ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN A MALAYSIAN

ESL PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT

SEDIGHEH ABBASNASAB SARDAREH

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

KUALA LUMPUR

2014

ABSTRACT

This study was prompted by an uncertainty about the effectiveness claims for assessment for learning (AfL) strategies teachers implement in their classrooms. Literature indicates that teachers do not have enough knowledge and skills to implement AfL to the spirit. They have difficulty developing learner autonomy while implementing AfL. Adopting a sociocultural theoretical perspective that considers learning as taking part in a community of practice and regards AfL strategies and teacher-students and student-student interactions as patterns of participation that can bridge the learning gap and help students become the owners of their own learning, this study concerned AfL in Year One and Year Two primary school ESL classes in Malaysia and aimed to investigate how teachers implement classroom discussion and questioning during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback. This qualitative case study was conducted in a selected primary school around Selangor. The school was selected based on specific criteria using purposive sampling. Year One and Year Two ESL teachers at the selected school and their students took part in this study. Interviews, classroom observations and relevant documents were used to collect data. Themes were identified through the process of constant comparison using Nvivo 10 software and the emergent themes were interpreted within a sociocultural theoretical framework. The data revealed that the teachers asked many questions to build a learning community and guide the students into the preferred practices. However, most of the questions asked by the teachers were lower cognitive questions that did not provoke thoughtful reflection and the importance of strategic questioning to foster autonomy as a social construct was overlooked. Those who knew the answers responded immediately and other students did not have the opportunity to answer the questions, share the processes of learning ownership, collaborate with their peers and progress within the social safety of the peer culture. A supportive and collaborative learning environment was not provided for the

students and hierarchical unequal patterns of participation were observed during the discussions. During whole class discussions, the students rarely asked questions and most of the time the teachers themselves were the only ones who talked and posed questions. The data showed that the discussions were dominated by certain students and highly controlled by the teachers. When some students dominated the discussions, others preferred to become more peripheral and some of them developed an identity of non-participant and increasingly became marginalized. Teacher feedback to the students was mostly in the form of praise and one-to-one instruction. It was observed that feedback was not dialogic to help the students actively participate in the feedback process, negotiate meaning and develop a shared ownership of learning. Highlighting the importance of teacher-students and student-student relationships in successful implementation of AfL helps policy makers and stakeholders to develop new ways of enhancing teachers' capacity to build new patterns of participation in the classroom and implement AfL strategies with the aim of developing more autonomous learners.

ABSTRAK

Ide kajian ini tercetus akibat kesangsian terhadap keberkesanan Pentaksiran untuk Pembelajaran (AfL) yang dilaksanakan oleh para guru di dalam bilik darjah. Tinjuan literatur menunjukkan bahawa, kebanyakan guru bahasa Inggeris tidak mempunyai kemahiran dan pengetahuan dalam pengimplementasian dasar baru ini. Mereka menghadapi masalah dalam membentuk aspek penting AfL, iaitu kekangan murid dalam kebebasan proses pembelajaran. Untuk tujuan penyelidikan ini, perspektif sosio-budaya telah diadaptasi dalam melihat komuniti pembelajaran dan pengajaran yang berlaku di dalam sekolah terutama yang berkaitan dengan strategi AfL dan hubungan di antara guru-murid dan antara murid-murid bagi membantu merapatkan jurang pembelajaran dan juga kebebasan kaedah pembelajaran oleh murid. Kajian ini disasarkan kepada murid Darjah Satu dan Darjah Dua di sekolah rendah Malaysia dan bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti bagaimana para guru dapat melaksanakan sesi perbincangan dan soal-jawab di dalam kelas dan bagaimana mereka dapat membantu murid-murid supaya memberikan maklumbalas yang baik. Kajian kes kualitatif ini dijalankan di sebuah sekolah rendah terpilih di sekitar Selangor. Sekolah ini terpilih berdasarkan kriteria khusus yang menggunakan kaedah 'purposive sampling'. Guru-guru kepada murid-murid Darjah Satu dan Darjah Dua sekolah ini melibatkan diri dalam kajian ini. Temuduga, pemerhatian di dalam bilik darjah dan dokumen yang berkaitan digunakan untuk mengumpul data. Tema kajian ini ditentukan dengan proses pembandingan tetap menggunakan perisian Nvivo 10 dan tema baru diterjemahkan di dalam rangka teori sosiobudaya (sociocultural theoretical framework). Data menunjukkan bahawa guru memberikan banyak soalan kepada murid dengan tujuan untuk membina komuniti pembelajaran dan membimbing murid-murid kepada amalan pembelajaran yang dikehendaki. Walaubagaimanapun, kebanyakan soalan yang diajukan oleh guru bersifat kognitif rendah, di mana ianya tidak mendatangkan

pemikiran reflektif dan kepentingan persoalan terancang (strategic questioning) bagi membentuk 'social construct' yang dipandang ringan. Murid yang mengetahui jawapan kepada soalan yang ditanya, dengan segera memberikan jawapan, manakala yang lain tidak berpeluang untuk menjawab. Mereka yang terlibat dalam situasi ini berkongsi proses pemilikan pembelajaran dan bekerjasama dengan rakan-rakan sekelas, serta berkembang di dalam keselamatan sosial bagi budaya pembelajaran bilik darjah. Suasana pembelajaran yang mempunyai nilai sokongan dan kerjasama tidak disediakan kepada murid dan ketidaksamaan paten hierarki di dalam bilik darjah turut dikenalpasti semasa sesi perbincangan. Apa yang diperhatikan, semasa sesi perbincangan, hanya guru yang mengajukan soalan dan bercakap, manakala murid jarang sekali bertanya soalan. Data menunjukkan bahawa sesi perbincangan hanya didominasi oleh beberapa murid dan terlalu dikawal oleh guru. Apabila hanya beberapa murid yang menyerlah, yang lain memilih untuk menjadi sampingan dan ada di antaranya bertindak untuk 'tidak terlibat', seterusnya menjadi tidak penting. Guru lazimnya memberikan maklumbalas dalam bentuk pujian dan arahan kepada satu individu. Maklumbalas yang diberikan adalah tidak dialogik bagi membolehkan murid terlibat dengan aktif di dalam proses maklumbalas, merunding maksud dan berkongsi kebebasan untuk belajar. Usaha menekankan kepentingan hubungan di antara guru-murid dan murid-murid di dalam pelaksanaan AfL, membolehkan penggubal polisi dan pemegang saham membangunkan cara baru bagi meningkatkan kemampuan guru-guru untuk membentuk paten baru penglibatan di dalam kelas.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MOE Ministry of Education

UPSR Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (The Primary School Achievement Test)

PMR Penilaian Menengah Rendah (The Lower Secondary Assessment Examination)

SPM Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (The Malaysian Certificate of Education)

SBA School-Based Assessment

SBOA School-Based Oral Assessment

KBSR Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah (Primary School Integrated Curriculum)

KSSR Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (Primary School Standard Curriculum)

AfL Assessment for Learning

AoL Assessment of Learning

ESL English as a Second Language

KPM Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (Ministry of Education)

PBS Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah (School-Based Assessment)

LP Lembaga Peperiksaan (Examination Syndicate)

JPN Jabatan Pendidikan Negari (State Department of Education)

PPD Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah (District Education Office)

NEAS National Education Assessment System

CoP Community of Practice

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A   Informed Permission Letter

Appendix B   Approval Letters

Appendix C   Observation Protocol

Appendix D   Panel of Experts

Appendix E   Teacher Interview Protocol

Appendix F   Student Interview Protocol

Appendix G   Document Summary Form

Appendix H   Transcription Symbols (Adopted from Bloome et al., 2008)

Appendix I   Sample of Interviews with the Teachers

Appendix J   Sample of Group Interviews with the Students

Appendix K   Sample of Classroom Observation Transcript

Appendix L   Sample of Open Coding Process

Appendix M   Worksheet B4DL1E1

Appendix N   Worksheet B2 DB2 E1 [SP]

Appendix O   Worksheet Unit 2: Do the right thing

Appendix P   The Story of 'Daphney Dolphin and Whippy Whale'

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Chapter 1 lays the foundation for this thesis. This chapter highlights: Background to the research (1.2), The enlarged conception of formative assessment (1.2.1), Definition of AfL (1.2.2), The Malaysian context (1.3), Research problem of the study (1.4), Purpose of the study (1.5), Research objectives (1.6), Research questions (1.7), Significance of the study (1.8), Brief explanation of the conceptual framework (1.9), Operational definition of key terms (1.10), and Limitations and delimitations of the study (1.11).

The main idea of this research centers on how Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers implement assessment for learning (AfL, hereafter) in their classrooms. Particularly, this study is an attempt to investigate how ESL teachers implement classroom questioning and discussion during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback in accordance with the new Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) that aims to focus on AfL. In the next section, we focus on the background of the research as an introduction to the objectives of this study.

1.2. Background to the Research

Teachers use various instructional and assessment strategies as they implement a lesson. These strategies likely to include ongoing formative assessment along with other assessment strategies to determine students' current status relative to the learning intentions and help them bridge their learning gap (Wiliam, 2011). However, since the notion of AfL has been widely used in recent research, teachers might hold different interpretations of AfL strategies.

AfL strategies have not been the predominant assessment method that teachers typically use in their classrooms (Stiggins, 2002). Therefore, teachers' knowledge and skills for implementing AfL (e.g., techniques & strategies of assessment) as a reliable assessment and instruction process to assess students' knowledge and understanding is a cause for concern. Teachers might have misconceptions about constructive effects of AfL as an instructional strategy on teaching and learning. In other words, it is unclear that teachers understand about formative assessment and whether they implement such practices within their instructional repertoires (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; Wiliam, 2011). This scenario is also taking place in the Malaysian ESL setting.

Prior to 2011, in Malaysia, students have been assessed mainly through standardized tests developed by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate (MES). These standardized tests included the Primary School Assessment or Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) in Year 6, Lower Secondary School Evaluation or Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) in year 9, and Malaysian Certificate of Education or Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) in year 11. Therefore, examination orientation was a noticeable characteristic of the Malaysian education system.

Summative assessments of students' learning that took the form of examinations and tests were typical ways of determining students' level of achievement and were essential to school accountability. In other words, all schools, teachers, students, and parents were striving for good grades and schools were held accountable for their pupils' examination results (Mohd Sofi, 2003).

As Stigler and Hiebert (1997) put it, which is relevant to exam-oriented assessment system, merely stressing the importance of standards and school accountability shifts the focus away from the teaching-learning process and does not provide the opportunity to improve learning and instruction.

Accordingly, the Assessment Reform Group (1999) suggests that successful learning takes place when students are the owners of their learning, whenever they have a good appreciation of assessment criteria and are highly motivated to achieve success. Moreover, there is little documented research to substantiate the claim that frequent testing improves learning (see the in-depth review of related studies as expanded in Chapter 2).

Therefore, in order to move away from an exam-oriented assessment system, School-Based Oral Assessment (henceforth, SBOA) was introduced by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and it was considered as the first step in the use of formative assessment in ESL classrooms (Gurnam, Chan, & Sarjit, 2011). It was first announced by the then Director General of Education, Abdul Rafie Mahat in 2003, in the closing ceremony of the national assessment seminar. The aim of the effort was to enhance students' oral communication and creative skills. SBOA centered on developing higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and applying language (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2001). However, the implementation afforded by the MOE failed in its aspiration.

As put forth by Hamzah and Paramasivan (2009), SBOA has not been implemented based on the objectives and guidelines developed by the MOE. For instance, in the English language subject, many ESL teachers use AfL strategies to assess students' oral language skills but it is uncommon to find it being practiced systematically (Gurnam et al., 2011). These statements probably show that teachers do not have enough skills and knowledge for implementing school-based assessment (hereafter, SBA) such as SBOA in spite of the fact that guidelines are also available (Hamzah & Paramasivan, 2009).

SBA or Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah (PBS) has gradually made its way into the Malaysian education system and is considered a catalyst for education reform. In

this regard, (Tan Sri) Musa Mohamed, the previous Minister of Education, in his speech in 2003 announced that in the future there would be more reliance on SBA and the Malaysian education system would follow the assessment practices in other countries such as New Zealand, Finland, Britain, the United States, and Japan (Musa, 2003). Consequently, some standardized tests might be abolished, whilst some of them may contribute less to students' overall grades. As can be seen in Chapter 2, this statement is worrisome since many exploratory studies done on PBS are still in their infancy. Also, those mentioned countries themselves are still skeptical on implementation of this decentralized and holistic assessment approach.

In tandem with the government initiatives to develop a decentralized and holistic assessment system, the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015) introduced the National Education Assessment System (NEAS) which is aligned with the new Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2010). The aim of NEAS is to move the focus away from standardized tests, to develop a holistic assessment system, to enhance lifelong learning, to develop a better citizen, and to improve SBA (Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia, 2009). In other words, both summative and formative assessments are given importance.

The new assessment system is a combination of standardized tests and SBA. The academic and non-academic parts are the main components of the new assessment system in Malaysia. The academic part includes school assessment as well as central examination. School assessment is designed, produced, administered and graded by teachers in schools. Yet, central examination is developed by the MES and graded by teachers based on the rubrics provided by the MOE.

The non-academic components are psychometric and co-curricular assessments as well as physical activity. Psychometric assessment measures students' innate knowledge and abilities. Also, students' participation in co-curricular and physical activities

contributes to their overall assessment (Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia, 2011). SBA is still in its infancy and its implementation in the classroom is still in the process of perfection.

SBA in Malaysia is conducted by class teacher during the learning and instruction process. It is a planned process and teachers implement it based on the standard document developed by the MOE. SBA is expected to contribute 40 percent to students' primary school assessment examination or Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) final grade by 2016. Thus, the results of the 2016 UPSR will undergo a transformation with a new format which will incorporate UPSR with SBA beginning with Year One pupils in 2011. The Teacher Education Division of the MOE is formulating guidelines and policies to help teachers implement the new assessment system (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2010). However, one main characteristic of this policy is a top-down approach to policy decisions.

Since AfL is a new innovation in the Malaysian education system, teachers' knowledge and skills in its implementation is highly important. Wilhelm and Chen Pei (2008) state that:

> … ELT curricular reform efforts in Asia are impressive but have taken, for the most part, a top-down approach. Long-lasting change will depend upon the beliefs, responses, and efforts put forth by participants as they strive to meet the challenges of change (p. 80).

Hamzah and Paramasivan (2009, p. 14) in their preliminary study supported this statement by quoting the previous Education Director General, (Tan Sri Dr.) Murad Mohammad Noor stating that "… the most important part in the implementation of any plan is teachers. However good the plan, it will be of no use if teachers do not implement it well". To add to that, knowledge receivers or students are also an important aspect to this policy.

Malaysian public schools are still in the initial stages of implementing formative assessment. Studies have shown that in the Malaysian primary schools a typical lesson plan consists of four phases:

1. The introduction phase;

2. Introducing the content of the lesson;

3. Rehearsing tasks similar to those taught in the previous phase; and

4. The closure phase (Faizah, 2011).

In her study on teachers' concerns about SBA, Faizah (2011) found that teachers usually ask closed questions rather than referential ones. Questions such as "What does this word mean?", and closed-routine questions such as "Do you understand?" are typical of such closed questions. In other words, the creative aspect as mentioned by the MOE is not translated well into classroom practice.

Thus, teachers' current classroom practice in the Malaysian primary schools reveals that they only assess students' ability to accomplish tasks very much alike what they have taught previously. Classroom discourse is teacher-centered and teachers usually expect their students to give specific answers to questions they pose. Students are not knowledge constructors and do not play an active role in the learning process. Apparently, this is not in line with the aims of the Malaysian new Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) to use AfL to help learners construct knowledge and implement it into their daily life (Faizah, 2011). Therefore, the effectiveness of classroom practices is open to question.

As Pellegrino (2002) puts forth "formative assessment should be seamlessly integrated within instruction" (p. 76). Black and Wiliam (1998b) propose that formative assessment should be a natural element of daily classroom instruction to support teaching and learning. They maintain that all activities done by teachers and pupils in the classroom guide learning. Therefore, teachers should have a complete understanding

of their students' strengths and weaknesses as well as their learning progress to adjust their teaching to meet pupils' needs. Black and Wiliam (1998b) claim that if teachers implement AfL in their classrooms, students achieve substantial learning gains. They urge policy makers to understand the value of AfL and guide classroom assessment practices in this direction (Black & Wiliam, 1998a). Thus, the chief importance of the teaching-learning process is to improve learning.

AfL requires teachers and learners to use assessment to improve instruction and learning. It is about assessing learners' progress, providing them with feedback and deciding on the next step in teaching and learning. AfL is not about certifying learning but rather concentrates on improving learning. Using AfL in the classroom can help teachers fulfill other components such as thinking skills and personal abilities, lifelong learning and mutual understanding (Bennett, 2011; Black & Wiliam, 1998ab).

The effectiveness of AfL in students' learning seem to be of interest to the current educational setting. It is based on extensive research carried out by Black and Wiliam in 1998. In their paper "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment", they redefined the term 'formative assessment' by stressing that assessment is only formative when it is an integrated part of learning and teaching, and provides teachers with information to adjust instruction to fulfill students' needs and consequently improve their learning.

Researchers and educators acknowledge the favorable role of AfL in students' learning, yet, more consistent research needs to be conducted on the practical development of AfL in schools (Black, 2000) as well as teachers' knowledge and understanding of the implementation of AfL in their classrooms (Bennett, 2011; Black & Wiliam, 1998ab; Wiliam, 2011).

As such, drawing upon Wiliam and Thompson's (2008) framework of aspects of formative assessment and looking through the lens of sociocultural theory that considers

learning as taking part in a community of practice and regards AfL strategies and the relationship between teacher and students as patterns of participation that can bridge the learning gap, this study concerns AfL in Year One and Year Two primary school ESL classes in Malaysia and attempts to investigate how teachers implement classroom discussion and questioning during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback.

The framework adopted for this study will be explained in detail in Chapter 2. But in the meantime, in the next part the researcher will focus on the enlarged conception of formative assessment so as to conceptualize the phenomenon under investigation.

1.2.1. The Enlarged Conception of Formative Assessment

Michael Scriven (1967) suggested the terms summative and formative evaluation and clarified two different roles of evaluation in the field of curriculum evaluation. He maintained that the primary focus of formative evaluation is to improve a person or program during an activity. As opposed to formative evaluation, summative evaluation aims at assessing if students or programs have met the stated goals. Later, Bloom and his students (1969, 1971) suggested that similar differentiation is applicable to the evaluation of students' learning- that is called assessment (Wiliam, 2006b). The differentiation of the terms is important since it defines the type of activity that occurs in the classroom.

Formative and summative assessments are essential terms to understand educational assessment. Summative assessment centers on students' level of achievement (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971; Sadler, 1989; Shavelson, 2006). In addition, formative assessment emphasizes the importance of providing students with feedback to help them improve their learning (Black & Wiliam, 2004; Sadler, 1989; Shavelson, 2006).

Bloom et al. (1971) integrated the term "formative assessment" into mastery learning techniques. According to mastery learning techniques, students advance to the next learning goal when they have mastered the current goal. In mastery learning practices, teachers design teaching and learning activities based on the learning goals. At the end of every unit of instruction, teachers administer a formative assessment that is usually a paper-and-pencil test. Information from formative assessment provides teachers and students with feedback to specify correctives for those who have not mastered the learning goals.

Correctives can be in the form of a group discussion, computer-based task, verbal or visual presentation, one-to-one instruction and so forth. The aim of correctives is to solve students' learning difficulties diagnosed by formative assessment. Teachers manage teaching, testing and remediation phases to assure that all students have mastered the learning goals. The difference of this technique is that learning is tested only at the end of a lesson which seems structural and inefficient.

However, the power of formative assessment received little attention until Black and Wiliam published their paper entitled "Assessment and Classroom Learning" in 1988. Black and Wiliam (1998a) began by reviewing two critical articles (Crooks, 1988; Natriello, 1987) to serve as a baseline for their study. Using meta-analysis technique, they subsequently reviewed over 160 journals from several countries published over the past nine years. The analysis led them to conclude that formative assessment is clearly a means to improve student achievement.

They enlarged the conception of formative assessment and mentioned that frequently testing students at the end of each unit might be helpful but does not take into account the importance of formative thinking. Instead, teachers should use different assessment methods other than paper-and-pencil tests to provide continuous evidence of students' progress in mastering knowledge and skills required to achieve learning goals.

This new conception is called "assessment for learning" (Gipps & Stobart, 1997). Knowledge sharing and collaboration are the two keywords in the process of implementing formative assessment.

In an AfL classroom, teachers define and share the learning intentions and criteria for success at the very beginning of their teaching. Learners not only learn about the learning intentions but they also learn about the scaffoldings they receive in order to achieve the stated learning intentions. Learners play an active role in monitoring their own progress. They constantly collaborate with their teacher to monitor their achievement level relative to the learning intentions. During the learning process, students actively communicate their learning evidence to their teacher and peers. Thus, they have a key role in assessing their own learning. They monitor their learning progress, control their success, and believe that they can achieve success if they try their best (Wiliam, 2011). In other words, formative assessment refers to on-going learning processes.

The enlarged conception does not consider formative assessment as a test that occurs at the end of every instruction period, but rather as an integrated component of an instructional activity. So, the new conception requires various assessment methods other than quizzes and paper-and-pencil tests. Teachers assess students through classroom interactions and group discussions so that they show different ways of understanding and completing a task or activity (Wiliam, 2011). This leads to student-centered approach.

In the initial conception of formative assessment, teachers and curriculum developers were responsible for planning and interpreting formative assessment and providing students with correctives. However, in the new conception students play an important role in their assessment process through self- and peer-assessment as well as teacher-student interaction. Thus, the main difference between the old and new

conceptions of formative assessment is that the former provides teachers with information about students' overall achievement, whilst the new conception gives students information about their learning (Bennett, 2011). That is to say, formative assessment focuses more on students' learning progress.

According to Stiggins and Chappuis (2005), in an AfL classroom, teachers consider students as decision makers in the learning and instruction process. The other difference is that the old conception of formative assessment focuses on frequent testing of students' mastery of stated standards, but AfL takes into account students' learning progress as they move forward to achieve the learning intentions and puts a great emphasis on students' role in their learning process.

In sum, students' achievement and success does not only depend on frequent assessment or teachers' and principals' interpretation of assessment data. Rather, students' success depends more importantly on what they do with assessment information. AfL provides students with a clear picture of learning intentions so that they know what teachers expect from them. Formative feedback is also given to students to help them bridge their learning gap. Therefore, they learn to assess their own learning to find out where they are relative to the learning goals. AfL guides students to close their learning gap by instructing them to monitor their learning progress and helps them to improve their learning. In the next part, the researcher will discuss the definition of AfL.

1.2.2. Defining AfL

Assessment for learning (AfL) and Assessment of learning (AoL) are the main assessment methods in schools. AoL, also referred to as summative assessment, provides a clear picture of students' current level of achievement. AfL which is the focus of this study is often described as formative assessment and is aimed at enhancing

students' learning as they interact with their teachers and peers (Crooks, 2002). In addition, AfL is more focused on the quality of student learning and not merely on the knowledge received.

The term "assessment for learning" was first used by Mary James in a conference in 1992. Then Gipps (1994) used this term to explain a shift from traditional assessment practices that included "checking whether the information had been received" to a more holistic practice of "the structure and quality of students' learning and understanding" (p. 26). Here, two-way interactions between teacher and students enhance the teaching-learning process.

As explained by Stiggins (2002), the basic tenet of AfL is that assessment can improve student learning. Perhaps, among the first generation definitions of formative assessment, the definition by Black and Wiliam (1998a) is the most widely cited. Black and Wiliam (1998a, p. 2) considered AfL as "all activities teachers and their students undertake in assessing themselves, to get information that can be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged". This basic principle is considered as a conceptual framework for effective definition of AfL.

In the same way, other authors have proposed narrower definitions. For instance, the Assessment Reform Group (2002) explained AfL as "the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there" (p. 2). To explain their definition further, the Assessment Reform Group (2002) identified 10 principles. They mentioned that AfL:

1. Is part of effective planning
2. Focuses on how students learn
3. Is central to classroom practice
4. Is a key professional skill
5. Has an emotional impact
6. Affects learner motivation
7. Promotes commitment to learning goals and assessment criteria
8. Helps learners know how to improve

9. Encourages self-assessment
10. Recognizes all achievements (p.2).

This definition has been widely used, yet according to Klenowski (2009) "the ways in which the words are interpreted and made manifest in educational policy and practice often reveal misunderstanding of the principles, and distortion of the practices, that the original ideals sought to promote" (p. 263). For instance, what are the parameters used to measure 'effective planning'? This principle might be interpreted and put into effect in different ways and may lead to confusion among researchers and educators. For this reason, these principles may only reduce the gap in the teaching-learning process but not the definition of AfL.

The above mentioned definitions show the most important components of AfL, such as teacher and students' collaboration in classroom discussion and questioning; defining and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success; formative feedback; as well as peer- and self-assessment. These strategies reduce the distance between students' current level and the desired goals and also help students monitor their own learning process (Sadler, 1989). But to implement these strategies teachers need a proper training based on the principles of AfL.

Works in this area have shown that if it is used efficiently, AfL significantly improves learning and instruction. However, the potential of AfL is not fulfilled yet. Teachers are not completely familiar with formative assessment and they might only implement some elements of it non-systematically (Bennett, 2011). As Marshall and Drummond (2006) describe, the name of formative assessment might be prevalent but teachers do not conform to the spirit of AfL.

Moreover, many teachers and policy makers regard formative assessment as a tool and describe it as frequently testing students to monitor their progress. Even so, Popham (2008) considered formative assessment as a process not simply frequently testing

students at the end of each instruction period. Different interpretations of the philosophy behind these principles produce different implementation strategies in the classroom.

According to Broadfoot et al. (2002) different researchers might interpret the concept of formative assessment differently and more often it means frequently testing students to keep track of their learning. So, researchers prefer to use the term "assessment for learning" that emphasizes the learning process and helps students fill their learning gap (Broadfoot et al., 2002). Stiggins (2002) mentioned that:

> Assessment for learning is about far more than testing more frequently or providing teachers with evidence so that they can revise instruction, although these steps are part of it. In addition, we now understand assessment for learning must involve students in the process (p. 761).

Arguably, Bennett (2011) mentioned that considering AfL as merely a process or an instrument is oversimplification because both process and product are important. On the other hand, these two should work together to provide students with useful feedback. Bennett (2011) explained that a well-developed formative assessment should help teachers identify what their learners know and adapt their instruction to meet learners' needs. Thus, Bennett (2011) considered formative assessment as integration of process and instrumentation. He also noted that renaming formative assessment is problematic and does not offer a solution to the issue of formative assessment definition. The next generation definitions are more inclusive and systematic as compared to the former definitions.

These ideas, as well as the issue of superficial implementation of AfL strategies, led to the next generation definitions of formative assessment such as the definition by the international conference on AfL in New Zealand in 2009. They explained that "assessment for learning is a part of everyday practice by students, teachers and peers that seeks, reflects upon and responds to information from dialogue, demonstration and observation in ways that enhance ongoing learning" (Klenowski, 2009, p. 264). Based on this definition AfL consists of all formal and informal classroom practices that

teachers, students and their peers perform systematically to monitor and promote students' learning and to help them become the owners of their learning.

The second generation definitions of AfL highlight the importance of interaction between teacher and students and imply a sociocultural approach to learning (Bennett, 2011). However, these present-day definitions are not well suited for the learning process especially if issues such as contextual perspectives and one size does not fit all perspective are not taken into account.

Therefore, a proper definition and framework for AfL is needed. To this end, in this study, the researcher will refer to the sociocultural perspective. The sociocultural perspective proposes a more universal definition that can be useful for the learning and teaching process.

In high stakes environments, AfL might be conceptualized from a constructivist perspective (Carless, 2007) to help teachers adapt instruction to meet students' needs (Popham, 2008). AfL in these contexts is viewed as giving students cognitive scaffolds to make them expert learners. This view is challenged by the sociocultural perspective. According to Moss and Brookhart (2009) "high quality formative assessment blurs the artificial barriers between teaching, learning and assessment to forge a culture of collaborative inquiry and improvement in the classroom" (p. 12). According to the sociocultural perspective, AfL is more than an individual's cognitive activity and is viewed as a shared interaction between students and teachers in a simplistic way (Sfard, 1998) and this is the basis for this thesis scrutinizing this aspect per se.

Looking at AfL through the lens of sociocultural theory, AfL practices are positioned within the broader social and cultural context of each classroom. "The social structure of the practice, its power relations and its conditions for legitimacy define possibilities for learning" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). Therefore, the quality of teacher-student relationship in a sociocultural context to develop autonomy is of utmost

importance. The autonomous learner is the central participant within the community of practice and AfL practices help learners to monitor and adjust their learning to achieve the desired goals and become the owners of their own learning. Thus, based on the sociocultural theory as major frame to study this topic, it should also incorporate the subdivision of Community of Practice (CoP) as expanded by Wenger (1998).

Definition is important because without an agreed upon definition, it is difficult to substantiate the effectiveness of AfL and provide a summary of related research on AfL. In this thesis, the researcher proposes a sociocultural definition of AfL (see section 1.9.2). According to the sociocultural definition of AfL proposed in this study, assessment practices are situated within the social and cultural context of classroom interaction with the aim of informing and improving students' learning to enhance autonomy.

Therefore, AfL is not merely considered as a set of techniques, but as part of an interaction between cultural and dialectical process that is controlled by the learners themselves. To understand the context of this study framed in the sociocultural theory, the context of ESL in Malaysia is given below.

1.3. The Malaysian Context

Three important scenarios are shown in this section: the scenario of primary school education in Malaysia, the educational emphases of Year One and Year Two English curriculum, and also the implementation of AfL in Year One and Year Two ESL classrooms.

1.3.1. Primary School Education in Malaysia

Under Malaysia's national education system, children begin their formal education at the age of seven. They undergo six years of primary or elementary education (Year 1 to Year 6). Years 1-3 is called Phase I, while Years 4-6 is Phase II.

The purpose of this division is merely to inform teachers that more in-depth curriculum comes into play during Phase II.

Primary education has as its basic aim to bring about the overall development of students through skills that cover reading, writing and arithmetic as well as inculcating thinking skills and values. Generally, throughout the six years of primary education, there is a continuous internal assessment to keep track of students' development and to identify problems in the teaching-learning process. Primary schooling is aimed at developing a solid foundation for lifelong learning in children before they move up to secondary school.

As they reach the sixth year, pupils should sit for a standardized test, Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) or the primary school assessment examination. After that, students are promoted to Form One which is the base year of the secondary school (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1997). This phenomenon was changed when the transformation of education started to take place in 2008.

In 2008, the MOE began the trial implementation of the new modular and thematic primary school curriculum as well as SBA in fifty primary schools in Malaysia. The reason for this curriculum and assessment transformation was to ascertain that the schooling system fulfills students' current and future needs by improving learners' acquisition of communication and thinking skills, creativity and innovation. To achieve this goal, communication skills; students' benefits; physical; spiritual; attitudes and values; humanities; and literacy in science and technology have been accentuated in the new curriculum (Khair, 2008).

From the beginning of the school term in 2011, the new Primary School Standard Curriculum known as KSSR or Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah is being implemented in all primary schools nationwide. The new curriculum improves the integrated curriculum for primary school (KBSR) introduced and implemented in the

late 1990s. KSSR is based on twelve principles formulated by the MOE to transform educational arena in Malaysia and particularly the ESL context.

1.3.2. The Educational Emphases of Year One and Year Two English Language Syllabus (KSSR)

In the introduction of the new primary school curriculum it states that "the goal of this new ESL curriculum is to help pupils acquire the language, to use it in their daily lives, to further their studies, and for work purposes" (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM), 2010, p. 3). Three important elements, namely, classroom discussion and questioning as well as feedback are stressed in the implementation of this curriculum.

The National Philosophy of Education is aimed at developing the intellectual, spiritual and emotional potentials of the learners; hence, the new KSSR English language curriculum stresses "critical literacy". Pupils are expected to question and evaluate texts to develop individual growth and also function as a productive and effective member of society. Thus, the new ESL curriculum attempts to provide students with basic language skills appropriate to their level of development so that they can communicate effectively in different contexts, read and comprehend English texts, write with an appropriate language and style, and use appropriate and correct grammatical rules in both writing and speech (KPM, 2010).

In Year One and Year Two new English language syllabus, educational emphases aim to prepare students for real life problems. The MOE defines twelve important principles to be observed by both teachers and students. In this study, some of these principles are incorporated to explain the teaching-learning process during AfL. The educational emphases announced by MOE or KPM (2010) are as follows:

1. **Creativity: "**Creativity is the ability to produce something new in an imaginative and fun-filled way" (KPM, 2010, p. 15). Students should also be

able to apply their creative ideas in other relevant contexts. Activities such as role-play and making masks/puppets can be used for this purpose. For example, students retell the fable using puppets and role-play characters in the fables with guidance.

2. **Entrepreneurship**: By using group activities, elements of entrepreneurship such as innovation, initiative and creativity that are features of learning success and personal fulfillment are included in lessons. Fostering these elements is essential in the new world.

3. **Information and communications technology skills (ICT)**: Using ICT facilities such as graphics, networking, and computer-related activities is emphasized in the new syllabus.

4. **Malaysia Negara Ku:** Patriotism and the love for Malaysia ought to be reflected in themes and lessons. Patriotism, my family, my friend, my school, environment and consumerism are the topics for the Year One and Year Two English classroom. For this purpose, teachers can divide students into groups, distribute cards to each student, say the words, join the words to make sentences, and finally ask their students to put up their cards and make sentences.

5. **Multiple intelligences**: The theory of multiple intelligences is incorporated in the new Year One and Year Two English language syllabus. For instance, when students are learning polite expressions, interpersonal intelligence is used and kinaesthetic intelligence is reflected when students sing songs or recite poems.

6. **Learning how to learn skills**: According to the new syllabus students should reflect on their own learning and take the ownership of their learning to be independent and lifelong learners. Pupils should learn to listen, view, read, write, select and retain. They should be able to scan and skim the text and reflect on their own learning.

7. **Elements of value and citizenship** are also emphasized in the new English syllabus.

8. **Mastery learning:** According to this approach it is crucial for teachers to ensure that students have mastered a learning goal before moving to the next learning goal.

9. **Contextual learning:** Emphasizes that students learn when they relate the content being learnt to real life situations in a meaningful manner. So, teachers should use situations familiar to students as contexts for the topic being learnt.

10. **Constructivism**: The new Year One and Two English language syllabus is based on constructivism learning theory. According to constructivism, students construct new knowledge and skills based on their prior knowledge. Teacher assists students in acquiring knowledge and problem solving skills through student-centered active learning.

11. **Assessment** in the new syllabus is based on criteria that are connected to the learning and content standards. For instance, teachers use checklists, observations, presentations, quizzes and tests to assess students individually. Both formative assessment (school-based initiative) and summative assessment are used to gauge student learning.

12. **Thinking skills** that help students in decision making and problem solving are also included in the new syllabus. Based on this principle, pupils should be able to evaluate an idea, and also generate and produce ideas.

KSSR is a standards-based modular curriculum. The Year One and Year Two English language syllabus emphasizes acquiring basic language skills and includes reading, writing, listening and speaking, and language arts modules. The fifth module which is grammar is added in Year 3- 6. Themes and topics are used to present the

language and make it more meaningful. Basic thematic topics are created to become the core content for Year One and Year Two.

Three important themes in the new syllabus are "world of stories, world of self, family and friends; and world of knowledge" (KPM, 2010, p. 7). The curriculum content is formulated based on "Content Standards and Learning Standards. Content Standards specify the essential knowledge, skills, understandings and strategies that pupils need to learn and learning standards describe in detail the degree or quality of proficiency that pupils need to display in relation to the Content Standards for a particular year" (KPM, 2010, p. 9). Based on these core standards, the MOE encourages teachers to implement this new curriculum in the Malaysian ESL context.

1.3.3. AfL in Year One and Year Two Primary School ESL Context

To implement the new English syllabus successfully, the MOE has provided teachers with document standards- although as can be seen later little training is provided to guide teachers implement AfL. The aim of this document is to provide teachers with some practical suggestions of teaching methods. Teachers select a theme and then decide on appropriate speaking and listening, reading and writing activities. A coherent organization should be sustained between speaking and listening, reading and writing skills.

Assessment is regarded as an integrated component of the teaching-learning process. To implement formative assessment successfully, teachers should act as facilitators in the classroom, observe students' performance, obtain information and give students feedback to improve their learning. Teachers use continuous formative assessment to gain feedback and monitor students' progress. Awareness of students' strengths and weaknesses help teachers to plan the next steps in teaching and learning.

Language bands are introduced to guide teachers during the implementation of AfL. In other words, AfL in Malaysian primary schools consists of six bands. Students

can move to the next band only if they have achieved the current band. If students are unable to achieve a band, teachers should provide them with guidance and help them to achieve that particular band (KPM, 2010). Here, assessment is based on the developed rubrics readied by the MOE. Some of the language skills proposed to be assessed are explained below.

According to the new syllabus, students should be able to improve their pronunciation by practicing correct stress and intonation. They need to have good listening skills and should be able to express their ideas and thoughts. Teachers can assess students' listening and speaking skills through classroom activities such as classroom discussion and role-play. They should provide students with opportunities to take part in different listening and speaking situations such as giving a presentation in class or listening to a storytelling session. So, it is not necessary to assess students formally at any time. Assessing students' listening and speaking skills can be an ongoing process to monitor their progress towards content and learning standards and provide them with feedback on their progress (KPM, 2010).

Students' phonemic awareness will be developed in Year One and Year Two ESL classes. The three main features of phonics usage are phonemic awareness, blending and segmenting. Reading aloud and shared reading are strategies that teachers can use in teaching reading skill. Students' phonemic awareness in Year One and Year Two classrooms can be assessed through different phonemic awareness tasks such as rhyme, alliteration, and segmentation. Activities such as questioning, summarization, using graphic, story maps, and semantic organizers can be used to assess students' reading comprehension (KPM, 2010).

In the pre-writing stage, students do activities such as painting, drawing, following pattern, and cutting and sticking to develop hand-eye coordination. At letter-writing level students learn the shape, name and sound of each letter. Then at word level

students learn skills of writing and spelling words through activities such as pictograms and word games. Year One and Year Two ESL teachers can assess students' writing skill through tests and classroom exercises. In assessing writing teachers focus on sentence/paragraph organization, grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling, capitalization and vocabulary (KPM, 2010).

Year One and Year Two students learn to play with language using songs, rhymes and fairy tales. The language art module requires teachers to provide students with constructive feedback and encourage them to enhance critical thinking and lifelong learning skills. Assessment activities such as public and choral speaking, drama, and school bulletin, observation, checklists, anecdotal records, interviews, retelling and journals, inventories and running records, performance tasks and demonstrations, folder and portfolios can be used to provide students with an opportunity to assess their own learning relative to the learning intentions (KPM, 2010).

In the next section, the importance of this research is highlighted through the statement of the problem which focuses on a big issue: The implementation of AfL is still in the gray area for school practitioners and researchers alike.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

Most research works on formative assessment focus on the effectiveness of AfL in student learning. This included AfL practices and student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003; Lee, 2011; Newby & Winterbottom, 2011; Tan, 2011). This also included studies on students' involvement in formative feedback (Fluckiger, Vigil, Pasco, & Danielson, 2010; Handley, Price, & Millar, 2011; Havnes, Smith, Dysthe, & Ludvigsen, 2012); Teachers' questioning awareness and student learning (Almeida, 2010; Noorizah, Idris, & Rosniah, 2012; Sun, 2012); and features of classroom dialogue that help students develop their

understanding (Matsumura, Slater, & Crosson, 2008; Minstrell, Li, & Anderson, 2009; Pimentel & McNeil, 2013; Ruiz-Primo, 2011; Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, 2006; Sidhu, 2011). Moreover, some studies focused on teachers' readiness and concerns about AfL strategies (Faizah, 2011; Hamzah & Paramasivan, 2009; Irving, Harris, & Peterson, 2011).

In these studies, researchers have added to the existing knowledge base regarding the value of formative assessment, therefore, the effectiveness of AfL in student learning is not disputed. Even though AfL has received great attention in the decade since Black and Wiliam's (1998a) meta-analysis, and significant contributions have been noted throughout the literature, questions still arise.

Bennett (2011) recognizes this uncertainty stating that one deterrent to the implementation of formative assessment is the considerable confusion among educators regarding what formative assessment actually means. Furthermore, Black and Wiliam (1998b, 2009, 2012) and Wiliam (2011) maintain that high-quality AfL is almost rare in classrooms. Teachers are unfamiliar with AfL and they might only implement some elements of it non-systematically.

As can be seen from past research, teacher practice of AfL is still in its infancy; therefore a thorough study on implementation of AfL strategies is needed to guide them implement AfL practices to the spirit (Bennett, 2011; Marshall & Drummond, 2006). On the other hand, what is problematical is that less importance is given to the learning aspects of AfL strategies. Teachers implement AfL strategies at specific points in time to assess students' achievement against particular objectives. A traditional role of teachers and students is at the heart of this problem and the importance of sociocultural context that leads to the development of learner autonomy is not taken into account (Bennett, 2011; Swaffield, 2011).

Therefore, using the lenses of sociocultural theory and community of practice, this study aims at investigating how AfL is carried out in Year One and Year Two ESL classes in a Malaysian primary school. In particular, this research centers on how teachers implement classroom discussion and questioning during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback.

Since AfL is a new innovation in Malaysia's education system and there is lack of literature on Malaysian ESL primary school teachers' implementation of AfL, this study further enhances the knowledge on AfL and hence enables future teachers to focus more on effective practices. In addition, by looking at AfL from a sociocultural perspective, this thesis contributes to better understanding of AfL strategies as well as theorization of AfL.

1.5. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to investigate how AfL is carried out in a Malaysian primary school ESL context. This study is an attempt to investigate how Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers implement classroom discussion and questioning during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback.

Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers and their students (N = 100) in a selected government funded school will take part in this study. Since the interactions between teacher-students and student-student are the main source of data, Students are included in the study and their voices are given credence to interpret the data.

In this research, AfL is viewed from a sociocultural perspective; AfL is considered as a situated practice within the larger context of teacher-students and student-student interactions that aims to improve teaching and learning towards the desired qualities and helps students to become owners of their own learning.

1.6. Research Objectives

To bridge the gap in the literature on AfL, especially in the context of ESL, this study is aimed at investigating the phenomenon of AfL in a Malaysian primary school ESL context. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To investigate how Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement classroom questioning during AfL.

2. To investigate how Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement AfL through classroom discussions; and also

3. To investigate how Year One and Year Two ESL teachers provide students with formative feedback.

1.7. Research Questions

This study is an attempt to answer the following research questions based on the AfL implementation in a selected primary school:

1. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement classroom questioning during AfL?

2. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement AfL through classroom discussions?

3. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers provide students with formative feedback?

These 3 general research questions are related to the conceptual framework that will be discussed further in the current chapter and Chapter 2 of this thesis, and are also reflected in the review of the related studies on AfL in Chapter 2. Table 1.1 displays the methods of data collection and analysis for answering the research questions of the study.

Table 1.1

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis for Answering the Research Questions

RQ	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis	Tool of Analysis
1	Classroom Observation, In-depth Interview, & Documents	Constant Comparative Method	NVivo10 software
2	Classroom Observation, In-depth Interview, & Documents	Constant Comparative Method	NVivo10 software
3	Classroom Observation, In-depth Interview, & Documents	Constant Comparative Method	NVivo10 software

1.8. Significance of the Study

Many researchers hold the view that AfL results in a great increase in student achievement (Black & Wiliam 1998ab, 2006, 2009, 2012; Marzano, 2006; Stiggins, 2006). For students to achieve high learning gains, teachers need to have knowledge and understanding of how to use AfL strategies. By knowledge and understanding, we mean both the theory and classroom practices.

Accordingly, the desired goal of this research is to investigate how AfL is carried out in Year One and Year Two primary school ESL context in Malaysia according to the new primary school standard curriculum (KSSR). This study aims at investigating how Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement classroom discussion and questioning during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback that assists learning.

This study builds upon what has been a minimal body of literature on AfL and is significant to the domain of assessment in education as it extends the knowledge base that currently exists in the field and might have the following implications:

Firstly, this research is significant because it uses a sociocultural perspective to investigate teachers' implementation of AfL strategies in the social context of the teacher-student relationship which is quite rare in the non-Western centric body of knowledge.

Secondly, the data from this study is useful for teacher professional development courses. Models for effective professional development on formative assessment proposed by Black and Wiliam (1998b) included intensive workshops to introduce the concept with follow-up meetings where discussions specifically focused on designing assessments, using strategies in the classrooms, and analyzing the results of students' work. However, Wiliam (2006b) readily admitted that adequately training all teachers in formative assessment would take an extraordinary amount of time and resources. Therefore, with this study once a determination has been made about how teachers implement AfL strategies, it becomes clearer what additional professional development training teachers need.

Thirdly, this study has important implications for the practices of leaders across a school system in identifying, supporting, and instituting AfL that improves teaching and learning process. The data from the current study might contribute to a greater appreciation of how to use AfL in primary school ESL context to help students with their learning and provides in-depth information about how AfL is carried out in the Malaysian primary school ESL classrooms.

Fourthly, by identifying and analyzing how teachers actually implement AfL strategies, this study serves as a starting point in determining what actions need to be done to enhance AfL implementation in primary school ESL classrooms in Malaysia.

Leung and Mohan (2004) mention that if we tend to find out how teachers practically accomplish AfL in the classroom and if we want to develop suitable theory and method in investigating the complex interaction between teaching, learning and assessment, we need to thoroughly examine teachers' perspectives of the learning assessment issue.

Black and Wiliam (1998b) believe that since it is a requirement for raising classroom standards, teachers need to be more cognizant of AfL use in their classrooms. However, there is little, if any, guidance to assist teachers to find out how to use AfL to improve teaching and learning. Therefore, the data from the current study contributes to the cognizance of ESL teachers about the implementation of AfL. Teacher training programs might also benefit from the findings of this study to provide pre-service teachers with better training and increase their knowledge about AfL.

Finally, an understanding of teachers' implementation of AfL strategies, as will be revealed in this study, should facilitate its classroom implementation. The data from this study can impact public policy by providing information to legislators and department of education staff on the level of knowledge needed to implement a successful AfL system in primary schools. Therefore this exploratory study contributes to:

- Bridging the gap in the literature on AfL by providing information on how Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers implement AfL in their classrooms in the Malaysian sociocultural context;

- By adopting a sociocultural perspective to investigate teachers' implementation of AfL strategies in the social context of the teacher-student interactions, this study contributes to the theorization of AfL and would have bearing on the field of AfL;

- Helping teacher training colleges understand teachers' problems in implementing AfL more deeply and become more equipped to meet their needs in future training courses; and also

- Helping teachers realize the strengths and weaknesses of AfL implementation in Year One and Year Two primary school ESL context and improve their instruction.

Now, the next section will focus on how this study will be framed both in the collection of the data and the analysis techniques before conclusion can be made for this study.

1.9. Brief Explanation of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study draws upon Wiliam and Thompson's (2008) framework of aspects of formative assessment as well as community of practice sociocultural perspective (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

In Wiliam and Thompson's (2008) framework, formative assessment consists of five strategies that define the domain of AfL (Bennett, 2011). First, teacher shares learning intentions and success criteria with their students. The second strategy is reengineering efficient classroom questions, discussions and tasks in which the teacher sets the learning tasks and plans AfL classroom techniques such as questioning and class discussion. The third strategy is providing students with feedback so that they can advance their learning. Then, learners engage in active learning and assist each other in the learning process. Finally, students become the owners of their own learning (Wiliam, 2011).

These strategies developed by Wiliam and Thompson (2008) are at the heart of AfL but teachers should implement them in ways that help students learn socially through interactions and develop autonomy. It is recognized that sociocultural interactions in the classroom directly affect the way students construct autonomy within AfL practices.

Marshall and Drummond (2006) identified that closed, hierarchical relationships in the classroom constrain autonomy. In the same vein, Torrance and Pryor (2001, p. 616) found out that AfL is "an intersubjective social process, situated in, and accomplished by interaction between students and teachers". To address this gap, AfL is considered as a situated practice within the larger context of teacher-students and student-student interactions (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

According to the sociocultural perspective, AfL strategies of classroom discussion and questioning as well as formative feedback are not only a set of techniques to elicit evidence of student understanding, they are also powerful learning activities in themselves (Swaffield, 2011).

Teachers should be able to implement effective classroom questioning and discussion. According to social constructivists, "students perform at their best when they are working within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)" (Berk, 2009, p. 265). For instance, during classroom discussion and questioning students are expected to demonstrate higher order thinking skills and go beyond constructing simple answers to questions. When students want to express their own ideas during classroom discussions or answer teachers' questions during AfL, "it is expected that they will follow-up and provide guidance through probing, allowing students to create their own responses with minimal assistance" (Berk, 2009, p. 265).

In an AfL classroom, teachers provide students with feedback when there is still enough time to take action. Formative feedback yields descriptive information about students' performance in relation to the learning goals. As Shute (2008) mentions, formative feedback provides students with information to modify and improve their learning.

According to Stiggins (2008), in an AfL context teachers provide students with continuous formative feedback "which is a necessity in promoting progressive learning"

(p. 18). "Feedback should serve to clarify, synthesize, expand, modify, raise the level of, or evaluate students' responses" (Cruickshank, Jenkins, & Metcalf, 2009, p. 375). Cruickshank et al. (2009) elaborate that:

> The importance of providing feedback is to encourage student-originated responses while correcting or elaborating on their effort. In the case of an incorrect response, it is appropriate to ask the student to provide support for their answer in an effort to guide them towards the correct solution (p. 377).

As mentioned earlier, works on AfL show that teachers lack knowledge and skills to implement AfL in their classrooms. As such, this study is an attempt to investigate how AfL is carried out in the Year One and Year Two primary school ESL classrooms in Malaysia. This study is aimed at investigating how teachers implement classroom discussion and questioning during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback. To achieve this goal, interviews and a series of classroom observations were conducted. The related documents were also analyzed to gain more data. Figure 1.1 shows the conceptual framework of this study as explained earlier.

Wiliam and Thompson's (2008) Framework of Aspects of Formative Assessment
Community of Practice Sociocultural Perspective

AFL

Classroom Questioning
- No hands up
- Rich questions
- Probing
- Increasing wait time

Formative Feedback
- Comments on how to improve
- Engage students
- Cause thinking
- Move students forward

Classroom Discussion
- Probing
- Stimulating
- Reflective
- Interaction

Findings based on specific context: primary school ESL teachers' implementation of classroom discussion and questioning during AfL and providing students with formative feedback.

Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework drawing upon Wiliam and Thompson's (2008) framework of aspects of formative assessment and sociocultural perspective.

1.10. Operational Definition of Key Terms

Eight important operational definitions are presented below:

1.10.1. Assessment, Linn and Gronlund (2000) define the term assessment as "a general term that includes the full range of procedures used to gain information about student learning (observations, ratings of performances or projects, paper-and-pencil tests) and the formation of value judgments concerning learning progress. Assessment, on the other hand, may include both quantitative descriptions (measurement) and qualitative descriptions (non-measurement) of students. In addition, assessment always includes value judgments concerning the desirability of the results" (p. 31). In this study, we describe assessment as the process of teachers' collecting information about students' learning which includes everything from formal practices such as testing, to the day-to-day and moment-by-moment practice of observing students in the classroom and making notes. Both informal oral feedback and written feedback fall under the definition of assessment.

1.10.2. Assessment for Learning (AfL), in this thesis the researcher proposes a definition of AfL from a sociocultural perspective; AfL includes all practices during the teaching and learning process which aim to improve teaching and learning and help students become the owners of their own learning. Therefore, the quality of teacher-student interactions in the social and cultural context is highlighted in this definition. AfL is conceptualized more than a set of strategies used for assessing students at the end of each instruction period and is considered as an integral part of the cultural and dialectical process of enhancing students' control of their own learning process. Learners are engaged in the assessment process so that they can assess their own learning and develop autonomy. AfL practices in a social constructivist classroom include strategies such as classroom discussion, classroom questioning and formative

feedback. In the sociocultural view of AfL, understanding the complexities of the implementation of these AfL strategies in a specific context is important.

1.10.3. Assessment of Learning (AoL), Linn and Gronlund (2000) explain that AoL "typically comes at the end of a course (or unit) of instruction. It is designed to determine the extent to which the instructional goals have been achieved and is used primarily for assigning course grades or for certifying students' mastery of the intended learning outcomes" (p. 41). In this study we define AoL as the main type of assessment in schools. Its purpose is summative and the aim is to verify students' learning and report their progress to school and their parents but it is not an on-going activity as compared to AfL. Teachers place a great emphasis on comparing students' achievement and give feedback to students by using grades or marks that do not help them improve their learning.

1.10.4. Standardized Test, Based on Linn and Gronlund's (2000) definition, in this research, we consider standardized tests as tests developed by external administrators such as test specialists. In other word, it is a process of formally examining students that is administered, scored, and interpreted in a consistent manner and under standard conditions. This type of test is given importance to summatively assess student learning. In other words, standardized test is useful to understand learners' learning success to be compared nationally.

1.10.5. Classroom Questioning during AfL, According to Brown and Edmondson (1985), the main purpose of classroom questioning is to elicit evidence of students' knowledge and understanding, to adapt instruction, to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, to direct their understanding and to maintain classroom control. In this study, the researcher describes classroom questioning during AfL as a technique that provides students with an opportunity to think, explore their

understanding and make their own ideas. In other words, questioning during AfL should elicit maximum feedback for improving teaching and learning.

1.10.6. Classroom Discussion during AfL, According to Black and Wiliam (1998b) classroom discussions help students express their own understanding and provide them with an opportunity to improve knowledge and understanding. Further, students' dialogue with teacher offers teachers the opportunity to re-orient students' thinking. Accordingly, in the current study the researcher explains classroom discussion during AfL as a dialogue between teacher and students that evokes students' thoughtful reflection and expression of ideas and encourages students to take an active role in their learning so that they can learn from their peers, build upon others' ideas and improve their knowledge.

1.10.7. Formative Feedback, As Shute (2008) describes it "formative feedback is information communicated to the learner to modify his or her own thinking or behavior for the purpose of improving learning" (p. 154). In this study, the researcher considers formative feedback as feedback that provides information not only on students' current learning status but also helps them to improve their learning.

