University of Southampton

Faculty of Humanities

Modern Languages

An Exploration Study of the Factors Influencing Students' Experiences with Assessment Feedback in the UK

by

Ashwaq Fahad Althowibi

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

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Recent attention in literature has been given to the agency of students in the feedback process. This research aims to explore the experiences that students have of assessment feedback during their study in EAP programmes. In order to obtain vivid data that can help in understanding such experiences, both interviews and questionnaires were used sequentially, and were able to provide interesting insights into students' experiences, including their responses to assessment feedback. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interviews and exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, as well as structural equation modelling to analyse the questionnaire.

The findings revealed that students joining EAP programmes value and appreciate assessment feedback on their academic writing. They also found it an opportunity to learn from the feedback and relate it to further learning. The study also highlights that the process of feedback involves a complex interplay between the cognitive and affective dimensions that could be affected by different factors. The findings suggest that the students are aware of the usefulness of the role of the feedback to advance their academic writing, even though they feel upset or disappointed in regards to it.

Furthermore, the research identified the factors that influence students' responses to assessment feedback. Various factors related to the feedback message, the feedback provider and to students themselves have been revealed in the interview data. These factors were later examined in the quantitative phase. Results from exploratory factor analysis revealed that students display two

types of responses to assessment feedback (positive and negative responses); and four factors (students self-efficacy in writing, language mindset beliefs, perceptions of teacher role, preferences of the mode of feedback). The results of confirmatory factor analysis led to a model of students' responses to assessment feedback that consists of the six factor structure. Additionally, SEM results confirmed that students' self-efficacy in writing and their perceptions of the teacher's role were strong predictors of their responses to assessment feedback. Self-efficacy was the strongest factor that influences students' positive responses to assessment feedback, whereas students' perceptions of the teacher's role were the strongest factor that influences their negative responses to assessment feedback. Interestingly, language mindset beliefs was found as a significant moderator of the relationship between their self-efficacy and their negative responses to assessment feedback, which indicates that this factor could make a noticeable difference in experiences with assessment feedback. Thus, future research investigating experiences with assessment feedback from students' perspectives should consider the examination of their mindset beliefs, and how it could impact on their responses.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Ashwaq Fahad Althowibi

Title of thesis: An Exploration Study of the Factors Influencing Students' Experiences with Assessment Feedback in the UK

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

Signature: Date: 24/3/2022

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved family who are always encouraging me to go on every adventure especially this one.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter sets the stage for the current study, providing background information and presenting the context of this study as well as the rationale for focusing on assessment feedback. It also states the personal motivation and the study's aims and research questions. Finally, it concludes with the presentation of an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background to the Research

The United Kingdom (UK) has become a significant global education provider for students from different countries around the world. The UK's higher education (HE) area is a competitive market, as it ranks among the top educational suppliers compared with the United States of America (USA), Canada and Australia (UK, 2015). By 2018/19, 45% of students studying in the UK at postgraduate levels were international students according to The United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA, 2018), with China being the first among the students' countries of origin. This presence and increase in the number of non-UK domicile students is argued to be the most noticeable manifestation of the 'internationalisation' of British HE (Tian & Lowe, 2009).

In order to improve international student recruitment and to develop international partnerships, there has been a great deal of internationalisation activity in British universities. The institutional and academic expectations and reactions, therefore, are required to evolve as a result of the rapid globalisation of college and university campuses, as well as address international students' needs by providing more resources and support services (Akanwa, 2015). This is due to the fact that the international student market is an unstable one and relies on perceptions of the quality of teaching and learning, as well as value for money, together with the general environment and the support services provided (Ryan, 2011). Consequently, the demand for new approaches to teaching, alongside learning and assessments has increased. Nonetheless, the exact knowledge regarding what this might involve and how it can be put into practice in the teaching domain remains absent (Ibid).

Furthermore, in order to enhance the learning experiences of international students, helpful guidelines have been developed so that academic staff can identify the learning needs of this group of learners (Ryan, 2011). However, despite the growing number of postgraduates in the UK's HE sector, the research into this group seems to be lacking, especially on those involved in pre-sessional programmes. The majority of the conducted research mainly focused on

undergraduate students (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006; Ryan, 2005; 2011). As a result, research into postgraduates, especially their experiences with assessment and feedback is still required (Evans, 2013; Tian & Lowe, 2013).

