

**Exploring EFL teachers' cognitions and practices of assessment  
feedback on learners' L2 writing at a Saudi university**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## Abstract

Assessment feedback is pivotal to the process of L2 teaching and learning. Assessment standards have also become a key element in accountability measures among 'high-stakes' tertiary educational settings in Saudi Arabia, and worldwide. As a result, the role of teachers in high-stakes assessments has changed over time. One crucial aspect is the response to institutional concerns over the value of teachers' practices (underpinned by their cognitions) in what have become measures of educational outcomes. Using Borg's (2006) model of language teacher cognition as a theoretical framework and guide for the research questions, this study presents an analysis of teachers' responses to curricular changes, within the national educational transformation plan led by Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Drawing on data collected before the Covid-19 pandemic, the study explores the cases of five EFL teachers, in search of their cognitions and practices of assessment feedback. This is contextualised based on teachers' self-reported and actual feedback practices on their students' writing during a seven-week course of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at a Saudi university.

Using an in-depth qualitative approach, data generation took place by means of conducting pre-observation semi-structured interviews with teachers, and follow-up stimulated recall interviews from classroom observations, over one academic module. Though faculty members of distinctive educational backgrounds showed similarities in their endorsement of assessment feedback practices, they differed in their feedback preferences. Furthermore, the study finds discrepancies between participants' self-reported and actual feedback practices and a unanimous agreement among the sample on the need for improving practitioners' understanding of effective assessment feedback delivery. The study recommends a practical model for language teacher cognition of assessment feedback to support in-service and ongoing teacher education. Research into feasible standard-setting for teacher-based assessment and feedback is further recommended.

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## List of Abbreviations

AF	Assessment Feedback
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
CELTA	Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
L2	Second/non-dominant/foreign language (English)
LMS	Learner Management Systems
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
FA	Formative Assessment
HE	Higher Education
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCAAA	National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment
PYP	Preparatory Year Programme
SA	Summative Assessment
SV 2030	Saudi Vision 2030
UN	United Nations
CBT	Computer Based Test
CEPT	Cambridge English Placement Test
LOs	Learning Outcomes
WCF	Written Corrective Feedback

## **Chapter 1: Introduction to the research project**

### **1.1 Research background**

In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), a unique transformative economic and social reform blueprint was launched in 2016. At a national level, Saudi Vision 2030 (SV 2030) is a strategic framework designed for reducing KSA's massive dependence on oil. Sustainability has been at the core of SV 2030 since its inception, with ambitions to accelerate the energy transition, achieve sustainability goals, and drive a new wave of investment. From a societal position, the framework aims to diversify the economy and develop public services in the sectors of education, health, infrastructure, recreation, and tourism (A Sustainable Saudi Vision, 2022).

Accordingly, SV 2030 is a transformative economic and social reform blueprint aiming to open the KSA up to the world on both an economic and societal level. In common with other citizens in the country, I became inspired by the process of unlocking opportunities for KSA's growth, investment and opening to the world. I was also motivated to become involved in a collaborative platform launched for future growth, and more importantly to increase citizens' quality of life. As a Saudi citizen, I realised at that time that my role was to support this ambitious reform, using the knowledge and skills that I am currently developing as an educator and researcher, and as a loyal citizen of my country within the global community.

Part of the strategic objectives of SV 2030 launched in 2016, was the national recognition of the crucial need for an educational shift. The educational transformation plan entailed a shift from a culture of memorisation to a culture of learner autonomy and criticality. This was the main incentive for this research, as learners' lifelong skills are now top of the agenda for educational change within SV 2030. Moreover, this study intends to illuminate some of the overall requirements that will fulfil the country's needs pertaining to learning skills, and it will thus contribute to achieving the goals of SV 2030. These requirements are essentially the elements that are needed for an educational shift towards learner autonomy and criticality. One of these elements is improving knowledge about assessment and feedback, which is in alignment with the educational goal of SV 2030 to develop learners' lifelong skills. This empirical research study aims to explore the cognitions

and feedback practices of practitioners in a Saudi high-stakes tertiary setting. The knowledge that would be gained would serve to develop and sustain learners' lifelong learning skills through peer assessment and self-assessment abilities.

With the inception of the preparatory year programme in 2008 across state universities in Saudi Arabia, I was assigned at that time to teach English to newly enrolled students. However, it also became clear to me that with the policy shift towards standardised assessment practice in the Saudi context (along with Quality Assurance and Accreditation standards discussed in section 1.3.3.), teachers were becoming less involved in policy-related matters that ultimately dictated their practice. For example, a Test Development and Curriculum Unit had been established, and teachers are no longer requested to submit test items for the regular exam selection process. As a result of the move toward centralised testing, the authority had been taken away from teachers in most assessment practices. For example, online testing for receptive skills (e.g. reading and listening), and integrated skills (e.g. vocabulary and grammar) have become electronically marked. Productive skills (e.g. writing and speaking) are the remaining language skills assessed by teachers, with much of the writing being transferred to an online assessment, that included plagiarism detection techniques (discussed further in sections 1.3.3 and 1.3.4).

Part of my experience in the programme had involved an administrative role in teacher training for technological platforms that facilitate online learning through the adopted Learner Management System (LMS): first the Oxford; and then Blackboard. During these orientation sessions, teachers would be introduced to online assessment tools that catered for receptive skills (reading, listening, grammar and vocabulary) and productive skills (speaking and writing). However, these tools were provided as additional resources that were not included in the formal assessment plan. Based on these in-service experiences in my previous work context, I developed an interest in online platforms that allow teachers to teach their learners beyond classroom settings. I realised that these resources allow teachers to provide their learners with additional resources and practice tasks within a shared space, which also facilitates feedback. I also realised the pivotal role of assessment in the teaching and learning process and the importance of having some form of

assessment literacy for both teachers and learners. Given the challenges monolingual learners face when seeking to progress in their academic studies in a foreign language, I knew (as a teacher) that these challenges would most likely continue until teachers and leading professionals realise the relevance of feedback to the development of learners' L2 writing. This led me into developing an interest in teachers' cognitions of assessment and how they responded to their learners with feedback.

As an English language teacher at one of the most widely attended universities in Saudi Arabia, it was suggested by a colleague during a teacher training session that more staff should be researching assessment. At that time, many of the teaching staff had little knowledge or experience of how to go about this, but I was advised by a colleague that exploring the impact of assessment on teaching and learning could be a good start. The experiences I had gained through many years of work in Saudi tertiary education, gave me access to and knowledge about the everyday practices of teachers, as well as the influence of the national assessment policy on teaching and learning. Therefore, familiarity with the testing and assessment system included the following: experience gained through teaching and assessing Saudi learners; experience in preparing learners for the national English testing system and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS); co-publishing on the topic of e-learning (see Appendix H); conducting an assessment review report with colleagues in 2017, which required the analysis of the survey data that had been obtained from teachers and learners regarding their perceptions on teaching, assessment (procedures, content, rubric/rating scales), and the curriculum; and experience in teacher education for technology integrating into teaching and learning. These experiences served in developing my understanding of English Language Teaching (ELT), as well as familiarity with assessment feedback practices in the Saudi tertiary context.

During my preparation for becoming a PhD candidate, no one in the educational context I was working for had mentioned the impact that feedback (as a key element following assessment) had on the development of lifelong learning skills. My interest in assessment feedback was formed at that moment and began to grow. I also began to relate to the literature I was reading, and I realised the impact that the

feedback I was receiving from my mentors and supervisors had on my development as an academic writer and researcher. It was only when I began to embark on research related to the washback effect that testing systems around the world had on teaching and learning, that I began to understand the debate surrounding the influence of testing on education. This encouraged me to consider conducting research within a Saudi teaching and learning context.

There are several reasons for choosing to conduct research in a Saudi educational tertiary setting. One is the popularity of the university – it is among the most highly attended state universities in the western region of KSA. Learners across the country seek to enrol in this university, as it is one of the most research progressive universities in the country. Secondly, the relevance of my background to this research project and my many years of experience in English language teaching have given me an insider's perspective of the context. Additionally, carrying out a research study in this setting is helpful due to my familiarity with the context, which supports becoming involved with this educational research topic. Being a lecturer at the university was an important factor in the choice of university for this exploration. These factors include accessibility and familiarity with the culture of the educational setting, which allowed me to use the allotted time effectively in carrying out the study (see Chapter 3, section 3.11, for insider and outsider issues).

## **1.2 Status of English language teaching in Saudi Arabia: addressing educational expectations and targets within the Saudi Vision 2030**

This chapter presents an introduction to the research topic by illustrating the educational context in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The chapter is presented in two main sections: Section 1.2 describes the status of English within KSA; section 1.3 discusses Second Language (L2) teaching and learning in Saudi tertiary settings by focusing on the Saudi Preparatory Year Programme. The chapter concludes with the rationale for conducting this study, and how it supports the educational targets for SV 2030.

The next section presents the increasing importance of English within KSA and its education system. It is then followed by an explanation of the educational expectations that address SV 2030 pertaining to the achievement of educational learning targets.

### **1.2.1 Increasing demand for English language teaching in Saudi Arabia**

Arabic and English are the two main languages used in KSA. Among the non-Saudi population, many people speak Urdu, Hindi, Tagalog, and some speak Turkish and Farsi. Many non-Arabic speaking expatriates reside in KSA without the need to speak or write Arabic. However, Arabic is viewed as a holy language that represents Islam since the Quran is written in Arabic (Payne and Almansour, 2014). As the Arabic language holds value in society due to its religious significance, other languages exist alongside this language, and for other purposes. Arabic is indeed the official language in Saudi Arabia, and English comes second as the only compulsory language subject taught in Saudi schools, universities, and colleges.

The English language has a strong presence in the Saudi educational system due to a range of considerations, the most important of which is that English is the only foreign language taught in Saudi public schools (the reasons for this are discussed later in this section). Other languages of minorities who live in the country (e.g. Turkish), were never introduced into the education system. The teaching of English was introduced into the country's educational system in the late 1920s (Al-Shabbi, 1989; Baghdadi, 1985; Niblock, 2006 cited in Alrabai, 2016). From the 1960s to the 1990s, English was taught as a required subject in intermediate and high schools with 4-6 classes per week. English is also taught as a core subject in private schools, universities, government organisations (Al-Seghayer, 2014), and it is used as the medium of training in many local industries (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014) such as the airline industry, oil companies, hospitals, and telecommunications. Therefore, English fulfils several functions in academia and many domains within the workforce. English enjoys a prominent status in various professional sectors and at all levels within KSA (Al-Seghayer, 2014; 2016). For example, although many employees in Saudi Arabia are non-native English speakers and speak other foreign languages

(e.g. Bengali, Urdu, and Tagalog), the Saudi government has focused solely on the use of English (Alnasser, 2018).

This focus on the English language has arisen for several reasons. At a societal level, English is given high status, witnessed by its use in public (e.g. restaurant menus, shop signs, naming of products). This perceived growing position of English is in response to the development of KSA in a variety of domains, such as education and the economy (Al-Seghayer, 2014). It is also possible that English is receiving increasing attention in KSA because of its function as a lingua franca, which suggests that speakers of other languages use English as a means of communication (Alnasser, 2018). The use of English as a lingua franca also concurs with SV 2030, which plans to make the country more attractive to international investments, while considering English as a valuable means of communication for both present and future social and economic ventures. Indeed, English stands out as the language of education, technology development, military power, employment prospects, economy (including business and trade), media influence (western popular culture), international relations, and as a link to modern lifestyle, adds Mazawi (2005). Thus, it is evident that the presence of English as a language has and will continue to hold an important value in KSA.

### **1.2.2 Meeting educational targets for Saudi Vision 2030**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (section 1.1) SV 2030 was introduced to the public as a transformative strategic plan. As a national incentive, it seeks to achieve sustainable development through a wide range of reforms within the education sector. The educational component within SV 2030 has addressed three key areas: development of curricula, advancement of Higher Education (HE) and building skills that are necessary for the labour market. With education being at the forefront of SV 2030 aiming at developing public services, the Saudi Ministry of Education (MoE) aims to provide educational opportunities in alignment with the country's labour market. Thus, the Saudi government has paid special attention to the teaching of the English language, focusing on presenting the English language at all educational levels (Al-Asmari and Khan, 2014). For example, on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the MoE announced that English would be taught in Saudi schools starting

from year group one (ages 5–6). Also, educational policies on English curricula in tertiary education are in a continuous state of modification. For example, English language curricula (designed specifically to be taught in the Middle East) had been adopted by Oxford and then by Cambridge publishers. Recently, the shift toward Academic English has played a role in curricula selection (to be discussed further in section 1.3.4).

SV 2030 also aims to advance objectives pertaining to tertiary education, such as having Saudi universities among the top universities in the World University Rankings. With the continuous and growing importance of English as a global language, especially in education and business, the Saudi government has been and continues to invest in education, including English language teaching. In doing so, universities recruit the best available applicants and allocate their budgets to materials and technologies. Furthermore, in seeking to achieve national targets within the SV 2030 agenda, the MoE has launched several academic initiatives, including a research initiative that aims to develop research skills within general education, raise the quality of research output, and increase the efficiency of scientific research. Such initiatives are supported by the establishment of university research centres (e.g. King Abdulaziz University Deanship of Scientific Research and the King Fahd Medical Research Centre).

On a global level, the Saudi MoE is committed to achieving universal targets on 'Quality Education', initiated by the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) project. This initiative has set a nationwide trajectory for promoting a culture of peace, global citizenship, and an appreciation of cultural diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development. Much recently, the first female spokesperson of the MoE was assigned this position in 2019, making her responsible for over six million students and teachers in the public education sector (Al-Shehri, 2019). This is an example of the enactment of SV 2030 for educational transformation, as it is a portrayal of the national strive towards gender equality (United Nations SDG, 2018) which is aligned with the SDGs of the UN.

SV 2030 aims to reformulate the basis of the social and economic dimensions of Saudi society (Nurunnabi, 2017). The Saudi government is committed to creating a

solid base for the economy by preparing and developing its youth as critical thinkers and academically sound individuals who can play their part in the social and economic development of the country (Mitchell and Alfuraih, 2017). Thus, the increased use of English as a means of communication and teaching is a response to the ongoing changes in the economy and the emerging requirements of job markets, for which the Saudi government is attempting to prepare the young generation (Alzhrani and Alkubaidi, 2020). For example, English was introduced as a compulsory subject in 2006, to grade six (ages 11–12) in all elementary schools. Then, it was officially introduced into grades four and five (age 9–11) in 2012. In tertiary education, English language teaching has become fundamental in students' academic progress. This is discussed in much detail in the following sections.

### **1.3 Second Language teaching and learning through the Preparatory Year Programme at Saudi tertiary settings**

With the continuing and growing importance of English as a global language, especially in education, Saudi universities are investing in teaching their learners how to communicate effectively in both spoken and written English. As learners transition to tertiary level education, achievement in the English language is a determinant of their academic success in the long run. This draws attention to the roles of standardised English language assessment and teachers' feedback in supporting learners' L2 proficiency and the achievement of the SV 2030 targets (on English language use and the development of learners' lifelong learning skills).

Throughout all Saudi public universities, enrolment in Preparatory Year Programmes (PYPs) has become compulsory for entry to the tertiary level. As stated on their website, the goals of the PYP at the Saudi university include guiding students to the appropriate colleges that match students' abilities and skills; standardising university admission for students based on Grade Point Average (GPA) after the completion of their preparatory year; showing the available university disciplines and the nature of the study to the students; improving students' knowledge and skills, especially in the English language, computer information, communication and research; and allowing students the opportunity to discover their potential in a university environment.

All PYP students must take the English language placement test before the start of the academic year, and they can only take the test once. The programme uses the Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT) to put learners in the correct English level. Based on their handbook, the purpose of the PYP is to ensure that students achieve an intermediate level of proficiency in their use of the English language, equivalent to the 'threshold' level within one academic year. Further information on English language teaching and assessment in the PYP is provided in sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2.

The following sections introduce the English language courses in the Saudi PYP, the development of assessment standards and accreditation procedures, and the implications of high-stakes assessment on the quality of ELT in the researched context.

### **1.3.1 English as a mandatory course in the English Language Programme at a Saudi university**

As a result of the realisation of the importance of English in the Saudi educational system, its delivery has undergone many changes, including curriculum innovation (Al-Seghayer, 2014). For example, English language programmes in Saudi tertiary settings have been adopting curricula developed by Oxford and Cambridge publishers that are designed for Middle East English language learners. The English Language Programme (ELP) forms one of the major and mandatory components of the PYP and is delivered by highly qualified faculty members to approximately 18,000 newly admitted full-time male and female students each year on each campus (ELI, 2022). Furthermore, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) emerged in its early stages at the ELP in 2018 with the additional label - 'academic' along with English language teaching. As a profession, EAP is recognised as being linked to developmental vocational training projects and English-medium universities within newly independent countries that were linked to infrastructure development and the oil industry in the Middle East (Ding and Bruce 2017).

Catering for the English language needs of the faculties at the Saudi university, the ELP is composed of different tracks (health/medicine, communication, engineering,

academic/science, and general) with different exit proficiency levels catering to the English language needs for faculties in each track (ELI, 2022). Depending on the college system in which they are enrolled, students must be registered in English language courses during the PYP. For example, the Academic English Track (ELIS) has been designed for students who wish to go to faculties where English is the only or main language of instruction at the Saudi university. These include medical, science, and engineering faculties. The intensive English language course in this programme forms the major and mandatory component of the PYP courses, particularly for students enrolled in the Science track pathway and using the Academic English curriculum. A typical class in a Saudi PYP consists of 30 students (on average) who attend 3–4 hours of English classes every day. Students study English daily (16–18 hours per week) along with other modules, depending on the science or humanities track they are enrolled into. The ELP consists of four modular courses over one academic year that students must complete successfully to gain admission to their chosen faculty.

A module covers one level of the ELP and is considered a full and independent course. The total duration of the module system is seven academic weeks, and the final exam is scheduled during the seventh week of each module. Students must be assessed as having completed and passed one level to proceed to the succeeding level, and likewise throughout the entire programme. They are offered a maximum of three opportunities to complete their ELP courses and must complete six credit units by the end of the first year. In some cases, a lack of English proficiency may lose the opportunity to remain on the regular academic track and they may become obliged to transfer to the Applied College where they are enrolled in a diploma programme instead that requires tuition fees. This may influence learners' motivation, given the nature of this high-stakes setting. The following section presents details of the position of English language teaching (within the objectives of the Saudi PYP) concerning high-stakes assessment.

### **1.3.2 High-stakes assessment in the Preparatory Year Programme**

Assessment during the PYP is significant due to the potential impact that achievement tests have on students' academic prospects. This applies to all courses

including the English courses. In describing the testing structure of Saudi PYP programmes (including the researched context), similarities exist in terms of their high-stakes nature (Almossa, 2017). For example, the purpose of English language programmes across Saudi universities is to ensure that students achieve a standard English language proficiency level that enables them to master the fundamental skills of academic English. The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is used to describe the language proficiency levels (Council of Europe, 2017) in the Saudi PYPs. According to Fulcher (2010), the CEFR is employed beyond European borders, testifying to its usefulness in centralised language education policies. Students enrolled in the Saudi PYP are expected to transition from beginner level (CEFR A1) to pre-intermediate level (CEFR B1) English proficiency upon completing the programme. Students are required to achieve a score of 60% or above for promotion to the next level. This level of English is the university's defined minimum English language proficiency level before transitioning beyond the PYP. The CEFR has been adopted as a tool in standard-based education in most Saudi university English language programmes, which also applies to the educational context of this study.

As mentioned earlier, students in the Saudi PYP are assessed at the beginning of each academic year using the online CEPT upon admission to the university. Sample tests made by Cambridge are available on their website ([cambridgeenglish.org](http://cambridgeenglish.org)) for students to see what is expected on the assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure accurate placement in the appropriate level of the programme (courses 101, 102, 103, and 104). In cases where learners do not take the CEPT during the summer, they are placed at a beginner level (A1). Students must complete the English course requirement to become eligible for being admitted to the college of their choice unless they are exempted by providing an IELTS overall score of 4.5 with a sub-score of 4 in each subskill (ELI, 2017).

In the PYP, students are placed into ELP courses based on their CEPT results. The ELP courses are aligned with the CEFR. The programme course modules start at level A1 and end at B1. Assessment and teaching are also expected to be aligned with the CEFR standard by utilizing the coursebook series *Cambridge Unlock*. The Course Syllabus (designed and approved internally by the Curriculum and Test

Development Unit), contains the course description, goals, objectives and learning outcomes. This means that the CEFR descriptors are integrated into the course learning outcomes using the 'Can-do Statements'. The CEFR descriptors are also integrated into the assessment rubric/rating scales. The examination system is written, designed, and prepared internally by the in-house Curriculum and Test Development Unit. Since students need to understand the descriptors, teachers are instructed to discuss with their students the writing test rubrics while using writing test samples (approved by the ELP). Therefore, teachers are instructed to use class time to prepare their learners for the writing assessment (discussed further in section 1.3.4.2).

The potential impact that achievement tests have on students' academic prospects results in a massive amount of effort from stakeholders. Madaus (1988) describes 'high-stakes' examinations as those whose results are seen by different stakeholders (e.g. teachers, programme administrators, students, test developers) as influencing important decisions. Furthermore, exams may even influence teachers' and students' perceptions of their abilities, their actions and even the content and methodology of the teaching programme (Wall, 2005). Wall (2005) expands on this notion by stating that such examinations conditions can have a significant impact, not only on individuals but also on classroom practices. Since the testing conditions in the PYP have important consequences for students (Popham, 1987, cited in Wall, 2005), this leads to describing the testing nature of Saudi PYP as 'high-stakes' testing. This also results in a considerable amount of importance being attached to the assessment procedures adopted by the language programme, as described by Mansory (2016).

### **1.3.3 Development of assessment standards and accreditation procedures**

As mentioned earlier (section 1.1) the policy shift towards standardised assessment practice in the Saudi HE context has led to greater investment into delivering a better quality of education following national and international standards. In response to the national demands to improve the quality of education, several centres and projects were established, including the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA). The NCAAA was established in 2004 to evaluate and accredit all Saudi academic institutions and setting national academic standards to

ensure that in-house assessments within institutions comply with them (The NCAAA, 2011). Standardisation across Saudi PYP programmes has resulted in similarity in aspects relating to curriculum selection and assessment though variations might occur between public and private universities and between male and female campuses (Almossa, 2017). It should be noted that Saudi HE is gender-segregated, which results in female and male educational programmes being taught at separate campuses for cultural and religious reasons. The practice of gender segregation in the Saudi education system means that female staff work in different locations than male staff. Though exams within the ELP at the Saudi university are standardised across the male and female campuses, assessment-related decisions are frequently initiated from the male campus, while female staff are assigned secondary roles and tasks in the test-development committee.

The NCAAA is responsible for ensuring the adoption of effective teaching and learning methods and it requires all universities to adopt the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for HE in the KSA since introduced in 2009 (Darandari and Murphy, 2013; Almossa, 2017). The NCAAA (2011) reported that the NQF learning outcome domains were based on modern theories and successful practices adopted in countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). The establishment of the NCAAA serves to elevate Saudi HE and monitor the education standards. Therefore, Saudi universities must demonstrate that appropriate teaching methods and assessment procedures are being followed to promote the attainment of Learning Outcomes (LO). In addition, they must validate the quality of the LOs achieved by students in terms of what they will know or be able to do with the language. External markers carry this validation process, which includes evaluating assignments and projects and comparing them with assessment benchmarks, criteria, and procedures. The process also includes comparing department practices against those of other departments within the same institution and across other institutions.

The NCAAA emphasises the improvement of learning and teaching, assessment design, and the alignment of assessment methods with the domains of LOs. The objective of this evaluation is to allow a wider variety of assessment methods to be employed, in alignment with the learning objectives and anticipated outcomes

(Almusallam, 2007). Complying with the NCAAA standards, the shift towards standardised assessment has resulted in much change in Saudi HE, particularly in terms of assessment procedures. In the context of Saudi universities, it has been reported that female and male teaching staff are equally marginalised from decisions related to assessment (Almansory, 2016; Habbash and Idapalapati, 2016). However, the introduction of electronic testing systems in 2011 (at the ELP) has led to an improved state of collaboration between male and female teaching staff in administrative roles. For example, examinations within the ELP are written, designed, and prepared internally by an in-house Test Development and Curriculum Unit that includes male and female staff members across the campuses (ELI, 2021 accessed online).

### **1.3.4 Description of the writing component in the English courses**

The ELP is committed to bringing students' proficiency in English further up on the CEFR scale. The courses are designed for academic English and consolidate learners' grasp of basic structures, while also introducing them to supplementary vocabulary and grammatical structures, and more complex academic texts. It aims to bring students to a B1 level in academic English by providing them with the tools to deal with academic-oriented English by strengthening their skills in writing, reading, listening, and speaking. The English language courses are intended to accomplish their goal by the end of each academic module (by the end of week seven). This is discussed in more detail in the following sections in terms of the objectives, assessment procedures, and student achievement in the EAP course.

#### **1.3.4.1 The course objectives for the classroom-based writing tasks**

In the EAP courses, teachers are expected to construct daily evidence of learning assignments following specified guidelines set by the ELP Curriculum and Test Development Unit. These guidelines state that assignments should require students to show evidence that they have learned the content presented during class on that day, and that assignments should be tied to the learning objectives for the pages of the coursebook covered that day.

Teachers are also encouraged to use a variety of daily 'Evidence of Learning' assignments that connect with and relate to the skills covered that day in the classroom. Examples of Evidence of Learning include a series of questions adapted from the textbook (grammar and/or vocabulary activities) that reinforce what was taught. Furthermore, teachers are expected to provide students with a writing prompt (either in a sentence or short paragraph form) to think critically, reflect, evaluate, and give their opinion, which is developed based on a reading or listening passage covered in the day's lesson. Examples of Evidence of Learning tasks can include one or more writing worksheets from the weekly writing lessons. The amount of class time required for assignment preparation should vary from day to day and should be no longer than 20 minutes. It should always be conducted in the last part of the hour, but teachers should do it at different hours on different days of the week. For example, some days it might be at the end of the first teaching hour, some days at the end of the second teaching hour, and some days at the end of the third teaching hour.

The writing component of the course includes writing simple cohesive paragraphs in an academic style on themes already introduced in their course books. The LOs include developing students' language skills to communicate by writing well-organised descriptive, process, and/or opinion paragraphs (e.g. cities and places, festivals and celebrations, internet and technology, weather and climate, and sports and competition). The course LOs, along with recommended teaching strategies and assessment methods for the skill of writing, are demonstrated in the course specification booklet (see Appendix D), which is provided internally by the programme and approved by the Education & Training Evaluation Commission (2019/2020).

#### **1.3.4.2 Assessment in writing skills development**

According to the instructional pack designed by the Curriculum and Test Development Unit, teachers are instructed to follow standardised assessment procedures in assessing students' writing. Assessments include regular writing tasks on Blackboard (three in total), which are checked using a plagiarism system before they are graded by teachers. Throughout the 7-week course modules, there is an

outlined weekly schedule of when each Blackboard Writing Assignment is due, when the grading is due, and when the revised draft is due from the student by the end of the module. At the start of every writing lesson, teachers are expected to allocate an appropriate amount of time in class for explaining the new writing assignment that students must complete on Blackboard (for homework). A '0' is given if the assignment was not submitted, partially completed, was off-topic, plagiarised, or did not fulfil most of the requirements (such as length or any other parameters set by the Curriculum and Test Development Unit). For levels 101 and 102, a '1' is awarded if the assignment meets most of the requirements. For levels 103 and 104, a '1-3' is awarded depending on the quality of the submitted writing, which is also graded based on set parameters. For context-specific parameters for assessing writing, a sample of one Blackboard assignment and its assessment criteria is provided in Appendix D3.

The paper-based assessments include the mid-module writing exam (week 3) and the final writing exam (week 6) which are both conducted in class. The writing examinations have one writing prompt on an academic topic related to the coursebook. Learners are assessed (using the rubric/rating scale) on writing well-organised and developed paragraphs/essays with a topic sentence, supporting sentences, clear organisation, and appropriate reasons and examples. Depending on their level, learners are encouraged to express ideas in sentences, paragraphs, and/or essays. For example, in levels 101/102 (CEFR A1/A2), there is a section that focuses on punctuation, word order, and/or linking words. Learners are expected to exemplify in the writing assessments the use of linking words (e.g. because, and, also) to link simple sentences and phrases, to complete a paragraph, or describe a simple list of points. Finally, learners are expected to follow correct capitalisation, punctuation, spelling, grammar use, and correct word order in sentences.

To prepare learners for the first writing assessment, sample exams are provided for teachers, who are requested to share them with their students during lessons, ahead of the examination date. Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the assessment distribution for the skill of writing, along with other skills in the course. The content for the Computer Based Test (CBT) includes the skills of listening, reading, grammar

and vocabulary. The speaking assessment is conducted separately. The writing assessment is conducted on paper and assessed internally by teachers.

End-of –Unit Weekly Review Tasks (on Blackboard)	10%
Speaking Project	10%
Speaking Exam (Mid Module)	5%
Writing Exam (Mid Module)	5%
Writing Exam (Final)	10%
Mid-Module CBT	20%
Final CBT	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 1-1. Overview of the skills assessment in the ELP**

#### **1.3.4.3 Student achievement and feedback in writing**

In the ELP, student achievement in writing is measured from a variety of assessment perspectives, including daily classroom-based assignments, three Blackboard writing assignments, a mid-module writing examination, and the final writing examination. Blackboard writing prompts are supported by lessons in the Course Writing Packet, and students are expected to gain maximum benefit from the Blackboard writing assignments if they complete each one after the weekly writing lesson on the topic. Teachers are instructed to grade the assignments immediately and provide feedback (individually and/or as a whole class). Teachers have the autonomy to choose their methods and strategies in providing feedback, as they see appropriate (i.e. depending on learners' needs and time).

Students are expected to get the maximum benefit from the Blackboard writing prompts if they do each one after the weekly writing lesson on the topic, and if the teacher grades them and provides individual and whole class feedback promptly. Assignments conducted on Blackboard require students to revise their entries after having received feedback from their teachers, and students are expected to learn

from the feedback for future writing assignments and assessments. For the mid-module writing assessment, teachers are expected to provide written feedback on students' exam papers, and then they are instructed to show the learners the marked exams with written feedback in class. Furthermore, teachers are instructed to allocate 30 minutes of class time to allow learners to discuss and clarify the provided feedback when learners need further clarification.

### **1.3.5 Integration of critical thinking skills into academic writing**

In the transition towards academic English in 2018, the ELP at the targeted Saudi university adopted the coursebook series called *Cambridge Unlock*. According to their website, *Unlock* is centred on 'real-life' objectives that should prepare learners to use English independently. One of the main components of the new ELP curriculum is the integration of critical thinking skills into each language skill, including writing. For example, the course specification states that teaching staff are instructed to demonstrate how ideas maps, surveys and tables can enable students to better understand, evaluate, and analyse reading and listening texts. Students are also expected to use a variety of visual organisers such as T-charts, ideas maps, and wh-charts to evaluate, analyse and organise information. They are also encouraged to demonstrate how tables can be used to organise interviews and writing.

At this level, the LOs are related to critical thinking are intended to assist students in being better able to listen, read and write (Course specifications, 2018, Accessed online). The learning objectives detailed in the course syllabus state that students will know or be able to compare, categorise and evaluate, identify advantages and disadvantages, and analyse a variety of text elements including questions, ideas, examples, tables and graphs. Instructions for teachers on ways of developing critical thinking skills (in writing) are provided in the teacher's manual, development pack (lesson plans) and provided by *Cambridge Unlock Reading and Writing Course Books* (see figure D2 in Appendix D). Figure 1-2 is an image demonstration of student's coursebook 1 and 2 for Reading, Writing and Critical Thinking (Course Book 3/B1 is also used).



**Figure 1-2. Cambridge Unlock second edition books 1 and 2 – Reading, Writing and Critical Thinking**

The structure of educational curricula standards within the SV 2030 includes developing self-learning skills. These priorities have guided the process of developing, implementing, and assessing education standards in all education fields and across all levels of education. For instance, limited exposure to English instruction in the past at intermediate levels within public schools (years 7–9) led to EFL curricula being introduced in earlier year groups (years 4–6). Recent additions to the curricula, with an emphasis on course learning objectives, are students' textbooks (of all levels) and a course specifications booklet for teachers. This is intended to help learners reflect on what they have learned on the final page of every unit for each coursebook. Students are, thus, expected to read the 'I can ...' objectives and self-assess how well they can do each one, referring to the completed work and lessons in the unit. Teachers are also expected to discuss these objectives with their learners, and feedback should be given on them. If learners need more practice with any of the unit's learning objectives, they can access the online workbook for additional practice. Critical thinking skills in writing are thus prioritised

and reflect the national orientation towards a productive society for the future work industry, lifelong learning, and growth.

### **1.3.6 English language teaching education and training**

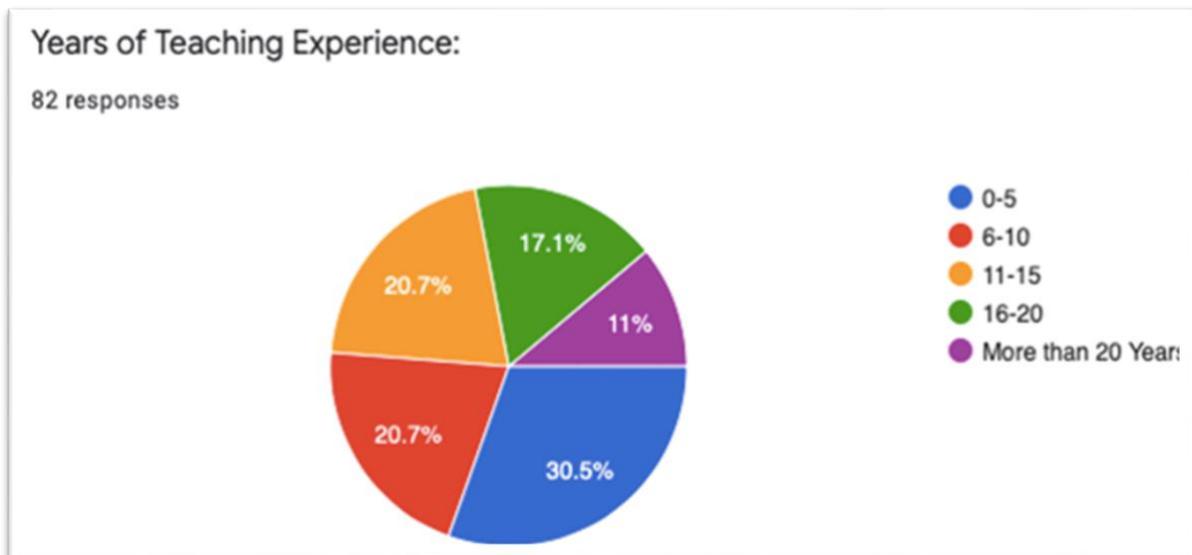
In KSA, EFL teacher education has been an issue. Al-Seghayer (2011) highlighted that there is a lack of pre-service training that is offered to prospective Saudi EFL teachers. Pre- and in-service teachers do not seem to have received adequate training due to the lack of resources (Melibari, 2016). Pre-service ELT training programmes represent only 10% of the total courses offered by English departments in colleges and universities (Al-Seghayer, 2011). Furthermore, it is perceived that such programmes are insufficient regarding disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, technological pedagogical knowledge, technological pedagogical content knowledge (Al-Seghayer, 2011; 2017) and little to no pre-service or in-service training in assessment for the teachers. As a result, those who decide to join the teaching profession seek education in ELT from abroad.

The Saudi government has invested in educational reform initiatives since 2004, through the MoE, to drive changes in schools and universities. Development plans began with the expansion of university campuses, increases in student entry numbers, staff recruitment, and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes, including scholarship opportunities for Saudi teachers working in schools and universities. Recommendations for ELT in Saudi schools were provided in 2017 by the Shura Council (The Saudi legislation body adhering to the sources of Islamic legislation). The first of its recommendations was to improve English teaching through CPD programmes for teachers (Almossa, 2017).

Despite Saudi initiatives to achieve world-class standards in teaching, learning and assessment, a gap still exists between the country's education system and that of other countries. For example, issues regarding teaching and learning approaches in KSA, such as rote-learning, memory recall and high-stake testing continue to be discussed in the literature (Alnassar and Dow, 2013; Al-Roomy, 2016; Al-Seghayer, 2015; Larry and Abouammoh, 2013; Almansory, 2016). This suggests a need for re-evaluation of teachers' CPD at local universities. Research suggests that investing in teacher education is important because it increases teachers' knowledge, skills, and

fosters awareness of the key principles in pedagogy, assessment, and feedback (Popham, 2008; Stiggins, 2007; Taylor, 2013; Wiliam, 2011). As noted by Wiliam (2011), the quality of teachers in an organisation is one of the important factors in an education system.

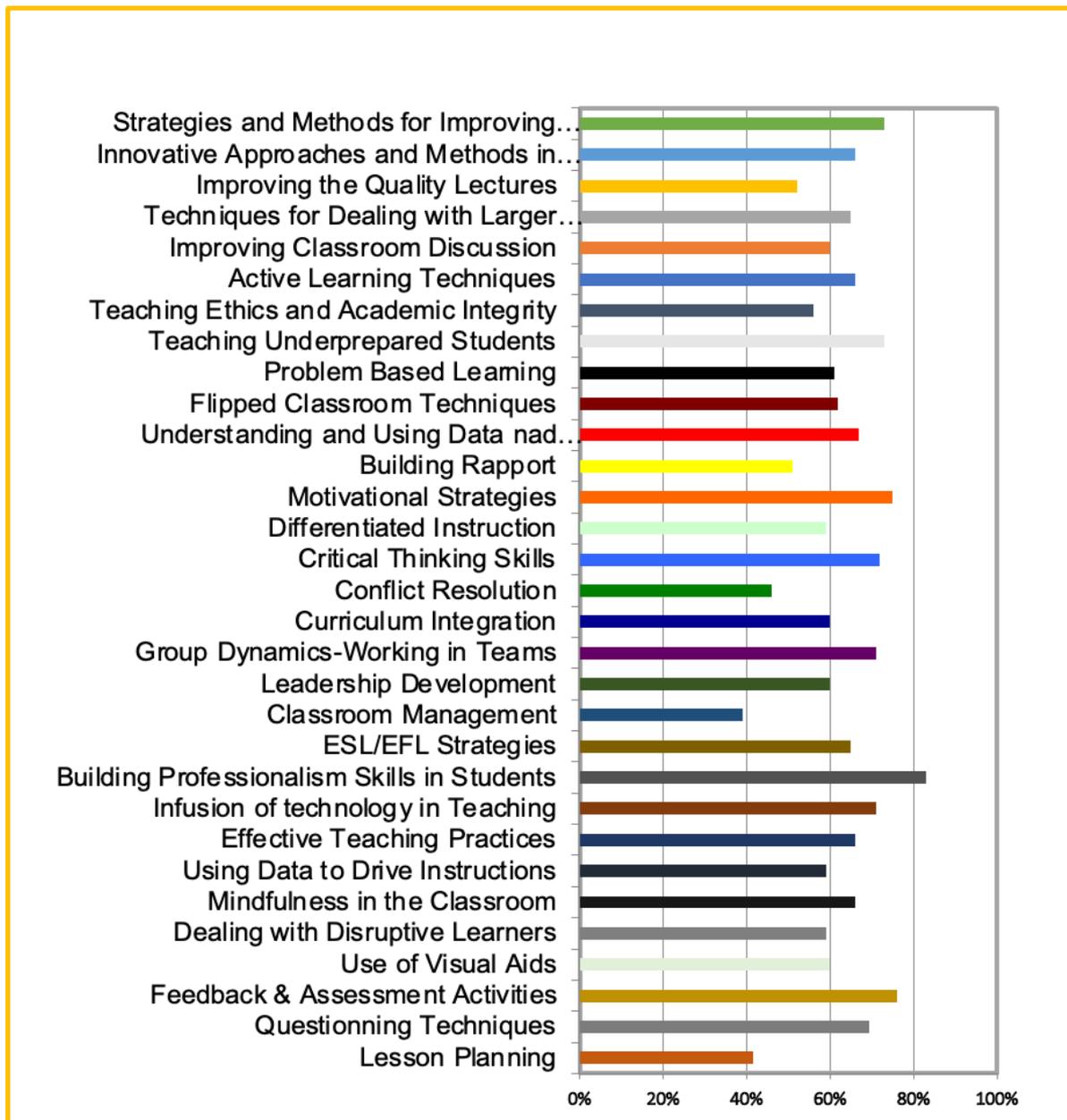
For the purpose of this study, the faculty needs analysis report was requested from the ELP at the Saudi university. The obtained report provides an overview of the needs of ELP instructors who taught PYP students during the academic year 2019-2020. The report also serves in identifying the nature of the teacher training and mentoring programme offered by the CPD unit and whether there is mention of training on assessment feedback. The acquired survey consisted of three components: the number of years of employment; the training areas instructors were interested in; and other workshops they would be interested in taking. Figure 1-3 shows the length of employment of the instructors who responded (n = 82). Data from the survey revealed that the majority of in-service instructors who responded had been working for five years (at the most). Instructors who had been teaching 6–10 years and 11–15 years accounted for the second-largest group. This was followed by a group of teachers with experience of 16–20 years. The last group had been working for more than 20 years.



**Figure 1-3. CPD Needs analysis response from teachers**

Figure 1-4 presents the survey responses relating to the areas of interest of the respondents based on the needs analysis for improving the quality of lecturers. The

shown percentages relate to the respondents who were interested in learning more about each topic. The area of highest interest was 'Building Professionalism Skills in Students', with 83%. This was followed by Feedback and Assessment Activities and Motivational Strategies, with each scoring 76%. This suggests that training in assessment and feedback is greatly needed and recommended for the ELP, adding to this study's significance (will be discussed again in Chapters 5, 6 and 7).



**Figure 1-4. Needs analysis survey response for improving the quality of lecturers (2019-2020)**

In the survey, workshops were also ranked by teachers based on their levels of interest in the subject. The staff's responses, in descending order, included teaching underprepared students, strategies and methods for improving receptive and productive skills, and developing learners' critical thinking skills. This was followed by integrating technology in ELT, understanding, and using data from assessment to improve classroom practice, techniques for dealing with larger classes. The least request was related to leadership development, differentiated Instruction, teaching ethics and Academic Integrity, building relationship and rapport with learners, lesson planning, and classroom management. Additional workshops requested by individual instructors included techniques for using technology in ELT, strategies for motivating learners, developing learner autonomy, and ways to help improve learners' writing effectively and efficiently. Based on the PD needs analysis report, it was recommended that the areas of interest and suggested workshops should be considered by the Professional Development Unit during the academic year 2019–2020.

#### **1.4 Rationale for the research study**

Many learners in KSA begin formal learning of English in primary schools, yet the majority graduate from secondary schools with a relatively low command of English. Upon entering university, learners face many challenges as most of the undergraduate and postgraduate courses use English as the medium of instruction or English course material. Additionally, Saudi learners find L2 writing the most challenging skill to master (AbuSeileek, 2006; Alhaisoni, 2012). Difficulties that Saudi EFL/ESL learners encounter in various aspects of writing have been noted in several studies (e.g. Al-Hazmi and Scholfield, 2007; Alhaysony, 2008). Results show the dominance of traditional approaches to teaching writing skills, namely the product approach (i.e. the teacher focuses on the corrective aspects only such as grammar and language use), with little reference to assessment standards or writing criteria.

In the English language classroom, teachers are often faced with the challenging task of supporting students to reach comprehensive writing standards. Studies have attempted to explore the causes of this L2 academic challenge and the weak achievement in writing (Al-Ahdal et al., 2014; Al-Seghayer, 2011, 2014; Liton, 2012;

Maherzi, 2011). One possibility that has not been studied thoroughly is how the main feedback provider (i.e. the teacher) conceptualises and delivers feedback.

Furthermore, teachers may limit their feedback on writing due to individual and/or contextual reasons. In examining the teacher's role, local studies have suggested a need to improve/strengthen the role that teachers play in assessment (e.g. Mansory, 2016), but there is inadequate empirical evidence on the inclusion of teachers in assessment-related decisions. As the two main stakeholders in educational assessment, teachers and students have been overlooked when making decisions about assessment (Almossa and Alzahrani, 2022).

From a global perspective, discussions on teachers' assessment literacy (Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Fulcher, 2012;) highlight the importance of teachers' knowledge of and expertise in assessment (Broadfoot and Black, 2004; Vogt and Tsagari, 2014). Furthermore, teachers are expected to be more involved in assessing work and providing effective feedback. However, given the role that assessment plays in teaching and learning, teachers are expected to have adequate knowledge of all aspects of assessment to effectively develop their teaching, support their students and respond to their needs, and meet the expectations of stakeholder groups (Herrera and Macías, 2015). Due to the nature of the standardised system in this EAP context, teachers have a very limited role in assessment. This is a weakness, as teachers' feedback can be a powerful way of supporting their learners' development. Thus, enhancing teachers' knowledge of sound assessment and feedback principles is beneficial to the learning process. Furthermore, while teachers are being held responsible for enhancing their students' assessment literacy (which will be discussed further in Chapter 2, section 2.4, and Chapter 5, section 5.3.1) there is a lack of support and training in this area due to a lack of adequate pre-service teacher training in ELT generally and specifically in assessment. Therefore, there is a need for in-service training for teachers in ELT (Al-Seghayer, 2014). This suggests the importance of evaluating institutional teacher training programmes and the additional support that is needed from policymakers.

This study outlines valuable directions of research on educational reform and the contextual factors influencing teachers' cognitions. From an L2 contextual perspective, English education in KSA still faces many challenges. Researchers (e.g.

Al-Seghayer, 2017; Alshahrani, 2020) have stated that the L2 writing skills of low-proficiency learners (CEFR A1/A2) need immediate attention since this learner group constitutes the majority of L2 learners who begin undergraduate studies. Authorities have stated that serious problems still exist, such as the mismatch between the expected LOs and the learners' L2 performance; teaching and assessment strategies; and poor testing and assessment policies (Al-Bargi, 2019; Alghamdi and Siddiqui, 2016; Obaid, 2016). This points to a need for further exploration into teachers' cognitions of how they respond to their learners on their L2 writing.

This study is an opportunity to explore the cognitions and practices of EAP practitioners and the perceived contextual constraints on their assessment feedback practices. The outcomes of this study aim to serve more than one purpose. One intended outcome is to create knowledge about the relationship between cognition and feedback practices, which is useful for both teachers and researchers in the fields of language teaching, assessment, and feedback. The implications resulting from this study will indicate specific actions that could be implemented to support the SV 2030 goals for education. Additionally, the practical recommendations resulting from this study are designed to support both long-term and immediate needs to develop and deliver effective teaching and learning (see Chapter 7, section 7.4). Beyond having value at a national level, the researched context is relatable to other language programmes that provide academic English literacy and/or EAP.

## 1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is structured into seven chapters. In **Chapter 1**, I have set out the research rationale by providing the background and motivation for this study. I have also described the Saudi tertiary educational context; I have identified the challenges within the educational transformation programme for SV 2030; and ended the chapter with the contribution of the study. **Chapter 2** provides a review of the literature on the conceptual underpinnings of language teacher cognition, exploring the research on teachers' cognitions of feedback in L2 writing. The chapter also reviews the literature on assessment feedback, discusses the implications of the review, and presents the research questions for this study, as an outcome of the review. **Chapter 3** presents the methodology of the study. It also gives details on participant recruitment, sampling, research methods, data collection, analysis

procedures and ethical considerations. In **Chapter 4**, I analyse the data on the participants' cognitions and practices of assessment feedback through a language teacher cognition lens. The research findings are presented based on the sequence of the research questions. The findings represent the nature of the feedback processes (following assessment) taking place within one language programme at a Saudi university. **Chapter 5** provides a cross-case analysis and identifies the themes across the cases. **Chapter 6** provides a discussion of the findings' chapters, presents the themes linked to the research questions, and proposes a model for language teacher cognition of assessment feedback. **Chapter 7** concludes the study by providing the contributions, the implications of the research, recommendations for practice and future studies, the limitations, and my reflections on this research journey.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introducing language teacher cognition**

This chapter presents a review of the academic literature relating to language teacher cognition, and the literature relating to assessment feedback. Then, it discusses the relationship between language teachers' cognitions and assessment feedback practices. The chapter concludes with implications drawn from the literature review, stating the identified gap in knowledge, and presenting the research questions of the study.

The following section defines cognition from a language teacher perspective. This includes established concepts in teacher cognition research: knowledge, beliefs, and experiences (learning and practical) that influence teachers' cognitions.

### **2.2 Defining teacher cognition**

Being a globally used term, cognition is commonly used in the fields of medicine, education, and psychology. Speaking from this broad perspective, cognition is defined in the Oxford Dictionary of English (2018) as, "the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses". However, with specific reference to empirically grounded research on the practice of teaching, cognition entails certain attributes within the context of teaching and learning. As an accumulation of the research conducted in this domain, teacher cognition has been established as an umbrella term described by Borg (2003, p. 81) as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think". Much recently, there has been a shift of focus away from isolated conceptualisations of teachers' minds toward context (Kubanyiova and Feryok 2015). This has led to expanding the boundaries of research on teacher cognition and reaching a conclusion that emphasises the complexity of teacher cognition, particularly in the EFL context (Kubanyiova, 2012).

Before discussing the role of context in shaping teachers' cognitions, preliminary concepts that are well-established in teacher cognition research (Borg, 2019), are worthy of consideration in the discussion on cognition. In the following section, I

discuss the nature of knowledge and beliefs (respectively) and their relation to language teacher cognition.

### **2.2.1 The nature of 'knowledge'**

Understanding the knowledge base of teaching is essential in characterising a research-based conception of the skills of teaching (Shulman, 1986). Although teacher knowledge is strongly associated with teacher cognition research (Borg, 2006), different forms of knowledge have been recognised in this respect. For example, knowledge about facts, principles, and concepts in a discipline is recognised as content knowledge (Grossman et al., 1989) or subject matter knowledge (Carter, 1990). Links between different forms of knowledge have also been considered to form an understanding of the knowledge base of teaching. Relevant to forms of knowledge that teachers bring to their classroom, Shulman (1986) introduced the concept of strategic knowledge. Conversely, others (e.g. Anderson, 1983) have recognised the role of context in reference to teachers' knowledge about the curriculum, material, students, and available resources. This form of knowledge comes into play as the teacher confronts situations and adapts her teaching strategies according to situations (e.g. adult learners compared to much younger learners). Therefore, combining different forms of knowledge serves as a unifying concept in explaining the overarching knowledge base for teachers (Turner-Bisset, 2001).

Taking this further, Gatbonton (1999) described pedagogical knowledge as the accumulated knowledge about teaching (e.g. procedures, strategies) that serves as the basis for classroom behaviour. Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) was initially recognised as the type of knowledge that is the most central to successful teaching and more grounded in disciplines of formal education (Carter, 1990). However, MacEwan and Bull (1991) disagreed and argued that in variable ways all knowledge is pedagogic. Given that the role of context comes into play, it becomes evident that teachers transform subject matter competence into an adaptable form in their classroom based on their ability (Shulman, 1986). For example, Worden (2018) examined the experiences of a single novice L2 writing teacher engaged in teaching a previously unfamiliar pedagogical genre for the first time. It was found that the

participant's cognition of the genre developed over time because of the interactions that happened between PCK (i.e. collaborative reflection with the researcher), interactions with her learners, and the context. The study demonstrated that the academic disciplines were certainly one important source of her PCK, but they were not the only source. Building on the construct of PCK, Koehler and Mishra (2009) added technological knowledge to their framework in describing the necessity as well as the complexity in the interaction amongst three bodies of knowledge to suit the demands of modern-day classrooms: content, pedagogy, and technology. It was argued that the interaction of these bodies of knowledge, both theoretically and in practice, produces the types of flexible knowledge needed to successfully integrate technology use into teaching. This resulted in the emergence of an additional and timely component in pedagogy - Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge.

Since technology is used to deliver feedback in many educational settings these days, considering the importance of technology use and purpose in delivering feedback deserves attention when discussing teachers' cognitions. This suggests that teachers need support in linking their pedagogical knowledge, with technology and content, and within their classroom contexts (Koehler and Mishra, 2009) as they connect in their classroom decision-making processes. This also supports the notion that the core of the new knowledge base must focus on the activity of teaching, the teachers, the contexts, and the pedagogy by which it is done (Freeman and Johnson, 1998). For example, in many EFL, ESL, and EAP settings, it is not uncommon for teachers to have educational background qualifications in areas such as TESOL, English Literature and/or Linguistics, or even Technology-related specialties within Education. As each field comes with its disciplinary knowledge, teachers may struggle as they navigate the use of technology in their feedback delivery practice, for example. When teachers have not acquired the essential knowledge to put it to good and purposeful use, they may rely on something other than knowledge – mainly their beliefs, which is discussed in the next section.

### **2.2.2 The nature of 'beliefs'**

The term 'beliefs' has various connotations which may include personal and religious beliefs. In the educational domain, however, teachers' beliefs are defined as

attitudes and values about teaching, students, and the educational process (Pajares, 1992). Beliefs can take the form of subconsciously stored material resulting from incidents in one's awareness (Nespor, 1987). Moreover, teachers' beliefs can act as a filter through which new information and experiences are interpreted (Pajares, 1992). Given that beliefs are an unobservable cognitive aspect (Borg, 2003), they can be manifested through one's attitude. Calderhead (1988) described attitudes as involving behavioural changes. For example, becoming a teacher requires an individual to develop attitudes toward learners, towards teaching and learning, and an appreciation of one's relationship with the teaching role (Nias, 1989). As attitudes have been associated with beliefs, researchers have also used terms such as views, perceptions, or personal theories, when conducting studies on teachers' beliefs, depending on the purposes of their studies (e.g. Borg, 2001; Basturkmen et al., 2004). This not only serves in defining beliefs, but also brings attention to the impact that beliefs have on behaviour and ways of thinking.

The interest in teachers' beliefs is based on the widely held view that beliefs play a major role in determining teachers' pedagogical practices (Johnson, 1994; Borg, 2003, 2006; Farrell and Kun, 2008). Similarly, beliefs have been discussed in connection with other notions. Woods (1996) believed that knowledge and assumptions (along with beliefs) develop through experiences. Teachers' assumptions here are the result of internalising one's beliefs, which consequently inform teachers' decisions and behaviour (Woods, 1996). For example, when teachers do not have enough knowledge about assessment and feedback, they may rely on their beliefs in considering the purpose of their feedback. Thus, cognition development takes place when teachers are faced with challenges in their teaching and learning context. This suggests that teachers build up their beliefs over time, giving them a unique repertoire, such as the strategies and techniques they use for providing feedback.

The conceptualisation of teachers' minds as an 'individualistic' notion is based on earlier work in the field of language teacher cognition, which was influenced by research on teachers' decision making (Burns et al., 2015). With developments in cognitive psychology, researchers such as Kagan (1992), Pajares (1992), Lin et al. (1999) and Borg (2006) have recognised the importance of studying beliefs, not only

in terms of their influence on behaviours but also about teachers' professional development. When studying teachers' cognitions, beliefs have been recognised as a guide to an individual's thoughts and behaviour (Borg, 2006; Pajares, 1992). This means that beliefs serve as a filter through which teachers interpret their experiences, and which consequently impacts their thinking and information processing (Pajares, 1992). Thus, encouraging the practice of teacher self-awareness through professional development is key to how beliefs and practices relate (Borg and Sanchez, 2020).

