Implementation of Peer Observation of Teaching in ELT Tertiary Education System in Malaysia: A Social-constructionism View

Submitted by

Sazuliana Sanif

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Abstract

The present study primarily aims to explore the English language (EL) teachers' current practices and their experiences of teacher evaluation, and how these are related to the introduction of peer observation of teaching (POT) in the Malaysian university system. Then, it aims to explore the possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation.

The participants of the study were determined by 2 stages of the research design. In Stage 1, from 10 different universities around Malaysia, 72 teachers completed the online questionnaire and eight semi-structured interview were conducted. In Stage 2, at the university where the study was conducted, 24 participants completed the after-workshop questionnaire and ten observations as well as eight semi-structured interview were carried out. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS descriptive statistics while qualitative data were transcribed and then analysed using thematic content analysis.

The findings on teacher evaluation revealed that there was teacher evaluation in place at every university involved in the survey. However, there seemed to be some major shortcomings that need to be addressed. Shortcomings such as teachers were not reminded of the real purposes of each evaluation undertaken, some evaluations were wasted because they were not studied, and teachers were not given ownership in setting out the suitable methods for evaluation. The findings on peer observation revealed that teachers had different understanding about it. Through the intervention study, it was discovered that the tone of the discussion between teachers were sometimes calm and celebrating, whilst some were critical and judgemental. The findings also showed that introduction of peer observation may be possible at the university under study provided the purposes were for developmental. However, teachers still had the feeling of nervousness and being judgemental about the whole process because of the common top-down approach.

The findings from the study have provided several implications for the improvement of the existing EL teacher evaluation in particular, as well as evaluation of teachers of

other subjects in general. In addition, the findings have also provided several implications for the introduction of peer observation especially to the university managements and the teachers in particular. The current study also contributes to knowledge by proposing: i) a model for teacher evaluation, and ii) one plan for the procedure of peer observation of teaching; which can be adjusted according to the suitability of any given context.

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List of Acronyms

ASTE	Academic Staff Teaching Evaluation
BSM	Board of Salary Movement
CAD	Centre for Academic Development
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPE	Centre for Professional Excellence
CTES	Course Teaching Evaluation System
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EL	English language
ELT	English language teaching
FIAC	Flanders' Interaction Analysis Categories
HE	Higher education
HOD	Head of department
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LAN	Lembaga Akreditasi Negara
LEA	Local Educational Authority
MET	Measures of Effective Teaching
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
MQR	Malaysian Qualifications Register
MRS	Malaysia Remuneration System
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
NCCTQ	National Comprehensive Centre for Teacher Quality
NEP	National Education Policy
NPAS	New Performance Appraisal System
NRS	New Remuneration System
NUTP	National Union of Teaching Profession

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PMR	Penilaian Menengah Rendah
POT	Peer observation of teaching
ProDAIT	Professional Development for Academics Involved in Teaching
QAD	Quality Assurance Division
SFS	Student Feedback Survey
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSB	Sistem Saraan Baru
SSM	Sistem Saraan Malaysia
STPM	Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TER	Teacher Evaluation Record
TFS	Teaching Feedback Survey
TPR	Teaching Process Recall
TST	Teacher Support Team
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPP	University Preparation Programme
UPSR	Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah
USA	United States of America
UTHM	Universiti Tun Hussein Malaysia

List of Appendices

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents the rationale, purpose, research design, and significance of the current study.

1.1   Rationale of the Study

This study began due to two strands. First, I realized that few share my interest in English language teacher evaluation, as well as the fact that the subject of teacher evaluation is regarded with some uncertainties. Second, I also formed an interest in determining what peer observation of teaching means to the teachers, and whether they may benefit from the exercises. Thus, the study consists of an investigation into the experiences of English language teachers at universities in Malaysia concerning teacher evaluation and their views about introducing peer observation of teaching into the practice. I was further motivated by concern about the usefulness of current teacher evaluation as an evaluation tool for English language teaching (ELT) in the university context in Malaysia. My research was additionally prompted by my own personal interest in the topic, mainly inspired through social and academic chats with my English language teacher colleagues typically after each teacher evaluation was conducted. Therefore, I believe this topic may provide a useful basis for improvement of evaluation practice in the field of ELT and other relevant areas. The research outcomes are intended to shed light on developing evaluations in tertiary education, which will also benefit professional development in my teaching career.

With regards to peer observation of teaching, based on the literature, not many universities in Malaysia have introduced peer observation exercises. This differs from countries such as Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom, in which peer observation of teaching has been introduced to the university teachers as a means for professional development. Since peer observation is one of many approaches to teacher evaluation, I am more interested in introducing this exercise at my university first as a method for teacher improvement and for self-development before taking it to the evaluation level.

A review of the literature on teacher evaluation has raised my awareness of the positive and negative influences of the evaluation methods on teaching and learning practice. Concerning the positive aspects, Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin and Bernstein (1984), commenting on the purposes of teacher evaluation, suggested that it can serve two purposes, namely improvement and accountability. This is because results obtained from teacher evaluation may be improved through teacher professional development training and holding teachers accountable for their work (Stronge, 2006).

However, various researchers argue about the methods of teacher evaluation used to identify teacher effectiveness. Suwanarak (2007), Ahmad (2005), and Coburn (1984), for example, conflict concerning the most controversial method, i.e. the student rating questionnaire. They found that students' lack of maturity and expertise to make judgements about course contents and teaching styles as teachers may obtain good evaluation due to popularity rather than ability. Concerning classroom observation, Sheal (1989) emphasized that many of the observations are unsystematic and subjective, and administrators as well as teachers tend to use themselves as a standard. With respect to students test score, Kane and Darling-Hammond (2012) found that the scores are too unreliable, as they measure too many other factors outside the teacher.

Through informal discussion of teacher evaluation among teacher colleagues, I considered that the evaluation of teaching in my context reflects more the negative aspects. This is because teachers often voice their concerns about having taught the right lessons, and complain about not receiving the results of every evaluation they went through, while feeling uncomfortable making suggestions for improvement.

I became interested in the teacher evaluation process when I was first evaluated by my students. I began to realise that the practice of evaluating teachers' instruction at the university where I serve seems to be a practice taken from the previous practices. It is obvious that very little has changed in practice. This is because since I joined the university, for the past 16 years, I have gone through

the same teacher evaluation methods again and again, including student evaluation of teachers and evaluation by the immediate superior or head of department, without any questions. In fact, other methods or practices carried out in other universities around the world have not been suggested.

English language teachers seemed to undergo teacher evaluation or just follow normal practice and their teaching culture, such as asking students to complete student rating forms every semester and by conducting performance review meeting with the head of department every academic year. Teacher evaluation using a student rating questionnaire has compelled me to conduct this study because it reminds me of the whole process which I went through when I was a university student during my first year of my bachelor degree and my master's degree. During those times, we (the students) were instructed by every teacher to evaluate his or her teaching using a standardised questionnaire which he or she brought into the class. Each teacher allocated some of his or her teaching time, for example 10-15 minutes, for the students to complete the evaluation questionnaire before he or she could collect them back and pass them to the responsible department. Based on this experience, what really strikes my mind was that there were times when we as students found that the evaluation seemed a repetition; being done over and over again and we started to take the evaluation for granted. Due to this, we were more likely to say the same things again and again and never bother to criticise, because while we were told that the results help the teachers to improve, we never observed any changes, either in the teachers' teaching practices or in management.

Teacher evaluation by students in the form of student rating has been used since I joined my current university. Students have evaluated my teaching every semester. There were times when I distributed the forms and collected them myself, and I could see how the students evaluated me before they reached the office.

A performance review meeting with the head of department (HOD) carried out at my workplace was also conducted. These are summative in nature and cover

aspects such as teaching and learning, research, publications, and community services. As far as evaluation is concerned, teachers have been assessed based on their achievements and progress on criteria mentioned above at the beginning of the academic year. Based on my experience, teachers have never been informed about the marks they obtain. However, outstanding teachers have the chance to be awarded yearly for excellent performance based on this performance review meeting, thus raising the issue of transparency in evaluation by the management. Excellent teachers were only informed that they performed well when they were rewarded, while others were kept uninformed unless they failed to achieve a certain target. Thus, one or two excellent teachers receive awards and the underachievers are consulted and given training. Besides this, there is still an increment in salary every year based on the appraisal, even though teachers are not informed of their achievements in the appraisal. Teachers will only be consulted if their performance is below average. In reality, according to Mathers, Oliva and Laine (2008), formative evaluation results may serve as a useful guide for professional development plans and improve teachers' practice. Thus, with no prior knowledge of the results of each appraisal, teachers will remain faithful to their old teaching methods and practices and there will be no room for improvement.

I always have feelings of nervousness when having to go through every evaluation. Clear understanding of what the purposes of each evaluation that took place at the university was almost never made available. Evaluating teaching has never been related to continuous professional development. Based on my experience, the main purpose of conducting teacher evaluation was for accountability, serving as a measure to ensure that teachers carry out their duties properly and efficiently.

A number of quantitative and qualitative studies have explored the English language teacher evaluation system in Malaysia pertaining to different methods of evaluation. Evaluation also covers different aspects of classroom teaching and

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practices. This study also tracks some of the broad national and local policy initiatives at different universities around Malaysia related to teacher evaluation.

1.2   Purpose of the Study

Fundamentally, the major concern of the research is the investigation of English language teachers' knowledge and the experience of teacher evaluation in Malaysian higher education (HE) institutions. In addition, the study also seeks to investigate both the possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation as a method for teacher evaluation.

There are four principal areas that serve as the foundation of the research questions mainly:

- current practices of English language teacher evaluation,
- English language teachers' experiences of teacher evaluation,
- views of Malaysian English language teachers on introducing peer observation in the system; and
- possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation.

More specifically, the study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the current practices of English language teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?
2. What are English language teachers' experiences with teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?
3. What are Malaysian English language teachers' views about introducing peer observation into the system?
4. What are the possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation?

1.3   Research Design

The methods and procedure will be briefly mentioned here, although they will be thoroughly discussed in the fourth chapter.

In this study, I have used an interpretive multi-method approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting data. There were two stages in my data collection, i.e. stage 1 and stage 2. Data collected in stage 1 provided further information for stage 2. All have been explained briefly according to the sequence of the data collection. Detail of the data collection process and instruments used have been outlined in the following section.

Stage 1

i.   I started my data collection by distributing questionnaires to the universities around Malaysia. The questionnaire was developed based on my extensive reading on teacher evaluation as well as my experience having gone through the process at my workplace before I went to the UK. Questions pertaining to current practices and teachers' experiences with teacher evaluation were asked. The questionnaire contained items that can be analysed numerically, and they also include open-ended items which required qualitative analysis.

ii.   Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants who voluntarily left their contact details when answering the questionnaire.
(Data obtained from numbers i and ii contribute to the answers of my research questions 1 and 2).

Stage 2

i.   A one-day workshop was conducted with the English language teachers at the university under study to introduce peer observation of teaching.

ii.   Questionnaires were then distributed to all the workshop participants to gather their opinions about the exercise.

iii.   Two peer observation sessions were conducted with ten participants (five pairs), including:
- Ten in-classroom observation session; and
- Ten post-observation meeting sessions.

iv.   Lastly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants to collect their views about peer observation of teaching.

It is hoped that using these selected methods, this study will form an introduction to alternative approaches to teacher evaluation and serve as an incentive for the decision making bodies in Malaysia to attempt new research models.

1.4   Significance of the Study

This research has been undertaken for a number of reasons. Firstly, the study is significant in that it has been carried out by a Malaysian English language teacher who has experience of ELT in the tertiary education. Therefore, the study is rooted in an in-depth understanding of the culture of teaching and learning and the socio-political situation. This will consequently provide deeper insights into the experience of Malaysian teachers in a particular context. Secondly, previous studies by Malaysian researchers, such as Lee and Ling (2011) and Fernandez-Chung (2009), have mainly focused on peer observation at private HE institutions in Malaysia. Selamat and Ayavoo (n.d.) conducted a study using peer observation at one of the public higher institutions located in the north of Malaysia. Their study covered issues such as the perception of teachers towards peer observation and its advantages and disadvantages. They did not investigate the possibilities and challenges of introducing peer observation into the HE system in Malaysia. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Abdullah (1997) on peer observation at a higher learning institution in Malaysia was associated with the Goldhammer clinical supervision model in which contained supervisory elements. Hence, this may be the first time a study regarding peer observation at public HE institutions is undertaken in the Malaysian context in relation to teacher evaluation and teacher continuous improvement.

I believe that this study will provide insights for Malaysian university teachers and policy makers into the effectiveness of peer observation as part of a wider framework of formative teacher evaluation and continuous teacher improvements with regards to a number of different aspects. The outcome of this study will help

to inform the current practices of teacher evaluation in which many suggestions made by teachers could be considered to better improve the system. Besides, the method of peer observation intervention conducted in this study may shed some light to teachers of ELT. For example, through the intervention study, any university managements, head of departments, or researchers relevant to this area of study will be able to observe and understand the power relationship between the English language teacher participants and learn the content, tone and outcome of each discussion; in which these may also occur in other settings. In addition, I expect that useful implications for university managements and also for teachers formulated from this study may be applicable to the teaching and learning of other departments and faculties in the university setting, either in Malaysia or in other contexts. It is also hoped that many parties such as university managements, the people involved in teachers' professional development, and the EL teachers themselves can benefit from the contributions made at the end of this study. As a theoretical contribution, I suggested a participatory approach in the teacher evaluation system using peer observation of teaching, whilst, as a methodological contribution, I proposed a plan for conducting the above mentioned exercise.

1.5   Overview of the Study

Apart from this Introductory Chapter, this thesis consists of another six chapters. Detailed descriptions of the content of each chapter follow.

Chapter Two consists of two parts. Part I introduces the background information of this study which includes details about Malaysia, the history of English in the country and in the education system, and some current issues regarding the standard of English in Malaysia. Meanwhile, Part II provides some information about the higher education institutions in Malaysia focusing on the quality assurance system and the current teacher evaluation procedures.

Chapter Three illustrates the theoretical framework of the current study in which it elaborates further on four relevant models of teacher effectiveness and two

relevant models of peer observation of teaching (POT). The remaining chapter includes the review of literature on teacher evaluation and peer observation as well as previous studies on these two areas.

Chapter Four is divided into three parts. The first part describes the research methodology, in which the philosophical stance is set out and how it shapes the research process is also further explained. The rationale for employing an interpretive paradigm with exploratory approach is detailed. The second part of this chapter presents the research design and the methods used in the current study. The third part elaborates on the data analysis process where data obtained from questionnaire, interviews and post-observation meeting are analysed. Issues of validity as well as the reliability of the methods of the study and ethical issues are also discussed.

Chapter Five demonstrates the detailed description of the data by providing the detailed analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data from three research instruments used in this study, namely the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and transcribed post-observation meetings. This includes statistical data as well as interpretation of the qualitative findings.

Chapter Six describes the major findings drawn from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data of the current study. These findings are linked to the context of the study and the related literature. The findings have been discussed in two parts. The first part presents the discussion of major findings related to teacher evaluation, while the second part presents a discussion of the major findings related to peer observation.

In the final chapter, a summary of the research findings, final remarks and conclusions, implications of the study, and contributions to knowledge including theoretical and pedagogical contributions are presented. Finally, the chapter ends with the limitations of the study, some recommendations for future study, and reflections on the researcher's PhD journey.

Chapter 2: Background of the Study

This chapter is divided into two parts. Part I introduces the background information of this study, including details about Malaysia, the history of English in the country and in the education system, and some current issues regarding standards of English in Malaysia. Part II provides information on current teacher evaluation at certain universities in Malaysia, particularly the elements of practices of teacher and professional development at the tertiary level.

Part I

2.1   Malaysia in General

Malaysia is located in Southeast Asia. It consists of Peninsula Malaysia and the states of Sabah, Sarawak and the Federal Territory of Labuan in the Northern coastal area of Borneo Island which are separated by the South China Sea. Peninsula Malaysia is neighbouring Thailand in the north and Singapore in the south (see Figure 2.1). Malaysia consists of thirteen states and three federal territories. As of April 2015, the total population exceeded 30 million people. Kuala Lumpur is the capital city of Malaysia.

Historically, the country was founded by the Malays, a large ethnic group living in the Malay Archipelago for centuries. Malays make up 50.4% of the population, while Chinese 23.7%, indigenous 11%, Indian 7.1% and others 7.8%. The main religion is Islam, although members of other religions are free to practise their own religious belief such as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism and many others. The country has developed into a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country, and these factors influence its culture and play a large role in politics.

Figure 2.1   Map of Malaysia

2.2   History of Education in Malaysia

Malaysia, initially known as Malaya when colonised by the British, won independence in 1957. Its educational system was greatly affected by the British system. This can be traced back to before independence where the educational system of Malaya was restructured according to the Barnes Report 1951 which aimed at developing a national education system (Guan & Suryadinata, 2007).

However, due to ethnic sensitivities, the report was not universally accepted by all ethnic groups in the country, and it was considered unsuccessful. Later, in 1956 Razak Report was published and its recommendations provided the foundation for the development of the country's National Education Policy (NEP). The country's educational objectives and goals have been clearly defined in the NEP as formulated in 1988 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2011):

> "Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonic, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian

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citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards and who are responsible and capable of achieving high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large."

Concerning the above, Malaysia practises a centralised curriculum development system. The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) is the central agency under the Ministry of Education (MOE), and is responsible for initiating curriculum development at pre-school, primary school and secondary school. The curriculum promotes national unity through the use of Malay language as a medium of instruction.

Before the foundation of the modern education system in Malaysia, the Malays attended "hut schools" and Islamic schools. With the growing number of other ethnic groups, mainly consisting of Chinese and Indians, the government began to establish vernacular schools. The Malays lived in rural areas and most of them were planters, while the Chinese lived in urban areas and were involved in business and trade. Indians tended to live in the rubber estates. The English-medium schools were not very attractive to the Malays, because their locations in urban areas were more attractive to the Chinese.

2.3   Education System in Malaysia

Education in Malaysia has experienced rapid development in the late 20th century, with many changes made to educational policy to suit the demands of the economy (Sani, 2003). Previously, education in Malaysia was the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MOE). Since 27 March 2004, a significant development occurred with the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). Education became then under the responsibilities of two ministries, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education, respectively. The Ministry of Education handles matters related to pre-school, primary school, secondary school and post-secondary school, while the Ministry of HE determines the policies and direction of HE in Malaysia. However, beginning of 15 March 2013,

these two ministries were again merged into a single Ministry of Education by Prime Minister Dato Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak (Ministry of Education, 2015).

2.3.1 Schools in Malaysia

The Malaysian educational system includes education from the age of five, known as pre-school. The education system features a non-compulsory kindergarten education or pre-school to post-secondary education which is free. Primary and secondary education in Malaysia makes up 11 years of government education. This encompasses a period of six years for primary education and a period of five years for secondary, including three years of lower secondary and two years of upper secondary. Schools in the primary education system are divided into two categories: national primary schools and vernacular schools. The medium of instruction in vernacular schools is either Chinese or Tamil, to better reflect the children attending those schools, while the Malay language is used as the medium of instruction in national primary schools for all subjects except English, Mathematics, and Science. After only six years of English in Mathematics and Science, in 2009 the government decided to revert the teaching of both subjects back into Malay language in 2012. This will be explained upon in detail in 2.3.3. Pupils in Year Six of the primary school are required to sit for the *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR) or Primary School Achievement Test before progressing to the secondary school. They are tested on five elements, namely Malay language comprehension, Malay language writing, English language, Science, and Mathematics.

In the national secondary schools, the medium of instruction is also the Malay language, except for subjects including English, Mathematics and Science. At the end of the lower secondary school, students are evaluated in the *Penilaian Menengah Rendah* (PMR) or Lower Secondary Examination, which is set to be abolished in 2016. At the end of upper secondary school, there is a national examination called *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) or Malaysian Certificate of Education. All the three examinations mentioned above are set by the Malaysian Examination Syndicate. If a student performs well in this examination and fulfils all

the criteria needed to pursue his or her studies at the tertiary level, then he or she may opt to study at the pre-university or matriculation centres for up to one to two years. However, upon completion of the secondary education, students can still take advantage of a further 2 years of post-secondary education known as Form 6. The flowchart in Figure 2.2 clearly illustrates the system. Again, at the end of Form 6, there is a national examination known as *Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia* (STPM) or Malaysian Higher School Certificate, which is managed by the Malaysian Examination Council. If a student opts for Form 6, this means that he or she has undergone 13 years of school education. All these important examinations are clearly illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1   Important examinations conducted at primary and secondary schools in Malaysia

Years in school	Examination	Administration body
Year 6	*Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR) or Primary School Achievement Test	Malaysian Examination Syndicate
Form 3	*Penilaian Menengah Rendah* (PMR) or Lower Secondary Examination	
Form 5	*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) or Malaysian Certificate of Education	
Form 6	*Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia* (STPM) or Malaysian Higher School Certificate	Malaysian Examination Council

2.3.2 Higher Education in Malaysia

There are two types of universities in Malaysia, namely public (government-funded) and private. The type and number of government-funded HE institutions that currently exist are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2   Public higher education institutions in Malaysia

	Type of Government HE Institutions	Number of Institutions
1	Public Universities	20
2	Polytechnics	22
3	Community Colleges	37
4	Public College	1
5	Teacher Education Institutes	27

(Data source: MOHE, 2011)

Students need to compete in order to secure a place at the public universities. Students also have the option to enrol in a private university after completion of SPM or STPM. There are currently more than seventy private tertiary institutions to cater to the educational demands of Malaysian students. Some of the students prefer to enrol in courses offered at these institutions which are known as "twinning" programmes. These programmes are considered attractive, as students can spend a portion of their course duration abroad as well as getting overseas qualifications.

Figure 2.2 shows the route which may be undertaken by an SPM leaver.
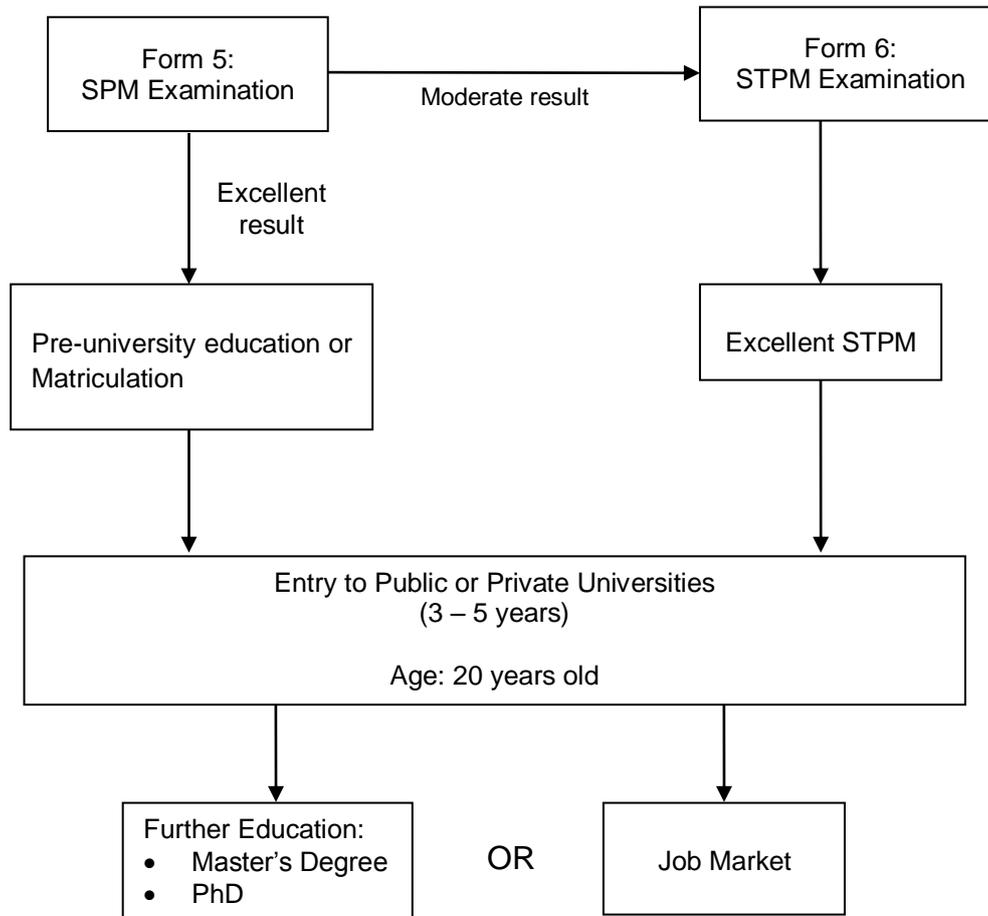
Figure 2.2   Higher education system in Malaysia

The following section contains an overview of the English language teaching (ELT) in Malaysia.

2.3.3 ELT in the Educational System in Malaysia

In schools

English is taught in primary and secondary schools and is considered a compulsory subject. On the whole, students at the primary schools experience the language lessons three hours a week, which is equivalent to six periods a week, i.e. for a single period of half an hour or a maximum of an hour (a double period).

When the teaching of Maths and Science in English was introduced, Year 1, 2, and 3 students spent eight periods learning English, while Year 4, 5, and 6 students spent seven periods. In the secondary schools, students have seven periods of English language lessons, i.e. a single lesson of 40 minutes or a double period of 1 hour and 20 minutes (Ali, 2003).

At universities

As a preparation for public universities and college admissions, students are required to sit for the Malaysian University English Test (MUET). MUET is a test of English language proficiency set and run by the Malaysian Examination Council. The test is largely recognised only in Malaysia and Singapore. It is graded in six bands, with band six as the highest and band one as the lowest. However, different universities have regarded different band level as a minimum requirement for their students' entry. For example, some universities have set their minimum requirement for MUET as band three, while others set their requirement as low as at least band two, depending on the courses in which students enrol. Thus, students who do not achieve the university's requirement will need to re-sit for the test in order to graduate (2012-2013 Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka Admission Handbook).

English is used as the primary medium of instruction in both public and private HE institutions. However, only one public university, the Malaysia National University (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) uses the Malay language as the medium of instruction for courses other than English. The university's mission is clearly stated as "to be a premier university which ennobles Malay language and disseminates knowledge encapsulated in the national culture" (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2011). The university was the third university established in Malaysia, but the first to use Malay language as the medium of instruction.

2.3.4 ELT at the University in which the Study was Conducted

The students

English language is being taught as a pre-requisite subject in most universities in Malaysia. Other pre-requisite subjects include Mathematics, Physics, and Statistics. At the university where this study was conducted, which is a government-funded university, English is taught for two consecutive semesters, i.e. the first and second semester during the first year of study. Students are required to pass all of the above mentioned subjects, and cannot be granted a degree until they have passed these compulsory university requirements.

All the English subjects offered at the university are compulsory and they are two credit subjects except Foundation English (UWB 10100) which is a Pass Attendance grade. This subject and English for Academic Purposes (EAP)/ Academic English (UWB 10102) are offered to the first year diploma and degree students who achieved Band 1 and 2 in their MUET examination. Meanwhile, students who achieved Band 3 and above in the MUET examination were exempted from the two subjects and allowed to proceed with the subject Technical Communication I (UWB 10402) for the diploma students, and Effective Communication (UWB 10202) for the degree students. Table 2.3 shows the subjects undertaken by students at the university.

Table 2.3   English subjects taken by respective students at the university

Level of study	Semester	Subject code	Subject	Duration
Diploma & Degree	1	UWB 10100	Foundation English	Lecture (1 hour) Tutorial (2 hours)
	2	UWB 10102	English for Academic Purposes/ Academic English	Lecture (1 hour) Tutorial (2 hours)
Diploma	3	UWB 10402	Technical Communication I	Lecture (1 hour) Tutorial (2 hours)
	4	UWB 20502	Technical Communication II	Lecture (1 hour) Tutorial (2 hours)
Degree	3	UWB 10202	Effective Communication	Lecture (1 hour) Tutorial (2 hours)
	4	UWB 20302	Technical Writing	Lecture (1 hour) Tutorial (2 hours)

The teachers

The English language teachers may have heavier workloads compared to other teachers of other subjects, since they need to serve all students in their first year of study regardless of the courses taken. In fact, in certain cases the same teacher may continue teaching the same group of students in their second term. This may occur because of the small number of teachers teaching the subjects compared with the relatively larger number of students.

Part II

2.4 Quality Assurance System in Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia

In Malaysia, education has come to be seen over the last decade as a means to support government ambitions to promote national unity and socio-economic development. Education plays an important role in realizing the nation's vision as it is a way to inculcate love towards the country, integration and harmony among different ethnicities. In order to realize this vision, rapid changes have been made to the country's education system, facilities and infrastructure *"to develop a world class quality education system, which will realise the full potential of individuals and fulfil the aspirations of the Malaysian nation"* (Ministry of Education, 2009). In addition, Malaysia is in the midst of a continuous effort to be the hub of HE excellence in Southeast Asia and has embarked on a HE plan from 2007-2020 to achieve world-class status for its universities (Muda, 2008).

Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN), or the National Accreditation Board, was established under the National Accreditation Board Act 1996 in July 1997 to accredit private higher educational institutions only programmes at the certificate, diploma, and degree levels. Finally, the government determined that public universities should also be subject to quality assurance. Thus, in April 2002, the MOE established the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) to manage and coordinate the quality assurance system in public higher educational institutions. QAD was committed in developing a Code of Practice for Quality Assurance, programme standards for many undergraduate disciplines, standards for postgraduate programmes, and procedures. It publishes reports concerning benchmarking outcomes, good practices, training, and the National Qualifications Framework (LAN, 2006).

In November 2007, both LAN and QAD were dissolved and their functions taken over by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). MQA is responsible for quality

assurance in both public and private HE institutions. Among the responsibilities of the MQA are the following:

1. to implement the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) as a reference point for Malaysian qualifications;

2. to develop, with the cooperation of stakeholders, standards, criteria and instruments as a national reference for the conferment of awards;

3. to quality assure HE providers and programmes;

4. to accredit programmes that fulfil a set of criteria and standards;

5. to facilitate the recognition and articulate of qualifications;

6. to establish and maintain a Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR); and

7. to advise the minister on any matter relating to quality assurance in HE.

(MQA, 2015)

The establishment of MQA was founded with the vision *"to be a credible and internationally recognised HE quality assurance body with the mission to inspire the confidence of its stakeholders through best practices"* (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2010). The MQA has provided the code of practice, setting out criteria and standards of HE in areas including the following:

1. Vision, mission and learning outcomes;
2. Curriculum design and delivery;
3. Student selection and support services;
4. Assessment of students;
5. Academic staff;
6. Educational resources;
7. Programme monitoring and review;
8. Leadership, governance administration; and
9. Continual quality improvement.   (MQA, 2010)

Continuous quality improvement has always been the central aim for quality assurance in Malaysian HE institutions. This is clearly stated in the MQA (2008: 9),

> "Quality assurance comprises planned and systematic actions to provide adequate demonstration that quality is being achieved, maintained and enhanced, and meets the specified standards of teaching, scholarship and research as well as student learning experience."

In addition to the MQA, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) also has a major role in improving the quality of education and training in the HE institutions in Malaysia. Implementing quality assurance programmes encourages HE institutions to collect data which will enable them to measure progress in key areas and establish benchmarks (Sohail, Rajadurai and Rahman, 2003). Meanwhile, according to Knight (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2009a), enhancing the international dimension of teaching, research and service leads to value added to the quality of HE systems.

The Malaysian Ministry of Education has funded many projects to support the growth of educational excellence. In order to support the teaching of English language in schools and universities, for example, the English Language Teachers Development Project conducted by British Council was undertaken. Among its aims were to provide a sustainable development and to set up support structures to facilitate English teachers' continuing professional development (British Council, 2015).

Some background history of performance appraisal in Malaysia

In Malaysia, the formal evaluation of the public servant employees has been undertaken for many years. Due to some weaknesses in the system, on 1 January 1992, the government introduced the *Sistem Saraan Baru (SSB)* or New Remuneration System (NRS). This system introduced a new appraisal system called the New Performance Appraisal System (NPAS) which is outcome-oriented. This system exposes both appraisers and those being appraised to new practices in the department and requires high commitment in achieving the objectives. This was part of the administrative reforms to streamline the public sector and improve its efficiency and effectiveness in providing quality services to the public. The NPAS, using a system based on reward and recognition, is done through problem diagnosis, participative involvement, corrective actions, executive and managerial action, and continuous review of performance. According to Shafie (1996: 342),

"The main principles of NPAS include the following:
- salary and incentives given should be based on the performance of employees;
- appraisal should be implemented fairly, objectively and in a transparent manner;
- performance appraisal should be based on work output that contributes towards fulfilment of organizational objectives; and
- to encourage positive competition among employees in order to upgrade quality and productivity."

The NPAS is a continuous process of evaluating employee's performance involving several stages. The first stage begins with the teachers and their superiors sitting together to determine departmental activities for the year. The planning must be based on the government policy and planning, budget, allocation, staffing, and facilities allocated (Public Service Department, 1996). Then, the rating officers determine the teachers' targets and guide them to set job targets and complete the annual work target. Then, teachers are responsible for implementing their agreed tasks. In the middle of the academic year, the mid-year performance review needs to be conducted in order to compare teachers' actual performance and their work plan. At this stage, work targets may be changed according to factors that affect work performance. Then, teachers continue to implement their tasks as agreed. Next, the teachers are responsible for completing the self-assessment form and submitting the form to the performance appraisal committee. The coordinator of the exercise will then pass each form to respective first rating officer, usually the immediate superior to the teachers. When necessary, this rating officer and the teachers can have a discussion regarding the appraisal decision, before being moderated by the second rating officer for the overall departmental assessment. The next stage is the task of the performance appraisal committee to process the marks for action by the Board of Salary Movement (BSM) to determine on the type of salary movement and to keep record of performance information. The entirety of the process is clearly illustrated in Figure 2.3 below.
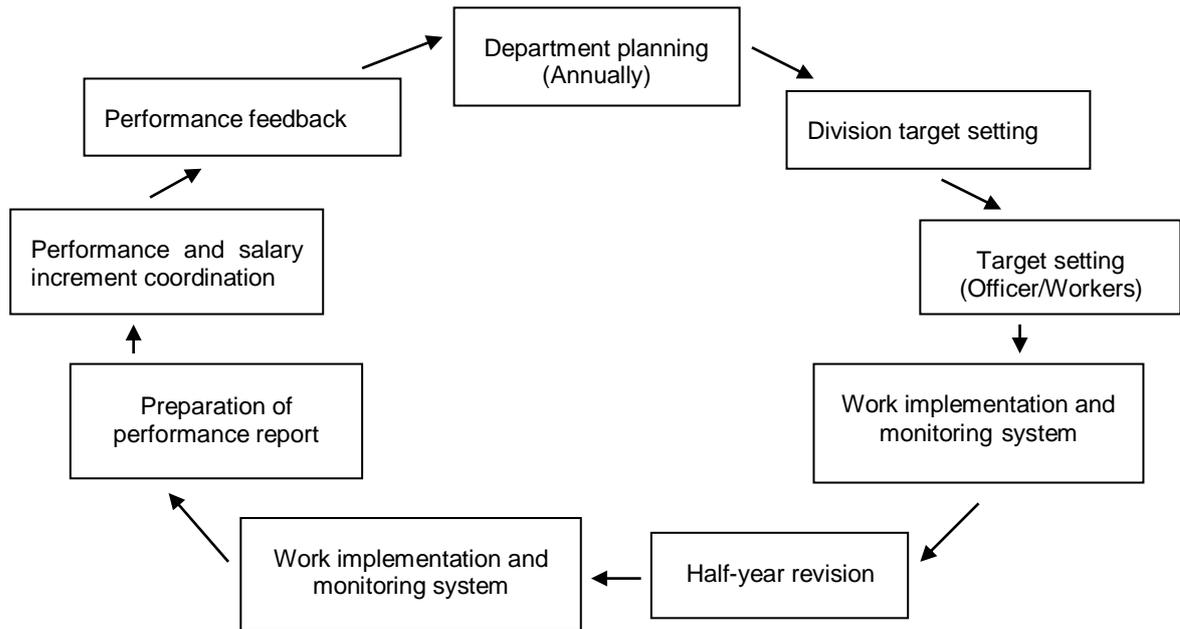
Figure 2.3   Public Service Department (1996)

This appraisal exercise was new to many Malaysian employees, including teachers. Only ten years of the implementation of the NPAS, the government came out with *Sistem Saraan Malaysia (SSM)* or the Malaysian Remuneration System (MRS), which was implemented starting 1 November 2002. This is actually a revised scheme to replace the existing NPAS which was confronted with a great deal of criticism from workers and also their unions. Under NPAS, teachers are assessed based on the agreed-upon goals set at the beginning of every year between them and their superiors. While carrying out the obligations relevant to the NPAS, teachers also must carry out other ad hoc duties throughout the year. However, the accomplishment of these tasks was not included in the appraisal, since they were not part of the agreed-upon goals set earlier (Rahman, 2006). This has led to dissatisfaction amongst the teachers who received low results in their performance appraisal which in turn has demotivated them in their teaching profession. As a result, according to the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP), 15,000 teachers have left teaching since the implementation of the NPAS in 1992. The main cause of teachers' dissatisfaction was that the appraisal system was seen as bringing little good, especially in terms of issues related to salary increments and job promotions resulting from the NPAS

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(Rahman, 2006). Several other reasons of dissatisfaction regarding NPAS, include raters seen as not knowledgeable and without skills, as well as bias and a lack of fairness and objectivity (Ahmad and Ali, 2004).

2.5 Teacher Evaluation at HE Institutions in Malaysia

Teaching quality and research quality are two main focuses for evaluation at the Malaysian universities. Many aspects must be taken into account when evaluating teaching quality, including students' achievement, teaching assessment, students' facilities, and also the design of courses and programmes (Stronge, 2006). Meanwhile, when evaluating research quality, factors such as the number of publications and number of research projects conducted, and the funding body which fund them are the most commonly contributing factors to excel in evaluations. Thus, these have become attractive factors for local and international students to consider pursuing their tertiary education in one of the public universities in Malaysia.

One way of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching is through the feedback from students. Suggestions and comments given by students may provide ideas for their lecturers to assess their teaching quality and thus, suggest for improvements or changes. As part of quality assurance in universities in Malaysia, the ratings of teaching by students are used for promotional and developmental purposes. In this regard, student ratings may be very useful to the academic administrators for judging a lecturer's teaching quality and can be a useful tool for decision making for promotion.

Student Rating Questionnaire

At some universities in Malaysia, collecting students' feedback through the use of student rating questionnaire is an established practice. Every registered student is required to complete the questionnaire. Different names are used for this questionnaire at different universities, such as Academic Staff Teaching Evaluation (ASTE) form, Teaching and Learning Evaluation Result (TER) form, Student Feedback Survey (SFS) system, Teaching Feedback Survey (TFS), and

Course Teaching Evaluation System (CTES). All consist of questions to gather information on the lecturers' teaching methods, students' preferences in relation to classroom conditions, teaching tools used as well as their perceptions of the lecturers and their teaching methods and practices. Previously, these evaluations were manually conducted. However, since 2010, the ASTE has been computerised and students complete the form online. This kind of evaluation is conducted every semester.

Yearly Performance Review Meeting

Before I explain in depth the common exercises of performance review meeting for teachers at HE institutions in Malaysia, there is a need to look at the system which is already in place implemented by the government of Malaysia for all public servants. A yearly performance review meeting or performance appraisal was defined as the assessment of an individual's performance in a systematic way, the performance being measured against such factors as "job knowledge, quality and quantity of output, initiative, leadership abilities, supervision, dependability, cooperation, judgement, versatility, health, and any others related" (Aswathappa, 2007: 226). Yong (1996) defined performance appraisal as an evaluation over a period of time involving the process of observing and evaluating employees' performance in the workplace based on pre-set standards. Additionally, this kind of appraisal serves various purposes such as for professional and career development, accountability check, and most commonly act as a mechanism for salary increment and promotion exercise decision (Ahmad and Ali, 2004), and to evaluate employees' strengths and weaknesses against the criteria set for the organization's goals (Rahman, 2006).

In relation to this study regarding teacher evaluation, yearly staff performance review meetings by the head of department or a dean are a method of evaluation at several universities around Malaysia. The *Staff Performance Appraisal Form*, as used by the staff at one university located in the south of Malaysia for example, is an appraisal form which the lecturers must complete in order to inform the head of departments about their progress and achievements throughout the year of

evaluation. The form is comprised of six components, and each component consists of sub-components to be assessed and later graded. The following illustrates the details of the form as used at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), one of the public universities located in the south of Malaysia:

- Component A (Management and Academic Development)
- Component B (Research and Consultancy)
- Component C (Publications)
- Component D (Academic Development)
- Component E (Management and Administration)
- Component F (Community Service)

In this yearly staff performance review meeting with the HOD, teachers are expected to achieve certain targets set at the beginning of the academic year. Thus, the increment in salary for the following year is based on the grade obtained. Since this kind of evaluation method is widely used at most universities around Malaysia, there is a need to look at this method in relation to professional development.

2.6   Professional Development at HE Institutions in Malaysia

Teachers of the new millennium should be professional and their professionalism is the key to quality improvement (Jemaah Nazir, 2001). Teachers must be sensitive to current issues and always strive to increase their knowledge in their area of expertise in line with the intention of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to produce excellent and successful human capital. For this reason, professional development programmes have been developed in order to assist teachers to enhance their expertise and knowledge relevant to teaching and learning.

The Professional Development Policy approved in the University Board of Directors Meeting dated 9 April 2009 at the National University of Malaysia suggests that professional development is currently being implemented. The

government has mandated that all teachers attend Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses for at least seven days or 40 hours a year. The Professional Development Policy was formulated in order to guide teachers towards recognizing the importance of lifelong learning. Additionally, it is aimed to promote those who were involved in these programmes.

The Teaching and Learning Department, Centre for Academic Development (CAD) at Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), where the current study was conducted, is responsible for the professional development programmes of its academic staff. Among the programmes are those related to teaching and learning, the evaluation of teachers, the development of e-learning, and organizing English language support programmes.

2.7   Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I have presented the contextual information background of the study. This includes geographical, historical, and educational information. In the following chapter, I will discuss the review of literature and the theoretical framework that informs this study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter provides the theoretical framework of this thesis focusing on two models, i.e. teacher effectiveness models and peer observation models. Firstly, it explores the models appropriate for evaluating teachers with relevance to teacher effectiveness. Models such as the Hay McBer model, the continuous learning model, the experiential process model and the reflective practice model will be explored in further detail. The chapter then explores models relevant for peer observation of teaching with reference to the Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) model and the Teaching Process Recall (TPR) model. A summary of the models will be presented at the end of the first section to provide some idea of the relevance to these models to the current study. Next, the chapter proceeds with the literature review on relevant topics mainly on teacher evaluation and peer observation to better understand the phenomena under study.

3.1   Theoretical Framework of the Current Study

This section provides an overview of teacher effectiveness as well as peer observation. The relevance of the models which informed the study is presented. Generally, good teachers are closely related to effective teachers. Thus, in order to produce good teachers there is a need to look at the system where teacher evaluation takes place. Based on the methods of evaluation which falls into the process stage, the results then provide the input for two actions; i) sanctions, and ii) professional development. Peer observation can be seen as one method to evaluate teachers. However, it is important to look at peer observation from two angles; i) for self-development, as well as ii) for teacher evaluation. Figure 3.1 below illustrates the theoretical framework which informs this study.
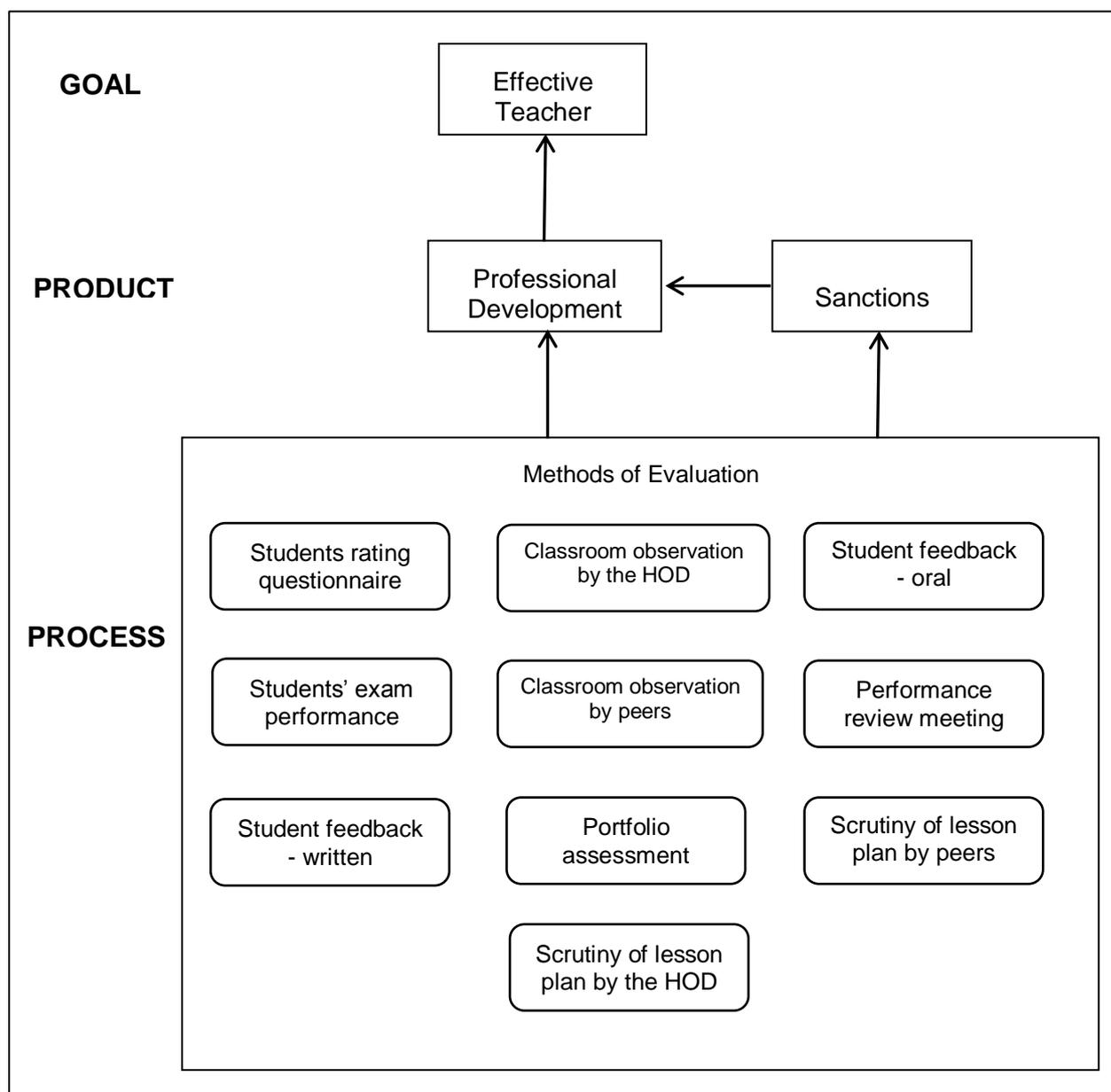
Figure 3.1   The theoretical framework of the present study

3.1.1 Teacher Effectiveness

Teacher effectiveness has become the subject of much debate since the term effective suggests different meanings to different people. One may need to consider many aspects of assessment before being able to jump into a conclusion that one teacher is good whilst the other is not. For example, one may say that a teacher is effective because the whole class likes the teacher so much, or almost

the whole class score excellent result in the examination due the effective teaching of the said teacher, or students in the class are always punctual because the respective teacher is always punctual and efficient. It may be difficult to define what makes a teacher effective. Defining teacher effectiveness is actually far more than looking into effective teaching. According to Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs and Robinson (2004: 4), teacher effectiveness may best mean "the power to realise socially valued objectives agreed for teachers' work, especially, but not exclusively, the work concerned with enabling students to learn". Meanwhile, Hunt (2009), defines teacher effectiveness as the collection of characteristics, competencies, and behaviours of teachers at all educational levels that enable students to reach desired outcome, which may include the attainment of specific learning objectives as well as broader goals such as being able to solve problems, think critically, work collaboratively, and become effective citizens.

There may be many different answers to the question: What actually defines a good teacher? In providing a comprehensive definition of teacher effectiveness, the role of teachers should not be emphasized on their responsibilities in providing subject-matter instructions alone. It is therefore appropriate to consider discussion in the research literature about teacher effectiveness taking into account five-point definition such as in Campbell et al., 2004; Cheng and Tsui, 1999; and Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 2005. The five-point definition on teacher effectiveness derived from a research synthesis for National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ) (Goe, Bell and Little, 2008) consists of the following:

1. Effective teachers have high expectations for all students and help them learn, as demonstrated on value-added, test-based, or alternative measures.
2. Effective teachers contribute to positive academic, attitudinal, and social outcomes for students such as regular attendance, on-time promotion to the next grade and graduation, self-efficacy, and cooperative behavior.
3. Effective teachers use diverse resources to plan and structure engaging learning opportunities; monitor student progress formatively, adapting

instruction as needed; and evaluate learning using multiple sources of evidence.

4. Effective teachers contribute to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civic-mindedness.

5. Effective teachers collaborate with other teachers, administrators, parents, and education professionals to ensure students' success, particularly the success of students with special needs and those at high risk of failure.

I personally believe that there is a need to look at teacher effectiveness in relation to teacher evaluation because it may provide clear picture of a teacher's characteristics for each evaluation. Besides this, in relevance to the focus of my study, i.e. the use of peer observation in facilitating teachers' practice, I could see that the above definition by Goe, Bell and Little (2008) can be improved not only through evaluating teachers but also through observation based on mutual trust and collegiality of peer teachers.

Based on the literature and on my own understanding, I can define an effective teacher as:

> "A motivated and enthusiast teacher who is able to accomplish the requirements by the institution where he/she is working, able to contribute to the achievements of the students, and able to strive for his/her own work satisfaction. If a teacher is able to balance between all the three then he/she can be considered as effective."

There are various models of teacher effectiveness which can also be the basis for the elements to look for in evaluating a teacher. The models will be described in detail below.

Hay McBer Model

This model is based on empirical studies and also on established research methods (Department for Education and Employment, 2000). The following factors, according to the Hay McBer Model, have significant influence on pupil progress (Figure 3.2):

a. Professional characteristics

b. Teaching skills

c. Classroom climate
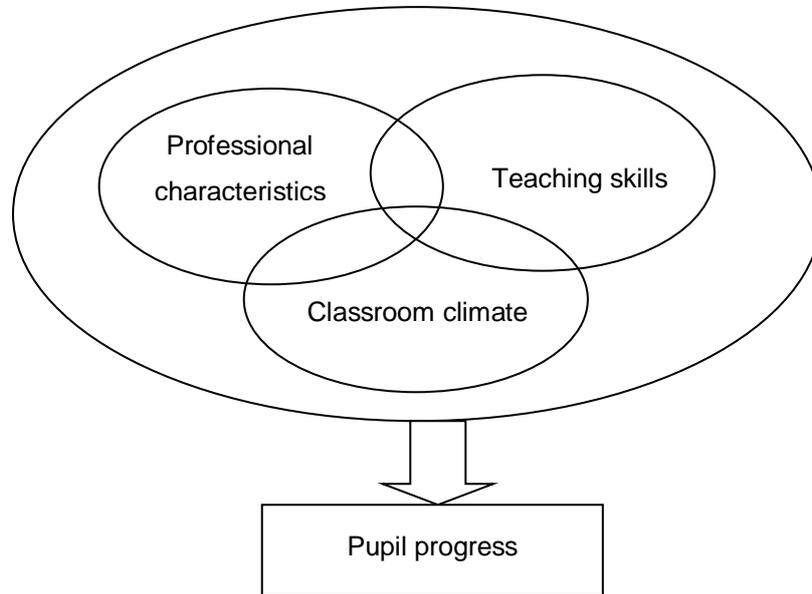
Figure 3.2   Hay McBer measures of teacher effectiveness

Based on Figure 3.2 above, professional characteristics and teaching skills serve as the input that teachers bring to teaching, whilst the classroom climate is regarded as an output measure. Professional characteristics are defined by Hay McBer as the underlying traits and patterns of behaviour that construct what teachers do. They are related to fundamental values, commitments and attitudes. There are sixteen characteristics under this factor which are clustered into five sub-factors namely professionalism, thinking, planning and setting expectations, leading, and relating to others. Teaching skills are defined as the specific skills of teaching which can be discovered and learned. There are 35 behaviours under this factor which are clustered under seven sub-factors namely high expectations, planning, methods and strategies, student management/discipline, time and resource management, assessment, and homework. Meanwhile, classroom climate is defined as the 'output measure' of the collective perceptions of students in relation to working in a particular teacher's classroom. In other words, students

look at teachers' ability to encourage students' learning and motivation. There are nine aspects under this factor namely clarity, order, standards, fairness, participation, support, safety, interest, and environment.

These three factors are interdependent and are essential in the sense that they are linked to the professional values and characteristics required to develop effectiveness. The three factors, which Campbell et al. (2004) claimed as 'within teachers' control', significantly influence students' progress. Students' performance is affected by the notion of what an effective teacher shows in his/her teaching and also his/her professional characteristics. This is truly shown in the findings by McBer (2000) who claims that the biometric data of a teacher such as teachers' age, gender and qualification has nothing to do with the performance or achievement of a student. This claim is supported by Rivkin et al. (2005) who even stress that teacher quality is the determinant of students' achievement in schools. The three researchers, in addition, emphasize that there is little or no evidence that a master's degree of a teacher raises the quality of teaching.

In relation to the context of this study, this model may possibly be useful as teachers might select certain criteria from either one of the three measures for their focus of observation or to look at a combination of criteria during the peer observation exercise for effective teaching. Thus, once selected the teachers need to work out their effort to influence the pupils' progress.

Continuous Learning Model

Another model which I found suitable to the context of the current study with relevance to teacher effectiveness is the continuous model proposed by Cheng and Tsui (1999). Teachers should adapt to the internal and external changes (Fullan, 2001), cope with different challenges, meet diverse expectations, and develop themselves through continuous learning in order to be effective (Cheng and Tsui, 1999). This model is based on the effects of a changing environment and teachers' continuous learning and adaptation for effectiveness. Therefore, the

nature of changes in the educational environment and their influence on teachers' teaching practices become the basic focus on teacher effectiveness. Fullan (2001) elaborates that change is a process, not an event; and hence, teachers' continuous learning in schools is encouraged in order to bring about continuous improvement and development in teacher performance and teaching quality.

Khan (2007) highlights that teachers as researchers should always instil the interest in developing their teaching skills by continuously experimenting new ideas and teaching methods in their classroom. Being reflective can contribute to continuous effort to develop and thus, encourages continuous learning. In addition, Richards (1991) emphasizes that reflection is a response to past experience and continuously recall and examine the experience as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for planning and action.

Since this model emphasizes continuous learning, thus, it can be associated with experiential learning process. This is discussed further below.

Experiential Learning Process

I find that it is important to discuss this model in relation to my research focus of teacher evaluation and peer observation of teaching. This is because the learning process through experience involve in these two areas.

Dewey (1938) developed theory of experience and its relation to education. He explained that sound educational experience involves both continuity and interaction between the learner and what is learned. According to a theorist, David Kolb (1984), learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. He claims that learning occurs in a cyclical process in which learners engage in and then observe and reflect on experiences, assimilate reflections in a theory, and then deduce implications for future action from that theory.
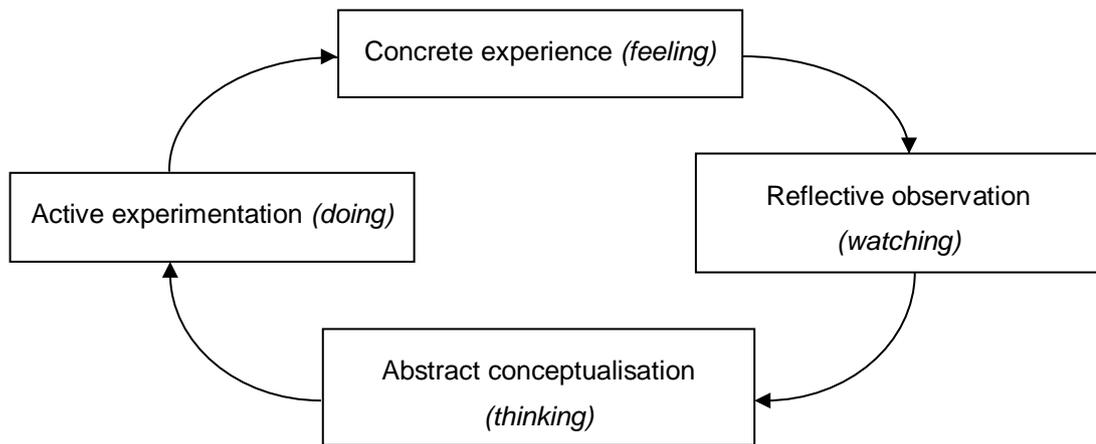
Figure 3.3   Kolb's experiential learning cycle

Like Dewey, Kolb also suggests four stages in the experiential learning. The study by Donnelly (2007) on *Perceived impact on peer observation of teaching in higher education* also supports this model. According to the researcher, the experience gained by seeing others teach can develop our skills as well as improve our classroom practice.

In the first stage of this model, concrete experience, is where teachers have had undergone certain activities and then employ new abilities which fully involve themselves. What teachers have had together with their new experiences, they then move to the second stage, i.e. the reflection observation. In this stage, teachers then reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives. Then they proceed to the abstract conceptualisation stage where they try to create concepts that integrate their observation into logical theories and perceptions. Finally, in the active experimentation stage, teachers try out the theories which they developed in the abstract conceptualisation stage in order to make decision and solve problems. The experience may guide teachers to a modified concrete experience which then enables the learning process to work continuously and cyclically, as demonstrated in Figure 3.3. These stages in the cycle become a challenge not only to the observed teacher but also to the colleague observer.