1.10.8. Qualitative Case Study, Merriam (1998) states that, "A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation" (p. 19). Thus, we can explain case study as a research method that investigates a phenomenon in-depth. This guarantees that the researcher investigates the central phenomenon through a variety of perspectives so that multiple aspects of the phenomenon will be disclosed and understood.

1.11. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Limitations are the potential weaknesses of the research that are beyond the control of the researcher (Pajares, 2007). This research is limited in several ways. Firstly, since it is a qualitative case study, we cannot generalize the findings to other Year One and Year Two primary school ESL classes in other primary schools. However, this does not limit the findings of this study because the researcher can gain much in-depth information from a particular case and information obtained from a particular case can be transferred to similar contexts (Erikson, 1986).

Secondly, since the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research, researcher's bias may also affect the results of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, four different checkers ensured the reliability of the transcriptions before the coding process was done. After coding was done, the second coder checked the codes to minimize researcher bias. Participants also checked the coding of the data and only then did the researcher analyze the data. To reduce bias and to ensure that meaningful data were collected and presented, in this research the researcher used multiple methods of data collection which include interview, observation and review of relevant documents.

Thirdly, the participants' responses are reflections and confined to their personal views and experiments about their AfL practices and directly affect the results of the study. Further, as discussed in Chapter Three, after coding was done, teachers were shown the results and asked to comment on the results so as to portray each theme based on their own voices and not biased based on the researcher's point of view.

Lastly, documents that the researcher has used in the study might be incomplete and selective. These documents might only show some aspects of the phenomenon under investigation. However, documents are useful in providing some information that the researcher cannot observe and in supplying leads for asking more appropriate questions during the interview.

Delimitation is narrowing the scope of the study by the researcher (Pajares, 2007). Participant recruitment delimited this study. Only Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers (One Year One teacher teaching Year One A & B classrooms and two Year Two teachers one of them teaching Year Two A and the other teaching Year Two B) in a selected government primary school and their students (N = 100) took part in this study.

Another delimitation is that the process of data collection was completed within 10 months. The study confined itself to observations and interviews as primary methods of data collection and relevant documents as secondary data collection method. It should be mentioned that, it was the researcher who chose the opportunity for primary data collection.

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, more explanations are provided on the framework that guides this study as well as related past studies, based on the aims and objectives of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 reviews the literature informing the research questions of the current study. The education emphases of the new Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) include thinking skills, mastery learning, ICT skills, constructivism, contextual learning, multiple intelligences, values and citizenship, creativity and innovation, knowledge acquisition, learning how to learn skills, entrepreneurship and assessment (KPM, 2010). This chapter will try to relate this significance to the constructivist classroom which focuses more on the concept of AfL.

In order to achieve the goals of the new curriculum, teachers are encouraged to implement AfL in their classrooms. However, since AfL is a new assessment method in the education system in Malaysia, teachers' knowledge and skills for the implementation of this new innovation is significantly important. Literature shows that teachers have difficulty implementing AfL strategies to the spirit. As such, the current study is aimed at investigating primary school ESL teachers' implementation of AfL strategies of classroom discussion and questioning as well as formative feedback to guide teachers implement AfL strategies effectively and help them conform to the spirit of AfL.

The approach to writing this chapter is: (1) through library research on pertinent review of related literature on AfL, general critics on summative testing and the implementation of AfL and also related studies on AfL strategies of classroom discussion and questioning as well as formative feedback (2) Online databases were also used with the keywords such as testing, assessment, the implementation of AfL, primary

school ESL context and issues of teaching and learning processes as the main search for the literature review.

This chapter encompasses two sections. The first section describes the theoretical framework for formative assessment (2.2) as this is where the study is framed. The next section centers on an overview of past studies on the aspects of AfL and the gaps to be filled in this study (2.3).

2.2. A Framework for Formative Assessment

This section provides information on the theorization of AfL. In the first part the researcher explains the necessity of integrating learning, assessment and instruction in an AfL classroom. Then, explanations on theorization of AfL and framework of formative assessment are given. Finally, the last part shows how AfL can be viewed from a sociocultural perspective which is the focus of this study.

2.2.1. Integration of Assessment and Instruction

Despite issues such as the time it takes to implement formative assessment and undeveloped assessment practices, research evidence from studies conducted in NewZealand, England and the United States have shown that implementing formative assessment is essential for student learning development. Black and Wiliam (1998b) mentioned this aptly, "It is clear that instruction and formative assessment are indivisible" and that "opportunities for pupils to communicate their evolving understanding are built into the planning" (p. 143).

This statement relates to how teachers should give students feedback to help them monitor their progress towards the learning intentions, and guide them to achieve those learning intentions (Wiliam, 2011). Pellegrino (2002) also stated the same view that formative assessment is an integrated part of instruction and helps students get

information about the quality of their work, how to improve their work and how to achieve their learning goals. This has a relevant relationship when we discuss the strategies that exist when teachers refine their instructions.

2.2.2. Refining Instructional Strategies

Wiliam (2011) believed that teaching and assessment are embedded within the instruction and formative assessment occurs during the teaching and learning processes. This perspective was investigated further by Black and Wiliam (2012) in their paper entitled "developing a theory of formative assessment". The next section gives some of the historical developments of their ideas on AfL.

Black and Wiliam (1998a), in their extensive review on formative assessment, drew together a number of studies on formative assessment but their review was not based on a pre-defined theoretical basis. Because of this analysis, the magnitude of reliability and validity of their review failed to achieve agreements among other researchers (e.g, Bennett, 2011; Dunn & Mulvenon, 2009).

Later, in 2006, they studied teachers who used formative assessment in their classrooms and based on the results of the study, they suggested a theoretical framework for AfL. However, this paper only described elements of formative assessment practices that improve students' learning within a framework of pedagogical practices. Other works (e.g., Black, 2007; Black et al., 2003) also focused on aspects of implementation and learning principles underlying formative assessment. Still no solid framework of AfL is proposed and the best this study could suggest has only limited pedagogical implications within the context of European centric.

In other words, the foundation of building the AfL framework takes place in isolation without taking into account what happens before the unit of study is presented and also the evaluation and monitoring phase after the unit of study has been completed.

Therefore, the propositions made are rather weak to be accepted as a strong theory applicable to the context of ESL and AfL practices.

An important point about the role of AfL was raised in Black and Wiliam's (2006) paper. In the conclusion of their paper Black and Wiliam (2006) mentioned that:

> Thus, whilst we cannot argue that development of formative assessment is the only way, or even the best way, to open up a broader range of desirable changes in classroom learning, we can see that it may be particularly effective. In part because the quality of interactive feedback is a critical feature in determining the quality of learning activity, and therefore a central feature in pedagogy (p. 100).

Drawing upon Ramaprasad (1983) and Sadler (1989), Wiliam and Thompson (2008) underlined three most important strategies that helped Black and William (2006) to develop a more appropriate theoretical framework for formative assessment. These key strategies are as follows:

1. Establishing where the learners are in their learning
2. Establishing where they are going
3. Establishing what needs to be done to get them there (Black & Wiliam, 2012, p. 208).

While teachers are responsible for implementing these three strategies in the classroom, students' role should not be neglected. Indeed, peer- and self-assessment activities introduce two distinctive elements. One is that understanding the success criteria – where they are going – through applying them to one's work, is a crucial foundation for self-assessment. The other is that it is helpful to consider the roles of the peer-community of learners and of each student as an individual separately. Both teacher and learners are responsible for learning. It is necessary for teachers to provide a safe learning environment so that students can learn within it (Black & Wiliam, 2012).

According to these three strategies, teachers need to design and implement an effective learning environment. It is also important to know that both teacher and learner are responsible for learning to reduce the effect of any failure of the other. The first strategy means eliciting evidence of students' learning to see where the learners are

in relation to the learning intentions. The second strategy means defining learning intentions to the students and the last strategy intends to provide students with feedback to find the gap and help learners to achieve success.

Ramaprasad (1983) pointed out that "feedback is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the learning gap in some way" (p. 4). Sadler (1989) also accentuated the importance of using information from feedback:

> An important feature of Ramaprasad's definition is that information about the gap between actual and reference levels is considered as feedback only when it is used to alter the gap. If the information is simply recorded, passed to a third party who lacks either the knowledge or the power to change the outcome, or is too deeply coded (for example, as a summary grade given by the teacher) to lead to appropriate action, the control loop cannot be closed, and "dangling data" substituted for effective feedback (p. 121).

Drawing on these three strategies, Wiliam and Thompson (2008) developed their framework of aspects of formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2009, 2012; Bennett, 2011). Wiliam and Thompson's (2008) framework of aspects of formative assessment defines AfL, identifies its key elements and explain how these elements work together to achieve desired outcomes. This framework has become a guideline to many researchers (Bennett, 2011).

According to Bennett (2011), these key strategies direct teaching and learning processes more effectively. For instance, questioning technique helps teachers identify where students are relative to the learning intentions; by establishing learning goals and success criteria students can identify where they are going, and through feedback they can find out how they can achieve success. In their framework, Wiliam and Thompson (2008) explained that formative assessment consists of five main strategies that define its own territory. Below the researcher will describe these 5 strategies one by one:

1. Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success

2. Engineering effective classroom discussions, questions

3. Providing feedback that moves learners forward

4. Activating students as instructional resources for one another, and

5. Activating students as the owners of their own learning.

Table 2.1

Aspects of Formative Assessment (Wiliam & Thompson, 2008)

	Where the learner is going?	Where the learner is?	How to get there?
Teacher	Clarifying and sharing Learning intentions	Engineering effective classroom question, discussions	Providing feedback that moves learners forward
Peer	Understand and share Learning intentions	Activating learners as learning resources for one another	
Learner	Understand learning intentions	Activating learners as owners of their own learning	

2.2.2.1. Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success

The first step of the AfL process is establishing learning intentions and success criteria "that is worthy and requiring understanding" (DeMeester & Jones, 2009, p. 5). A lesson presented to students should have clearly stated learning intentions with specific conditions for performance and criteria for evaluating that performance (Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan, & Brown, 2007). Teachers can clarify and share learning intentions and success criteria in different ways. Some teachers clearly describe the learning intentions at the beginning of the lesson, but they might fail to establish activities that will lead to the achievement of the learning intention and cannot discriminate between the learning intentions and those activities.

Instruction is more likely to be effective when teachers start from what students know and design their instruction based on the learning goals (Wiggins & McTighe, 2000). Therefore, more time is spent on reading, discussing and writing lesson plan learning goals and defining what teachers expect of students. Wiggins and McTighe

(2000) noted that, first of all, teachers should clarify the learning intentions and establish success criteria. Then they can explore activities that will lead to achievement of learning intentions.

Various methods of clarifying and sharing intentions exist, but it is important to know that each objective should clearly state what knowledge, skills, and accountability measures students should have to achieve learning intentions. Shavelson, Ruiz-Primo, and Wiley (2005) in their research concluded that "if we could make all our goals explicit to our students and ourselves, we might expect much more of their learning and our teaching" (p. 413). Therefore, it is important to define learning intentions and success criteria so that students better understand what is expected of them. However, the validity and reliability of these research works can be put into question since they are not replicable to other contexts such as the context of ESL teaching and learning processes in Malaysia.

Some researchers believe that to reveal learning goals and to enhance students understanding of the stated goals, students should be able to engage in some form of self- and peer-assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998ab; Bell, 2000; Cassidy, 2007; Dawson, 2005; McDonald & Boud, 2003; Munns & Woodward, 2006; Sadler, 1989). In doing so, students need to understand learning targets as well as the focus for their learning.

Although it may seem appropriate at this stage to question the validity of these qualitative studies on clarifying and sharing learning intentions, it gives us quite a clear description on how this may help the teaching and learning processes. At least, this provides a basis to further probe this application in the classroom context. The next aspect involves the use of classroom discussions and questions to enhance the effectiveness of AfL in practice.

2.2.2.2. Engineering effective classroom discussions and questions

When the criteria for success is established and students know what is expected of them, then in order to implement formative assessment effectively, teachers should design tasks to elicit evidence of students' learning and their progress towards learning intentions.

Heritage (2007, 2010) mentioned that there are different ways of collecting evidence of students' learning, yet, decision should fit the purpose and should also be consistent with the learning intentions. Heritage (2007, 2010) categorized different strategies for collecting evidence into three types: systematic or curriculum embedded, planned and spontaneous or on-the-fly. Systematic or curriculum embedded strategies include ongoing classroom interactions and tasks such as journals and end-of-section questions.

During planned assessment teachers plan questions or students' discussions in advance to elicit evidence of their learning. Spontaneous assessment is unplanned. For example, during classroom discussion, students might ask a question or say something that makes teachers ask more questions. But, what is more important is to establish a trusting environment.

Establishing a trusting environment for instructional conversations between teacher and student is fundamental to effective formative assessment. Bell (2000) explained the phrase "interactive formative assessment" as the occasion when a teacher gives feedbacks to students in the form of a class discussion or a question-answer between teacher and student and finds out the need to alter instruction.

Mortimer and Scott (2000) investigated the 'flow of discourse' and 'patterns of classroom talk' between teacher and student from a sociocultural perspective. Their analysis of classroom talk showed how discourse assisted students in developing meaningful understanding of complex science concepts when the teacher provided a

balance between presenting concepts and exploring ideas. The teacher's role was to guide and direct the conversation and to initiate, respond and provide feedback (Edwards & Mercer, 1987).

Encouraging students to formulate questions about conversation topics, Van Zee, Iwasyk, Krose, Simpson, and Wild (2001) found that when a teacher was attentive to student questions, the feedback information could be altered "by creating comfortable discourse environments" (p. 159). Wilen (2004) noted how a social studies classroom discussions consisting of higher-order questions by the teacher and students gave opportunities for using their knowledge and critical thinking to improve their understanding about the task or problem. They termed this pattern of discourse as instructional responsiveness. Another important aspect to be discussed is the concept of feedback to enable students' progress in their learning.

2.2.2.3. Providing feedback that moves learners forward

Research shows that feedback is the most important part of the assessment process and affects students' learning achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998ab, 2006, 2009; Shute, 2008; Wiliam, 2011). Studies have shown that feedback in the form of marks or grades have no significant effect on student learning (Crooks, 1988; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Mory, 2004). However, formative feedback considerably affects students' learning and helps them improve their learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). Shute (2008) mentioned that "formative feedback is information communicated to the learner to modify his or her own thinking or behavior for the purpose of improving learning" (p. 154).

In their meta-analysis, Black and Wiliam (1998a) stated that, "feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve, and should avoid comparisons with other pupils" (p. 143). Feedback can be viewed as the opportunity for teacher and student interactions that

results in reorienting the student toward the desired performance goal. Black and Wiliam (1998a) continued their work with teachers and commented upon the resulting successes when teachers realized the effectiveness of using feedback; hence the definition of feedback continued to be refined.

In two separate articles, Wiliam (2006b) redefined this term as "feedback that engages students and moves them forward is feedback that causes students to think" (p. 18), and, "if it shapes that student's learning…and the information is actually used to alter what would have happened in the absence of the information" (Wiliam, 2006a, p. 284). Wiliam (2006b) elaborated that feedback is "a 'moment of contingency' a point in the instructional sequence where the instruction can change direction in light of evidence about the students' achievement" (p. 285).

2.2.2.4. Activating students as instructional resources for one another

A critical feature of AfL is that assessment provides students with an opportunity to collaborate with one another during the learning process. To achieve this goal, teachers should support students and help them to have a good appreciation of the learning intentions and success criteria. According to Black and Wiliam (1998b), learners can achieve significant learning gains when they serve as learning resources for each other. Throughout peer-assessment, students should work as a group and interact with different designs and procedures to find solutions to the problems (Sadler, 1989).

The element of peer-tutoring or peer-assessment is viewed by Wiliam (2006b) as a "helpful stepping stone to self-assessment" (p. 19). The definition of self-assessment has been fairly consistent in the literature. It is one of those terms that is almost self-explanatory, but does carry some variation in interpretation by educational researchers.

Stiggins and Chappuis (2005) concluded that "feedback lays a foundation for students to learn to self-assess and set goals. In this way, AfL keeps students informed about where they are in relation to the agreed-upon definition of success" (p. 20). In

other words, during peer-assessment, students not only give feedback but they also identify positive features of the work. Moreover, students are more able to accept feedback from their peers rather than their teacher. Students benefit from providing peer feedback because they need to completely understand the learning intentions and success criteria of such work.

2.2.2.5. Activating students as the owners of their own learning

Learning rate increases when students take responsibility for their own learning and actively monitor and regulate their own learning (Wiliam, 2007). The strategy of "activating students as the owners of their own learning" brings together different education disciplines such as motivation, metacognition and self-regulated learning (Wiliam, 2011). The descriptive explanation on the enhancement of learners owning their own learning is provided below.

For instance, Boekaerts (2006) mentioned that "self-regulation is a multilevel, multi-component process that targets affect, cognitions, and actions, as well as features of the environment for modulation in the service of one's goals" (p. 347). In recent years, studies on self-regulated learning have drawn cognition and motivation together. According to Boekaerts (2006, p. 348) "self-regulated learning is both metacognitively governed and affectively charged". A question many teachers might ask is how to motivate students to tackle the task at hand and extend their own learning.

Ryan and Deci (2000) developed a cognitive evaluation theory framed in terms of social and environmental factors when considering students' motivation. A focal point in the development of their theory involved the human's need for competence and autonomy specifically when feedback was given in a socially contextualized environment. These two human characteristics were satisfied and intrinsic motivation was positively enhanced when students were given opportunities for self-assessment.

Related to self-assessment is a cognitively-based concept termed metacognition. Metacognition is a process of reflecting and self-monitoring which is an important aspect of formative assessment, as learners collaborate with their teacher and other students to identify the learning gap and how to alter this gap (Sadler, 1989). Metacognition includes two simultaneous processes; individual students monitoring their progress during the learning process, and the individuals making changes and adapting strategies if they are not performing within the construct of the task (Winn & Snyder, 1996). This type of activity includes students' goal setting, self-reflection and self-responsibility- a type of learning ownership.

In a study of metacognition and self-appraisal of work, it was found that students in upper elementary grades were able to provide rather sophisticated analysis of their work when interviewed directly by their teachers using a strategic questioning technique (Van Kraayenoord & Paris, 1997). These students also had a positive outlook about school and their relationships with their teachers were reflective of Ryan and Deci's (2000) findings. Therefore, we can safely conclude that learners become successful when they are given freedom to own their learning. Another element towards students' learning ownership is self-regulation or self-assessment.

To encourage student self-regulation or self-assessment which is a key element of formative assessment, the classroom teacher must create an appropriate learning environment to guide students to reveal their thinking since "ordinarily students do not do enough to provide the evaluator something to see" (Hiebert & Calfee, 1989, p. 53). Students are unlikely to offer what they know and understand in a typical classroom setting since often in a direct instruction environment these kinds of opportunities are not given. However, if an integrated approach to instruction and assessment occurs, students perform differently and "student participation in learning, premised on the idea

of authenticity would include active engagement in generating information about that learning" (Graue, 1993, p. 296).

As Chappuis and Stiggins (2002) summarized, in an AfL context, "both teacher and student use classroom assessment information to modify teaching and learning activities" (p. 40). When a change of this sort occurs, the teacher and student relationship is altered to reflect a formative assessment framework. Therefore, students' successful self-assess is the result of cross-section of teacher feedback and student introspection that lead to new realizations about learning and also the result of trusting relationships between teacher and student that allow for such growth.

The next sub-section will describe how AfL is guided through an adopted philosophical stance. Three main philosophical frameworks will be discussed which have relevance to this study.

2.2.3. Assessment for Learning: A Philosophical Stance

Learning theories attempt to explain the way people learn and give us an appreciation of the underlying complex process of learning. Although many learning theories exist, here we will focus on three philosophical frameworks relevant to this study.

Behaviorism is a theory of learning emphasizing concepts such as stimulus-response, reinforcement and operant learning. The basic tenet of behaviorism is that learning is a set of behaviors that is shaped by positive or negative consequences of the behavior (Skinner, 1957). Behaviorists believe that students' errors are random and happen because of lack of reinforcement in a particular stimulus-response chain. They do not consider what is going on in mind and believe that learners are only passive respondents to the stimuli. But this idea is in contrast to constructivism and

sociocultural theory that consider learners as active agents and believe in the non-random nature of students' errors (Hassan, 2011).

To illustrate, behaviorists believe that language is a behavior developed like other skills. According to behaviorism "a sentence is a part of a behavior chain, each element of which provides a conditional stimulus for the production of the succeeding element" (Fodor, Bever, & Garrett, 1974, p. 25). For instance, mastery learning concept can be directly related to the principles of behaviorism. Like behaviorism, mastery learning also focuses on observable and measurable behavior (Baum, 2005). Learning material is presented as small lessons and students should show the evidence of mastering each lesson before moving to the next (Anderson, 2000).

In other words, when practicing the assessment techniques and strategies, sequences of easily remembered and understood piece of information would be the main aim and the success of students is measured based on their capability to master the taught sequences. The behaviorist classroom has a structured and pre-determined lesson plan and environmental stimulus is provided to influence the behavior. According to Guey, Cheng, and Shibata (2010), programmed instruction is the basic element of a behaviorist classroom. That is to say, instruction is teacher oriented and students do not play an important role in learning activities. Moreover, students' needs and uniqueness are ignored in such classrooms as discussed in detail in the previous sub-section.

Behaviorism has had a great influence on education and still continues to exert an influence. It has shaped educational practices through mastery learning, setting behavioral objectives in teaching and testing, outcome-based education, competency-based education and assertive discipline (Noll, 2008). It is not surprising that the newly-revised AfL-style curriculum in Malaysia adopted the mastery learning introduced by behaviorist educationists.

Skinner's theory does not take into account learner's innate cognitive abilities as well as the key role of sociocultural environment in learning and is not adequate enough to mould a learner to be creative enough as compared to cognitivism, constructivism and sociocultural theory, as will be discussed later (Hassan, 2011).

Unlike behaviorism, cognitivism deals with cognitive processes of learning and understanding is of utmost importance (Guey et al., 2010). Yet, in another aspect of the language teaching and learning process, such as language assessment, behaviorism only tests individual skills in isolation from one another and the number of correct answers on examination determines an individual's level of knowledge and finally students are ranked based on their test results (Berry, 2008).

Therefore, behaviorism merely focuses on norm-referenced assessment (Hassan, 2011). However, this type of assessment not only ignores the active cognitive elements but also other psychological aspects of learning including affective features such as students' values and attitudes that play an important role in their cognitive, psychological, emotional and physical development.

As mentioned in passing, behaviorism has been criticized since it ignores internal learning factors such as cognitive and psychological aspects of learning and only focuses on observable behaviors. Therefore, critiques of behaviorism (see Chomsky (1959) for further critiques on this issue) created a movement to oppose behaviorists. Cognitivists challenge the limitations of behaviorism and emphasize the role of mental processes in learning. The difference is marked by the way mental processes are used to explain how students can succeed in their learning.

In contrast to behaviorists, cognitivists view learning as an internal mental process where teachers develop and construct learning tasks and activities in a way to emphasize cognitive development to improve learning. Cognitivists believe that learning involves the reorganization of cognitive structure through which learners

process and store information (Good & Brophy, 1990). In the classroom practices, teachers are encouraged to facilitate students' learning by invoking their cognitive active involvement.

Developing from cognitivism, constructivism accentuates the active role of learners in their own learning. In the view of constructivist, learners construct knowledge from their own experiences. Learners always carry out their own experiences, construct their own hypothesis, and seek to verify or disprove their hypothesis. Thus they can build their own concepts and experiences of the world and create their own understanding (Berry, 2008).

Cognitivists emphasize the importance of metacognition in assessment. They compare learning to the way computers process information which includes four stages of selecting, comprehending, storing, and retrieving information. Planning, monitoring and evaluation of the learning process are metacognitive strategies learners use to manage their learning (Berry, 2008). That is to say, learners use their metacognition to approach a task and to find out appropriate strategies to tackle it. This needs self-regulation on the part of learners. Learners should self-monitor, and self-assess their own learning. Therefore, self-assessment is considered to be an integral part of the learning process (Berry, 2008).

A cognitivist and constructivist such as Piaget believed that environment provides conditions for learning but it does not control the learning process. However, the sociocultural environment can influence humans' cognitive development which is a continuous process and not solely based on pre-determined stages discussed by Piaget (Hassan, 2011).

In contrast to the two learning theories discussed above, recent constructivist movements place a great emphasis on social interaction. In other words, learners construct their own knowledge by constantly interacting and negotiating with others. It

is only through interaction that learners develop their own concept and understanding. In this sense, the constructivist approach is viewed as advocating social constructivism (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Social constructivists acknowledge the importance of social interaction and more knowledgeable peers in shaping learners' experiences. According to social constructivists, teachers mediate students' learning through assessment. In other words, assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and this is the main focus of AfL (Berry, 2008).

As put forward by Stobart (2008), "the learning theory approach which underpins AfL, is probably best described as 'social constructivism'. This seeks to hold in balance learning as a cultural activity and as individual meaning-making" (p. 151). Furthermore, Sadler (1989) points out that Gipps (1994) coined the term 'assessment *for* learning' and accentuated that constructivist learning theory needed ongoing assessment practices that involve learners in authentic tasks and do more than merely testing discrete items of students' knowledge.

In the Malaysian context, with the introduction of the new primary school curriculum (KSSR), it has clearly adopted the views of 'cognitivism', 'mastery learning', 'multiple intelligences' and so forth- as discussed before- which point to the importance of this study and also how it relates to the teaching and learning process.

2.2.3.1. A Sociocultural Perspective for AfL

According to Black and Wiliam (2012), Wiliam and Thompson's (2008) framework explains the key elements of formative assessment, changes in learners' and teachers' role, and also the relationship between teacher and students in the classroom. However, the theory of formative assessment is not completed yet. Black and Wiliam (2012) explained that we need a theory to implement AfL successfully and to improve

formative assessment practices. More studies should be conducted to put AfL within a broader theoretical framework. Similarly, Bennett (2011) mentioned that without a precise and agreed upon definition, it is difficult to decide on the theory underlying AfL.

Most research on AfL has focused on the cognitive process of becoming more expert through self-regulation and the significance of social interaction within a community of practice that help students become the owners of their own learning has been neglected. Nevertheless, AfL strategies should be implemented in ways that help learners identify what qualities are valued, what roles and expectations are communicated in teacher-student interactions and provide learners with an opportunity to fully participate in the community of practice (Swaffield, 2011).

The importance of students' involvement in the assessment process as well as teacher-student relationship requires teachers to work beyond behaviorist and constructivist paradigms of learning. Tierney and Charland (2007) explained that "AfL can be considered as practice that is socially situated as a form of classroom interaction, and historically situated as part of an ongoing theoretical shift in the field of education" (p. 4). Therefore, a sociocultural theorization of Afl is needed to conceptualize AfL as a form of classroom interaction.

Sociocultural theory can be traced back to the work of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1978) mentioned that, as opposed to behaviorism, in the sociocultural view, learning in not merely an internal process of shaping behaviors and unlike cognitivism it is also not only a process of individual cognitive development. He stressed that learning is an active process in which learners interact with other people and objects in the learning context.

In Vygotsky's viewpoint, learning context should provide learners with guided instructions so that they are able to monitor and adapt their learning through interactions. In terms of assessment, in a social constructivist classroom AfL provides

students with opportunities to interact with each other and activate them as instructional resources for one another (Bennett, 2011; Berry, 2008). Therefore, the importance of teacher-student relationship, when teacher provides activities beyond the students' current level of achievement in instructional scaffolding, is highlighted. Vygotsky (1997, p. 339) stated that:

> The real secret of education lies in not teaching. The student educates himself [sic] … Thus the researcher must shoulder a new burden … He [sic] has to become the director of the social environment which moreover is the only educational factor.

Based on Vygotsky's perspective, Rogoff (1990) concluded that "the basic unit of analysis is no longer the properties of the individual, but the process of the sociocultural activity, involving active participation of people in socially constructed practices" (p. 14). Drawing on Vygotsky's perspective, Gipps (2002) identified four assessment related aspects which are related to the concept of AfL:

> 1. The critical role of tools in human activity and implications of offering assistance and guidance during the course of an assessment …
> 2. The inseparability of the social, affective and cognitive dimensions of action and interaction and hence the implication that learners should be assessed not in isolation and in competition but in groups and social settings …
> 3. The relationship between expert and apprentice … and the implications of this for the assessment relationship …
> 4. The role of assessment in identity formation (p. 74).

Social constructivists believe that formative assessments of students' learning are of great worth to the learners. So, they consider AfL as an interactive process in which teachers and peers help learners use their ZPD and progress to the next step in their learning (Shepard, 2005).

ZPD shows a person's potential ability for learning. This ability is greater than a person's actual ability when experts and peers in the social environment help learners promote autonomy (Wertsch, 1993). Hassan (2011, p. 321) stated that:

> The first time a student acquires a new fact that has a particular significance indicates only the beginning of the concept development. In practice, an essential feature of learning is that it generates the ZPD; that is, learning stimulates a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the student is interacting with other students in his/her group in cooperation with the

teacher. Once these processes are internalized, they become an integrated part of the student's independent developmental achievement. Consequently, the student should be able to solve more advanced aspects of the problem in an independent way.

A crucial aspect of Vygotsky's theory is a clear distinction between learning and development. Vygotsky is actually very close to Piaget in believing that learning occurs in stages. Each new stage is marked by the acquisition of new psychological processes that the individual has not previously been able to deploy on their own. So learning takes place within a stage, and development triggers movement from one stage to the next. For instance, probing question might trigger movement from one stage to the next, but only where they are focused on development, rather than learning. It is this stance that led Vygotsky to state that "the only good learning is that which is in advance of development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89). Without a clear understanding of the distinction between learning and development, this statement is impossible to interpret.

Torrance and Pryor (1998) mentioned that based on Vygostky's theory of ZPD, teachers should not only observe and assess the student's current level of achievement but they should also assess what the student is able to achieve. Hence, assessment is an integrated part of teaching and learning and interaction between teacher and student as well as students and their peers is an important part of the assessment process.

Shepard (2000) also accentuated the importance of ZPD and mentions that teachers should assess students through interaction so that they can diagnose learners' strengths and weaknesses and gain a better understanding of students' needs and consequently help them improve their learning.

Furtak (2005) characterized the AfL process as feedback loops that assist learning. Based on their interpretation, teachers provide students with feedback to decide where students are relative to the learning intentions. Then teachers identify the size of learning gap through observing students' performance in classroom activities such as group discussions. Furtak (2005) described the distance between students' current level

of achievement and the desired goals as the 'gap'. He mentioned that classroom activities make students' thinking perceptible and help teachers identify the gap.

Heritage (2007) pointed out that when teachers identify students' current level of achievement, it is important to determine the distance between students' level of achievement and the learning goal. If the distance is not too large, the students might do their best to achieve the goal. In contrast, if the gap is large, students might perceive it as unachievable and become frustrated. Heritage suggested that AfL determines the "just the right gap", what psychologists call "zone of proximal development (ZPD)" (p. 141).

Recently, sociocultural theorization of formative assessment has received great attention. Researchers such as Black and Wiliam (2006, 2009, 2012) as well as Pryor and Crossouard (2008) used activity theory and explained AfL strategies as an activity system. This theoretical perspective evoke "a dialectical understanding of the social and individual ... [and] looking at problematization of agency and identity" (p. 10).

Using Bernstein's (2000) notions of classification and framing, activity theory discusses individual's roles and division of labor in the activity system. Activity theory looks at AfL from a systematic perspective and does not take into account the interpersonal aspects of AfL that is the focus of this study.

Black and Wiliam (2006) maintained that communities of practice are not enough "as explanatory mechanisms as neither conceptual framework provides for the activities of agents to change the structure" (p. 83). Yet, Wenger (1998) argued that:

> A community of practice is a living context that can give newcomers access to competence and also invite a personal experience of engagement by which to incorporate that competence into an identity of participation- [they are also] a privilege locus for the creation of knowledge (p. 214).

In this thesis, the researcher looked at AfL from a sociocultural perspective and focused on the importance of teacher-student interactions in a community of practice. When we look at AfL through the lens of sociocultural theory, learning is not only an

individual cognitive practice in the individuals' mind, but a "patterned collective doings" (Sfard, 2008, p.124).

Based on Vygotsky's work (1997), learning and assessment are regarded as both a cognitive and social process. The interaction between teacher and students is crucial since cognition and understanding develop through social interaction with experts in a community of practice. Meaning is negotiated and learning is shaped by experiences as learners actively participate in a community of practice. In other words, learning is defined as a process of becoming expert within a community of practice.

Marshall and Drummond (2006) made a distinction between the 'letter' and 'spirit' of AfL. They asserted that teachers usually implement AfL strategies to the letter. They share learning criteria, ask questions and give feedback in a hierarchical relationship between teacher and student. They mentioned that in order to implement the spirit of AfL, teachers should "create an environment in which learning is socially constructed" (p. 147). As Mansell, James and Assessment Reform Group (2009, p. 20) noted:

> What was defined as the 'spirit' of assessment for learning was hard to achieve. Although many teachers used techniques associated with assessment for learning, such as sharing success criteria, or increasing 'thinking time' few did so in ways that enabled pupils to become more autonomous learners. This is a defining characteristic of assessment for learning and learning how to learn. Some 20 percent of teachers were, however, identified as capturing its spirit, which showed that it is possible.

As James, Black, McCormick, and Pedder (2007) put it, a purely constructivist approach to AfL "focuses attention on the mental models that a learner employs when responding to new information or to new problems" (p. 17). Drawing from Piaget, Von Glaserfield (1996) mentioned that "the space and time in which we move, measure, and above all, in which we map our movements and operations, are our own construction, and no explanation that relies on them can transcend our experiential world" (p. 74).

Within the constructivist perspective, learning is the responsibility of the learner. Learners receive cognitive scaffolds to monitor their learning experiences against their schemas. Bredo (1994) critiqued the view of individual learning that considers mind as an information processing system. He criticized individual learning approaches that consider mind as an information processing system with "the result ... that mind is separated from its physical, biological and social contexts" (p. 26).

According to the sociocultural perspective, assessment is a cultural activity and involves social participation within a community of practice which heavily relies on the relationship between teacher and students (Elwood, 2008). Lave and Wenger (1991) stated that AfL can be viewed as a way of understanding about "the activities, identities, artefacts and communities of knowledge" as an integral part of learning the ways of being full participant within the community of practice (p. 29).

Wenger (1998) described community of practice as a means of explaining "the social configuration in which our enterprises are defined as worth pursuing and our participation is recognized as competence" (p. 5). "A social group in a community of practice is a group in which teacher and learners are mutually engaged and do things together, negotiate day to day practices through a joint enterprise and have a shared repertoire of tools, discourses and concepts (Wenger, 1998, p. 73). The teacher and student relationship is crucial in building the learning community and creating the sense of belonging and becoming more expert within that community.

2.3. Past Studies

This subsection will focus on the three important research questions proposed in this study: 1) classroom questioning; 2) classroom discussion and 3) formative feedback.

2.3.1. Classroom Questioning

Researchers acknowledge the importance of classroom questioning as an efficient learning and instruction strategy (e.g., Almeida, Pedrosa de Jesus, & Watts, 2008; Chin & Osborne, 2008; Graesser & Olde, 2003) and as an important aspect of AfL (Black et al., 2003). Classroom questioning helps students gain a better appreciation of what they are learning as well as how they are learning. It also helps teachers understand students' learning progress.

Levin and Long (1981) claimed that teachers usually ask students between 300 to 400 questions a day and spend more than half of the classroom time on questioning. Yet, students rarely ask questions (Graesser & Person, 1994). However, it seems that teachers are not aware of this inconsistency. And because of this, many teachers do not fully utilize this tool as their teaching tools to enhance students' understanding.

Bloom (1956) classified teachers' questions into two types which are lower cognitive and higher cognitive questions. Lower cognitive questions include knowledge, comprehension, and application question types and higher cognitive questions consist of analysis, synthesis and evaluation questions.

In the same vein, Cotton (1983) mentioned that questions asked by teachers can be of lower cognitive questions that include closed, knowledge, factual and recall questions which require students to give short responses based on what they have learned previously and higher cognitive questions, also referred to as referential, interpretive, evaluative and open-ended questions that require students to create their own answers.

As mentioned earlier, research has indicated that teachers frequently ask questions in the classroom. For instance, Floyd (1960) conducted a study on 40 elementary school teachers' classroom questioning and found that teachers ask around 93 percent of classroom questions.

According to Brown and Edmondson (1985), the main purpose of classroom questioning is to elicit evidence of students' knowledge and understanding, to adapt instruction, to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, to direct their understanding and to maintain classroom control.

However, studies have shown that questions teachers and students ask in the classroom are usually procedural and factual. These questions do not help students increase autonomy; nor do they fulfill the other functions of questioning such as motivating students to think, developing their reflections and interest and encouraging students to ask questions (e.g., Brown & Edmondson, 1985; Cooper, 2010).

In their study on Malaysian ESL teachers' questioning approaches, Noorizah, Idris, and Rosniah (2012) explored questioning approaches of four primary ESL teachers in selected rural and urban schools. Thirty to sixty minutes of lessons were audio-taped and transcribed for further analysis. The results showed that teachers mostly used display questions in their classrooms. If this is the case, most probably in the context of this study will this also be the same as their findings; this is yet to be found out.

David (2007) conducted a study on classroom questioning and investigated the impact of display and referential questions on teacher-student interaction in secondary school ESL classrooms in Nigeria. A total of 20 teachers and 400 students were observed during 6 weeks. The results showed that teachers should ask more referential/open question rather than display/closed questions to increase student interaction. Lower level cognitive questioning techniques and strategies have little impact on students' learning.

Similarly, Black and Wiliam (1998a) claimed that not all question types improve learning. They added that when they pose a question, teachers usually look for a specific answer. So, students' future learning is inhibited and they lack opportunities to come up

with their own answers. Teachers usually do not give students ample time to answer questions and they themselves respond to questions after a few seconds (Rowe, 1972). This teacher-centred style of questioning techniques is rampant in many classrooms.

According to the education literature, teachers usually ask closed questions that require only one specific answer (Black & Wiliam, 1998a). Research suggests that "good" or "rich" questions have the potential to diagnose students' misunderstandings (Wiliam, 1999), plan teaching (Burns, 2005), and provide opportunities for learners with mixed abilities (Sullivan & Clarke, 1991).

Wiliam (1999) described "rich questions" as questions that "reveal unintended conceptions" provide a "window into thinking" (p. 16). He added that while these questions are difficult to construct, "they are essential as without them, there will be a number of students who manage to give all the right response, while having very different conceptions from those intended" (p. 16). According to Sullivan and Liburn (2004) good questions have 3 features:

1. They require more than remembering a fact or reproducing a skill
2. Students can learn by answering the questions and the teacher learns about each student from the attempt, and;
3. There may be several acceptable answers (p. 2).

Burns (2005) asserted that formative assessment requires students to clarify their responses to assist teachers in determining the next step in teaching and learning. That is to say, the focus should be mainly on Socratic methods of questioning that probe thinking at deep level. Socratic questioning means applying certain kinds of questioning such as discussion, clarification and probing questions (Yang, Newby & Bill, 2005). This kind of questioning is systematic, deep and focused on fundamental issues and concepts.

Probing encourages student-generated responses when they are explaining or correcting their responses and increases students' level of response (Cruickshank et al., 2009). The premise underlying probing questions is to guide students towards important

aspects of the topic. However, directing the same question to another student or rewording the question might have negative effects and may lead to confusion amongst students (Cruickshank et al., 2009). The reason is not explained fully, but through this study it is hoped that rewording technique can be explained to either hinder or help students in their learning processes.

Students can also learn how to develop effective questions to improve their learning. Recently, students' questioning has received more attention because questioning techniques engage learners in critical reasoning and problem solving. Graesser and Olde (2003) maintained that "questions are asked when individuals are confronted with obstacles to goals, anomalous events, contradictions, discrepancies, salient contrasts, obvious gaps in knowledge, expectation violations and decisions that require discrimination among equally attractive alternatives" (p. 525). Therefore, students' questioning helps them to improve their thoughts and understanding and promote autonomy in their learning processes (Watts, Alsop, Gould, & Walsh, 1997).

To understand how classroom questioning techniques facilitate teaching and learning milieu, Rowe (1974) conducted a study in elementary science classrooms in the U.S. to explore classroom discourse. He concluded that the mean time teachers wait after posing a question was only 0.9 seconds, and if there was no answer from the learner, the intervening was again 0.9 seconds. Therefore, to use questioning technique meaningfully, the time period should also be a guideline for teachers so as to avoid incomprehensible learning inputs.

Rowe (1974) argued that increasing wait time leads to the following changes in classroom discourse:

1. More longer and comprehensive answers

2. More confident answers

3. Challenging and improving other students' responses

4. Students' failure to answer the question decreased

5. Students offered more alternative explanations

In other words, some of the failures in disseminating knowledge are not because of teachers' failure to single out students' comprehension but the way techniques are utilized and adopted is important as well.

Black et al. (2003) conducted the King's-Medway-Oxforshire Formative Assessment Project (KMOFAP) in London. In the KMOFAP project, Black et al. (2003) investigated teachers' formative classroom practices. They found that teachers' practices encourage rote learning and teachers' feedback to students has mostly managerial and social functions. In other words, in practice, formative assessment was weak. They added that to implement formative assessment successfully teachers should change their perspectives towards their roles with respect to students and classroom practices.

Confirming the finding of Rowe (1974), teachers in the KMOFAP project found out that a wait time less than one second prevents students from participating in classroom discourse. Such a short wait time does not give students ample time to think and answer the questions. Teachers involved in KMOFAP projects agreed that they usually ask simple and closed questions requiring recall rather than deep thinking.

Sun (2012) explored the impact of ESL teachers' questioning techniques on teacher-learner interaction. In this survey, 73 students participated and two questionnaires (one on teacher and student interaction and the other on questioning techniques used by ESL teachers) were used for data collection. The results showed that students want their teachers to change their questioning strategies in order to develop a harmonious relationship between teacher and learners.

The results also indicated that 2.6% of the students wish their teacher to make their wrong answers right, while 87.3% like their teacher to give them more time to

think; 63.2% like to receive positive feedback even if they give the wrong answer; 78.4% responded that a specific group of students answer the questions, and 76.3% wish their teacher to give students of different ability levels the opportunity to answer questions. In sum, students desired an effective questioning environment to help them communicate with their teacher and answer the questions.

Almeida (2010) conducted a study to improve teachers' questioning awareness. Three secondary school biology teachers and 59 eighth grade students participated in the study. The data were collected during a course of continuous professional development (CPD) carried out over two months. The teachers were interviewed prior and after CPD sessions and the sessions were tape-recorded for further analysis. Moreover, the teachers were asked to audio-tape and transcribe a classroom session both prior and after CPD. The results revealed that there was a discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and practices in terms of classroom questioning patterns.

Teachers involved in the study were unaware of structuring and processing their questioning episodes. After CPD, considerable changes were found in teachers' beliefs and practices, especially regarding the wait-time, frequency and question types. This study accentuated the significance of developing suitable questions prior to the class and also facilitating student interaction. During the interviews, teachers mentioned that they lack knowledge and awareness about effective questioning as a crucial teaching strategy.

Effective classroom questioning underpins AfL. However, according to the literature, teachers lack knowledge and skills to conduct effective classroom questioning during AfL (Black et al., 2003; Black & Wiliam, 1998a; Brown & Edmondson, 1985). Thus, the current study investigated the process of classroom questioning during AfL in the Malaysian Year One and Year Two primary school ESL context and would reveal the results in Chapter Four of this study.

2.3.2. Classroom Discussion

Classroom discussion is an essential learning tool in primary school (e.g., Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif & Sams, 2004). Social constructivists believe that learning is a social phenomenon and children acquire knowledge and understanding through social interactions with other children.

According to Black and Wiliam (1998b) classroom discussions help students express their own understanding and provide them with opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding. Black and Wiliam (1998b) explained further that students' discussion with their teacher gives teachers a chance to re-orient students' thinking.

Contrary to the idea above, research works show that teachers often respond in ways that inhibit students' future learning. This is because teachers look for specific responses and cannot deal with unexpected answers. They try to direct students towards their expected answers and this makes students reluctant to work out their own responses to improve their understanding.

In their review, Black and Wiliam (1998a) described strategies such as using challenging tasks, effective questioning, feedback, and peer- and self-assessment to lessen these inhibitions. They particularly asserted that "the quality of interaction between [pupil and teacher] … is at the heart of pedagogy" (p. 16).

Black and Wiliam (1998b) pointed out that the most important strategies in classroom discussion are questioning and wait-time. But these strategies might be unproductive when teachers are looking for a specific answer and do not give their students enough thinking time. Giving students ample time to respond, giving them possible responses to choose from, or asking students to discuss in small groups might help them break this cycle. They added that "what is essential is that any dialogue

should evoke thoughtful reflection in which all pupils can be encouraged to take part, for only then can the formative process start to work" (p. 8).

Black and Wiliam (2006) explained AfL as a "trojan horse" that makes teaching more dialogic. Teachers need to start by giving big ideas of the lesson taught and then break the lesson into parts that are understandable for students and easy to digest. Clark (2011) stated that AfL is a crucial aspect of classroom practice that emphasizes the quality of learning, formative feedback and learning interactions in the classroom. Supporting these ideas, Alexander (2004) described the role of classroom dialogue in students' learning as follows:

> In the narrower context of that classroom talk through which educational meanings are most characteristically conveyed and explored, dialogue becomes not just a feature of learning, but one of its most essential tools. Hence we may need to accept that the students' answer can never be the end of a learning exchange (as in many classrooms it all too readily tends to be) but its true center of gravity (p. 14).

While exchanging ideas in discussion, students explore their decisions and ideas, learn from their peers, communicate their ideas and build upon other students' knowledge (Barak & Rafaeli, 2004). Effective classroom discussion involves posing questions and communicating critical viewpoints to support others' ideas (Graesser, Person, & Hu, 2002). So, through classroom discussions, students collaborate with each other as a community of learners to improve their knowledge. It also offers the opportunity to provide students with feedback to advance their learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998b).

Classroom dialogue has been analyzed from different perspectives. For instance, Dillon (1988) conducted a multi-disciplinary study and analyzed the transcripts of five classroom discussions. Six contributions analyzed the sample based on disciplines such as philosophy, socio-linguistics and cognitive psychology, while, the other six contributions were analyzed under headings such as discussion types, questioning and

wait-time, and questioning and students' initiatives. Dillon (1988) indicated that students' talk takes as much time as teachers' talk.

However, in the study conducted by Black et al. (2003) there was evidence of student talk for no more than 2 or 3 words. Yet, students' talk was in the form of a sentence in more formative classroom dialogue and words like 'because' and 'think' in students' dialogue indicated reasoned dialogue. In the first example teacher expected a particular answer, whereas in the second example teacher tried to steer the conversation by asking students for comments and also leading the conversation in a specific direction. This aspect is less evident in Dillon's study. In the same way, Black et al. (2003, p. 41) mentioned that "questions with a higher level of cognitive demand are used to promote thinking and lead to richer discourse".

Such studies might contribute to teachers' understanding of classroom discourse. However, it is not directly related to Wiliam and Thompson's (2008) framework of formative assessment. Those five key strategies mentioned in this framework are interrelated. For instance, when students serve as instructional resources for each other and whenever they are the owners of their own learning, they need to have a complete understanding of learning targets and success criteria. However, the interplay between these strategies is complex in leading classroom talk. For example, using students' responses to increase their involvement in classroom talk between peers is more difficult than dealing with an individual student's response.

An efficient classroom talk is "circular in form, cooperative in manner, and constructive in intent" (Martin, 1985, as cited in Roehler & Cantlon, 1997, p. 10). In classrooms featuring AfL, classroom dialogue is conceived as assessment conversations that regard assessment as an integral part of classroom activities (Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, 2006, 2007). Classroom dialogues make students' thinking evident and help teachers

constantly gain information on students' understanding to shape instruction and help them achieve the desired goals.

Studies on classroom dialogue usually follow Bellack, Kliebard, Hyman and Smith (1966) four types of moves that consist of:

1. Structuring (setting the context),

2. Soliciting (using strategies to elicit students' responses),

3. Responding (feedback on students' responses), and

4. Reacting (adjusting or modifying based on the information obtained).

Other researchers examined these types of moves to find out patterns of interaction in the social context of the classroom. Initiation-response-feedback (IRF) proposed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) is the most common interaction pattern in the classroom context. These patterns are conceived as limiting the interactional dialogue in the classroom because they reflect an authorative tone of interaction conducted by teachers in pursuit of the correct answer to the questions and priority is given to teacher talk rather than student talk.

According to Well (1990, as cited in Ruiz-Primo, 2011), these patterns are not inherently good or bad and this is the purpose of the third move that indicates its usefulness in developing learners' understanding. Assessment conversations can have chains of cycles that maintain constant teacher-student interaction (Mortimer & Scott, 2003). According to Mortimer and Scott (2003) in a non-interactive dialogue teachers guide students and reshape their ideas and turn taking with students hardly happens.

It is also important to consider that assessment conversation is not necessarily started by teacher. Students and peers can also use assessment information to close the interactional dialogue by providing feedback or guiding students (Ruiz-Primo, 2011).

Effective interactional dialogue can be used as instructional scaffolding and can provide learners with a supporting and challenging environment to help them achieve

learning targets. Teachers give students scaffolding such as encouraging participation, giving examples, clarifying language, verifying their understanding and elaborating their responses (Ruiz-Primo, 2011).

Assessment conversation can have multiple iterations that facilitate higher order thinking. Ruiz-Primo and Furtak (2006) investigated informal formative assessment in the scientific inquiry teaching context. In this study, they examined how 4 middle school science teachers used questioning technique as an informal assessment method to measure student learning. Classroom discussions were observed to explore teachers' classroom questioning.

Classroom conversation included 4 stages of posing a question by the teacher, students answer the question, teachers understand students' response and use the information to check students' progress and help them improve their learning. The results indicated that students perform better when dialogic interactions are closed with the use of information obtained during the interactions.

Minstrell, Li and Anderson (2009) found that skillful teachers have more cyclical dialogic interactions in their classrooms. Closure plays an important part in implementing effective dialogic interaction. Bell and Cowie (2001) proposed a three component assessment activity cycle consisting of collecting, interpreting and using information.

Another component not highlighted by Bell and Cowie (2001) was proposed by Ruiz-Primo, Sands, and O'Brian (2007). This component is clarifying learning goals to the students. According to Harlen (2007) explaining learning targets and success criteria include both an explanation on what students are going to learn and how they will learn.

Frederiksen and White (1997) conducted a study on middle school science curriculum. The control group was engaged in traditional discussions while the experimental group was instructed to use discussions that foster both peer- and self-

assessment. The experimental group showed considerable gains over the control group on project scores and low ability students performed better than their peers with a standard deviation of more than three. The standard deviation for medium ability students was more than two and for high ability students was higher than one. However, the design shows that the treatment group received more academic support and attention from the teacher than the control group. There is also no specific information on "general discussions" and the task assigned to the control group.

Ruiz-Primo (2011) focused on dialogic interactions that are central to formative assessment. It was claimed that dialogic interactions, also viewed as assessment conversations, make learners' thinking visible so that it can be examined and shaped as a central component of effective learning. This study highlighted the effectiveness of formative assessment and the use of instructional dialogue as assessment conversations.

Sidhu (2011) maintained that in an AfL context, establishing a teacher-student dialogue is essential and helps students improve their understanding through socially constructed learning. Li (2011) conducted a study to identify features of an EFL classroom interaction where teachers foster or inhibit opportunities to develop higher order thinking as an important aspect of meaningful interaction. The data were collected from 18 video-taped EFL lessons from six different secondary schools in Beijing.

Sociocultural analysis of interaction patterns in EFL classroom showed how teachers facilitate or inhibit students' participation and negotiation of meaning in classroom interaction. The findings indicated that in a complex social and discourse community of the language classroom, teachers can facilitate students' interaction by using more open questions, reducing interruptions, increasing wait-time and feedback to learners' responses. Teachers can provide students with an opportunity to interact by asking inferential questions and giving students enough time to think, asking students to elaborate on their responses and giving them formative feedback.

Teachers can also initiate and direct the turns, seek clarification and provide confirmation based on the learning targets. Regarding functions of interaction in the language classroom, the study conducted by Li (2011) suggested that teachers should provide students with an opportunity to interact and value their perspective by summarizing, clarifying and reformulating students' contribution.

As mentioned during this literature review, AfL promotes student learning. Due to the socially co-constructed nature of this type of assessment, interaction between teacher and students in classroom discourse is highly important. Leung and Mohan (2004) claimed that we need to study how AfL is accomplished through teacher-student classroom discourse. For this purpose, they analyzed teacher-student discourse of two multiethnic and multilingual elementary classrooms. Classroom discussions in this study were reviewed from assessment in general, language assessment and methodological viewpoints. This case study indicated that students should actively take part in classroom discussion and give reasoned answers to support their response.

In their study Matsumura et al. (2008) explored teachers' efforts and instructional practices to provide a collaborative learning environment for enhancing students' participation in classroom discussion. The study was conducted in five middle schools with 608 students. Thirty-four sixth and seventh grade language and mathematic classrooms were observed. Each lesson was coded for quality of classroom environment, tasks and student-teacher interaction. Multiple regression technique was used to determine the relation between these three codes. The results indicated that teachers' efforts to provide a collaborative learning environment significantly predicted students' behavior and their active participation in classroom discussions.

Pimentel and McNeill (2013) conducted a study on classroom talk and investigated secondary school science teachers' discussion approaches. Six teachers and

116 of their students took part in the study. Teachers' interviews about their beliefs regarding classroom talk as well as whole class discussion transcriptions were analyzed.

The findings indicated that the students' talk was limited to short and simple phrases and sentences. The teachers framed the discussions such that they limited the learners' answers. They rarely asked probing questions to evoke the students' ideas. Moreover, although the teachers believed that teacher-centered discussions are ineffective, the results showed that more often the teachers themselves dominated the discussions.

In sum, literature shows that teachers have an important role in implementing classroom discussion during AfL. However, the majority of teachers might respond to students in ways that inhibit learning (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998ab). As such in this study we will provide a rich description of how teachers accomplish AfL through classroom discussions in the Malaysian context.

2.3.3. Formative Feedback

Feedback has been conceptualized in different ways. The concepts of feedback as a gift, feedback as ping-pong and feedback as dialogue or loop have been recognized by Askew and Lodge (2000). Behaviorists define feedback as a gift from teacher to student, even though this concept does not help learners develop autonomy.