1.2 Context of the Research Study

Students have chosen to study in EAP programmes (English for Academic Purposes), as they believed it to be a "quick and economical use of English to pursue a course of academic study" (Coffey, 1984, p.3); pre-sessional English courses are a core component of most universities in the UK. Specifically, the role of EAP programmes is to enable international students to achieve the required level of English to pursue their studies (Krishnamurthy & Kosem, 2007; Nomnian, 2014). They also aim to help students to familiarise themselves with the conventions of academic English and the forms of skills that they require to subsequently become successful during their degree courses (Banarjee & Wall, 2006).

The major focus of these programmes is to develop English academic writing, as it is one of the required skills needed for students to achieve success in their postgraduate studies. Writing has been argued to be the most important skill for international students in order to succeed in their academic studies (Nomnian, 2014). Accordingly, the majority of assessments during British university courses are written based; however, it is still one of the most challenging skills for students, which they struggle to develop. Nomnian (2014) and Maringe and Steve (2007) focused on the problems experienced by international students, mainly originating from language backgrounds other than English, and attempted to explain their difficulties. Among these problems were students' language proficiency and their ability to adapt to a new culture. Most importantly, it has been agreed that mastering academic writing is among the major problems that international students face during their studies (Nomnian, 2014).

Academic writing requires much practice and conscious effort to develop (Myles, 2002). It becomes more complicated, especially in ESL contexts, where the differences between the target language and the mother tongue might affect the process and product of writing. The findings by Johns (1990) demonstrate that even when students participate in ESL learning over the course of many years, it is still common for many students to find it challenging to create structured pieces of writing of good quality. Myles (2002) demonstrates that the ability to write is not a naturally acquired skill, but it has to be learned through positive and correct teaching in formal instructional settings. Additionally, it is difficult to know what makes a piece of student's writing 'good' in the context of academic writing. Nonetheless, there is a general agreement throughout the literature in regards to the main features of good academic writing style. These include the

appropriate use of source material, text organisation, use of academic register, including referencing conventions, and the use of discipline-specific terminology. In addition, using grammar and punctuation accurately are also commonly focused upon (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a; Zhu, 2010).

In addition to the problems students generally encounter, international students are under pressure not only to be successful in their tertiary study, but also to improve their language skills and obtain appropriate qualifications. Therefore, many researchers, such as Ferris (2003) and Nomnian (2014) emphasised the importance of English for Academic Purposes in bridging the gap between learners' English level and their educational style on arrival, and the required level to study higher education in English speaking countries. Improving students' academic writing is one of the main goals of most EAP courses in the UK. The reason behind this focus on academic writing is to prepare students for their subsequent studies and to raise their awareness of the writing conventions. This awareness has developed over time as academic writing is not only viewed as involving a simple register analysis, form of learning, and vocabulary practice, but also a focus on writing purposes, its structure, its readership and style (Jordan, 2002).

A pre-sessional course, as stated by Storch and Tapper (2009), generally aims to increase the writing ability of learners, which includes developing more precise academic language and its utilisation. Additionally, students start to learn writing organisation, which includes patterns of cause and effect, as well as solutions to certain problems, and argumentative patterns, which will hopefully become relevant and useful when working within their academic studies. Students also need to become used to academic registers and the style of academic writing. It has been noted that pre-sessional courses in the UK mainly focus on writing from the perspective of discourse and organisation, instead of purely on the written language. In a study by Archibald (2001), pre-sessional course instruction effects upon writing proficiency were analysed, and the results showed, over an eight week period, that linguistic improvement in regards to linguistic accuracy and appropriate use are statistically less likely to occur when compared to other forms of improvement such as text organisation and structure. Cho (2003) also measured the levels of proficiency of writing extracts that were written under test conditions against those produced following extensive instruction. Similar to Archibald (2001), the linguistic aspect was shown to be statistically less likely to improve.