Besides on the three models earlier; the Hay McBer model, the continuous learning model, and the experiential learning model, there is a need to look at the reflective practice model in order to better understand the link between a teacher's skill and professional development. This is because according to Richards (1991), teachers should be reflective in order to bring about change in their teaching and classroom practices.

Reflective Practice Model

I find that there is also a relevance to discuss this model in relation to my research focus of peer observation. This is because this is a model which illustrates teaching as a process of active self-development through reflection, and self-awareness.

The simplest definition of reflection as defined by Mezirow (1998: 185) is "letting one's thought wander over something, taking something into consideration, or imaging alternatives". Meanwhile, Richards and Lockhart (1994) clearly define reflection or "critical reflection" to refer to an activity or process in which an experience is called, considered and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose. The practice refers to the ability of a teacher to reflect on an activity or an experience as well as making an analysis of the activity or experience to improve teaching practice. Cosh (1999) exemplifies that activity which encourage self-development such as the peer observation of teaching stimulates awareness and reflection, and it encourages experiment of newly learned techniques. Dewey (1933) elucidates about reflective teaching as an active, persistent and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the ground that support it and the further conclusion to which it leads. Open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness are three attitudes prerequisite for teachers for reflective action. Schon (1983, 1987) proposes the capability to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning was one of the defining characteristics of professional practice. He distinguishes two types of reflective engagement: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. He explains that reflection-in-action is embedded in automatic, tacit knowledge, whilst reflection-

on-action takes place when professionals think and reflect on their practice through feedback from other people as well as themselves. He argues that, it is by moving learners from knowing-in-action to reflection-on-action that they can begin to gain control of their developing skill. He also emphasizes that practical experience in reflecting coupled with appropriate supervision enhances reflective teaching. The relationship between theoretical knowledge and experiential knowledge comes together during classroom teaching and can best be illustrated in Figure 3.4. This model is based on the assumption that teachers develop professional competence through reflecting on their own practice.
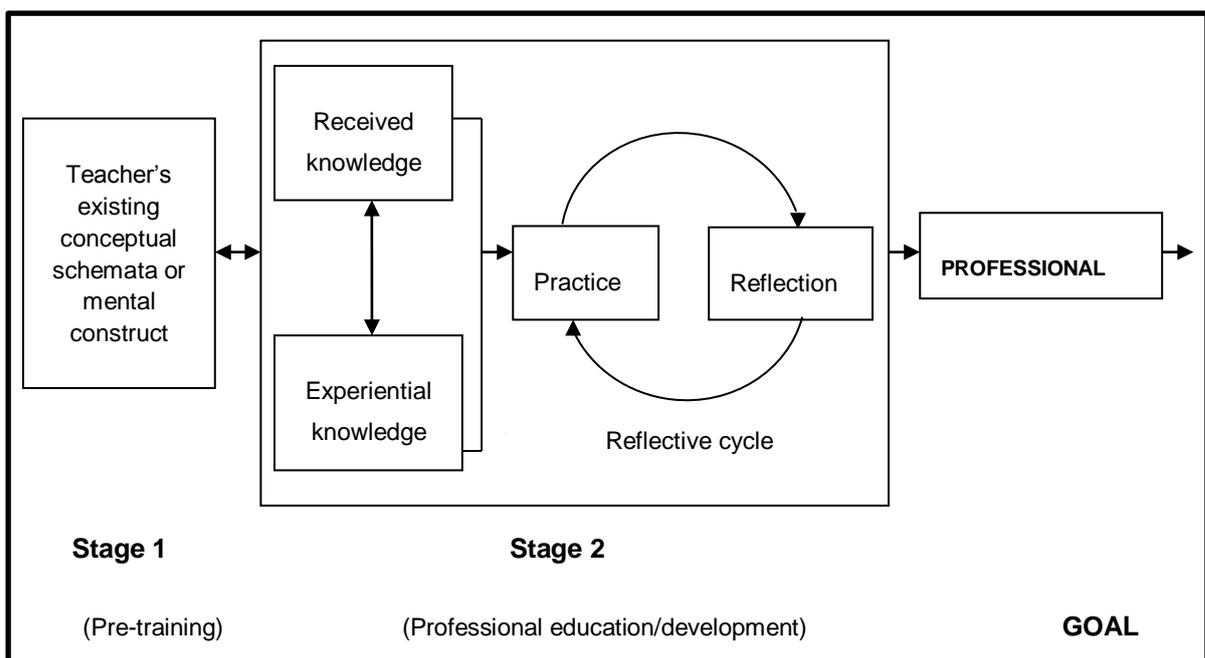
Taken from: Wallace, M. (1991)

Figure 3.4   Reflective practice model of professional education/development

Wallace (1991) explains that the process of professional development is divided into two stages. Stage 1 is the pre-training stage where teachers come into a training with some background knowledge, whereas, Stage 2 is the professional education or development stage. In the second stage, teachers have established information or data as in the "received knowledge" and later should try to relate to the core of this model, i.e. the "experiential knowledge" by reflecting on the inputs gained and deciding whether or not to change in practice.

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Although the current study is not about professional development, yet peer observation as the main focus of this study can be located within a wider framework of professional development. To relate to an English language teacher's experience, a teacher comes into a classroom with various sorts of preparations beforehand taking into consideration many aspects. Among them are his/her beliefs in what constitutes good teaching and learning practices, what models and theories fit and which approach best suit his/her teaching, what activities to be carried out at which period of time to which group of students and many more. Received knowledge includes the inputs obtained from the course module and extensive readings and from discussion with other teachers. Meanwhile, experiential learning is derived from the shared experience in the meetings (pre- and post-observation meetings) in the peer observation. Thus, in the reflection cycle, the teacher will have the chance to reflect on his/her teaching. This provides the chance for an English language teacher to decide whether or not to change and improve in his/her classroom practices whenever needed. Hence, improving teaching through experiential learning is the main objective of reflective model. This is emphasized by Richards and Lockhart (1994) as critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching.

Teachers with years of valuable experience may find it useless if they do not reflect on their teaching. Reflection appears to be the foundation to learning where participants in my study were encouraged to constantly reflect based on their experience and relate to their present classroom teaching and practice. According to Boud et al. (1985: 18), structured reflection is the key to learning from experience and reflection can be very difficult. He added, "Perhaps if we can sharpen our consciousness of what reflection in learning can involve and how it can be influenced then we may be able to improve our own practice of learning and help those who learn with us." Daudelin (1996: 39), who expressed that reflection, has an explicit relation to learning, said,

> "Reflection is the process of stepping back through from an experience to ponder, carefully and persistently, its meaning to the self through the development of inferences; learning is the creation of meaning from past or current events that serves as a guide for future behaviour."

Teachers have the obligation to reflect on their practice, work collaboratively with other teachers and to use self-assessment and self-directed inquiry in order to promote professional growth (Danielson and McGreal, 2000). In the context of this study where peer observation is not a common practice, teachers may be confused of what should they reflect on. However, this model provides ideas and act as a tool that can help teachers reflect on their classroom practice. Three forms of reflection suggested by Potter and Badiali (2001) are:

i.   technical reflection, refers to considering the curriculum and trying to adjust teaching according to the situation presented at a particular time;

ii.   practical reflection, refers to when teachers think about the means and the purposes of particular actions;

iii. critical reflection, refers to when teachers raise any issues related to moral and ethical situations encountered in the profession.

Alternatively, according to Glazer et al. (2000), teachers need to reflect on their daily experiences in the classroom, on the changes and experiments that may be implemented in the classroom and on their effect. Thus, they suggested the following steps to be taken once this information is collected such as:

i.   have a discussion regarding the information, if possible with an expert;

ii.   plan for a modified practice and experiment;

iii. do extra readings that can contribute to reflection and discussion; and

iv.   refer to an external facilitator in the reflection process.

Potter and Badialli (2001) and Glazer et al. (2000), however, do not include the preparation of teachers before a teaching takes place like the preparation for the lesson plan. This is because to them, in the literature, observation only focuses on what really happen in the classroom and later concentration is moved to the next action taken by the respective teachers whether to reflect or not to reflect. Therefore, the preparation of the teachers before they can start their classroom teaching should not be taken for granted. They prepare lesson plans, notes and hand-outs for the students. For this reason, these can be included and discussed among the peers to better improve teaching. Mathers, Oliva and Laine (2008) emphasize that lesson plans are a window into a teacher's preparation to deliver

content, scaffold the development of student skills, and manage the classroom learning environment.

3.1.2 Peer Observation of Teaching (POT)

In most instances in the literature, peer observation of teaching is seen more as a means for continuous professional development rather than to observe teacher effectiveness in teaching. For the purpose of the current study, I will be looking at two different models of peer observation, namely the peer observation of teaching (POT) model developed by Gosling (2002) and the Teaching Process Recall (TPR) model developed at the University of Northumbria by Claydon (2002).

Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) Model

Gosling (2002) developed the peer observation of teaching model. He outlined three models of peer observation namely:

i.   A management model/ An evaluation model
ii.   A development model
iii.   A peer review model

Table 3.1 illustrates how each model differs from one another.

Table 3.1   Characteristics of the evaluation model, development model and peer review model as suggested by Gosling (2002)

Characteristic	Management/Evaluation model	Development model	Peer review model
Who does it and to whom?	senior staff observe other staff	educational developers observe practitioners; or expert teachers observe others in department	**teachers observe each other**
Purpose	identify under-performance, confirm probation, appraisal, promotion, quality assurance, assessment	demonstrate competency/improve teaching competencies; assessment	**engagement in discussion about teaching; self and mutual reflection**
Outcome	report/judgement	report/action plan; pass/fail PGCert	**analysis, discussion, wider experience of teaching methods**
Status of evidence	Authority	expert diagnosis	**peer shared perception**
Relationship of observer to observe	Power	Expertise	**equality/mutuality**
Confidentiality	between manager, observer and staff observed	between observer and the observed, examiner	**between observer and the observed - shared within learning set**
Inclusion	selected staff	selected/ sample	**All**
Judgement	pass/fail, score, quality assessment, worthy/unworthy	how to improve; pass/fail	**non-judgemental, constructive feedback**
What is observed?	teaching performance	teaching performance, class, learning materials,	**teaching performance, class, learning materials,**
Who benefits?	institution	the observed	**mutual between peers**
Conditions for success	embedded management processes	effective central unit	**teaching is valued, discussed**
Risks	alienation, lack of co-operation, opposition	no shared ownership, lack of impact	**complacency, conservatism, unfocused**

(Taken from Gosling, 2002)

The first model, i.e. the management/evaluation Model, is suitable to be used for probation confirmation, promotion, tenure, and appraisal, which thus benefits the institution as a whole. In this model, evaluation is done by the senior staff who have more power upon the observed. Whilst, the second model, i.e. the development model, is more suitable to be used for improving teaching competencies as well as for assessment and is usually conducted by educational developers or expert teachers in the department. Both, management and development models, are summative in nature because according to McMahon, Barrett and O'Neill (2007), although labelled as 'peer observation', the process involved in the first model represents evaluating and managing employees by the superiors, whilst, the second model contains the managerial appraisal. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, I adopted the third model i.e. the peer review model, because it is more relevant and fits my study well. The characteristics described by Gosling really match the situation under study. Most of the characteristics have been described well in the earlier part of this literature review, especially about teachers observing each other for self and mutual reflection and also to gain constructive feedback.

In relation to the Malaysian context of the study, many studies on peer observation were carried out in Malaysia as a means for professional development (Lee and Ling, 2011; Fernandez-Chung, 2009; Abdullah, 1997; Selamat and Ayavoo, n.d.). As far as teacher evaluation is concerned, to my knowledge, there has never been any study regarding peer observation as a method for teacher evaluation conducted in tertiary level in Malaysia. Therefore, I believe that there is a uniqueness of this study as I intend to explore introducing peer observation into the system as a method for teacher evaluation.

Teaching Process Recall (TPR) Model

This model is a professional development model adapted by the University of Northumbria since 1988 for peer observation of teaching (Claydon and McDowell, 1993; Claydon, 2002). In this model, the teacher who wishes for his/her teaching to be observed records his/her teaching session, plays back the video to a group

of colleagues (not exceeding five members) and receives feedback from them (Cosh, 1999). The teacher decides which sections of the tape to show to the group. Among the elements which make this model different from the peer review model developed by Gosling (2002) are the observation is made on a teacher's teaching session which is video recorded and the discussion is made between a group of teachers. According to Claydon (2002), one of the objectives of TPR is to adopt a more analytical stance towards the teaching and learning process. TPR which includes three models, Model 1 first began as a non-evaluative model, i.e. on describing and explaining one's teaching, which was later developed into a revised evaluation model (Model 2 and 3) in response to teachers' requests.

3.1.3 Summary of Models

Each model of teacher effectiveness and peer observation highlights important factors. The Hay McBer model requires the teachers to acquire fundamental values such as the professional characteristics and teaching skills so that they can contribute to the dynamic classroom atmosphere and students' learning. In the continuous learning model, there is more to advancement in learning and developing the professional characteristics than just an accumulation of efficient teaching skills. Teachers continuously acquire new knowledge and skills which sometimes are overlooked when classroom teaching practice are done without any reflection, and are encouraged to make systematic inquiries into their own practices as suggested in the reflective practice model. In the experiential learning model, with the existing experience a teacher has, he/she will undergo new activities and then, move on to reflect based on his/her observation and experience. He/She will later conceptualize his/her observation and lastly, will practice and modify the experience based on his/her suitable needs. In the reflective practice model, a teacher is able to reflect on his/her experience and activity and make adjustment in his/her teaching practice.

In the peer observation model, teachers work alongside their peer colleagues and are encouraged to reflect upon their classroom practice during each stage of the observation process to match their developmental needs. The purpose is for

improvement not only to the observed teachers but also to teacher observers (Cakir, 2010; Shortland, 2004). In the Teaching Process Recall (TPR) model, a group of peer teachers observe their colleagues' classroom teaching via recorded video. This may be a good exercise as "more heads are better than one" as compared to the peer observation model where only a peer colleague observes. However, according to Smith (2002), this exercise may be very stressful to the teachers. The observed teachers in this model, having the right to decide on which sections of the tape to show to the group, may only select what they wish to show to the group and keep what they do not want to show.

In the following section, literature on teacher evaluation which includes the purposes and ways of conducting evaluation of teaching is presented. This will be followed by the literature on peer observation which includes the definition of the terms, the distinctive features of the exercise, the focus of observation as well as the potential benefits and challenges of peer observation.

3.2   Teacher Evaluation/Appraisal

In the literature, terms such as assessment and evaluation, review and appraisal are often used interchangeably and can cause confusion to novice writers. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully define each term as they often occur in many resources. Department of Education and Science (1985), in its publication *Quality in Schools: Evaluation and Appraisal*, explained the distinctions between the terms evaluation, assessment, review and appraisal as:

i)	Assessment	- implying the use of measurement and/or grading based on known criteria;
ii)	Evaluation	- a general term used to describe any activity by the institution or the Local Education Authority (LEA) where the quality of provision is the subject of systematic study;
iii)	Review	- a retrospective activity implying the collection and examination of evidence and information;
iv)	Appraisal	- emphasizing the forming of qualitative judgements about an activity, a person or an organisation.

According to Baehr (2005) and Huitt (2007a), there is distinction between assessment and evaluation. Assessment, according to Baehr (2005: 441), is

> "the term used to look at how the level of quality of a performance or outcome could be improved in the future. The assessment process is not concerned with the level of quality; only with how to improve the level of quality. Conversely, evaluation is the term used to describe the determination of the level of quality. The evaluation process focuses only on the actual level of quality with no interest in why that level was attained".

Huitt (2007a: 1), on the other hand, explained that assessment refers to "the collection of data to describe or better understand an issue whereas evaluation refers to the comparison of data to a standard for the purpose of judging worth or quality". With regards to the current study, I will be using the term evaluation more often as in teacher evaluation because I am looking at the actual quality of the performance, the outcome or the product. However, at some point I will be using the term assessment to mean the process before an actual quality can be given. According to Mok (1994), evaluation is a system or a process which includes activities in gathering information pertaining strategies and activities in teaching and learning. From these information, analysis and follow up action are made so that any necessary reflective practice can be conducted.

Teacher evaluation is a common practice in many educational systems and is part of the life of teachers (Stronge, 2006). An effective teacher evaluation is needed to ensure that learning experience among students is significant and efficient. Besides that, it is also essential to recognise and reward the work and efforts of teachers as they deserve to be appreciated in order to encourage better practices consistent with their professional and personal lives, and should be consistent with the university's mission (Canale, Herdklotz and Wild, 2014). The main goal of all teacher evaluation is to improve teaching and learning. It is crucial to first look at the models of teacher evaluation since they have clear impact on both teaching and learning. In the following, I will demonstrate the reasons why teacher

evaluation is so important and will also list the methods on how teacher evaluations are carried out.

3.2.1 Purposes of Teacher Evaluation

In order to understand the purposes and functions of teacher evaluation, Wise et al. (1984) provide a theoretical framework for analyzing teacher evaluation. These researchers look at teaching as labour, craft, profession and art. Under the conception of teaching as *labour*, the teacher needs to implement all that has been planned and organised by the administrators. Here, the school administrator is seen as the teacher's *supervisor*. Under the conception of teaching as *craft*, the teacher is expected to acquire specialized techniques and able to carry out teaching tasks without close supervision. Here, the school administrator is seen as the *manager* who controls teachers to general performance standards. Under the conception of teaching as *profession*, the teacher is expected to acquire more than just specialized techniques but to exercise sound professional judgement. Here, the school administrator is seen as an *administrator* who makes sure that the teacher is resourceful in carrying out his/her tasks. Under the conception of teaching as *art*, the teacher's teaching techniques and application is unpredictable and unconventional. Here, Gage (1978) argued that teaching uses science but in reality it is not itself a science because the teaching environment is not predictable. Here, the school administrator is seen as a *leader* who encourages the teacher's efforts.

In relation to the above, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2009a), two major purposes of teacher evaluation are to improve the teacher's own practice by identifying strengths and weaknesses for further professional development – **the improvement function,** and to ensure that teachers perform at their best to enhance student learning – **the accountability function**. Similarly, Wise et al. (1984) have the same opinion that the main purposes of teacher evaluation are for improvement and accountability. Thus, formative evaluation can fit in well for improvement purposes, whilst, summative evaluation can fit in well for accountability purposes (ET, 2008).

Formative evaluation is more associated with professional development. According to Isaacs (2003), this kind of evaluation is not as concerned with employment status as are the summative evaluation tools.

In addition to the purposes of teacher evaluation, Sawa (1995) emphasized that according to the literature, there are six main purposes which are:

1. It should strive to improve instruction by fostering self-development and peer assistance.
2. Staff development activities can be rated and identified.
3. The selection process can be validated.
4. A well-designed, properly functioning teacher evaluation process provides a major communication link between the school system and teachers.
5. Personnel decisions such as retention, transfer, tenure, promotion, demotion, and dismissal can be enhanced through an effective evaluation process.
6. Teacher evaluation is capable of protecting students from incompetent teachers by bringing structured assistance to marginal teachers. Since there are no clear-cut standards for judging incompetence, multiple indicators must be utilized to identify marginal teachers.

Wise et al. (1984) came out with the following table (Table 3.2) to describe the purposes of teacher evaluation. They also suggested improvement and accountability as the purposes of teacher evaluation but also looked at them at individual and organizational levels. Although many teacher evaluation systems are nominally intended to accomplish all four of these purposes, different processes and methods may better suit one or another of these objectives. In particular, improvement and accountability may require different standards of adequacy and evidence. Individual and organizational concerns also may demand different processes (for example, bottom-up or top-down approaches to change, or properly or improperly designed remedies to solve problems).

Table 3.2   Basic purposes of teacher evaluation

Purpose / Level	Improvement	Accountability
Individual	Individual staff development	Individual personnel decisions (e.g. job status)
Organizational	School improvement	School status decisions (e.g. accreditation)

Kremer (1988) explained that the general purpose of teacher evaluation is to safeguard and improve quality of instruction received by students so boards must provide a process that allows and encourages supervisors and teachers to work together to improve and enhance classroom instructional practices. In addition, Danielson (2011) elaborates that the two basic purposes of teacher evaluation are *to ensure teacher quality*, and *to promote professional development.*

The decision on the ways of organizing teacher evaluation can depend a lot on the instruments an organization uses. This can well be explained in the following section.

3.2.2 Ways of Organizing Teacher Evaluation

The process of teacher evaluation may comprise the use of many different data sources such as lesson plans, classroom observations, self-assessment, portfolio assessment, student achievement data, teachers performance review meeting, student rating questionnaire, peer observation and many more.
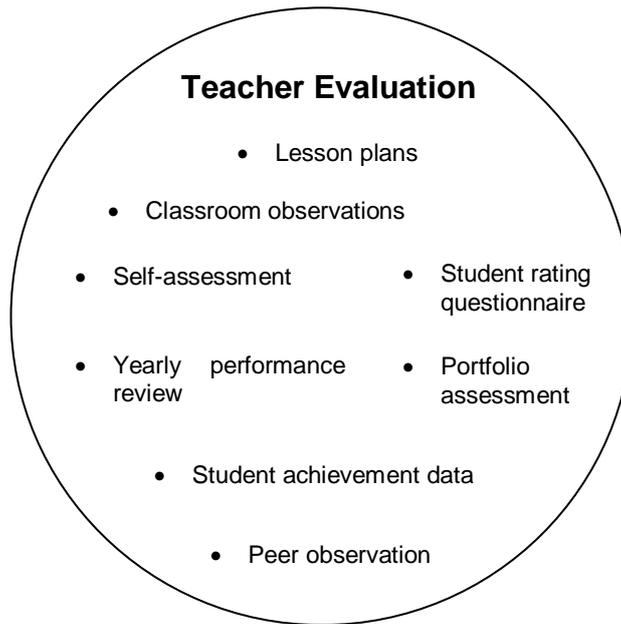
Figure 3.5   Different methods of evaluating teachers' performance

The following are some details of the instruments used for evaluating a teacher as well as understanding the needs of students. There is a need to look into these different methods of teacher evaluation as they shed lights on the exercises carried out at various institutions in Malaysia.

Lesson plans

Lesson plans reflect the preparation of a teacher in terms of his/her teaching content, delivery, the development of the students skills, and arrangements of any teaching aids to be used. Teachers' daily activities in the classroom can clearly be illustrated in the teaching logs or lesson plans; from before, during and after a lesson takes place. According to Serdyukov and Ryan (2008), always remember to ask *who, what, how* and *why* when developing a lesson plan of actual classroom teaching and learning. Savage (2015), on the other hand, explained that a lesson plan needs to consist of at least: learning objectives, learning outcomes, teaching activities, resources, a differentiation strategy and an assessment strategy.

Wragg, Wikeley, Wragg and Haynes (1996) conducted a project at the University of Exeter which consisted of three studies, i.e. Study 1 on 109 English local education authorities, Study 2 on 1137 questionnaire respondents of national survey, and Study 3 on 29 primary and secondary school teachers intensive case studies. They claimed that teachers who "stick" to their lesson plan were considered as excellent as this was included as one of the criterion of teacher effectiveness. Meanwhile, Butt (2008) emphasized that experienced teachers are often able to deal with 'expecting the unexpected' which may affect the delivery of the lesson plan. According to Mathers, Oliva and Laine (2008), lesson plan is indeed a "plan", and once it is implemented, the plan may need to be adjusted. Thus, the quality and appropriateness of the adjustments a teacher makes in a classroom cannot be evaluated solely from the lesson-plan scoring rubric.

Classroom observations

Classroom observation is still considered as a powerful tool of teacher evaluation. It is a process where an observer sits in one or more class sessions, make notes of the classroom teaching or video record the teacher's teaching practices and also students' actions. They then meet to discuss the observations. This allows a teacher to receive feedback from an experienced observer. Classroom observation is not meant for promotion or tenure. According to Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992: 34),

> "Testing knowledge of theory is not enough to judge effective teaching... Classroom observation gives us the opportunity to see teachers putting theory into practice; it shows us what the teachers do rather than what they know".

However, there is a drawback in this method of evaluation as there may be a tendency for the observed to receive comments from a poorly trained observer. Sheal (1989) stresses that many of the observations are unsystematic and subjective, and administrators and teachers tend to use themselves as a standard and they observe impressionistically.

Day (1987) points out five principles for maximizing professional learning through classroom observation. The five principles includes i) learning requires

opportunities for reflection and self-confrontation, ii) teachers and learning institutions are motivated to learn by the identification of an issue or a problem which concerns them, iii) teachers learn best through active experiencing/participation, iv) decisions about change should arise from reflections upon and confrontations of past and present practice; and v) learning institution and teachers need support throughout processes of change.

Self-assessment

Another method of assessment is to encourage teachers to reflect on their own teaching and teaching methods or to analyse their own instruction retrospectively. This can be done by videotaping their class sessions which allow them to review their performance and change or improve accordingly. Again, Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992) emphasize that self-assessment is simply the practice of teachers reflecting on what has taken place in the lesson with a view to improving their performance. It is argued that this method is even more important than analysis by others (Wragg et al., 1996). Self-assessment, which is also known as teacher self-evaluation or reflective evaluation (Beverly, 1998), provides room for the teacher to reconstruct the events, emotions, and accomplishments of a teaching experience. A study carried out by Atkins (1996) on teachers' attitudes and opinions towards the teacher evaluation process found that teachers prefer to have self-assessment as a component of the whole process. However, having this only method of evaluation as a means of evaluation is not enough. He found that the teachers favoured longer and more informative evaluations made up of more than one component.

Portfolio assessment

Teacher portfolio is considered the latest technique to teacher evaluation and has been popularly in use in many countries such as in the USA, the UK, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Canada and Australia. A teacher's own professional life is reflected in his/her portfolios. According to Murphey and Yaode (2007), the construct of portfolios has the potential of greatly affect teacher development as

teachers reflect on their practice and collect artifacts/students' work that represent good practice and data from their own classes. Hussin, Jusoff and Omar (2008) assert that teaching portfolios would cover all the areas indicating a teacher's dedications and good intentions, which might not (immediately) affect his/her student feedback questionnaires and in-class peer evaluations. According to Göçtü (2012), there are three types of portfolio assessment in ELT. They are:

  i)   Showcase portfolio
       - In this portfolio, teachers include their work as well as select their students' best and most representative work. The purpose is to demonstrate the highest achievement of the teachers.
  ii) Teacher-student portfolio or working portfolio
       - In this portfolio, teachers include their work in progress as well as the collection of their finished work. The purpose is to diagnose students' needs.
  iii) Assessment portfolio
       - In this portfolio, all items are graded and evaluated. Teachers keep students' portfolios for use of the teachers' assessment.

A study on the techniques used by Malaysian ESL teachers in implementing portfolio as a means for assessment was led by Singh, Samad, Hussin and Sulaiman (2015). The study was conducted on nine ESL secondary school teachers using semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and teachers' individual portfolios to explore the assessment technique used. From the study, it was found that by using portfolios the teachers were able to document the students' performance and teaching is sustained when improvements were made on the teaching materials, teaching techniques and assessment techniques.

Student achievement data

In addition to direct evaluation of teachers' teaching and classroom management, students' test results are often used to assess teachers' contributions to student learning. Student achievement data is said to be the most questionable tool to assess teacher performance. This is due to the question of whether teachers are

to be held responsible for the underachievement of the students. Kane and Darling-Hammond (2012) each argued for and against the issue. According to Kane, who supports the idea, students' achievement result has an important role and should be one of the measures to evaluate teacher effectiveness. This was based on his study that achievement-gain measures or gains in test scores provide valuable information than that of the end-of-year scores. On the other hand, Darling-Hammond, who is against the issue, based her claim on the findings made by The National Research Council and the Educational Testing Service of New York City that the evaluation of teacher effectiveness based on student test scores are too unreliable because they measure too many things other than the teacher. Oliva, Mathers and Laine (2009) discover the limitations of using student achievement data as students' test scores often arrive too late for the data to be examined for change to take place in teachers' instruction, and the result of the evaluation may provide only a sample over time.

Yearly performance review or performance appraisal system

Performance appraisal system in public service is an ongoing process of setting objectives and evaluating staff behaviours as well as performance within a certain duration to improve the quality and productivity of a department. By implementing this method of evaluation, teachers' needs could be identified in terms of relevant courses and trainings, promotion and bonus (Veloo and Zolkepli, 2011). The superior-subordinate appraisal is the most logical structure of appraising teachers especially in hierarchical organisations where every teacher is being appraised by a superior (Wragg et al., 1996).

Entwistle and Hait (1990: 39) put forward an example of teacher performance appraisal being carried out at Edinburgh University. By way of illustration, Entwistle and Hait, in writing about appraisal at university level, assert;

> "At the Edinburgh University, it has been decided to put substantial emphasis on a combination of self-appraisal linked to a progress review carried out by Head of Department. There will be a biennial 'Progress Review' which will normally take the form of an interview with the Head of Department or Head of Section. … The progress review will be entirely separate from the promotion procedures and this is intended to

create a climate within which discussion can focus on developmental needs prior to any subsequent formal assessment for promotion."

Ibrahim (2003), in his study entitled *Teachers' Reactions towards Teacher Appraisal* carried out in Malaysia, conducted his quantitative study by collecting his data through distributing 1000 questionnaires to secondary school ELT teachers. The major findings of his study are: 1) a majority of the respondents accepted the teacher appraisal criteria that had been used in the Teacher Appraisal form; 2) a majority of the respondents did not agree with the way the appraisal had been implemented; and 3) most of the teachers viewed that the Teacher Appraisal scheme needs to be reviewed. One of the findings in his study revealed that there was no relationship between teachers' reactions towards various aspects that would improve the effectiveness of the teacher appraisal.

Kelly, Ang, Chong and Hu (2008) find that teacher participation in developing the Performance Appraisal System is not a predictor of performance results, including motivation and job satisfaction. This is because in Malaysia and Singapore, appraisal is a top down approach where teachers have no opportunity to contribute any suggestions to improve the performance assessment system.

Student rating questionnaire

In addition to the above responsibilities of teachers to ensure quality teaching, students also play an important role in the evaluation of teachers. Student evaluations also act as an indicator of a teacher's achievements in teaching but one cannot rely solely on this type of evaluation. Students' evaluation of faculty, according to Gaillard, Mitchell and Kavota (2011), has been used primarily for faculty promotion, salary increments, tenure, teaching efficiency, retention and faculty dismissal. However, according to Coburn (1984), among the concerns about using student ratings are:

1) students lack the maturity and expertise to make judgments about course content or instructor style;

- This was supported by Ahmad (2005) in her study conducted at a university in Malaysia that factors such as students' age, attitude and personality may not provide accurate judgements on teacher effectiveness;

2) students' ratings are measures of popularity rather than of ability;

- This was supported by Suwanarak (2007) who discovered that low achieving students provide interesting comments and suggestions on teachers' teaching as they are likely to see more problems of learning than high achieving students.

3) the rating forms themselves are both unreliable and invalid;

- Unlike the study by Fan and Ahmad (n.d.) revealed that the issue was not with unreliable forms but with the way the forms and results were administered. Their study which was conducted at one of the teacher education institutes in Malaysia revealed that student rating questionnaires at the institute was administered in two ways: by the teachers themselves and by their head of departments. Their study entitled, "i-evaluation to uphold teachers' credibility" which encourages the use of online evaluation, was conducted due to the weaknesses of the student rating questionnaire administered and analysed manually by the teachers themselves resulting to lateness in obtaining results, results manipulation, no understanding between teachers and their superiors in the monitoring system, and there is no room for improvement of performance of the teachers.

4) other variables (such as grades received from the instructor, class size, or whether the course was required or elected) affect student ratings.

- This is also supported through the study by Liaw and Goh (2003) who claim that class size has inappropriately influenced student evaluation of lecturers in the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya. The study revealed that small classes received good overall teaching rating, whilst large classes received poor evaluations.

Shevlin, Banyard, Davies, and Griffiths (2000) in their research suggest that student ratings do not wholly reflect actual teaching effectiveness. In addition, Marsh and Roche (1997: 1188) argue,

> "Many student evaluations of teaching instruments fail to provide a comprehensive evaluation of theoretically sound, multiple dimensions of teaching quality, thus undermining their usefulness, particularly for diagnostic feedback."

Additionally, Marsh (1984) explains that there is a relationship between course grades and student rating questionnaire results. According to him, the leniency hypothesis indicates that students give higher rating in the evaluation questionnaire if they receive good grades. Likewise, Brockx, Spooren and Mortelmans (2011) elaborate that the interview technique as in the qualitative research managed to capture the valid reasons why students gave high rating to some teachers. Based on their study, class attendance proved to have a significant relationship with the rating scores. This, according to them, is because better teachers motivated more students to attend their classes and thus, has some influence in the students' characteristics as they learn more in these teachers' classes. As a result, they are more likely to pass the exams. Therefore, these three characteristics become the significant predictors of the rating score, i.e. class attendance, student characteristics and exam grades. However, according to Howsam (1960: 21),

> "Their ratings tend to agree with each other, and the teachers who are rated best by the pupils tend to obtain the highest pupil gains. Pupil ratings often do not agree with ratings by principals, supervisors, or other teachers. (This has not been considered an indication of weakness [of student ratings], however, since ratings by superiors and peers have not been shown to agree with pupil-gained measures or to be satisfactory in other ways.) Teachers have indicated their belief that pupil ratings, as obtained in research studies, are fair and accurate."

Students' evaluation of teaching through student rating form may be influenced by their perception towards their teachers. Suwanarak (2007) asserts that students may be unable to comment on the issue of course content but their evaluation may be unduly affected by the personal style of individual teachers rather than their ability to convey instructional material. She, who conducted a study on the

perceptions of Thai university students and teachers on the effectiveness of student rating forms of teacher evaluation at a university in Thailand, a neighbouring country to Malaysia, used a mixed-method design. She collected her data by distributing questionnaires to 60 students and 18 English language teachers, and interviewed 9 students and 12 teachers. Her study revealed that although student rating forms can be the main source of information about learning environment and teaching ability, there is a flaw in the evaluation carried out at her university. The negative aspects revealed were ineffective evaluation tool, inappropriate timing of evaluation, lateness in providing feedback and unconvincing judgement of teaching quality and teacher promotion.

In numerous studies found in Malaysia related to this method of evaluation, many researchers used the quantitative approach as their data collection method which depended solely on student rating questionnaire. Sok-Foon, Sze-Yin and Yin-Fah (2012), for example, found that lecturer characteristics, subject characteristics, and learning resources and facilities contribute to the overall lecturer performance among students. Mat, Dahlan and Osman (2007) in their study on student evaluation drawn from students in public higher education institutions in Malaysia discovered three valid characteristics for evaluating teacher effectiveness, i.e. delivery information, feedback and fair treatment, and interaction. In addition, Chuan and Heng (2014), in their research found that in 120 lecturers rated using the student rating, none of them received an 'excellent' rating the effectiveness of their teaching. The study which was conducted at one of the teaching education institutes in Malaysia also discovered that female lecturers were perceived as better performers than the male lecturers.

Peer observation

In Malaysia, the purpose of teacher evaluation specifically using peer observation as stated by Fernandez-Chung (2009) aims to support continuing professional development and to raise teaching quality via the development and sharing of good practices. Atkins (1996), in his study on teacher evaluation process, collected his data through a questionnaire distributed to 35 elementary and 15

secondary public school teachers. He found that 93% of the teachers wanted others to be more involved in the evaluation process in addition to the principal and also wanted the opportunity to be involved in both pre and post-conference. Meanwhile, 77% of the teachers believed that peer observation could be a valuable part of an evaluation instrument because they believed that an evaluation process should be formative before becoming summative.

As the issue of peer observation is of particular relevance to the study, there is a need to explore this area in greater depth especially by looking at the models or approaches to peer observation in the following section.

3.3   Peer Observation of Teaching

As mentioned earlier, teachers are aware of the need to often improve their teaching in order to cater for the needs of the students as well as for their own self-satisfaction. Thus, learning through peer observation of teaching encourages the exposure to a variety of individuals and sources of information (Smylie, 1995). Besides to gain new ideas and perspectives about teaching from colleagues, teachers are able to build mutual respect amongst themselves at their institutions and thus, contribute to healthy learning environment. In the following, further review of the literature relevant to peer observation is discussed. Unlike the peer observation as a method for teacher evaluation as discussed earlier in 3.2.2, this peer observation of teaching which has attracted me to conduct this current study has a few different attractive features. These will be explained further in the following section.

3.3.1 Definition of the Terms

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008: 1049), peer means "a person who is the same age or has the same social position or the same abilities as other people in a group". Whilst, observation is derived from the word observe which means "to watch carefully the way something happens or the

way someone does something, especially in order to learn more about it". When combined together these definitions, peer observation may mean to watch carefully a person who has the same social position or the same abilities as other people in a group by another person of the same criteria in order to learn more, in this sense, to learn more on his/her classroom teaching and practices.

Bell (2005: 3) defines the term peer observation of teaching as;

> "collaborative, developmental activity in which professionals offer mutual support by offering each other teach; explaining and discussing what was observed; sharing ideas about teaching; gathering student feedback on teaching effectiveness; reflecting on understandings, feelings, actions and feedback and trying out new ideas."

Peer observation can be defined as a process where a teacher comes into his/her colleague's classroom to observe his/her classroom teaching. In the context of this study, I came out with the following definition which I feel can best define peer observation of teaching:

> To explore one's own teaching by observing other teachers and classrooms in action, or by having one's own teaching or classroom management observed for the purpose of improvement, continued learning and exploration.

This process is seen as a medium in which teaching and learning can be improved for continuous development.

Terms such as *'peer review', 'peer appraisal'* and *'peer evaluation'* are widely used in many articles related to peer observation of teaching. Peer review, according to Kerchner, Koppich, and Weeres (1997), involves a longer period to conduct and more intense interaction as compared to any administrative review which is usually conducted for only a few hours each term or semester. On the other hand, Peterson (1995) uses the term peer review to mean peer evaluation. He defines peer review as a process or system for the evaluation of teacher performance by a peer or colleagues. Meanwhile, according to Wragg et al. (1996), peer appraisal occurs when two teachers of equal rank appraise each other. These teachers can be two basic scale teachers, two deputy heads, or two heads of department, can simply confirm each other's practices and engage in

mutual agreement. Some researchers also use the term 'peer review' to refer to 'peer evaluation' or 'peer observation'. This appears clearly in Gosling (2002) who uses the term peer review of teaching to mean peer observation of teaching. Meanwhile, Fernandez-Chung (2009) uses the term peer observation and peer evaluation interchangeably in her article both with the aim to support continuing professional development.

Before peer observation process can take place, both the observer and the observed as well as those involved in making the whole process of this activity a success, need to thoroughly understand the aim, objective and purpose of the observation. Those who have already understood the aim of the peer observation activity will be more objective towards the whole process and become more apprehensive on the observed (Shortland: 2007, 2004; Peel: 2005).

3.3.2 Distinctive Features of Peer Observation

Based on the literature, a number of factors need to be in place if a professional development programme using peer observation as a development tool is to be successful. Evidently, peer observation is different from other forms of classroom observation carried out for administrative and evaluative purposes. Among the features include:

i.   **The main purpose of the activity is for developmental rather than for judgemental.**

Before I go into depth in explaining the main purpose of peer observation for professional development, I need to clarify that peer observation of teaching serves two purposes, i.e. i) for developmental purposes, and ii) for evaluative purposes. The two serve completely different purposes based on the actual reasons why they are conducted. This is because peer observation for professional development of teachers involves peers and being conducted among teaching colleagues. Head and Taylor (1997) stress that through peer observation teachers can learn from and support each other as the exercise is seen as a

supportive rather than evaluative process. Professional Development for Academics Involved in Teaching (ProDAIT, 2006) recommends that:

> "Developmental and evaluative observation of teaching should be kept separate because if the focus turns to assessment of quality, then it is easy to lose developmental aspect of the activity."   (p. 1)

According to Selamat and Ayavoo (n.d.), development can take up many different forms such as attending courses and seminars and also discussion between teachers about their work-related with a colleague. The chat can provide teachers with the opportunity to learn new teaching skills which they have tried out or about to try. This can encourage them to be involved in meaningful discussion and can benefit both teachers. Shortland (2004: 227) asserts that "observation offers tremendous potential to promote self-knowledge and professional development, particularly when it is part of a continuing process".

Developmental peer observation of teaching can either be formal, which is meant as part of an academic development programme, or informal, which can be a common practice within a team teaching environment. This exercise is not about making judgements of a colleague but is a matter of fine-tuning and most importantly, helping the colleague to reflect on their practice. Cosh (1999) emphasizes that peer observation is frequently carried out for purposes of appraisal or judgemental of the observed, and this can be detrimental both to teacher confidence, and to supportive teaching environment.

In this kind of activity, observations, according to Abdullah (1997), tend to be objective rather than subjective and she expressed that any suggested actions are measurable units rather than impressionistic. She conducted a research on peer observation which was carried out during the Spring term for the English language lecturers for the University Preparation Programme (UPP) at one of the Malaysian Universities' American Degree Programme. A preliminary workshop was conducted with the lecturers to provide them with information on peer observation and its benefits. Participation of the lecturers was on voluntary basis and they were requested to complete three series of observation with one or more

partners. Towards the end of the term, the coordinator distributed a questionnaire which then formed the basis for the report. From the study, two statements that received negative responses were "Lecturers gained new skills", and "Lecturers changed their teaching methods or routines". The lecturers also stressed that they may be self-conscious and unnatural during the observation session resulting in a different effect on the students, while some lamented that they have problems trying to arrange sessions with unwilling participants who have negative attitude towards peer observation and with lecturers who thought that the sessions were their chance to criticize their colleagues rather than to be supportive.

Feedback provided by the observers is formative and descriptive rather than summative or evaluative and judgemental. Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2005) clarify that peer observation of teaching encourages reflection on teaching and promotes debate about best practices.

ii.   There is a structured system of observation with a set of procedures.

The task of the administration and the head of department at a number of universities around the world are to remind teachers of their responsibility to carry out peer observation activities so that teachers can learn new techniques of teaching from colleagues and better improve their own teaching. Donnelly (2007) stresses that there is support at all times for the development of trust among teachers which allows for honest and open exchange to encourage reflection about teaching.

This is because the rest of the content of the observation is treated as confidential. As practised at the University College London, the only thing that is recorded at the departmental and college records is X observes Y on date Z (Hanson, 2012). The activity can be very successful if the set of procedure is being well explained by the administration. This can be done by handling workshops to provide enough training for the teachers.

Although it is possible that individual teachers could undertake peer observation at their own initiative because this is a structured system, it is more likely that the

programme administration will need to initiate staff to carry out the exercise. Apart from this, teachers not only they take part in the exercise, but, in order to succeed and to support professional development, they also play their role in setting the procedure. As practised at the Lancaster University, the model used was set up by the staff involved and this characterises the most successful as it suits the particular context and need.

Mohamad and Jasmi (2003) highlight the complex process of observation as being illustrated in his study conducted on training teachers at one of the universities in Malaysia. Their quantitative study was conducted by distributing 100 questionnaires to 50 male and 50 female English language teachers. It was found that teacher observation is something which cannot be accepted positively by the majority of the teachers and only meant to look for a teacher's weaknesses. Cosh (1999) again emphasizes that in order to avoid uncomfortable feeling of the observed and to assure them ownership of the observation process, they should be reassured and consulted, and decided jointly on factors such as who should be observed, how often, what protocol should be followed, what the focus should be, and what form of feedback should take.

iii. **Teachers are given the right to make decision in all aspects of the peer observation. Openness and agreed purposes are essential.**

Giving staff ownership, according to Gosling (2009), is seen as recognition of the teachers' autonomy in which they carry out many of their roles. Abdullah (1997) also stresses that the procedures adopted should provide teachers with as much autonomy in decision making as possible. For instance, in her study, there is a free choice to select a reciprocal observation colleague where each individual is comfortable with, to decide on which aspects of their classroom behaviours and activities to become the focus of observation, and to decide on the following action to be taken subsequent the observation.

Precisely, teachers have control over all stages in the establishment and flow of the process. The teachers who act as the observed for example, has a complete choice over the exercise. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 3.6.
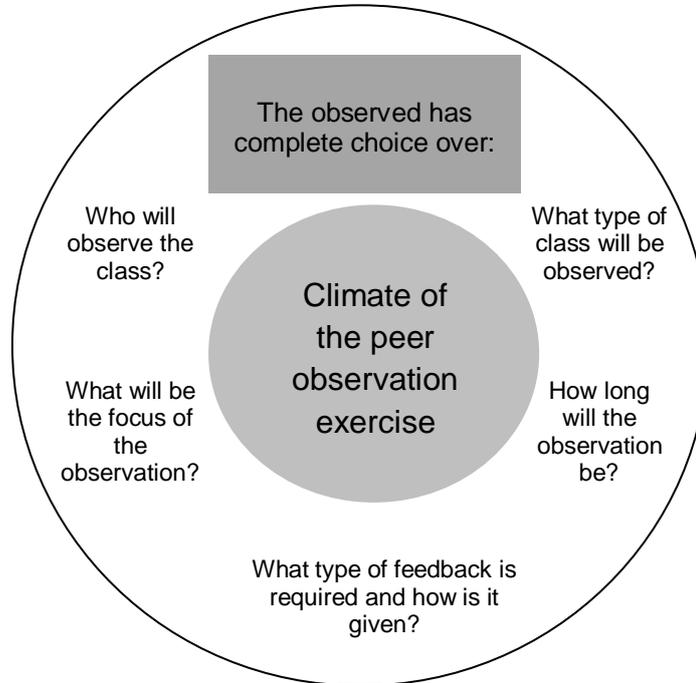
Taken from Donelly, R. (2007)

Figure 3.6   Climate of Peer Observation

iv.   The observation exercise is carried out in a non-threatening and supportive atmosphere, and based on mutual and collegial trust.

Bell (2005) highlights that peer observation of teaching can help develop teachers' teaching practices, transform their educational perspectives and increase collegiality. Cosh (1999) in her study claims that many of those who were involved in peer observation in her department perceived the exercise as threatening and felt that the observer was making judgement on the observed. Observation tends to be associated with evaluation, and is often regarded as a threatening or negative experience (Richards and Farrell, 2005; Ramaiah, 1999; Abdullah, 1997; Richards and Lockhart; 1994), and teachers may fear that it will be used in a judgemental way (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond, 2005). In addition, Roberson (2006) claims that among the key principles of formative assessment of

teaching using peer observation is that the assessment must not carry any negative impact as well as non-threatening; and the observed must feel comfortable with the assessment. Providing constructive feedback is not a simple task and it is a skill needed throughout an academic's professional life (Ali, 2012; Abdullah, 1997). Similarly, Cakir (2010) stresses that there are teachers who believe no matter what technique is used they feel disturbed when being observed. He pointed out that a teacher was annoyed with the presence of a practical student who took notes on the teacher's teaching techniques. In addition, Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2005) highlight the issue of the observed who may have difficulty of receiving criticism and thus peer observation may have an impact on relationships. Most importantly, according to Millis (1992), the collegial dialogues between the teachers serve as catalysts for teaching enhancement.

In a similar vein, a research conducted by Joshua, Joshua, Bassey and Akubuiro (2006) investigated the general attitude of Nigerian teachers towards peer evaluation of teachers, when the purpose of evaluation is formative or summative. The sample was 480 secondary school teachers from Akwa Ibom State using stratified random sampling technique. The study adopted a survey design and employed the causal-comparative method. The 13-item questionnaire revealed that the general attitude of the Nigerian teachers towards peer evaluation of teachers is negative whether the results of the evaluation serve formative or summative purposes. This study supports the study carried out by Cosh (1999) who claims that no matter if the purpose of the observation is for improvement or for judgemental, teachers are still negative about the idea of being observed and having someone else to exist in their classroom during their teaching. To add to this, Gosling (2000) asserts that when the teacher being observed accepts, or even welcomes, the comments of the observer, it can be a powerful learning experience, but it can also prevent full engagement by subject staff if the 'expert' is not fully trusted.

v. **Teachers reflect on their own teaching after the peer observation activity takes place.**

This does not only reflect upon the observed teacher but also on the teacher observer as both of them should benefit from the activity. The observed teacher can better improve and make changes to his/her existing teaching methods and style based on the post-observation discussion they have. Meanwhile, the teacher observer can better learn new teaching techniques such as the use of teaching aids, questioning skills, conducting activities and many more, and can try them in their own classroom. Cosh (1998) emphasizes that peer observation provides an environment in which we can reassess our own teaching in the light of the teaching of others. In the light of this, among the advantages of peer observation suggested by Bell (2005) include improvements of teaching practice, development of confidence to teach and learn more about teaching, and transformation of educational perspectives.

3.3.3 Focus of Observation

Before a peer observation session can be conducted, observed teachers must decide on the focus of observation. It can be very helpful if at the initial stage of the peer observation process, the teachers are provided with a list of areas for investigation. Based on the literature, there are many suggestions on aspects of observation such as those suggested by Flanders (1970) Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC), Fanselow (1977) Foci on Communication Used in Settings (FOCUS), Allwright (1988), Wajnryb (1992) and Richards and Lockhart (1994).

Ned A. Flanders, a pioneer in classroom interaction analysis, developed a popular tool to measure classroom observation pattern called Flanders's Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) (Allwright, 1988). It is widely used in educational research (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). Table 3.3 outlines a list of the ten interaction analysis categories.

Table 3.3   Flanders' ten FIAC categories

1. *Accepts feelings* of pupils in a non-threatening manner. Feelings may be positive or negative.

2. *Praises or encourages* pupil action or behaviour.

3. *Accepts or uses ideas of pupils*, including clarifying, building or developing pupils' ideas or suggestions.

4. *Asks a question* of pupil about content or procedure with the intent that the pupil should answer.

5. *Lectures* about content or procedure, including giving facts or opinions, expressing own ideas or asking rhetorical questions.

6. *Gives directions*, commands or orders with which a pupil is expected to comply.

7. *Criticises or justifies authority* with the intention of changing pupil behaviour from unacceptable to acceptable pattern.

8. *Student talk – response*: talk by pupil in response to teacher.

9. *Student talk – initiation*: talk by pupil which he or she initiates.

10. *Silence or confusion* in which communication cannot be understood by the observer.

Another important contribution in the field of classroom observation is the Foci for Observing Communication Used in Setting (FOCUS) developed by John F. Fanselow. He developed general categories which defined five characteristics of communication in setting. The following Table 3.4 clearly illustrates the characteristics.

Table 3.4   Fanselow's Foci for Observing Communication Used in Setting (FOCUS)

1. Who communicates?
2. What is the pedagogical purpose of the communication?
3. What mediums are used to communicate?
4. How are the mediums used to communicate areas of content?
5. What areas of content are communicated?

Dick Allwright, another prominent name in observation in language classroom research, developed his work which was initially based on the work by Fanselow. According to Allwright (1988), Fanselow's interest was on how to help teachers treat their learners' errors, but he was more interested in the "treatment of an error as an event in a learner's life" (Allwright, 1988: 198). Table 3.5 illustrates the eighteen point analysis of possible error types suggested by Allwright.

Table 3.5   Four major ways of categorizing errors as suggested by Allwright (1988)

Error type		
A. Linguistic description:	1.	Content area
	2.	Skill area
B. Importance: a) *Present:*	3.	Relevance of pedagogic focus
	4.	Frequency
	5.	Number of learners affected
b) *Future:*	6.	Accuracy
	7.	Communicative effectiveness
C. Source:	8.	Interlingual inference
	9.	Intralingual inference
	10.	L2 learning strategy
	11.	Communication strategy
	12.	Teaching
	13.	Carelessness (including obtuseness).
	14.	Stress (anxiety, fatigue, etc.)
	15.	Factual ignorance
D. Ease of correction:	16.	Teacher's competence
	17.	Resources available
	18.	Time available

In addition to the above, Wajnryb (1992) also suggested other additional aspects for observation, such as shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6   Aspects of observation as suggested by Wajnryb (1992)

1. *Teacher's plan for the lesson*
    -   The plan refers both to the preparation before the lesson and the decisions taken in the classroom during the lesson.
2. *Openings and closures of a lesson*
    -   Whether the teacher's opening of a lesson is a typical predictable conventions or routines and whether the teacher allocates enough time for the closure to take place.
3. *Lesson cohesion*
    -   Ways a teacher signposts the steps in a lesson and links them together.
4. *Teacher prompts and teacher's language of questions*
    -   Teachers elicit for various purposes: to create a context, to set students thinking, to attract and focus attention, to increase students talking time and many others. Thus, a particular purpose is the purpose for the eliciting and any link between purpose and question-type.
5. *Teacher's use of the board and visual aids*
6. *Students' active involvement*
    -   To determine teacher-student rapport and participation.
7. *Variety of teaching methods*
    -   To determine whether the teacher uses various methods in his/her teaching and whether the methods used by the teacher are suitable with the content.

Other aspects of classroom observation which were suggested by Richards and Lockhart (1994) can clearly be seen in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7   Focus or aspects of classroom observation as suggested by Richards and Lockhart (1994)

1. *Organization of the lesson*
    -   The entry, structuring and closure of the lesson.
2. *Teacher's time management*
    -   Allotment of time to different activities during the lesson.
3. *Student's performance on tasks*
    -   The strategies, procedures, and interaction patterns employed by students in completing a task.
4. *Time-on-task*
    -   The extent to which students were actively engaged during a task.
5. *Teacher questions and student responses*
    -   The types of questions teachers asked during a lesson and the way students responded.
6. *Student performance during pairwork*
    -   The way students completed a pairwork task, the responses they made during the task, and the type of language they used.

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7. *Classroom interaction*
   - Teacher-student and student-student interaction patterns during a lesson.
8. *New teaching activity*
   - Class performance during a new teaching activity.
9. *Group work*
   - Students' use of L1 versus L2 during group work; students' time-on-task during group work; the dynamics of group activity.

Based on the list above, teachers can select either one aspect or a combination of several aspects as their focus of classroom observation.

3.3.4 Potential Benefits and Challenges of Peer Observation

Benefits

Peer observation provides advantages for both observers and observed. Among the advantages which both parties can gain, as mentioned in ProDAIT (2006), are to develop their own reflective practice, to share good teaching experience, to gain new ideas and fresh perspectives about teaching, to enhance their own teaching skills, and to improve the quality of the learning experiences made available to students.

According to Schon (1983, 1987), being involved in peer observation can encourage teachers to be reflective about their classroom practices through the process of reflection in action research. He recommends that reflection-on-action could help teachers improve by reflecting on their practices via reflective discussion and find solutions to their problems in teaching and improve learning instruction in their classroom. Dzakiria, Mohamed, Hisham, Malek & Said (2007) who used action research as an approach for three English as a Second Language (ESL) secondary teachers to collaborate with lecturers from a university for Teacher Support Team (TST) programme in the north of Malaysia found that peer observation and action research encourage them to become more open-minded and willing to try out other possibilities. The teachers are taught to use peer observation using Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) to gather data for discussions with the university lecturers who function as facilitators.

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Another relevant study conducted at one of the private higher institutions in Malaysia by Lee and Ling (2011) also proved the advantages of the exercise. This is a quantitative research which uses online survey questionnaire on a sample of 50 lecturers. The researchers did not clearly mention as to which group of lecturers/respondents the study was conducted on. The study reveals that the lecturers are positive about peer observation and accepted it as a method to share and exchange knowledge as well as teaching skills. In addition, they have the same opinion that it has become a tool to enhance teaching quality and improve teaching. Thus, the researchers came to the conclusion that HE institutions should create awareness amongst academicians about the advantages and the real purposes of peer observation.

Research conducted by Fernandez-Chung (2009) at a private HE institution in Malaysia also provides evidence of several advantages on peer observation exercise. The study was conducted at a Law School and in September 2006, the school had decided to be the first to implement the exercise. According to Fernandez-Chung, out of eight full time teaching staff only three agreed to participate in the study despite the assurance of confidentiality promised. The objectives, terms and instruments were discussed and agreed upon amongst the three participants. Each peer was observed by two peers. There were pre- and post-observations carried out in the study where post-observation was conducted six months after the first observations. The study revealed that peer observation helps them to develop their own mechanism for self-development and it is an important tool for professional development and quality teaching. Staff are more motivated to learn and improve when they are aware of their own needs particularly when it is a continuing process.

Challenges

Although there are many benefits which peer observation has, there are still challenges to the exercise. The challenges come not only in terms of its implementation at the departmental level but also to get full cooperation from the teachers involved.

One of the challenges is to have the teacher community in an institution to carry out the instruction successfully. In order for the exercise to be implemented effectively at all levels and at any institutions, it may be more effective if the instruction follows the bottom-up approach rather than the top-down approach. Peer observation is usually presented in a top down, rather than bottom up initiative (Peel, 2005) and usually judgemental, if only peer evaluation rests on making a judgement of 'good practice' from a personal baseline (Shortland, 2007).

Another challenge to the exercise found in the study by Fernandez-Chung (2009) is the issues regarding seniority and number of years in teaching experience appear to be the drawback for peer observation to be effective. Amongst the participants, the researcher finds that the least experienced of the team showed most improvement whilst the senior among them had more difficulty to improve thus, resulting in difficulty to change for their own benefit as well as for the students. In the case of experienced teachers, a natural reaction to criticism is to become defensive to comments or suggestions of change. Even if a teacher is open to suggestions, there is still an emphasis on being developed by others, rather than on the self-awareness and active self-development of a reflective professional. Wajnryb (1992: 10) clearly explains,

> "Teachers themselves are the primary initiators of their own development. The spirit of enquiry, the wish to reflect on one's own teaching, perhaps to explore other paths, comes from within the practitioner; it cannot be imposed from outside and then measured by some objective assessment tool."