As Askew and Lodge (2000) put it feedback as a gift "fosters dependence rather than independence or interdependence and encourages notions of failure/success, wrong/right" (p. 5). Whilst, constructivists believe that feedback should be descriptive rather than evaluative. According to Askew and Lodge (2000) feedback is given "to provide a narrative which can be added to, to offer insights for reflection" (p. 9). Although within this perspective learners are central knowledge constructors, it is still teacher who decides the agenda.

Sadler (2007) and Hattie and Timperley (2007) operated from constructivism and suggested that feedback information should be used to bridge students' learning gaps. Therefore, effective feedback gives students information about where they are, where to proceed next and how to move their learning forward (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Yet, the importance of personal domain cannot be neglected. As observed by Askew and Lodge (2000) "as soon as we ask for feedback, we open ourselves to the possibility of criticism" (p. 8).

In the sociocultural perspective the responsibility for learning is shared between teacher and students and feedback is viewed as loop or dialogue. As mentioned by Askew and Lodge (2000) "the roles of learner and teacher are shared and expertise and experience of all participants are respected. All parties to such a dialogue have an expectation of learning" (p. 13).

For a long time, educators neglected to take into account learners' differences and assumed that there is no need to adapt instruction to learners' needs. They considered that failure in learning rely on learners themselves. However, Bloom and his students in the 1960s investigated the idea that the normal distribution of students' achievements was due to the failure of instruction in taking into account learner differences and the outcome was not natural. Thus, Bloom claimed that one-to-one tutoring is effective in student learning.

According to Guskey (2010), one-to-one tutoring is effective because the tutor identifies errors in students' work and then provides them with clarifications. This is what Bloom called 'feedback' and 'correctives'. However, this distinction has been counterproductive.

That is to say, information from students' work becomes feedback only if it is employed to bridge the learning gap (Black & Wiliam, 1998b; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Ramaprasad, 1983; Sadler, 1989, 2007). Yet, Bloom separated the information

about the learning gap from its instructional consequences (Wiliam, 2011). Moreover, feedback should affect students' future performance and help them improve their learning (e.g., Black & Wiliam, 1998a).

In the 1990s when researchers began to investigate learning from an integrative viewpoint, Graue (1993) illustrated an instructional assessment framework and suggested that "to meld teaching and assessment so that they are simultaneous and dialogic, both teacher and students become learners" (p. 285). The integration of assessment and instruction, particularly from a social constructivist viewpoint, was demonstrated as a part of educational process. Graue (1993) concluded that, "Assessment and instruction are often conceived as curiously separate in both time and purpose" (p.53).

Many researchers and educators support the use of assessment to guide learning and instruction. Sadler (1989) emphasized the cognitive and social functions of assessment and the important role of feedback in bridging the gap between students' current level of achievement and the desired learning intentions. Based on the new conceptions, assessment is a part of the teaching and learning process and provides students with opportunity to think and reflect on their learning and helps them to use feedback to improve their understanding.

Fuchs and Fuchs (1986) in their meta-analysis reviewed 21 research reports involving preschool, elementary and secondary school students. All studies included in this review centered on the use of feedback and its effect on students' achievement. The results of the meta-analysis yielded 96 diverse effect sizes with the average effect size of 0.70. In half of the studies reviewed, where teachers set rubrics for the action the effect size was 0.92, while when teachers judged about the action the effect size was 0.42.

It is important to note that when teachers developed graphs of each student's progress to guide action, the mean effect size was 0.70 which was larger than where they did not produce graphs (0.26). However, it should be mentioned that most of the participants in the reviewed papers were students with special needs. So the results cannot be generalized to other students in other settings.

In the late 1980s, two extensive review articles (Crooks, 1988; Natriello, 1987) boosted interest in the effectiveness of feedback in student learning. Natriello's (1987) review summarized studies on students' evaluation in schools. He reviewed the effect of a model of assessment on student learning. This model was based on designing tasks, setting goals and giving feedback to students.

Natriello (1987) discussed the effect of this assessment process on student learning and concluded that this assessment process had a positive effect on learning. Yet, he mentioned that the studies included in this review only confirmed the existing problems and did not provide a basis for improving practice. Most of the studies reviewed by Natriello "concentrate on one or two aspects of the evaluation process. As a result they fail to consider the impact of other key elements in determining the effects of evaluations". (p. 170).

Moreover, comparisons among different kinds of evaluation in schools would be misleading when evaluation is used for a multidisciplinary purpose. More importantly, one of the important shortcomings of this review is that it did not control for the quality and quantity of feedback given to students.

The review by Crooks (1988) had a narrower focus. Both formal assessment practices in a normal classroom and informal instructional techniques relevant to evaluation and motivation on students' learning such as classroom questioning were included in this review. Fourteen research papers on the relationship between classroom

assessment practices and students' achievement were summarized in Crooks' (1988) review.

Crooks (1988) concluded that "too much emphasis has been placed on the grading function of evaluation and too little on its role in assessing students to learn" (p. 468). He mentioned that balance is required between these two functions of assessment. In addition, over-emphasis on summative assessment leads to:

> Reduction of intrinsic motivation, debilitating evaluation anxiety, ability attributions for success and failure that undermine students' effort, lowered self-efficacy for learning in the weaker students, reduced use and effectiveness of feedback to improve learning, and poorer social relationships among the students. (p. 468).

He also asserted that students "should be given regular opportunities to practice and use the skills and knowledge that are the goals of the program and to obtain feedback on their performance" (p. 470).

Another study on the effect of assessment practices on student learning was conducted by Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, and Kulik (1991). This study focused on the impact of frequent testing on students' learning. The results showed that frequent testing was related to high achievement level. The score of those students who took a test over a period of 15 weeks was 0.5 standard deviations higher than other students. Their meta-analysis of 40 research papers yielded 58 effect sizes.

Bangert-Drowns et al. (1991) studied feedback in test-like situations such as questioning during a programmed learning, tests at the end of a unit of instruction and so forth. The results showed that the efficiency of feedback lies within the nature of feedback in encouraging mindfulness in students. Therefore, achievement was reduced when students anticipated the answers before tackling the questions. But when studies controlled for this variable, an effect size of 0.26 standard deviations was created. The effect size of 0.58 standard deviations was created when the feedback was provided in

the form of clarification of correct answers rather than only informing them that their response is correct or not.

Dempster (1991) supported the findings of the previous research. He reviewed studies on the impact of feedback on testing and mentioned that since most of the studies measures students' achievement concerning low level skills and content knowledge, generalizing findings to higher-order skills is questionable.

In a relevant paper, Dempster (1992) asserted that although research supports the advantage of integrating assessment and instruction and there is an agreement on the conditions for good and effective assessment such as frequent testing and providing feedback soon after test, existing practices in schools do not follow these ideals and they are also neglected in teacher education programs.

Feedback is considered as a crucial component of formative assessment that highly affects student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; Hattie, 2009; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Yet, as Havnes et al. (2012) put it "positive effects of feedback are not always the case" (p. 21).

Kluger and DeNisi (1996) reviewed about 3000 research papers published between 1905 to 1995 to investigate the effectiveness of feedback in college, school as well as the workplace. They describe "feedback as actions taken by (an) external agent(s) to provide information regarding some aspect(s) of one's task performance" (p. 255). Yet, most of the studies they reviewed were small scale studies and were reported too briefly to allow the calculation of effect size. Kluger and DeNisi (1996) had 3 inclusion criteria. Firstly, studies should include two groups of participants, one group received feedback while the other group did not receive feedback intervention. Secondly, at least 10 participants should be involved in the study. Thirdly, measurement of performance had to be provided in detail in order to calculate the effect size of the influence of feedback on achievement.

Unexpectedly, from 3000 studies only 131 research papers met the specified criteria. And the average effect size for the impact of feedback on performance was 0.41 standard deviations. It should be noted that in 50 studies out of 131 research papers included in the review, feedback minimized students' performance. Kluger and DeNisi (1996) found that feedback interventions were less efficient when the focus was on the learner or beyond the task, and most efficient when focus was on the task.

In their study, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) identified two types of feedback interventions; feedback that determines the performance does not meet the current targets, or those that determine the student's performance goes beyond the stated goal. In response to these feedback interventions, students can adapt their behavior to achieve the goal, modify or abandon the stated goal or reject the feedback.

Black and Wiliam's (1998a) review has been one of the widely cited studies on the effectiveness of formative assessment in student learning. Their work revealed achievements of a half to full standard deviation, with low-achieving students gaining the highest learning achievement. In their review, Black and Wiliam (1998a) attempted to improve reviews conducted by other researchers (e.g., Crooks, 1988; Natriello, 1987). They stated that Natriello (1987) and Crooks (1988) cited 91 and 241 research papers in their reviews respectively but only 9 papers were common to both reviews and none of them cited the Fuchs and Fuchs (1986) meta-analysis in their review.

Black and Wiliam (1998a) asserted that relying on electronic methods may generate irrelevant sources. Thus, they examined issues of 67 journals that included relevant papers published between 1987 and 1997 and cited 250 articles in their review. They presented features of formative assessment and pointed out that:

> It is hard to see how any innovation in formative assessment can be treated as a marginal change in classroom work, all such work involves some degree of feedback between those taught and the teacher, and this is entailed in the quality of interactions which is at the heart of pedagogy. (Black & Wiliam, 1998a, p. 16).

Black and Wiliam (1998a) believed that in order for assessment to become formative, the information from feedback should be used to improve teaching and learning. Thus teachers need to select different treatments in response to feedback based on how their students use the feedback given.

In other words, the learning milieu in which feedback operates is an integrated part of effective formative assessment. Students' motivation and self-assessment also affect the way they receive feedback (Deci & Ryan, 1994). Black and Wiliam (1998a) investigated teachers' and students' perspectives in settings where formative assessment was the main focus, to examine how students receive feedback. They came to the conclusion that:

> There does not emerge, from this present review, any one optimum model on which ... policy might be based. What does emerge is a set of guiding principles, with the general caveat that the changes in classroom practice that are needed are central rather than marginal, and have to be incorporated by each teacher into his or her practice in his or her own way ... That is to say, reform in this dimension will inevitably take a long time and need continuing support from both practitioners and researchers (p. 62).

Teachers in an AfL class use students' responses in an evaluative manner, give students feedback about the quality of responses and help them improve their learning. Black and Wiliam (1998a) in their meta-analysis revealed that the element of bi-directional feedback is a crucial component in AfL. Feedback increases the teacher-student interaction; students actively participate in the learning process and teachers adjust their instruction to the learners' needs.

The studies included in Black and Wiliam (1998a) provided convincing evidence that formative assessment practices produce considerable learning gains. In fact, most of these studies have the mean effect sizes between 0.4 and 0.7 which are among the largest ever reported (Black et al., 2003). Of particular interest is that so-called low achievers improved a great deal, thereby reducing the gap between low and high achievers.

Dunn and Mulvenon (2009) challenged the convincingness of the review conducted by Black and William (1998a). Black and Wiliam's (1998a) work was primarily based on the Fuchs and Fuchs (1986) meta-analysis of the impact of formative assessment on students' learning achievement. However, 83 percent of the participants in the studies reviewed were students with learning disabilities. In other words, the focus of the study was on the effectiveness of formative assessment practices in the context of special education. So, it is difficult to generalize the result of this study to other contexts.

As Dunn and Mulvenon (2009) claimed, the eight research papers Black and Wiliam (1998a) used to conclude the effectiveness of formative assessment on student achievement, do not advocate this conclusion and collectively the mean effect size of 0.70 come from a methodologically unsound study.

However, since Black and Wiliam's (1998a) study on the effect of formative assessment on students' achievement, little if any research has been done on this issue. Some other studies such as the study conducted by Ruiz-Primo and Furtak (2006) have been criticized because they also suffer from the same methodological issues such as self-selection of participants, generalizability and sample size. Thus, there is still a need for empirical evidence advocating the effectiveness of formative assessment practices on student achievement.

As mentioned by Bennet (2011), the major issue of concern with Black and Wiliam's (1998a) review is that studies surveyed are too diversified to be significantly outlined through meta-analysis. These different studies are related to giving feedback to the students, student goal orientation, self- and peer-assessment, teachers' choice of assessment tasks, questioning techniques and mastery learning systems.

Bennett (2011) added that Black and Wiliam (1998a) did not conduct any experiment and meta-analysis themselves. So, these effect sizes are not meta-analytical

and quantitative because there was no set of treatments that could be called 'formative assessment'. Stiggins (2002) stated that "if we are finally to connect assessment to school improvement in meaningful ways, we must come to see assessment through new eyes" (p.758). He added that first of all a clear understanding of AfL should be established. Black and Wiliam's (1998a) review article and other studies advocate the effectiveness of formative assessment on students' learning achievement. However, these studies also advocate the need to conduct methodologically sound studies in order to produce more conclusive results.

The above mentioned reviews of research indicate that not all kinds of feedback are effective. Ramaprasad (1983) and Sadler (1989) believe that feedback should provide information for a specific purpose within a particular system. It means that, when providing students with feedback, it does not suffice to inform them that they need to improve. Feedback should determine the type of error on students' work and what they need to do to improve their work (Wiliam, 2011). In other words, feedback should be formative. According to Clark (2011) formative feedback provides learners with scaffolded instruction and effective questioning that provoke deeper discussion and help them close the gap between their current level of achievement and the desired goal.

In a similar vein, Shute (2008) reviewed 141 publications on feedback with the focus on formative feedback. The inclusion criteria for this review were topic relevance, meta-analytical procedures and experimental design. Most of the articles reviewed described the data from quantitative studies and some of them were historical reviews (e.g., Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Mory, 2004).

Shute (2008) endorsed the results of these studies and mentioned that although there are many studies on feedback, the results are contradictory and inconsistent and the mechanism of feedback relating to students' learning is unclear. About one third of studies included in this review reported nonfacilitative effects of feedback on learning

(e.g., Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). For instance, providing feedback in the form of grades to compare students with their peers has a negative effect on their learning. Moreover, if students are engaged with the task, interrupting them by feedback might inhibit learning. According to Shute (2008) feedback that hinders learning is not formative.

Based on the studies reviewed, Shute (2008) concluded that formative feedback should be supportive, timely and specific to students' work and also nonevaluative. Information from formative feedback modifies the learners' behavior or thinking and improves their learning. According to this review formative feedback can be in the form of clarification of the correct responses, hints, verifying the accuracy of response and worked examples.

Formative feedback can be given to the learner at any time during the learning process. The review ends by suggesting guidelines for creating formative feedback. According to these guidelines, feedback should focus on a particular feature of the task rather than the learner and provide information on how to improve.

The premise underlying most of the recent research conducted on formative feedback is that providing students with formative feedback helps them improve their learning. With the change of focus from product to process in language assessment, AfL has gained a great importance in educational policy.

Assessment in the L2 writing classroom has traditionally been AoL which emphasizes using assessment for reporting and administrative purposes. AfL strategies such as formative feedback, conferences and peer response have been boosted in the L2 writing classroom. However, these strategies are not widely used by teachers. Lee (2011) investigated AfL practices used by secondary school L2 writing teachers in Hong Kong. Data were gathered from four secondary school classrooms. The study aimed at investigating how teachers' implementation of AfL in the L2 writing

classroom influence their teaching practices as well as students' attitudes towards writing. Results indicated that implementing AfL considerably change teachers' instructional and assessment practices and enhance students' motivation in L2 writing.

In another study, Parr and Timperley (2010) attempted to locate written feedback within the framework of AfL. According to this framework, feedback should provide information about students' position relative to the desired goals, the desired performance and what learners need to do to achieve the desired goals. For this purpose, they examined 59 teachers in six schools concerning their ability to provide formative written feedback on students' writing. The results revealed that teachers' ability to provide written feedback in the framework of AfL is an important part of teacher practice that guides students to improve their learning. However, to provide such kind of feedback teacher pedagogical content knowledge is required.

In a similar study on feedback, Fluckiger et al. (2010) conducted a study to investigate students' involvement in providing in time feedback to modify and improve their learning. Since planning time for providing students with formative feedback is a significant facet of teaching and learning, this paper suggested different ways of providing students with frequent formative feedback and engaging them in giving formative feedback to each other.

The following four techniques were described in this study: (a) a quiz involving three groups of students with feedback provided on product, process and students' progress; (b) students conferencing during midterm; (c) collaboratively revising questions and statements created by students; (d) providing students with timely feedback using collaborative assignment blogs. They concluded that the above mentioned techniques give timely feedback to students to adapt and improve their learning, provide them with scaffolding, actively engage students in the assessment process and inform teaching and learning. These strategies improve teaching and

learning and lead to a classroom environment focused on student learning rather than grading.

The Ministry of Education in New Zealand adopted the AfL framework for enhancing formative use of assessment. In a qualitative study Irving et al. (2011) presented eleven secondary school teachers' perspectives about assessment and feedback. The data were collected during two focus group discussions to see how teachers' conceptions of feedback and assessment relate to AfL practices.

Conceptual analysis of the data revealed three types of assessment as identified by teachers. These three assessment types were formative, classroom-based summative and externally mandated summative with different purposes of improving learning, reporting and irrelevance. Thus, feedback was recognized as being about learning, marks or grades and effort or behavior. This study indicated that although New Zealand teachers have been involved in AfL, there was no consensus among teachers on formative assessment practices and how best to implement AfL practices in the classroom. Moreover, even in a low-stakes environment like New Zealand there is still a tension between improvement and accountability assessment purposes.

The findings of the study by Tan (2011) validate the previous study in New Zealand. Tan (2011) investigated the meanings and influence of AfL initiatives in schools in Singapore. He examined current assessment purposes in Singapore education after education reform in 1977 and the announcement of the Thinking School Learning Nation (TSLN) and Teach Less Learn More (TLLM) policies. He attempted to find out whether assessment merely served to rank students or it was also a means to improve learning.

This study revealed various meanings of AfL in Singapore. Tan (2011) concluded that assessment might do three different things for learning. The first one is assessment for learning that supports assessment of learning. In other words, the main aim is to

improve students' results on summative assessment and the focus on formative feedback is to benefit summative assessment rather than students' learning improvement.

The second meaning is assessment for improving students' learning without regard to examination results. This version of AfL prompts students to learn beyond what is tested in examinations and recognizes that all learning types cannot be evaluated in examinations. The third meaning is AfL for enjoyment. This type of AfL tries to motivate students to enjoy their learning and enhance their learning correspondingly.

Thus, the meaning of AfL is interpreted in different ways in Singapore's educational context. However, these different meanings and understandings of AfL do not always promote students' learning. Tan (2011) found that although the importance of providing feedback has been recognized, Singapore's education system still places a great emphasis on high-stakes tests. He recommended three area of improvement:

1. Defining standards and providing students with effective feedback.

2. Preparing students for lifelong and sustainable learning and motivating them to learn beyond what is to be tested.

3. Much weight should be given to holistic learning and assessment practices should be developed in ways that improve students learning.

Newby and Winterbottom (2011) argued that teachers have difficulty implementing AfL techniques in their classrooms to support students' learning. They give students homework without considering its effectiveness. This study investigated the effectiveness of undertaking research homework over a few weeks in incorporating AfL strategies into a science lesson.

Students were given formative feedback before completing homework and were provided with opportunity to engage in self- and peer-assessment to reflect on their work relative to the criteria. They also completed a short questionnaire as a basis for

conducting the focus group interview. The results of the questionnaire and the focus group interview revealed that integrating AfL techniques while providing students with research homework can support their learning.

Handley et al. (2011) in their study asserted that the way students involve with feedback is crucial for its effectiveness. They viewed that students should engage with feedback to increase their understanding and adapt their future behavior. This paper claimed that literature on feedback mostly focused on experimental studies and did not consider students' engagement with feedback. Limitations such as methodological issues and inconsistent findings of previous studies suggest the need for further research.

A conceptual framework of the process of students' involvement in feedback was developed in this study. They also suggested a research agenda that convey students' experiences and insights about their engagement in feedback. This research agenda can contribute to policies and practices to help students take responsibility and ownership of their own learning and enhance their involvement in feedback.

The idea of providing students with formative feedback is a crucial part of formative assessment and also the starting point for the work on AfL in classrooms (Clark, 2010). Studies discussed above confirm the effectiveness of formative feedback in improving student learning. However, the processes of providing students with formative feedback is not yet clear and feedback practices are weak in classrooms (Black & Wiliam, 1998a, 2009; Wiliam, 2011). Sadler (2010) emphasized that students' understanding and interpretation of feedback information as well as the use of information to improve learning should be analyzed.

Ramaprasad (1983) emphasized the active use of feedback information. So, teachers should formulate and deliver feedback in ways to enhance students' active involvement (Havnes et al., 2012). Havnes et al. (2012) investigated how assessment

data is used and interpreted in upper secondary schools in Norway with a focus on English, Norwegian, mathematics and vocational training. The data were collected from five secondary schools using a questionnaire survey and focus group interviews. The result showed that teachers and students have different interpretations of feedback practices.

The study indicated that formative assessment is weak in practice and many of the students did not find feedback a useful tool to further their learning. The focus group interviews revealed that using feedback systematically to support learning is rare and teachers are unaware of strategies to implement feedback to improve student learning and use the information in their future instruction.

Moreover, according to Weeden and Winter (1999), primary school teachers lack clear understanding of different forms of feedback. Thus, students misunderstand teacher feedback because it usually lacks depth (Shute, 2008). To fill this gap, this study investigates how Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers provide students with formative feedback.

2.4. Concluding Remarks

Prior literature shows that teachers are not familiar with AfL and it is unclear whether they implement AfL strategies within their instructional repertoire in a systematic manner (e.g., Bennett, 2011; Black & Wiliam, 1998b, 2009, 2012; Wiliam, 2011). As can be seen from past studies, teacher practice of AfL is still in its infancy, therefore, a comprehensive study on the implementation of AfL strategies is needed to help them carry out AfL to the spirit (Bennett, 2011; Marshall & Drummond, 2006).

In an AfL classroom, students should actively take part in the learning process and take the responsibility for their own learning (Black & Wiliam, 2012). Through self- and peer-assessment, AfL strategies enable students to gain better understanding of the

learning intentions and success criteria. To increase learner autonomy, teachers need to understand how AfL strategies inform student learning and how hierarchical learning relationships can restrain the desired development. This can be attained by looking at AfL from a sociocultural perspective that regards AfL as a social interaction between students and their teacher and the task at hand.

Therefore, the context of this study is framed in sociocultural theory and attempts to investigate Malaysian primary school ESL teachers' implementation of classroom questioning and discussion during AfL and the way they provide students with formative feedback. This perspective modifies how AfL strategies of classroom questioning and discussion and formative feedback are apprehended and helps teachers implement these strategies to the spirit.

As to many research works, the most important validation of a study is through the integration of the statement of the problem, the framework and a proper method adopted to conduct the study. Therefore in the next chapter, Chapter 3, these issues will be addressed properly.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This research aimed at investigating the implementation of AfL as carried out by Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers in Malaysia. More specifically, this study focused on how teachers implement classroom questioning and discussion during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback. This research was conducted as an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement classroom questioning during AfL?

2. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement AfL through classroom discussion?

3. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers provide students with formative feedback?

Consequently, this chapter explains the qualitative methodology adopted to conduct this study. It provides descriptions on the research design, research site and participants of the study, and also methods of data collection and analysis. Ethical issues are discussed in this chapter as well.

3.2. Ontology and Epistemology

The ontological perspective that knowledge is co-created by individuals within a specific sociocultural context, informed the research design of the current study (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Reason (2003, p. 262) described this standpoint and stated that "our reality is a product of the dance between our individual and collective mind". Sociocultural perspective highlights people's activities as the prime focus of research. Wertsch (1993) mentioned that:

When action is given analytic priority, human beings are being viewed as coming into contact with, and creating, their surroundings as well as themselves through the actions in which they engage. Thus, action rather than human beings or the environment considered in isolation, provides the entry point into the analysis (p. 8).

This is consistent with sociocultural views that inform AfL (e.g., Gipps, 2002; Elwood, 2008). This research perspective is grouped under the heading of social constructivist participatory paradigm and share an epistemology that learning and knowing is a collaborative inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

3.3. Qualitative and Interpretive Methodological Approach

In this study the researcher adopted the qualitative approach mainly because of the potential of this approach in deeply exploring the phenomenon in its real context. Qualitative data thoroughly explore a phenomenon from participants' viewpoint.

As put forward by Lincoln and Guba (1985) qualitative data are a person's own experiences to better understand the phenomenon under investigation. In other words, qualitative research reports are rich in details and insights and help us better understand 'social sciences' findings as compared to the 'natural sciences'. They mentioned that numerical data do not relate to human experience which is more exposed to respondents' reactions; therefore, qualitative method comes into the picture.

As Merriam (2009) noted, in qualitative research the researcher tries to capture people's experiences and understanding of the world in terms of the meaning they bring to the world. In other words, the qualitative method is used in the natural context without manipulation of the context. This study focused on how Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers implement classroom questioning and discussion during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback. For this purpose, the researcher needed to engage with ESL teachers in the school context to find out how

they implement AfL strategies. So, qualitative methodology was an appropriate way to achieve the research objectives.

Another rationale for selecting qualitative approach was because the researcher aimed at investigating a little known phenomenon. Creswell (2008) pinpointed that:

> the naturalist (the researcher) elects qualitative methods over quantitative (although not exclusively) because they are best studied for research problems in which the researcher does not know the variables and needs to explore; because the literature might yield little information about the phenomenon of study, and the researcher needs to learn more from participants through exploration (p. 53).

Accordingly, in this study the researcher wanted to thoroughly investigate AfL in Year One and Year Two primary school ESL classes in Malaysia and since little was known about this issue in Malaysia, qualitative methodology fulfilled this promise.

The selection of research method also depends on the research questions the study aims to answer (Merriam, 2009). In this study, qualitative methodology was the most appropriate method to answer the research questions and satisfy the need to investigate how AfL is carried out in Malaysian primary school ESL classrooms.

Moreover, as an English teacher, the researcher was interested in seeing whether or not this research can affect her teaching practice. According to Burns (2000) qualitative research and teaching practices have strong connections. This connection might encourage teachers to engage in the research process and use the results to make new decisions. This made the researcher more decisive in using a qualitative methodology.

Qualitative methodology fits the learning theory underlying this study which is social constructivism (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) and it was another reason for adopting this methodology. According to Merriam (2009):

> Interpretive research, which is where qualitative research is most often located, assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event. Researchers do not "find" knowledge; they construct it (pp. 8-9).

Therefore, as Merriam (2009) mentioned, social constructivism informs qualitative research. In the same vein, Cresswell (2007) stated that:

> In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences … These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views ... often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives (pp. 20-21).

As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) mentioned, the multi-method aspect of this methodology ensures thorough understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The data collection methods in qualitative approach reflect the social constructivism approach to learning. According to social constructivists the concepts of internal and external validity that are features of quantitative research are replaced by authenticity and trustworthiness in the qualitative method (Silverman, 1993).

Lastly, the researcher chose qualitative methodology for this study because as stated by Kaplan and Maxwell (1994), qualitative method prevents the de-contextualization of the content of the findings. In other words, at the end of each study, the analysis depends on the researcher's impression and interpretations; hence, the 'validity' of the data is in the hands of the researchers to be fair in their interpretations (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In addition, Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that in quantitative studies, researchers predict and generalize the findings; however, qualitative researchers seek exploration and understanding to similar contexts, which is an important element of this study.

3.4. Research Design: Qualitative Case Study

In this study the researcher adopted the qualitative case study design to fully understand the phenomenon under investigation, collect rich data, and thoroughly answer the research questions under investigation. As Merriam (1998) states "A case

study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation" (p. 19).

Literature on research methods shows that when the focus is on the research process, case study is the most appropriate design (Merriam, 1998). Accordingly, the current study aimed to thoroughly investigate the process of implementing AfL in Year One and Year Two ESL classes in a selected primary school in Malaysia, so, the researcher adopted qualitative case study design.

Although Merriam's (1998) definition of qualitative case study is in agreement with other definitions, Creswell's (2007) narrow definition might also be helpful for some researchers. He mentioned that:

> Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes (p. 73).

Therefore, based on Creswell's (2007) definition, the case study approach focuses on a bounded system. So in the current study, the researcher focused on Year One and Year Two ESL teachers' implementation of AfL in a selected primary school in Malaysia. Moreover, qualitative case study approach is different from other approaches in that it makes use of various methods of data collection and the flexibility of this approach makes it useful in educational research.

As Merriam (2009) points out, selecting appropriate data collection method highly depends on the aims of the researcher to understand a phenomenon in real-life context. This study aimed to thoroughly investigate how Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers implement classroom questioning and discussion during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback. Since a qualitative case study has flexible format and does not have a particular data collection and analysis method, this

research adopted multiple methods of data collection. Interviews and classroom observations were the main data collection methods. Teachers' lesson plans and other related documents served as secondary data in this study.

According to Yin (2003) "the qualitative case study approach allows the investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (p. 2). He explained further that qualitative case study is the most suitable design "when the boundaries between phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident and multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23).

Whilst the researcher was mainly interested in investigating Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers' AfL practices, understanding their practice was possible only when the researcher could understand the context in which teachers' practices were developed.

Qualitative case study is a suitable approach to answer 'why' and 'how' questions which are good for exploratory study (Yin, 2003). Yin (1989) maintains that case study can be exploratory in nature and "it might be used to explore situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes" (p. 25). In the current study, the researcher aimed to answer 'how' questions, which are frequently asked for case study and exploratory research.

Moreover, the use of qualitative case study is crucial whenever the researcher aims at focusing on a specific educational phenomenon and tries to gain theoretical knowledge and practical insights from analyzing that case, such as Year One and Year Two ESL teachers' implementation of AfL in a primary school in Malaysia. As Freebody (2003) mentions, "Researchers in a variety of professional and practical domains use case studies as a way of conducting and disseminating research to impact upon practice, and to refine the ways in which practice is theorized" (p. 81). Figure 3.1

shows the research design, participants and instruments used for the purpose of this study.
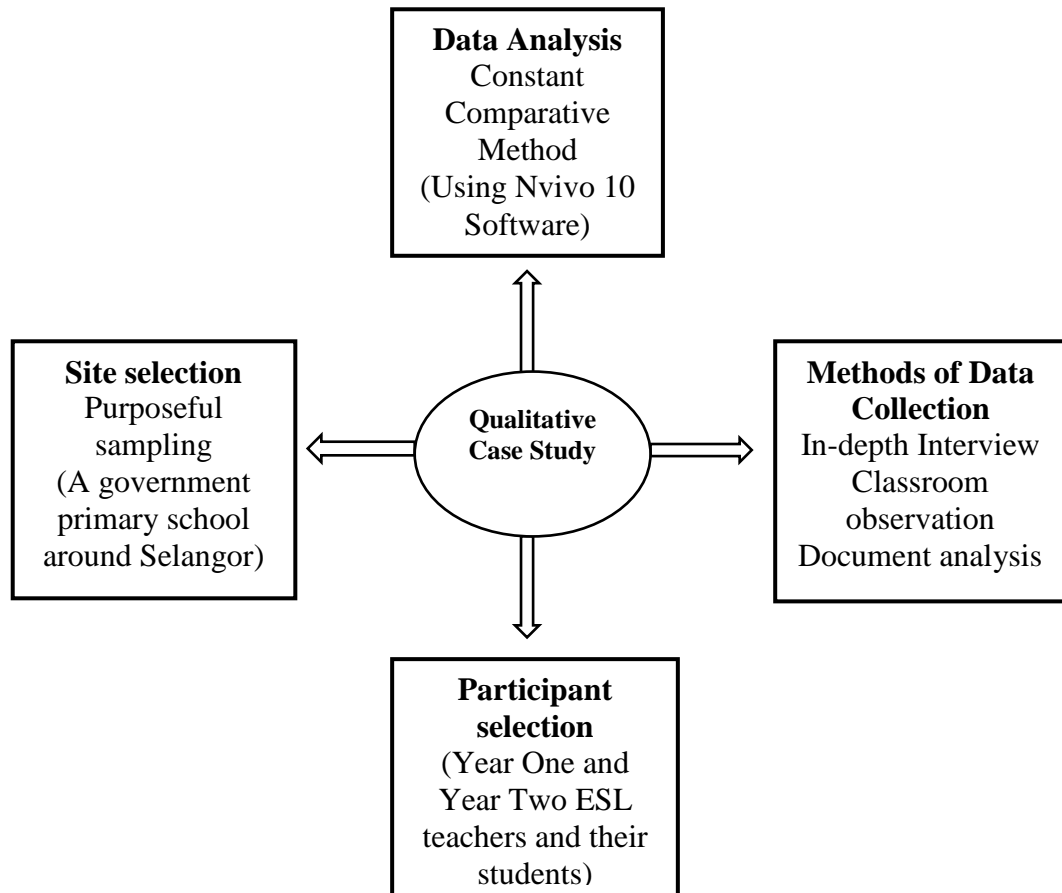
*Figure 3.1.*The research design, participants, and instrumentation for this study

3.5. Research Site and participants

This study took place in a selected government primary school around Selangor. The school was selected using purposive sampling strategy. As put forward by Patton (1990) "the purpose of purposive sampling is to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (p. 169).

The following criteria were used to determine the school:

1. Top-scoring school with a long history of academic excellence in the state of Selangor. The selected school ranked at top 10% among all primary schools in the country during the past few years;

2. School that focuses on 'formative assessment' in its school plan;

3. School in which teachers ascribe students' improvement to modifications in assessment practices in the classroom;

4. School in which teachers are highly inspired to utilize assessment data to reflect on their instruction and students' learning; and also

5. Year One and Year Two English teachers in the selected school should have tenure not less than five years. Moreover, teachers should be directly involved in formative assessment, should have been given training on formative assessment and also willing to take part in this research.

The researcher focused on one primary school that satisfied the criteria to study this case in-depth and gain better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Moreover, some other schools around Selangor also met the selection criteria. The researcher went to these schools to see if the criteria were applicable and Year One and Year Two English teachers of that school were willing to participate in this research. However, a number of teachers whose school met the criteria did not agree to take part in this research. In accordance to the research ethics, those who did not agree were not forced to take part in this research.

The selected school had one Year One ESL teacher teaching two Year One classes (Year 1A and Year 1B) as well as two Year Two ESL teachers (one teaching Year Two A and the other teaching Year Two B). Thus, in the current study we focused on three teachers and their students (N= 100) for the period of at least ten months as generally done by most conventions of ethnographic studies.

Table 3.1

Participants Involved in the Study

Participants	Year One	Year Two
ESL Teachers	1	2
Students	1A = 25	2A = 28
	1B = 19	2B = 28

3.6. Methods of Data Collection: Multi Approaches in Data Collection

As mentioned before, classroom observations and in-depth interviews were the primary methods of data collection in this study. The data were supported by secondary data such as related documents.

3.6.1. Classroom Observations

Classroom observation is one of the important sources of information in qualitative study. According to Nunan (1992), classroom observations provide useful information that help the researcher understand social events in the classroom context. In this study, the researcher used direct observation. Compare to participant observation, direct observation is more focused and observer only observes specific occurrences in the classroom context.

According to Patton (2002) direct observation of situations and people is advantageous for two good reasons. Firstly, direct observation helps the researcher gain a better understanding of the research context. Secondly, direct observation "allows the researcher to be open, discovery oriented and inductive and reduces reliance on pre-conceived notions of the setting" (Patton, 2002, p. 262).

The participants need to be informed that the observation is not a performance evaluation but the aim is to see what is happening in their classroom (Liao, 2003).

Therefore the teachers were told not to perform in a different way on the observation days. The observed teachers received a formal permission letter (Appendix A), that needed their consent signature prior to being observed (Lichtman, 2009). The researcher designed a classroom observation worksheet for the purpose of classroom observations to gather more information on teachers' responses during classroom teaching (Appendix C).

A panel of experts in qualitative research (Appendix D) commented on the observation worksheet to verify the accuracy and appropriateness of each item in the classroom observation worksheet. The purpose was to determine if the instrument content was sufficient to represent an effective sample pertaining to the content domain. Content validation lay in the format of the instrument involving the clarity of instructions and printing, size of type, appropriateness of language, and so on (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007).

To gain a thorough appreciation of the participating teachers' classroom instruction, the ESL teachers' classes (Year One A & B as well as Year Two A & B) were observed by the researcher together with one of her colleagues as a co-observer over a period of 16 weeks, ten periods a week, with every period taking 30 minutes. So, fourty periods of each classroom were observed during sixteen weeks.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2007) pointed out that observers should collect data from different viewpoints through various formats by working "in teams so that they can check each other's observations against another's" since "not only do they prepare extremely detailed fieldnotes, but they attempt to reflect on their own subjectivity as a part of these feildnotes" (p. 453).

Prior to the field observations, the co-observer needed to be instructed for effective observation and tape-recording with the help of a panel of experts concerning practice observations, role-playing demonstration, familiarity with all coding themes

and features in observation sheets, and the handling of the whole observation process (Creswell, 2008; Lichtman, 2009). The number of observations is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Number of Observations Conducted in Each Class

Classes	Number of Observation	Teacher
Year One A	40 periods	Devi
Year One B	40 periods	Devi
Year Two A	40 periods	Izyan
Year Two B	40 periods	Irwan

Then the researcher examined the teachers' lesson plans to see the consistency and distinctiveness of what was planned to actual teaching practices. While observing the lessons, the researcher and co-researcher made anecdotal notes of all the events and interactions that took place in the classroom. All the observation sessions were tape-recorded and transcribed using transcription symbols (Appendix H) for further analysis.

As Bogdan and Biklen (1998) put it "field notes are the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (cited in Zhang, 2008, p. 84). Thus, fieldnotes are taken in the matter of the physical setting of the classroom, the teacher-student interactions, the students' learning tasks, and the teacher-participant's blackboard writing design as well as the fulfillment of observation sheet (Lichtman, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Zhang, 2008).

3.6.2. In-depth Interviews

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998) "interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other" (p. 93, cited in Zhang, 2008, p. 80). Interview is

typically used to reveal participants' internal viewpoints on their behavioral performance (Bartels, 2005).

The interview offers participants an opportunity to express their perspective on a phenomenon (Liao, 2003), that is an important approach to check the accuracy of the information gained through observation, and provides the researcher with opportunity to bridge the gaps in understanding (Patton, 2002).

To achieve validity during the interview, firstly, a harmonious relationship of rapport with the interviewees was established in order to create a friendly atmosphere (Liao, 2003). A formal permission letter (Appendix A) was also sent to the teachers and also participating students' parents for signature.

Secondly, in the process of interviewing, the interviewer avoided asking leading questions and giving possible answers (Liao, 2003). If a certain question was ambiguous then the interviewer paraphrased that question to make sense for the interviewees.

Thirdly, semi-structured interview protocols were designed for the convenience of the teachers and the students to elicit responses to predetermined research questions (Creswell, 2008; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Verma & Mallick, 1999). For the purpose of this study, an interview protocol was designed to interview the participating teacher (Appendix E) and another protocol was designed for students group interviews (Appendix F). Interview questions were formulated in an open-ended way so that an elaborate elucidation from the interviews was apparently stimulated due to the fact that semi-structured questions give participants the opportunity to express what is important to them (Li, 2004). The interview questions were explanatory, contextual and generative in nature and allowed the teacher and students to express their views in detail.

As in the observations, the panel of scholarly qualitative specialists (Appendix D) was kindly invited to provide constructive insights to strengthen the validity of

interviewing. Since English is the second language of the interviewees, the interviews with the teacher were conducted in English. However, considering that the students are not proficient in English and also to gain accurate information, the group interviews with students were conducted in Bahasa Melayu their native language.

In the process of interviewing, Fowler's (1993) five aspects of standardized interview behavior were strictly adhered to, which are (1) to introduce the research purpose and the main aims, (2) to submit questions, (3) to further explore insufficient replies, (4) to keep a record of answers, and (5) to properly handle the issues concerning interpersonal respects of the interviewing (cited in Zhang, 2008). All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed using transcription symbols (Appendix H) for further analysis. Moreover, making phone calls and also chatty conversations were applied to facilitate communication with the participants for further data collection (Tsui, 2003; Woods, 1985).

To develop the interview questions, emphasis was laid on pre-determined themes in order to elicit relevant information from the interviewees, which increased the reliability of the interview (Creswell, 2008; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007).

On the basis of three-interview series structure (Seidman, 1998), three interviews, namely, pre-study interview, pre-observation and post-observation interviews were conducted with the participating teachers. One Mixed ability group of eight students was created by the teachers in each classroom and four group interviews were conducted with the students to gain more data on the teachers' implementation of AfL.

Each of the interviews was conducted by both the researcher and the co-interviewer. The co-interviewer was trained beforehand, to increase the power of the interview and to make herself completely acquainted with all the question items (Creswell, 2008); training encompassed solutions to unexpected cases in the

interviewing process such as interruptions or issues that the interviewees might have on the spot. Therefore, this study maintains the credibility of the data gathered.

3.6.3. Document Analysis

In this study, related documents also provided useful information. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), documents help the researcher understand the broader context that informs the study.

In this study, we used documents in order to support the data from interviews and observations. We made use of documents such as the Year One and Year Two English language syllabus and curriculum, teachers' timetables and lesson plans, students' work and teaching and learning materials. A document summary form developed by the researcher was used for this purpose (Appendix G). The following table shows the list of documents used for the purpose of this study.

Table 3.3
List of Documents

	Document type
1	Teachers' lesson plan
2	Performance standard document (Year One & Year Two)
3	School plan 2012
4	Primary School Curriculum Standard Document (Year One & Year Two)
5	Teacher's guidebook (English Language Year One & Year Two)
6	Students' profile
7	School-based evaluation instrument module
8	Tenth Malaysia plan (2010-2015)

3.7. Phases of Data Collection

It took 10 months to collect the data. Acclimatization period lasted three months, site research took four months to complete, and post research lasted three months.

In Phase One, the researcher went to the selected school and did the meet-the-prospective-respondent session which is important in building trust and rapport between the participants and the researcher. This is to ensure that respondents answer truthfully without uncertainty regarding the research objectives (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994). Thus, phase one of this study was the time when the researcher tried to build good trust and rapport with the respondents.

In Phase Two, the researcher explained the aim of the study to the participants and briefed them on what to do. After the briefing session, in order to establish the context of the teachers' experience, we conducted pre-study interview. Each interview lasted up to 30 minutes. As mentioned in the previous section, to avoid bias in the observation and interview protocols and also to ensure the relevancy of questions a panel of experts (Appendix D) checked these protocols.

In Phase Three, the pre-observation interviews were conducted. The purpose of pre-observation interview was to gain information about how teachers implement the lesson in their classrooms. Each pre-observation interview lasted up to one hour.

In Phase Four of the study, the participating teachers' classrooms (Year 1A & B and Year 2A & B) were observed over the period of 16 weeks, ten periods a week, with every period taking 30 minutes to gain detailed information of actual teaching practices. We observed the classes as direct observers. The information obtained from observation sessions helped the researcher to develop more discussion topics during post-observation interview.

During Phase Five of the study, we conducted post-observation interviews. The participating teachers were interviewed up to one hour. Post-observation interview

helped the researcher to gain more detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation. It was assumed that teachers feel more relaxed during post-observation interview. They could express their idea better and clarify vague answers given during the first interview. It should be mentioned that, it was planned that interview sessions could be extended to as many as needed.

In the sixth Phase of the study, four group interviews were conducted with students in four classes (one group interview with each class) to obtain more information on the teacher's implementation of AfL strategies. Each mixed ability group consisted of eight students selected by the teachers themselves.

And finally, during the last phase of the study, data verification was done before and after the analysis. The researcher went to the school to check the raw data as well as the codes with the participants and when they agreed to the analyzed data, the researcher started to write the results of the study.

It should be mentioned that the researcher explicitly explained the purpose of the study. Some guidelines of ethics of research were also read out during the meet-the-prospective-respondent session to assure the respondents that confidentiality of data collected will be maintained. Finally the researcher personally thanked all the teachers involved in the study.

After having discussed some procedures, now we turn our attention to how data were analyzed in this study. Figure 3.1 shows phases of data collection in this study.
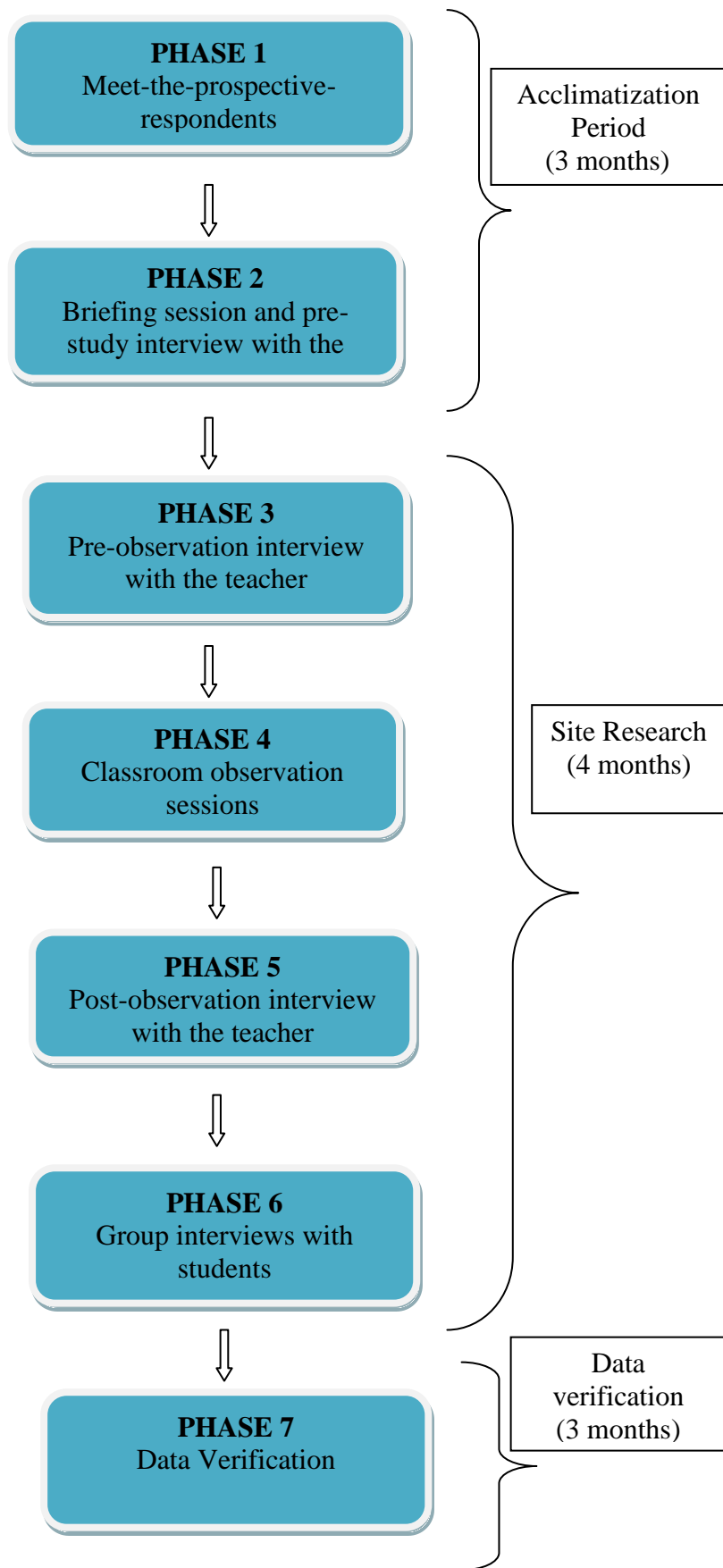
Figure 3.2. Phases of data collection.

3.8. Data Analysis

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), qualitative data analysis is a process of "working with the data, organizing it, breaking the data into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (p. 145). In this study the researcher followed Creswell's (2008) six steps in analyzing and interpreting qualitative data to ensure systematic analysis of the data obtained from interviews, classroom observations and document analysis. These steps include "preparing and organizing the data, exploring and coding the database, describing findings and forming themes, representing and reporting findings, interpreting the meaning of the findings, and validating the accuracy of the findings" (p. 244).

As this is not a canonical study, therefore the researcher analyzed and thematized the data in her writing-up. The data for this study involved observational data consisting of observational transcripts, audio-taped recordings, fieldnotes, classroom observation sheet, and the data from interviews consisting of teacher's and students' interview protocols, audio-taped recordings of interviews and interview transcripts as well as the results of document analysis.

The data collection and analysis were done simultaneously (Patton, 2002). So, information from the first observation and interview could be used to refine interview questions and helped me ask questions specific to the experience of the teacher.

In the current study, the researcher applied Nvivo 10 software to analyze the data using the constant comparative method. In the first phase of data analysis that is called 'open coding' the researcher read through all the transcriptions to develop the codes. During the process of open coding, the data is broken apart in an analytical way which leads to a grounded conceptualization (Strauss, 1987). Many codes were developed in this phase.

In the second stage which is axial coding, the researcher put the codes into conceptual categories and made relationship between subcategories and categories to make the data manageable. Then, in the third phase, the core categories that have emerged from the axial coding helped the researcher to refine the interview questions and gain more relevant data from interviews, observations and documents. However, as the analysis progressed, the initial codes were reclassified and the emergent themes were reformulated to find the final categories and summarize the data collected during 10 months in the selected school. A sample of the process of open coding applied in analyzing the data is shown in Appendix L.

It should be mentioned that, in Chapter 4, the pattern of social interaction among students and between teacher and students is illustrated in sociogram that is a diagram to depict pattern and structure of interactions at a specific point in time.

Patton (2002, p. 14) suggests that "in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument", meaning that in qualitative research the trustworthiness relies on the "skills, competency and rigor" of the researcher.

3.9. Ethical Guidelines

In order to minimize the ethical issues, the participants were exposed to the research objectives, the significance of their cooperation and the procedure of their participation, providing informed permission letter and keeping all the information confidential to ensure that the participants were unidentifiable throughout the study (Creswell, 2008).

As mentioned in passing, an informed permission letter (Appendix A) that provided the relevant information for participants was given to the principal of the selected school, the participating teachers throughout the study process as well as the students' parents. Moreover, in order to conduct this study, the researcher obtained

approval from University of Malaya before proceeding with data collection and analysis. The researcher also got permission from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and state education department. All the approval letters are attached as appendix B.

The most efficient way to collect data is to apply a camcorder since it is a lot less distracting than making notes in the field and provides a verbatim record of the response information (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010). The memory of most observers usually is not reliable enough for meaningful research, thus a coding system involving video-recording what is observed is the best solution (Ary et al., 2010). So in the observations, the researcher should ask for permission from the participating teachers whether or not they are ready to be video recorded (Lichtman, 2009). However, the participants in this study did not agree to be video recorded; therefore the researcher tape-recorded the events during observations and interviews and this was to abide to the rules of research ethics.

Lack of a mutual reliable rapport between the researcher and participants is an important ethical issue in interviewing (Lichtman, 2009). Therefore, in this study, the researcher kept in constant contact with the selected participants. When the researcher is regarded as a close friend, the participants would trust the researcher and might forget that a research study is in progress (Ary et al., 2010).

Before and during the report process of this study, the researcher ensured the participants' anonymity and confidentiality and used "pseudonyms or code numbers to keep track of what information come from whom without revealing identities" (Ary et al., 2010, p. 484). Moreover, participants took part in this study on a voluntary basis so they could withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences.

During the data collection, the participants were ensured individual emotions, values, outlooks, as well as various needs rather than only 'participants' for the

research, and the obtained data in relation to the study were not shared with others outside of the research study (Creswell, 2008).

3.10. Validity and Reliability

With its focus on a specific context and process, case study is so unique. Thus, it is not generalizable to other contexts to ensure reliability. It is also undeniable that researchers' bias might have influenced the data. However, in this study the researcher adopted some strategies to enhance validity and reliability.

Many researchers urge the use of various data collection methods, to reduce bias and to strengthen the research design (Patton, 2002). Using multiple methods to collect data intensifies the validity and trustworthiness (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Goldman-Segall, 1995; Merriam, 2009). Therefore, in this study the researcher adopted various data collection methods, namely, classroom observation, interviews and analysis of relevant documents. The researcher tried her best to avoid bias by ensuring objectivity in interpreting the data. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) mentioned that comprehensive and illustrative fieldnotes that consist of researchers' reflections on their own bias and subjectivity determine the accuracy of the data.

Member check was another strategy used to ensure the credibility of the study (Merriam, 2009). To this end, during the transcription of the data, four different 'checkers' were used in order to ensure the reliability of the transcription before subjecting data to the coding processes. When coding was done a second coder checked the codes to minimize researcher bias to a greater extent. Also, the participants were later called for another session to read the coding of the data and when they agreed to the analyzed data, then only the researcher started to write the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents and discusses the findings of the current study which were obtained from the respondents in a selected primary school in the state of Selangor, Malaysia. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the qualitative case study method was adopted to collect rich data and thoroughly answer the research questions of the study. It should be mentioned that although the data collected and analyzed should be taken critically in order to investigate the phenomenon of AfL, we should also consider that 'generalization' as the aim of many quantitative researches, is not the main aim of this study- the aim of this study is to explore and describe the case of only one selected school (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The aim of this chapter is to describe and understand Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers' implementation of AfL in a selected school. The analysis of data encompasses Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers' implementation of AfL strategies of classroom questioning, classroom discussion and formative feedback to provide a holistic picture of the implementation of AfL in the Malaysian sociocultural context and answer the following research questions posed at the onset of the study:

1. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement classroom questioning during AfL?

2. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement AfL through classroom discussion?

3. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers provide students with formative feedback?

To answer these three research questions, the researcher examined and analyzed the data using the constant comparative method. It is worth mentioning that, since the current research highlights Year One and Year Two ESL teachers' implementation of AfL in a selected primary school, to enhance anonymity, the identities of the selected school and the participants have been coded. Let us start with the profile of the selected school and the respondents (4.2) before we move on to the next part to answer the research questions (4.3).

4.2. Profile of the Selected School and the Respondents

Intending to comprehensively understand ESL teachers' implementation of AfL from the perspective of social constructivism, this qualitative case study focused on one primary school. Established in 1961, school X is a small government primary school located in a city in the state of Selangor, Malaysia. This school has been ranked among the top ten percent in Malaysia over the past few years.

The school building is surrounded by several houses and apartment buildings and consists of two main building blocks of two-story high in a light blue color, sports complex, canteen building, and a prayer room. There are two classes at each grade level and each class consists of 18 to 30 pupils. School X also has two staff rooms, principal's office, computer lab, library, science laboratory, as well as four classes for extra-curricular activities such as music and art classes, and health care room.