Accordingly, teachers who administer a twelve-week pre-sessional plan regarded the improvements in grammatical accuracy and linguistic proficiency to not be realistic aims, and thus, organisational and critical thinking have been shown to be vital concepts to promote course success ahead of language proficiency by the learner (Basturkmen & Lewis, 2002). Nonetheless,

creating organisational patterns as the main goal has attracted some criticism; in particular, Hartshone et al. (2012) suggest that intensive courses often find themselves to not address certain aspects of proficiency, even though a main goal of English teaching is to improve linguistic accuracy levels. As a consequence, language production's precision and accuracy, as stated by Turner (2004) has decreased which affects negatively upon overall content; thus, it can result in undermining the texts that are produced by the learners. Initially, Turner notes that linguistic elements in courses are commonly overlooked due to the fact that success in academia is not attributed to the utilisation of good language (p.99). Nonetheless, Turner states that even though the correct use of language often goes unmarked and unnoticed, bad language is more noticeable and remarked upon more frequently, which ultimately creates issues. Moreover, Turner (2004) states that EAP writing instructions fail to determine how important proficiency is at a micro-level, as they concentrate completely on the macro-level function. Indeed, a student's potential to express their arguments in an effective manner is often affected detrimentally by a lack of language knowledge, even though they may be academically aware and have the capacity to think critically. Hence, Turner (2004) explains that students require the ability for language manipulation, which enables the possibility to formulate arguments, as a high level of language proficiency is just as vital as content knowledge.

It is normally stated that students have prior experiences of writing before they enter their courses, as well as different learning backgrounds, abilities, and motivation levels, which all influence an individual's writing development (Goldstein, 2004). Due to these levels of variety, Meyer (1996) proposed that practitioners of EAP programmes, especially those involved in pre-sessional courses, can potentially find themselves in a "disciplinary vacuum" (p.34). This involves attempting to accommodate a variety of learners, even though there is often a lack of knowledge in relation to the specific target language required, together with writing skills that learners require on their eventual academic courses.

Furthermore, the central aspect of the feedback provided in EAP programmes focuses on learners' future performance. Teachers view feedback as a response to help students improve their text, not only by correcting their language, but also by guiding them to reframe their thinking and providing them with strategies that they can use to arrange their ideas in the text (Zhang, 2019). In other words, feedback is about teaching and learning through interaction more than simply detecting errors and making corrections which enables students to become competent, confident and independent writers provided with strategies to revise their own work. Therefore, EAP courses are considered an extremely significant place for learners to develop writing skills through the received feedback on their work. The following explains the significance of feedback on academic writing.

1.3 Why Assessment Feedback Experience

Feedback seems to be a significant contributor to the quality of the student experience (Higgins, Hartley, & Skelton, 2001). Feedback is considered the most powerful tool in influencing students' learning and achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Bloxham & Boyd, 2007; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hyland & Hyland, 2006a). It is also considered an important function that assessment can and should perform (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Feedback on students' writing offers them responses that help them to understand how their textual goals are to be achieved and how this can be improved (Poverjuc, 2011). It is supported by the Vygotskyian concept of scaffolding, which indicates how novice writers gain greater levels of comprehension in regards to writing structure, and how they learn to participate in the process of writing knowledge acquirement through interacting with dialogue and feedback from more experienced peers and academic tutors (Vygotsky, 1978). Hence, learners are improved by more knowledgeable individuals through relevant assistance that the student implements into his/her learning process (Morton, Storch & Thompson, 2014, p.26). Therefore, educators and advisors present assistance that is imperative to a student's development, and thus, a student is able to advance their academic writing abilities and skills, in order to produce a better level of writing.

Even though the use of feedback is theoretically supported in literature, previous research suggests contradictory outcomes regarding its effectiveness. In many instances, students have ascertained great value from their teachers' comments on all aspects of their writing (Hyland, 1998a; Leki, 2006). Nevertheless, results have indicated that variations exist among students in relation to the successful use of these comments in their subsequent changes (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Hyland, 1998a; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997). These variations were a result of the confusion and uncertainty generated by the feedback that students receive (Poverjuc, 2011). Additionally, although there is a vital focus on assessment and feedback in HE (Eckel & King, 2004), outcomes from the National Student Survey (NSS), as shown by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (2019), demonstrate that students are more satisfied with other pedagogic aspects of their courses in comparison to assessments and feedback. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (2019) shows that 73% of students were still unsatisfied with their assessments and feedback.