Every teacher is responsible in carrying out his/her designated tasks, activities and responsibilities. However, there is a need for observation in order to avoid continuous same teaching practices which may lead to routine practices. Hamid (1995) stresses that without being observed some teachers might stick to their old teaching methods and these practices may become a routine which in the end one might think of them as correct and acceptable. Observation can become an invaluable form of staff development and can play a crucial role in preventing teachers from becoming isolated and routinized. Cosh (1998) elucidates that our notion of good teaching derived from our own experience of being taught may

become the great influence on the way we teach. Thus, teachers need to change in order to develop and improve for better teaching. Wragg et al. (1996: 23) emphasize,

> "In order to make what teachers do in classrooms more effective, they must change their own behaviour. In turn, for pupils to learn more effectively, they too must alter they behaviour, whether directly as a result of what the teacher does, or of their own free will. Without change there could be no improvement."

However, many studies indicate that teachers resist change if the instructions come from people who are external to where the teachers work or live. This is clearly expressed by Morimoto (1973: 255) that,

> "When change is advocated or demanded by another person, we feel threatened, defensive, and perhaps rushed. We are then without the freedom and the time to understand and to affirm the new learning as something desirable, and as something of our own choosing. Pressure to change, without an opportunity for exploration and choice, seldom results in experiences of joy and excitement in learning."

Teachers have their own interpretations and assumptions on what works well in classroom and these can and should become the basis of change. It is hoped that teachers, as collaborative and critical learners (Smyth, 1991), can rethink their assumptions and their practices through new learning and insights from peer observation exercises.

Time would be the main factor which contributes to the impediment of peer observation (Bell, 2002). As mentioned earlier, heavy workloads may be one of the reasons why teachers are reluctant to carry out this exercise apart of seeing it as additional work and take it lightly because it has less immediate impact to them. In addition, teachers feel uncomfortable being observed were among the challenges faced by the teachers in the study by Lee and Ling (2011) despite the benefits listed earlier.

Training is important in order for the teachers to have confidence in observing (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2005) as well as knowing the correct procedure in carrying out the task (Shortland, 2004). However, again this involves

time on the teachers' part and may be costly on the administration part. Training has to be conducted to constantly train and remind teachers on the right procedure and exercise.

3.4   Summary of the Chapter

The aim of this chapter was to review research literature pointing out how the reviewed research studies relate to and inform my study. The chapter has defined basic concepts and constructs of the current study. The literature reviewed throughout has shown how ample research is available on the purposes of teacher evaluation and the ways of organizing the evaluation by listing the possible tools. In addition, the distinctive features of peer observation as compared to a classroom observation for evaluation purposes were reviewed to inform which of the is pertinent to the Malaysian context in which this study is conducted. The literature showed that there is a gap in the current study and therefore shows that this study is unique. This is because as far as teacher evaluation is concerned, to my knowledge, there has never been any study regarding peer observation as a method for teacher evaluation conducted at tertiary level in Malaysia. The chapter assisted me in developing the different research instruments used in the current study (i.e. the questionnaire, the workshop, the semi-structured interview as well as the observation of post-observation meetings) and these will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology, Design and Data Analysis

Methodology is determined by the research purpose and can be modified to suit the topic under exploration (King, 1987). Research methodologies are always driven by certain philosophies and assumptions. This is an exploratory study informed by the interpretive paradigm with an element of action research. Action research, according to Carr and Kemmis (1986), is a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out. This study is intended to encourage improvements to the current practice of teacher evaluation by introducing or promoting an additional element, i.e. peer observation, into practice.

There were two stages in my study. Stage 1 sought to address research questions 1 and 2, and Stage 2 gathered data to address questions 3 and 4 (refer Chapter 1 – 1.3). Stage 1 was conducted through a qualitative exploratory methodology, while Stage 2 contains an action research element with exploration and intervention elements. The following will contain justifications for the selection of methodology and the theoretical framework by first looking at a review of the philosophical assumptions underpinning it.

4.1   The Philosophical Assumptions

A paradigm is a 'belief system' that one holds (Denzin and Lincoln) or set of assumptions about how the world works. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) claimed that a research paradigm consists of three important elements: ontology (assumptions about reality), epistemology (assumptions about knowledge and concerns with the question of what counts as valid knowledge) and methodology (the research process). Details of these elements will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.1.1 The Ontological Assumptions

The nature of reality underlying this research is the nature of multiple realities, which conveys reality as being created through "the negotiation of meanings", which are socially constructed (Pring, 2000). This orientation tends to put emphasis and value on human understanding, interpretative aspects of knowing about the social world, the significance of the investigator's own interpretations, and understandings of the phenomenon being studied. Different minds lead to different meanings even in relation to the same phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). According to Radnor (2002), reality is socially constructed through interaction. Thus, individuals have different perceptions of what reality means to them. This offers an understanding that objective truth does not really exist. It actually exists through individual construction grounded on the subjective meanings given to a particular situation by those who are involved in it.

In relation to this, an exploratory qualitative methodology including suitable, trustworthy and credible data analysis methods were used to research peer observation in ELT in a public university in Malaysia. Throughout this investigation, I have attempted to reach reality by seeking information from the perspectives of the ELT lecturers in Malaysia and then negotiating the meaning with them. In other words, in view of the exploratory nature of the study, and its context specificity, it is appropriate to adopt the naturalistic orientation of interpretative/qualitative research.

Hence, the study aims to construct meaning by interpreting views from the ELT teachers' different perspectives to explore the meaning and assumptions about teacher evaluation and peer observation that exist in their minds. Thus, in this sense, a constructionist stance has been adopted in a qualitative manner, as Crotty (1998: 43) claimed that, "According to constructionism, we do not create meaning. We construct meaning. We have something to work with. What we have to work with is the world and objects in the world."

4.1.2 The Epistemological Assumptions

In my study, there is a parallel between ontological and epistemological assumptions. In this sense, the ontological assumption of the research is that of multiple realities, thus, the epistemological assumption is constructionism, which holds that meaningful truth does not exist independently from consciousness and that there is no objective truth waiting for us to discover (Crotty, 1998).

Evaluators need to see what teachers are doing. Colleagues too may observe other colleague teachers teaching for better self-development. In this sense, my understanding of the situation is that the common practice at most universities in Malaysia where the head of department becomes the evaluator seems to reflect a positivist's point of view. In this case, I did not intend to find one solution, but to determine rigorous and systematic findings of what happen when teachers observe each other and then talk together. This supports Crotty's view that humans are different and hold unique ability in adapting to different environment and surrounding.

In this study, I have attempted to construct meaning by interpreting views from different perspectives using multiple methods. This is because I believe that a richer understanding of the potential benefits of teacher evaluation and peer observation will only be reached as a result of the engagement of the researcher, which is me, with the participants, who are the lecturers/teachers. The use of multiple sources in the current study was not intended to triangulate the data. This, according to Flick (2006), is not appropriate in interpretive research because it seems to imply "checking up" in order to get the right truth or one reality. However, the use of multiple sources in this study, such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, and field notes should allow a fuller picture of the issue being investigated. Patton (2002: 556), for example, stated that "It is in data analysis that the strategy of triangulation really pays off, not only in providing diverse ways of looking at the same phenomenon but in adding to credibility by strengthening confidence in whatever conclusions are drawn."

With an interpretive inquiry, I hope to find out answers to these questions:

1. What are the current practices of English language teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?
2. What are English language teachers' experiences of teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?
3. What are Malaysian English language teachers' views about introducing peer observation into the system?
4. What are the possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation?

4.2   Methodology

As mentioned earlier, the methodology of this study is qualitative exploratory in nature informed by the interpretive paradigm. Therefore, this methodology is epistemologically consistent with social constructionism, in which truth or meaningful reality does not exist independently of our thinking, but emerges as a result of our interactions. In compliance with the exploratory nature of this study, there is an element of action research consisting of intervention. In exploratory research, usually "data collection is less structured, and researchers use a range of probes and other techniques to achieve in-depth answers" (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 111). This is where I thoroughly investigate the possibilities and challenges for peer observation exercise to be introduced at the institution where the study was conducted. I found a need for intervention to take place in this study because it provides insights into and comprehension of the peer observation exercise, the teachers' feelings about the whole process of the exercise, and the problems that they may encounter. These were obtained through using a range of data and an overall interpretive methodology that attempt to gain teachers views of introducing peer observation at the institution.

This study uses the interpretive inquiry approach. Interpretive research is sometimes called qualitative or naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to Pring, in this paradigm (2000:55), "... we seek to understand the

world from the perspective of the participants, or to understand a set of ideas from within the evolving tradition of which they are a part." Thus, understanding these meanings is considered to be more valuable than having only one generalization. In addition, it is more subjective to interpret phenomena in a natural setting by focusing on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences.

The interpretive paradigm sheds light on the notion of how social action is explained and understood through the subjective meaning of human action and behaviour. From an interpretivist perspective, reality is conceived as the product of human experience constructed out of interaction between human beings and their world, and each individual constructs meaning differently (Crotty, 1998; Pring; 2000). In other words, individuals already have different perceptions of what reality means to them. Interpretive research is informed by the epistemology that the researcher and the researched cannot be separated. Data of such research is generated through constant interaction between them. These constructions are formed based on the persons' or participants' past experiences and beliefs system and following this that knowledge and truth are created rather than discovered (Richards, 2003).

In an interpretive research, it is vital to be clear about the values held by everyone who is involved in it. Thus, as a researcher, I am aware that I should make my assumptions transparent and also remain cognizant of my own biases. Thus, I will need to undergo the process of reflexivity. Researchers must provide as much information as possible, in terms of both technical details of conduct and potential bias, so that others can scrutinise the "objectivity' of the investigation (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). This will be briefly discussed in the following section.

4.3   The Research Design

The research design of the study was informed by the research questions. Additionally, in compliance with the exploratory nature of this study, the sequential mixed method design (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003) has been found to best suit the procedure of data collection and data analysis, integrating both quantitative

and qualitative data for the purpose of better understanding the research problem (Creswell, 2007). Hence, with the use of sequential design (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004), the purpose of conducting mixed methods research design by integrating different types of data in the study is for complementarity (Bryman, 2006). The quantitative data was collected to complement the qualitative data, such that the qualitative part helped to evaluate and interpret the results obtained. For further understanding of the sequential mixed method design used in this study, I have adapted the method as suggested by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003: 688) as illustrated in the following Figure 4.1.

| **Stage 1**
Purpose: To find out about:

• The **current practices of teacher evaluation (TE)**
• EL teachers' **experience of TE** | | **Stage 2**
Purpose: To find out about:

• EL teachers' **views of introducing peer observation (PO)**
• **Possibilities and challenges** of introducing PO |

Quantitative Data Collection

• Distributed online questionnaires to EL teachers at universities throughout Malaysia

Quantitative Data Analysis

• Used SPSS for descriptive statistics, e.g. percentages and frequencies

Qualitative Data Collection

• Interviewed 8 volunteered EL teachers

Qualitative Data Analysis

• Transcribed and coded for thematic analysis

Quantitative Data Collection

• Distributed questionnaires to workshop participants

Quantitative Data Analysis

• Using SPSS for descriptive statistics, e.g. percentages and frequencies

Qualitative Data Collection

• Observed 10 post-observation meetings
• Interviewed 8 PO participants

Qualitative Data Analysis

• Transcribed and coded for thematic analysis

Inference

• Findings to answer research questions 1 & 2
• Findings informed Stage 2
• Findings to answer research questions 3 & 4

• Discussion of major themes

Figure 4.1   Sequential Mixed Method Design Procedure Used in this Study

The sequential mixed method design, a commonly used design in many studies such as those by Al-Nwaime (2012) and Al-Rubaie (2010), is a design which involves one type of question (exploratory), with two types of data (qualitative and quantitative) collected in sequence with one being dependent on the other

(Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). This design is mixed in its data collection and analysis phase only.

As the study is intended to investigate the practices of teacher evaluation at the universities in Malaysia as well as English language (EL) teachers' views of teacher evaluation, and to introduce peer observation amongst lecturers at the tertiary level which has never or rarely being practiced before, the study has employed two stages, which are explained in depth below.

In Stage 1, a questionnaire consisted of closed- and opened-end questions was distributed and semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to answer research questions 1 and 2. This stage was conducted through a qualitative exploratory methodology where the questionnaire and interview are employed to collect as much information as possible from the participants in order to provide information for the next stage. In Stage 2, I conducted a one-day workshop with all the EL lecturers from my university. During the workshop, I provided the lecturers with information about peer observation. Then, I conducted several activities with the participants so as to give them clearer idea on how to carry out peer observation. Having the participants to get involve as much as possible in the activities helps them gauge the topic well and understand the whole process better. At the end of the workshop, I distributed questionnaires to all participants for the purpose of collecting information on their feelings about the exercise. After that, two peer observation sessions were conducted on specific dates agreed between me and the participants namely: i) 10 in-classroom observation sessions; and ii) 10 post-observation meeting sessions. Lastly, I conducted interview sessions with all the participants, one at a time, to collect their views about their experiences of the peer observation session conducted before. The stages of data collection are clearly illustrated in Figure 4.2.

STAGE 1 (Exploratory)

Objective: To answer research questions:
1) What are the current practices of English language teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?
2) What are English language teachers' experiences of teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?

First - Distribution of **questionnaire** → To English language lecturers from several universities around Malaysia

Second - **Interview** → Eight lecturer participants from various universities

*Initial data analysis

STAGE 2 (Intervention)

Objective: To answer research questions:
3) What are Malaysian English language teachers' views about introducing peer observation into the system?
4) What are the possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation?

Workshop (6 hours) & **Questionnaire** →
- Conducted on a large group of English language lecturers
- Purpose: To introduce peer observation
- The workshop was informed by the information generated from Stage 1
- A questionnaire was distributed to all participants at the end of the workshop

In-classroom Observation (CO)

CO 1 — A observed B — CO 6
CO 2 — C observed D — CO 7
CO 3 — E observed F — CO 8
CO 4 — G observed H — CO 9
CO 5 — I observed J — CO 10

Post peer observation meeting (PO)

PO 1 — PO 2
PO 3 — PO 4
PO 5 — PO 6
PO 7 — PO 8
PO 9 — PO 10
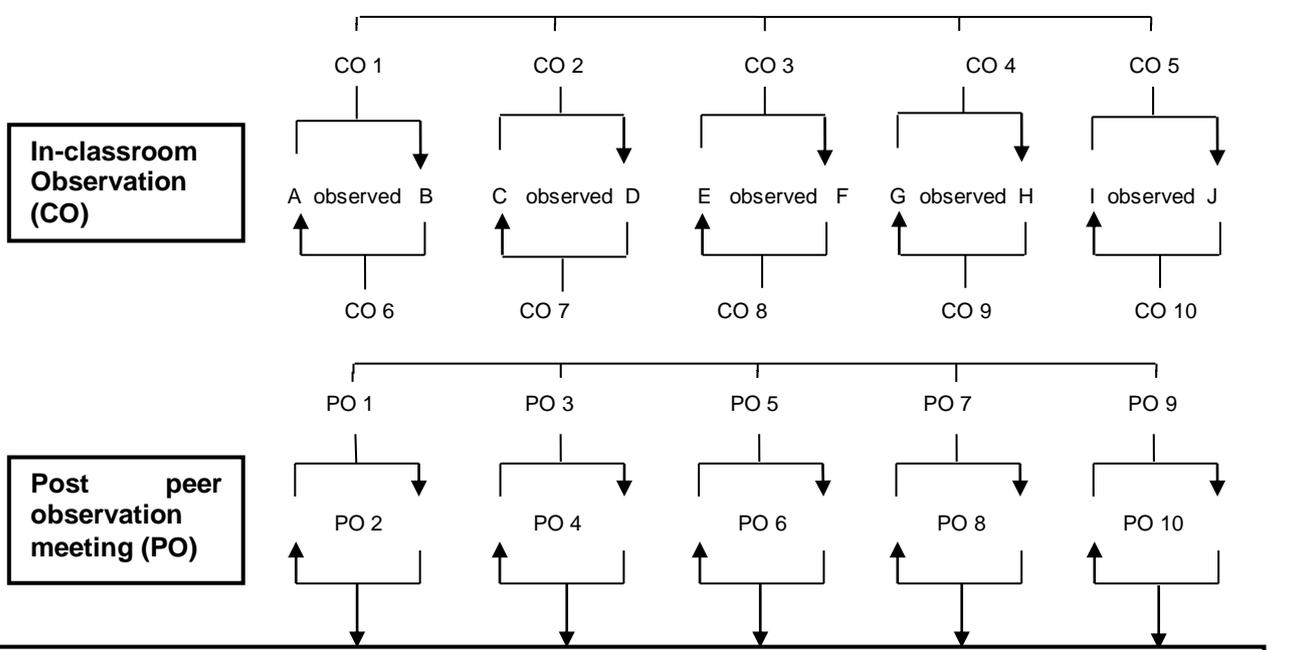
Post-observation interview
Purpose: To collect the content of, for example, what A said to B, and how B reacted to A and vice-versa

Figure 4.2   Stages of data collection

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4.4　　Research Participants

In the current study, there are two types of sampling strategies used: probability and non-probability (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). The participants of the study were determined by the 2 stages of the research design. In Stage 1, as many English language teachers as possible from several universities were invited to participate by answering the questionnaire which was sent to them via online. Here, I used the probability sampling strategy since any EL teachers at tertiary level could respond based on the questionnaire distributed. Their email addresses were obtained from the universities websites. Thus, I spent quite a few days identifying the English language lecturers as they were all under different faculties and departments from various universities. Although the questionnaire was distributed to more than 500 recipients, only 93 lecturers returned back with their answers. However, out of the 93 respondents only 72 answered the questionnaire thoroughly, making n=72. This was because the rest 21 only answered the questionnaire halfway, i.e. they answered only the background questions and left the rest of the questions blank. This means that only 14.4% of the total recipients returned their feedback. According to Petchenik and Watermolen (2011), on average, online survey response rates as low as 2% have been reported, and are 11% below telephone and mail surveys. On the other hand, convenience sampling which falls under non-probability sampling strategy was also used in this first stage. The reason why I used this kind of sampling was that it was the least costly in terms of time and money. In this regard, Marshall (1996) explained that convenience sampling is the least rigorous technique involving the selection of the most accessible subjects. Thus, eight participants volunteered to be interviewed by leaving their contact details at the end of the questionnaire. The following are the number of participants in Stage 1 (Table 4.1) and the details of interview participants in Stage 1 (Table 4.2).

Table 4.1   Number of participants in Stage 1

Research instruments	Number of respondents
Questionnaire	72
Interview	8

Table 4.2   Details of interview participants in Stage 1

No	Name	Age	Gender	Region in Malaysia	Years of teaching experience
1	Biah	52	Female	Central	28
2	Mie	54	Male	Central	30
3	Aizal	43	Male	Southern	19
4	Liz	48	Female	Southern	24
5	Din	55	Male	Southern	31
6	Sal	60	Female	Northern	36
7	Chen	32	Female	Central	8
8	Ram	54	Male	Central	30

In the second stage, 24 English language teachers at the university under study attended a workshop on "The introduction to peer observation of teaching exercise". At the end of the workshop, questionnaires were distributed to these teachers in order to understand their understanding and perceptions about peer observation of teaching before and after the workshop. Ten English language teachers volunteered to become participants for the study. Earlier, before I conducted the workshop, I had already sent out emails to my teacher colleagues from my workplace asking for volunteers to participate in my study. In the email, I explained what the study was all about, how it would be conducted, the duration of the work, there would be training given before they can become my participants and the most important thing is their participation in the study would be treated

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with utmost confidentiality. After that, I received replies from eight participants who were all female teachers. These eight participants fell into the opportunistic sampling, which according to Ritchie and Lewis (2003) involves the researcher taking advantage of unforeseen opportunities as they arise during the course of fieldwork. Eight participants can easily make up 4 pairs. Therefore, I labelled the pairs as Pair 1: A and B, Pair 2: C and D, Pair 3: E and F, and Pair 4: G and H. While conducting the workshop, I again announced to the participants that I was still hoping to have at least one pair of male teachers. There were no specific reasons why I requested participation from the male teachers. However, I believe there might be some form of difference in terms of communication or classroom practice that might be unique to this study. I was lucky that two male teachers, after I saw them talking to each other, straight away agreed to become my participants. Therefore, they were labelled as Pair 5: I and J. These teachers were free to decide among themselves who to become their partners as I did not want to interfere or decide who they should work with. This supports the idea that one of the features for peer observation to be successful is by giving staff ownership (Gosling, 2009) as recognition of the teachers' autonomy in which they carry out many of their roles (Abdullah, 1997). The ethnic origin of all ten participants is Malay. Although there was no intention by the researcher to gather participants only from the Malays, having participants from various ethnic origins may have resulted in a different findings. The following are the number of participants in stage 2 (Table 4.3) and the detailed dossiers of the participants (Table 4.4).

Table 4.3   Number of participants in Stage 2

Research instruments	Number of respondents
Questionnaire	24
Interview	8
Observation	10

Table 4.4   Details of peer observation participants in Stage 2

	Participants	Gender	Years of teaching experience	Number of work-place	Some information on teaching experience	Experience of being observed
1	Tey	F	14 years	2	9 years of teaching experience at a famous boarding school located at the east coast of Malaysia as an English teacher and Head of the English language Panel. 5 years of teaching at the university now. She is now assigned as the head of the multimedia lab 2.	While in school, she was observed by her head of department. She was not sure of the purpose but assumed it was related to yearly task achievement progress. She was observed twice at the university. First, by the head of department as part of the university confirmation process for the New Lecturers Foundation Course in 2012, and second, by the Aeronautic Programme Coordinator, i.e. a new and prestigious programme being introduced at the university. She was not sure if the main purpose of the observation were to see the standard of the lecturer who taught the programme, but according to her she was informed by the coordinator that he was there only to observe the students.
2	Zaren	F	8 years	2	7 years of teaching experience at the same famous boarding school as where As was but located at the south of Malaysia. 1 year of teaching at the university now.	While in school, she was observed by the head of the English language unit once in 2009. She said the reason for the observation was to assess her teaching and learning, the methods used to teach in the class, the teaching aids used and the most important thing is as a spot check on the teachers too.

						She has never experience being observed at the university yet.
3	Neem	F	3 years	1	She has no teaching experience before. Teaching at the university is her first job after graduation.	Although new, she was observed by the head of department twice in a semester. The reason of the observations was to fulfil the requirement of a basic training course for the new and young teachers (Basic Course in Teaching and Learning). Apart from the above, she also informed about her experience being observed for three times during her teaching practical during her study times. She said the purpose of these observations was for grading system.
4	Nur	F	9 years	2	She had one year of teaching experience at school. 8 years of teaching at the university now. She is assigned as the head of language lab 1.	She had never been observed while at school, but at the university she had experienced being observed by the head of department for the requirement of the Basic Course in Teaching and Learning.
5	Ita	F	11½ years	2	6 months of teaching experience at a private university. 11 years of teaching experience at the university now. She is assigned as the Head of Language Lab 2.	She had been observed twice at two different courses at the university where she is currently working. First, in the Basic Course in Teaching and Learning, and second, in the New Lecturers Foundation Course which was meant for job confirmation.
6	Nore	F	11 years	2	5 months of teaching experience at a private university. She has spent more	She experienced being observed when she attended the New Lecturers Foundation Course, also for

					than 10 years at the university now. She was appointed as the Head of the English Language Unit for four consecutive years.	confirmation purposes.
7	Tim	F	1½ years	3	Although she has only 1½ years of teaching experience, she has worked at 3 different institutions. 2 weeks of teaching experience at two different private institutions. She has been teaching for about more than a year at the university now.	She has never had the experience of being observed before.
8	Riea	F	1 year and 3 months	2	3 months of teaching experience at a public university before. She has spent about a year at the university now.	She has experienced being observed at both workplaces. At the previous university, she was observed three times by her mentor. She claimed that she benefited a lot from these observations where the main purpose was not only to improve her skills in teaching but also to discuss her strengths and any improvements needed. At the current university, she was observed for the Basic Course in Teaching and Learning which she attended. The reason of the observations was to fulfil the requirement of a basic training course for the new and young teachers
9	Meedan	M	14 years	3	4 years of teaching experience at two different schools; 2 years at a private school, and another 2 years at a national school. 10 years of teaching at	At the university, he was observed by the head of department for the New Lecturers Foundation Course, meant for job confirmation.

					the university now. He is now the head of the Centre for Academic Development (CAD), the centre among which responsible for the teacher teaching assessment.	
10	Azi	M	3 years	2	A year of teaching experience in a national school. 2 years of teaching at the current workplace now.	He had never been observed while serving at both workplaces. However, when talking about observation, he explained that we had gone through several observations during his study years at the universities both in Australia and Malaysia particularly during his practicum. He was aware that the observations were done by his lecturers for the purpose of the syllabus.

*For the reason of this study, I considered the teachers with fewer than 5 years of teaching experience as new and less experienced teachers, while, those with more than 5 years as senior and experienced teachers.

**Note: I have been addressing the respondents as English teachers and English lecturers. In my context, there is a slight difference between the two posts. A teacher (or a language teacher as the administrative department tends to address them) is a person who is appointed to work with the university with the minimum requirement, i.e. a Bachelor degree. On the other hand, a lecturer is a person who is appointed to work at the university with at least a Master's degree. An obvious difference between the two is the workload given to teach, i.e. teachers have higher workloads compared to lecturers. This is because lecturers have to concentrate on research and publications as part of their key performance indicator as well as teaching.

4.5   Data Collection Strategies

In the current study, the quantitative questionnaire and the qualitative data from interviews were collected and analysed in Stage 1. Some information collected in Stage 1 informed the design of the study in Stage 2. Thus, in Stage 2, another different quantitative questionnaire was collected and analysed, and future qualitative data from interviews were collected and analysed. This is clearly illustrated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5   An overview of the data collection methods – research instruments and participants

Stage	Research questions	Research instruments	Participants
Stage 1	1) What are the current practices of English language teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education? 2) What are English language teachers' experiences of teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?	1. Questionnaire 2. Interview	72 8
Stage 2	3) What are Malaysian English language teachers' views about introducing peer observation into the system? 4) What are the possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation?	1. Questionnaire 2. Observation (Post-observation meeting) 3. Post-observation interview	24 10 8

All the methods used to collect data in the current study will be discussed in turn below.

4.5.1 Questionnaire

I decided to use questionnaire as one of the methods of my data collection especially for the beginning of Stage 1 and Stage 2. This is because, according to Brown (2001), questionnaires are well suited to gathering data once the issues, research questions, and specific survey questions have been clearly outlined. They are cheap and fast, useful for large-scale studies, and anonymous. Also, questionnaires allow for controlling bias, the respondents can complete them in their own time, they are standardized in format across all respondents, and they can easily cover a wide geographic area. In Stage 1, the questionnaire was distributed online, while in Stage 2, the questionnaire was distributed to all participants upon completion of the workshop. Among the benefits of conducting online survey are that it offers so much potential for so little cost, far more than

other methods of collecting survey data (Dillman, 2000) and participation is thought to be easy for frequent computer users (Israel, 2011). In the following section, I will provide a detailed explanation of the steps taken in designing, piloting, and distributing the questionnaire.

Designing the questionnaire

<u>Stage 1</u>

In devising the questions, I drew on two main sources, particularly my own experiences and questions addressed by other studies in the field which I adapted to suit the Malaysian context. The questionnaire contains both closed and open questions. Closed questions are quick to complete and straightforward to code (e.g. for computer analysis), and do not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate respondents are, whereas open-ended questions are more useful if the possible answers are unknown or the questionnaire is exploratory (Cohen et al., 2011). The latter kind of questions also enable the respondents to answer as much as they wish, and are particularly suitable for investigating complex issues, to which simple answers cannot be provided. Most of the questions consisted of Likert scale questions ranging from 1 to 5. The bigger the number, the stronger emphasis on the answer and the smaller the number the lesser emphasize on the answer: for instance, 5 for 'strongly agree' and 1 for 'strongly disagree'. However, I also provided the respondents with a middle choice, providing 3 as 'neutral'. The advantage of using a Likert scale is that it can be easily understood and it is the most universal method in collecting survey responses. Robson (2002) suggested that the strength of Likert scale is that its simplicity and ease of use.

Designing the questionnaire was not easy. This is because even though I had gone through teacher evaluation before, I still struggled with the questions to ask as I was too focused on the common practices at my workplace, i.e. using student rating questionnaire. Therefore, I did a lot of readings in the literature especially on teacher evaluation and peer observation and then tried to relate the issues to the questions which I constructed. In order to design the survey questions, I first

drew a table which consists of the wh- questions and the list to consider, mainly focusing as a start to questions such as:

Who – who could be my participants;

What – what might be the relevant questions; and

How – how will the questionnaire look (the layout and design).

I first divided the questionnaire into 2 main sections namely Section A and Section B. Section A is for demographic questions and Section B is for questions on teacher evaluation as well as peer observation. There were 4 questions in Section A and 23 questions in Section B (see Appendix 3).

<u>Stage 2</u>

In this stage, the questionnaire was designed with the notion that the respondents had obtained some background information on peer observation exercise as explained in the workshop. Some of the questions formulated were adapted from Abdullah (1997), who conducted her study on peer observation for professional development at a university in Malaysia. The questions were based on various studies compiling the possible benefits and challenges of peer observation as well as gathering the views of the English language teachers on the introduction of the exercise. I also included some new questions relevant to the current study. Similarly, the questionnaire in Stage 1 and Stage 2 consisted of closed and open questions, constructed using Likert scale. Open-ended question was asked at the end of each question for the respondents to provide their point of views. An example of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4.

Piloting the questionnaire

I piloted the survey questions for Stage 1 with my 10 English lecturer colleagues at different universities in Malaysia. Some suggestions were given to change several questions as they may cause confusion to respondents such as questions which may have two reasonable answers and also the issue of labelling (whether

to use the word 'undecided' or 'neutral' on the Likert scale). Three colleagues recommended that I take out a question from the set as it was a bit confusing and may cause the respondents to leave it unanswered. After revisiting the questions and removing a question from Section B, which made it now left with only 22 questions, I once again sent the survey questions to two experts from my university for a final check. After receiving their approval that the questionnaire looked fine, I had the confidence to distribute it to my respondents. Conversely, the questionnaire for Stage 2 was given to the two experts again for their opinion and their feedback helped in having wider scope of peer observation exercise.

The final questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of two sections: 1) background information (four questions), and 2) questions on teacher evaluation (22 questions). Some questions are multiple choice questions structured with only one option to be chosen, while there are also some open-ended questions meant to look for any supporting answers to the multiple-choice questions. A sample of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 3.

In the background information section, questions such as gender, length of teaching experience, length of employment at the current institution and the teachers' highest academic qualification were asked. The section of the questionnaire was developed to gather information on various aspects of the teachers' background.

In the main section, questions on teacher evaluation were asked. Questions such as whether or not teacher evaluation was practised at the university where the respondents were teaching, what they think of the purposes of teacher evaluation, when evaluations are carried out, who is responsible for carrying out the evaluation and many others were posted. Some questions on peer observation were also asked to find out the respondents' knowledge on the practice and lastly, an open-ended section as an invitation for them to take part in an interview. The main purpose of this section of the questionnaire was to elicit the respondents'

views and experiences of teacher evaluation as well as peer observation in ELT in Malaysian Tertiary Education.

Distributing the questionnaire

<u>Stage 1</u>

The questionnaire was distributed using the SurveyMonkey software application. SurveyMonkey is an online survey tool which helps to distribute questionnaire, collect and analyse responses. I piloted the questionnaire on SurveyMonkey with 12 colleagues to determine whether it was easy or difficult for them to answer and whether using the application worked. My colleagues responded that the questionnaire could be answered easily and needed only a few minutes spent to answer all the questions. All of my colleagues are EL teachers with more than eight years of experience in teaching.

A cover letter was prepared to accompany the questionnaire. The cover letter stated the purpose of the survey and how much time would be expected to be spent in answering the questionnaire with the hope to receive quick feedback from the respondents. When both were ready, I sent them to more than 500 English language teachers at the universities around Malaysia. After a month, an email reminder was sent to those who had not yet responded. After the second email, I received 93 responses from nine universities which I considered a large enough sample to provide sufficient data from which to draw some conclusions. The information obtained from this questionnaire was at the same time very important for me as the researcher, as it was used to inform the content for the workshop. Figure 4.3 shows the number of responses gathered.

Figure 4.3   Number of responses to the survey question

As mentioned earlier, only 72 respondents completely answered my questionnaire. I was left with curiosity concerning why 21 respondents answered the questionnaire partially. A colleague sent me an email mentioning that she had attempted to answer the questions, but once she completed the background section, the whole questionnaire closed and a 'Thank you for your response' note appeared on her screen. Thus, the total number considered in this study is only 72, i.e. n=72.

Stage 2

In this stage, I distributed the after-workshop questionnaire to all my workshop participants. They spent around 15 to 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire before it was returned back to me. I was able to collect all the questionnaires from 24 respondents (n=24).

4.5.2 Interview – Semi-structured Interview

Kvale (2007) emphasizes that the purpose of an interview is to obtain descriptions of the world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena. In addition, Miller and Fredericks (1994) stressed that one of the advantages of an interview is the possibility of accommodating spontaneity as well as preconceived and more tightly structured aspects. A structured questionnaire does not provide the researcher with the opportunity to clarify questions or responses as compared to an interview. This is also supported by Cohen et al. (2011: 349):

"Interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In these senses the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable."

Interviews are relatively flexible and personal, and provide relatively rich data in either written or spoken forms, or both. This flexibility allows the interviewer to explore new avenues of opinion in ways that a questionnaire does not; thus interviews seem better suited to exploratory tasks (Brown, 2001).

I also needed to decide on the type of interview most suited for use in this study. Lichtman (2014) asserts that there are four types of interview that are commonly used in data collection; i) the structured or standardized interview, ii) the semi-structured or guided interview, iii) the unstructured or in-depth interview, and iv) the casual or unplanned interview. For the purpose of this study, I chose a semi-structured interview. This is because this type of interview may not only allow the interviewer to lead the participants to a focused and systematic inquiry to the topic, but also provides the participants with some ease, freedom and flexibility in expressing their views and experiences. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) asserted that a semi-structured interview has a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as suggested questions. Yet at the same time, there remains openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the story told by the subjects.

Designing the interview questions

In designing the interview questions, I took into account two stages involved in the current study; Stage 1 and Stage 2. The interview questions for Stage 1 were designed based on the research question 1 and 2, and the questions for Stage 2 were designed based on the research questions 3 and 4. The whole process will be explained in depth in the following sub-sections.

<u>Stage 1</u>

In this stage, I devised my own interview questions, as well as adapting some from Richards and Lockhart (1994). I also consulted two experts from my university for additional input. With my years of experience having gone through teacher evaluation at the university where I worked had helped in figuring out many of the questions. I came out with five main questions followed by several sub-questions and they were constructed based on issues regarding teacher evaluation at the university, its purposes, frequency of evaluation, people responsible for each evaluation, teachers' feeling of being evaluated and many others. A sample of interview questions may be found in Appendix 5. After several times the set of questions being checked by the experts from my university, it was later approved and could be used for interviews.

<u>Stage 2</u>

In this stage, the first step in designing the interview questions was to think of the research participants as the observer and also as the observed. I devised slightly different schedules: one for the teacher who would be the observer in the peer observation and one for the teacher who would be observed. Therefore, the first thing I did was to divide a page into two with a line across the page. On the left hand side of the line I wrote the heading as "For the observer" while on the right hand side, I wrote "For the observed". The article "Teacher development through peer observation" by Richards and Lockhart (1991) is a very useful article as it listed some sample of possible questions to be asked of an observer and an observed. I consulted again the two experts on peer observation and requested their assistance for construct validity.

I then piloted the interview schedule with eight English teacher colleagues in Malaysia by email. My colleagues responded positively, telling me that the questions could be understood easily. The interview questions may be found in Appendix 6.

Conducting the interviews

<u>Stage 1</u>

In this stage, I interviewed eight participants from different institutions around Malaysia. Face to face interviews were carried out with several participants from my workplace, while telephone interviews and online interviews were carried out with the participants outside of my workplace. Telephone interviews offer a kind of compromise in the sense that they are confidential and also less time-consuming because the interviewer need not spend time travelling to reach to the respondents (Brown, 2001). Meanwhile, the online interviews which I conducted were based on asynchronous online interview, i.e. using email. According to King and Horrocks (2010: 87), the growing popularity of email as a medium for qualitative research is because it is "easy to understand, it is widely available and highly familiar to many people, is simple to use, and of course enables researchers to reach potential participants worldwide". This kind of interview is known as a "remote interview" (King and Horrocks, 2010: 79).

<u>Stage 2</u>

In this stage, interviews were conducted with only eight of my participants after they completed the post peer observation meetings. Permission was obtained from the participants to voice record the session only for the purposes of the study. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the two other teachers were unable to attend my face-to-face interview and requested that an online interview be conducted. These two teachers were those who volunteered to participate in the study when they attended my workshop on peer observation earlier. However, after the interview questions were sent to these two participants, they failed to return back to me, although two email reminders were sent reminding them how valuable their responses were to my study. These Stage 2 interview sessions were intended to investigate the English teacher participants' views about introducing peer observation in Malaysian universities and their thoughts on how this might be affected, as well as what challenges might be encountered.

4.5.3 Workshop

A one day workshop was conducted in September 2012 with all the English
language lecturers at the university at which Stage 2 of this study was conducted.
Details of the workshop will be explained according to the following: the objectives
of the workshop, issues related to its preparation, administration, and constraints.

Objectives

The main objectives of the workshop were: i) to introduce the lecturers about the
practice of peer observation of teaching, ii) to discuss on the best practices on
how to carry out the exercise, iii) to discuss the most effective ways to provide
feedback to colleagues, and iv) to explain the advantages of being reflective.

Preparation

In terms of permission and location, I will discuss in detail in the 4.8.1 Getting
Access section regarding the issue of getting the approval to conduct my study at
the university. In terms of permission to conduct the peer observation workshop,
an email was sent to the Head of Department of Language Studies requesting to
conduct this workshop with all the English lecturers. The idea was well accepted
and I started to prepare the working paper outlining details about the needed
participants, suggested suitable location, and the tentative programme for her
consideration and approval. She forwarded my emails to the Head of the Centre
for Academic Development (CAD), the department in-charge for professional
development of all academic staff. I was informed by the head of department that
the teachers were not allowed to take leave, as the CAD has made it an obligation
for the teachers to attend the course as a training development programme and
they were given eight hours to be accumulated in their training hour session.

Before the actual workshop took place, I did a lot of reading and went through
many websites on peer observation of teaching. This was done to learn about
how peer observation workshops were conducted and how content was handled
at different universities in the UK, such as Imperial College London, the

Nottingham University, Lancaster University and many others, and in Australia, such as in the University of Western Australia, University of Wollongong, the University of Melbourne, and many more. From these workshops, I tried to adapt some of the contents as well as the forms used and tried to suit them to my own context. I was unable to pilot the workshop as I was far away from my home country. However, after I had outlined the whole workshop content together with all the accompanying forms and checklists, I had them gone through with two experts in the area of peer observation. These two experts were able to provide me with meaningful insights on what to include and what not to be included into the workshop. For example, one of the helpful suggestions given was to move all activities from before the lunch break. This was to enable me to provide the participants with appropriate information about the peer observation of teaching exercises before any activities could take place. The content of the one-day workshop can be seen in Appendix 7.

Administration

The workshop was administered based on the tentative programme. It was an interactive workshop where I encouraged questions from the participants and I often triggered them with questions about classroom observation. I used PowerPoint slides for my presentation and showed them some documents especially samples of observation forms. There were two activities where I showed them two video clips of classroom teaching. These video clips were of two different Malaysian English teachers teaching at two different universities. The participants were divided into small groups of 4 to 5 members. They were requested to identify the aspects of observation which they wish the observer to observe in Activity 1, whilst, in Activity 2, they were requested to list as many aspects of observation as possible. This workshop emerged from my engagement with the literature on teacher evaluation/appraisal and classroom observation.

The workshop was held when students were on their semester break and teachers were informed beforehand by CAD. Although teachers were informed about the accumulated training hours, I still had the problem of attendance from the teacher participants. Some turned up throughout the session, some could only be seen in the morning, while, some only turned up after lunch time. Thus, there was a problem to gather all the participants since the workshop was carried out at their own convenience and space which enabled them to "disappear" at their own workplace.

4.5.4 Observations

Mason (2002: 89) argues that data which is accumulated from a good observation is "rich, rounded, local and specific". Robson (2002) claimed that what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check. He also argued that observation, as a data collection method, provide several advantages. First, it is a very direct way to collect data as the researcher does not need to ask about the feelings and views. Second, data collected via this method can be used to complement data from other research techniques like interviews and field notes. Third, it is seen as the best way to capture 'real life' events.

In this study, I have conducted unstructured observations. An unstructured observation operates within the agenda of the participants, i.e. "responsive to what it finds and therefore, by definition, is honest to the situation as it unfolds" (Cohen et al., 2011). In other words, Punch (2009) asserted that researcher does not use predetermined categories and classifications, but makes observations in a more natural open-ended way. Therefore, this method was specifically useful to answer the third and fourth research questions, which investigated the English language teachers' views of peer evaluation and the possibilities and challenges in introducing peer evaluation.

In relation to the procedure to carry out the study, I adopted the three stages of peer observation process as suggested by Bovill (2010) at the Learning and

Teaching Centre, University of Glasgow, and Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2004). These three stages of peer observation are also practiced at many universities around the UK such as University of Reading, University of East Anglia, University of Warwick, and Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh; University College Dublin in Ireland and University of Queensland in Australia. The teacher participants were briefed about these stages in the workshop held earlier. The stages which vary in lengths included: 1) the pre-observation meeting; 2) observation of teaching; and 3) the post-observation meeting. The role of the teacher participants consisting of an observer and an observed teacher (each pair) and my role as the researcher are detailed out in Table 4.6 below based on each stage involved.

Table 4.6   The three stages of peer observation of teaching and the roles of the observers, the observed teacher, and the researcher

Stage	Details	The role of the teacher observer and the teacher observed	My role as the researcher
1	The pre-observation meeting	In this meeting, both the observer and the observed met and discussed how the observation was to be organised and the feedback to be sought. Important arrangements such as time, venue, duration of lesson, context of the lesson as well as the ground rules for the observation were discussed. The observed outlined the areas of his or her teaching practice for feedback.	I was not present in this meeting.
2	The observation of teaching	The observer came into the observed teacher's classroom to conduct the observation. He or she came with a checklist or a form on the focus of observation. The observed taught based on the agreement in the discussion in Stage 1.	I was present in the classroom and was a complete observer, i.e. I maintained distance from the observed events to avoid influencing those observed (Flick, 2006). My presence was to see the classroom condition as well to see the sitting position of the observer who acted as a non-participant in this observation. I made some field notes for my own references.
3	The post-observation meeting	This meeting was held as soon as possible after the observation session. At this stage, the observed teacher's task was to critically examine his or her own teaching with an open mind and to tentatively plan for the next lesson. Meanwhile, the observer's task was to help clarify and build upon the observed teacher's understandings of the behaviours and events that occurred in the classroom.	I was also present in this meeting and again was a complete observer. A tape recorder was placed with the consent of the participants to record their discussion. I made some field notes for my own references especially pertaining any body movements or facial expression of the participants which could not be recorded through voice record.

I undertook two different types of observation:

1) <u>Classroom observation</u>

First, I observed what happened in the classroom when the observer observed the teacher colleague teaching. My presence in the classroom was as a non-participant observer, observing what the observer observed and what was happening in the classroom during the observation and I did not involve at all in the teaching. Non-participant observation is where data are collected by observing behaviour without interacting with participants (Flick, 2006). I conducted ten classroom observations and each session lasted for one teaching session, i.e. 50 minutes. In each class session, I made a note of the observations on the form created earlier.

2) <u>Observation of meeting between observer and observed teacher</u>

Second, I observed the discussion between the two peer teachers talking about the classroom observation which was conducted earlier. Again, I acted as a non-participant observer. This happened in the post-observation meeting. With the consent of the participants, each session was voice recorded so that I was able to listen to their discussion repeatedly for my data analysis. I conducted ten post-observation meetings, and each meeting lasted for about 20 to 30 minutes.

During the classroom observations, each peer observer was provided with a form to record comments related to the agreed elements to be observed (Table 4.6). I had a short session with all the ten participants before the observation sessions took place to brief them on what to complete and what to look for in the observation. At this point, I distributed inform consent forms (Appendix 2) to all participants for them to read and sign, indicating their willingness to participate. The observation schedule is best illustrated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Classroom observation and post-observation meeting schedule

Observation	No	Date	Observer	To be Observed	Duration	Descriptions
Classroom Observation	1	27/9/2012	**A**	**B**	50 min	Checklist Field notes
	2	8/10/2012	**B**	**A**	50 min	Video recorded Checklist Field notes
	3	26/9/2012	**C**	**D**	50 min	Checklist Field notes
	4	27/9/2012	**D**	**C**	50 min	Checklist Field notes
	5	3/10/2012	**E**	**F**	50 min	Checklist Field notes
	6	4/10/2012	**F**	**E**	50 min	Checklist Field notes
	7	15/10/2012	**G**	**H**	50 min	Checklist Field notes
	8	18/10/2012	**H**	**G**	50 min	Checklist Field notes
	9	4/10/2012	**I**	**J**	50 min	Video recorded Checklist Field notes
	10	10/10/2012	**J**	**I**	50 min	Checklist Field notes
Post-observation meeting	1 & 2	9/10/2012	**A** **B**	**B** **A**	40 min	Recording
	3 & 4	8/10/2012	**C** **D**	**D** **C**	30 min	Recording
	5 & 6	5/10/2012	**E** **F**	**F** **E**	35 min	Recording
	7 & 8	12/10/2012	**G** **H**	**H** **G**	40 min	Recording
	9 & 10	11/10/2012	**I** **J**	**J** **I**	50 min	Recording

Table 4.7 demonstrates that each observation took up about 50 minutes, i.e. 1 class lesson. The observers are labelled as A, C, E, G and I, meanwhile, those observed are labelled as B, D, F, H and J. This means each person had his or her own role each time or each slot allocated. As an example, in the classroom observation no. 1, A came into B's classroom to observe her teaching, and in the classroom observation no. 2, it was B's turn to observe A's teaching. The same process went on with the other pairs. Observations were conducted on essential elements of the observed such as teaching methods, classroom management, students' and teacher's behaviour, teaching aids, and students' in-class response.

After each pair had conducted the observation (of observing and being observed), both were invited for a post-observation meeting held at a room which was booked by the researcher. Here, each person took turns to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of his or her partner's teaching. As an example, A talked about B's teaching while at the same time B was able to react to A's comments. Thus, these were amongst the crucial elements to be observed and analysed.

Data from the observation was recorded in two ways. First, I made field notes in the observation sessions. I jotted down whatever I thought important in each observation. As a general rule, according to Lofland and Lofland (2006), field notes should be made as immediately as possible. Second, in the post-peer observation meetings, I also made field notes while voice recording the session. I was aware that using field notes as a means to support the use of voice recorder could help me as the researcher to better understand the complex process of the observation. In addition, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) claimed that field notes provide an opportunity to record what researchers see and hear outside the immediate context of the observation and can record feelings about the dynamic of data collection or ideas for data analysis. Field notes and checklists are useful means of data which were used to inform the possible questions for interview.

My role as an observer

In conducting an observation, a researcher may serve as either an active observer or a passive observer. However, according to Gold (1958), as cited in Flick (2006), in an observation, there are actually four roles of an observer among which are; 1) the participation observer, 2) the observer as participant, 3) the complete participant, and 4) the complete observer. First, the participation observer acts as a member in an observed group in which he or she functions not only as in physical presence but tries to establish some roles in the group. Second, the observer as participant would mainly focus on observing participants for a brief period of time to enable him or her to carry out structured interview. Third, the complete participant observer often has an active role while being involving in his or her observation and taking part actively in any activities. Finally, the complete observer plays an overt role and never gets involved in any sorts of activities of the participants observed.

In this study, I took the role of a complete observer in both observations, be it in the classroom observation or in the post-observation meeting. The teachers' teaching and students' reaction in the classroom, and also the teacher-teacher interactions in the meeting were the main focus to what went on in the observations. To actively get involved in the classroom activities and also in the post-observation meetings was almost impossible for me as the researcher, as this would have caused distraction to the participants. This is what Wragg (1999) described as the *Hawthorne effect,* which means that any influences or improvements made by participants under study were the effect of the experimental conditions tried by the researchers.

Checklist for observation

Designing the observation checklist

Several checklists and observation forms were prepared for use of the peer observers while undertaking the classroom observation. These documents were

introduced to all the workshop participants in the workshop previously conducted by the researcher at which the ten participants were also present.

First, before a peer observation of teaching could take place, a checklist on the "things to do" was prepared for the participants. It was a form which consists of two columns where the first column listed a reminder for the participants on the things to do mainly before, during and after the observation. This also included the list of accompanying forms to be taken together in each activity. While in the column next to each item was a blank column with the heading "Action", where the participants would jot down notes. Second, a list of aspects to observe was prepared as a guide for the observers to observe their colleagues' teaching. This included themes such as teaching methods, classroom management, teaching aids, students' team or pair work and teacher-student interaction. There have been many suggestions on aspects to observe for classroom observation in the literature review section in 3.3.3, such as those suggested by Richards and Lockhart (1994), Wajnryb (1992), and Flanders (1961, 1970). These suggestions need serious consideration by teachers before any observation can take place because they depend on the educational contexts and cultures. These lists were made available to the observers as a guide for their observation.

Regarding the peer observation form, I provided the participants with four different forms and let them decide on the best form to use based on their own preferences. The forms included the one which I adopted from one of the universities in the UK which I downloaded from the university website and three other forms which were adapted from Bubb and Hoare (2001). The reasons why these forms were selected were because they gave the participants a variety, i.e. different aspects of observation by different teachers, and also by looking at the different forms this might provide the teachers with different ideas on how to approach their observations. As mentioned earlier, four different forms were selected for this study; i.e. 1) Session Observation Record – a form adopted from the University of Exeter (https://as.exeter.ac.uk/aspire/peerdialoguescheme/); 2) lesson observation assessment – because it has a checklist on judgement to mark

which was easy for the observer to complete as well as a space for observers to provide an overview of the observation; 3) lesson observation sheet with prompts – because it included the prompts which were adapted from the agreed focus of the lesson, and 4) strengths and weaknesses form – because it provided a clear picture of the observer's judgement of each claim. These three forms (forms number 2, 3 and 4) were adopted from Bubb and Hoare (2001).

4.6   Research Site

The first phase of the study involved questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were distributed via online to more than 500 English language teachers at nine universities throughout Malaysia. Locations of these universities were regionalised according to central, southern, northern and east coast regions of the Peninsular Malaysia, and West Malaysia including the states of Sabah and Sarawak.

The second phase of the study took place at a Malaysian Technical University in a suburban area in Johor. Johor is located in the south of Malaysia; i.e. about 260km from Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. All observations were carried out in the classrooms, lecture halls, and language offices located at the university. Permission to use the facilities at the university was obtained once the study was authorised.

4.7   Data Analysis

Closed items in the questionnaire were analysed quantitatively and open-ended items, interviews, and observations were qualitatively analysed.

All quantitative data were analysed using two methods, the SurveyMonkey Package, a web-based survey programme, for the questionnaire collected at Stage 1; and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which is a well-known data management programme, for the questionnaire collected at Stage 2. The qualitative data were analysed using exploratory content analysis which, according to Lichtman (2014: 337), some researchers are drawn to

because "it has a structure and is more in keeping with the position of looking for rigor and acceptance". According to Braun and Clarke (2006), qualitative data analysis consists of six phases: i) familiarising oneself with the data; ii) generating initial codes; iii) searching for themes; iv) reviewing themes; v) defining and naming themes; and iv) producing the report. There have been many other resources which have provided useful information pertaining to data analysis such as those by Lichtman (2014), Ritchie and Lewis (2003), Radnor (2002) and Miles and Huberman (1994). Although there are many ways of analysing qualitative data, I found the one suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) to be the most appropriate method for application in my study as they provided six sequential steps which made my analysis work more systematic. Apart from this, the explanation they provided was clear and simple to understand. Unlike Miles and Huberman's (1994) three processes of data analysis which do not follow sequential steps and can happen at the same time and over and over again. Table 4.8 provides an overview of the data analysis methods involved in the current study.

Table 4.8   An overview of the data analysis methods

Stage	Research instrument	Number of data	Data analysis method
Stage 1	Questionnaire	72	SurveyMonkey
	Interview	8	Transcribed and coded for themes
Stage 2	Questionnaire	24	SPSS
	Observation (Post-observation meeting)	10	Transcribed and coded for themes
	Post-observation interview	8	Transcribed and coded for themes

An in-depth explanation of the data analysis approaches used in this study will be included in the following sections.

4.7.1 Questionnaire

<u>Stage 1</u>

In this stage, the questionnaire which consisted of open-ended and closed items, was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The SurveyMonkey Package provides an automatic calculation for the frequencies and percentages of the responses for each question listed. Therefore, the calculation of the question results could be of use immediately to describe the findings. An example of the analysis of one question is shown in the following screenshot copy below.
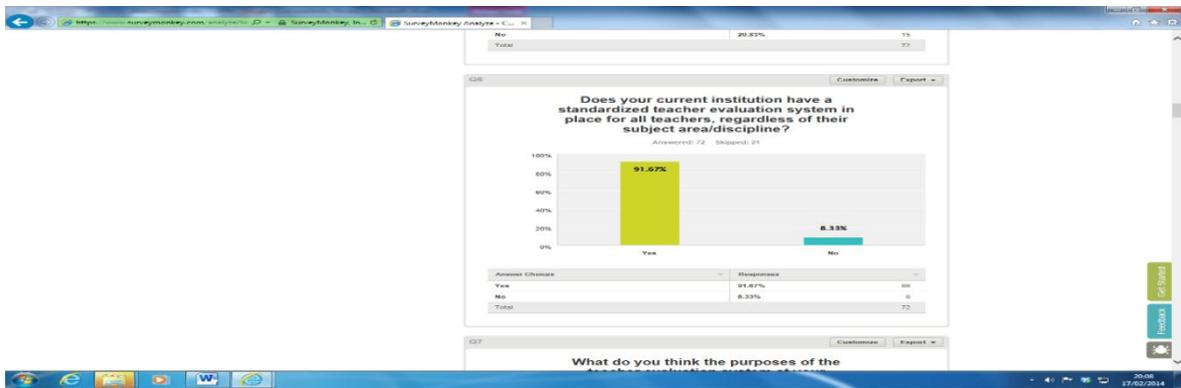
Figure 4.4   Screenshot of a sample SurveyMonkey close-ended question analysis

Responses to the open-ended items in the questionnaire were analysed qualitatively. However, the SurveyMonkey Package assisted in the qualitative analysis stage by listing the responses of each item in one place for ease of data gathering such as shown in Figure 4.5. These responses were analysed based on the themes and sub-themes analysed in the interview and observation analysis.

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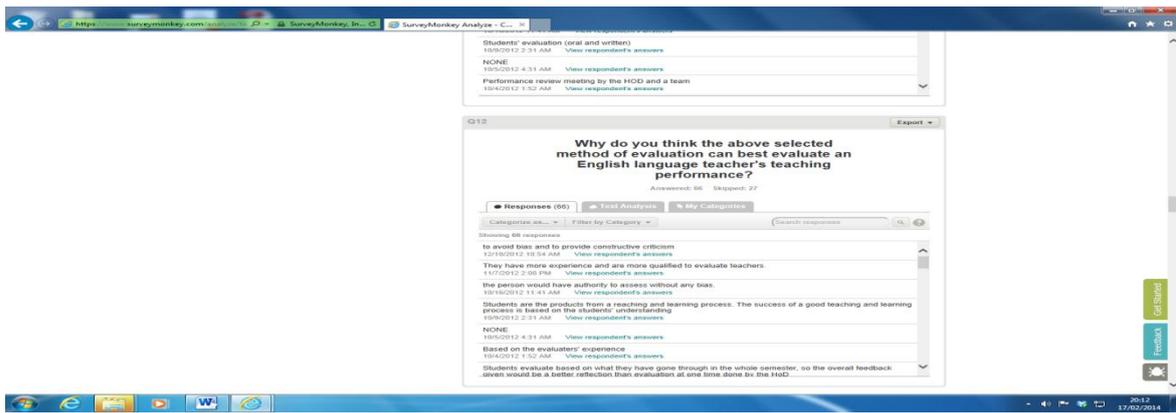
Figure 4.5   Screenshot of a sample SurveyMonkey open-ended item analysis

<u>Stage 2</u>

In this after-workshop questionnaire, analysis of the close-ended items of the questionnaire distributed after the workshop was carried out using the SPSS software. This was done by first entering the identification of respondents in the Data view in SPSS software, in this case they were identified as numbers – 1, 2, 3, and so on until 24 to refer to 24 participants. Next, in the Variable view, I inserted all the respondents' responses. These responses were coded according to numbers 1 to 5, as 1 represents "Strongly disagree" to 5 "Strongly agree". Once these were completed, frequencies and percentages were calculated and the data presented in tables, as shown in Chapter 5.

Apart from having the advantages provided by SurveyMonkey in terms of analysis, using SPSS also helped in many ways. All data obtained from SurveyMonkey was transferred into SPSS. SPSS was used to analyse the data to look at the mean and the standard deviation of the responses by the respondents. Many reasons appear to support the usage of this statistical package. One of the greatest advantages of using SPSS, according to Bryman and Cramer (2001: 15), is that "it enables you to score and to analyse quantitative data very quickly and in many ways." In addition, Pallant (2005: xv) explained that "SPSS is an enormously powerful data analysis package that can handle very complex statistical procedures."