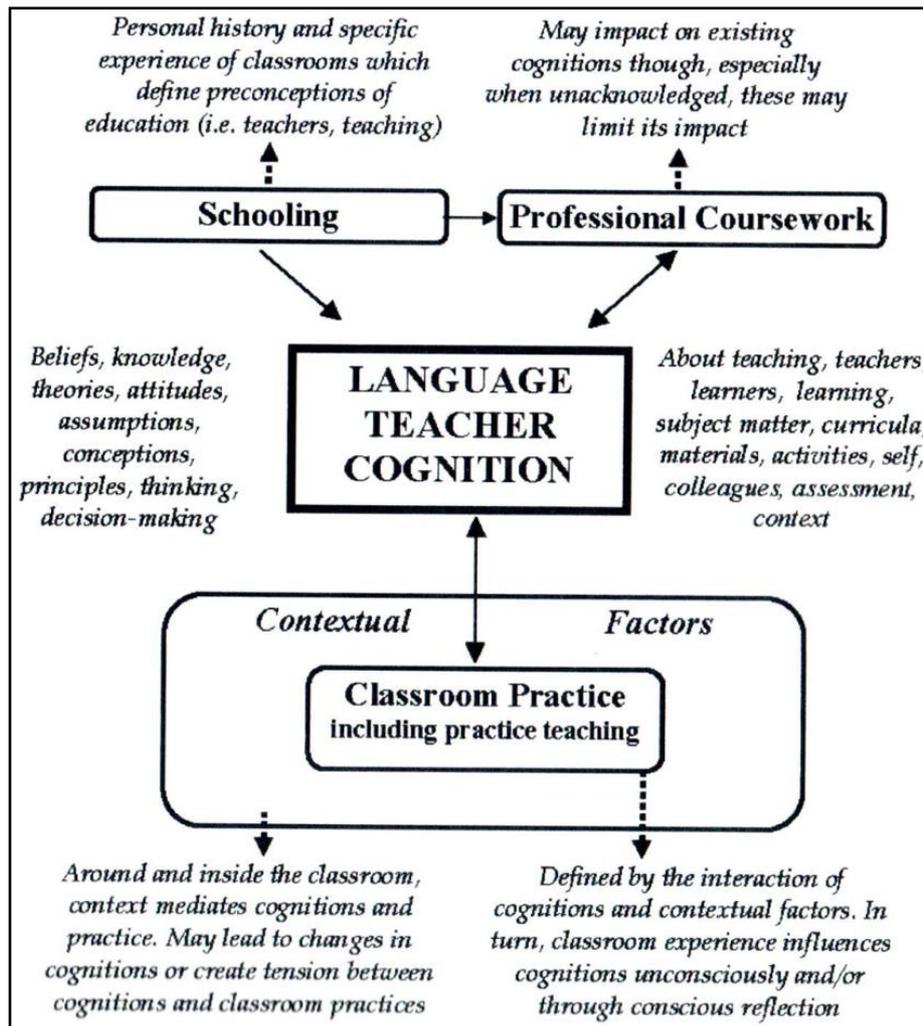
### **2.2.3 Knowledge, beliefs, and cognition**

Linking an elusive concept such as cognition to other chief concepts (i.e. knowledge, beliefs, attitude, and assumptions) has helped in unpacking the meaning of teacher cognition. The discussion on the inter-relationship between beliefs, assumptions, knowledge and decision making (Woods, 1996) explains how cognition is translated into classroom actions (discussed in section 2.2.2). Taking this discussion further, teachers' experiences (as a result of pedagogical-related thinking and decision-making processes) also play a role in forming networks between knowledge and beliefs, which may not be perceived distinctively in the minds of teachers (Borg, 2003; 2006). Based on the previous discussion of cognition, this study defines language teacher cognition as the learning and developmental experiences in assessment and feedback that teachers undergo in becoming language teachers, particularly in terms of how they facilitate and provide feedback on their learners' writing. In other words, teacher cognition in this study is described as the cumulation of their knowledge and beliefs (gained through learning and practical experiences as students, trainees, and in-service teachers) which informs their awareness and day-to-day classroom decision-making processes. This definition proposes that teachers' cognitions about assessment feedback are impacted by their previous experiences with feedback. This also brings attention to teachers' learning and practical experiences, which are discussed in the following section.

## **2.3 Experiences that influence language teacher cognition**

In defining cognition, a generic term has been recognised for informing teachers' cognitions – their experiences (Borg, 2003). From a language teacher cognition

perspective, personal educational history and the educational context in which teachers work also have an impact on their cognition. For example, in the process of facilitating and providing feedback to their learners, teachers' self-awareness about their own feedback experiences can influence their current practice. This highlights the role of learning and practical experience in shaping teachers' cognitions. Based on the literature on teacher cognition, Borg's (2006) model of language teacher cognition theory has identified the main educational resources that influence cognition. These resources include learning experiences that take place through schooling (school, college) and in their pre-service educational experiences (discussed in section 2.3.1), their in-service professional development experiences (discussed in section 2.3.2), their practical classroom teaching experiences (discussed in section 2.3.3) and their experiences within their context in their educational setting (discussed in section 2.3.4). The model is based on a schematic conceptualisation of teaching within which teacher cognition plays a pivotal role in teachers' lives (Borg, 2003). Bearing in mind the resources that influence teachers' cognitions and practices, the experience of receiving and providing feedback may also have an impact on teachers' cognitions (see Figure 2-1. Elements and processes in language teacher cognition).



**Figure 2-1. Borg's model (2006, p. 283) demonstrates elements and processes in language teacher cognition**

Figure 2-1 above outlines the relationships suggested by mainstream educational research between teacher cognition (Freeman, 1993,1996), teacher learning (through both schooling and professional education), and classroom practice (Borg, 2003). The following sections discuss the impact of each dimension on cognition.

### **2.3.1 Learning experiences: the impact of schooling on cognition**

In Borg's (2006) model shown in Figure 2-1, schooling is described in general in terms of the learning experiences that teachers undergo throughout their education before they enter the professional stage as novice teachers. As an initial step in formal education, mainstream schooling offers the basis for teachers' educational backgrounds. It was acknowledged that teachers' experiences as learners influence their initial thinking and development early in their careers (Borg, 2006). This implies

that teachers learn about teaching through their experience as learners, and by observing their teachers.

Schooling can be an initial learning experience for teachers also through college or pre-service training (about classroom structure and management). This is recognised as an educational resource that influences teachers' cognitions. As a result, teachers' prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning in general and language learning (Borg, 2006). Pre-service courses, however, may include specific pedagogical teaching and theories approaches that are integrated into learners' evaluation in the given course. Consequently, teachers' language learning experiences create cognitions about language learning, which are a resource base for their initial conceptualisations of L2 teaching during teacher education (Borg, 2003). Studies of practising teachers lend support to this view. For example, Johnson (1994) shed light on teachers' prior experiences and found that pre-service teachers' instructional decisions during a practicum were based on images they had of teachers, materials, activities, and classroom organisation. These were generated by their experiences from their formal language learning experiences as L2 learners themselves.

From a different perspective, Woods (1996) reports on a teacher whose beliefs about L2 learning were influenced by the fact that while years of formal instruction in French did not enable him to communicate in the language, six months in the company of French speakers developed his ability to finally do so. As a result, this teacher developed beliefs about the superiority of communicative techniques over grammar-based techniques for promoting L2 learning. This could be interpreted as the result of the feedback he had received from his colleagues during his communication in French., as familiarity with the linguistic development of language learners can support teachers in holding realistic expectations for students (Rogers, 1988). Also, it has been suggested that language teaching decisions can be better made when one understands language on a deeply personal level (Wilkins, 1972). As such, teacher education experiences may lead to establishing one's professional self-definition (Freeman and Johnson, 1998), as practitioners are encouraged to examine their own language learning experiences.

### **2.3.2 Professional coursework experiences: the impact of in-service training on cognition**

In the field of language teaching, Borg (2006) asserts that research on teacher cognition is supported by work in teacher education. This has discussed the notions of variable outcomes and individual developmental pathways, which are central to an understanding of the impact of teacher education on language teacher cognition (Borg, 2001). As identified in Figure 2-1, professional coursework (as a form of in-service teacher education) is an important resource that influences teachers' cognitions and their work. Though they still form part of teachers' cognitions, other studies (e.g. Cumming, 1989; Brown and McGannon, 1998) illustrate that teacher education programmes may not provide an appropriate or realistic understanding of teaching and learning. Conversely, researchers (e.g. Tsui, 2003) concluded that teacher education did impact trainees' beliefs and classroom practices, although the precise nature of this impact varies across studies and between different trainees. This suggests that teacher education can be impactful given that extensive considerations are made by stakeholders. For example, literature examining the processes and structure of cognitive development suggests that significant changes in trainees' awareness can take place during in-service teacher education.

Several studies were conducted on the impact of teacher development courses on teachers' cognitions and practice. In her study, Kubanyiova (2012), rigorously documented the case of eight teacher-learners (within their teaching environment) in search of the possible transformation of theory into practice. This intensive study not only capitalised on the way in which teachers' backgrounds greatly affected the trajectories of their learning, but also revealed that even though the workshop delivered in the study did not always lead to a conceptual change in teachers, it increased their awareness of certain aspects of classroom teaching (e.g. the need to create a healthier relationship with learners). Similarly, Baeshin (2016) examined the effect of workshops discussing the controversial topic of using the First Language (L1) in English language classrooms, on the beliefs and practices of seven female in-service teachers working at one Saudi university. Similar to other researchers in teacher cognition research (e.g. Borg, 2006; Kubanyiova, 2012) Baeshin (2016) argued that any change in teachers' beliefs and practices is highly individual, and is

coloured by multiple factors (e.g. background, education, experience, personality). Additionally, it was stated that the educational policy of the setting in which participants were employed presented further influences. In such a case, Lamb (1995) recommends that teachers should determine the areas of their teaching that they wish to develop, formulate their agenda for change in the classroom themselves based on an extended awareness of their practice. This suggests a significant need for collaboration between teachers, policymakers, and teacher trainers.

Having discussed the impact of schooling and professional coursework experience on language teacher cognition, the next section looks at the impact of teachers' practical experience on their cognition.

### **2.3.3 Classroom teaching experiences: the impact of classroom practice on cognition**

Classroom practice is defined by the interactions of teachers' cognitions and contextual factors (Borg, 2006). Over time, teachers' experiences in the classroom have been recognised to have a powerful influence on their cognition (Woods, 1996). As a result, teachers' practices can swing between the theories they adopt and their observations from their classroom practice (Malderez and Wedell, 2007). As identified in Figure 2-1, classroom practice is another resource that interacts with teachers' cognitions. Since the arrows point in both directions in Figure 2-1, this relationship works in reverse as well; classroom experiences can also influence cognition. Thus, it can be argued that throughout their careers, teachers' experience in providing feedback in the classroom also has an impact on their cognition.

Investigations into the change in an EFL teacher's approach to writing instruction were conducted by Tsui (1996) by introducing the process writing approach into her classroom. Despite the positive reactions of the teacher and the students, process-writing was problematic because students were writing fewer compositions than in other classes (process-writing was more time-consuming) and students were making more grammatical mistakes than before (this concerned the teacher because accuracy was important in the public examinations students would be sitting). Consequently, the teacher reverted to a product approach, although in time she eventually implemented a modified version of process writing which was not as time-

consuming as the one she had first tried to implement. This illustrates changes in cognition over time as a result of developing experience in classroom practice. It also brings attention to specific features in an educational context (prioritisation of accuracy in writing) as having an impact on cognition as well. This shows that language teachers' classroom practices are shaped by a wide range of interacting and conflicting factors (Borg, 2003). More importantly, being reflective practitioners by nature, many teachers seek ways to adapt and develop their cognition to meet the demands of the evolving context, argue Malderez and Wedell (2007).

#### **2.3.4 In-service experiences: the impact of contextual factors on teachers' cognitions**

As indicated in Figure 2-1, one of the main influences on cognition is the teaching and learning context (Borg, 2006). Tsui (2003) emphasised that the knowledge and skills that teachers develop are linked to the specific contexts in which they work and to their personal histories. As a result, situational factors in an educational context have an impact on teachers' practices (Woods, 1996). These include student-related factors (e.g. student numbers in a class, class dynamics), teacher-related factors (e.g. recent conversations with other teachers), and resources (e.g. teaching material, availability of photocopying, their supervisors, and mentors). Examples of contextual factors also include a lack of time to provide individual feedback, limited teaching and learning resources, and learners' language ability.

A study by Jonglai et al. (2021) found that teachers engage with existing assessment practices due to the way that training is carried out in their context. For example, it was noted that English language teachers in a primary school in eastern Malaysia, understood that formative assessment was all about teachers improving their lessons to motivate learners in learning the English language. However, contextual factors affected their implementation process, and their practices deviated to some extent from the underlying principles and objectives of the policy reform on assessment. This suggests that contextual factors can influence teachers' assessment and feedback practices as they respond to the situations in their context. The importance of studying teachers' existing beliefs about assessment and the contextual factors, could serve as a potential guide for developing in-service

teacher education programmes and enable teacher educators to anticipate teachers' diverse responses to professional course work and training, and ways of overcoming situational factors in their educational context.

It can be concluded that contextual factors are an important consideration in the study of teacher cognition. What teachers do cannot be perceived with reference only to their knowledge and beliefs. Rather, teacher cognition is intertwined with what teachers acquire in their contextual learning and practical experiences, which in turn impacts their cognitions (Borg, 2019). The next section provides a synthesis of studies on teachers' self-reported feedback practices within their context, representing teachers' struggles with assessment feedback across a range of settings.

#### **2.4 Teachers' reporting of their feedback practices: teachers' self-reported feedback strategies**

In addressing claims about the controversy surrounding Written Corrective Feedback (WCF), Bitchener and Ferris (2011) assert that empirical investigation is a valid attempt in resolving various issues regarding the treatment of learners' errors. They also state that such investigations have been growing over the years and are beginning to overturn earlier controversies about the efficacy of corrective feedback for L2 learning, both oral and written. Despite an abundance of research on WCF in L2 writing, answers to fundamental questions of whether and to what extent various types of corrective feedback can promote accuracy remain inconclusive (Liu and Brown, 2015). Considerations over the design (e.g. validity), execution, and reporting practices of empirical studies have further emphasized that such inquiries must be planned in a way that is appropriate to the questions being investigated and/or explored. When this is not the case, critique and debate are likely to arise when interpretations of data and findings are offered.

The role of WCF in L2 development continues to be an area of ongoing inquiry and remains an engaging topic for both established and emerging scholars (Bitchener and Ferris, 2011). While cognitive processing conditions have been considered in the examination of feedback effectiveness, context-related factors, and individual learner factors have been hypothesised in facilitating or impeding the effectiveness

of WCF for L2 development (Bitchener and Storch, 2016). As a result, we find considerations for studies addressing corrective feedback that have been situated within a cognitive framework, along with other views, advocating a socio-cultural perspective on feedback (e.g. Carless and Winstone, 2020) where knowledge and understanding can be co-constructed by the teacher and the students (to be discussed in sections 2.5.1.3, 2.5.1.4 and 2.5.1.5 of this chapter).

As mentioned earlier, studies of teachers' beliefs about feedback in L2 writing have been explored and investigated in numerous contexts. EFL lecturers' self-reported feedback strategies on students' written compositions were investigated by Wei and Cao (2020). A total of 254 respondents completed the survey questionnaire across universities in Thailand, China, and Vietnam. This study revealed the tension that teachers noted, regarding their cognition about feedback provision and their self-reported feedback strategy use. For example, most teachers in their open-ended responses admitted that they understood from professional training that indirect feedback strategies (e.g. using prompts and error codes) can be more beneficial for learners in the long term. However, this cognitive change did not result in any self-reported behavioural change in terms of providing feedback to students. The authors note that this was due to various contextual and cultural factors (as perceived by the teachers). Student-related factors were the most frequently mentioned influences, which included: learners' lack of ability in understanding their teacher's comments and metalinguistic cues; limited resources for students to study, concerning their errors; concern about students' low language proficiency; learners' low motivation in engaging with feedback; and their misunderstanding of error codes.

To understand feedback from both the teachers' and learners' perspectives, participants' attitudes toward WCF were investigated by Hamouda (2011). The study aimed at looking into feedback preference strategies and identifying the difficulties encountered by both teachers and students during the feedback process at one Saudi university. Although the findings revealed that both teachers and students had positive attitudes towards WCF, students preferred teacher correction to peer and self-correction. This could be interpreted due to a cultural understanding of feedback that considers the teacher as the expert (or the only acceptable) source of feedback, given that the teacher is the highest authority figure in the classroom. This

exemplifies how both teaching professionals and learners in educational settings perceive 'expertise' in feedback processes. For example, teaching practices in KSA have been recognised as primarily traditional, teacher-centred, that they do not include learner autonomy (Alrabai, 2017). Even learners have been found to have negative perspectives of learner autonomy (Asiri and Shukri, 2020). A study at one Saudi PYP found that teachers were less positive about the possibility of promoting learner autonomy in their context and cited reasons concerning curricula, society, and mostly learner factors including lack of motivation, independence, and low English proficiency (Borg and Alshumaimeri, 2019). These examples demonstrate that peer assessment, self-assessment, and learner autonomy are under-practised in Saudi state schools and universities.

In similar EFL contexts (such as in China) Zhao (2014) argued that teachers would be discouraged to carry out peer assessment and peer feedback in settings where there are large class sizes, administrative constraints, and an exam-driven culture of learning. An example from such a context includes a study that revealed tutors' limited knowledge of peer assessment and unanimous hesitation in using it (Zhao, 2018). The former was explained by insufficient instruction and training in peer assessment, while the latter relates to the incompatibility of peer assessment with an examination-oriented education system, learners' low English language proficiency and learning motivation, and the conflict of peer assessment with the entrenched teacher-driven learning culture. In KSA, Hariri and Bahanshal (2015) record similarities in the EFL educational culture, its challenges, and issues of learner motivation, particularly where learners' language proficiency is often very low. These studies recognised concerns about learners' language learning experiences and teachers' perceptions of assessment in high-stakes educational settings.

Studies that were conducted on EFL pedagogy and assessment in several Saudi universities found similarities among professionals in conceptualising feedback. For example, Almoossa (2017) found that the concept of feedback was associated with positive and negative comments, and it centred on encouraging and praising students for giving the correct answers. In a similar study context, it was noted that feedback was not given to everyone (e.g. it was selective, dependent on students' situation) and was most frequently generic (Al-Khatib, 2015). Participants in both

studies were aware that they were in a challenging situation, and they wanted to enhance students' learning through their written feedback comments, but the need to conform to the formal instructional and assessment requirements left teachers feeling unable to voice their pedagogical concerns.

Even in a context where commitment to academic excellence is highly valued, similar struggles were reported by teaching staff, in their delivery of timely and useful feedback. In pedagogical research in British HE, the lived experience and beliefs of teaching staff remain under-explored and under-represented. Cognitions of the role of WCF in teaching and learning were researched by Bailey and Garner (2010) concerning the lived experiences with writing assessment feedback. Using an interviews method, the authors attempted to provide a deeper understanding of the views and beliefs of teaching staff about written feedback, from a cross-section of disciplinary backgrounds in one institutional context. It was found in the study that the participating teachers had varied cognitions about the purposes of written feedback, such as uncertainty over what it achieves and what students learn from it. The authors noted that the respondents typically gave unsupported and generalised accounts based on students' reactions. In practice, teachers admitted to adapting to the conflicting demands on feedback, but they adapt in different ways. Some respondents indicated their frustration at the lack of ownership in their writing of feedback comments, and others mentioned adjusting their language to meet individual student needs while avoiding the limitations of official standards and norms. The study emphasised the contribution qualitative research can create in filling that gap and supporting the view that much research across HE into diverse aspects of the teacher experience is required.

It can be concluded that the reality of the constraints that teachers perceive in their educational roles in assessment and feedback may lead to dissatisfaction in their feedback practice. The literature suggests that language teacher cognition research can be further developed to not only improve the quality of teaching but also to sustain lifelong learning skills for learners. In the next section, I will critically discuss concepts linking to feedback with assessment and synthesise the studies that address the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their actual practice.

## **2.5 The relationship between teachers' cognitions and their assessment feedback practices**

To identify the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their assessment feedback practices, concepts relating to **assessment** and **feedback** are discussed (sections 2.5.1.1 and 2.5.1.2), including the **shift in the feedback paradigm** and the **assessment feedback framework** (sections 2.5.1.3 and 2.5.1.4). The discussion leads to presenting a **definition of feedback** for the purpose of this study (section 2.5.1.5). Then, I synthesise the studies that address the relationship between teachers' cognitions and assessment feedback practice in section 2.5.2 and present the implications of the literature review for this study (section 2.6).

### **2.5.1 Introducing assessment feedback**

The literature on assessment feedback describes the nature of the relationship between assessment and feedback (Winstone, 2017). It also discusses how assessment feedback impacts both teachers and learners. Assessment feedback is defined as feedback exchanges that are generated within an assessment design (Evans, 2018). Thus, feedback can be seen as a process where the learner makes sense of performance-related information to promote their learning (Henderson et al., 2019). This can be done by developing learners' understanding and evaluation of quality work (Molly et al., 2019; Carless and Boud, 2018). Since assessment is seen as one way of improving students' learning, this eventually makes assessment feedback integral and meaningful to the assessment process (Winstone and Boud, 2020). Thus, using the label 'assessment feedback' adds a generic element to the feedback that follows assessment. The next section looks at different types of assessment and how they influence feedback.

#### **2.5.1.1 Different forms of assessment: the overlap between summative and formative assessment**

As different forms of assessment are used in measuring students' learning, Summative Assessment (SA) is recognised for measuring products of learning, while Formative Assessment (FA) measures abilities in the learning process (Harmer, 2014). Black and Wiliam (1998, p. 7-8) defined FA as: "encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information

to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged". Shepard et al. (2005) defined FA as an assessment carried out during the instructional process to improve teaching and learning. Formative assessment is a recognised practice in teaching and learning. It is also an assessment instrument or tool through which instruction might be improved, shaped, and structured to be aligned with the LOs.

When it comes to assessing learners' achievement, feedback can be provided either in formative or summative terms. It should be noted, however, that SA may still serve formative purposes. William (2011) notes when assessment is followed by feedback that can elevate learners' actual performance to their desired level of performance, it becomes formative. For example, when teachers provide feedback early in the course, it becomes the main source of formative feedback. Feedback that is provided on classroom-based tasks is also designed to help students learn from their activities and identify what needs to be done to improve their knowledge (Irons, 2008). They do this by knowing the strengths and weaknesses of their performance (Sadler, 1989). Woods (1987, cited in Torrance and Pryor 1998) says that FA should identify the level that a learner is ready to take as the next challenge, based on what they can do, given that they receive feedback. Since assessment includes feedback (in most cases), the primary function of feedback is to influence students' future work and learning strategies (Winstone and Boud, 2020). This suggests that feedback should guide learners on how to improve. It also proposes that each learner must be given support and an opportunity to improve or confirm their performance status. Therefore, the overlapping functions of FA and SA can play a consequential role in framing the feedback that takes place afterwards, providing room for alternative notions, and involving both feedback and assessment.

#### **2.5.1.2 Reconceptualising feedback in terms of effect, impact, and timeliness**

In being an essential part of the language learning experience, feedback has been acknowledged as a potential tool for educational development (Agius and Wilkinson, 2014; Evans, 2013). One of the commonly used definitions of feedback in an educational context was provided by Hattie and Timperley (2007) as: "information provided by an agent (e.g. teacher, peer) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding", (p. 81), thus presenting it as the most powerful means of enhancing

student learning. Indeed, feedback is considered both essential and critical for students' learning (Evans, 2013). While this definition considers feedback as a 'product', more recent conceptions of feedback see it as a 'process' (e.g. Carless and Boud, 2018). This suggests that feedback is carried out through a process of negotiating meaning, with the active participation of the learners. Therefore, feedback needs to focus less on providing information and more on guidance on understanding the expected quality of work and making judgements (Sadler, 2010).

In terms of effect, feedback that is described as both constructive and useful may contribute to learners' writing development. Wiliam (2011) argued that feedback is mainly considered helpful if it describes to the learner what needs to be done to close the gap between the actual state revealed by the feedback and the desired state and reference levels of performance (i.e. expected standards). Based on their research, Black and Wiliam (1998) argued that feedback has been shown to improve learning when it gives learners specific guidance on their strengths and weaknesses. They suggest using interaction during feedback through questioning and deep thinking. This process includes activities that allow learners to learn from shared discussions with teachers and their peers.

For feedback to be interpreted by the recipient in at least roughly the way the assessor intended, they must share a set of cognitive-rhetorical schemata about quality academic writing, the assignment task at hand and the purpose of the feedback (Boud and Molloy, 2013; Sadler, 2013). This means that action on feedback is developed through dialogue and co-construction, based on a positive relationship between the teacher and learner; it sets a tone for negotiation (Carless, 2019). For example, an investigation was carried out by Green (2019) to examine the way a postgraduate student on an MA TESOL programme constructed summative and formative messages from the written feedback on her assignments. Although the participant was able to construct appropriate messages about aspects of her written expression (e.g. lexical choice), she showed a limited ability to construct summative or formative messages from the feedback given on an argument or analysis, or task achievement. Green highlighted the importance of making the formative messages explicit in an assessment, suggesting the need to perceive feedback as dialogue. Sadler (1989) further explains that the learner must

take action to close gaps in learning and that any dialogue should evoke thoughtful reflection in the learner. To address the feedback gap, it has been noted that students must clarify their understanding of feedback and ascertain where the problem lies. For example, the errors could be related to lack of knowledge, lack of preparation or misunderstanding of the course requirements (Sadler, 2010, cited in Evans, 2018), as feedback is often interpreted at the personal level rather than at the task level (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996). This suggests that one of the challenges in academic literacies is learning to conceptualise feedback as more than written comments. The emphasis of feedback should thus be on supporting learners to drive feedback for themselves.

When feedback is reported as developmental, supportive, and timely, it can be immensely powerful for improving achievement (Brown et al., 1997). However, for feedback to have an impact on learning, it is suggested that it should come at a time when it can inform learners' understanding and 'future behaviour' (Winstone and Carless, 2019, p. 61). This brings attention to the timing of feedback delivery, which could serve formative functions. Research conducted on essay writing (e.g. Hartley and Chesworth 2000) suggest that if feedback occurs at a late stage in a course, it loses its timely aspect, which may lead to student dissatisfaction and missed opportunities for learning. For example, once students receive feedback, they should be given time to work with it; this makes timing critical to the development of students to move forward in their learning. Feedback given at the end of the course will not present the same opportunities for development. Thus, ensuring the delivery of feedback before the next task is essential to the quality and 'timeliness' of teachers' feedback.

Despite claims about the importance of feedback in producing positive student learning effects (Black and William 1998; Carless et al. 2011), there are concerns regarding the perceived lack of impact of feedback on learners' achievement (Evans, 2013; Evans, 2019). This brings further attention to the purpose of assessment and feedback, and how teachers make use of them. In other words, feedback is about making an impact. Rudestam and Newton (2007) suggest that this concerns the intended impact of an assessment system, which is to ensure learners remain motivated and learn a common core for each subject. Though assessment includes

feedback in most cases, the primary function of feedback is to influence students' future work and learning strategies (Winstone and Boud, 2020). Teachers' understanding of feedback also has an element of assessment – such as awarding a grade – or it is viewed as a means of informing their teaching and students' learning. Again, this is about teachers' understanding of the purpose of assessment and the implications it has for potential research on teachers' cognitions of assessment and feedback.

### **2.5.1.3 The new feedback paradigm**

The conceptual framework underlying the purpose of feedback has been developed in recent years. As opposed to the previous conception of feedback as information transmission, the new feedback paradigm, proposed by Winstone and Carless (2019), views the feedback process as a 'partnership'. This reflects a broader shift in which feedback has become conceptualised not as a simple transmission of information from teacher to student, but rather as 'transformational' – a dialogue between the teacher and student(s). The key aim of assessment feedback should be to support students to become more self-regulatory in managing their learning as part of a sustainable assessment practice (Evans, 2018). Accordingly, the notion of feedback is repositioned, not as an act of information given to students, but rather as a 'co-production' process in which both teachers and students have key roles to play. The concept of students as 'partners' in feedback processes provides support for reframing feedback processes as a partnership between teachers and students (Carless, 2019). For example, learners could have increased opportunities to suggest their preferred feedback types, feedback modes, and feedback timing. Also, learners could play a greater role in eliciting feedback through requests on issues which they perceive as valuable (Barton et al. 2016; Winstone and Carless, 2019).

It has been recognised that one of the most highly endorsed assessment practices includes giving feedback, linking assessments to the learning objectives and outcomes, using marking guides, and monitoring and revising assessment methods (e.g. Vogt and Tsagari, 2014; Almoossa and Alzahrani, 2022). Considering the processes in which feedback takes place, Carless et al. (2011) note that dialogic feedback can inform students about the current task, whilst developing their ability to

self-regulate their performance in future tasks. Thus, the emphasis on feedback becomes about realising the importance of supporting learners to drive feedback for themselves (Winstone and Boud, 2020). This is based on the idea that learning cannot be sustainable in any sense if it requires continuing information from teachers about the students' work, argue Boud and Molloy (2013). As a result, the focus of feedback has shifted to developing learners' attributes, such as their evaluative judgement and self-efficacy (Price et al., 2011; Boud 2015; Tai et al., 2018; Molloy et al., 2020). This suggests that feedback should be bound to long-term outcomes, such as developing learners' capacity for self-evaluation in practice through taking action and, therefore, enhancing learning. As a result, it is proposed in the new feedback paradigm that students need to be more 'active' and involved in the learning process.

Though feedback is being recognised here as a 'learner-centred' process, the main source of feedback comments is primarily the teacher (Bearman et al., 2016). Taking into consideration the new feedback paradigm is important because it recognises a key teacher role – that of designing feedback processes that facilitate student participation (e.g. peer interaction). Furthermore, seeking a framework (that takes into consideration the new feedback paradigm) could serve in transforming assessment practice in HE. This suggests a need for organisations to conceptualise feedback as a 'sustainable' practice within assessment, which is discussed in the next section.

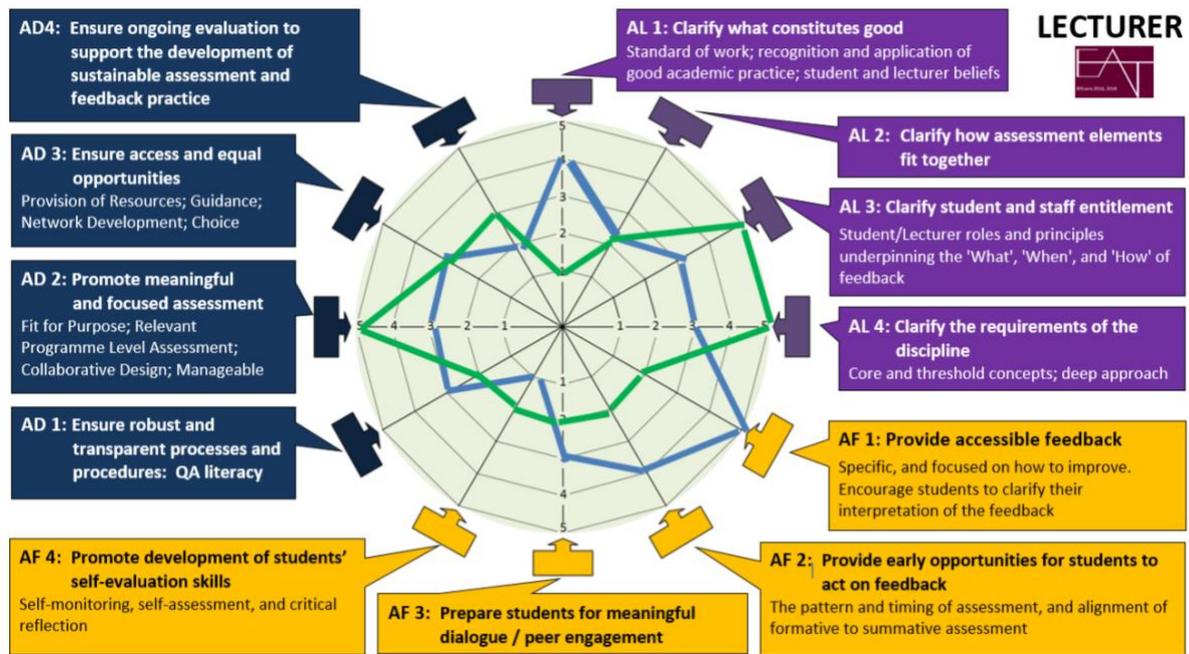
#### **2.5.1.4 Evans' Assessment Tool: the conceptual feedback model**

A framework for transforming assessment in HE is proposed through Evans' Assessment Tool (EAT) (see Figure 2-2). Prior to developing the EAT framework, Evans (2011) developed a conceptual model of feedback that focuses on individual development from both the student and lecturer perspectives. The model acknowledged the sources of feedback exchange between the teacher and learner, as well as the mediating sources of feedback (e.g. peers, self, internet). However, the developed framework employs a research-informed holistic approach to analysing and designing sustainable feedback processes (Evans, 2016). Being mindful of the need for high-quality research-informed pedagogy, and the importance

of sustainability from the student and staff perspectives, Evans evolved the framework from extensive research on assessment feedback within HE institutions. The framework has been suggested as a guide for teachers and programme leaders to promote effective assessment practice. The framework also considers feedback as a social practice (Evans and Waring, 2011; Nicol, 2013), and takes the perspective that shared and individual interpretations are developed through the process of discussion, sense-making and co-construction between participants (Price et al., 2011). This approach involves using multiple sources in the feedback processes.

Within the conceptual feedback model, Evans (2013) suggests that teachers and students should collaborate in their learning environments and that teachers play a key role in facilitating students' feedback literacy (Winstone and Carless, 2020). Such an approach involves developing the learners' understanding, capacities, and dispositions to make sense of information and use it to enhance work or learning strategies (Carless and Boud, 2018). This re-conception of feedback requires good feedback practices to be demonstrated to teachers. More importantly, it requires teachers to engage in open communication about their beliefs and in challenging their beliefs.

The guidelines provided by Evans (2016) in EAT support sustainable assessment feedback practices. Within the EAT framework, the guidelines concerning Assessment Feedback (AF) are useful in this study because it contains elements that align with the educational objectives within SV 2030 regarding the integration of critical thinking skills. For example, four recommendations are identified within the assessment framework guidelines for using EAT: AF 1 providing accessible feedback (i.e. emphasis on how to improve); AF 2 providing early opportunities for students to act on feedback so that it can serve formative purposes (i.e. allowing sufficient time to use feedback to enhance work); AF 3 preparing students for meaningful dialogue and peer engagement; and AF 4 promoting the development of students' self-evaluation (e.g. self-monitoring and self-assessment) and critical reflection skills. In the process of exploring teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback, it is particularly useful to employ the four AF guidelines used in the EAT framework (see Figure 2-2 Evans' Assessment Tool (2016)).



**Figure 2-2. Evans' Assessment Tool (2016)**

The discussion concerning good assessment feedback practice has served in linking the role of organisation leaders, teachers, learners, and professional training. In considering different stakeholders that are involved in feedback processes, the literature relevant to assessment and feedback has served in identifying, adopting, and adapting a definition that serves the purpose of this research. Based on critical consideration of the perspectives presented in this review, the definition of feedback for this study is discussed in the next section.

### 2.5.1.5 Definition of feedback for this study

Recent notions of feedback have been discussed in sections 2.5.5.1 and 2.5.5.2. As a result, aspects of the social nature of feedback were considered in defining the term 'feedback' for this study, as well as considerations of learners' development in the earlier stages of their L2 writing. Thus, recent notions of feedback have been considered for this study, as the exploration takes on teachers' cognitions. As mentioned previously, Carless and Boud (2018, pp.1315-1316) define feedback as:

a transformational process through which learners make sense of information from various sources and use it to enhance their work or learning strategies.

Information may come from different sources (e.g. peers, teachers, friends, family members, or the CBT) to support student self-evaluation of progress.

This definition goes beyond the notion that feedback is principally about teachers informing students about strengths and weaknesses. Firstly, it better aligns with the new feedback paradigm underpinned by a social constructivist approach, suggested by Winstone and Carless (2020), and it echoes Evans' conceptual framework (2013; 2016). Secondly, some of the identified strategies follow the key strategies of FA, which considers the individuals involved in this process: the teacher, learner, and peer(s) (Leahy et al., 2005, cited in Wiliam, 2011, p. 46; Carless and Boud, 2018). Thirdly, the transformational aspect is part of the feedback process and draws attention to certain aspects of learners' written outputs that need improvement in support of their future written work.

Accordingly, the definition provided by Carless and Boud (2018) has been taken and adapted for this study. Having multiple sources involved in feedback processes is at the heart of this conceptualisation of feedback, as well as the role of learners in the self-regulation of future work. This study, however, focuses on how teachers facilitate feedback (e.g. pair work) and provide feedback (e.g. verbal/written dialogue) both within and beyond the classroom (e.g. online). This study also explores teachers' cognitions and practices of L2 writing assessment feedback, and the feedback interactions that are generated within the assessment design of the ELP (Evans, 2013). This is based on their role as key providers of their learners' development in L2 writing. Learners' outputs here include sentence building and linking sentences, in terms of content, grammar and mechanics. In adapting the definition of feedback provided by Carless and Boud's (2018) and Evans' (2013) assessment feedback model (discussed in section 2.5.1.4), feedback in this study is, therefore, defined as:

A process of information transformation following classroom-based assessment, coming from various sources (e.g. teacher, peers, self), that serves in informing learners about their knowledge gap in sentence building to improve the quality of their L2 writing.

This study aims to explore language teachers' feedback provision on classroom-based assessment and assessment-related tasks (i.e. Blackboard writing tasks, the mid-module assessment). The definition above describes feedback as both a complex and interactive process that follows assessment, taking place in feedback follow-up sessions during lessons. The sought-out purpose of feedback would be to reduce the performance gap for learners by helping them move from their actual performance and reach a better performance in writing. This form of assessment allows teachers to give timely feedback to their learners, enhance learners' writing performance, and reach the targeted goals and expected LOs for writing. For example, the mid-module writing assessment, which is administered in week three of the module, can be considered both formative and summative, depending on how the teachers and learners react and engage with this assessment. For the mid-module to have formative features, it must be used to improve instruction. As such, in providing effective feedback sessions and demonstrating exemplars of quality work from the onset of the course, students could be offered an opportunity to produce improved work by the end of the course module.

In explaining the 'process' feature in the provided definition of feedback in this study, feedback is situated between social practices (involving participants), contextual constraints (institutional restrictions) and individual capacity (cognition). This conception takes feedback beyond grade justification and focuses on measurement purposes. For example, Winstone and Boud (2020) propose repositioning feedback as more than an afterthought, so that it has a meaningful purpose of providing information that helps students to further develop their level of performance (in this case in writing). This means that feedback is not just something that happens alongside assessment. In other words, feedback is about making an impact. Nevertheless, the relationship between how and why teachers carry out assessment feedback in the way they do is not always straightforward. The following section discusses scholarly evidence on tensions between cognition and practice.

### **2.5.2 Literature studies on the relationship between teachers' cognitions and feedback practices**

Research on teachers' actual classroom practices reveals tensions between stated beliefs and classroom behaviour, meaning that teachers' beliefs are not always reflected in their teaching (Borg, 2006; Richards, 1996; Ferris, 2014). For example, Li and Walsh (2011) explored the pedagogical beliefs and classroom interactions of two secondary school EFL teachers (one novice and one experienced) in the People's Republic of China by analysing interview data and then by looking at interactions with students. It was found that the relationship between stated beliefs and enacted beliefs is complex and defined by contextual factors, which coincides with other teacher cognition research. Borg (2003) explained that the relationship between cognition and practice is non-linear, due to mediating influences within the educational context. Furthermore, any mismatch between cognition and practices should not be a focus of criticism, as they present an opportunity for teacher education researchers to explore teachers' cognitions, teaching, and teaching contexts in much depth (Borg, 2006). Suggestions were made on the need to look more thoroughly at the relationship between stated beliefs and decisions made while teaching. Thus, studying classroom feedback interactions could serve in gaining an in-depth understanding of teaching and learning.

Several studies have investigated both oral and written forms of corrective feedback, respectively, in search of (in)congruences between beliefs and practice. In her study, Alkhatib (2015) investigated the cognitions and practices of teachers on writing at a Saudi university. It was found that teachers' cognitions were greatly congruent with their practices regarding the amount and focus of WCF. Conversely, incongruency was noted concerning the explicitness of WCF. Despite the teachers' agreement on the usefulness of the direct approach, teachers' beliefs regarding the explicitness of WCF varied depending on learners' level and on the type of errors (e.g. frequent - serious). Incongruence was mostly attributed (by the teacher participants) to constraints imposed by institutional contexts, such as the pressure of an exam and school policies that highly value error feedback. Teacher-related factors included previous learning and teaching experiences, a lack of training, and a lack of subject-specific knowledge. Student-related factors included proficiency level, class size, and attitude. The author also mentioned that most teachers and students prioritised

teacher over non-teacher WCF, suggesting that peer feedback is rarely implemented in an L2 writing context, and thus highlighting the need for training teachers to experiment with a wider range of feedback techniques.

In another EFL tertiary setting in Turkey, Yuksel et al. (2021) examined teachers' beliefs and practices of in-class oral corrective feedback revealing cases of incongruence between what they said they believed and what they did. The authors also discussed the contextual factors that played a role in the actual classroom practices of teachers. These contextual factors, as stated by teachers, comprised the dynamics of the discussion (e.g. the topic generated a lively discussion, so they did not want to interrupt with error correction); the characteristics of the learners (e.g. not providing feedback because they waited for the learner to self-repair, or they explicitly corrected a student because they were behind and needed more help); classroom management (e.g. students lost their focus and were talking off-topic, so they provided explicit correction); and the type of activity (e.g. providing feedback on certain activities was necessary). The authors revealed that when the participants were asked whether they wanted to change their general stance on corrective feedback, the teachers almost always believed that their actions were appropriate in their specific contexts.

From a learner-related perspective, the impact of student-related factors on teachers' cognitions was investigated by Lei and Pramoolsook (2020) to examine the beliefs and practices of EFL teachers' written feedback strategies on undergraduate English majors' thesis drafts. The interviews and text analysis results of the written feedback strategies (used in six sets) showed mismatches between stated and actual written feedback strategies both in general and in different draft stages. In practice, teachers provided written feedback more indirectly for the first and second drafts, and more directly for the third draft. While they stated that they preferred to employ just one strategy, they tended to use both direct and indirect feedback strategies in practice. This showed that teachers employed their favourite strategies, but they also considered student-related factors (proficiency level) while giving feedback on their students' theses. It was suggested to explore both the social and student-related factors that may exert influence on teachers' feedback practices.

Junqueira and Payant (2015) also found a mismatch in studying the beliefs and feedback practices of a novice L2 teacher over one academic semester. The teacher participant stated that she believed in providing feedback on global concerns and, to a lesser extent, on local issues and in offering explanations for instances of WCF. However, her actual practices revealed some mismatches, such as local WCF significantly outnumbering global WCF. The participant provided extensive direct feedback, and her comments were primarily on local issues (e.g. breaking down the grammar), going against her belief that the focus of teacher feedback should be on organisation and content. Unlike the impact of contextual factors mentioned in Alkhatib's (2015) study, this teacher's beliefs included the need for feedback to be contextualised through hands-on practice when responding to actual student writing. The novice teacher (in Junqueira and Payant's (2015) study) found feedback to be time-consuming due to the number of hours required for the process of writing explanations on students' essays. Although she demonstrated a high level of reflectivity during the interviews and in her journal entries, she struggled over the amount and type of feedback to give, as well as issues of fairness in grading students' papers. The data revealed that the majority of her WCF involved no explanation, which could have been a subconscious or intuitive strategy employed to deal with the time pressure she experienced throughout the semester.

One of the main tensions that have emerged in studies on teachers' reflections on their feedback practices (e.g. Alkhatib, 2015; Cumming, 1990; Ferris, 2014) was the issue of time in delivering detailed feedback. Hyland and Hyland (2006) argued that providing written feedback on learners' writing is one of the most common pedagogical practices that help learners develop their L2 writing skills and grammatical accuracy. However, written feedback on its own is not always effective. The emphasis here is on the ability of the teacher to provide the learner with comments they can understand and use to improve. For example, if teachers' written feedback includes vague comments or inconsistent marking of errors, it may negatively affect the learners' writing abilities, making them frustrated, passive and confused, adds Williams (2003).

A study conducted by Orrell (2007) described the relationship between cognition and practice in terms of assessment feedback as 'dynamic'. The participants believed

that one of the most valuable purposes of assessment was to give students feedback on their achievements. At the end of the assessment process, it was common practice for assessors to provide a summary explanation, in writing, for the grade assigned. The assessors defined feedback as giving students an insight into the appropriateness of their written product and their efforts to produce it, facilitating student self-evaluation and improvement, and encouraging them to engage in a co-learning discussion of the actual ideas expressed in the writing. However, the actual feedback given was defensive and summative in orientation, rather than facilitating learning. It was noted that the formative teaching function was lacking because the students were not required to act on the written comments. Therefore, academics gave no guidance on how the work might be improved. Orrell concluded that the possibility of using the feedback to contribute to students' learning and their development of autonomous learning was optional and left to chance.

These studies are examples of beliefs and practice mismatches in EFL settings. The research has presented a concurrent mismatch between beliefs and practices, and this has revealed implications that include opportunities worthy of exploration in a new setting to understand teacher cognition. The aim of this project is to examine teachers' cognitions and practices in relation to assessment feedback. The next section of the report is a review of the literature related to teacher cognition and language assessment literacy, as both aspects are relevant to this project.

### **2.5.3 The relationship between teachers' cognitions, feedback, and assessment literacy**

The driving force for the need to understand teachers' cognitions in relation to assessment is due to several reasons. First, teachers are required to engage in a large range of assessment-related activities. For example, teachers prepare students for both local and internationally recognised examinations such as the IELTS. Second, English language testing is increasingly used for migration purposes and in assessing skilled immigration eligibility (Fulcher, 2012). The increasing social and political demand for and use of assessment data by different stakeholders has led to concerns in the field of EFL/ESL education. At the forefront of this development, teachers are expected to engage with L2 assessment. Since teachers are compelled to undertake context-specific assessment tasks, this makes their role in language

education and language assessment courses even more important. This increasing focus has inevitably signified the knowledge base that language assessors need to obtain to keep up with the increasing demand, adds Inbar-Lourie (2008).

In the field of language education, language assessment literacy has been defined by Vogt and Tsagari (2014, p. 377) as the ability of language teachers, “to design, develop, and critically evaluate tests and other assessment procedures, as well as the ability to monitor, evaluate, grade, and score assessments on the basis of theoretical knowledge”. A number of projects (e.g. Fulcher, 2012; Vogt and Tsagari, 2014) have sought to establish levels of assessment literacy among teachers. These projects have tended to report assessment literacy levels as concerningly low. It was also found that the teachers who participated in such studies considered teaching and assessment to be distinct tasks and that they were only engaged in teaching activities. Discussion on the nature of assessment literacy, reflects an ongoing debate on the nature of the professional knowledge in the field of language testing, for those who have limited or partial knowledge of testing and assessment, argues Inbar-Lourie (2013). This has resulted in a growing body of research inquiries addressing teachers’ assessment literacy from different EFL/ESL contexts.

In researching EFL teachers’ ideology of ELT assessment literacy in a Saudi HE context, Hakim (2015) found evidence concerning novice and experienced teachers’ perceptions about assessment tools for the better learning of their students in writing courses. In this study, Hakim found that most novice instructors were not comfortable with some assessment techniques (e.g. peer review). Furthermore, it also noted that a remarkable proportion of novice and moderately experienced instructors did not assign high-scale ratings to self and peer assessment techniques. It was noted that the use of self-assessment and peer assessment was challenging for less-experienced language instructors. However, more experienced instructors recognised that peer review and self-assessment techniques are helpful. Although the reason for this was not identified in the study, it was assumed that it was a result of contextual factors (e.g. time constraints due to the curriculum pace, large class sizes, and a lack of confidence among students). This suggests that researching teachers’ cognitions in language assessment is much needed, to avoid unfairly characterising teachers as lacking in assessment knowledge.

## **2.6 Implications of the literature review for this study**

The final section of this chapter provides a recap of the literature review to identify the knowledge gap. The chapter concludes by presenting the research study questions generated for this study.

### **2.6.1 Identifying the gap in the literature review**

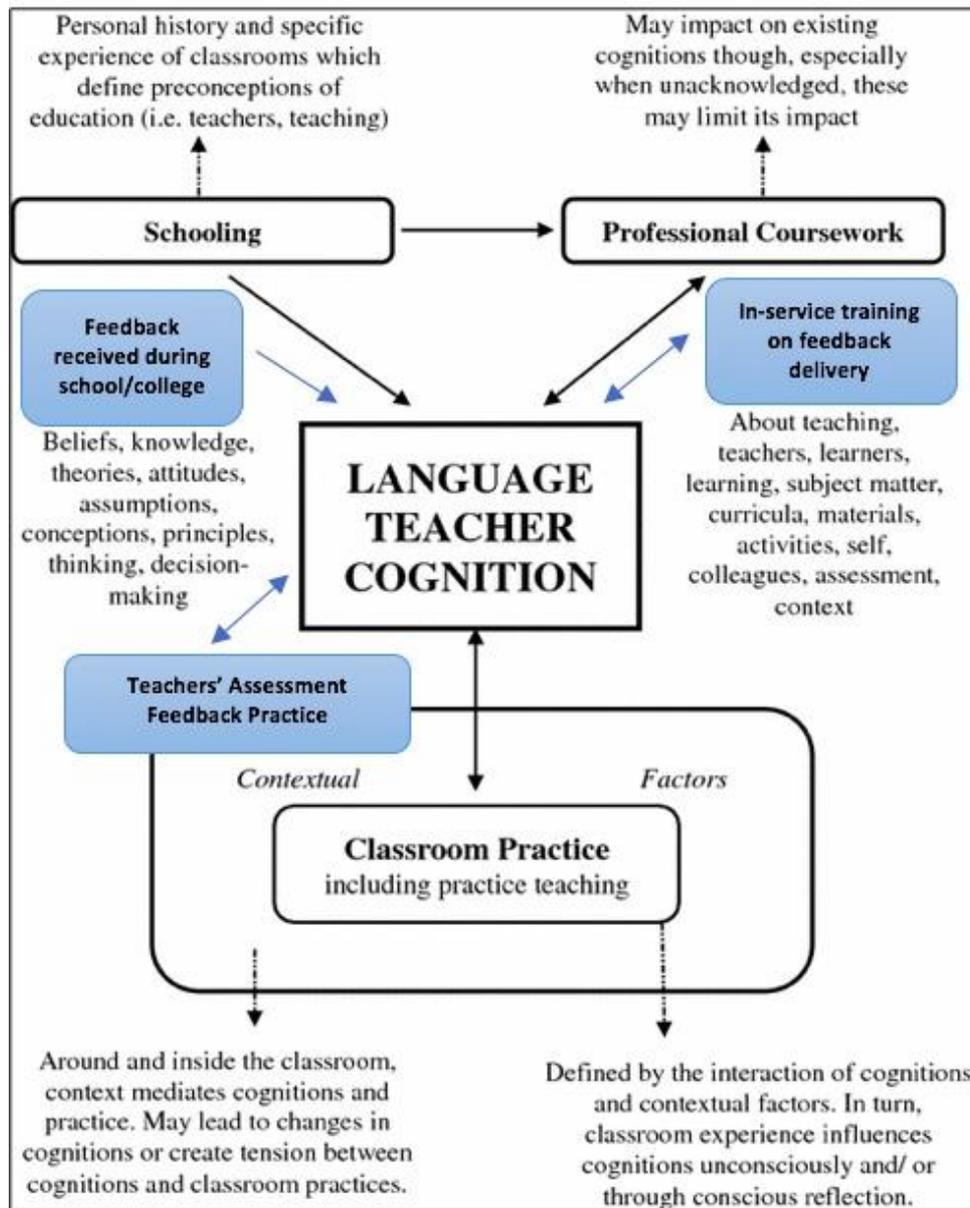
Teacher cognition research has provided a fundamental understanding of the complex process of becoming, being and developing professionally, as teachers (Borg, 2019). However, there is still much to be learned about teachers' assessment knowledge and their practices in Saudi Arabia and similar contexts. Teachers' insights can be developed into the experience of being in HE nowadays, which can serve to inform research, policy, and practice around formative teaching and learning. Hence, the current study explores and explains a specific and much-needed area of research on Saudi EAP practitioners' cognitions of assessment feedback. As discussed in section 2.5.2 studies have revealed a concurrent mismatch between teachers' cognitions and corrective feedback practice (e.g. Junqueira and Payant, 2015; Orrell, 2007). This signifies the indefinite relationship between teachers' cognitions and their actual feedback practice, and it presents an opportunity for teacher education research through deeper explorations of cognition, practice, and context. Another point is that researchers dealing with teachers' cognitions concerning feedback on L2 have mainly dealt with summative WCF (e.g. Alkhatib, 2015), oral corrective feedback (e.g. Yuksel et al., 2021) respectively, and mainly novice teachers (e.g. Worden, 2018; Junqueira and Payant, 2015). Thus, the literature review on teacher cognition and feedback exposes a gap in our understanding of how a combination of written and verbal feedback (non-specifically corrective or summative in nature) is perceived from a language teacher cognition perspective using a sample of much experienced teachers.

Given the nature of this high-stakes programme, this study will provide useful findings in areas that matter to policymakers (e.g. teachers' assessment feedback practices). This will help in-service staff members and heads of professional development in the wider community (external to the specific educational context), by leading them to explore the extent of teachers' awareness of the importance of

assessment feedback. To the best of my knowledge, no documented study has investigated, explored, or explained teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback in the tertiary context using both written (including electronic) and verbal feedback.

By adopting Borg's conceptual underpinnings of teacher cognition, this study defines language teachers' cognitions as the learning and developmental experiences that teachers undergo in becoming language teachers (based on **schooling and professional coursework**), and in how they facilitate and provide feedback on their learners' writing (**classroom practice**). Drawing on language teacher cognition theory (Borg, 2006) and the literature on assessment feedback, this study endeavours to fill this void by providing potential insights into language teacher education. It does this by exploring the relationship between teachers' cognitions and practices regarding how they facilitate and provide feedback on their learners' writing, using both oral and written comments. Furthermore, it is inspired by the assessment feedback framework and EAT (Evans, 2011; 2016) as the basis for designing interview themes and questions on teachers' assessment feedback practices, and in the discussion of the findings. Therefore, this study has relevance to the growing body of literature on teacher cognition and research on assessment feedback and teacher development.

In adopting Borg's (2006) model on language teacher cognition, I have narrowed down the focus to teachers' cognitions of feedback throughout the stages of their learning (during school and professional coursework) and their practical classroom teaching experiences. This is demonstrated by the highlighted blue boxes (see Figure 2-3, an adaption of Borg's model (2006, p. 283) of language teacher cognition on assessment feedback.



**Figure 2-3. An adaptation of Borg's (2006) model of language teacher cognition of assessment feedback**

As can be seen in Figure 2-3, I have made feedback an explicit feature in Borg's model as a guide for this study, and therefore, have combined the work from the assessment feedback literature and the teacher cognition literature, to present an adapted model. The adapted model addresses the nature and process of feedback that teachers received during school, college, their in-service training, and their assessment feedback practice within their teaching and learning context. For the purpose of this study, I have added feedback explicitly and highlighted it in Borg's model to signify its importance in teachers' developing cognitions, which eventually impact their classroom assessment feedback practices.