The NSS comprises of a total of 27 questions split into nine categories: the teaching on my course; learning opportunities; assessment and feedback; academic support; organisation and management; learning resources; learning community; student voice; and finally overall satisfaction. Each question asks students to reflect on their experiences and to report on their satisfaction levels on a six point Likert scale (i.e. definitely agree, mostly agree, neither agree nor

disagree, mostly disagree, definitely disagree, and not applicable). Respondents are asked to score their assessment and feedback experiences against four questions (numbered 8 – 11 on the NSS):

1. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
2. Marking and assessment has been fair.
3. Feedback on my work has been timely.
4. I have received helpful comments on my work.

The list below highlights that 'student union' and 'assessment and feedback' still remain the lowest:

- The teaching on my course: 84%
- Learning opportunities: 83%
- Assessment and feedback: 73%
- Academic support: 80%
- Organisation and management: 75%
- Learning resources: 86%
- Learning community: 76%
- Student voice: 74%
- Student union: 56%
- Overall satisfaction: 84%

("National Student Survey," 2019 results in the UK, Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2019).

The reasons behind the continuous low scores have been addressed in the literature regarding students' experiences of assessment and feedback. Studies have shown that when feedback lacks quality and the language is not fully comprehensible, students often find it difficult to work with the critique (Wingate, 2010). Likewise, certain studies indicate that students cannot always fully understand feedback when it is ambiguous and not individualised to the particular student (Coffin et al., 2005; Granville & Dison, 2009; Hyland, 2003). As a result, feedback is sometimes ignored, misunderstood or misinterpreted (Hyland, 1998b). Consequently, feedback has been researched more in recent years, as HE institutes try to implement and improve the service (Hill, 1995). Accordingly, to develop a better level of service, there has been a movement from an "inside-out" approach, where those inside think that they have the knowledge of teaching and assessment of students, to an "outside-in" approach adopted by successful industries that survey students' preferences and expectations (Sander et al., 2000).

It has become clear from the literature based in the UK, that studies focus on assessments in general, and specifically upon feedback in relation to undergraduates and home students, while there has been minimal attention given to graduates who are international non-native speakers. However, the literature has concluded that it is questionable whether postgraduate students normally experience fewer challenges when starting to deal with new learning environments. Furthermore, students who return to education from workplace environments often experience many challenges when accessing discourses within HE (Evans, 2013). Evans (2013) notes that there is a failure of adequate research focusing on feedback from the perspective of lecturers and postgraduate students. The current study has included postgraduate students to its focus on the assessment feedback experiences in pre-sessional courses in the UK and tried to understand their varied experiences with assessment feedback, as well as the factors that might lead to such variations.

1.4 Personal Motivation

As aforementioned, assessment feedback is a crucial element in the process of learning, as it has the power to shape the whole learning experience of students in general. As I was a student who joined EAP to familiarize myself with the academic environment in the UK, I decided to conduct my study in this context in order to understand the different experiences with assessment feedback in relation to students' responses and explore the reasons or factors that could have led them to respond the way they did. I was interested to understand from learners' perspectives their feelings and beliefs in relation to assessment feedback on their written assignment. Additionally, I wanted to explore why some students accept feedback and think of it as an opportunity to improve while others ignore it. For me, I found it challenging to deal with the feedback I used to receive from my teachers during my study in the EAP course and to determine the best way to respond to teacher feedback, especially at the beginning of my study abroad. I still remember how I was anxious when I received the formative feedback along with a provisional grade, as I did not understand that the main objective was to help me improve, and it was not a final judgment on my work. However, spending six months in an EAP course enabled me to understand a lot about the education system in the UK and more importantly teacher feedback helped me to better understand the assessment process in this new context.