All the administrative staff as well as 37 teachers teaching in this school are employed permanently by the MOE, Malaysia. The students' population in School X is 312 including both male and female students aged between 7-12 years. Demographically, students are from different social and economic backgrounds. Therefore, they are characterized by different learning styles and abilities.

In line with the transformation of the National Education Assessment System (NEAS) and the introduction of the new assessment system as well as the new primary school standard curriculum (KSSR), AfL is being implemented in this school since 2011. AfL is planned, developed and conducted by teachers during the teaching and learning process to improve students' learning, identify their weaknesses, increase their self-esteem, and revise teaching strategies (Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia, 2011).

Based on the new assessment system, no summative assessment should be carried out, except when students move up to Year Six they have to sit for the UPSR. But alongside instructions on PBS, the MOE has explained that this is subject to change according to the school principal. "So if the principal insists on having exam at the end of the year then teachers should conduct summative assessment as well" (Izyan, Interview). Here, we can see the flexibility or autonomous decision making by the school principal in implementing the new assessment system and it can be inferred that this is the principal who decides whether to have only formative assessment or a mixture of formative and summative.

However, if they decide to conduct mid-term and end-of-the-year exams, these exams should be designed based on the descriptors highlighted in the standard document. Year One students in school X have to sit for the final year exam and Year Two students have both mid-term and final exams:

> Because the principal believes that in mid-term and final year exams, teachers assess whatever they need to assess during formative assessment, things that they have assessed, they just put it in the final year paper and it is like re-assessing the students to see whether or not they really get the idea of what they have learned earlier. (Irwan, Interview).

Therefore, through summative assessment teachers assess what they have practiced previously during the year and give marks to the students. "It is just like reinforcement. The students receive marks and their marks indicate their level of

understanding of the topics" (Irwan, Interview). The mentioning of the word 'believe' just now is not a data driven act or does not mean that the principal makes decision or takes actions without any education data from the school to support the implementation of their assessment methods. In other words, school principal makes decisions based on the school context information (Informal interview with the headmaster of the school).

In accordance with the new assessment system, in school X, teachers are highly encouraged to conduct AfL to improve students' learning and adjust their own instruction. AfL, hence, is currently carried out by Year One and Year Two teachers. As mentioned in the school plan, teachers should act as facilitators in the classroom, observe students, elicit information about students' learning and give them feedback to enhance learning.

Teachers assess students based on performance standards set according to the levels of achievement (Table 4.1) as prescribed in the curriculum document.

Table 4.1

Performance Standard

	6	Know, Understand and Able to do in an exemplar manner
	5	Know, Understand and Able to do in an admirable manner
	4	Know, Understand and Able to do in a systematic manner
	3	Know, Understand and Able to do
	2	Know and Understand
	1	Know

Source. Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia (2011).

As shown in Table 4.1, there are six levels of achievement; these levels are called bands. To achieve Band One, students should know basic knowledge or should be able to perform basic skills or respond to basic things. Band Two requires students to be able

to change information from one mode to another. Students fall under Band Three if they are able to use knowledge to perform basic skills in a situation. To achieve Band Four, students should be able to perform the four language skills in the appropriate procedure or in a systematic manner. Band Five requires students to be able to perform in a new situation, using the appropriate procedure or in a systematic manner. Finally, in order to achieve Band Six, students need to be able to perform in a new situation, using the correct procedure or in a systematic manner, and they should also be able to be an exemplar (Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia, 2011).

Table 4.2 shows formative assessment or Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah (PBS) operating table for year 2012. In school X, teachers follow this timetable to implement the new assessment system. They use worksheets and different kinds of activities to assess students based on the performance standards highlighted in the standard document.

Teachers might use ready-made worksheets or they can use self-designed worksheets. They are free to incorporate their creativity during the teaching and learning process in order to design different tasks and activities to assess students relative to the standards. In short, school flexibility and the freedom given to principals might result in successful implementation of any innovation on the school-wide level.

According to Table 4.2, after distributing the PBS instruction letter, there would be a meeting regarding the implementation of formative assessment. This meeting is held four times a year. Then, Assessment Management System or Sistem Pengurusan Pentaksiran (SPPBS) registration should be done. Teachers implement formative assessment during the year and collect information on students' level of achievement in the online system. SPPBS generates a report of each student's achievement during the year and parents can ask teachers for their child's achievement report whenever they need it.

Table 4.2

School X PBS Operating Table 2012

Number	Event	Time	Action
1	Letter of instruction for implementing PBS to the State Education Department (JPN)	December 2011	LP
2	Distributing letter of instruction for implementing PBS to the District Education Office (PPD) and school	December 2011	JPN
3	PBS committee meeting	January, April, August, and December	JPN/PPD/School
4	SPPBS registration (Year One 2012) Registration updates SPPBS (Year Two 2012)	January- February	School
5	PBS implementation period	Throughout the school session 2012	School
6	Quality assurance activities: mentoring, monitoring, and detection	During the year 2012	School/PPD/JPN /MOE
7	Collection of student scores in SPPBS	During the year 2012	School
8	Reporting pupils' scores	According to the needs (upon request)	School

Source. School Plan 2012.

Given the research scope of this study, in order to investigate ESL teachers' implementation of AfL, the researcher visited the school to meet the prospective respondents. The principal welcomed the researcher and asked some questions about the

purpose of the study. The researcher gave him some explanations on the nature of the research as well as the importance of the results.

There were two Year One and two Year Two classes in school X. One teacher was teaching both Year One A and Year One B classes. And Year Two A and B were taught by two other teachers. Table 4.3 shows the particularities of the participating teachers.

Table 4.3

The Particularities of the Teachers

pseudonym	Age	Years of teaching Experience	Education	PBS training course	Position in School
Devi	32	10	BA in TESL from Open University of Malaysia	Attended a course in 2010	English teacher/ Head of school PBS committee
Izyan	30	6	BA in teaching English as a foreign language to primary school children from Queensland University of Technology, Australia	Attended a course in 2012	English teacher
Irwan	30	7	BA in TESL from University of Malaya/ Master student in TESL at University of Malaya	Attended a course in 2011	English Teacher

The principal called these three teachers to arrange an appointment so that the researcher could meet them in person. He was so willing to help the researcher conduct the study and stated that this would be a fruitful research and the results would help

teachers implement AfL effectively. A few days later the researcher came back to the school to meet Year One and Year Two ESL teachers.

Irwan and Izyan enthusiastically agreed to take part in the study. Izyan stated that she had attended an AfL course when she was doing a degree in TESL at Queensland University of Technology and she was somehow familiar with the concept. The other Year Two teacher, Irwan, highlighted the importance of ongoing assessment and its effectiveness in student learning.

Devi, the Year One teacher, was a little reluctant to take part; however, when the researcher explained to her about the importance of her participation and assured her about the confidentiality of the data, she agreed to be involved in the study.

When the researcher asked the teachers about the training courses and workshops they had attended on AfL, they mentioned that they had only attended a three day course held by the MOE and they still need to learn about formative assessment. They were so keen to learn about the effective implementation of AfL in their classrooms. As one of the teachers stated:

> We need to learn practical techniques for implementing formative assessment. In training courses they just provide us with some explanation on what we have to do next year. They briefly explain to us the curriculum standards and how to write lesson plan. The focus is mostly on what is new in curriculum standards compare to the KBSR and not on the implementation of the new assessment system (Devi, Interview).

As the statement above shows, the training courses held by the MOE do not give teachers a clear picture of how to use AfL in their classrooms. Teachers are only exposed to some general information about the textbook and the new curriculum. They need to learn practical ways of implementing AfL. In other words, training courses should provide teachers with practical examples of how to implement AfL strategies based on the content of the textbooks.

The participating teachers had a general understanding of AfL. Table 4.4 shows a brief summary of the similarities and differences of Devi, Izyan and Irwan in their implementations of AfL strategies of classroom discussion, classroom questioning, and formative feedback in their classrooms.

Table 4.4

Profiling the Teachers' Implementation of AfL strategies

	Devi	Izyan	Irwan
RQ1	Asking plenty of questions especially while teaching listening and speaking skills Asking lower cognitive level questioning Devi recognized that the type of questions highly depended on the topic she aimed to teach	Questioning is the central feature of classroom practice low-level questioning probing questions is not used She understands the principles of questioning during AfL but she cannot implement it successfully	Asking questions to find students' weaknesess Strategic questions is not asked by the teacher Asking pseudo questions Repeating and rewording the questions
RQ2	Teacher controlled discussions The teacher had difficulty keeping the discussion on topic	Teacher focused Some specific students dominated the discussions Not attentive to all students' responses	The teacher was the only question asker during the discussions Asking clued questions during the discussions
RQ3	One way transmission of feedback has little knowledge of what feedback is and its importance	No dialogic feedback is given to the students understands the principles of feedback but doesnot give feedback that leads to increased engagement	little constructive feedback praises the students but do not understand the principles of formative feedback

As can be seen from the table, Devi, Irwan, Izyan were almost on the same level of understanding of the implementation of AfL. According to this table, the participating teachers asked large number of questions in their classrooms. However, they mostly asked low level questions. Strategic questions were not used to provoke thoughtful reflection. For instance, Izyan had a good understanding of questioning technique but she was unable to implement it well. Devi asked many questions during listening and speaking but the questions only required the students to recall knowledge of facts. And Irwan asked pseudo questions in his classroom; yet, this question type only required one specific answer.

The discussions were teacher focused and only certain students dominated the discussions. Among the teachers, Devi had difficulty keeping the discussions on topic. It was observed that Izyan was not attentive to all students' responses. And Irwan was observed to ask a lot of clued questions during the discussions.

The teachers rarely gave constructive feedback to their students. Devi had little knowledge of formative feedback and its role in student learning. On the contrary, Izyan was aware of the importance of formative feedback, however, this feedback type was seldom given to the students. Irwan, the year Two A teacher, praised his students more often but did not have a good appreciation of effective feedback in AfL classrooms.

After meeting the teachers and building rapport with them the researcher was allowed to start collecting data.

4.3. Findings and Discussions

To answer these three research questions on the participating teachers' implementation of AfL in a primary school ESL context, in this section the researcher presents the data based on the analysis of classroom observations and interviews with the teachers and the students as well as the relevant documents. It should be mentioned

that in the observation extracts 'T' represents the teacher, and 'S' represents the student. In a similar vein, in group interview transcripts 'I' represents the Interviewer, 'S' is the indicator of an individual student and 'Ss' represents students.

4.3.1. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement classroom questioning during AfL?

"Questioning is a key component of ongoing learning and sound reasoning that are highlighted in the new syllabus, therefore, its effective implementation is of great importance" (Izyan, Interview).

Below, the researcher explains the themes that emerged from the data to answer the first research question- How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement classroom questioning during AfL?

4.3.1.1. Questioning Students Oftentimes

In an AfL classroom, questioning technique is not merely a pedagogical tool to elicit evidence of students' understanding but also a means to improve their understanding. The participating teachers were aware that AfL strategies such as classroom questioning had the potential to help them recognize pupils' level of understanding. As one of the teachers put forth:

> Asking questions of the students during formative assessment helps me know if they understand what I am teaching or not. I ask questions in the classroom. For example, I ask them to spell or pronounce a word or I may ask them to tell me the name of each finger in English. If they cannot answer my questions I need to correct them and teach them again. (Devi, Interview).

The above statement points to the fact that the teachers employed questioning to gauge students' understanding of each topic. If the students were able to answer the questions correctly, the teachers made sure they have learned. The results of the data

analysis showed that questioning technique was one of the main instructional and assessment strategies the participating teachers used in their classrooms.

The data revealed that Devi, Irwan and Izyan asked questions to build a learning community and guide the students into the preferred practices. The teachers asked many questions of their students when teaching a topic and also by giving them worksheets (question sheets) to complete, mainly to ensure their understanding.

4.3.1.1a. Questioning When Teaching a Topic

The participating teachers considered questioning technique as an important instructional and learning stimulus. They asked plenty of questions while delivering a lesson and it was the central feature of their classroom community of practice. As one of the teachers explained, "It is important to ask questions in order to effectively convey the lesson content and elicit students' understanding" (Irwan, Interview). These teachers recognized the importance of questioning technique in the teaching and learning process.

Devi, the Year One teacher, asked lots of questions based on the topic she wanted to impart to the students:

> Depending on the topic, I frequently ask questions in my classroom. When I want to start teaching a topic I ask questions. I also ask my students questions during and after teaching the lesson. So I can say that I ask questions all the time- before, during and after teaching (Devi, Interview).

Therefore, depending on the nature of the topic of the lesson and activities, to conduct a lesson Devi resorted to questioning technique. She usually asked a few questions before teaching a new topic to make her students think about the topic. She kept asking questions while teaching the topic and finally after teaching the topic she closed the lesson employing questioning technique. As the results indicated, Devi used questioning mainly as a means to check the students' understanding. She added that:

I ask questions to see if the students can give correct answers to the questions or not. Let's say if they give the right answer it shows that they understand. So they are aware that when they answer my questions correctly, I know that they have learned (Devi, Interview).

This statement was confirmed by Devi's students. In the following episode, the students mentioned that their teacher asked them many questions in the classroom.

I: How does your teacher ask you questions?

S$_2$: She always asks questions.

S$_4$: During her teaching

S$_2$: We also have to write

I: What do you need to write?

S$_2$: Answer question sheets

S$_6$: Activity book

I: O.K during her teaching, she would stop and ask you question. You also have to complete worksheets and answer questions in your activity book.

(Year One A students, Group interview)

The students recognized that their teacher consistently asked questions when teaching them a topic and also gave them worksheets (question sheets) to complete. They were aware that their responses to the questions were indicators of their level of understanding.

Irwan, the Year Two A teacher, also used questioning technique. He asked questions of the students almost every time he taught them a lesson. Irwan recognized that asking questions played a crucial role in students' learning and helped them learn better. He asked questions to find out his students' weaknesses and retaught them if they could not give the correct answer. "I ask questions during the lesson and if some students do not understand, I teach them again so that they can understand" (Irwan, Interview).

The Year Two B teacher, Izyan, used questions whenever she intended to teach a topic. She asked questions to ensure students' learning before moving to the next topic. "Depending on the topic I want to teach, I usually start teaching by asking questions. After I teach the lesson I ask them what I have taught then only I move to the next lesson" (Izyan, Interview).

According to the new English syllabus, teachers need to help their students promote higher order thinking skills and become the owners of their own learning. To achieve these objectives, the participating teachers formulated their questions based on the topic they were planning to teach as well as the objectives emphasized in the standard document. As Devi mentioned "we focus on the curriculum specifications and then based on that we check our textbook. So we ask questions of our students based on the topic in the textbook and the objectives mentioned in the standard document" (Devi, Interview).

Based on the new syllabus, Year One and Year Two consist of four modules, namely, listening and speaking, reading, writing and language arts.

Teachers start with listening and speaking, then reading and the third skill is writing. Finally, after teaching writing they focus on language arts. Teachers cover each topic within two weeks. Normally, for listening and speaking the total period is ten periods and teachers ask many questions while teaching this skill.

(Researcher field observation)

To teach listening and speaking, Devi played the recording of the dialogue in the textbook and asked the students to listen carefully. Then she started asking WH-questions. Also, sometimes she played poison box game with the students. The poison box was passed around the classroom and the student who received it, had to answer the question.

If they are able to answer, I tick the boxes on the assessment evidence to show that the student is able to answer WH- questions. I use the same technique when I teach them reading. After reading a passage I ask them WH- questions (Devi, Interview).

Irwan employed questioning technique when teaching a lesson or by giving worksheets to the students. He pinpointed that "question types asked by the teacher rely on the skill she/he intends to teach" (Irwan, Interview). He mostly used worksheets to assess reading and writing skills. Moreover, he usually asked WH- and true or false questions when teaching listening and speaking as well as reading skills:

> To assess listening I usually ask WH- questions based on what the students have listened. I usually assess them through worksheets. For example, I write some sentences and ask the students to rearrange the sentences based on the passage they have read. Or I may give them some sentence strips and ask them to rewrite the sentences but that is for writing, normally to assess reading I ask them WH- questions or true or false questions. Sentence strips I just do it as an activity and they have to arrange sentence strips according to the passage they have read (Irwan, Interview).

Izyan found that asking questions during a lesson could help students generate more ideas. Most of the time, she asked her students questions based on listening and speaking skills, especially while teaching stories and songs, to help them improve their listening and speaking. She asked questions about story or song and students had to recall and answer the questions:

> Okay let's say when I read them a story I do not just read the story and just go from beginning to the end. I ask questions related to the story. So they start giving ideas ok see … will see whose idea is correct. It is just like they compete with each other to give the right answer. That is when I teach them a story. Let's say if we do songs for example a song about animals. I ask them to tell me the name of the animals in the song. So they try to recall what they have heard. Things like that. I think most of the time I ask them questions when teaching listening and speaking (Izyan, Interview).

Izyan's statement indicates that the aim of teachers' questioning while teaching stories and songs is to make students brainstorm ideas to find the correct answer to the questions posed by their teacher. They can interact with each other, comment on their peers responses and come up with the correct answer.

4.3.1.1b. Asking Questions by Giving Worksheet (Question Sheet) to the Students

The result showed that although the teachers used questioning technique when teaching a lesson, they mainly assessed students' learning by asking questions through worksheets (question sheets) at the end of each instruction period and it was considered as a kind of self-assessment. Worksheets were generally regarded as evidence of students' learning and indicated whether or not they could achieve a particular band. To keep track of students' level of achievement, the teachers kept these evidences in the students' profiles.

Devi usually searched the internet to find examples of worksheets suitable for her students' level. Since her Year One students were mixed ability students, she gave them simple evidences so that they could do the activity, answer the questions and achieve the band. If the students were unable to do the task and answer the questions she taught them again and repeated the assessment.

I give them exercises to see whether they can do the exercises or not. If they are not able to do, I will repeat or we have discussion and then I give them another exercise to do. I teach them the same topic again and do the assessment again (Devi, Interview).

Usually at the end of each lesson, Irwan photocopied a question sheet and gave it to his students to complete. Upon completion, he collected the question sheets and marked them accordingly. In the next lesson, those who had given the wrong answers to the questions were asked to do the same task again after guidance was given by the teacher.

Normally after I teach students a topic, I give them question sheets to check their understanding. PBS is continuous but it depends on teacher and how they manage a topic. If the students are not able to do the activity I may make it simpler or guide them to do it (Irwan, Interview).

To assess reading, writing and other language skills Izyan generally used question sheets and activities designed and developed by herself. She occasionally used ready-made activity books because sometimes she found the questions and activities in ready-made activity books not suitable for her students' level of ability, therefore, she preferred to build her own activities, tasks and question sheets.

I like to test my students based on what I have taught them. I won't test them based on things that I have never taught before. The skills are the same but the items I am assessing is not there so I just use certain things from the activity books that I've bought from outside. Activities that are suitable for the students (Izyan, Interview).

She found out that worksheets should be visual and not too wordy. Moreover, questions worksheets should not be too difficult for the students because "if questions are difficult for them to answer they can get demotivated very easily" (Izyan, Interview).

It was also evident in students' discussion that their teachers gave them lots of worksheets (question sheets) to complete and asked many questions in the classroom. The students knew that they had to answer the questions sheets after each instruction period.

I: how does your teacher ask you questions?
S_5: she gives us papers
S_2: asks us to finish the task
S_8: worksheet

(Year One B class, Group interview)

The following extract shows that Year One students were complaining that their teacher gave them too many worksheets to do:

Extract 1

OC- The teacher is teaching the new topic. Then after that students have to complete worksheets.

T: Now I give you this paper |

OC- T distributing the worksheets

S$_3$: Teacher, nak buat apa? [Teacher, what are we going to do?]

S$_{14}$: Woah, banyak. [Wow that is a lot.]

S$_8$: Teacher, banyak kan. [Teacher, so many.]

As the above extract shows, after she finished teaching the lesson, Devi explained to the students that they should answer the questions worksheets she was distributing among them. The students had to complete four worksheets at the same time on their own.

The data revealed that the teachers asked many questions using worksheets or question sheets. They usually asked their students to complete two or three worksheets simultaneously. While doing the activities and answering the questions, the students were not allowed to ask their friends or look into their books and they had to do it individually. Completing several question sheets individually, did not enhance the students' engagement in classroom questioning. The students were not engaged in the process of peer-assessment and did not receive feedback on their work.

In an AfL classroom, questioning technique plays a key role in identifying and bridging students' learning gap. In line with many researchers (e.g., Almeida et al., 2008; Chin & Osborne, 2008; Graesser & Olde, 2003) who acknowledged the importance of questioning as an effective learning and instruction strategy and also consistent with the study conducted by Black et al. (2003) which found questioning to

be an integral aspect of AfL, the participating teachers in this study recognized questioning as an integral component of AfL and asked many questions of their students in order to build a learning community.

Proper questioning strategies and techniques help students enhance their learning. The results indicated that teachers in this study knew the value of questioning during AfL and asked many questions in their classroom. They formulated their questions based on the topic they planned to teach as well as the performance standards highlighted in the standard document.

The data from this study confirm the findings of other studies which revealed that teachers ask lots of questions in their classrooms (Floyd, 1960; Levin & Long, 1981). The results showed that the teachers asked countless questions when teaching a lesson or by giving question sheets to the students but they mostly asked lower cognitive level questions that did not provoke thoughtful reflection.

This finding is parallel with that of Brown and Edmondson (1985) as well as Cooper (2010) who found that teachers more often implement questioning technique in their classroom but they mostly ask factual questions that do not improve learning. According to the current study's findings, simply asking a large number of questions of the students does not help them learn complicated concepts and does not enhance learner autonomy that is the main focus of AfL.

Frequently asking questions as the data in this study revealed, only helped students to recall facts. The teachers need to ask less questions but better questions. They need to ask higher cognitive level questions that require higher order thinking skills and encourage students to engage in classroom questioning, collaborate with their teachers and peers, and develop understanding. In the next section, the researcher will discuss the question types asked by the participating teachers.

4.3.1.2. Question Types: Teachers mostly ask lower cognitive level questions to check students' knowledge and understanding

As suggested by Sullivan and Liburn (2004), proper questioning techniques and strategies employed by teachers require students to think beyond factual remembering. Based on the socio-cultural theory, Wenger (1998) suggests that questioning involves learning new knowledge where experience is important and the sharing of meanings during the questioning sessions could enhance students' learning success rates. However, this rarely happened in the participating teachers' classrooms. It is postulated that proper questioning strategies during AfL can help students learn with better understanding.

The participating teachers frequently used questioning technique in their classrooms but the questions they asked in their mixed ability classes were mostly lower cognitive level questions. Based on the literature review this is not in agreement with the principles of social constructivism.

The Year One teacher, Devi, asked questions as she entered the class. She usually asked questions about time and date, before teaching a topic. Then while teaching she asked questions relevant to the topic. "My always ask questions are 'what day is today?' and 'what date is today? Then I start teaching the new topic" (Devi, Interview). However, the data showed that most of the questions Devi asked were lower cognitive level questions. The question types used by this teacher are explained below:

Devi asked the students to listen to her carefully. She wanted to teach the new lesson but did not mention anything about the lesson and the new topic beforehand. She started to draw the picture of a human's hand on the whiteboard. Students were sitting at their desks quietly looking at the whiteboard. The teacher finished drawing and started writing the name of each finger on the picture. Then she looked at the students and opened the lesson using questioning technique.

Extract 2

T: Class, do you know that every finge+r what? Has a na+me O.K? Each of this –
has a name ok like this one.
What do we call this one? In Bahasa Melayu what do we call this one?

Ss: Ibu jari

T: Ibu jari. In English what do we call? What do we call this one? What do we
call? Ibu jari, this one here
Thum..? thum? Who wants to answer?
Irfan, thum what? Thumb? Thumpa who else?

S$_5$: Tampal

T: Tampal? No+
This is what we ca+ll thumbkin

Ss: Thumbkin

T: Thumbkin

Ss: Thumbkin

T: O.K where is thumbkin? Show me your thumbkin. No no show me your
thumbkin everyone. Alif show me your thumbkin. What is thumbkin, Class?
[Apatu thumbkin?]

Ss: Jari

S$_2$: Jari tangan

T: Jari tangan?

Ss: Ibu jari

T: Ibu- So thu+mbkin or ibu ja+ri.

In the extract above, the teacher used an opening question to start the dialogue
with the students. She addressed the question "Class, do you know that every finger
what? Has na+mes O.K?" to all the students but it seemed that Devi did not expect them
to respond because after posing the question, she did not wait for the students to give an
answer. Maybe by posing this question, the teacher was only seeking for the students'
non-verbal reaction to start the lesson. This opening question was a closed question
which only required 'yes' or 'no' answer on the part of the learners and did not provoke
thinking.

In the next turn, the teacher pointed to one of the fingers in the picture and asked
the students "what is it called?" As can be seen in the extract, without waiting for the

students to answer the question, she rephrased it and asked the students to translate the name of that particular finger into Bahasa Melayu. This question was also an example of closed questions Devi usually used in her classroom.

In the subsequent question she asked the students to respond to the same question in English. One of the students gave the wrong answer and thereupon the teacher herself immediately answered the question without waiting for other students to provide an answer and without giving some clues to the students to help them answer the question. When Devi provided the students with the correct response, all of the students repeated the answer and afterwards the teacher asked them to show their thumb in order to help them memorize the word.

This extract is a good example of how Devi asked closed, display question type in her classrooms. Questions of this type often required a very short-specific response and did not provoke thoughtful reflection. Based on Bloom's (1956) classification of question types, the questions asked by Devi in the above extract were lower cognitive level questions that only determined the students' level of knowledge. The students needed to remember the name of particular things such as the name of each finger to answer the questions. This question type had one specific answer and did not help students improve higher order thinking skills as expected in the new syllabus.

Devi continued the lesson by calling a student to come to the whiteboard. Then she asked him a question to gauge his understanding on the topic.

Extract 3

T: O.K so | Alif come here. Come here, Alif

S_{15}: Alif

T: From this picture do you think which one is thumbkin? [Daripada gambar ni yang mana satu thumbkin?]

S_{15}: Thumbkin ini. [This is thumbkin.]

T: O.K

In the above extract, the teacher was asking recall questions to ensure that all students have learned the name of each finger. These questions were also examples of closed questions that only required the students to display knowledge and recall what they have learned.

Devi recognized that the type of questions highly depended on the topic she aimed to teach. For example, she usually asked true or false questions to assess listening skill. "They listen to a textbook passage or a passage designed by myself and then after that I give them true or false questions to see whether they understand the passage or not" (Devi, Interview). However, this question type only encouraged students to recall facts. Devi asked true/false questions using worksheets and the students had to answer the questions based on the given passage (see Appendix M). To answer true/false questions, the students only needed to recall information from the listening passage.

Depending on the topic as well as syllabus specification objectives, Devi often asked WH- questions. "I usually ask WH- questions in my classroom but I think all types of questions related to the topic, even the simple ones are effective. Because it makes the students think and recall knowledge to answer my questions" (Devi, Interview). She found out that WH- questions were effective in students' learning and helped students think and use their prior knowledge to answer the question. The following extracts are examples of WH- questions used by this teacher.

Extract 4

OC-The teacher is drawing a picture of an elephant on the board.
T: |||| so this is an elephant and this is … What is this? |
S₃: trunk
T: elephant | nose.

The topic of the lesson was 'Animals'. Devi was asking questions of the students to see if they have learned the names of animal body parts. In extract 4, the teacher was

asking WH- questions because she recognized that this type of question was more effective in promoting students' learning than other question types. This question required the students to tell the names of the elephant body parts but it was also a closed, display question and only assessed students' knowledge of facts. She continued the lesson by asking questions about a turtle:

Extract 5

T: Look at Look at the turtle.
What you can see from the turtle? [Apa yang nampak daripada turtle tu?] |
OC: Students did not reply
T: Amni when you look at the turtle what you can see? [Apa yang nampak?]
S_1: Shell
T: Shell. Other than shell?
S_8: Face
T: Face? Face O.K.

In the above extract, Devi asked a WH- question. Yet, at first the students could not answer the question because this question was ambiguous and the students were unsure about the answer. If the teacher posed this question to ask the students to tell a turtle body parts names, the students were required to recall different body parts of this animal to answer the question.

In extract 5, it seems that the teacher was looking for a specific answer because when S_1 responded to the question, the teacher did not give feedback and asked the students to name another part of a turtle's body. When the students told another part of turtle's body, the teacher approved the answer by saying 'O.K'. In fact, the answer to this question was limited to one acceptable answer and the teacher wanted the student to display knowledge and respond to the question.

In the following extract, the teacher asked questions that required the students to tell the name of an animal in Bahasa Melayu, however, in the first turn, the teacher

answered the question before posing it clearly. The following questions were also examples of typical closed questions that aimed to assess students' knowledge.

Extract 6

T: Crocodile you know crocodile buaya. [Zaree crocodile apa itu in Bahasa Malaysia?]

S8 & S9: Buaya

T: Buaya. O.K elephant?

Ss: Gajah

T: Dolphin?

Ss: Dolphin

S_6: Lumba-lumba ↑

T: Lumba-lumba.

The participating teachers mentioned that while teaching a story they asked questions about the story to make students think and make predictions. Nevertheless, classroom observation results showed that teachers were not asking open questions even when teaching stories. Devi pointed out that:

When I read a story I ask them 'what happens next?' I want them to think and predict what happens in the story. For example when I taught them the story of 'the tiny thimble' I asked them 'what will happen when the mother touches the cloth?' so the students look at the picture, think about it and answer the question (Devi, Interview).

While teaching the story 'The Tiny Thimble', Devi asked the question she mentioned in the interview. The following extract shows how she asked the question:

Extract 7

T: O.K then when the mother sews… What is sewing?
 Menjahit [sew]
Suddenly the cloth changed. What happened to the cloth? What happened? Mishra what happened to the cloth? What happened to the cloth? Who knows?

S$_{11}$: Jadi emas [changed to gold]

T: Who can answer me? O.K if you can answer me I give yo+u twenty cents

S$_2$: Ha?

S$_4$: Cikgu [Teacher]

T: I give you twenty cents if you answer. Who can answer me? O.K Akif what happened to the cloth?

S16: Cloth?

T: Omar

S$_{11}$: Jadi emas [changed to gold]

In the first instance, the question "What happened to the cloth?" seemed to be an open question that required the students to predict an event in the story. But as the dialogue progressed, the researcher found out that the question had one specific answer and the teacher was looking for a particular answer. In other words, the answer was embedded in the text and the students had to recall what they had read in the story to answer the question; therefore, this question did not gauge students' higher order thinking skills.

Moreover, when the teacher posed the question, one of the students gave the correct answer in Bahasa Melayu but the teacher did not pay attention and repeated the question. Thus, maybe the students thought the answer given by S$_{11}$ was wrong, they got confused and did not try to respond to the question. As can be seen in the extract, finally S$_{11}$ repeated the answer again. Overall, in an AfL classroom teachers should ask questions that enhance interaction among the learners and the teacher, yet, the question asked by Devi did not encourage real life communication.

Then after teaching the story, Devi started to ask questions about the story. She asked recall questions to ensure students' understanding. Based on Bloom's classification of question types, these questions only assessed students' knowledge and required them to recall the information to answer the questions.

Extract 8

T: She is selling the? What is this?

S$_8$: Bag

T: Selling bags

Ss: Bag

T: Where? [Dekat mana?]
At the | market. What is market in Bahasa Malaysia?

S$_x$: Pasar [market]

T: Pasar. Good.
So she is selling bags.

In order to make the students understand the meaning of the vocabularies in the story, Devi used questioning technique:

Extract 9

T: What is cloth bag? | What is bag? | You know what is bag, right?
Tau kan beg tu apa? [You know what is bag, do not you?]

Ss: Tau [Yes]

The above extract shows that the teacher asked yes/no question to see if the students understand the meaning of the word 'bag'. This question was a closed question and the students could answer it by saying yes/no per se.

Irwan, the Year Two A teacher, usually asked "What" and "Where" questions. The type of question he asked his students were based on the topic he was teaching them. "Based on the topic that I am teaching I ask different types of questions. So, it depends on the topic. But generally I think WH- questions are effective because this question type makes students think" (Irwan, Interview). He used WH- questions more often because he found out that this question type was more effective and also easier to understand. "Questions must be kept simple and direct, and clear to the students. For example, it is better to ask 'Where do you live?' rather than 'Do you live in KL or Selangor?' that does not make students think deeply (Irwan, Interview).

Therefore, according to Irwan, questions should not only be simple but also clear and understandable. In the following extracts, Irwan was teaching the topic of recycling. Let's see how he employed WH- questions to teach this topic.

Extract 10

T: Page 125 it is about recycling
O.K now from that page
What is the title? New-

Ss: New from old

T: New from old
What does that mean?
New you make something new from old products.

The teacher started the lesson by asking students to tell him the lesson title. Irwan employed this opening question to start the dialogue with his students. He asked WH-question, yet, it was a recall question and students only needed to remember the title to answer the question.

The next question was also a WH- question that required the students to give the meaning of the lesson title. By asking this question, the teacher aimed to check the students' comprehension. He wanted to see if the students were able to understand the meaning of the lesson title and whether or not they could give the meaning of the title in their own words. However, the teacher did not wait for the students to answer this comprehension question and he himself gave the answer immediately after posing the question. Irwan continued the lesson by asking the following question:

Extract 11

T: From what?

S_4: Tissue

T: Ah from tissue

S_2: Plastic

T: Plastics. Very good

Some Ss: Newspaper

T: Newspaper, plastic bag

Some Ss: Book

T: Book

Ss: Magazines

T: Yes, Magazines

In the above extract, the teacher was asking the students to give examples of things that can be reused. Students provided different possible answers to the question. This question did not require one specific answer; however, the students could answer the question by giving one-word short responses.

Then the teacher continued with the following dialogue:

Extract 12

T: What is that?

Some Ss: Tin

Some Ss: Plastic bottle

T: Plastic bottle, Very good
O.K all these things you can reuse

The teacher drew a picture on the whiteboard and asked the students to guess the name of the object. The question asked by the teacher was a closed, display question because there was only one possible answer to this question. Moreover, this question checked the students' knowledge of facts as it only required the learners to tell the name of the object. Irwan continued the lesson by asking the following questions:

Extract 13

T: After you finish reading the newspaper or the magazine, what can you do?

S_9: We can do scrapbook

T: You can do a-?

S_9: Scrapbook

T: Scrapbooks

Very good
What else?

S$_{11}$: Bag

T: Bag?
Can you make bag using paper?

Ss: No

T: Bag. I do not think so
But you can make-
What?
You put letter inside

S$_3$: Cards

S$_6$: Paper

T: What is it? It is a?

S$_7$: XXXX

T: No, you put when you want to send the letter you put inside the letter

S$_{11}$: Paper bag

T: Yes you can make paper bag
And then beside that you can make what?

S$_6$: Origami

T: *Envelop*
Because the answer is envelope
Using the papers, the newspaper or the magazine you can make envelope

At first, it might seem that the teacher was asking an open/referential question because the question required the students to name all things they could make reusing newspaper. However, as the exchange progressed it became apparent that the teacher had a specific answer in mind. The students provided two possible answers. But as the extract shows, the teacher was expecting one specific answer which was 'envelope'. He did not reject the possible answers given by the students but tried to guide the students to give the expected answer and finally he provided the answer himself.

This type of question is called pseudo questions. At first it might seem that the teachers accept variety of different responses but they have decided on the correct answer and expect students to give the desired answer. The following extract shows another example of this question type used by Irwan.

Extract 14

T: Tin or plastic tin or maybe aluminum tin. What can you use that?
 You put your coin inside. You can make what?

S$_{12}$: Tabung

T: What is tabung in English?

S$_2$: Pretty bag

T: Oh you can make pretty bag O.K. What is tabung in English?

S$_{11}$: Coin box

There might be different possible answers to this question but the teacher expected one specific answer which was 'coin box'. Therefore, we could not consider this question as an open question.

Irwan also asked yes/no questions. The following extract from the same lesson shows how he employed this type of question in the classroom. As mentioned before, this question type is a closed question with specific answer (yes/no).

Extract 15

T: Do you know how to make paper planes?

Ss: Yes

T: Yes but do not do it here. Do at home. All right
So use can do a lot of things using the papers and plastic also like Plastic flower.
You have- Have you seen plastic flowers before?

Ss: Yes

T: Yes very nice. Very | beautiful and very expensive too.

Izyan found out that teachers' question types depended on the skill they wanted to teach as well as the students' ability level. According to Izyan:

Well it depends on what kinds of skills students are trying to gain. You just have to ask questions according to the level of the students. If students are high achievers there is nothing wrong with giving them challenging questions instead of asking straightforward answer kind of question. So just have to play with that. Go along with the students' level. Do not limit their potential because they can take the challenge. So it depends on the students' ability (Izyan, Interview).

In her classroom, Izyan asked true/false, yes/no and WH- questions. She formulated simple and short response questions to give all the students an opportunity to answer. She explained that:

> Normally I ask true or false questions or yes or no questions. Short-response questions. I cannot expect long response from my students because I know their level so I will keep it simple and easy to digest. If I ask WH- questions like who is this girl? The answer is 'this is Liana' for example. What does she like? Badminton. Then questions such as do you like cake? Do you like coffee? Do you like banana? Things like that. Short response questions. As long as they understand what I am asking that's fine (Izyan, Interview).

Izyan recognized that long questions might be ambiguous and distracting. "If the question is too long, at the end of the question the students might forget what the main question is" (Izyan, Interview). So, she preferred to ask short and clear questions.

The following extracts demonstrate how Izyan asked clear, short and simple questions as mentioned in the interview. The following extract shows questions asked by the teacher while teaching the /ei/ sound. To teach the students how to pronounce the sound /ei/, the teacher gave them some words to pronounce. For instance, she drew a picture of a cake and asked the students to pronounce the word 'cake'.

Extract 16

T: What is this? |
What am I drawing?
S_{13}: Sandwich
T: No ↓
Ss: ▲ ▲ cake
T: Cake

The students were able to pronounce the word correctly and it showed that they had learned the sound /ei/. This question only assessed students' knowledge of facts. That is to say, by asking this question the teacher wanted to make sure that the students

could pronounce the sound /ei/. Therefore, it was a closed question that did not require the students to actively process information and develop higher level thinking skills.

Izyan continued teaching by asking the students 'who likes cake?' This question only elicited the students' non-verbal reaction. So, to respond to this question, the students raised their hands to show that they like cake.

The next question was a yes/no question. A closed question addressed to one particular student to see whether or not she like cake. Then she asked the students to spell the word 'cake'. This question assessed the students' knowledge of facts and to answer the question they only needed to know how to spell this word.

Extract 17

T: Who likes cake?

OC- Ss raised their hands to show that they like cake

T: Faizah you do not like cake?
It's ok
How do you spell cake?

OC- Ss are spelling cake

T: How do you spell cake ↓

S_{11}: c-a-k-e

In extract 18, Izyan posed the same question type as asked in the above extract. She was asking the students to pronounce two words with the sound of /au/. The purpose of asking this question was assessing the students' knowledge of the sound system. So, this question was also a factual question and did not promote higher order thinking skills.

Extract 18

T: How do you say this?

Ss: auto ↑

OC- Ss are pronouncing the word 'auto'

T: O.K? What about this?
'audio'

OC- Ss are pronouncing the word 'audio'

In the following excerpts, the teacher was asking questions to review past lessons. The students had learned the names of common sea animals in previous lessons. Extract 19 indicates that the teacher showed a picture of sea animals to the students and asked them "what are these?" and "where do they live?" These questions were short-response questions and the students needed to remember information from previous lessons to provide answers the questions.

Extract 19

T: Now can you see the picture?

Some Ss: yes

T: Have you seen the picture?

Some Ss: no

T: What are these?
Yesterday we read
What are these? What are these?
Are they cars?
Are they cars?
What are these?
What do you see in the picture?

Some Ss: Yes

T: Are they insects?

S_{22}: Yes

Some Ss: fish

T: Where do they live?

Ss: Sea

T: *Sea* Yes, live in the sea

The following extract indicates that the teacher was asking questions to ensure that her students could remember the human body parts they have learned before. This

question was also a lower cognitive level question that only required the students to recall information and answer the question.

Extract 20

T: I'm going to ask you whether you remember your body parts
Parts of body
Do not do anything yet
Munir, parts of body?
Do you know what body is?
This is *your* body
This is *my* body
Do not have to write yet. Listen first.
Do you remember what these are?

Ss: Eye

Ss: Ear

T: Give me one part of the body |

S_2: Ear

T: Ha? Ears O.K

S_8: Nose

T: Nose O.K

S_{12}: Legs

Year Two teachers also used question sheets. However, these question sheets required the students to recall information, define, label, identify, match, and name. All these question types were lower cognitive level questions. According to Bloom's classification of question types these questions were knowledge questions and assessed factual knowledge.

For instance, after teaching animal names as well as the human body parts to the students, Izyan asked them to complete a worksheet (Appendix N). In order to complete this worksheet the students had to recall the name of the animals they had learned as well as the human body parts in order to group the words given and write in each column.

After teaching the topic of recycling, Irwan taught the students the sound system. He taught them how to pronounce /ai/ and /ee/ sounds. After teaching these sounds he gave the students a worksheet to do (Appendix O). To complete the first part of the question sheet, the students needed to find words with the /ai/ sound and color the related pictures. This question was a factual question that only assessed the students' knowledge of the sound system. The second question required the students to write 'ee' in the blanks. So, to answer this question, the students only needed to copy 'ee' in the blanks and they did not have to utilize higher order thinking skills.

The results of this study showed that although the participating teachers were aware of the importance of questioning technique during AfL, they asked lower cognitive questions which did not trigger thoughtful reflection. These findings are relatively aligned with the findings of Faizah (2011) and Noorizah et al. (2012) which revealed that teachers ask closed/display questions which do not promote thinking skills. The results of the current study on questioning during AfL expanded the findings of previous studies and revealed that the teachers in this study formulated questions that at first sight seemed to be open questions but they expected the students to provide a short-specific answer.

An example of this question type is the question asked by Irwan "After you finished reading the newspaper, the magazine what can you do?" this question might seem to be an open question that make students think and give ideas, however, the teacher expects the students to give a specific answer which is "envelope". According to Black and Wiliam (1998a) questions that require students to give one specific answer, do not help students come up with their own answers and enhance their learning.

Classroom questioning is a social phenomenon that might vary according to the intention behind the question. Question should elicit communicative response. So,

teachers need to ask questions that encourage students' meaning construction rather than eliciting preconceived knowledge and understanding.

Although questions were designed to suit the content of the lesson, it was observed that most of the questions asked by the teachers focused on the students' background knowledge, content and structure and elicited specific, predetermined answers. As Berk (2009, p. 265) mentioned "students perform at their best when they are working within their ZPD". However, most of the questions asked by the teachers were below the students' ZPD and did not help the students promote their thinking skills. This finding is inconsistent with Berk's (2009) findings that according to sociocultural theory, teachers need to formulate questions that make students go beyond giving simple, short-specific answers and make the students think and reflect on an issue rather than merely discovering the correct answer. Therefore, it is expected that teachers pose this type of questions, ask clarification and probing questions and help students develop their own responses with less assistance and enhance their understanding.

Probing questions help students develop higher order thinking skills (Yang et al., 2005). According to Burns (2005) Socratic questions are crucial to improve learning. Therefore, teachers need to ask more open and high-level questions that afford students the opportunity to use a description of shared cultural understanding to make sense of social behavior. Developing a question progression before teaching the lesson can help teachers to implement classroom questioning during AfL more effectively.

4.3.1.3. The Importance of Effective Questioning to Foster Autonomy as a Social Construct is Overlooked

Research suggests that "good" or "rich" questions have the potential to diagnose students' misunderstandings (Wiliam, 1999), plan teaching (Burns, 2005), and provide opportunities for learners with mixed abilities (Sullivan & Clarke, 1991). Yet, the

results of the current study showed that the teachers' questioning did not fulfill the aforementioned promises.

Questioning was a typical instructional and assessment strategy used by the participating teachers. But the data showed that the teachers asked low-level cognitive questions and the main purpose of questioning was to check the students' knowledge and understanding. For example, Irwan usually showed his students a picture and asked them "what are these?" or "What can you see in the picture?" The students had to think and recall knowledge from their memory to answer the question. In the same way, Devi mentioned that:

> When we ask questions students need to recall what they have learned previously to answer the questions. So we ask simple questions related to their previous knowledge to see whether or not they are able to understand what we have taught (Devi, Interview).

Therefore, by asking questions Devi triggered the students' prior knowledge to see if they could recall information. For instance, when she was teaching the students the topic of 'Earth detective' she asked questions about what she had taught them the day before in order to check whether they could remember what they have learned or not.

Extract 21

T: Now rule number two "turn off the tap after you wash your hands".

Ss: Hands

T: O.K first you turn on when you wash your hand. Then you use soap right?   Do you still remember how to wash your hands?

Ss: Yes

Ss: No

T: O.K step number one: wet your hands. Step number two

S_8: Soap

T: Use soap. O.K step number three

S$_8$: You scrub the hands

T: Scrub between your

S$_8$: Fingers

T: Fingers. Then?

S$_8$: Rinse

T: Scrub behind *your* hand. After that

S$_8$: Wash your hands

T: Wash your hands. And lastly

S$_8$: Clean your hand or

T: Wipe

S$_3$: Wipe your hand

T: Wipe your hand using? Wipe your hands using?

S$_8$: Towel towel or tissue

S$_5$: Tissue

Some Ss: Towel

T: Using tissue or towel.

In the above extract, Devi was teaching the students some strategies for saving the planet earth. Then in the next turn she asked a question about the previous lesson to check the students' knowledge. She addressed the question to the whole class but only a few students tried to respond.

Izyan mentioned that "we ask questions to see how far the students have achieved" (Izyan, Interview). For example, after teaching the topic of 'parts of the body" she asked the students to name the human body parts. So, the students needed to recall what they have learned to respond to the question.

Knowledge questions are good to assess students' ability to recall information but it is important to note that the key focus of AfL is to make students highly independent, therefore, teachers in an AfL classroom need to formulate strategic questions to make students reflect on their own learning and become the owners of their own learning.

In line with Black et al. (2003), Black and Wiliam (1998a), and Brown and Edmondson (1985), the results of this study revealed that the teachers lack knowledge

and understanding to practice effective questioning techniques that foster autonomy as a social construct in the classroom and they need more training in this regard. The teachers need to ask more strategic questions to help students formulate their own responses, interact with each other and develop autonomy.

According to Vygotsky (1978) when more knowledgeable peers in the community of practice guide learners to expand their understanding of the tools within the community, learners improve expertise and adopt a more participatory role within that community. As Sadler (1989) put it "learners should be able to understand and control the doing while it is happening" (p. 1). These statements emphasize the importance of learners' ability to monitor their own learning to improve autonomy which is the main focus of AfL.

Izyan found out that the best way to make classroom questioning more effective is through the use of visual aids. She stated that:

> A good strategy to get the students motivated or to get them involved in classroom questioning is through using visual aids. If you use the television, just a simple slide show let's say you have simple story and then you have pictures to go along with the story you use that and they are very attentive and when you ask questions everybody wants to get involved and they can ask themselves about the question. Everybody wants to answer so yeah the most effective way that I can relate to is through using the television, using pictures or maybe the power point presentation (Izyan, Interview).

Izyan usually held language arts classes in the library because she could make use of the available facilities and teaching aids. At the beginning of a teaching session she took her students to the library and asked them to sit around the two big tables. Then she distributed a worksheet among the students that included pictures of some sea animals. Before giving instruction to the students on how to complete the task, Izyan started to

show them the picture of sea animals and asked some questions. The following extract shows the dialogue between the teacher and the students.

Extract 22

T: Can dolphin live on land

S_x: No

T: Then what happens?

S_{12}: Dies

T: What happens to Dolphin?

S_{12}: It needs water

S_6: Tak boleh nafas [Cannot breathe]

T: Cannot breathe.

In the above extract, the teacher was not asking high cognitive level questions and wanted the students to give specific answers to the questions. Moreover, since the students had previously learned the names of common sea animals, most of them were expected to answer the questions correctly. However, as can be seen in the extract, only three students tried to answer the questions and the rest were silent. Overall, some students were always seen to be silent in the classroom. The below sociogram shows the interaction among the teacher and the students:
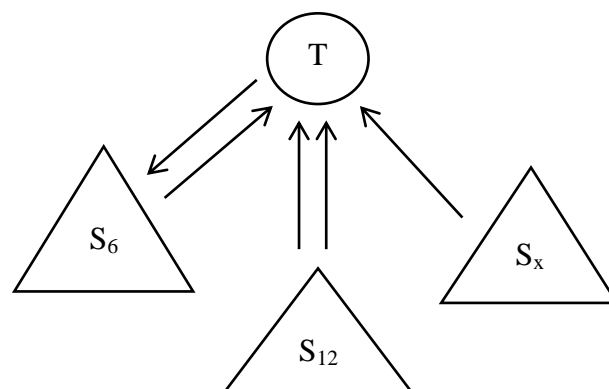
Figure 4. 1. Engagement in questioning.

Izyan addressed the question to the whole class. Those who knew the answer responded to the questions immediately and other students were not provided with the opportunity to give an answer. It was also evident that the teacher had a specific answer in mind because when S_x and S_{12} tried to answer the question, the teacher did not approve or reject their responses. But when S_6 provided the desired response, the teacher immediately approved the answer.

Although the students were asked to work together, they did not have the opportunity to share the processes of learning ownership, collaborate with their peers and progress within the social safety of the peer culture. In fact, in an AfL classroom teachers need to give all students the opportunity to answer the questions so that they can improve expertise and become autonomous learners.

Approaching the questions to the whole class may decrease the students' level of participation as indicated in the extract above. A good strategy is to call the student's name for the answer and even if they give the wrong answer, guidance should be provided until they can give the correct answer with minimal assistance.

It was observed that most of the time questions were instantly answered by good students or by the teachers themselves. Izyan mentioned that:

> Since my class is a mixed ability classroom, normally the very good one would answer first. I can say when I ask question, the very good one would answer first and the passive one would be quiet. You know sometimes we cannot be ambitious. As long as they get the knowledge we are satisfied. For good students we are ambitious we can give them so many input. For moderate and weak students we cannot be that ambitious so as long as they manage to obtain the learning objectives for that day it is ok and then we ask another student to answer (Izyan, Interview).

Izyan viewed that there was no need to call good students' name to answer the questions because whenever they knew the answer they responded immediately without putting up their hands. She did not expect too much from weak students and stated that:

Maybe they do not understand. When I call them and they give the wrong answer, I ask another student to respond to the question. Then I ask the weak student to repeat the correct answer. Although they do not know they can listen to their friend and repeat the answer (Izyan, Interview).

Devi emphasized the importance of classroom questioning and explained that effective questions give us feedback on students' learning. "When we ask question in the classroom students tend to talk. They should be able to think and give you an accurate answer so we can ensure their learning" (Devi, Interview). It was observed that most of the time only certain students answered the questions.

Extract 23

T: class what was the rule number four to save the earth? Do you remember?

S_8: Collect rain water to water the plants.

T: O.K Eh in this class ada Angel seorang je ke? Yang lain mana? [Is Angel the only student in this class? Others?]
Akif O.K tell me apa lagi peraturan lain Akif [Akif tell me another rule]

S_{15}: Turn off

S_9: Turn off the tap

T: turn off the tap | Turn off the tap, OK?
Akif who wants to help Akif

S_8: Yes, me

T: Turn off the tap when we when are not what?

S_8: When we are brushing our teeth

In the above extract, the teacher was asking the students to name the rules for saving the planet earth. Devi had taught them the rules at the beginning of the session. She asked the above question just to see if the students have learned the rules or not. As soon as the teacher posed the question S_8 answered. S_8 was an active and confident student who answered the teacher's questions more often.

In the next turn, the teacher invited the rest of the students to take an active role and respond to the question. But the students were observed to resist the teacher's expectations for participation. For instance, she called one of the students (S_{15}) to tell another rule for saving the earth. The student tried to answer but he could not remember the rule so the teacher asked other students to help S_{15} to respond to the question. But as always it was S_8 who answered the question quickly.
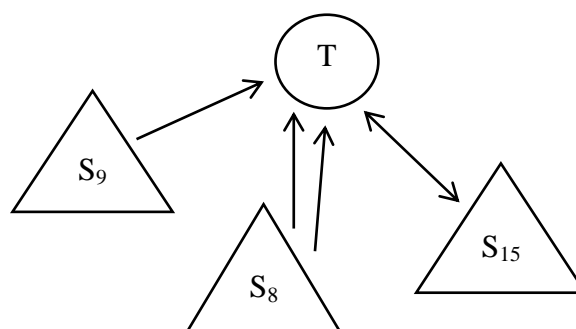

Figure 4.2. Engagement in questioning

In the above extract, using questioning technique, Devi invited S_{15} to enter a more collaborative view of learning and encouraged him to extend identity towards a more central participant. However, she did not provide the student with guidance to direct him towards the answer and enough think time was not given so that the student could come up with the right answer and become a central participant. As the extract shows, S_{15} became less participatory and more peripheral when he could not give the full answer and the teacher directed the question to other students without waiting for him to give a complete answer to the question.

It was observed that in Devi's classrooms usually the students did not have enough time and opportunity to answer the questions. As Devi put it:

most of the time I do not have enough time to wait because I need to finish the syllabus … depending on the time but sometimes we have to tell them the answer. Sometimes if a student gives me the wrong answer, I ask another student. When

the student listens to the correct answer given by his/her friend then he knows he was wrong (Devi, Interview).

Several times, the researcher observed that Devi answered the questions herself without waiting for the students to respond. For example, the following extract shows that while teaching the story 'the tiny thimble', Devi asked the students to find a synonym for the word 'tiny'. But when a student gave the wrong answer, she herself responded to the question without guiding the student to give the correct answer or asking another student to give an answer. She rejected the answer given by S_{12} and provided the students with the correct answer. Yet, in an AfL classroom teachers should handle students' wrong responses in order to increase the challenge and consequently the level of interaction among teacher-students and student-student in the classroom. The teacher could wait for the students to give possible responses to the questions and discuss among themselves to find the correct answer.

Extract 24

T: The tiny thimble
Ss: The tiny thimble
T: What is tiny? What is tiny? Who knows what is tiny?
S_{12}: Puteri [Princess]
T: Puteri? No
It is small. Tiny means small.