### 2.6.2 Developing the research questions

It is important for language teacher cognition research to consider the quality of feedback being provided by teachers. This study aims to explore teachers' cognitions and actual feedback practices on their learners' L2 academic writing by reflecting on their learning and practical experiences in receiving and providing feedback. As suggested by Borg (2006), key topics from L2 acquisition research can be used in exploring teachers' cognitions and practices relative to the specified topics. Thus, Borg's adapted model forms the theoretical framework for this study. In exploring the Saudi EAP context, the adapted model (Figure 2-3) serves as the theoretical framework and practical guide to develop and address the research questions below:

1. What are the English language assessment experiences – learning, pre-service and in-service training, and previous teaching within their local context – that have informed teachers' cognitions of feedback on L2 writing?
2. How have teachers' cognitions (identified in RQ1) informed their self-reported feedback on their learners' L2 writing?
3. How have teachers' cognitions informed their actual feedback practices on their learners' L2 writing?
4. How does the teaching and learning context impact the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their actual feedback practices on their learners' L2 writing?

## 2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter began with an introduction to the conceptual underpinnings of language teacher cognition. This included the nature of knowledge, beliefs, and the impact of teachers' learning and practical experiences on their cognition. I then presented research relevant to teacher cognition from the assessment feedback literature. A range of studies on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices have recognised the indefinite relationship between beliefs and practice, and the impact of contextual constraints on teachers' feedback practice. The literature on teacher cognition and feedback was useful in identifying the gap, demonstrating that feedback in L2 writing has not been discussed frequently from a language teacher

cognition perspective. Drawing on language teacher cognition theory (Borg, 2006), and Evans' framework for assessment feedback (EAT, 2016), I have modified Borg's model based on the wider review of the literature (Figure 2-3). As a result, the assessment feedback literature has been used to inform language teacher cognition research. Therefore, this study aims to explore teachers' cognition, by focusing on teachers' learning and teaching experiences that have influenced their cognitions of assessment feedback, their self-reported feedback, and their actual feedback practices. As a contribution to knowledge, this study addresses teachers' cognitions as specific to the strategies that EFL teachers employ when providing feedback to their learners on their L2 writing assessment within a Saudi EAP context. Now that research questions have emerged from a review of the literature, methodological implications will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains my research design: the way I planned, organised, and implemented the methodology. Through this explanation, I reflect on the reasons informing my decisions at various stages of the data generation process. I start with the restatement of the research questions before I discuss my research stance. This will demonstrate how my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions have informed the research methodology. Then, I will introduce the methodology adopted for this study – a case study approach. In the section devoted to the context and participants, I will explain my sampling decisions and recruitment process, followed by a brief introduction to the participant teachers. The data generation section will include details about the tools I employed to collect the data. I will elaborate on the pilot study and illustrate how I collected and analysed the data. The concluding section discusses ethical considerations, followed by the measures I took to ensure trustworthiness.

### **3.2 The research questions**

The previous chapter has identified teachers' belief systems as a key challenge for developing sustainable feedback practices in HE (Evans, 2022; Carless, 2013) through considerations of the importance of studying teachers' cognitions (Borg, 2006). This review has assisted in the refinement of the key research questions and the development of the theoretical framework for this study. Initially, I will consider how the participants' conceptions and experiences of feedback have informed their self-reported practices. Then, I will discuss how teachers' beliefs are enacted in their classrooms before considering alignment and/or misalignment of beliefs with practices, respectively. Finally, teachers' reflections on the context are recognised as having an impact on their perceived feedback practice. Thus, this study aims to explore in-service teachers' cognitions and practices of assessment feedback by revealing their self-reported feedback and their actual feedback practices. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the English language assessment experiences – learning, pre-service and in-service training, and previous teaching within their local context – that have informed teachers' cognitions of feedback on L2 writing?
2. How have teachers' cognitions (identified in RQ1) informed their self-reported feedback on their learners' L2 writing?
3. How have teachers' cognitions informed their actual feedback practices on their learners' L2 writing?
4. How does the teaching and learning context impact the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their actual feedback practices on their learners' L2 writing?

The research questions allow for both a descriptive and analytical approach in interpreting teachers' beliefs and practice(s) related to assessment feedback. The following section discusses the philosophical underpinning of the research.

### **3.3 Research stance: the philosophical underpinning of the study**

As explained in section 1.2, my study aims to explore and understand teachers' conceptual understanding of assessment feedback and their actual practice. The epistemological position is informed by interpretivist principles, relying heavily on naturalistic methods to understand how the participants see their world and communicate their knowledge (Cohen and Manion, 1994). This view suggests that there is no one objective reality, but multiple realities because reality is perceived differently by individuals (Creswell, 2013). Accepting that there can be different realities, ontological assumptions in this study see reality as subjective – as understood by the participants (Cohen et al., 2007), and based on their actions and behaviour, which construct their reality (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Driven by a constructivist viewpoint, this study focuses on considering practices from the perspective of those who live them (Rudestam and Newton, 2007). This takes place as participants reflect on their feedback experiences, beliefs, classroom practices, and interpretation within an educational setting. In this case, my role as a researcher is to 'understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes' of the participants (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 719) which I have attempted to do while conducting this study. Thus, the features of this study are typical of interpretivist and

constructivist research (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2003) as it focuses on the meaning of subjective events and describes the meaning from the perspectives of the participants. This yields emic perspectives (Cohen et al., 2007), where the concern is to capture the meanings placed on situations by the feedback providers, which in this case are EFL teachers.

The axiological assumptions accept the biases of the research (Creswell and Poth, 2018), acknowledging my previous role in the ELP. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that there is no 'value-free' research. Thus, a researcher's actions and exploration can influence the questions they are researching (Bassey, 1999). Accordingly, my presence and the way I positioned myself as a researcher are identified in this research. I had worked previously in this language education programme, which provides the background behind the choice of this topic. Therefore, I was aware of the importance of overcoming this challenge through the process of co-constructing knowledge with the participants and analysing the acquired data (further discussion on positionality in section 3.11).

### **3.4 A case study approach**

Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) consider the case study as an approach that plays an important role in educational research in terms of enhancing a researcher's understanding of individuals, contexts, and communities. It could be said that there has been a trend toward using case studies in TESOL and applied linguistics, which acknowledges that quantitative methods cannot always answer complex questions (Hood, 2009). Another reason for applying qualitative methods through case studies is that the design of quantitative methods does not always encourage teachers to reflect on their ideas, but rather the ideas of the researcher are imposed on the teachers (Munby, 1984). Also, surveys may provide limited options, which could represent only surface values (Li and Barnard, 2011) and may not represent deeper mental constructs or ensure study reliability (Borg, 2006).

Like other research methods, case studies have been an object of criticism for their limitations. Bryman (2004), for example, argues that they have limited external validity because the findings from a case study are not usually generalisable (Yin, 2009). This is because each case study is context-specific. However, the goal of

case studies is not to generalise but to obtain in-depth insights into complex phenomena with issues rooted in socio-cultural contexts (Duff, 2008). Thus, they “capture cases in their uniqueness” (Hammersley and Gomm, 2000, p. 3) and are shaped by ‘unique individuals’ in unique situations’ (Donmoyer, 2000, p. 62). One of the main characteristics of a case study is that it achieves a strong naturalistic and cultural understanding of a specific case, which could be simple or complex, according to Stake (1998). As stated by Cohen et al. (2000), case studies can involve people, programmes, provided that they comprise a single entity rather than a collection of disconnected parts. Furthermore, the research methodology in case studies can involve multiple sources of data collection, which adds breadth and depth to data, allowing triangulation and contributing to the validity of the research (Yin, 2014).

Considering the aims of the study and my ontological and epistemological stance, I decided to adopt a case study approach as the most appropriate research methodology for capturing the case of five EFL teachers and their experiences within their unique context. I took into consideration the fact that the aim of this study is exploratory in nature. It is concerned with how the participants make judgements and inferences about students’ learning based on the nature of the teachers’ feedback provision. One basic consideration was that participants might not have a shared understanding of feedback. Their perspectives and practices might be affected by previous training experiences and different knowledge backgrounds. As Leung (2004) notes, teachers hold different perspectives, attitudes and approaches that shape their beliefs and practices, regardless of the training they may have had. Thus, there are no universal beliefs or distinctive views among educational practitioners.

Since I am exploring individual teachers’ beliefs and practices in this research, through an in-depth interviewing and analysis process, each participant is considered a case. This approach serves to explore a phenomenon (Yin, 2014), which is the provision of assessment feedback, and to explain this phenomenon. The exploratory design is structured using established naturalistic methods (i.e. interviews and observations) to observe the phenomena in their natural context. By recognising similarities and concerns (both inside and beyond the context), the

acquired knowledge is considered a form of naturalistic generalization (Stake, 2000, p. 22). A case study in tertiary education would thus contain content that is relatable to other HE or vocational settings that have an English academic literacy programme.

### **3.5 The research setting: sample recruitment**

#### **3.5.1 The research setting**

The study was conducted at an ELP at a major Saudi university, located on the west coast of KSA. The EAP course is taught as part of the PYP for the science pathway, using the Cambridge English Unlock series. I am a native of the research setting and familiar with the general culture and practices of its basic education, which increased the feasibility of the study. For example, access to the campus allowed me to take photographs of classrooms and resources, as appropriate. A further discussion on my research position is discussed in section 3.11.

During the period when I was carrying out the actual data collection process (interviews and observations), I immersed myself in the context, spending as much time as possible at the university to learn about it (e.g. new building, new curriculum) and to build rapport with the participants and students. In the lessons that were to be observed, the main tools commonly used in the classroom were whiteboards, coursebooks, workbooks and classroom projectors connected to desktop computers with internet access. I also sought opportunities to speak to additional teacher participants, gain contextual information, and inquire about the in-service professional training programme.

#### **3.5.2 Recruitment of teacher participants**

The recruitment of teacher participants was facilitated through upper administration and the academic manager responsible for arranging and assigning faculty teaching schedules. After obtaining ethical approval from the University of Leeds and the research site, a recruitment email was sent to teachers requesting volunteers from all teaching levels at the ELP. The ELP administrators were involved in recruiting the research sample, sending out the information sheet, and contacted me when they

received responses from teachers. The recruitment email included the participant information sheet, consent form, and the research site approved form. When the volunteering teachers responded, they contacted me and received consent forms. The selection of participants was according to pre-determined criteria such as variation in ethnic background, educational qualifications, and experience in ELT (see Appendix B3).

However, there were certain limitations related to recruiting a mixed-gender sample. As described in Chapter 1 (section 1.3.), Saudi HE is segregated, which means that female and male educational programmes are taught on different campuses. The main challenge in data collection was restrictions on entering the opposite gender campus. Due to cultural considerations controlling the Saudi education system, this study was therefore conducted on a female campus only. It should be noted here that at the time of the study, the research sample was selected from the total population of teachers ( $n = 88$ ) who were teaching the EAP course during the first module of the academic year 2019/20. A figure representing the total teacher population for the EAP course (among other teaching courses) is provided (Appendix B1). Five teaching participants were included in a seven-week data collection period.

### **3.5.3 Sampling strategy**

Purposive sampling techniques were employed to select the research sample, as this study particularly targets teachers in an English language programme. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 113) identify a purposive sample as a 'non-probability sample-driven from the researcher targeting a particular group, in the full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population; it simply represents itself. Non-probability sampling is often used in small-scale research, case studies, ethnographic research, and action research (Cohen et al., 2007). As Silverman (2013) notes, a purposive sample allows the researcher to focus on the features of a certain group of people to fit the purpose of the research.

The disadvantage of this technique is that it does not allow the data to be generalised and it cannot be representative of a broader population, as stated by Cohen et al. (2007). As far as the aim of this research is concerned, this study does not intend to generalise the findings, but to provide answers to the question of how

individual teachers conceptualise and practise feedback on their learners' EFL writing. Another disadvantage of purposive sampling is subjectivity (Davies, 2007) which I minimised by identifying clear criteria for participant selection. Considering the social developments in the country, I intended to have a heterogeneous sample: local (Arabic speakers) as well as native English teachers (non-Arabic speakers). As the ELP at the Saudi university recruits teachers from diverse backgrounds, an invitation for participation was sent to all the teachers to capture the diversity of views at the teaching and learning context. Thus, the teachers' selection criteria were as follows: teachers from different ethnic backgrounds and teachers with different work experiences for a total of five teacher participants (see Chapter 5 Figure 5-1 for a summary of participant profiles).

### **3.6 Data generation tools**

It is common in case study research to utilise multiple data generation tools, since the phenomenon under investigation is usually complex and influenced by contextual factors (Yin, 2018). To produce different types of data that would serve to gain a better understanding of the participants' beliefs, and their self-reported and actual feedback practices, I employed multiple data collection tools. These included semi-structured interviews, lesson observations, stimulated recall post-observation interviews, and follow-up clarification interviews, together with research field notes. The interview data were collected using different modes (audio call and face to face) over a period of seven weeks. The teachers' beliefs and practices were elicited through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Calderhead (1996) notes that case studies of teaching using observational and interview procedures have resulted in well-documented and insightful accounts of teachers' thoughts and practices. According to Mann (2016), interviews have been proven to be a useful method for understanding participants' beliefs. Therefore, the initial interviews were conducted before classroom observations to receive background information on the teacher participants and to elicit their beliefs.

#### **3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews**

Interviewing teachers was a primary means of gathering information in this study. The purpose of the interviews was to better understand teachers' conceptualisation

of assessment feedback and how they translated it into everyday classroom practices. Since interviews aim to elicit mental constructs (i.e. cognitions), they are essential for understanding teachers' conceptions of their work in ways that have practical meaning (Borg, 2006). Also, previous research has assumed that beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured, and must, therefore, be inferred from what teachers say, intend, and do (Borg, 2001). Using interviews provided rich and authentic material captured from the narrative of the interviewees' experiences. They enabled me to build a coherent construction of events based on their "lived experiences and the meaning they make of that experience", (Seidman, 2006, p. 9).

One criticism of interviews in teacher cognition research is that they obtain abstract data that lack reference to concrete contextual details (e.g. the learners or the policy on teaching and assessment). Therefore, it is recommended to acknowledge the contextual details using additional research methods such as classroom observations (discussed in section 3.6.2). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews involve an interview guide that is prepared in advance rather than fixed questions as in a survey questionnaire. Unlike structured interviews, semi-structured ones allow the interviewer to be flexible and to follow emerging topics and issues elaborated on by the interviewee (Dörnyei, 2007). Although the interviewer is using an exploratory approach, they are still considered to be directing the interview while allowing for modifications and explanations by the interviewee (Cohen et al., 2000). Owing to this flexibility, the generated data is co-created with the interviewees, allowing them to take a sharing role in contextualising the research study. This approach involved contextualising teachers' assessment and feedback practices, understanding the nature of teachers' feedback provision, and clarifying the reasons for their assessment feedback practices.

Using the semi-structured interview method allowed the in-depth exploration of views and perceptions, as well as making the interviews more situated and contextualised. The data from these interviews allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of in-service teachers' beliefs, experiences, self-reported feedback, and contextual constraints that they perceived informed their practice. The purpose of the interviews was the following:

1. To elicit teachers' experiences of assessment feedback and their self-reported practice. The interview questions focused on teachers' feedback strategies (verbal and written), and why they perceived it to be the best form of feedback delivery.
2. To encourage the participants to express their views about certain issues related to feedback provision at the ELP at the Saudi university.

The design for the interviews adopted an approach built on the phenomenological theory of Husserl (1970, cited in Bevan, 2014, p. 142). The use of an interview series with the teacher participants proved particularly useful for allowing time for reflection and more meaningful or expanded dialogue (Seidman, 2006). The three-interview design for this study (explained in detail beneath the table) included a list of topics that guided each interview (Table 3-1) and open-ended questions. The conversations lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.

**Table 3-1. Topic guide for the semi-structured interviews**

INITIAL INTERVIEW	INTERMEDIATE INTERVIEW	FINAL INTERVIEW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational background</li> <li>• Experiences with assessment and feedback as L2 learners</li> <li>• Experience with feedback during teacher training</li> <li>• Experience with different feedback strategies</li> <li>• Teachers' response to the new writing assessment method, how feedback is provided (e.g. written, verbally, using technology, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a relationship between self-reported feedback practice and actual classroom feedback practice</li> <li>• Identifying teachers' feedback strategies noted in the observed L2 writing lesson and clarifying them</li> <li>• Discussion about participants' observed behaviour and their verbal commentaries during the feedback process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' reflections on their feedback practice: (dis)satisfaction with learners' development in L2 writing</li> <li>• Perceived constraints that impact teachers' feedback practice</li> <li>• Contextual matters influencing cognitions and practices, as perceived by the participants (e.g. learners, training, time, etc.)</li> </ul>

The interview questions explored the teachers' feedback conceptions, experiences, and self-reported practices; these were asked about in the initial interview and followed up in consecutive interviews. The interview questions drew on themes from the research study questions and literary studies. These themes were covered by asking three types of questions during the interviews – main, probes and follow-up questions (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). The main questions were open-ended, and the sequencing and wording were used flexibly to tailor each interview to the individual subject and the responses given (Cohen et al., 2018) by asking participants to inform me of their assessment and feedback experiences (as learners) and in describing to me their feedback practice. A sample of the pre-observation interview with one teacher participant is provided (see Appendix G1).

The initial pre-observation interviews were conducted one week before lesson observations to elicit the teachers' beliefs about feedback and their self-reported feedback practices (e.g. using technology-assisted feedback, peer feedback, learners' self-assessment). Drawing on teachers' experiences of language learning, teaching and academic writing is an essential part of this study. In their study of teacher knowledge and experience, Clandinin and Connelly (1990; 2000, cited in Casanave, 2011, p. 21) highlight the importance of focusing on participants' practical knowledge in their field, their experiences (and how they interpret them), which serves in contextualising past and present views, as well as the planning of future solutions.

For practical reasons (discussed in the limitations of the study, section 7.3), the initial pre-observation interviews took place over the phone during my residency in Leeds. These interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and shared with the interviewees for validation purposes (see section 3.12 for discussion on trustworthiness and member checking). The intermediate interviews took place face-to-face at the research site, following the observed lessons. Internet-based communication via WhatsApp chat messages served in facilitating appointments with the participants, follow-up questions, and member checking. The post-observation interviews served in facilitating further discussion of the participants' feedback provision (based on the observed lessons). Data analysis began immediately after each interview had been transcribed. Patterns within each interview and between interviews were identified,

and themes were categorised under larger themes (e.g. beliefs, workload, pacing guide, rating scale, etc.). These were used to guide and inform the semi-structured observations, which further explored teachers' feedback practices.

The closing interviews took place over the phone and provided an opportunity for the participants to further reflect on their beliefs about feedback. As in the case of the initial pre-observation interview, the final interviews were conducted via audio-recorded phone calls (carried out from my residency in Leeds), and these were transcribed and analysed. These interviews took place towards the end of the teaching course (after the end-of-module writing assessment). The final interviews also allowed the participants to provide clarification for my questions about their decisions during the observed lessons. The questions in these final interviews included questions (prepared in advance) about their previously stated comments (e.g. beliefs about peer feedback) that required elaboration following lesson observations. This allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of participants' beliefs about their feedback practices. This also led to discussions about the constraints that the participants perceived as having an impact on their feedback practices for their specific student cohorts.

### **3.6.2 Classroom observation**

Classroom observation has been used as a method that represents the evolving relationship between teacher training and research on language teaching and learning (Allwright, 1988). Kubaniyova (2012) affirms that observations offer much to research on language teacher cognition, as they connect the data to the educational context in a broader sense. The use of observations in qualitative research draws the researcher into the phenomenological complexity of the participants' worlds (Cohen et al., 2000). Since knowledge and beliefs are both abstract and complex, observations provide a concrete and descriptive basis of what teachers believe (Borg, 2006), and, therefore, have become both an increasingly and commonly employed method for collecting data in studies on language teacher cognition. Accordingly, observing teachers is key to understanding what teachers do in their context. Furthermore, observations provide an opportunity to witness and gather authentic data in its natural environment (Cohen et al., 2000), which complements the data collected through interviews and allowed data triangulation (Hammersley,

2008). In observing the participants in their classroom environment, direct access to their behaviour and interactions with their learners were attained during feedback lessons on writing. Thus, incorporating observations (along with the interview method) helped me in understanding teachers' contextualised feedback practices.

As with the case of using semi-structured interviews, considerations for a flexible observation method were necessary. According to Evertson and Green (1986, cited in Borg, 2006, p. 229) using a semi-structured observation approach means that the procedure is open and narrative. Structured observations, on the other hand, are criticised in teacher cognition research because they focus on separating behaviours in the classrooms. Also, there is the danger that pre-specifications of what to observe may lead researchers to ignore unanticipated but potentially insightful classroom events and behaviours (Borg, 2006). Hence, the observations employed in this study were semi-structured using a record of participants' assessment methods (e.g. their use of technology), their feedback approach (e.g. use of exemplars, assessment criteria, teacher fronted presentation, peer feedback). Classroom observation consent forms for teachers and learners, respectively, were used for this study (sample consent forms are provided in Appendix A3).

Observations were also used to document teachers' feedback delivery and their verbal commentaries during feedback interactions with their learners. Observing the lessons provides access to the content material used for feedback purposes (e.g. samples of learners' writing tasks or assessments, teachers' resources), which was useful for facilitating discussions with the participants during the follow-up interviews. As for the role of the researcher during observations, it was noted that there is a tendency in teacher cognition research for non-participant observation (Borg, 2006), where the observer is not involved in the activities of the participants, but merely observes and records (Creswell, 2012; Richards, 2003). Following this, I observed but tried to not become involved in the class activities (Cohen et al., 2000). I took notes in my research journal. Whilst observing the lessons from the back of the classroom, I used descriptive field notes (discussed in section 3.6.4) to document the behaviours of the teacher and the learners, and I also recorded my emerging thoughts, ideas, and questions, which were used in the post-observation interviews

(Creswell, 2012). The semi-structured classroom observation form is provided in Appendix G3.

### **3.6.3 Post-observation stimulated recall method**

To compare teachers' beliefs and practices, this study adopted stimulated recall as an interview method to uncover cognitive processes during the observed lessons. Stimulated recall is a technique for eliciting the participants' thought processes during a prior event (Grass and Mackey, 2016). The procedure was carried out with some degree of support from stimuli (i.e. audio, video, or textual) so that the participants could watch and/or listen to themselves carrying out an activity while vocalising their thought processes at the time of the original activity. This requires teachers to reflect on and comment on their cognitions about their observed behaviour (Borg, 2006). The main advantage associated with this technique is that it examines teachers' interactive thinking since teachers cannot teach and talk about their thoughts during lessons (Borg, 2006). Although it had taken some time to transcribe the observed sessions before to the interviews, using stimulated recall during the follow-up interviews led to a more accurate discussion of ideas with the participants (e.g. beliefs on using peer feedback during writing tasks).

Due to university rules, video recording is not permitted with female participants. As an alternative, the audio records and researcher's notes that were obtained from the observed lessons provided the stimuli for the follow-up interviews. While trying to keep the time between the observed lesson and its reporting as short as possible (within 48 hours), each participant was asked to take part in one stimulated recall follow-up interview session to compare their beliefs and actual practices and to discuss observed feedback practices. Some cases required two classroom observations and follow-up interviews to balance the obtained data for this study.

Pre-determined criteria (e.g. use of indirect verbal feedback, learner self-assessment peer-assessment strategies) were used to select audio extracts that maximised the opportunity for participants to remember and report their thoughts on the observed classroom experience. The stimulus selection process included (3–8 minute) audio extracts, followed by my interview questions about the participants' feedback strategies and techniques used/not used (e.g. implementing peer assessment and

feedback, self-assessment). Each interview included three to four audio clip excerpts (stimulus) selected from the set-up for teachers' discussions with their learners on writing issues. After the audio clip ended, participants were asked to recall their thoughts of their interactions with their learners, and the feedback that they gave. In the process of probing teachers' thinking, the stimulus helped interviewees remember events from the lessons by listening to an audio clip of their instruction while asking learners a verbal question or setting up a group activity. A sample of a post-observation stimulated recall follow-up interview is provided in Appendix G7.

This study uses stimulated recall interviews to uncover cognitive processes that were not evident in the observations. The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to compare participants' beliefs about their self-reported feedback practices and their observed classroom practices. This involved questions about the individuals' beliefs about feedback, and the factors that may lead teachers to alter their practices or prevent them from enacting their beliefs. The questions used in the post-observation stimulated recall interviews addressed the main topic (cognitions about assessment feedback) and the themes that this study had covered (self-reported feedback, actual feedback, contextual factors). The themes also included various techniques used/not used in participants' feedback provision (e.g. using exemplars, implementing peer feedback, self-assessment strategies) and the extent to which teachers' self-reported feedback concurs with their actual practice. Table 3-2 presents the data collection schedule for the observations and stimulated recall follow-up interviews.

**Table 3-2. Lesson observations and follow-up stimulated recall interviews**

Pseudonyms	Level	Lesson Theme	Interview Time	Notes	Observation Date
<b>Nisreen</b>	102 CEFR A2	'the internet and technology' writing task	60 Minutes	Interview took place 4 hours after the session	17-9-2019
<b>Haya</b>	102 CEFR A2	'a national event' writing task	1 hour and 17 minutes	Interview took place the next day	15-9-2019

<b>Summa</b>	102 CEFR A2	Feedback session on previous writing task on 'subject-verb agreement'	70 Minutes	Interview took place the next day	18-9-2019
<b>Amy session 1</b>	101 CEFR A1	'Write about your Country' task	60 Minutes	Interview took place the next day	16-9-2019
<b>Amy session 2</b>	101 CEFR A1	Feedback session on previous writing task 'social media'	35 Minutes	Interview took place two days after the session	19-9-2019
<b>Mona session 1</b>	101 CEFR A1	Writing task and feedback 'Write about your Country'	40 Minutes	Interview took place 3 hours after the session	17-9-2019
<b>Mona Session 2</b>	101 CEFR A1	Feedback session on previous writing task – 'national dish'	60 minutes	Interview took place the next day	18-9-2019

### 3.6.4 Researcher field notes

Throughout the data collection process, I recorded my research timeline and field notes in my research journal. I wrote down my observations and reflections of the writing sessions, comments about the interviews I had with teachers, and other elements related to the feedback culture in the researched context. For example, I noted students' reactions to their teachers' instructions when asked to work in pairs, use the error code sheets to self-correct and work in groups on their writing tasks. I also took note of the task setups; the feedback discussion content, and interactions that took place between the classmates and with their teacher (in search of cases of individual feedback, peer feedback and self-reflection), which are not always

detectable in the recording. I also noted that teachers provided reinforcement during these tasks, ensuring that their students understood the task instructions. I used a digital journal at the end of each data collection phase, in which I kept a record of the participants' commentaries during data collection. I also used my research field notes during the analysis process to reconstruct the participants' immediate context (see Appendix G4). Because I was also recording my impressions of the observations, the reflections helped me become more aware of my bias and reduce subjectivity (Shenton, 2004). Table 3-3 provides a summary of the data generation methods (according to the research study questions), their contribution to the case, and the obtained research data.

**Table 3-3. Data generation methods, their contribution, and the generated data**

Data Collection Method	Contribution to Constructing the Case	Generated Data
<p><b>Pre-observation phone interviews</b></p> <p><b>RQ 1: What are the English language assessment experiences – learning, pre-service, in-service training, and previous teaching within their local context – have informed teachers' cognitions of feedback on L2 writing?</b></p> <p><b>RQ 2: How have teachers' cognitions (identified in RQ1) informed their self-reported feedback on their learners' L2 writing?</b></p>	<p>Obtaining relevant background details of participants</p> <p>Collecting participants' feedback experiences and self-reported feedback practices in their current context</p>	<p>Audio-recorded files of the interviews</p> <p>Researcher's notes from pre-observation interviews</p>
<p><b>On-site classroom observations</b></p> <p><b>RQ 3: How have teachers' cognitions informed their actual feedback practices on their learners' L2 writing?</b></p>	<p>Including in-site evidence of how the participants carried out feedback during lessons</p> <p>Recording through field notes pertinent contextual aspects</p>	<p>Audio-recorded files of the teachers' speech while providing feedback and discussing errors</p>

	<p>of the participants' feedback delivery</p> <p>Adding to the construction of units of analysis through the physical and/or digital content</p>	<p>Researcher's notes during and post-observation</p> <p>Physical or digital files/documents provided by the participants</p>
<p><b>Face-to-face post-observation interviews stimulated recall</b></p> <p><b>RQ 3: How have teachers' cognitions informed their actual feedback practices on their learners' L2 writing?</b></p>	<p>Detailed information on participants' actual feedback practices during the lesson observation</p> <p>Participants' verbal narrations of their thoughts during the observed lessons</p>	<p>Audio-recorded files of the interviews</p> <p>Responses during the interviews provided by the participants on their observed practice</p> <p>Researcher's field notes, obtained from observations and pre-observation interviews</p>
<p><b>Final phone interviews</b></p> <p><b>RQ 4: How does the teaching and learning context impact the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their actual feedback practices on their learners' L2 writing?</b></p>	<p>Participants' reporting of their self-perceived satisfaction with their feedback practice</p> <p>Participants' reporting of the constraints that had an impact on their feedback practice</p> <p>Additional participant reporting of context-related matters (i.e. marking of the writing assessment and professional development training programme)</p>	<p>Audio-recorded files of the interviews.</p> <p>Researcher's field notes pre/post-interview</p>

### 3.7 Piloting the study

As the study is of qualitative nature, researchers suggest specific techniques to achieve credibility. Assuring the credibility of qualitative research is linked to persuading the reader that the findings are justifiable through prolonged engagement that is achieved by spending sufficient time on the research site to gain information

about the culture (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To achieve credibility, I spent a lot of time at the research site to familiarise myself with the new curriculum and contextual specificities. The research site material includes gaining access to curriculum books, teaching resources, and assessment material for gaining a holistic view of the context. For example, I learned that learners are assessed in writing through a combination of paper-based and online methods, including the use of the Blackboard platform for writing assignments. I requested enrolment in one virtual classroom on the Blackboard platform to observe students' writing tasks and how teachers commented on their learners' tasks. I also used this time to test each data generation method, I contacted 10 of my former colleagues (six teachers for the interviews and four teachers for the observations). Thus, I piloted two methods during two different periods within the same academic year 2018/2019: I piloted the interviews in September 2018; and the classroom observations and stimulated recall in March 2019. The teachers involved in the piloting of the research methods were at the same research site (the Saudi university) intended for the main study. The next two sections (3.7.1 and 3.7.2) explain each method independently.

### **3.7.1 Piloting the interviews**

Piloting the interviews method served in the trustworthiness of the study (Creswell, 2013) of the intended research instrument, and the practicality of utilising individual interviews (compared to focus groups) as the main procedure for generating data. The decision to conduct interviews over the phone in the piloting stage (as a substitute for face-to-face interviews) was taken for practical reasons related to travel restrictions. To arrange the phone interviews, a time was agreed with the participants in advance. The interviews were conducted in the English language, as the participants were English language instructors with experience in teaching EFL in the current context. It was agreed that the phone interviews would take place during the sixth week of the seven-week module, and each interview lasted 30–45 minutes.

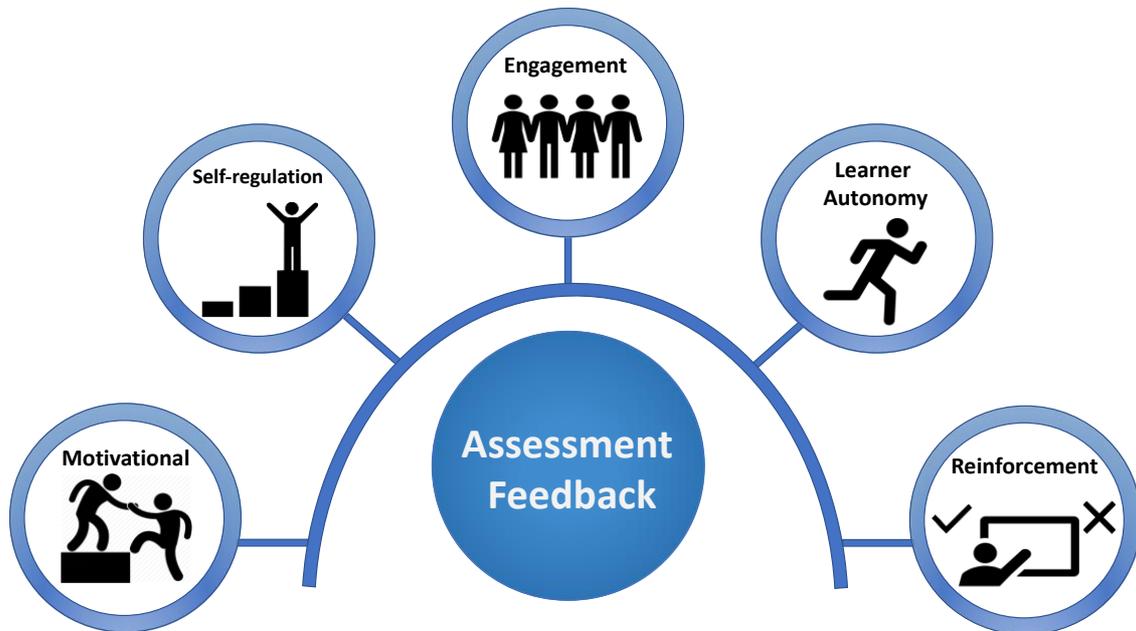
The data generated from the piloting interviews were very rich and informed the research design. Since the pilot study took place towards the end of the module, this was advantageous as the participants were by then familiar with the new curriculum, they knew their students very well, and had assessed them in writing. The teachers were asked about their feedback beliefs and self-reported practices related to the

students' writing on Blackboard, in-class writing tasks, and the writing exam. Six interviews were transcribed and analysed, and the results were produced. Based on the participants' reported practices, samples of students' writing exams with written feedback were shared for the exploration of this written feedback.

The pilot was an opportunity to consider and confront any potential issues in terms of feasibility for the main study, such as participant recruitment and record-keeping via electronically approved means (software, recording devices). Another important aspect of piloting the interviews was to ensure that the questions were easy to understand and did not cause ambiguity for the participants. For example, it was noted that the interview structure contained too many questions. Therefore, I reduced the number of questions intended for the initial interview in order not to overload the participants with questions. This is also helped as it narrowed the focus through the elimination of irrelevant questions and consider re-wording the interview questions with prompts that served as identifying formative feedback features taking place in the first half of the module. Another observation was that the participants discussed their conceptualisation of feedback in terms of what it meant to them, but it was difficult to elicit from them a clear description of feedback. However, their beliefs about feedback were discussed much more directly. Moreover, the pilot was useful for practising and improving my interviewing skills as I learned to hold back from asking leading questions and instead used probing techniques, which elicited teachers' beliefs about their feedback approach. Indeed, piloting the interviews helped greatly with the development of this research study design (Appendix A2)

From a teaching and learning perspective, the pilot study also sought to explore the nature of both formative and summative feedback related to the skill of writing. It uncovered some of the teachers' feedback practices as reported by the participants, and their beliefs about feedback. However, the participants reported using numerous forms of feedback, which deserved further exploration. For example, they described their feedback practice as consisting of using peer feedback, group work, individual feedback, modelling of good practice, as whole class, use of L1, as well as using different modes of feedback delivery (verbal, written, electronic). As for the Blackboard writing tasks, the participants reported feeling unsure about whether electronic feedback was used for formative purposes, compared to classroom-based

approaches. Figure 3-1 demonstrates teachers' conceptions of feedback, which include notions that support language learning development: motivation, self-regulation, engagement, learner autonomy, and reinforcement of knowledge and writing skills (Hariri, 2019). This was based on the results of the published pilot study using the interview method (Appendix H).



**Figure 3-1. Teachers' conceptions of feedback (Hariri, 2019)**

The image presents a model of the embodiment of 'assessment feedback' in terms of numerous dimensions of formative feedback. Based on the learning that took place during the pilot study, I noted that classroom feedback could serve as a platform from which to include further aspects of meaningful feedback (i.e. feedback that supports learner autonomy and student engagement). Moreover, the participants in the pilot study mentioned that they discussed with their learners their writing errors during the lessons. Since written feedback was not necessarily supportive of how learners can understand ways to improve their writing, therefore, an additional research tool (i.e. observations) was considered to explore teachers' practice of dialogic feedback in the classroom. The results of exploratory studies are intended to be used to support precise procedures that are proposed in the methodology section (Locke et al., 2000), observations were adopted as a complementary method to the interviews.

### **3.7.2 Piloting the classroom observations and stimulated recall method**

Fieldwork piloting and analysis took place several months before the main study (between October 2018 and April 2019), to practice face-to-face interviews, classroom observations, and using stimulated recall methodology. Classroom observations were a new method for me as a researcher, as was the use of stimulated recall method. It was decided to pilot these methods to gain experience in probing techniques, while actively listening to the participants as they reported their feedback practice prior to the observations, and then provided me with their reflections on what had taken place in the observed classroom during the follow-up interviews. I sought approval to practice classroom observation at the University of Leeds Language Centre. This allowed me to become familiar with taking notes of teachers' feedback practices and familiar with feedback practices in a context other than the one selected for this study.

A few months later, I travelled to the actual research site and conducted another pilot study. An on-site visit was necessary to pilot the lesson observations and test the stimulated recall protocol interview method. A second ethical approval request was necessary for conducting and recording lesson observations at the Saudi university. Four English language teachers were interviewed after signing consent forms to participate in the piloting stage of the research study. The interviews took place before the classroom observations and afterwards. A total of 10 lessons were attended over three weeks. The aim was to identify how teachers supported their students' writing development through effective feedback provision. Audio recordings and field notes were used to keep a record of teachers' classroom practices. This allowed me to obtain data on the teachers' feedback on students' writing tasks and this could be used as a reference for the stimulated recall follow-up interviews. Data were obtained in the form of a description of how teachers carried out their feedback provision through face-to-face means as well as electronic means (e.g. Blackboard).

I observed four 60 and 75-minute lessons as I piloted the classroom observations. The first observation was structured, and the main categories I focused on were teachers' behaviour when carrying out feedback, which they had previously reported. However, when observing the lessons, I realised that because I was focusing on

specific points, I was missing interesting developments in the lesson. For example, as one teacher provided feedback on the importance of using articles, a student questioned the relevance of using articles in writing. During the conversation, the teacher acknowledged its relevance to assessment and mark deduction. This suggested the importance of considering dialogic feedback as well. Therefore, I decided to pilot a less-structured observation to determine which type of observation would be most suitable for the research.

Another purpose of the observations was to pilot the stimulated recall technique for recalling classroom data and then share the data with the participants, along with prompts and questions which facilitated the discussions. Emerging themes from the transcripts included matters that had an impact on teachers' feedback practices (e.g. class size, learners' language proficiency, module timeframe, the assessment rubric/rating scales). Figure 3-2 below demonstrates a sample of the themes generated from piloting interviews and classroom observations at the research field site.

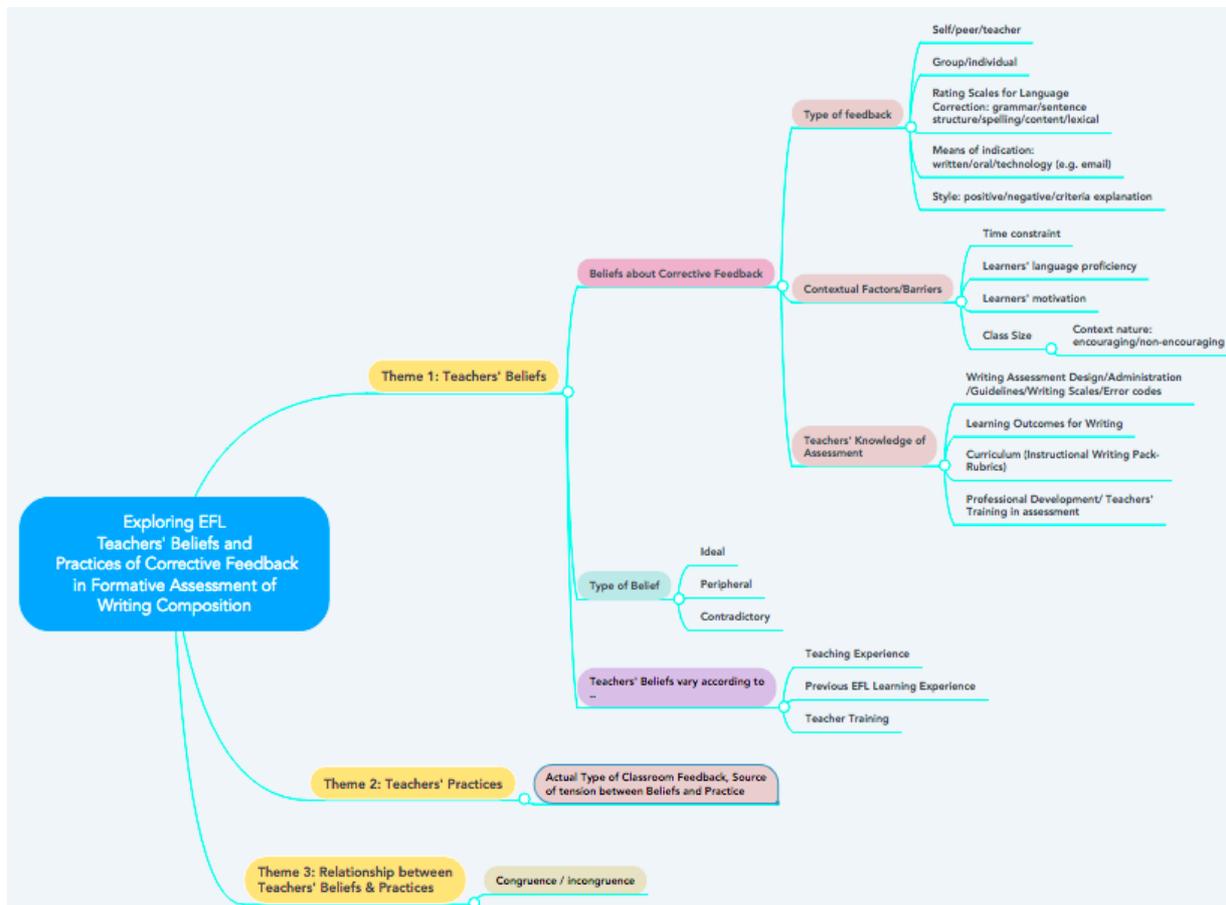


Figure 3-2. Mind map representation of emerging themes

### 3.7.3 Implications for the main study

Numerous implications related to the use of the research methods (interviews, observations, and stimulated recall) were drawn from the pilot study. Also, due to the cultural aspects and the nature of the researched context, it was necessary to consider the design of the data collection plan:

1. Exam interruptions: Due to participants' involvement in exam administration at the time of data collection, several interviews were delayed. Therefore, it was necessary to be aware of the importance of arranging interviews and observations during the most convenient time of the module, for teachers to be available.
2. Clarification of the research technique: The stimulated recall technique was new to several participants, and they needed to be well briefed about the procedure. Preparations ahead of the interview sessions were arranged to allow both the researcher and participants to practise this interview technique, by listening to a short audio extract, and then asking the participants to comment on their thought processes at the time of the observed lesson. Also, the information sheet was modified to explain the data collection procedure. For example, participants were asked to send screenshots of their written feedback comments using WhatsApp or on paper for further analysis.
3. Sensitivity of the interview method: The workplace environment did not provide enough private spaces to enable privacy when the participants listened to the audio excerpts for the research. This made them slightly uncomfortable during the procedure, so private office space had to be arranged for the interviews. Therefore, the teachers' resource room was an option when private offices were not available.
4. Practicality of the research technique: The stimulated recall technique requires data processing (i.e. transcription and audio editing) before the interviews are conducted. Also, this method should be completed within 48 hours of the classroom observation to ensure the reliability of the obtained

data. This is essential for teachers to provide accurate accounts of cognitive events. Also, it is preferable to edit the audio excerpts ahead of the interview, to shorten the interview time for the participants and the researcher.

5. Focus of the interviews: Based on the pilot study, the interview questions were revised to consider the themes that emerged, and the teachers' feedback practice taking place inside and outside of the classroom. Also, access to the virtual classroom sessions on Blackboard revealed that the feedback was mainly summative and did not provide instructions for learners on how to improve. For example, teachers' feedback on Blackboard mainly consisted of brief comments (e.g. *excellent, well done, great*), acknowledging correctness and providing a mark. If a learner answered incorrectly to the task or plagiarised their response, their teacher would acknowledge it (e.g. '*You didn't answer the question correctly*', '*This is not your work, based on the similarities that came out from the plagiarism detector*'). Based on interviewing teachers, it also became clear to me that the online platform did not provide space for formative feedback, compared to lesson observations which provide opportunities for interaction, dialogue and negotiation of errors.
6. Structure of the classroom observations: When observing the lesson, I realised that because I was focusing on specific points, I was missing interesting developments in the lesson. Piloting the classroom observation method allowed me to notice and record interesting events that affected teachers' feedback practice. For example, several students were discussing with their teacher issues related to assessment standards in writing that were not listed on my observation notes. I also noticed that several teachers provided feedback on learners' writing using exemplars (samples of students' writing). This developed my understanding of the feedback culture and the means of feedback facilitation (online, in-person). Therefore, I decided to use less-structured observation to allow for the exploration of aspects on the nature and culture of assessment feedback in the teaching and learning environment.

7. Seeking contextual information from senior teachers: When piloting the research methods, I realised that much had changed since I was a teacher at the ELP, such as the introduction of the EAP curriculum and recent developments in assessment. For example, using Blackboard for assessing students' writing tasks was no longer an optional resource, and become mandatory in the course assessment plan. Therefore, I kept in mind that I will need to speak to 'institutional informants' (senior teachers) who served as additional participants in the study for numerous reasons: clarification purposes; the gathering of facts on institutional guidelines on assessment feedback; and the nature of the teacher training programme. This would also serve as a triangulation of information sources.

### **3.8 Data collection procedure**

The data generation process lasted for seven weeks – from September 2019 to October 2019 (Module 1 teaching and examination Table - Fall 2019/2020 is provided in Appendix B2). The research timeline was guided by a relatively common observation according to Gold (1997), in which fieldwork phases should continue until both the researcher and participants have used up their ability to identify types of questions relevant to the research objectives. This was sufficient to generate data throughout the taught course.

#### **3.8.1 Preparations for the first data collection phase**

Five in-service teachers were recruited to participate voluntarily in the research. It should be noted here that at the time of the study, the research sample was selected from the total population of teachers ( $n = 88$ ) who were teaching the EAP course series during the first module of the academic year 2019/2020 (see Appendix B1). Each of the participants had an 18-hour per week teaching schedule, and the courses they were teaching included learners who had been assigned according to their English profile CEFR A1 or A2 (see Figure 5-1).

Institutional documents were reviewed to identify the feedback guidelines that had been given to teachers. As part of their instruction, teachers were expected to prepare their learners for the internal writing assessment (the foundation year

programme for assessing each English language skill). Thus, the first three weeks of the course were crucial, as they provide a series of writing activities to move learners forward in their writing and towards the expected LOs. Thus, teachers are expected to coach their learners and give feedback on the written activities conducted during class time or online. This is when instructors cover the pages in the course-book containing the vocabulary and grammar needed for the students to produce a piece of writing. Then, students produce several written drafts on which they receive feedback. The students are asked to respond by writing a paragraph containing a topic sentence, at least four supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. Writing assessment prompts include themes and topics that had already been discussed in the reading and writing book (see samples of students' writing tasks and assessment in Appendix E). These tasks and early assessments allow learners to receive formative feedback and work on their writing deficiencies.

Before conducting the classroom observations, I interviewed each participant to form a biographic profile. This provided an understanding of each participant's cognitive development, in terms of how their conceptualisation of feedback on writing had evolved throughout their formal education and professional coursework training. The participants were then asked to report on their feedback approach on writing for their learners in the current context, mainly their beliefs on how feedback should be given. Data from the pre-observation interviews served in providing discussions on self-reported feedback and observed feedback during writing lessons.

### **3.8.2 Preparations for the second data collection phase**

The second phase of data collection included classroom observations and stimulated recall follow-up interviews. I was able to conduct face-to-face post-observation interviews with all the participants. This generated data on feedback behaviour in the classroom as well as on teacher-learner feedback discourse. The observations took place after the mid-module writing assessment. The mid-module exam is designed to give students feedback on their writing that they can use to better prepare for the final writing exam, which is worth a higher percentage of their grade. It is a requirement that all teachers abide by this by allocating a session in their teaching (as a follow-up) to the marking and feedback they had written on their students' writing exams. This was to allow discussion and clarification for students on their

feedback, which would enable them to reflect on their performance, and to perform better in the final writing exam.

The observations were used for two purposes. First, to identify the participants' feedback techniques and approaches, and secondly to establish a relationship between their self-reported feedback practice and the nature of the classroom feedback experience. The lessons that I observed facilitated discussions on teachers' feedback comments during the follow-up interviews. I used their verbal comments (noted during the lessons) to ask questions relating to their beliefs and practices. In other words, I sought to understand why they carried out certain feedback techniques in their feedback provision. Classroom observations took place between weeks 3 and 5 for the writing tasks feedback lessons and the writing assessment feedback follow-up class lessons. The purpose of the second observation was to witness the participants' feedback approach following the standard writing assessment, as a follow-up on their marking and written feedback comments. The observation explored the participants' feedback provision on the writing assessment and the nature of the classroom discourse regarding feedback processes. Through my observation of the email correspondences from the exam committee heads to teachers, I learned that teachers were instructed to explain the assessment rubric/rating scales (the descriptors of criteria and standards for writing) to their learners in advance of the writing assessment.

Data from the observed lessons allowed the participants to comment on their feedback provision and thought processes as they facilitated feedback discussions during the lessons. This allowed me to explore how the teachers provided feedback on their learners' writing, firstly in the L2 classroom tasks, and then, in the follow-up session, on the first writing exams. The classroom observations had generated descriptive data on the teachers' instructional behaviour during feedback, teacher-learner discourse, learner engagement in the feedback processes, and the nature of the classroom feedback processes. This also served in providing opportunities for discussing congruences and incongruences between beliefs and practice, the issues, and challenges they underwent in their current practice. Through such a process, the participants were able to provide clarifications on the commentaries they provided in the pre-observation interviews, which may have challenged their

earlier thoughts on feedback delivery. Sample images of the classroom observations are provided (see Appendix F).

### **3.8.3 The final data collection phase**

At the end of the course, excerpts from pre-observation and post-observation interviews were used to facilitate discussion during the final interview. The final stage of data collection allowed the participants to further reflect on their assessment feedback practice, at the very end of the teaching course. According to Mann (2016), allowing a sustained approach of on-going obligation of reflection on practice can enable a better understanding of the professional activity. It also helps to build rapport between the participant and the interviewer, which facilitates discussion throughout each interview. Thus, excerpts from the pre-observation and post-observation interviews were used to facilitate discussions with the participants who provided clarifications on the commentaries they had provided earlier in the data collection process. This was a form of closure in terms of what the teachers' reflections upon their classroom feedback provision would reveal. It included reflection on their feedback, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their feedback approaches, and considerations for contextual issues and challenges (such as course length and the impact that such factors had on their learners' progression in the course).

In addition to data gathered from interviews with the participants in this study, conversations took place with 'institutional informants', who were senior staff and leading teachers assigned roles in Professional Development, Mentoring, and Test Development and Curriculum. Interviews with these participants (i.e. institutional informants) were conducted at the end of the data collection stage to form an understanding of the sample's views on the feedback instructions compared to the views of the management. For example, issues relating to instructions on feedback were discussed with institutional informants (e.g. Test Development and Curriculum Unit), and issues relating to the in-service teacher training programme (e.g. Professional Development Unit and Mentoring committee). Table 3-4 demonstrates a summary of the main study data collection procedure, starting with recruitment taking

place at the end of August 2019, and ending with the final stage of interviewing in October 2019.

**Table 3-4. Main study data collection procedure**

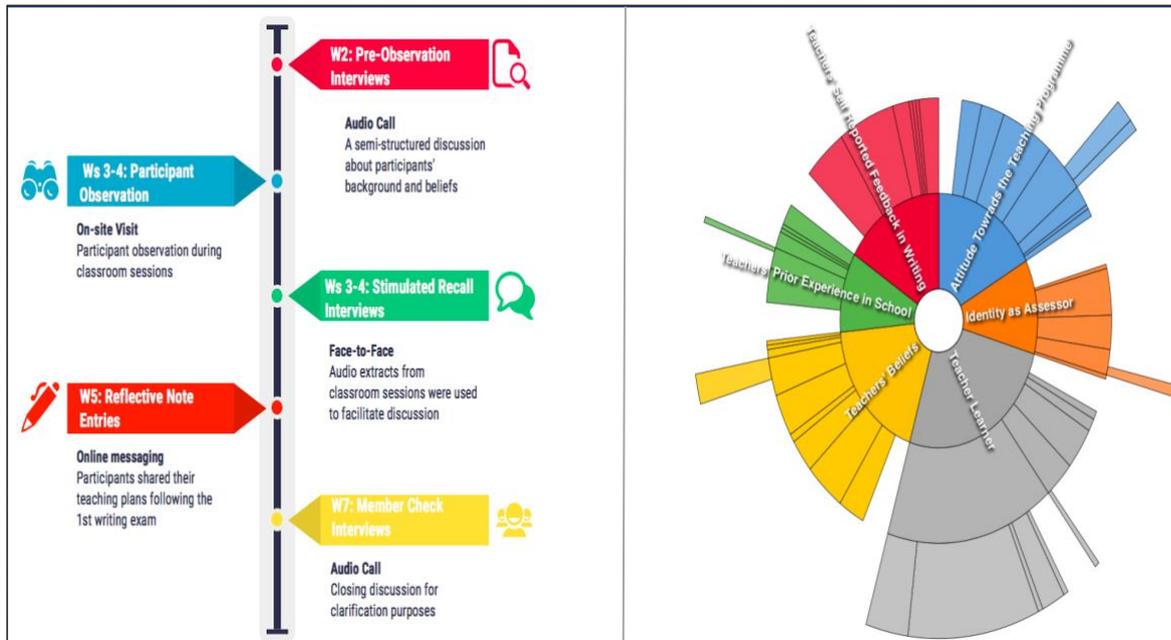
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>
<b>August 18- August 30</b>	Collecting module 1 calendar and identifying the module start/end dates, and exam days	Contacting the Saudi university Admins
	Sending participants the information and consent forms, Finalising participant recruitment,	Contacting the Saudi university Admins for facilitation of a heterogenous sample: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Experienced (10+ years)</li> <li>• 4 Newly Recruited (0-1 year)</li> <li>• 4 Teacher Trainers (5-10 years)</li> <li>• 4 Semi-Experienced (1-5 years)</li> </ul>
<b>August 25- October 4</b>	Identifying teachers' profile, educational background, assessment feedback experiences, and self-reported feedback provision,	1- Conducting pre-observation interviews (Audio calls) 2- Transcribing the audio tracks
<b>September 21- October 5</b>	Completing the data collection including lesson observations; simulated recall, closing interviews	1- Travelling to Jeddah, KSA 2- Initiating classroom observations, based on previously arranged appointments with the participants 3- Obtaining feedback samples from teachers during lesson observations 4- Transcribing the audio files 5- Conducting stimulated recall interview sessions 6- Contacting institutional informants, (senior teachers) for clarification purposes

### **3.9 Data analysis**

This section outlines the qualitative analysis in my study including its nature, purpose and procedures involved. The broad purpose of the analysis was to describe and interpret the data (Braun and Clarke, 2013) as explained in the following sections.

#### **3.9.1 Overall process of analysis**

The analysis was guided by the analytical approaches of case study research, including procedures such as examining, categorising, coding, and recombining narrative evidence (Yin, 2018). Initially, the data analysis was carefully constrained by the research questions whilst drawing on broader themes and concepts from the literature. Although the analysis was mainly inductive (emerging from the data), occasionally it had certain deductive elements (influenced by the assessment and feedback paradigm and framework, discussed in sections 2.5.1.3. and 2.5.1.4). Within the aims and research questions, the data that emerged during the research were unique to each case. Within cases and across cases, the analysis employed a thematic approach (Cohen et al., 2018). This approach develops the patterns that emerge, and it also relies on an inductive procedure for interpreting the findings (Rudestam and Newton, 2007) by focusing on similarities, differences and diverging patterns within the data. These patterns are then reviewed against those found by other researchers (Blaxter et al., 2006). Figure 3-3 demonstrates the project timeline, data generation tools, and the initial themes that were generated from the first phase of the analysis by using NVivo.