The questionnaire data which will be presented in the data analysis and research findings chapter later can be identified from the letter Q. The use of the letter Q followed by a number, for example Q1, refers to the questionnaire answers provided by respondent 1. Since there were 2 stages in the data collection which used questionnaire as explained earlier, these data will be classified according to the stages which can be clearly illustrated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9   **Analysis of questionnaire data identified according to the number of the respondents and the stages involved**

Key	Refers to
(Q1/Stage1)	The questionnaire answers provided by respondent 1 for data collected at Stage 1
(Q1/Stage2)	The questionnaire answers provided by respondent 1 for data collected at Stage 1

4.7.2 Interviews

Data from the interviews could not be extracted until they were transcribed. This was not a simple task. The interviews were listened repeatedly as there were some constraints such as noise distraction as well as inconsistent voice tone and pace of the respondents. This is because some of the interviews were conducted at the respondents' houses, so voices from children playing and people talking in the house could also be heard. The interviews were fully transcribed and analysed according to the six phases of thematic analysis, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), as explained below:

Phase 1: Familiarising myself with my data

I listened to the interviews and typed them in the Microsoft Word document. Frequent listening to the interviews/data made me familiar with the data. All interview data were transcribed verbatim (samples of transcribed interview can be seen in Appendix 8 and 9 in which Appendix 8 illustrates an example of

transcribed interview for Stage 1 and Appendix 9 illustrates an example of transcribed interview for Stage 2). This was done while I was still in Malaysia. However, I was unable to transcribe all interviews while in Malaysia. Those transcribed there were shown to the respective respondents for validation purposes (Radnor, 2002). Due to time constraint, ten interviews were transcribed here in the UK and were sent back to the respondents via email. The respondents checked their transcripts and confirmed that the message they wished to convey was correct.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Once the transcripts were returned back to me, I began to analyse the data by looking for initial codes. This was done by first putting each interview transcribed in a table which consists of 2 columns; i.e. in the first column, I placed the interview transcription and in the next column, I left it blank for codification purposes (Appendix 8). This was done for ease of generating the codes by analysing the interviews line by line. This is, according to Gibbs (2007), the most common recommended approach as a first step of going through the transcript. One of the advantages of doing line by line coding is that it forces a researcher to pay close attention to what the respondent is actually saying and to contrast codes that reflect their experience of the world. My initial coding work was first done manually, using pen and paper. This is because I feel more comfortable to have a hardcopy of data with different colours. After doing so on all the transcripts, I typed all the codes generated into the Microsoft Word document again. Using the word-processing programme was easy, as it allowed me to cut and paste lines or chunks of data.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

At this point, I started to think of appropriate themes for the codes which were generated earlier. The use of different colours for the categorisation of codes has made it easier for me to refer to different themes and sub-themes. However, the task was a bit challenging whenever two codes could fit into two different themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Reading and re-reading the data enabled me to check on codes and data chunks which could fit into two different themes. When two codes or sub-codes did not fit in the initial categorisation, emerging themes appeared. At this stage, the thematic 'map' became more apparent.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

Once I was clear about the whole 'map' of my analysis, I constantly refined each theme so to generate clear definitions and names for each theme. This is what Braun and Clarke (2006) deemed "the overall story of the analysis tells".

Phase 6: Producing the report

Finally, I arrived at the writing up stage of the whole analysis. Here, I tried to relate back to the data analysed to my research questions and literature.

The interview data which will be presented in the data analysis and research findings chapter later can be identified from the name of the respondents given at the end of their quotes. Next to their names were the stages in which they involved. This can be clearly illustrated in the following Table 4.10.

Table 4.10   Analysis of interview data identified according to the number of the participants and the stages involved

Key	Refers to
(Biah/Int.Stage1)	Biah is the interviewee at Stage 1
(Tey/Int.Stage2)	Tey is the interviewee at Stage 2

4.7.3 Observations and Field Notes

Similar to the analysis methods used to analyse interviews, I also undertook thematic analysis to analyse data obtained from my observation and field notes. In

Appendix 10, I provided a sample of the transcribed post-observation discussion. The analysis of the observation data was conducted in six steps. Firstly, I wrote up the field notes which included my own reflections obtained from the classroom observations as well as the post peer observation meetings. Secondly, as the post-observation meetings were audio-recorded, all the data were first transcribed and typed into the Microsoft Words document. Constant listening and reading of the transcriptions helped me become familiar with the data. Thirdly, I created a table consisting of three columns. The first column is the transcription of the observation, the second column is the filed notes, and the third column is where I just left it blank for codification purposes. Next, I included all the field notes wherever necessary into the second column of the table. After that, I began to generate initial codes to the data by doing them manually, i.e. pen and paper. After the manual coding was completed, I transferred all the data into word-processing so that I could start with the cut and paste of lines or chunks of data to categorise the codes under suitable themes and sub-themes.

4.8 Ethical Issues

Ethical approval was obtained prior to this research taking place (refer Appendix 1). Throughout all phases of the research, it was vital for me to be sensitive to ethical considerations. This is because I would be entering into the research site; involving participants in my study; gathering data that revealed the participants' teaching and methods of teaching in the classrooms; and requesting participants to allocate their time for the study. Cohen et al. (2011: 76) suggested that each stage in a research sequence raises ethical issues. They stressed the following:

> "Ethical issues may arise from the nature of the research project itself (ethnic differences in intelligence, for example); the context for the research (a remand house); the procedures to be adopted (producing high levels of anxiety); methods of data collection (covert observation); the nature of the participants (emotionally disturbed adolescents); the type of data collected (highly personal and sensitive information); and what is to be done with the data (publishing in a manner that may cause participants embarrassment)."

The current study was carried out in an ethical manner and based on four underlying ethical issues supported by Flick (2006), i.e. getting access, informed

consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. These four issues will be discussed in detail in the next section.

4.8.1 Getting Access

Before gaining access to the research site, permission from several relevant authorities from the university where I work was gained especially when the study involved the students and teachers at one of the faculties at the university. First, I got the permission from the Dean of the Faculty. Getting his permission was not a simple task. This is due to the fact that the Malaysian Government and also the public universities in Malaysia have implemented a new policy that any staff or students on study leave sponsored by the government or any public universities were not allowed to come back to Malaysia for data collection purposes. However, not long after that, another new regulation was circulated to those studying abroad stating that any candidates could request to come back to Malaysia to collect data provided the trip was taken at their own expense. In relation to this, a letter and my paperwork were sent to the dean of the faculty as well as to my sponsor, i.e. the registrar of the university, stating the reasons why I wanted to come back to the university. A month after my application was sent, I sent a follow up letter and was informed that my application had not yet been brought for consideration to the monthly management meeting due to the scheduled meeting being postponed. After the next meeting, I was informed by the head of department through a telephone call that my application for data collection at the university was granted. However, due to our closeness and my many years of working at the university, I was not provided with any official letter. In relation to the rights of the online survey participants and the observation as well as interview participants, in the cover letter I mentioned that they have at any time the right to withdraw from answering the questionnaire as well as being the observation and interview participants.

4.8.2 Informed Consent

Creswell (2008) explained that participants' right can be protected during data collection through completing and signing the inform consent form (see Appendix 2). Creswell (2007:44) pointed that "most often our research is done within the context of a college or university setting where we need to provide evidence to institutional review boards or committees that we respect the privacy and right of participants to withdraw from the study and do not place them at risk." These issues are particularly important in research involving participants who are "commonly characterized as 'vulnerable' because of the perceived openness to coercion, exploitation or harm by more powerful others" (Crow, Wiles, Heath and Charles (2006: 84).

Before any data collection work was able to be carried out, the ultimate importance was to gain the permission for ethical research approval from the Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter. This was done by completing the ethical research approval form by explaining the purposes of my study and the procedures for data collection (Appendix 1). Once the form was approved, I began the process of data collection for this research.

Accordingly, in this study, I also requested the consent from the teachers apart from gaining consent from the registrar of the university, the Dean of the Faculty, the head of department and the head of language panel. The consent form for the teacher participants is found in Appendix 2. Letters had been sent to the registrar, dean, head of department and also the head of language panel informing that all the English language lecturers were involved in the workshop, while some of them volunteered as research participants. I approached the participant lecturers and informed them about the nature of the research and that they were given the choice to participate or withdraw at any time from the study. As for the interview participants, in the face-to-face interviews, they were informed about their right to withdraw at the beginning before the interview took place. Once agreement to participate was certain, the inform consent forms were signed. For the telephone

and online participants, once they agreed to participate, the informed consent form was sent to them via email and returned to me once completed.

4.8.3 Issues of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Issues of anonymity are crucial in any study as this ensure that participants' and institution's true identity will not be revealed. In doing so, I employed only pseudonyms, not giving the correct names or revealing the identity of participants. This was done in order to protect the rights of those who involved in this study. Thus, closely connected with anonymity is confidentiality. It is also important that issues of confidentiality be taken into close attention. In order to guarantee confidentiality, I did not reveal or discuss the data gathered with any party. In relation to this study, the data gathered from the teachers was not discussed with their head of department or the dean or any relevant authorities. This is also relevant to the survey participants as mentioned in the cover letter of the questionnaire that followed that their details and responses were treated with utmost confidentiality.

Since the current study was conducted in 2 stages, each method of data collection was dealt with thorough considerations for confidentiality and anonymity. For example, teachers had agreed upon their lessons to be observed by setting the date and time convenient for both parties. However, there was an observer who at the time of the observation was sick and unable to attend his colleague's classroom observation. Due to the full cooperation and commitment by the two participants, the sick observer teacher contacted me and his colleague earlier in the morning about being unable to attend his colleague's session. I quickly contacted his colleague to enquire how to handle the matter, since he had already prepared to be observed. The teacher voluntarily offered for his session to be video recorded and requested a technician to record the whole lesson. In another example, a teacher became nervous near the time of her lesson being observed and requested that her observer colleague to arrange for some other time to come to her class. As I was aware of her right to withdraw from being a

participant in the study, I advised her on this matter. However, she convinced herself that she wanted to learn new things about her own teaching by participating in the peer observation and discussion.

4.9   Trustworthiness - Issues of Validity, Reliability and Generalizability

The issue of trustworthiness especially in terms of validity, reliability and generalizability in quantitative and qualitative research is among those issues often debated in the literature. In the following section, details on issues pertaining to procedures to ensure validity and reliability of the methods used in the study have been explained.

4.9.1 Validity and Reliability Issues Relating to the Questionnaire

Validity and reliability seem to be the two characteristics which a researcher needs to be aware of in conducting a quantitative research. These two factors influence the quality of the data. Guba and Lincoln (1989: 242) used the term "credibility" to refer to validity, which further refers to "the match between the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders". They then used the term "dependability" to refer to reliability, which refers to "the stability of the data over time."

Thus, in my study, I ensured the validity of the questionnaire by assessing its face validity and content validity. The face validity was established by ensuring that the questionnaire employed seemed valid to the participants without special training in the art of survey design and assessment. In my study, such a strategy was employed during the piloting stage where ten English language teachers were asked to answer the questionnaire and share their opinions about the items. It was through their responses that some questions were removed while some were reconstructed in order to get excellent responses from the participants. The result of the pilot test shows that the Cronbach Alpha is 0.785. This value is considered suitable as according to George and Mallery (2003), in order to measure reliability,

any value ranging from 0.7 to 0.9 is considered reasonable. Content validity means that the questions are understood and used in accordance with the relevant literature. In relevance to this matter, I created my items based on themes that evolve around the issues of teacher evaluation and peer observation at tertiary level in Malaysia. After taking into account the opinions from the EL teachers at the piloting of the questionnaire stage, I then sent the edited version to two experts from my university for a final check.

4.9.2 Validity and Reliability Issues Relating to the Interviews and Observations

According to Creswell (2007), it is best for qualitative researchers to engage in at least two techniques of validation in any study. His claim was based on the eight techniques suggested by Creswell and Miller (2000). In relation to this study, two techniques were used to make inquiries into the same phenomenon to ensure validity. Triangulation methods were applied to increase methodological validity (Flick, 2006) through sources such as observations and interviews, while rich and thick description was employed to enable readers to transfer information to other settings.

Member checking

Member checking was an important step taken after transcribing the interviews and observations. The member check, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stake-holding groups from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility. All the interview and observation transcriptions were sent to the participants through their emails for them to check and validate for any misunderstanding. In this way, I was able to understand matters from the participants' perspectives.

Generalizability

Generalizability, or 'applicability' and 'transferability', is the extent to which the results obtained from a study can be transferred to other setting, persons, and times (Lichtman, 2014: Johnson, 1997). As mentioned earlier, there is a need to provide a thick and rich description of the research findings (Lewis, 2009; Lincoln and Guba, 1985) to establish trustworthiness of a study. Loh (2013: 5) explained that this technique is recommended to "guide the field activities and to impose checks to be certain that the proposed procedures are in fact being followed" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Due to the nature of the enquiry, generalizability was not the main aim of the current study. However, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) emphasized that the findings of a study may be generalised to some degree to the total population of the sample selected. Other students of other institutions whose teacher evaluation is based on a generic questionnaire may have similar views on the effectiveness of the evaluation using student rating questionnaire. In addition, the results of the study obtained from the peer observation exercise conducted on the EL teachers may be applied to some extent to teachers of other courses at the university.

4.10   Research Challenges

In the data collection process, I encountered some problems which delayed my initial plan for the whole study. Among the problems were the following:

i.   Many online survey questions were distributed but only a small number of respondents responded to the questionnaire.

ii. Observations were supposed to be carried out by the end of September 2012. However, the new 2012/2013 session only started on the 2nd week of September. As I was observing teachers who were observing other teachers' teaching, they only felt comfortable to be observed in Week 3 after classes had comfortably settled down and resumed as normal. Therefore, observation only started on the 4th week of September, making my timetable quite packed with other activities for data collection such as interview, post-

observation meeting and again, the last interview after the post-observation meeting before I left the country.

iii.   Some respondents to the survey question who had agreed to be interviewed, when contacted claimed they could only answer to the interview via online. They had agreed to answer to email interview as this can provide them with more time to think. When sent them the email, they did not reply, even though many follow up emails were sent.

iv.   There was an observer teacher who fell sick during the day of the observation and could not turn up for the classroom observation, requiring his colleague to video record his teaching session. This was done as the teacher had prepared to be observed and refused to have another session arranged for the observation.

v.   Some lecturers at some point felt nervous and refused to be observed as scheduled, thus requiring me to rearrange for another observation time.

vi.   Attendance problem due to workshop held in campus. Some of the participants came only in the morning session, whilst, some came in the afternoon session.

vii.   This activity required full commitment from the participants (although they could opt to withdraw at any point of the activity). Among the commitment were attending the workshop, getting prepared with the observation forms, having pre-observation meeting, preparing their teaching lesson and having prepared to be observed, discussing issues in the post-observation meeting, and attending interview with the researcher. May be due to so much of these commitment, two of my participants did not respond to my interview. This happened after their post-observation meetings when I told both of them that I wanted to interview each of them to ask about their experience going through the whole process of peer observation. When I told them that the interview might take more than half an hour, one of them enquired whether he could answer it online because he could not spend more time. Listening to this, the other respondent also requested to answer the interview via email. Conform to the request of both respondents, I sent them email containing the interview questions hoping for their cooperation. After two

weeks, I sent them a follow up email reminding them about the interview. One responded that he was still answering the questions and needed some more time. Then, after three weeks from the last email, I sent them another follow up email. That time I received no reply at all.

4.11 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I have explained the philosophical stance that has framed the basis of my research design, i.e. using the sequential mixed method design. I have chosen an interpretive mode of inquiry because I believe that this is the most appropriate methodology to investigate EL teachers' experiences of teacher evaluation and their views of introducing peer observation into the Malaysian tertiary education system. In addition, I have detailed my data collection strategies as well as data analysis methods and explained about dealing with ethical issues relevant to the context of the study. I also encountered some research challenges which I described at the end of the chapter. In the next chapter, findings of the current study are presented and quantitative and qualitative findings are integrated.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Research Findings

This chapter presents the findings of all the data gathered for this study with their interpretation. The findings were divided sequentially according to the research questions. I have divided this chapter into two parts namely; i) teacher evaluation and ii) peer observation. In the teacher evaluation part, I included the findings related to the first and second research questions; whereas in the peer observation part, I included the findings related to the third and fourth research questions. A number of major themes, categories, and sub-categories were developed following the thematic analysis of the data from different sources such as questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and also semi-structured observations. The aim of the research questions was two-fold: firstly, to explore and understand the existing practices of teacher evaluation and to find out the English language (EL) teachers experience related to teacher evaluation; and secondly, to explore EL teachers' views on making peer observation an element of the teacher evaluation process in their institution.

These research questions were underpinned by two main principles of the teaching and learning process. First, they emphasized the importance of teacher evaluation in ensuring that teaching quality was at the standard required by stakeholders. Secondly, it was seen as of paramount importance for teachers to look at peer observation as a method for improvement as well as for teaching development in order to develop and diversify the current teacher and professional development approach. According to Bell (2005), peer observation of teaching can help develop teachers' teaching practices and transform their educational perspectives.

The findings in this chapter have been presented according to the following themes:

1) The English language teachers' views on the current practices of teacher evaluation at a number of Malaysian universities,

2) Their experiences of teacher evaluation at different institutions,

3) The description of the English language teachers' views of peer observation, and

4) The possible advantages and challenges of introducing peer observation.

Teacher Evaluation

This section answers the two research questions on teacher evaluation, i.e.

- **What are the current practices of English language teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?**
- **What are English language teachers' experiences of teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?**

5.1 Current Practices of Teacher Evaluation

This part of the chapter aims to provide an overview of the commonly used methods of teaching evaluation at different universities in Malaysia as well as those practised at the main study site. However, before proceeding with current practices, I will list all the universities involved in this study. The number of teachers and universities involved in the study can be clearly seen in Table 5.1. Each of the university involved has been identified as UA (University A), UB (University B), and so on.

Table 5.1   Breakdown of the number of universities as well as survey and interview respondents who responded in this study

	University (U)	Survey respondents	Interview respondents
	UA	17	2
	UB	14	1
	UC	4	0
	UD	4	0
	UE	13	2
	UF	3	0
	UG	2	1
	UH	4	2
	UI	7	0
	UJ	4	0
Total	**10**	**72**	**8**

This part of the analysis is mainly descriptive. It is based on the analysis of the survey questions related to the population and the phenomenon under study. This is then supported with the views of the EL teacher respondents regarding the related issues elicited during the interviews.

Data from the questionnaire and interviews indicate that teachers have mainly been evaluated by their own students, the teachers' colleagues/peers and their head of department. The types of methods employed by the different 'evaluators' are set out in Figure 5.1.
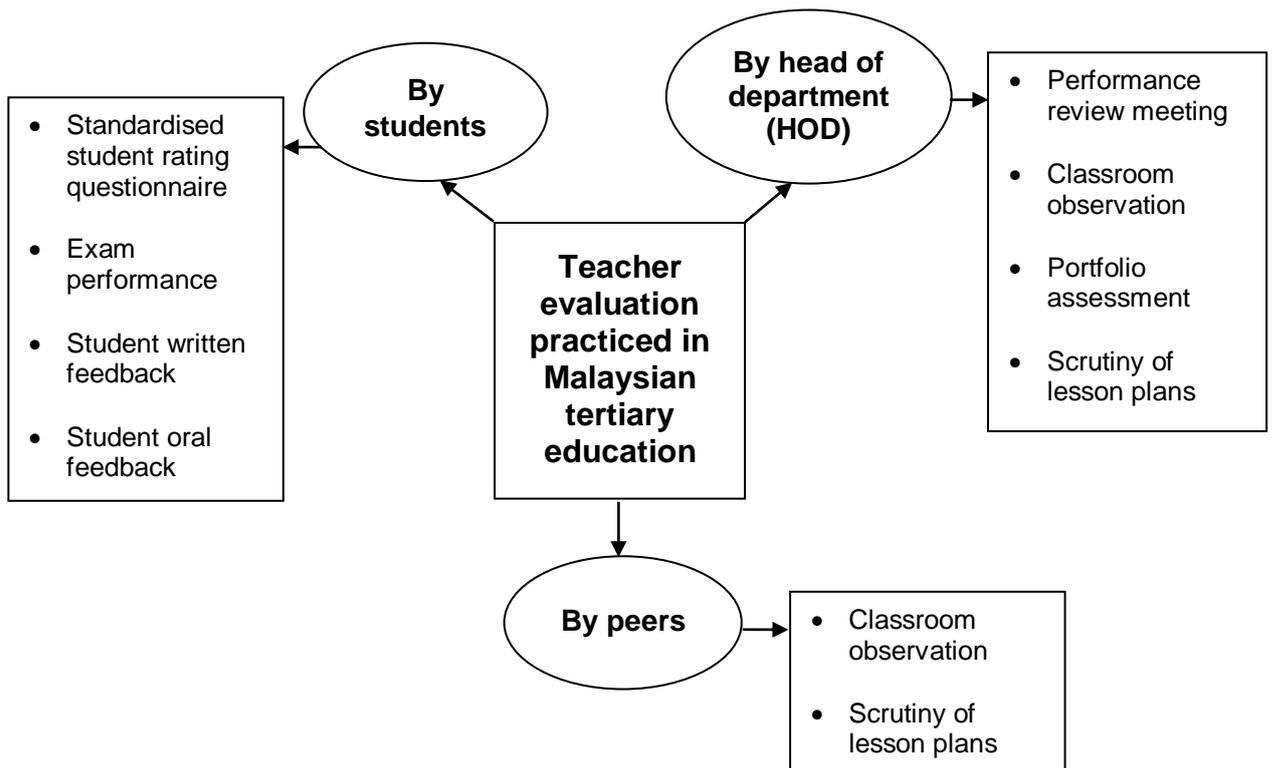
Figure 5.1   Methods of teacher evaluation based on the distribution of respective individuals

In the following Table 5.2, the percentages of responses on the EL teacher evaluation at different universities in Malaysia are presented.

Table 5.2   Different methods of English language teacher evaluation at different universities in Malaysia

	Percentage	Responses
Student rating questionnaire	96%	69
Student feedback - written	64%	46
Students' exam performance	38%	27
Classroom observation by a department head	33%	24
Performance review meeting with a department head	33%	24
Portfolio assessment by a department head	30%	21
Classroom observation by a peer	21%	15
Scrutiny of lesson plans by a department head	17%	12
Student feedback - oral	17%	12
Scrutiny of lesson plans by a peer	11%	8
Total Respondents: 72		

In the subsequent section, I will elaborate on the evaluation by students.

5.1.1   Evaluation by Students

There are four methods of evaluation commonly being undertaken by students. They are the student rating questionnaire, student written feedback, student oral feedback, and students' exam performance. The student rating questionnaire happened to be the most popular method used in many universities around Malaysia. This questionnaire refers to the standardised teacher evaluation form as outlined by a responsible centre or the management of each university for the use of students to evaluate their teachers. The data obtained from the survey question as in Table 5.2 above evidently showed the details.

Student rating questionnaire seemed to be the most common method of evaluation at most universities. It does not only produce quantitative data but also qualitative data through the open questions. A total of 96% of the respondents reported that this method was used to evaluate their teaching at their respective institutions. However, almost all teachers claimed that this was not the only method to evaluate their teaching. The rating questionnaire was only one method of the evaluations supported with other methods which will be explained in depth in the following sections. Respondent Q84 articulated the strength of student rating questionnaire as,

> Students evaluate based on what they have gone through in the whole semester, so the overall feedback given would be a better reflection than evaluation at one time done by the HOD. (Q84/Stage1)

Other respondents were also in agreement that student rating questionnaire was the best method of evaluation, because according to them,

> Only students know what teachers do in class and whether they feel they are improving. (Q83/Stage1)

> Because students are always there in the classroom and they are a reliable source to indicate if the teacher has done her best to make them understand the lesson effectively and has gone the extra mile to help them improve their language. (Q79/Stage1)

This view was not universally held, however, as the quote below demonstrates,

> Students' feedback may be biased and prejudice due to many factors, while a HOD may not be able to get to know each of the staff personally. But if I have to choose, I'd go with students' evaluation. But personally, if students evaluate certain teachers poorly, the blame is mostly put on the teacher. If students find that a class is boring, the blame lies with the teacher who has failed to raise their interest, and so on and so forth. (Q34/Stage1)

The quotation above gives the impression of a conflicting opinion by the respondent. This was because she mentioned two methods of evaluation (student rating questionnaire and evaluation by a HOD) at a start but pointed out the

weaknesses of both of them. However, according to this respondent, on top of these she chose student rating as the best method of evaluating EL teacher, without describing its advantages.

Qualitative data were collected from interviews with eight teachers, and in response to the question "How is the performance of English language teachers evaluated at your university?", six out of eight of the teachers responded that the evaluation was generally good. Student rating questionnaire was referred to in different ways in the different institutions. For instance, Mie said,

> The evaluation at the university is good and the student evaluation used here is called as Teacher Evaluation Record (TER). Using this TER, students (whatever the course they are taking) are to evaluate their teachers at the end of each semester and the teachers are given a target of 80%. After that, the forms are evaluated by the Centre for Professional Excellence (CPE) and then if there is any problem, the Dean will be informed for any action to be taken. There are three semesters in an academic year and therefore, each teacher is evaluated three times a year. (Mie/Int.Stage1)

At another institution, Din claimed,

> The student evaluation, called the Training and Academic Staff Teaching Evaluation System at this university, is generally good. It is undertaken by students to evaluate their teachers' teaching, which are conducted online every semester, i.e. twice a year. (Din/Int.Stage1)

Liz, from the same institution as Din, added,

> The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) is responsible for the evaluation and it is carried out by my students. In other words, the students that I teach that particular semester will evaluate and provide feedback on my teaching and learning. CAD then tabulates the scores and quantifies the evaluation before arriving at an overall score: Excellent, Good, Fair and Weak. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

The above quotations denote that all students, regardless of which institutions they attended, had the opportunity to undertake teacher evaluation every semester of their academic year. In light of this, Aizal explained,

> Since I started teaching at this university in 2001, student evaluation has existed and was carried out manually every semester, where

teachers brought the evaluation form into the classroom for the students to fill up. But for the past four to five years, we have changed to electronic online evaluation system where students will go to the university's website and evaluate their teachers. (Aizal/Int.Stage1)

All interview participants mentioned above indicated that student rating questionnaire at their institutions was carried out every semester. Below, I include the elements of a teacher's performance included in the rating questionnaire, as explained by three respondents from three different institutions. According to Chen, the student rating questionnaire at her institution consists of a form using a Likert scale, which investigated three areas from the academic, course, and facilities perspectives as follows:

1. Academic	- whether the class starts and finishes on time; - whether the teacher is able to explain simple and complex concepts; - whether the teacher encourages participation from the students; - whether the teacher is always available to discuss problems with students; and - whether the teacher helps in learning in any ways.
2. Course	- whether the students understand: - the aims and objectives, - the learning outcomes, - the requirements of the course. - whether the lecturer is able to narrow the gap between the student's prior knowledge to understand the present subject matter; - whether the course itself is useful for the programme the student undertakes.
3. Facilities	- whether the classrooms and labs are clean and the computers are all in working order; - whether adequate teaching aids are used; - whether the teacher provides sufficient materials regarding the course; - whether the layout of the classroom helps in the students' learning; and - whether effective sound system is used.

(Chen/Int.Stage2)

At Liz's institution, the focus was on:

1. Teaching and learning - preparation and planning,
2. Presentation, communication and use of teaching aids, and
3. Motivation and guidance.   (Liz/Int.Stage1)

Meanwhile, Sal elaborated that the student rating questionnaire at her institution looked at:

1. Objective of teaching,
2. Induction set,
3. Teaching progress suitable or not with the objective,
4. Elaboration of teaching,
5. Teacher has sufficient knowledge to teach,
6. Teaching aids,
7. Fluency of communication of teacher,
8. Teacher's ability to create conducive environment for learning,
9. Teacher's ability to involve students,
10. Student-teacher relationship,
11. Creativity of teaching, and
12. Students' comment on how to improve teaching.   (Sal/Int.Stage1)

A similarity between Chen's, Liz's and Sal's elements of student rating questionnaires is the communication aspect and the use of teaching aids aspect. The three universities seemed to focus on the use of the appropriate teaching aids. However, an obvious difference between the three is that Chen's evaluation looked at the teacher from the facilities point of view, whether or not all computers are working and effective sound system is used are not the teacher's responsibility. This is also the same at Sal's institution as it focuses at several elements like induction set, elaboration of teaching and creativity of teaching which are very subjective and students are incapable of providing the wanted feedback. According to Liz, the student rating questionnaire at her institution considered the quality of teachers from before a teacher started a lesson until the follow up action by the teacher after the lesson ended including to provide motivation and guidance to students.

Student feedback – written

There were teachers who initiated feedback in written form from their students by asking them to give some comments after each session or after certain duration of teaching. Based on the quantitative analysis, 64% of the respondents agreed that student written feedback could help them improve their classroom practices. Some were done formally while some were informal. There were also teachers who claimed that some of their students sent them messages or emails talking about their teaching, providing good feedback about the lessons and vice versa. These teachers found it motivating to get feedback about their teaching from their students through written feedback because they can refer to the comments often and there was a proof of written evidence.

In reference to the open-ended question: "Based on the methods of evaluation listed in the previous question, which one method do you think can best evaluate an English language teacher's teaching performance?", those teachers who selected "student written feedback" as the best method, provided reasons. Response from respondent Q37:

> There was a student who sent me a text through my mobile phone telling me that she enjoyed my writing class so much. I felt appreciated. (Q37/Stage1)

Respondent Q37 did not seem to ask his students to leave any detailed comments about his teaching but was clearly pleased to be valued. Similarly, Din, in the interview responded,

> I often receive good comments from my students. They express their feelings through the emails they sent to me. I didn't ask for it. However, it's nice and it makes you feel good about your own teaching really. (Din/Int.Stage1)

Unlike respondent Q37 and Din, respondent Q42 specifically asked for her students' comments at the end of her lessons. She was a new teacher with fewer than three years of teaching experience. Therefore, she valued the comments and suggestions, seeing them as an aid to improving her teaching. She said,

I will spare the last ten minutes of my lecture each fortnightly for the students to provide me with any comments or suggestions on my teaching. I had promised not to disclose their identity and all those are meant only for my references and no other parties involved. (Q42/Stage1)

Chen described,

There was a time when I asked my students to leave their comments through email about the subject which I taught one semester. Maybe it was my first semester teaching the subject, I received quite a number of negative feedbacks. The bad thing about it was that they used different email addresses instead of the university emails. Therefore, I did not know exactly who made the complaints. (Chen/Int.Stage1)

The above quotations from respondent Q42 and Chen suggest that new and inexperienced teachers found it helpful to improve their teaching methods and approaches by requesting students to provide feedback. Respondent Q82 was in agreement with Chen about the non-disclosure of the students' identity through her comment,

Students who left positive feedbacks left their full names and email address. Students who left negative feedbacks usually did not leave their names and email address or just wrote down their nicknames. (Q82/Stage1)

In my study, young and new teachers were more likely to rely on the students' feedback so that they can further improve their teaching, while experienced teachers do not normally ask for feedback from their students. There were some exceptions. Respondent Q41, with a PhD and more than 20 years of teaching experience said,

Their [the students'] responses are confidential, so they are free to give me their honest opinion about my teaching, which helps me to improve. (Q41/Stage1)

Student feedback – oral

Only 17% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that students' oral feedback was among the best method of teacher evaluation. Getting fast responses about one's teaching proved to be worthy because of two reasons; first, for the teacher's

own satisfaction and second, for his self-improvement. The quotation by respondent Q67 further clarifies this,

> Seeing the students' facial expression while they talk about our teaching; be it good or bad, add to the teaching experience and good for me to improve. Personally, I am satisfied with the 'on the spot' students' feedback. (Q67/Stage1)

Directly interviewing students may reveal students' thoughts on some unanticipated aspects, which generates a great deal of useful information (Chan, 2010). Respondent Q27 clearly expressed,

> I can get immediate responses from my students about my teaching and classroom practice. Usually, after each lesson when I meet students outside of the classroom they are more free and at ease to have conversations rather than inside the classroom with the formal type of seating arrangements. That was the time when they started to express whatever they felt. (Q27/Stage1)

Students' exam performance

38% of the respondents responded that students' exam performance was used as one indicator of teachers' performance. Respondent Q63 and Biah expressed their concern regarding evaluation of teachers based on students' exam results. They expressed,

> A good and effective teacher can influence the performance of the students. (Q63/Stage1)

> I know I teach my students well, you see… by looking at the final examination results. You know… if you can't really get them to understand your teaching, definitely they will not be able to answer the exam this good. (Biah/Int.Stage1)

The above quotes support the idea to consider students' performance in exams as a method for evaluating teachers, which is in line with the study by Rivkin et al. (2005), who stressed that during one year with a very effective maths teacher, pupils gained 40% more in their learning than they would with a poorly performing maths teacher.

Students' exam results was also used as a method to evaluate teachers when teachers were requested by the faculty or management to provide evidence that students were consulted before a teacher could fail them. Respondent Q47 claimed,

> It was really frustrating when there are students who failed the final examination. Teachers were deemed responsible for the students' failure and were asked to provide evidence that they were consulted several times regarding their coursework, tests and assignments before we teachers can fail them. It was horrible and frustrating. (Q47/Stage1)

In the next section, I will elaborate on the evaluation by the department head (HOD).

5.1.2 Evaluation by the Head of Department (HOD)

Evaluations undertaken by heads of department commonly utilised data from four sources: classroom observation, a performance review meeting, portfolio assessment and scrutiny of lesson plans. All these methods will be addressed further in the following sub-sections.

Classroom observation

33% of the questionnaire respondents selected classroom observation by the department head as their preferred method of evaluating teaching. This is an observation conducted by the HOD, and can either be on a routine basis or undertaken when need arises. Therefore, it can either be conducted every semester or if there are complaints about some teachers.

Respondent Q78 said,

> When a competent assessor evaluates, he or she can give constructive feedback to the teacher which helps to indicate his or her teaching performance and ways to improve. (Q78/Stage1)

In the above instance, the respondent suggests that a department head is usually an experienced teacher who has had many years of teaching background and thus, capable enough to be regarded as a competent assessor who could provide

helpful insights about teaching and suggest improvements. This view was also expressed by respondent Q3, who said,

> The department head - with experience in teaching for more than 10 years - has the essential know-how on good teaching practice. The knowledge and skills can be used to assess her subordinates' performance in class. Many of her subordinates have not had professional qualification in teaching. The ones who have the professional qualification in teaching are basically yet to be well-experienced: many have been with the department for fewer than 5 years. (Q3/Stage1)

In the above quotation, the respondent was trying to explain that new and inexperienced teachers at her institution were many of those who had no professional qualification. These teachers can benefit from feedback from the HOD in terms of knowledge and skills. In addition to providing teachers with constructive feedback, several respondents agreed that teachers' teaching methods also share similar importance. This was supported by Liz who said,

> With the years of experience in teaching, the HOD can offer suggestions to the teachers especially in the methodological and pedagogical aspects of teaching and learning. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

In the above quotation, it is clear that although having peers to observe seemed a good idea but experienced teachers were still needed for observation as they may have more insights on the pedagogical and methodological aspects. Thus, this may be the reason why more respondents preferred classroom observation by a HOD, i.e. 34%, as compared to classroom observation by a peer, i.e. 21%. However, according to Ellis (1994), teaching styles and methods are very subjective and despite much research done there have been no proof that any one style or method of teaching is significantly more successful than the others.

Performance review report/meeting

In a performance appraisal, teachers set the plans and objectives to achieve within an academic year. However, in the middle of the year, teachers can review back what they have and have not achieved and make some adjustment to the previous goal set at the beginning of the year in order to suit to the current

situation. At the end of the academic year, teachers will revisit the plans and objectives and complete the appraisal. The superiors will evaluate, review and discuss with the teachers on any specific areas in which performance has not been satisfactory. This review report/meeting is based on the standardised Annual Performance Review Report Form (refer Borang JPA Prestasi 4/2002 – P&P at http://docs.jpa.gov.my/docs/borang/pjawam/LNPT/LNPT_PnP.doc). Since the same form has been used every year, based on my own experience, evidence from many elements such as from lesson plan, number of hours (teaching workload) and students taught in a term (in this case two terms for this annual assessment), results from student ratings, number of publications, research and involvement in community services are discussed at the performance review meeting.

33% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that performance review report/meeting with the HOD was a valuable part of the teacher evaluation process. Respondents Q74 and Q1 explained,

> You can see the areas that need to be improved. (Q74/Stage1)

> The teacher and the head can discuss why certain marks are given and how the teacher's performance can be increased (Q1/Stage1)

The first quote indicates that teachers clearly wanted to know their weaknesses and later tried to improve their teaching based on the review. In the same situation, as in the second quote, a teacher may have the chance for discussion together with the HOD about the marks given. In this sense, the teacher could then explain and defend herself about the marks, which was a good practice as by doing so the HOD seemed to consider the effort and hard work of the respective teacher. Respondent Q11 supported the claim above by saying,

> Students feedback alone is not enough and truthful. Some form of discussion or consultation can take place between HOD or dean from time to time because a face to face meeting or consultation is the best way compared to letting a machine or numbers do all the work. (Q11/Stage1)

Here, she highlights that an evaluation must not only rely on numerical data alone but to consider having some form of discussion with the HOD. The meeting between the HOD and the teacher provides an opportunity for reflective dialogue which could benefit both parties.

Aizal, in the interview, claimed that research has been the most powerful essence to teacher evaluation at the university where he was working. He said,

> This university became a research university (RU) since two years ago. And ever since then, there are basically two major parts to our works; one is for teaching and the other one is for research. It is actually a 70 + 30 percent calculation. So, a teacher can either opt for 70% of teaching and 30% of research; or 70% of research and 30% of teaching. (Aizal/Int.Stage1)

Portfolio assessment

Portfolio assessment by the HOD gained 29% from the questionnaire respondents. According to Seldin (1997: 2), "A teaching portfolio includes documents and materials which collectively suggest the scope and quality of a teacher's teaching performance…. It is not exhaustive compilation of all of the documents and materials that bear on teaching performance. Instead, it presents *selected information* on teaching activities and *solid evidence* of effectiveness." Despite its newly gaining popularity, none of the interview respondents mentioned this method of evaluation. Only two questionnaire respondents left their comments as follows:

> Portfolio serves as objective evidence. (Q5/Stage1)

> It would encourage teachers to become 'reflective practitioners' and encourages teachers to focus on aspects of their classroom teaching, and to try out new ideas. (Q20/Stage1)

It is true that a teacher's own professional life can be reflected in his or her portfolio when all details regarding his or her daily activities about teaching and learning are all placed in the portfolio. Therefore, the claim by respondent Q5 was right that all the evidence of his or her teaching were all placed into the portfolio for the HOD or dean to assess. By having this evidence and a source of

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reference, the teacher was able to reflect on his or her own teaching for self-improvement. The construct of portfolios has the potential of greatly affecting teacher development as teachers reflect on their practice and collect evidence that represent good practice and data from their own classes (Murphey and Yaode, 2007).

Scrutiny of lesson plans

This method of evaluation was among the least preferred by the respondents. This may be because it may not provide much information to the evaluator since it is a "plan", and once it is implemented the plan may need to be adjusted and thus, the adjustments cannot be evaluated based on the plan (Mathers, Oliva and Laine, 2008). Only 17% opted for scrutiny of lesson plans by the HOD as the best method of evaluating teaching. However, none of them left any individual comments for this kind of evaluation as there were some who said that this method of evaluation may be best combined with other methods.

This evaluation method may be less accepted at tertiary level because based on my experience, scrutiny of lesson plan works well at school level. In my personal opinion, this method works less well with adult learners at university level because teachers are more flexible with the lesson plan. An evaluation based on this method may be invalid because a lesson may not follow what has been set as in the lesson plan due to different circumstances in different classes.

In the following section, I will elaborate on the evaluation by peers or colleagues.

5.1.3 Evaluation by Peers/Colleagues

Classroom observation

21% of the respondents selected classroom observation by peers as the best method of evaluation. The reasons this claim were divided according to the following:

Honest and unbiased feedback

The respondents regarded classroom observation by peers as the best method of evaluating teachers. This was because they were able to gain honest and unbiased feedback. Three respondents commented,

> It would not be too daunting for the teacher under observation. A more experienced peer would provide an honest feedback for improvement. (Q48/Stage1)

> Evaluation by peers is more honest and has less 'risk' of demotivating teachers (Q31/Stage1)

> Unbiased evaluation as well as for the development and improvement of both the teacher and his or her peer who evaluate the teaching performance. (Q22/Stage1)

Although respondent Q48/Stage1 above had had more than 10 years of teaching experience, she still considered observation as a daunting task yet one of the powerful methods to progress in teaching.

Enhances collegiality

Classroom observation by peers if carried out well can provide a powerful learning experience for teachers and increase collegiality (Bell, 2005; Sparks, 1986). By conducting this activity, teachers are more open and at ease to accept comments. This was clearly expressed by respondent Q21,

> … peer observation is considered to benefit both parties and enhance team work and collegiality. Peers are those who we feel comfortable with and mutual discussion helps the teacher to be himself/herself. (Q21/Stage1)

Respondent Q58 also mentioned,

> Experienced teachers are knowledgeable and well-versed in effective teaching methodologies which can benefit the new teachers. (Q58/Stage1)

Respondent Q40 who drew a comparison between classroom observation by peers, student rating questionnaire and evaluations by the HOD explained,

Students often evaluate based on popularity. Heads of department have favourites. Peer evaluation is best as teachers understand constraints under which they work. (Q40/Stage1)

Scrutiny of lesson plans by peers

11% of the survey respondents opted for scrutiny of lesson plans by peers. However, there was only one respondent, who commented on this method of evaluating teaching. Respondent Q37 described that this method of evaluating teaching is good where teachers could plan and discuss what may work well in their classrooms. He explained,

Teachers have to be aware that teaching means learning more than anything else. Discussion on lesson plans would be a great idea to scrutinize with the best teaching practices and up-to-date activities. There are teachers who are comfortable and never wanted to try new things. (Q37/Stage1)

In the next section, I will elaborate on the other essential evaluations based on the point of view of the respondents to the current study.

Other essential evaluations

There were other interesting findings which I obtained based on the surveys and interviews conducted. Some teachers when interviewed seemed to express their concerns and feelings about the needs to combine several evaluations and felt that their anxieties about the current situation should be taken seriously into consideration by the responsible parties. This can be clearly seen through the comments of the survey as well as interview respondents discussed in the following sub-sections.

Combination of several evaluation methods

There were respondents who suggested for the evaluation to be combined instead of having only one method of evaluation set at each institution in order to evaluate the English language teachers' teaching. The following were the findings

obtained from the survey. Table 5.3 below sets out the combination suggested by the respondents.

Table 5.3   Respondents' suggestions about combining certain methods of evaluation

Respondent	Evaluation by students				Evaluation by HOD				Evaluation by peers		Total
	SRQ	SF - w	SF - o	SER	CO	PRM	PA	SLP	CO	SLP	
Q8				- *Mixture of some -*							
Q32	✓	✓					✓				3
Q55	✓				✓				✓		3
Q60					✓			✓	✓	✓	4
Q63					✓				✓		2
Q66		✓	✓		✓	✓					4
Q69	✓	✓	✓	✓							4
Q81	✓								✓		2
Q89		✓	✓								2
Q93	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Total	5	5	4	2	5	2	2	2	5	2	34
	16				11				7		

Key: SRQ   Student rating questionnaire   CO   Classroom observation

SF-w   Student feedback – written   PRM   Performance review meeting

SF-o   Student feedback – oral   PA   Portfolio assessment

SER   Students' exam result   SLP   Scrutiny of lesson plans

Only ten out of the 72 survey respondents suggested the methods of evaluation to be combined in order to receive good result. Only one respondent, i.e. respondent Q8/Stage1, did not specifically select which methods to combine but suggested "mixture of some" because according to him by doing so it can ensure the

comprehensiveness of the evaluation. This is similar to the response by respondent Q93 who stressed that the evaluation should be,

> A combination of all, i.e. 360 degree evaluation, because by doing so it can avoid bias and to provide constructive criticism. (Q93/Stage1)

Respondent Q55 also suggested a combination of three methods namely; student rating questionnaire, classroom observations by the HOD and by peers. He explained the reason to combine the three methods was,

> To justify the evaluation and see for themselves the abilities and capacities. (Q55/Stage1)

This explains that these combinations contribute to better evaluation to escalate the quality of teaching in higher institutions in line with the mission and vision of most of the universities, i.e. to achieve world class standard.

In Table 5.3, evaluation by students specifically student rating questionnaire and student written feedback were the preferred methods of evaluation. This supports the earlier findings that evaluation by students was the most preferred method of evaluation for most respondents. Respondent Q69 who selected all the four methods of evaluation by students said,

> The results from these evaluations reflect the lessons' effectiveness and its method of delivery. (Q69/Stage1)

While, respondent Q89 who selected student feedback – written and oral, as the best method stressed,

> Students are the products from a teaching and learning process. The success of a good teaching and learning process is based on the students' understanding. (Q89/Stage1)

None of the respondents selected evaluations from either the HOD or peers alone. Evaluations by these two groups of people were usually combined with others, for instance evaluation by the students and HOD, and evaluation by the HOD and peers.

Two respondents suggested combining the evaluation made by students with those made by the HOD. Respondent Q32, who selected student rating questionnaire, student written feedback and portfolio assessment by the HOD, explained,

> Triangulation, this may be the best way to check if we teachers have done the right thing. (Q32/Stage1)

Meanwhile, respondent Q66/Stage1 chose student oral and written feedback, and also unscheduled classroom observation and performance review meeting by the HOD as "to help identify teachers who are not performing as they should". Here, she emphasized the word 'unscheduled' classroom observation, perhaps due to any complaints from the students or any hearsay regarding some teachers who were not performing well or not being on time. Therefore, the reason for having unannounced classroom observation is to enable the HOD to check on the validity of the complaints although this respondent added that some might not feel comfortable with this approach as it is often seen as top-down. Mie, in the interview, said that classroom observation by the HOD was supposed to be conducted together with student rating questionnaire,

> To justify the evaluation and see for themselves the abilities and capacities of the teachers based on the evaluation made by students. (Mie/Int.Stage1)

This may be true as student evaluation alone may not be valid because students might evaluate based on their preferences, as suggested in a study by Suwanarak (2007). Therefore, there is a need for another party to conduct evaluation in order to justify those made by the students. This was supported by respondent Q81, who opted for student rating questionnaire and classroom observation by peers by saying,

> Student rating alone will not give a clear picture of one's teaching performance. Classroom observation by someone experienced who is in the same field plus student rating questionnaire would be a better form of evaluation. (Q81/Stage1)

Two respondents did not include the evaluation by students at all. They both preferred evaluation by the HOD to be combined with the evaluation by peers. Respondent Q60, for instance, advised considering classroom observation and scrutiny of lesson plans by both the HOD and peers. She explained,

> Evaluation should be carried out in the spirit of the need for young lecturers to improve their teaching; senior or experienced lecturers should be invited to guide new or inexperienced lecturers. (Q60/Stage1)

In addition, respondent Q63, who chose classroom observations by the HOD as well as peers as the effective methods of evaluation, claimed,

> The HOD and peer teachers are responsible for evaluating teaching because these people could share sound advice and they are those who understand the course learning outcome. (Q63/Stage1)

The two quotations above gave more emphasis on teachers as evaluators because of two reasons. First, the HOD and experienced teachers are needed to assist and guide the new and inexperienced teachers especially to improve their teaching. Second, they are expected to understand the course learning outcome well and thus, provide relevant advice to the teachers.

Recognition for administrative/managerial roles

Questionnaire respondents were given the opportunity to suggest other methods for evaluating teaching. Respondent Q83 who had selected three methods from the list provided, namely student rating questionnaire, student exam performance, and performance review meeting with the HOD, commented that the EL teachers should also be evaluated based on:

> Other contributions like coordinating programmes or holding other administrative posts. As we all know, the EL proficiency level of the students in our country is very low. To cater to the needs, usually the EL teachers were asked to conduct some language programmes or activities either at the university, in schools or even to the surrounding communities. The coordinator of the programmes should be acknowledged. How they are to be acknowledged, this should be given much thought by the managements or superiors. There are also those who hold administrative posts apart from teaching. Teaching and doing

administrative work are totally two different things. Those who hold other administrative posts should also be acknowledged for the extra work that they do. (Q83/Stage1)

In contrast to the above statement, Din claimed,

> At the university, teachers who hold extra posts or become any subject or programme coordinators were promised with extra marks in the review meeting with the HOD... provided they perform. (Din/Int.Stage1)

This indicates that the EL teachers at the university are being appreciated and their contributions are being acknowledged. In the following section, I will detail the findings obtained from the questionnaire and interviews regarding the teachers' experiences of the teacher evaluation at their institutions.

5.2   Participants' Experiences of Teacher Evaluation

This section presents the English language teachers' experiences of teacher evaluation in Malaysia tertiary education. Data obtained from questionnaire as well as semi-structured interviews are presented in sequence according to the following: 1) Teacher evaluation system; 2) Purposes of evaluation; 3) Frequency of evaluation; 4) Person/s responsible for evaluation; 5) Effectiveness of the current evaluation; 6) If the evaluation received is negative; 7) Choice of evaluator; and 8) Frequency of receiving formal feedback.

5.2.1 Teacher Evaluation System at the Universities in Malaysia

In each of the institutions where the questionnaire survey was undertaken, respondents reported that a teacher evaluation procedure was in place. 92% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that there was actually a standardized teacher evaluation in place at their respective institutions, as shown in Table 5.4. Here, 'standardized' teacher evaluation refers to "all fit one" form of evaluation and undertaken by all teachers in the institution regardless of their subject areas. Only 8% of them disagreed with that statement. This may indicate that although there was no standardized teacher evaluation at their institutions, there may still be some kind of evaluation in place for evaluating teachers' teaching.

Table 5.4   Percentages of responses on standardized teacher evaluation in place at different institutions

	Frequency	Percentage
No	6	8
Yes	66	92
Total	72	100

Table 5.5 below revealed that the majority of the questionnaire respondents (79%) reported that there was a teacher evaluation system in place specifically for English language teachers at their current institutions.

Table 5.5   Percentages of responses on teacher evaluation system for English language teachers at the current institutions

	Frequency	Percentage
No	15	21
Yes	57	79
Total	72	100

In reference to the above qualitative data, the data obtained from the interview did not reveal that there existed any evaluation which was tailored for the English teachers and their needs. Based on the interviews, only two out of eight interviewees said that it is not necessary for the English language teachers to have a different evaluation to those teachers of other subjects. The remaining participants agreed with the idea to have a different evaluation for the English teachers. For example, when asked about this, Ram thus commented,

> I think it is a good idea to have one different evaluation for the English teachers because English is quite different from other subjects. An alien language is being introduced to people who have no such background. Unlike content-based instruction, this involves assisting learners to master English which is most often difficult to them. (Ram/Int.Stage1)

Similarly, Sal, who was in agreement with the above statement, expressed,

> Yes, of course we need a different evaluation because languages like English, Arabic, Bahasa Melayu, Chinese, Tamil can share similar methods, theories, activities, teaching aids… unlike teaching of content subjects. They should be different from teaching languages. Content subjects can be split further – reading subjects, skill subjects and the like. Language is a skill subject but it is not the same as computer skills or camera skills. English is a communication skill. (Sal/Int.Stage1)

Liz added the following point regarding this issue,

> The teacher evaluation at my university is not precisely for ELT but rather a general teaching & learning evaluation. In general, most evaluation systems focus on student achievement and teacher practice. However, few systems have the capacity to differentiate among specialty area educators. I am of opinion that there is a need for the development of a plan for language teaching evaluation. It ought to involve direct observation of language instruction in progress besides assessing the degree to which course design, program administration, and individual teaching performance conform to certain principles, policies and procedures that have been demonstrated to play a role in successful language learning. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

Mie expressed his despair as follows:

> Ya, maybe on certain areas, for example, not only in their method of teaching but also in their language proficiency. I am sad to say but there are some young ones who need to brush up their English. (Mie/Int.Stage1)

One of the elements of evaluation which was needed in evaluating an EL teacher, according to Mie, is the language proficiency aspect, which did not exist in the current teacher evaluation. Thus, his comments indicate that there is a need to have a different evaluation for the EL teachers to teachers of other subjects. Mie's opinion supported the claim by Liz, who emphasized,

> There is a need for the development of a plan for language teaching evaluation which involves direct observation of language instruction in progress. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

All the above quotations shed light on how useful it may be to have a different evaluation specifically for the English language teachers. First, the quotations by Ram and Sal emphasize language as communication skill rather than as a content-based skill, while teaching content subject requires a student to

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understand the deep knowledge of the subject itself (Shulman, 1987). This implies that language is unique and therefore, there is no best method in teaching a language. Prabhu (1990: 170) explains,

> "An important consideration for language teaching methods is the quality of learning to be promoted, as distinct from the quantity. The question of quality has been a recurrent concern for the profession through ages, being conceptualised and verbalised variously as grammar in contrast to practice, knowledge in contrast to skill, explicit knowledge in contrast to implicit knowledge, accuracy in contrast to fluency, learning in contrast to acquisition, ability to display in contrast to ability to deploy, etc."

Second, the proposal for development of a plan for language teaching evaluation shows that something is lacking in the existing evaluation. Third, the language proficiency of the teachers implies that there are some English language teachers who are less proficient in the language, which is not addressed in the teacher evaluation.

In contrast to the idea to have a different evaluation for the EL teachers, Aizal and Chen, both from two different institutions, disagreed on this. This is because to them, evaluation is carried out only to look at teaching techniques and pedagogy where at the end, according to Chen, "it's all about the same results." The claim shows that at these two different institutions, the existing teacher evaluation procedure might have been used for quite a number of years and it may be best to revise the content of the evaluation. All parties involved in maintaining the standard for high quality in teaching and learning in each institution such as the management, teachers, and centres for excellence have a role in reviewing the content of each teacher evaluation. If this is not done, teachers, students, and even the HODs may become too familiar with the content, as a result becoming able to predict the end-result of the evaluation.

Teachers' point of view about going through the system at their university

Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, items [i] and [iv] attracted the highest level of respondents' agreement: 67% of the respondents agreed with

item [i] 'It provides useful feedback on how I can improve.' and 56% with item [iv] 'I enjoy the opportunity to discuss my teaching with a colleague.' This may indicate that the teachers find the feedbacks given as very beneficial for them to improve their teaching and discuss new ideas about teaching with their colleagues. Meanwhile, 36% of them agreed with item [v], in which they were worried that their teaching were to be judged as poor, and 14% concurred that the exercise seemed to be a threatening process, as in item [iii]. This shows that teachers sometimes lost confidence in what they usually do when being observed. These findings are in line with the works by Wajnryb (1992) and Richards and Nunan (1990), who found that observation may not be accepted by some teachers for their judgemental and threatening nature. In agreement with that, 12% of the respondents agreed with item [ii] that they only appreciate positive feedbacks. All these are clearly illustrated in the following table.

Table 5.6   Teachers' opinion of the system at their university (n=72)

	Mean	S.D.	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
i. It provides useful feedback on how I can improve.	3.67	.934	16% 11	51% 37	19% 14	13% 9	1% 1	72
ii. I only appreciate the positive feedbacks given.	3.49	1.007	3% 2	9% 6	16% 11	61% 43	11% 8	70
iii. I find it a threatening process.	2.46	.871	0% 0	14% 10	24% 17	51% 36	10% 7	70
iv. I enjoy the opportunity to discuss my teaching with a colleague.	2.97	1.021	14% 10	41% 29	30% 21	10% 7	4% 3	70
v. I am worried that my teaching will be judged as poor.	2.32	.885	4% 3	32% 23	21% 15	37% 26	4% 3	70

*There were some respondents who did not respond to some questions.

Note that in the above table, although items [ii], [iii] and [iv] received disagreement from the respondents, there are still teachers who were anxious about the teacher evaluation. Therefore, it was essential to investigate the reasons behind this dissatisfaction. The qualitative data analysis provided a more in-depth explanation of this matter.

As a teacher, the most important thing before getting into the class is to make sure that everything is in order. Preparation is the most important thing. Biah, in the interview claimed,

> After 30 years of teaching I am cool. I mean I don't feel nervous at all. As long as I know what to teach and I am prepared and this is enough. Preparation is very important to the teachers because we are dealing with foreign students. It shows our strategies. (Biah/Int.Stage1)

However, she then explained that she was not in favour of observation, although for formative purposes. She added,

> I am 52, why do you want to observe me anymore… that is what I feel. And then the next thing is, with me at my age… you know… I sort of know more or less what to do when I go to class. I like learning. I am an independent learner. I tell the students what to do… (Biah/Int.Stage1)

From the above quotation, I could understand that Biah feels that the observation served more like someone checking on her work which almost all teachers do not like. This may be because the purpose of the observation was not detailed out and explained clearly to the teachers which caused them to have negative reaction towards the exercise. If this was done earlier and truly convinced the teachers, they may have no problem with observation and may agree with Shortland (2004), who asserted that observation promotes self-knowledge and professional development, particularly when it is part of a continuing process.

Unlike Biah, who felt reluctant being observed, Chen preferred to be observed by her superiors on certain conditions. When asked whether or not the person(s) who currently evaluate(s) her is/are the best person, she responded,

> No for superiors because they have never observed my teaching. They just based on the students' evaluation and by chance if they see my course file. Too much human emotion at stake, especially if they like or hate you on a personal basis. My superiors (HODs) should continue to evaluate me but be more involved like teaching observation and discussion about my teaching methods. (Chen/Int.Stage1)

Listening to the response by Chen, she sounded frustrated by the evaluation of her superior who only looked at the results from the students' evaluation in order to evaluate a teacher. Based on my many years of teaching experience at two different institutions before I left for my study, I went through the same experience

where the HOD or the superiors only looked at the reports from the students' evaluation. If needs arise or complaints heard, then further action might be taken, such as teaching observations by a HOD or senior teachers or portfolio assessment and scrutiny of lesson plans by the HOD will be conducted. Chen also sounded a bit apprehensive with the subjectivity of the superior's evaluation which may incur emotional effect. In order for an evaluation to be effective, the exercise should not be detrimental, where most teachers are uncertain of their role to assess and to judge, however constructively, or to learn (Cosh, 1999).

The teachers then described their reaction about the current teacher evaluation as a mixed feeling. This can be seen in Table 5.7 as they did not only agree on one view but on several views.