Questioning is a form of social interaction (Tierney & Charland, 2007) and requires learners' active participation (Rogoff, 1990). Yet, the data showed that the students had rarely an opportunity to actively take part in classroom questioning. During the group interview the students confirmed that most of the time their teacher did not wait for them to reply to the questions and she herself provided the correct answers:

I: O.K if your teacher asks- um ... how would she ask questions? | O.K would she wait for you to answer or | she would answer herself?

Um...

S$_{3, 6, 15}$: Give answer

I: does she answer herself.

S$_{11, 8, 15}$: yes, because we do not know

(Year One A students, Group Interview)

Irwan accentuated the importance of questioning in fostering students' active participation. "When I ask questions, I expect my students to speak up and try to answer it rather than to keep quiet in the classroom" (Irwan, Interview). Irwan wanted the students to actively participate and answer the questions. In the following extract, the students were doing an activity in the activity book. The teacher addressed the question to one of the students and asked him to match one of the sentences to picture number one. Right away after posing the question, some students tried to give the answer but the teacher asked them to remain silent and called a particular student to respond to the question. When Irwan called a certain student to answer the question, other students who wanted to answer became less participatory. The extract shows that the teacher invited that particular student (S$_5$) to extend his identity towards a more central participant, yet, when S$_5$ gave the wrong answer, one of the most active students in the classroom (S$_{11}$) answered the question.

Extract 25

T: O.K Faiz tell me which one is picture number one?

Some students: Put the-

T: I asked Faiz. I do not ask others. Faiz which one is number one?

S$_5$: The machine turns the used cans into new cans

T: Ha? Wrong. That is wrong.

S$_{11}$: Teacher saya [Teacher, me?]

T: O.K Durga

S$_{11}$: Put the cans into the orange recycling bin

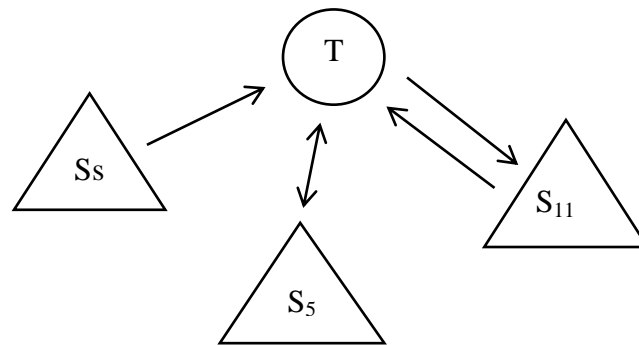T: Yes. That is number one

T

Ss

S$_{11}$

S$_5$

Figure 4.3. Engagement in questioning.

As evident in Extract 25, instead of directing the student to give the correct answer, the teacher asked another student to answer the question. In other words, S$_5$ was not provided with enough time to think and respond to the question and guidance was not given to direct the students towards the correct answer. Therefore, S$_5$ did not develop a more central participatory role, whereas S$_{11}$ became more participatory. This is in line with Rowe (1974) as well as Black et al. (2003) findings that not enough wait time is allocated for the students to provide answers to questions and avoid teacher-centered learning.

The researcher also noticed that when the students did not understand the question or did not give the expected answer, Irwan relied on repeating and rephrasing the question. As he mentioned:

> Maybe they do not understand what we are asking for so we have to simplify the questions. Sometimes we have to understand the way they are thinking so we can use simpler way of asking questions to help them provide the answer. I have to accept whatever they reply but then I tell them this is not the answer that I want so maybe when we pose the same question in a different way, they can give the correct answer (Irwan, Interview).

In the following extract, the teacher was teaching the topic of recycling. First he asked the students to read the passage in the textbook entitled 'A Day in the Life of a Recycled Can' and after that he asked questions.

Extract 26

T: O.K very good. So what happened first? What happened first? Agus. Who is Agus? What did he do? What happened?
Agus is a name of a person maybe a boy. So the boy drank using um...Maybe drank coke for example and then what happened? Agus rinses me.
O.K the workers will put the tin can into the machine. And what did the machine do?

Ss: The machine turns me and my friends into new cans again.

T: O.K so is it the same tin? Is it a new same can? It goes back, recycling and then becomes the same can all right. | O.K now take out your activity book.

As can be seen in extract 26, in the first instance, the teacher asked "what happened first?" then he repeated the question and raised it in different ways. Literature shows that repeating and rewording questions may lead to students' confusion and lower levels of participation (Cruickshank et al., 2009). This extract also shows that when the teacher repeated and reworded the questions, the response rate decreased and it was the teacher himself who responded to the questions without waiting for the students to provide an answer.

It was observed that the other two teachers, Devi and Izyan, kept repeating a question several times or rephrased it (For instance Extracts 7, 9, 19, 24, & 34). However, the teachers did not give the students enough time to think and give the correct answer. Also, they did not build on their responses in order to direct them towards the correct answer.

As mentioned in passing, the teachers also asked questions of their students using worksheets. It was observed that they used worksheets at the end of each instructional

period in order to assess the students' understanding. The teachers considered worksheets to be a form of self-assessment as well as a source of learning.

For the students, worksheet fitted within their cultural narratives of tests rather than learning. Connecting learning with this cultural narrative of test created a conflict for the students who resolved it by not actively engaging in the AfL practice of classroom questioning and they were observed to complete worksheets individually without demur.

Many findings of this study point to the fact that all three teachers are still practicing teacher-centred syllabus. The findings of the present study support the findings of Sun (2012) which revealed that a change in classroom questioning is needed to build a harmonious relationship between teacher and students and help learners become independent. The results of this study are also consistent with the findings of Almeida (2010) who found that teachers are not aware of structuring their questioning episodes and effective questions are not asked in the classrooms. These findings highlight the importance of developing an effective question progression prior to the class in increasing classroom interaction and enhancing learner autonomy.

Identity in an autonomous learner is a continual social interaction that is identified by self-monitoring of the interaction patterns in the classroom. Questioning patterns of participation should be designed such that students become co-constructors of knowledge by sharing the ownership of their learning within the community of practice. But the results of the current study showed that the traditional concept of questioning was maintained and classroom questioning did not seem to fulfill the promise of enhancing learner autonomy. The students were not encouraged to ask questions and engage in self-reflection. Many of them were silent oftentimes during classroom questioning and questions were usually answered by a specific group of students or the teachers themselves.

4.3.1.4. Commentaries on the Descriptions of the Study- Research Question 1

Three major themes emerged from the data; namely, (1) Questioning students oftentimes; (2) lower cognitive level questions and also (3) little focus on effective questioning to foster autonomy as a social construct.

As mentioned in passing in Chapter 2, the main types of questionings are divided into (1) low-cognitive level of questioning and (2) high-cognitive level of questioning (Bloom, 1956). In the context of this study, it seems that the low-cognitive level of questioning techniques and strategies were utilized by the three teachers. Why this is of concern especially related to the description of this study is that- good questioning techniques and strategies can facilitate students to achieve success in their ESL learning (Almeida et al., 2008; Chin & Osborne, 2008; Graesser & Olde, 2003; Black et al., 2003).

Since, 300-400 questions are asked per day during the classroom time (Levin & Long, 1981), and 90% of classroom time is spent on questioning techniques and strategies by teachers (Flyod, 1960), it is important to note that the use of questionings in classroom should be stressed.

The description of this study also has similar agreement with Graesser and Person (1994) that students in the Malaysian ESL Primary contexts rarely asked questions. This is quite a surprising phenomenon since questioning can be reflected as a way to enhance a motivation for students to learn language (Graesser & Olde, 2003) and also promote autonomy for students to be self-paced on their learning processes (Watts et al., 1997). One of the many reasons for this is related to the variable of professional teacher training system.

The description of this study also in agreement with many of the studies analyzed by Black et al. (2003) whereby teachers were not trained in the questioning techniques and strategies in both pre-service and in-service teacher institutions. One set of data in

this study also seems to agree with the findings of Almeida (2010) that teachers' lack of questioning knowledge hindered the way students asked questions during the implementation. One of the ways this can take place is the one suggested by Sun (2012) whereby teachers need to learn to ask Socratic questions as proposed by Yang et al. (2005).

The results of this study do not necessarily to blame teachers for their lack of understanding in implementing questioning techniques in the classroom, since what is important is to train teachers in both low-cognitive and high-cognitive questioning techniques and strategies as proposed by Black et al. (2003), Black and Wiliam (1998a) and Brown and Edmondson (1985). One of the techniques as suggested by Rowe (1974) is to use wait time as to allow students be more comfortable in the dialogic conversations with their teacher. The description of this study also allow us to see the patterns of low-cognitive level questioning dominating the classroom questioning time as compared to the high-cognitive level questioning types (Bloom, 1956).

It should be noted at this juncture that low-cognitive level of questioning techniques and strategies should be viewed with cautions since Cotton (1983) mentions that the use of this techniques and strategies are useful when the teacher is faced with the introduction of the new topic to students. As the task increases in difficulty so will the question that will trigger the active learning process from students.

One of the ways to ensure that low-cognitive level of questionings prevalent in classroom is to allow teachers and students to adapt to types of questions whether it is factual, comprehensible, application and so on as suggested by Brown and Edmonson (1985) and Cooper (2010). This is also in the agreement with the meta-analytic study carried out by Black and Wiliam (1998a). The descriptions of this study agree with Noorizah et al. (2012) and David (2007) that factual, low-cognitive level type of questioning is still prevalent in the exam-oriented context (Tan, 2011).

In the context of any education system, high-cognitive level of education is aimed by many countries around the world. In order to produce students with high-cognitive level of thinking, classroom teachers play an important role in molding students in the future. The descriptions of this study do not point to this trend however. The description of this study seems to agree with William (1999) that high-cognitive level type of questions is important as explained by teachers of this study.

The reasons they gave were in synch with many research works to use questioning to improve teaching plan (Burns, 2005), diagnose students' misunderstanding in certain tasks and difficult topics (William, 1999), help weak students to improve on their learning tasks (Sullivan & Clarke, 1991), and also to use probing techniques in the classroom (Cruickshank et al., 2009). However, those statements were described before their real practices took place. When the real practices took place, these three teachers went back to Brown and Edmonson's (1985) description of low-cognitive level of questioning techniques and strategies without adjusting to the level of abilities of their students such as that suggested by Cotton (1983).

In the next section, research question 2 is answered and the same writing technique is used to describe and comments on the study.

4.3.2. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement AfL through classroom discussion?

"Every student can learn and it can be shown through exchanging ideas in classroom discussions" (Irwan, Lesson plan goal).

Below, the researcher explains the themes that emerged from the data to answer the second research question- How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement AfL through classroom discussion?

4.3.2.1. Creating a Supportive and Collaborative Environment

AfL places a great emphasis on learning interactions in the classroom (Clark, 2011). Teacher-student and student-student relationships are highly important for the successful implementation of AfL strategies; therefore, teachers' skill to provide a supportive and collaborative environment is a crucial AfL practice that helps learners interact with each other as well as their teacher to develop autonomy. The participating teachers recognized the importance of creating a collaborative culture in the classroom.

Devi explained the nature of the teacher-student and student-student relationship as a 'learning relationship'. She recognized that through collaboration, students can develop their understanding. This statement is consistent with Wenger's (1998) suggestion that, by creating a collaborative environment, students would be able to develop knowledge and skills valued within the community of practice.

Irwan identified the importance of building a collaborative culture in order to develop students' skill to learn collaboratively in discussions. He stated that to achieve this goal "positive relationships should be established among the students as well as the students and their teacher" (Irwan, Interview).

According to social constructivists, socially constructing patterns of participation help learners interact with their peers, monitor their own learning and consequently become the owners of their own learning. In the same vein, Izyan viewed that learners need to interact in a safe and collaborative environment in order to be able to apply their knowledge in real life situations. She mentioned that:

> Teachers should help students become lifelong learners. What they learn in the classroom is to a certain extent applicable to life outside of the classroom. They are learning for the real world as well because their life is not just in school. They are going to go out and meet real people in real world (Izyan, Interview).

She added that the old assessment system was too exam-oriented and did not offer students opportunities for lifelong learning. Izyan pinpointed that previously students

competed against each other to get good grades and the importance of developing emotional quotient was neglected:

> Previously assessment was too exam-oriented so students did not have the opportunity to learn for the real world. Students just wanted to pass the exam and the main aim was to compete with each other in terms of what they get in exam and then like most graduates that we have out of the system they can get high marks, they score academically but they are not street smart. They are socially challenged because they are lacking in critical thinking skills, they are lacking in empathizing, they are lacking in many things that is related to emotional quotient so they are lacking in EQ I would say. They are high in IQ but lack EQ. Now in the new system we are trying to have a balanced growth of progress in both EQ and IQ (Izyan, Interview).

As mentioned by Izyan EQ plays an important role in students' learning development because the aim of the new curriculum is not only to prepare students who are able to receive high grades on examinations but to develop intellectual, spiritual and emotional potentials of the learners.

As endorsed in the primary school standard curriculum (KSSR), pupils need to learn how to interact with their peers. In other words, pupils should be able to communicate with others in different contexts and present their ideas in an exemplary manner. Therefore, teachers need to provide students with a collaborative culture in the classroom so that they can communicate with their peers in a systematic manner.

According to the sociocultural perspective, the teacher is an expert in a community of practice (Rogoff, 1999) and learning and assessment is considered as a cultural activity occurring as a result of social interactions (Elwood, 2008). Therefore, the interactions among learners and their teacher are shaped by classroom activities and generate learning (Wenger, 1998). In other words, AfL practices are only tangible within the context of classroom interactions.

To fulfill this promise, the participating teachers used whole class activities such as making puppets, reciting nursery rhymes with gesture, role play, games such as 'Bingo' and making charts with the aim of enhancing collaboration, building a safe environment in the classroom and creating a shared language of learning with their students.

Devi, the Year One teacher, asked the students to work together: "I ask my students to work together so that they can feel a sense of belonging to my classroom" (Devi, Interview). She found that language arts classes provide the students with opportunities to do tasks collaboratively.

To teach language arts, Devi used activities such as reciting nursery rhymes with gestures and making puppets. She asked the students to complete activities collaboratively "I usually ask them to come and sit with me in a circle on the floor so it is easier for me to control them and also easier for them to cooperate with their friends" (Interview, Devi).

While teaching the lesson of 'the tiny thimble', Devi first drew the picture of a human's hand on the whiteboard and started to teach the students the name of each finger in English. Later, during language arts she asked the students to bring glue and scissors and sit with her in a circle on the floor. Then she distributed paper finger puppets among the students and asked them to cut the paper puppets and put each of the finger puppets on the right finger. But the result of classroom observation showed that merely asking the students to sit and work together does not lead to collaboration:

> Some students were not able to cut their finger puppets so Devi was helping them on a one-to-one basis to cut their puppets. A number of students were chit-chatting with each other about topics not relevant to the activity making a lot of noise and some other students were doing the activity individually without talking to their peers or seeking help from their teacher even if they needed help.

(Researcher Observation Fieldnote)

The result of classroom observation showed that finger puppets activity was a whole-class activity because Devi did not put the students into small groups. As made evident from the above observation fieldnote, although the students were sitting together they were not collaborating with each other and the leaning activity was an individual experience.

It would be more plausible for the students to do the task collaboratively if they were working in smaller groups so that they could collaborate with their group members, look at each other's work, learn from their peers and became expert. Moreover, teachers' role as facilitators has an important role in developing learner autonomy. But the results of classroom observation show that the teacher herself was sitting on the floor beside some of the students and did not move around to check all students' work and guide them if necessary.

Reciting nursery rhymes was another activity Devi used in her classroom with the aim of enhancing the supportive and collaborative environment. She mentioned that "I always use songs to teach listening skill. If pupils can sing together with correct pronunciation, they will achieve the band" (Devi, Interview). For instance, after making finger puppets, the teacher asked the students to show their finger puppets to their friends and recite the song 'Where is thumbkin?' together. Some students were singing the song whereas the rest were quiet. Devi told the students that she wants everybody to sing. Then she started to sing and asked them to repeat after her and memorize the song as shown in the following extract.

Extract 27

T: Class I want all of you to read. Not just a few.
 I want you to memorize. One more time. Remember.
O.K this is?

S$_8$: Thumbkin

T: O.K everybody touch your thumbkin.

Everybody do like this.
Press your thumbkin here on your cheek.
This is thumbkin. Remember
Thu+mbkin

Ss: Thumbkin

T: Thu+mbkin

S_5: Thumbkin

T: This one?

Ss: Pointer

The above extract shows that not all of the students could sing the song maybe because they felt shy or were afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, they preferred to remain silent and resisted the teacher's expectations for their participation. This extract also shows that when the teacher recognized that some students could not sing the song, she started to repeat the name of each finger and asked the students to memorize. Generally, this activity only required the students to memorize and recite a song and it is not a collaborative activity in nature.

Role-play was another activity Devi used in her classrooms to enhance collaboration. For instance, while teaching the story 'the tiny thimble' Devi called some of her students and asked them to play the role of the characters in the story as indicated in the below extract:

Extract 28

T: Shh... The rest of you sit down and Keep quite.
Korang semua penonton. [You are all the spectators.]
Kalau tak dengar cerita nanti tak main. [If you do not listen, we won't play]

S_6: Teacher main apa ni? [Teacher, what game is it?]

T: Ah, dia orang nak berlakon. [They want to act.]
 O.K Azzam is the mother.

Ss: (*giggle)*

T: I will bring the chair for the mother. Mother sit here mother.
Ok Aiman is the man.
O.K Akmal come here. Akmal is the old lady.

Ss: (*giggle)*

S_x: Dia jalan macam ni. [He has to walk like this]

T: O.K this is the thimble.

The above extract shows that the teacher wanted the students to collaborate and play the role of the characters in order to learn the story better. But it also shows that the teacher only asked some of the students to role-play and urged other students to remain silent and not to take part in the role-play.

The extract below also indicates that the students were unprepared to do the task collaboratively and the teacher herself was the only person who talked during the role-play. The teacher needed to instruct the student collaborate with each other and play the role of the characters in the story. Yet, the results show that role play was a teacher-centered activity and the students did not get the chance to learn through collaboration.

The students who were supposed to play the roles of characters in the story were just repeating the sentences after the teacher. Moreover, whenever other students who were not role-playing wanted to talk, the teacher asked them to remain silent. She simply did not allow the rest of the class to feel the sense of belonging to the classroom community of practice and take part in the activity as shown in extract 29.

Extract 29

T: Please buy bag. Who wants to buy bag? Buy bags.

S$_{15}$: Buy bags

T: O.K come here Ayman. Ayman is the man. Aiman is the?

Ss: Man

T: Ayman is the man O.K. Amalina what are you supposed to say?
Please buy my bags. Please buy

S$_{15}$: Please buy

T: My bags

S$_{15}$: My bags

T: Ayman says. No thank you.

S$_9$: No thank you

T: I do not have any money
The rest of you sit down. Keep quiet
I do not have any money, you say
I do not have-

S₉: I do not have

T: Any money

S₉: Any money

T: Akmal is the old lady. O.K old lady come.
Do you want to buy?
Akmal says I do not have no money but I have thimble. O.K show her.
[Dia tak ada duit, kan? But she has | thimble]
O.K then Amalina the girl gave the bag to the old lady
So Amalina goes? Where? Ok go home to who? To whom?

Ss: Mother

Irwan played games such as 'bingo' with his students "You can do bingo game to enhance collaboration" (Irwan, Interview). For instance, he used bingo game to check the students' phonemic awareness. To this end, after teaching the students the sounds e-e and i-e, he asked them to take out a ruler and a piece of paper and draw nine boxes. It took a long time for all students to finish drawing boxes. Then he chose 9 words from among the words with e-e and i-e sounds on page 126 of the textbook and asked the students to write the selected words in the boxes and then they started to play 'bingo game'.

The same as Devi, Irwan did not divide the students into smaller groups to do the activities; therefore, bingo game was conducted as a whole class activity. The teacher was the caller and the students needed to cross the words they heard. When all the words were crossed the students yelled 'bingo'. The students were so excited playing bingo game; however, the task was not collaborative in nature because they were not working in groups to accomplish the task together and it was the teacher who designed the task and specified the objectives. Even the words to be written in the boxes were selected by the teacher himself. As indicated in the following extract, the students were working individually. They just listened to the teacher, crossed the words and finally all the students won the game.

Extract 30

T: O.K your first word is-
We choose the words from the yellow box.

S₁₁: Ha? From yellow box

T: O.K the first word is 'bite'
O.K fill any box you want. Do not show to your friends. Do not show to your friends. Please hide. | Finished?

Ss: Yes

T: O.K Atika hurry up. Come let me help you

S₂: Bingo

T: If you say bingo then you are wrong. We are not yet playing bingo |
O.K good. Word number two. Which one do you want?

OC- students say some words but finally the teacher himself chose the second word

T: The second word is file.

The above extract shows that the teacher selected nine words from among sixteen words in the textbook and asked the students not to show their boxes to other students. All in all, this is a traditional bingo game that Irwan was playing with his students and only required the teacher to call the words and the students needed to cross the words and consequently all won the game.

The students were enjoying playing the game. They mentioned it in their group interview:

I: Is there an activity that you wish your teacher to do every day? When your teacher comes to the class, you would ask the teacher, let's do-, Ah, what is that?

Ss: Play

I: Play? Playing what?

Ss: Game
Bingo game. Bingo game

I: you like to play bingo game, is not it?

Ss: Fun. It's fun.

S₅: easy game

(Year Two A students, Group Interview)

Based on the above extract, the students were keen to play bingo because it was fun. However, games should not be used only for fun. The teachers need to use games such as 'Bingo' in order to review a topic covered by the teacher and help students learn through collaboration. For example, Irwan needed to play bingo with his students in such a way to make sure all of them have learned the sounds e-e and i-e and were able to recognize words with i-e and e-e sounds.

Moreover, as put forth by the students, the bingo game was an easy task for them to do and most of them could accomplish the activity easily without seeking help from more knowledgeable others. That is to say, the game did not lead to mutual engagement in the community of practice as required in an AfL classroom.

The same as Devi and Irwan, Izyan used some learning activities to create a collaborative culture in her classroom. She realized that during language arts sessions, students have the opportunity to collaborate with each other in an exemplary manner. She always held language art classes in the library. There were two big tables in the library and Izyan asked the students to sit around these tables and work together. As she explained:

> There are a lot of AfL activities that we can use in our classroom. For example, during language arts that is the only time, well that is the only time that you can see clearly whether or not they grasp what you are trying to teach. Because most of the time when they are doing language arts they work together. When they are working together, you can talk to them, you speak and that is how you know whether the person has good mannerism or is respectful while working together (Izyan, Interview).

For instance, after teaching the students the topic of 'save the sea creatures', during language arts Izyan wanted the students to make a sea animal chart. She asked the students to sit around the two tables in the library and distributed sea creatures' worksheet among them. The students needed to color the pictures, cut them, paste them on a colorful paper and hang the chart wherever they like using a ribbon.

The students were chattering while coloring the picture making a lot of noise. It was observed that some of the students were sharing things such as color pencils and some of them were confused by the task.

(Researcher Observation Fieldnotes)

Overall, the data showed that the students were unprepared to collaborate within the community of practice and the activity was teacher-directed. Moreover, students' strategies for checking their understanding centered on waiting for the teacher to come and correct their work which implies a traditional view of the teacher-student interaction.

Teachers need to position AfL practice of shared goals and success criteria within a collaborative culture to help students learn collaboratively. It is not enough to ask students to follow specific steps to do the activity individually without clearly communicating the learning criteria they need to meet and teaching them how to do peer collaboration. Izyan found out that when the students were making a lot of noise and whenever they were shouting at each other, they were not collaborating in a good manner. She pinpointed that:

> If they are shouting at each other that means they are not collaborating in an exemplary manner. What you saw the other day during language arts they have to share things. They have to share color pencil, share the glue, the scissors and help each other to do the task. I am not saying that all of them have good manners; some of them can be very tough (Izyan, Interview).

According to the performance standards, pupils should be able to do things collaboratively and in an exemplary manner. In the word of Izyan:

> If you look at the bands, the criteria that the students should achieve they should be able to do something in an exemplary manner, so well I would say whatever we have taught them or assessed in the classroom, they should be able to do it outside (Izyan, Interview).

Izyan's statements indicate that in order to develop a shared ownership of learning, teachers need to explain to the students why they need to do things in an exemplary manner. For instance, why they need to write legibly "write nicely because if you do not write nicely, poor the teacher, pity the teacher, needs to strength her eyes to read your handwriting so they start to write nicely and it shows that they have manners" (Izyan, Interview). She added that:

> Because they are young students, they are young they are only Year One and Year Two, you need to explain to them when you are teaching why you need to write nicely because if you write nicely that shows your personality because you respect those who wants to read your handwriting so you write nicely because you are considering their … you are being empathic (Izyan, Interview).

Izyan recognized that since Year One and Year Two students are young, teachers need to clearly explain them what they need to achieve. She found out that one of the reasons that some of her students were unable to complete the activity (sea animal chart) during language art was because she did not clearly communicate the learning criteria with them; so, they were confused by the task.

> Like for example the other day that I asked them to make the chart of sea animals, I did not manage to finish the model to show them. So you see when you do not have the example prior to what they are going to do they would get lost. They will feel like they have no directions. Where are we going after this? Where are we going after this? So I told them orally but they did not have the mental image of what they need to achieve at the end of the day. That's why everything went haywire. So you need to really make sure that they know what they are going to do next (Izyan, Interview).

She found out that if the students keep asking her the same questions that means there must be a problem in her instructions. "It would be a huge success if I had a model to show them before they started doing the activity. It would be useful for the students especially the weak ones" (Izyan, Interview). She viewed that teachers have to cover the

syllabus within a specific period of time "for Year One there are 30 topics to cover and I think it is too much" (Izyan, Interview). So, teachers do not have ample time to explain everything in detail. The next extract shows that some students did not know how to do the activity although brief instruction had been given by the teacher orally. It also shows that even though the students expressed their confusion on the task, the teacher took it for granted and asked the students to start coloring the pictures.

Extract 31

T: O.K put the ribbon here so you can hang it at your door O.K?

S4: Ala...Aku tak paham [I do not understand]

S7: Teacher, Fadhil kata dia tak paham [Teacher, Fadhil said he does not understand]

T: It's O.K

S7: It's O.K (giving support to Fadhil)

T: I am not going to give you scissors yet. You have to color first. I give you fifteen minutes to color O.K?

It is evident from Izyan's explanation as well as the result of classroom observations that sharing learning criteria with the students is a stepping stone to building a supportive and collaborative classroom environment. Students need to know what is expected of them in order to be able to collaborate with their teacher and peers effectively and become expert.

Another important component of classroom discussion is learning criteria. Classroom discussion promotes learning criteria to be achieved by both students and teacher (Ruiz-Primo et al., 2007). According to Harlen (2007) explaining learning targets and success criteria include both an explanation on what students are going to learn and how they will learn. However, the results of classroom observation showed that none of the participating teachers wrote the learning criteria on the board and they just provided the students with a short oral explanation.

Like Izyan, Devi and Irwan also gave the students some general explanations prior to the activity. "Well I give them some instructions first before they start doing the activity or task but once they start doing the activity they do not talk to me anymore" (Irwan, Interview).

For example, the following extract shows that after teaching the students the topic of 'recycling' Irwan asked them to complete a task in the activity book. He gave them some explanations and allowed them to look into their textbook if necessary. Then he asked them to do the task on their own.

Extract 32

T: O.K based on what you have just read about recycling. O.K I want you to first read the instruction. On one, two, three. Number the pictures. O.K to recycle can. First you number the pictures. Which one is first? Which one is second and which one is the last one?

S_{11}: Oh

T: And then you write the steps to recycle can. You can refer to your text book.

S_2: Text book

T: Page 128 | you can do now. Please do on your own.

During language arts, Devi gave the students oral explanations on how to make finger puppets. However, as explained earlier, the results of the observation showed that some of the students were confused by the task and did not know how to complete the task at hand.

According to social constructivists, the autonomous learner is expected to be able to ask questions, interact with peers and develop expertise. Students need to learn to belong within the community of practice and become skilled learners in that community. Teachers need to build positive relationship and a trusting environment so that students feel comfortable to actively participate and not to be afraid or shy of asking questions.

Building trust was recognized as the element that underpins the development of AfL and autonomous learners but the data showed that it was not the central feature of these communities of practice and the teachers were not successful in building trust and making learning appealing to encourage the students to get involved in AfL practices.

As the results of the study conducted by Matsumura et al. (2008) revealed, teachers' efforts to provide a collaborative learning environment significantly predict students' behavior and their active participation in classroom discussions. Yet, activities used by the participating teachers did not lead to the students' active participation and implied traditional understanding of learner autonomy and collaboration.

The students valued more personal relationships with their teachers as a key to engagement in the community of practice. They conceptualized that it was only the teachers' role to know their students and create learning experiences focused on building a positive teacher-students relationship.

4.3.2.2. Whole Class Discussion

Classroom discussion is an essential learning tool in primary school (e.g., Mercer et al., 2004) that expands the horizon of learning (Alexander, 2004), and helps learners generate ideas (Graesser et al., 2002). The results showed that the participating teachers did not divide the students into smaller groups. While teaching the lesson and even while completing classroom activities, they regarded the whole class as one group and classroom talk always occurred between the teacher and the whole class.

In the words of one of the teachers, Devi, "we do not put the students into small groups because it would be difficult to manage the class" (Devi, Interview). The Year Two B teacher, Izyan, agreed with Devi on this matter. She stated that "it is very difficult for me to get them into smaller groups because there is only one teacher and many students, so, there is not enough time to monitor all groups" (Izyan, Interview).

The other Year Two teacher, Irwan, also considered the whole class as one group and most of the time he addressed the questions to the whole class during the discussions.

As the teachers' statements show, the main reasons for not dividing the students into small groups include not having ample time to monitor all groups as well as difficulty in classroom management. As a result, the teachers considered the whole class as one group and conducted whole class discussions. But it is worth mentioning that whole class discussion is effective only if it is orchestrated well. In other words, teacher's role in facilitating and managing whole class discussion is highly important.

During the discussions, the participating teachers stood before the class and asked questions of their students. Izyan asked lots of questions during the whole class discussion. As she put forth:

> classroom discussion is … mostly at this stage I have to do a lot of asking, a lot of questioning and mostly it is a big class discussion not small group discussion because you see we have many students but only one teacher in the class so it is very difficult to monitor all the smaller groups (Izyan, Interview).

Izyan did not conduct discussion very often in her classroom. She found out that her students did not benefit much from discussions mostly because they were from a non-English speaking background. She recognized that there were some students who listened and looked at the slides or the pictures but it was difficult to know what was going on in their mind because they rarely talked or asked questions during the discussions. For this reason she preferred to use whole class discussion rather than discussion in smaller groups.

> To be honest only a few gain from discussion. Because some of them simply put off by discussion because they do not know what we are discussing about because they do not have the language. Like I tried to encourage them to use English but how can they use if they do not have the repertoire? If they do not have the environment that is using English so in my classroom talking about the context of my classroom, at the moment only a few gain from discussions and many of them

are still at a loss, still need a lot of guidance. Therefore, most of the classroom discussion that I had so far is just between the whole class and me (Izyan, Interview).

Izyan used whole class discussion mostly when they read stories. "So the discussions are mainly based on the stories they have read, values they can gain from the story, which character they like?" (Izyan, Interview). When she wanted to teach a story, Izyan held the class in the library in order to use the available facilities. "I do not have big book so my big book is digital big book on the TV or power point slides" (Izyan, Interview). Let us explain how Izyan conducted whole class discussion in her classroom community of practice.

To teach the story of 'Daphney Dolphin and Whippy Whale', Izyan showed the students the picture on page 115 of the textbook (Appendix P) and started asking questions:

Extract 33

T: can everybody see the picture? Can you see?

Ss: yes teacher |

T: O.K good. What do you see in the picture?

S$_{11}$: sea

T: what do you see in the picture? What is in the sea? What do you see?

S$_2$: animals ↑

T: these are sea animals

OC- the teacher pointed at one of the animals in the picture and asked the students to name it.

T: What is the name of this animal?
Some students: fish
A kind of fish. What do we call it?

S$_{16}$: Dolphin. Dolphin

T: this is dolphin. How many dolphins do you see in this picture?

S$_{14}$: I know. Two

T: are you sure?

Ss: ▲ no

T: there is only one dolphin in the picture. What else do you see?

S$_{11}$: turtul

T: turtul. What else? What is this animal beside dolphin?

S$_{11}$: Whale

S$_2$: Sotong [Cuttlefish]

T: No

S$_{11}$: Jelly fish. I can see jellyfish.

T: yes. And the last one. What are these two sea animals? Imran what do we call these sea animals?

S$_{12}$: sea horse

T: yes sea horse. What color is sea horse?

S$_2$: gold

T: gold very nice color

As shown in the given extract, the teacher opened the discussion by asking 'can everybody see the picture?' The aim of asking this question was to capture the students' attention in order to start the discussion. Then in the next turn, she asked the students to tell what they could see in the picture. Izyan addressed the question to the whole class so that everyone had the chance to give an answer but it is evident that she was looking for specific answers to this question (the names of the sea animals in the picture) because when one of the students provided an answer, the teacher tried to repeat and rephrase the question so that the student could give the expected answers.

In the next turns the teacher posed closed questions that only required the students to give one short-specific answer. For instance, she pointed to one of the sea animals in the picture and asked the students to give the name of that particular animal. All of these questions were closed questions and did not make the students generate ideas. Yet, in an AfL classroom, teachers need to ask open questions so that students generate ideas, support or challenge each other's ideas giving reasons and consequently develop understanding. In other words, questioning should provide information about all

students' understanding, misunderstandings and gaps in knowledge and provide teachers with opportunity to move students from their current level to where they need to go.

It was observed that during the whole class discussion the teacher usually did not give the students enough time to formulate an answer. In the extract above, when a student gave the wrong answer to the question 'How many dolphins do you see in this picture?' other students rejected the answer but the teacher did not wait and did not give opportunity to others and answered the question herself.

Increasing wait time helps students collaborate with their peers and provide better answers to the questions during classroom discussion. Think-pair-share is one of the strategies that teachers can use to accomplish discussion during AfL. This technique requires students to think and formulate an answer, discuss the answer with their neighbors and share the answer. Izyan continued the lesson with the following extract:

Extract 34

T: Now all of you look at the picture. Are these sea animals happy?

Some students: yes ↑

T: are they happy? Look at the picture carefully.

S_{11}: no teacher they are not happy

T: they are sad. These sea animals are sad
Can you tell me why do they look sad?

S_{14}: they are hungry

T: wrong. Who knows?

S_9: the sea is dirty

T: the sea is dirty. I want to know why do they look sad?
 Izra can you tell why?

S_2: they are bored.

S_{11}: alone

T: their friends are dead. They are sad because many of their friends are dead.
Now turn to page 116 and read the story silently. Then we read together.

The first question in this extract only required the students to give yes/no answer. Some students gave the wrong answer; thus, the teacher asked them to look at the picture carefully. Then one of the students gave the correct answer. In the next turn Izyan asked the students to find out why the sea creatures in the picture are sad. As the extract indicates, the teacher addressed the question to the whole class and all the students needed to think and find an answer. S_{14} said that they are sad because they are hungry. But the teacher immediately rejected the answer given by S_{14}. Yet, in an AfL classroom teachers should not put down students' ideas during discussion, rather they should help students brainstorm ideas to improve critical thinking. The teacher needed to wait for the students to come up with possible answers to the question and ask probing questions to guide them towards the correct response.

The next question 'Can you tell me why do they look sad?' had more than one possible answer so the students had a chance to discuss possible answers. Some of the students' answers especially the answers given by S_{11} and S_9 were acceptable but it seemed that the teacher was looking for a specific answer which was mentioned in the story.

In other words, the teacher wanted the students to refer to the textbook and give the correct answer. The extract shows that when S_9 gave a reason 'the sea is dirty', the teacher did not confirm or reject the answer. She just repeated the answer and asked S_2 to answer the question. In the next turns S_2 and S_{12} gave answers but the teacher herself provided the desired answer without discussing the responses given by these students.

As can be seen in the extract, this discussion was based on a picture in the textbook. Picture based discussion can enhance students' level of participation in discussion; however, the results of the classroom observation showed that the discussions were highly controlled by the teacher. In other words, the discussions were teacher-centered.

In an AfL classroom discussion should be student-centered so that students can generate ideas and develop understanding through peer interaction. Teachers act as facilitators and use probing questions to move the discussion forward. As the above extract shows, Izyan did not give the students enough time to think and formulate answers to discuss with their friends. Moreover, instead of using probing questions to help the students provide the correct answers, most of the time Izyan kept repeating the same question several times.

In her mixed ability classroom, Devi preferred to use whole class discussion "I discuss with the whole class because I teach mixed-ability classes and not all of them can speak well" (Devi, Interview). She found that discussion would be more effective if the dialogue took place between the teacher and the whole class so that students with different abilities had a chance to take part in discussion.

Devi conducted the whole class discussion to teach listening and speaking. "Depending on the skill I want to teach I use discussion. For example, when I teach listening and speaking skills I conduct discussion. I ask them questions and I want them to listen and answer my questions" (Devi, interview). The following extract shows Devi's whole class discussion with her students while teaching the lesson of 'Earth detective'.

Extract 35

T: Save earth by using less paper because the paper here- O.K all these papers are from trees. *All* of you have to recycle the newspaper, what else? Magazine

S$_8$: Can

T: Can. O.K? You must recycle. Anything you can re- | anything you can recycle then do recycle.
What is recycling?

S$_8$: Guna balik semula [Re-use]

OC- the students is not using the correct term in Bahasa Melayu

T: Guna balik semula

What is recycling?
Kitar semula. Means you can use it again like your obon pencil.
Have you heard of obon pencil before this? Who has obon pencil?

S_{11}: What?

T: Obon pencil. Obon pencil

S_8: Obon pencil?

T: Obon- Do you have obon pencil?

S_3: Ada [I have]

T: O.K this one. Class this one is obon pencil.
They came to our school before this. They sold obon pencil, color pencil.

S_3: Saya ada dua [I have two]

T: O.K this is made of recycled paper. These one you can see. They are made of recycled paper.

In this lesson, the discussion was about finding ways to save the planet earth. In the above extract, the teacher started the dialogue by giving an example of how to save the earth. She explained to the students that recycling things such as paper can help save the planet earth. Then she asked the students to give example of things which can be recycled. This question required a short answer on the part of the learners but gave them a chance to participate in the discussion by providing possible answers. Yet, only one student answered this question and the teacher did not wait for other students to respond and immediately posed another question. According to the principles of social constructivism, teachers should ask not more than a question at a time to enhace engagement among students and give them enough time to brainstorm ideas and find the correct answer.

The teachers asked the students to give the meaning of 'recycling'. To respond to this question, one of the students translated the word 'recycling' into Bahasa Melayu, however, she did not use the correct term. The teacher did not approve or reject the answer given by S_8 and repeated the question one more time without giving clue to the students and waiting for them to answer the question. She repeated the same question and answered it herself by providing the correct translation of the word 'recycling' in

Malay language, defining it in English and giving Obon pencil as an example of things that can be made from recycled paper.

The above extract indicates that the students did not show a high level of response to the teachers' questions during the discussion. In other words, the students were not actively participating in the discussion. This might be due to the fact that the teacher was not asking brainstorming questions requiring the students to generate ideas and the dialogue was highly controlled by the teacher. Moreover, the extract shows that most of the times the teacher did not wait for the students to give ideas and answer the questions.

Devi continued the discussion by asking the students to propose solutions to save the earth:

Extract 36

T: O.K? O.K what else you can do to save your earth? [Apa lagi awak boleh buat to save your earth? Class apa lagi yang boleh awak buat untuk selamatkan bumi awak ni?]
Because your earth is now is very old. [Bumi ni dah *tu+a* sangat.]
It's very old

S_{11}: Dah tua? [Is it old?]

T: Dah tua dah [Indeed]

S_{16}: Dah tua macam mana? [How old?]

T: Dah tua sangat-sangat [Very old]

S_{11}: Kenapa? [why?]

T: What?

S_{11}: Kenapa? [why?]

T: Kenapa? Sebab- *Sebab* Sebab bumi kita dah lama+ sangat.So, dia dah tua sangat dah. [we have been living on the earth for a long time so it is old already.]

S_{15}: Kena tukar Bumi kot [Maybe we have to change the Earth]

S_{11}: Ha ah (approving the idea) ▲

T: You cannot change the earth to another one. Where? You want to go to Mars Sarah? Sarah nak pergi ke planet Mars nak tukar dengan Bumi? [Do you want to change the planet earth to mars Sarah?]

S$_{11}$: Ha ah. Boleh tukar [Yes. Shall we?]

T: Boleh? [Can we?]

In this extract the teacher was trying to engage more students in the discussion. She started the dialogue by maintaining that people should find a way to save the earth because it is old. Then the students asked the teacher to give them some explanation on why the earth is old. One of the students gave his idea stating that we can change the earth. This idea was approved by another student and challenged by the teacher.

As evident from the above extract, the students started to generate ideas; however, as the discussion progressed they gave answers not related to the topic of discussion. As a consequence, the teacher could not keep the discussion on topic and the students began chit-chatting with each other making a lot of noise.

Extract 37

S$_2$: Teacher, saya nak pergi alien [Teacher, I want to go to alien's place]

OC- Ss speak all the same time; the following is the most comprehensible talks

T: Nak pergi alien? [You want to go to alien?]

S$_2$: Ha ah [Yes]

S$_{15}$: Saya nak jumpa Ultraman [I want to meet Ultraman]

T: Ultraman? There is no Bumi Ultraman. There is no Ultraman

S$_8$: Saya XXXX

T: Ultraman Ultraman is just a fiction.

S$_8$: Cartoon

T: There is no Ultraman world outside there

S$_{15}$: Kaki dia ada roket [He got rocket on his feet]

T: Ah Ultraman, Izra? Ultraman macam roket? [Is Ultraman like rocket?]

OC- Ss giggle

T: Ultraman is just a fiction. Do believe anything that you watch on television. Jangan awak tengok, Ultraman. Lucunya Ultraman [do not see Ultraman. Funny Ultraman]

S$_8$: Dinosaur

T: Yes but it is long time ago. O.K dinosaurs exist because you can see all the fossils. All the bones.

S$_8$: Dinosaur Park

T: I never see a dragon. I do not know where is the dragon?
Come back to the topic save the earth.

Students' ideas should foster shared interaction. But as can be seen in the above extract, the student's idea to change the earth changed the topic of discussion and the students started to give ideas not relevant to the topic. The students started to talk about cartoon characters such as Ultraman and Alien and also the existence of dinosaurs which were not that related to the topic of 'saving the earth'.

Moreover, the above extract shows that only some specific students (S$_8$ & S$_{15}$) were talking and expressing their ideas. During the whole class discussion it important to make students interact with each other and exchange ideas but it is also important that teacher should keep the discussion on topic and not let some specific students dominate the discussion.

Another example of whole class discussion in Devi's classroom is shown in extract 7. When she was teaching the story 'the tiny thimble', Devi asked the students 'What happened to the cloth?' she addressed this question to the whole class and was expecting the students to give the correct answer based on the story they had read. In other words, this question had one possible answer and did not require the students to brainstorm ideas. One of the students (S$_{11}$) gave the correct answer in Malay language but the teacher did not pay attention and repeated the question.

As evident from extract 7, nobody volunteered to answer the question maybe because they thought the answer given by S$_{11}$ was not correct and got confused or maybe they could not recall information to give the teacher's expected answer. During the discussion teacher should be attentive to students' responses and contributions and help them connect their ideas to what they have learned to move the discussion forward.

The Year Two teacher, Irwan, regarded questioning as an integrated part of classroom discussion. He mentioned that "I usually conduct classroom discussion when I pose questions that cannot be answered by an individual student" (Irwan, Interview).

While teaching the lesson of 'Reuse, Recycle', Irwan posed a question to the class that required the students to give example of things that can be recycled. As the extract shows, the students have been learning this topic since the previous week and it seemed that by conducting this discussion the teacher aimed to check their knowledge and what they have learned.

After posing the question the teacher himself provided an example and asked the students to name things which can be made by reusing newspapers or magazines. In the following extract, one of the students (S_{11}) responded to the question and gave scrapbook as an example of things that they could make reusing newspaper and magazine.

Then in the next turn the teacher gave 'envelope' as another example and encouraged the students to provide other examples. As shown in the extract, one more time S_{11} volunteered to answer the question. The teacher approved the student's answer and asked the students for more examples. To respond to this question, another example was provided by one of the students.

Extract 38

T: O.K so starting from last week we learned about recycling about-

S_3: Reuse

T: Reuse, reproduce
All about recycling
O.K last session you said some things you can recycle like papers, plastics, bottles and cans
O.K Can you give me another example | that you can reuse with papers? For example newspaper what can you do? After you finish reading the newspaper, the magazine, what can you do?

S_{11}: We can do scrapbook

T: You can do a-?

S$_{11}$: Scrapbook

T: Scrapbooks
Very good
Using the papers, the newspaper or the magazine you can make envelope

S$_{11}$: Origami

T: and then you can make origami. Like small birds, stars, what else?

S$_2$: Airplane

T: Airplane
Yes paper plane
Do you know how to make paper planes?

Ss: Yes

T: Yes but do not do it here. Do at home. All right
So use can do a lot of things using the papers

In continuation to the discussion, another student (S$_2$) responded to the question and gave airplane as an example. As can be seen in the following extract, the teacher was asking more than one question at a time and it might lead to confusion among the students. In addition, the teacher's questions were clued questions that required the students to give a specific answer and did not enhance thoughtful reflection.

Extract 39

S$_{12}$: Vases

T: Yes another example is vase

Oh vase you can put flowers. All right. And then what else? O.K what about cans? Like sardine can. Tin or tin plastic tin or maybe aluminum tin. What can you use that? You put your coin inside. You can make what?

S$_{16}$: Tabung

T: What is tabung in English?

S$_{11}$: Coin box

T: Very good. What is it? Money box or coin box. So you can make *coin* box. All right. Money box.

According to Mercer et al. (2004) classroom discussion is an essential learning tool in primary schools. Yet, whole class discussion is not easy to manage because

teacher should encourage all students to participate in the classroom discussion and at the same instant not let some specific students dominate the discussion. In accordance with the sociocultural perspective, students become more expert while interacting in a community of practice; therefore, students should feel comfortable to take part in discussions, develop a shared language of learning, challenge or support each other's ideas giving reason and develop autonomy.

The participating teachers asked questions to encourage the students to develop a shared language of learning as well as a shared ownership of the learning tasks and guide them into the desired practices, yet, the learners were not positioned as insightful participants who could give correct answers, ask questions and challenge their teacher's questions as well and other students' answers.

The data from this study showed that the teachers usually looked for specific answers to their questions. However, according to Black and Wiliam (1998a) when teachers try to direct students towards their expected answers, students do not have the opportunity to work out their own responses and improve understanding. Moreover, the students' responses were limited to words and short phrases and sentences that were given by some specific students in the classroom. This is relatively in line with Pimentel and McNeill's (2013) findings which indicated that teachers framed questions in such a way that encouraged short and simple responses on the part of the learners and did not include reasoning. Patterns of participation will be discussed in detail in the next section.

4.3.2.3. Hierarchical Unequal Patterns of Participation

Research shows that student questioning should be considered important by teachers (e.g., Van Zee et al., 2001). The results of this study showed hierarchical unequal patterns of participation in the discussions. It was observed that students rarely asked questions. Izyan found out that most of the time she herself was the only one who talked and asked questions during the discussions. This is not in line with Dillon's (1988) finding which indicated that students talk takes as much time as teachers talk. Izyan mentioned that:

> Most of the time it's me who ask questions not so much of the students. Only a few students may ask questions like 'teacher why he did that'? Things like this but only a few students. The rest of them well I can see them looking at the screen but they do not ask me anything (Izyan, Interview).

When she posed a question during the discussion, Izyan, asked the students to put up their hands then she selected one of them to answer the question. "I say ok now who wants to answer? Put up your hands. If you talk I won't choose you so you must put up your hands quietly" (Izyan, Interview). She recognized that some students wanted to participate but it seemed that they did not have clear understanding of the aim of the discussion as well as the purpose of the questions raised by the teacher. They simply raise their hands to respond to the questions but they did not know the answers because they had no idea what the questions was about.

> Some of them want to talk but they have no idea of what I am asking but they want to respond. They put up their hand but they cannot answer the question. They simply do not answer because they do not know (Izyan, Interview).

During the discussion, Irwan addressed the question to the whole class and most often the students raised their hands to give response. "Students usually raise their hands to answer my questions" (Irwan, Interview). He considered that students learn a lot while taking part in classroom discussion. Nevertheless, he realized that some of the

students do not really participate in the discussion. "Some of them, they are in the classroom but they really do not discuss during the classroom discussion … they do not interact" (Irwan, Interview).

Devi, the Year One teacher, raised questions to provide opportunities for the students to get involved in the discussion. Even if they talked in Malay Devi did not put down their ideas and encouraged them to speak in English.

I am not telling that all the time they talk in English. Sometimes they do communicate in Bahasa Malaysia. I just let them talk and then I encourage them to talk in English… as long as I receive feedback from them, it is fine (Devi, Interview).

Yet, she recognized that only a few students were engaged in the discussions. "During the discussion only some of the students talk or ask questions and the rest are quiet" (Devi, Interview).

With most of the classroom time allotted to questioning, most of the students were positioned as silent and the questions were answered by some specific students who dominated the discussions. As evident from extracts 33- 39, most of the time the teacher was the only question asker and the only person who initiated the discussion by posing a question.

Further, the dialogues were dominated by some specific students. Meaning that, the teachers initiated the discussion, few specific students responded to the questions and the responses were sometimes evaluated by the teacher. In other words, Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) was the commonest pattern of interaction (Well, 1990, as cited in Ruiz-Primo, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, the data showed that most of the time it was only the teacher who initiated the discussion. This is not consistent with Ruiz-Primo's (2011) statement that assessment conversation does not necessarily start by the teacher.

Students and peers can also start the discussion and use assessment information to close the interactional dialogue by providing feedback or guiding students.

To this end, students should actively participate in classroom dialogue. They need to put themselves in teacher's frame of reference and take part in discussions so that they can exchange ideas, learn from their peers, promote learning ownership and construct knowledge and understanding (Barak & Rafaeli, 2004).

According to Black and Wiliam (2006) AfL makes teaching more dialogic. In an AfL context, effective classroom discussion involves posing questions, communicating critical viewpoints and having an argument to support others' ideas (Graesser et al., 2002). Therefore, the participating teachers need to minimize IRF and make the conversation more dialogic so that the students have the chance to ask questions, support or challenge each other's ideas and use the information to have more cyclical dialogic interactions in their classrooms.

As the data shows, the students were not involved in dialogic interaction and only accomplished the teachers' communicative demands. This is not consistent with Ruiz-Primo's (2011) assertion that dialogic interaction makes students' thinking visible so that it can be examined and shaped as a central component of constructive learning.

Assessment conversation can have multiple iterations that facilitate higher order thinking. Yet, the dialogic conversations in these classrooms did not have multiple iterations and Devi, Irwan and Izyan did not use information to move the students' learning forward.

According to Minstrell et al. (2009) closure plays an important part in implementing dialogic interaction effectively. Students perform better when dialogic interactions are closed with the use of information obtained during the interactions (Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, 2006). In this study it was observed that sometimes the teachers did not evaluate the students' responses in order to use the information from their

learning gap to make the conversations more dialogic. In other words, the teachers were not attentive to all students' responses to get the students involved in the discussions and help them move beyond the learning gap.

The findings of the study conducted by Black et al. (2003) revealed that when teacher expected a particular answer there was evidence of students talk no more than 2 or 3 word phrases but when teacher tried to steer the conversation by asking students' comments and leading the conversation in a specific direction, teacher-student talk took the form of complete sentences. In the current study, the data showed that the teachers usually asked lower level cognitive questions, expected particular answers to the questions and the students' responses to the questions were limited to words and short phrases and sentences that were given by some specific students in the classroom.

The results were not consistent with Li's (2011) findings which showed that in a complex social and discourse community of language classroom, teachers can facilitate students' interaction by using more open questions, reducing interruptions, increasing wait-time and feedback to the learners' responses.

The participating teachers had great control over the interactions. Involuntarily nature of the students' participation in role-plays (e.g., extract 28 & 29), reformulating the students' incorrect responses (e.g., extract 34 & 35), trying to elicit the correct response using clued questions (e.g., extract 33, 34, 35, & 39) are indicators of teacher controlled discussions.

However, guiding students and reshaping their ideas by teachers led to a non-interactive dialogue (Mortimer & Scott, 2003). Moreover, using heavily clued questions made the students play a passive role in the interactions and did not give them a chance to formulate their own thought, feel a sense of belonging to the community and become central participants.

Through engaging in activities, learners' negotiate their identities and move forward in their learning from novice to expert (Wenger, 1998). If the students tried not to make eye contact with the teacher or doodled and whispered with other students, it was implied that they were making a choice not to participate. As mentioned before, in the current study only particular students answered the questions and the rest were silent. Below the researcher illustrates patterns of participation in these four classrooms.

S_{12}, Year One A student, sat at the back of the class. Although she was a confident learner, she did not engage in the discussions. One of the students who always dominated the discussions, S_8, was sitting beside her. It seems that S_{12} felt that S_8 was trying to compete with her and push her out of the way. Therefore, S_{12} avoided the conflict by not being volunteered to answer the questions and taking longer doing tasks or activities.

S_8 explained that the students sitting nearby her at the back of the class do not participate in classroom talk because they are lazy. During the observation, S_{12} developed more positive relationships with the teacher and became more peripheral in her participation. However, she did not extend her identity towards a central participant maybe because it was difficult for her to change her established identity in the classroom. The teacher did not provide S_{12} with opportunities to become more central in her participation and allowed certain students such as S_8 to dominate the discussions.