**Figure 3-3. Project timeline, research tool, and initial themes**

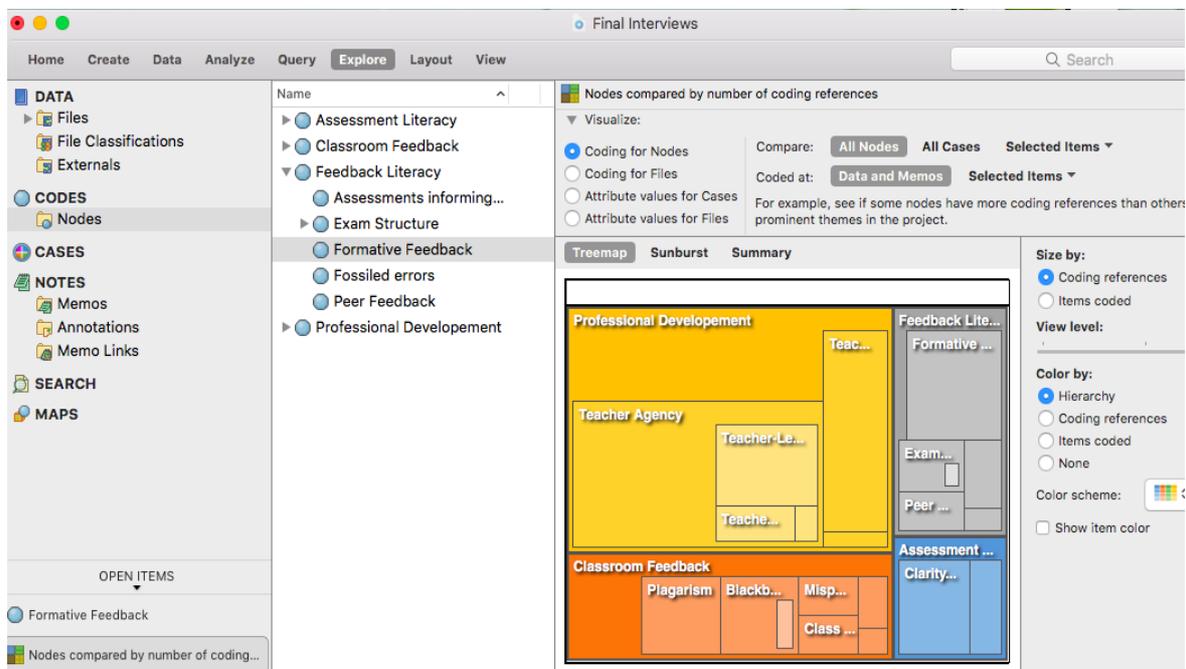
Having completed the within-case analysis, I conducted a cross-case analysis (Yin, 2018; Cohen et al., 2018). Drawing on Creswell (2014) and Cohen et al. (2018), I followed the systematic stages of data analysis and repeated them for each case: (1) data management, (2) coding, (3) generating themes. I will now outline each step successively.

### 3.9.2 Data management

The first organisation stage involved choosing the software program with which to store and analyse the data systematically (carefully noting the dates and times of the observations and interviews) on a password-protected encrypted drive. Physical data (e.g. photographs, audio recordings and participant observation notes) were stored in separate physical folders, then transferred electronically. I stored the data in specially designated folders on the University of Leeds drive. Having organised the data, I then transcribed them (over a period of approximately three months) and uploaded the files to NVivo 12 (QSR International Ltd.). I created a separate project for each method and separate files for each case within each project. Transcription was the initial phase of interpretation, followed by the coding stage.

### 3.9.3 Coding

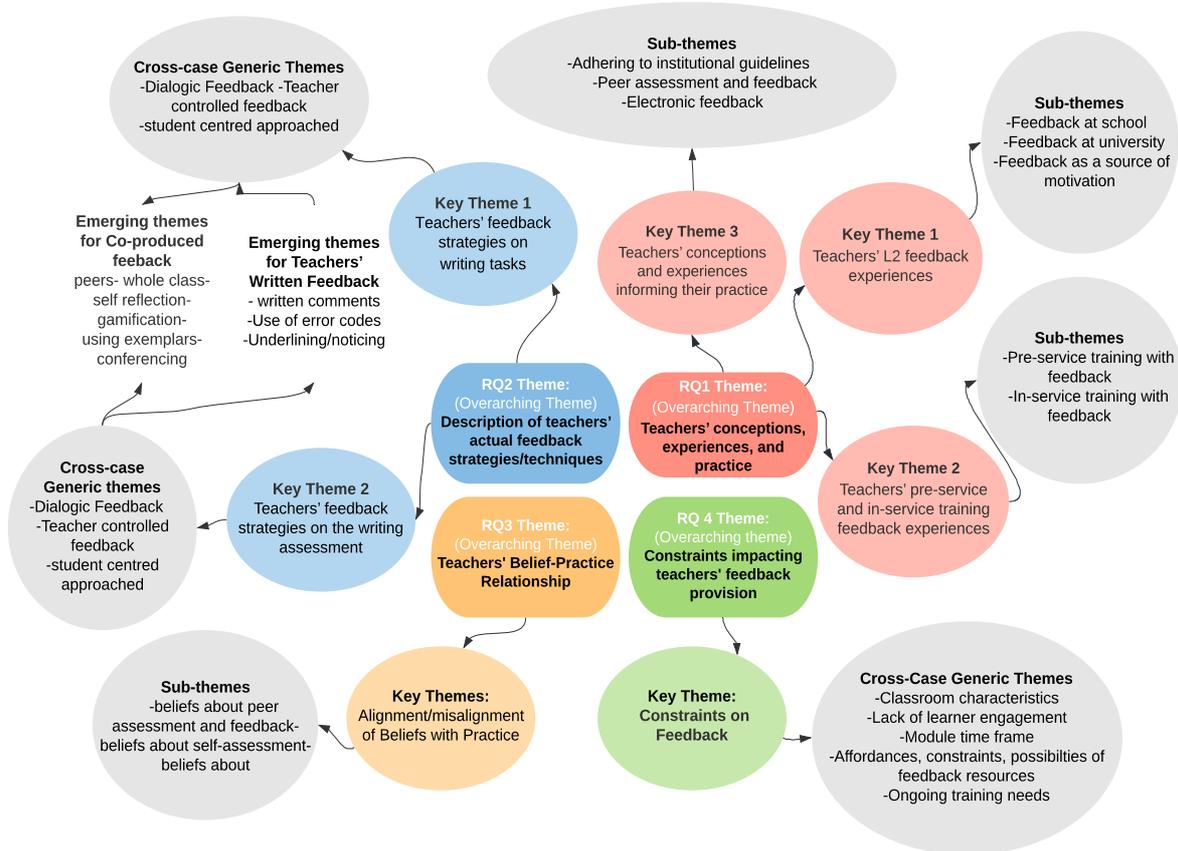
Thematic coding is commonly used in qualitative methods in the social sciences (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Saldana, 2015; Yin, 2018). The coding stage for the thick descriptions from the interviews and observations was an iterative, long-term process. During this stage, I read the transcripts several times, and identified initial codes in NVivo, as I selected participants' utterances in the transcript. The codes represented the key themes and sub-themes found in the data. I coded all the data that were relevant to the aim of the research and research questions, i.e. focusing on beliefs on feedback, self-reported practices, and actual practices. Figure 3-4 demonstrates the initial trials in identifying themes from the interview transcripts.



**Figure 3-4. Sample of the research coding using Nvivo12**

Although I initially used NVivo, mainly to organise my data and create codes, I later realised that it does not result in solutions to problems of analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Also, it does not allow one to immediately see the whole picture and interconnectedness of codes (Welsh, 2002). To achieve rigour in data analysis, I, therefore, used both manual and electronic coding. The research study questions and methods were the main guide for creating the tables. This included placing and organising information (themes, data excerpts) within table columns and using visuals (see Figure 3-4). I also used headings and subheadings to interpret the data,

by identifying themes and the relationships between them. Simultaneously, codes were constantly named and renamed in the software (Nvivo12), to categorise and sort the data effectively. This made electronic coding comparable to the manual coding. Figure 3-5 illustrates the themes in the form of a mind map, based on each case and across the cases.



**Figure 3-5. Mind map of the research themes/codes**

### 3.9.4 Generating themes

Having coded the data, I started writing the narratives of each case, using the data to illustrate the themes. Interpretation of the data involves transcending data and analyses (Wolcott, 1994) and making sense of the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, cited in Creswell, 2008). Although I relied mainly on inductive procedures for interpreting the findings (Rudestam and Newton, 2007), the literature review was initially used to generate the initial thematic sections for the pre-observation interviews and lesson observations. For example, theoretical perspectives for implementing effective assessment feedback in HE contexts using Evans' Assessment Tool were considered in this research. This included concepts and

themes such as timely feedback, peer engagement, self-assessment, and meaningful dialogue (discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.2.6). The main themes, however, were derived from the research study questions and by drawing on relevant themes in the literature. Sub-themes were later modified during the analysis and cross-case stage.

The findings from each case are presented in the Findings chapter. In each case, I first contextualised the case with the background academic information of the participant. The structure for the presentation (Hussey and Hussey, 1997) was based on the overarching themes (from the research questions) and the themes/codes that emerged from the analysis. This enabled a holistic evidence-based narrative account of each case. Thus, the overarching themes act as the section titles for each case: experiences with feedback in school/university, experiences with feedback during pre-service/in-service training, self-reported practice. Within these overarching themes, I included themes/codes for each case, supported by the primary evidence from the data (using quotes and participant observations during lessons). The overarching themes (which I return to in the findings, Chapter 5) include teachers' assessment feedback experiences informing their cognition, self-reported feedback practice, actual feedback practice, belief-practice relationship, and contextual factors impacting teachers' cognitions.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations: anonymity and confidentiality**

Ethical considerations are acknowledged in this research, including interviewer bias and insider research (discussed in section 3.11). Other key aspects include data protection, data storage, anonymisation, consent forms and sharing of research data. The research ethical application was submitted to the University of Leeds Ethics Committee, and approval for the ethics application and risk assessment procedures was received on Jan 3, 2019. Being able to protect participants' identities and provide anonymity and confidentiality is one of the requirements of ethics committees and the researcher needed to address these points when applying for ethical approval (Haverkamp, 2005). This is crucial when the study involves sensitive topics (Cohen et al., 2000). Anticipating that sensitive issues might emerge during the data collection process, I adopted the following measures to safeguard the participants' identities (Wiles et al., 2006):

- Replacing the participants' names with pseudonyms and anonymising the university
- Preserving the confidentiality of the data by using pseudonyms when storing the data
- Not disclosing the issues emerging from the interviews with others in ways that might identify the participants
- Not disclosing any information that the participants did not want to be shared

I ensured that the identities of the participants would not be identified by the ELP. In addition, I avoided commenting on the participants' lessons. This also helped me to protect their self-esteem and avoid having them feel judged. Being familiar with the context, I was aware that confidentiality was a very sensitive issue for in-service teachers. For instance, one of the participants shared her negative experiences of being observed and pointed out that the observer later shared the details of the observation protocol with other teachers in her department. To ensure confidentiality, I provided a detailed explanation in the information sheet of what confidentiality entailed and the measures taken to ensure the participants' anonymity and confidentiality. The participants' rights were made clear in writing and verbally for the interviews (Bevan, 2000). The teachers were given information sheets that covered the confidentiality and privacy of the participants in terms of the content of views expressed in their responses, and the freedom to withdraw their consent at any time. The research site data collection approval form was also shared with the participants.

Separate consent forms for interviews and lesson observations were provided for the teachers. During the lesson observations, consent forms were also provided for learners (translated into Arabic, see appendix A1). I explained to the students the purpose of the project and the purpose of the consent forms (for recording classroom observations). In the process of asking learners to sign the forms, there was one lesson in which a few students were reluctant to sign the forms, though they provided verbal consent. They requested an explanation for providing their initials on the consent forms. I explained the ethical procedure formalities according to research standards of universities in the UK, and they agreed to sign the forms. The

forms were all signed by the participants and me (ahead of the interviews and lesson observations).

During the study, I strictly followed the ethical regulations outlined in the information sheets and consent forms. I used pseudonyms for the participants and anonymised any other names. The participants were aware that they were able to withdraw their data up to the end of the data collection or discontinue participation without explaining their reasons for doing so. All the data collection was conducted anonymously, the confidentiality of the data storage was ensured, the data were stored separately on the University of Leeds drive, away from any cloud synchronisation, and the data will be destroyed once the study is completed (Saunders et al., 2015).

### **3.11 Insider, outsider researcher: my position as a researcher conducting studies on the Saudi EFL community**

To take an ethical approach, this study must acknowledge the position of the researcher in terms of neutrality (Wilson, 2017). It is important that in conducting studies within the EFL community, I clarify my stance in terms of researcher positionality. My philosophical stance as a researcher has affected decisions, which I had made in the research design. According to Holmes (2020), positionality impacts views and beliefs about the research design, research conduct and outputs. My experience as an EFL teacher, and in administering national assessments and arrangements in the past for staff training, may have a bearing on my philosophical position. My aim (as a researcher) is to provide objective and value-free analysis of the research questions by drawing on the views of experts and practitioners in the field and giving preference to their perspectives. These considerations have a bearing on my philosophical position (discussed in section 3.3).

Based on my background, I am aligned with the position of an insider as described by Saidin and Yaacob (2016), by engaging in topics that are related to a group I am associated with. As such, my insider knowledge provides access to key players and provides a level of personal knowledge in the field to help understand and question the views of others. It is also suggested that participants may therefore be more willing to share, and they may provide richer data (Berger, 2013, cited in Woods,

2019). Equally, being an insider raises questions over the level of researcher objectivity, as it is possible to select participants with whom we share similarities (Woods, 2019). For example, two of the participants in the sample were employees when I worked at the university, and we met occasionally during staff meetings and professional training events. I realised that this could be an advantage and would facilitate a rapport with the participants and thus generate rich data (Garton and Copland, 2010). To some degree, any concerns over my insider status are minimised by the fact that I discontinued my work at this institution two years before initiating this research project. This reduced the more immediate familiarity, plus I had no experience of teaching the newly introduced curriculum (i.e. the EAP courses using the *Cambridge Unlock series*). This was advantageous for the research as I had to learn about the new curriculum and the new policy on assessment from the participants.

Relationships with the research participants generated considerations of what is described in the literature as the insider and outsider researcher. For example, understanding teachers' beliefs, expectations, and concerns, as well as their interactions with their learners during feedback processes, were among many other facets that were taken into consideration for the purpose of this exploratory study. Since qualitative research is relational (Kubanyiova, 2013), developing rapport and trust is considered essential. However, this was quite challenging considering the power imbalance in the relationship between the researcher and the research participants at the researched site. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge my role in both the generation and interpretation of the research data.

While some scholars state that the power should entirely belong to the researcher, others argue that it should be shared with participants. For example, Karnieli-Miller et al., (2009) propose that the power relationship between the researcher and the participants can be viewed as a continuum, and in constant fluctuation during the numerous stages of the research process. In the recruitment and data collection stages, for instance, both the researcher and participants appear to share power. As the researcher makes decisions about the research agenda in the selection of the interview questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005), the participants might determine the degree of collaboration in the discussion and may adjust the direction of the

interview. It is argued, however, that during the data analysis process the researcher is in total control of the data and regains the power (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). Indeed, it is the researcher who interprets the participants' stories and decides how to present them to the research community. This entails additional responsibility toward the participants.

Considering my epistemological stance and the nature of this study, I tried to reduce my power and engage the participants in the process of making sense of data. For example, to describe and discuss the adopted curriculum and assessment methods, I realised that I needed to gain further entrance into my insider perspective. To avoid potential biases on my part when meeting the participants, I made sure that I allowed each participant to freely express their views. I informed them that I was not there to judge their work or assess them, but to learn from them. I also discussed the information sheet with them to explain their role in the research and my role as a researcher. Aspects such as confidentiality and anonymity were brought up with each participant. This disclosure encouraged participants to be open and comfortable in deciding on what to share with me. It also allowed the participants to express their interpretation of aspects relating to teaching, learning, assessment, and the nature of their feedback practice. For example, during the lesson observation, I sat at the back of the class (near the students), I tried to reduce eye contact with the teacher participants, and I refrained from asking any question that could cause them to feel uncomfortable. Thus, my presence resulted in minimal disruption during lessons.

To some extent, research is a co-produced product because participants are involved in the project by sharing their personal experiences and, are inseparable from it (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). In this case, I considered the participants' views during the analysis stage, and my role as a researcher was to "understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes" of my participants (Cohen et al, 2007, p.19) which I have attempted to do when conducting this study. I also felt that it was insufficient and decided to allow the research participants an opportunity to reflect on my interpretations of their experiences, and by thus becoming involved in the co-construction of meaning (Harvey, 2015) by employing the strategy of member

checking (discussed in section 3.12). The next section discusses the implemented strategies in the data collection and analysis process for maintaining trustworthiness.

### **3.12 Trustworthiness in the interviews and classroom observations**

I adopted the concept of trustworthiness for this qualitative study. Trustworthiness is used to describe criteria such as credibility and transferability, that are used to judge qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) implies a careful and precise inspection of the findings and conclusions using specific strategies. In my study, I used two trustworthiness strategies: triangulation and member checking. Aspects of trustworthiness that were addressed in this study are discussed below.

Triangulation involves using multiple data sources to validate the findings (Bryman, 2012; Duff, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Cohen et al., 2011). This strategy is essential for validating the findings when using descriptions and themes (Locke et al., 2000). In section 3.6, I discussed all the data generation tools and provided the rationale for each method: interviews (face-to-face, phone calls, via online text chat) classroom observations, and research field notes. The findings were based on the evidence generated by all these tools. Collecting data from various sources provided different perspectives on the same issue, and this enriched the findings. This is based on data collected from five individual teachers, different types of data collection methods (interviews, classroom observations including content material), ways of obtaining data (face-to-face/phone interviews, observation).

To enhance the credibility of the research, triangulation of source evidence required obtaining access to learners (classroom observations) to witness teachers' actual feedback practice. Also, approaching institutional informants, who were assigned committee tasks (e.g. Mentoring committee, Test Development and Curriculum Unit) and who also happened to be teachers, served in reporting context-related matters and in seeking clarification on aspects that were beyond the participants' scope.

These interviews were conducted to form an understanding of the sample's views on the feedback instructions against the views of the management. I also collected data from participants who had different backgrounds and experiences to be a realistic representation of the multi-cultural perspectives within the teaching and learning

setting. This produced data on the understandings of Saudi tertiary assessment feedback practices from a heterogenous sample (i.e. different backgrounds, disciplines, and experiences) compared to a much similar and local point of view. This supports the credibility of the research findings, according to Creswell (2008).

The second strategy used for delivering trustworthiness was member checking. This involves giving the participants the analysed data or findings and asking them to review and comment on them (Creswell, 2012). Participants' assistance with the interpretation of results was used to strengthen the analysis by validating the findings and addressing my own potential bias during the analysis. In this study, the transcripts from the interviews and the interaction data (between the teacher and learner) were made available to the participants to confirm whether the transcriptions were true reflections of their views. The participants were given the opportunity and sufficient time to reflect and comment on my interpretation of the data to validate and correct my interpretations of their responses. The participants agreed that the transcriptions were true reflections of their views, and thus nothing on the transcriptions was changed. Preliminary analysis of the interviews was member-checked by the participants in the form of summaries that were shared electronically (see Appendix G5). After the teachers were given sufficient time after the observations to formulate their reflections, an open-ended interview was conducted with each teacher, in which we discussed my interpretation of their practices in the classroom. This step was performed as a member check, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985), to enhance the credibility of the findings.

### **3.13 Chapter summary**

This chapter has discussed the methodological approach and research design of the study. It started with a restatement of the research questions, followed by the philosophical underpinning of the study, and the research approach. It provided details of the data generation tools and procedures for observations, interviews, and discussion of the data analysis stages. To ensure trustworthiness, I have attempted to be transparent and have reflected on the challenges I faced throughout the data collection and analysis process, giving explanations to justify my decisions. To explore and understand the nature of teachers' feedback practices, I recruited five English language teachers from one ELP at a Saudi university. Data were generated

in three phases and over a period of seven weeks, employing semi-structured interviews and semi-structured classroom observations followed by post-observation stimulated recall interviews and final closing interviews. Using qualitative methods in this study allowed for a thorough exploration of the research questions and provided data that reflected the views of the participants. Data were then analysed both manually and electronically, which benefitted the study as the strengths of one method helped to mitigate the weaknesses of the other. As a result of the analysis, emerging themes were identified as the key findings of the study, which are discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Research findings for the individual cases**

This study explores the case of five EAP instructors who strive to provide feedback on the comprehensibility of their students' writing at a Saudi university. The results are derived from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and stimulated recall interviews to elicit the teachers' feedback approaches to their learners' L2 writing. In this chapter, I explore in-service teachers' conceptual understanding of feedback, their self-reported feedback practice on their learners' L2 writing, and their actual feedback practices. Five cases are used to draw attention to teachers' adopted beliefs and their congruence with practice. First, I will consider the participants' conceptions of feedback, including their beliefs and their self-reported experiences of feedback delivery. Then, I will discuss how teachers' beliefs are enacted in their classrooms before considering the alignment and/or misalignment of their beliefs with their practices, respectively. Finally, the teachers' reflections on the context are recognised as having an impact on their feedback practice.

### **4.1 Introduction to Nisreen**

This section presents the case of Nisreen (pseudonym), who is a native bilingual of English and Urdu. She was one of five English language teachers working at the ELP at the Saudi university, with the same teaching schedule (18 hours per week) as the other participants. Nisreen had been teaching English for seven years on this language programme, and this was her second year teaching the recently introduced curriculum, for course level 102 (equivalent to the English profile of CEFR A2). Nisreen's academic qualifications included an MA Degree in English Language and Linguistics and a certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA). The following sections present her journey, from being at the receiving end of feedback to becoming the feedback provider.

#### **4.1.1 Nisreen's assessment feedback experiences informing her cognition**

Nisreen's conceptions, experiences of assessment feedback, and self-reported feedback practice are reported in the following sections, before being compared with her actual practice. This section also considers the contextual factors of the language programme.

#### 4.1.1.1 Nisreen's positive feedback experiences at college

Nisreen learned English at a very early age and began receiving feedback from teachers when she started school. Nisreen reported that the feedback she received in school and college were very different. According to Nisreen, feedback on writing in school was brief and grade oriented, whereas in college it was more detailed, with proper use of some error codes. This was when feedback became motivating and constructive:

*Interviewer: what about assessment in writing? Can you remember how you were graded or assessed in writing? What kind of feedback you received as a student in those schools?*

*Nisreen. Yeah, in schools, to be very honest, it wasn't much detailed. They were just giving us a grade and we'll just write very brief comment that "good attempt"... **But yes, at college level, it was much more detailed** [Nisreen's emphasis]. They would highlight each and every mistake on school, they would also, I still remember they used to use some error codes, umm, mostly for spellings and some grammatical mistakes, but written feedback, like what do I need to work on...I remember my teachers would always start with positive points first, that overall "very well written and you have improved from before", "some very good ideas", and then they would come on to this, which I would say, like criticism. I mean, **the feedback used to be constructive** [Nisreen's emphasis]. (Nisreen, Pre-Observation Interview)*

Nisreen believed that her learners should be given an active role in the feedback process. Nisreen believed that she had benefitted from being engaged (as a learner) in the feedback process during her learning experiences. For example, Nisreen recalled being exposed to feedback approaches that supported learners to provide correct forms. She reported her teacher's use of elicitation as she provided feedback in the class: "She would write down some common mistakes, and would ask, what do you think is wrong? She would not just directly tell us, she would mostly elicit from students, and it was more like a learning process".

#### 4.1.1.2 Peer feedback during in-service professional coursework teacher training

After having been introduced to peer feedback during her teacher training, Nisreen became familiar with being in a position of giving and receiving feedback from colleagues. Teacher training was influential in her development as a language teacher in terms of building pedagogical content knowledge, such as awareness of classroom interaction patterns. Nisreen had voluntarily become a member in the Student Academic Support Committee in the ELP, where she prepared revision sheets with her colleagues. During this in-service role, she received feedback on her tasks. Nisreen was also undergoing the ‘Train-the-Trainer’ course at the time of the study, which she found was an opportunity to develop in general, particularly due to the feedback she received from senior colleagues on all aspects of teaching. Nisreen elaborated on her beliefs about the benefits of receiving peer feedback from colleagues:

*I think it's quite healthy, **because, you know that they are your colleagues,** [Nisreen's emphasis] they're on the same page, they're also learning, they are, also given training to become teachers, so not very seasoned students were there. (Nisreen, Pre-Observation Interview)*

Nisreen found benefit in peer feedback. She thought that it served developmental formative purposes, compared to a short end-of-course evaluation. She said, “*We used to comment on each other's strengths and weaknesses, and our trainers used to give us feedback. And that too was quite in detail. And they also, had face-to-face sessions (for feedback)*”. Nisreen's beliefs on the benefit of peer feedback were attributed to receiving formative and individual feedback from her peers. Nisreen explained that she learned to apply peer-assessment in her feedback practice after completing the CELTA course. She described her approach as using ‘two stars and a wish’ – providing two positive attributes and one area in need of development; “*Give them two positive points they have improved, and then, ‘I wish’ you can say that, this is their weakness and how to overcome this*”. (Nisreen, Pre-Observation Interview)

#### 4.1.2 Nisreen's self-reported feedback practice

When describing her current feedback practice, Nisreen acknowledged the role of 'the learners' when it comes to choosing the best approach. She commented, "*It depends, on the type of students you have, on their **attitude**, also their **behaviour** [Nisreen's emphasis]. Some students, they prefer to have like one-to-one sessions, they don't like general feedback*". Nisreen reported that her approach to written feedback included a preference for using error codes and carrying out peer assessment/feedback. Nisreen was strongly supportive of this latter strategy, but she preferred to use it with higher proficiency learners. Additionally, Nisreen reported using a smart-phone application (WhatsApp) to provide feedback outside of class: "*I just briefly comment on their writing and give detailed feedback in class later*". This suggested that she employed a hybrid approach (face-to-face and online interaction) to feedback delivery. Samples of Nisreen's use of WhatsApp chat messages and feedback comments were shared with me (See Appendix C1).

Nisreen also mentioned the importance of considering the assessment criteria when providing feedback to improve learners' awareness of the assessment rubric/rating scales. She explained this by discussing the assessment rating items related to content and mechanics in the process of providing feedback: "*So they should be very aware of the rubric, that one which they will be marked on, and the areas which they need to work on*". Finally, Nisreen believed that her feedback would help to develop learners' writing, despite the course length of seven weeks. She perceived learners' development over such a limited time:

*Some teachers often view that it is just not realistic, like seven weeks is not as sufficient time for students to improve, but I think so. Because, in a module, I **have seen some remarkable improvement among my students** [Nisreen's emphasis]. So, I think they do, and if I give them feedback, like this, seven weeks is a pretty long time. (Nisreen, Pre-Observation Interview)*

#### 4.1.3 Nisreen's actual classroom feedback practice

During the observed sessions, I noted Nisreen's feedback approach by identifying the sources (teacher, peer, self) in the tasks that she carried out. In each session, Nisreen delivered her feedback systematically through different strategies and

techniques. This was observed in the discussions that took place between learners and between the teacher and learner(s). It was noted that this method encouraged the learners to generate self-corrected forms with support from their teacher. In her discussion with her learners, Nisreen's feedback techniques included elicitation, for example: "*So which is the correct one? ...How do you spell it?*". I also noted Nisreen encouraging learners to think about issues in writing based on the sample she projected during lessons: "*Why did she get this mark?*" Nisreen frequently provided restatements to confirm the correct answers from her learners:

*T. Ok, if you want to give **your opinion**, [Nisreen's emphasis], what will you use?*

*Ss. I think that, 'in my opinion'.*

*T. Exactly, 'in my opinion', I believe that, I personally feel, it seems to me, yes, exactly. (Nisreen, Classroom observation)*

Nisreen also practised peer assessment and peer feedback during both observed sessions. It was noticed that the learners were familiar with this practice and actively participated in supporting each other. Nisreen guided them in the process of error correction, and she asked them (individually) what they found in one another's writing and what corrections they provided. Nisreen also projected four writing samples for her learners to practise evaluating their peers. Following the observations, samples of students' writing tasks and assessments were shared voluntarily with the researcher and discussed with Nisreen. Samples of the participants' mediated feedback techniques (verbal, written, and co-produced feedback processes) across the cases are provided in appendix G2.

Nisreen's actions in the classroom strongly supported the use of assessment and feedback, simultaneously. For example, Nisreen integrated a game-like activity tool (Kahoot) for assessing writing-related information, the application of linking words in writing, and distinguishing factual statements from opinions, in a self-assessment manner. Corrective feedback was electronically generated, and Nisreen gave positive reinforcement throughout the activity. The extract below demonstrates the interaction between the teacher and her learners as they answered the online task. The purpose of the task was to distinguish advantages, disadvantages, topics,

supporting sentences and the correct use of linking words. An excerpt from the lesson is provided below:

*T. Look at the options first [teacher reminds students to take their time]*

*T. **Is it a fact or opinion?** [Clarification]*

*S. Opinion*

*T. This time, you played very well! [teacher commends learners for answering]*

(Nisreen, Classroom observation)

Regarding written feedback, Nisreen shared screen-shot images demonstrating corrective feedback on her learners' writing tasks, including errors relating to the content (e.g. plagiarism, off-topic), organisation (e.g. paragraph structure), and punctuation (image found in Appendix G). According to Nisreen, this not only provided opportunities for learners to make up for weaknesses in their writing tasks and provide her with immediate information about their writing performance, but it also served to build a trusting relationship with her learners.

During the observed lessons, revision samples were shared with me. Written feedback was mainly related to writing structure, grammar, and mechanics. Samples of her written feedback were: *"You need to write a concluding sentence"*, *"Give your opinion at the end"*. Samples of Nisreen's written feedback on spelling, punctuation, grammar and structure included: *"Use paragraph format"*, while prompts to correct the learners' interpretation via WhatsApp of the writing topic were, for example: *"It's off-topic! You are supposed to write about the place you visited and its positives & negatives"*. The samples that were shared during the pre-observed and observed lessons are provided (see Appendices C and G2).

As I observed Nisreen during the lesson, I noticed her training her learners to evaluate writing samples against the assessment criteria and rubric/rating scales. Her deliberate act of ensuring that her learners understood writing criteria standards as a strategy was embedded into her feedback practice. For instance, Nisreen projected four anonymous written passages (selected from their writing assessment) and asked her learners to assess the writing samples. In the next extract, Nisreen

asks her students to provide evaluation marks and justifications for the marks they suggested using the provided writing assessment rubric/rating scale:

*T. This is a situation in which a student wrote 70 words in a paragraph form, she had clear topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence, no grammatical mistakes or structure or spelling mistakes, why did she get this mark?*

*Ss. Word count...*

*T. What was the word count for your paragraph?*

*Ss. Ninety, ninety to one hundred*

*T. So, 70 is?*

*S. Less...*

*T. Yes, so she did not write enough. (Nisreen, Classroom observation)*

#### **4.1.4 Nisreen's belief-practice relationship**

To relate Nisreen's beliefs to her practice, the following sections provide examples of the alignment and misalignment that were noted in her feedback practice, concerning use of coded feedback and self-assessment (section 4.1.4.1), peer assessment (section 4.1.4.2), and developing learners' assessment knowledge (section 4.1.4.3).

##### **4.1.4.1 Alignment of Nisreen's beliefs and practice on coded feedback enabling learners' self-assessment**

For the individual writing task, Nisreen's written feedback included the use of error codes and written comments on learners' writing tasks and assessments. This was congruent with what she reported in the pre-observation interview: *"Because I have explained to them, error codes, very well, I take a printout of these error codes, and I put that on the bulletin board"*. I asked Nisreen about the purpose of using error codes, and she explained that teachers are expected to abide by the rules in the programme and use error codes in their feedback. She also mentioned providing the error code key as a reference for her learners. As a form of self-assessment, Nisreen's learners were asked to use the key to identify their errors in writing mechanics. Nisreen explained that she had taught them how to interpret them based

on the abbreviations provided in the key: *“I just followed the rules over here. They have asked us don't write the correct spelling and just use error codes”*. In addition to following institutional guidelines on feedback, Nisreen expressed her belief in the benefit of using error codes, as opposed to providing learners with direct feedback correction on their errors:

*They can discuss together, since they know these error codes very well. So, they don't actually come for every mistake that what should I have written, they correct themselves, most of the times they know that this is wrong for spellings, they check dictionary, from their mobiles. But if there is a sentence structure, which is a completely wrong sentence, then they come to me.*  
(Nisreen, Post-observation interview)

This practice was supportive of learners' developing autonomy, as it reduced the need to refer to the teacher for error code meanings. Thus, Nisreen was giving her learners an active role in the feedback process through self-correction, as opposed to other situations in which the teacher becomes the sole source of feedback.

#### **4.1.4.2 Misalignment of Nisreen's beliefs and practice on peer assessment**

Nisreen's actual classroom feedback strategy of using peer assessment/feedback was incongruent with her previously stated beliefs. Initially, Nisreen reported using peer assessment with higher-level learners by saying, *“I've tried it. Not with low levels to be very honest, but yes, with level three, and four”*. However, during the observed lessons, Nisreen asked her learners to peer-assess by exchanging marked exam papers and providing peer feedback in the form of 'two stars and a wish'. After getting to know her learners, Nisreen mentioned that she believed that they had acquired critiquing abilities through self-assessment and peer assessment, as she recalled: *“Now that I have observed, that they are able to do the error correction for their peers, for themselves, they can exactly know that what went wrong in their writing”*. Nisreen decided to allow her learners to practise peer assessment after the initial interview, although they were not placed in high category learner groups. In the pre-observation interview, Nisreen was not in favour of using peer assessment with

low-proficiency learners (see section 4.1.1.2). This demonstrates a change in Nisreen's view on using peer assessment with a certain proficiency learner group.

#### **4.1.4.3 Alignment of Nisreen's beliefs and practice of including assessment knowledge in her feedback**

After reviewing the institutional instructions, I noted that the writing assessment rubric/rating scales were the only suggested documents to be shared with learners. Nisreen's feedback gave further clarity about goals and success criteria through practical applications and the use of exemplars. This was a decision that required preparation by Nisreen, as the institution's documents did not provide resources for this. There were several discussions with learners on writing assessment criteria and the assessment rubric/rating scales that demonstrated Nisreen's use of assessment awareness approaches in her feedback practice. She reported earlier (in the first interview) on her approach to providing learners with a clear understanding of assessment measures: *"I've shown them the exam sample and the rubric, they will be marked down if they, a paragraph is beautifully written, but just did not include the concluding sentence, they lose marks"*. This was in alignment with the first interview when she mentioned using the assessment criteria when giving feedback on content and mechanics (as discussed in section 4.1.2).

According to Nisreen, engaging her learners in classroom discussions (such as peer assessment and discussions surrounding assessment criteria) allows her learners to acquire the capacity to judge their own work. Nisreen perceived that her feedback approach had an impact on her learners' performance over the weeks, reflected in an improvement in their marks in the final writing assessment. She reported how they described to her their performance in the final exam, due to what she believed was the result of previous feedback on their earlier writing assessments. Nisreen stated that an indication of them being mindful and conscious of their performance was that they let her know how they had performed in the assessment:

*They told me, 'Teacher they asked us to write five, and I wrote three linking words, I think I'm going to lose marks', and they were regretting it. So, I mean fine it was a careless mistake, but at least they can identify their mistakes.*

(Nisreen, Final interview)

It was noted that Nisreen's actual feedback practice was mainly congruent with her previously stated beliefs. Her feedback was distinguished (among the sample) by her use of multiple feedback sources (teacher, peers, self) in her corrective feedback techniques (using prompts), in referring to assessment criteria, and by encouraging her learners to correct themselves and their peers.

#### **4.1.5 Contextual factors impacting Nisreen's feedback provision**

By the end of the teaching course, Nisreen was asked (in a final interview) to provide her thoughts about her assessment, teaching, and feedback provision. She reported on some of the contextual factors, including adjustments to delivering feedback using WhatsApp (section 4.1.5.1), and the need for considering learners' L2 proficiency (section 4.1.5.2).

##### **4.1.5.1 Nisreen's adjustment to delivering timely feedback – using WhatsApp**

By the end of the course, Nisreen expressed her thoughts about the length of the programme course being limiting, although she mentioned otherwise at an earlier stage of the course (section 4.1.2). She stated that the course expectations were to produce one paragraph of writing, which may have been manageable. However, she stated another issue that arose from the course length, which was the need to settle students properly in their assigned courses at the beginning of each teaching module. This is when schedule changes frequently take place, which (according to Nisreen) causes disruption to instruction. She noted: *"I think, we still, lose a lot of time initially, during the first week. Still, there are placement tests going on, registrations going on, then there are late registered students"*.

Although this was not a requirement in the teaching context, Nisreen had a strong argument for choosing WhatsApp as part of her feedback delivery method: *"So, I think WhatsApp is something, very quick, they get a swift reply, they can just quickly ask a question"*. This was the main reason for using WhatsApp, as it allowed prompt feedback delivery, compared to more formal methods such as Blackboard. Nisreen also provided another reason for seeking additional methods for feedback delivery – students being 'unavailable' and unable to visit her for feedback during her office

hours. This motivated Nisreen to use online means for delivering feedback. She commented, *“My schedule is posted outside the classroom, so they know very well that I am available in these timings, but still some students have other subjects to attend, or they have to eat in the break”*. The course duration and students’ commitments (attending other courses during her office hours) both served as a considerable trigger for Nisreen’s decision to provide an additional method in her feedback delivery - using *WhatsApp*.

#### **4.1.5.2 Nisreen’s feedback approach is informed by learners’ L2 proficiency**

As Nisreen reflected on her feedback approach, she developed considerations about certain strategies that might not suit all types of learners. She noted that it was important to take certain characteristics such as language proficiency level into consideration. She mentioned the need to use different feedback strategies, such as a whole class, and one-to-one writing conferences, which are sometimes needed for providing additional support for learners’ writing development:

*You can't just rely on peer feedback to be very honest. I think you need to have a separate hour, in fact, a whole class session to make them understand. It would be much better, if I just, for some of the students, if I need like one-to-one interaction with them, to let them know that what do they lack, and what areas they need to work on. (Nisreen, Final interview)*

In the earlier stages of the teaching course, Nisreen showed awareness of the important process of gathering information about students’ understanding of essential writing skills through classroom-based assessments. Nisreen mentioned learning new approaches during her CELTA training, which she said had developed her understanding of the importance of using different classroom strategies in feedback: *“I have learned interaction patterns can be different, yes shuffling is important, moving students around is important. Giving feedback, different approaches in our way”*. By this, Nisreen emphasised the importance of noticing mixed abilities in classrooms and using appropriate strategies to allow lower proficiency learners to benefit from higher proficiency learners.

To conclude, Nisreen's actual feedback practice was mainly congruent with her stated beliefs. Her feedback was mainly carried out as whole class discussions on assessment criteria, modelling exemplars, using technology-enhanced feedback, and integrating peer assessment and peer feedback.

## **4.2 Introduction to Haya**

This section presents the case of Haya (pseudonym), who is an Arabic native speaker. She learned English by going to school in Egypt. Haya had been teaching English for 11 years on the language programme. As in the case of Nisreen, Haya was assigned to teach course level 102, and this was also her second year of teaching the new curriculum. Haya's academic qualifications included a BA in English Language Education, an MA in Language Education and Innovation, and a CELTA certificate. The following sections introduce Haya's life journey in receiving and delivering feedback for academic and career development.

### **4.2.1 Haya's assessment feedback experiences informing her cognition**

In the following sections, Haya's conceptions, experiences of assessment feedback and self-reported feedback practice are reported, while taking into consideration the contextual factors of the language programme.

#### **4.2.1.1 Haya's negative feedback experience at school**

Haya described the feedback she received in school as unsatisfactory, as she did not perceive it as 'educational'. For example, instead of writing several drafts that were revised by her teacher, she was told to memorise a good sample and write this passage in the summative exam. At university, however, Haya was exposed to what she described as 'good feedback' through consistent discussions with her supervisors. Those contrastive feedback experiences motivated Haya to become conscientious in her feedback practice, which she described: *"I always reflect on my feedback, by what happened in my life. Okay, there were good or bad teachers, I don't want to be like them"*. Haya was clear in her expression that a teacher's feedback practice reflects their professional character. She was both reflective and expressive of her need for growth as a teaching professional and within the demands of the context.

#### **4.2.1.2 Haya's positive pre-service and in-service professional development experience**

Haya found the pre-service training useful for developing her language teaching skills. She learned to give feedback on writing after attending a CELTA course. Haya also completed an in-service professional development 'Train-the-Trainer' course, where she received verbal feedback on the teaching of different skills, including writing. She reported that the recent training she had received had changed her understanding of feedback (as a formative practice). She commented: *"I am a teacher now, I know what is meant by writing, and giving feedback. When I go back to what I had before, no, it wasn't educational at all"*.

#### **4.2.2 Haya's self-reported feedback practice**

When describing her feedback practice, Haya acknowledged the importance of using a flexible approach in feedback delivery. For example, Haya reported using WhatsApp, not only to provide feedback to her learners individually (as in the case of Nisreen) but also to facilitate discussion among the learners in the WhatsApp group chat. She also stated that current learners expect innovative approaches to learning: *"Even within the class, because students are stuck to their mobiles. So, why not to use this mobile, they will get ideas from each other"*. This suggested that Haya also employed a hybrid approach (face-to-face and online interaction) in her feedback delivery. Samples of Haya's use of WhatsApp chat messages and feedback comments were shared with me (See Appendix C2).

Haya also mentioned that she preferred using a whole class feedback approach to support her learners' writing development by bringing their attention to their errors and informing them about the assessment criteria: *"Before I give them the feedback, I write common mistakes, and I show it on the board, and then I ask them to correct the mistakes"*. Haya believed in the importance of providing learners with the assessment criteria, while still guiding them in the evaluation process by asking them to check their colleague's papers for specific aspects (e.g. spelling and punctuation) during pair work tasks. She recognised that they needed support when they were assessing each other: *"At the end, they are not teachers"*. When asked if she would consider using peer assessment and feedback, Haya reported that she might use

peer assessment in her current teaching module: *“I think I will do that this module, because I think my students are good, but if they are repeaters, I cannot do that with them”*.

#### **4.2.3 Haya’s actual classroom feedback practice**

As I observed Haya during the writing task and writing assessment sessions, I noted her feedback approach by identifying the sources of feedback she employed. Haya used a whole class approach for providing feedback. In this feedback process, she took samples of learners’ errors from their writing tasks and assessments, shared these errors with the whole class, and allowed them to provide the correct forms themselves. Thus, I witnessed Haya’s use of exemplars in discussing learners’ common errors, as she displayed anonymous writing through the classroom projector, using samples of good practice and samples with errors (e.g. compound sentences with the correct linking words).

Indeed, Haya encouraged her learners to identify the errors using prompting techniques, such as elicitation. The learners, in return, provided correct forms for grammar, spelling, and sentence structure (as shown in appendix G). This behaviour, which Haya displayed in her error correction techniques, was observed during her feedback discussions with learners. In the post-observation interview, she explained how this technique allows them to discover on their own: *“I don’t say, there is an error, I repeat, raise my voice, I put it in like a question, **to lead them** [Haya’s emphasis] to find it”*.

#### **4.2.4 Haya’s belief-practice relationship**

To relate Haya’s beliefs to her practice, the following sections provide a summary of the alignment that was noted in her feedback practice. This was regarding the application of peer assessment and developing learners’ assessment knowledge by discussing quality work.

##### **4.2.4.1 Alignment of Haya’s beliefs about peer assessment/feedback**

I observed Haya as she carried out peer assessment and peer feedback during one observed session, and I noticed that the learners were familiar with this practice.

They actively participated in supporting each other. Haya elaborated on her positive belief in peer assessment, while using the 'think, pair, share' approach. She favourably sustained this approach in most skills, and she reported that her learners would first think 'individually', then 'with their peers', before discussing it within a 'larger group'.

During the post-observation interviews, Haya explained the benefits of this strategy by providing details on why she believed that this practice was beneficial for the learners: *“to share ideas and get more vocabulary. Some weaker students don't have enough ideas, just they can write one or two words, but when they sit with others, they can get benefit from them”*. Haya also mentioned another perceived benefit of using peer assessment, other than serving the learning process. She believed that this practice also reduced pressure from the teacher in the process of giving feedback to a class of students. Haya elaborated further on the advantage of allowing her learners to assess each other: *“So, when you look at writing, with the eye of correcting, you will be more focused on the mistakes, and that's what happened, they started to correct each other punctuation, and spelling”*. Again, Haya re-emphasised that her decision to take on this practice would be informed by the learners' L2 proficiency, suggesting that learners contribute to the success of this strategy: *“These [learners] are really active. Sometimes, with weaker ones or repeaters, they don't care”*.

#### **4.2.4.2 Alignment of Haya's beliefs on projecting 'quality work' in feedback**

Classroom observation allowed me to witness Haya's use of exemplars as she used them to analyse writing issues with her learners. This activity encouraged the participation of the learners in the feedback process, which served as self-evaluation practice. This represents an alignment between Haya's beliefs and her practice. For example, it was an effort to facilitate discussion. Haya noted that this approach helped develop the students' ability to self-correct. Furthermore, as Haya discussed this approach, she showed reflexivity by discussing with me her plans for scrutinising other aspects of writing that needed attention:

*I was really happy with them. But I thought, next class, I can take pictures of some of the writing without their names, and also ask the students, 'What's*

*the problem here?’ Maybe because I noticed some of them writing, without a topic, without mentioning here what is the title, without indenting, even the layout, and then let them also to correct, and give their opinion about this writing. (Haya, Post-observation interview)*

Haya certainly embedded writing assessment knowledge in the writing task session and then in the writing exam follow-up feedback session. She chose the most common mistakes in her students’ writing and then used these to stimulate a discussion on whether they knew the writing rules. Haya explained the purpose behind this by adding: *“I chose some excellent sentences written by some good students, to show them that I also care about the good writing, and I asked them some questions. Why is this sentence a good topic sentence?”* Haya further explained how this process provides support to weaker students, who have trouble explaining reasons for errors. Haya believed that a ‘shared’ feedback role among the class allowed feedback to be provided in an informal and non-intimidating manner:

*Okay, some students noticed the mistake, but they can't highlight what's the problem exactly. They don't say for example, ‘the problem here is the verb, because the sentence structure is wrong’, But they know there is a problem. And I found in their writing some students, some very weak students, they weren't able to, **so that's why I let the high achievers talk, to express themselves** [Haya's emphasis], Okay, and the others, I know, they're not participating in that stage, **but they are learning** from them. (Haya, Post-observation interview)*

It was noted that Haya’s actual feedback practice was mainly congruent with her stated beliefs. Her feedback was distinguished by her use of several feedback sources (teacher, peers, self) in her corrective feedback techniques (using prompts), and by her reference to the assessment criteria.

#### **4.2.5 Contextual factors informing Haya’s feedback provision**

Haya reported on some of the contextual factors that influenced her feedback provision, including a need for training on assessing and providing feedback (section

4.2.5.1) and limited time for supporting learners' writing development (section 4.2.5.2). These are discussed independently in the following sections.

#### **4.2.5.1 Haya's need for training on assessment and providing feedback**

Haya made an interesting link between the ability to assess and the ability to provide feedback. When reporting on how confident she perceived herself in terms of assessing and providing feedback (evaluative marks and descriptive comments), she mentioned feeling unsure of her assessment and feedback, *"Maybe because of the criteria, [Haya's emphasis] sometimes it's not clear enough for the teacher"*. By saying this, Haya is expressing the difficulties she faced with interpreting the writing assessment rubric/rating scales before she translated them into feedback for her learners. She was questioning her ability to understand the assessment criteria. For example, she described the assessment rubric as lacking clarity in terms of evaluating students' ideas by adding: *"Sometimes you feel that she did wonderful in the grammar, the spelling but sometimes you feel, not all those ideas are relevant, I can't judge the ideas"*.

When asked about the kind of training she had received and needed, Haya said that she had never received in-service training on providing feedback and that she, therefore, needed training on that: *"Yeah, maybe I need to develop some point, maybe I need to change the way I'm giving my feedback, maybe there are some other alternative ways which is better than the one that I'm doing"*. Haya specifically noted a need for training on feedback-embedded assessment, adding, *"When it comes to assessment, not just to assess the students, no, part of the assessment is also giving feedback to the students"*. Thus, Haya recognised that assessment and feedback are complementary to one another. She thought that it would be useful to be observed by her mentors for developmental purposes, saying, *"I think also observation is very important to develop the teacher"*.

#### **4.2.5.2 Haya's need for a longer course length for feedback provision**

Haya believed that the module timeframe presented an issue in terms of allowing sufficient time for feedback provision. She stated: *"Because the skill of writing, you cannot have this kind of achievement in a month or a month and a half. Yes, they*

*can change a little bit, but to move from mark 5, for example to be mark 10, it's very hard. It needs time*". Even when using technology to provide feedback, Haya believed that this was not as efficient as feedback being given in class: *"Because it's face to face, you can write full sentences, you can evaluate every part, but of course on the WhatsApp, or even the Blackboard itself, you cannot give them the right feedback like the one in the class"*. Upon reflection, Haya questioned the 'effectiveness' of technologically delivered feedback and she preferred discussing the feedback with her learners in the class. As a result, she emphasised the need for the module timeframe to be extended: *"If we have enough time, in a like a term, or semester, I think it would be better"*.

To conclude, Haya's actual feedback practice was congruent with her stated beliefs. Her feedback was mainly carried out as whole class discussions in addressing assessment criteria, discussions using corrective feedback techniques (using prompts), modelling of writing exemplars, and integration of peer assessment and peer feedback into her practice.

### **4.3 Introduction to Summa**

This section presents the case of Summa (pseudonym), who is a native bilingual of English and Arabic. Summa was the most experienced language instructor in the sample, having been in the field of language teaching for 25 years. She had taught English for nine years in this language programme. Similar to the previous cases (Nisreen and Haya), this was also Summa's second year in teaching the recently introduced curriculum, and she was also assigned to teach course level 102. Her academic qualifications included an MA in Teacher Development and Reflection for Continuous Professional Development and a Postgraduate Diploma in Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). At the time of the study, Summa had recently begun to study for a PhD.

#### **4.3.1 Summa's assessment feedback experiences informing her cognition**

In the next sections, Summa's conceptions, experiences of assessment feedback and self-reported feedback practice are reported, while also taking into consideration the contextual factors of the language programme.

#### **4.3.1.1 Summa's motivational feedback experience in school**

Feedback in school served as a motivational tool for Summa, as she recalled its effect on her language learning experience. She expressed appreciation for the time her teacher spent in providing feedback to her as a learner. She explained how feedback would impact her learning: *"The kind of feedback, either like spoken or written feedback, sort of impacts your motivation in language learning, and that's sort of like takes you to the next level, it empowers you"*. Summa reported how this experience influenced her own practice when she became a teacher herself, by saying: *"You find yourself in a classroom, trying to sort of mirror them in some ways"*.

#### **4.3.1.2 Peer feedback on Summa's test item creation**

Summa had experience in test item creation through her responsibilities in the Test Development and Curriculum Unit. As part of her development on this committee, she was provided with constructive feedback on test item creation for various skills: *"It's just part of the policy that we get some feedback from the students and teachers, to see how well we're doing. Actually, it sort of improves our work as well"*. Summa reported finding the feedback supportive of her development: *"I'm learning a lot from my work through the committee, and because my work gets reviewed by other people, and I get feedback on my test creation items, like the question stems being too long"*. This represents Summa's in-service experience in test development and in receiving peer feedback from work colleagues.

#### **4.3.2 Summa's self-reported feedback practice**

Summa described her feedback practice as being selective in the correction of learners' errors; *"If a mistake is a big mistake, as a sort of affecting the cohesion, or the writing, then you have to highlight it, and then have to talk about it, but if it's a minor thing, or it doesn't affect cohesion, or the meaning then you don't give it focus"*. Summa expressed her strong beliefs about providing feedback by facilitating student self-assessment and 'reflection', which, she explained, makes students question their learning:

*Because I'm sort of so much into reflection into my teaching, questioning my own practice, I also like my students to question their own ways of learning. So I, yeah, I make use of instruments that are already provided in the book, like sort of self-assessment, at the end of each and every unit. I make sure that it is used in a more constructive way, by not just ticking boxes, but by also adding my own questions, so that my assessment is more constructive, and it gives me a more accurate picture of her own learning. (Summa, pre-observation interview)*

Summa described her feedback strategy as a practice of having frequent discussions with her learners on their common mistakes: *“When they have writing inside the class, I put them in groups, and they discuss something, and they write it together, and then I have them write it on the board”*. As for applying peer assessment in her classes, Summa was not supportive of this strategy, and reported her concerns with this approach, stating that it is mainly the teachers’ responsibility to assess and provide feedback.

#### **4.3.3 Summa’s actual classroom feedback practice**

As with the other cases I had observed, when I observed Summa during the writing task session, I noted her feedback approach by identifying the sources of feedback (teacher/peers/self) she employed. As her students were given back their marked writing tasks using error codes, they were asked to reflect, and self-correct their identified errors. Summa checked to see if they had corrected their writing errors. She then carried out a pair work activity, which was to correct sentence word order. She also carried out a game-like activity with her learners, by dividing them into two main groups as they competed for the highest score for correcting word sentence order.

Summa described her feedback as formative, saying; *“I did not give them the right answers, but I gave them the opportunity to work out the right answers by themselves”*. She described the case of one student who did not understand why she had underlined ‘he is works’ and how she guided the student to discover this by identifying that it was ‘grammatically’ incorrect. I also noted Summa initiating individual discussions with learners, and she explained how this practice helped with

providing feedback, even for herself: *“I will get feedback from them definitely, in my way assessing them, if it’s not working, I should notice alternative ways”*. This was Summa’s second reason for her dialogic feedback with her learners – to reflect on her practice as a teacher.

#### **4.3.4 Summa’s belief-practice relationship**

To relate Summa’s beliefs to her practice, the following sections provide a summary of the alignment and misalignment that was noted in her feedback practice, regarding peer assessment and learners’ self-assessment.

##### **4.3.4.1 Misalignment of Summa’s beliefs on peer assessment**

Although Summa’s beliefs were not strongly in support of peer assessment for all learner groups, I noted her application of peer assessment in one observed lesson. In the pre-observation interview, Summa reported that she did not believe in using peer assessment in her feedback practice:

*The students look up to me for assessing their work, meaning they expect the teacher, and they think it’s natural for the teacher to assess the work. The second one, is, I am always worried about students’ feelings, like they might feel intimidated, and patronised, as another peer or student would point out a mistake. It will sort of demotivate them, and they wouldn’t like. So, for these two reasons, I don’t do that. (Summa, pre-observation interview)*

After the observed session, I asked Summa about her beliefs about using peer assessment and feedback, to which she responded by saying: **“No, no, I said, I don’t tend to do a lot [Summa’s emphasis], because I don’t like my students to feel patronised, because, um they might look up to me, but it worked [peer assessment]. I was trying for the first time. I mean nobody felt like they were being forced to do that”**. With reflection on this unfamiliar feedback strategy, Summa thought that she could have carried out the task in a more controlled manner to allow independent thinking and evaluation. She noted in the post-observation interview, *“They got a peek at each other’s mistakes, so maybe, I should have brought it up, then the steps should have been fine”*.