Table 5.7   Teachers' reaction about the evaluation (n=72)

	Mean	S.D.	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
Interesting	3.28	.791	0% 0	45% 32	35% 25	20% 14	0% 0	71
Useful	3.63	.795	7% 5	58% 41	24% 17	11% 8	0% 0	71
Boring	2.86	.844	0% 0	22% 15	41% 28	35% 24	3% 2	69
Pointless	2.58	.946	0% 0	19% 13	20% 14	54% 38	7% 5	70
Scary	2.54	1.061	0% 0	19% 13	24% 17	41% 29	16% 11	70

*There were some respondents who did not respond to some questions.

Analysis shows 45% of the respondents agreed that evaluation was interesting while 65% agreed it was useful. This shows that despite being challenging as agreed by 44% of the respondents, the exercise of teacher evaluation may be interesting and useful to some teachers for them to observe their performance in

teaching every term. Based on the evaluation, they were able to see if they have improved or vice-versa.

Two respondents commented in the questionnaire as follows:

> Each time when student evaluation is scheduled, I will feel a bit nervous but I am looking forward to know more about my teaching and the students' feelings about my classes. You know each semester you have different groups of students. (Q73/Stage1)

> Scary because bosses only look at the marks. (Q15/Stage1)

The first quotation implies the feelings of apprehension which is a normal feeling for teachers when they were to receive an evaluation. Then, the evaluation becomes interesting as they were able to compare between comments and between groups of students, becomes useful as the comments serve to accommodate to the students' needs and to improve and to change become a challenge to the teachers. In the second quotation, the respondent expressed her feelings of anticipation, and was being realistic as some superiors usually focus on those with fewer marks for their evaluation. She was also being sceptical of evaluation and the person in charge of the evaluation as the superiors often associate marks obtained with their performance.

This was confirmed through an interview with Din who commented,

> As for me, maybe because I know and strongly believe that I have done the right thing… you know… the advantage of having years of experience teaching in schools - facilitate (not teach) my students well in a way. I strongly believe in like using PBL, the Internet, video watching, field trips, even play golf or bowling with them and of course challenge them with challenging tasks that I believe will help them improve even more and effective, etc, explore and take risk! Once you've done your very best and the students have been consulted on how you want them to learn in your class despite the loads of work and different ways of learning (don't think so much about what others think of you or what they don't agree about) then, half the battle has been won. (Din/Int.Stage1)

The above quotations by Din really point out that teachers have the feelings of satisfaction about their teaching when their students perform well in the

examination or show some improvements in their learning. Din even reminded teachers to be positive about their own teaching and classroom practices, as he mentioned, "… explore and take risk… and don't think so much about what others think of you…then, half the battle has been won." This denotes that he found satisfaction in teaching by trying out some new techniques and approaches to students' learning.

In relation to classroom observation by the HOD, some questionnaire respondents were unsatisfied with this method of evaluation. Two respondents who selected 'pointless' and 'boring' expressed their opinion as follows:

> It is unfair to judge a teacher's performance based on only one observation each semester. (Q24/Stage1)

> Of course I will prepare well before the observation… I often prepare something extra, this is really unrealistic actually. (Q53/Stage1)

The question of an "ideal" frequency for classroom observation held by a HOD may not have been discussed with the teachers at the institution where respondent Q24 worked. Meanwhile, for respondent Q53, she realised that she did extra preparation for the observation and that this in reality did not happen in real life. Some teachers had to adapt to changes in their daily teaching although teaching plan had been outlined in the lesson plan.

5.2.2 Purposes of Teacher Evaluation

In this section, I will elaborate further on the existing purposes of teacher evaluation at different universities as mentioned by my participants as well as their opinion on what the purposes *should* be. First, I will present the data I obtained from my survey, and then, I will relate them to my qualitative interview data.

Existing purposes of teacher evaluation

Table 5.8 below indicates that the questionnaire respondents agreed with three out of the four listed purposes. Items [iv] 'To develop professional tools - providing all teachers with feedback on their teaching', [iii] 'To identify teachers who would

benefit from additional training/support' and [i] 'To identify good teachers for promotion/increased salary' attracted the highest levels of teachers agreement: i.e. 80% of the teachers agreed with item [iv], 73% with item [iii], and 66% with item [i]. This may indicate that teachers appreciated teacher evaluation and looked at the evaluation carried out at their respective institutions from a positive angle. The one purpose which received the most disagreement among the teacher respondents was item [ii] 'To identify poor teachers with a view to demote/dismiss them', i.e. 60%. As mentioned earlier, the main purposes of the evaluation was to look at positive improvements for the teachers and institutions, rather than to dismiss them.

Table 5.8   Teachers' views of the purposes of teacher evaluation at their institutions

	Mean	S.D.	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
i. To identify good teachers for promotion/increased salary	3.64	1.104	23% 16	43% 30	17% 12	13% 9	4% 3	70
ii. To identify poor teachers with a view to demote/dismiss them	2.36	1.154	4% 3	13% 9	23% 16	33% 23	27% 19	70
iii. To identify teachers who would benefit from additional training/support	3.69	1.109	23% 16	50% 35	8% 6	16% 11	3% 2	70
iv. To develop professional tools - providing all teachers with feedback on their teaching	3.92	1.097	33% 24	47% 34	6% 4	11% 8	3% 2	72

*Note: 2 respondents did not complete items [i], [ii] and [iii]

With reference to the above findings, I will include three histogram charts in order to provide clearer picture of the obvious difference in mean score for item [i], [ii] and [iv]. It is important to note here that I will only provide histogram charts for these findings and not for the rest of the study simply to give some idea and to make comparisons among the quantitative data.

The following histogram chart, as in Figure 5.2, clearly illustrates the findings concerning whether the purpose of teacher evaluation was to identify good teachers.

i. *To identify good teachers*
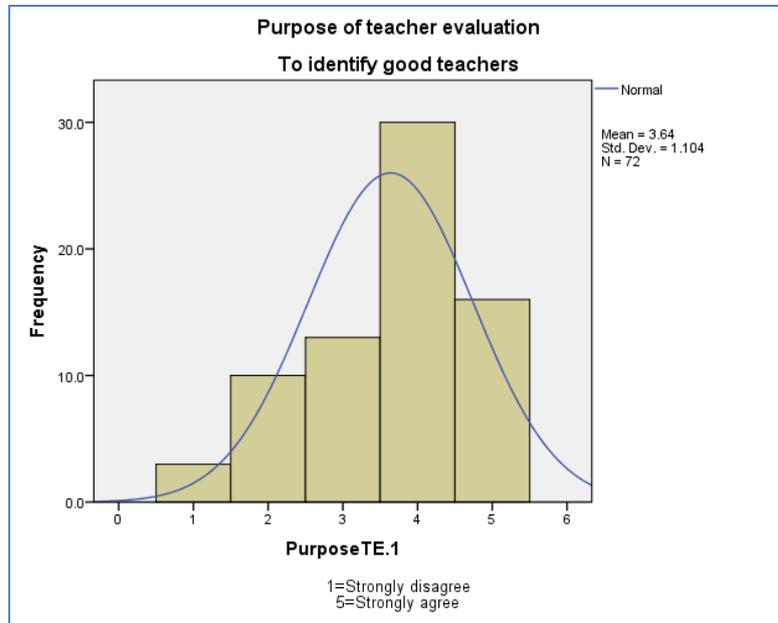
Figure 5.2   Respondents' view on purpose [i] To identify good teachers

The distribution to the responses to question 7i of the survey tends to follow a normal distribution curve, but with more teachers responding towards the high end of the scale, showing that more teachers tended to agree with the statement that the purpose of the teacher evaluation system in their institution is to identify good teachers for promotion or increased salary. The mean score was 3.64, which is slightly above the neutral score of 3.0 on this scale of 1 to 5 confirming that on average teachers were likely to agree with the statement. Meanwhile, the frequency distribution for question 7ii (as shown in Figure 5.3) shows more teachers scoring low while fewer scoring high. This indicates that teachers tended to disagree that the purpose of teacher evaluation at the institution was to identify poor teachers with a view to demoting or dismissing them. The means score of 2.36 lies below the neutral score of 3.0, confirming that teachers tended to disagree with the statement. The standard deviation of 1.154 was slightly larger

than that in question 7i, showing a greater spread of responses. This could be because 4 teachers strongly agreed with the statement (whereas in question 7i only 2 teachers had strongly disagreed).

Respondent Q38 who agreed with statement 7i, added in the questionnaire comment section that the purpose of teacher evaluation at her institution was:

> To reward teachers with good incentives. (Q38/Stage1)

This gives a positive connotation about evaluation at her institution. The above respondent, however, did not mention in detail what kinds of incentive were the teachers rewarded either in terms of increment in salary, promotion to a higher post, or others and at the same time, did not also mention about those who obtained poor evaluation. Meanwhile, in the interview, Liz explained,

> The purpose is merely to gauge the effectiveness of a particular staff's teaching (imparting of knowledge & skills) in relation to students learning (acquisition of knowledge & skills). (Liz/Int.Stage1)

The evaluation at the university where Liz belongs illustrates that not only it is meant to measure teachers' effectiveness in teaching but also to measure students' learning as well. Students need to be exposed to the highest standards of teaching and learning for them to achieve their potential (Moore, 2013).

Based on the following histogram chart, as in Figure 5.3, findings on whether the purpose of teacher evaluation was to identify poor teachers.
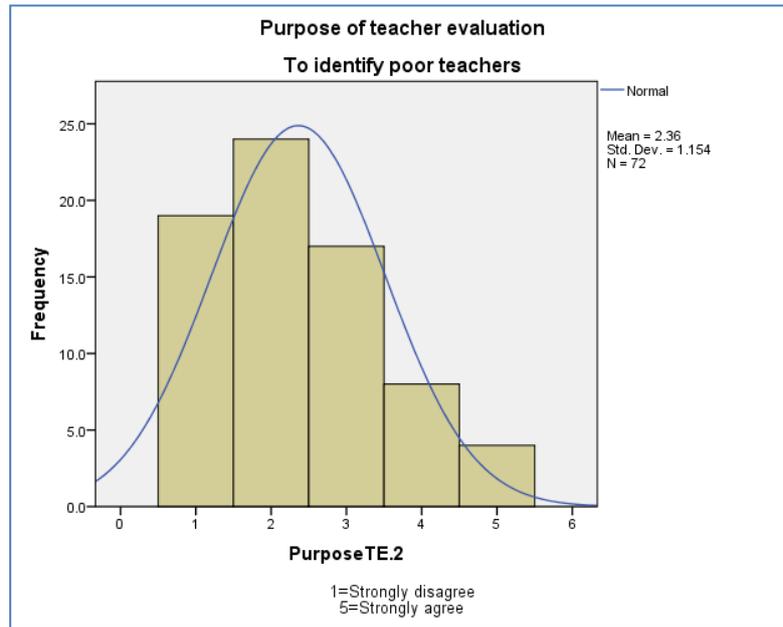
Figure 5.3   Respondents' view on purpose [ii] To identify poor teachers

It is interesting to look at the first two histogram graphs and compare between them as the one in Figure 5.2 shows that more teachers responded towards the high end of the scale showing that more teachers agreed with the purpose of teacher evaluation at their institutions were to identify good teachers. On the other hand, figure 5.3 shows that fewer teachers responded towards the low end of the scale, showing that less teachers agreed with the teacher evaluation at their institutions were to identify poor teachers with a view to dismiss them.

iii.   *To identify teacher who would benefit from training*

Analysis for item [iii] shows that the mean score of 3.69 indicates that on the whole teachers tended to agree that the purpose of teacher evaluation at their institution was to identify teachers who would benefit from additional training or support. The mean, which is slightly above the neutral score, confirmed that on average teachers were likely to agree with the statement above. This finding was related to the idea by Mie and Din who said that those who did not perform well were then asked to attend courses to improve their teaching. Mie stressed,

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We are given a target of 80%. And so far, all our full time teachers exceeded the 80% except for some part-timers, they get below 80, and if they get below 80 they will be asked… you know… they will be asked to come in and we will do some consultation and then if need be, they will be sent for training… training on pedagogy, classroom management, and many more. (Mie/Int.Stage1)

Din, who was from the same university as Liz, mentioned two more purposes. They are:

To identify weaknesses in teaching and learning in many aspects like pedagogy, infrastructure, support, etc., and to take corrective actions towards improving the weaknesses like train and retrain the staff affected by poor assessment, provide needed infrastructure and learning materials including the use of ICT, etc. (Din/Int.Stage1)

Based on my experience as an EL teacher at the context of this study, the most common teacher evaluation used was the student rating questionnaire and the yearly performance appraisal by the HOD. For these two types of evaluation, teachers were expected to achieve certain targets for their given marks or scores and these marks or scores were used as a benchmark to evaluate whether a teacher falls under excellent, good, or poor. Here, Mie's statement was a bit unclear as to why only part-timers did not exceed the 80% target as compared to the full time teachers. I am of the opinion that part-time teachers may not be provided with clear explanation on how the evaluation is carried out. They also may not be provided with a clear guideline of the requirements by the institutions before they started to teach and thus resulting in low marks in the evaluation. Apart from this, as far as professional development is concerned, the quote by Din has revealed that training and improving teaching for the staff with poor evaluation is the focus of evaluation at the university.

Based on the following histogram chart (Figure 5.4), the findings for whether the purpose of teacher evaluation was to develop a professional tool were presented.
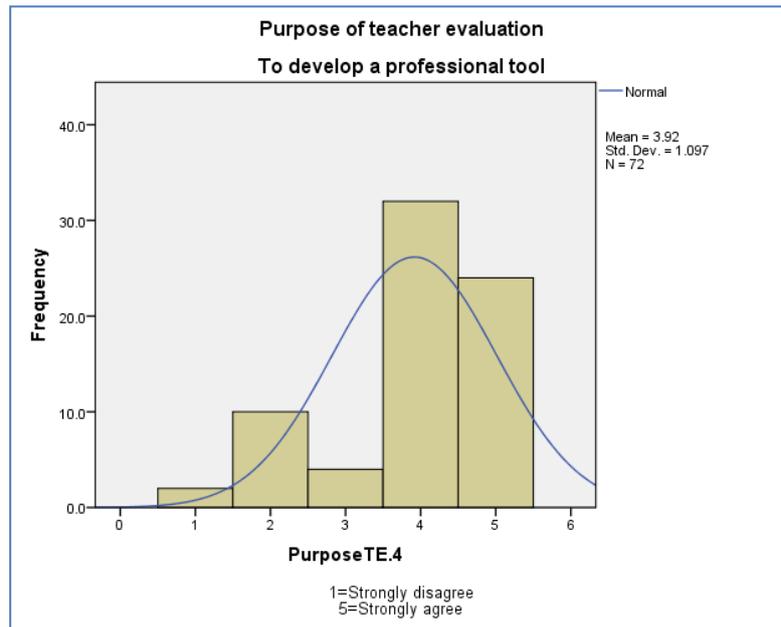
Figure 5.4   Respondents' view on purpose [iv] To develop professional tool

In response to similar question, i.e. question 7, the histogram in Figure 5.4 for responses to question 7iv shows two distinct groups of responses. A large group agreed that the purpose of teacher evaluation is to develop professional tools that is providing all teachers with feedback on their teaching, while a minority group disagreed with very few holding a neutral opinion. This was borne out by the high mean of 3.92 on this question, showing a high overall level of agreement.

Additionally, respondent Q32 stressed that the purpose to show whether or not a teacher is making progress towards a goal. She said,

> To meet the requirement, i.e. the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) set at the beginning of the academic year. (Q32/Stage1)

Another purpose of the procedure was for self-improvement. Respondent Q89 expressed,

> For the teachers themselves as a reflection on how to improve the teaching and learning process. (Q89/Stage1)

In addition, respondent Q84, who was a new and young lecturer who fell under those teachers with 3 to 5 years of teaching experience, came out with this interesting answer, which gave a picture that she is a motivated and thoughtful teacher.

> To identify some of the useful methods to be applied when teaching students from different background, and, to recognise the style of learning English preferred by current students. (Q84/Stage1)

From the open-ended section of the questionnaire and also from the interviews, one purpose of the teacher evaluation at different institutions was identified. The purpose highlighted by the respondents has been to determine the end-of-year bonus.

v.   *To determine the end-of-year bonus*

Data from the questionnaire and interview revealed that some semi-government and private institutions still exercise offering end-of-year bonus to their staff. This is meant to appreciate the staff and to encourage them to better perform in the future.

An experienced teacher with PhD, respondent Q60, said the purpose of teacher evaluation at her institution is,

> To determine how much Hari Raya (Eid) bonus is to be paid to the teachers. (Q60/Stage1)

Sal, in the interview, also supported the comment above by saying,

> For the management to decide on how much bonus to give for Hari Raya Eid Fitr (Eid celebration), so that people do not question when so and so is not given more than so and so. (Sal/Int.Stage1)

Sal tried to emphasize how teachers really value the end-of-year bonus from the government. Her statement implies that different teachers receive different amount of bonus depending on their yearly performance. This is to show that institutions which give end-of-year bonus based on the performance of the teachers appreciate and acknowledge their effort for the betterment of the teachers

themselves and also for the institutions. Wragg (2004) stated that the major purposes of performance-related pay are to recruit, retain and motivate workforce assuming that teachers will be more committed and work harder to achieve the institution's goal. Sal claimed that the amount of the bonus was decided based on the performance of each teacher with reference to the discussion with the HOD on the aims and goals set at the very beginning of the academic year. This is because she concurred that one of the methods used for teacher evaluation at her institution was based on the performance review meeting with a department head held each academic year. She added that teachers usually did not argue about the amount given, because it was based on their yearly performance as set and discussed at the beginning of each semester.

In the following part, the respondents emphasized their views about what the purposes of the teacher evaluation should be.

The purposes of teacher evaluation <u>should</u> be …

In the interview, the following question was then asked, *"What do you think that the purpose of the TE system <u>should</u> be?"*

   i. To evaluate teachers' professional knowledge

Liz commented that rather than the above existing purposes of teacher evaluation, she added the purposes should be to evaluate teachers' professional knowledge. She said,

> Ideally, the TE system ought to evaluate teachers' professional knowledge, instructional strategies, professionalism, communication and assessment strategies. Most importantly, it must provide effective feedback to teachers that go beyond just evaluative 'good' or 'bad,' but take a position of how one can grow for the better. In addition, the TE system should (i) create a professional culture of respect and trust among staff members, (ii) continuously improve teaching and learning to increase student achievement, and (iii) engage lecturers/teachers in reflective practice to improve student learning. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

In this case, data suggests that there is a preferred objective as far as teacher evaluation is concerned. Six participants seemed to believe that the professional

development side of teacher evaluation was lacking in the current practice. The participants, who were aware that they taught in a top-down managerial context, expressed their views and dissatisfaction with the mechanical and standardised form of teacher evaluation used by their management teams.

Two other interviewees, Mie and Sal, had the same opinion as Liz, as they both expressed that teachers were supposed to be provided with the evaluation feedback so that they were able to reflect. Schon (1983) argued that the ability to reflect on action, so as to engage in a process of continuous learning, is one of the defining characteristics of professional practice. For example, in response to the question, Sal said,

> In reality, teachers should know the result of each evaluation so that they can improve themselves, apart from to alert them on good teaching practices and to create awareness of what should and should not be carried out. (Sal/Int.Stage1)

In addition, the purpose of teacher evaluation should be, according to Chen,

> … more qualitative and not just quantitative. The superior should also do observation and not only rely on student rating questionnaire. (Chen/Int.Stage1)

Chen was trying to convey that relying on numbers alone was not enough. For instance, in reference to the percentages resulting from the student rating questionnaire cannot give teachers a clear picture of what may be missing or lacking. Thus, methods of evaluation other than using a questionnaire alone may be among the best references for teachers to determine their weaknesses and to improve where appropriate. Qualitative data, which may be obtained from student oral or written feedback and also by conducting some classroom observations, may be worth taking into consideration.

ii. *To conform by the job scope*

Sal again emphasized that the purpose of the evaluation was for teachers to keep on the right track in teaching their students as this is the utmost important thing.

Thus, the main purpose of the evaluation was to ensure that teachers follow their teaching syllabus. She emphasized,

> The main purpose is to remind teachers/lecturers to keep on the right track, this is the most important thing. They should always go by the syllabus so that they are teaching the correct thing and will not be teaching whatever they feel they want to teach and waste their time. (Sal/Int.Stage1)

Respondent Q52 who agreed with this idea stated,

> Teachers have syllabus to follow and to make sure that they cover them for examination purposes.(Q52/Stage1)

Sal argued that there were teachers who wasted their time for not following the syllabus and thought that there were those who teach based on *"whatever they feel they wanted to teach",* which resulted in a waste of their time. The claims by Sal and respondent Q52 above show that teachers were unable to do extra for their students, except to make sure that they taught as outlined in the syllabus. This shows that the performance of the teachers was determined by the achievements of their students in the exams. Thus, failure to cover the syllabus may result in low achievement of the students.

iii. *For quality assurance*

Biah, a member of staff at an international university, thought that the purpose of evaluation was to maintain the standard of the university. She stressed,

> I think because this is an international university, they need to maintain the standard or otherwise, we are dealing with foreign students. They need to have a certain kind of standard which is at par with other international universities. (Biah/Int.Stage1)

The standard of the teaching and learning at the university reflects the image of the university as competing with the others in a global market.

iv. For customer satisfaction

Similarly, Mie emphasized the importance of looking at students as the stakeholder in addition to ensure good quality. He said,

> I think the main purpose is to make sure that we deliver what we promise. We are a private university and our motto is "Students' education is our priority". And to make sure that the client get what they wanted and what they paid for, and of course to ensure good quality and to make sure that the lecturers carry their job, which I think is good. (Mie/Int.Stage1)

The above quotations by Biah and Mie imply the importance of teacher evaluation is in order to ensure that high quality of teaching and learning is to be maintained. The two purposes above shows that they are interlinked. However, the two instances indicate that teacher evaluation is working within a customer satisfaction approach and that teacher or professional development does not seem to be a priority.

5.2.3 Frequency of Evaluation

Almost 75% of the survey respondents reported that teacher evaluations were carried out every semester. 14% of them claimed that it was carried out once a year and 12% said it was carried out less than once a year (see Table 5.9).

Table 5.9   Frequency of having teacher evaluation

	Frequency	Percentage
Less than once a year	9	12
Once a year	10	14
Termly	53	74
Total	72	100.0

However, data from the remaining one fourth of the questionnaire respondents as well as the analysis from the interview indicates the frequency of evaluation at every university varies. Six respondents claimed that it was conducted termly, one respondent said annually, while the other said less than once. Sal, who had been

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teaching at many different institutions since 1976, was able to compare different experiences of evaluation. She commented,

> At this current university, I am being evaluated annually. At the university before I came here, evaluation was done only once, i.e. before I am confirmed into the job. When I first got the job as a lecturer, during my earliest stage of teaching at one of the universities, evaluation was done quite often. The subject coordinator came to observe quite regularly, about 2-3 times a semester. While teaching in school, it was done only once a while when the panitia (the EL panel) came. (Sal/Int.Stage1)

In the above quote, Sal, who was teaching at a university in the north of Malaysia, revealed that there appears to be no standardized teacher evaluation procedure in HE institutions in Malaysia. Unlike Sal, Ram who had more than thirty years of teaching experience, but the interview was based on his five years of teaching at his current institution explained,

> I have been evaluated only twice since I joined this university. First, was at the beginning of my service; that was five years ago. And the second one was done last year… that's all. (Ram/Int.Stage1)

The evaluation which both Sal and Ram were referring to was the classroom observation. According to Sal, at her institution evaluation was based on classroom observation which was conducted termly and the performance review meeting with the HOD conducted annually. Ram, who worked at the same institution as Biah, explained that student ratings were conducted termly, performance review meeting annually and classroom observation conducted by the HOD at random whenever the head wanted to. Chen, Mie, Liz, Din and Aizal, explained that they were evaluated by the students termly and by the HOD annually.

5.2.4 Person/s Responsible for Evaluating Teachers' Teaching

Questionnaire respondents were asked: "Who is responsible for evaluating your teaching?" Their responses could be clustered into five categories: 1) student; 2) dean; 3) head of department; 4) management; and 5) senior lecturer. Data from the open-ended question in the questionnaire revealed that only two universities

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practised classroom observation. The respondents selected senior lecturers as the person responsible for observing their teaching. Some of the respondents indicated only one type of evaluator, while others claimed that at their institutions there were several parties who evaluated their teaching. Students were said to be the most common persons to evaluate teachers. This was based on the 43% of the respondents who mentioned them as the persons responsible to evaluate teachers' teaching (refer Table 5.10). The department head appeared to be the second common person to evaluate teachers in most institutions around Malaysia with 36%, followed by the management 26%, the dean 18%, and senior lecturers 8%. It is worth mentioning here again the number of universities involved in this study, i.e. 10 universities.

Table 5.10   Frequency of participants selected the people responsible to evaluate teachers

	Yes	No	Total
Students	43% 31	57% 41	72
Dean	18% 13	82% 59	72
HOD	36% 26	64% 46	72
Management	26% 19	74% 53	72
Senior lecturers	8% 6	92% 66	72

At all the universities, students appeared to be the main people to evaluate teachers. This may be because students deal directly with teachers almost every day. Besides this, students, regarded as the main customers at most universities, are usually given much priority in evaluating their teachers. However, according to Suwanarak (2007), students usually lack the maturity and expertise to make relevant judgments about course content or teaching methods.

5.2.5 Effectiveness of the Current Evaluation System

Data from the questionnaire, as shown in Table 5.11, reveals that slightly over half the respondents (51%) thought that the current teacher evaluation at their respective institutions was effective. While, 49% of the respondents claimed that the evaluation at their institutions was not effective. This shows that the responses spread almost equally between the two choices.

Table 5.11   Effectiveness of the current teacher evaluation at each institution

	Frequency	Percentage	
Not at all effective	5	7	Not Effective
Not very effective	30	42	
Quite effective	26	36	Effective
Effective	11	15	
Total	72	100	

The interview data sheds some light on what might be meant by 'effective'. Reasons why the evaluation was effective, according to two interviewees are; first, students are honest in their ratings, and second, every evaluation should achieve its objective. Biah, in the interview, expressed her satisfaction of the evaluation which took place at her institution because she believes that her students know her best. She said,

> Yes, I am satisfied with the student ratings. I do feel they are accurate and effective. The students… I think they know best. Ask the students, they know best, because they are very honest you know. The teachers come to class and teach and meet the students often. The students will leave good remarks if they are happy, but if they don't then they will go to the office to complaint. (Biah/Int.Stage1)

Chen also uses the term 'honest' to describe her students when doing the evaluation. She stated,

> I find that student rating questionnaire is effective because students are honest and you are able to now it because numbers in quantitative speaks/reflects a certain amount of truth. (Chen/Int.Stage1)

Biah and Chen showed a great deal of trust in the students. Both claimed that students are honest in their judgements. However, their students' judgement may be based on several reasons. One of them is popularity. Suwanarak (2007) points out that teachers receive good ratings due to being popular because of their kindness and leniency. On this point, both Biah and Chen may seem to accommodate their students' demands and needs in order to obtain good feedback from them and always trying to help them enjoy their teaching. However, both of them have a point here that in the context of classroom teaching, students are their clients. Chen also values the results that she obtained, particularly the marks given in the evaluation. To her, higher marks mean better teaching and that she is good at dealing with students. In relation to Chen's claim "numbers in quantitative speaks/reflects a certain amount of truth", based on my years of teaching experience in the context of the study, HODs and deans value the numbers obtained from each teacher evaluation to mean that those obtained 90% and above as excellent, and those obtained below 80% as teachers who needed assistance and trainings to improve their teaching. Thus, these evaluation results were used to help those teachers who obtained below 80%. This is supported by Mie, who is from the same institution as Chen. He claimed,

> As the deputy director of Center for Professional Evaluation, I will go through the survey to check those who are below 80% and also those who are above 90%. Sometimes we use those people who got 92% and above or 95% and above to help coach those who got below 80% on top of the training and then these people will be assess again in the following semester. (Mie/Int.Stage1)

The above quote by Mie shows that not only the university benefits from the evaluation but also the lecturers do. Lecturers who performed below par are encouraged to attend training to improve their teaching, and meanwhile, those who are excellent are recommended by the centre to train the weak ones. This supports the belief of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007), who claimed that the role of excellent teachers is to help other teachers improve their effectiveness and have a major impact on improving pupil attainment.

Din's comment below also shows indication of the effect of evaluation. He said,

> I am sure each evaluation has its own objective. As long as the evaluation achieves its objective, it should be acceptable. I am not sure about the evaluation at this university but I did get excellent results. (Din/Int.Stage1)

Din emphasized that an evaluation is effective when its objective is achieved and acceptable. Once this is achieved, then the whole process and outcome are considered significant. Although he was unsure whether or not the evaluation at his university achieves its objective, he indirectly believes that it somehow provides a kind of satisfaction to his work and teaching. Based on my understanding, Din refers to objective here as goal or aim. Din believes that for him by getting excellent results, he may have achieved the objective of the evaluation which in contrast, this may also be the result of being favoured by his students. This is because according to Din,

> I know and strongly believe that I have done the right thing the advantage of having years of experience teaching in schools … I facilitate my students well in a way I strongly believe in using PBL, the Internet, video watching, field trips, even play golf or bowling with them and of course challenge them with challenging tasks. (Din/Int.Stage1)

Although Din challenges his students with difficult tasks, he also helps them enjoy and appreciate his teaching by having outdoor activities. This maybe among the reasons why, he obtained excellent results each time the student evaluation is carried out. Students could either give him good remarks because of his good understanding of the lessons or the outings and fun that he handled, as mentioned by Suwanarak (2007) in remarks about teachers' popularity.

Another reason why an evaluation is effective is the accuracy of the evaluation. According to Mie,

> I would take the evaluation as 80% and above accurate. I guess because my students are all EL students… that's why they are good. (Mie/Int.Stage1)

The reason why it was accurate was because he was at an advantage of having to teach students undertaking English language as their major course, and the evaluation forms were all constructed in English. For students with language

difficulties, it may be a problem to understand the statements in the evaluation form and thus leave the comment sections blank for the open-ended questions.

Despite the many reasons why evaluation is seen as effective, there are still complaints from the teachers who find that evaluations carried out at their institutions are ineffective. This is due to factors such as: i) Lack of support, ii) Controlling power effect, and iii) Weaknesses in the administration of evaluation. Further elaboration on each factor is detailed out below.

i)   Lack of support

Full support from the management is very important to ensure good result of each teacher evaluation for better action to be taken. This does not only rely on the result gained from the evaluation alone but the process before an evaluation can take place also affects each evaluation. This is because, according to the respondents, the teacher evaluation has no significant impact on them, the scores were not studied upon and there is a need for various parties to evaluate them.

In contrast to Din's claim above, Liz who was from the same institution as Din explained the opposite. She commented,

> The teacher evaluation at my university is not precisely for ELT but rather a general teaching & learning evaluation. Thus, the purpose is merely to gauge the effectiveness of a particular staff's teaching (imparting of knowledge & skills) in relation to students learning (acquisition of knowledge & skills). As far as I'm concern, there is no specific significance. As a result, once a staff gets his or her rating, typically, one just carries on business as usual. The teacher evaluation does not provide staff with feedback for him/her to get better so that students' learning can increase. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

Here, Liz was trying to convey that teachers were not very much affected by the result from the evaluation held at her university be it excellent or poor. This implies that teachers felt complacent with the existing methods of evaluation and had never tried to improve in order to receive better evaluation because the evaluation was not done qualitatively. It actually did not have any impact on the teachers. Liz's comment indirectly informed that she might have received non-favourable

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feedbacks from her students as compared to Din, who always received excellent results. This really portrays that the teacher evaluation is really an instruction imposed top-down. In other words, the evaluation existed because the management wanted it to exist and therefore was not valued by the teachers. She further elaborated,

> As mentioned earlier, to me this is all very mechanical and thus, has no significance. I just feel it as part and parcel of the teaching & learning mechanism. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

Chen, who also shared the same idea, said,

> Every semester the student rating questionnaire score is wasted because it is not studied and reflected upon. And I don't like the yearly appraisal by the HOD because they have never observed my teaching. They only based on the student rating questionnaire and by chance if they see my course file. There is so much of human emotion at stake especially if they like or hate you on a personal basis. Then, the meeting between the HOD and the dean to discuss about the staffs' yearly appraisal is usually a one way communication. So no new learning was shared. (Chen/Int.Stage1)

The evaluation, as explained by Liz and Chen, has become a routine and has no impact on the teachers themselves as a strategy for self-improvement or self-development. To them, student rating questionnaire was too commonly being conducted making teachers complacent and therefore it has no significance to teaching and learning. As a result, Chen suggested that the results of student rating questionnaire be studied and reflected upon so that all parties could benefit from the university's effort. Apart from student rating, Chen found that the evaluation at her institution was ineffective because the superiors did not conduct any classroom observation. Although earlier she commented that students are honest in their evaluation, she still values more the point of view of those superior. Student rating questionnaire should serve as a support to other forms of evaluation as well, here in her case observation and yearly appraisal by the HOD. Here, we could understand that several methods of evaluation were implemented at Chen's university but there was no effort by the management or those involved in the evaluations to further study the results to better contribute specifically to the

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teachers' improvement and for the well development of the university in general. Evaluation by a superior, according to Chen, was seen as very subjective because of the emotions involved in the process of observation. In addition to this, "one way communication" according to Chen may mean that in order for an evaluation to be transparent, it is best for the superiors to get teachers involved in all discussion about any appraisal.

Although based on Table 5.2, student rating questionnaires gained the highest percentage for the methods of evaluation, some of the participants suggested for someone else to become the evaluator. Mie, for example, highlighted,

> For me, the students are the one who evaluate me, and then of course my immediate boss. I feel that there should be more than one person because they can have different perspectives. I guess it's good to have somebody who is an expert in that area to evaluate you, somebody who knows the subject. But it is quite difficult to have someone of the same field. I would rather have someone from the English or education rather than someone from accounting, etc. (Mie/Int.Stage1)

Mie has a point here, as he indicates that it is important to have more than one evaluator, i.e. the students. He would like to have an evaluator from a similar area of expertise so that teachers can receive feedback on their teaching. This is something which students cannot do in their evaluation. Students cannot provide any comments or suggestions for improvement in terms of the subject matter. Although Mie was from the same university as Chen, he did not leave any comments about the evaluation by a HOD or Dean. However, respondent Q42, having had the performance review report/meeting with her HOD, expressed her bad experience with this method of teacher evaluation. She said,

> I had a very bad experience going through the performance review report/meeting. I never had the chance to discuss my scores with my head of the EL panel. When I first teach at this university, I was told that in the review meeting we will get to know our scores and performance. However, during my time none were discussed. I was shock to know from my dean that I fell into those under-achievements. Why? This was not discussed with me before it reached the dean. Really frustrating! (Q42/Stage1)

Sal, in the interview, also explained,

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> We were asked to set our aims and goals at the beginning of the academic year and will revise them again with the HOD at the end of the year whether or not we have achieved our target. However, at the end of the year we were given our marks by the HOD without having the chance to discuss on what we have done. This is unfair because we were unable to defend ourselves. (Sal/Int.Stage1)

Based on the analysis, it was revealed that the notes for the meeting was not sent to teachers for further actions and meetings did not happen between the evaluator, i.e. the HOD, and the teachers. These expressions by the respondents reflect my many years of experience in teaching at one of the public universities in Malaysia where teachers were not informed about their performance although explained in the report/form.

Many universities have tried out different approaches to improve teaching and learning. However, to maintain the sustainability of certain approach/programme is not an easy task on the part of the management team. In this sense, Din elaborated,

> Assessment should be formative as well and not just summative. When I was head of PDP we introduced the mentor-mentee system whereby senior staff assists fresh staff in their facilitation of students, clinically. Otherwise, these fresh graduates will teach as how they have been wrongly taught – merely lecture – and as a result the teacher becomes more talkative while the students remain passive and not improve. (Din/Int.Stage1)

He explained that the mentor-mentee system which he introduced no longer existed, though he felt that the programme conducted clinically could assist teachers to improve.

ii)   Controlling power effect

Another reason why the evaluation is seen as ineffective is a lack of cooperation from those in power, in other words, from the people in control of the evaluation. The following instances provide better picture of the true scenarios in some institutions. In terms of peer observation as the teacher evaluation method practised at the university where Sal was working, she expressed her

discontentment of being observed by a teacher who has less experience than her. She claimed,

> I am not a new teacher. I am not looking forward to having to do more work because there are already lots of works to do. I don't learn new things upon being evaluated. Given a chance I do not want to go through this again since I am already retired. I want to teach but I do not want to be stressed knowing that someone is observing me, although you are aware that you have to be made countable to God. (Sal/Int.Stage1 – had a PhD and had been teaching for more than 38 years)

Here, Sal who had already retired felt that she only wanted to contribute in terms of knowledge and skills to the students at the university. She did not value evaluation anymore, as she emphasized that she was not new to teaching. This indirectly implies that she wanted to bring changes to the university. She then further added,

> I feel intimidated. They are like judging my teaching. They never have a PhD holder volunteering to teach at this institution and they do not know how to handle seniors. They are treating me like I am a junior. My novel intention to be here is to help them but I do not know what they feel.

Sal felt really uncomfortable with the observation as she considered the session as being judgemental over her teaching. In the true sense of peer observation, this exercise is seen as failure, because according to Head and Taylor (1997) through peer observation teachers can learn from and support each other as the exercise is seen as a supportive rather than an evaluative process. Teachers should have a mutual willingness to provide mutual support for each other.

iii)   Weakness in the administration of evaluation

Teachers view weaknesses in the administration of the evaluation as one of the contributing factors to why the evaluation at their university was not effective. Among the weaknesses are issues of time and accuracy.

Mie, for instance, stressed about the two factors. In the interview, he said,

> For the student rating questionnaire, sometimes students they are late…you know… if they do not fill up the form they can't sit for the exam. Sometimes I think they rush through in the survey. When they rush through, I think there will be no accuracy. That is the question mark. That's what I feel, because sometimes they fill up in a hurry. So, they fill up just for the sake of exam.

Mie explained that students wait until the very last minute to complete the evaluation form and thus find it a matter of completing without thinking of their contribution for the betterment of the teaching and learning at the institution. This affects the accuracy of the evaluation when students rush in completing the survey. They may be doing it for the sake of submitting it to the office so that they are eligible to sit for the examination.

The administration of the items in each evaluation should be taken into account. Din, in the interview, said,

> The assessment items should be inclined towards student-centred learning and NOT teacher-centred teaching.

The above quote emphasized the quantitative data as to why some teachers agreed that the teacher evaluation currently practised at their institutions is not effective. They carried out the practice as it was required by the university, but it has very little or no effect at all to their teaching. This is because the practice has been imposed from the higher management and teachers have no say on this matter. In other words, evaluations at tertiary level were an instruction given top-down. In support of this matter, teachers were not given the chance to voice their opinion.

In the interview, Ram emphasized that the evaluation of teaching was carried out in an unsystematic way. This was because teachers were not informed about the guidelines of the evaluation. He stated,

> I don't really understand how the teachers at the university were evaluated. There were no clear guidelines on how the calculation was made. My achievement in the review with my HOD seemed to show no difference between the many years when I was assigned only to teach and the years when I teach as well as I hold quite a number of posts.

5.2.6 If Negative Evaluation Received

Based on the questionnaire, the respondents of the current study reacted differently when they received negative feedback. This is clearly shown in Table 5.12 below.

Table 5.12   Teachers' reaction if the evaluation they receive is negative (n=72)

	Mean	S.D.	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
i. I straightaway plan for improvement.	4.14	.678	28% 20	62% 44	7% 5	3% 2	0% 0	71
ii. I discuss the comments with my colleagues to get some ideas about how to improve.	4.13	.786	33% 24	51% 36	12% 8	4% 3	0% 0	71
iii. I discuss the comments with my head of department.	3.4	1.002	12% 8	39% 26	29% 20	16% 11	4% 3	68
iv. I just leave it because I know there will be no action taken against me.	2.17	.949	0% 0	6% 4	16% 11	50% 34	28% 19	68
v. I will always try to improve my teaching but usually my teaching remains the same.	2.49	.919	1% 1	15% 10	26% 17	44% 29	14% 9	66

*There were some respondents who did not respond to some questions.

Analysis of the questionnaire data concerning the teachers' reaction if the evaluation they receive is negative showed that responses to items [i] I straightaway plan for improvement, and [ii] I discuss the comments with my colleagues to get some ideas about how to improve, were accepted positively by the respondents. Meanwhile, 51% of the respondents agreed that they normally discuss the comments with their HOD, while 20% of them refused to do so. If compared between the findings for item [ii] and item [iii], it may be concluded that the respondents put more preferences to discuss about the feedback they received with their colleagues as compared to the HOD. In relation to this, respondent Q24 stressed,

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It's quite embarrassing to discuss one's weaknesses with the bosses. So, I guess, since the bosses know the feedback lecturers get from the evaluation, they should make general comments during meetings as not to embarrass or humiliate anybody in particular. (Q24/Stage1)

This supports the idea by Gosling (2002), who suggested for an exercise to be successful teachers are to be regarded as genuine peers where real equal mutuality and respect for each other are the utmost importance whatever their status in the department.

Only 6% said they did nothing after receiving a negative evaluation. In the interview, Liz highlighted,

As far as I'm concern, the outcome from the student evaluation here has no specific significance. As a result, once a staff gets his or her rating, typically, one just carries on business as usual. The TE does not provide staff with feedback for him/her to get better and student learning can increase. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

Liz's idea more or less supports the decision of the four respondents who share the same claim. I believe that due to the practice being carried out without bringing any effect to the teachers, they tend to feel complacent of the exercise and treat evaluation as a routine. She then added,

To me this is all very mechanical and thus, has no significance. I just feel it as part and parcel of the teaching & learning mechanism. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

Chen, in the interview, also shared the same opinion about the above matter. She lamented,

Every semester the student rating questionnaire score is wasted because it is not studied and reflected upon. (Chen/Int.Stage1)

The above quotations reveal that at some institutions evaluation has become a routine that was not studied and acted upon wisely. This could bring advantage to every party involved if each evaluation is managed well.

In the questionnaire, several respondents left their comments regarding this issue. One respondent said,

Negative feedback is a challenge for anyone to improve his or her teaching. (Q29/Stage1)

Another said,

If I try there will be improvement. (Q60/Stage1)

The above quotations show that these teachers looked at the evaluation result from a positive point of view and would then change to better improve themselves in teaching. However, not all teachers may easily accept negative feedback as constructive. This may be clearly seen in the following responds. A respondent commented,

If we are not lenient in terms of marks we will get negative remarks from students so we just continue with what we believe as good teaching practice. Students, they like to be told what to read and what to do. They are so dependent on us. (Q43/Stage1)

This finding shows that the teacher does provide the students with what he or she believes as good teaching practice. Knowing that the students come from an educational culture where they are spoon-fed and always depending on the teachers to inform what and how to do in their studies, this teacher realises that negative evaluation by her students may be due to encouraging the students to be independent and expressive which they do not favour. Another respondent put the blame on the system. He or she blamed,

Maybe something is not right with the system of assessment. (Q38/Stage1)

Looking at the above quotation, Liz also shared the same idea.

I have a very mixed feeling and opinion on this. To a certain extent it does make me feel valued as a member of staff especially when my rating falls on the upper end of 'excellent'. However, when the rating is on the down scale of just a 'good', I tend to question the evaluation system as how accurate it is! But I am sure I can improve myself if I am given the chance to work with other teachers. (Liz/Int.Stage1)

Here, Liz believes that evaluation could not only be based on other parties alone such as the superiors for example the HOD or dean, or the students as in the

student rating. This proves that she supports participatory teacher evaluation besides the existing teacher evaluation at her university. Teachers who support continuous professional development are more open to changes and willing to discuss with their colleagues about methods to improve teaching.

5.2.7 Choice of Evaluator - "I have no say"

A majority of those interviewed claimed that they have no say in who evaluates them. In this sense, they felt that they have no right in determining who to become their evaluator. Mie commented,

> We don't really have a say… because we are a government set up. So, for our standardized yearly teacher appraisal by the HOD, basically our bosses do our evaluation and for our teaching, students will evaluate. (Mie/Int.Stage1)

Ram emphasized,

> I have no say. All the teachers don't. We are assigned by the HOD for appointed lecturers to evaluate us. Those are all self-known, no one told us who will evaluate whom, but once you know that an evaluation is taking place you will be able to guess. (Ram/Int.Stage1)

The above two interviewees seemed to support each other through their ideas. Mie claimed that the teachers have no say in who evaluates them because they are working with the government institution or in other words, at a public university. As a matter of fact, teacher evaluation, regardless of where it is, be it at public or private institutions, should be given much importance in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Based on my experience in the context of the study, teacher evaluation is very much imposed top-down. This may be why teachers have no say in the implementation of each evaluation it is meant for teachers to improve. If given the chance for teachers to work in a more democratic teacher evaluation or allowing for more participatory teacher evaluation, they may find that evaluation is more meaningful and ready to change to better improve themselves.

In addition to the above, the involvement of teachers and their voices into the process of teacher evaluation should be given much thought. In the above instance, Ram claimed that although he was not informed of who was his evaluator, he had already had the person in mind. Meanwhile, Mie explained that at his institution two methods of evaluation take place; one is the evaluation of the teachers in terms of teaching, and the other one is of community works, number of conferences attended, number of papers published and many others. Teachers are not involved in the decision of what methods of evaluation suit them. Therefore, both agreed that teachers usually have no say in an evaluation especially in the standardized yearly teacher appraisal, i.e. those other than teaching. It is normally a one way method, typically being evaluated by those superior to the teachers, who in his case was usually the HOD. Din, in the interview, explained,

> Teachers don't have a say… The assessors are my students though they may not be the only assessor. It has to include my superiors in ESL. (Din/Int.Stage1)

Similarly, in the interview, Sal stressed,

> No. I have no choice. She only has masters and I have PhD. She is not in English teaching line. Kind of weird. In my previous workplace, once I was confirmed, nobody observed me. I observed students in schools in practical teaching often. (Sal/Int.Stage1)

In the two quotations above, at two different institutions, Din and Sal also agreed that they have no say in who evaluates them. Din stated that at the moment students were those who evaluate him, although he hopes for other evaluators to be involved in the process of teacher evaluation. He agreed with the involvement of those more experienced, especially in his own area of ESL, will give more advantages not only to him but also to the university. In this sense, he did not only need someone to assess him in terms of the teaching methodology but also in terms of content. Sal, on the other hand, who had had peer observation experience at her university explained that she has no right to decide on who to observe her. She was asked by her HOD to undergo teaching observation and was provided an observer not from English language background.

5.2.8 Frequency of Receiving Formal Feedback

In each of the institutions where the questionnaire survey was undertaken, some respondents reported very often, some reported sometimes, while some reported rarely receiving formal feedback on their practices. The table below illustrates the percentage of the findings.

Table 5.13   Percentages of respondents' opinion about the frequency in receiving feedback

	Frequency	Percentage
Never	5	7
Rarely	18	25
Sometimes	19	26
Very often	12	17
Always	18	25
Total	72	100

Based on the analysis, 25% of the respondents said that as part of the teacher evaluation system they always receive formal feedback on their practice, while 17% said that very often and 26% of them said they sometimes receive feedback. 25% of the respondents claimed that they rarely receive feedback, while 7% claimed they never receive feedback at all.

A questionnaire respondent revealed that he felt good for not receiving any feedback at all. He/She commented,

> About the formal feedback, I feel good not receiving any feedback at all because I know if I receive a feedback, it means that my immediate boss is watching me. I don't like this. (Q42/Stage1)

The above statement is proof that many other teachers do not like to be observed or evaluated. In fact, based on my many years of teaching in the context of this study, teaching at the university was like being in my own world and observing or being observed by other teachers was far from the normal practice. This supports the claim by Muijs and Reynolds (2005) who stressed that traditionally teachers teach "behind closed doors".

In relation to the above, analysis of the questionnaire data on the selection of the person who instigates the formal feedback revealed that 33% of the respondents themselves requested the feedback, 46% said their HOD, while 15% said other parties. This is clearly shown in the following Table 5.14.

Table 5.14   Percentages of respondents' view on the person responsible to instigate formal feedback

	Frequency	Percentage
I do	24	33
My head of department	33	46
Others	15	21
Total	72	100.0

In the following section, data analysis and research findings related to peer observation are presented.

Peer Observation

This section answers the two research questions on peer observation:

- **What are Malaysian English language teachers' views about introducing peer observation into the system?**
- **What are the possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation?**

5.3 Teachers' Views about Introducing Peer Observation

In the beginning, I planned to present the findings to the above research questions separately. However, I noticed that combining the findings and presenting them into one section provides better picture of the exercise to the current situation. This section is divided according to; 1) teachers' understanding about peer observation; 2) the intervention; 3) the possibilities; and 4) the challenges of introducing peer observation at the university at which this study was conducted.

5.3.1 Teachers' Understanding of Peer Observation

Definitions of peer observation

All the respondents responded differently when asked in the questionnaire and also in the interview on the meaning and their understanding of "peer observation". The following are some selected responses given in the questionnaires and interviews divided according to those with some prior knowledge on peer observation and those without any knowledge at all on the said topic.

Responses from teachers with some knowledge on peer observation

Peer observation was defined by the questionnaire respondents as follows:

1. Teacher A observes teacher B. (Q54/Stage1)

2. Your colleague observing you. (Q11/Stage1)

3. Teachers can evaluate their own friend's teaching of the same line. (Q43/Stage1)

4. An evaluation on the teaching effectiveness by a colleague. (Q47/Stage1)

5. Colleagues teaching the same subject evaluate you in class. (Q93/Stage1)

The above are some examples of simple definitions given in the questionnaire. In reference to the first quotation, it was unclear whether or not the respondent understands the term especially what she said as "observing you". One may think that the colleague may assess the teacher being observed from all aspects including appearance or personality rather than focusing on aspects of classroom teaching or the teaching methodology like the evaluation by the students (Suwanarak, 2007). Abdullah (1997) mentioned that teachers must be kept aware of the aspects of observation in the peer observation activity. Meanwhile, in the second, third, and fourth quotations, the respondents used the word 'evaluate' to define the exercise. Usually, in peer observation, peers do not evaluate by judging or grading their colleagues' teaching but providing them with ideas to better improve and at the same time benefits the observers too. An observer may have some idea to improve his own teaching by watching a colleague teaching (Cosh, 1999). Therefore, with regards to peer observation, the usage of the word "evaluate" may cause misconceptions and confusion to those who are new to the exercise.

Some questionnaire respondents even went a bit further than just mentioning A observing B. Here are some examples:

6. A colleague or colleagues of similar areas regardless of their level of experience to join as an observer or observers in a real classroom teaching session conducted for the purpose of learning or improving teaching methodology/techniques for the sake of future generation. (Q15/Stage1)

7. When your colleagues or fellow teachers are given the responsibility to observe and provide comments about the teaching and learning process in your classroom. (Q32/Stage1)

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8. Peer observation is a method of gaining feedback to improve teaching skills; where one takes turn in sitting in one of each other's teaching sessions and later discuss on each other's teaching. Once over, each teacher will write a reflection on the discussion and then decide on appropriate improvements. (Q36/Stage1)

9. We used to have such peer observation – more of clinical whereby a senior staff assists new staff through clinical peer observation but not to the extent of assessment. (Q78/Stage1)

The understanding of peer observation as expressed by the four respondents above showed that they had strong knowledge of the exercise. The expressions as in number (5) above "colleagues of similar areas" and in number (2) "of the same line" portray that only teachers of the same area of expertise can become observers. This is not necessary for peer observation exercise to succeed as observers can also be selected from among teachers who are not of the same area. Kemp and Gosling (2000) found that teachers are happy to be observed by a departmental colleague but not necessarily from the same subject area from the discipline. The definition provided in number (7) showed that the respondent had a very thorough understanding of the exercise. She also mentioned about writing a reflection, which is a crucial factor that encourages a teacher to develop. This is in line with Schon (1983), who proposed that reflection-on-action takes place when professionals think and reflect on their practice through feedback from other people, as well as themselves.

Responses from teachers who had no knowledge at all on peer observation - "I was not sure what it is all about."

Many questionnaire respondents left the question blank or some responded as "I don't know", "Not sure" and "Never heard of it before". Some wrote a little more,

When I was first told to attend the workshop on peer observation, I was not sure what it was all about. (Q3/Stage1)

Actually, I quickly browsed the internet for the meaning of peer observation when you sent out an email looking for volunteers for your

study. From there, then only I know that peer observation exist. (Q12/Stage1)

The data obtained from the questionnaire revealed that not all participants were aware what is meant by peer observation, although the exercise is already widely practised in several countries like the UK, the USA, and Australia. Based on the questionnaire data collected and my observation from the workshop held before the peer observation exercises were carried out at the university where the current study was conducted, I realised that not many teachers have clear understanding of peer observation.

Participants' feeling before and after the exercise

<u>*Before*</u>

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the workshop on introduction of peer observation exercise was held and an after-workshop questionnaire was distributed to all participants. The analysis of the after-workshop questionnaire data revealed that teachers seemed to be very satisfied with the explanation and sample activities held at the university although some were unsure to agree or disagree to some items, i.e. they chose 'Neutral'. As can be seen in Table 5.15, items [i] *I am happy to use different range of techniques*, and item [vi] *I can be more reflective about my own teaching*, attracted the highest level of teachers' agreement. These show that the teachers were comfortable with conducting the exercise. However, based on the items [ix] *I am afraid that peer observation activity is very judgemental*, [x] *I am afraid that peer observation activity can affect my relationship with other teachers*, [xi] *I am afraid that the observer will only focus on my weaknesses*, and [xii] *I am afraid that any negative feedbacks received will spread to other teachers,* responses from the participants showed that they still have a negative feeling about the exercise. These are clearly illustrated in the following Table 5.15.

Table 5.15 Teachers' feeling about conducting peer observation (n=24)

Statement	Mean	S.D.	SA	A	N	D	SD
i. I am happy to use different range of techniques.	4.50	.522	50%	50%	0	0	0
ii. I will have more confidence in my teaching.	3.75	.622	8%	58%	34%	0	0
iii. I learn better from observing others' teaching.	4.25	.754	42%	42%	16%	0	0
iv. I become more open to ideas and critics.	4.08	.669	25%	59%	16%	0	0
v. I can change my teaching methods/routines.	3.83	.937	16%	43%	25%	16%	0
vi. I can be more reflective about my own teaching.	4.33	.651	42%	50%	8%	0	0
vii. I prefer to develop my own teaching skills.	3.75	.754	16%	42%	42%	0	0
viii. I am afraid that I can lose my confidence after observing a better teacher.	2.83	.937	0	25%	42%	25%	8%
ix. I am afraid that peer observation activity is very judgemental.	3.50	.905	8%	50%	25%	17%	0
x. I am afraid that peer observation activity can affect my relationship with other teachers.	3.25	.866	0	50%	25%	25%	0
xi. I am afraid that the observer will only focus on my weaknesses.	3.33	.985	8%	42%	25%	25%	0
xii. I am afraid that any negative feedbacks received will spread to other teachers.	3.68	.893	25%	33%	17%	25%	0

Generally, the teachers had mixed feelings about the whole exercise since there were those who had never heard of the exercise at all. This is evident due to the different reactions given by the participants. One of the after-workshop questionnaire respondents said,

> When attending the workshop, I had a mixed feeling; positive and negative. Positive because I am happy to learn from colleagues if there are any weaknesses in my teaching, but negative at the same time if I do not know how to comment and I cannot accept others' comments. (Q5/Stage2)

This is supported through a response by another respondent who emphasized,

I've never heard of peer observation before. It is totally new to me. I am nervous of being observed. I am afraid that my colleague will criticize my teaching in front of me as I have never been criticized openly in a face to face meeting. I am really really worried. (Q10/Stage2)

A teacher who was unsure about the exercise expressed,

I am sure there will be teachers who are against this. (Q12/Stage2)

Another response was from a respondent who seemed to be "on the fence" and waited for the instruction by his or her superior asserted,

I will carry out my teaching as usual unless if I am given the instruction to do this classroom observation. (Q23/Stage2)

It is obvious that based on the quotations above, nervousness seemed to be the main emotion among the respondents. It is natural for many teachers being observed to feel nervous even if the emphasis is on self-development (Cosh, 1999; Gosling, 2002). It can be seen that most of them were anxious of not being able to comment correctly and to be criticized. This feeling could be overcome if enough training were given and a lot of exercises were carried out with them. As a matter of fact, the true purpose of peer observation, if explained clearly, can overcome these awkward feelings of the participants. In contrast, despite of those who dislike being observed, there was also a respondent who claimed that he/she disliked observing others' teaching. He/She said,

I think I don't like observing other teachers because I know although the purpose is for developmental rather than judgemental, I definitely cannot run away from being judgemental. (Q4/Stage2)

It was found that not only those observed dislike being observed but also observers also had the same feeling. The above quotation exemplifies the fact that as an observer, one cannot refrain himself from being 'himself'. In this sense, although clearly informed that the whole idea and process of the exercise was for self-improvement and development, a teacher may still feel critical about a colleague or his teaching after an observation (Gosling, 2002). This is due to the context in which teaching is a matter of "behind closed doors" business (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005).

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Meanwhile, in the interview, Nore expressed,

> What is the assurance that my colleague will not tell others about my teaching? Will there be any form to complete regarding confidentiality or all these based on trust? (Nore/Int.Stage2)

Ita and Riea were more judgemental. They said,

> I may become more confused and might feel demotivated thinking about the discussion after the observation. (Ita/Int.Stage2)

> I was a bit sceptical about this exercise at first because I always have the feeling that the observer will always judge me and my teaching. (Riea/Int.Stage2)

Nur was more receptive. She claimed:

> Honestly, I think I don't simply change due to the comments in peer observation exercise. But who knows if this exercise is introduced in the future and after going through many of these exercises, they give impact… who knows. (Nur/Int.Stage2)

After

All the participants were in agreement that they found peer observation was a worthwhile experience, and recommended for the exercise to be implemented in the university.