S_2 described himself as silent and not good at learning English. But it was observed that he was trying to build positive relationships with their teacher by going to see the teacher and showing his work or asking some questions in Malay language. He could not improve himself academically during the observation period but became a more confident participant. Throughout the observation, he answered fewer questions and rarely engaged in classroom talk but maintained his positive relationships with the teacher and became more peripheral in his participation
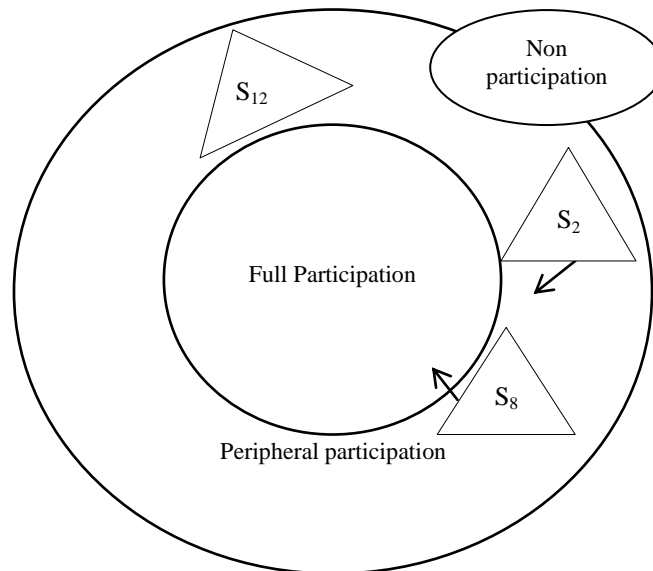
Figure 4.4. Patterns of participation in discussion (Year One A students)

In Year One B classroom, S_{11} was an active participant and most of the times dominated the discussions. It was observed that sometimes the teacher did not evaluate the students' responses. For instance, in extract 7, S_{11} responded to the question 'what happened to the cloth?' but his response was not confirmed or rejected by the teacher. It seems that other students thought the answer given by S_{11} was wrong and when they recognized that S_{11}'s participation was not approved by the teacher, they avoided participation.

It is shown in the extract that S_2, S_4 and S_{16} got confused when the teacher did not evaluate S_{11}'s response and did not give any possible answer to the question. In other words, they preferred to position themselves as less peripheral participants. This extract shows the important role of teachers' feedback to the students' responses in encouraging learners to actively engage in classroom discussion and develop an identity of autonomous learner.
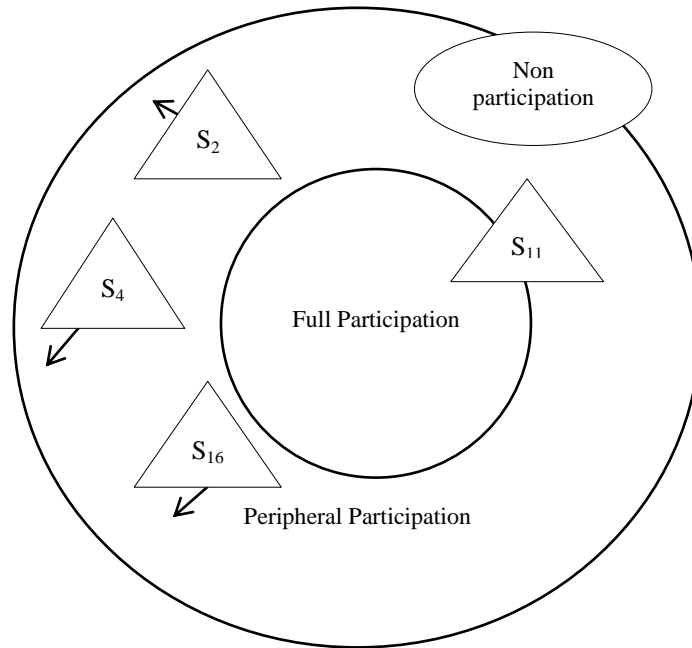
Figure 4.5. Patterns of participation in discussion (Year One B students)

The same pattern of participation was observed in Year Two B. For instance, as it is evident from extracts 33 and 34, the discussion was dominated by some specific students especially S_{11} and S_2. In these extracts the teacher was asking lower cognitive level questions and was looking for specific answers on the part of the learners. It was also observed that sometimes the teacher did not evaluate the students' responses and made the students avoid participation. During the observation period S_{11} remained a central participant, however, S_2 did not extend his identity and positioned himself as a peripheral participant. S_{16}, S_{14} and S_9 also preferred to peripherally participate in the discussions and the rest of the students became marginalized.
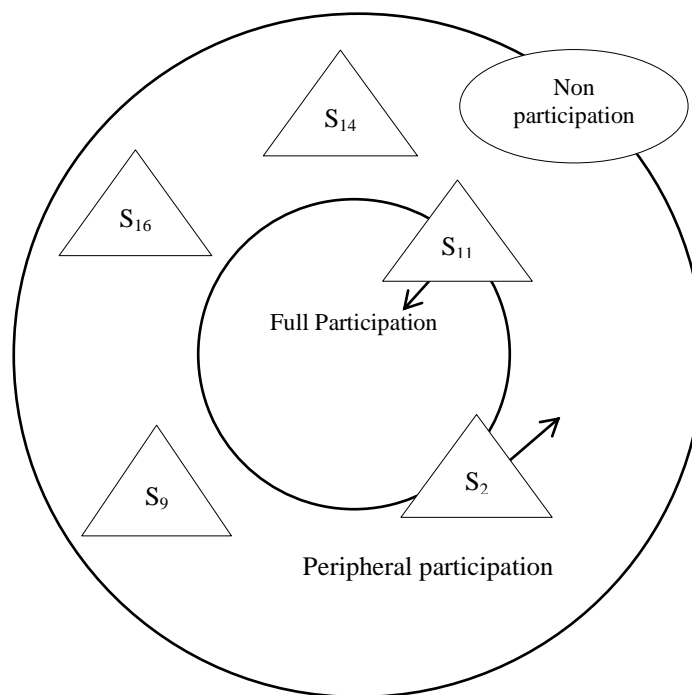
Figure 4.6. Patterns of participation in discussion (Year Two B students)

In Irwan's classroom S_{11} dominated the discussions. Irwan asked a lot of clued questions that made the students play a passive role during the discussions. According to extracts 38 and 39, S_{11} was always the star during the discussions. S_2 and S_{12} became less peripheral in their participation and did not extend their identity towards central participants. S_3, S_4, S_7 and S_9 preferred to participate peripherally and the students who were involved in non-productive interaction became marginalized.

Exploring the patterns of participation in these classrooms showed that the students were not aware of their roles during the interactions. The teachers' silence while accomplishing worksheets and tasks, made the students adapt roles identical to those in a cultural narrative of test- silent learner and working individually to find the correct answer. Therefore, many of the students especially more peripheral participants, did not take the risk of building relationships and asking questions.
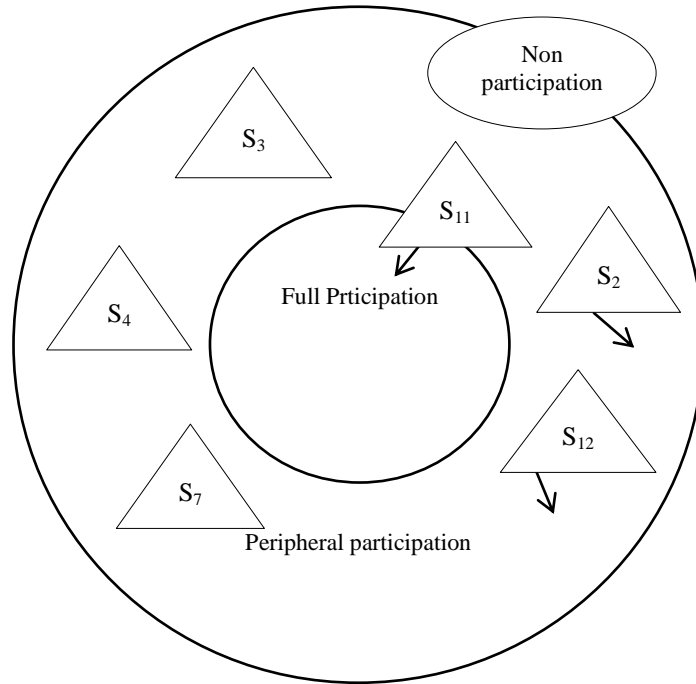
Figure 4.7. Patterns of participation in discussion (Year Two A students)

The students' learning achievement was not conceptualized as their active participation. Much of class time was devoted to the teacher's questions and specific students' responses to the questions. These patterns of participation lead to teacher-centered discussions and the teachers did not help their students to generate ideas to move the discussions forward.

The participating teachers valued learning through interaction but they also stated that they are used to the old syllabus and it is difficult for them to change their role based on the new syllabus specification and the new assessment system. Therefore, more training courses need to be conducted to give teachers information on the new assessment system and help them implement AfL strategies in such a way as to move students' learning forward.

Based on the principles of sociocultural theory, learning is a process of becoming more expert in the community of practice, the heart of AfL. Learners develop expertise

through interacting and engaging with the language, tools and peers within the community of practice. According to Lave and Wenger (1991) while developing expertise, learners move from being peripheral participants to more central participants with the help of more knowledgeable peers that guide learners to improve their understanding of the tools in the community while they are in their ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978).

Students should learn to participate and belong to the community of practice that teachers shape by providing a safe and collaborative environment. Further, teachers need to appreciate students' contribution to classroom interactions. According to Wenger (1998) "members whose contributions are never adopted, develop an identity of non-participation that progressively marginalize them" (p. 203).

The participating teachers in this study needed to position their students as active learners and central participants in the discussions by inviting their ideas and questions, sharing the ownership of learning and giving them a voice during the discussions. They needed to help marginalized students extend their identities towards more central participants by giving credence to their ideas and being attentive to their responses to the questions and appreciating their contributions to the discussions.

4.3.2.4. Commentaries on the Descriptions of the Study- Research Question 2

Three big themes are described to answer Research Question 2. These are: (1) Supportive and Collaborative Environment, (2) whole-class discussion, and also (3) Hierarichical and unequal patterns of participations of teachers and students.

Classroom discussions are an important part of learning and teaching processes (Mercer et al., 2004). It not only helps students to learn more successfully (Black & Wiliam, 1998b), but also points to the fact that many successful academic achievements are partly based on the collaborative and effective classroom discussions and the right

proportion of interactions that happen in the classroom (Black & Wiliam, 1998a, 2006; Alexander, 2004).

The analysis of the study points to the notion that what should contain a good classroom discussions rarely happen during the practice of AfL by the teachers. Some of the reasons that this phenomenon takes place are suggested by Minstrell et al. (2009) whereby teachers are not skilled enough to embark on the sequence of successful classroom discussions such as how to start, to lead, and also to end the whole-class discussions meaningfully.

The inference that we can make is the same as those suggested by Li (2011) that many of these teachers in this study are novice and unskilled in terms of professional training in the AfL areas. This may somehow inhibit the success learning of students. The training of teachers are important as foreseen by Matsumura et al. (2008) that skilled and professionally trained ESL teachers may exhibit better rate of success in their classroom as compared to those untrained, novice teachers.

One of the reasons is that trained, experienced ESL teachers can easily clarify learning goals that will lead indirectly to the autonomous learning processes as suggested by the research works of Ruiz-Primo et al. (2007) and Ruiz-Primo (2011). In this situation, teachers lead students what to learn and how students can achieve this goal successfully (Harlen, 2007)

Classroom discussions that lead students to achieve their learning goals (Sidhu, 2011) are of special attention by many researchers in the ESL field but mostly dominated by science-based research works such as the works of Frederiksen and White (1997) and Pimentel and McNeill (2013). In this study, the three teachers seem to agree with these research works that both theoretical understanding of what AfL is and the practices of AfL during its implementation in the classroom are totally two different subjects.

In the section, Research Question 3 is described and explained in detail which comprises of: (1) Praise giving, (2) One-to-one instruction or explicit feedback (3) and also dialogic feedback.

4.3.3. How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers provide students with formative feedback?

"Giving feedback to students is very important because learners would like to know their level. I am pretty sure that my students would love to know where they are at the moment" (Izyan, Interview).

Below the researcher explains the themes that emerged from the data to answer the third research question: How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers provide students with formative feedback?

4.3.3.1. Giving Praise

The results of this study showed that a lot of teacher feedback to students was in the form of praise. The teachers accentuated the importance of praise in building close relationship between students and their teacher, increasing students' self-esteem and encouraging them to learn better. Izyan, the Year Two B teacher, viewed that praise could motivate the students to perform better:

> As an ESL teacher I would say that praising students' efforts is very important because language is not something that everyone likes. Language can be very challenging, very demotivating at times. By praising students I think they will really benefit from it and it can help them get motivated to learn better (Izyan, Interview).

According to the above statement, Izyan valued feedback containing praise because she found out that learning a second language is not an easy task for the students, therefore, teachers need to use praise to keep them motivated. She maintained

that "to be able to speak another language is a big thing that needs extra skills, so if teachers criticize students too often, students will get turn off" (Izyan, Interview).

It was observed that sometimes the participating teachers rejected the students' answers by saying 'no' or 'wrong' but they never punished them. For example, in extracts 33 and 34 when Izyan rejected the students' answers to the questions, she either repeated the question again or asked another student to give the correct answer. Izyan maintained that "Even if the students are not performing to the standards the teacher is aiming them to" (Izyan, Interview). In her viewpoint, it is very important to give feedback to ESL learners especially the young kids and it is better to give feedback in a positive way so that students feel like they are appreciated for the effort they put in.

> What you can do is to put it in a positive way. Wow it is a good effort but it is nicer if you can do it this way. Just to get them motivated to continue learning. Give them the feeling of being capable of doing something (Izyan, Interview).

Most of the time, Izyan gave positive feedback to the students and praised them. When a weak student made progress she praised that particular student's effort and made him/her a 'star student'. It was also confirmed by her students. During the group interview they mentioned that "She praises us when we answer questions. She says 'very good' and sometimes after that we clap our hands" (Year Two B Students, Group Interview).

Classroom observation showed that Izyan praised the students whenever they gave correct answers to the questions. For instance, in the extract below the teacher was asking the students to spell the word 'bake'. Some students put up their hands to respond to the question and then Izyan selected S_{12} to give an answer. As can be seen in the extract, when the student provided the correct answer, the teacher praised him using encouraging words such as 'good' and 'very good'.

Extract 40

T: How do you spell *bake*?

OC- Ss are spelling the word 'bake'

T: ▼ You put up your hand
Yes

S_{12}: b-a

T: Yes Adam?

S_{12}: k

T: 'k' good
Ayman 'e'
Very good

OC- The teacher was giving feedback to Ayman (S_{16})

Izyan praised the students while checking their activity books too. It was observed that at the end of a teaching session, the teacher asked the students to take out their activity books and then she started to check their work. The teacher was checking the activities that the students had accomplished the day before and was giving comments such as 'good' and 'very good' orally or in writing. As the below extract shows, during focus group interview the students asserted that they like to be praised by their teacher when they complete activities.

I: What makes you eager to do the activities?

S_4: Because I get full mark

I: What else?

S_{15}: Full mark

I: You can get full mark. Anything else?

$S_{16:}$ Getting present

S_4: Teacher praises me

(Year Two B Students, Group Interview)

However, praising students by writing rewarding words in their activity books does not help much to improve their works. This is consistent with Parr and Timperley's (2010) findings which revealed that teachers' ability to provide written feedback in the

framework of AfL is an important part of teacher practice that guides students in improving their learning. However, to provide such kind of feedback teacher pedagogical content knowledge is required.

This type of feedback Izyan gave to her students while checking their activity books was not related to the quality of the students' work or their learning needs. In other words, it did not lead to students' self-reflection and did not provide them with information about their learning gap. By receiving feedback on their work, students need to know where they are relative to the learning goals and how they can achieve the goals. But this feedback type only gave Izyan information about her students' ability to complete the task. This is in spite of the fact that feedback is the process of learning for both teacher and students and not the teacher per se.

Devi and Irwan also affirmed the importance of praising students. Devi praised the students and encouraged them to try harder. If the students could accomplish an activity or task correctly, she praised them by saying encouraging words such as 'good' and sometimes gave them rewards. She pinpointed that:

> I usually praise my students. For example, I say 'good work', 'nice try' and sometimes as I said I give them something such as sticker or money. If they are not good I would say 'next time [please] do it correctly', or for example if the student's handwriting is not good, I say 'improve your handwriting'. I try not to punish them (Devi, Interview).

The same as Izyan, Devi also used encouraging words to praise the students. If the students were not on the right track, she did not give them negative feedback and just gave comments such as 'improve your work'.

As it is indicated in extract 41, in Year One A classroom when S_8 gave the correct answer to the question, the teacher praised her by saying 'good'.

Extract 41

T: And the last one. What is this?

S$_8$: Elephant

T: Elephant. O.K Good

During group interview, the students highlighted that if they completed the given tasks correctly and provided correct answers to the teacher's questions, the teacher praised them. "She praises us by saying good, correct or very good" (Year One A Students, Group Interview). To obtain a clearer picture of Devi's use of praise, the researcher will look into some classroom episodes.

After teaching the students how to punctuate sentences, Devi wrote three sentences on the whiteboard and asked them to rewrite the sentences in their sticker book. The students were required to punctuate the sentences, paste the correct picture under each sentence and afterwards color the pictures. As it is shown in extract 42, to encourage the students to do the activity, Devi announced that she will give a sticker to the first three students to complete the activity.

Extract 42

T: O.K. Class finished?

Ss: No ↑

T: O.K, this is Norree's work. Because she is the first person who finished, I give a sticker to Norree as present.
O.K. Norree collect your sticker.

OC- The chatter decreased when the teacher praised S$_{10}$.

T: O.K, Angel. This one is Angel's work. O.K, Angel also gets sticker.

OC- the teacher gave a sticker to S$_8$

T: Only for first, second and third

S$_x$: Siapa nak jadi ketiga? [Who wants to be the third?]

S$_{15}$: Saya [me]

T: So who is the third one? O.K. Faster
O.K faster. Who wants the third sticker?

Color it nicely
O.K. Umar gets the last sticker

Ss: Alaa

OC- (disappointed)

T: O.K, the last sticker is for Umar

The above extract shows that when the teacher gave the first sticker to the first student to complete the activity, other students were persuaded to finish up their activity and get a reward sticker from their teacher. Therefore, it is implied that the students were eager to be praised by their teacher. This is also evident in the group interview.

I: O.K if you give the correct answer, what does your teacher do?

S_3: Writes

S_7: She writes the answer on the whiteboard.

S_3: she would praise us

I: If you're wrong, what does she do?

S_5: She gives the answer.

(Year One B Students, Group Interview)

The students recognized that if they try to find the correct answers to the questions and complete activities correctly they will be praised by their teacher. They knew that they would not be punished for their wrong answers and if they give the wrong answer the teacher corrects them, asks another student to answer or provides them with the correct answer.

Irwan praised the students to help them improve their self-esteem and to encourage them to use language in their daily communication. "Praise helps the students cultivate a positive attitude towards language learning. It also helps them improve their self-esteem to enhance their ability to use the language" (Irwan, Interview). He encouraged his students to improve themselves by giving them praise.

I give my students points and stickers and sometimes when they have done their work I stamp their book or I may let them leave the class earlier than others. I also praise their effort by saying 'good work', 'very good'. (Irwan, Interview).

As shown in the following extract, students approved that their teacher praised them most of the time by giving them reward sticker and present, saying encouraging words or letting them leave the class early.

I: When your teacher asks questions or asks you to do an activity, what does he usually do if you answer correctly?

Ss: we receive a sticker

S_{11}: we can leave early

S_{16}: Get present.

S_2: teacher says 'very good'

(Year Two A Students, Group Interview)

The following extracts show how Irwan praised his students in the classroom. For example, extract 43 indicates that the teacher was playing bingo with the students. To encourage them to win the game, Irwan told the students that the first three winners can leave the class five minutes earlier than other students.

Extract 43

T: Let's see who is the winner of this bingo game.
The first three winners
I will select three winners you can go back five minutes early today.

Ss: Yeay

OC- The students were excited

The results of classroom observation showed that, like Devi and Izyan, Irwan also praised his students whenever they answered his questions correctly or accomplished an activity successfully. For example, after teaching the students the i-e sound, he asked them to complete an activity in their exercise book. There were nine word boxes and

each box included two words with the i-e sound. The teacher chose one word in each box, read it aloud and the students needed to listen to the teacher and circle the word they have heard. After doing the activity, when the teacher found out that the majority of the students had completed the activity correctly, he praised them by saying 'very good'. This is indicated in extract 44.

Extract 44

T: How many of you got all correct?
OC- Students who have got all correct raise their hands
T: Quite a number of you. Very good. That means you are good listeners.

In sum, the results indicated that the teachers praised their students to motivate them to try hard and learn better. They praised their students for completing activities correctly within the specified time, providing correct answers to the questions and for doing their best to achieve the learning goals.

The participating teachers praised the students by saying encouraging words such as 'good', 'very good' or by giving tangible rewards such as sticker and stamp. The students also confirmed that most of the times they were praised by their teacher and commented that they felt good inside when they were praised.

Feedback is considered a key element in formative assessment and an important factor that highly affects students' learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hattie, 2009). However, as Havnes et al. (2012) put it "positive effects of feedback are not always the case" (p. 21). Feedback should give students time to reflect and learn how to improve their learning. In other words, feedback should be focused on process as well.

Like Behaviorists the participating teachers gave feedback as a gift from teacher to student (Askew & Lodge, 2000). But feedback as a gift or praise did not help them develop autonomy. As Askew and Lodge (2000) put it feedback as a gift "fosters

dependence rather than independence or interdependence and encourages notions of failure/success, wrong/right" (p. 5).

In other words, teachers 'reward' positively when they have positive results and 'reward' negatively in the form of punishment when they receive negative results from students. Praising students only expresses positive feelings about the students and does not include any task-related information. Feedback should also contain narratives that offer insights for reflection. Narrative refers to the description teachers provide to students in order to help them improve.

Constructivists emphasize the importance of keeping feedback focused on the task rather than on learners (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). On the contrary, according to social constructivist perspective, the teachers should keep feedback focused both on task performance as well as students' identity. Sadler (2007) and Hattie and Timperley (2007) operated from constructivism and suggested that feedback information should be used to bridge students' learning gaps. Yet, the importance of personal domain cannot be neglected. According to social constructivists, feedback should increase students' engagement, enhance their commitment to learning and understanding of the task and help them to develop autonomy.

The results of this study showed that the teachers praised their students and valued the importance of praise in students' learning. However, general praise is not likely to be effective in developing autonomous learning. The results indicated that the teachers did not have enough knowledge to provide their students with formative feedback to help them enhance autonomy. This is in line with Hattie and Timperley's (2007) statement that "it is difficult to document the frequency of feedback in the classrooms except to note that it is low (p. 100)".

4.3.3.2. One-to-One Instruction

As it is specified in the new syllabus, the new assessment system does not require teachers to give feedback in the form of mark or grade; instead, they need to provide students with formative feedback during the teaching and learning process to obtain information about students' learning and help them enhance their learning experience.

The results of classroom observation showed that when the students accomplished an activity or a worksheet (question sheet), the teachers did not give them mark or grade. If the students completed the activity incorrectly, their teacher corrected them or taught them again. Devi mentioned that "we are not giving grades. We just say whether they can achieve or not. From their mistakes we can understand whether or not they have learned. Then we need to correct them and sometimes re-teach them" (Devi, Interview).

The teachers expressed that the old assessment system required them to frequently test students and give them grades to determine their level of understanding. Izyan explained that:

> Previously we used frequent testing to assess students. Tests were designed by teachers and grades above 40 were considered passing grades. We had four tests a year. Two monthly tests and the other two tests were mid-term and final examinations. Let's say after teaching two or three lessons we gave them a test (Izyan, Interview).

However, based on the new syllabus, teachers only check to see whether or not students have achieved the stated goals. Irwan stated that if a student could not achieve the task or activity teachers need to guide them.

> But when we use formative assessment we assess students through worksheets to see if they can achieve the band, we do not grade them. We just check if they can achieve or not. In Malay we call it 'Menguasai/tidak Menguasai'. If they cannot achieve teachers have to guide them until they achieve (Irwan, Interview).

The data showed that if the students were unable to complete a task or worksheet, the teachers gave them guidance on a one-to-one basis. Devi recognized that some students, especially the weak ones, were incapable to do the activities by themselves so she gave them one-to-one guidance to help them complete the activities and find the correct answers. She mentioned that:

> If they have given the wrong answer I ask them to do corrections and I explain to them one by one and help them to find the correct answer. Maybe sometimes when we are teaching to the whole class they do not understand but when we teach them one by one they can understand better (Devi, Interview).

It was observed that most of the times Devi provided one-to-one instruction while teaching writing to the students.

> During writing, first I give them instructions then they do the activity. If I see they have done it wrong I call them and teach them one by one because writing needs more focus and understanding. Students should write legibly and correctly (Devi, Interview).

For instance, when she taught the students how to put sentences together to form a paragraph, Devi asked them to complete a worksheet. The worksheet comprised of five sentences taken from the story 'the tiny thimble'. The students were required to punctuate the sentences and put them into order to form a paragraph. The following extract shows that when the students almost completed the worksheet, the teacher found out that some of them were not on the right track; therefore, she gave explanation to those particular students on a one-to-one basis.

Extract 45

T: O.K there is a space here right? So when you want to write the second sentence, do not write it here. 'One day'. You have to write here. 'One day an old woman gave her a tiny thimble'. You have to contin-ue. This sentence should follow the previous sentence. Understand?
Now the third sentence 'She thanked the old lady' you have to continue.
This is how we write in paragraph. Understand?

Ss: Yes

T: O.K continue. Sentences in a paragraph follow each other.

OC- Ss quietly continue with their tasks. T continues to check on each Ss

T: Aysha. When you write in paragraph, you do not have to write numbers. I said. Like this. O.K?

This episode reveals that Devi found out that two students had completed the activity incorrectly. So she started to guide them one by one. The first teacher turn indicates that she gave the student an explanation on how to write the sentences to form a paragraph and helped the student to complete the activity. Afterwards, she guided the other student who had done the activity the wrong way and reminded her that there is no need to number the sentences in a paragraph.

Upon completion, the teacher asked the students to fold the worksheet and glue it onto their sticker book. The following extract illustrates how Devi was giving one-to-one feedback to S_{22} who was confused with the task. As evident from the extract, the teacher explained to the student how to fold the worksheet and paste it into her sticker book and afterwards she made a round in the class to check the students' work and guide them on a one-to-one basis if necessary.

Extract 46

T: O.K Fold the paper into two. Fold it like this ||

OC- *other students are busy doing the task*

T: Batrisha. Then take the glue. I want you to paste it
You have to fold it. Fold like this

S_{22}: Lipat [folding]

T: Yes

OC-The teacher makes a round in the class checking and helping Ss on a one-to-one basis

The same as Devi, Irwan also gave feedback to the students on a one-to-one basis. In order to correct the students' wrong answers to the tasks or activities, he guided them

individually and corrected their mistakes on a one-to-one basis. He pinpointed that "we need to tell the students when they are wrong and I think the most effective way is to guide them on a one-to-one basis. This way, students are corrected and given the guidance individually" (Irwan, Interview).

It was observed that if a student completed worksheets or tasks in their activity book wrongly, Irwan called that particular student to come to his desk or he himself went to student's place and corrected him/her. He explained that:

> After my students complete a worksheet or an activity, I ask them to submit their worksheet or activity book and then I will check their answers. If someone has done it incorrectly, I will call that particular student(s) or I will go to their sitting place and provide guidance (one-to-one basis) on how to answer the questions correctly (Irwan, Interview).

For instance, when the students accomplished the task on page 98 of their activity book requiring them to complete a passage about the steps in recycling a jam jar to make a fish bowl, Irwan asked them to submit their activity book so that he can check the responses one by one and help them correct their mistakes. It is indicated in the following extract:

Extract 47

T: O.K if you have finished please submit the activity book. I want to check one by one. Group one. First students sitting at the left hand side of the class. |O.K the rest while waiting you can color. All right.

S$_x$: Ye ye can color

OC- Some Ss started coloring while waiting. Teacher is checking Ss' books. Some students are making noise.

T: I said group number one first (to a S)
You cannot go out
O.K Wait

S$_6$: Nah (submit the book). Here it goes |

T: Durga write your name. Do not walk around.
Ah...Durga please you write name. Sit down

Extract 47 shows that the teacher asked a group of students to submit their books and asked the remaining students to color the pictures while waiting. Irwan started to check the answers one by one and afterwards if a student's answers were wrong he called that student and explained to him/her individually. The following extract indicates that Irwan called S_{13} and asked the student to correct the answer. S_{13} told the teacher that he does not know how to do the task so Irwan highlighted the student's incorrect answers in red and asked him to find the correct answers. However, he did not provide guidance on how to find the right answers.

Extract 48

S_{13}: Aku tak tau dah [I seriously do not know]

T: This is wrong. Correct this one. Hurry up.
This is wrong (*to a S_{13}*)
Wait wait wait (*to a S_{19}*)
This is wrong

OC- Ss finishing the work. Slight noise begin to emerge

After teaching the students the sounds e-e and i-e, the teacher and the students read the words with e-e and i-e sounds in the textbook and played bingo game using these words. First, Irwan asked the students to draw a box with nine compartments so they could write words in each compartment. Extract 49 illustrates that the teacher found out that S_{18} was not able to draw a box; therefore, he went to the students' desk and guided him.

Extract 49

T: boxes you also you do not know how to do it. This is not correct
Satu kotak besar dengan sembilan petak [a large box with nine compartments]
One two three four five six seven eight nine. Your box has only six compartments

Do it right now. In the paper that I give you.

S_{18}: Buat kotak ya? [Draw a box ya?]

T: Take out your pencil
Nanti dulu, buat dulu kotak (to a S_{18}) [Wait. Draw a box first]

S_{18}: Buat kotak dekat belakang dia ke teacher? [Draw at the back?]

T: Dekat belakang dia [At the back]
Here one two three. Here also one two three

This episode shows that Irwan was helping the student to draw a box. He told S_{18} that the box should have nine compartments not six. Then he asked the student (S_{18}) to take out his pencil and draw the box correctly at the back of the paper. Irwan made a round in the classroom and checked the students' boxes. When he made sure that everybody has done it correctly then only they started to play bingo.

Izyan recognized that the school usually did not allow ample time for teachers to be attentive to every individual student. She acknowledged the importance of one-to-one instruction and mentioned that:

> During class there is not enough time available to give feedback to every student but from time to time I monitor whether they have finished their work and check their progress. Sometimes I provide some students with one-to-one instruction if I feel they do not understand. Some of them do not understand so maybe I can give one-to-one attention to these students and help them complete their work (Izyan, Interview).

This statement shows that whenever time permitted, Izyan provided her students with one-to-one instruction in order to guide them accomplish tasks and activities successfully. It was observed that the language art lessons gave her an opportunity to provide the students with one-to-one instruction.

For instance, when Izyan asked the students to make the chart of sea animals, she found out that some of the students were confused with the task. While other students were cleaning up their sitting place, the teacher went to one of the students' desk to help

him complete the chart. The following episode shows the conversation between Izyan and that particular student (S_{14}).

Extract 50

T: Eh, Rafi |Put the glue here. Paste it. Color it nicely (*to a S₁₄*)

OC- Some students have finished their work and the teacher is asking them to clean up their sitting place.

T: O.K after you paste the ribbon look at the spelling, write the name of the animals and then you can show it to your friends. Yeay, Rafi finally. O.K I think that's good.

S_{14}: Ini betul ke? [Is it correct?]

T: O.K go and write the name of the animals. You can show it to your friends.

This extract illustrates that the teacher was giving S_{14} explanations on the steps he needed to follow in order to complete the chart of sea animals. The students also confirmed that sometimes when they were unable to complete an activity the teacher told them how to do it correctly.

S_7: Sometimes it's a bit difficult

I: Is it difficult? What happen when you have difficult task?

S_2: Teacher gives the answer.

S_7: Teacher corrects our work.

(Year Two B Students, Group Interview)

According to this extract, the students recognized that their teacher would help them individually to complete their work or give them the correct answers when they are unable to do it by themselves.

The results indicated that in the Malaysian sociocultural context, one-to-one instruction was highly valued by the students as a source of help. The results of this study revealed that whenever time permitted, the participating teachers gave one-to-one instruction to those students who could not complete the activities and worksheets. The

students used to wait for their teacher to come around to their desk before they seek for help in a whisper.

The data showed that the assessment task was not a focus of joint enterprise, through which students could foster negotiation of meaning, give and receive feedback and develop a shared repertoire of language learning. The findings indicated that teachers recognized one-to-one instruction as an effective way to give feedback to the students. This is aligned with the findings of Guskey (2010) that inferred the effectiveness of one-to-one instruction. Guskey (2010) claimed that one-to-one tutoring is effective because the tutor identifies errors in students' work and then provides them with clarifications. This is what Bloom called 'feedback' and 'correctives'.

However, as literature shows, feedback should affect students' future performance and help them improve their learning. Research shows that information from students' work becomes feedback only if it is used to alter the learning gap (Black & Wiliam, 1998b; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Ramaprasad, 1983; Sadler, 1989). However, according to Wiliam (2011) Bloom separated the information about the learning gap from its instructional consequences. In other words, feedback as a focus of joint enterprise should help students give and receive feedback on each other's work and improve their learning.

Moreover, this approach is rather time-consuming and uneconomical. That is to say, one-to-one instruction needs lots of classroom time and teachers do not have enough time to provide all students with feedback. As the results of this study showed, feedback was not equally distributed among the learners and teachers only gave one-to-one instruction to some students who could not do the activities. This is in spite of the fact that in an AfL classroom feedback is an integrated part of the teaching and learning process. Feedback should be equally distributed among the students, to give them

information about their learning within a classroom community and help them develop identity within the community of practice.

4.3.3.3. Effective Dialogic Feedback is not Given to the Students

The participating teachers acknowledged the importance of giving feedback to the students and asserted that teachers do not usually give effective feedback.

Many teachers do not really give effective feedback. So students do not know where they are going. They do not know what their level is and they do not feel happy about themselves. For instance, we human beings we like compliments, we need to be praised, and that will keep us going. Some students take criticism positively. Some students will turn off. So it is best to pick your words wisely when you want to give feedback to your students (Izyan, Interview).

This assertion indicates that effective feedback should give information on students' level of achievement. Moreover, when they want to give feedback to their students, teachers need to give it in such a way that keeps students motivated to learn better. The participants recognized that feedback would help teachers ensure students' learning and encourage them to learn better. "When we give feedback to the students we can understand whether they are learning or not. Teachers and also students can find out their strengths and weaknesses and enhance their learning" (Devi, Interview).

The teachers shed light on the role of feedback in determining where the students stand relative to the learning targets. According to Irwan "Feedback is very important because students need to know where they stand. If you do not give feedback and if you do not tell them their weaknesses, how are they going to improve?" (Irwan, Interview).

The results showed that most of the time the teachers gave feedback to the students in the form of praise. They praised their students whenever they answered the questions correctly or completed a worksheet or activity successfully. If the students gave the wrong answers to the questions or activities, the teachers themselves provided

the correct answer or asked other students to respond to the question. It was also observed that the teachers provided the students with one-to-one instruction when they were unable to complete worksheets or activities by themselves.

Reviews conducted by Bangert-Drowns et al. (1991); Black and Wiliam (1998b) Crooks (1988); Dempster (1991); Fuchs and Fuchs (1986); Kluger and DeNisi (1996); Natriello (1987); and Shute (2008) as well as the study conducted by Lee (2011) confirm the effectiveness of feedback in students' learning. This is in line with the participating teachers' assertion that feedback helps students to learn better.

Based on the studies reviewed, Shute (2008) concluded that formative feedback should be supportive, timely and specific to the students' work and also nonevaluative. Information from formative feedback modifies the learners' behavior or thinking and improves their learning. In other words, the purpose of giving feedback to the students is more than just a process of linear information transmission to correct students' mistakes; effective dialogic feedback is crucial to improve academic achievement.

As explained by Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Pryor and Crossouard (2010) in order for feedback to be effective, students' understanding of the quality of the work they are expected to accomplish should be challenged and improved. To this end, feedback should be given through a dialogic approach in which students' understandings are transformed.

Within a sociocultural perspective, feedback is conceptualized as loop or dialogue that plays an important role in informing learners' personal competence (Wenger, 1998). Social constructivists view competence as belonging within the community of practice and extending identity towards more central participants. Therefore, feedback on the task is personal as well because it informs and builds "personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities" (Wenger, 1998, p. 5).

The findings of this research revealed that most of the time, feedback given by the teachers did not help the students to extend their identity towards more central participants. To illustrate, we will examine some classroom episodes.

For instance extracts 40-44 show one way transmission of feedback. In these extracts, the teachers praised those students who gave correct answers to the questions. Yet, this type of feedback given to the students did not help them to develop autonomy.

In extract 40, Izyan asked the students to spell the word 'bake'. She asked them to put up their hands and answer the question. Then the teacher gave feedback in the form of praise to S_{12} and S_{16} who answered the question.
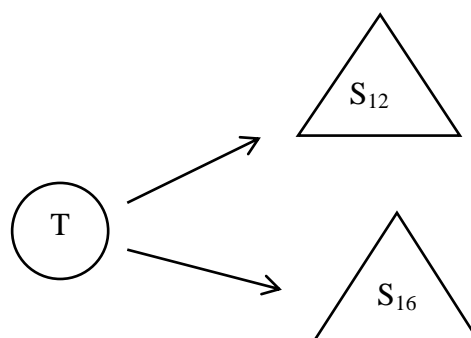
Figure 4.8. Feedback 1

This figure indicates that teacher praise for student effort was a one way feedback. It is worth mentioning that this type of feedback did not lead to the students' increased engagement, enhanced self-reflections as well as improved understanding. And throughout the observation period S_{12} and S_{16} remained peripheral participants.

Devi and Irwan also gave the same type of feedback to their students. For instance, Extract 42 shows that the first three students to accomplish the activity were rewarded by Devi. When the teacher praised S_{10}, S_8 who actively participated in classroom activities was persuaded to finish the work faster to receive a sticker from the teacher. Finally S_8 accomplished the task successfully and received a reward sticker.

However, it was observed that when the teacher gave reward to the third student, other students felt frustrated to complete the task. That is to say, they did not try to extend their identity towards more central participants as they found out that they would not be rewarded by the teacher.
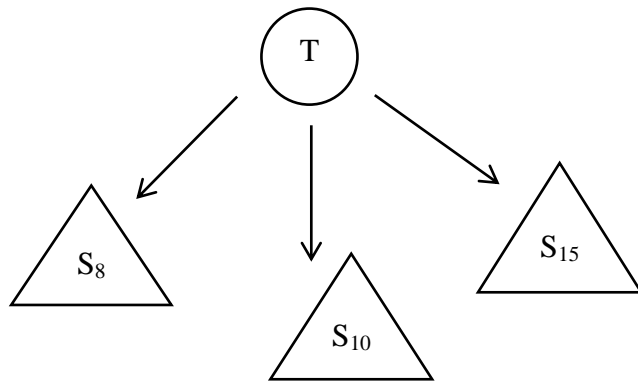
Figure 4.9. Feedback 2

The same thing happened in Irwan's class. In extract 43, he announced that he would praise the winners. Irwan rewarded the first three winners of the bingo game by letting them leave the class five minutes earlier than other students. As is evident in Figure 4.10, one way transmission of feedback to some specific students was not converted into increased participation.
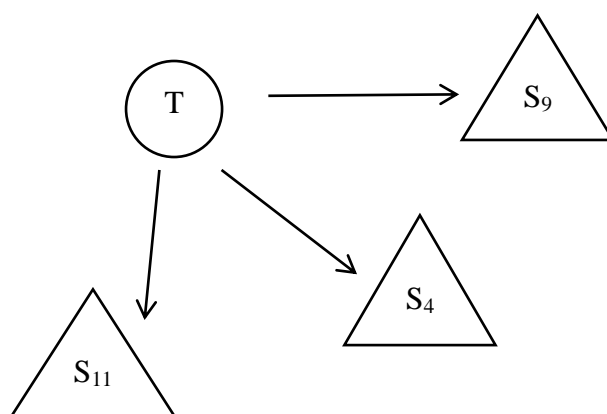
Figure 4.10. Feedback 3

The following extract indicates that the teacher identified three winners among the students who put up their hands as winner, after checking their bingo-boxes. He rewarded those three winners by declaring that they could leave the class five minutes early. This extract also shows that when the teacher praised the first three winners, other students were calling their teacher to come to their sitting place, check their work and announce them as winner if they have done it correctly. Yet, the teacher did not pay attention and told the students that they play bingo another time. This issue impeded students' engagement in the process of feedback.

Extract 51

T: let's see who the winners are. Say Bingo and raise your hand.

Ss: Bingo

T: One, two, four
One, two

Ss: Bingo bingo ▲

T: One, two

OC- The teacher announced S_4 and S_{11} as the two first winners.

S_7: Bingo

T: Not yet
One two three

OC- Irwan recognized S_9 as the third winner and checked her bingo-box.

T: Let me see Humirah's. Yes. Humirah also bingo. So these three of you will get five minutes. You can go back five minutes early.

Ss: Teacher, teacher ▲ ▲

T: Enough enough. We will play bingo another day. Now take out your activity book

The data showed that during one-to-one instruction feedback was directed to individual students to help them complete the activities and find the correct answers to the questions. As can be seen in extracts 45-50, the teachers were giving one way feedback to help those students who could not manage to accomplish the tasks. Figure

4.11 depicts the one way process of feedback directed to a particular student during one-to-one instruction. As mentioned earlier this type of feedback did not transform students' thinking.
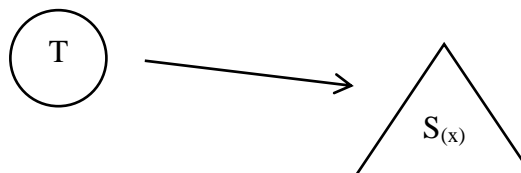
Figure 4.11. Feedback

According to social constructivists such as Wenger (1998), in an AfL classroom feedback is assumed more than dialogue between teacher and student about the task and involves all formal and informal ways of giving information to students about their competence within a community of practice. By helping learners to develop identity within their community of practice, feedback is considered as a practice rather than just a strategy to be practiced and moves focus from the letter to the spirit of AfL. In other words, for feedback to be dialogic and improve students' understanding, students should actively participate in the feedback process.

When they get involved in an activity, students should be given an opportunity to comment on each other's work, move around the classroom, look at other students' work and learn from each other. Therefore, they receive feedback from their teacher and peers, reflect on their work and become autonomous learners. Through the process of feedback students need to be stimulated to develop their sense of responsibility and agency. To achieve this, teachers need to provide the students with a safe and supportive learning environment such that they can get engaged in the feedback process.

The results showed that the students were not actively engaged in the feedback and their voice was not given credence due to the nature of the tasks as well as teacher

authority in the classroom. It was observed that feedback was not integrated into the patterns of participation of the class to become part of the shared repertoire. This finding does not support the results of the studies conducted by Fluckiger et al. (2010), Handley et al. (2011), and Havnes et al. (2012) that highlighted the importance of students' involvement in the feedback process. The participating teachers lacked effective understanding of feedback (Weeden & Winter, 1999) and feedback given to the students was not based on the principles of AfL (Irving et al., 2011; Newby & Winterbottom, 2011; Tan, 2011)

They were not provided with a collaborative learning environment and only a few specific students dominated the discussions. To illustrate, during classroom questioning and discussion some specific students responded to the questions and received one way feedback in the form of praise from their teacher when they gave the correct answers. When a student gave the wrong answer, the teachers themselves answered the question or directed the question to another student.

Moreover, the students had to complete the worksheets individually and if the teachers noticed that a student could not manage to accomplish the task, they provided that particular student with one-on-one instruction. The same thing happened in language arts classes. During language arts, the students were not divided into groups and more often they competed with each other to finish the task sooner than others to receive a reward from their teacher. Therefore, the students did not have the opportunity to think and reason together. Dialogic feedback is more than hierarchical relationship between teacher and students and it involves relationships in which students reflect on the task, reason together and become more central participants.

4.3.3.4. Commentaries on the Descriptions of the Study- Research Question 3

Three big themes are also described to answer Research Question 3. These are: (1) Praise giving, (2) One-to-one instruction or explicit feedback (3) and also dialogic feedback.

Evidence that formative feedback improves learning is abundant in the literature on AfL. For instance, the one that was carried out by Dunn and Mulvenon (2009) which follow the tradition of qualitative secondary data analysis. However, many quantitative researchers also have their own disputes- especially on the sample size, validity and reliability, reliability of measures and on method of research design (Ruiz-Primo & Furtak, 2006). However, as Bennet (2011) puts it aptly, it is not the finding which is important but how we learn from one context to be applied to another ESL context is of the utmost importance.

The patterns of formative feedback still agree with Askew and Lodge (2000) who see the prevalence of teacher-dominated feedback rather than student-initiated responses. The trend in this study seems worrisome since it is understood that effective feedback ensures learning success in the particular the ESL environment (Sadler, 2007; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Also, teachers in this study cannot differentiate among many types of summative and formative feedback that exist in the teaching arena (Weeden & Winter, 1999).

Feedback which is geared towards students' autonomy is not observed and what is prevalent in this study is the teacher-dominated feedback that do not allow autonomous learning environment (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991). It should be noted however, that most of the trends in the knowledge of AfL were published based on small scale study Kluger and DeNisi (1996) and therefore most of the results are inconclusive to generalize to the whole population of ESL arena (Irving et al., 2011). In other words, there are no agreed parameters of what is a 'bad' or 'good' AfL practice (Sadler, 1989).

The trend of teachers not having to understand the types of summative and formative feedback is similar to the Singaporean ESL context (Tan, 2011). This seems to suggest that AfL which is usually top-down process is the agenda not of teachers but the power to be. The same can be said when comparing this phenomena to the advanced countries' context such as that of Norway (Havnes et al., 2012). This is understood because althought AfL is originated in the Western-centric culture this phenomenon is also prevalent there as suggested by Newby and Winterbottom (2011).

The data from this study also suggest that the quality of feedback (Crooks, 1988; Natriello, 1987) is little seen and practiced by teachers and many teachers are unaware of this importance. In the study also, there is no observed event where experienced teachers (Devi and Irwan) and less-experienced teacher (Izyan) embark on the one-to-one tutoring techniques in a way that enhance learning success (Guskey, 2010). In other words, whether one is a skilled teacher does not influence the success of implementing AfL since all three subjects are in agreement with Graue (1993) which believes that many teachers do not see assessment as a continuum to both curriculum and teaching process.

This is also against the data found by (Black & Wiliam, 1998b; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Ramaprasad, 1983; Sadler, 1989, 2007) which proposed that experienced teachers may handle AfL easily as compared to inexperienced teachers. What is prevalent is that the data from this observational events provide evidence, at least in this school, that both teachers and students engage in low-level, less interactive, and dialogic of feedback which may not motivate both parties to teach and to learn (Dempster, 1991; Handley et al., 2011)

Training of teachers seems to be lacking in this observed event. But, this is not the case in other long-run program of AfL such as that in the Western countries. This is in agreement with Dempster (1992) and Havnes et al. (2012) who believe that proper

training and guidance whether in-service or pre-service programs can at least facilitate and contribute to the success of the implementations of AfL.

In the observed site also, all three teachers, did not focus on the tasks (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996) but more on the summative ways of corrective feedback as spelt out by Black and Wiliam (1998a). Although teachers are provided by rubrics by the District Education Office to be implemented in their classroom, they resort most of the time to the spirit of Assessment of Learning as compared to the spirit of AfL (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986).

What this study can describe is many observed events of classroom teaching, the prevalence of teacher dominance (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), unmeaningful feedback (Clark, 2011), and misunderstanding of AfL spirit (Fluckiger et al., 2010) are most prevalent not only in this study but also throughout the world of ESL.

In Chapter Five, the researcher will conclude and suggests the best possible ways, based on this study, to improve teachers' implementation of AfL and understand how AfL could be carried out.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

The final chapter of this thesis starts with an overview of the thesis. Then, summary and significance of the findings are presented. Recommendations for the education system, stakeholders, recommendations from the participants and recommendations for further research are also made in this chapter. Finally, this chapter ends with concluding remarks.

5.2. An Overview of the Thesis

Uncertainty about the effectiveness for AfL strategies implemented by teachers in their classrooms inspired the researcher to conduct the current study. Literature shows that teachers do not have enough knowledge and skills to implement AfL strategies effectively (Bennett, 2011; Wiliam, 2011). They have difficulty developing learner autonomy while implementing AfL (Marshall & Drummond, 2006; Swaffield, 2011). This has been proposed as the problem for this study.

A sociocultural theoretical perspective was adopted to investigate how ESL teachers implement AfL strategies of classroom questioning, classroom discussion and formative feedback in one primary school in the state of Selangor, Malaysia, using a qualitative case study approach. In this study AfL strategies were considered as socially situated within the broader context of classroom interactions. Three research questions were formulated to study the case of this school based on the selected principles of the sociolcultural perspective.

The researcher then proposed a definition of AfL from a sociocultural perspective and defined AfL as practices during the teaching and learning process that aim to

improve teaching and learning and help students become the owners of their own learning. Therefore, the quality of teacher-students interaction in social and cultural context is highlighted in this definition. AfL is conceptualized more than a set of strategies that are used to assess students at the end of each instruction period and is considered as an integral part of cultural and dialectical process of enhancing students' control of their own learning process. Learners are engaged in the process of assessment so that they can assess their own learning and develop autonomy. This definition set the limitation of what unit ought to be studied and described in this study.

In a sociocultural view of AfL, understanding the complexities of the implementation of AfL strategies in a specific context is important. Therefore, to investigate teachers' implementation of AfL in the Malaysian sociocultural context, Year One and Year Two ESL teachers in the selected school took part in this study. Interviews, classroom observations and relevant documents were used to collect data. Themes were identified and developed through the process of constant comparative method using Nvivo 10 and the emergent themes were interpreted within a sociocultural theoretical framework.

The important themes emerging from the data have implications for teachers and teacher educators, policy makers as well as AfL researchers. First, the teachers asked a lot of questions to build a learning community and guide the students into the preferred practices. However, most of the questions asked by the teachers were lower level cognitive questions and did not provoke thoughtful reflection and the importance of effective questioning to foster autonomy as a social construct was overlooked. Second, the teachers conducted whole classroom discussions. The data showed that the students were not provided with a supportive and collaborative learning environment and hierarchical unequal patterns of participation were observed during the discussions. Teacher feedback to the students was mostly in the form of praise and one-to-one

instruction. It was observed that feedback was not dialogic to help students actively participate in the feedback process and develop autonomy.

Sociocultural theorization of AfL has recently attracted the attention of researchers and educators (e.g., Black & Wiliam 2006, 2009, 2012; Pryor & Crossouard, 2008). By investigating teachers' implementation of AfL strategies in the social context of the teacher-student relationship, this study contributed to this emerging theorization of AfL.

Before discussing the significance of the findings of the study and recommendations, the researcher will summarize the findings in response to each research question.

5.3. Summary of the Findings

How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement classroom questioning during AfL?

The data showed that the teachers valued the importance of questioning technique as an essential learning and instructional stimulus. They asked a lot of questions of their students to build a learning community in the classroom. Depending on the nature of the topic of the lesson as well as the learning objectives, the teachers asked plenty of questions while teaching and also through worksheets (question sheets).

The data showed that simply asking a large number of questions did not help the students improve their learning and enhance autonomy. Although the teachers were aware of the importance of questioning during AfL, they asked lower cognitive questions which did not trigger thoughtful reflection and the main aim of asking questions in these mixed ability classes was to check the students' level of understanding. It was also observed that the teachers in this study formulated questions that at first sight seemed to be open questions but they expected the students to provide a short-specific answer.

According to social constructivism, questioning is a social phenomenon and teachers' questions should provoke communicative responses and make students construct meaning. It was observed that most of the questions asked by the teachers focused on the students' background knowledge, content and structure and elicited specific, predetermined answers. Teachers needed to ask more open questions that afford students the opportunity to use a description of shared cultural understanding to make sense of social behavior.

The basic tenet of AfL is to make students independent. Therefore teachers needed to formulate strategic questions to make students reflect on their learning and become the owners of their own learning. But it was observed that only certain students answered the questions and some students were always positioned as silent in the classroom. The students who knew the answer responded immediately and other students did not get the chance to answer the question, share the processes of learning ownership, collaborate with their peers and progress within the social safety of the peer culture.

When a particular student could not respond to the teachers' questions, the teachers directed the question to another student without giving enough think time to that particular student to come up with the correct answer. Therefore, the student became less participatory and more peripheral.

Several times, the researcher observed that the participating teachers answered the questions themselves without waiting for the students to respond. Yet, teachers in social constructivist classrooms should guide students to answer the questions, use probing questions to help students formulate their own responses with less assistance and handle students' wrong responses in order to increase the challenge and consequently the level of teacher-student and student-student interaction in the classroom. Most of the time when the students could not give the correct answer, the teachers repeated and reworded

the questions. Therefore, the response rate decreased and it was the teacher himself or herself who responded to the questions without waiting for students to answer.

The teachers asked a lot of questions using worksheets (question sheets) at the end of each instruction period. The data showed that worksheets fitted within their cultural narratives of tests rather than learning. Connecting learning with this test narrative created a conflict for the students who resolved it by not actively engaging in the AfL practice of classroom questioning and they were observed to complete worksheets individually without demur.

During classroom questioning, patterns of participation should be designed in such a way as to help students become co-constructors of knowledge by sharing the ownership of their learning within the community of practice. But the results of the current study showed that the traditional concept of questioning was maintained and classroom questioning did not seem to fulfill the promise of enhancing learner autonomy.

How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers implement AfL through classroom discussions?

According to Wenger (1998) through creating a collaborative environment, students would be able to develop knowledge and skills valued within the community of practice. The participating teachers recognized the importance of creating a collaborative culture in the classroom to help students interact with each other and learn collaboratively in the discussions. They used activities such as reciting nursery rhymes with gestures and making puppets, role-play, bingo game and making charts of sea animals to build a supportive and collaborative environment.

The results of classroom observation showed that only asking the students to work together during language arts activities such as reciting nursery rhymes with gestures, making puppets and making sea animals chart, did not lead to collaboration. The

students needed to have a sense of belonging to the community of practice so that they did not prefer to remain silent and did not resist the teachers' expectations for their participation.

To conduct the above mentioned activities, the teachers did not put the students into small groups; instead activities were teacher centered. For example, the teacher asked only some specific students to play the role of the characters in the story and other students became marginalized.

In general, the students were unprepared to mutually engage and collaborate with each other within the community of practice. The teachers needed to position AfL practice of shared goals and success criteria within a collaborative culture to help students learn collaboratively.

The results showed that classroom talk was always between the teacher and the whole class. The teachers conducted whole class discussions because they did not have ample time to monitor small groups and it was difficult for them to control the classroom. During the discussions the teachers stood before the class and asked questions.