#### 4.3.4.2 Alignment of Summa's beliefs about learner self-assessment

During the observation, I noticed her use of several reflective tasks in which learners would reflect and correct their writing errors. After she gave them back their marked writing assessment, she asked them to provide the corrected version: *"I want you to think about your errors"*. Her learners carried out this task independently, although Summa used a scaffolding approach during the task, checking to see if the students had questions or needed assistance. Summa had reported in the pre-observation interview her use of self-assessment in her feedback provision. After the observed session, she explained the purpose behind this approach: *"I sort of try to guide them towards the correct version of the mistakes, because I would like to, to promote the practice of critical thinking"*. I asked her whether it was because this was promoted in the curriculum, and Summa responded that she believed in the importance of supporting learner reflection:

*That's true, that is just part of the curriculum, number one. Number two, as a personal goal, I would like to create reflective learners, themselves, I like them to be able to reflect on their own learning. That's why when I give my feedback on their written tasks, I don't correct their mistakes, I highlight their mistakes. And I give them time to think about the mistakes and get to the corrections themselves. (Summa, Post-observation interview)*

After the observed session, I asked Summa about a particular student to whom she appeared to give more attention (compared to other learners). Summa explained to me that in carrying out this 'reflective' task, she was also trying to identify learners who needed additional support: *"There is a persistent problem with this student. I had to sort of, guide her, like, she would always write run-on sentences"*. Another noted observation was Summa's use of classroom competition tasks by dividing students into two large groups and instructing them to find the errors and provide corrected forms. When asked about the purpose behind this practice, Summa responded saying, *"I love students coming to the front of class, I like them to take responsibility of the role they are in, they get challenged"*. She noted that this approach might not work with all learners, by saying, *"But sometimes it might also not work with others, like those who like to think, and reflect"*.

#### 4.3.5 Contextual factors informing Summa's feedback provision: Summa's need for individual (tutor-learner) conferencing

At the end of the teaching course, Summa reported on some of the contextual factors informing her feedback practice, including limited time for supporting learners' writing development, and the need to consider individual one-to-one feedback. Summa brought up the issue of time having an impact on her feedback practice and consequentially on her learners' writing development. Summa's reflections on the mid-module explained this: "*I give them the chance to sort of work out what mistakes they have made, but sometimes I get a feeling, that is not quite enough*". She suggested having lessons organised around providing additional support, due to recurrent errors found in their writing. After further reflection on the module timeframe, she restated her issue about not having enough time for individualised conferences and how it had an impact on the students' development: "*They kept making the same mistakes repeatedly, and what is sad about it, **we don't have time to have like one-to-one***". Summa mentioned she would like more time to explain to her learners their errors and how to overcome them.

To conclude, Summa's actual feedback practice was largely congruent with her stated beliefs (except for her use of peer assessment). Her feedback was distinguished by her use of multiple feedback sources in her feedback techniques (teacher, peers, self), and by her encouragement to learners to reflect on their errors.

#### 4.4 Introduction to Amy

This section presents the case of Amy (pseudonym), who is a native English speaker and speaks Mandarin as her second language. The least experienced participant in the sample, Amy had been teaching English for five years in this language programme. This was her first experience in teaching the recently introduced curriculum for course level 101 (equivalent to the English profile of CEFR A1). Unlike the rest of the participants, Amy earned an undergraduate degree in Business and a Master's degree in Business Administration. Before she transitioned to English language teaching, she received a TESOL certificate.

#### 4.4.1 Amy's assessment feedback experiences informing her cognition

In the next sections, Amy's conceptions, experiences of assessment feedback and self-reported feedback practices are reported. Her first time teaching the new curriculum is taken into consideration in the analysis.

##### 4.4.1.1 Amy' positive feedback experience

As a learner herself, Amy reported that she had spent more time receiving feedback from her teachers than the learners in the current context. At university, Amy reported receiving feedback in what appeared to be a 'process-like' approach. She said, *"So, you go to the teacher, and you go through several drafts. And then she sits with you. So, feedback at that level is usually quite exhaustive"*. She also compared class sizes by adding: *"I think our classes were much smaller, maybe 20. Here I struggle with 44 [Amy's emphasis]. So, it compromises the feedback you give students"*. Amy reported having an over-average class size, which she was not happy with.

##### 4.4.1.2 Amy's developed feedback approach

As in Haya's case, Amy's teaching skills had developed through the training she had received during the TESOL course. When asked if she was taught how to provide feedback, she said that she developed her feedback strategies based on her experiences with learners, which is discussed in further detail in the following section.

#### 4.4.2 Amy's self-reported feedback practice

During the pre-observation interview, Amy reported on her feedback provision and described having both a large class and what she described as mixed-ability learners. Then she discussed the challenges she was facing with providing feedback: *"We have many low levels, half my class, they are not even ready to write, So, for us to accomplish this task, in seven weeks to get them at, at a certain level, is actually very difficult for them"*. In terms of formative feedback, Amy reported using individualised feedback for a specific reason: *"For the writing homework, I give individual feedback, because they're very mixed abilities. So, at first, my first session*

*is to catch somebody who is completely lost*". She emphasised the importance of bringing the learners' attention to the writing assignments through feedback early in the course to make them committed to their writing task requirement: *"The first thing they have to know is somebody is checking their work, because once they're graded, they don't care"*.

When asked about the application of peer assessment, Amy noted that she did not believe in its effectiveness, compared to feedback provided by the teacher: *"Some students are more helpful than others, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work, but it really depends on the on the situation, so yes, I have tried it before. It's not always that effective"*. When discussing whether it would support learners in mixed-ability classrooms, Amy still did not think it would serve the purpose: *"I think I only have about five students who are, are, okay, but the rest of the students, no, I think they're just waiting for the answers"*. For these reasons, she preferred using individual feedback as her main strategy, and she added an additional reason: *"Some students want to know exactly, is this sentence ok or not, so then they would ask me, I don't mind, I'm okay with giving them one-on-one"*.

Amy added that the learners need to commit to the feedback process as well. This was the first case in which the learners were mentioned in terms of taking responsibility for their learning by attending class, completing their writing tasks, and accepting feedback. Amy mentioned that she struggled with their lack of contribution, and she reminded them frequently, adding: *"I always tell them attendance is so important"*. This represents her thoughts on learners' contributions to the feedback process.

#### **4.4.3 Amy's actual classroom feedback practice**

I observed Amy during several writing task sessions to identify her feedback strategies. Like the other cases, I also noted her behaviour concerning the feedback strategies she had reported to be using or had not reported using. For example, after her students were given back their marked writing task, she asked them not to share or look at each other's marked papers. She explained that the purpose of this was to avoid the learners gaining the habit of comparing marks, as this led to a tendency to focus on marks rather than feedback. Amy called on her students to discuss their

errors with them. Interestingly, Amy used samples of her learners' writing for error correction purposes within a whole class discussion. In this process, she used the classroom projector to share students' writing on the screen, and she initiated dialogue with her learners on the errors that she noted. This provided her learners with opportunities to identify and correct errors and suggest corrections for grammar and sentence structure (verb tenses and run-on sentences). In demonstrating exemplars of good-quality writing, Amy also used one of her student's written assignments in her feedback lesson. When I asked about the purpose of this, Amy believed that it was a source of motivation for other learners: *"I thought she put in a good effort, and I wanted to use that as an encouragement, to do the same"*.

#### **4.4.4 Amy's belief-practice relationship**

To relate Amy's beliefs to her practice, the following sections provide a summary of the alignment that was noted in her feedback practice. This was about providing individual/whole class feedback, dealing with plagiarism, and using feedback to motivate learners.

##### **4.4.4.1 Alignment in Amy's feedback approach for dealing with plagiarism**

In an earlier interview, Amy mentioned some of the challenges she had faced in her feedback over the past few years while teaching in the current context. One of the issues that Amy mentioned was dealing with plagiarism, which she took seriously when providing the students with feedback: *"It's very challenging, of course, so that's why they resort to plagiarism"*. In the observed feedback sessions, Amy did indeed discuss with her learners the importance of avoiding plagiarism and seeking trustworthy sources. Interestingly, she initiated a whole class discussion on this and asked them many questions about their submitted writing task:

*T. When I asked you to collect information, how did you collect information?*

*Where did you get your information?*

*Ss. Google*

*T. Who used Google?*

*S. No [one student says no]*

T. So you only used one source? Some information? **Did you look for other ways of finding information? You trust Google?** [Amy's emphasis]

Ss. Yes...No

T. Did anybody go to Wikipedia?

Ss. Noooo

T. **Am I gonna see a copy and paste on your paper?** [Rising intonation]

Ss. No.

T. So, you have to ask yourself where you get information. Especially when you talk about facts...You have to be careful about getting facts. The paper has to be original. (Amy, classroom observation 1)

In the observed lesson, Amy questioned her learners about their information sources. She asked them about their sources to find out if they had used Wikipedia or copied information without citing sources and being critical. In the post-observation interview, she explained to me the purpose behind her discussion with her learners on this: *“One thing, I want them to be careful about getting their source correct, the most trustworthy source. Second, I don't want them to copy and paste, because it happens a lot.”* Amy clarified that she wanted her learners to understand that selecting information sources was as important as avoiding plagiarism, and she linked them together in her discussion: *“If they're copying information sentences, then it's up to them to rephrase it, but I don't want them to find a convenient source”*. Amy explained that she used feedback time to remind her students to not worry about making mistakes in their writing: *“I always tell them: ‘please make all the mistakes you want, even if you think it's not perfect, it's fine’”*.

#### **4.4.4.2 Alignment in Amy's use of feedback to motivate learners**

Amy explained in an earlier interview that she used feedback to motivate her learners. This was in alignment with her practice, as I observed her in the classroom projecting a registration sheet for her students' writing tasks. Although there were no actual marks given for that writing task, Amy made them believe that they were graded to motivate them to complete the tasks. Amy also believed that her classroom feedback would encourage her learners to commit to completing the writing tasks, even if they were unsure of their writing: *“Now, the topic sentence is*

*quite hard for them. So, I didn't push them, I just want [them] to have the vocabulary, get the key ideas out".* She thought that feedback still contributed to their understanding and development and commented: *"So when I flashed those three components (writing standards), they were like, oh, it's hard. So, you're still developing the language, and now you want to develop at that level".* I asked Amy why she used a whole class strategy repetitively, after observing her lessons several times, and she explained that this clarified misconceptions, especially when there was limited time in the classroom. I also asked Amy how class time allowed formative feedback, and she clarified that class time allows learners to modify their writing, after she has informed them of their errors, *"So yes, the focus is that in class, and they know that they still have to work on that".*

#### **4.4.4.3 Alignment of Amy's beliefs on delivering individual feedback**

Amy had described in an earlier interview how she used individual feedback as part of her feedback strategy, which was congruent with her practice. I noticed during the classroom observation that Amy invited her students to go to her so that she could give them individual feedback. This was congruent with her earlier statement that she preferred using individual feedback. Amy explained her reasons for this: *"Because I have to make myself clear, when they ask, "What is this circle?" I say because 'you don't need that apostrophe".* However, she explained that it was only possible when there was time; *"I still continue with one-on-one, if time allows it. It also gives me a chance to tell them what they also did right".* Due to her above-average class size, Amy used her break time (after class) to provide individual feedback: *"With this class size, it's too time-consuming. It's also hard to get their attention to understand their mistakes because they're usually in a hurry to leave".* Amy explained the purpose behind her insistence on providing individual attention: *"Because I wanted them to know first, there is feedback. Because usually they will see the mark and they just give it back to me".*

It was noted that Amy's actual feedback practice was congruent with her stated beliefs. Her feedback was mainly carried out individually, using whole class discussions, using corrective feedback techniques (with prompts), and referring to the assessment criteria and plagiarism.

#### 4.4.5 Contextual factors informing Amy's feedback provision

At the end of the teaching course, Amy talked about some of the contextual factors informing her feedback practice, including learners' role in the feedback process and the need for in-service training.

##### 4.4.5.1 Lack of learner responsibility in feedback

In the final interview, Amy said that she was disappointed by the learners' failure to take responsibility for their development, based on the feedback provided by their teacher: *"Sometimes I feel like all the expectations are on us, on the teachers, but what do they expect from the student?"* Feedback was conceptualised by Amy as being similar to a 'doctor-patient' relationship. I asked Amy to elaborate on this 'doctor-patient' relationship. She explained that there are some students who came and asked her about their writing and appreciated her support, as she corrected them: *"I like that kind of patient who says, 'I really want to take your advice'.* This metaphor represents the significance of taking responsibility for the learning process by following up on feedback. It also highlighted the formative qualities in her conceptualisation of feedback, as she viewed it as serving to develop learners' writing.

Amy stressed the importance of making learners aware of their role in the feedback process: *"I always feel pushed that they have to learn, **but the patient is the one who has to take the medicine** [Amy's emphasis] and get herself treated".* For example, it was annoying when they did not bring essential learning resources such as a book or pencil. She mentioned the case of one student who refused to submit her writing assignment: *"I kept checking on her and I sent her reminders, and she still didn't submit it".* Amy stressed the importance of learners' taking responsibility for their learning, which she believed deserved attention. Amy believed that learners' responses to the feedback depended on their personalities: *"Some [students] they're really willing to put into work".* However, she mentioned those who did not put in enough effort after (she suspected) they became familiar with the system: *"Then you have students who start to figure out that the system is actually so lenient. That's when they don't think it's gonna matter anymore".*

#### 4.4.5.2 Amy's need for in-service training on interpreting the assessment criteria

It appeared to me that Amy was disregarding the assessment criteria in her instructional feedback, especially after I observed her returning the marked writing assessment to her learners. I asked her whether she thought that using the assessment criteria would support her learners' assessment knowledge. Amy said that this posed a problem for her when she had to justify the marks to her learners. I asked Amy to explain her interpretation of the writing assessment rubric/rating scales, because she mentioned in several interviews that it was 'vague'. She added that the training she had attended was unhelpful because it did not make sense to her: *"Three years ago, somebody came up with like, scales or numbers, this is our skills coordinator, she did a workshop for us, and she said, 'If you get five mistakes here, give them a five. If they make 10, give them four'. So, this was like, dumb."* I asked Amy if she had found any in-service training on providing feedback, and she replied, *"I haven't, I haven't found the ones I really liked. Seems like right now the emphasis is how to get technology in the classroom"*.

I asked Amy about the issues she faced with interpreting the assessment criteria components, and she provided more details:

*What is usually the problem, for example, somebody would have very good content, but a lot of grammar mistakes, Okay. So, when I would give her feedback, I would think about how it should be. So, I go bottom-up rather than top-down. For example, they have content, grammar, lexical range. But the rubric gives a lot for content. Now, because the content has to be 45 words, a lot of times they repeat themselves, so that's not much effort. Okay, so how do you interpret that? So somebody who's trying to write a sentence was trying to be more creative than other students, but, but maybe the meaning was not accurate. So, do I give a full mark for that? (Amy, Final interview)*

To conclude, Amy's actual feedback practice was mainly congruent with her stated beliefs. Her feedback was mainly carried out using individual feedback with her

learners, using corrective feedback techniques (with prompts), and whole class feedback discussions for dealing with learners' writing issues and plagiarism.

## **4.5 Introduction to Mona**

This section presents the case of Mona (pseudonym), whose first language is English. She learned Arabic as a second language. Mona had been teaching English for nine years in this language programme. Similar to the other participants in this study sample, this was her second year teaching the recently introduced curriculum, for course level 101. Mona's academic qualifications included a BA in English Literature and a certificate in CELTA, which she earned through distance learning. Thus, Mona's formal education was unique and distinctive among the sample. She completed her primary and secondary education through home-schooling (i.e. she was educated outside of the mainstream school system). Mona earned her undergraduate degree through an online distance learning programme.

### **4.5.1 Mona's assessment feedback experiences informing her cognition**

In the next sections, Mona's conceptions, experiences of assessment feedback and self-reported feedback practice are reported. Since Mona's background is very different from the rest of the sample, her unique situation is taken into consideration, resulting in fewer experiences of receiving feedback throughout her home-schooling experience. However, her in-service experiences of peer feedback (discussed in this section as well) did not leave her at much of a disadvantage compared to her colleagues.

#### **4.5.1.1 Mona's lack of feedback experience in school**

Mona is the only participant who lacked face-to-face classroom learning experiences during her childhood, teen years, and early adult life. As a result, Mona developed an independent educational profile at an early age. Due to her unique educational background (i.e. home-schooling), the only feedback Mona received was from her mother, who provided brief comments on her tasks such as: "Good job". Mona described her approach to learning as autonomous by reporting that she was "an avid reader" and spent a lot of time reading books. During her undergraduate studies, she was enrolled in what she described as "*a self-study distance*

*programme*”, where she only received evaluative feedback (i.e. marks) without the provision of comments or descriptive feedback on her development.

#### **4.5.1.2 Peer feedback on Mona’s test item creation**

Before joining the current teaching context, Mona received support from her colleagues as she developed in the teaching profession. This was the first form of meaningful feedback she received, and she believed that it played a role in her development as a teacher. During Mona’s in-service committee responsibilities, she had experience in test item creation, similar to the case of Summa (see section 4.3.1.2). As part of her committee duties, she modified her tasks based on the feedback she received on the writing assessment prompts. Mona mentioned that she learned from the feedback provided by her colleagues, specifically on how to customise the test to suit the context (i.e. Middle Eastern learners).

#### **4.5.2 Mona’s self-reported feedback practice**

Mona reported that the experience she had in receiving feedback from colleagues made her more attentive to providing feedback to her students. For example, she tried to avoid giving vague comments in her feedback to L2 learners. She noted the importance of providing specific feedback and its relevance to achieving the expected LOs. Mona’s self-reported feedback strategy was mainly one to one, with the aim of giving learners individual attention. Also, due to her current learners’ limited command of L2, Mona preferred to provide individual feedback as she monitored their writing during class time, as described in the following extract during the pre-observation interview:

*The researcher. Have you asked them to write something for you, to assess their writing ability?*

*Mona. Yes. yes, they've done two writings, for me so far... I did assess them individually, but I walked around during the writing activity they were doing.*

When asked about specific feedback strategies she learned through training, Mona explained: *“Many workshops that I have taken, all of them, I find what I think will work for me, and work for my students. And I try to incorporate them into my daily*

classes". For example, Mona noted that she used peer assessment in speaking tasks only, but not in writing, stating that her students' language proficiency would not enable them to carry out self-assessment/feedback. The current learner group was at the beginners' level. *"They need to be monitored, these are the fundamentals of English, so I need to make sure they get this part right, so they can move up"*.

#### **4.5.3 Mona's actual classroom feedback practice**

As I observed Mona during both writing task sessions, I noted her feedback approach by identifying the strategies she reported. I also noted her behaviour, which lacked variety in terms of feedback sources. Mona was the main source of feedback for her learners, as there was a lack of peer interaction and learner reflection during her feedback sessions. I noted Mona giving feedback on an individual level as she assessed the task during the lesson. She silently read each paragraph and indicated her learners' errors, as she negotiated with them their correct forms. I noticed that this approach allowed Mona to support learners in their writing development, as they were provided with adequate opportunities to clarify their intended ideas for their writing tasks, using suggestions provided by their teacher. For example, errors relating to language interference were noticed by Mona and corrected immediately, for example by saying, *"I - should be in capital"*. In one case, a student said to Mona, *"But it's not in the beginning of the sentence"*, and another student asked, *"What about he and she?"*. This specific error (i.e. capitalising I) was frequently noticed in this learner group during the observed session. Since capitalisation does not exist in the Arabic script (the learners' native language), this type of error is expected. Mona provided clarification on this during the lesson observation by repetitively explaining each time this error had occurred in her students' writing. She emphasised this by saying, *"Whenever you say 'I' for yourself, it's always capital, no matter where it is in the sentence"*.

Similarly, when there were missing verbs or punctuation marks, Mona asked questions to bring her learners' attention to these errors. This was done in the form of dialogue, in which Mona used prompts to allow the learners to provide the correct forms themselves. This allowed Mona to support the learners in their writing development, as they were provided with opportunities for learner-repair. When there were missing full stops, Mona asked, *"Where is your full stop? What are you*

*missing?*". She used requests for missing information, such as: *"Add more sentences"*, asked students to remove irrelevant sentences: *"Just take that out"*; and gave options for correct forms: *"Is it in? or on?"*.

It was observed that Mona's elicitation technique for correcting error forms encouraged the learners to contribute to the feedback process, as they suggested possible answers, followed by confirmation from the teacher. I asked Mona why she asked her learners questions about their errors instead of providing the correct forms, and she replied: *"Because I wanted to see, if they knew what the issue was or not [Mona's emphasis]. If they didn't, after the first try, and second try, then I gave them the answer"*. Thus, it was noted that monitoring and support were essentially provided by the teacher, who was the main source of feedback during the observed writing sessions. Other sources of feedback (e.g. peers) were not observed.

#### **4.5.4 Mona's belief-practice relationship: alignment of Mona's beliefs and practice in delivering individual feedback**

Mona's actual classroom feedback strategy of using individual feedback was congruent with her previously stated beliefs. During both observed sessions, Mona used several feedback strategies, but she was the main source of feedback. Mona's learners were engaged in the dialogic feedback interactions that she had initiated. I asked Mona why she used individual feedback, and Mona described the class as a mixed-abilities learner group that needed individual attention: *"I noticed a few students, that this is not their level, there are students below level, and I can see, from their writing and participation, they aren't getting it"*. However, I noted that this strategy had indeed facilitated feedback interactions and dialogue between Mona and her learners. For example, students were asked to complete writing their paragraphs, and Mona checked each student's writing in the process. I asked Mona what she was specifically looking for as she was assessing their writing, and she said, *"I was focusing on subject-verb agreement, and the fact that there is a subject, and punctuation, and capitalisation, which we discussed in the previous class. So, it was a sort of assessment"*.

Mona followed the same approach when providing individual feedback on her learners' writing assessment during the second observation. However, she did not allow as much dialogue for negotiating the learners' errors as she did in the earlier observation. After Mona handed back the marked writing assessments, she elaborated on the learners' errors when they asked questions about the underlined words. When the learners asked her questions about their errors (e.g. capitalisation, incorrect verbs), Mona did not provide options or ask questions as she had done previously. Feedback was mainly a clarification of writing errors.

In the follow-up interview, Mona said that she intended discussing with her class the common errors she found after providing individual feedback. However, she was unable to do so because the class had finished. Overall, she was content with her feedback strategy, saying, *"I was gonna go over, um the common errors, after giving them individually, I didn't expect them all to come and ask, but it worked out well, thankfully"*. I saw a sample of the learners' writing assessments and noticed that Mona did not use error codes or write comments, as did the rest of the participants in this study. She mainly underlined the errors and reported that teachers were mainly instructed to underline written errors and write students' common errors, which she admitted she did not do.

#### **4.5.5 Contextual factors informing Mona's feedback provision: Struggles with interpreting institutional guidelines on feedback**

At the end of the teaching course, Mona reported on some of the contextual factors informing her feedback practice. I discussed with Mona some of the limitations she faced in her feedback provision within the programme. She revealed that the institutional documents requested that teachers strictly abide by the teaching pacing guide regarding assessing students and providing feedback. For example, Mona was the only participant who did not use error codes in her feedback practice. I asked her about the instructions she received about writing error codes on learners' writing assessments:

*The researcher. Okay, and instructions for the correcting, the final assessment of the final writing exam, did they ask you to use codes in that information sheet?*

*Mona. Um no, they didn't ask us to put an error code, we were just asked to underline, and you may note most frequent errors that occurred.*

To conclude, Mona's actual feedback practice was congruent with her stated beliefs. Her feedback was distinctive among the sample by her use of limited feedback sources – the main feedback provider was herself. Similar to the rest of the participants, she used corrective techniques (with prompts) in her feedback discussions with her learners.

#### **4.5.6 Summary of the findings**

I have discussed the cases of five individual teachers, and their cognitions informing their self-reported feedback practice, their observed and actual feedback practice, their belief-practice relationship, and the contextual factors impacting their practice. The findings suggest that the participants' conceptions and experiences of feedback provision play a major role in the enactment of their beliefs. However, the research also provides insights into the complex context within which the participants worked. The context-specific nature of teaching and assessing the skill of writing meant that the participants took specific actions to achieve a self-satisfactory sense of achievement. Consequently, the participants' feedback practice was not only influenced by their feedback learning and practical experiences, but also by the limited resources (including time) and the lack of in-service teacher training. After analysing each case independently, another reading of the transcripts took place, in which I compare the findings according to the themes drawn from the research questions and the individual cases. The next chapter discusses the themes that emerged across the cases.

## Chapter 5: Cross-case analysis

### 5.1 Introduction to the cross-case analysis

I have previously discussed the findings of individual cases by focusing on the feedback preferences of teachers, underpinned by their beliefs, and their reporting of contextual factors that had an impact on their feedback provision. Although these cases help to reveal the individuality of each teacher, it is useful to identify both common and contrasting features through cross-case analysis (Yin, 2018). As a channelling link to the discussion of the findings, I conducted a further analysis across the cases. As the specifics of each case provided distinctiveness in terms of codes, the cases were carefully compared (Stake, 2006), to produce generic themes across the entire sample.

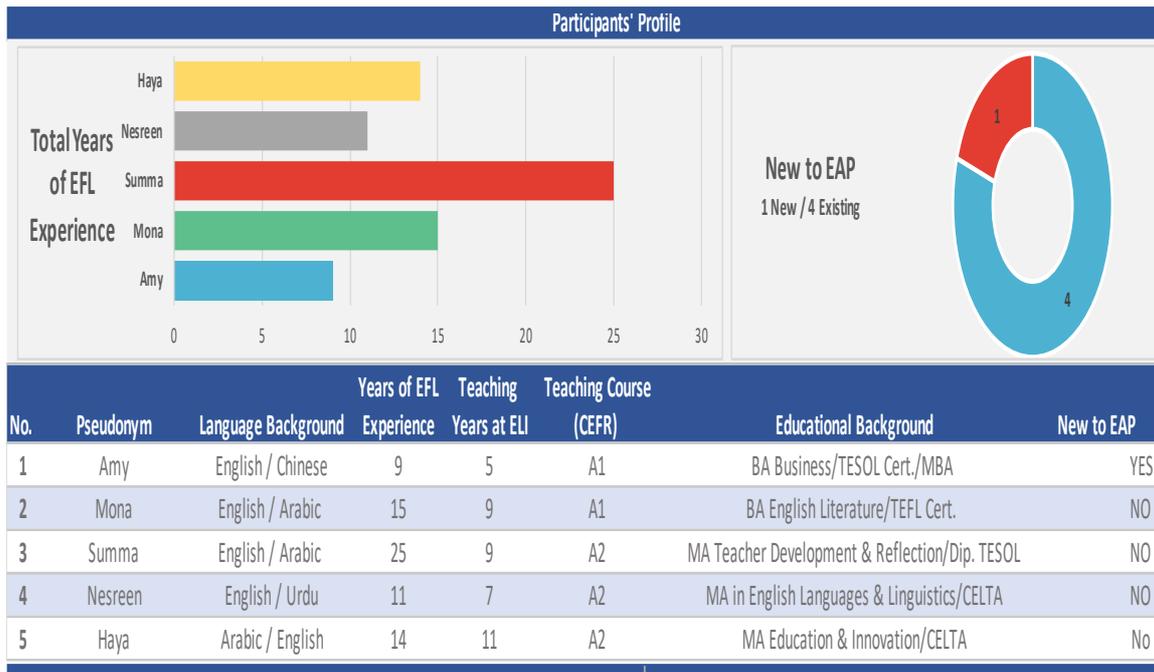
The cross-case analysis aimed to collect a set of conclusions (Yin, 2018). According to Stake (2006), this form of analysis involves reading the data of each case and noting the common themes and sub-themes that correspond to the research questions. This mainly involves, firstly, reading the data of the cases, and noting the common themes (e.g. dialogic feedback) and sub-themes (e.g. peer feedback, use of exemplars) that correspond to the research questions, while also drawing on themes from the literature. This was carried out across cases and recorded in a table (see Appendix G6). Secondly, the cross-case analysis involves comparing the cases, looking into the common and atypical findings, and evaluating their importance and significance in terms of answering the research questions. Accordingly, a cross-case analysis was performed by finding comparisons and contrasts across the cases in the form of cross-case conclusions

The following sections discuss the common themes across the cases. Section 5.2 presents themes addressing teachers' experiences that informed their cognitions, section 5.3 presents the themes on teachers' self-reported feedback, section 5.4 presents the relationship between teachers' cognitions and actual practice, and section 5.5 presents the themes relating to contextual factors that had an impact on all the cases. The chapter summary follows in section 5.6.

## **5.2 Teachers' experiences of assessment feedback informing their cognition**

The sample consisted of five female English language teachers. Nisreen, Summa and Haya (pseudonyms) held postgraduate degrees related to English language education. The remaining two participants were distinguished by their educational backgrounds (business studies) and the mode of education they had experienced – (home-schooling/online learning). For example, Amy had specialised in Business (before transitioning to ELT), and she had the least amount of teaching experience in the sample. The most unique case was Mona, who was home-schooled and received her undergraduate degree in English Literature, through an online distance learning programme.

In teaching the Academic track, four out of the five participants (at the time of the study) had the experience of teaching the EAP course during the preceding academic year. The only exception in the sample was Amy, who was teaching the EAP course for the first time. The entire sample had an 18-hour per week teaching schedule, and they were assigned to teach English language learners for CEFR A1 and A2 (who are considered beginner levels). Figure 5-1 demonstrates a demographic representation of the participants' profiles including academic background, years of teaching experience (EFL experience and EAP teaching experience), and language background (I return to discussing this in section 5.2.1, and in Chapter 6, section 6.2.8 and Chapter 7, section 7.2.2).



**Figure 5-1. Participant profiles in the EAP context**

Participants' assessment feedback experiences (as language learners and as developing professionals) were discussed independently in Chapter 4. The following sections discuss the participants' conceptions of feedback, based on their experiences of receiving and providing feedback while considering similarities and differences in their experiences. Accordingly, the cross-case themes were identified concerning participants' assessment feedback experiences as language learners and then as teachers (pre-service then in-service professionals). In terms of their cognition, the findings on participants' earlier cognitions (discussed in section 5.2.1) are followed by participants' developing cognitions (discussed in sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3).

### **5.2.1 Teachers' earlier cognitions: assessment feedback experiences as language learners**

Considering the variety in the participants' educational backgrounds, I will focus on similarities and anomalies among the cases and how that influenced their earlier cognitions of assessment feedback. For instance, there were similarities in the participants' experiences of receiving feedback early in their education. Summa, Nisreen, and Haya vividly recalled being at the receiving end of feedback early in their education. Feedback received in school was described by Nisreen as 'very

basic' and 'evaluative'. It was mainly described as 'corrective', based on identifying errors in spelling, grammar and mechanics using error codes. Similarly, Summa and Nisreen described receiving feedback (based on their learning experiences) as 'motivational'; it had an impact on their language learning experience and perceived writing development. Also, it was noted that classroom peer assessment and feedback were lacking in all the cases, except for Nisreen and Haya who reported experiencing it later in teacher training (discussed in Chapter 4, sections 4.1.1.2 and 4.2.1.2).

At university, however, feedback became more constructive for the majority of the sample. Amy, for example, described the feedback as being mainly 'formative', involving several drafts and intensive teacher-learner conferencing. The entire sample reported benefitting from their teachers' feedback at university. However, Mona was the only participant who was home-schooled, and had the least experience with classroom-based assessment feedback in both school and college. Mona reported that the feedback she received during her undergraduate online studies was mainly evaluative and lacked complementary written notes. As a result, the data that was generated from Mona's case was less than that of other participants, who shared many examples of their classroom experiences as learners. Though Mona's educational background and learning circumstances are taken into consideration, her in-service experiences in the Test Development and Curriculum Unit allowed her to practice peer feedback, which she lacked during her childhood and undergraduate studies.

The next sections provide examples of the participants' similar and contrasting experiences of pre-service and in-service training.

### **5.2.2 Teachers' developing cognitions: pre-service experience with feedback**

Borg (2006) acknowledged that teachers' experiences as learners influence their initial thinking and development early in their careers. Before teaching on the language programme, all participants had received pre-service training, with noted variance in terms of the amount of training received. Even though the participants had made different choices in their professional development paths, some of the common themes emerging from all the cases were related to the feedback received

from their colleagues during pre-service and in-service training. Interestingly, peer feedback was first introduced to the participants during their training. For example, Nisreen reported that she received feedback from her peers during teacher training, using the ‘two stars and a wish’ technique (discussed in section 4.1.1.1). Haya reported the ‘think, pair and share’ approach, which facilitated peer discussion (discussed in section 4.2.4.1). As revealed, both participants incorporated peer assessment and peer feedback into writing tasks. Similarly, Mona mentioned receiving feedback from colleagues when she underwent training early in her career, which she perceived as being beneficial for her development. Additionally, it had informed their feedback practice, through the application of newly acquired feedback strategies that were learned during training.

### **5.2.3 Teachers’ developing cognition: in-service experience with feedback**

In-service training was also an opportunity for the participants to receive feedback from experienced colleagues. For example, Summa and Mona were members of the Test Development and Curriculum Unit and received feedback on test item creation and question stems (discussed in sections 4.3.1.2 and 4.5.1.2). Similarly, Nisreen had created diagnostic tests within a different committee, and she had received feedback on her test creation tasks. Additionally, Nisreen and Haya completed the ‘Train-the-Trainer’ course, from which they received verbal feedback on the teaching of different skills, including writing (discussed in sections 4.1.1.2 and 4.2.1.2). Participants reported that their developed understanding of feedback (based on their in-service experiences) had an impact on the feedback they provided to their learners. For example, Mona reported that her feedback to her learners had become more ‘specific’ (discussed in section 4.5.1.2) and Haya reported that she had developed a deeper ‘understanding’ of feedback through training and practice (discussed in section 4.2.1.2).

It was noted, however, that not all the participants had equal opportunities for receiving in-service training on assessing writing. For example, Amy mentioned not receiving training on feedback at all (discussed in section 4.4.5.2). Nisreen, however, mentioned receiving specific instruction on marking students’ writing exams: *“We had this kind of orientation, before assessing writing papers, and they used to give us student sample papers to mark”*. Therefore, the only training associated with

writing assessment was focused on providing accurate marks and grade justification. There was no reference to receiving training on how to provide feedback that improved learners' writing development. Having reviewed the needs analysis report (discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.3.7) it was evident that the teacher training and mentoring programme was informed by teaching staff. This indicates that teachers are encouraged to request the training topics, as well as suggest the topics that they perceive as beneficial for their growth. It also indicates that their training demands are informed by teachers' cognitions of ongoing training needs, including training on assessment and feedback, as a highly demanded training need.

### **5.3 Teachers' self-reported feedback practice**

Institutional guidelines on feedback provision were discussed with the participants, who all reported that they were aware of instructions for teachers on providing feedback on writing. However, they had their preferences and were selective in their choice of classroom feedback methods. In the following sections, the participants' reported feedback strategies are recognised according to their preferences and perceptions and the different purposes they served. These comprise learners' assessment literacy (section 5.3.1), perceptions of using peer assessment (5.3.2), using WhatsApp (5.3.3) and the importance of addressing learners' individual needs (5.3.4). These are discussed in the following sections.

#### **5.3.1 Developing learners' assessment literacy**

Integrating assessment literacy into teachers' assessment feedback practice offers the opportunity to harmonise views on the purpose and process of feedback. The language instructors in this context were instructed to discuss the rubric/rating scales (descriptors of criteria and standards for writing) with their learners. However, there were limited accounts of building learners' assessment literacy across the cases. Nisreen was one of the only participants who discussed the importance of bringing learner awareness into the assessment criteria. She expressed her strong belief in its relevance to feedback, *"They have to be very aware of the rubric itself, and it is quite time-taking, because they come up with so many questions"*. She explained that learners had difficulties understanding the jargon (wording of the rubric/rating scales) and that they, therefore, needed explanation from the teacher.

The rest of the participants, however, reported carrying out a corrective approach in their feedback practice. For example, Haya explained described this process in the form of steps while focusing on 'mistakes': *"I evaluate each paper, and before I give them feedback, I write common mistakes. I collect the common mistakes from students' papers, and I show it on the board, and then I asked them to correct the mistakes"*. The remaining three participants reported using approaches that they expected to provide support in developing learners' knowledge of correct forms (see Chapter 4, sections 4.3.2, 4.4.2, and 4.5.2).

### **5.3.2 Using peer assessment and peer feedback**

In terms of the benefit of peer assessment and peer feedback, all five participants were unsure of this strategy in the initial interviews. For example, Haya and Nisreen reported using peer feedback as an effective strategy, but regardless of their belief in the benefits of peer feedback and assessment, they still had doubts. More specifically, Haya noted that the use of this practice depended on the learners. Similarly, Nisreen articulated strong beliefs about the benefits of peer assessment for learners' writing development, but she said that its success depended on learners' attitudes. Amy was also sceptical about peer assessment and noted that it was not always 'effective' (discussed in section 4.1.3). When asked if they would use peer assessment in their current teaching course, there was some uncertainty and doubt among all the participants over whether their learners would be able to carry it out successfully, especially since it was still the beginning of the teaching course (weeks 1–2). Likewise, Summa and Mona insisted that the teacher should be the main source of feedback for learners (discussed in sections 4.3.2 and 4.5.2).

### **5.3.3 Using WhatsApp for feedback**

When discussing the use of additional resources for providing feedback, two participants (Nisreen and Haya) reported using WhatsApp for providing feedback to their learners during the course. Nisreen explained that WhatsApp was useful for providing initial feedback to her learners that she could then follow-up on in class. For Nisreen, using WhatsApp for feedback delivery on learners' written assignments facilitated the use of both explicit and implicit corrective feedback (Ellis et al., 2006)

techniques (e.g. *'Add a concluding sentence'*, *'You need to write a concluding sentence'*, *'Give your opinion at the end'*, *'Use paragraph format'*). Likewise, Haya reported using the WhatsApp group chat (during the class) to encourage peer feedback and collaboration among the learners. However, Summa, Mona and Amy did not like to provide feedback via text messages. It should be noted here that at the time of the study there were no rules regarding the use of personal accounts or contact numbers for communication purposes with students. Thus, teachers had the autonomy to choose the method they preferred for communicating with their learners and delivering feedback.

#### **5.3.4 Addressing learners' individual needs**

The participants in this study carried out individual feedback with their learners, regardless of the lack of specific guidance on how feedback was expected to be carried out at the language institution. Since it was common that the classes included learners of varying L2 proficiency, Nisreen acknowledged the importance of paying attention to mixed abilities in the EFL classroom: *"You can easily figure out these students, everyone has different abilities, not everybody is born with the potential of a great writer"*. Similarly, Amy took into consideration the mixed abilities aspect in her classes and believed that receiving individual attention supported their writing development (discussed in section 4.1.3). Mona mentioned using a similar approach with her learners. Her reasons for using this approach were explained as due to the teaching situation in which her current learners were beginners, and, therefore, needed individual and much-focused attention (discussed in section 4.5.2).

### **5.4 The relationship between teachers' cognitions and their assessment feedback practice**

In the next section, the relationship between teachers' self-reported practice and actual practice is identified according to themes. Each of the following sections discusses the emerging themes: teachers' feedback provision using assessment literacy (section 5.4.1); peer assessment (section 5.4.2); whole class discussions (section 5.4.3); individual discussions (section 5.4.4); feedback as a motivational tool

(5.4.5); self-assessment (section 5.4.6); and written corrective feedback (section 5.4.7).

#### **5.4.1 Teachers' cognitions on using assessment literacy**

Teachers' knowledge about assessment and their comprehension of the assessment rubric/rating scales and guidelines were in general weak. When it came to discussions on writing quality and assessment criteria, Haya and Nisreen were the only participants who modelled writing exemplars. In the observed feedback sessions, it was noticed that self-regulation behaviour was recognised through 'co-produced' feedback processes involving learners in dialogue on their writing errors. This provided their learners with opportunities to participate in the feedback process, while using a whole class discussion strategy in the writing tasks and assessment follow-up feedback sessions. For example, I witnessed Nisreen's use of exemplars for discussing quality work as part of her feedback to learners (after marking their assessment), as she mentioned when reporting her practice (discussed in section 4.1.2).

*The researcher. Do you give them constructive feedback on how to improve their writing, and, of what is expected of them?*

*Nisreen. Exactly, so, yes they have to be very well aware of the rubric itself, and it is quite time-taking, because they come up with so many questions. Of course, you know, the technical, the jargon, which is used in the rubric, is sometimes beyond a student's comprehension range, they don't understand that language...maybe they have no idea what diction is. So, I need to simplify it for my students, and I just tell them in detail that this is what is expected from them, and they will be marked on this thing.*

Similarly, Haya displayed anonymous writing samples through the classroom projector and invited learners to identify errors, using prompts to encourage them to provide corrections on grammar, spelling, and sentence structure. This was congruent with what she reported as her feedback practice (discussed in section 2.1.3). It was noted that the sample used a dialogic approach during feedback interactions. For example, Nisreen and Haya provided clarifications using dialogic feedback in their observed sessions, resulting in regular opportunities to engage in

feedback processes. Thus, correct forms were provided by the learners during the class revision, as their teachers used exemplars of their writing to facilitate interaction on errors that were noted.

It was observed that the participants used several techniques to create interaction and dialogue about corrective feedback (e.g. prompts, questions, elicitations, restating learners' correct forms, metalinguistic clues, and provision of correct forms). However, some techniques were more frequently used than others. Three participants (Nisreen, Haya, and Amy) displayed anonymous samples of students' writing through the classroom projector and invited learners to identify and provide correct forms for punctuation, grammar, and spelling. Furthermore, to help the learners provide correct forms, they modelled exemplars from the students' own writing when discussing high-quality work. Nisreen and Haya's feedback techniques revealed similar correspondence in the observed feedback sessions. Their use of prompts and questions encouraged learners to actively engage in dialogues to correct their or others' errors and resulted in a 'dialogic approach' in the feedback process. However, the rest of the participants provided limited support for their learners to develop their assessment-related knowledge. For example, they did not refer to the criteria in the observed lessons, and they did not refer to it in their self-reported feedback.

#### **5.4.2 Teachers' cognitions on using peer assessment**

In the initial interviews, most of the participants were sceptical about using peer feedback with their current learners. It was noted that Nisreen and Haya applied peer feedback in the writing task sessions and in the writing exam follow-up feedback session. Since the participants had just begun their course (weeks 1–2), they were still unsure of their learners' capabilities and whether their current learners' language proficiency level would enable them to carry out peer feedback. Regardless of their beliefs about peer feedback and peer- assessment, they still took into consideration the learners' responses to this strategy. Being more specific, Haya noted that the success of this practice would depend on the learners:

*The researcher: Oh so, you, you practice peer assessment in the classroom?  
You let them correct for each other?*

*Haya: Yes, yes. But also, it depends on the students' level.*

*The researcher: Have you tried that this module, have you tried peer assessment?*

*Haya: I just give them two classes.*

*The researcher: Okay.*

*Haya: But, I think I will do that this module, because I think my students are good. Okay. This, this time, but if they for example, if they are repeaters, I cannot do that with them.*

Similarly, Summa was not completely supportive of peer assessment, yet she applied peer assessment in the observed writing session. She thought that the task had been successful, but she explained her concerns about this feedback strategy in terms of learner expectations in the pre-observation interview (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.3.2). Summa also believed that it was the teachers' responsibility to deliver feedback by mentioning: "*The students look up to me for assessing their work, and they think it's natural for the teacher to assess the work, instead of having a peer doing that*".

Engaging learners in the assessment of their peers resulted in another form of feedback co-production. Three out of five participants used peer assessment and peer feedback, and each teacher had their own technique for following up on those tasks. Nisreen and Haya, for example, incorporated peer assessment and peer feedback into their practice. Haya took notes of learners' errors (while they were doing pair work tasks) and then discussed these errors with the entire class. Alternatively, during the pair work tasks, Nisreen asked her learners questions about what they found in each other's work, such as: '*Any mistakes?*' '*Did you find anything else?*'. Like Nisreen's technique, Summa elicited correct forms from learners as they reflected on their marked errors, by asking, "*How would you correct that?*" or "*what do you think is missing?*". When I asked Summa in the post-observation interview about the reason for this, she replied saying: "*because I want them to be reflective learners*". This was similar to what she had said in the pre-observation interview (see section 4.3.4.2). Samples of co-constructed feedback processes using corrective

techniques in dialogue during classroom observations across the cases are provided (see Appendix F3).

Meanwhile, Nisreen and Haya commended their learners for being responsive to tasks involving peer assessment (discussed in sections 1.3.2 and 2.3.2). They both carried out these tasks during the observations, using different techniques (e.g. asking each pair some questions, taking notes). This was demonstrated through the promotion of learners' self-evaluation skills and preparation for peer engagement. An important factor that might have led to an alignment between beliefs and practice was their learners' willingness to participate in peer assessment tasks. Unlike their colleagues, Amy and Mona did not incorporate peer assessment into their feedback sessions. Amy did not believe that peer feedback was an effective approach, and she did not use it in her feedback session. Similarly, Mona did not favour using peer feedback with lower proficiency levels. Thus, carrying out peer assessment and feedback was not considered to be a sustainable (maintainable) practice among the sample. They claimed that its success was mainly dependent on learners' language proficiency and their attitude towards peer assessment.

#### **5.4.3 Teachers' cognitions on using a whole class discussion strategy**

The use of dialogic feedback was observed during classroom discussions in most lessons. For example, Nisreen, Haya, and Amy used feedback techniques (e.g. questions, elicitations) with no provision of correct forms. When discussing common errors using a whole class strategy, correct forms were provided by some of the learners, such as when Haya displayed autonomous samples on the board to highlight the common mistakes she found in their writing. However, it was noticed that not all the learners were engaged, as only some were called upon to provide answers, and some volunteered. Similarly, Amy explained that she wanted to motivate her learners to produce better quality writing by displaying exemplars from one student's writing assessment (as discussed in section 4.2.).

Similarly, Nisreen and Haya, who were both assigned to teach learner groups CEFR A2, used a whole class feedback strategy to address learners' common errors, both in the writing task sessions and the writing exam follow-up feedback session. This

was congruent with their beliefs on feedback incorporating whole class discussion (e.g. discussion on learners' common errors in writing). Through this practice, the teachers were providing opportunities for students to work with the assessment criteria and examples of good work. It was observed that all the participants employed whole class feedback, for different purposes. For example, Amy used a questioning technique to raise awareness of the importance of gaining information from original sources, and to reinforce the importance of criticality by questioning their source of information. Verbal feedback techniques (initiated by the teachers) included clarification and elicitation of correct information (to be discussed further in section 6.2.7.1).

#### **5.4.4 Teachers' cognitions on using individual discussions**

It was noted that teachers' beliefs about providing individual feedback were congruent with their actual practice. Additionally, those who preferred using teacher-student individual conferencing continued with the same approach in their feedback provision following the writing assessment. Amy and Mona were both assigned to teach beginner learner groups (CEFR A1) and they were supportive of this approach, as they believed that their current learners needed more support due to their below-standard L2 proficiency. As both participants take into consideration the mixed abilities aspect in her classes, she believes that giving individual attention through constructive feedback makes learners take their writing assignments more seriously. This was a strong reason for Amy to carry out feedback in a rigorous manner, as she realised that the class may contain mixed-ability learners who may not follow with general feedback. She wanted to ensure that her learners understood that she was taking their writing seriously while giving individual attention to her students:

*Amy. I give individual feedback. So, for the first submission, I want to know, because, they're very mixed abilities, so my first session is to catch somebody who is completely lost. So, today, I've gone through at least, about 35 scripts.*

*The researcher. Okay, so is it challenging, to give feedback?*

*Amy. Yeah, it's exhausting! but what they have to know, the first thing, they have to know, is somebody is checking their work. Yeah ... the teacher, she makes sure that they did it. Because once they're graded, they don't care ... So, unless I showed them ... that, I'm really checking in and telling them, "Hey, I'm waiting for you. Okay?"*

#### **5.4.5 Teachers' cognitions on feedback as a motivational tool**

Among the sample, feedback was described as motivational for the teachers and the learners. For example, Haya reported that identifying learners' strengths had motivational effects: *"I believe that I need to highlight the strengths. That's really motivating"*. She mentioned in the pre-observation interview that her experience in receiving feedback from her supervisors was motivational for her as a developing professional:

*I still remember the person who was a teacher supervisor, he will attend your classes, giving you a wonderful feedback, constructive feedback, to reflect on yourself, and reflect on that, and always used to encourage teachers and students as well. Okay, so that was a great motivation to me.*

Nisreen also described how receiving positive feedback motivated her language learning experience during school:

*It was a learning process, and it was conveyed in such a positive manner, maybe the choice of words of that teacher, she wasn't subjective at all, and **she was quite motivating** [Nisreen's emphasis], and because of her encouragement, her continuous guideline, and encouragement, I think, as a student, I always feel, you know, umm much better after, receiving feedback from her,*

Amy stated that giving her learners feedback (acknowledging completed assignments) openly during class motivated them to continue doing their writing tasks (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.2 on findings regarding Amy's feedback practice). When I asked her about the purpose of marking their assignments with

ticks, she responded by saying that it kept them on track: *“Because they know that I’m showing it to everyone during class, and they’ll say teacher, where is my check?”*.

#### **5.4.6 Teachers’ cognitions on using self-assessment**

Discussions with the participants about learner self-assessment (before classroom observations and following the observations) revealed variances in their understanding of self-assessment. For example, I found that Summa and Nisreen incorporated creative game-like elements that allowed learners to reflect on and identify their errors. Although the participants did not mention these strategies in the pre-observation interviews (as mentioned in section 5.3.), they were noted in their practice during the observed feedback sessions. For instance, Nisreen used an online assessment tool (Kahoot) to provide feedback, by using anonymous samples from her learners’ written essays (as discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.1.3). While the feedback was electronically generated (through the online gaming application) the learners were engaged in this task during the lessons. This contrasted with Nisreen’s earlier report (in the pre-observation interview) when Nisreen described her students as being reluctant to become the owners of their learning: *“Some of them, you know, they’re hesitant, shy, and they don’t feel like doing this”*.

Similarly, Mona did not believe that all learners are ready for self-assessment, especially in the case of beginners. However, other participants employed tasks that indeed encouraged their learners to reflect on their errors without providing immediately corrected forms. For example, Summa used error code detection in the form of ‘reflection’ tasks, which provided learners with opportunities to internalise the feedback. Not only did she mention the importance of reflection during the interviews, but Summa also discussed it with her learners during the lessons (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.3). In the pre-observation interview, she discussed her beliefs about encouraging learners to become reflective as she perceived had supported her professional growth:

*Another thing is, I try it with my own students, because I’m sort of so much into reflection into my teaching, questioning my own practice, I also like my students to question their own ways of learning. So I, yeah, I make use of instruments that are already provided in the book, like*

*sort of self-assessment at the end of each and every unit, I make sure that it is used in a more constructive way, by not just ticking boxes, but by also adding my own questions. So that my assessment is more constructive, and it gives me a more accurate picture of her own learning. (Summa, pre-observation interview)*

Regardless of each participant's feedback strategy (whole class, peer or individual), their practices for corrective feedback techniques enabled dialogue with the learners, resulting in co-constructed use and understanding of feedback. These conversational elements are implemented through techniques such as drills, language awareness and consciousness-raising (Burns, 1998). The term 'technique' is used here to describe the participants' verbal feedback patterns appearing during the dialogue between the teacher and learner(s). As with the case of the more experienced teaching participants (Summa and Nisreen), these deliberately orchestrated dialogues and discussions were evidence of using learner self-assessment, reflection, and internalisation in the feedback processes.

#### **5.4.7 Teachers' cognitions on using written corrective feedback**

Classroom observations included looking at samples of teachers' written feedback on their learners' writing tasks and assessments and how that had facilitated feedback discussion. This revealed different use of error codes among the sample. For example, Haya and Nisreen's use of error codes in the written feedback facilitated learner engagement through a self-reflection task. Such incidents that occurred during the lesson observations encouraged the participants to become open and speak about their underlying beliefs as they voiced their concerns over their feedback provision.

Secondly, although learners' errors were mainly marked with codes, the correct forms were given by the teachers in a few samples. For example, Nisreen (See Appendix E on marked assignments and assessments) used descriptive comments, and she used a wider range of error codes such as SS (sentence structure) and VT (verb tense) without providing the correct forms. Missing words were also frequently inserted in the observed samples. Amy and Haya, however, used fewer codes

(mainly SP for spelling) and Mona use uncoded marking (i.e. underlining or circling an error) without indicating the error types.

Amy's written feedback on her learners' written tasks included short comments such as 'commas', 'full stop', 'spelling'. Written comments on learners' writing tasks and assessments included a combination of evaluative (use of marks) and written feedback notes (e.g. *'Be careful about some grammatical errors'*, *'Focus on grammar and sentence structure'*, *'You can add some more details'*). It was noted that descriptive feedback was inconsistent among the sample. Instructional documents in the teacher resources folder provided on the website for the ELP state that teachers are expected to provide feedback in the form of written notes on learners' *'global errors'*. However, it was observed that not all writing assessment samples had feedback in the form of written notes. The most distinct case was Mona, who only used uncoded feedback. I noticed that it was up to the learners to negotiate the correct forms with their teacher during the feedback follow-up sessions. In Amy's case, however, she called on her learners to discuss their writing assessments individually, providing explanations on how to improve.

Although the participants reported giving feedback in person (in the classroom), additional forms of online communication were used. For example, Nisreen and Haya were the only participants who mentioned incorporating online text chat (WhatsApp) in their feedback provision (see Chapter 4, sections 4.1.2 and 4.2.2). However, they did not carry out this practice during the observed sessions. Sample screenshots of this reported practice were sent to me ahead of the lesson observations (See Appendices C1 and C2). I noted in these samples, that Nisreen, for example, provided descriptive comments in her feedback on the papers and via WhatsApp chat messages and included written comments on how to improve: *'you should write one-sided opinion paragraph'*, *'use paragraph format'*, *'you need to think about the sentence structure'*. (See Appendices C1 and Appendix E).

Across the cases, it was also noticed that the participants refrained from providing correct forms to encourage their learners to self-correct, as a form of co-constructed feedback. In some cases, however, the correct forms were provided when the learners' attempts were unsuccessful. Corrective feedback techniques across the

cases mainly included elicitations (e.g. *what do you think is wrong?*) and metalinguistics clues (e.g. *Do we say 'their' or 'its'?*), which are claimed to generate more learner-repair than other types of feedback (Panova and Lyster, 2002). Restating correct verbal production was occasionally noticed.

## **5.5 Contextual factors informing teachers' cognitions**

One of the themes that were discussed earlier, was the relationship between participants' cognition of applying peer assessment and their actual feedback practice, which was a prominent theme across the cases (see section 5.5.2). This was due to many potential reasons, including the nature of the Saudi educational settings (to be discussed in Chapter 6 section 6.2.6.1). Also, the participants' feedback practices took into consideration existing contextual factors and the impact these had on sustaining their feedback practices. This brought attention to their teachers' awareness of contextual issues that deserved further attention.

After completing the data collection process with the five participants, I had developed a concern in my understanding of three key areas found in the data: marking and feedback instructions for teachers; the impact of class size on feedback; and the availability of regular training on assessment feedback. These themes had surfaced as a result of the analysis that had taken place during my presence at the research site. I also noted that there was inconsistency amongst the sample on whether training on assessment and feedback was provided regularly for teachers. Therefore, I sought to speak to institutional informants to get clarification on context-related matters (i.e. instructions for teachers on marking of the writing assessment, teacher training survey report prepared by the mentoring committee). I contacted teachers who were assigned administrative roles in the CPD mentoring programme and the writing assessment coordinator. I interviewed the teacher coordinator and asked her questions based on my research findings.