Coming from a context where assessment feedback is not a common practice may have contributed to the difficulties I encountered to respond effectively to the comments I used to receive on my work. Similarly, whilst studying in the UK, I heard and witnessed some of the issues that my friends faced after receiving their feedback comments, which inspired me to further explore students' experiences of assessment feedback. Furthermore, another impetus for me to

pursue my PhD has been due to a commitment to my job to continue my education, which is funded by the Saudi Ministry of Education. The intention behind such scholarships is to provide all Saudi staff with development programmes abroad, and subsequently to benefit their workplace when they return. Adhering to this principle, I chose this topic because it provided me with insightful knowledge regarding how students think and feel in relation to assessment feedback and understand the obstacles that might hinder or influence the way they respond to feedback. In particular, from my experience as a student and a lecturer in Saudi universities, the feedback culture was missing. There is no emphasis on the importance of assessment feedback and its role in students' learning experiences. The summative assessment dominates, where students are informed of their grades only at the end of the semester without any feedback comments. Therefore, acquiring a deeper knowledge in regards to this topic could enable me to work on the promotion of an effective assessment feedback culture in the Saudi education system.

1.5 Aim of the Study and Research Questions

The present study seeks to explore the experiences of international students with assessment feedback on their academic writing. The overarching aim is to explore how international students would describe their experiences with assessment feedback in relation to their academic writing in the UK pre-sessional courses. It aims to explore their responses and the possible reasons behind the variations in their responses toward assessment feedback. It takes the feedback experience as an anchoring point since research indicates that feedback has a powerful influence in shaping the entire student learning experience. Therefore, the study has aimed to answer the following research questions upon its completion:

1- How do international students respond to assessment feedback on their academic writing?

2- What factors influence students' responses to assessment feedback in the UK pre-sessional courses?

3- To what extent do these factors predict students' responses to assessment feedback?

An exploratory sequential design was adopted to help in answering these research questions. Finding answers to these questions can help in improving the lack of information regarding international students' experiences with assessment feedback related to their writing, which is viewed as a crucial aspect in their learning experience abroad. Moreover, this understanding may potentially improve EAP programmes by better preparing students for success in dealing with feedback on writing in new situations and to help teachers vary their feedback according to students' needs, in order to maximise the benefits of feedback.

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into six chapters as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction. The current chapter includes the background, the context and rationale for the study. It also introduces the research aims and questions and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review. This chapter reviews the literature underpinning the study. More specifically, it includes a discussion of the assessment feedback meaning and purposes; the theories guiding assessment feedback, the argument regarding the principles of the effectiveness of assessment feedback from students' perspectives, the prominent conceptual models of effective feedback that were developed based on previous research, as well as the research on students' experiences with assessment feedback and the interplay between their emotions and their responses to assessment feedback, together with the influence of the psychological aspect on their responses.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Research Design. This chapter explains the methods used to achieve the aim of the present study and the rationale for the specific design and methods. This includes a description of the instruments used, the participants, the piloting phase, and its implications for the main study, a description of the data collection procedures, as well as methods of analysis. Lastly, the ethical considerations are defined.

Chapter Four: Study Findings. The fourth chapter starts with details of the qualitative analysis and findings. This is followed by presenting the analysis and results of the quantitative data, along with a description of the related methods.

Chapter Five: Discussion. The fifth chapter discusses the findings of the current research in relation to previous literature.

Chapter Six: Conclusion. The final chapter includes a summary of the research, its contributions, its implications and recommendations, as well as suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the literature related to the current study. The first section presents the definitions and purposes of assessment feedback. Following this, the theories guiding feedback in this research are presented. Furthermore, the effectiveness of feedback including a brief review on the conceptual models, as well as students' perspectives on the principles of effective feedback are discussed. This is followed by details of the research on students' experiences of assessment feedback, together with the influence of their emotions on responses to feedback. In addition, the psychological factors and their influence on students' experiences of assessment feedback are discussed. The chapter concludes with an overview of the focus and significance of this study in relation to the literature review.

2.1 Assessment Feedback Meaning and Purposes

It is essential to understand the meaning of 'assessment feedback' to help to understand the focus of this study. It will also help in setting out the context in order to understand the existing debate surrounding assessment feedback.