Based on the sociocultural perspective, the teachers needed to encourage all the students to participate in the discussions and at the same time not let some specific students dominate the discussions. Students should feel comfortable to actively participate in the discussions, develop a shared language of learning, challenge or support each other's ideas and develop autonomy.

Teachers' questions should encourage the students to develop a shared language of learning as well as a shared ownership of the learning tasks and guide them into the desired practices. But the students were not positioned as astute participants who could ask questions in the classroom and challenge their teachers' questions and other students' responses. It was observed that most of the time the teachers looked for

specific answers to the questions and tried to direct the students toward the expected answers. Moreover, the answers to the questions were limited to words and short phrases and sentences that were given by some specific students in the classroom.

Hierarchical unequal patterns of participation were observed during the whole class discussions. The students rarely asked questions and most of the time the teachers themselves were the only ones who asked questions and talked during the discussions. The data showed that the discussions were highly controlled by the teachers. The participating teachers needed to position the students as active learners by inviting their questions, sharing ownership of the learning and allowing them a voice in classroom discussions. When the discussions were dominated by certain students in the classroom, other students preferred to become more peripheral and some of them developed an identity of non-participant and increasingly became marginalized.

How do Year One and Year Two ESL teachers provide students with formative feedback?

The participating teachers valued feedback containing praise and praised their students to keep them motivated to learn better. They praised the students by saying encouraging words or by giving tangible rewards whenever they completed a task or activity within the specified time or when they could give correct answers. The students also expressed that they felt good inside when they were praised by their teacher. According to social constructivists, general praise fosters dependence rather than independence which is the aim of AfL. Feedback in the sociocultural perspective should focus both on task performance and students' identity.

The data indicated that if the students completed an activity or a worksheet (question sheet) incorrectly, the teacher provided them with one-to-one instruction. One-to-one instruction was highly valued in the Malaysian sociocultural context. However, during one-to-one instruction, the assessment task was not considered as the

focus of a joint enterprise and the students were not offered an opportunity to negotiate meaning and develop a shared ownership of learning. Moreover, the students were not actively involved in the feedback process and waited for the teacher to come to their seats and provide them with one-to-one instruction.

According to social constructivists, feedback is more than a dialogue between teacher and student about the task at hand but rather it involves all the ways to give students information about their competence in a community of practice. In other words, feedback should be dialogic to help students improve their learning. The students needed to actively participate in the process of feedback, comment on each other's work, receive feedback from their teacher and peers, reflect on their own work and develop autonomy. Teachers should provide students with a safe and supportive learning environment to help them develop a sense of responsibility and agency and actively get involved in the feedback process.

5.4. Significance of the Findings

The findings are contributed to the understanding of practice and theory of AfL. In pursuit of understanding AfL and teacher-student as well as student-student interactions, this study showed that AfL can be viewed from a participatory perspective that encourages students to develop an identity of expert in a community of practice. This understanding of AfL is important to help marginalized students to become more expert in their classroom community of practice.

This thesis also contributes to the practice of AfL. Building a positive relationship between teacher and students is a crucial element in creating a sense of belonging and becoming more expert within a community of practice.

A sociocultural perspective challenges acquisitional views of learning. Through this perspective learning is regarded as a sociocultural activity. According to a

participatory perspective, learning is not measured based on what learners memorize or recall but the measure is how learners become more central participants within a community of practice. In other words, central participants show their understanding by using a shared language and are mutually engaged in the community of practice and recalling facts is only considered as a part of central participation and not the whole measure of learning.

Before the researcher proceeds with the recommendation section, it should be reminded once again that the recommendations below-mentioned are based on research findings that have been thouroughly explained in the previous chapter and also commentaries on the research question sub-sections in Chapter 4 that relate to the findings of this study.

5.5. Recommendations

In this section, the researcher presents the recommendations of the study which includes four subsections: Recommendations for teacher educators and in-service teachers, recommendations for stakeholders, recommendations from the participants and recommendations for further research.

5.5.1. Recommendations for Teacher Educators and In-service Teachers

- Teaching for learning is a challenging and complicated practice. Looking at AfL from a sociocultural perspective and considering learning as participation in a community of practice and developing an identity of becoming more expert requires teachers to have knowledge and capacity to help learners construct meaning through participation in a community of practice. To implement AfL strategies of classroom questioning, classroom discussion and formative feedback effectively, teachers need to help students extend their identities

towards more central participants in a community of practice and become autonomous learners. Building positive teacher-student and student-student relationships most especially collaborative peer learning relationships can help promote students' autonomy.

- Many teachers experience traditional narratives of learning during their pre-service teacher training. Teachers' capacity would develop in an ideal manner during their pre-service education; therefore, teacher educators should help pre-service teachers to develop capacity to change their traditional roles and classroom practices in the AfL classroom. Collaborating with their peers might help pre-service teachers to experience participatory learning and become expert in implementing AfL strategies to the spirit.

- Teacher educators should introduce AfL as more than a set of strategies to be implemented by teachers and autonomy as more than an individual student characteristic. Classroom questioning, classroom discussion and formative feedback should allow students to develop shared knowledge that can be considered as a part of joint enterprise. To this end, change in traditional patterns of participation in the classroom should be recognized by teachers. Providing students with a supportive learning environment as well as tools to interact with peers can help them become more expert.

- Teachers should learn how to build social relationships with their students through modeling learning, fun, and so forth. They need to create their own identity of practice through understanding students' learning culture in the school community of practice, for example through participating in co-curricular activities.

- While implementing AfL strategies of classroom questioning, classroom discussion and formative feedback, teachers need to provide students

opportunities for peer assessment and collaborative learning by developing shared expectations through cognitive and social scaffolding to challenge the traditional cultural narratives of learning.

5.5.2. Recommendations for Stakeholders

I would like to make the following recommendations for stakeholders based on the findings:

- Encouraging teachers to implement classroom questioning and discussion as well as formative feedback by clarifying the findings of this study in in-service training workshops and seminars.

- Learners' active participation in learning activities to develop autonomy is the basic tenet of AfL. Therefore, to design AfL policy implementations, policy makers should consider the importance of negotiating meaning and identity while practicing AfL.

- There is a need to develop specific guidelines on how to implement classroom questioning and discussion during AfL and how to provide students with formative feedback. Detailed guidelines should be developed and distributed to schools. Policy makers need to upgrade the guidelines according to the teachers' needs. To develop and upgrade guidelines, stakeholders can seek help from university lecturers and other experts experienced in AfL.

- Setting clear standards that measure the effectiveness of teachers' implementation of AfL strategies in the Malaysian context.

- A panel of experts of AfL from the MOE Malaysia should be established to monitor teachers' implementation of AfL.

- Providing teachers with professional development courses to develop their capacity to implement AfL practices. Teachers should learn how to engage with their students in participatory AfL learning. The participative view of AfL

questions traditional cultural narratives of learning; therefore, policy makers need to work with teachers to help them challenge traditional norms of power and control in classrooms.

- School principals should be supported to reduce interruptions during the school day and give teachers opportunity to interact with their peers and give feedback on each other's implementation of AfL strategies.

- A support system should be developed to appreciate and support the work of teachers and students who are able to develop a sense of belonging within a community of practice while implementing AfL strategies.

5.5.3. Recommendations from the participants

Recommendations from the participants are given below:

- The MOE should take into account teachers' needs and opinions about the implementation of AfL. For this purpose, a comprehensive needs assessment can be conducted to determine and address teachers' needs and opinions.

- Training courses should be conducted on a regular basis to give teachers detailed information on how to implement AfL strategies and make them understand the new assessment system better.

- Banding system refers to descriptors which are very restricted to national level but not adjusted to the needs of students' learning processes. Therefore, teachers need to develop evidence that suit the needs of their students.

- The new assessment system requires teachers to do extra administrative work. For instance, they need to input a lot of marks into the database, compile lists of students' works and so on. It is crucial to reduce teachers' workload in schools such that they have ample time to implement AfL strategies in their classroom communities of practice. To solve this problem, the MOE can provide teachers

with teacher aides to assist teachers in their work and provide weak students with extra help.

- The MOE should provide schools with enough resources and facilities. Schools need to be equipped with computer lab, printer, overhead projector, photostat machine, television, DVDs, videos and audio-tapes and facilities of this kind without which it would be difficult to implement the new assessment system. Teaching aids such as wall charts, flashcards, flip charts, and kits and toys should also be provided to help teachers implement AfL effectively.

- The online system (SPPBS) is down most of the time. It is not user-friendly and takes a lot of teachers' time. The MOE needs to improve the online system so that teachers do not face difficulty recording the assessment results.

5.5.4. Recommendations for Further Research

Recently conceptualizing AfL from a sociocultural perspective and recognizing teachers' complexities in implementing AfL strategies have received more attention. Recommendations for further research consist of information gained from the findings of this research and areas requiring further attention:

- Due to the limitations of qualitative study, this research was conducted in one selected primary school in the state of Selangor. More accountability is needed to ensure the effective implementation of AfL in Malaysian primary schools. Other researchers can visit more schools, observe more classrooms and discuss with more teachers on the implementation process and outcomes.

- Looking at teachers' implementation of AfL in this study showed that students should play an important part in negotiation of meaning and identity while engaging in classroom questioning and discussion as well as formative feedback. Future studies can focus on students' voices and contribute to successful implementation of AfL in Malaysian primary schools.

- Teachers' ability to create positive teacher-student relationship is the core of implementing AfL strategies and worth further research. The effects of school culture on teacher-student relationships or finding ways to create a sense of belonging to bring intersubjectivity to teacher-student interactions are good avenues for further studies.

- Lastly, conceptualizing AfL from a sociocultural perspective needs more improvement. As we learn from implementation of AfL strategies, theorization of AfL can be extended. Conceptualizing AfL as a participatory approach within a community of practice can be more fully-developed. AfL strategies of classroom questioning and discussion as well as formative feedback should be reconceptualized given the importance of positive teacher-student relationship, mutual engagement, as well as sense of belonging to a community of practice to challenge traditional perspectives.

5.6. Concluding Remarks

Looking at AfL from a sociocultural perspective challenges the acquisitional views of learning. Effective AfL strategy implementation needs considerable amount of time as well as teachers' effort to build new patterns of participation in the classroom. More effort is needed to implement AfL strategies of classroom discussion, classroom questioning and formative feedback in countries like Malaysia where the learning environment is based on traditional cultural narratives of learning. The results indicated that AfL interactions directly affect what and how students learn and can underpin successful learning. Highlighting the importance of teacher-students and student-student relationships in successful implementation of AfL helps policy makers and stakeholders to develop new ways of enhancing teachers' capacity to implement AfL strategies with the aim of developing more autonomous learners.

References

Alexander, R. J. (2004). *Towards dialogic teaching: Rethinking classroom talk.* Cambridge, NY: Dialogos.

Almeida, P. A. (2010). Classroom questioning: Teachers' perceptions and practices. *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2*(2)*,* 305–309.

Almeida, P. A., Pedrosa de Jesus, H., & Watts, M. (2008). Developing a mini-project: Students' questions and learning styles. *The Psychology of Education Review, 32,* 6-17.

Anderson, J. R. (2000). *Learning and memory: An integrated approach* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C., & Razavieh, A. (2010). *Introduction to research in education* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Askew, S., & Lodge, C. (2000). Gifts, ping-pong and loops: Linking feedback and learning. In S. Askew (Ed.), *Feedback for learning* (pp. 1-18). London, UK: Routledge.

Assessment Reform Group. (1999). *Assessment for learning: Beyond the black box.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Assessment Reform Group. (2002). *Assessment for Learning: Research-based principles to guide classroom practice*. London, UK: Assessment Reform Group.

Bangert-Drowns, R. L., Kulik, J. A., & Kulik, C.-L. C. (1991). Effects of frequent classroom testing. *Journal of Educational Research, 85*(2)*,* 89–99.

Barak, M., & Rafaeli, S. (2004). On-line question-posing and peer-assessment as means for web-based knowledge sharing in learning. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies, 61*(1)*,* 84-103.

Bartels, N. (2005). Researching applied linguistics in language teacher education. In N. Bartels (Ed.), *Applied linguistics and language teacher education* (pp. 1- 26). New York, NY: Springer.

Baum, W. M. (2005). *Understanding behaviorism: Behavior, culture, and evolution* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Bell, B. (2000). Formative assessment and science education: A model and theorizing. In R. Millar, J. Leach & J. Osborne (Eds.), *Improving Science education: The contribution of research* (pp. 48-61). Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Bell, B., & Cowie, B. (2001). *Formative assessment and science education.* Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Kluwer.

Bellack, A. A., Kliebard, H. M., Hyman, R. T., & Smith, F. L. (1966). *The language of the classroom*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Bennett, R. E. (2011). Formative assessment: A critical review. *Assessment in Education: Principles, policy & Practice, 18*(1)*,* 5- 25.

Berk, L. (2009).*Child development* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Berry, R. (2008). *Assessment for Learning.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Black, P. (2000). Research and the development of educational assessment. *Oxford Review of Education, 26*(3&4)*,* 407-419.

Black, P. (2007). Full marks for feedback: Make the grade. *Journal of the Institute of Educational Assessors, 2*(1)*,* 18–21.

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., & Wiliam, D. (2003). *Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice.* Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998a). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice, 5*(1)*,* 7-74.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998b). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan, 80*(2)*,* 139-148.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2004). The formative purpose: Assessment must first promote learning. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 103*(2)*,* 20-50.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2006). Developing a theory of formative assessment. In J. Gardner (Ed.), *Assessment and learning* (pp. 81-100). London, UK: Sage.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2009). Developing a theory of formative assessment. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 21*(1)*,* 5–31.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2012). Developing a theory of formative assessment. In J. Gardner (Ed.), *Assessment and learning* (2nd ed., pp. 206-229). London, UK: Sage.

Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals, Handbook I: cognitive domain.* New York, NY: David Mckay.

Bloom, B. S. (1969). Some theoretical issues relating to educational evaluation. In R. W. Tyler (Ed.), *Educational evaluation: New roles, new means* (National Society for the Study of Education Yearbook, Vol. 68, Part 2, pp. 26-50). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Bloom, B. S., Hastings, J. T., & Madaus, G. F. (1971). *Handbook on the formative and summative evaluation of student learning.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Boekaerts, M. (2006). Self-regulation and effort investment. In K. A. Renninger & I. E. Sigel (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Child psychology in practice* (6th ed., Vol. 4, pp. 345-377). New York, NY: Wiley.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and method.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and method* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.

Bredo, E. (1994). Reconstructing educational psychology: Situated cognition and Deweyian pragmatism. *Educational Psychologist, 29*(1), 23-35.

Broadfoot, P. M., Daugherty, R., Gardner, J., Harlen, W., James, M., & Stobart, G. (2002). *Assessment for learning: 10 principles.* Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge School of Education.

Brown, G. A., & Edmondson, R. (1985). Asking questions. In E. C. Wragg (Ed.), *Classroom teaching skills* (pp. 97-120). London, UK: Croom Helm.

Burns, M. (2005). Looking at how students reason. *Educational Leadership, 63*(3), 26–31.

Burns, R. (2000). *Introduction to research methods* (4th ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Carless, D. (2007). Conceptualising pre-emptive formative assessment. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 14*(2), 171-184.

Cassidy, S. (2007). Inexperienced students' ability to self-assess: Exploring links with learning style and academic personal control. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 32*(3), 313-330.

Chappuis, S., & Stiggins, R. (2002). Classroom assessment for learning. *Educational Leadership, 60*(1), 40-43.

Chin, C., & Osborne, J. (2008). Students' questions: A potential resource for teaching and learning science. *Studies in Science Education, 44,* 1-39.

Chomsky, N. (1959). Review of B. F. Skinner verbal behavior. *Language, 35,* 26-58.

Clark, I. (2010). Formative assessment: There is nothing so practical as a good theory. *Australian Journal of Education, 54*(3), 341-352.

Clark, I. (2011). Formative assessment: Policy, perspective and practice. *Florida Journal of Educational Administration & Policy, 4*(2), 158-180.

Cooper, R. (2010). *Those who can, teach* (12th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Cotton, K. (1983, February). *Classroom questioning.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, Orlando, Florida.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Crooks, T. J. (1988). The impact of classroom evaluation practices on students. *Review of Educational Research, 58*(4), 438-481.

Crooks, T. J. (2002). Educational assessment in New Zealand schools. *Assessment in Education, 9*(2), 237-253.

Cruickshank, D., Jenkins, D., & Metcalf, K. (2009). *The act of teaching* (5th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

David, O. F. (2007). Teacher's questioning behavior and classroom instruction pattern. *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal, 2*(2), 127-131.

Dawson, M. E. (2005). Are they really learning what we're teaching? *Journal of College Science Teaching, 34*(5), 34-35.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1994). Promoting self-determined education. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 38*(1), 3–14.

DeMeester, K., & Jones, F. (2009). Formative assessment for PK–3 mathematics: A review of the literature. Retrieved from http://lsi.fsu.edu/Uploads/1/docs/Formative%20Assessment%20Lit%20Review%20FCRSTEM.pdf

Dempster, F. N. (1991). Synthesis of research on reviews and tests. *Educational Leadership, 48*(7), 71–76.

Dempster, F. N. (1992). Using tests to promote learning: A neglected classroom resource. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 25*(4), 213–217.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research, 2,* 1-28.

Dillon, J. T. (1988). *Questioning and discussion: A multi-disciplinary study.* New York, NY: Ablex.

Dunn, K. E., & Mulvenon, S. W. (2009). A critical review of research on formative assessment: The limited scientific evidence of the impact of formative assessment in education. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 14*(7), 1–11. Retrieved from http://pareonline.net/pdf/v14n7.pdf

Edwards, D., & Mercer, N. (1987). *Common knowledge: The development of understanding in the classroom.* London, UK: Routledge.

Elwood, J. (2008). Gender issues in testing and assessment. In P. Murphy & K. Hall (Eds.), *Learning and practice: Agency and identities* (pp. 87-101). London, UK: Sage.

Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed., pp. 119-161). Old Tappan, NJ: Macmillan.

Faizah, M. (2011). School-based assessment in Malaysian schools: The concerns of English teachers. *Journal of US-China Education Review, 8*(10), 1-15.

Floyd, W. D. (1960). *An analysis of the oral questioning activities in selected Colorado classrooms* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Colorado State College, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Fluckiger, J., Vigil, Y. T. Y., Pasco, R., & Danielson, K. (2010). Formative feedback: Involving students as partners in assessment to enhance learning. *College Teaching, 58*(4), 136-140.

Fodor, J. A., Bever, T. G., & Garrett, M. F. (1974). *The psychology of language: an introduction to psycholinguistics and generative grammar.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2007). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (6th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Frederiksen, J. R., & White, B. J. (1997, March). *Reflective assessment of students' research within an inquiry-based middle school science curriculum.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Freebody, P. (2003). *Qualitative research in education: Interaction and practice.* London, UK: Longman.

Fuchs, L. S., & Fuchs, D. (1986). Effects of systematic formative evaluation: A meta-analysis. *Exceptional Children, 53*(3), 199–208.

Furtak, E. M. (2005). *Formative assessment in K-8 science education: A conceptual review.* Commissioned paper by the National Research Council for Science Learning K-8 consensus study. Retrived from http://www.nationalacademies.org/bose/furtak_commissioned_paper.pdf

Gay, L. R., & Airasian, P. (2000). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis.* London, UK: Prentice Hall.

Gipps, C. (1994). *Beyond testing: Towards a theory of educational assessment.* London, UK: The Falmer Press.

Gipps, C. (2002). Sociocultural perspective on assessment. In G. Wells & G. Claxton (Eds.), *Learning for life in the 21st century* (pp. 73-83). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Gipps, C., & Stobart, G. (1997). *Assessment: A teacher's guide to the issues.* London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton.

Goldman-Segall, R. (1995). Configurational validity: A proposal for analyzing multimedia narratives. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia, 4*(2/3), 163- 182.

Good, T. L., & Brophy, J. E. (1990). *Educational psychology: A realistic approach* (4th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Graesser, A., & Olde, B. (2003). How does one know whether a person understands a device? The quality of the questions the person asks when the device breaks down. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95,* 524-536.

Graesser, A., & Person, N. K. (1994). Question asking during tutoring. *American Educational Research Journal, 31,* 104-137.

Graesser, A., Person, N., & Hu, X. (2002). Improving comprehension through discourse processes. *New Directions in Teaching and Learning, 89,* 33–44.

Graue, M. E. (1993). Integrating theory and practice through instructional assessment. *Educational Assessment, 7*(4), 283-309.

Guey, C., Cheng, Y., & Shibata, S. (2010). A triarchal instruction model: Integration of principles from behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 9,* 105-118.

Guskey, T. R. (2010). Formative assessment: The contributions of Benjamin S. Bloom. In H. L. Andrade & G. J. Cizek (Eds.), *Handbook of formative assessment* (pp. 106–124). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Hamzah, M. O., & Paramasivan, S. (2009). Between the ideal and reality: Teachers' perception of the implementation of school-based oral English assessment. *The English Teacher, 38,* 13-30.

Handley, K., Price, M., & Millar, J. (2011). Beyond 'doing time': Investigating the concept of student engagement with feedback. *Oxford Review of Education, 37*(4), 543-560.

Harlen, W. (2007). Formative classroom assessment in science and mathematics. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.), *Formative classroom assessment* (pp. 116–135). New York, NY: Teacher College Press.

Hassan, O. A. B. (2011). Learning theories and assessment methodologies: An engineering educational perspective. *European Journal of Engineering Education, 36*(4), 327-339.

Hattie, J. C. (2009). *Visible learning: A Synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Hattie, J. C., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research, 77*(1), 81–112.

Havnes, A., Smith, K., Dysthe, O., & Ludvigsen, K. (2012). Formative assessment and feedback: Making learning visible. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 38*(1), 21-27.

Heritage, M. (2007). Formative assessment: What do teachers need to know and do? *Phi Delta Kappan, 89*(2), 140-145.

Heritage, M. (2010). *Formative assessment: Making it happen in the classroom.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Hiebert, E. H., & Calfee, R. C. (1989). Advancing academic literacy through teachers' assessments. *Educational Leadership, 48*(1), 50-54.

Irving, S. E., Harris, L. R., & Peterson, E. R. (2011). One assessment doesn't serve all the purposes or does it? New Zealand teachers describe assessment and feedback. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 12*(3), 413-426.

James, M., Black, P., McCormick, R., & Pedder, D. (2007). Promoting learning how to learn through assessment for learning. In M. James et al. (Eds.), *Improving Learning how to learn: Classrooms, schools and networks* (pp. 3-29). London, UK: Routledge.

Kaplan, B., & Maxwell, J. A. (1994). Qualitative research methods for evaluating computer information systems. In J. G. Anderson, C. E. Aydin & S. J. Jay (Eds.), *Evaluating health care information systems: Methods and applications* (pp. 45- 68).Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. (2010). *KSPK & KSSR. Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum.* Retrieved from www.ippm.edu.my/KSSR/KSSR.ppt

Khair, M. Y. (2008, August). *Basic education curriculum revisited: A look at the current content and reform in Malaysia.* Paper presented at SEAMEO-RETRAC 11th Governing Board Meeting and Conference, Institut Aminuddin Baki, Malaysia.

Klenowski, V. (2009). Australian indigenous students: Addressing equity issues in assessment. *Teaching Education, 20*(1), 77-93.

Kluger, A. N., & DeNisi, A. (1996). The effects of feedback interventions on performance: A historical review, a meta-analysis, and a preliminary feedback intervention theory. *Psychological Bulletin, 119*(2), 254- 284.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, I. (2011). Bringing innovation to EFL writing through a focus on assessment for learning. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 5*(1), 19-33.

Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia. (2009). *SPPK Dalam Transformasi Pendidikan. Mesyuarat Pengurusan Pendidikan KPPM, Bill 2/2009.* Retrieved from http:// www. Slideshare. Net/hmd1610/s-p-p-k-28-feb-k-p-p-m-u-p-s-I

Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia. (2011). *Panduan dan peraturan PBS.* Retrieved from http://www.scribd.com/faridooi/d/81532201-Panduan-Dan-Peraturan-pbs-2011

Leung, C., & Mohan, B. (2004). Teacher formative assessment and talk in classroom contexts: Assessment as discourse and assessment of discourse. *Language Testing, 21*(3), 335-359.

Levin, T., & Long, R. (1981). *Effective instruction.* Washington, DC: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Li, L. (2011). Obstacles and opportunities for developing thinking through interaction in language classrooms. *Thinking Skills and Creativity, 6*(3), 146-158.

Li, Y. (2004). *Chinese teachers' perceptions of the implementation and effectiveness of communicative language teaching* (Unpublished master's thesis). Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada.

Liao, X. (2003). *Chinese secondary school teachers' attitudes towards communicative language teaching and their classroom practices* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Auckland, New Zealand). Available from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database. (UMI No. 305288637).

Lichtman, M. (2009).*Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 163-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Linn, R. L., & Gronlund, N. E. (2000). *Measurement and assessment in teaching* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Mansell, W., James, M., & Assessment Reform Group. (2009). *Assessment in schools. Fit for purpose? A commentary by the Teaching and Learning Programme.* London, UK: Economic and Social Research Council, Teaching and Learning Research Programme.

Marshall, B., & Drummond, M. (2006). How teachers engage with assessment for learning: Lessons from the classroom. *Research Papers in Education, 21*(2), 133-149.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1995). *Designing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Marzano, R. (2006). *Classroom assessment and grading that works*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Matsumura, L. C., Slater, S. C., & Crosson, A. (2008). Classroom climate, rigorous instruction and curriculum, and students' interactions in urban middle schools. *Elementary School Journal, 108*(4), 293-312.

McDonald, B., & Boud, D. (2003). The impact of self-assessment on achievement: The effects of self-assessment training on the performance in external examinations. *Assessment in Education, 10*(2), 209-220.

Mercer, N., Dawes, L., Wegerif, R., & Sams, C. (2004). Reasoning as scientist: Ways of helping children to use language to learn science. *British Educational Research Journal, 30*(3), 359–377.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ministry of Education, Malaysia. (1997). *Education in Malaysia*. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.my

Ministry of Education, Malaysia. (2001). *Assessment: The future of educational assessment*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Author.

Minstrell, J., Li, M., & Anderson, R. (2009). *Annual Report for Formative Assessment Project*. Seattle, VA: Facet Innovations.

Mohd Sofi Ali. (2003). English Language Teaching in Primary Schools: Policy and Implementation Concerns. *IPBA E-Journal*, Retrieved from http://kajian berasaskansekolah.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/article70.pdf

Mortimer, E. F., & Scott, P. H. (2000). Analyzing discourse in the science classroom. In R. Millar, J. Leach & J. Osborne (Eds.), *Improving science education: The contribution of research* (pp. 126-142). Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Mortimer, E. F., & Scott, P. H. (2003). *Meaning making in secondary science classrooms*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Mory, E. H. (2004). Feedback research review. In D. Jonassen (Ed.), *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology* (pp.754-783). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Moss, C., & Brookhart, S. (2009). *Advancing formative assessment in every classroom: A guide for teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Munns, G., & Woodward, H. (2006). Student engagement and student self-assessment: The REAL framework. *Assessment in Education, 13*(2), 193-213.

Musa, M. (2003, May 8). Malaysian education system to be less exam-oriented. *New Straits Times*. Retrived from http://www.nst.com.my

Natriello, G. (1987). The impact of evaluation processes on students. *Educational Psychologist, 22*(2), 155-175.

Newby, L., & Winterbottom, M. (2011). Can research homework provide a vehicle for assessment for learning in science lessons? *Educational Review, 63*(3), 275-290.

Noll, J. W. (2008). *Taking sides: Clashing views on educational issues, expanded.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Noorizah, M. N., Idris, A., & Rosniah, M. (2012). Teachers' questioning approaches in the Malaysian ESL classroom. *The International Journal of Learning, 18*(7), pp. 313-326.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Orlich, D. C., Harder, R. J., Callahan, R. C., Trevisan, M. S., & Brown, A. H. (2007). *Teaching strategies: A guide to effective instruction* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Pajares, F. (2007). *The elements of a proposal.* Retrieved from http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/proposal.html

Parr, J. M., & Timperley, H. S. (2010). Feedback to writing, assessment for teaching and learning and student progress. *Assessing Writing, 15*(2), 68–85.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research method* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research method* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pellegrino, J. W. (2002). Knowing what students know. *Issues in Science and Technology, 19*(2), 48-52.

Pimentel, D. S., & McNeill, K. L. (2013). Conducting talk in secondary Science classrooms: Investigating instructional moves and teachers' beliefs. *Science Education, 97*(3), pp. 367-394.

Popham, W. J. (2008). *Transformative assessment.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Pryor, J., & Crossouard, B. (2008). A sociocultural theorization of formative assessment. *Oxford Review of Education, 34*(1), 1–20.

Ramaprasad, A. (1983). On the definition of feedback. *Behavioral Science, 28*(1), 4–13.

Reason, P. (2003). Three approaches to participative inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. (pp. 261-283). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Roehler, L. R., & Cantlon, D. J. (1997). Scaffolding: A powerful tool in social science constructivist classroom. In K. Hogan & M. Pressley (Eds.), *Scaffolding student learning. Instructional approaches and issues* (pp. 6–42). Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Rogoff, B. (1999). Cognitive development through social interaction: Vygotsky and Piaget. In P. Murphy (Ed.), *Learners, learning and assessment.* London, UK: Paul Chapman.

Rowe, M. B. (1972, April). *Wait-time and rewards as instructional variables, their influence in language, logic and fate control.* Paper presented at the National Association for Research in Science Teaching, Chicago, IL.

Rowe, M. B. (1974). Relation of wait-time and rewards to the development of language, logic, and fate control: Part II - Rewards. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 11*(4), 291-308.

Ruiz-Primo, M. A. (2011). Informal formative assessment: The role of instructional dialogues in assessing students' learning. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 37*(1), 15-24.

Ruiz-Primo, M. A., & Furtak, E. M. (2006). Informal formative assessment and scientific inquiry: Exploring teachers' practices and student learning. *Educational Assessment, 11*(3), 205-235.

Ruiz-Primo, M. A., & Furtak, E. M. (2007). Exploring teachers' informal formative assessment practices and students' understanding in the context of scientific inquiry. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 44*(1), 57–84.

Ruiz-Primo, M. A., Sands, D., & O'Brian, J. O. (2007). *Improving teachers' formative assessment practices and students' learning in mathematics and science classrooms.* Proposal submitted to the Institute of Education Science.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 68-78.

Sadler, D. R. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional strategies. *Instructional Science, 18,* 119-144.

Sadler, D. R. (2007). Perils in the meticulous specification of goals and assessment criteria. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice, 14,* 387-392.

Sadler, D. R. (2010). Beyond feedback: Developing student capability in complex appraisal. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 35*(5), 535-550.

Scriven, M. (1967). The methodology of evaluation. In R. E. Stake (Ed.), *Perspectives of curriculum evaluation* (vol. 1, pp. 39-55). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and social science* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Sfard, A. (1998). On two metaphors for learning and the dangers of choosing just one. *Educational Researcher, 27*(2), 4-13.

Sfard, A. (2008). *Thinking as communicating: Human development, the growth of discourses, and mathematizing*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Shavelson, R. J. (2006). On the integration of formative assessment in teaching and learning: Implications for new pathways in teacher education. In F. Oser, F. Achtenhagen, & U. Renold (Eds.), *Competence-oriented teacher training: Old research demands and new pathways* (pp. 63-78). Utrecht, UT: Sense.

Shavelson, R. J., Ruiz-Primo, M. A., & Wiley, E. W. (2005). Window into the mind. *Higher Education, 49,* 413-430.

Shepard, L. A. (2000). The role of assessment in a learning culture. *Educational Researcher, 29*(7), 4-14.

Shepard, L. A. (2005). Linking formative assessment to scaffolding. *Educational Leadership*, *63*(3), 66-70.

Shute, V. (2008). Focus on formative feedback. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(1), 153-189.

Gurnam, K. S., Chan, Y. F., & Sarjit, K S. (2011). Students' reactions to School Based Oral Assessment: Bridging the gap in Malaysia. *Asian EFL Journal*, *13*(4), 300-327.

Sidhu, R. (2011). Why use AfL? Dusting off the black box. *Teaching Geography, 36*(2), 58-60.

Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction.* London, UK: Sage.

Sinclair, J. M., & Coulthard, M. (1975). *Towards an analysis of discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils.* London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behavior*. New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Stiggins, R. J. (2002). Assessment crisis: The absence of assessment for learning. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(10), 758-765.

Stiggins, R. J. (2006). Assessment for learning: A key to student motivation and learning. *Phi Delta Kappa Edge, 2*(2), 1-19.

Stiggins, R. J. (2008). Correcting errors of measurement that sabotage student learning. In C. A. Dwyer (Ed.), *The future of assessment: Shaping teaching and learning* (pp. 229-243). New York, NY: Erlbaum.

Stiggins, R. J., & Chappuis, S. (2005). Putting testing in perspective: It's for learning. *Principal Leadership, 6*(2)*,* 16-20.

Stigler, J. W., & Hiebert, J. (1997). Understanding and improving classroom mathematics instruction: An overview of the TIMSS video study. *Phi Delta Kappan, 79*(1)*,* 14-21.

Stobart, G. (2008). *Testing times: The uses and abuses of assessment*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990)*. Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Sullivan, P., & Clarke, D. (1991). Catering to all abilities through "good" questions. *The Arithmetic Teacher, 39*(2)*,* 14-18.

Sullivan, P., & Liburn, P. (2004). *Open-ended math activities: Using "good" questions to enhance learning in mathematics.* South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press.

Sun, Z. (2012). An empirical study on new teacher-student relationship and questioning strategies in ESL classroom. *English Language Teaching, 5*(7)*,* 175-183.

Swaffield, S. (2011). Getting to the heart of authentic Assessment for Learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 18*(4)*,* 433-449.

Tan, K. (2011). Assessment for learning in Singapore: Unpacking its meanings and identifying some areas for improvement. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice, 10*(2)*,* 91-102.

Tierney, R., & Charland, J. (2007, April). *Stocks and prospects: Research on formative assessment in secondary classrooms.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Torrance, H., & Pryor, J. (1998). *Investigating formative assessment: Teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom.* Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Torrance, H., & Pryor, J. (2001). Developing formative assessment in the classroom: Using action research to explore and modify theory. *British Educational Research Journal, 27*(5)*,* 615-631.

Tsui, A. B. M. (2003). *Understanding expertise in teaching: Case studies of ESL teachers.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Van Kraayenoord, C. E., & Paris, S. G. (1997). Australian students' self-appraisal of their work samples and academic progress. *Elementary School Journal, 97*(5)*,* 523-537.

Van Zee, E. H., Iwasyk, M., Krose, A., Simpson, D., & Wild, J. (2001). Student and teacher questioning during conversations about science. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 38*(2)*, 159-190.

Verma, G. K., & Mallick, K. (1999). *Researching education: Perspectives and techniques.* Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press.

Von Glaserfeld, E. (1996). *Radical constructivism: A way of knowing and learning.* London, UK: Routledge.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological process.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). *Educational Psychology*. Boca Raton, FL: St. Lucie Press.

Watts, M., Alsop, S., Gould, G., & Walsh, A. (1997). Prompting teachers' constructive reflection: Pupils' questions as critical incidents. *International Journal of Science Education, 19*(9)*, 1025-1037.

Weeden, P., & Winter, J. (1999). *The LEARN project*: *Report for QCA*. London, UK: QCA.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1993). *Voices of the mind: A sociocultural approach to mediated action.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2000). *Understanding by design.* New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Wilen, W. (2004). Refuting misconceptions about classroom discussion. *Social Studies, 95*(1)*, 33-39.

Wilhelm, K. H., & Chen Pei, B. (2008). University teachers and students' perceptions of ELT methodologies and their effectiveness. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies, 8*(2)*, 79-102.

Wiliam, D. (1999, May). *A template for computer-aided diagnostic analyses of test outcome data.* Paper presented at 25th annual conference of the International Association for Educational Assessment held at Bled, Slovenia. London, UK: King's College London School of Education.

Wiliam, D. (2006a). Assessment. *Journal of Staff Development, 27*(1)*, 16-20.

Wiliam, D. (2006b). Formative assessment: Getting the focus right. *Educational Assessment, 11*(3&4)*, 283-289.

Wiliam, D. (2007). Keeping learning on track: Formative assessment and the regulation of learning. In F. K. Lester Jr. (Ed.), *Second handbook of mathematics teaching and learning* (pp. 1053-1088). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Wiliam, D. (2011). What is assessment for learning? *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 37*(1)*,* 3-14.

Wiliam, D., & Thompson, M. (2008). Integrating assessment with instruction: What will it take to make it work? In C. A. Dwyer (Ed.), *The future of assessment: Shaping teaching and learning* (pp. 53–82). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Williams, M., & Burden, R.L. (1997). *Psychology for Language Teachers: A Social Constructivist approach.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Winn, W., & Snyder D. (1996). Cognitive perspectives in psychology. In D. H. Jonassen (Ed.), *Handbook of research for educational communications and technology* (pp. 112-142), New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.

Woods, P. (1985). Conversations with teachers: Some aspects of life history method. *British Educational Research Journal, 2*(1)*,* 13- 26.

Yang, Y. C., Newby, T. J., & Bill, R. L. (2005). Using Socratic questioning to promote critical thinking through asynchronous discussion forums in distance learning environment. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 19*(3)*,* 163-181.

Yin, R. K. (1989). *Case study research, design and methods* (2rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research, design and methods* (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Zhang, W. M. (2008). *In search of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' knowledge of vocabulary instruction* (Doctoral dissertation, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia). Retrieved from http://etd.gsu.edu/theses/available/etd0523200821532/unrestricted/Zhang_weimin_200808_phd.pdf

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS PRESENTED

Papers published:

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S., Saad, M. R. M. (2013). Defining Assessment for Learning: A proposed definition from a sociocultural perspective. *Life Sci J, 10*(2)*,* 2493-2497.

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S., Saad, M. R. M. (2013). Malaysian Primary School ESL teachers. Questions during Assessment for Learning. *English Language Teaching, 6*(8)*,* 1-9.

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S., Saad, M. R. M. (2012). A Sociocultural Perspective on Assessment for Learning: The Case of a Malaysian Primary School ESL Context. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 66,* 343-353.

Papers presented:

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S., Saad, M. R. M. (2013). *Feedback during Assessment for Learning: An Overview.* The 17th English in Southeast Asia Conference (ESEA), 5-7 December, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S., Saad, M. R. M. (2012). *A sociocultural perspective on Assessment for learning.* The 8th International Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) Seminar - Aligning Theoretical Knowledge with Professional Practice, 4-5 September, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

List of other papers published by the candidate during candidature:

Aghili, M., Palaniappan, A. K., Kamali, K., Aghabozorgi, S., **Abbasnasab Sardareh, S.** (2014). Unifying Informal and Formal Learning Environments: Educational Use of Social Network Sites through Implementing Community of Inquiry Framework. International Journal of e-Education, e- Business, e-Management and e-Learning, 4(3), 191-196.

Saad, M. R. M., **Abbasnasab Sardareh, S.,** Ambarwati, E. K. (2013). Iranian Secondary School EFL Teachers. Assessment Beliefs and Roles. *Life Sci J, 10*(3)*,* 1638-1647.

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S., Saad, M. R. M., Boroomand, R. (2012). Self-Regulated Learning Strategies (SRLS) and academic achievement in pre-university EFL learners (2012). *California Linguistic Notes, XXXVII*(1)*,* 1-35.

List of other papers presented by the candidate during candidature:

Aghili, M., Aghabozorgi, S., and **Abbasnasab Sardareh, S.** (2014).*Unifying informal and formal learning environments: educational use of social network sites through implementing community of inquiry framework.* 5th International Conference on E-Education, E-Business, E-Management and E-Learning- IC4E 2014, Toronto, Canada.

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S., Aghili, M. (2012). *A phenomenological study of Iranian secondary school EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs.* UUM COB first international qualitative research conference, 4-7 November, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Boroomand, R., Saad, M. R. M., **Abbasnasab Sardareh, S.** (2011). *Motivational beliefs variables and Iranian middle school EFL learners` academic achievement.* The First Iranian Students Scientific Conference in Malaysia, 22-24 April, University Putra Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S. (2011). *Secondary School EFL Teachers. beliefs about English Language Assessment in Iran.* International Online Language Conference (IOLC) 2011, 3-4 September, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S., Saad, M. R. M. (2011). *Exploring ESL learners` generative learning strategies in second language academic reading.* Second International Language Conference (ILC), 22-24 April, International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Abbasnasab Sardareh, S. (2010). *The Relationship between University EFL Learners` Beliefs about their own Reading Ability and their Reading Strategy Use.* The 1st Clark Education City International TESOL Convention. November 25-27. Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga, Philippines.

APPENDIX A

Informed Permission Letter

Title of Research: ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN A MALAYSIAN ESL PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT

My name is Sedigheh Abbasnasab Sardareh, and I am a PhD candidate in TESL at the Faculty of Education at University of Malaya. I am writing to request your kind cooperation in research on Assessment for Learning in a Malaysian ESL primary school context. This research will be conducted under the supervision of Dr. Mohd Rashid Mohd Saad.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this qualitative case study is to investigate how assessment for learning (AfL) is carried out in a selected primary school ESL classes in Malaysia. This study is an attempt to investigate how Year One and Year Two primary school ESL teachers implement classroom discussion and questioning during AfL and how they provide students with formative feedback.

At this stage in the research, 'Assessment for Learning' is defined from a sociocultural perspective; AfL practices include all practices during the teaching and learning process that aim to improve teaching and learning and help students become the owners of their own learning. Therefore, the quality of teacher-student interaction in the social and cultural context is highlighted in this definition. AfL is conceptualized more than a set of strategies that are used to assess students at the end of each instruction period and is considered as an integral part of cultural and dialectical process of enhancing students' control of their own learning process. Learners are engaged in the process of assessment so that they can assess their own learning and develop autonomy. AfL practices in a social constructivist classroom include strategies such as classroom discussion, classroom questioning and formative feedback. In a sociocultural view of AfL, understanding the complexities of the implementation of these AfL strategies in a specific context is important.

Phases of Data Collection:

1. Meet-the-prospective-respondents: the researcher will go to the selected school to meet the participants of the study and make trust and rapport with them.

2. Briefing session and pre-study interviews with teachers: The researcher will explain to the participants about the aim of the study and brief them on what to do. After the briefing session, in order to establish the context of the teachers' experience, we will conduct pre-study interview. Pre-study interview session will last up to 30 minutes.

3. Then pre-observation interview: The purpose of pre-observation interview is to obtain information about how the participating teachers are going to implement the lesson. Pre-observation interview will last up to one hour.

4. Classroom observation: The participating teachers' classrooms will be observed over the period of eight weeks to gain detailed information of actual teaching practices. The researcher will observe the classes as direct observer. The information obtained from

observation sessions will help the researcher develop more discussion topics during post-observation interview.

5. Post observation interviews: During this phase the researcher will conduct post-observation interview. The participating teacher will be interviewed up to one hour. Post-observation interview will help the researcher gain more detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation.

6. Group interviews with students: Group interviews will be conducted with the students to obtain more information on the teachers' implementation of AfL practices.

7. Data verification: The researcher checks the analysed data with the participants and then only starts to write the results of the study.

Potential Risks: Participants will be provided with the opportunity to withdraw their responses after their interview and prior to the publication of the findings. Participants will be asked to review the final transcript and sign a transcript release form wherein they acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what they said or intended to say.

Potential Benefits: The information gathered from this study will provide valuable information for theories of action, knowledge, and practice related to implementing and sustaining school improvements focused on AfL. It is my hope that data collected from your school division will provide a rich context from which other educators will be able to better improve AfL practices in the schools with which they are involved.

Storage of Data: The researcher would ask permission from the participants to video and audio record the interviews and observations. Following completion of the study, all data (audio tapes and field notes) will be stored and retained by the researcher in accordance with the guidelines defined by the University of Malaya. The data will be placed in a locked cabinet for a minimum of two years. After that the data will be destroyed.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point; you are also free to contact the researcher at the number provided above if you have questions at a later time.

Sincerely yours,
Sedigheh Abbasnasab Sardareh
Department of Language and Literacy, Faculty of Education, University of Malaya
Email: abbasnasab@siswa.um.edu.my
H/p: 0176763252

APPENDIX B

Approval letters
Letter of Approval from University of Malaya

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

10th Nov 2011

To Whom It May Concern

Name	: Sedigheh Abbasnasab Sardareh
Passport No	: L16898754
Registration No	: PHA 100003
Programme	: Doctor of Philosophy
Specialization	: Teaching of English as a Second Language

This is to confirm that the above candidate is a student in the Doctor of Philosophy, University of Malaya, beginning in semester II, session 2010/2011.

She/he is currently doing research and would require research data which can be obtained from your school/office/institution/university. We would appreciate it if you are able to assist our candidate in his/her research and would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

ANIDA KAMALUDIN
Assistant Registrar (Higher Degree)
Faculty of Education

Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
• Dean's Office: (603) 7967 5000 Fax: (603) 7956 5506 • http://www.um.edu.my
• Deputy Dean: (603) 7967 5079/5080/5099 • Fax: (603) 7967 5141/5089
• Assistant Registrar: (603) 7967 5131/5001 • General Office: (603) 7967 5006/5133 • Fax: (603) 7967 5130
• Department of Mathematics and Science Education/Department of Educational Foundations and Humanities: (603) 7967 5040 • Fax: (603) 7967 5148
• Department of Language and Literacy Education/Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology: (603) 7967 5027 • Fax: (603) 7967 5139
• Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling/Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy: (603) 7967 5036 • Fax: (603) 7967 5010

Letter of Approval from the Ministry of Education (Malaysia)

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH DIVISION
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
LEVEL 1-4, BLOCK E8, PARCEL E
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION CENTRE
62604 PUTRAJAYA

Telephone : 03-88846000
Fax : 03-88846439
Homepage : http://161.142.144.5

Our Ref. : KP(BPPDP)603/5/Jld.8(05)
Date : 05 Dec 2011

Ms. Sedigheh Abbasnasab Sardareh
R302, University Of Malaya International House
Jalan 17/2, Petaling Jaya
46400 Selangor

Dear Sir/Madam,

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS, TEACHERS TRAINING INSTITUTES, STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS AND DIVISIONS UNDER THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION MALAYSIA

I am pleased to inform you that your application to conduct research has been approved by the **Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia**. The details of the approval are as follows:

Researcher's name : **SEDIGHEH ABBASNASAB SARDAREH**

Title Of Research : **Implementation Of Assessment For Learning In A Malaysian Primary School ESL Context**

2.   The approval of this research was based on the instrument submitted to our Division. You must obtain the necessary permission from the respective Directors of the State Education Departments for the use of the school samples.

3.   Please submit a copy of your final report directly to the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education. **You are required to obtain our permission if you are intended to present or publish your report in any seminars, forums or the mass media.**

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

(DR. HJ. ZABANI BIN DARUS)
Sector Head,
Research and Evaluation Sector
for Director
Educational Planning and Research Division
Ministry of Education Malaysia

Letter of Approval from Selangor Education Department

Rujukan Kami : JPNS.PPN 600-1/49 JLD.17(64)
Tarikh : 23/12/2011

MS. SEDIGHEH ABBASNASAB SARDAREH
R302, UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA INTERNATIONAL HOUSE
JALAN 17/2
46400 PETALING JAYA
SELANGOR

Tuan,

IMPLEMENTATION OF ASESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN A MALAYSIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL ESL CONTEXT

Perkara di atas dengan segala hormatnya dirujuk.

2. Jabatan ini tiada halangan untuk pihak tuan menjalankan kajian/penyelidikan tersebut di sekolah-sekolah dalam Negeri Selangor seperti yang dinyatakan dalam surat permohonan.

3. Pihak tuan diingatkan agar mendapat persetujuan daripada Pengetua/Guru Besar supaya beliau dapat bekerjasama dan seterusnya memastikan bahawa penyelidikan dijalankan hanya bertujuan seperti yang dipohon. Kajian/Penyelidikan yang dijalankan juga tidak mengganggu perjalanan sekolah serta tiada sebarang unsur paksaan.

4. Tuan juga diminta menghantar senaskah hasil kajian ke Unit Perhubungan dan Pendaftaran Jabatan Pelajaran Selangor sebaik selesai penyelidikan/kajian.

Sekian, terima kasih.

"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"

Saya yang menurut perintah,

(MOHD SALLEH BIN MOHD KASSIM)
Penolong Pendaftar Institusi Pendidikan dan Guru,
Jabatan Pelajaran Selangor,
b.p. Ketua Pendaftar Institusi Pendidikan dan Guru,
Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia.

s.k. 1. Fail

Extents of the Observed Teachers' Implementation of AfL

Teachers` Name: File No: Date: Class:

Period: Topic: Visit No:

Category	Comments
Clarify learning intentions: Stating learning goals Defining success criteria Where students are going What is quality work Student friendly language	
Engineering classroom discussion and questioning: Reflective Stimulating No hands up Probing Effective questioning	
Providing feedback: Quality work Comments on how to improve Address misconceptions Engage students Cause thinking Tell what has/has not been done Specify a better way Move student forward Use assessment information to identify the next step in teaching and learning	
Activating students as owners of their learning: Criteria in students` language Students ask questions Students suggest ways to improve Providing feedback to the teacher	
Peer- & self-assessment: Remark to other Student reflect Reflective responses Students renew their own work	

Panel of Experts

1- Dr. Mohd Rashid Bin Mohd Saad

Department of Language and Literacy Education
Faculty of Education
 University of Malaya

2- Prof. Sharan B. Merriam

Professor Emeritus
Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy
College of Education
University of Georgia
(The researcher met and consulted Prof. Sharan B. Merriam in the 8th International
Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) Seminar - Aligning Theoretical Knowledge with
Professional Practice, 4-5 September, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia).

3- Dr. Hossein Farhady

Professor Emeritus
Department of Foreign languages
Iran University of Science and Technology
(Contacted through e-mail)

Teacher Interview Protocol

Teacher`s ID …………… Interview No. ………… Grade ……….

Lesson ………… Duration of Interview …………… Date …………

Opening Statement:

The purpose of this interview is to help the researcher better understand how you implement AfL in your classroom. More specifically, your responses to the interview questions help the researcher understand how you implement classroom questioning and discussion during AfL and how you provide students with formative feedback. I like to understand what happens and why that happens in your class. I am also interested in why you teach in the way that you do and why. You are welcome to make constructive suggestions in terms of the currently existing gap between theory and practice of AfL in Year One and Year Two primary school ESL classes in Malaysia. I am greatly indebted to you for your consent and co-operation beforehand. If you have any further suggestions or recommendations regarding the nature or the directions of this study, please feel free to contact me at:

E-mail: abbasnasab@gmail.com

Interview Questions:

1. Please tell me about your teaching carreer and your educational qualification.

2. How long have you been teaching English in primary schools in Malaysia? And how do you think of assessment?

3. How do you assess your students? Why?

4. Are the assessment strategies and practices you tend to use now are different from those you used earlier in your career? How? If they are different what motivated the change?

5. What do you believe is the primary purpose of assessment? Please explain.

6. Do you know the difference between summative and formative functions of assessment? Can you provide me with some examples to explain the difference?

7. How do you think assessment for learning (formative assessment) can be used in schools?

8. Could you please identify any AfL activities you use in your classroom?

9. What do you feel is the most effective way for a student in your classroom to be involved in his/her own assessment?

10. How to know about what students know and are learning?

11. When do you ask questions in your classroom?

12. What types of questions do you usually ask?

13. How do you think classroom questioning technique promote students` learning?

14. Are certain question categories more effective than others for promoting students' learning? Why?

15. What do you think are the characteristics of effective questions? Please give some examples.

16. How your questions can positively impact students` responses?

17. Please describe how do you conduct classroom discussions? What students do?

18. What techniques do you use to initiate classroom discussion?

19. How frequent you use classroom discussion technique?

20. How much do you feel students are learning in discussion?

21. How do students in your class know what they need to get better at?

22. What purpose do you think feedback should serve?

23. What feedback have you found to be particularly effective?

24. What do you think is the value of feedback for learning ESL?

25. How do you provide feedback to students about how they are doing?

26. How often do you provide students with feedback?

27. Do you have any recommendations for enhancing AfLin primary school ESL context?

28. Is there anything else you'd like to add? Any concern?

29. Do you have any question I might be able to answer?

Thank you so much for taking your time for this interview and for all you have shared with me.

Students' Interview Protocol

1. How often does your teacher assess your work? How?

2. Does your teacher tell you about the learning goals? How?

3. How does your teacher ask you questions in the classroom? Please give me some examples.

4. When the teacher asks you a question in class, what does he/she normally do?

5. How often are you given feedback regarding your work? How?

6. Do you take part in classroom discussions? How?

7. What feelings do you have toward your assessments at school in general?

8. Is there any assessment activity used in class you do not like? What are they? Why?

9. Is there any activity you would like your teacher to do more often in class? What are they? Why?

10. Is there any question you want to ask me?

Document Summary Form

Site:
Document no:
Date Revisited:
Code: doc

1. Name or description of document:

2. Event or contact (if any) with which the document is associated:

3. Significance or importance of document:

4. Brief summary of contents:

 Include the following questions:

What is the purpose of the document?

Who follows up the document?

What is the context the document is written in?

How long is the document valid?

Does any other document supports this document?

Who is responsible of the document?

What is the content of the document?

Transcription Symbols (Adopted from Bloome et al., 2008)

↑ = rising intonation at the end of utterance

↓ = falling intonation

Xxxx= undecipherable

Stress

"Reading from written text"

▼= less volume

▲= more volume

▲▲= greatly increased volume

Uttered with increased speed

| = short pause |||| = long pause

⌐⌐ = interrupted by the next line

- = uncompleted word

⌐ line 1

= overlap

└ line 2

Vowel+ = elongated vowel

*= voice, pitch, or style change

words= boundaries of a voice, pitch, or style change

Nonverbal behavior or transcriber comments for clarification purpose in italics

APPENDIX I

Sample of Interviews with the teachers

I: Please tell me about your teaching career and your educational qualification.

Ok I obtained my degree from Queensland University of Technology in Australia and my degree is specialty of Education studies for teaching English as a foreign language for primary school. And I started teaching in January 2006. Up until now this is my first school so I'm still new.

I: How long have you been teaching English in primary schools in Malaysia? And how do you think of assessment?