The next sections reveal the challenges the participants faced in their feedback provision, and the responses I received on a few of these issues. Feedback challenges were linked with certain factors associated with the language programme, including policy and the facilitation of training for teachers. This indicates that the inconsistency in feedback practices among the sample was informed by classroom

characteristics (discussed in section 5.5.1); the module timeframe (discussed in section 5.5.2); technology-enhanced feedback (discussed in section 5.5.3); and in-service training and guidelines (discussed in section 5.5.4). These themes emerged when discussing some of the challenges that the participants faced in enacting their beliefs on feedback. Each of these themes is discussed individually in the following sections.

### **5.5.1 Classroom characteristics informing teachers' cognitions**

This section discusses characteristics that are unique in each class, mainly classroom size, the ratio of mixed-ability learners, and individual differences in engaging with feedback. Class size is defined as the number of students in a class with one teacher (Department for Education, 2011). Out of the five cases, two participants had classroom sizes that exceeded the average (25–30 students). For example, Amy had a class of 40 students, which she also described as comprising learners of mixed abilities. Thus, it was anticipated that a larger, smaller, or mixed-ability class would influence the participants' decisions over their feedback strategies. According to Ireson and Hallam (2001), a mixed-ability class does not just consist of a range of abilities, but also a range of learning styles and preferences. Indeed, learners' ability to engage in feedback was one of the main concerns of the participants. While discussing the issue of class size with the writing assessment coordinators, she expressed her concern with this persistent issue:

*The issue with class size is that it does affect the amount of feedback that you get, and this might seem that you might want to mention in your [research] presentation, because now there isn't any proof. I mean, as much as this being is being brought up regarding class size, nobody's listening. The classes are getting larger and larger globally, not just here. And yeah, that this is an issue when it comes to feedback from teachers, you know. (Lara, institutional informant)*

A notable example of this was Amy, who repeatedly mentioned her struggle to deliver feedback and how much time it took her to deliver feedback as a result of her current class size. When discussing how her feedback played a role in achieving the

LOs, Amy noted that although her learners performed well on their assessment, she still believed that it was a challenge: *“I have 40 and I think only 20 should be in this track, because 20 at least, they already had some kind of level, the other 20 were really struggling”*. When asked if she would have used different feedback strategies, Amy mentioned that they needed one-to-one feedback, due to their low language proficiency. Throughout the interviews, Amy noted that mixed-ability learners needed more attention; *“It was harder to motivate them”*, as she believed that their proficiency level was below the expected standards.

Similarly, Mona was unsure of how to provide feedback in a mixed-ability class, especially when she was teaching advanced learner groups. She recalled a case in which some of the learners should have known the basics of English grammar and their application in their writing: *“Like when you get level three, the students should already know perfectly how to do subject-verb agreement, still haven’t gotten the basics of present simple”*. Her beliefs were supportive of the role of assessment and feedback in informing instruction, but issues with managing feedback in classes of mixed-ability learners had led to inconsistency in her feedback provision. Mona mentioned she was unable to use a variety of feedback modes with her current learners, as their language proficiency (level A1) would not enable them to carry out peer assessment, for example. Being asked about this made her question the purpose of FA: *“One of my strengths, is where I can go back and reteach something, that they should have already learned, we’re not supposed to do that! But at the same time, if I don’t teach it, it will hinder their learning”*.

When observed, Mona and Amy mainly carried out individual feedback. Mona was sceptical about whether a different group of learners would benefit from her feedback approach, as she said: *“I’m not sure if it’s because they are science [EAP] students, all my previous experiences has been with Arts [General English] students”*.

However, she noted that this group of learners was *“very fast, learning, understanding, comprehending and we actually moved a bit faster in the curriculum”*. Similarly, Summa noted how her feedback strategy was informed by the learner group: *“... this works with this kind of group [high proficiency learners], and I’m happy I can repeat it many times”*. Nisreen voiced a similar observation, *“with these science students, since they were really good students, so we managed, but for Arts,*

*repeaters, and some students, who are like low achievers, it's not sufficient at all".* A comparable observation was reported a few weeks later by Haya, who voluntarily texted me in the following module to modify her thoughts on how learners' L2 proficiency was an important factor in informing her classroom feedback strategies:

*I wanted you to know that I was unable to apply peer feedback with the new batch, they were not able to correct one another or figure out error code meaning on their own, except for SP-spelling. I had to give them individual feedback, although I had 40 students. I couldn't use peer feedback with them, though I wanted to.*

Individual differences in engaging with feedback revealed participants' views of learners' responsibility and commitment to the feedback process. For example, Amy used the 'doctor-patient relationship' metaphor to support her beliefs about learners taking a proactive role in feedback (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.4.5.1). Through this, Amy was recognising the role of the student (as an active participant in the feedback process) and the importance of considering their teacher's comments to improve their writing skills. Using a metaphor in describing her perception of feedback, Amy viewed its potential effect as being similar to a situation of a patient taking treatment or medication to improve:

*I had a case where she said, "I don't need the ten marks", I said come to do it [the task] early, so that we catch these kind of problems. I had three cases, I gave them a zero, and they were like, "Okay, whatever". Sometimes I feel like, all the expectations are on us, on the teachers, but what do they expect from the students? **The patient is the one who has to take the medicine** [Amy's emphasis] and get herself treated. (Amy, final interview)*

Similarly, Summa was disappointed and noted that not all learners were interested in reading her written comments, "*I gave their papers back and several of them came and discussed it with me, but others, they just gave back the papers*". Summa also explained how learners are different:

*Classrooms are dynamic, at the end of the day, you can't just say, it's like a recipe, or this way, it's gonna work with each and every group. I mean, sometimes, I'd like them to move around and make noise and everything and see that they are learning, but sometimes, it might also not work with others.*

(Summa, final interview)

### **5.5.2 Module timeframe informing teachers' cognitions**

There was a stated belief among the sample regarding the impact of the module timeframe on feedback provision and thus on the achievement of the LOs for the skill of writing. The element of time was a concern in terms of whether it allowed learners to achieve the expected proficiency (in writing) within the seven-week time frame.

Haya noted that this challenge had an impact on feedback provision: *"If you come to the issue of time, I think we need more time"*. Similarly, Amy acknowledged this challenge in terms of classroom management for teachers, and in terms of achievement for learners: *"for us to accomplish this task, in seven weeks to get them at, at a certain level, is actually very difficult for them"*.

Nisreen had a change of perspective on the module timeframe by the end of the data collection period. At the beginning of the module, she said that seven weeks was enough for the learners to develop, through the feedback that was given to them (see Chapter 4 section 4.1.2). However, in the final interview, she had a different opinion when she noticed learners' fossilised language errors (following her feedback throughout the course) because she noticed that her learners kept repeating the same errors. This explained her reason for using WhatsApp as compensation for time (see Chapter 4 section 4.1.5.1). Furthermore, the participants reported their concerns over persistent errors in writing (fossilisation) in some learner cases, regardless of repeated feedback. This led to a concern among the participants that some learners would not be able to achieve the expected proficiency (for writing in this case) within a seven-week time frame. For example, Summa voiced the issue of time constraints and the impact it had on completing the curriculum requisite, managing instruction, and covering all the material. In her opinion, Summa found that such circumstances not only made her feel inadequate as a teacher, but it was also a factor in her need to prioritise feedback from an 'error corrective' stance:

*I've got a prescribed curriculum, I've a book to cover, and I've got a time pressure. So, there's no time for that (individual feedback). So, I obviously, I would do it that way, like organised lessons to sort of rectify what's happening, sort of, give, teach them what they need actually, based on those mistakes they make. But I feel I'm, I'm not doing much, or enough, yes, but this is the harsh reality of the situation. (Summa, final interview)*

As demonstrated across the cases, time was a common issue for the participants (as well as a theme among the sample), who unanimously voiced their need for more time to allow for one-to-one feedback with their learners.

### **5.5.3 Technology-enhanced feedback informing teachers' cognitions**

Language teachers at the ELP were instructed to use the university's software LMS (Blackboard) to provide written feedback on their learners' writing tasks. Since this was a policy that informed feedback provision, its usefulness was discussed with the participants, allowing them to report their experiences of delivering feedback through Blackboard. Summa, for example, found that giving feedback on Blackboard was complementary and supported learner self-reflection:

*I did provide feedback to them on Blackboard as well, and I really liked the idea, because they have enough time to sort of plan for the writing and revise it, and I always tell them that go back and read it and look out for mistakes” (Summa, final interview)*

Similarly, Amy described feedback on Blackboard as serving a summative purpose through using the online platform for marking evidence on learners' writing tasks. However, Amy believed that the feedback that was taking place in the classroom allowed her opportunities for discussing errors, and it provided her students an opportunity for development before the final writing assessment. Amy emphasised the need for face-to-face discussions on the writing tasks assigned on Blackboard. Amy provided an example of using class time to provide support for writing development, compared to the online platform:

*One of my students, she created a sentence that was which was quite good. But it wasn't it wasn't completely accurate. If she had written that during class and showed it to me, I would have helped her out, you know, and then she would have been able to re-submit [on Blackboard]. (Amy, final Interview)*

As an illustration of how contexts shaped cognition and practice, it was observed that few cases had used an alternative means of technology-enhanced feedback. For example, Haya and Nisreen mentioned adopting additional communication methods other than Blackboard for channelling feedback, and thus echoing that using Blackboard was insufficient for the provision of formative feedback. This led them to use WhatsApp for providing feedback on their learners' writing tasks in the early stages of the course. They noted earlier in the course the benefits of using this method, which served as a useful and convenient approach to providing feedback to their learners. This represents awareness of technology integration for feedback purposes among the participants. Furthermore, Nisreen believed that WhatsApp was more effective in channelling feedback than Blackboard, saying: *"Sometimes even Blackboard has some glitches, it just, gradually stops, it hangs, and it doesn't work. Okay, so, I think it [WhatsApp] is even more convenient"*. Haya had a similar opinion on feedback provision through Blackboard, and she preferred discussing feedback in class: *"Because it's face to face, and you can, you can write full sentences and you can evaluate every part, but of course, the WhatsApp or whatever, or even the Blackboard itself, you cannot give them the right feedback like the one in the class"*. This reveals that participants had taken specific actions in their feedback delivery while stating the context-specific reasons for carrying out their practice.

#### **5.5.4 Institutional assessment feedback guidelines informing teachers' cognitions**

Based on what was reported in each case, interpretation of the assessment feedback guidelines and the writing assessment rubric/rating scales had not been consistent among the sample. Even in-service training on assessing and providing feedback had not been consistent. For example, Nisreen mentioned a lack of ongoing support mechanisms for teachers on how to assess and provide feedback: *"They used to have these workshops in which they used to give us actual sample*

*papers of students and they would ask us to mark it, following the rubric, and we would discuss in groups that is fine, we are on one page, they would mark exactly according to the rubric. Now, it's been years".* Also, Amy noted that the workshops were not helpful to her in giving proper marks and mentioned a lack of workshops for teachers on providing feedback (see section 4.4.5.2). Similarly, Haya revealed that she was unsure of the effectiveness of her feedback, expressing a need for training on assessment feedback (discussed in section 2.4.1). Having joined the programme more recently, Mona mentioned her struggle in interpreting the assessment marking guide and she expressed a need for clearer specifications for marking. She associated her feedback with a lack of understanding of the assessment rubric:

*We have had workshops, and it's helpful, in a way, but at the same time the rubric itself is a bit vague, because when it says few errors, how do you classify few? It's a bit vague, and it's a little bit up to the teacher to decide what she would find as acceptable. (Mona, final interview)*

The nature of the feedback taking place was not only influenced by the teachers' own feedback experiences and beliefs, but also by the apparent lack of support being provided by the teaching and learning context. The participants suggested that much of this stemmed from the lack of attention to in-service teacher education on assessment and feedback. Based on the participants' lack of confidence in their assessment feedback practice, and their confession of needing clearer instructions and training, I decided to seek facts from knowledgeable senior staff members – namely 'institutional informants'. I sought clarification on institutional guidelines for teachers on assessment feedback. After speaking to the Head of the CPD within the Women's main campus, I was guided to speak to Lara (pseudonym) who was a senior teacher and member of the Test Development and Curriculum Unit, responsible for coordinating the writing assessment with her colleagues from the men's campus. When discussing the writing assessment rubric (rating scale) with Lara, she admitted to some of the criteria in need of adjustment, indicating a need for modifying the assessment rubric/rating scale:

*Yeah, I told [deleted name of staff member], when he sent it this module, the rubric for revision. And I wrote back to him, because this rubric has been used*

*since last year. Since we started with the Unlock series [new curriculum], this was the first opportunity I had to look at the rubric, and said to him, “you know, there is no provision for lexical range in this rubric”. I mean, even if there were students who are using a wider variety of lexis, we are we're not going to give them better marks, based on the rubric. So, then he said, that was a point that was bothering him as well. And he said, “If I could manage to do it, I should try to accommodate lexical range in the rubric”, but because we didn't have time, we kind of left it up. Hopefully next month. (Lara, Institutional Informant)*

It became evident to me that there was a lack of clarity in the feedback instructions, which may have led to teachers carrying out assessments and feedback in an inconsistent manner. For example, when I observed the participants' written feedback, I noticed that Mona was the only participant who believed that teachers had not been instructed to use error codes when marking students' errors. She insisted that teachers were requested to indicate writing errors through underlining only, without the use of codes, and added that this would encourage learners to guess their errors. This suggests that instructions on feedback provision, both written and verbally delivered in the classroom, were subject to personal interpretation. When discussing this issue with the writing assessment coordinator, she disputed this by saying it has been made clear a few years ago to the teaching staff, and that cross-checking procedures are carried out on the writing assessment to ensure that teachers are following the guidelines:

*But we did we tell the teachers across the board that this is very important. And I remember the year before last, sending in error codes with the rubrics and stuff for the teachers. But now it's not a very big deal I guess, like the teachers know this, and I'm sure they'll be using it, and I think there are random checks, you know the way they're checking the writing. (Lara, Institutional Informant)*

I continued my discussion with Lara asking her about teachers' non-uses of error codes and whether the teaching staff had received clear instructions on error code use. Mona had mentioned earlier (see Chapter 4, section 4.5.2) wanting her students to guess their errors by underlining their incorrect forms on the writing assessment.

Lara was puzzled by this and gave her own account of such practice considering the limited time teachers had in the module teaching system:

*Lara. I don't think so, that would be very misleading. Okay, you could, use that technique and higher levels, I mean level three, students can do it. If you've trained the students to do it, it's fine. Another thing that I just completed my Delta. Delta is like assessment is a big thing and especially how you train, the students to receive your feedback is a big deal as well. So if you're going to train your students beforehand to get the mistakes, and they've actually, I mean they have actually mastered that strategy, then you can go ahead and do it, but I don't think that's something that you can achieve in one module at all.*

*The researcher: Okay, okay, it was interesting, I noticed one, it wasn't all the teachers, it was just one teacher, and I wanted to ask her why she decided, not to use error codes. And I think there's, this understanding, that she thought that, that she wasn't supposed to use error codes?*

*Lara. No, no, it's specifically mentioned that you should write using codes, maybe there needs to be more emphasis for teachers and why our codes are important and why they should be used. I mean, it would help be helpful to have more workshops for teachers on how to do so yeah. I can suggest it to my colleague.*

To conclude, discussing the noted issues with institutional informants (i.e. a member of the Test Development and Curriculum Unit for the writing skills assessment) allowed an opportunity for providing clarifications of the nature of institutional instructions and lack of clarity in instructions on feedback practice (discussed in Chapter 6, sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.8).

## **5.6 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I have reported on the participants' assessment feedback experiences, their self-reported practices, their actual feedback practices,

explanations about beliefs on specific feedback strategies, including similarities and differences across the cases. Section 5.2 discussed teachers' experiences that informed their cognitions, section 5.3 discussed teachers' self-reported feedback, section 5.4 discussed teachers' actual feedback provision, section 5.5 discussed the relationship between cognition and practice, and section 5.6 discussed the contextual factors that had an impact on all the cases. Emerging themes across the cases were related to the use of peer assessment, assessment literacy, technology-enhanced feedback, teachers' written feedback, and in-service teacher training. These themes represented the overall nature of the feedback provision among the sample and in the specific EAP context and how they informed the participants' cognitions. These aspects will be discussed with reference to the literature in the following chapter.

## Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings

### 6.1 Introduction: the guiding framework for this study

As discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), this study is situated within language teacher cognition theory (Borg, 2006) and it aimed to explore teachers' cognitions and practices of feedback on their learners' English academic writing. Since the original model of language teacher cognition (Borg, 2006, presented in Chapter 2, p. 31) is non-specific to the study focus, I have adapted and narrowed the focus of Borg's model to teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback, as shown in Figure 6-1, which is a reproduction of Figure 2-3 (presented originally in Chapter 2, p. 59).

The findings are in accordance with the adapted framework model, which established the structuring of this chapter according to the research findings on language teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback. This adapted model has been designed to reflect the context in which teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback operate. This chapter is structured according to the adaptation of Borg's framework, by linking the three dimensions: (a) the impact of schooling, (b) the impact of professional coursework, and (c) the impact of classroom practices and context on language teachers' cognitions.

This chapter discusses the findings of the study (presented in Chapters 4 and 5). It begins by discussing the key findings as revealed in the analysis, and as they correspond with the research questions (section 6.2). Section 6.2.1 addresses the impact of schooling, professional coursework, and classroom experience on teachers' cognitions, from which the theme 'reasons for variation among teachers' informed cognition of feedback' emerges (discussed in section 6.2.2). It also reflects the overlap between the three dimensions and the complex inter-relationship between each dimension. Section 6.2.3 addresses how teachers' cognitions of feedback informed their self-reported feedback provision, from which the theme 'reasons for variation in teachers' self-reported feedback provision' emerges (discussed in section 6.2.4). Section 6.2.5 addresses the third research question, by discussing the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their actual feedback practice, from which the theme 'reasons for variation in teachers' actual assessment

feedback practice' emerges (discussed in section 6.2.6). Section 6.2.7 addresses the fourth research question and identifies the contextual constraints on teachers' cognitions, from which the themes surrounding constraints on teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback' emerge (discussed in section 6.2.8).

The chapter provides insights into the contextual environment within which teachers work, and it explains how assessment feedback practices pose questions for institutional practice on the required support for teachers (discussed in section 6.2.8.1) and the lack of in-service training (discussed in section 6.2.8.2). Additionally, the AF guidelines identified within EAT (Evans', 2016, see Chapter 2, section 2.5.1.4) are reflected in this chapter. The guidelines include providing accessible feedback (AF 1); providing early opportunities for students to act on feedback (AF 2); preparing students for meaningful dialogue and peer engagement (AF 3); and promoting the development of students' self-evaluation and critical reflection skills (AF 4).

Based on a reflection of the findings and key themes in this chapter, a developed model for Language Teacher Cognition of Assessment Feedback is proposed (section 6.3). The chapter ends with the summary (section 6.4).

## **6.2 Discussion of the key findings**

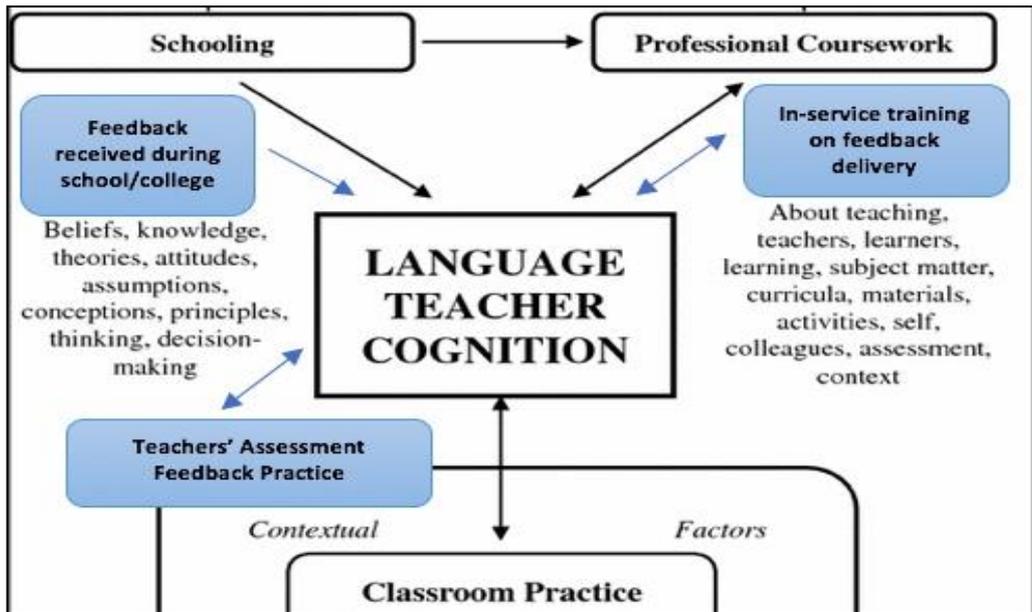
As revealed in this case study, explorations of EFL teachers' cognitions of their feedback practices provide an understanding of their experiences through knowledge construction and belief reconceptualisation of assessment feedback. Borg (2019) asserts that teacher cognition research is of paramount importance, as forming an understanding of how becoming, being, and developing as a teacher is informed by what teachers think and feel about all aspects of their practice (and who/what informs them). Although it is the individual mind that needs to be understood to make sense of what teachers do, other elements highlighting features of the context are acknowledged in this chapter, including aspects pertaining to institutional policy on assessment feedback and in-service teacher training (discussed in section 6.2.8). The key findings below are organised according to the research study questions, the framework for this study (see Figure 6-1), and the guidelines for AF taken from EAT (Evans, 2016). The following discussion combines

the findings and ties the data into a coherent holistic picture to explain the explorations that were made. It, thus, links teachers' experiences with their self-reported feedback practice, their actual practices, and the role of mediating contextual factors in feedback delivery.

### **6.2.1 The impact of schooling, professional coursework, and classroom assessment experience on teachers' cognitions**

In their initial step in formal education, mainstream schooling offered the basis for teachers' educational background (Borg, 2006). Additionally, teachers' classroom experiences involve the interaction of their cognitions with their contextualised practice. As a result, classroom experiences can consciously or unconsciously influence cognition. More importantly, classroom observations allowed exploring any feedback practices that had not been reported by the participants in the pre-observation interviews. Thus, unanticipated, yet potentially insightful, classroom events and behaviours were noted (Borg, 2006) in discussing the nature of feedback taking place.

The first research question explored participants' experiences of assessment feedback (as learners) and of providing feedback (as teachers). The participants' experiences with assessment feedback (or the lack of them) had defined their earlier cognitions of feedback. Figure 6-1 has been obtained as a section from the adaptation to Borg's (2006) model of language teacher cognition to emphasise the impact of schooling, professional coursework, and classroom experience on teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback.



**Figure 6-1. A section from the adaptation to Borg's (2006) model of language teacher cognition**

It was noted in this study that the participants' experiences in receiving feedback during their schooling were less influential on their cognition than the feedback training they received as part of their professional courses (discussed in section 5.2.1). This was revealed based on the noted comparison between the participants who had experienced formal education settings and the participants who had experienced home-schooling and online learning. For example, Nisreen reported receiving feedback from her peers during teacher training, using a 'two stars and a wish' technique (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.1.1.2.) and Haya reported the 'think, pair, and share' approach, which facilitated peer discussion (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.2.) and carried out a similar feedback approach in the observed lessons. Similarly, Mona, (who was home-schooled) mentioned receiving feedback from colleagues as she underwent training early in her career, which she perceived as beneficial to her cognitive development. As can be seen in the cases where the participants cited their experiences with feedback repetitively, and in the cases in which I had observed them apply similar approaches in their feedback provision, it is evident in this study that teacher education had informed teachers' cognitions of classroom-based assessment and feedback. These examples resonate with the literature (e.g. Tsui, 2003) and the claim that teacher education impacts

trainees' beliefs and classroom practices and increase awareness of certain aspects of classroom teaching (Kubanyiova, 2012).

The findings revealed that assessment feedback conceptualisation amongst the sample are products of their changing experiences ranging from their time as students (being influenced by their teachers or mentors), through their initial teacher education on assessment feedback delivery, and later in-service training opportunities with senior colleagues. The participants' intentional involvement in planning and choosing their training influenced their developing cognition of assessment feedback. In-service training was also an opportunity for the participants to receive peer feedback from experienced colleagues and mentors in preparing for writing practice tests (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.1.1.2) and test item creation (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.3.1.2). More clearly, however, the participants' classroom experiences of providing feedback had an additional impact on their cognitions, mainly their beliefs about peer assessment, peer feedback and self-assessment (discussed in Chapter 5, sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.6).

This study has revealed that teachers' experiences of assessment feedback (based on their classroom practice) had the most influence on the way that the participants implemented feedback, compared to their schooling and professional coursework experiences. This was evident in the way they adapted different feedback modes to their classroom-based feedback practice (such as gamification and peer assessment discussed in section 6.2.6). The analysis also revealed that the participants' cognitions of feedback varied amongst the sample with some having more experience and training due to the time spent in the teaching profession. For example, only two teachers had experience with the application of peer assessment and self-assessment in their classrooms (to be discussed in section 6.2.3).

### **6.2.2 Reasons for variation in teachers' informed cognitions of feedback**

The findings of this research study revealed that schooling, professional coursework, and classroom experience (as identified in the framework, Figure 6-2) had an impact on participants' cognition to varying degrees. Pre-observation interviews with the participants explored thematic strands that included receiving feedback as language learners and as teacher-learners and their beliefs about peer assessment/feedback.

As the participants reflected on their feedback provision, they revealed that there was also a lack of support provided for teachers on feedback.

One noted observation across the cases, was that peer assessment and feedback were first introduced to the participants during teacher training (Nisreen, Haya, Summa, and Mona). However, Amy had not experienced peer assessment or peer feedback with colleagues or mentors in her training. This was an opportunity that was presented to some teaching staff in the ELP through their involvement in in-service professional development and committee tasks (feedback on test item creation). These peer feedback experiences consequently informed their feedback practices with their learners. This influence of learning and practical experiences on cognition has been demonstrated by other researchers, such as Borg (2006), who acknowledged that teachers' experiences as learners and their prior experiences (Johnson, 1994) influence their initial thinking and development early in their careers. In-service information about the participant teacher sample is provided in Appendix B3.

The participants voiced that the feedback they received from their colleagues (on their test item creation) had an impact on their conceptualisation of feedback. Evidently, the participants had not experienced this type of peer engagement before joining the teaching profession, and in some cases, not even after being employed by the ELP for several years (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.5.2). Zhao (2014; 2018) acknowledged that limited knowledge of peer assessment (and hesitation in using it) are due to limited instruction and training on peer assessment. Kubanyiova (2012) also noted that teacher development courses could increase awareness of certain aspects of classroom teaching that support learner engagement. In an examination-oriented education system (such as the case of this study), aspects of learners' low English language proficiency and motivation, and the conflict of peer assessment with the entrenched teacher-driven learning culture, influence teachers' decisions over the application of unfamiliar feedback approaches (Zhao, 2018).

Indeed, teachers need to be encouraged to think and enact dialogic feedback in their practice. For example, engaging learners in discussions on their writing and how to improve is a form of social (behavioural) engagement, which entails communication

(Svalberg, 2009). This is relevant to learners' revisions that are elicited through feedback processes. The benefit of social engagement in feedback processes (as demonstrated in this study through some form of peer assessment) should be highlighted (discussed in Chapter 5, sections 5.4.2). However, Evans (2015) has emphasised the importance of resources being available (for teachers) to enable learners to have agency and autonomy in managing and interacting within their learning environments to suit their needs. This study revealed that there was a lack of equal opportunities for experiencing and learning about peer assessment and feedback through in-service teacher training (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.4). Carless et al., (2011) noted the importance of support for learners' self-regulation while arguing that feedback should be conceptualised as a sustainable practice within assessment. For example, promoting awareness in using feedback processes in developing learners' autonomy and self-regulation skills, and ways to facilitate peer engagement is much needed when discussing the importance of learners' lifelong learning skills. Thus, further attention needs to be paid to the content of the teacher training programme within this study context, and in HE in general. This is discussed in the study recommendations on teacher development (Chapter 7, section 7.4.2)

### **6.2.3 The impact of teachers' cognitions on their self-reported feedback practice**

The second research question explored the participants' cognitions of feedback and how this informed their self-reported feedback practices. This was explored through discussions with teachers about their personal histories and the context (including learners, teacher training, and institutional decisions regarding assessment feedback and the new curriculum). Refer to Figure 6-2 of the adapted model on language teacher cognition, particularly the impact of teachers' cognitions on their perceived classroom practices.

Participants' reports during the interviews revealed their feedback strategies, approaches (verbal/written) and reasons for their feedback choices and preferences. The findings indicated that participants' cognitions of feedback had informed their self-reported feedback practices. However, the analysis also revealed participants' preferred feedback strategies, as they were selective in their feedback strategies and

feedback delivery (based on their given reasons). This was illustrated by their scepticism about using peer feedback (discussed in section 6.2.3.2) and self-assessment with their current learners, and their views on mixed-ability classes (discussed in section 6.2.3.4). This resonates with recent studies (e.g. Wei and Cao, 2020) which revealed the influences on teachers' cognitions, mainly learner factors.

The data revealing participants' self-reported use of electronic feedback delivery methods (e.g. WhatsApp text chat) both inside and outside of classrooms, (discussed in section 6.2.3.3) also signifies teachers' autonomy in their feedback provision. Electronically mediated feedback was reported as being used, along with handwritten feedback. The former was reported to be facilitative of learners' engagement with feedback, representing participants' autonomous decisions on feedback delivery. Based on the participants' experiences of feedback in the classroom, their approach to feedback with their learners (at the time of the study) had been informed by their classroom experiences. As mentioned in the literature, teachers' experiences in the classroom have a powerful influence on their cognition (Woods, 1996) and play a role in forming the networks of teachers' knowledge and beliefs (Borg, 2003).

#### **6.2.4 Reasons for variation in teachers' self-reported feedback practices**

The findings of this research study revealed that the participants gave varying accounts of their self-reported feedback provision as a representation of the link between cognition and classroom practice (identified in the framework, Figure 6-2). The findings also acknowledge the existing capacity for mediating feedback sources within the context (teacher, self, peers) and modes of feedback delivery (e.g. technology-enhanced feedback). These have been illustrated in this study through the participants' awareness of the importance of developing learners' self-assessment and peer assessment skills. For example, feedback strategies that included peer assessment, using WhatsApp, and using assessment literacy, was noted in variation amongst the sample (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3) based on their classroom-based feedback practices. However, the variation that was noted among the participants' self-reported feedback was an indication of a lack of a systematic approach to dealing with learners' writing issues. These findings resonate with the literature (e.g. Winstone and Carless, 2019) on the need to create a

responsibility-sharing culture in feedback processes. Teachers should be encouraged to engage learners more often with feedback processes in the classroom. This can be through guiding and supporting learners in their interpretation of feedback, through interactions with their peers and their teachers. This will also help learners to become reflective learners throughout their writing development.

The variation also reflects the influences that support or hinder the adoption of additional feedback strategies. These influences have been identified in other studies (e.g. Hakim, 2015; Alshahrani, 2020). However, additional influences identified in this study include: (a) teachers' schooling, professional coursework, training, and experiences of formative feedback; (b) teachers' observations of their learners' L2 proficiency before adopting peer assessment and feedback strategies (discussed in section 6.2.6); and (c) contextual constraints and affordances (discussed in sections 6.2.7 and 6.2.8), which include institutional regulations on feedback provision and resources (i.e. time). These influences resulted in variations in teachers' self-reported feedback provision. For example, it was noted that feedback strategies (for the majority of the cases in this study) were seen as being dependent on the nature of the learners' errors and the weaknesses in their writing. This not only informed the participants' awareness of the importance of feedback having formative qualities, but also of their learners' skill development. The analysis also revealed a range of approaches for feedback delivery (oral/written/online text), use of feedback sources (teacher, peer, self), and exam preparation material among the sample. This resonates with the research, which recommends that teachers also need to be professionally trained in facilitating feedback interactions in their classrooms. When feedback is reported as developmental, supportive, and timely, it can have an immense impact on improving achievement (Brown et al., 1997).

Irons (2008) notes that helping students to prepare for their assessment through drafts or mock exams could at least provide an opportunity for guidance and potential discussion about assessment, which could enhance learners' performance on their final assessment. Furthermore, learners should be able to compare their actual performance with the desired performance, to engage in appropriate action to bridge the gap between the two. This practice was evident among the sample, as in

the case of Nisreen and Haya (discussed in Chapter 4, sections 4.2.3 and 4.1.4.3). This demonstrates how the participants conceptualised their role in the feedback process and explains why they were motivated to carry out feedback processes in the manner they did.

### **6.2.5 The relationship between teachers' cognitions and their actual classroom feedback practices**

In response to the third research question, the mode of feedback interactions (teacher, peers, self) that were observed during the feedback lessons showed that there were both congruency and incongruency between beliefs and practices, within each case and across the cases. For example, findings that revealed the (mis)alignment between self-reported and actual feedback practices in using peer assessment (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.4.2) revealed the impact of contextual factors on teachers' cognitions and practices. As in the cases of Summa and Amy, they initially believed that peer assessment was an inadequate substitute for teachers' feedback due to their stated reasons such as learners' expectations of feedback, but they used this approach in the observed lessons (see Chapter 4, sections 4.3.2 and 4.4.2). This resonates with findings in other studies (e.g. Junqueira and Payant, 2015; Lei and Pramoolsook, 2020) that noted the impact of student-related factors on teachers' cognitions. As Borg (2009) had argued, mismatches between cognitions and practices should not be a focus of criticism, as they present an opportunity for teacher education research. The purpose of the study was not only to notice discrepancies between participants' self-reported and actual feedback practices, but to uncover the needs of teachers in terms of training and support in their assessment feedback practices.

### **6.2.6 Reasons for variation in teachers' actual assessment feedback practices**

Conducting classroom observations and interviews with the participants revealed elements about the contextual nature of teachers' feedback provision. The findings showed variation in feedback practice and reflected the unsystematic and inconsistent nature of the teachers' assessment feedback provision within the single cases and across the sample (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.4). Looking through the lens of life experiences raised questions about what could prevent

congruency between self-reported and actual practices. Based on initial discussions with teachers on their self-reported feedback strategies, by observing them in their classrooms, and then again by interviewing teachers using the stimulated recall follow-up method, participants were able to reflect on their feedback practice. In this study, reasons for the lack of congruency included student-related factors (feedback responses and their L2 proficiency, motivation and self-evaluative skills, learners' writing issues, and time), which all had an impact on teachers' cognitions and their feedback provision. These factors are discussed independently in the following sections.

#### **6.2.6.1 Teachers' cognitions of learners' feedback responses**

In this study, the participants reported that learners also had their feedback preferences and responded well to some feedback strategies and not so well to others. For example, the sample was unanimously unsure about whether their current learners were able to learn from peer feedback and make corrections accordingly. The participants expressed their concern about students' low language proficiency and their ability to provide and interpret feedback, even from their peers. Although the participants' responses in the pre-observation interviews expressed clearly that they understood the benefit of peer assessment in the long term, there was scepticism about using peer assessment and feedback as a sustained practice, and about students' expectation that feedback would be provided by their teacher. This was evident during the classroom observations when the participants decided for or against certain feedback strategies such as peer assessment and peer feedback. Thus, decisions to apply peer assessment and feedback were noted in later interviews as being dependent on learners' readiness and capability in carrying out feedback with peers, as reported in other studies (e.g. Wei and Cao, 2020).

This confirms that feedback practice is a dynamic activity in which teachers' actions are influenced by their learners' behaviour and engagement (Hyland and Hyland, 2006; Min, 2013). Hyland (2000) explains that peer assessment is a formative developmental process that allows learners the opportunity to discuss their texts and discover others' interpretations of them, whilst developing learner autonomy by shifting responsibility away from teachers. It also develops learners' higher-order

thinking by allowing them to critically read their peers' writing (Mangelsdorf, 1992) and improve the quality of their writing by integrating peer feedback into their revisions (Zhao 2010, 2014). As mentioned in the EAT guidelines, (AF 3) preparing students for peer engagement is recognised in relation to good assessment feedback practice (discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5.1.4).

The role of learners in feedback processes was noted by Amy, who had experience with learners that did not engage with her feedback (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.4.5.1). Amy argued that learners need to commit to the feedback process and take responsibility in the feedback process. This was the first case in which the learners were mentioned as needing to take responsibility for their learning by attending classes, completing their writing assignments, engaging with feedback, and in taking action to close gaps in learning (Sadler, 1989). Amy mentioned that she struggled with her learners' lack of engagement and said that she reminded them of this frequently. This resonates with the literature (e.g. Rand, 2017; Evans, 2013) which notes that it is common for teachers to become frustrated with students for not using feedback as it is intended. This also agrees with the ongoing recognition of feedback as a partnership and the importance of recognising the shared responsibilities between teachers and students in feedback processes (Carless and Winstone, 2020; Nash and Winstone, 2017).

#### **6.2.6.2 Teachers' cognitions of the impact of feedback on learners' motivation and self-evaluative skills**

It was perceived by the participants in this study that the means of feedback delivery had an impact on learners' motivation. Nelson and Schunn (2009) recognised characteristics that are central to feedback, such as being 'motivational' (influencing beliefs and willingness to participate); serving as reinforcement (to reward or punish specific behaviours); and informational (to change performance in a particular direction). For example, Summa and Nisreen believed that feedback could be conducted through motivational methods, such as using game-like activities (Kahoot) to raise awareness of quality writing (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.3). This was supported by their cognition of the importance of promoting learner engagement in feedback processes, and the importance of providing early opportunities for learners

to act on feedback to inform their future work (discussed in Chapter 4, sections 4.1.4.3 and 4.3.4.2). If feedback occurs at a late stage in a course, it could lead to learners' dissatisfaction with feedback (Hartley and Chesworth 2000), and more importantly, mean that students miss opportunities for progress. This resonates with Evans' guidelines (AF1 and AF2) on providing accessible feedback and early opportunities to act on feedback.

In this study, teachers perceived the use of online spaces for providing feedback to the learners using the institution's LMS (Blackboard) had facilitated feedback in the form of monologue rather than dialogue. According to the participants, using alternative online platforms for feedback delivery (e.g. WhatsApp) and actual classroom spaces) allowed learners to engage in the feedback process through dialogue (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3.3). As demonstrated in this study, participants' use of technology was a novel (Warschauer and Ware, 2006) and motivating way to engage L2 learners in writing. It was also revealed in this study that classroom feedback can encourage learners to self-assess by engaging them in discussions about their knowledge of writing and assessment standards. For example, teachers' use of recast in their feedback gave way to other feedback techniques such as elicitation, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, and repetition (see Appendix G2). The participants believed that this would encourage learner involvement and help them to realise their errors independently, although this may not necessarily be effective with all learners. This resonates with the literature (e.g. Ferris, 2006), where indirect error feedback is recommended due to the nature of the engagement involved and the fact that it promotes learner autonomy. Engaging learners in dialogue about their writing encourages them to clarify and defend their meaning, and it helps to "build a sense of ownership over their texts", explains Tardy (2006, p. 74). Thus, it was noted in this study that teachers' actions in the classroom, in minimising their control and building competence through dialogue during feedback, may contribute to developing learners' self-evaluative skills, as recommended by Evans' guidelines on AF (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.1.4).

### 6.2.6.3 Teachers' cognitions of learners' writing problems

The classroom observations revealed that the participants' feedback strategies were dependent on the message that needed to be conveyed to their learners. For example, Amy used whole class discussions as a strategy because she noticed that many of her learners made similar mistakes in their writing concerning plagiarism (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.4.4.1). It, therefore, made sense to give whole class feedback. Also, Amy had a relatively large class size (40 students) and mentioned repetitively struggling with providing individual feedback to each learner. Also, Nisreen was observed using Kahoot (an online game for classroom assessment) to practise the application of linking words in writing and to distinguish factual statements from opinions (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.1.3). It took place in the form of self-assessment, as learners were developing their understanding of writing standards. This approach may prove to be more effective than error correction as it contributes to knowledge development (Cook, 1991, cited in Ferris, 2006). It also relates to the guidelines recommended by Evans (2016) on the promotion of learners' self-evaluative skills (AF 4).

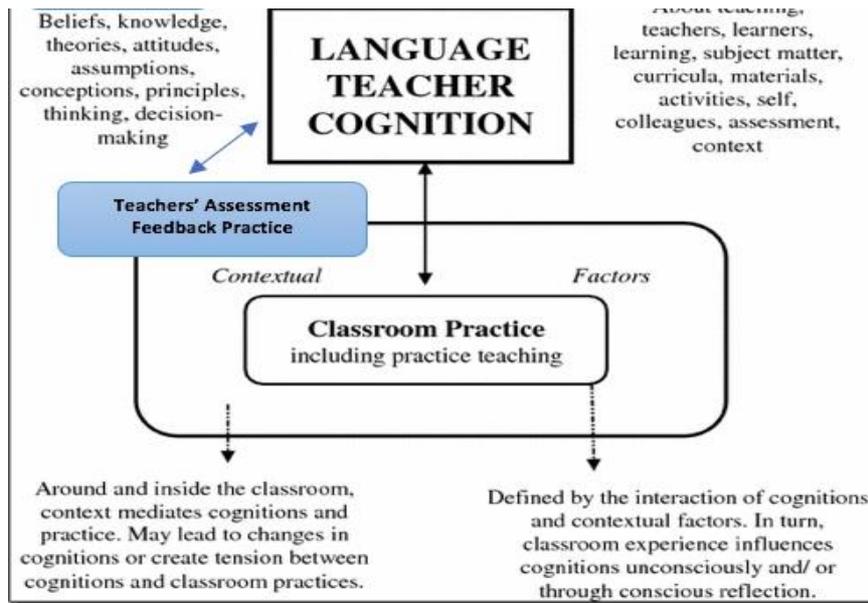
Classroom observations served in generating descriptive data on the teachers' instructional behaviour during the feedback sessions. For example, participants in this study demonstrated the use of corrective feedback techniques using prompts (e.g. restating, metalinguistic cues) on their learners' writing assessment. It was noted during the classroom observations that this practice facilitated discussions between teachers and students on how their writing could be developed (see Appendix G2). For example, the participants gave an overall evaluation of the class while the papers were being handed back to the students and learners' errors were highlighted (e.g. spelling, grammar, word choice). Then, prompts and questions were used by the teachers for clarification purposes and to facilitate discussions that enabled learners to correct their errors. This feedback technique did indeed facilitate learners' participation by providing the correct forms in the form of dialogue with their teachers, as mentioned in Evans' guidelines (AF 3) on preparing students for meaningful dialogue.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the participating teachers enabled their learners in becoming involved in the feedback process through dialogue. This

practice allowed learners the opportunity to ask questions and gain knowledge on how to improve their writing in the future. This resonates with the literature (e.g. Green, 2019) that highlights the need for feedback to be perceived as a 'shared role', that involves dialogic feedback processes informing students about the current task, whilst developing the ability to self-regulate performance on future tasks (Carless et al., 2011). As noted in this study, classroom-based assessment feedback could serve as a platform from which to include further aspects of meaningful feedback. For example, feedback that supports learner autonomy and self-regulation is presented through student engagement (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.4.1). This also resonates with the Agenda for Change that has been proposed by a group of international experts in the field of assessment feedback. One of the aims of this agenda is to inform a rethinking of the concept of feedback as 'dialogic' (Price et al., 2013). The emphasis here is on enabling learners to make sense of their teachers' feedback and to develop their self-evaluative skills (Evans, 2013; 2016). In this approach, both teacher and learner(s) are engaged in the negotiation of meaning through interaction, to generate a common understanding, rather than using feedback as diffusion of information.

### **6.2.7 The impact of the teaching and learning context on the relationship between teachers' cognitions and their actual feedback practices**

In relation to the fourth research question, the findings revealed the role of contextual factors in teachers' cognitions (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5). Figure 6-2 is a section taken from the adaptation to Borg's (2006) model on language teacher cognition. The image emphasises the aspects of context that have an impact on teachers' cognitions and may result in the dissonance between belief and practice.



**Figure 6-2. A section from the adaptation to Borg's (2006) model of language teacher cognition**

In the observed teaching sessions and follow-up interviews, the participants provided an in-depth reflection on their contextualised feedback practices (specifically at the end of the teaching course). The analysis of the teachers' responses through stimulated recall data following the classroom observations explored the relationship between the participants' cognitions and actual practices. These reports were part of the participants' reflection on their classroom-based feedback practices (as identified in the framework for contextual factors). In addition to discussions that took place regarding student-related factors (discussed in section 6.2.6), contextual issues and challenges were considered with the participants (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5). The contextual features that had an impact on the participants' feedback practice are discussed in the following section.

### **6.2.8 Contextual features informing teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback**

The findings of this study revealed varying reports from the participants on the support provided for teachers within the teaching and learning context, pertaining to training or lack of sufficient training on assessment feedback (as discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.4). One of the main findings was the discrepancy among the sample in terms of their background knowledge and experience of the concept of

assessment feedback and how to interpret the writing assessment rubric/rating scales. Spillane (2002) highlights that the development of new knowledge occurs through existing structures such as teachers' cognitions and practices. It also resonates with Tsui (2003), who stressed that the knowledge and skills that teachers develop are linked to their specific contexts. This suggests that understanding teacher cognition is central to understanding the process of teacher education and the nature of teachers' feedback practices (Borg, 2006).

#### **6.2.8.1 Institutional policy on provisional feedback: teacher autonomy and institutional structure**

Having completed interviewing and analysing the data generated from the five cases, I reviewed the institutional documents related to assessment feedback. I noted that instructions on marking and providing feedback could have been delivered more clearly to the instructors. For example, the assessment rubric/rating scale was mentioned as posing confusion for the participants in this study (as discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.4). To understand the wider context, information was gathered from additional participants (institutional informants) who were teachers with assigned administrative roles in the CPD mentoring programme, and in the Test Development and Curriculum Unit (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.4). This resulted in helping me understand and identify issues related to the feedback culture as it generated distinctive interpretations (Olsen, 2004) from the five cases. It also resulted in acquiring a deeper understanding of the nature of in-service opportunities for teacher training.

At the time of this study, the needs analysis report that had been sent out to teachers (discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.3.7) revealed that training programmes were informed by teaching staff in the ELP. It also revealed that teachers' engagement or lack of engagement influences the selection of topics within their teacher training programme. Exploring teachers' feedback processes in this context allowed me to witness what has been described by Tardy (2006) as the interaction between agency and expertise. Furthermore, it also resonates with the reflective aspect that teachers experience throughout their teaching career which plays a role in their autonomy, as their practices swing between the theories they adopt and their observations from

their practice (Malderez and Wedell, 2007). Indeed, this margin for teacher autonomy allowed teachers to practise feedback differently, at times shaped by the socio-cultural context and teachers' common practices (White and Ding, 2009). It has been recommended that teachers should determine the areas that they wish to develop based on awareness of their current practices (Lamb, 1995).

The participants in this study stressed that they were aware of global practices of feedback (e.g. peer assessment and self-assessment), but they were far from being able to efficiently implement them due to reasons including a lack of professional training (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.4) and situational factors related to learners, and the impact of time. For example, the institutional instructions on providing assessment feedback follow-up sessions mentioned the facilitation and mediation of student learning through peer assessment and self-correction. However, time (in particular) was mentioned as a challenge by the participants regarding providing adequate feedback, on an individual level and in-person (i.e. face-to-face) (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.2). Allowing sufficient time between students' receiving of results, followed by feedback discussions on the next steps in developing their work is very important to enable them to process the provided feedback and become ready to take advice on how to proceed. This may reduce the fossilised errors that the participants mentioned (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.2). This is in line with the literature (e.g. Tsui, 2003) that emphasises the role of context in teachers' cognitions, and the situational factors that may impact teachers' practices (Woods, 1996).

#### **6.2.8.2 Lack of in-service training on assessment feedback**

The analysis identified variation among the sample in terms of available opportunities for training on assessment feedback. Discussions with the participants during the interviews allowed them to consider wider issues related to the perceived effectiveness of their feedback (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.4), training they had (or had not received) on assessment feedback, and that which they would like to receive. For example, teachers' in-service teacher training experiences, mentoring experiences, awareness of various feedback strategies, (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.2.3) led to discussions on whether access to teacher training is available,

not always taken advantage of, and whether CPD (on a broader/universal scale) includes assessment feedback. These were contextual aspects worthy of further consideration.

As revealed in this study, the participating teachers were not satisfied with in-service training. For example, it was noted that training on assessment was inconsistent among the sample. Nisreen mentioned receiving orientation on marking students' writing exams and they were surprised that this had discontinued (see Chapter 5, section 5.5.4.). Other participants (Summa, Mona) learned about assessment and feedback from their colleagues while working in the Test Development and Curriculum Unit (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.3). This reveals that opportunities for receiving training and mentoring on assessment were made individually. A table presenting academic and in-service information about the participant sample, their years of experience in EFL teaching, and in teaching the EAP curriculum (provided in Appendix B3).

At the time of the study, Amy was teaching the EAP course for the first time (among the sample), and she reported that she was not happy with the training that teachers had received in marking learners' writing (see Chapter 4, section 4.4.5.2). Also, Amy mentioned that the only training associated with writing assessment and feedback was focused on providing accurate marks and grade justification. She voiced a need to receive training on how to provide feedback for learners to allow them to use feedback to improve their writing - formatively. Nevertheless, such courses and workshops need to capitalise on teachers' cognitions - their experience with feedback, and how to develop their understanding of feedback that serves learners' writing development. By incorporating assessment literacy into these courses, it can also build learners' understanding of the nature and meaning of assessment criteria, writing standards, and the skills involved in self-assessment and peer assessment (Price et al., 2012).

In this study, a lack of clarity on feedback instructions led to teachers carrying out assessment feedback in a non-consistent manner. For example, the use of error codes (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.4) was interpreted differently among the sample. For example, Mona's lack of use of error codes revealed that her feedback delivery was not following institutional guidelines on feedback delivery (discussed in

Chapter 4 section 4.5.5). Also, institutional documents stated that teachers were expected to provide feedback in the form of written notes on learners' errors, but they did not explain much about how this links with the assessment criteria and rubric/rating scales. The evidence provided by the participants revealed that the teacher education programme (offered to the five EFL participating teachers in the past) did not provide adequate training on feedback. Additionally, institutional regulations on conducting 'in-class reviews' following assessment were formally documented, but with a lack of written details on how this review should be carried out. Furthermore, the assessment rubric/rating scale posed an issue for some participants, who were not certain how to use it in their feedback on the writing assessments. For example, it was found that for writing mechanics, the marking criteria were clear for the participants, but there was some vagueness in the criteria relating to **ideas** and **creativity**. Assessment practices and instructional practices should be given the same importance in teachers' preparation of coursework, argue Herrera and Macías (2015) suggesting that institutions should facilitate training for EFL teachers' knowledge and competencies in assessment. This suggests a need for training on assessment criteria to allow the teachers to use them to provide accurate feedback.

When teachers experience change through professional development programmes, it is recommended that they have proper support and guidance, because teachers may not know what needs to be changed or how to navigate around these changes, adds Wedell (2003). Part of the professional role of teachers is to make use of assessment data to make decisions on teaching, instruction, and students' learning (Hopfenbeck, 2018). Given the levels of trust assigned to teachers in the delivery of assessment feedback, the degree to which in-service teacher training prepares teachers for this role deserves more attention. As noted in the case of academic staff at a university in the UK (see Chapter 2, section 2.4), much of the academic staff were aware that they are in a challenging position when it came to providing feedback: they want to enhance students' learning through their written comments; but the need to conform to the formal requirements leaves them feeling unable to voice their pedagogical concerns appropriately (Bailey and Garner, 2010). Unfortunately, much of teachers' perceived concerns about learners' needs have been overlooked in numerous educational settings. Based on the scholarly studies

that have been discussed, it can be assumed that teachers' cognitions about the purpose of feedback can play an important role in its perceived effectiveness. However, existing factors may hinder the association between feedback and learning improvements, and these are often overlooked in discussions on feedback effectiveness (Van der Kleij and Lipnevich, 2020). Finding ways of voicing this continuous debate in the research (in teacher cognition, assessment, or feedback) means emphasising the nature and content of teacher training, CPD, and professional course work.

### **6.3 A proposed model for language teacher cognition of assessment feedback**

This study has presented a lens through which an understanding of language teacher cognition can be developed, pertaining specifically to assessment feedback in the L2 and EAP context. The findings demonstrated that teachers' cognitions and practices are influenced by experiential opportunities or a lack of opportunities for in-service training on assessment feedback. As revealed in this study, teachers' experiences ultimately develop the pedagogical aspects of their work and inform their decision making (Woods, 1996; MacEwan and Bull, 1991), particularly in terms of their assessment feedback practice.

In this study, Borg's (2006) model provides a fundamental understanding of the impact of educational, practical experiences, and contextual factors on teacher cognition. However, it assumes a history of formal schooling takes place in a face-to-face classroom setting. Also, the model does not explicitly differentiate between pre-service and in-service teacher education. The following figures demonstrate Borg's original model of Language Teacher Cognition (2006) (Figure 6-3), followed by the developed model of Language Teacher Cognition of Assessment Feedback (Figure 6-4). The latter model represents a reconstructed view of teacher cognition, as it takes into consideration both the conventional (face to face) and unconventional (online) experiences in teachers' learning backgrounds as in the case of the home-schooled participant (discussed in Chapter 4, in section 4.5).