Two out of the eight participants interviewed who were new and very young teachers expressed that they were quite uncomfortable at first, although they had volunteered to participate. However, one of them became very excited in the post-observation meeting when her colleague suggested several approach to teaching and some changes to the activities held in her class in order to attract students' attention. Consequently, she was overwhelmed with the comments given and waited for the next observation.

> I would like to try this again in the future… yeah… definitely with other teacher. (Riea/Int.Stage2)

> It would be great if I can have someone else to come and observe my teaching (Neem/Int.Stage2)

However, not many of the participants were aware of after post-observation meeting reflection. Only three of those interviewed mentioned about the after post-observation meeting. Tey, for example, elaborated on the usefulness to follow up the peer observation exercise held, while, Nore and Zaren were unsure of the next step after the peer observation exercise was over. They said,

> Based on the observation, I was not so sure on what and how to reflect. However, with many exercises of observation of this kind I am sure I am able to reflect effectively and have much improvement in my teaching. (Tey/Int.Stage2)

> I am unable to figure out who will notice the improvements I will make in my other classes. (Nore/Int.Stage2)

> I am worry this kind of exercise maybe one-off if there is no involvement from the management or instruction from the top. (Zaren/Int.Stage2)

In the interview, different number of observations was suggested by the participants to be carried out throughout the academic year. This is clearly illustrated in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16   Participants' suggestions about the frequency of observations

Number of observations	Reasons	Suggested by
i. Once a month	So that improvements can be observed (Zaren) Because it should be a continuous process (Neem and Nur)	- Zaren - Nur - Neem
ii. Once a semester/term	*No reason provided*	- Tim
iii. Twice a semester/term	To ensure enough time to improve (Riea) To ensure the improvement has been taken seriously (Ita)	- Ita - Riea
iv. Three times a semester/term	*No reason provided*	- Nore
v. Once a year	*No reason provided*	- Tey

Based on my experience as an English language teacher at the university where this study was conducted, twice a semester/term may sound reasonable and doable due to the workload. As mentioned earlier in the introduction section in Chapter 1, the English language teachers are called as the "service subject" teachers like the Maths teachers where these teachers need to serve all the first and second year students regardless of the courses they undertake.

5.3.2 The Intervention - Result of the Peer Observation Exercise

As mentioned earlier in section 4.3, this study looked at ten English language teacher participants of whom some were senior and experienced, while some were new or inexperienced with two teachers having less than two years of teaching experience. Data obtained from the observations in the post-observation meetings were analysed. In the following Table 5.17, again I have provided the peer observation activities according to the research participants' status (senior or new teachers) in order to give an idea of who observed and who were being observed in each session.

Table 5.17   List of the ten observations based on the status of the teachers

ST observing ST	ST observing NT	NT observing ST	NT observing NT
Ita OBS Nore	Nur OBS Neem	Azi OBS Meedan	Riea OBS Tim
Nore OBS Ita	Meedan OBS Azi	Neem OBS Nur	Tim OBS Riea
Tey OBS Zaren			
Zaren OBS Tey			

Key: ST – senior teacher
    NT – new teacher
    OBS - observed

Analysis of the observation data led to the identification of different themes and sub-themes: 1) power relationship and content of the discussion; 2) tone; and 3) outcome. These are discussed below.

5.3.2.1   Power relationship and content of the discussion

In the following section, I will discuss the findings of the post-observation meeting/discussion based on the status of the teachers; 1) discussion between a senior teacher with another senior; 2) discussion between a senior teacher with a new teacher; 3) discussion between a new teacher with a senior teacher; and 4) discussion between a new teacher with another new teacher.

In relation to power, I will also include the content of the discussion which is one of the major themes under the intervention. This theme – 'content' – is discussed concurrently with the theme – 'power relationship' because there is an element of power in the dialogue between the participants. This can be clearly seen in all the abstracts below, in which I will include the details of the conversation as a reference to the discussion.

   i)   *Discussion between a senior teacher with another senior teacher*

   •   Ita and Nore

In reference to Table 5.17, there were two pairs of senior peer teachers observing each other's classroom teaching, i.e. discussion between Ita and Nore and vice-versa, as well as Tey and Zaren and vice-versa.

   a)   *Discomfort*

Based on my observation, when two senior teachers met to discuss about their observations in the post-observation meeting, the teachers seemed a bit tense and at times they even became critical about each other. This can be seen in the following instances.

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Ita:	The seating arrangements… that's why certain students cannot make contact between one another. So based on my observation last time, the class is lively, the students participated…. but I found out that… that was the strength… But I think it was because of the arrangement of the classroom and then the tables were separated from one another. So… *(Nore interrupted)*
Nore:	So… what should I do?
Ita:	Maybe, aaaa…. but the weaknesses that I found there were 2 students just in front of me…
Nore:	The farthest from the front… the farthest from me?

In this first example, Ita tried to explain her observation that the seating arrangement in the classroom was a disadvantage to Nore, because it caused students to have difficulty to discuss among themselves. As both are senior teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience, at times they were seen as arguing. Nore showed disagreement by interrupting the conversation in quite a number of instances. As in the example above, Nore interrupted by asking what she should do to overcome the situation. Being interrupted, Ita felt a bit alarmed and changed her topic of discussion. This shows that Nore did not like to be told what was right or wrong. Holding a post or having years of teaching experience are among the reasons why a teacher is not open to criticism as compared to those who are new and inexperienced in teaching (Fernandez-Chung, 2009). Nore's discontentment was more obvious in the following example.

N*ore*:	Yes, I admit that… I can only remember those with strange attitudes, those who frequently ask questions… definitely I can remember their names. Students… *(Ita interrupted)*
Ita:	Those who are so silent? It's a shame you know…
Nore:	Students who pay attention… I have no worry. But those who always stay silent and always sit at the corner and at the back, I really… *(Ita interrupted)*
Ita:	These are those who seek your attention… it is obvious you know…
Nore:	Okay okay okay I will call their names… in the next class, I will.

In the above abstract, Ita tried to tell Nore what is good practice which has made Nore to feel uncomfortable. Nore was unable to remember all her 21 students' names and Ita picked this up as a weakness and indirectly tried to blame this as one of Nore's weaknesses.

b)   Being critical

Ita was a bit critical when noticing that Nore did not want to listen and kept on arguing. Having Ita to interrupt the conversation several times forced Nore to feel uncomfortable to continue with the topic and at last made her agree with the ideas suggested by Ita.

From the two examples above, there seems a struggle in convincing and attracting the attention of an observed teacher, in this instance - Nore. They both are critical and their conversation at times becomes heated discussions as both often disagree between one another.

- Nore and Ita

When the discussion switched, from Ita as the observer to Nore as the observer in Ita's classroom teaching, the situation was more or less the same. This could be felt from the very beginning of the discussion, in the next session between Nore and Ita when Nore opened the conversation. Ita sounded nervous wanted to correct Nore about the focus of the observation, as in the following:

Nore:	Alright, I observed your class… it was on Technical writing and the lesson was on field trip report… *(Ita quickly interrupted)*
Ita:	But you will not evaluate the content right?
Nore:	No no, only on what we have agreed upon… on students' participation.
Ita:	Okay okay.

After going through the discussion for Nore's classroom observation, Ita appeared to be a bit sceptical about the discussion. This is explained in the following.

a) Fear of judgement

From the start of the discussion, Ita expressed her worry by quickly interrupting Nore's introduction to the discussion. She was concerned that Nore might be judgemental and discuss about something outside of their agreement, i.e. students' participation. In my personal opinion, it was right for Ita to feel a bit agitated about her classroom observation because of the experience she had gone through in the previous meeting, being interrupted for many times and having disagreements. However, based on my observation in the post-observation meeting, Ita was more open to discussion when she let Nore talked and explained her observation without much interruptions as compared to her discussing Nore's classroom teaching. Perhaps due to this calm situation, Nore at times was more positively on Ita's classroom practices expressing praise and having more collegial atmosphere although feeling judgemental at the same time. These can be clearly seen in the following examples.

Nore:	I found that you include students' participation by asking them lots of questions but I think it is just the same with my class, only those who are outstanding responded to your questions. The rest were like hiding themselves taking the chance not to answer the questions asked. They were hoping that the teacher will not see them and hoping their friends will answer on behalf of their group. But when you ask… particularly calling certain names you just ask group by group so they would voluntarily answer on behalf of their group. But I thought it was a good interaction where you control the class very well… Emmm… what else yeah?
Ita:	Actually, sometimes we have a certain feeling of… favouritism… do you have that?
Nore:	No, I don't… previously yes, now I don't.

b)   Use of praise

Nore was trying to be rational by praising Ita for having a good interaction with her students. Ita let Nore spoke out her opinion until Nore herself felt she has said everything from the expression, "… what else yeah?" In contrast to Ita being a listener, Nore seemed to be a bit more expressive. This is true when despite Ita being polite and trying to be collegial by asking Nore's reaction whether or not she has favouritism, Nore did not admit although she felt the same before. Ita was looking for shared experiences. Although this peer observation activity was conducted based on the teachers' mutual agreement and they selected colleagues whom they are comfortable with (in this case Ita selected Nore because she felt comfortable with Nore although she currently was holding a post in the department), Nore showed discomfort about being provoked. This may be because Nore who is currently the Head of the English language Unit and felt that she has more power over Ita. In the following example, Nore even acted like a counsellor or an analyst by asking ideas rather that offering solutions. The following example explains further.

Ita:	One thing I wanted them to focus is how they manage. Whether between the groups there is any mutual agreement, who wanted to do this, who wanted to do that. They cannot just stick to their course mate alone. They have to mix. This is what reality is… when they work later, they will not only mingle with those whom they only like.
Nore:	So you think…
Ita:	I think there should be a mutual agreement that each group should consist of students of different programmes. They must work together.
Nore:	And then…
Ita:	Yes, the selected members were from their own programme… No, they have to mix around.

Here, although Nore acted as the observer, she did not offer any solutions but to even provoke Ita to see what was her next reaction to the situation. Due to the

power that Nore has, she was more authoritative and Ita let herself tell what she felt about her students' group formation.

- Tey and Zaren

The discussion on the observation started with Zaren commenting on Tey's classroom teaching.

a)   Influence of relationship and personality

The session seemed not at all tense and was a bit lively. Tey and Zaren, both were previously English teachers from the same type of a famous boarding school but had served at different cities in Peninsular Malaysia. Although Zaren was junior in terms of her years of teaching, she came from the same teaching background as Tey, and they seemed to respect each other in some way. In the meeting, Tey let Zaren speak for almost 5 minutes as to listen to the introduction without any interruption. Tey seemed to agree with Zaren's comment about some ideas and at some point about focusing on the silent students. At the beginning she was less critical and spoke only when asked by Zaren. The following abstract illustrates the discussion.

Zaren:	Yes, maybe the Japanese student… he may have language barrier right, so at least ask simple question maybe. Let him… you know… share his ideas and opinions. So far ok, I think the rest are fine. About the classroom performance, the question that you ask, not only focusing on the majority but also on individuals which I think is good. Well done.
Tey:	*(Suddenly burst into laughter)*
Zaren:	Do you want to comment anything?
Tey:	Well, sometimes we don't really realise what we are doing in class. So, like in terms of the way I asked questions I don't know whether it is actually a good practice or not to call out names because students at this age they don't like to be called names to answer questions. So I don't know… or what's your comment Zaren?
Zaren:	May be you can ask for volunteers.
Tey:	Volunteers first?

Due to the close relationship between these two teachers and their similar personalities, the atmosphere of the discussion was so relaxed. Zaren was *positive*; and the *use of praise* as well as *inclusiveness* such as when Zaren herself encouraged Tey to add comment to the discussion contribute to further seeking and giving advice from both parties.

Zaren did not expect only a laugh from Tey as a response to her comments. She provoked further so that she could receive a response from which she could learn to develop for her own classroom teaching. Tey started to share about her questioning technique which she herself was unsure whether or not it was actually a good practice and Zaren voiced her opinion. This shows there was an exchange of discussion and ideas about teaching methodology which may not exist without any mutual agreement set between them regarding their expectations and confidentiality.

Zaren:	But yes, I could still remember… you did not only call names towards the end of my observation but you also call for volunteers first.
Tey:	Sometimes, you don't realise it. There were actually times when we actually did.
Zaren:	Yes, sometimes we call names, then we call for volunteers.
Tey:	Yeah, sometime I don't realise it.

b) Tactful

In the following abstract, although Zaren had less teaching experience than Tey, the nature of where they served before had made Zaren feel more open and able to tell Tey what she considered as a good practice. Zaren was also wise in raising an issue about the attitude of the foreign students in a tactful manner. She also encouraged further discussion by having open questions rather than a criticism. In addition, she also offered Tey a tactful advice to appreciate the students.

Zaren:	Eeeeemmm…the foreigners… were they as quiet as the day I went into the class for observation?
Tey:	There were 3 Somalis. 2 of them sit side-by-side. I would say we have to initiate first, make them notice that I notice them. Then, they will not be embarrassed.
Zaren:	Do they like to be praised, like "Good!"?
Tey:	Oooo I am quite stingy… *(laugh)*
Zaren:	You should, you should. Students, they like to be praised. They feel that their efforts are being appreciated. You should do that.

- Zaren and Tey

In the next post-observation discussion between Zaren and Tey for Zaren's classroom teaching, I noticed that the pattern of discussion was more or less the same. This can be seen as follows:

Zaren *paid attention* to what Tey said and *did not interrupt* much while she was explaining. This implies the *influence of relationship and personality* between them especially the *sense of respect.* Apart from these, Tey also *used praises; offered tactful advice; discussed in relaxed manner; and had the willingness to take advice.* This could be either because of they both show respect for the opinion voiced in the discussion or they may be a bit reserved to comment in order not to hurt each other's feeling or not to influence their good rapport. This is because as mentioned earlier in the participants' background section, both Zaren and Tey came from the same teaching background, i.e. they were English language teachers before from the same famous boarding schools, but taught at different districts.

ii)   *Discussion between a senior teacher (as observer) with a new teacher*

- Nur (senior) and Neem (new)

The discussion of Neem's classroom teaching started with Nur opening the conversation with a very long introduction including a list of suggestions which reflected her own teaching.

a)   *Feeling of inferiority*

Nur opened the conversation by telling what she observed, what should be done, what were good practices and what she herself had learned. She took up a few minutes in the introduction before allowing Neem to first respond to the discussion. In this sense, Nur took control of the discussion. The discussion did not take such a long time as Neem did not speak much except to accept all the ideas suggested by Nur. In this sense, Neem seemed to accept whatever voiced by Nur. It is possible that Neem felt somewhat inferior when she realised that she was new and inexperience getting prepared to receive comments from an experienced teacher like Nur. In one instance, Neem even admitted her weakness before being told by Nur by telling what she was supposed to do, as illustrated below:

Neem:	Me too, knowing that the students are weak, I am supposed to provide them with supporting materials too.
Nur:	Supporting materials… what do you mean?
Neem:	What I mean maybe one video alone is not enough. I will need to provide more support maybe because of the students' level of proficiency. But I think that group of students, they actually communicate well among themselves because through their meeting, they perform well.

Neem identified for herself that she should have other supporting materials apart from relying on video alone. Thus, this peer observation exercise seems a good example to develop oneself when teachers usually tend to reflect on their own teaching. In this case, Neem reflected on her own teaching by realising that she

should have conducted her teaching differently and added more supporting materials. This is in line with Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond (2005), who encompassed their reflections on reflective practices within peer observation to include re-examination of existing teaching and learning practices so that the quality and meaningfulness of the learning environment can be enhanced. This also supports the idea of the senior teacher as motivator or facilitator to other teachers for developmental change.

In this discussion, Neem seemed a bit reserved and did not talk much. Despite seeing Neem just kept silent most of the time, Nur did not seem to encourage questions from Neem. This suggests Nur saw the relationship as a hierarchical one.

- Meedan (senior) and Azi (new)

From the very beginning of the session, I could see that Azi looked nervous, although the discussion has not yet started. Meedan started the conversation as illustrated in the following extract:

Meedan:	Okay Azi, I am going to give you the summary of what you have done. This is not to tell you whether it is wrong or right, or weak or good. This is just a summary, a brief report. So you started the class with a revision, you related to what you have done with the students in the previous class, okay. The students were a bit confused, lost. As a result, you've got a little bit nervous. I am just reporting okay, **not commenting**.
Azi:	Yeah… it's alright.
Meedan:	Then, you use your power point notes. The power point notes were shown quite fast. Some of the slides are too long and… you tend to read to the students. You have used humour… you have used humour, then, you have prompted students relating what you are trying to say to their prior knowledge. You use L1 but very minimally. I am **not commenting** yet… yeah.
Azi:	Okay, okay. I know.
Meedan:	This is not to tell you whether it is wrong or right, or weak or good.

a) *Feeling of confidence*

From the extract above, the way Meedan opened the conversation indirectly implied that he wanted to be perceived as a senior teacher. In addition, with my existence during the meeting, I was able to recall the tone of his voice. His voice was loud and he spoke with confidence, and had never given the chance for Azi to interrupt. It is also notable that he did not even ask Azi to comment himself. The tone is **judgemental**. Then, Meedan indirectly showed that he was in power by saying "not yet commenting" which was expressed not only once but twice in the above abstract. This might contribute to Azi's feeling inferior and nervous.

b) *Being judgemental*

In the next abstract, Meedan stressed the details of his comments. Again, he expressed, "… this is the comment…" indicates that he has the right to say what are good and what are bad practices based on his normal practices.

Meedan:	If I were to comment, if there is any room for improvement, it should be on the slides. Well, this is **the comment** yeah. That's it, because the slides are long. If the slides are long, there is a tendency for us to read. So I guess, longer version uploaded internet, shorted version 3 or 4 words per line or 3 or 4 line per page… that is what we favour in class. That's what I can suggest, okay.
Azi:	I know… I know. Even anyone there, the students will read, we will read. But definitely you will read faster than students. I think that is my weakness because before this….
Meedan:	**If I may correct you** it is not our weakness… it's not our weakness because we feel secure that it is up there. We feel secure… if you put 2 or 3 words, we are afraid that students don't understand. Well, in actual fact the more we put the more they don't understand.
Azi:	The thing is, is not that I am concerned about the students but I am concerned about myself. Because I am very… tend to forget on what are the things that I want to teach or speak to the students and that is why I tend to make long slides… and things like that.

c)   Feeling of apprehension

Referring to the abstract above, to add to Azi's nervousness and inferior of dealing with someone with many years of experience than him, he admitted his weaknesses by telling out why he had done the PowerPoint slides as such commented by Meedan. His expression such as those listed below, resembled his feeling at that particular time.

- "I think that is my weakness…"
- "… not that I am concerned about the students but I am concerned about myself."

As an observer, I was unsure whether Azi stating his weaknesses was done intentionally or unintentionally. However, I think due to the nature of the exercise and the briefing before the observation took place had given clear picture that mutual agreement of the whole exercise was for improvement in classroom practices and it allowed for openness from both parties. Therefore, whatever that he told Meedan (although sounded like he was degrading himself) might be with the intention of receiving constructive feedback.

Azi may also feel nervous from the way Meedan constructed his words. A possible explanation for this might be because Meedan used the phrase, *"If I may correct you…"*, which was something unlikely to be accepted in the Malaysian culture. Based on my experience as a teacher and as a citizen of Malaysia, Malaysians are those who are so polite to each other that we do not normally correct others in a face-to-face context. Therefore, what Meedan had said may add to Azi's nervousness and at the same time portrayed his status as a senior teacher. However, it becomes strength for Meedan to have the courage to construct his sentence in such manner.

- Azi (new) and Meedan (senior)

In no post-observation discussion in my study were any conversations started by the teacher being observed, except for the following discussion of the only two male teachers involved in this study.

a)   Being authoritative

Meedan, an experienced teacher and the teacher being observed, opened the discussion by trying to highlight Azi's weakness for not being able to be present at his class for the classroom observation as planned. Here, at the start of the discussion, Meedan has already tried to show his power as being a senior by indirectly telling that, due to Azi's absence, his teaching session was recorded for Azi to assess and by doing so with the existence of me as an observer, Meedan allegedly asked for Azi to apologise. The following illustrates the situation:

Meedan:	Okay, so… you came to my class… no, you didn't, right. You watched the video tape, right.
Azi:	Yes, I am so sorry for not being able to turn up in you class as agreed earlier. It was because I was on medical leave on that day. Sorry again.
Meedan:	That's fine.
Azi:	I watched the video tape, and I saw the content of the video tape was about … you taught the students on how to use the Edmodo… *(continues)…* The weakness from your teaching is that… you rely so much on the internet access.
Meedan:	I… did what?
Azi:	You were relying too much on the internet access.
Meedan:	Oh… in that case I blamed the university for that.

Reading through the conversation above, it was obvious that Meedan sounded so authoritative. Although Azi mentioned to Meedan not to rely a lot on the internet

access, he did not seem to admit it as his weakness but instead to blame the university for the flaw.

b)   Being defensive

Azi, on the other hand, offered support to his colleague by suggesting ways to overcome the problem. This implies that an observing teacher does not only learn how to observe, but also sees different ways of doing things and can try to reflect on his own classroom (Richards and Lockhart, 1994).

In addition to this, Azi explained to Meedan what he considered as a good practice by suggesting to him to restate what he has taught his students at the end of the day during the lesson, which he did not do. This is illustrated in the following abstract:

Azi:	And the second one is I think we should as a teacher we should restate on what we have taught during that day. Anything at the end of your teaching, like let say "Ok what we have learned today?" That is my suggestion. Somehow they will relate back from the first teaching until the end of the session.
Meedan:	Oh, didn't I do that? Okay okay thank you, I appreciate that suggestion very much.

Meedan's response "… didn't I do that?" implies that he did not like to be told what was wrong and what was right, and he did not admit any of his misdoing. However, he hid his feeling by appreciating Azi for the advice he gave. Meedan accepted Azi's suggestion maybe because he could recall back that the main purpose of the peer observation exercise was for improvement; or he did not want to proceed with the topic at all. However, it was brave for Azi to continue suggesting what he thinks to be good practices to Meedan considering that there were several times Meedan defended himself. Some teachers are so cautious with regards to comments, especially if the comments were given by a teacher who has less experience then he had and regarded the whole process as a threatening and critical (Cosh, 1999).

- Neem (new) and Nur (senior)

Unlike the earlier discussion between Neem and Nur, where Nur acted as the observer and provided many comments on Neem's classroom teaching, the discussion between the two on Nur's classroom teaching was a bit lively and only one party did much of the talking.

a)   Feeling reserved

This discussion was a bit calmer than the one between the two before, maybe because Neem was aware of her position here as an observer of an experienced teacher like Nur, and her position of being a new teacher with very few years of teaching experience. Because of this, she no longer had a nervous feeling waiting for comments like before. It is true that teachers can take fellow teachers' suggestions better than by the management or the superior because they associate their involvement with formal assessment (Roberson, 2006).   The abstract below has revealed that even a senior teacher did extra preparation before an observation took place. This confirms that peer or classroom observation affects teachers' anxiety.

Neem:	Were you a bit rushing just because of this observation… because once you have finished with summary you need to provide them with some exercises…
Nur:	The exercises were actually a combination of both topics…
Neem:	You combined? *(In a shocking tone)*
Nur:	Yes, it was a combination of summary and predicting outcome topics.
Neem:	Yes, if you separate between the two...
Nur:	Yeah, even better I know. I did it because of the observation.

b)   Unstressful

Although a senior teacher, as a human being Nur could not escape from feeling shy having someone inside the classroom to observe her teaching, which is actually a common feeling. Without being asked, Nur uncovered her feelings about the observation.

Neem:	Overall, I like your class. With the interesting videos… you were able to explain clearly.
Nur:	I was actually shy when there was someone observing me.
Neem:	Were you?
Nur:	But, back to questions… I admit that I am a bit impatient if my questions were not answered.
Neem:	But your materials itself were able to capture students' interest… not only the students' but also my interest.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that Neem used a lot of praises. The statements such as: "I like your class, You are able to explain clearly, and … captured not only the students' interest but also my interest" show that both teachers could benefit from the exercise as they both learned from observing and being observed.

iv)   Discussion between a new teacher with another new teacher

- Tim and Riea

Tim and Riea both were enthusiastic and sounded keen to learn new things. They both could accept and support any ideas easily without any disagreement.

a)   Openness

Here, I will start by discussing the post-observation discussion between Tim and Riea for Riea's classroom teaching. Tim opened the discussion with a long

explanation by listing Riea's strengths such as the teaching aids she used and her teaching style. While doing so, Riea listened patiently without any interruption. Due to the openness of the discussion, Riea also admitted her own weaknesses, as shown below:

Riea	I think that is the problem with me *(laugh)*. One thing that I notice since the very beginning of my teaching career is that I have the tendency to assume that my students… they can picture what I have said… yeah. And one more thing may be because we were like running out of time.
Tim	Yes, yes, may be… I get your point. It is now that the university changed the policy… 1 hour for lecture and 2 hours for tutorial. 1 hour for lecture is too short for Academic English.
Riea	Yes, that is such a very short time to let the students understand and to teach them in the language although being taught since school still they have problems in understanding… that's the problem.

As these two new teachers' discussion continues, they seemed to become even freer and open to discussion. For instance, although this was actually the session to discuss on Riea's classroom teaching, Tim seemed to declare her own weakness, as illustrated below:

Tim	I don't know but I am a bit traditional in terms of teaching. I think the traditional method is the best and can still work well until now. I myself should improve on this. I don't know, what do you think?
Riea	Yes, I agree with you but I think we can balance the traditional teaching with the modern and up-to-date method that is by using the online resources. I haven't tried yet but I will try one day.

b)   Sharing of good practice

It is obvious that in the example below the teachers enjoyed the discussion on the sharing of good practices. Although the peer observation exercise was actually a first practice, they both found that the session was helpful in the sense that they managed to open up to ideas and comments and became more creative in

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teaching. This supports Richards' (1991) claim that peer observation provides opportunities for teachers to observe each other's different teaching styles and provide opportunities for critical reflection on their own teaching. Due to the fact that these two teachers knew they both were new in teaching arena, they seemed to refer to their previous experience, appreciating their teachers' teaching as good practices which to them worked well. This can be seen in the abstract below, in which both teachers reflected on their past experience.

Riea	Yes, I get you. I know it really works if I solve certain problems together with the students. I can still remember my lecturer she seemed to bring into the class all the traditional teaching aids just to make sure that we really understand and remember all the rules of grammar. For instance, she brought into my class the mah-jong paper (the white big paper) for us to list down points or words, etc. with colourful markers.
Tim	Exactly, slides alone are not enough. You have to use the marker and the white board, this is like emphasizing the content of your teaching. If you write down the words on the white board the students can see clearly so they can remember easily. It is like you were highlighting the main points to the students. You can bring the large white piece of papers and pass to each group and give them different colours of markers. And from there you can ask them to each one, for example, write an example of a compound sentence. Then ask them to show it and explain to the whole class. I think this may work well for grammar classes.

- Riea and Tim

The pattern was almost the same for the reverse discussion. Tim let Riea open the discussion and let her speak for almost 3.32 minutes about Tim's strengths. This shows *openness* between the two teachers. The strengths included clear voice, encouraged student-student interaction and allow for question and answer session. There were equal turn-takings between the two teachers. This indicates that they both respect each other and would appreciate each other's point of view. Phrases like "what do you think?", "am I right?" and "do you agree?" encouraged more responses from the other party. These may be seen in the abstracts below:

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Riea: At times I was not so sure of whether the students were discussing with you or they were discussing or talking among themselves having you in their group, so, I was not so sure. *What do you think?*

Time: I think so far this is the common problem happened to all this section (students in the class) that I teach… you know. They have this inferior complex, may be they are lack of confidence speaking English and may be they think that it is grammar fine, normally it is difficult right to learn grammar as compared to reading comprehension, right.

Riea: So, I think the S-S interaction here is influenced by the T-S interaction as well. Some lecturers speak Bahasa Melayu in the class, so, they are used to it.

Tim: Yes, I think the students take things for granted because they feel for other subjects the lecturers always cater to their needs to explain everything in Bahasa Melayu if things got complicated. They will always wait until the end of the class and asked their lecturers, "Sorry we don't understand." An advantage is that we are English teachers so we teach using the target language. This helps the foreign students, *am I right*? *Do you agree?*

Although the session was to discuss on Tim's classroom teaching, both teachers seemed free to ask for opinion and exchange ideas about their teaching practice.

Although while explaining the findings in relation to power relationship and content of the discussion of each peer observation exercise issues pertaining to tone were also touched, it will be described further in the following section.

5.3.2.2 Tone

Tone plays an important role in creating the ethos of the discussion. Analysis of tone is included in Table 5.18.

Table 5.18   Details on the tone of each discussion

Discussion between the observer* and the observed**	Tone
• Ita* and Nore** • Nore* and Ita**	Both discussions sounded **critical** with lots of interruption by the teachers as a sign of disagreement, because each teacher did not want to admit their weaknesses.
• Tey* and Zaren** • Zaren* and Tey**	Both teachers seemed so **calm** and the discussions sounded **congenial**; and sometimes turned monotonous as both showed some respect for each other. Both seemed reluctant to speak about each other's weaknesses.
• Meedan* and Azi** • Azi* and Meedan**	1) For Meedan's (senior teacher) classroom teaching, the tone of the discussion was much more **formal and a bit critical** as there were many interruptions by Meedan who were quite **sceptical** about the comments given. At times, he also seemed **judgemental.** 2) For Azi's (new teacher) classroom teaching, the tone was **calm** but at times turned critical when Meedan raised some issues that challenged Azi.
• Nur* and Neem** • Neem* and Nur**	Both discussions seemed **congenial** with very little interruptions or no interruption at all.
• Tim* and Riea** • Riea* and Tim**	Both teachers' discussions were **celebratory** as they appreciated the comments and were looking forward for another session.

5.3.2.3 Outcome

As the peer observation exercise was conducted to observe only one classroom teaching for each teacher, no further observations were made due to time

constraint. Due to this reason, teacher observers were unable to observe if there were any improvements made by the teachers observed based on their earlier comments. However, due to a miscommunication on the date of the observation between Neem and Nur, as I was informed of a different date, therefore, I missed their classroom observation. Fortunately, they offered to conduct another observation and I was able to be present. I was informed by Nur that she did not mind coming to observe Neem's teaching for a second time because first, they are very close friends, second, Nur was so keen of observing other colleague's teaching, and third, she would like to see if there were improvements made based on their informal discussion earlier of Neem's teaching. While walking out from the class, Nur explained to me (the researcher),

> I was glad to see Neem has made some improvements to her teaching methods as in the previous class she did not start the lesson with a set induction. She also started her teaching by explaining about what prediction was (her topic for her lecture on that particular day was on 'Prediction') and then followed by a video clip related to the topic without involving the students. (Nur/Int.Stage2)

In all the ten post-observation discussions, the teachers were positive about the peer observation exercise and expressed that they appreciated the praises and suggestions given. Although they were less confident and nervous about the exercise especially before the whole peer observation of teaching exercise were conducted, their perception changed once they went through the whole process. All teachers agreed to improve according to those recommended by their colleagues. Two of the participants, i.e. the new teachers – Tim and Riea, even expressed their excitement about having the chance to participate in the peer observation exercise as, through the exercise, they were able to know that they were on the right path. As explained by them,

> Oh I like this very much, never thought of this kind of exercise before. You know… each time after I finished teaching I kept on thinking whether I have done the right job and this is the opportunity to ensure the teaching is on track. (Riea/Int.Stage2)

> It is true that every time before each class I will always say to myself, "What am I supposed to teach them today?" (Tim/Int.Stage2)

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Other participants claimed the exercise really opened their minds about teaching and would glad to join other peer observation exercises if given the chance.

In the following section, findings regarding the implementation of peer observation of teaching at the university under study will be further elaborated.

Summary of the overall intervention

In the following Table 5.19, I have included the summary of the overall intervention result to better view the characteristics of the participants in relation to the relationship and content, and the tone of the post-observation discussion.

Table 5.19   The overall intervention result

Participants		Relationship and content	Tone
ST observing ST	Ita OBS Nore	i) Discomfort ii) Being critical	**Critical** with lots of interruption
	Nore OBS Ita	i) Fear of judgement ii) Use of praise	
	Tey OBS Zaren	i) Influence of relationship and personality ii) Tactful	**Calm** and **congenial**
	Zaren OBS Tey	i) Influence of relationship and personality - Sense of respect ii) Use of praise iii) Tactful iv) Relaxed v) Willingness to take advice	
ST observing NT	Nur OBS Neem	i) Feeling of inferiority	**Congenial**
	Meedan OBS Azi	i) Feeling of confidence ii) Being judgemental iii) Feeling of apprehensive	**Formal;** a bit **critical; judgemental**
NT observing ST	Neem OBS Nur	i) Being authoritative ii) Being defensive	**Congenial**
	Azi OBS Meedan	i) Feeling reserved ii) Unstressful	**Calm** but sometimes **critical**
NT observing NT	Riea OBS Tim	i) Openness ii) Sharing of good practice	**Celebratory**
	Tim OBS Riea	i) Openness	

Key: ST – senior teacher
      NT – new teacher
      OBS - observed

5.4 Implementation of Peer Observation of Teaching

There were many possibilities and challenges to the implementation of the peer observation exercise. Details of these are described as follows:

5.4.1 Possibilities of Implementing Peer Observation

There are many reasons which make peer observation of teaching possible to be implemented at the university under study. In this section, findings regarding this issue will be presented and data obtained from the questionnaire is explained alongside with the data obtained from the interview.

Table 5.20 Teachers' view about the possibilities of peer observation (n=24)

Statement	Mean	S.D.	SA	A	N	D	SD
i. Can save management time.	3.50	.674	0	59%	33%	8%	0
ii. Peer observation is only possible if it is a "top-down" approach – an instruction given from the department head to the teachers.	3.42	1.084	17%	33%	25%	25%	0
iii. Peer observation is only possible if it is a "bottom-up" approach – an instruction suggested by the teachers to the head of department.	2.75	1.055	0	25%	41%	17%	17%
iv. Teachers are more open to using different techniques in teaching.	4.08	.669	25%	58%	17%	0	0
v. Teachers may make positive changes in their teaching.	4.00	.603	17%	66%	17%	0	0
vi. Teachers may have positive change in their beliefs.	3.75	.622	8%	59%	33%	0	0

Interview and questionnaire respondents agreed that peer observation exercise can be implemented due to the following factors:

i)   Can save management time

It was obvious that the peer observation exercise, according to 59% of the questionnaire respondents, can save the management time. This may be because

the records from the exercise can serve as reference for teacher evaluation. At the same time, in order to encourage this exercise, Zaren said,

> The management can use the information obtained from peer observation by listening and discussing with the teachers. (Zaren/Int.Stage2)

ii) Voluntary or compulsory

Based on the questionnaire data, 50% of the respondents agreed that the exercise is possible if it is "top-down", i.e. instructions from the superior to the subordinate. While, only 25% of the respondents agreed the opposite, i.e. the exercise is possible if it is "bottom-up", i.e. an instruction initiated or suggested by the subordinate themselves.

Meanwhile, most of the interview participants suggested for the exercise to be carried out voluntarily rather than making it compulsory.

- Voluntary

Six out of eight of the participants suggested for the exercise to be conducted voluntarily.

> I would say it should be voluntary so that teachers do not feel 'forced' to do so. (Tey/Int.Stage2)

> Voluntary because not all people like it. (Nore/Int.Stage2)

> Not many teachers like to be observed, therefore, I think the exercise can best work when the teachers themselves volunteer. (Neem/Int.Stage2)

> I think voluntary because not all teachers feel comfortable to be observed. (Riea/Int.Stage2)

> In order to receive full commitment and support from the teachers, I would suggest for the exercise to be carried out by the teachers voluntarily. (Zaren/Int.Stage2)

As a start I think it should be voluntary since we are new to the exercise. As more training given and more exercises are carried out then the university can decide to make it compulsory. (Tim/Int.Stage2)

- *Compulsory*

Two of the participants suggested for the exercise to be made compulsory for all teachers.

I think the faculty should make it compulsory because it depends on the purpose/aim of the observation. (Ita/Int.Stage2)

To maintain the quality of teaching and learning of the university, it is better to make the exercise a compulsory. At least, teachers have some reasons to carry out the exercise. (Nur/Int.Stage2)

iii)   To encourage teacher change

Teachers will change not only in their teaching and classroom practices but also in their beliefs. This is evident based on the post-observation discussion between Riea and Tim who discussed on teaching methodology where Tim mentioned about how she admired the way her previous English language teacher taught grammar in class. Tim who then taught as how she experienced being taught by her teacher was suggested by Riea to try new approaches and agreed to try out the suggestion.

iv)   For accountability

In the interview, Tey explained,

Yes, I strongly believe that this should be encouraged amongst the teachers here or else we will never realise if there is any teaching practices which we do might not suit the students' needs. (Tey/Int.Stage2)

Tey's view supports the findings in a study by Hamid (1995) who stressed that without being observed some teachers might stick to their old teaching methods and these practices may become a routine which makes one might think of them as correct and acceptable. In relation to this, Zaren also stressed,

Can serve as a benchmark on teaching profession. (Zaren/Int.Stage2)

This is in line with the government's mission to support the highest quality of HE as stated in the mission of Malaysian Qualifications Agency, "… the mission to inspire the confidence of its stakeholders through best practices" (MQA, 2010).

v)   To raise standards

Nore and Neem stressed that through the peer observation exercise, teachers should be able to raise the standard of their teaching. They explained,

> The purpose should be for the betterment of teaching and learning. (Nore/Int.Stage2)

> I am sure the main purpose for the this exercise is for each teacher to reflect and improve his/her standard of teaching practice (Neem/Int.Stage2)

vi)   To share good practice

Riea, in the interview, stressed,

> Different people have different approach in teaching. Therefore, I can have different ideas and feedback by observing others and the comments given by other teachers. (Riea/Int.Stage2)

vii)   For continuous professional development

Ita explained,

> It is more for self-improvement and sharing of experiences for professional development. (Ita/Int.Stage2)

Tim said,

> Teachers should be involved and be responsible for their own development. Hence, they should be given the chance to assess their work and their colleague's work and decide on what works well for them. I think peer observation is the right platform. (Tim/Int.Stage2)

Besides the above, participants were also asked about the benefits of peer observation in the questionnaire. In the following, findings pertaining these benefits will be addressed.

Analysis of the questionnaire data on the benefits of peer observation shows that the respondents agreed with almost all the items. This can be illustrated in the following Table 5.21.

Table 5.21   Teachers' feelings about the benefits of peer observation (n=24)

Statement	Mean	S.D.	SA	A	N	D	SD
i. Better communication among teachers.	4.08	.793	26%	67%	0	7%	0
ii. More sense of the purpose as a teacher.	4.17	.577	26%	67%	7%	0	0
iii. Can improve atmosphere of cooperation.	4.42	.515	42%	58%	0	0	0
iv. Teachers gained confidence.	3.50	.905	8%	50%	25%	17%	0
v. Teachers learned new skills.	4.17	.718	34%	50%	16%	0	0
vi. Teachers gained valuable insights into their teaching/classroom behaviour.	4.42	.515	42%	58%	0	0	0
vii. Teachers became more willing to share with and learned from colleagues.	4.00	.739	25%	50%	25%	0	0
viii. Teachers were able to accept feedbacks from colleagues.	3.33	.985	8%	42%	25%	25%	0
ix. Teachers became more reflective about their own teaching.	4.00	.739	25%	50%	25%	0	0
x. Teachers changed their teaching methods/routines.	4.00	.739	25%	50%	25%	0	0
xi. Teachers used a wider range of techniques.	4.17	.577	25%	67%	8%	0	0
xii. The activity resulted in increased professionalism in teachers' attitude.	3.92	.699	16%	43%	25%	16%	0

In the table above, only three items, i.e. item [iv] Teachers gained confidence, [viii] Teachers were able to accept feedbacks from colleagues, and [xii] The activity

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resulted in increased professionalism in teachers' attitude, can be seen as the least agreed upon by the respondents. However, the following responses by the interview participants support the benefits listed above. Among others are the following:

Nore said she is more reflective.

> I realised that I am more reflective about my teaching after the exercise. (Nore/Int.Stage2)

Tim explained that she learned from her colleague.

> Before this, I never notice my own mistakes not until I got involved in this peer observation exercise. The discussion in the post-observation meeting was very useful and helpful for my teaching. (Tim/Int.Stage2)

Neem was able to accept her colleague's feedback.

> I will try not to repeat the mistakes made by my colleague. (Neem/Int.Stage2)

In the next section, findings regarding the challenges of introducing peer observation are presented.

5.4.2 Challenges of Introducing Peer Observation

Peer observation is not without problems. There are many challenges which may make peer observation of teaching difficult to be implemented at the university under study. In this section, findings regarding this issue will be presented and data obtained from the questionnaire is explained alongside with the data from the interview. The quantitative data has been illustrated in the following Table 5.22.

Table 5.22 Teachers' view of the challenges of introducing peer observation (n=24)

Statement	Mean	S.D.	SA	A	N	D	SD
i. Time consuming as there are many teachers to be the observer and those to be observed on rotation.	3.58	.996	17%	41%	25%	17%	0
ii. Costly because the management needs to conduct workshop frequently to brief on the role and function of peer observation.	3.42	1.084	17%	33%	25%	25%	0
iii. Requires commitment of all teachers and the people at management level.	4.17	.577	25%	67%	8%	0	0
iv. May not be accepted by all teachers.	3.75	.754	8%	67%	17%	8%	0
v. Difficulty to adapt or change in attitude.	3.92	.793	17%	67%	8%	8%	0

The challenges of implementing peer observation at the university under study as suggested by the questionnaire and interview respondents are:

i)   Commitment of teachers and the people at the management level

In this section, I will elaborate the findings separately. First, I will explain the commitment of teachers, and then I will elaborate about the commitment of the people at the management level. However, based on the quantitative data, 92% of the respondents agreed that peer observation exercise requires commitment of all teachers and the people at the management level.

- Commitment of teachers

Classroom observation was only imposed once in their teaching career as an English language lecturer at tertiary level, i.e. once they were being promoted from an English language instructor to an English language lecturer. Therefore, senior teachers may feel reluctant to be observed. Tey, in the interview, reported,

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> Senior teachers might not agree because they will feel that they are being 'exposed' and they may not be able to accept criticism. (Tey/Int.Stage2)

Teachers with higher degrees, for example those with PhDs, may find it more difficult to accept being observed by someone with lower degree than they have obtained. Sal is an example of this said,

> She only has masters and I have PhD. She is not in English teaching line. Kind of weird. At my previous workplace once I was confirmed, nobody observed me… Given a choice I do not want to go through this again. Since I am already retired [from full time teaching], I want to teach but I do not want to be stressed knowing that someone is observing me, although you are aware that you have to be made accountable to God. (Sal/Int.Stage1)

Apparently, it was not only difficult in encouraging teachers' participation in this exercise as observed but also in looking for an observer. Nore expressed,

> I personally do not like observing other teachers because I know although the purpose is for developmental, I definitely cannot run away from being judgemental. (Nore/Int.Stage2)

Although teachers were told that this exercise is based on mutual willingness, based on Nore's claim above, it is true that teachers still cannot resist being judgemental although observing his or her own colleague. If looking at the exercise positively, Nore could improve her teaching by not doing the mistakes done by her colleague. However, if looking at it from a different point of view, Nore might regard her colleague as being incompetent in teaching which consequently may affect the teachers' good rapport.

- *Commitment of the people at the management level*

Effort

In the interview, Zaren explained that the management has to put much effort to introduce the exercise to all teachers. This includes all preparation from paperwork and documentation to courses and reminders to all teachers. Zaren said,

It must be difficult to introduce this exercise to all teachers… you know… whether or not it can be easily accepted by all. Like at this university, this exercise has never been introduced before. Therefore, I think teachers need to attend workshops as what you have done. However, one workshop only is not enough, things need to be explained clearly and the teachers need to be reminded of many things for many times. (Zaren/Int.Stage2)

- *To ensure the sustainability of the exercise*

Based on the findings above, many teachers agreed that this exercise is beneficial for their self-improvement and can maintain the standard of their institutions. However, it becomes a challenge to the management to ensure the sustainability of the exercise from having teachers to participate regularly to continuing the good practice if the management changes. Neem, being pessimist, said,

I know this exercise is great but I am sure there are teachers who will against this, and it must be a challenge to the management to make sure this exercise continues. (Neem/Int.Stage2)

On top of these, in order for both parties, i.e. all teachers as well as the management to commit to the exercise, based on the findings, other factors such as time and cost need to be given attention. These two factors will be discussed later.

ii)   Difficult to change in attitude

Some participants found it difficult to make it a culture for professional development purposes or for self-improvement. This is obvious when some of them were assigned to choose their own choice of observer. This is because staff are more motivated to learn and improve when they are aware of their own needs particularly when it is a continuing process. However, in the study, issues regarding age, seniority, and length of experience in teaching appear to be the drawback for peer observation to be effective. Amongst the participants, the least experienced showed most improvement while the senior among them had more difficulty to improve. Sal showed her disagreement with the peer observation exercise carried out at her institution by saying that she has a PhD and she is

serving the institution on contract basis. In the same instances, Biah mentioned her age to express her disagreement about being observed. She claimed,

> I am 52, why do you want to observe me anymore… that is what I feel. And then the next thing is, with me at my age… you know… I sort of know more or less what to do when I go to class. (Biah/Int.Stage2)

Some teachers do not like to be told what is good and what is bad, as in the above example, which happened to an experienced teacher like Biah.

Since this peer observation exercise was new to the teachers, they found it difficult to think of any appropriate changes in their teaching. For instance, two questionnaire respondents explained,

> I am worry if I am unable to address or react to the comments given. (Q24/Stage2)

> What and how am I supposed to reflect on? (Q19/Stage2)

Teachers needed some advice on the aspects to improve.

iii) Time constraints

Time seemed to be a common challenge in carrying out peer observation. This is expressed by the following participants:

> It needs lots of time and sacrifice. Time to explain to teachers on how to implement, time to implement the activity itself, time to improve for yourself (as a reflection) and many others. Besides that, I need to sacrifice my own time to discuss for the pre- and post-observation meeting. These maybe constraints to others to run this peer observation stuff. (Zaren/Int.Stage2)

> Teachers may feel reluctant to spare their time to observe or to be observed. (Nur/Int.Stage2)

> Teachers have different and packed timetables. (Riea/Int.Stage2)

iv) Costly

It may be costly for each institution to send teachers for seminars and workshops to become competent trainers. For instance, based on this study, initially there

was no expertise in this area and thus, the opportunity I had to share my knowledge and expertise in the area of peer observation had saved the university on training costs.

Although the challenges to the exercise outnumbered the advantages, this does not mean that peer observation is difficult to conduct. In addition, all teachers whether they are new and inexperienced or senior and experienced should work together to ensure the success of the teaching and learning through conducting peer observations. This is evident from the intervention section of this study when two new teachers voluntarily selected two senior teachers as their partners/pairs to observe their classroom teaching without being assigned.

Shared understanding and mutual willingness have much impact for this activity to be carried out. However, issues of inequality and lack of mutuality may arise when a senior teacher comes to observe a new teacher or vice-versa. Staff must be regarded as genuine peers and maintain respect each other as equal whatever their status are in the department if peer observation of teaching is to be successful (Gosling, 2002).

Management plays an important role for an exercise like peer observation to take place successfully. In reference to my context, as a beginning the university has proven to be supportive when they gave full support regarding the workshop which I conducted to introduce the exercise. Time spent by the teachers who attended the workshop was considered and accumulated in their training hours. They accepted issues related to professional development; thus, this is the main reason for the acceptance of the workshop time accumulated into the teachers' training hours.

5.5   Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I have provided a descriptive and interpretive analysis of the data collected from different perspectives based on the research questions of the current study. Findings from the qualitative thematic content analysis have been combined with results from the quantitative statistical analysis, where appropriate,

in order to present the study findings in an integrated manner and to avoid repetition. Many weaknesses were found in the current teacher evaluation at some of the universities sampled in this study. The weaknesses, where there is a match of views, suggest a possibility for change. Besides these, peer observation was seen by the participants as an additional strategy for developmental purposes and it can contribute to participatory teacher evaluation. All these issues will be discussed and interpreted in more detail in the following discussion chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Major Findings

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the major findings as presented in Chapter 5. These findings are emerging issues informing the teacher evaluation practices at a number of institutions sampled around Malaysia and the peer observation exercise carried out at the university under study. The discussion will be divided into two parts. In the first part entitled "Teacher evaluation", discussion of findings related to the issue will be provided. In the second part entitled "Peer observation of teaching", discussion of relevant findings will be provided.

Teacher Evaluation

Analysis of findings in the previous chapter indicates both strengths and weaknesses in the current teacher evaluation procedure conducted at the universities sampled in Malaysia. In this part of the chapter, I will further discuss the strengths and weaknesses of teacher evaluation procedures based on the emerging themes, followed by discussions of issues of power.

6.1   Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Teacher Evaluation Procedures

It has been found from the findings of the current study that teacher evaluation plays an obvious role at the institutions sampled around Malaysia. Teacher evaluation procedures in the institutions sampled in this study typically included the following elements: an evaluation questionnaire completed by students, observation of teaching practice by a superior, and a performance review meeting with the head of department. However, there seemed to be some weaknesses in the methods of evaluation as well as the implementation of the system. These had raised one critical question about the purposes of using these methods of

evaluation and as to why most administrators were keen on these methods. The question is as follows*: To what extent are these methods of evaluation reliable and have they improved teaching and classroom practices?* It was also found that although the evaluation was both of and for teachers, they were not given the opportunity to voice their opinion concerning the evaluation. This had also raised another critical question: *To what extent can teachers be involved in the teacher evaluation processes?* The following discussion focuses on issues relevant to these questions.

6.1.1 The Purposes of Teacher Evaluation

Findings of the current study highlighted that teachers at the universities sampled were not often reminded of the purposes of the evaluation carried out.

Aim and objective of the evaluation

It was evident from the findings that some teachers only follow procedure as given by administration without much thought. Teachers often need to be reminded of procedures to keep them aware of acceptable practices. As said by Samuel Johnson, a famous English poet, "People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed". This is relevant to the current study, as teachers listed several purposes behind teacher evaluation at their universities and what the purposes should be. It was obvious that some of those interviewed were unsure of the real purposes of evaluation at their respective institutions. However, others outlined several purposes of what the evaluation should be which if given attention, may provide some insights to the administrators to better serve the teachers, the management and the universities as a whole.

Ideally speaking, the current study has found that the main purpose of the evaluation was for *improvement*, i.e. to improve the teachers' own practice by identifying strengths and weaknesses for professional development, though obviously aimed at setting standards for quality teaching. However, it was also found that its true objective tended to refer to *accountability* purposes, especially to check if the teachers had carried out their responsibilities as outlined in the

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yearly performance review form, as well as whether or not they managed to achieve their work target. In relation to student' exam performance, teachers remained aware of their responsibility to finish the syllabus in order to ensure that students were able to pass their examination. They felt accountable for their students' achievement in the exam as well as the performance of their department. Unlike a study by Rivkin et al. (2005) which found that effective teachers contribute to positive academic outcomes, respondents in this study linked their performance to issues such as career and salary advancement and bonus pay. This includes the "amount of Eid bonus", as mentioned by the respondents. Thus, one method for promoting effective teaching in Malaysian universities is a monetary incentive. However, based on the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) report in which Malaysia took part, in half of 23 countries involved, higher levels of self-efficacy amongst teachers were reported when they received more professional development, as well as when they received appraisal and feedback (OECD, 2009b).

Conflict between purposes – for improvement or accountability?

The earlier discussion has made apparent the conflict inherent in combining the improvement and accountability purposes into one teacher evaluation procedure. Teachers themselves appear to manipulate the evaluation because when they know the purpose is for improvement, they are more open to reveal their weaknesses, especially when hoping for suggestions for training. However, when facing problems related to career and salary, they opt not to reveal their weaknesses (OECD, 2009a). This becomes even more difficult when two parties are responsible for the evaluation of teachers. For instance, in each institution, the student rating questionnaire is managed by a centre often known as the Centre for Academic Development, while the classroom observation of teaching and the staff/teacher yearly performance appraisals are often conducted by the superior or the HOD. Based on my teaching experience, these evaluations were being treated individually and were never being integrated. This is, according to Stronge and Tucker (2003), similar to those practices in many countries which rarely refer

to models of teacher evaluation but rather a unique combination that integrates multiple purposes and methodologies. Although on one hand, evaluation for accountability purposes is often seen by teachers as an approach to check on them (Stronge, 2006), it may benefit teachers who feel that they have not been treated fairly. For example Chen, in an interview respondent of the current study, claimed that "human emotion" is one of the factors that contribute to ineffective teacher evaluation. Therefore, it appears that the real purpose of teacher evaluation as outlined at every university has been designed from a managerial stance, without taking into account teachers' views. As a result, as long as teachers carry out their daily duties, they forget or are not reminded about being reflective for their self-development as well as for their continuous professional development. Subsequently, they become stagnant in their classroom and teaching practice and thus, putting the standard of teaching at risk. Hence, there are benefits for some kind of monitoring to ensure that teachers continuously improve to maintain this standard.

6.1.2 Best Practices for Evaluating Teaching

Based on the literature, student rating questionnaire appears to be the single most researched subject at many higher institutions related to evaluating teaching. In the past 70 years, over 2000 articles and books have been written regarding this topic (Ory and Ryan, 2001). Since it is evident from the findings that student ratings have been used extensively at every institution sampled, there seem to be some benefits and limitations to the use of this procedure. These will be discussed in detail below.

Clarity of question items

The teachers in the current study claimed that the questionnaires included many question items which were not designed in a structured and thoughtful manner and the content was not reviewed for such a very long time or even a decade. The student rating questionnaire method was regarded by some respondents as "a long practiced procedure", which in most universities, have been in use for many

years to evaluate teachers. Two of the interview participants of the current study also said that students were asked in the evaluation to evaluate on the facilities provided at one university, which was "outside of the teachers' control". Burden and Troudi (2007), who conducted their study on student rating of teaching at a university in Japan, specifically on students of three EFL classes with 40 students in each class, found that the students considered evaluation as "their voice", and that it is their chance to be heard. This supports the current study, as according to the teacher participants the students evaluated their teachers in all aspects including the classroom condition. This is an advantage for the students because by voicing out their opinion about their teachers, whether positive or negative, can make their teachers aware of their strengths or weaknesses and can then improve their teaching. Regarding evaluation of teachers on the facilities provided at the university as found in the current study, none of the students in the study by Burden and Troudi (2007) mentioned this as one of the criteria of evaluation. However, the three top criteria of teacher evaluation which they selected were the understandability of the subject, teachers' method of teaching, and student enjoyment.

It was evident that based on the views of the respondents, the clarity of the question items in the rating questionnaire needs more careful consideration. The research conducted by Hejase, Al-Kaakour, Halawi and Hejase (2013) on students' perceptions on student evaluation of teaching particularly on the student ratings at five universities in Lebanon revealed that students at different universities responded differently on the questionnaire. Some of them agreed that the questionnaire did not cover all evaluation criteria and was more relevant to evaluate what is addressed in the classroom. This shows that, to some extent there is a need to include the criteria of quality assurance of teaching and learning in the question items. Some of the questionnaire respondents, as well as the interview respondents from different universities, came to the consensus that the current evaluation questionnaire is not well planned and structurally suited to language teaching, hence missing out on some critical aspects to gauge the effectiveness and competency level of the evaluated teachers. It is conducted

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merely to acknowledge the need of having teacher evaluation to further boost the image and reputation of the institution. As quality assurance is pivotal in enhancing credibility of these universities, I agree with the study by Malakolunthu and Vasudevan (2012) that the notion of 'one size fits all' evaluation does not work for all educational practices. Although their study was conducted in a different context, namely four primary schools in Malaysia, they discovered that the teachers at the schools under study were unsatisfied with the use of the evaluation methods, since the beginning and senior teachers were evaluated using the same instruments. They believed that the administrators should develop their own instruments according to the needs of the teachers. Similarly, at most universities in Malaysia, student rating questionnaires are conducted using generic questionnaires also applicable to teachers of other subjects. This is against the view of Wise et al. (1984), who stated that excellent teaching cannot be judged in the abstract as is generic teaching competence but through the judgments of an expert who knows the subject-matter, grade-level, and teaching context of the teacher being evaluated. Therefore, the findings from the current study suggest that for some participants a mixture of evaluation methods may be necessary. This is because, Kane and Staiger (2012) concluded that based on the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project a combination of three methods of evaluation, i.e. classroom observations, student surveys and value-added features produced more consistent ratings of teachers. MET is a three-year study involving approximately 3,000 volunteered teachers who opened up their classrooms for researchers to identify and develop effective teaching at districts across the United States of America.

Students lack of maturity

Some of the interview respondents argued that students lack maturity, evaluating their teachers based on their popularity, kindness and leniency. The respondents stressed that students are not the right people to evaluate teachers. Suwanarak (2007) and Ahmad (2005), who conducted their studies at the HE context in Thailand and Malaysia respectively, also found evidence that evaluation by

students is usually based on popularity rather than ability. This contradicts the views of two interview respondents of the current study who believed that *"students are honest"* and *"they will leave good remarks if they are happy, but if they don't they will go to the office to complaint".* These two statements imply that a student rating questionnaire may become a reliable source for teacher evaluation, as it reveals that good teachers may receive high scores in the student rating questionnaire. Although the latter view showed some maturity on the part of students, such as they wanted teachers who could impart effective teaching and useful knowledge in their learning journey, there were those who took advantage of the student-oriented approach at some universities. However, these views by the respondents tend to support the claim by Follman (1992, 1995) that students spend more time with their teachers than other evaluators (Wragg et al., 1996) resulting in unique ratings of teacher behaviors. In relation to the above, it seems that students lack the knowledge to evaluate teachers in terms of their subject content knowledge and other professional responsibilities. Goe, Bell and Little (2008) and Follman (1992, 1995) emphasized that students as raters have a lack of knowledge of the full range of teaching requirements such as curriculum, content knowledge, and professional responsibilities. Thus, teacher evaluation depending solely on student rating is insufficient, as explained earlier on the study by Joe, Tocci, Holtzman and Williams (2013).