Well if it is not including my training years I have been teaching since January 2006 up until now. During the university I did my teacher training for about three months and before that I never had any experience with school. Except that I did teach a few students privately. I think assessment help teachers understand their students` achievement.

I: How do you assess your students? Why?

In fact I learned about assessment for learning for a semester. So I did a subject of AfL and I really like it. The way I assess my students depends on what skills I am assessing. For example, if I am assessing their listening and speaking skills obviously I will talk to them and mostly through observation and their fluency and their ability to speak and understand what they have heard. It depends on how they reply my questions or my statements and how do they respond to it. And basically that is for listening and speaking roughly I'll just do observation with some guidelines I mean like I have a criteria like they don't have to be grammatically perfect but as long as they have fluency and I can understand what is the massage so I won't punish them for grammatical mistakes.

I: So you mainly assess listening and speaking through observation.

Yea, with some guidelines. I have my own guidelines like what type of sentences I am looking for and then what type of response I am looking for. So where I see fit to the curriculum, you know we have the new PBS the new assessment system so whenever I see fit to the curriculum requirements that's how I assess them. That is for listening and speaking, for reading, writing and other language skills and functions generally I would

have the instruments worksheets, exercises which I build myself. Occasionally I take from the exercise book or the activity books that are ready made outside. I take from activity books from other authors but sometimes I find the skills not related to my students that's why I prefer to build my own instruments because I like to test them with what I have taught them I won't test them with things that I have never taught before. The skills are the same but the items I am assessing is not there so I just use certain things from the activity books that I've bought from outside that I see fit or suitable for the students not everything from the activity books.

I: Are the assessment strategies and practices you tend to use now are different from those you used earlier in your career? How? If they are different what motivated the change?

Well it is slightly different but skills that are being assessed are still the same, it is just that the new system requires more paper work and we are trying to help the students to do things instead of the teacher assessing them on papers we get them to do things for example we assess them through play, through dramatization, through a song. A lot of things that are student centered so the new assessment is well it is more hands on I would say for the students but at the same time it is giving a lot of more work to the teachers. Because the blueprints are fine and the system is good and I think the reason why we have these changes is because in the previous curriculum assessment was too exam- oriented so students don't learn for the real world, students choose to pass the exam and then they are, they are, how do I say how do I put this, they competing with each other in terms of what they get in exam and then like most graduates that we have out of the system they can get high marks, they score academically but it terms of … they are not street smart, they are socially challenged because they are lacking in critical thinking skills, they are lacking in empathizing, they are lacking in many things that is related to emotional quotient so they are lacking in EQ I would say. They are high in IQ but lack EQ. now in the new system we are trying to have a balanced growth of progress in both EQ and IQ. So we don't want students to have high IQ but no EQ. we would prefer students with high EQ than IQ.

I: So the assessment practices that you are using are different from what you used previously because previously you had to prepare them for examination

Yes, not that we had to prepare them for examination it is just their expectation, the parents` expectation because the previous curriculum has been used since 1983. It has

been there for a long time so the parents are molded to go through this channel and they are so used to this pattern so they don't want to go outside of the pattern they want to stay in the system and they are giving pressures to the teachers because they want their kids to score high on the paper so but yeah they score academically but not emotionally.

I: What do you believe is the primary purpose of assessment? Please explain.

Well the purpose of assessment in my opinion is to see how far the students have achieved. Let's say I am teaching language so my target is to get them to be able at least to speak the language to get them by. For example, if I put them in an English speaking community they can survive in that community. They have some language, some skills in the language that can get them by. And in terms of writing at least they can write massages or things that they are trying to convey and people who read it can understand the massage. Because you know if you write something in English, if you have wrong grammar or grammar mistakes in it, the meaning might change. So, well… my target is not to have a perfect English but at least just enough for them to survive in the community but not everyone has the opportunity to be in an English speaking society or community but nowadays no doubt that English is the current lingua franca. Wherever we go at least people know some English. And the working world in Malaysia it is very easy for people who don't really have good qualifications but they are street smart, they can speak in English and they are the ones who get the job. Not the one who get high distinction let's say in their degree, not those people get the job. I'd put it this way. For example girl A obtained high distinction in her degree and she can speak English rather ok. I'd put it average. But girl B doesn't have a high distinction in her degree, not a very outstanding performance. But she can speak fluent English. So she will be the one who gets the job. Because that is the competition in Malaysia like although they say that we have to speak in our mother tongue which is Bahasa Melayu but still English is given much importance in job requirement. English is a plus point.

I: Do you know the difference between summative and formative functions of assessment? Can you provide me with some examples to explain the difference?

Formative assessment like right now we have KSSR the new curriculum of course we do the assessment gradually, formatively as the students learn so the skills are developed from the lowest level and gradually going up that is formative and we do it very often. Some teachers might do it once a week; some teachers might do it once a month. Depending on the teacher but in the old curriculum it is not that we don't do

formative assessment but formative assessment is unofficial. Like right now in KSSR whatever formative assessment that we do it is official we have to have the evidence, we have to keep it in the file so it is recorded but the formative assessment that we had in the old curriculum was based on the activities, their homework, exercises that we do in the classroom and the teacher is obliged to … in fact they are responsible to mark exercises, look for the students` weaknesses or strengths so they can give them appropriate exercises in the future. That is the formal formative assessment. To me it is just that now in the KSSR it became more official, everything must be recorded but in the old curriculum it is not recorded, it is just in the students` exercise books. So for summative assessment it is like what we are having now at the end of the year or at the end of the term the school term like in the midyear so we have a midyear exam and a final exam so these exams are to test the skills that they have learned from the beginning of the year up until the point that they sit for that exam. By right, in KSSR we are not supposed to have the midyear and final year exam but you know this is … I would put it as a very sensitive issue to be talked about because the instructions goes out like ok no exam should be carried out for KSSR, except when they go up to Year Six they have UPSR but I think they will change the name and I don't know what they will call it so that would be the only summative assessment they have from Year One to Year Six but they put alongside with the instructions … they say this is subjected to change according to the headmaster. So if the headmaster insists on having it at the end of the year the so we shall have it. That's why Year One and Year Two have also summative assessment. We work smart here. whatever that we need to assess during formative assessment, things that we have assessed, we just put it in the final year paper like reassessing them to see that whether they really get the idea of what they have done earlier so the examination is actually questions that we … things that we are supposed to assess. This is just something similar to what they have practiced previously during the year so it is just like reinforcement so if they can answer it correctly they get the score and the score will show that is how much they understand about the topics.

I: Does the final exam affect students' promotion to the next grade?
No, by right no. we just use the result of final year exam to put the students into groups. But actually we are not supposed to put them into groups. Good students stay in class A. not so good or weak students in class B. we are not supposed to do this. We should mix them and put them in different classes. Or let's say we have quite a large number of the students, equal number of good and average students can stay in one class and the same

goes to the next class. By right we should do that but everything goes according to what the headmaster wants.

I: How do you think assessment for learning (formative assessment) can be used in schools? Please explain and provide some examples.

Well, because assessment for learning if you look at the bands, the criteria that the students should achieve they should be able to do something in exemplary manners so well I would say whatever we taught them or assessed in the classroom, they should be able to do it outside but because they are young students, they are young they are only Year One and Year Two, you need to explain to them when you are teaching why you need to write nicely because if you write nicely that shows your personality because you respect those who wants to read your handwriting so you write nicely because you are considering their … you are being empathic. We explain this to them and I believe if you treat kids like adults you will receive the same treatment from them. I always believe in that because I did my own research. Well not official research but I did this on my nephew and niece so we have mutual respect because you treat them like adult not kids. We try to tap some sense in them so they can actually do it. So when you start talking about things like being nice to other people, how you can be nice to other people so write nicely because if you don't write nicely poor the teacher, pity the teacher needs to strength her eyes to read your handwriting so they start to write nicely so that shows their manners. They have sense of being emphatic. So in whole, because we really don't see them outside of class, the only time they are outside the class is during recess hour so that is when they can apply maybe with their friends. But I saw a few… for example there was one topic in Year Two, it is do the right thing, in that topic we focus on getting them to do things correctly for example when you are in the canteen shall you push your friend or run around? Or before you go to the canteen what should you do queue up and then in the queue when you walk in the queue can you run can you … so I put it in a song, twinkle in the star, they remember the song and at the same time when they are leaving for recess I've heard them when I leave them I heard some of them hey do not pus, hey don't run so it is good enough for me they are applying what they have learned. To certain extent it is applicable outside of the classroom and they are learning. They are learning for the real world as well because their life is not just in school they are going to go out and meet real people in real world so ya.

I: you mean it's good to explain to them about the goals and after that assess them in way so they can apply whatever they have learned inside the classroom in real world situation.

Yes, correct.

I: Could you please identify any 'formative assessment' activities you use in your classroom?

There are a lot of activities that I use for assessment for learning. For example, through language arts and through listening and speaking that is the only time, well that is the only time that you can see clearly whether or not they grasp what you are trying to teach. Because when you talk to them, you speak, that is how you know whether the person has good mannerism or well respectful so most of the time is when they are doing language arts when they are working together in groups, if they are shouting to each other that mean they are not practicing in an exemplary manner. What you saw the other day language arts they have to share things. They have to share color pencil, share the glue, the scissors. I am not saying that all of them have good manners; some of them can be very tough, very difficult but most of them can share so it's ok if they don't use English hundred percent because all of them they don't come from an English speaking background so ya that is a kind of assessment through observation and also through worksheets. In the worksheet the kind of … the readers … um what they have … they read and then they have to … there is one topic about good deeds. Like for example if your mother is sick what can you do for her? Maybe give her backmassage or maybe things like that, nice things. So and then but it is always easier to see whether they are applying it through talking to them. On paper they could pick on other pupils' paper but when you speak to them, the way they respond to you, you will know because you have been teaching the students since early of the year.

I: So you assess them formatively through language art activities and some other classroom activities using worksheets.

Yeah, by using worksheets and of course the worksheets should be visual, a lot of visual, not so much of the words because you know kids they get easily detached if you have too many words. When it is too difficult for them they can get demotivated very easily.

I: What do you feel is the most effective way for a student in your classroom to be involved in his/her own assessment? Please give examples.

In my opinion the best way to get them motivated or to get them involved in assessment well worksheet whether they like it or not they have to do it but the best way to see whether they are applying it, they are involved in it is through using the you know visual aids if you use the television just a simple slide show let's say you have simple story and then you have pictures to go along with the story you use that and they are very attentive and when you ask questions everybody wants to get involved. Everybody wants to answer so yeah the most effective way that I can relate to is through using the television or maybe the power point presentation and another way is to use songs. They really enjoy it. Songs and then activities that can go with is … they like to get in touch with creative side. When they listen to the song and then when we talk about the song, to get their response let's say they are characters in the song which character you like? The cow, the horse or the cat? So if you like the cat you draw the cat nicely and talk about it. So when they start drawing it and then when I ask the why you like the cat they reply and give reason so through tapping on their creative side it is always interesting to see their response rather than writing all the time because they are still young unless they have gone to Year Three, Four and Five I think that is the right time to slowly get into writing and more technical language functions.

I: How to know about what students know and are learning?

How do I know that? Through asking them questions orally. Again listening and speaking. There is a lot of … I mean listening and speaking plays a huge role in assessing the students because on papers we don't know what is going on in their mind. They could just answer it and got it right probably they answer correctly just because they got lucky. They might just give the answer and they just got lucky on paper. But when you ask questions and when you talk to them you know what is going on in their head and you know whether they are trying to say something and sometimes they do understand what you are asking but they just have no idea of how to reply because they are lacking in vocabulary. The word bank is still limited, the repertoire is still limited so they can't really respond to you unless you elicit through trial and error. Because they do understand you it is just that … well I did this it was a mistake during my teacher training years I gave up speaking English because it is too difficult to get them understand but actually if you … if you well, you will get short term gain but you lose in the long term because at the end of the day the student will say oh never mind she

will speak Malay after this so no need to try to understand what she is saying so what I am trying to do now is to speak English like 99% of the time by hook or by crook they need to understand what I am saying and after a few months of drilling them with the same instruction, I see them gaining something. They do understand so it works. Well, you lose short term but in the long term, in long run you gain. So yeah most of the time the most useful tool to assess them is through talking to them.

I: How often do you ask questions in your classroom?

Ok let's say I just put it in context like when I read them a story so I don't just read the story and just go from beginning to the end. Before something happens in the story I ask students what do you think happens after this? So they start giving ideas ok see … will see whose idea is correct. It is just like they are competing each other who gets the right answer so that is when I them a story and let's say if we do songs I will ask them say the song is about animals. I ask them what animals are in the song. So try to recall what they have heard. Things like that like I think 50 to 70% of the time I ask them questions through listening and speaking and in fact in writing as well I get them to talk first before they start writing. Once they start writing they don't talk to me anymore. Right? Before writing I give instructions earlier. Step by step then only I give them the worksheet. Say if they keep asking me the same questions, there must be a problem in my instructions. So the next time I come in I have to fix my instructions. And then it changes every time because it is like this is the first year of KSSR for Year Two because they are pioneer so I myself have to do trial and error which way is the best to achieve what I want. Like for example the other day like having the model, the chart of sea animals, I didn't manage to finish it so you see when you don't have the example prior to what they are going to do they would get lost. They will feel like they have no directions. Where are we going after this? Where are we going after this? So I told them orally but they don't have the mental image of what they will achieve at the end of the day. But in previous lessons when I had the model like you saw the paper doll. I had that before they began doing it and it was a huge success. Everybody was on task. Everybody was doing it right so it is good to have I mean especially for weak students we have to have a product. What you want to achieve at the end of the day. Show them an example then only you give instructions. Ok first you are going to color. I give you fifteen minutes and then after you finish coloring what we are going to do next is to cut up the pictures. Cut up the pictures then you are going to paste them. Step by step and then get them to repeat the steps like the other day I missed up that part I didn't get

them to repeat the steps. That's why everything went haywire. So you need to really make sure that they know what they are going to do next.

I: What types of questions do you usually ask? Please give example.

Normally I ask true or false questions. Yes or no. things that needs short response. I can't expect long response from my students because I know their level so I will keep it simple and keep it really easy to digest. If I ask WH- questions like who is this girl? The answer is 'this is Liana' for example. What does she like? Badminton. So when they give me short answer that's when I fix them oh she like badminton. It's ok if they don't repeat you the first time as you go along you drill them the pattern, the answering pattern. Then questions such as do you like cake? Do you like coffee? Do you like banana? Things like that. Short response.Because as long as I understand what I am asking that's fine.

I: How do you think classroom questioning technique promote students` learning?

Well, at this stage it gets students to … um it stimulates their thinking skill. I would say questioning will stimulate their thinking skill although at this point the thinking skills are at the most basic level like yes or no but at least that thing the questioning gets them to think whether I like it or not and who is she? They will ask themselves about the question and as you go along you can increase the level of difficulty in questioning and then you start asking. Let's say if you are a scientist what will you do. Some of them can get to that point like Mugni, a boy in my class, you can ask him difficult questions. He can give answers. And then I have students who can speak but very poor at writing, very poor at performing the task. Hands on tasks very poor but in terms of speaking they can speak.

I: So you believe that questioning technique promotes students' learning. Right?

Yes, I do.

I: Even for those who don't perform well on a task if you ask questions they can perform better.

Yes. There is one very week student. When I leave her alone she can't do it but when I prompt her ok what happens next? I ask her questions. And then she starts thinking. She starts thinking and she says oh like this? Yes. So that's when I give response. When she get the correct answer. Well, do you think it is? If she knows that means she does understand that means something is going on in her head so let's say she got the wrong

answer I'll still ask her the same questions. Do you think this is this? Things like that. Really get them into the task. Not many are like that. We have a few. Like in a class we have four or five. And we do have students who can think, who are able but they are simply lazy. Simply lazy to think. They just want to get things done. It doesn't matter how it looks. Doesn't matter how you write. They can actually write nicely but they just want to finish. Because they just want to compete who finishes the work first. Who gives, who pass it to the teacher first. It doesn't matter whether it is correct or not.

I: Are certain question categories more effective than others for promoting students' learning? Why?

Well it depends on what kinds of skills students are trying to gain. You just have to modify according to the level of the students. If the student is high achiever there is nothing wrong with giving him challenging questions. Instead of giving him straight forward answer kind of question. So just have to play with that. Go along with the students' level. Don't limit their potential because they can take the challenge. So it depends on the students' ability.

I:*What do you think are the characteristics of effective questions? Please give some examples.*

Ok effective questions would be clear questions. Not long questions, not confusing, in a way straight forward but with some words that can initiate critical thinking skills. Like 'what do you think happens next?' short question but it requires thinking skills. So a question shouldn't be … no distractors. When you are asking the question let's say you are asking about a story, you just want them to say that if he does that he will get this. For example in a story Aladdin and the magic lamp, if he rubs the lamp the Jin will come out. You just want them answer what happens if Aladdin rubs the lamp? What will happen? So that is the simplest question. But some well it is not that I don't do it sometimes accidentally you just get distracted and you ask … ok let's say Aladdin rubs the lamp and then you put in things that are not related to what is going to happen after he rubs the lamp. That is going to be very distracting and students … I mean if the question is too long, at the end of the question the students forget what the main question is. I could not think of one at the moment. I tried to make up one but I can't. Distractors are things like for example when you are giving instructions ok you need to go to the library you need to go straight and then at the end of a junction, you will come to a T junction and at the T junction you turn right and the library would be on your left. That is the instruction but let's say the road is straight and at the end of the road would

be a T junction so take right and then the library would be on your left. So along the way there are a few bystreets, roads going to the right or left, so you don't give distractors such as ok go straight on and then you will see … there will be two turnings to the right don't take the first and the second turnings and wait until you come to the end of the road you'll find a T junction. So those are distractors. So you just give a very straight forward kind of instructions. Just go straight along the road until you come to a T junction and at the T junction then only you turn right. Isn't it easier that way? Instead of giving oh you will see three turnings to the right. Don't take those turnings. You go until you come to the end of the road. So if you mention those turning it is going to be such a distraction.

I: How your questions can positively impact students` responses? Please give an example.

I give them another scenario let's say you want to ask about scenario A but you have a similar scenario or scenario B. almost similar to A. you want them to respond aboutscenario A but they don't know what kind of response you want. Ok let me take you to this scenario B. if she does this, this is what is going to happen. So what do you think happens if in scenario A this particular girl do this what will happen? So at least they know if in scenario B that is what happens so maybe in scenario A this could happen. So give a similar, a parallel situation so they can compare and from there they can go so much from there. So to help them give better answers I give them examples in an almost similar situation. In a similar situation what will happen. I give examples and then before I ask questions maybe I give an example of questioning and answering. For example this question this is how I answer it. So probably provide them with some examples before you ask them and when you start asking that is when you give an example which is not of the same situation similar situation but just an example.

I: Please describe how do you conduct classroom discussions? What students do?

Ok well at this stage it is very difficult for me to get them into smaller groups but when they do they have a lot of things going on and usually the classroom discussion is … mostly at this stage I have to do a lot of asking, a lot of questioning and mostly it is a big class discussion not too much into small group discussion because you see we have many students but only one teacher in the class so it is very difficult to monitor all the small groups to speak in English or discuss things that they need to discuss in English. By right they should but I don't think it's a problem if you have students who come

from English speaking background but it is a challenge for those who come from non-English speaking background. So, most of the classroom discussion that I had so far have been just between me and the whole class. So the discussions are mainly based on the stories they have read, values they can gain from the story, which character they like? So most of the time it's me who ask not so much of the students. The students will ask but only a few of them will ask questions like 'teacher why he did that'? Things like this but only a few students. The rest of them well I can see them looking at the screen but they do not ask questions. Normally the discussion happens when I read them a story because I don't have big book so my big book is digital big book on the TV or power point slides. I see them looking at the slides but I don't know what is going on in their mind. Like some of them they really want to participate and they really want to raise their hand and talk. And sometimes they have no idea of what they are asking. They have no idea of what I am asking but they want to respond. They simply put up their hand and I ask ok what do you think and then just looking around. No answer. They simply don't answer because they don't know. They simply want to compete with others. Because everybody is putting up their hands and wants to respond to my questions. So that's why I say ok now who wants to answer put up your hand. If you talk I won't choose you so you must put up quietly and those are the ones I choose to answer my question. I have to do that if not they would be shouting they would be …

I: What techniques do you use to initiate classroom discussion?
Going back to the same thing using questioning and answering and eliciting the students' idea.

I: How frequent you use classroom discussion technique?
I don't do it so often only when we read stories. At least in two weeks there would be once or twice. Depending on the topic if I have stories then I 'd do the discussion.

I: How much do you feel students are learning in discussion?
To be honest only a few gain from discussion. Because some of them simply put off by discussion because they don't know what we are discussing about because they don't have the language. Like I tried to encourage them to use English but how can they use if they don't have the repertoire? If they don't have the environment that is using English so in my classroom talking about the context of my classroom, at the moment only a

few gain from discussions and many of them are still at a loss, still need a lot of guidance.

I: How do students in your class know what they need to get better at?

I will give feedback of course. I will give feedback and then I will choose the best. Let's say when we did that I will choose the one with an exemplary art craft and I would say this is very good and this is how you do it and once you have done this you can write you can color. I give them ideas. And then maybe you can color the pictures in the line don't go out of the line. So things like that I mean simple feedback that they can understand. That's how they will compete to do the best.

I: What purpose do you think feedback should serve?

I believe that by giving feedback students are motivated to do better. For example if you give feedback like it's always criticism, like if it is too often the students will get turn off. The best is if you want to give feedback give a positive feedback although you know the students are not performing to the standards you are aiming them to. What you can do is to put it in a positive way. Wow it is a good effort but it is nicer if you can do it this way. So you give them suggestion once you have given them the feedback. I think feedback plays a very important role and growing up in the Malaysian education system. I think many teachers … this is from my schooling experience, many teachers they don't really give good feedback. Like if the students are outstanding or mediocre or not so good, they don't really give feedback just ok good. So students don't know where they are going. They don't know what their level is. And they don't feel happy about themselves. Of course we human beings we like complements and that will keep you going. Some students take criticism positively. Some students will just shut you off. So it is best to pick your words wisely.

I: What type of feedback have you found to be particularly effective?

Like normally I will use facial expression, intonation like when I am giving feedback like 'ok good' instead of monotonous feedback I will say 'this is so great look at this this is wonderful' you show them that you are very happy with that kind of product. When you use that students are simply happy with your feedback because they feel good about themselves because they at least they know that they can do something.

I: What do you think is the value of feedback for learning ESL?

I would say giving feedback to the students is very important because I think as a learner I would like to know what my level is. And I am pretty sure that my students would love to know where they are at the moment. I mean what level they are at now. So as an ESL teacher I would say it is very important because language is not something that everyone likes. Language can be very challenging, very demotivating at times. By giving feedback I think many students will benefit from it. They will get motivated because it is not their language it is somebody else's language. It is not their language and if they can perform something using that language that means they have extra skill. It is a positive point because they would feel like they are appreciated for the effort they put in, for language activity and then to do something that is not in your area like for example English is their second language it is not their mother tongue so to be able to speak other language is a big thing so it is an extra skill that other people can't do it. I can do it. Something like that so you need to feel good about yourself that's why it is very important to give feedback to ESL learners especially the young kids. Just to get them motivated to continue learning language. Give them the feeling of being capable of doing something.

I: How do you provide feedback to students about how they are doing? Please give example.

I would say like normally I will give feedback straightaway when they are doing the activities and it is very rare that I give specific comment or feedback about their language learning. Because of the time constraint since most of the time I would be rushing going to the next class and I don't have the extra time to talk to them about what they have gained. Well there are a few times that I manage to say 'oh you can read that is good that means you like to read books'. Most of the times I give positive feedback to my students like 'see if you read more this is what you get. Like 'see you have improved'. One of my students last time he could not even write but now he can recognize the letters, he can write, he knows the words so it is a huge achievement I think for him. So I said 'wow see if that particular student, Reduan, if Reduan can do this you see Reduan you worked hard this is what you achieve. So I will make him an example to the class. 'See Reduan works hard see what he can do this is …' It is still like sharing with the whole class instead of talking to them one to one.

I: how do you give feedback to the students after accomplishing a task or activity?

Well I put some notes let's say if it is a worksheet I put some notes there like I want them to write nicely, please write more neatly or most of the time are good job, very good, excellent, keep it up or things like that. When I give back the paper then I will tell them you know what is your mistake here well you can get higher score if you do it this way so instead of saying 'next time don't do this' I would say 'you can get higher score if you do this. It is not difficult you can do it is just you need to think harder'.

I: you mentioned the problem is that you don't have enough time to give feedback to every student?

Yeah, I did but well times like this when I did filing. We have to take a free time to do filing, when I put in things in their files. Like a day for example I can give feedback to five or six students only so it is always I have to rotate to which student I give feedback to.

I: How often do you provide students with feedback?

Informal feedback or formal feedback? Informal like during the class itself or during the activities so I believe in saying good things about what they do although you don't quite agree with it. I tried but if it is one to one very specific feedback I would say probably once a month for a student because in a month I have to rotate which students I give it to. So it would be once a month for the student. Like at least once a month. Not that often because of the time constraint.

I: Do you have any recommendations for enhancing formative assessment in primary school ESL context?

My recommendation would be if we want to execute this we must make sure that the thing is well cooked or well prepared for the teacher to carry it out. The problem now is frankly speaking the things are not well cooked yet. We don't have the textbook. We are flying without the text book like for Year Three we don't have the text book yet but we have the courses how to teach Year Three next Year. So we are flying without the text book and then like no guidelines. We create our own guidelines so when the textbook comes in everything changes again. So before we can execute AfL we must make sure we have all the resources, we have all the things that is needed for it to be well executed. For example many of the language arts activities need computer. Since we don't have enough computers for each student we need to find alternative activities. At

the moment this school is small. The number of students are manageable but for big schools we have forty like some even fifty students in a classroom with one teacher to assess everything, to do everything for all fifty kids and I mean the teachers don't just teach one class they teach other classes as well so the MOE should at least provide teachers with a teacher aide. Teachers are doing hard work. We teachers we don't just teach. We do other things as well. We do administration work like filings, all the letters that comes in and goes out, the meeting minute, a lot of things and if you are a class teacher there are a lot more work to do. So we need a teacher aide to provide weak students with extra help. We need clear guidelines as well. Because the system is beautiful, I would say it is wonderful but we don't have enough resources, resources in terms of textbooks, guidelines, teachers and then facilities. We have modules but it has to go along with the text book. But now we haven't received the textbook. So at least if we have the textbook, we can prepare ourselves for next year. For Year One and Year Two no problem because it has been going on since 2011 but for Year Three next year, the teacher who is teaching Year Three … . for Year One and Year Two also before they implemented it in 2011, we had nothing so now as we go along we have some idea of how to do it. You can follow the guideline by book but it is not suggested. It is not advisable. You should use your creativity according to your students' level. In fact, before introducing a new system, the MOE should plan everything. The new assessment system is good but they have just introduced. They don't know what is happening in schools. How teachers are implementing the new system? When we go down to the core we see that it is not being implemented as it is expected.

I: Is there anything else you'd like to add? Any concern?

My concern is they are lacking in terms of reading skills because it is leveled to a very simple, very easy I don't know because we level it to the easiest level because of the students' ability. My concern is the level from one school to another is different. My band one could be this but the band one in other school could be that. That means schools are responsible to take care of their own reputation so let's say I give you band six and then once you go to secondary school the students who get band six don't perform well in Form One so the secondary school will know that ok student from this school is not a good student although they got band six. So in a way it gives you a bad reputation but how much can the government engage or really control this quality, this kind of reputation based assessment. We haven't come to it yet we don't know. So we will know it in 2016. We will see what happens in 2016. You know the criteria for

achieving band one to six are the same in all schools but probably the level of activities are not the same. Some teachers still testing the same band but my activity could be easier than other teachers. Like for example this is the descriptor, this is band one the basic band so this one performance standard is going to be used up until Year Six. Know basic skills listening, reading and writing and descriptors are say aloud rhymes or sing songs, able to do any of the following ok for example my evidence is based on singing groups so if they sing in groups doesn't matter if they pronounce well or not, they have passed band one. But some teachers might be stricter. They could say not everyone is singing correctly or they take three by three testing them to sing so they don't pass band one because they are not singing correctly. Different teachers have different levels of difficulty.

I: Do you have any question I might be able to answer?
Glad to help.

Thank you so much for taking your time for this interview and for all you have shared with me.

Sample of group interview with the students

I: First question. How often does your teacher assess your work? How? How many times does your teacher evaluate your work?

Ss: | Many times.

S_8: We have a test one time in one week.

S_{11}: When we finish a lesson.

$S_{3\ \&\ 12}$: Quite a number of tests. Too many

Some students: The KSSR test

S_7: She would give test at the beginning of the lesson

I: Does your teacher tell you about the learning goals? How? Does she explain you the learning objective?

Ss: Yes, during the lesson

I: How does your teacher ask you questions in the classroom? Please give me some examples.

S_2: She always asks questions.

S_4: During her teaching

S_2: We also have to write

I: What do you need to write?

S_2: Answer question sheets

S_6: Activity book

I: O.K during her teaching, she would stop and ask you question. You also have to complete worksheets and answer questions in your activity book.

I: When the teacher asks you a question in class, what does she normally do? O.K if your teacher asks- um ... how would she ask questions? | O.K would she wait for you to answer or | she would answer herself?

Um...

$S_{3,\ 6,\ 15}$: Give answer

I: does she answer herself.

$S_{11,\ 8,\ 15}$: yes, because we do not know

I: O.K you put up your hand. How does she ask you? Type of questions?

S_{11}: WH questions.

S_8: She asks What questions

I: How often does your teacher give you feedback regarding your work? How? O.K For example she asks you one question, then you raise up your hand and answer the question, what would she do after that? |

Ss: very good. She says good, very good

S_8: she gives us praise

$S_{11, 7 \& 15}$: She says good, correct, very good

I: She praises you.

S_2: We clap our hand.

S she gives praises.

I: O.K How often you give feedback related to your work?

Ss: A lot of times

S_{16}: I go forward and ask her

S_{15}: we raise our hand

$S_{22 \& 8}$: She comes to our desk and tell me what to do

I: O.K During classroom discussion, your teacher creates classroom discussion, right? Do you participate or not?

Some students: Participate

I: You participate. How?

Some students: Raise your hand and answer questions.

$S_{16, 7 \& 2}$: answer questions when teacher call my name.

I: O.K How do you feel about KSSR assessment we are currently doing?

$S_{8, 11}$: Too many questions

S_{12}: I like coloring

$S_{22 \& 3}$: Test is difficult

S_{16}: Coloring is easy

S_2: I like

I: O.K is there any assessment activity in the classroom that you like or don't like? O.K for example, does your teacher give assessment that you like. Is there anything that you like or anything you don't like?

Ss: Yes

Ss: we don't like tests

$S_{16:}$ worksheet. Many worksheets

S$_{22}$: Difficult

I: the assessment is difficult so you don't like it.you don't like to do worksheets. Because your teachers gives you a lot of worksheets to complete.Ah..O.K is there any activity that you like and you are always longing to do?

S$_{11\ \&\ 8}$: Play

I: Play? Playing what?

Ss: playing bingo game

S$_{16}$: Its fun

S$_{16}$: Sometimes we do Arts and Crafts

Ss: we like drawing and coloring

Some students: its easy. We feel happy

I: Happy, right? You like coloring drawing. If you do it nicely, you will get mark, it's fun, isn't it? O.K do you have anything you want to ask me?

S$_8$: that's all

Sample of classroom observation transcript

Observation Field notes
Setting: Year One B
Observer: Sedigheh Abbasnasab Sardareh
Role of Observer: Direct observer
Time: 12:00 A.M., September 26, 2012
Length of Observation: 60 minutes.

T: O.K Do you see my fingers here? ↓

Ss: Yes

T: What is this? What is the name of this finger? Do you still remember?

Thumbkin?

No+

S_6: Pointer

Ss: finger.

Pointer. Pointer

T: What is this?

Pointer. Good.

Thi+s one?

Ss: Pinkie. Pinkie. ▲

T: Good. This one?

Ss: Pinkie

T: Pinkie. No+

S_x: Ayah   [Father]

T: What is this? What is this?

Ss: Ring-

S_{11}: Thumbkin

S_5: Kakak   [Elder sister]

T: Ring what?

S_7: Pointer

T: Ring? Ring man. O.K. What is this, Irfan? What is this?

Ss: Ring man

T: Ring man. This one?

Ss: Middle man

T: Middle man (*approving the answer*)

Nabil. This one?

S9: Ayah

T: Ayah?

S15: Thumbkin

T: ┌Tumb- |

   └Kin

Ss: xxxxKin

T: O.K. Everybody repeat after me.

Thumbkin

Ss: ▲Thumbkin

T: Not pumpkin. Thu+mbkin

Ss: Thumbkin |

T: Pointer

Ss: Pointer

T: Middle man

Ss: Middle man

T: Ring man

Ss: Ring man

Ss: Pinkie

T: O.K Alif come here Alif. Tell your friends. O.K everybody can sit. Sit down, sayang.

Alif tell your friends. O.K. What is this?

OC- The teacher showed the picture of thumbkin to a student and asked him to name it

Ss: Thumbkin ↑

T: Let Alif say

Ss: Thumbkin

T: Louder. Louder Alif

Ss: Thumbkin

OC- the students were repeating the name of the fifth finger (thumbkin)

Ss: Pointer

T: O.K. Again?

Ss: Pointer

T: Pointer. This one?

S7: Ring man

T: Here ring man?

Ss: Middle man

T: Middle man

This one?

Ss: Ring man

T: The last one?

Ss: Pinkie

T: Pinkie. O.K good, Alif. O.K Class please take out your text book O.K.

S: Teacher ini?   [what is this one teacher?]

OC- no response from the teacher

T: O.K pa+ge 116 |

One one six

O.K. Everybody come and sit here on the floor |

Adam come here.

Akmal. Sit here, Akmal

S13: Teacher, kongsi ya?   [Teacher, sharing?]

S7: Nanti letak balik ya   [Please put it back]

T: O.K. Alif. O.K. Sit like this.

Adam, come here.

O.K. Now do you want to listen to the story?

Nak dengar eerita tak?   [Do you want to listen to a story?]

Ss: Na+k   [want]

T: O.K, So, the title is the tiny thimble.

O.K. Class repeat after me.

T: The

Ss: The

T: Tiny

Ss: Tiny

T: Thimble

Ss: Thimble

T: The tiny thimble

Ss: The tiny thimble

T: What is tiny? What is tiny? Who knows what is tiny?

S₁₂: Puteri   [Princess]

T: Puteri? No

It is small. Tiny means <u>small</u>. What is small?

Ss: Bulat   [Circle]

T: Bulat?   [Circle]

T: Kecil. O.K tiny means keci+l   [small. O.k. tiny means small]

Ss: Kecil ↓   [small]

T: O.K Thimble? Thimble. You know what is thimble?

Ss: Stinky

T: Stinky? Pernah tengok mak jahit baju tak? [Have you seen your mom sewing?]

Ss: Pernah   [Yes]

T: When she sew cloth she wear something here | for protection. [Pakai dekat jari here, benda tu bulat untuk pelindung tangan dia daripada kena needle. Daripada jarum.]

O.K when she wants to sew the cloth. Then she wears the <u>thimble</u>.

Perlindungan untuk jari, dia pakai dia masuk dalam jari. [she puts in on her finger for protection.]

Thimble something like this. This is. On your thumb.

OC- The teacher is showing a marker lid to the students and explaining that thimble is something similar to this market lid and people put it on their thumbkin when they want to sew.

S₂: Oh, yang itu   [oh, that one]

T: O.K you wear the thimble here.

 Nampak tak? Tak nampak?   [Can you see?]

Ss: Nampak   [yes]

T: O.K this one is what we call thimble. You can go to the shops that sell needles, thread, cloth. O.K you can ask for the | thimble.

O.K now look at the story then. This is the picture. What you can see from the picture? What is this? Little? Little what? Little girl. What is little girl?

Little girl in Bahasa Malaysia? Little girl is?

Ss: Perempuan   [Girl]

T: ┌Budak perem-

S: └ puan

T: So this is little girl. O.K what is she doing?

Ss: Jual bags   [sell bags]

T: She is selling the? What is this?

Ss: Bag

T: Selling bags

Ss: Bag

T: Where?   [Dekat mana?]

Where?   [Dekat Mana?]

At the | market. What is market? In Bahasa Malaysia?

 Pasar. Good.

So she is selling bags ↓

Nak beli? Nak beli?   [you want to buy? You want to buy?]

 You want to buy my bag, Alif? Alif is smiling. Don't know what to do. Don't know what to say.

Amalina you want to buy my bag? No? You don't want to buy. O.K now listen to the story. Azam don't-. Azam hide behind Iman. I want to see your face. Sit on the floor, Nabil.

S$_{12}$: Sini   [here]

T: O.K. Once-

Class, follow me.

OC- The teacher asked the students to repeat after her.

Once

Ss: ▼Once

T: There was

Ss: There was

T: A little girl

Ss: A little girl

T: Once

Ss: Once

T: There was

Ss: There was

T: A little girl

Ss: A little girl

T: She

Ss: She

T: Made

Ss: Made

T: Oh, sorry

She

Ss: She

T: Make

Ss: Make

T: Cloth bags

Ss: Cloth bags

T: Cloth bags

Ss: Cloth bags

T: What is cloth bag? | What is bag? | You know what is bag, right?

Tau kan beg tu apa?   [You know what is bag, don't you?]

Ss: Tau   [Yes]

S: Ini ni ni, Teacher   [this, this, teacher]

T: Ahaa like this? This is bag. So cloth bag? bag ka-? Kain [cloth]. O.K

OC- The teacher showed her own cloth bag to the students as an example.

She sold them. Class, she-

Ss: She

T: Sold them

Ss: Sold them

T: At the market

Ss: At the market

T: Dia jual dekat mana?   [Where does she sell it?]

S: Dekat pasar   [At the market]

T: Pasar   [Market]

T: O.K one day. What is one day?

S: Satu hari   [One day]

T: Satu hari ▼. O.K. Please buy a bag. Please buy a bag. The man said. This is the man. Man said what?

Ss: No ↑

T: He- Dia tak nak.   [He didn't buy]

So, thank you. Then she went to this lady. This old lady. O.K please buy a bag. The lady said what? I have no money. What is I have no money?

Ss: Dia tak ada duit   [He doesn't have any money]

T: I have no money

Ss: Tak ada duit   [I have no money]

T: Tak ada duit.   [I have no money]

I only have this tiny thimble.

Dia kata dia ada thimble   [She says she has thimble]

But she has no money.

Dia ada ambil benda itu.   [She took the thimble]

Here is a cloth bag.

The girl gave the old lady a bag.   [Dia bagi dekat perempuan itu bag.]

O.K thank you little girl.

She thanked the old woman and walked home. She said what? Thank you and she walked home. What is she walked home?

Dia jalan XXXX balik.   [she walked home]

O.K she has the thimble in her hand.

Dia pegang thimble tu dekat mana?   [Where is she holding the thimble]

Hands

S$_{15}$: Hand

T: mana?   [where?]

 hands. Tangan ▼   [hands]

At home she showed it to her mother.

Dia tunjukkan dekat?   [show off to?]

Ss: Orang manusia   [people]

T: an orang?   [a person]

She showed it to who?

Ss: Mak   [Mom]

T: Ah, to mother. Mother, look at this thimble. An old woman gave me this thimble. She say what?

Mak mak tengok thimble ni. Ada perempuan tua bagi dekat saya. [Mom, see this thimble. An old lady gave it to me]

She put the thimble on her mother`s finger.

O.K then her mother began to sew.   [Mak dia nak jahit.]

When the thimble touched the cloth what happened? [Bila benda tu touch the cloth, dekat kain. What happened?]

What happened? Ajaib. Then she cried. What happened?

S$_x$: Berlampu   [light]

T: Berlampu? There is no light

T: the cloth changed into gold.   [Kain berubah jadi emas]

T: Yes. Do you understand the story?   [Paham tak cerita ni?]

Nabil, paham?   [Nabil, understood?]

Sure? Sure you really understand the story? O.K. then Nabil tells me what happened to the cloth?

S_{15}:*Emas*

T: Ha?

Ss: Jadi emas   [Turn into gold]

T: Jadi emas? Betul ke?   [Turn into gold. Is it correct?]

Ss: Betul   [right]

T: O.K, Class let's read together with me. O.K everybody follow me.

The tiny thimble

Ss: The tiny thimble

T: The tiny thimble

Ss: The tiny thimble

T: Everybody please open your mouth. Idham sit down properly. O.K the tiny thimble

Ss: The tiny thimble

T: O.K. Once

Ss: Once

T: There was a little girl

S: There was a little girl

T: Again. Once there was a little girl

S: There was-

T: Ezzo are you still sleepy?

 Ngantuk ke? Ha? Ngantuk ke? Tak ngantuk? Ngantuk tak?   [Still sleepy?]

S: Ngantuk   [sleepy]

T: O.K now O.K once. Class, follow me. Once there was a little girl.

T: There

Ss: There

T: Was

Ss: Was

T: A little girl

Ss: A little girl

T: She

Ss: she

T: made

Ss: made

Ss: Made

T: cloth bags

Ss: cloth bags

T: she

Ss: she

T: sold them

Ss: sold them

T: At

Ss: At

T: The market

Ss: The market

T: One day

Ss: one day

T: Ok class read. I want to listen. O.K 1, 2 , 3.

 Oc- *Silence in the class*

T: Bacalah.   [read]

 S$_x$: 1, 2, 3. Nabil, Teacher suruh baca   [1, 2, 3, Nabil, teacher asked to read]

 Macam mana?   [how?]

T: You don't know how to read it.

 Lagi sekali.   [One more time.]

Once

Ss: Once

T: There

Ss: There

T: Was

Ss: Was

T: A little girl

Ss: A little girl

T: She

Ss: She

T: Made

Ss: Made

T: Cloth bags

Ss: Cloth bags

T: She

Ss: She

T: Sold them

Ss: Sold them

T: At the market

Ss: At the market

T: One day

Ss: One day

T: Try to read by your own. O.K 1, 2, 3

Ss: Once

T: There

Ss: There

T: Wa+s

Ss: Was

T: A+

Ss: A+

T: Little gi+rl

Ss: Little gi+rl

T: She

Ss: She

T: Made

Ss: Made

T: Cloth bags

Ss: Cloth bags

T: She

Ss: She

T: Sold

Ss: Sold

T: Them at the market

Ss: Market

T: One day-

OC- The teacher asked the students to read the story but they couldn't so she asked them to repeat after her one more time. Then she called one of the students to read the story.

O.K Akmal can you please read? Stand up, Akmal. O.K

Akmal read. It's ok.

O.K once

S$_{13}$: Once

T: There

S$_{13}$: There was

T: a+

S$_{13}$: a

T: little girl

S$_{13}$: Little girl

T: O.K good who wants to continue? Alif

She

S$_{15}$: Once there was a little girl. She made cloth bag. She sold them at the market.

T: O.K. Now I thought that all of you are very sleepy.

Mengantuk kan?   [sleepy right?]

You don't have energy, right? so we are going to play.

O.K. this four person. 1, 2 ,3, 4. O.K. Class.

Amalina is the little girl. Amalina is the little girl who sells bags.

 Ambilkan handbag dekat sana.   [take the hand bag near there.]

O.K the rest of you sit down. Sit down. Keep quiet.

O.K Amalina sell bag.

Ss: Aaaa

Who else?

S$_2$: Saya   [Me]

T: Siapa kena tangkap tadi?   [Who was caught?]

S$_x$: Saya

T: O.K. Akmal.

S: Azam

T: Shh.. The rest of you sit down. Keep quiet.

Korang semua penonton. Kalau tak dengar cerita nanti tak main. [You are all the spectators. If you don't listen, we won't play]

S$_{15}$: Teacher main apa ni? [Teacher, what game is it?]

T: Ah, dia orang nak berlakon. [They want to act.]

O.K Azzam is the mother.

Ss: (*giggle)*

T: I will bring the chair for the mother. Mother sit here mother. Ok Ayman is the what? Aiman is the man. O.K Akmal come here. Akmal the old lady.

Ss: (*giggle)*

S$_x$: Dia jalan macam ni [He has to walk like this]

T: O.K this is the thimble.

S$_7$: Thimble

T: This is the? Thimble. Ok Akmal stand here. Ok Ayman also come here you will come after this. Ok Amalina. imagine you are at the market. Amalina says what?

S$_{15}$: Bag

T: ▲ Bag. Bag. Bag

T: Please buy bag. Who wants to buy bag? Buy bags.

S$_{15}$: Buy bags

T: O.K come here Ayman. Ayman is the?

Ss: Mama

T: Mama? No. Aiman is the?

Ss: Man

T: Ayman is the man O.K. Amalina what are you supposed to say? Please buy my bags.

Please buy

S$_{15}$: Please buy

T: My bags

S$_{15}$: My bags

T: Ayman says. No thank you.

S$_9$: No thank you

T: I don't have any money

The rest of you sit down.

I don't have any money, you say

I don't have-

S$_9$: I don't have

T: Any money

S₉: Any money

T: O.K Bags bags

Akmal is the. Class, Akmal is the old lady. O.K old lady come.

Do you want to buy?

Hei..Batisha

Sₓ: Ah, tadi dia tolak saya.   [He pushed me]

T: Shh. O.K nak cerita ke tak nak ni?   [Do you want to continue or not?]

Ss: <u>Nak</u>   [want]

T: Aiman says, Akmal says I don't have money but I have thimble. [Dia tak ada duit, kan? But she has | thimble]

O.K show to her.

O.K then Amalina the girl gave the bag to the old lady

So Amalina goes? Where? Ok go home to who? To who?

Ss: Mother

T: To her mother. O.K Amalina says what? Ok come come here. Only Amalina stands. The rest of you sit down. Amalina says what? Ok Ayman come here Ayman.

T: The old lady

S₁₅: The old lady

T: Gave

S₁₅: Gave

T: This thimble

S₁₅: This thimble

T: To me

S₁₅: To me

T: Mother buat apa?   [So mother what?]

Mother wear it. O.K. So mother wear the thimble.

Nabil

And mother what?

Ss: Jahit   [sew]

T: Sew the cloth. Ok what happened to the cloth?

Ss: Jadi emas   [changed into gold]

Ss: Emas   [gold]

T: What happened to the cloth? it changed into?

Ss: Emas   [gold]

T: Emas. What is emas in English? In English what is emas?

S$_x$: Diamond

T: Diamond?

T: Changed into? What is this?

Ss: Emas   [gold]

T: Gold

Kain berubah jadi emas   [The cloth changed into gold]

O.K do you understand the story?

Ss: Yes

T: Paham tak?   [Do you understand?]

Ss: Yes

T: Ah, sikit sikit pun paham kan?   [At least you understand, although a bit]

OK now go back. Mother go back. Go back

O.K take out your activity book. Take out activity book

Ss: Activity book

T: O.K Take out your activity book

Sit down

Ss: Jangan la   [Please don't]

T: O.K page 125. Sit down ‖

S: Muka surat berapa, Teacher?   [Which page, teacher?]

S$_{15}$: 125 (*answering on behalf of T*)

T: Akmal where is your book? Activity book

S$_{13}$: Cekgu, ini ya?   [Teacher, this one ya?]

T: O.K class the tiny thimble.

S: Teacher, boleh warna tak?   [Teacher, can I color it?]

T: O.K.

O.K class a thimble. O.K read this one. A thimble.

Ss: A thimble

T: Ayman sit down.

T: A thimble

Ss: A thimble

T: O.K what is thimble? This one is a thimble.

Ibu pakai dekat jari bila nak jahit. [mother puts it on her finger when she wants to sew]

My bags

Ss: My bags

T: My bags

Ss: My bags

T: What is my bag?

Ss: Anak perempuan | [daughter]

S: Beli beli beg   [shopping bag]

T: Bag saya.   [my bag]

My bag is bag saya

Ss: bag saya   [my bag]

T: A cloth bag

Ss: A cloth bag

T: A cloth bag

Ss: A cloth bag

T: What is a cloth bag?

Beg yang dibuat daripada ka- kain   [bag which is made of cloth]

O.K little thumb

Ss: Little thumb

T: Lttle thumb

Ss: Little thumb

T: What is little thumb?

Ibu jari. Ibu jari apa nih? Ibu jari kecil   [thumb. What is thumb? Little thumb]

Now. Look at picture number one. Picture number one. These are? What is the answer? These are?

Ss: These are

T: These are what? I want you to choose from these four answers. These are? Amalina look here. Who knows the answer?

S: Ini   [here]

T: There are a thimble. No

These are?

S: Ini ini teacher   [here here teacher]

T: Little thumb. No. O.K I write.

S: Teacher. Teache ini.   [teacher. teacher here]

T: A thimble. This one my bags.

What is that sound?

OC- sound of a pencil being played on the table

T: Cloth bags and little thumb. So number one. Which one is the answer? There are a thimble. These are my bags. These are a cloth bag or these are little thumb.

Ss: Three. three. little thumb.

T: Who said a thimble? Someone said a thimble. Who said my bags? Who said a cloth bag. And little thumb?

OK who said little thumb?

O.K now the girl is tunjuk apa tu?   [What is the girl point at?]

Ss: Bag

T: Seller. So the answer is this one or this one? These are

Ss: My bags. My bags

S: Three three

T: These are my bags. So number one. These are | a | These are my bags. Which one? What?

S: Number one

T: Number one. These are? Which one is the answer Azam? These are my bags.

Ini ialah beg saya.   [These are my bags.]

OK write now.

S: Teacher dah   [teacher we wrote]

T: Only copy this one. My bags.

O.K how to write the letter g. one, two. O.K? Look here. One two. Not like this.

Nabil, how to write g? one two

OC- the teacher is showing the steps to write letter G

T: O.K class at the end of the sentence. You must put? What do we call it?

Ss: Stop

T: Full stop. These are my bags and then full stop. O.K picture number 2. Please buy? Please buy?

Ss: Nak beli   [I want to buy]

T: Nak beli apa?   [What do you want to buy?]

Ss: Bag

T: Please buy- Please buy- Please buy a cloth bag.

Which one is a cloth bag? This one is not. This one is a cloth bag. Which one is the cloth bag? This one or this one?

Ss: Yang mana nombor satu ni?   [What is the answer for number 1?]

T: Please buy a cloth bag.

O.K picture number three. Picture of a little girl and old lady. Ok the lady wants to give her a?

Apa yang orang tua itu nak bagi? Dia nak bagi apa? [What does the old lady give?]

Ss: Dia punya jahit   [To sew]

T: Thimble. A thimble. So here is? Here is a thimble. O.K. Here is a thimble. O.K so the last one? It fits my? It fits my?

OC- Ss copying the sentences in the whiteboard, while T makes a round checking on Ss work

T: O.K class finish? Finish?

S$_x$: Belum   [not yet]

Ss: No

S$_{15}$: Dah   [finish]

T: Boleh tak buat sendiri?   [Can you please write on your own?]

OC- (to a S who ask for T to write for him)

S: Warna la dulu   [Just color it first]

T: O.K class look here. Everybody look at me. Let`s read. Nabil. Farisha. Farisha. Adam. Everybody please look at me. Let's read.

These are my bags.

Ss: These are my bags

T: These are my bags

Ss: These are my bags

T: These are my bags

Ss: These are my bags

T: Ini ialah beg saya

Ss: Beg saya

T: Please buy

Ss: Please buy

T: Please buy

S: Please buy

T: A cloth bag

Ss: A cloth bag

T: Please buy

Ss: Please buy

T: A cloth bag

Ss: A cloth bag

T: Sila membeli beg kain saya.   [please buy my cloth bags.]

O.K here is a thimble.

Here

Ss: here

T: is

Ss: is

T: a thimble

Ss: A thimble

T: Here is a thimble.

Ss: thimble

T: It fits my little thumb

It fits

Ss: It fits

T: My little thumb

Ss: My little thumb

T: Finish it. I want you to finish it. O.K finish?

Ss: finish

S_{22}: Teacher, nak warna   [Teacher I want to color]

T: You can color it at home. O.K? I want you to put all your things inside your bag

Who has not finished? Everybody done?

Ss: Yes

T: Keep our book inside your bag

S: Nak balik lah wei   [Time to go home, guys]

APPENDIX L

Sample of Open Coding Process

Penilaian Prestasi Bahasa Inggeris KSSR Tahun 1

Performance Standard Band 4 | B4DL1E1

Name : _____

Class : 1_____

Date : _____

Listen. Then, tick (✓) the correct answers.

Hello, I am Raja Square.
I live in the Land of Shapes.
My house is a big rectangular.
It has two square windows.
It also has a triangular door.

		True	False
1.	Raja Square lives in the Land of Shapes.	( )	( )
2.	Raja Square's house is a big triangular.	( )	( )
3.	It has two square windows.	( )	( )
4.	The door is rectangular.	( )	( )

REF: B2 DB2 E1 [SP]

Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah
English Language Year 2 (SK)

Name : _____ **Date** : _____

Year : 2 _____

Item **9[b]** : Group.

monkey	rat	eyes	mouth	nose	cat
dog	fish	bird	ears	hands	tiger
	lion	legs	tongue	hair	

Parts of the body	Animals
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____

Status : ☐ Achieved ☐ Need more practice

Checked by:

Date:

English Year 2

103

316
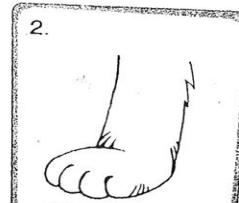
APPENDIX O
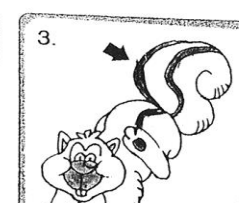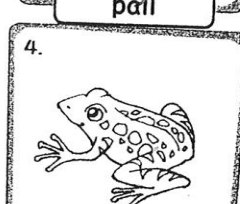
UNIT 2: Do The Right Thing

A) Colour the pictures that have the 'ai' sound.

1.	2.	3.
pail	paw	tail
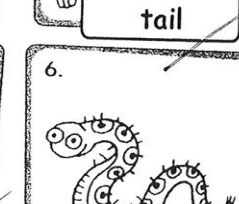
4.	5.	6.
frog	snail	snake

3 / 3m

B) Write 'ee' in the blanks.

1. sw_e_ _e_p

2. thr_e_ _e_

3. sl_e_ _e_p

4. sh_e_ _e_p

4 / 4m