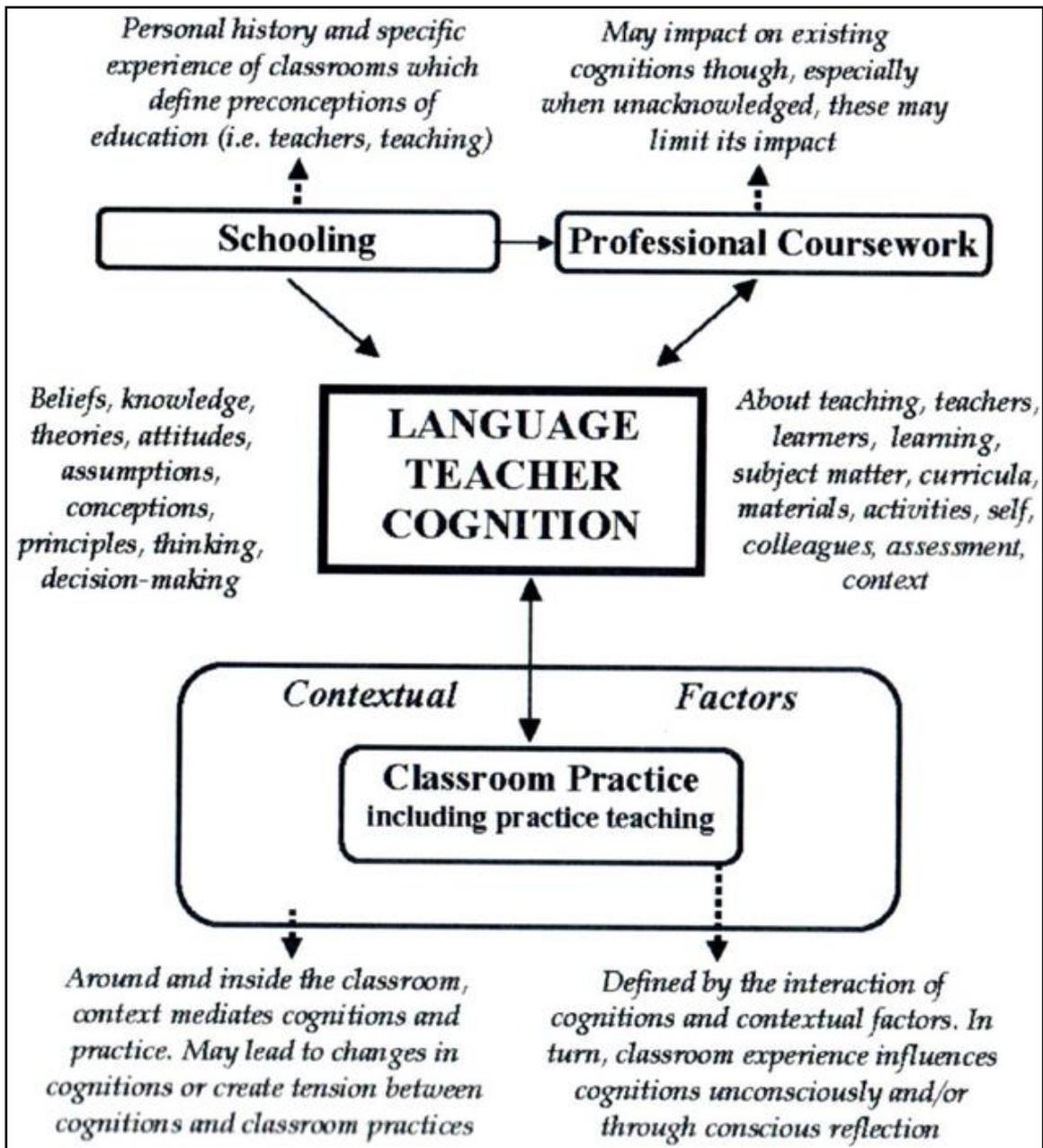
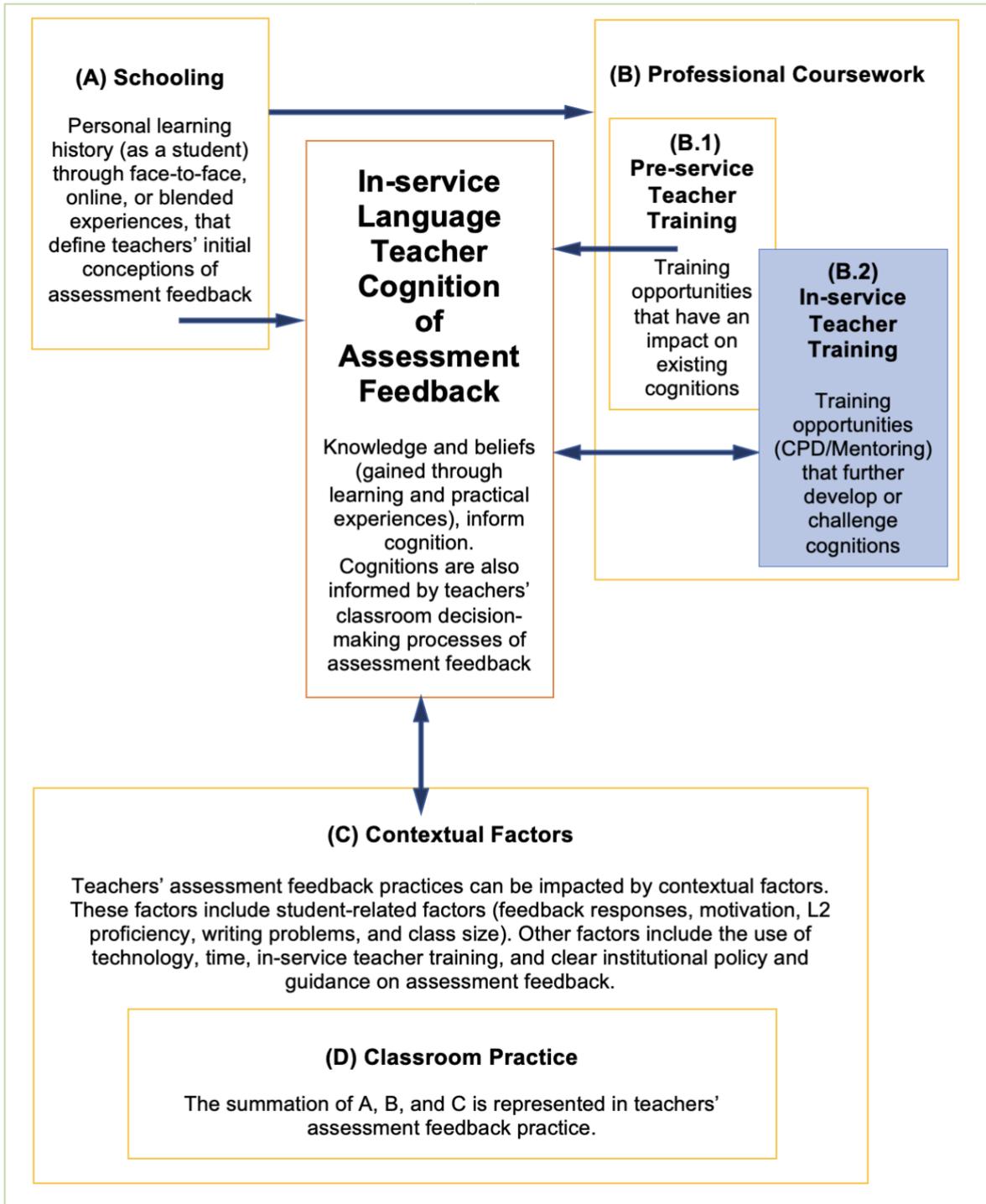


Figure 6-3. Borg's (2006) original model of Language Teacher Cognition



**Figure 6-4. A proposed model of Language Teacher Cognition of Assessment Feedback**

As demonstrated in the developed model (Figure 6-4), the arrows emerging from the upper boxes (labelled A and B) indicate the impact of the main sources of feedback conceptualisation for newly qualified and long-serving teachers. Firstly, the teachers' personal history relating to their educational experiences during school and college

(or home-schooling) define their initial conceptions of assessment feedback. This study has demonstrated that some teachers may have lacked face-to-face classroom experiences when they were students (see Mona's case in Chapter 4 section 4.5). Therefore, schooling experiences need to be considered due to personal or external circumstances (i.e. parental decisions or pandemic-related reasons) that lead to home-schooling, remote learning, or hybrid/blended learning experiences. The proposed model takes into consideration possible personal experiences, as there is no assumption that every teacher will have physically attended a local educational setting. The model is also applicable to virtual learning and teaching environments in the L2 context, and arguably beyond the L2 context.

Secondly, the developed model recognises the differentiation between initial teacher training and in-service teacher training under the general term 'professional coursework'. Pre-service training opportunities on assessment feedback delivery are represented first (B.1) as they impact existing cognitions. Then, in-service training opportunities are separately represented by CPD (B.2), which has been differentiated as it may develop, or challenge teachers' cognitions and practices related to contextualised assessment feedback. However, this latter form of training may or may not be available to all teachers, as found in this study. Thus, influences on cognitions are linked to CPD and/or contextual influences asserted through the culture of the institution(s) in which they operate. Therefore, in-service training (B.2) is linked with cognition, but separately from pre-service teacher training. Based on the findings of this study, these later experiences had an additional and significant impact on the participants' cognitions, as they allowed teachers to develop their conceptions of assessment feedback, as they were encouraged to question and seek validation from senior teachers during their in-service training opportunities. This also highlights the role of in-service training opportunities, particularly for assessment feedback.

Thirdly, the findings of this study highlight the significant role of contextualised practice in an EAP setting. As indicated in the bottom boxes in Figure 6-4 (labelled C and D) teachers' classroom practices are influenced by contextual factors. The factors pertaining to the EAP course include student-related factors (learners' responses to feedback, learners' motivation, learners' L2 proficiency, learners'

writing problems, and class size). Other factors include the use of technology, time, in-service training opportunities, and clear institutional policy and guidance for teachers on assessment feedback. The findings indicate that contextual factors are a significant cause of not only the alignment and misalignment between teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and actual classroom practices, but also of inconsistent practice amongst the teachers. Therefore, the developed model not only demonstrates the inter-relationship between teachers' personal and practical experiences with feedback, but also emphasises the significant impact of in-service training (i.e. CPD and mentoring experiences) on teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback. This study, therefore, presents an opportunity for rethinking language teacher cognition of assessment feedback. It calls on investing in teachers' knowledge and skills of assessment feedback.

#### **6.4 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the findings of teachers' cognitions, and their assessment feedback practices. Throughout these discussions, I synthesised the main findings with the literature and following the research questions of the study. Considering the uniqueness of the research study context and the nature of teachers' feedback provision, many aspects of the findings resonate with the literature on the continued mismatch between beliefs and practice. I have also discussed teachers' cognitions of learners' feedback responses, how their practices supported learners' writing development (e.g. benefits of using dialogue during feedback processes), as well as teachers' cognitions on the role of learners in their writing development and in overcoming their writing problems. Nevertheless, the discussion revealed the need for teachers to be professionally supported in assessment feedback practice in this developing EAP context. In providing the necessary support for teachers through in-service training, material, and resources, teachers may enable learners to succeed and progress in HE studies. In the next chapter, I will present the conclusion of the study by stating the contributions, the implications and recommendations for future research and practice, and the limitations of the study.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This study has provided an understanding of EFL teachers' cognition of assessment feedback in the context of EAP classrooms. The study took place within a Saudi tertiary level setting that had recently undergone curriculum reform for students preparing for entry into faculties where English is the only or main language of instruction (e.g. medicine, science, and engineering). The study provides an enhanced understanding of how and why EAP teachers enact assessment feedback within their teaching and learning communities, in an effort to enhance their learners' L2 writing. The findings of the study provide the basis for suggestions for teacher development and ways to improve teacher training within the context (internal and external) of the tertiary setting of interest. The chapter begins with the contributions of the study, discusses the research implications, the recommendations for future research and practice, and the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with my reflections on the study.

### **7.2 Contributions of the study**

This study has made a theoretical, empirical, and practical (pedagogical) contribution. It provides a new perspective on language teachers' cognitions and practices of assessment feedback, specifically in the EAP context. In this section, I will concentrate on the first two aspects of the contribution: the theoretical and the empirical. The practical contribution will be discussed in the recommendations section, in much detail.

#### **7.2.1 The theoretical contribution**

This study contributes to the research body at a theoretical level by providing a contribution to the understanding of the development of in-service language teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback. The developed model (Figure 6-5) brings attention to assessment feedback through a teacher cognition lens that is derived from Borg's (2006) theory on language teacher cognition. In adopting Borg's (2006) model on language teacher cognition, I have narrowed down the focus to

teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback. This study presents a model of language teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback.

Firstly, the proposed model takes into consideration the range of possible learning experiences, as there is no assumption that every teacher will have physically attended a local educational setting during their 'schooling' years. The study has considered the potential variance in the participants' educational backgrounds and their individual experiences with assessment feedback, ranging from what would be considered a 'normal' form of education (where students attend school) to the rare case of a home-schooling experience. Thus, it unpacks Borg's (2003) label of 'personalised' histories to uncover different forms of school settings (i.e. home-schooling, hybrid/blended learning, and traditional face-to-face learning). Secondly, the study unpacks the label 'professional coursework', as used by the author (Borg, 2006) by differentiating pre-service training from in-service teacher training opportunities (see Figure 7-1).

In considering the third dimension (i.e. the impact of classroom practices and context on language teachers' cognitions), this study revealed that teachers' cognitions are influenced by a range of socio-cultural factors (in addition to personal factors) which interact to shape who teachers are and what they do (Kubanyiova and Feryok, 2015; Borg, 2014), which is an illustration (also an emphasis) of the role of context in shaping cognition. As asserted in the literature, teacher cognition does not operate in a vacuum (Borg, 2019), as teachers' experiences with feedback evolve from their time as students, as teacher-students, and throughout their teaching careers. It was also found in this study that teachers' feedback practices are influenced by contextual factors including student-related factors (learners' responses to feedback, learners' motivation, L2 proficiency, learners' writing problems, and class size). Other factors include the use of technology, time, in-service teacher training, and clear institutional policy and guidance on assessment feedback. The findings indicate that contextual factors are a significant cause of the alignment and misalignment between teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and actual classroom practices.

### **7.2.2 The empirical contribution**

This study makes an original contribution, as it is, to the best of my knowledge, the first to explore and explain teachers' experiences with assessment feedback in the context of a Saudi high-stakes, tertiary, and specifically an EAP setting. Most studies have focused on teachers' feedback strategies at the secondary school level, while teachers' provision of feedback on students' written assignments in HE remains under-explored (Hyland, 2013; Baily and Garner, 2010). As facilitating high-quality feedback is a fundamental requirement in HE, there is much more we need to know and understand about the factors that contribute to the development of feedback quality. This demonstrates that the study is an important contribution, especially since assessment feedback is still under-researched from a language teacher cognition perspective. Additionally, the teacher sample in this study was heterogenous - a combination of various individual backgrounds (e.g. ethnicity, learning histories, academic discipline, and teaching experiences) compared to studies consisting of a single case sample which focus on novice teachers (e.g. Junqueira and Payant, 2015; Worden, 2018). Finally, research on computer-mediated feedback methods (as a form of delivery) versus traditional pen and paper delivery is much needed (Pearson, 2022). This study has explored teachers' use of both traditional feedback approaches (teacher, peer, self) as well as technology-enhanced feedback (i.e. WhatsApp) for delivery of formative feedback on their learners' L2 writing. As a result, this presents a contribution at a national level, and it is relatable to educational programmes in HE that provide academic English literacy and/or EAP.

### **7.2.3 The practical contribution**

The teachers' cognitions of the influence of feedback on learners' sustainable lifelong learning skills have been highlighted in the developed model. It suggests that there is a need to build teachers' awareness of learners' self-regulation skills through in-service training that targets beliefs (to be discussed further in section 7.4). Teachers' awareness of this aspect is key here, as it drives learners' engagement with feedback processes. Thus, the developed model takes into consideration the LOs in association with teacher cognition theory. In other words, our experiences of

assessment feedback as learners may have a long-term impact, including on our practice as teachers.

### **7.3 Research implications and recommendations**

The findings of this study reveal how teachers' cognitions influenced their assessment feedback practice. It highlights the importance of creating a space for the teachers to discuss their assessment feedback practice, offering them effective learning opportunities, and supporting them through frequent training. Other aspects pertaining to the context (e.g. lack of sufficient in-service teacher training) and the external teaching and learning environment (e.g. cultural restrictions) provide implications for practice as well as future studies.

This study has opened numerous areas worthy of future research, as the feedback exploration in this study was restricted only to female teachers for beginner level L2 learners. More research is necessary to examine how and to what extent the teachers begin to negotiate and implement their assessment practices in their future teaching contexts. This would undoubtedly reveal valuable insights for L2 teacher educators to consider in their teacher training programmes and institutional CPD. These implications could contribute to research work in the field of language learning and L2 writing assessment feedback research. Continuing this line of inquiry would most certainly reveal new and valuable insights for L2 teacher educators to implement in their teacher training programmes.

The implications resulting from this study indicate the required and specific actions that should be implemented to support the SV 2030 goals for education. The recommendations are presented in two sections. Sections 7.3.1 and 7.3.2, focus on recommendations for future research studies; sections 7.4.1 - 7.4.5 focus on recommendations for practice.

#### **7.3.1 Recommendation for future study 1: A study with male participants should be conducted using video-recorded stimulated recall methodology**

Understanding teachers' needs and highlighting communication between teachers and other stakeholders could offer valuable insight in an educational context. Using

qualitative methods in this study allowed for a thorough exploration of the research questions and provided data that reflect the views of the teacher participants. This study utilised stimulated recall methodology to acquire data during classroom observations. This method allowed the use of probing techniques to gather deeper insights into the participants' cognitions of their beliefs and practices after they had been observed in the classrooms. Using stimulated recall helps researchers to understand teachers' cognitions, and how cognition changes according to certain classroom situations (Grass and Mackey, 2016). The stimulated recall was a meditating strategy that was used to explore teachers' thoughts and thinking processes as they were engaging with their learners during the observed feedback lessons. This methodology allowed for both an accurate and a deeper exploration of the participants' views through the interactive data and analysis that had been acquired from classrooms recording and follow-up interviews. As a result, it provided an in-depth understanding of the interaction between cognition and practice, and of the nature of assessment feedback among female teacher participants.

Using stimulated recall in the future might open the doors to understanding and examining teachers' feedback practices and similar issues in tertiary settings in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. The advantage of using 'video recordings' during classroom observation is that they may be more effective in eliciting accurate recall compared to using an audiotape, as much is lost in the latter (Grass and Mackey, 2016). Given the cultural freedom in such settings, the use of the video-recorded methodology would be advantageous for the researcher, and it may uncover further details of classroom engagement compared to audio-recording only. Therefore, future studies (in the Saudi/Arabian Gulf educational context) can be conducted on the men's campus to compare the study results with those of this study.

### **7.3.2 Recommendation for future study 2: A similar study involving learner participants should be conducted**

It has been recognised that learners are social beings who learn better from each other's experiences while constructing their knowledge (Dewey and Dewey, 1915). This concept also applies to using corrective feedback group discussions to promote learning from peers and scaffold one's knowledge (Boggs, 2019). Exploring learners'

engagement with feedback through peer assessment would reveal some of the emerging trends in peer support for writing development and other skills as well. Although this study has generated data from an L2 exploration into the skill of writing, inferences about assessment may apply to other language skills (e.g. reading comprehension), and they could provide useful insights into learners' engagement and reflections on received feedback. Future research could examine learners' engagement with feedback processes through interventions such as training courses that aim to develop and raise awareness of feedback (for both teachers and learners) and how it impacts learning and improvement in L2 writing. The impact of feedback on learning could be another avenue in research on assessment feedback. Involving learner participants (along with teacher participants) in research may help in understanding the development of learners' cognitions along with the enactment of teachers' cognitions.

Another intention of this study is to inform policy and assessment feedback practice at various levels of education across the world. Recommendations on cognition and practice in teacher development are presented in the following section.

#### **7.4 Recommendations for practice: A suggested agenda for teacher training programmes that involve cognition and tackle misconceptions about assessment feedback**

Teacher training has been recognised under the principles of successful assessment feedback practice (Evans, 2013). The effects of the contextual factors in the present study indicate the need for in-service training for teachers so that they can try a wider range of feedback techniques. Pedagogical recommendations are supported by the present study's findings, where participants voiced their need for the necessary training and experience to use feedback as a learning opportunity. Hence, heads of CPD are encouraged to initiate practices and invite experts in feedback to hold specialised seminars, training sessions, and workshops about teaching and assessing writing in general and how teachers can encourage learners' engagement with feedback. Indeed, teachers need continuous training that focuses on assessment feedback relevant topics: promoting peer assessment and learner self-assessment strategies; using the CEFR level descriptors and assessment

rubric/rating scale when providing feedback; and encouraging learners' engagement in feedback processes through dialogue.

This study has provided insights into the educational context and nature of workplace learning experiences, within a wide range of developments, beginning with the national incentive SV 2030. Other developments in the local context include the new Saudi curriculum, the adoption of technology in feedback delivery, and feedback instructions. This reveals the need for stakeholders to reconceptualise feedback, particularly when setting their policy on assessment feedback training. This notion is presented through the proposed model for language teacher cognition of assessment feedback (presented as Figure 6-5 in Chapter 6, p. 184). Based on the proposed model for in-service Language Teacher Cognition of Assessment Feedback, the recommendations for assessment feedback practice are discussed independently in the following sections.

#### **7.4.1 Promoting awareness of teachers' use of peer assessment**

Explored teachers' experiences of feedback (as learners in the past) and then by their much recent experiences of providing feedback to their learners provided interesting insights about peer assessment and peer feedback. The analysis revealed that teachers employed different feedback strategies, as they were selective and, in some part, dismissive of institutional guidelines on feedback delivery. For example, this was illustrated by their scepticism of using peer feedback, for example (discussed 5.3.2), and self-assessment strategies (discussed in section 5.5.6). The study revealed that the participants' experience of peer assessment and in-service training on assessment feedback varied across the sample (discussed in Chapter 5, sections 5.2.3 and 5.6.4). The findings of this study also brought attention to the importance of teachers' awareness of learners' engagement through peer assessment, dialogue, and feedback interactions. It was noted during the classroom observations that learners might have read their teachers' written feedback without being motivated to respond to the comments or to engage in follow-up discussions. Hence, building a learning culture that allows learners to play an active role in scaffolding and knowledge construction might enhance learners' engagement and performance.

In the case of L2 learning, Boggs (2019) advises that learners should edit their errors and help their peers with their writing while they are guided by their instructors. This suggests that teachers should modify their learners' attitudes towards feedback, mainly by encouraging them to play a functional role in the learning-to-write process by facilitating peer engagement and support, even among less proficient L2 learners. Different stakeholders including policymakers, department leaders and teacher trainers need to be involved in making informed decisions about the nature of the classroom feedback interactions. Also, teachers need to adopt strategies that meet learners' expectations and guide them to take an active role and reflect on the WCF received (Agius and Wilkinson, 2014). For example, encouraging learners in peer evaluations and peer-editing sessions could help increase their awareness of their error patterns and performance. This may also include problem-solving activities as well as using peer-assessment strategies. Knowing such tasks can promote situational authenticity which fosters natural interaction in the classroom (Bygate, 2016) and even beyond learners' immediate context. Also, asking higher-achieving classmates to work with their peers in teams could support learning (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005). Furthermore, advising learners to adopt this practice may allow them to exchange and construct their knowledge and strengthen their understanding of the targeted linguistic forms.

#### **7.4.2 Teachers should be aware of the advantages of feedback and encourage learners' self-assessment strategies**

This study revealed teachers' use of electronic feedback delivery methods (e.g. WhatsApp) both inside and outside of classrooms (discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.2.3). Electronically mediated feedback was used along with handwritten feedback, as the former facilitated learners' engagement with feedback processes. This represents some of the participants' awareness of the importance of building learners' self-assessment skills (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.6) through mediating sources of feedback (e.g. peers, self, internet), which support individual development (Evans, 2011). However, the entire sample did not believe that beginner learner groups could successfully carry out self-assessment. It was noted that some participants in this study were not in favour of using self-assessment strategies with low-proficiency learners. Some of the participating teachers believed

that those beginner learners were incapable of improving their writing independently, due to their perception of their learners' low proficiency levels. Therefore, learners with limited proficiency levels should still be taught useful self-editing skills (i.e. strategies for how to edit their writing). Learning these skills and practising them with other learners is likely to improve their engagement with feedback processes. Teachers' understanding of the benefits of self-assessment may serve in developing learners' lifelong skills.

Assessment feedback research (e.g. Boud et al., 2011; Evans, 2013) has been advocating the need to promote learners' self-assessment skills so that they can make the most of feedback processes. Additionally, support for learners' self-regulation needs to be recognised in teacher development programmes (Evans, 2013; Carless et al., 2011). This suggests that teachers should be aware of the advantages of feedback, and they should encourage self-assessment strategies, even with beginner learners. Self-assessment is fundamental to the self-regulation of lifelong learning (Archer, 2010). Furthermore, Evans (2018) advocates that student engagement should be the priority objective of feedback. This requires students to do the necessary preparatory work so that they can make the most of feedback opportunities. Seker (2015) explained that self-regulated learners can define their learning goals. For example, providing opportunities for students to assess their work and that of others are an important part of enabling them to develop their self-assessment capacity. Thus, supporting students to use resources and networks that may support their understanding of assessment criteria by demonstrating and modelling of quality writing, use of tools to explicitly demonstrate different ways of thinking about writing are all important in supporting students in this endeavour.

#### **7.4.3 Promoting teachers' use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) when providing assessment feedback**

It was revealed in this study that the only training associated with writing assessment was mainly focused on the 'corrective' aspect along with providing accurate marks for grade justification. It was also noted among the sample that there was no reference to receiving training on how to provide feedback following assessment. In reference to professional coursework (section B in Figure 7-1), this study demonstrated that teachers struggled to interpret the assessment rubric/rating scales

when assessing their learners' writing. As a result, the emphasis of their feedback was mainly on correcting errors in their writing. For feedback to be interpreted by the recipient (in at least the way the assessor intended), they must share a set of cognitive-rhetorical schemata about quality academic writing (Boud and Molloy, 2013). Along with teachers' use of WCF to increase learners' awareness of their performance, establishing a clear understanding of assessment criteria stated is essential, as well as supporting learners' self-regulation strategies. Therefore, it is recommended that the ELP delivers adequate training on feedback delivery with reference back to quality work. Notions on 'quality' work in alignment with the CEFR need to be included in teacher training programmes rather than them focusing on the corrective feedback approach.

Teachers' assessment feedback practices in this study reflect a deficit-oriented approach (i.e. corrective feedback on deficits and errors) rather than the worded feedback of the CEFR descriptors, which value competencies (even at low levels) (Tzagari, 2016; Vogt, 2004). Tzagari et al., (2018) emphasise that the implementation of the CEFR for assessment for learning purposes is one of the most important issues in language learning. However, this is very slow in classrooms in Europe (Tzagari, 2016) and Saudi Arabia (Hakim, 2015; Alkhatib, 2015). This resonates with the principles stated by the National Union of Students on Formative Assessment and of feedback being 'critical to the development of learning' (Bols and Wicklow, 2013; Hattie, 2007). Additionally, since both assessment and teaching are expected to be aligned with the CEFR (discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.3.2) aligning teachers' feedback with the CEFR serves in achieving this goal. This would not only help to achieve the LOs, but it would also help learners to develop strategies that lead to self-regulatory learning, particularly self-evaluative judgement (Evans, 2016).

Using CEFR in local instructional settings is important because these standards play a constant role in learners' lives beyond their current programmes (Zhao and Zhao, 2020). According to Nikolov (2016), assessing foreign-language learners is a sensitive and complex area, as inappropriate assessment procedures may have lifelong negative consequences for students' attitudes and motivation for language

learning. This suggests that teachers need guidance to support their learners in developing their competence in self-assessment against prescribed standards, independently and within their learning communities in the future. Reconceptualising assessment is key here, as it should not be limited to developing subject knowledge (e.g. writing quality) but it should also foster assessment skills for current and future learning. Thus, there is an urgent need for stakeholders to implement feedback instructions and training that is supportive of assessment for learning practice, in the wider context.

#### **7.4.4 Encouraging teachers to engage learners in feedback processes through dialogue**

It was noted in the study findings several cases in using dialogic feedback that promoted learners' cognitive engagement with feedback (discussed in Chapter 6 section 6.2.6). Teachers need to be reminded that learners have different needs and learning styles. This requires integrating feedback strategies that have a dialogic nature (whether verbal or written) to encourage interaction with learners (discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.2.6.4). In reference to contextual factors (section C in the proposed model), the findings of this study have exposed the need for stakeholders to reconceptualise feedback as a 'dialogic' process when designing EAP courses. Programme leaders should ensure that the courses are long enough to allow teachers to take their time and get to know their learners' levels in the targeted writing skill by analysing short examples of their writing at the beginning of the course (discusses in Chapter 5, section 5.5.2). With this approach, the teacher can provide effective feedback that matches the learners' needs and individual levels of proficiency. Wiliam (2004) highlighted the role of effective feedback while acknowledging the national assessment plan in the UK (Assessment Reform Group, 2022, Accessed online). Furthermore, dialogue is central to sustainable feedback practice, according to Carless (2013). As the primary function of feedback is to influence students' future work and learning strategies (Winstone and Boud, 2020), it is recommended that for feedback to be conceptualised by teachers as a sustainable practice within assessment, support for learners' self-regulation needs to be recognised in teacher training programmes (Carless et al., 2011). Therefore, teacher

trainers need to consider this when designing institutional training opportunities for teachers.

When addressing teacher cognition, the benefit of social engagement in feedback processes (by encouraging peer assessment) should also be advocated (discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.2.2). In an examination-oriented education system (such as the case of this study), aspects of learners' low English language proficiency and their motivation, and the conflict of peer assessment with the entrenched teacher-driven learning culture, influence teachers' decisions over the application of unfamiliar feedback approaches (Zhao, 2018). To avoid inconsistency in practice and variation among teachers' practice, these aspects need to be taken into consideration when designing teacher training programmes.

#### **7.4.5 Support for teachers' continuous development and training on assessment feedback**

It was revealed in this study that participants' experiences of receiving during their in-service training and professional courses had a greater impact on their cognition than the feedback they received in their schooling (discussed in Chapter 6 section 6.3). This study highlights the importance of in-service teacher training programmes and recommends that department heads provide training on assessment feedback for teachers. On a local scale, policymakers at the national and institutional levels (represented by the Saudi MoE) should collaborate in the structuring of the policies. This could be achieved if the concerned authority (university preparatory year programme leaders) was informed and well-resourced, as they follow up in ensuring that the gap between policies and their implementation is reduced. Teachers can also learn from each other by holding workshops for L2 writing teachers to introduce them to L2 writing theories, pedagogical developments, assessment, and feedback literacy. For example, Writing Centres that have been established in Saudi ELP settings can develop their programme based on mentoring and peer group sessions for their staff. This approach would encourage less-experienced teachers to enhance their performance in teaching, assessing, and providing feedback by observing experienced colleagues within their context. Assessment feedback workshops for teacher training and educational leaders are suggested in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1: Recommended introductory workshops on assessment feedback**

Workshop Title	Objectives/Focus	Designated Leaders
<b>1. Defining assessment feedback</b>	To define and differentiate between assessment feedback for formative purposes and assessment feedback for summative purposes	Quality and Development Unit
<b>2. Delivering formative feedback using assessment criteria</b>	To use the CEFR, assessment rubric/rating scales and expected LOs as a guideline for evaluating quality work and delivering feedback	Institutional Teacher Training Quality and Development Unit
<b>3. Sustainable assessment feedback practice</b>	To support teachers in adopting and adapting peer assessment and self-assessment strategies with their learners, for lifelong learning purposes	MoE Cadres Training and Qualification Centre

Observations of the teaching course revealed that SA was the dominant form of assessment in this context. This demonstrates the nature of the assessment-driven culture of education and how feedback is often conceptualised and practised. As a result, the provision of feedback within the language programme has been shaped by these developments. If we want to transform assessment feedback, policymakers (at national and institutional levels) must ensure that well-structured detailed policies that have the inputs of all stakeholders are put into place to guide the practice. To facilitate effective learning communities, organisational and individual beliefs need to be aligned (Evans, 2020); this will help to establish a responsibility-sharing culture between feedback givers and receivers (Winstone and Carless, 2019). This echoes the shift from understanding language teacher cognition through the lens of an individualist, to a more social one, pertaining to the 'collective' (Burns et al., 2015). Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008, p. 242) refer to units of analysis within a complex theory perspective as 'collective variables' or which describe interaction taking place among multiple elements in a system This ultimately brings attention back to the educational setting and social context in which the teachers' cognitions

operate. This suggests that their cognition is not developing in isolation, but is rather socially constructed (Sahakyan et al., 2018; Korthagen, 2004).

Teacher education should provide opportunities for the exploration of teachers' prior knowledge and beliefs, which is a comprehensible form of introducing teacher cognition to teacher educators (Borg, 2009). New methods of feedback application can be promoted by teachers welcoming observations from their colleagues, and in observing them in turn in their classes so that they can learn from each other (Tuck, 2012). At the same time, experienced teachers might be introduced to new methods of providing WCF to learners and engaging them in learning activities that enhance their L2 skills. Carless et al., (2011) recommended that for feedback to be conceptualised as a sustainable practice within assessment, support for learners' self-regulation needs to be recognised here. Furthermore, it has also been argued that teachers' feedback is used to enhance teaching through the involvement of teachers in professional development activities, as this would serve in promoting a better understanding of their work, in preparing students for meaningful dialogue/peer engagement, and in promoting the development of students' self-evaluation skills to include self-monitoring and self-assessment and critical reflection skills (Carless, 2007; Carless et al., 2011; Evans and Waring, 2011; Gilbert et al., 2011; Handley et al., 2008).

Teaching learners how to improve their writing skills begins with preparing teachers to teach, assess, and provide formative feedback. For example, teachers need to know how to analyse data regarding students' knowledge and how to use the results of the analysis to decide which tasks students need to complete to demonstrate their knowledge (Pellegrino et al., 2016). Hence, CPD courses and training on writing skills assessment, and how to give constructive and engaging feedback, should be made available to teachers. During these training sessions, assessment literacy and feedback literacy should be taught. Information and instructions should be given on how to use different feedback methods (direct such as error codes, and indirect such as prompts), on how to use the assessment rubric/rating scales, exemplifying of writing standards and criteria in their feedback practice. Furthermore, concepts pertaining to lifelong learning skills and self-regulation (e.g. peer assessment and self-assessment) need to be highlighted in teacher training (Nash and Winstone,

2017) by pointing to the knowledge, skills, and characteristics that learners require beyond the course (Boud, 2000; Hounsell, 2007).

On a global level, more attention needs to be focused on the development of shared understanding amongst stakeholders of assessment feedback. Wiliam (2011) argued that the quality of teachers in an organisation is the most important factor in an education system. Investing in teacher training and development would support the achievement of universal educational goals that support conscious awareness of sustainable assessment feedback practice. Teachers' feedback practice is just the beginning of their quest to become effective L2 assessors. This especially applies to teacher assessment, which is often impacted by high-stakes contextual factors including standardised examinations, curricula, and organisational policies. Ensuring equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all have been two of the main goals of the United Nations' Sustainable Developmental Goals Agenda.

Inspired by this universal theme, as well as the national incentive (i.e. SA 2030) KSA conducted a voluntary review for the 2018 UN Forum and provided a detailed account of the quality of education in the country. Educational evaluations that were conducted recently within Saudi institutions identified teachers' skills in need of much development (Saudi Arabia National Review, 2018. Accessed online). It is, therefore, essential to reconsider professional development and ensure that it is sustainable and encourages change in teachers' knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes on a global scale, as well as in local educational settings. As Boud (2000) recognised, sustainable practice includes the acquisition of lifelong learning skills that go beyond formal educational settings. This understanding applies to teachers' assessment feedback practice, which develops learners' L2 skills. Exploring teachers' cognitions can benefit teacher educators as it will help them to better understand the factors that promote or prevent effective feedback following assessment, and thus contribute to more targeted teacher education on assessment feedback.

## **7.5 Limitations of the study**

While undertaking this research project, limitations connected to methodology and feasibility have emerged. These limitations will be identified here to inform

assessment feedback researchers about the areas that require additional considerations going forward.

In terms of feasibility, the nature of the research data collection period and the language programme had limitations. First, as a lone researcher, my responsibilities as a parent (based in England), and the practical aspects of overseas data collection regulated my travel and the accessibility of the research site. Thus, the research data collection time was planned to take place at the beginning of the academic year to accommodate my circumstances and to make it possible to complete it within the sponsorship timeframe. There were also financial limitations including allowances and one annual travel ticket per year. This had implications for the timing and accessibility of classes at the research site.

Due to the timing in which this study took place (i.e. beginning of the academic year), the recruitment of teacher participants was based on the reality that most students who had taken the CEPT were placed in beginner levels 101 and 102 (CEFR A1 and A2). Thus, having a sample of teachers who were teaching beginner learners at the time of the study may have affected the participants' feedback practices, such as their reluctance in using peer feedback and self-assessment with lower proficiency learners. However, if the study had taken place during the second semester of the academic year, the teachers could conceivably have used different feedback strategies with their higher proficiency learners. Also, due to cultural restrictions that controlled research accessibility, data were gathered from female teachers only at the university's female campus. The study may therefore have been enriched if it had been replicated at the men's campus, or if the data had been gathered across both campuses to identify any similarities or differences in cognition among a mixed-gender sample.

In terms of the methodology employed for the stimulated recall process, there were limitations because of further cultural restrictions. For instance, the research site did not allow classroom video recordings of female participants, even for research purposes. This created a particular challenge, as the process had to therefore rely on simultaneous notes of classroom interactions taking place between learners and their teachers/peers in real-time. Compared to audio, video recordings would have

captured facial expressions and body movements that the researcher may have overlooked.

## **7.6 Personal reflections**

My background as a teacher of EFL has influenced greatly the way I conceptualised this study at the inception stage. Having in mind the challenges that learners face in their learning and the many factors that contribute to this process, I was keen to know how these factors influenced the academic achievements of students. As a language teacher in a prominent Saudi university, I decided to explore teachers' conceptions of feedback, as these are a core part of assessment as well as instruction. Understanding the interactions between cognition and practice and the contextual factors has given me a deeper understanding of the individual and socio-cultural aspects of the teaching and learning community. From a research perspective, using qualitative methods in exploring cognitions provided a rigorous approach, and served in thoroughly answering the research questions. As I mentioned in the methodology section (discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.6) utilising sequential interviewing, classroom observations, stimulated recall interviewing methodology, and member checking, allowed me to establish rapport with the teachers and gain their trust. This method also provided an understanding and explanation of the nature of assessment feedback, the interaction between cognition and practice, the in-depth interactions with the participants, which resulted in a richness of data.

I have realised that in-service teachers' cognitions of assessment feedback cannot be well comprehended without considering all the resources and support surrounding them. This study has given me a better understanding of the need for better assimilation of instruction, assessment, and feedback. This will be a useful guide for me when I return to my role as a teacher, mentor, and educator. I have also come to realise that research is an iterative process that requires mental resilience and persistence to complete. Although it can be challenging and sometimes frustrating, when one perseveres, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Reflecting on my research expertise before this study, I can now say that I have seen tremendous improvement in my questioning, listening, critiquing, and critical writing abilities, which are all key requirements of independent studies. My goal has been to develop

myself into an independent researcher and I think these four years of rigorous processes have achieved this. Given that this study reveals the contributions that it makes to knowledge, I believe that the thesis provides a platform for developing a better understanding of the role of assessment feedback in the development of learners' L2 writing in tertiary settings and EAP classrooms. Studies as such, advocate the need for sharing good practice as well the need for collaborative support between educational leaders, teaching professionals, and teacher trainers.

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## Appendix A – Data collection: consent and piloting interviewing method

### A1. Classroom observation consent form for teachers and learners (English and Arabic translation)



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

#### طلب موافقة للمشاركة في بحث علمي

عنوان البحث: استطلاع تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية حول ممارسات التقييم في كتابة اللغة الثانية وذلك للطلاب في الفصول الدراسية

اسم الباحث: روى أسامة حريري

في حالة الموافقة على الفقرات الآتية، الرجاء وضع الأحرف الأولى من اسمك في المربع

- 1- أؤكد أنني قرأت جيدا وفهمت محتوى البحث العلمي بعنوان "استطلاع تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية حول ممارسات التقييم في كتابة اللغة الثانية وذلك للطلاب في الفصول الدراسية"، وقد أتيت لي الفرصة للسؤال عن هذا البحث.
- 2- أفهم أن مشاركتي تمت بعلمي إرادتي وأنه بإمكانني الانسحاب من البحث في أي وقت ومن دون ضرورة لإعطاء أي أسباب الرفض.
- 3- أفهم أن مشاركتي ستظل سرا، وأعطيت الحرية للباحث في الرجوع إلى مشاركتي من دون ترميز، الاقتباس منها، ووصفها وتحليلها. أفهم أن اسمي لن يربط بمادة البحث، وسوف يستخدم الباحث أرقام وليس أسماء للإشارة إلى مشاركتي.
- 4- أوافق على استخدام محتوى النص مستقبلا للأغراض البحثية وللنشر.
- 5- أوافق على مشاركتي في البحث المذكور أعلاه وسأبلغ الباحث في حالة تغيير رغبتني في المشاركة.

علما بأنه سيتم اتلاف التسجيلات بعد تفريغها مباشرة، وبإمكانك الحصول على نسخة من تفريغ النص للمراجعة عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني عند الرغبة.

اسم المشارك

التاريخ

التوقيع

يتم توقيع وتاريخ هذا الطلب بحضور الشخص المشارك.

اسم الباحث الرئيسي

التاريخ

التوقيع

عند إنهاء توقيع هذا الطلب من الجميع يجب إعطاء نسخة منه إلى الشخص المشارك في البحث. كما يعطى المشارك نسخة عن ملخص البحث وعن أي وثيقة تم استخدامها في هذه المشاركة. يجب أيضا حفظ نسخة من هذه الموافقة مع البحث وفي مكان أمين.

التاريخ: / ٢٠١٩

أسم المتقدم بالطلب: روى أسامة حريري

Title of Research Project:

Name of Researcher:

Please initial box

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet/letter (delete as applicable) dated *[insert date]* explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. *Insert contact number here of lead researcher/member of research team (as appropriate).*
- 3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential (only if true). I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.
- 4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research
- 5. I agree to take part in the above research project.



\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant  
(or legal representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person taking consent  
(if different from lead researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

*To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*

## **A2. Pilot interview questions**

### **Section 1: Teachers' Profiles – Qualifications and Training**

1. What is your educational qualification(s)? In which major(s)?
2. Do you have any TESOL or ASSESSMENT related certificates?
3. How many years have you been teaching English?

### **Section 2: Teachers' Previous Learning Experience**

4. What is your native language?
5. Tell me about your experience in learning writing:
  - As a student in school, how was it?
  - As a student in university, how was it?

### **Section 3: The Context: EFL Learners**

6. Which course level are you teaching?
7. Could you describe your learners' writing ability within the following?
  - in-class writing tasks
  - Blackboard
  - Writing exam
8. What do your students need to learn to improve their writing skills?

### **Section 4: Teachers' Cognitions: Knowledge and Beliefs about Feedback**

9. Could you describe the concept of teacher feedback?
10. What is your understanding of teacher feedback?
11. What is your experience in giving feedback? What do you think works and what doesn't?
12. Why do you provide feedback for in-class writing?
13. Why do you provide feedback on Blackboard?
14. Why do you provide feedback on the writing exam?
15. Does your feedback describe to your learners what they need to do to move forward?
16. Does feedback help in achieving the learning objectives?
17. What is the role of feedback? What do you think it serves?
  - E.g. supporting the learning process
  - E.g. judging students' achievement
  - E.g. maintaining professional standards
18. What do you think your students do with feedback?

### **Section 5: Teachers' Practice: Feedback Focus**

19. In terms of the rubric items, which has received your attention in providing feedback? Why?
20. What other forms of feedback do you use? Why?
21. Could you show me a sample of your feedback on the following?
  - students' writing assignment or assessment
  - students' writing on Blackboard.

### **Section 6: Concluding Remarks**

22. Do you have any other comments, suggestions, concerns about teacher feedback in L2 writing?

## Appendix B - ELP Research site documents

### B1. A figure representing the total teacher population for English for Academic Purposes (ELIS) among other teaching courses

	ELIA			ELIS		ELIE		ELCA	
	Level	Sections	Students	Sections	Students	Sections	Students	Sections	Students
Module 1 Year 2019-20	101	59	2487	33	1316	2	42	8	380
	102	33	1075	31	1057	Total teachers	2	Total teachers	2
	103	44	1322	18	529				
	104	18	552	6	162				
Total M1		154	5436	88	3064				
Total sections	242	Total students	8500						
Deleted 104	ELIA Sections	ELIA Students	ELIS Sections	ELIS Students					
	25	1000	18	630					
Total sections	43	Total students	1630						

### B2. Module 1 teaching and examination Table - Fall 2019/20

Week	Dates	Exams/Notes
Week 1 - Teaching	01/9/2019 - 05/9/2019	○ Module inception
Week 2 - Teaching	08/9/2019 - 12/9/2019	○ Teaching
Week 3 - Teaching	15/9/2019 - 19/9/2019	○ Teaching
Week 4 - Teaching	(23/9/2019 Saudi National Day) 22/9/2019 - 26/9/2019	○ Teaching resumes on Tuesday ○ <b>Mid-Module CBT Exam</b> - Wednesday, 25 Sept. ○ <b>Mid-Module Writing Exam</b> - Thursday, 26 Sept. (9:00am & 2:00pm)
Week 5 - Teaching	29/9/2019 - 03/10/2019	○ Mid-Module Writing Exam In-Class Review - Monday, 30 Sept. ○ <b>Mid-Module Speaking Exam</b> Tuesday, 1 Oct.
Week 6 - Teaching	06/10/2019 - 10/10/2019	○ <b>Final Writing Exam</b> – Thursday, 10 Oct. (9:00pm & 2:00pm)
Week 7 - Teaching	13/10/2019 - 17/10/2019	○ Writing Exam In-Class Review – Monday, 14 Oct ○ <b>Speaking Project</b> – Wednesday, 16 Oct.

Week 8 - Exam Week	20/10/2019 24/10/2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Final CBT Exam</b> – Sunday, 20 Oct.</li> <li>○ <b>Grade Cross-check</b> – Monday, 21 Oct.</li> </ul>
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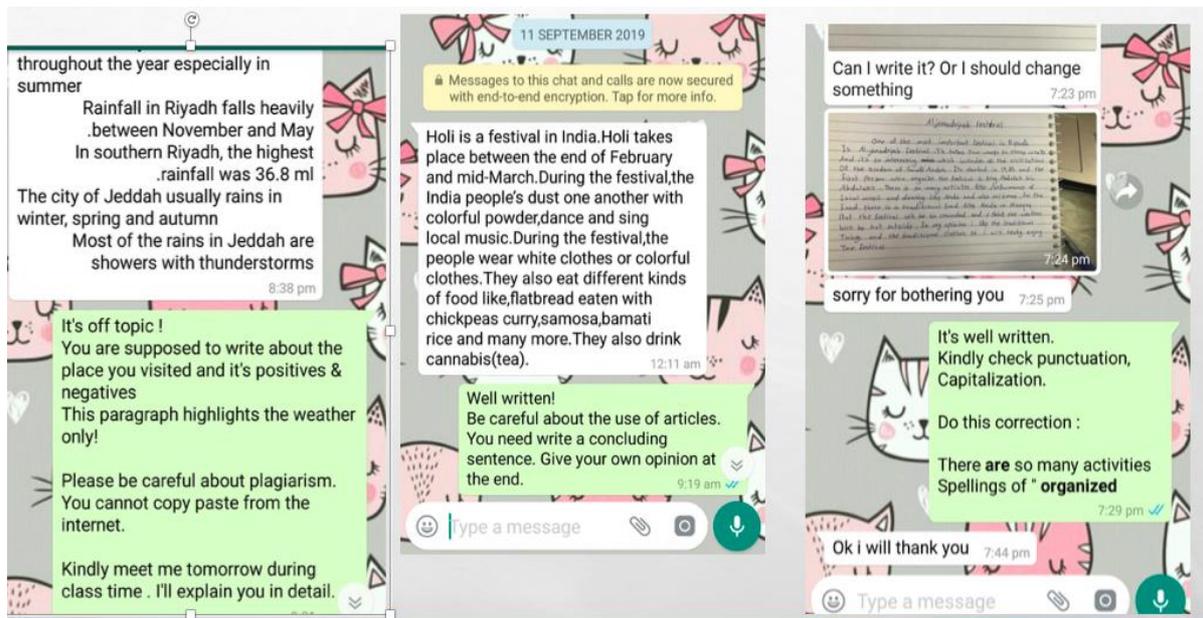
### B3. Background information about individual cases.

The table presents academic and in-service information about the participant sample, years of experience in EFL teaching, and experience in teaching the EAP curriculum.

Teacher Participant	Academic qualifications, in-service duties	Years in EFL teaching	Years in the context	Years in EAP
<b>Nisreen</b>	MA English Language and Linguistics/ CELTA Student Academic Support	11 years	7 years	One year
<b>Haya</b>	BA English Language Education/CELTA/ MA in Education and Innovation Electronic testing committee	14 years	11 years	One year
<b>Summa</b>	MA in Teacher Development and Reflection for CPD/PhD students/ TESOL Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma in TESOL Test development and curriculum unit	25 years	9 years	One year
<b>Amy</b>	BA in Business/MBA/ TESOL Certificate	9 years	5 years	None
<b>Mona</b>	Home-schooled/ Online BA in English Literature/TEFL Certificate Test development and curriculum unit	15 years	9 years	One year

## Appendix C – Data samples: online feedback via WhatsApp

### C1. Online Feedback via WhatsApp outside of class for the case of Nisreen



## C2. Online Feedback via WhatsApp inside of class for the case of Haya



## Appendix D –Teachers’ resources: academic writing

### D1. Developing critical thinking skills in the teacher’s manual and development pack/lesson plans. Course LOs, teaching strategies & assessment methods for CEFR A1 level.

3.2	<p>Written Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>create</b> 7-10 sentences and/or a short descriptive or comparative paragraph about people, lifestyle, places, jobs, and homes &amp; buildings</li> <li>• <b>adopt</b> the use of very basic linear connectors such as “and”, “but”, and “then” correctly to link words or groups of words</li> <li>• <b>adopt</b> basic punctuation such as full-stops, commas and capital letters correctly</li> <li>• <b>build</b> sentences with appropriate word order in subject-verb, subject-verb-object, subject-verb-adjective, and subject-verb-adverb sentence structures</li> </ul>	<p>Pair work</p> <p>Teacher fronted presentation</p> <p>Process writing</p> <p>Teach basic word order, punctuation, and connectors.</p> <p>Regularly collect and give feedback on practice writing tasks done in class</p> <p>Provide whole class feedback, as needed, on errors commonly encountered in the</p>	<p>Mid-Module and Final Writing Exams</p> <p>Online Writing Tasks in Blackboard</p>
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8

### Course Specifications

Code	Course Learning Outcomes	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
		students’ Blackboard writing tasks	

## D2. Integration of critical thinking skills into academic writing

Provided in the Cambridge Unlock Reading and Writing Course Books (pp. 1 & 3, pp. 29, 400, 297)

### WRITING

The second half of each unit focuses on the productive skill of writing. It begins with the prompt for the unit Writing Task and systematically equips students with the skills and language to plan for, prepare and execute the task successfully.

### CRITICAL THINKING

⌚ 60 min

#### PURPOSE

- To introduce the Writing Task
- To help generate, develop and organize ideas for the Writing Task
- To teach and practise the lower-order critical thinking skills of remembering, understanding and applying knowledge, through practical brainstorming and organizational activities
- To teach and practise the higher-order critical thinking skills of analyzing, evaluating and creating, in order to prepare students for success in the Writing Task and, more generally, in the university classroom

Encourage students to work through this section collaboratively in pairs or small groups, to support and encourage each other. Facilitate their learning and progress by circulating and checking with students as they work through this section. If time permits, have groups exchange and evaluate one another's work.

### CRITICAL THINKING

#### Learning objectives

- Organize arguments from an essay about outsourcing fashion production in a table
- Identify the types of support used by the writer
- Evaluate the types of support used by the writer
- Categorize a list of arguments relating to the writing task for Unit 7
- Evaluate the strength of the arguments and justify your opinion
- Support the three strongest arguments with additional evidence

### CRITICAL THINKING

#### Learning objectives

- Identify data described by a paragraph in a table
- Research and analyze information about two buildings you are interested in
- Answer questions to compare two buildings

### D3. Sample of Blackboard assignment and assessment criteria - level 104

**Should universities require students to take physical education classes?**

**Discuss both sides and give your opinion.**

**Write a balanced opinion essay of 250–300 words. Your essay should follow the format below.**

Introductory paragraph

- Hook
- Background information
- Thesis statement

Body paragraph 1

- Why universities should require students to take physical education classes with supporting arguments
- Details

Body paragraph 2

- Why universities should NOT require students to take physical education classes with supporting arguments
- Details:

Concluding paragraph

- Summary of both arguments
- Your opinion with reasons
- Prediction or recommendation

#### Criteria **معايير**

##### **0 Points**

- The requirements for a 1 are not met.
- Less than 4 paragraphs written.

##### **1 Point**

- Introduction has some brief background and a somewhat effective thesis statement
- Concluding paragraph attempts to briefly summarize the arguments for both sides.
- Each body paragraph has a topic sentence and somewhat brief support for the position.

##### **2 Points**

- Introduction attempts a hook, has some background information, and has a thesis statement.
- Concluding paragraph tries to summarize both arguments and gives your opinion.
- Each body paragraph has a topic sentence and at least 3 additional sentences containing mostly relevant facts, examples, reasons and/or explanations to support the topic sentence.

##### **3 Points:**

- Introduction contains an effective hook, clear and sufficient background information, and a thesis statement that clearly shows your opinion.
- Concluding paragraph effectively summarizes both arguments, gives your opinion with reasons, and makes a logical prediction or recommendation.
- Each body paragraph has an effective and appropriate topic sentence and at least 5 additional sentences containing relevant facts, examples, reasons and/or explanations to support the topic sentence.

By submitting this paper, you agree: (1) that you are submitting your paper to be used and stored as part of the SafeAssign™ services in accordance with the [Blackboard Privacy Policy](#); (2) that your institution may use your paper in accordance with your institution's policies; and (3) that your use of SafeAssign will be without recourse against Blackboard Inc. and its affiliates.

## Appendix E- Samples of written corrective obtained following classroom observation

### E1. Samples of written corrective feedback on the writing assignment

I think the internet is a waste of time.  
 Because 96% <sup>ww</sup> to the internet is not necessary  
 to <sup>?</sup> working and most people waste their time  
 on the internet when they aren't working or  
studying. Also, most of a people are sp  
separated <sup>VT</sup> from the outside world to spending <sup>VT</sup>  
 time with family <sup>sp</sup> and friends <sup>sp</sup>. We need  
 a break from staring <sup>?</sup> at that <sup>ss</sup> bright  
screen all day.

\* Use punctuation  
 Be careful about spellings and  
 sentence structure  
 - Add a concluding sentence.

I'll talk today about my Country, ~~Sa~~  
 King dom ~~of Saudi~~ Arabia. It is an arab  
 Country, and also it is also the largest Country  
 in the Middle East, ~~and also~~ It is also  
 the largest Country in the Arabian Gulf.  
 We <sup>in</sup> Saudi Arabia, <sup>our</sup> Constitution <sup>is</sup> the <sup>Qur'an</sup> and  
 Sunnah. Our motto is No God but Allah.

The Capital of Saudi Arabia ~~Riadh~~ is Riyadh. <sup>Our</sup>  
 mother tongue is Arabic. The king is Salman bin  
 Abdul Aziz Al Saud, The Crown Prince and his  
 son Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud.

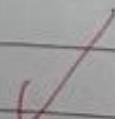
Saudia Arabia is the richest oil Country in the  
 world. We are now in an age of progress  
 after vision 2030.

<sup>sp</sup>  
 Finally I am proud of my Country.  
 Finally

commas

full stop

spelling



## E2. Samples of written corrective feedback on the writing assessment

**Part Two** (Part two is worth 70% of the grade.)  
 Write a paragraph about the Historic Jeddah Festival (Atareek) using the information given below. Your paragraph should have:

- a topic sentence that includes the name of the festival and where it takes place
- at least 4 supporting sentences that talk about when the event is, what people can eat there, and what people can do there
- a concluding sentence

Name:	Historic Jeddah Festival (Atareek)
Location:	Al Balad, Jeddah
When:	March 30 to April 8
Food and Drink:	old Hijazi bread, Balila, Saleek, traditional coffee (gahwa)
Activities:	listen to traditional music, see traditional dances, Arabic literature and poetry reading, lectures about Arab culture, visit shops
Visitors:	3 million

Write 90–120 words.

Historic Jeddah Festival (Atareek)

Historic Jeddah Festival (Atareek) is one of the most popular festival in Jeddah. It is located in Al Balad, Jeddah. It happens every year on March 30 to April 8.

There are different kinds of food such as old Hijazi bread, Balila, Saleek, and drink traditional coffee. It's called gahwa.

Atareek Festival have many activities like <sup>up</sup>listen to traditional music, <sup>up</sup>see traditional dances, Arabic literature and poetry reading, lectures about Arab culture. There are many shops you can visit.

The number of visitors are 3 million ~~and~~ visitors over around the world.

In conclusion, the Atareek is an enjoyable festival with a lot of fun activities and great food in Jeddah.