Students were also seen as lacking maturity when they often delayed in providing their responses in the student rating questionnaire. In the current study, according to some respondents, they did not even bother to respond at all. This suggests that if they wanted teachers with excellent teaching and able to impart useful knowledge for them, they need to contribute ideas and comments for the betterment of the university where they were studying. On the other hand, students perhaps opted not to respond because they doubted that evaluation would make any difference. This, therefore, is different from the study by Brockx, Spooren and Mortelmans (2011), who claim that teachers who organise their classes in a professional manner may result in excellent class attendance, boost students' motivation to study well and pass their exams.

Time

Time appears to be a major problem in implementing a student rating questionnaire. In the current study, the findings indicated that students rush in completing the questionnaire which can result in unreliable feedback. This is in accordance with Suwanarak (2007) who claims that students in her study completed their rating questionnaires at the end of their final exam period resulting in carelessness in completing the questionnaire. Therefore, reconsidering the right time for students to complete the rating questionnaire, forms two sides of a coin. Based on my experience as a teacher of more than fifteen years, if the questionnaires are to be completed in the middle of the term, students often take them for granted and provide their feedback at their last minute. On the other hand, if questionnaires are to be completed at the end of the term, some respondents claim that students rush to answer them or may opt not to answer at all. As a result, it is likely that these questionnaires are left unanswered due to the students' lack of motivation for doing so. Therefore, teachers or administrators might not obtain what they really wanted from the rating questionnaire results.

Culture

Culture is another factor with potential influence on students' feedback. Speaking as a Malaysian, I am aware that being considerate is a typical characteristic of Malaysian people. Therefore, this has become a common reason why comments from students are positive and why they do not always like to express opinions or offend their teachers. Particularly, it is our culture for the younger people to pay high respect to their elders. Therefore, students display their respectful attitudes in the way they give feedback regarding their teachers. It is in this sense, to some extent, could be the reason why the feedback appeared unreliable or useless. This culture and norms, which are instilled from an early age, are based on the National Principle 1970, which are as follows:

1. Belief in God

2. Loyalty to the king and country
3. Supremacy of the Constitution
4. Rule of law
5. Courtesy and morality

Therefore, conforming to this principle, students become considerate and demonstrate a sense of respect to the elders, and especially to their teachers.

Findings from the study have also revealed that a number of the respondents have attached importance to classroom observation by their HOD. This may be due to several reasons. First, some teachers appreciate the existence of the HOD to observe their teaching. It is worth to share what teachers do in the classroom as this is an opportunity for them to discuss with a competent teacher.

Criteria of an observer

Findings of the current study highlighted that teachers with higher qualifications felt uncomfortable being observed by teachers with lower qualifications. Thus, one of the important characteristics of an observation, according to Wragg (1999: 4), is that "the purpose, timing and context of an observation should largely determine its methods". Therefore, clear explanation of the purposes of each observation, whether for development (formative) or assessment (summative), may contribute to a pleasant atmosphere of the classroom observation resulting in a better relationship between the observer and the observed. There is a danger to the participants (observer and observed) if there is no clarification of the purposes of each observation as elaborated by McMahon et al. (2007: 503),

> "misleading descriptions to be adopted where, for example, staff-appraisal or assessment of candidates for teaching qualifications by observation is sold as peer-review and such deceptions, in turn, exacerbate any pre-existing teacher suspicion of any form of third-party observation."

It is especially more difficult when the teacher observer is someone of a different subject area. Observation must not necessarily be carried out by an observer of the same subject matter, if the focus of observation was on the quality of

pedagogical strategies (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2011). In this instance, a classroom observation session may not be successful if the teacher being observed is reluctant to be observed and thus, the true purpose of observation may be challenged. Classroom observation by the HOD as a method of teacher evaluation may become a difficult task for either or both of the observer and the observed. Therefore, a clear explanation of the holistic process which takes place such as the purpose of the observation, the role of the observer, the pre-observation (briefing) and the post-observation discussion (debriefing) is really important (Wragg et al., 1996). These researchers conducted their studies among school teachers in primary and secondary schools in the UK. Teachers may not have issues regarding the qualification of the observers, as long as a clear explanation of the purposes of classroom observation is detailed beforehand. In addition, an observer needs to be skilful in order to conduct an effective observation. All observers must share a common understanding (Wragg et al., 1996; Wise et al., 1984) of what constitutes teacher effectiveness as what the teacher observation system describes in order to provide consistent and accurate observation scores (Joe et al., 2013). According to Kane and Staiger (2012: 8), the five different instruments used in the MET Project provide consistent and accurate observation scores since "all observers must have the same understanding of what constitutes each level of teacher quality the system describes".

Aspects of observation

Data obtained in the current study has revealed that teachers were not informed about the aspects of each observation and that they were unsure on what basis they were evaluated by their HOD. This is in contrast to the principle of peer observation exercise, where Richards and Lockhart (1994) and Wajnryb (1992) suggest a list of aspects of observation which teacher observer and the observed teacher can choose and discuss in the pre-observation meeting. Unlike peer observation, classroom observation typically depends on the decision of the HODs concerning what aspects they will be examining without having to discuss

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with their subordinates. The observations conducted by the HODs at the universities sampled around Malaysia were more of a top-down in approach. According to Farrell (2011), the classroom observation he conducted was for professional development focusing on a single aspect, i.e. classroom communication, as he based his study on seating chart observation record (SCORE). He argued that because the focus of the observation was on classroom communication, the teachers could focus on his or her reflections on this aspect, rather than when a more general observation is undertaken.

Frequency of observation

Although teachers in the current study valued the observation of teaching by the HOD, it was revealed that at some universities, this observation only takes place for new teachers or to those who recently joined the institutions. It was conducted every semester for summative purposes, i.e. promotion and tenure. Other than this, at some universities in this study, random observations were conducted by the HOD showing that there were no routine observations or they seemed to be carried out at any time convenient to the HODs. Although a common practice of teaching at many universities around Malaysia and worldwide is "a practice behind closed doors" (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005), there remains a need for a sense of respect between an observer and an observed, so that what is expected from each observation can be discovered. Based on my years of teaching experience, on average teachers have 18 to 21 hours of teaching each semester, and there are new and different groups of students every semester. It may be unreliable to make an assumption based on only one or two hours of observation conducted once in each semester for the HOD to get an accurate picture of the teachers' effectiveness in the classroom. According to Milanowski, Prince and Koppich (2007), due to the complexity and variability of most teachers' jobs, observation of a single lesson is not likely to form reliable basis to make a judgement. Instead, evidence should be collected at multiple points in time. In addition, student ability is not evenly distributed across classrooms. Therefore, a one-off observation may be unfair to teachers who were assigned to teach low performing students, as

compared to those teaching gifted and talented students. Whitehurst, Chingos and Lindquist (2104: 15) stated, "Imagine a teacher who gets an unfair share of students who are challenging to teach because they are less well prepared academically, aren't fluent in English, or have behavioural problems."

6.1.3 Utility of Post Evaluation – "Evaluation and scores are wasted because they are not studied…"

Concerning the whole evaluation, findings of the current study have revealed no systematic plan or guide for teachers to follow to the next step after an evaluation takes place. This sheds lights on the importance of the awareness amongst the teachers about the use of the evaluation results either for self-improvement or for professional development. This is in line with Glazer et al. (2000). From the result of the evaluation of their teaching, teachers need to reflect on their daily experience in the classroom. Thus, it is through reflective practice (Wallace, 1991) that teachers are able to improve their teaching by carrying out their technical, practical and critical reflection (Potter and Badiali, 2001). Teachers in the current study were not really affected by the result from the evaluation at their university whether it was excellent or poor and thus, their practices remained the same. As a researcher, I find that this to be a strong statement. This shows that teachers might not be affected by the evaluation that took place which makes the whole process futile. From this viewpoint, it is likely that the university simply wants to use the evaluation results as part of evidence indicating proper standards of quality assurance of teaching and learning. This indicates that the evaluation procedure is a routine bureaucratic exercise such that little is expected to come out of it. On the other hand, the evaluation of teaching could be more systematic if teachers were well informed about the evaluation. Peterson (2000) explained that teachers should be more involved and in control of their evaluation as good evaluation provide a source of acknowledgement and reward for teachers.

Findings of the current study have also revealed that teachers do not really benefit from the performance review reports or meetings with their HOD. The process of the evaluation involves setting the plans and objectives at the beginning of the

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year, reviewing and adjusting to any changes in the middle of the year, and revisiting the plans and completing the appraisal (Ahmad and Ali, 2004). This provides the teachers with time and space to adjust to the initial plans and objectives of their teaching as well as their other job scope, such as community services (Public Service Department, 1996). However, in actual fact, this indicates that the entire process of this method of evaluation was for accountability purposes, i.e. to check if teachers carry out their responsibilities as set earlier at the beginning of the academic year. Conversely, it has also been revealed that the results from the yearly performance review with the HOD at some universities were not returned and discussed with the teachers. This has led to dissatisfaction amongst the teachers as they were unable to get to know their results regarding their performance. Through this, they were unable to identify any weaknesses so that they can make improvements. This scenario is in contrast to the findings in the study on the appraisal in Malaysian university conducted by Ahmad and Ali (2004). In their study, they claimed that the appraisal is done continuously. This suggests a type of discussion that takes place after each appraisal. This, unfortunately, does not happen to the participants in the current study. Ahmad and Ali (2004) explained that a first rater officer, i.e. the immediate superior who will evaluate a teacher, can discuss with the teacher regarding the appraisal process and decision, before being moderated by the second rater officer, or the following evaluator, for overall departmental evaluation. Although teachers are aware of the daily 'loneliness' of classroom teaching (Wragg et al., 1996), they are also aware that the performance appraisal has a direct influence on their motivation and job satisfaction. Therefore, if the performance appraisal is not reviewed and discussed by teachers and their superior, this will affect the teachers who received poor scores. This may later affect the superior-subordinate professional relationship and also the teachers' performance and their job satisfaction. Despite the importance of receiving some kind of feedback on the evaluation, some teachers actually expressed a sense of relief when they were not consulted after the exercise. These teachers viewed the absence of feedback after the evaluation as a positive indicator of their overall performance. Not providing teachers with feedback after each appraisal may be the culture at most

universities in Malaysia. Only underperforming teachers were consulted, thus leaving the unproblematic ones to their own devices.

6.1.4 Different Evaluation for EL Teachers

Findings have shown that some participants suggested a different evaluation procedure for the English teachers. The assumptions of similar practices of the whole evaluation lead some teachers to understand that the process can be done with ease and without much hassle. A proposal by some participants for the need of a *development of a plan for language teaching evaluation* shows something is lacking in the existing evaluation system. One of the reasons for this demand is that the non-existence of the *language proficiency* aspect as one of the criteria in the current evaluation seemed an issue for the respondents in the current study. Since English is treated as a second language in Malaysia, it is crucial for teachers as a change agent (Fullan, 2001) themselves to be competent and well-versed in the language in order to build a community which is competent in the target language (in this context refers to the students, lecturers, administrators and everyone involved in the university). The requirement for language proficiency as a component in the teacher evaluation implies that there are some English language teachers who are less proficient in the language, which was not addressed in the existing teacher evaluation. If this is so, then the definition of what 'good' teaching is needs to be developed at the department where the English teachers belong. As an example, one of the criteria of an effective teacher is teaching skills (McBer, 2000). Therefore, in a related matter, one of the skills of an effective English teacher is that he or she must be proficient and able to communicate well using the language. I believe it is the responsibility of the respective department, in this case, the English language Department at each institution to design its own evaluation instrument as an addition to the existing procedure to better improve their teachers. By doing so, the department has ownership of the evaluation process and needs to ensure that all aspects are given careful consideration taking into account the context of the evaluation. In addition, there are issues regarding unemployment and lack of confidence of the

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Malaysian graduates due to poor command of the English language and lack of communication skills (The Sun Daily, 2014) due to the weaknesses of the Malaysian curriculum. Consequently, the responsibility to educate the students to master the language lies with the education system and involves all English teachers. It is best to start an early remedy through teacher evaluation which suits the context and objectives of each institution. In my view, I support the idea for all institutions to suggest a unique or different evaluation for English language teachers in order to accommodate the different needs. Unlike teachers of other subjects, the proficiency aspect is the least emphasized.

One motivation to consider a different evaluation for the EL teaching is that the evaluation of teaching requires judgement from experts rather than generalists. Therefore, excellent teaching cannot be judged in the abstract as is generic teaching competence (Wise et al., 1984). Thus, teaching content subject requires a student to understand the deep knowledge of the subject itself (Shulman, 1987). In addition to teaching English, this proposes that language is unique and therefore, there is no single best method in teaching a language. Since learning English as second language can be difficult, having classroom observation focusing on the students' use of the language through pair work, group activities and role play (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992) may contribute to better understanding of classroom teaching. Prabhu (1990: 170) explained this as follows:

> "An important consideration for language teaching methods is the quality of learning to be promoted, as distinct from the quantity. The question of quality has been a recurrent concern for the profession through ages, being conceptualised and verbalised variously as grammar in contrast to practice, knowledge in contrast to skill, explicit knowledge in contrast to implicit knowledge, accuracy in contrast to fluency, learning in contrast to acquisition, ability to display in contrast to ability to deploy, etc."

Findings of the current study have demonstrated a need to revise the evaluation instruments to suit the needs to effectively evaluate the English language components. With the position of English language being taught to all first year students, in which the language is treated as a *'service subject'* (as explained in

Chapter 1), it is seen as a subject less important compared to their core subject areas, such as engineering, information technology and business. Therefore, the same set of student rating questionnaire used and reused without considering much revision and changes to suit each context may be pointless. In this regard, 'student as customer', a metaphor emphasized by some respondents of the current study, revealed a popular student-oriented approach in the educational setting. This approach, according to Schwartzman (1995), has been adopted by a number of higher learning institutions in the USA due to the high competitiveness of HE. However, this challenged back the accountability of the management and teachers at these institutions who tried to accommodate to the students demand. According to Wilson (1998), the student-oriented approach has made higher institutions now "pander" to students by adjusting curricula and inflating grades to obtain greater "customer" satisfaction in a competitive environment.

6.1.5 Teachers' Voice and Sense of Self – "We have no say!"

Teachers in Malaysia have both the right and freedom of speech to voice out their opinion. This is in line with the Malaysian Constitution, which preserves the right for all citizens, the right to express their opinion freely. As enshrine by Article 10 (1)(a) of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, "All citizens of Malaysia are given the right of freedom of speech." Based on my personal experience, teachers often voice their opinion regarding certain issues only with their teacher colleagues. Issues regarding their dissatisfaction about teaching evaluation, work conditions, promotion, salary and many others were not brought to the attention of the administration or to the management level. The teachers were essentially releasing their tension through having after class chats. Therefore, in terms of evaluating teachers and their teaching, teachers can have their say through the correct channel. In addition to this, findings have also revealed that teachers have no say in who evaluates them, as all procedures are set forth by the institutions to which they belong. I believe this is more of an institutional culture issue rather than a constitutional issue. As far as evaluation is concerned, to my knowledge, there has never been any participatory teacher evaluation being held at any

universities around Malaysia based on this current study. Therefore, teachers felt that they were being isolated from the evaluation procedure, yet needed to participate in the whole process simply to fulfil the requirement of the standard procedure of the universities. The administrations at many universities, on the other hand, evaluate teachers solely for compliance with regulations or to respond to community sentiment.

Teachers have become more reserved in voicing out their opinions because they are worried of being suppressed by the superior. For example, Chen, one of the interview respondents in the study, expressed, "There is so much of human emotion at stake especially if they like or hate you on a personal basis." This instance shows that teachers face a great deal of resistance in voicing their feelings. Similarly, in relation to the Malaysian context, Malakolunthu and Vasudevan (2012: 453) stressed that the teachers in their study described teacher evaluation with words such as "catching, witch hunting, fault finding, subjective, not fair, spotting weaknesses, etc." because it was not conducted according to a proper format. As a result, teachers followed through each evaluation imposed on them without objection.

Teachers were not given ownership for being part of the institutions. They were marginalized and were not involved in setting out whatever method of the evaluation is, be it in constructing the items in the student rating questionnaire, designing the end-of-year HOD appraisal, and outlining aspects to look for in an observation and many more. Teachers were also not included in the discussion to set the purposes of each evaluation. The teachers only expressed their disapproval and dissatisfaction with the evaluations in informal discussion among colleagues. Their silence implied their acceptance of the existing problems, which might bring into question the reliability of the evaluation results. This may be one of the many reasons why the educational system remains unchanged. Speaking based on experience, and being from the same culture of the participants, I believe that their acceptance of the existing system is grounded in the belief that they have no authority to make changes to the system. They seem to become tied

up in a bureaucratic muddle. According to Troudi (2007: 6), "Teachers are often excluded from educational policy and play an insignificant role in decision-making."

In the findings of the current study, many agreed that teachers did not have any say in the evaluation process and procedure. One of the respondents emphasized that "We don't really have a say because we are a government set up." Again, this falls back on the issue of accountability of the management as well as the teachers. As far as the person responsible to evaluate the teachers is concerned, teachers were not given their right to suggest who should evaluate them. The management is accountable to suggest those who they think have the right and knowledge to evaluate the teachers taking into account any constraints the evaluators as well as the teachers may have. Apart from this, based on my years of teaching, teachers stick to the culture of "just follow" whatever is ruled out for them without having the responsibility to contribute for better improvement in the evaluation system. This is in contrast to the accountability model as suggested by Cheng and Tsui (1999).

Since we live in a democratic country, taking into account teachers' views regarding the evaluation of teachers would shed lights on many issues. First, teachers are directly involved in teaching and learning, and are therefore responsible for their students' learning and achievements. Therefore, their existence in the university is seen as relatively important in the procedure and process of teacher evaluation. This is what Wenger (1998) termed the teachers as the *Communities of Practice.* They belong to the community due to their professions and their daily tasks. My opinion is that the evaluation of teachers must involve teachers' views, which supports Danielson (2012), who suggested that it is important for an evaluation to be considered as something done *with* teachers rather than something done *to* teachers. This leads to the idea that the involvement of teachers and their voices in setting out the evaluation should not be underestimated.

The weaknesses of the implementation of the two methods of evaluation, i.e. student rating questionnaires and classroom observation, highlight that it may be a good idea to look at peer observation of teaching as an additional method for evaluating teacher effectiveness. This method may also contribute to the teachers' self-improvement to better benefit each institution. Therefore, in the next part, discussions will be presented pertaining to peer observation exercise based on the information gathered from the after-workshop questionnaire, the outcome of the peer observation intervention, as well as interviews carried out at one of the institutions in Malaysia, which have identified some strengths and weaknesses of the whole exercise.

Peer Observation of Teaching

In this part of the chapter, further discussions are held based on the questionnaire distributed, peer observation intervention, post-observation meetings, and interviews conducted in this study. It is worth mentioning here again that this study involved ten volunteering English language teachers of different years of teaching experiences. Many possibilities, as well as challenges, were discovered.

6.2 Implementation of Peer Observation: Factors Influencing Participation

In general, implementation was a success, as participants were willing to participate in the study. This was evident from the number of teacher participants who volunteered to participate in the current study as well as the responses given in the survey and interview.

The following are the factors which may encourage and discourage teachers' participation to the whole peer observation exercise: i) teachers' psychological factors; ii) institutional factors; and iii) instructional factors.

6.2.1 Teachers' Psychological Factors

Teachers' psychological challenges were reported as one of the factors that hinder the success in implementing peer observation at the institution where this study was conducted. Although teachers claimed that they were ready to participate, findings have revealed that they were still lack of self-confidence and lack of being reflective. These findings support the study by Rani (2014) who found that the reason why her EL teacher participants had difficulties in practising reflective teaching was because they were not exposed to the knowledge of being reflective in their pre-service education. In addition to this, they still faced difficulties in encouraging their colleagues who lacked of readiness and focus of being reflective while doing group reflection.

At the initial stage, before the intervention of peer observation of teaching exercise was conducted, it was found that the teachers could be categorised into three different groups. They had different perceptions about the whole exercise. The _three groups of teachers_ based on the findings are as follows:

1) teachers who had negative feelings about this exercise,
2) teachers who followed whatever the instructions were or those who "sat on the fence" with mixed reactions about the exercise, and
3) teachers who had positive feelings about the exercise.

The teachers who fall into the first group refused to attempt the exercise although they were convinced of the confidentiality of the feedback. It was either due to lack of confidence to try out a new exercise or not wanting to accept any new changes in teaching. Those who fall into the second group, namely those who followed whatever instructions given to them or neither they felt positive about the exercise nor negative, tend to find that their life was easier by _going with the flow,_ i.e. follow whatever the instruction was. Meanwhile, those who fall into the third group were supportive and willing to try out new ideas. This clearly shows that teachers differ according to their goals and priorities. This "groups of teachers" is what Grant and Zeichner (1984: 103) explained as contrasting "types". They further expressed that "teachers who are unreflective about their work lose sight of the fact that their everyday reality is only one of many possible alternatives. They tend to forget the purposes and ends toward which they are working." (p. 104)

Findings from this study also showed that although clear objectives and purposes of the peer observation exercise were explained during the workshop before the intervention took place, teachers still reported feeling nervous about the exercise. As a result of their nervousness, some teachers did extra preparations for the observation and they felt that their teaching were unnatural. This could happen due to observer effect. This supports the study by Abdullah (1997), who found that teachers reacted differently when being observed and as a result they become self-conscious and unnatural resulting in a different effect on the students.

Based on my own experience, receiving full cooperation from all teachers may not be an easy task. In relation to the current study, the teacher participants may be more accustomed to a culture of "evaluation" and that after each evaluation they will receive a yearly increment in their salary or to be promoted to a higher grade in their position. However, increment in salary or promotion to a higher grade does not happen to those who participate in peer observation exercise. Therefore, although the features of peer observation are emphasized among which are mutuality and closeness, teachers cannot escape the feeling of nervousness and being judged. In an informal chat with some of the peer observation participants of the current study, I realized that the participants were a bit reserved and still struggling with the evaluation mentality. A study by Shortland (2010) discovered that despite all the challenges peer observation has, professional relationships can still be strengthened leading to the development of enhanced mutual trust and respect. This is evidence through her case study on 10 peer observations with her colleague at a university in the UK where she learned that,

> "The objective of successful peer observation is to harness the insight
> of critical friends to promote personal and professional development on
> a continuing basis, within a supportive framework. If this 'higher level'
> can be reached, lecturers themselves can benefit immensely." (p. 301)

After peer observation reactions differ from one participant to another. More experienced teachers seemed more judgemental compared to new teachers. According to Richardson (2000), the most unexpected outcome from his peer observation experience was that professors whose classes he observed were interested not only in their teaching but also in his thoughts about teaching. He conducted his study at the university in which he worked, i.e. at the Brigham Young University, UK, where senior and junior teachers participated in the peer observation exercise. Many of the senior teachers were professors, who were found in the study to act differently when being observed and who found it difficult when an observer exist inside their classes. Richardson explained that an interesting change took place because when he refused to become evaluative, the professors started to talk about teaching instead of evaluation. This may be

due to the fact that they have an evaluation mentality, associating each observation with evaluation.

Teachers also showed a lack of self-confidence. This may also be attributed to a number of reasons. First, the feeling of being judgemental rather than developmental is very common especially for teachers with less teaching experience being observed by teachers with many years of teaching experience, especially when the observer has higher or better qualifications, such as those with PhDs. However, this may also happen when an experienced teacher is observed by a new teacher. This was obvious through the pattern of discussion in the post-observation meetings. There is a need for teachers to help each other to improve, as according to the Chicago Teachers' Union (2013),

> "We must share best lessons and strategies as well our observation scores with one another. We must advocate for ourselves in pre/post observation conferences and others. We must mentor each other whether we are new educators or veterans. We all need help sometimes."

In my opinion, and based on my observations, the way an individual teacher responded to the observer depends a lot on the status of the observer. Status here may be referred to as the observer's years of teaching experience or seniority and his or her position at the department. That is to say, the higher the qualification of the observer or the more years of teaching experience the observer has will influence their discussion. Besides that, age may be another factor why some teachers reserved to comment their colleagues. This is quite influenced by the Malaysian culture where in particular, younger teachers have high respect for elder teachers. Due to this respectful attitude, some teachers tend to speak or respond less and let the more experienced teacher observer to give comments. This situation, however, does not happen to those with position in the department. It was evident based on the findings in this current study that a younger teacher observer who held a position in the department seemed vocal in her discussion and felt reluctant to accept her colleagues' comments. However, based on a study by Byrne, Brown and Challen (2010), a one-off exercise may not be sufficient and thus, if the observation is done participants often may have

greater opportunity to decide on the focus and have greater ownership of the whole process. This contradicts with the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) report that in half of the countries that participated in the survey, teachers were more likely to feel confident and more effective in front of the class when engaging in collaboration with other teachers (OECD, 2009b). In my view, this may be attributed to the foundation of the educational system in Malaysia, where the school system is more exam-oriented (Chia, 2014; Ali, Zailani, Othman and Mishra, 2015). For this reason, I believe being excellent in schools means passing with good grades in exams and had excellent paper qualifications. I personally feel that this has some relation to the background of the teachers in Malaysia, as since their school time they were exposed to exams and the understanding that excellent students typically receive good grades and easily pass their examinations.

Secondly, a teacher observer may lack the proper skills for observing classroom teaching. As a result, he or she may not feel confident in observing others' teaching. Wragg et al. (1996) explained that based on their study, some teachers found observation to be perfunctory or even insulting because observers tended to just "sit and watch" and were most likely to use freehand notes. In the context of peer observation, a teacher observer should have attended several trainings or workshops detailing the right procedures before an observation can take place. Explanation from experts on how to conduct observation and being able to carry out as many observation exercises as possible before a real observation takes place can help boost a teacher observer's confidence. It was due to the time constraints of this current study that the workshop related to peer observation was only carried out once, a week before all the participants conducted their peer observation of teaching. In so many instances, teachers lack both the skills of giving and receiving feedback. Therefore, many teachers need to acquire these skills before a peer observation exercise takes place. If teachers have no confidence in conducting the exercise, there will be a low tendency of providing quality feedback. Based on my experience, classroom observation is usually associated to teacher evaluation and thus, it is judgemental and for accountability.

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Observations were only conducted by someone who is more superior, or in other words someone with power. Teachers being observed typically never have had the experience of observing others or being together in the class whose teaching is being observed. As a result, these teachers either lack skills of observation or never bother to learn the skills at all.

In relation to improvement among teachers, it is well understood in the context of the study that as far as evaluation is concerned teachers were not informed about being reflective in their teaching, thus lacking the awareness to change in order to improve. Due to this, teachers lack the capacity for reflection and were not aware of 'what' to do next and 'how' to deal with and 'why' there is a need to reflect on their teaching based on the evaluation they received. As a result, evaluations may be wasted and their teaching practices are likely to remain the same (Hamid, 1995). Lortie (1975) explained that our notion of good teaching is actually derived from our own experience of being taught rather than from our training or the theories of education. Based on my experience, teachers at the university in which this study was conducted have been exposed to many compulsory teaching and learning courses and trainings as a basic requirement at the beginning of their teaching journey. It was hoped that providing the new teachers with the knowledge and skills in teaching could prepare them with some pedagogical skills. These trainings could also remind the old teachers about being reflective in their classroom teaching. However, teaching at the university before I came to the UK to further my study was considered to be "a teacher's own business". Once the course syllabus and module were distributed to the teachers at the beginning of the semester, it was up to their wise decisions on how to deliver their teaching. This is why in my view, without much monitoring or less encouragement in academic discussion between peer teachers, their teaching and classroom practice may become a routine. In my view, time and effort in providing all the courses and trainings were wasted if no monitoring was conducted to observe these teachers. I can still remember the training I attended about being reflective in teaching. It is among the teachers that change needs to take place and encouragements and support should be given by the institutions in which

reflection-on-action is needed for teachers to bring changes to the students (Selamat and Ayavoo, n.d.). This supports an idea from Schon (1983, 1987) that teachers may improve by reflecting on their practices through reflective discussion and try to find solutions to their problems encountered in the classroom.

Besides this, the teachers were also not well supported by the management, resulting in a lack of motivation among the teachers. If their efforts were not acknowledged, they may not feel responsible even for their own development. As mentioned in the literature, all documents related to the observation such as lesson observation form and the strengths and weaknesses form are treated with high confidentiality. Hanson (2012) explains that at the University College London, the only thing that is recorded at the departmental and college records is X observes Y on date Z. I believe that by having this amount of documentation and reminding teachers of their responsibilities of carrying out the peer observation exercise during the term is enough to make them feel a sense of responsibility for their own improvement. Having too much paperwork might discourage teachers as they might resist filling up forms. Besides this, peer observation can also boost teachers' motivation as well as their self-esteem if they were given the chance to discuss about their performance together with their superior collaboratively for the purposes of evaluating their teaching. In this sense, teachers have the chance to get involved directly in the formative and summative evaluation of their own teaching. Ultimately, the communities of practice as suggested by Wenger (1998) are not only restricted to the teachers alone but also involve their superior since all of them belong to the same community of teaching and learning.

Teachers can develop professionally by being reflective on their teaching and classroom practices. This is common when teachers do self-assessment by writing a journal through watching their own recorded classroom teaching session with a view to improving their performance (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992). However, in addition to performing assessment on their own, teachers can also support the existing teacher evaluation scheme by having a colleague to come into their class to share new ideas and gain constructive comments about their

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own teaching in a more participatory teacher evaluation. This is in line with Atkins (1996), who found that teachers support peer observation as it can become a valuable part of an evaluation instrument because they believed that an evaluation process should be formative before becoming summative. In fact, the study by Atkins also found that 93% of his teacher respondents wanted the opportunity to be more involved in the evaluation process.

Factors contributing to responses

The four observers in the peer observation intervention were negatively judgemental of the lesson they had observed when reviewing it with the observed teachers. Although I had briefed all participants on the purposes of conducting peer observation, among which are developmental efforts and exchange of experiences in teaching (Ali, 2012), some adopted a negative tone in the post-observation discussion. This may be because teachers in my study had little experience of work-related discussions as mentioned by Selamat and Ayavoo (n.d.). However, this may also be attributed to the position held by the participants and their age. It is obvious that in the current study an experienced teacher finds it difficult to accept suggestions given by another experienced teacher who holds a position in the department. Additionally, an experienced teacher may find it even more difficult to accept new ideas suggested by a new teacher. This is why open-mindedness is very crucial for this exercise to continue. Dewey (1933) also stressed about open-mindedness which could lead teachers to be reflective in teaching. However, based on the Malaysian context, we were trained from young that we must always show respect to those older than us. In acquiring knowledge especially, we were taught to show respect to and never argue with our teachers. In relation to this, Tani (2005) explained that the Asian students are lack of in-class participation due to the strict rules and regulations in which both the students and teachers must abide. It may be due to these reasons that students find it difficult to establish openness and open-mindedness when they grow older particularly when they start to work.

Observation becomes less daunting if it is being carried out by a peer who according to some respondents often provides "honest" feedback. This may mean that the whole process can become daunting if the observation were made by someone with higher status, for example by a HOD or an outside evaluator. Thus, she might only do extra preparation to please the observer, unlike what she would do with a peer she considers less daunting. Respondent Q31/Stage1, for example, agreed with this and added that this method of evaluation made teachers feel less demotivated. I partly agree with her opinion, because any feedback given by a peer who we consider at the same level may make a teacher feel less demotivated as compared to feedbacks given by those with higher status. However, claims that their evaluation is 'honest' and 'unbiased' may mean that these peers who become observers may feel that they are more sympathetic and less critical, as they do not want to offend their colleagues and to show respect for each other. For this reason, observation by a colleague might be less effective because sincerity and mutuality as agreed before the process takes place do not work. This is partially true, as according to Wragg et al. (1996), they found that there was a need for observers to have a good level of knowledge and understanding of the context, especially of the subject and age group, allowing them to undertake more informed observation and be in a position to offer advice and guidance. I believe that the selection of colleague in peer observation shows diversity of reasons why the complexity of the observer and the observed relationship is considered so important. This covers the professionalism of the observer, the closeness of the colleague, the why how the whole peer observation process is conducted, and the subject knowledge of the observer.

Time of conducting the post-observation discussion

Another factor is that the post-observation meeting was conducted between both teachers immediately one after another. Therefore, if the first meeting started with a good start with each colleague being less critical and less disagreement occur, the next discussion would reflect the same to the peer colleague. This is in line with the findings in a study by Ali (2012), who found that discussion on each

observation is reciprocal if a teacher observes and assesses another teacher positively. This is where he claimed that peer observation may seem to be a situation of *"you scratch my back and I will scratch yours"*. In actual fact, what pleases one may not please the other. If a teacher or an observed practises openness, he or she should try to accept any comments and advices regardless if they are painful. These should be taken positively and then be reflected in his or her classroom teaching.

6.2.2 Institutional Factors

The findings revealed that most of the evaluations carried out at the universities were for summative purposes, i.e. to determine the direction of the department in general. This really portrays that the current teacher evaluation is really a procedure imposed by the institution's management. It is actually a top-down evaluation formed because the management simply wanted it to exist and therefore was not valued by the teachers. In a similar vein, the evaluations were carried out to meet the administrative requirement, instead of promoting teacher quality at the universities. A study regarding teacher evaluation practices in a different context, at four primary schools in Malaysia, by Malakolunthu and Vasedevan (2012), revealed that teachers did not see the teacher evaluation system as an opportunity to move away from a rigid to a more autonomous system which enables them to develop professionally in their respective schools. Teachers need to have a sense of belonging in order for them to teach better and in order to promote excellence in teaching and learning for their own betterment and also for the students' benefit. This is where Wenger (1998) set teachers as in the modes of belonging in a community of practice which consists of engagement, imagination and alignment and that in order for teachers to teach efficiently, they must align their activities and their interpretations of events with structures, forces, and purposes beyond their community of practice.

The study shows that the evaluations were conducted to check whether or not teachers carry out their work and if so, then the evaluation was meant to check if they were carried out properly and efficiently. Based on my teaching experience,

teacher evaluation is certainly imposed top-down. If given the chance for teachers to work in a more democratic teacher evaluation or allowing for more participatory teacher evaluation, they may find that evaluation is more meaningful and be more ready to change to improve themselves. This is because they are given the chance to participate in the evaluation of their own teaching and learning process which will also benefit the institutions where they belong.

Perhaps, due to the working culture of the teachers at Malaysian universities, including the English teachers who often practice the superior-subordinate culture, the participants of the current study showed disagreement to the bottom-up approach in peer observation of teaching. This becomes a challenge to introducing peer observation. This revealed that peer observation is impossible if it is a "bottom-up" approach. However, based on these findings, I personally believe that in order for the exercise to be accepted and able to be carried out successfully, it may be a good idea to give teachers the chance to get involved in the evaluation of teachers for improvement and also for continuous professional development. Cosh (1999) highlights two different models of teacher evaluation using peer observation practised in the USA and the UK which were unsuccessful. In the USA, merit assessment in which teacher accountability through peer observation of teaching has been linked to pay, while in the UK, peer observation of teaching has been linked to appraisal rather than pay. Teachers were reluctant with the practice, as it has been imposed top-down and they have no control over the whole practice.

Teachers in this study explained that their workload may be one of the reasons which put them off from conducting the peer observation exercise. They explained they were given the maximum hours of teaching as well as attending conferences and encouraged to do research at the same time. Based on my experience teaching at the institution at which this study was conducted, the total hours of teaching varies according to teachers with different qualification. In addition to this, some teachers also were given the responsibilities to handle administrative works. For example, a new teacher may be given more credit hours of teaching

because they were not obliged to do research work, compared to an experienced teacher who is given less credit hours of teaching but has more obligation to carry out research, adding to their workloads.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the Introduction section, English language subjects are among the subject requirements for the first year students across all courses offered at the university. Therefore, it is worth mentioning again that English is known as a "service" subject among the community at the university, making it more burden for the EL teachers, in that a very small number of EL teachers to serve more than one thousand first year students taking up the subject.

6.2.3 Instructional Factors

Generally, teachers were positive towards peer observation. This can obviously be seen through the positive outcomes resulted in the teachers' participation in the so called introduction exercise and also through the survey results. Both observers and observed agreed that they benefited from the exercise, but favoured a developmental or formative process rather than a judgemental and summative process. According to Huitt (2007b), based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is the nature of people with careers like teachers to want to become good employees and at the same time climb the career ladder. Undeniably, they do not want to remain at the same notch at which they begin. Findings of the current study showed that teachers want to improve for the development of their students' achievement and also to fulfil the requirement of the teaching profession. It was based on the finding that teachers claimed they needed the help of other teachers to improve. This exercise may boost the teachers' confidence and self-esteem in teaching and learning as according to Bell (2005) and Cosh (1998), peer observation provides an environment in which we can reassess our own teaching in the light of the teaching of others. Thus, the better the teaching, the better the institution becomes, and as a return this could raise the reputation and image of the university and attract more students to pursue their studies.

Teacher participants in this study expressed that they were able to benefit from the feedbacks given by their colleagues provided if the peer observation is consistently carried out. Improvements can be made based on the constructive feedback provided and constant changes for perfection are encouraged. These improvements in teaching and learning can be shared between peers and/with their superiors in the participatory teacher evaluation. This can benefit both parties as teachers' can have their voices in the evaluation of their own teaching and at the same time, the superiors are able to observe the accountabilities of the teachers. Although these teachers admitted they had a worthwhile experience having to go through the peer observation exercise, they also faced some challenges during the whole process. In line with the nature of their profession, there is a need for teachers to develop professionally. It was through peer observation that teachers have become more open to being observed. This was mostly expressed by the new teachers that they wanted to try out the exercise again. In addition, having the chance for experienced and inexperienced teachers to learn about their teaching from their colleagues seemed to be a better opportunity for them to develop their teaching skills. Teachers spend most of their time and energy teaching not only to see their students achieving good results in exams but also for the betterment of the institutions where they belong. Thus, this supports the study by Veloo and Zolkepli (2011) that teachers with high job satisfaction are more motivated in their work and are able to improve the quality of their teaching. Motivation among teachers is very important as they are able to provide effective teaching and learning which in turn can generate excellent human capital. With the introduction of peer observation at the university, teachers are aware that they were able to develop professionally and not to work in isolation or 'in their own world' anymore. They have the chance to discuss with their own colleagues who are in the community of practice. Wenger (1998: 149) elucidated "identity as *negotiated experience.* We define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation as well as by the ways we and others reify ourselves." This includes the teachers' ability and inability to shape the meanings that define their communities and their forms of belonging.

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Teachers participating in the current study were willing to conduct the peer observation exercise again in the future without being assigned or asked to do so. This result showed similarity to those by Fernandez-Chung (2009) and Abdullah (1997) about the willingness of their participants of their study to continue with peer observation. Participants in the study by Fernandez-Chung (2009) revealed that they were more aware of their own needs especially when it is a continuing process. Meanwhile, participants in the study by Abdullah (1997) agreed to have the exercise conducted every semester because *"there is all-round gain".* This encourages professional development in the teachers involved in peer observation exercise. Teachers' professional development is vital as it is a continuous and on-going process for teachers to better improve their knowledge, skills as well as their pedagogy. An effective teacher is always considering how they can improve his or her teaching. Teachers in the context of Abdullah's study were new to peer observation and thus, needed to attend several training and workshop in order to become well-versed with the whole exercise. This is also true to the teachers in this current study, who were newly exposed to the exercise and had not received any appropriate training before except the one conducted for the purpose of this current study. Training on peer observation should be done often and could take place through special programmes or through encouraging greater teacher collegiality for two reasons. First, it encourages reflection on teaching and promotes debate about best practices (Hammersley-Fletcher and Orsmond, 2005), and second, it is a powerful learning experience when the observed teacher accepts comments from the observer (Gosling, 2002). According to Campbell et al. (2004), teacher evaluation can be an effective part of institutional improvement when used to focus on professional development needs. Once it becomes a continuous process that all staff go through rather than a process which takes place at a few specified times, it can become a platform for continuous learning. Another important factor for teachers to continuously develop is by observing the improvement process undertaken after each observation took place. The changes that took place especially when the teachers reflected on being reflective-in or on-action, as suggested by Schon (1983), could become

powerful tools for better teaching to ensure excellent achievement of students' learning.

In one of the instances in the findings, one of the interview respondents name Sal, was assigned by her HOD to conduct peer observation exercise. However, she was not given the right to decide on her own pair or colleague to observe her teaching. She was assigned an observer who has no English language background. This is against the correct practice by Shortland (2007), who explained that in order for the practice to be effective a teacher should be given the right to decide on who to observe his or her teaching.

In the peer observation exercise implemented as part of the research design in this study, teachers were given the freedom to choose their observers. From this study, peer observation appears to be an efficient method for teaching improvements due to the closeness and mutuality between teachers (Gosling, 2002) and the right to choose an observer for the exercise (Cosh, 1999). It was evident in this study that teachers chose colleague observers whom they feel comfortable to work with regardless of the position they held in the department. In one example, a new teacher chose an experienced teacher to observe her classroom teaching. In another, an experienced teacher chose to be observed by a colleague who had many years of teaching experience and was also the head of the English language panel. Thus, this is likely to lead to the success in introducing peer observation into the system. This supports the idea that one of the requirements for peer observation to be successful is giving staff ownership (Gosling, 2009) as recognition of teachers' autonomy (Abdullah, 1997). Based on the literature and also based on my own study, I believe that teachers need to be empowered to take control of their own evaluation, especially by working with a colleague. This evidence shows that teachers are willing to select anyone whom they think can help provide useful suggestions for them to improve.

It was also revealed that teachers in this study selected their partners or colleagues based on the following reasons; 1) the trust and closeness in the

person chosen; 2) respect; 3) the years of teaching experience; and 4) seniority (position of responsibility). These may obviously be seen through the backgrounds of the participants as they were pairs of different groups, i.e. some pairs were new teachers, some pairs were those with many years of teaching experience and new teachers, some were experienced teachers, while, some selected their pairs who held a post. However, none of them selected their partners based on their subject knowledge. In my view, teachers can become more complacent in the peer observation exercise if they selected their observer based on trust and closeness only. Although it is important for both the observer and the observed to have mutual trust, they might feel complacent of the whole peer observation exercise. This is because they are given the right and freedom to choose their colleague observers. This may be done only for the sake to fulfil the requirement for peer observation of teaching in the department. By having their full right to select their partners, they can collaborate to agree upon all classroom activities for the sake of the observation. This may result in "an expectation held by one partner about another, that the other behaves or responds in a predictable and mutually acceptable manner" and "including an expectation that neither party will exploit the other's vulnerabilities" (Sako, 1992: 37).

Data from the peer observation intervention study has revealed that teachers' length of experience could become the basis for distribution of the groups of observation. There appeared to be four groups of peer observation. The first group consists of senior teachers observing other senior teachers, the second group consists of senior teachers observing new teachers, the third group consists of new teachers observing senior teachers, and the fourth group consists of new teachers observing other new teachers. It was evident from the study that on some occasions senior teachers found it difficult to accept the opinion of other senior teachers. It was even more challenging for senior teachers to accept comments given by the new teachers. This could be the judgemental feeling (Bell, 2002) of the senior teachers, who see comments given by the others as negative and destructive. However, new teachers find the exercise interesting since they

are able to learn new techniques and skills and are able to improve their teaching. Accordingly, when teachers were given their right to select their own colleague to observe their teaching, they will choose not only those whom they are comfortable with, but also those with some length of teaching experience. This includes those with higher post. In this sense, they did not see their colleagues as their immediate superiors, but as peers whom they feel at ease to work with. The most important thing about this is that they are able to see their colleague as someone who can provide ideas to better improve their teaching. When colleagues see each other as "at the same level" (as teachers), they have a sense of freedom to voice their opinion through the exposure provided.

6.3   Summary of the Chapter

The current study has investigated the current practices of teacher evaluation and the English language teachers' experiences regarding the evaluation at Malaysian tertiary institutions, as well as the possibilities and challenges of introducing peer observation into the system. Findings regarding teacher evaluation have revealed many methods of teacher evaluation conducted at different universities around Malaysia and it showed that the system was in place. However, there remain some weaknesses in the implementation of each method. There are many reasons for this gap between the obvious advantages in policies and lack of them in practice. A number of factors have accounted for these findings among which are the appropriate time in conducting the evaluation, the qualification of the observer in conducting classroom observation, issues related to power and the need for a different evaluation for the English language teachers. Findings regarding introducing peer observation into the system revealed that it was possible for introduction because teachers were positive about the whole exercise, although there were still many challenges encountered especially factors such as the teachers' psychological factors and institutional as well as instructional factors. However, despite the many disadvantages of peer observation, it can contribute to an effective teacher evaluation by establishing

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participatory teacher evaluation for the teachers and organised in a bottom-up procedure in order to allow for teachers' voices to be heard. In the next chapter, I will present the theoretical and pedagogical contributions of the study and suggest some recommendations for future research. I will end the thesis with my reflection of my research journey.

Chapter 7: Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

This chapter summarises the findings of the current study and offers some final remarks. It also presents the implications which arose from the study and offers theoretical and methodological contributions to knowledge. Finally, some recommendations for future research are offered together with my reflection on my PhD research journey. It is worth mentioning here again that this study was conducted to address the following research questions:

1. What are the current practices of English language teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?
2. What are English language teachers' experiences with teacher evaluation in Malaysian tertiary education?
3. What are Malaysian English language teachers' views about introducing peer observation into the system?
4. What are the possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation?

7.1   Summary of the Research Findings

This section on the summary of the research findings will be divided into two sub-sections namely teacher evaluation and peer observation.

Teacher evaluation

The findings for research question 1 revealed that some form of teacher evaluation procedures were in place in each Malaysian university sampled in this study. However, teachers were unsure of the purposes of the teacher evaluation conducted. Some claimed that it was more for improvement, whilst, others claimed that it was for accountability purposes. In general, there was evidence that in the universities sampled in this study the evaluation was used mainly to monitor if teachers had carried out their tasks and whether they were done

properly. In addition, teachers at some institutions in the current study explained that in terms of frequency of observation, they experienced being observed only once and for summative purposes.

Some participants suggested that there should be a customised evaluation for English language teachers. One of the reasons for this claim is because of the non-existence of the language proficiency aspect as one of the criteria in the existing evaluation. It was also considered preferable for judgements about ELTs to be made by experts in the field rather than by generalists.

The student rating questionnaire seemed to be the most commonly used system, used by all the universities sampled, for evaluating teachers. However, questions were raised about its reliability in measuring ELT's performance. This study revealed that the questionnaire was not structurally made to suit language teaching, hence, losing some critical aspects to gauge the effectiveness and competency level of the teachers. Furthermore, findings for research question 2 also revealed that the question items in the student rating questionnaire had not been updated recently and therefore, certain questions were found irrelevant. Besides this, there is a need for more careful consideration especially in the clarity of the question items and to include the criteria of quality assurance of teaching which is lacking. In addition, based on the current study, students are also seen as incapable of evaluating teachers as they lack the content knowledge of the subject taught, the curriculum, and the professional responsibilities. This has made evaluation procedure which relies solely on a student questionnaire as insufficient; a combination of methods to evaluate teachers was suggested as more likely to produce reliable data. However, there was evidence from this study that even where a university employed more than one type of data gathering tool as part of the evaluation procedure, the separate elements were often treated individually, i.e. there was no integrated approach. Treating each source of data independently defeats the purpose of teacher evaluation since the results from every evaluation tool, if studied properly, could lead to a clearer identification of a

teacher's strengths and weakness and could contribute to an effective improvement plan.

The teachers in my study felt they were unable to raise their concerns about the evaluation process with their immediate superior because of the power relationship that exists. They claimed that they had no say in the evaluation process. They felt marginalised and were not involved in formulating the evaluation system at their institutions. Dissatisfaction regarding these issues was discussed only in informal chats among colleagues, never raised with their immediate superiors. It was discovered that they were worried of being oppressed by their superior.

Peer observation

With regards to peer observation of teaching, outcomes of the peer observation intervention of the current study which addressed the research question 4 indicated that teachers still felt nervous about the exercise although clear objectives and purposes of the exercise were explained in the workshop before the intervention took place. As a result, teachers did extra preparation for the observation and were unnatural during the observation. Lack of peer observation experience has made it difficult for the participants to feel comfortable with the whole process. It is likely because this was the first time they were involved in peer observation and their observation experience is often associated with evaluation.

The teachers in my study were lacking in self-confidence when being observed because they feared being judged negatively by their colleagues. In addition, teachers were not well supported or encouraged by the management to consistently conduct peer observation. Teachers with higher qualification felt uncomfortable being observed by teachers with lower qualification. This was made more difficult when they were not informed about the aspects of each observation and the criteria used by the HOD when evaluating them. New teachers appeared more open to being observed. These teachers found that they

had the chance to discuss with their own colleagues who were in the same community of practice (Wenger, 1998). They were willing to conduct the exercise again in the future without being assigned to do so. In relation to this, age and position held by the participants in the current study are among the reasons attributed to the judgemental effect of the peer observation exercise. The way an individual teacher acted or responded to the observer depends a lot on the status of the observer. In the current study, an experienced teacher found it difficult to accept suggestions given by another experienced teacher. It was obvious that being senior or junior affected their post-observation discussion through the pattern of discussion, i.e. the content, the relationship, the tone and the outcome of discussion, between the participants in the post-observation meeting.

Being reflective did not appear to come naturally or easily to the teachers who participated in the peer observation intervention, as some asked about how and what to reflect on after they had been observed. They were unsure of what to do with the observation outcomes. This suggests that some teachers lack the pedagogical awareness and self-knowledge to identify their strengths and weaknesses, in order to consider where there is a need for improvement in their classroom practices.

The ethos or tone of the post-observation discussion seemed to be another reason which influenced the reaction of each pair. For instance, if the first meeting started with a harmony discussion, the following meeting to discuss the other parties' classroom teaching would also be conducted in a harmonious discussion. If the nature of the discussion was positive and the teacher understood what the observer would be looking at, and the teacher had some say in the focus of the observation, the teacher was presumably more likely to listen respectfully and in an open way.

When the teachers who had taken part in the peer observation intervention were asked whether they would like it to be introduced formally into their institution, teachers' workload seemed to be one of the reasons which put them off from conducting peer observation. English is a compulsory subject for all first year

students across all courses offered at the university under study which means the English teachers had more workload as compared to teachers of other subjects. In addition to this, like other teachers, involving in research work, attending seminars and conferences were among others required for their yearly performance evaluation. These had caused a hindrance for these teachers to participate in the exercise.

In reference to the process of peer observation in general, participants in this study also emphasized that they would prefer a developmental rather than a judgemental exercise because it could boost their confidence and self-esteem in teaching and learning. They were aware that the sharing of ideas between peers and/with their superiors encouraged them to develop professionally and this can help them value a participatory teacher evaluation.

In terms of the right to decide on an observer, findings of this study indicated that teachers valued the freedom to decide on their pair or colleague as they had the chance to choose based on closeness and mutuality. As a result, some teachers selected and considered more respected and experienced teachers to observe their teaching and in fact chose those with position in the department because they wanted to benefit from them.

7.2   Final Remarks and Conclusions

Based on this current study as well as on my own experience, I noticed the common practice of teacher evaluation in the Malaysian context is that both good and poor teachers remain to serve the universities. This is based on the results obtained from the student rating questionnaire, end-of-year review meeting with the HOD as well as the interview with the respondents. The poor teachers who are identified through the evaluation are, however, usually sent to attend trainings with the hope that they are able to improve their classroom teaching. However, without systematic monitoring of these poor teachers, expected improvements

from them may be futile and old practices may possibly again become a routine (Hamid, 1995).

It is also worth considering more than one methods of teacher evaluation since relying on only one method may not portray the true picture of teacher performance in the classroom. Therefore, this study suggests that there is a need for multiple sources of evidence to be gathered in a teacher evaluation procedure, if a holistic picture of a teacher's performance is to be generated, regardless of whether the aim is accountability or professional development or both.

As discovered from this study, teachers were not used to being reflective about their classroom teaching and practices. They were rarely or never being reminded to reflect on their own teaching. As teachers, we are encouraged to continuously learn new knowledge. This is in line with the first message sent from the Mighty Allah to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), which says:

اِقرَأ

(Surah 96:1)

Meaning: "Read"

This first message implies that we need to learn and learning is a never-ending process in ones' life. In fact, many scholars including Muslim scholars also advice people to seek knowledge. There are many quotes and sayings in support to the above verse. One of the very famous quotes is the following:

اطْلُبُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنَ الْمَهْدِ اِلىَ اللَّحْدِ

Meaning: "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave"

This quote reminds us of our duty as teachers, although knowledgeable, yet we will never be able to learn everything and thus, need to constantly learn new things. Speaking as a Muslim, we are taught that there is no time frame in seeking knowledge and there is no restriction in learning to only formal education or formal teaching. Therefore, in relation to teacher evaluation and peer observation of

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teaching exercise in this current study, their relevance with the continuous learning model and experiential learning model as explained in chapter 3 are so significant. Hence, good teaching and also good teacher evaluation play role in improving students' overall learning.

7.3   Implications of the Study

The key findings of this study have implications for policy as well as practice with respect to the teacher evaluation system in Malaysia. There is a need for due consideration regarding the various problems with teacher evaluation in general. The recommendations made in this study stem from the actual users of the teacher evaluation system and peer observation exercise, i.e. the teachers. Other recommendations are made based on the interpretations of the findings of the current study as well as the literature.

7.3.1 Implications for University Managements

It is recommended that teacher evaluation at each university be revised consistently to suit the continuous needs of maintaining teaching quality. Teachers need to be given authority in planning and designing the questionnaire items in the student rating questionnaire. Teachers are often excluded from educational policy and play an insignificant role in decision-making (Troudi, 2007: 6). As a matter of fact, regular review of procedures is also crucial to ensure they are fit for purpose. Therefore, clear communication to staff in relation to the purpose of the teacher evaluation procedure, i.e. for accountability or for professional development purposes, or for both. All new information should be provided to the teachers as they are those involved directly with the evaluation process.

Inclusion of teachers in the design of teacher evaluation procedures should be taken into consideration as they have legitimacy to ensure the procedures are relevant to the subject discipline. It is also advisable to consider the role of needs

analysis in designing and re-designing of the evaluation items in the student rating questionnaires as well as other evaluation methods. This is because for example, although one single evaluation questionnaire can be generic, i.e. used to evaluate teachers of all subjects, some specific items need to be added depending on the nature of the academic subject and the purpose of the evaluation.

It is obvious from this study that subject knowledge was not addressed in the student rating questionnaire. Therefore, the management can consider the provision of professional development courses to address teachers' pedagogical or subject knowledge weakness with time allocated for teachers to attend these trainings.

The inclusion of peer observation as part of revised teacher evaluation procedures, or as a separate means of professional development may help to improve the existing teacher evaluation procedures. Attention needs to be given to the frequency with which peer observation should be considered to ensure that teachers are familiar with the procedure of how to carry out a proper and effective observation. This exercise may be conducted once a term for the first year of implementation of peer observation and then, depending on the needs identified, repeated termly for teachers identified with weaknesses, or once yearly in the case of teachers identified as excellent practitioners. This is because in order to have peer observation as a means of teacher evaluation, teachers need to have the motivation to carry out the whole task. This may be a very effective tool for teacher evaluation because it is considered as a participatory model of teacher evaluation. After conducting this study, I noticed that some characteristics of peer review of teaching as suggested by Gosling (2002) are missing. Characteristics such as the duration and frequency of observation all these need to be added and discussed to the model. This is because a one-off observation is insufficient to support improvement of teaching. Byrne et al. (2010) stress that teaching occurs in a range of settings, and if peer observation is to be used to support improvement of teaching, then a one-off observation of a lecture is not sufficient to enable this to happen.

Due to the above factor, I realised that there is a flaw in the last characteristic of the peer review model suggested by Gosling (2002). This is because the relationship of the observer and the observed is of equality, which means the observer and the observed may be more or less equal in terms of their objective of teaching, experience, belief and many others. Thus, in the current context of the study, equality may contribute to teachers' feeling of complacency and lack of focus, as being stated in the last characteristic, i.e. risks. This is totally different from the two other models of peer observation of teaching suggested by Gosling (2002) where in the first model, the relationship between the two is based on power, whilst in the second model it is expertise where the observed has an obligation to strive for better preparation to impress the observer. Thus, in order to reduce the feeling of being complacent and unfocused, a systematic and proper method should be explained by the management on how to conduct peer observation has to be explained clearly and thoroughly between all those involved. Proper discussion prior to each observation is crucial to ensure effective feedback sent and received to/from both parties, i.e. the observer and the observed. In a proper discussion, clarification regarding issues such as aspects/focus of observation, relevant documents for observation and time as well as venue for observation can be further discussed.

In a similar vein, in order for peer observation activity to be carried out in this context, certain criteria should be put in place by the management. Although it is true that with the involvement of the management, the activity might seem to be practicing the top-down approach which is commonly not being favoured by teachers, as described by Cosh (1999) to relate to the example of the peer observation model in the UK which is linked to appraisal. She stresses that the reason why this model was not successful is because the teachers claimed that they have no control over the procedure because it was imposed from above. Administrators or the immediate supervisors should ensure that the teacher evaluation procedure is clearly set out so that all understand the purpose(s): the data sources to be used; the methods of feedback to the teachers; the frequency of evaluation; and the possible outcomes. Once these are clearly set out, teachers

would understand where they stand and would be able to plan their work. In order to reduce the top-down practices and the barriers between the managements and teachers, those influential people involved in evaluating teachers should try to create an ethos which is supportive rather than judgemental.