Generally, there are variations in defining assessment feedback. Feedback was conceived as a procedure that has been meant to be utilised to inform the learner whether their instructional responses are right or wrong (Kulhavy, 1977). Sadler (2010), however, considers this comprehension of feedback to be narrow, especially in the present era, as feedback is used by learners to revise and modify potential shortcomings. Learners use feedback to modify their behaviour and to improve their following assessed submissions. Other scholars have considered feedback to be "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p.81). This information, as stated by Ramaprasad (1983) "is about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way" (p.4).

In comparison, Angelo (1995) provided a comprehensive definition of assessments, and considered them to be "an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning" (p.7). During this process, the evidence of a good performance that matches standards and criteria is gathered, analysed and interpreted in order to improve performance (ibid). It is "a systematic approach to collecting information and making inferences about the ability of a student or the quality or success of a teaching course on the basis of various sources of evidence"

(Richard & Schmidt, 2010, pp.35-36). This view of assessment can potentially help increase students' learning and development through the inferences made regarding their knowledge and understanding (Erwin, 1991).

These definitions imply that both assessment and feedback have a common goal which is improving students' learning. Assessment feedback is not only concerned with providing judgement on students' performance, but also with explaining the gap between their current state in learning and the desired level of performance. Indeed, Sadler (1998) stated that the defining features of feedback must be that it "requires knowledge of the standard or goal, skills in making multi-criterion comparisons, and the development of ways and means for reducing the discrepancy between what is produced and what is aimed for" (p.142). Accordingly, assessment feedback in this study is seen as a process where information from an agent i.e. teachers is provided for students to help them improve their current state of learning.

Feedback is a result of educational assessments and it is potentially the most central concept in the assessment process when dealt with effectively (Price et al., 2010; Taras, 2005). The feedback comments could be either formative or summative or both; however, it has been argued that the meaning of feedback lacks clarity, as its disguised multiple purposes are not clearly acknowledged (Price et al., 2011). A closer inspection for these purposes is required, especially those related to the widely used terms as 'summative' and 'formative' assessments. Therefore, this section briefly highlights feedback in relation to the following assessment paradigm.

2.1.1 Assessment of Learning (AoL)

AoL equates with the traditional view of the summative purpose of assessment, in which the purpose is to grade, certificate or record progress of learning that has occurred (Price et al., 2011; Torrance & Pryor, 2002). This commonly aims to assess what students have learned through the course in order to decide whether they pass or fail their course or project; it comes in the form of projects or presentations, short tests or final exams (Popham, 2003). AoL is commonly utilised to judge learners' levels of achievement at a specific point (Taras, 2005) using the same criteria for all students, as it aims to 'report achievement in a way that is comparable across students'(Harlen, 2006, p.106). However, many argue that summative assessments do not help students to promote their learning (e.g. Black & Wiliam, 1998), as the focus is on determining students' progress to the following levels. This leads not only to a limited effort from teachers to provide feedback, but also limits students' use of feedback, especially those who have achieved success and passed the assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998a; Taras, 2005).

In addition, the summative dimension of feedback focuses on the quality and quantity of knowledge that those learners have presented in their assessment (Sutton, 2012). Thus, it is only a description of what has been achieved and has no other real use (Brown & Hudson, 1998). This will likely lead students to stop reading or responding to feedback if the grades are not provided on formative task. This was evident in the recent studies on feedback, which appear to agree upon the limited feed forward role of feedback that is received at the end of the course after students have moved on to a new stage (Carless, 2015; Price et al., 2010). Due to this wide criticism of summative assessments (Broadfoot, 2000) a call for a shift to formative assessments has been suggested as an attempt to reduce the negative impact of summative assessments (Taras, 2005). The following is a discussion of formative assessment.

2.1.2 Assessment for Learning (AfL)

AfL, which is used interchangeably with the term formative assessment, provides teachers with diagnostic information that helps them change and modify their instructions to meet their students' needs (Earl, 2013; Wiliam, 2009). This includes "all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (Black & Wiliam, 1998, p.10). Specifically, through AfL, the feedback role presents forms of information that are assessed, such as students' strengths and weaknesses, which need to be communicated to students, while the teachers are required to create new strategies in order to assist students clarify their learning objectives and understand the assessment criteria (Chong, 2017). Hence, as Jones (2010) demonstrates, teachers create the strategies that empower students to work towards set aims individually. Accordingly, AfL provides feedback in regard to formative activities and through the utilisation of draft comments, which helps to prepare summative work for summative assessments (Chong, 2017). Formative feedback is seen as an opportunity by students due to its role in raising their awareness and in helping them to improve their work. Therefore, the feed forward role of feedback is enhanced in formative assessments.