**For Teacher's Use Only:**

Content & Para Structure	Grammar & Sentence Structure	Spelling & Punctuation	Total
10 / 10 points	4 / 5 points	5 / 5 points	19 / 20 points

Write a paragraph about the Historic Jeddah Festival given below. Your paragraph should have:

- a topic sentence that includes the name of the festival and where it takes place
- at least 4 supporting sentences that talk about when the event is, what people can eat there, and what people can do there
- a concluding sentence

Name:	Historic Jeddah Festival (Atareek)
Location:	Al Balad, Jeddah
When:	March 30 to April 8
Food and Drink:	old Hijazi bread, Balila, Saleek, traditional coffee (gahwa)
Activities:	listen to traditional music, see traditional dances, Arabic literature and poetry reading, lectures about Arab culture, visit shops
Visitors:	3 million

Write 90-120 words.

## "Historic Jeddah Festival"

In Saudi Arabia people celebrate Historic Jeddah Festival (Atareek). The festival takes place in Al Balad. The festival <sup>ww</sup>lets for about one month and takes place in March 30 to April 8 every year.

First of all, there <sup>ww</sup>re many activities. People can listen to traditional music, see traditional dances and lectures about Arab culture. <sup>ww</sup>However, they can sell different types of food such as old Hijazi bread, Balila and traditional coffee. The festival is popular place and the visitors are 3 million.

To sum up, I personally feel that this festival

For Teacher's Use Only:

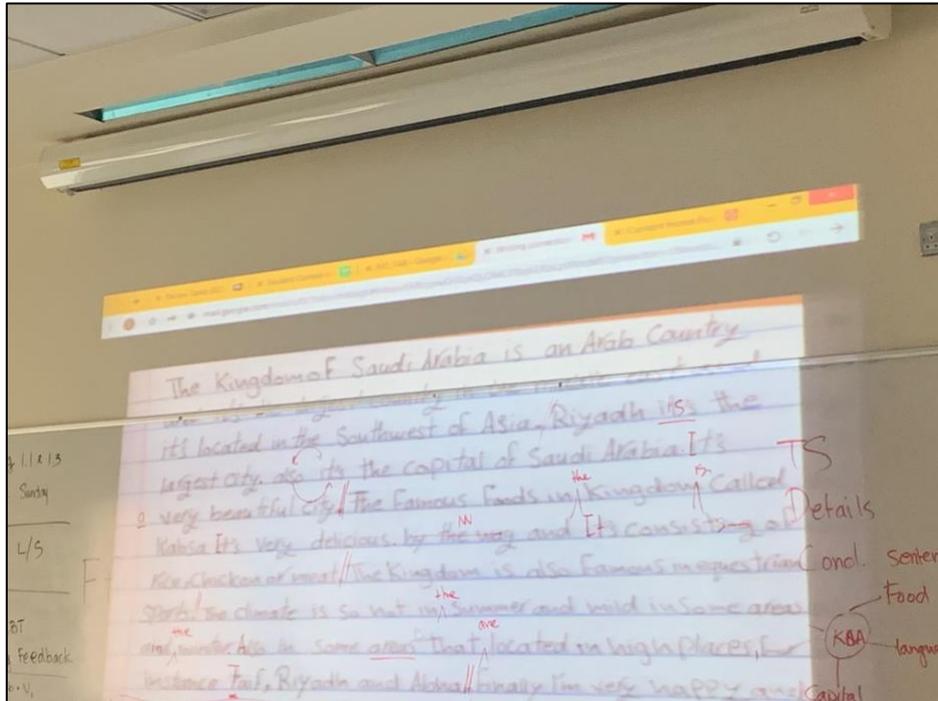
Content & Para Structure	Grammar & Sentence Structure	Spelling & Punctuation	Total
9 /10 points	4 /5 points	5 /5 points	18 /20 points

- tried  
as an  
Errors  
can add  
some more  
details

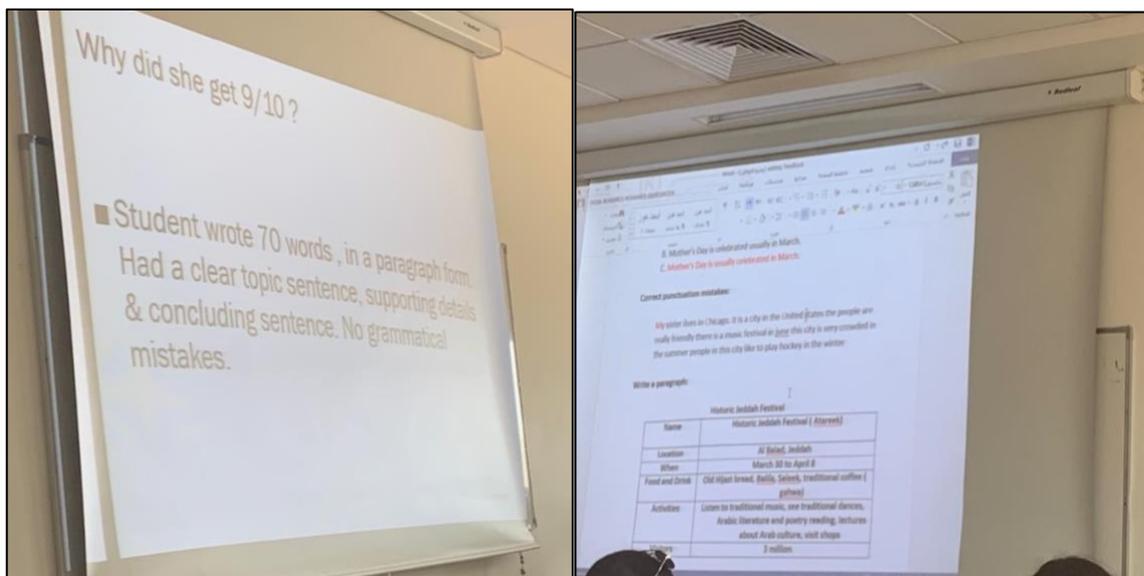
in Saudi Arabia is very important for the people of the country, and their celebration to keep the spirits of harmony. ✓

## Appendix F. Images of classroom observations

### F1. Observing Amy's lesson on feedback



### F2. Observing Nisreen's feedback lesson (left); Haya's feedback lesson (right)



### F3. Observation of teachers' co-constructed feedback processes

Focus of Analysis	Feedback Category	Feedback Sub-Category	Description	Data Samples
Focus of verbal teacher feedback	Mediating Feedback Techniques	<b>Restating</b>	Teacher emphasises learners' correct responses with paraphrasing the proceeding utterance(s)	<p>Nisreen. Ok, if you want to give your opinion, what will you use?            Ss. I think that, in my opinion            Nisreen. Exactly, in my opinion, I believe that, I personally feel, it seems to me,            yes, exactly. – <b>Restating</b></p> <p>S1. and Chicago, C is capital            Haya. ok, and other capital mistakes?            S2. United U,            Haya. Why?            S2. Because it's a name            Haya. Ok some people capitalised U and left the s small in 'states'</p> <p>Haya. [Reading the sentence]            We all enjoying this festival            S1. Without -ing            S2. We all enjoy this festival            Haya. Ok, why? Why not enjoyed? – <b>Elicitation</b>            S. because it is not now            Haya. Ok because the action is not now, so I cannot put it in the progressive form,- <b>Restating</b></p>
		<b>Metalinguistic clues</b>	Teacher encourages learner participation	<p>Summa. Do we say 'their' or 'its'? -<b>Metalinguistics clues</b>            S2. Its.</p>

			<p>through further use of explanation and comments, by offering option/choices/ and asking questions</p>	<p>Summa. yes, good. Possessive pronoun.</p> <p>Amy. It is the largest city? This is what we call a run on. Can we split this sentence; we have two ideas? - <b>Metalinguistics clues</b></p> <p>Ss. Yeah. She mentioned it two times, so we can remove</p> <p>Nisreen. This is a situation in which a student wrote 70 words in a paragraph form, she had clear topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence, no grammatical mistakes or structure or spelling mistakes, why did she get this mark? - <b>Metalinguistic cues</b></p> <p>Ss. word count...</p> <p>T. what was the word count for your paragraph?</p> <p>Ss. Ninety, ninety to one hundred</p> <p>T. So, 70 is?</p> <p>S. Less...</p> <p>T. Yes, so she did not write enough</p> <p>Haya. In the writing, are you talking about a festival happening in the future, or that usually happens every year? - <b>Metalinguistic cues</b></p> <p>Ss. It always happens.</p> <p>T. so the tenses should be?</p>
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				<p>Ss. Present simple!</p> <p>T. Present simple</p>
		<b>Elicitation</b>	<p>teacher encourages the correct form by asking questions</p>	<p>Mona. Where is your verb? -</p> <p><b>Elicitation</b></p> <p>S2. is. Jeddah is famous for their Kabsa.</p> <p>Mona. Ok</p> <p>Haya. I will give you a chance to correct yourselves. Ok, what do you think the problem is here? -</p> <p><b>Elicitation</b></p> <p>S1. Capital I, 'In' kingdom of Saudi Arabia,</p> <p>Haya. Any other corrections? -</p> <p><b>Elicitation</b></p> <p>S2. we can say Saudi people, not Saudi Arabia people... maybe?</p> <p>Nisreen. What do you think is wrong? - <b>Elicitation</b></p> <p>Ss. the spelling</p> <p>T. spelling of which word?</p> <p>S1. Different</p> <p>S1. Difference</p> <p>T. she said spelling mistake of the word 'differently'</p> <p>T. and what else is wrong?</p> <p>S2. take part.</p> <p>T. So which is the correct one</p> <p>How do you spell it? -<b>Elicitation</b></p> <p>Nisreen. Ok. what else is wrong?</p>

				<p><b>-Elicitation</b></p> <p>Ss. maybe there are two mistakes. ww, wrong word</p>
		<p><b>Provision of correct form</b></p>	<p>Teacher provides missing information, as she reviews students' writing task</p>	<p>Mona. What missing?</p> <p>S. [no response]</p> <p>Mona. 'I live in Jeddah, Al-Nuzha'. Just put 'in'... because this is where you live. -</p> <p><b>Provision of correct form</b></p> <p>Mona: why is this small? (refereeing to use of the pronoun I)</p> <p>S. because... [student doesn't know]</p> <p>Mona. Whenever you use I to talk about yourself, it is always going to be capital, no matter where it is.</p> <p><b>-Provision of correct form</b></p> <p>S. What about she and he?</p> <p>Mona. No, only I.</p>

## Appendix G – Data generation methods

### G1. Pre-observation audio interview with Nisreen on September 7, 2019

**Interviewer. So, we'll start by going back to your childhood and your first or second language. And I would like to know, what was the second official language that you learned as a child?**

Interviewee. umm...This was actually, English was the second language, my first language is Urdu. Yeah. So, second language was English. And you know, That said, there was no other language, which I learned ... a bit of what I remember that in grade five, but that was just for a year we learned Arabic. but that was only for a year.

**Interviewer. So, this was in India?**

Interviewee. In Pakistan,

**Interviewer. Pakistan. So, your first language was Urdu and then? And then you learned English? Okay. Um, can you remember some of the difficulties that you faced while you were learning English?**

Interviewee. Yes umm ... Because umm my parents, they were not in a habit of conversing in English throughout. So, of course, I started learning proper language at school. But then, because all my schooling was in Missionary Schools, I studied in like St Joseph School. So of course, we were not allowed to use any other language other than English. So actually, you know, I didn't find much difficulties. It was, I mean, really easy for me to grasp. Because, you know, if you're young, you are, you know, a quick learner. And then I was among teachers, none specially would always, you know, converse in English. So, and then, since I come from military background, so my medium of communication with parents was totally English, but most of it, It was an combination of two languages Urdu and English. So, it wasn't pretty difficult. I still remember that it was. I just .... went with the flow. And that's it.

**Interviewer. Ok. That's good to know. Um, what about assessment and writing? Can you remember how you were graded or assessed in writing? What kind of feedback you received as a student in those schools?**

Interviewee. Yeah, in schools, to be very honest, it wasn't much detailed. They were just giving us a grade and we'll just write very brief comment that "good attempt". "Well tried" Overall, "really good work," "keep it up" things like that in school, I remember. So, it was to the point very basic and not detailed at all. But Yes, at college level and specially at university level, it was much more detailed. They would, you know, highlight each and every mistake on school they would also I still remember they used to use some error codes, umm, mostly for spellings and some grammatical mistakes, but written feedback like what do I need to work on, like in grammar, cohesion, coherence, spelling's, vocabulary, it wasn't like that, it was just overall one or two words comment or maximum a sentence, but yes, in college or at university, it was detailed, they would you know, mention each and everything if there is repetition of ideas, that there is a redundancy, I have mentioned this before, and spellings and grammar, and grammar also in detail that if the tenses not correct, choice of words on diction, capitalisation, punctuation, writing, mechanics, and content, that how much it was really bad, If there is any irrelevant detail, they will just highlight it and mention. And of course, I remember my teachers would always start with positive points first, that overall "very well written and you have improved from before", some very good ideas, and then they would come on to this, which I

would say, like criticism, I mean, the feedback used to be constructive, and they would make sure that, you know, they will be I still remember specially at university, My teachers were quite fair and balanced in their comments. And, you know, it wasn't subjective at all. I mean, they would keep emotion out of the equation. So that was it.

**Interviewer. So, you were pretty happy with the feedback that you received in college?**

Interviewee. Yes, in college and university, yeah.

**Interviewer. Was there a teacher who used a unique feedback approach that you still remember?**

Interviewee. Actually, you know, Yeah in college, I still remember, that she would just you know, generally write down some common mistakes, and you just, you know, write them down on whiteboard, and he would ask that, what do you think is wrong? How would you correct it? You know, I mean, she would not just directly tell us by using a red pen, okay, fine, this is wrong, this is the correct spelling. And you will do like this, you should have written like this. Not at all, she would mostly elicit from students. Okay, how would you approach to this idea? What do you think you can add? If you have to add some more details? What do you think? So, you know, then it could be like a whole class feedback. And you know, a person wouldn't feel like intimidated by a teacher that she's been pointing me You wouldn't feel victimised, but I still remember how their way of giving feedback, it used to be very general. And then you know, she would just give out our exam papers, and then she would have written something or the other. But if she wanted to focus on some specific mistake, she would always ask us to, you know, find out a solution or give suggestions.

**Interviewer. Would you say that the engagement that was happening in the class, was good for you, and you enjoyed it?**

Interviewee. Yes exactly!

**Interviewer. Okay, so, you felt that kind of feedback helped in your development and motivation to write?**

Interviewee. Ahh... Yes, actually, it did. Because, you know, I always knew that she is not going to, you know, pinpoint me, and it was more like a learning process, It was the feedback was quite constructive, the, you know, the criticism was never taken negatively. And it was a learning process, and it was conveyed in such a positive manner, maybe the choice of words of that teacher, she wasn't subjective at all. And he would understand, and she was quite motivating, and because of her encouragement, her continuous guideline, and encouragement, I think, as a student, I always feel, you know, umm much better after you know, receiving feedback from her, that, you know, she's not negativity criticising my work and, ah, you know she would always say there is room for improvement. And of course, there is a class of unique mixed individuals, everyone has different, you know, abilities, not everybody is born with the potential of a great writer. So, you know, she would shape this feedback in such a way that you feel confident. And you know, Actually, I found it really useful, that this is the extra way of, you know, approaching to whatever you want to highlight,

**Interviewer. Is this, umm approach that your teacher had used? Did it influence the way you teach students now?**

Interviewee. Ahhhh to some extent, yes. Yes, I do like this thing. But again, I would say, you know, sometimes it works, it works wonders, but sometimes it doesn't. It depends, you know on the type of students you have, on their attitude also their behaviour. Some students, they prefer to have like one to one session, they don't like that, you know, you just give a general

feedback. So, yes, I have tried that approach. And it has worked sometimes, but not all the time, to be very honest.

**Interviewer. So, do you wait for your students to request certain kinds of approaches and feedback? Or do you ask them? How do you negotiate this with them in the classroom? usually,**

Interviewee. Ah, In the classroom, like, talking about this, in my own university Kind Abdulaziz University, taking, now, it's been eight years and before that I was teaching in King Saud University for two years. So over here, we have, you know, all the teachers are given a rubric, you know, so we have to follow the rules that you have to highlight about the length, content, grammar mechanics, for example, spellings and vocabulary, cohesion and coherence, so already there is a table given, on which you have to, you know, grade them..

**Interviewer. The rubric you mean?**

Interviewee. Yes, exactly, the rubric. And then in the end, there is a comment box, also, in which I usually write comments about everything, I make sure that, you know, I just write my notes meticulously, so that students know exactly which areas to work on. And my approach is more like I learned this, in CELTA that is always good to give feedback, like two stars and a wish. The stars with positive points, and you know appreciate them, give them two positive points they have improved, or you find something good in their writing. And then you know, "I wish" you know, you can say that, this is their weakness and how to overcome this. So, I usually do this approach. But Yes, I, you know, I tried to say I had written in the papers, but there were a group of students, and they really wanted to, you know, have a session with me, and they asked me for my office hours, saying "teacher, how can I improve?" and I refer to the notes, But then, to be very honest, she just said, teacher. Yeah, I have read that. But I want you to just tell me, like, verbally. So then, I figured out that maybe, you know, she needs some special time. And I should just, give her some examples. And I should, you know, I need to communicate in detail with her that what are the areas she needs to work on. So, of course, there were some of them were low achievers. And some of them, were high achievers, also, but maybe they didn't get the desired result. So, they specially asked for it. So, I..., you know, try to give them a general feedback, you know, they're not embarrassed. Sometimes, you know, they feel like, you know it's a big insult, if you just, take their names and tell them [their grade], and then I write some comments, which are, in detail and still if they feel the need, that you know, I need to talk to them, sit with them. So, I make sure that I give them adequate enough time, so at least for their own satisfaction. And as a teacher, I think I'm duty bound, you know, to make them satisfied that what is lacking in their writing. So, for especially for Foundation Year Students, you know, they're very conscious about their grade and their percentage [university GPA].

**Interviewer. I completely understand. So, you mentioned, you've taken CELTA, training. Um, how did that help you in becoming a teacher? in assessing students in writing for example? Was there a section on assessing students in writing and giving them feedback?**

Interviewee. Yeah, yeah. it helped actually you know, I think that, you know, I've learned a lot as a teacher, and this certification was required, although, when I did my masters in English... language and linguistics, I completed 120 hours of observed assessed teaching, we used to call it micro-teaching, I have done that in my masters. But still, Yeah, I, I just found that I have to have this certification, which is, you know, like a professional certificate to become a certified teacher, especially teaching in the Middle East. So, in 2017, I did my CELTA from IH London. So, and it was a very fruitful experience. And I learned a lot and yes, you the way, they used to give us feedback as teachers, when, after observing us, That also had me, you know, in shaping my profession as a teacher, that they would also, they would ask for, you know, peers,

our colleagues used to sit together. And we used to comment on each other's strengths and weaknesses. and of course, in a very polite manner.

**Interviewer. Peer feedback?**

Interviewee. Yes, exactly. Yeah peer feedback. So you know, and it's, I think it's quite healthy, because you know, that they are your colleagues, they're on the same page, They're also learning, they are also, they ... also given training to become teachers, so not very seasoned students were there. So of course, it's a learning experience that first you give feedback on each other, which is, in a very polite manner, you can talk about your strengths and weaknesses, and in writing, also although there wasn't much writing, Yes, I remember they were four assignments. And our trainers used to give us feedback. And that too was quite in detail. And they also, you know, had face to face sessions, in which they would ask us that, you know, if something is not clear, and I would ask that, how can I improve in this area. So that really helped actually, that first you give her your input. yes for example, like, if I come to my class, and I'm telling my students that I need you to, you have to have topic sentence, you have to have body paragraphs, and a concluding sentence in your writing, then, of course, I'm expecting them to, you know, produce the same. So This is the production stage, and if they're lacking something, so of course, I have to mention each and everything, I can't just, you know, overlook anything. So, of course, I have to be polite, and I have to be positive. But then, you know, there has to be some specific comments for their better improvement. And I remember that peers also used to use these errors codes, if there is a run-on sentence, if something is missing.

**Interviewer. Do you mean in your training?**

Interviewee. Yes, exactly and they would encourage us to use error codes, but this comment section is basically very important, to know where students stand.

**Interviewer. Yes. You seem very motivated to teach, ah students, can you tell me what motivated you to become an EFL teacher, If that's okay?**

Interviewee. Yeah, Sure. Why not. umm... You know, I guess when I competed, and you know, especially when we did this micro teaching, So I was, you know, quite motivated by this thing. And I always taught because of my mother, she's still teaching. She's a teacher, I think this profession runs in the family. My sister, yeah, she's also, she used to teach in the Qassim university in Saudi Arabia for like, 10 years. And then she moved to Germany. So I think more or less, it is something in my life, yeah, so you know, I wanted to become, But then I personally think, I have groomed myself by doing these courses, and even currently, I'm filling this train-the-trainer course, which is basically for you know, like attending workshops and things like that.

**Interviewer. Yeah. I've heard of that, but I haven't gotten that training. Do you get instructions on how to teach writing and give feedback as well?**

Interviewee. There was a section Yes, we had three days training, it is still in the process. And then there was this special day, or I think it was the third day we had this session, which was like an hour and half on how to give feedback. But that was related to, I think, related to workshops, but our trainer said that it is more or less same which you are using in your class, the same approach that start with positive points, be polite, have a rational thinking, being neutral, it shouldn't be biased, Of course. And then um again, when it's writing, so you have to consider each and every point. if you been given a rubric that on what points you are going to, you know, analyse the text and how you're going to evaluate. And The most important thing is that students should be aware in advance before taking the writing test, they should know that you know, they will be marked on whether it's diction, capitalisation, punctuation, writing,

mechanics, grammar, spelling, content, vocabulary, whatever it is. So they should be very aware of the rubric that one which they will be marked on, and then you can you know, just to give them marks and the positive points. And then of course, the areas which they need to work on.

**Interviewer. Of course. I mean, students need literacy on assessment as well, they need to understand things, like, maybe how they're being assessed?**

Interviewee. Yes, and sometimes, you know, to be very honest if it very basic level, like it, there is a call for cohesion and coherence. And students have no clue what does it even mean? So Yeah, yeah. So, as a teacher, I can't, you know, expect students to, you know, follow this pattern without telling them, because they have no idea what cohesion is, and then I can't mark them down. So, I make sure the students are very well aware. Okay, what does this mean? some simple things like basic things spelling, vocabulary they're very well aware of, but you know, I have this session before writing that this is cohesion. I mean, it has more to do with the drama. But coherence is the connection of ideas, how you develop your ideas, it should be related, because sometimes I face some students, you know, they write really very good writings, but they're off topic. So, I need to educate them, you know, yeah

**Interviewer. You need to advise them, you need to give them constructive feedback on how to improve and to write?**

Interviewee. Exactly! So, they have to be very well aware of the rubric itself, and it is quite time-taking, because they come up with so many questions. Of course, you know, the technical, the jargon, which is used, in the rubric, is sometimes beyond a student's comprehension range, they don't understand that language, we as teachers, we know, okay, fine. This stands for diction is this, but students, maybe they have no idea what diction is. So, I need to simplify it for my students, and I just tell them in detail that this is what is expected from them, and they will be marked on this thing. And then I make sure that they have understood completely, and then I give them feedback, which is, I think, a fair thing to do with students.

**Interviewer. Yes, I see that is that, umm is there someone specially you think of when you picture a good language teacher? somebody from your childhood experience, one from you know, right now at the ELP Anybody who you picture that you would like to follow in their approach?**

Interviewee. Exactly. So, I always loved this subject. Because of the teacher, I think credit goes to my teacher, because they were so kind, loving, caring. And the way they used to teach; they were so... .. I mean, you don't have to be really motherly or a nice teacher. But you I don't know, there is that x-factor. You know what I mean? So, it is just, just there. And I remember when I was in grade eight, my teacher Mrs X and then it was Mrs X and then my favourite teacher four times in my Master's she was, Mrs X, she was such a remarkable teacher that, you know, I think, I was totally fascinated by her teaching, her methodology, the strategies she would use in teaching. Yes, in faith and giving feedback also, but the way she taught us the language, It was commendable. And Yes, that inspired me to become a teacher. And I, would, all, I think there's always room for improvement. And when, to be very honest, Ruaa, when I knew these remarks from my students, you have no idea, I just, I'm on cloud nine, they would always text me that we should, are you teaching this module? We're so looking forward to it. And it just makes my day.

**Interviewer. I know, as teachers, we reflect a lot on language learning and the phenomenon itself, the way we taught and how the student we teach, experience language learning. Do you think this understanding has changed over the years now**

**with teaching Eli students? Is language learning for them different from the way we used to learn it when we were younger?**

Interviewee. Yeah, I think it has, definitely. And I think it's because of the context also. Because the background, also, there is a difference of culture, the way they are brought up, and the way they are exposed to different society, and as I told you, we receive a class of mixed individuals, you can easily figure out there are students, for example, and some of my students they have already, you know, they were enrolled in summer camps in America and England. So when they come back, they have this, you know, this intrinsic motivation, and they're confident. But some students, you know, those who are not exposed to maybe they haven't travelled a lot, and maybe they're totally confined. So, it's different. And then if I talk about myself, yes, I think so it, because it wasn't my first language, either, but with the passage of time, yes. And through interacting with others. And as a teacher now, For example, then I came to Saudi Arabia, you know, I have also, you know, conducted these workshops, I went to Paris to, and I presented twice in this TESOL Arabia. So, I think this exposure is given me a new dimension, I think it's a great learning experience. And yes, it is totally different from the way I learned this language and my approach, and my, the way my teachers taught me, and, you now, the students, the way they are, you know, acquiring this language, There is a huge difference.

**Interviewer. I see, what do you think of the assessment in this course, you're teaching the unlock series aren't you? what do you, what do you think of the writing assessment?**

Interviewee. Yes, exactly. We used Headway Plus before. And we always complained that, you know, there was like, separate this writing booklet. Yes. And in which two students used to write this first draft and the second draft and then the final draft? And then because to be very honest, some students were in a habit of memorising it, and they will, you know, just copy paste, whatever they have learned.

**Interviewer. was it a kind, something called, formative assessment, in this writing booklet?**

Interviewee. Yeah, it was, I think. Yes, it was. But this Unlock! I think it's really good, you know, the way they approach this writing

**Interviewer. Please tell me about this, how is it better for students? and how is it good for you as a teacher?**

Interviewee. because you know, before producing this final product 'before writing', they get ample enough practice, the way they approach, you know, step by step, their driving this first draft, it is in a very systematic way. And, you know, I had this even in the focus group meeting also, that, you know, they have really, you know, designed it in a very beautiful manner that, you know, first day is this language development, and they are doing the reading. And then they give are two passages and they have, We keep them a lot of vocabulary words, they are practising, they're using it in different exercises, there is critical thinking, whether it's listening speaking book, or reading writing book, there's so many you know, and they're able to figure out, pros and cons, and you know, so there is a really good practice, how to evaluate writing, how to edit your writing, Everything is given there, and then the approach to their writing task. And even in writing tasks, itself, there is a proper plan, you know, everything, just a graphic organiser, everything is given. But how you make a table, how you brainstorm how you make a clutter diagram, just to put your ideas, not in detail, just in like bullet points. So, It's very, very nice. And I, oh God I enjoy teaching writing now because of this book, I think, yes.

**Interviewer: so, you feel a sense of connection with the new material?**

Interviewee. yes, they are really good, really relatable, students have so much, you know, to talk about, they can relate things. And it's, I think, related to everyday life, whether it's sports, festivals, places, it's about whether, you know, they can just come up with so many ideas. So, I think it's really good. The team, the topics, It's very much related to them.

**Interviewer. You mentioned that in your, CELTA course, you did peer feedback. Have you tried it in your classroom?**

Interviewee: Yes, yes, I've tried it. Not with low levels to be very honest, not with levels 1 and 2, But Yes, with level three, and four, If I'm giving them like first draught, or if I have time, I did have to do this, especially in the afternoon classes, I do this creative writing, I just give them a random topic. Or I could just ask them, okay, how did your day go? So, you know, they will just write a paragraph on it. So, then, I asked them to do it individually, after some time, we, you know, they discuss it in pairs, and then they ah, exchanged their writings. And then, you know, they try to I, because I have explained them, error codes, uhh very well, you know, I just always have this, I take a printout of these error codes. And then there is an example of that, and I put that on the bulletin board or notice code. So, I just give it to them, they use these, of course, they cannot give a detailed feedback, but they you know, correct each other's. And I really appreciate that, to whatever extent they can do the correction themselves so peer correction, and then they discuss each other's you know, writing, yes

**Interviewer. Yes. that sounds good. Do you, yourself, try to assess your learners' understanding of writing?**

Interviewee. I always, you know, maintain my own journal, which I write the points, yes, I have that, So when I have marked the papers, whether it's, you know, like a writing draft which has to be assessed, or, you know, its just a class with the next Creative Writing thing. So, I make notes, and you can see that if there is a common mistake, If it is very common, a student is, you know, doing it on repeat repeatedly, the mistake is there. And when I knew that I had taught them, but still, you know, there is a doubt, they're in a confused state of mind, Then I make sure that I have to teach this thing again, If you know, hardly one or two students are making mistake, and something that of course, I just write that in the comments. And, you know, I always try to look for that if they are not repeating it. But if there is a mistake, if there is something which is not clear, And if instructions are not clear, if you know, it tells, it shows you completely that you know, there is something wrong, and maybe I missed a point, Maybe there was some problem in my explanation or something, or it wasn't clear, or they're confused by one thing or another, Then I make sure that I have to teach that again. So, I make points, I make a note for myself or so, because I need to reflect on my teaching and my feedback as well. And then there is a good thing here, that once you have market, given feedback, we also have this, you know, as teachers also, there is a cross checker. And then there is a checklist for the cross checker as well. She has to go through each and every student's transcript, whether I have used the error codes, you know as a normal human being, maybe if I've missed something, or I miscalculated the marks. So sometimes, it's I think it's really good. Yeah, it's more transparent. And, you know,

**Interviewer. Yes, that's very important in assessment. Yes, I see, I checked the website, and I had a look at the core specifications. It seems that the ELP is encouraging teachers to, to give feedback to students, through having them write on the board. And I don't know if you notice this in the websites, the teacher resource in the unlock series, when it's mentioned that feedback strategies or teaching strategies to include students writing on the board, having them get up and mark the errors or self-correct? Have you tried that?**

Interviewee. I remember, like a few years ago, and there are different approaches to be very honest. And you know, you can try, you can say that there is no right or wrong in teaching methodology. So, it depends, again, I tried, but my students were reluctant. Some of them, you know, they're hesitant. They're shy, and they don't feel like doing this. But very few, they like this approach of, you know, just coming over and doing correction, but it did not work very well with my students. But yes, I know a few teachers of mine. And then they said that students they are, ahh They get hyper and they're so excited. And they were like, Okay, fine. Yes, we are doing it, you know, on the board, and everybody can see, maybe someone can learn from my mistake.

**Interviewer. So, we've reached the last part of our interview here, It's about your beliefs as a language teacher and assessor. Do you think teachers should have more of an active role in assessment?**

Interviewee. Umm in assessment, yes, I think so. Yeah, teachers should definitely have an active role how to design.

**Interviewer. So, you feel ready to join, for example, an assessment committee or test development committee?**

Interviewee. Yes, yes, I am. So, yes absolutely.

**Interviewer. So, if you imagine yourself in the future, like five or 10 years from now, do you imagine yourself taking a more active role in assessment? And, and actually designing tests? For example? Do you think that's possible?**

Interviewee. Yes, yes, definitely, I would definitely like to, you know, be a part of this assessment committee or testing unit or anything, which designs or you know, to design, even the curriculum, and specially this assessments, Formative Assessment assessments or anything, so because now, you know, I've been teaching English for the past, It's been more than 10 years now. So, I think I have a fair idea. And I've been, you know, doing this, I like, on a very small level, designing quizzes and needs analysis, diagnostic tests. But I think I would definitely love to be a part of this testing unit or any exam committee, if I were supposed to design some papers,

**Interviewer. well you seem to have invested a lot of time in learning to assess and designing tests or needs analysis, like you mentioned. So, this this all, this experience that you've had in the past, I think it's equipped you with this confidence, right?**

Interviewee. Now, I believe that I am, to be very honest, somewhat well informed about students and about the things and yes, I do feel confident, as I told you earlier that yes, of course, there is some training required some certification. And yes, there is always room for improvement I can learn. But still, I think I should definitely give it a try. Because I'm doing it. So, I think so yes, I can why not.

**Interviewer. When you're assessing students in writing? Do you feel confident and happy with the grades, and feedback, that you're giving to your students?**

Interviewee. I'm, I'm not subjective at all, I just follow the rules. And you know, I strictly for them, and wherever there is, although I've been working I as I told you for more than 7 years in this university, so sometimes, as teachers, we know that, okay, fine, it's on our fingertips. But still, I make sure that I go through the rubric in detail, because sometimes they add many more new things. And we always have this kind of orientation. Before assessing writing papers, we always have this orientation. And initially, they used to give us students sample paper to mark. And you know, I have done that. So, I know, that I am doing it in a very

transparent manner. And it's absolutely on point. And secondly, a big thing for me is that the feedback from students because they have never argued with me, that [for example] 'teacher that, I did not deserve this, and you've given me this', so, so I don't undermark them or don't give them extra,

**Interviewer. And by the end of the module, do you feel like students have had effective feedback from you as a teacher, within the six weeks?**

Interviewee. Yes, yes, I think so. Some teachers are often view that it is just not realistic and one and half or two months, Let's say like seven weeks is not as sufficient time for students to improve. But I think so. So, you know, they, because in, in a module, I have seen some remarkable improvement among my students. So, I think they do know, and if I give them feedback, like this, seven, weeks is a pretty long time. And they have this, you know, improved. And then of course, with the passage of time, with their increased level, again, they learn a lot. They move to another level, and they learn a lot, and they improve also, but I think that being also, All I can say is that students were very much satisfied. They were happy, and they were quite grateful. So, I think, yeah

**Interviewer. Finally, do you happen to use What's app with your learners at all?**

Interviewee. I've been using what's app with my students for the past 4,5 years. Most of the teachers use this mode of communication because it's the easiest and convenient to get the message across. I personally use it for informing students about important exam dates if there's a change in the formal exam date. If class venue has been changed, or to give them a reminder of class test or quiz. Students usually message me in the group if they are late or something. If a student is absent or has missed the lecture, other students share pictures of whiteboard on which I usually write and explain things to my students. They ask sometimes if the class is cancelled due to bad weather? I send them some images of grammar which serve as handouts for revising prepositions, adjectives, tenses and other things. I sometimes use it for giving feedback on writing. If a student was absent and her draft was due, they send their writing on what's app for correction. So I just briefly comment on their writing and give detailed feedback in class later.

**Interviewer.** Thank you very much.

## G2. Mediating Feedback Techniques - Focus of verbal, written, and co-produced feedback processes across the cases

Feedback Coding Categories	Description	Data Examples
<b>Nisreen's written feedback using praise</b>	Student appraisal for correctly complying with instructions	<i>'Well written', 'Well tried'</i>
<b>Nisreen's written feedback using advice</b>	General advice for future assignments	<i>'Be careful about plagiarism. You cannot copy paste from the internet.'</i> <i>'Be careful about spelling and sentence structure'</i>
<b>Nisreen's written feedback using the writing criteria</b>	Student are asked to reflect on errors and missing information	<i>'You should write one-sided opinion paragraph'</i> <i>'Add a concluding sentence'</i> <i>'Be careful about spelling and sentence structure'</i> <i>'Use punctuation'</i>
	Error correction without information on how to improve	<i>'Kindly check punctuation, capitalisation'</i>
	Critique of content	<i>'It's off topic! You are supposed to write about the place you visited and its positives &amp; negatives.'</i> <i>'This paragraph highlights the weather only!'</i>
	Critique of structure	<i>'You need to write a concluding sentence. Give your opinion at the end.'</i> <i>'Use paragraph format'</i>
	Critique of using mechanics	<i>'Kindly check punctuation, capitalisation'</i> <i>'Be careful about spelling'</i> <i>'Use punctuation'</i>

<p><b>Nisreen and Haya's verbal feedback using 'restating' technique</b></p>	<p>Teacher emphasises the answer which the learner provides by affirmation and repeating/re-phrasing students corrections</p>	<p><i>Nisreen. Ok, if you want to give your opinion, what will you use?</i>  <i>Ss. I think that, in my opinion</i>  <i>Nisreen. Exactly, in my opinion, I believe that, I personally feel, it seems to me, yes, exactly-<b>Restating</b></i>  <i>Haya. Let's look at punctuation. Why is M capital?</i>  <i>S1. Because, first of the paragraph.</i>  <i>Haya. Yes, the first word -<b>Restating</b></i></p>
<p><b>Amy's' verbal feedback using 'Clarification Request' technique</b></p>	<p>Teacher asks questions about their submitted assignment to discuss plagiarism, and information sources</p>	<p><i>Amy. When I asked you to collect information, how did you collect information? <u>Where did you get your information?</u></i>  <i>Ss. Google? [together]</i>  <i>Amy. Who used Google?</i>  <i>S. No [one student says no]</i>  <i>Amy. So you only used one source? Some information? Did you look for other ways of finding information? You trust google?</i>  <i>Ss. Yes...No</i>  <i>Amy. Did anybody go to Wikipedia?</i>  <i>Ss. Noooo</i>  <i>Amy. Am I gonna see a copy and paste on your paper? [Rising intonation]</i>  <i>Ss. No.</i>  <i>Amy. So, you have to ask yourself were you get information. Especially when you talk about facts...You have to be careful about getting facts. The paper has to be original.</i></p>
<p><b>Nisreen, Amy, and Haya's verbal feedback using 'Metalinguistic clues' technique</b></p>	<p>Teacher encourages learner participation through offering option/choices</p>	<p><i>Nisreen. is texting an advantage or disadvantage?</i>  <i>Ss: Advantage</i></p> <p><i>Amy. It is the largest city? This is what we call a run on. Can we split this sentence;</i></p>

		<p>we have two ideas? - <b>Metalinguistics clues</b></p> <p>Ss. Yeah. She mentioned it two times, so we can remove</p> <p>Nisreen. This is a situation in which a student wrote 70 words in a paragraph form, she had clear topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence, no grammatical mistakes or structure or spelling mistakes, why did she get this mark? - <b>Metalinguistic cues</b></p> <p>Ss. word count...</p> <p>Nisreen. what was the word count for your paragraph?</p> <p>Ss. Ninety, ninety to one hundred</p> <p>Nisreen. So, 70 is?</p> <p>S. Less...</p> <p>Nisreen. Yes, so she did not write enough.</p> <p>Haya. In the writing, are you talking about a festival happening in the future, or that usually happens every year? - <b>Metalinguistic cues</b></p> <p>Ss. It always happens.</p> <p>Haya. so the tenses should be?</p> <p>Ss. Present simple!</p> <p>Haya. Present simple</p>
<p><b>Nisreen, Haya and Mona's verbal feedback using 'Elicitation' technique</b></p>	<p>Teacher directly elicits the correct form from student by asking questions</p>	<p>Nisreen. Ok. what else is wrong? - <b>Elicitation</b></p> <p>Ss. maybe there are two mistakes. ww, wrong word</p> <p>Haya. [Reading the sentence] We all enjoying this festival</p> <p>S1. Without -ing</p>

		<p>S2. <i>We all enjoy this festival</i>  Haya. <i>Ok, why? Why not enjoyed? –</i>  <b>Elicitation</b>  S. <i>because it is not now</i></p> <p>Mona. <i>Where is your verb? - Elicitation</i>  S2. <i>is. Jeddah is famous for their Kabsa.</i>  Mona. <i>Ok</i></p> <p>Haya. <i>What do you think is wrong? -</i>  <b>Elicitation</b>  Ss. <i>the spelling</i>  Haya. <i>spelling of which word?</i>  S1. <i>Different</i>  S1. <i>Difference</i>  Haya. <i>she said spelling mistake of the word ‘differently’</i>  Haya. <i>and what else is wrong?</i>  S2. <i>take part.</i>  Haya. <i>So which is the correct one? How do you spell it? -Elicitation</i></p>
<p><b>Mona’s verbal feedback using provision of correct forms</b></p>	<p>Teacher provides missing information, as she reviews students’ writing task</p>	<p>Mona. <i>What missing?</i>  S. <i>[no response]</i>  Mona. <i>‘I live in Jeddah, Al-Nuzha’. Just put ‘in’... because this is where you live. -</i>  <b>Provision of correct form</b>  Mona. <i>Why is this small? (refereeing to use of the pronoun I)</i>  S. <i>because... [student doesn’t know]</i>  Mona. <i>Whenever you use I to talk about yourself, it is always going to be capital, no matter where it is.</i>  <b>-Provision of correct form</b>  S. <i>What about she and he?</i>  Mona. <i>No, only I.</i></p>

### G3. Semi-structured classroom observation form

Assessment Methods	Teacher's Feedback Actions	Purpose	Student's Responses to Feedback
<p>Suggested 101/102 teaching strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pair work</li> <li>-Teacher fronted presentation</li> <li>-Process writing</li> <li>-Teach basic word order, punctuation, and connectors.</li> <li>-Students write answers on the board and the teacher gives whole class feedback</li> <li>-Teacher regularly collects and gives feedback on practice writing tasks done in class</li> <li>-Provide whole class feedback, as needed, on errors commonly encountered in the students' Blackboard writing tasks</li> </ul>			
<p>Simulating the test method: using test prompt samples that are provided by the ELP</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Diagnostic: to assess writing ability (content/information)</li> <li>-To inform students about their progress development through teacher feedback</li> <li>-To inform students about the course LOs</li> <li>-To allow learner reflection</li> </ul>	
<p>Teachers' own (creative) assessment/feedback methods</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Diagnostic: to assess knowledge on content</li> <li>-To give feedback</li> </ul>	

		-To support students' learning experience	
Discussing assessment criteria		-Diagnostic: to access knowledge on assessment criteria -To give feedback -To support low achievers -To allow learner reflection	
Display of exemplars: Projecting learners' essays during class, followed by whole class discussion on errors. Teacher waits as students think of the correct answer to her questions,		-Diagnostics: to access knowledge on error codes for mechanics -To give feedback (e.g. vowel ending causes changes to verb ending (study-studies)) -To promote learner engagement/autonomy	
Peer assessment and peer feedback method		-To allow peers to assess one another -To allow peer feedback and teacher feedback -To supports high achievers in becoming autonomous -To allow reflection	

#### G4. Researcher field notes

Participant	Level	Teachers' Assessment and Feedback approach	Lesson Theme	Time	Notes	Date
Nisreen	102	<p>Gamification using Kahoot: assessing students on information on writing technology, topic sent vs. supporting</p> <p>Group activity: 5 minutes (dis/advantages of smartphones) and students read their answers out-loud, teacher writes on the board</p> <p>-Individual activity: Graphic organiser outline activity (paragraph writing) - Writing about the internet being a waste of time, and not helping us do more work (one-sided opinion paragraph– 5 sentences)</p>	The internet and technology	60 Minutes	SRI was two hours after the session had ended.	17-9-2019
Haya	102	<p>Sitting arrangement U shape for learners</p> <p>-There was input from the reading which started before I arrived. P.48</p>	Writing about a national event	1.17 hour and Minutes		15-9-2019

		<p>-Individual activity: The first exercise is done on paper (ideas map)</p> <p>-teacher circulates and takes notes of errors that she sees</p> <p>-Pair work -sharing ideas</p> <p>-1<sup>st</sup> written draft</p> <p>Groups were assigned according to topic selected</p> <p>- peer correction</p> <p>-Whole class feedback: correctios of common mistakes (ss – ww- sp)</p>				
Summa	102	<p>-Students are given their writing task, they are asked to reflect, then teacher circulates to give feedback,</p> <p>-Pair work activity, correcting sentence word order</p> <p>-Gamification: students are divided into two main groups, competing for</p>	Writing session on Subject Verb Agreement	70 Minutes		18-9-2019
Amy session 1	101	<p>-Vocabulary activity: whole class assessment through Q&amp;A on last sessions vocabulary</p>	Writing task: Write about your Country	60 Minutes		16-9-2019

		<p>-Entering notes on the online spread sheet table (assessment), teacher circulates as the students fill out the table</p> <p>-Mind map activity: Shared Input, generated from both teacher and students</p>				
Amy session 2	101	<p>-Unit 4, students get their writing back</p> <p>-Teacher projected students' writing on the screen (whole class feedback) conversation with students</p>	Feedback session on writing	35 Minutes		19-9-2019
Mona session 1	101	<p>Reading session was followed by a writing activity</p> <p>-Teacher assigns writing task in class and circulates, giving individual feedback while she reads their writing, asking them questions and giving correct answers.</p>	Writing topic: Write about your Country	40 Minutes		17-9-2019
Mona Session 2	101	Teacher goes over the difference between topic sentence and main idea	Writing task	60 minutes		18-9-2019

		-students use their phones to complete their tasks, -grammar for writing (p.94) there is/there are				
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## G5. Sample of member checking

Hope you've had a great module so far

When you have time, please take a look at the analysis I have formulated based on taking to you and observing your classes, and feel free to add or suggest something I may have missed or misunderstood.

Here is the analysis:

RQ3: What does reflection upon their feedback provision for L2 writing reveal about EFL teacher cognition?

It was noted that the participant has a very developed cognition of assessment feedback. Her classroom behaviour in terms of carrying out assessment feedback, had mirrored her beliefs in many ways, and she was able to enact her previously stated beliefs and self-reported practice. This positive result could also be due to the curriculum being supportive of her beliefs, and the learners being motivated. She was very much satisfied with the course book, and the programme altogether, though she was not convinced of the formal writing assessments (prompt selection).

The main signs of her cognition development (in assessment feedback) includes the following:

1. Her classroom behaviour, the articulation of her personalized goals, with regards to aspiring further ELT training, is an indication of her growth in this profession.
2. Satisfaction with her feedback approach, is based on her learners' response and their requests to join her class again. For her, this was an indication of their acceptance of her as their teacher.
3. Her cognition includes a vision of the language teacher she wishes to become, someone who clearly believes in the importance of the L2 learning experience (Dörnyei, 2005). Her sense of belonging (Mitchell & Nyles, 2004) to the ELT community, is defined by means of creating L2 learning experiences.
4. She believes in building rapport with her learners and getting to know them as learners. Connecting with them is important for the purpose of achieving the course outcomes.
5. Her prior learning experiences, (specifically her teacher learning experiences) have influenced her practices in the language classroom (Borg, 2001).
6. Her cognitive development takes into account her personal investment, imagination, along with knowledge, and beliefs about assessment and feedback in L2 writing. As evident in other research (Burri et al., 2017) cognition growth plays an essential role in student teachers learning to teach language.

[11/12/19, 2:58:00 PM] Ruaa:

Hello

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5. Her prior learning experiences, (specifically her teacher learning experiences) have influenced her practices in the language classroom (Borg, 2001).
6. Her cognitive development considers her personal investment, imagination, along with knowledge, and beliefs about assessment and feedback in L2 writing. As evident in other research (Burri et al., 2017) cognition growth plays an essential role in student teachers learning to teach language.

Dear Ruaa

Thank you for your detailed feedback. It's extremely valuable. I truly appreciate your insight because it helped me become a better teacher. It's a great learning experience for me.

Heart-felt thanks to you for leaving this excellent review.

God bless you

[11/12/19, 9:38:03 PM] Ruaa:

I'm so glad you found it useful

### G6. Observed/non-observed feedback processes across the cases

<b>Feedback Process</b>	<b>Nisreen</b>	<b>Summa</b>	<b>Mona</b>	<b>Haya</b>	<b>Amy</b>
<b>Peer discussion</b>	Use of peer interaction in writing during both classroom observations	Use of peer interaction in writing in one classroom observation.	No use of peer interaction for writing.	Use of peer interaction in one classroom observation for writing.	No use of peer interaction for writing.
	<b>Nisreen</b>	<b>Summa</b>	<b>Mona</b>	<b>Haya</b>	<b>Amy</b>
<b>Whole class Discussion</b>	Use of whole class discussions in giving feedback during both classroom observations	Use of whole class discussions in giving feedback during both classroom observations	Use of whole class discussions in giving feedback during both classroom observations	Use of whole class discussions in giving feedback during both classroom observations	Use of whole class discussions in giving feedback during both classroom observations
	<b>Nisreen</b>	<b>Summa</b>	<b>Mona</b>	<b>Haya</b>	<b>Amy</b>
<b>Learner Self-evaluation</b>	Use of error codes and coding key handout	Use of error codes. Elicit answers as learners reflect on their marked assignments	Use of underlining only (noticing technique)	Use of error codes	Use of minimal error codes (SP-spelling only).
	<b>Nisreen</b>	<b>Summa</b>	<b>Mona</b>	<b>Haya</b>	<b>Amy</b>
<b>Using exemplars</b>	Analysis of good/bad exemplars for quality work,	Analysis of exemplars, for error correction	No use of exemplars	Analysis of exemplars, for error correction	Analysis of exemplars, for error correction,

	based on learners' writing samples, assigning marks, using assessment criteria	based on learners' writing samples,		based on learners' writing samples,	based on learners' writing samples,
	<b>Nisreen</b>	<b>Summa</b>	<b>Mona</b>	<b>Haya</b>	<b>Amy</b>
<b>Gamification</b>	Use of students' writing samples to assess class understanding of writing quality, via gamification	Use of students' writing samples to assess class understanding of writing quality, via games	Not observed	Not observed	Not observed
	<b>Nisreen</b>	<b>Summa</b>	<b>Mona</b>	<b>Haya</b>	<b>Amy</b>
<b>Online-text chat</b>	Use of what's app for providing feedback	No use of online text chat	No use of online text chat	Use of what's app for providing feedback	No use of online text chat

## **G7. Post-observation stimulated recall (face-to-face) follow-up interview with Summa on September 20, 2019**

**Interviewer.** First of all, I want to thank you so much for yesterday's session. I really enjoyed being there. It was a very, unique session.

Interviewee. Was it?!

**Interviewer.** Um, I felt like you were treating the students as adults

Interviewee. Yes, you have to, they are adults, aren't they, they are sometimes 18 may be almost, you know, you might get somebody who is 19. Anyway, I think it's okay between the ages of 16 and 19 I think that is considered,

**Interviewer.** young adults

Interviewee. yes

**Interviewer.** And your classroom management, the girls were getting louder sometimes. But you managed to keep your cool, yeah?

Interviewee. Yes, They get too loud sometimes, but I do like doing activities in my classroom. They just sit and listen to me it is not good,

**Interviewer.** But your attitude and your mood and your calmness, you make teaching look so easy.

Interviewee. I do .... really? I've been in teaching for 20 something years, and I still learn a lot, every time I walk to the classroom like, I, I feel my own personality changes inside the classroom. And I like being among young, young people. They make me energetic. and they make me not feel my age at all, and they make me more, how do you say, optimistic about the future. I think of them as of course, they're smart. My girls are unique, actually, they are smart, bright, they ask questions, they love to learn, their motivation level is very high.

**Interviewer.** Has this always been the case?

Interviewee. Um, it has been always like that, thank God.

**Interviewer.** So you're saying that the students motivate you?

Interviewee. I think they do. we motivate each other.

**Interviewer.** That's very sweet, And you say that you enjoy going to the classroom, you've enjoyed your practice over the years. So do you feel like your identity as a language teacher has evolved as well, right? And you told me at the very beginning, in the first interview that you weren't very sure if you wanted to be in the teaching profession, and then slowly with training, do you remember that?

Interviewee. I do remember

**Interviewer.** and you were telling me that you enjoyed it.

Interviewee. I do. I do. You know, when I first did my undergrad, when I first joined College of Education, I didn't like it so much. the theories and the other, I started loving it since I, You know, when we got the face of teaching practice, the practicum part of it.

**Interviewer. out there in the real world...**

Interviewee. Then, that thing ignited something, Subhan Allah, that sort of ignited interest in me. So I started loving it ever since. So I think yes, my identity as a, as a teacher, my profession, and my own practice has evolved and have improved all of these years, I practice with

**Interviewer. You reached the language teacher that you've always wanted to become?**

Interviewee. Not yet

**Interviewer. Not yet?**

Interviewee. So always there will be a room for development,

**Interviewer. what are you hoping to add? you're already mashallah have wonderful teaching skills**

Interviewee. As practitioner, I am quite satisfied with my way of practice. But you know, classrooms are dynamic, at the end of the day, you can't just say, it's like a recipe, or this way it's gonna work with each and every group. I mean, sometimes my, you know, I'd like them to move around and make noise and everything and see that they are learning, but sometimes it might also not work with others, who like to, like to think and reflect,

**Interviewer. you used the word reflect?**

Interviewee. Yes, I did

**Interviewer. I didn't find many teachers using that word, I'm myself haven't been exposed to this practice until I started my PhD. So that kind of fascinate me, the word with your students. can you tell me why?**

Interviewee. Why? because I would like to, to promote, it is the practice of critical thinking

**Interviewer. It's in the curriculum**

Interviewee. That's true, that is just part of the curriculum, number one. Number two, as a personal goal, I would like to create reflective learners themselves, I like them to be able to reflect on their own learning. That's why when I give when I, when I write the feedback for the written... um, my feedback on their written tasks, I don't, correct their mistakes, I highlight their mistakes. And I give them time to think about the mistakes and get to the corrections themselves. I will ask like questions, guidance courses, like, "what do you think? what would you say? what do you think would be the right answer? read the sentence to solve, what do you think might be a better world, or a better expression?"

**Interviewer. That's what they need to develop?**

Yeah.

**Interviewer.** I noticed, So the first activity was that you handed back the students papers, you did not correct them. You highlighted the errors, and you told them think about it, then you circulate it.

Interviewee. Yes

**Interviewer.** [Playing the audio track]. So did the students get what they were supposed to get in this task?

Interviewee. D. [A particular student] has got this problem, there is a persistent problem with this student. I did know about her problem. That's why I looked up for it, I looked up in her writing, I looked because I had an idea about mistakes, I have an idea about mistakes. Because you know, as you are teaching, you're assessing, you can go through this continuous assessment and you get to form an idea, you get to sort of have some kind of profile in your head about each and every student. So, I looked out for that. And then I had to sort of guide her like, you know, this, she, she would always write run one sentences.

**Interviewer.** and when you hinted to her, she needed to break it down, like you just said, do you think she got that at that moment when you mentioned that you need to break it down, did she understand that?

Interviewee. She shook her hand. [laughing] But of course that wouldn't tell you much.

**Interviewer.** Yes, what would you do next time?

Interviewee. Maybe next time I'll make it more, constructive, maybe if hints or some notes are not enough, I would for example ...um, show her a correct practice of that, yeah, So maybe I should give them more practice on that,

**[Listening to an audio Track]**

Interviewee. Yes, She wrote something wrong

**Interviewer.** So the whole essay was wrong?

Interviewee. It was wrong. The criteria was there, so I think it was [naming one student] she was not there at the beginning, she missed the first week, that is the reason, and that's why I directed these students to the Student Support Centre. And now, there are not taking the exams with the rest of the students

**Interviewer.** Aha, so they are taking the make-up instead?

Interviewee. Yes, I think the office has given the choice of, to take it now or not, if they choose to take it now, they need to sign a consent form. But me as a teacher, I can make that decision for them. I already know that they are not ready. I told my coordinator, you as my coordinator, I would like you to know that me, as a teacher, I took this decision for my own students. I don't want them to the exam, right now. They're not ready, they're not ready to take the exam. and then you make them sign a consent form saying I'm going to take the exam, but what if something goes wrong! then she is to blame, she has signed the consent form.

**Interviewer.** Because she takes full responsibility

Interviewee. If somebody, for example missed a lot, on learning, then you are responsible for yourself. I do my job I think is I have to cover my back first, and then maybe hold them responsible for whatever happens after. So I do like teaching I do like tutoring, but if somebody

fails the exam then it is because of their own negligence, But I have to do my part first. You have to think of them, yeah,

**Interviewer. I can sense you have empathy for them,**

Interviewee. empathy, um, I would say a sense of duty, sense of responsibility, Yeah, this is important

Interviewer. Of course, it is very important

## Appendix H - Conferences and outputs

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