It is also paramount to gain buy-in from the management in order to ensure the sustainability of the peer observation exercise. Thus, the involvement of teachers in this kind of exercise together with the support from the management such as HODs or Deans can also contribute to a meaningful participatory teacher evaluation. In fact, the policy must be able to withstand current and future challenges in teacher evaluation and must continuously be able to gain acceptance and support from the management without which the future is bleak.

7.3.2 Implication for Teachers

Teachers should be more aware of the purposes of each evaluation. It is found that teachers had very little exposure to professional development and looked only at attending seminars and conferences; and presenting or publishing papers as the main methods of teacher development. Therefore, there is a need for teachers to look at their pedagogical approach in their classroom teaching and improve wherever necessary. Thus, improvements are made not only for assessments but also for work satisfaction since a desire to change is important for development to take place.

Teachers are advised to take initiatives to attend professional development courses and training workshops relevant to peer observation of teaching. They can gain many benefits from these courses among which can prepare them to become effective observers, can become more open to accept constructive comments, and can be more reflective in their teaching. It is hoped that they can make the most of the peer observation exercise. If peer observation is introduced by universities, both the observers and the observed teachers have their rights and responsibilities. However, it was found that the nature of how teachers work collaboratively in order to encourage collegiality is in real need of improvement at

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the university where this study was conducted. Teachers should always be reminded to improve themselves in all aspects of their teaching and learning. This is very important to ensure that the exercise can survive. Open door policy may be implemented through peer observation of teaching exercise an approach to encourage more teachers to work together with the managements as explained earlier.

Teachers also need to take advantage of professional development opportunities to help them improve their teaching. In relation to peer observation (if this exercise is to be introduced at the universities), teachers should find time to attend as many trainings and workshops related to the exercise as possible to familiarise themselves with the whole practise. Taking this into account, I believe that the teachers in the current study may become more confident and skilful if they were given more chances to attend trainings and to participate in peer observation exercise. By having to go through these, they may encounter certain issues during the observation and become more familiar with the exercise. Teachers need to be more open to constructive feedback on their performance. They also need to try to reflect (effectively) on their own practice.

In the following section, I will be discussing the contributions to knowledge which this study can offer.

7.4   Contributions to Knowledge

The current study contributes to the bodies of knowledge relating to teacher evaluation and peer observation. First, it fills the gap in the literature regarding teacher evaluation in the Malaysian educational context. To my knowledge, this is the first study conducted in Malaysia to explicitly investigate the prevalence and nature of teacher evaluation procedures in higher education institutions in this country and to explore the feasibility of introducing peer observation as an instrument for furthering the professional development of English language

teachers. It is hoped that this study will trigger some interest among ELT researchers in the Malaysian context and those in the wider ELT community.

Second, at the level of educational research, this study also has a contribution with regard to social constructivism means of enquiry in the Malaysian context. Most studies related to teacher evaluation methods as discussed in chapter 3, for example, using student rating questionnaire, were conducted in Malaysia using the positivist scientific stance as a theoretical framework. To name some of the examples are the work by Chuan and Heng (2014), Sok-Foon, Sze-Yin & Yin-Fah (2012), Mat, Dahlan and Osman (2007), and Liaw and Goh (2003). This may be due to the Malaysian culture that students are a bit reluctant in giving comments about their own teachers. In most instances in evaluating teacher effectiveness, students are asked to evaluate their teachers' performance using the close-ended rating questionnaire, distributed to students towards the end of semester. Many researchers avoid adopting a social constructivist approach in studies related to student evaluation and prefer the technical or product model. This may be one of the many reasons why teacher evaluation in Malaysia is still top-down and essentialist in approach. Issues relevant to student evaluation in Malaysia were often dealt with through quantitative approach where researchers (as listed above) believe in objectivity. Considering the social constructivism approach means giving emphasis on the collaborative nature of learning and the importance of the cultural and social context.

Third, adopting a sequential mixed methods research design combining both quantitative and qualitative research in the form of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observations have not been extensively used in Malaysia and thus, can encourage for further research. Similarly, the study suggests an alternative to the traditional method of face-to-face interview. For instance, one major problem faced during the process of data collection was that finding the right time to meet the teacher participants. This situation is typical and can be expected to occur in any study of this type in Malaysia or similar context. Therefore, this study proposes using an online interview to overcome such problem. This "remote

interview", as termed by King and Horrocks (2010), using email has been found to be effective in such situations, as teachers were more relaxed and answered the questions at their own pace and convenience.

Finally, the current study also contributes to knowledge by proposing: i) a model for teacher evaluation, and ii) one plan for the procedure of peer observation of teaching; which can be adjusted according to the suitability of any given context. The proposed model is based on the model referred to in the literature review, i.e. the reflective model developed by Wallace (1991), whilst, the two plans are developed by myself after having gone through this current study. These will be discussed in depth in the following section.

7.4.1 Theoretical Contribution

As explained by Wallace (1991) in the reflective practice model, teachers develop professional competence through reflecting on their own practice. To relate to being reflective among teachers, it may seem vital to count teachers in the evaluation process so that their voices and opinions are listened. Therefore, in Stage 1 of this model, teachers are prepared with their prior knowledge about classroom observation which they obtain through attending workshops and training; and in fact, the knowledge they gain at the beginning of their teaching profession. They are aware of the role of an observer and an observed. Then, in Stage 2, with the knowledge received through attending workshops and trainings on peer observation and the experience they gain getting involved in classroom observation exercise, they move into the reflective cycle where they practice the peer observation and then try to reflect-on-action. This is a cyclical process where each teacher observes and being observed and tries to reflect by having a change or improve in practice. At this stage, it is hoped that the exercise is repeated for several occasions. Lastly, in the goal stage is the evaluation stage, where an evaluator can discuss with the respective teachers the peer observation they experienced and the changes or improvements they have made.
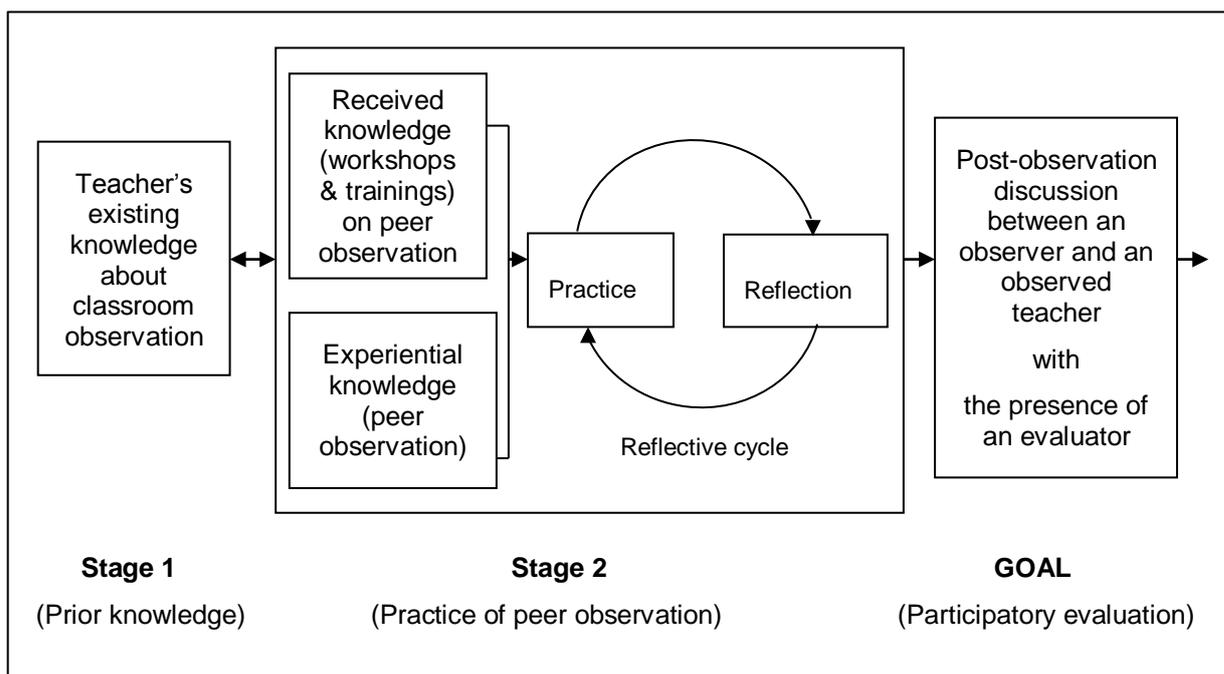
Figure 7.1   Peer observation cycle: A participatory approach

I reiterate the point made in the discussion chapter that the participation of the teachers and the immediate superiors involve in the evaluation of teachers can be the best practice to consider as this involves discussion and negotiation between the two. Thus, involvement of these two parties can be meaningful through the participatory approach to help teachers with professional development. Here, the model I am suggesting is to have peer observation as an element of professional development and as part of teacher evaluation in the current top-down model in Malaysia.

Finally, this study contributes to knowledge by proposing a plan for conducting the peer observation of teaching exercise. This method can be applied and modified depending on the specifications of any given context.

7.4.2 Methodological Contribution

In terms of the methodological contribution of this study, my original contribution of knowledge is the following method on how to conduct the peer observation of teaching exercise. I would suggest to researchers interested to conduct this exercise at their institutions to consider this plan since it leads to being reflective. This plan is clearly illustrated in the following Figure 7.2. In Stage 1, the teacher (also addressed as observed) together with the observer will have a pre-observation discussion to provide details for the peer classroom observation to be conducted. Then, in Stage 2, the observer's task is to observe the colleague's teaching and at the same time provide comments in the form provided. Next, in Stage 3, they pursue to the post-observation meeting where both teachers once again meet to discuss on what has been observed. Lastly in Stage 4, the observed teacher will reflect, improve or change his/her teaching based on the suggestions provided by the observer. At the same time, the observer's task is also to reflect on his/her own teaching by trying to improve or follow the good examples of the colleague. This is where being reflective of one's own teaching come into place as discussed earlier in chapter 3, the Reflective Practice Model. Initially, although not clearly shown in the plan or illustration in Table 4.6 in Chapter 4 that teachers need to do self-analysis, teachers were reminded of being reflective all the time about their teaching and especially after a peer observation exercise.

Stage 1 Pre-observation discussion

Both the observer and the observed meet together to discuss on a specific focus for observation as well as other important arrangements such as time, venue, duration of lesson, context of the lesson as well as the ground rules for the observation.

Stage 2 Peer classroom observation

The observer comes into the observed teacher's classroom to conduct the observation with a checklist or a form on the focus of observation and complete it while observing his/her colleague's teaching. He/She is free to choose the best seating location. The observed teacher is to teach based on the topic agreed in the discussion in Stage 1.

Stage 3 Post-observation meeting

This meeting is to be held as soon as possible after the observation session. The observed teacher's task is to critically examine his/her own teaching with an open mind and to tentatively plan for the next lesson. Meanwhile, the observer's task is to help clarify and build upon the observed teacher's understandings of the behaviours and events that occurred in the classroom.

Stage 4 Post-observation self-analysis/reflection

At this stage, both the observer and the observed teacher should separately reflect on current teaching practices and to decide critically whether they wish to introduce any changes into their teaching classroom techniques and instructions.

Figure 7.2   Plan for the procedure of peer observation

7.5   Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of the current study suggested a number of areas that need further investigation.

The current study focused on two broad areas, i.e. first, on teacher evaluation and second, on peer observation of teaching. It is best recommended that a researcher focuses on only one area alone, i.e. either teacher evaluation only or peer observation only, rather than combining his/her study into one major research like the current study. I realize that this is another limitation in this study since I could not focus on looking into only one method of teacher evaluation because I am a lone researcher with limited time and resources.

There are many methods of teacher evaluation such as those mentioned in this study like performance review meeting, students' verbal feedback, students' written feedback, student rating questionnaire, portfolio, peer observation, scrutiny of lesson plan, and many others. Although I gathered data about the elements which were included in universities' teacher evaluation procedures, it was not my focus or intention to investigate each individual element already being used. Therefore, future researchers might want to consider conducting an in-depth study into one of these methods of teacher evaluation. Focusing on one method could provide readers with detailed insights into the strengths and weaknesses and provide important suggestions for improvements. For example, researching about teacher evaluation using portfolio may be a good idea to start with as it is a recent topic widely debated to assess teacher effectiveness.

7.6   Reflection on my PhD Research Journey

On the first day I met my main supervisor, he explained about my role as a doctorate student and gave me a lot of advice among which I would never forget were never work in isolation and try as much as I could to mingle around with friends and senior students at the Research Support Unit (RSU) office. I was lucky

because I could pass the words of wisdom to my colleagues who felt demotivated due to being far from their home country and other problems they faced in their studies. Frequent meetings with my supervisor at the earlier stage of my study were very meaningful as these had reduced the gap between me and my supervisor, and thus, allowing me to feel at ease to have discussions.

I started my PhD journey with studying for the MSc in Educational Research at the Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter, as part of the requirement of the PhD programme. The course required me to undertake four modules namely Nature of Educational Enquiry, Interpretive Methodologies, Designing Communicative Research and Scientific Methodology, and a dissertation. Before coming to the UK, I did my MEd in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) in Malaysia using the most dominant approach of qualitative research. Therefore, I was a bit worried about learning the quantitative research for the first time and I discovered that joining the course enabled me to further understand how to analyse quantitative data using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software.

After I completed all the four modules, I started to think of a suitable topic for my dissertation. In fact, before coming to the UK, I planned to do research about teacher evaluation but had no specific focus. I realised that having the right topic for my dissertation could lead me straight into the research for my PhD. The topic came to mind based on my own experience as an English language teacher having gone through several methods of teacher evaluation, yet teachers' teaching of the language remain stagnant. After I conducted extensive reading, I realised that teacher evaluation is such a wide area and requires a team and not a single researcher in order to conduct a study. I might have a risk of not being able to complete my study within the time frame specified by the university. I continued to do extensive reading and paid several visit to the university library to borrow theses to find out other relevant areas related to teacher evaluation that was considered new and reasonably to be conducted within the time frame. This led me to identify that one of the methods of teacher evaluation, i.e. peer observation,

could help teachers to improve their teaching instead of focusing on evaluation for accountability purposes. At this point, I discussed my idea with my supervisor who was happy with it and suggested me to look for some other relevant articles, journals and books. I also had discussions with my PhD colleagues and they shared their experience especially in planning the outline of my PhD journey.

I acquired a number of skills from the four MSc modules, supervisors' feedback and tutorials, and effective researcher workshops at the university during my PhD study. Previous assignments such as comparing and contrasting two published articles of different paradigms focusing on ontology, epistemology and methodology, doing critique on an interpretive study, designing a small-scale quantitative study – communicating my research findings and preparing poster presentation for the said study in the Annual Staff and Student Conference were among the excellent opportunity for me and other research colleagues to present in front of experienced audience. It was also through these presentations that I received constructive feedback which can assist me in preparing a more professional presentation in the future. Using different computer software such as NVivo, SPSS, Endnote were among other advantages of attending the course. I also got to know a new and interactive tool for presentation, i.e. Prezi, from other participants. I acquired a number of skills from the effective research workshops I attended such as how to extract main gist from the article I read, how to conduct effective interview, and how to be a critical writer. I was blessed with efficient supervisors who always provided me with very prompt and constructive feedback through emails and meetings. I also learned that quick responses through emails are very important and helpful for a PhD student as I did not want to lost the momentum in my writing and this a culture not practised by many at my workplace and worth practising.

In the light of the reflection above, I think this is a starting point for me to bring in a research culture amongst my faculty colleagues. In addition, I believe I have the responsibility to share the invaluable knowledge, positive working aspects and culture I obtained during my study in the UK.

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Appendices

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH
DISSERTATION/THESIS

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

DISSERTATION/THESIS

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/ and view the School's statement on the GSE student access on-line documents.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR **COMPUTER** (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). DO **NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name:	Sazuliana Sanif
Your student no:	600003585
Return address for this certificate:	School of Education, St Luke's Campus, University of Exeter
Degree/Programme of Study:	PhD
Project Supervisor(s):	Dr Salah Troudi and Dr Gill Haynes
Your email address:	ss477@exeter.ac.uk
Tel:	07505556723

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: date: **3 July 2012**

*NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must **not be included** in your work. It can be kept for your records.*

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2011

Certificate of ethical research approval
DISSERTATION/THESIS

Your student no: 600003585

Title of your project: The nature of peer observation in ELT tertiary education in Malaysia

Brief description of your research project:
My research project aims at understanding the current practices and experiences of English language teachers in relation to the teacher evaluation process in Malaysian universities and how they help to inform practices of teacher evaluation and better improve the activities in the future.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):
The participants planned to be involved in my study are the English language teachers at the Malaysian universities.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:
   a) <u>informed consent:</u> **Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document.** a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents:
   In order to obtain the agreement of the prospective participants in my field study, information will be given to English language teachers concerning the aims and purposes of the study and the broad areas to be explored through the different methods. There will be no compulsion for the participants to participate in this research project, and if they choose to participate, they have the right to withdraw at any stage.

   b) <u>anonymity and confidentiality</u>
   The researcher will take as much effort as possible to preserve the participants' anonymity. The name of the institution visited will not be published and pseudonyms of participants/ teachers will be used when written in the research report. As for confidentiality, all information will be treated as confidential. The participants will be assured that the data collected will be protected and used only for research purposes. The participants will also have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about themselves.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:
The researcher is also aware of not to expose the participants to any stressful situations. Therefore, the teachers who feel uncomfortable of being audiotaped or videotaped during the interviews or classroom observations will be excluded from the audio or videotaping. However, field notes will be taken. The participants will also have the freedom to either complete the teacher evaluation questionnaire or not.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2011

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):
The data collected will be saved by the researcher in secure places. The video will later be deleted from the camcorder and will be saved in a secure file given by the university IT service. The hard data such as the questionnaires and the interview transcripts will be saved in the university locker allocated for the researcher in the Research Support Unit (RSU).

Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):
There are no any exceptional factors which may raise any ethical issues given the nature of the study about teacher evaluation and peer observation.

---

*This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's **Research Support Office** for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.*

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

---

This project has been approved for the period: 15 July 2012   until: 30 November 2012

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): ....date: 5/7/2012

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference:............D/11/12/63.................

Signed:...date: 5/7/2012
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
updated: April 2011

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me

any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form

all information I give will be treated as confidential

the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity

...........................…………….....   ....
(Signature of participant)   (Date)

....
(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s)

Contact phone number of researcher(s):………………………………………..

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

…………………….………………………………………………………………………………….
OR

…………………….……………………………………………………………………………….

Sample of questionnaire for Stage 1

Dear participants,

I am studying for a Doctor of Philosophy in Education at the University of Exeter, UK. I am conducting this survey as part of my research for the degree. I am looking for English language lecturers/teachers who have experienced at least a year of teacher evaluation at tertiary level. I am interested in understanding the current practices and experiences of English language teachers in relation to the teacher evaluation process in Malaysian universities as well as their views on peer observation. It is hoped that the information obtained will help to inform practices of teacher evaluation and better improve the activities in the future.

Your participation in this survey will help me understand this important topic better. Please kindly spare a few minutes of your time to fill out this questionnaire. Your details and responses to this questionnaire will be treated with utmost confidentiality and you have the right at any time to withdraw from participating in this survey.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Sazuliana Sanif

CURRENT PRACTICES AND *EXPERIENCE* OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS ON TEACHER EVALUATION

1. Are you male or female?

    ○ Male

    ○ Female

2. How long have you been an English language teacher?

    ● Less than 3 years

    ○ 3 to 5 years

    ○ 6 to 10 years

    ○ 11 to 20 years

    ○ Over 20 years

3. How long have you been employed as an English language teacher by your current institution?

    ○ Less than 3 years

    ○ 3 to 5 years

    ○ 6 to 10 years

    ○ 11 to 20 years

    ○ Over 20 years

4. What is your highest academic qualification? Please indicate your area of study.

A bachelor's degree in	
A master's degree in	
A doctorate degree in	
Other (please specify)	

5. Does your current institution have a teacher evaluation system in place for English language teachers?

    ○ Yes

    ○ No

6. Does your current institution have a standardized teacher evaluation system in place for all teachers, regardless of their subject area/discipline?

    ○ Yes

○ No

7. What do you think the purposes of the teacher evaluation system at your institution are?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
To identify good teachers for promotion/increased salary	⦿	○	○	○	○
To identify poor teachers with a view to demote/dismiss them	○	○	○	○	○
To identify teachers who would benefit from additional training/support	○	○	○	○	○
To develop professional tool – providing all teachers with feedback on their teaching	○	○	○	○	○

Other   (please   specify)

8. How often is the teaching of English language teachers evaluated at your current institution?

○ Termly

○ Once each year

○ Less than once a year

9. Who is responsible for evaluating your teaching? (Please indicate their position within the institution)

10. Please tick below to indicate the different ways in which your performance as an English language teacher has been evaluated at your institution. (You may tick more than   one   answer)

Methods of evaluation

☐ Students' exam performance

☐ Student feedback - written

☐ Student feedback - oral

☐ Scrutiny of lesson plans by a peer

☐ Scrutiny of lesson plans by a head of department

☐ Classroom observation by a peer

☐ Classroom observation by a head of department

☐ Performance review meeting with a head of department

☐ Portfolio assessment by a head of department

☐ Student evaluation of teaching (SET)

Other   (please   specify)

11. Based on the methods of evaluation above, which one method do you think can best evaluate an English language teacher's teaching performance?

12. Why do you think the above selected method of evaluation can best evaluate an English language teacher's teaching performance?

13. In your opinion, how effective is the current teacher evaluation system in your institution for English language teachers?

○ Effective

○ Quite effective

○ Not very effective

○ Not at all effective

14. How often, as part of the teacher evaluation system, have you received formal feedback on your practice?

○ Always

○ Very often

○ Sometimes

○ Rarely

○ Never

15. Who instigates the formal feedback?

○ I do

○ My head of department

Other (please specify)

16. What do you do if the evaluation you receive is negative?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I straightaway plan for improvement.	○	○	○	○	○
I discuss the comments with my colleagues to get some ideas about how to improve.	○	○	○	○	○
I discuss the comments with my head of department.	○	○	○	○	○
I just leave it because I know there will be no action	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
taken against me.					
I will always try to improve my teaching but usually my teaching remains the same.	○	○	○	○	○

Other   (please   specify)

17. Do you think English language teachers should have a different teacher evaluation system to teachers of other subjects?

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

18. Could you further elaborate your answer above?

19. Personally, do you think the teacher evaluation system in use at your institution today is efficient and effective for your own improvement in teaching?

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

20. Are you in favour of the current teacher evaluation system at your institution?

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

21. How do you describe your experience, having gone through the teacher evaluation system at your university?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
It provides useful feedback on how I can improve.	◉	○	○	○	○
I enjoy the opportunity to discuss my teaching with a colleague.	○	○	○	○	○

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	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I find it a threatening process.	○	○	○	○	○
I am worried that my teaching will be judged as poor.	○	○	○	○	○
I only appreciate the positive feedbacks given.	○	○	○	○	○

Other   (please   specify)

22. In general, how do you find the teacher evaluation at your institution?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
interesting	○	○	○	○	○
useful	○	○	○	○	○
challenging	○	○	○	○	○
boring	○	○	○	○	○
pointless	○	○	○	○	○
scary	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

23. Have you ever heard of "peer observation of teaching"?

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

24. Could you please explain what do you understand of the term "peer observation of teaching"?

25. Please write below any other comments you would like to make about the teacher evaluation system at your institution or about teacher evaluation in general.

26. Are you willing to participate in an oral interview? If so, please write down your telephone number and email address below.

Sample of questionnaire for Stage 2

Dear friends,

After attending this workshop on peer observation, I really appreciate if you could spare about 10 minutes to answer the following questionnaire.

Please tick (✓) in the box provided wherever appropriate.

1. Various studies have suggested the following as benefits of peer observation. Please indicate how far you agree with the benefits.

	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Neutral (N)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
Better communication among teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
More sense of the purpose as a teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improved atmosphere of cooperation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers gained confidence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers learned new skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers gained valuable insights into their teaching/ classroom behaviour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers became more willing to share with and learned from colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers were able to accept feedbacks from colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers became more reflective about their own	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

teaching

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Teachers changed their teaching methods/routines

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Teachers used a wider range of techniques

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The peer observation activity resulted in increased professionalism in teachers' attitude

2. What are your views as an English language teacher about introducing peer observation into the Malaysian tertiary education system?

	SA	A	N	D	SD
I am happy to use different range of techniques.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I will have more confidence in my teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I learn better from observing others' teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I become more open to ideas and constructive criticism.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can change my teaching methods/routines.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can be more reflective about my own teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I prefer to develop my own teaching skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am afraid that I can lose my confidence after observing a better teacher.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am afraid that peer observation activity is very judgemental.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am afraid that peer observation activity can affect my relationship with other teachers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am afraid that the observer will only focus on my weaknesses.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am afraid that any negative feedbacks received will spread to other teachers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other (Please state)

…………………………………………………………………………………..………

…………………………………………………………………………………..

3. What maybe the possibilities and challenges faced by Malaysian universities in introducing peer observation?

<div align="right">SA A N D SD</div>

Possibilities

Can save management time. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Peer observation is only possible if it is a "top-down" approach – an instruction given from the head of department to the teachers. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Peer observation is only possible if it is a "bottom-up" approach – an instruction suggested by the teachers to the head of department. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Teachers are more open in using different techniques in teaching. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Teachers may have positive change in their teaching awareness. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Teachers may have positive change in their beliefs. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Other (Please state)

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

Challenges

Time consuming as there are many teachers to be the observer and those to be observed on rotation. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Costly because the management needs to conduct workshop frequently to brief on the role and function of peer observation. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Requires commitment of all teachers and the people at management level.   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

May not be accepted by all teachers.   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Difficulty to adapt or change in attitude.   ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Other (Please state)

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………..

4.   Please write below any other comments you would like to make about peer observation in general.

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………..

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

INTERVIEW questions – Stage 1

(to be conducted face-to-face or online interview)

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. It will take around 30-45 minutes, if that is OK with you? As you know, I am interested in learning about your perceptions and experiences of the teacher evaluation process in this university as an ELT. Everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence. Is it OK with you if I record this interview? Only I will listen to the recording. Do you have any questions before we start?

Background:

1. How long have you been teaching?

2. Is this your first workplace?

Interview Protocol Aligned to Research Questions
1. How is the performance of ELT teachers evaluated at this university? *Prompts: How often does the procedure take place? (Annually, twice yearly, etc.)* *What elements of a teacher's performance does the procedure include:* *e.g. Quality of teaching in the classroom; students' levels of achievement; levels of student satisfaction; relationships with colleagues; efficacy in administrative roles…* *Who undertakes your evaluation? Do you have any say in who evaluates you? Is just one person responsible for evaluating your performance, or are more people involved?*
• Does the university use the same procedure for evaluating the performance of other university staff? If yes, what is your comment? If no, do you know why not?
• What do you think is the purpose of the teacher evaluation (TE) procedure for ELT system at your university?
• What do you think that the purpose of the TE procedure *should* be?
2. How often have you been through the TE procedure at this university?
• Do you think the person(s) who currently evaluate(s) you is/are the best person/people to do this? Why/Why not?

(If they've said no ask) Who would you like to evaluate you? Why?

- Can you please talk me through how the procedure works, from the beginning till the end.
  Prompts: *Forms to be filled, evidence to be provided, observation of practice; meetings with evaluator; written feedback?*

- Can you tell me how you feel about each of the parts of the process that you've just described please?

- Does peer observation take place as part of the current TE procedure?
   If yes, can you explain to me how that works?

- (If multiple methods of data collection are employed in the TE process ask): Do you think that it's important that the evaluation includes a range of ways of gathering information about your performance? Why?

- Which source of information about your performance do you think the evaluation should attach most important to?
   Do they?

- When you know that your performance as a teacher is about to be evaluated, how do you feel? Which of the following words best describes your feelings?
  - Threatened
  - Anxious
  - Looking forward to receiving feedback on how to improve your practice
  - Looking forward to receiving positive feedback on your current performance
   Why do you feel like this?

- What would you say works well, if anything, in the current TE procedure for ELTs at this university?
   Prompts: *e.g. Does it provides useful feedback enabling you to improve your practice?*
   Does it make you feel valued as a member of staff?

- What would you say works less well, if anything, in the current TE procedure for ELTs at this university?

3. Do you feel that previous evaluations of your teaching have been accurate in their assessment of your performance and practice?

4. If no, why not?

5. In general, do you think that the current method for evaluating your performance is effective? Why/Why not?

- If you were in a position to make changes to the current method of TE for ELT system, what changes would you make and why?

  (If it's the same procedure for all teachers in the university ask):

  Do you think that the English language teachers should have a different method of TE to teachers of other subjects?

  - Why/Why not

- Who do you think has the greater benefits from the TE procedure – the university, the person undertaking the evaluation or the TE being evaluated? Why?

- What, if anything, happens at this university if the teacher evaluation procedure identifies that a teacher is not performing at the required level? How do you feel about that?

- What, if anything, happens at this university if the teacher evaluation procedure identifies that a teacher is not performing at the required level? How do you feel about that?

- What, if anything, happens if the teacher evaluation procedure identifies that a teacher is doing an excellent job?

- Those are all my questions. Is there anything else you would like to add about the teacher evaluation process in this university? Thank you for giving me your time.

INTERVIEW questions – Stage 2

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Interview Protocol Aligned to Research Question
FOR THE <u>OBSERVER</u></td></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>What kind of class did you observe?</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td>How long was the observation?</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Where did you sit to undertake the observation?</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td>What was the focus of your observation?</td></tr>
<tr><td>5.</td><td>How was the observation focus decided upon? (Who decided?)</td></tr>
<tr><td>6.</td><td>How did you record the information you observed? (Please describe the instrument you used, if appropriate.)</td></tr>
<tr><td>7.</td><td>Was it easy to gather the required information? (Please comment)</td></tr>
<tr><td>8.</td><td>On reflection, if you could do this observation again, would you change the method of gathering/recording the required information? Why/why not?</td></tr>
<tr><td>9.</td><td>Did you have a pre-observation discussion with the teacher?</td></tr>
<tr><td>10.</td><td>If yes, when did the discussion take place?</td></tr>
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<tr><td>13.</td><td>How long did the discussion take?</td></tr>
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<tr><td>18.</td><td>What was the discussion about?</td></tr>
<tr><td>19.</td><td>How did you feel about observing another teacher's practice and giving them feedback on it?</td></tr>
<tr><td>20.</td><td>Did you feel that you learned anything from being an observer? If yes, what? If no, why not?</td></tr>
<tr><td>21.</td><td>What, if anything, do you feel has worked well in this peer observation process?</td></tr>
<tr><td>22.</td><td>What, if anything, do you feel has worked less well?</td></tr>
</table>

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT PEER OBSERVATION
23. Have you ever heard of peer observation before this activity was carried out here?
24. In general, have you found peer observation of teaching a worthwhile experience, both as an observer and as the person observed? Why/why not?
25. Would you be interested in taking part in peer observation again? Why/why not?
26. Do you think that peer observation of teaching should be introduced in this university?   If yes, why?   If no, why not? 27. What challenges might there be to introducing peer observation of teaching in this university? 28. If you think peer observation of teaching should be introduced, what do you think its purpose(s) should be? Prompts: professional development; identifying teachers for praise/reward; identifying poor teachers to discipline/dismiss them. 29. Do you think it should be a compulsory process or should it be voluntary? Why? 30. How do you think the peer observers should be selected? 31. Ideally, how often do you think peer observation of teaching should take place? Why? 32. What circumstances, if any, would be required for you to give your full support to the introduction of peer observation in this university? 33. Thank you, those are all my questions. Do you have any further comments you would like to make about peer observation of teaching?

Interview Protocol Aligned to Research Question
FOR THE <u>OBSERVED</u>
1. What kind of class were you observed teaching? 2. How long was the observation? 3. Where did the observer sit to undertake the observation? 4. Were you happy with where they were sitting? Why/Why not?
5. What was the focus of the observation? 6. How was the observation focus decided upon?   Who decided on this focus?

7.	How did the observer record the information they observed?
8.	Did you have a pre-observation discussion with your observer?
9.	If yes, when did the discussion take place?
10.	Where did the discussion take place?
11.	How long did the discussion take?
12.	What was the discussion about?
13.	Did you have a post-observation discussion with the observer?
14.	How much time elapsed between the observation and the post-observation discussion?
15.	Where did the post-observation discussion take place?
16.	How long did the discussion last?
17.	What was the discussion about?
18.	On reflection, if you could have this observation done again, would you have asked the observer to look at something different? If yes, what would you have preferred the observer to focus on and why?
19.	How did you feel when you were being observed?
20.	Did you do anything differently in preparation for or during the observed lesson to what you would normally have done?
21.	If yes, what?
22.	Why did you do it differently?
23.	Did you find the feedback given to you in the post-observation discussion useful?
24.	If yes, how was it useful?
25.	If no, why wasn't it useful?
26.	What, if anything, do you feel has worked well in this peer observation process?
27.	What, if anything, do you feel has worked less well?
28.	Thank you, those are all my questions. Do you have any further comments you would like to make about peer observation of teaching?

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME:
PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING AS A MEANS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WORKSHOP

5 September 2012

8.00 – 8.30 am	Registration
8.30 – 9.00 am	Introduction to peer observation
9.00 – 10.30 am	Types of observation – formative & summative Its relation to teacher evaluation and professional development
	Stages of peer observation - Briefing and debriefing
10.30 am – 12.30 pm	Observing teaching: Video clip 1
	<u>Activity 1</u> Discussion on Video clip 1 - "What may be the areas/aspects of observation that you wish the observer to observe?"
	Benefits of peer observation
12.30 – 2.30 pm	Observing teaching: Video clip 2
	<u>Activity 2</u> Discussion on Video clip 2 - "What may be the aspects to be observed?"
2.30 – 3.30 pm	Drawbacks of peer observation
	Giving feedback
3.30 – 4.30 pm	Receiving feedback
	Reflective practice
4.30 pm	Course/Workshop ends

Sample of coding and sub-coding

Transcript	Coding
Prompts: How often does the procedure take place? (Annually, twice yearly, etc.)	
Every semester/ 3 times/a year. We have 3 semesters a year.	every semester/ 3 × a year
What elements of a teacher's performance does the procedure include: e.g. Quality of teaching in the classroom; students' levels of achievement; levels of student satisfaction; relationships with colleagues; efficacy in administrative roles…	**Elements of evaluation**
Preparation Quality of teaching Quality of notes Timing – whether they come on time, they leave on time The classroom setting Approach - Pedagogical The quizzes and tests And also - What kind of assignments (I can email you the questions later, remind me)	1) Preparation 2) Quality of teaching 3) Quality of notes 4) Timing - punctuality 5) Classroom setting 6) Pedagogical approach 7) (Quizzes, tests, assignments) → under no. 1 - Preparation
Who undertakes your evaluation?	**people undertaking evaluation**
For me - the students/ my students whatever course I'm taking/because they have to do the survey online/before they can sit for their final exam./ They must undergo or do the survey. And then, after that it's evaluated by a department called CPE (Center for Professional)/.. actually the person is me. I will look through, and then if there's problem, I will inform the Dean./That is for all the lecturers in the university. Like Business, IT, Economic./	all students } (who?) of all courses } evaluates online (what?)/ before exam (when?) compulsory Then, evaluated by CPE (who?) evaluates inform Dean if there's prob. (who evaluates) all lecturers (who is evaluated?)
Do you have any… since you are the one who evaluates them, does the teachers have any say in who evaluates them?	**Choice of evaluator**
No, each and everyone of the students will evaluate and then I will look at the survey.	No

Sample of Transcribed Interview with Liz (Interview Stage 1)

Researcher:	Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. It will take around 30-45 minutes, if that is OK with you?
Liz:	**Yes, I'm fine with it.**
Researcher:	As you know, I am interested in learning about your perceptions and experiences of the teacher evaluation process at your university as an ELT. Everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence. Is it OK with you if I record this interview? Only I will listen to the recording.
Liz:	**Sure, no problem at all.**
Researcher:	Do you have any questions before we start?
Liz:	**No**
Researcher:	How long have you been teaching?
Liz:	**I have been teaching for about 26 years now: 15 years as a primary school teacher & 11 years as a lecturer in a higher learning institution.**
Researcher:	Is this your first workplace?
Liz:	**No, my fourth.**
Researcher:	How is the performance of ELT teachers evaluated at this university? *Prompts: How often does the system take place? (Annually, twice yearly, etc.)*
Liz:	**They are evaluated once every semester (a semester runs through for 4 months)**
Researcher:	*What elements of a teacher's performance does the system include: e.g. Quality of teaching in the classroom; students' levels of achievement; levels of student satisfaction; relationships with colleagues; efficacy in administrative roles…*
Liz:	**There are three categories of evaluation:** **[i] Teaching and learning preparation & planning.** **[ii] Presentation, communication & use of teaching aids.** **[iii] Motivation & guidance**
Researcher:	*Who undertakes your evaluation? (or Who evaluates you?). Do you have any say in who evaluates you? Is just one person responsible for evaluating your performance, or are more people involved?*
Liz:	**The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) is responsible for the evaluation and it is carried out by my students. In other words, the students that I teach that particular semester will evaluate and provide feedback of my teaching and learning. CAD then tabulates the scores and quantifies the evaluation before arriving at an overall score: Excellent, Good, Fair & Weak**
Researcher:	Does the university use the same system for evaluating the performance of other university staff? If yes, what is your comment? If no, do you know why not?
Liz:	**Yes, I think it's rather fair as it is an uniformed evaluation.**

Researcher:	What do you think is the purpose of the teacher evaluation (TE) system for ELT at your university?
Liz:	**The TE at my university is not precisely for ELT but rather a general teaching & learning evaluation. Thus, the purpose is merely to gauge the effectiveness of a particular staff's teaching (imparting of knowledge & skills) in relation to students learning (acquisition of knowledge & skills). As far as I'm concern, there is no specific significance. As a result, once a staff gets his/her rating, typically, one just carries on business as usual. The TE does not provide staff with feedback for him/her get better and student learning can increase."**
Researcher:	What do you think that the purpose of the TE system _should_ be?
Liz:	**Ideally, the TE system ought to evaluate teachers' professional knowledge, instructional strategies, professionalism, communication and assessment strategies. Most importantly, it must provide effective feedback to teachers that go beyond just evaluative 'good' or 'bad,' but take a position of how one can grow for the better. In addition, the TE system should (i) create a professional culture of respect and trust among staff members, (ii) continuously improve teaching and learning to increase student achievement, and (iii) engage lecturers/teachers in reflective practice to improve student learning.**
Researcher:	How often have you been through the TE system at this university?
Liz:	**Once every semester for the past 11 years.**
Researcher:	Do you think the person(s) who currently evaluate(s) you is/are the best person/people to do this? Why/Why not?
Liz:	**Definitely NO to a great extent and YES partially because teaching and learning is not confined to just the students. There is more perspectives to it and, thus has to be addressed accordingly beyond the student perspective.**
Researcher:	If no, who would you like to evaluate you? Why?
Liz:	**In principle, in order to have a holistic evaluation and ensure the TE system is professional, sustainable as well as supportive, it would be best if the management or immediate superiors, qualified and experienced colleagues take active role in the TE in addition to the students.**
Researcher:	Can you please talk me through how the system works, from the beginning till the end. [Prompts: _Forms to be filled, evidence to be provided, observation of practice; meetings with evaluator; formal written feedback?_]
Liz:	**Sometime in the beginning of week 10 of a semester, online evaluation forms are made available to students to evaluate their respective lecturers/teachers and courses taken. Students respond to numerous Likert scale questions based on their individual opinions. Their responses are confidential and they are given approximately two weeks to complete all evaluation as the system is closed after the dead line. In addition to the Likert scale question there is an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire to seek students' comment. However, most students**

normally leave this question unanswered.

Researcher: Can you tell me how you feel about each of the parts of the process that you've just described please?

Liz: **As mentioned earlier, to me this is all very mechanical and thus, has no significance. I just feel it as part and parcel of the teaching & learning mechanism.**

Researcher: Does peer observation take place as part of the current TE system? If yes, can you explain to me how that works?

Liz: **There has never been any peer observation in the current TE system. It is very much student centred.**

Researcher: Do you think that it's important that the evaluation includes a range of ways of gathering information about your performance? Why?

Liz: **Yes, indeed. I believe it should include among others, information about the planning and preparation, classroom environment, classroom instruction together with professional responsibilities. This is to ensure that all domains of the teaching and learning processes are given due recognition and emphasis.**

Researcher: Which source of information about your performance do you think the evaluation should attach most important to?

Liz: **I believe the focus should be more towards the planning & preparation and classroom instruction as these are the vital essence of teaching and learning.**

Researcher: Do they?

Liz: **Amazingly, it's a yes to a certain extent as both these components form part of the existing TE system in my university.**

Researcher: When you know that your performance as a teacher is about to be evaluated, how do you feel? Which of the following words best describes your feelings?

- Threatened
- Anxious
- Looking forward to receiving feedback on how to improve your practice
- Looking forward to receiving positive feedback on your current performance

Liz: **Anxious of course and look forward to receiving positive feedback on my performance. (I would like to a stress a point and make an honest confession here that, I don't think that I would take heed of feedback to improve my practice).**

Researcher: Why do you feel like this?

Liz: **It does not bother me because I do not mind being held accountable to a high standard because I hold myself to one. This obviously is due to my years of teaching experiences at various levels and environments.**

Researcher: What would you say works well, if anything, in the current TE system for ELT at this university? [Prompts: *e.g. Does it provides useful feedback enabling you to*

improve your practice? Does it make you feel valued as a member of staff?]

Liz: **I have a very mixed feeling and opinion on this. To a certain extent it does make me feel valued as a member of staff especially, when my rating falls on the upper end of 'excellent'. However, when the rating is on the down scale of just a 'good', I tend to question the evaluation system as how accurate is it!**

Researcher: What would you say works less well, if anything, in the current TE system for ELT at this university?

Liz: **Can't pin point anything specific for now.**

Researcher: Do you feel that previous evaluations of your teaching have been accurate in their assessment of your performance and practice?

Liz: **Very much precise indeed most of the time.**

Researcher: In general, do you think that the current method for evaluating your performance is effective? Why/Why not?

Liz: **Definitely NO to a great extent and YES partially because teaching and learning is not confined to just the students. There is more perspectives to it and, thus has to be addressed accordingly beyond the student perspective.**

In principle, in order to have a holistic evaluation and ensure the TE system is professional, sustainable as well as supportive, it would be best if the management or immediate superiors, qualified and experienced colleagues take active role in the TE in addition to the students.

Researcher: If you were in a position to make changes to the current method of TE for ELT system, what changes would you make and why?

Liz: **Not much though, I may want to add evaluation by a superior for aspiring lecturers/teachers (fresh/beginners) and peer observation for senior staff to maintain and sustain a particular standard.**

Researcher: *(If it's the same system for all teachers in the university ask):*

Do you think that the English language teachers should have a different method of TE to teachers of other subjects? Why/Why not

Liz: **In general, most evaluation systems focus on student achievement and teacher practice; however, few systems have the capacity to differentiate among specialty area educators.**

Thus, I am of opinion that there is a need for the development of a plan for language teaching evaluation. It ought to involve direct observation of language instruction in progress besides assessing the degree to which course design, program administration, and individual teaching performance conform to certain principles, policies and procedures that have been demonstrated to play a role in successful language learning.

Researcher: Who do you think has the greater benefits from the TE system – the university, the person undertaking the evaluation or the TE being evaluated? Why?

Liz: **In terms of benefits, I think the TE system has an interdependent cyclic**

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effect. Simply defined, it's benefit to one, for instance to the one be evaluated, brings greater benefit to the other; the person undertaking the evaluation in general and the university specifically as it raises the standard and quality of teaching and learning.

Researcher: What, if anything, happens at this university if the teacher evaluation system identifies that a teacher is not performing at the required level? How do you feel about that?

Liz: **In the event this happens, the identified lecturer/teacher is required to attend/undergo refresher teaching and learning courses to update him/her in terms of the teaching and learning pedagogy, etc.**

I think this is fair and just or rather relevant. Concerned individuals should take it on board as a constructive measure rather than looking at it as a degrading measure or punishment.

Researcher: What, if anything, happens if the teacher evaluation system identifies that a teacher is doing an excellent job?

Liz: **The norm at this university is for such a lecturer/teacher to be awarded as best lecturer/teacher by his/her respective faculty. In addition, it carries weight, considered and given due recognition when it comes to promotion.**

Researcher: Those are all my questions. Is there anything else you would like to add about the teacher evaluation process in this university? Thank you for giving me your time.

Liz: **It is my pleasure for being able to be of help and part of your significant study. All the best in your analysis and may interesting and knowledge contributing ideas emerge from your findings. CHEERS!**

Sample of Transcribed Interview with Zaren (Interview Stage 2)

Interview Protocol Aligned to Research Question
FOR THE <u>OBSERVER</u>

1. What kind of class did you observe?

   Degree students for the subject Academic English

2. How long was the observation?

   1 lesson (1 hour)

3. Where did you sit to undertake the observation?

   At the back of the classroom

4. What was the focus of your observation?

   Teacher questions and students response

5. How was the observation focus decided upon? (Who decided?)

   The observed

6. How did you record the information you observed? (Please describe the instrument you used, if appropriate.)

   Face to face and note-taking

7. Was it easy to gather the required information? (Please comment)

   It was not really easy but I gave full attention and much focus.

8. On reflection, if you could do this observation again, would you change the method of gathering/recording the required information? Why/why not?

   Yes, maybe to use voice-recording tape to help recall the things I've missed out.

9. Did you have a pre-observation discussion with the teacher?

   Yes

10. If yes, when did the discussion take place?

    On 25/9/2012

11. Where did the discussion take place?

    At the Library, at Level 3

12. What was the discussion about?

    It was about what area (focus) to look for during the observation.

13. How long did the discussion take?

    ½ hour

14. Did you have a post-observation discussion with the teacher? **Yes**

15. How much time elapsed between the observation and the post-observation discussion?

    In 2 weeks time

16. Where did the discussion take place?

    At my office at C16

17. How long did the discussion last?

   About 20 minutes

18. What was the discussion about?

   More on the comments regarding the classroom observation

19. How did you feel about observing another teacher's practice and giving them feedback on it?

   I learned a lot, more on idea sharing

20. Did you feel that you learned anything from being an observer? If yes, what? If no, why not?

   Yes, how to handle a large number of students

21. What, if anything, do you feel has worked well in this peer observation process?

   We provide comments on areas to be improved.

22. What, if anything, do you feel has worked less well?

   If both the observer and the observed do not give full commitment, but thankfully I'm really satisfied with my peer ;-)

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT PEER OBSERVATION

23. In general, have you found peer observation of teaching a worthwhile experience, both as an observer and as the person observed? Why/why not?

   Yes, at least as a benchmark on teaching profession.

24. Would you be interested in taking part in peer observation again? Why/why not?

   Yes, because I can improve my teaching skills and styles.

25. Do you think that peer observation of teaching should be introduced in this university? If yes, why? If no, why not?

   Yes if we have the chance because we can learn from each other.

26. What challenges might there be to introducing peer observation of teaching in this university?

   Teachers may feel reluctant to spare their time to observe or to be observed.

27. If you think peer observation of teaching should be introduced, what do you think its purpose(s) should be?

   For professional development

   Prompts: professional development; identifying teachers for praise/reward; identifying poor teachers to discipline/dismiss them.

28. Do you think it should be a compulsory process or should it be voluntary? Why?

   It should be a voluntary activity rather than compulsory as teachers are able to give full commitment and support.

29. How do you think the peer observers should be selected?

   Let teachers have the freedom to choose their own partner or peer.

30. Ideally, how often do you think peer observation of teaching should take place? Why?

   In order to observe improvement I think it should be conducted once a month.

31. What circumstances, if any, would be required for you to give your full support to the

introduction of peer observation in this university?

Well, it will take lots of things to consider. First, the <u>effort</u> of introducing it to all teachers – whether it can be easily accepted or rejected by others. Like in this university, this activity has never been introduced yet. Therefore, I think teachers need to attend workshops as how you have done. However, 1 workshop only is not enough, things need to be explained clearly and the teachers need to be reminded of many things. Second, it needs lots of <u>time and sacrifice</u>. Time to explain to teachers on how to implement, time to implement the activity itself, time to improve for yourself (as a reflection) and many others. Besides that, I need to sacrifice my own time to discuss for the pre- and post-observation meeting. These maybe constraints to others to run this peer observation stuff.

32. Thank you, those are all my questions. Do you have any further comments you would like to make about peer observation of teaching?

Thank you too for giving us the chance to experience peer teaching/ observation. It was such a great experience.

Interview Protocol Aligned to Research Question
FOR THE <u>OBSERVED</u>

1. What kind of class were you observed teaching?

    Degree class for Academic English subject

2. How long was the observation?

    1 lesson, 1 hour

3. Where did the observer sit to undertake the observation?

    At the back of the class

4. Were you happy with where you were sitting? Why/Why not? **Yes, I am**

5. What was the focus of the observation?

    Classroom interaction

6. How was the observation focus decided upon?   Who decided on this focus?

    Yes, the observed

7. How did the observer record the information they observed?

    Face to face and note-taking

8. Did you have a pre-observation discussion with your observer? **Yes**

9. If yes, when did the discussion take place?

    On 25/9/2012

10. Where did the discussion take place?

    At Level 3, Library

11. How long did the discussion take?

    More than 20 minutes

12. What was the discussion about?

    About the focus during the class observation

13. Did you have a post-observation discussion with the observer? **Yes**

14. How much time elapsed between the observation and the post-observation discussion?

   2 days

15. Where did the post-observation discussion take place?

   At my office at C16

16. How long did the discussion last?

   Half an hour

17. What was the discussion about?

   To critically examine my teaching

18. On reflection, if you could have this observation done again, would you have asked the observer to look at something different? If yes, what would you have preferred the observer to focus on and why?

   Yes, I would prefer the observer to look at students' group work and teacher question and student response to learn more.

19. How did you feel when you were being observed?

   I feel nervous and a little ashamed of myself.

20. Did you do anything differently in preparation for or during the observed lesson to what you would normally have done? **No**

21. If yes, what?

22. Why did you do it differently?

23. Did you find the feedback given to you in the post-observation discussion useful?

   Yes, really.

24. If yes, how was it useful?

   I can improve in many aspects of my teaching based on the feedback.

25. If no, why wasn't it useful?

26. What, if anything, do you feel has worked well in this peer observation process?

   We both become more open-minded and honest.

27. What, if anything, do you feel has worked less well?

   The unwillingness to accept weaknesses maybe!

28. Thank you, those are all my questions. Do you have any further comments you would like to make about peer observation of teaching?

   It would be good if the observed is reluctant to let him/herself to be videotape to just video record only. Thank you so much ☺

Sample of Transcribed Post-Observation Meeting/Discussion between Azi and Meedan for Azi's Classroom Teaching on 9/10/2013

Meedan:	Okay Azi, I am going to give you the summary of what you have done. This is not to tell you whether it is wrong or right, or weak or good. This is just a summary, a brief report. So you started the class with a revision, you related to what you have done with the students in the previous class, okay. The students were a bit confused, lost. As a result, you've got a little bit nervous. I am just reporting okay, not commenting.
Azi:	Eh… it's alright.
Meedan:	Then, you use your power point notes. The power point notes were shown quite fast. Some of the slides are too long and… you tend to read to the students. You have used humour… you have used humour, then, you have prompted students relating what you are trying to say to their prior knowledge. Okay, that's what you did.
	You also mentioned in class that the notes were in Edmodo. You involved students but you were just telling near the rostrum. You use L1 but very minimally. I am not commenting yet… yeah.
Azi:	Okay, okay. I know.
Meedan:	You used students' prior experience when mentioning about KRU, or something. And then, you also relate after they finish studying they will become engineer. And you finish off the class with a mock online fieldtrip. So, if were to comment, if there is any room for improvement, it should be on the slides. Well, this is the comment yeah. That's it, because the slides are long. If the slides are long, there is a tendency for us to read.
Azi:	I know… I know. Even anyone who's there, the students will read, we will read. Definitely you will read faster than students.
Meedan:	So I guess, longer version uploaded internet, shorted version 3 or 4 words per line or 3 or 4 line per page… that is what we flavour on in class. That's what I can suggest… I can suggest, okay.
Azi:	I think I will highlight that. Based on the lengthy part of my power point presentation. I think that is my weakness because before this.
Meedan:	If I may correct you. It is not our weakness… it's not our weakness because we feel secure that it is up there. We feel secure… if you put 2 or 3 words, we are afraid that students don't understand. Well, in actual fact the more we put the more they don't understand.
Azi:	The thing is, is not that I am concern about the students but I am concern about myself.
Meedan:	Ha.. ha…
Azi:	Because I am very… tend to forget on what are the things that I want to teach or speak to the students and that is why I tend to make long slides… and things like that.

Meedan: Yes, I feel you… I feel you my brother, I feel you *(Mee puts his hand on Azi's shoulder pretending to calm him and trying to make him feel ease and they both burst into laughter)*

Azi: And then the first part of the… nervousness part is because of …aaaa… *(Mee interrupted)*

Meedan: Yeah of having us here right…

Azi: Because of… you know… the situation was… if you want to know… basically I mistakenly that time, I thought if you realise first of all I already put the proposal slide in front… if you realise. And then suddenly when I asked them, oooo they haven't done the types of report yet. So that actually I was ready with the proposal, and then suddenly I changed to the types of report…that's why I was like… Oh my God!

Meedan: *Laugh…* Oh my God!

Azi: And then it caused me to become a bit nervous, plus knowing that a colleague who has more experience than me observing me… that add to my nervousness. But after a few minutes I felt that I get used to the situation and I admit I weakness is at the slides and I tend to read from the slide. I'd like to add, honestly, with the existence of Mee in my class I feel nervous.

Meedan: *(Mee straightaway added)* Yes, me too. Even if I have anyone in my class, and even if I have a static camera… Yeah, I will feel conscious of myself, right…. I am conscious of whatever mistakes I make… you know… with the class we can redo it next week, but with the existence of a colleague… you know… you may not have the record of what corrections we make in the next class after the observation.

Azi: Sometimes I would feel the same, like for example, a teacher who is as the same level as me is…. *(Azi then named a female teacher, here for research purposes was labelled as SSS)* SSS because SSS registered and reported for duty on the same as I did. I think if SSS were to observe me, I think I would feel the same because it was like… I know somebody is watching me teaching, looking on my grammatical errors things like that… usually I don't do grammar mistakes then suddenly I do grammar mistakes… yeah.

Meedan: Yes, exactly. From my experience is that if it's team-teaching it is different. Indirectly, we will observe each other while he's teaching. Whatever I think should be added I will add in my section. So team-teaching is more open…

Azi: *(Azi quickly added)* … more open in terms of honesty.

Meedan: *(Mee nodded as a sign of agreement with Azi's statement)*

Yeah, yeah, you don't feel like you are being audited.

Azi: Yeah, I agree with you. However, I do somehow to certain extend support this exercise of peer observation but it needs to be done more than once... yes, more than one time. I give you an example, like let say Mee is observing my teaching and may be this is the first time, so, I feel a bit nervous, but if he comes for the second time and the third time… or quite frequently… may be more than 5 times, I would feel like "Yeah, I will feel alright, he is just watching me." **And I could be as honest as I could be**. Hmmm… yes, may be one time is not enough may be, this can be done continuously…

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Meedan:	Oh yes, what if this observation were done by peers but by different teachers? I am sorry to ask you but this question suddenly struck my mind.
Azi:	What do you mean? Do you mean the teacher observing me keep changing, they change between teachers? Is that what you mean?
Meedan:	Yes
Azi:	I wouldn't be that comfortable. If you me I would prefer to have a static video camera without a person there. You can record me for 3 or 4 of my classes I wouldn't mind. And then have the teachers to observe or watch the videos, it doesn't matter because it will capture my true performance. And because the camera is there for 3 or 4 classes so I only used to having that. Well, you know, pitching a camera and having a person inside the classroom are two different things you know. A person has expressions, right.
Meedan:	*(They both again burst into laughter)*
	Yes, but it will be same person watching the video, you know.
Azi:	Yes, I know but the person is not there. That makes a whole lot difference. It is just like a psychological effect, you know.
Meedan:	Yes, I understand you. Even the students will react differently if there is another person in the class.
Azi:	But if there is only a camera the reaction will different also. **Students react differently, we react differently, and then the class will be like… you know… not authentic.** Having another a person but if it is a camera for 3 or 4 times… by the third time perhaps… you know… the students will be used to having a camera. Even if the same person observing the same class for 5 times, I think that will be… may be… like if me myself, I will feel comfortable and I believe the students won't mind, may be the first time they care about the person observing them but on the second time, third time, they would just leave it that way.
Meedan:	**I don't mean to disagree but I look at it differently. I don't like to have a person looking at my teaching.** I am not saying that you are wrong.
Azi:	I think in my opinion we need to tell the students that there is a teacher coming to observe the class and we need to remind them to just ignore him/her, just do your work because the observer will do his/her work. Because in my experience last time when I was in Brisbane, I have been observing the school and then the same thing that the teacher did to the students. Let say, like Mr Mee here is going to be with you guys… first, is more for consent, and then to let them know what is the purpose of Mr Mee existence in the classroom. This will remind the students that the observer will not do any harm to the students.
Meedan:	Yes, in terms of legal rights.
Azi:	Yes, legal right is one thing, and another thing is that they know that they are being observed and they know that the situation is different.
Meedan:	Well, you know… in reality I think it is not the job of the observer to inform the class or ask consent from the whole class but the teacher him/herself need to do so beforehand. If I were the teacher being observed on that day, I will tell my students that he/she is going to observe me.

Azi: Oooo okay, is that it should be done… Alright then.

Meedan: Well, I think overall you have done a good job, well done.

Azi: Thank you. Still many things to improve in the future. Thanks for your constructive feedback.

Meedan: You are most welcome.