However, the term formative assessment is often considered as a fuzzy term (Knight & Yorke, 2003), as it might vary from very informal, unplanned feedback in the classroom, to relatively formal written assignment tasks. A mid-course formative task during a module can only be formative if the task delivers 'usable' feedback that students engage with, but if accompanied by a "rather skimpy set of written comments", then it cannot be defined as formative, despite the intention to use it as such (Sadler, 1989, p.17). As Rust, Donovan, & Price (2010) suggest, redrafting work based on feedback may be the only way to ensure "...a significant effect on future performance" (p.153).

Moreover, in order for the formative feedback to be effective, it has been widely argued that students need to improve their evaluative skills (Black & Wiliam, 1998) and tutors develop a knowledge of students' development and the psychology of receiving and providing feedback (Knight & York, 2003). The students' role in the feedback process can be best explained by Earl (2013), who proposed the concept of Assessment as Learning (AaL), which further develops formative assessment roles, and places students as the central figures in assessments. Earl (2013) defines AaL as "a subset of AfL, but it emphasises the important role of students as active agents in the assessment process; students not only contribute, but also connect assessment with their previous learning to set up individualised goals for progress"(p.553). This helps to concentrate on how students' roles function in the process of assessments, where students connect previous learning experiences with the assessment, in order to create individual progress objectives and aims.

AaL helps to present assessments' formative nature, where assessment information promotes students' learning. However, contrastingly from AfL, which emphasises how teachers must be active within learning improvement, where they design relevant tasks for assessment, AaL centralises the students in the process of assessments. In particular, students develop as reflective learners, who become capable of critically evaluating their own individual learning strengths and weaknesses, whilst also stipulating their own goals, as well able to regulate and monitor their learning progress through innovative strategies. Furthermore, students, during the process of AaL, connect their assessment performance with their learning progression, whilst simultaneously advancing the learning process together with the teacher. Students can monitor their own learning and utilise the feedback in order to adjust, adapt, and make necessary changes to their learning process (Chong, 2017).

Despite the various paradigms and meanings of assessment in the literature as an information-based process, the learner's development remains its fundamental values. Assessment should not be regarded merely an evaluation of students, but also as a means that should be exploited to enhance students' learning by making use of what the classroom can offer, beside informing teaching (Nelson & Dawson, 2014). Feedback is considered the central aspect for any assessment process to achieve its learning goals. Specifically, it can be argued that feedback has the power to shape the assessment experience of students, as well as their whole learning experience in general.

2.2 Feedback in the EAP Context

According to Coffin et al. (2005), feedback is provided for the following purposes:

- to teach, or reinforce, a particular aspect of disciplinary content;
- to explain or justify a grade;
- to support students' writing development;
- to teach specific academic writing conventions;
- to indicate strengths and weaknesses of a piece of writing (perhaps in relation to a set of criteria); and/or
- to suggest how a student may improve in their next piece of writing (p.104).

Within EAP programmes, feedback is usually provided to achieve the last four purposes. The feedback EAP tutors provide to their students does not aim to teach and reinforce a particular aspect of disciplinary content. They do not necessarily have such content knowledge of their students' courses, and it might be impossible, as there are a variety of learners from different disciplines. Moreover, the feedback provided does not "explain or justify a grade", as it is formative in nature and aims to help learners improve their subsequent drafts, rather than grading their writing.

The other four elements are related more to the EAP contexts. EAP tutors provide students with feedback to help them develop their writing, as it is a central aspect in their studies. Feedback can help them to improve their writing organisation, ideas, coherence and cohesion. It can also help them to improve the language of their writing, although it is argued, that improving the linguistic accuracy is not within the scope of EAP programmes (Cho, 2003; Turner, 2004). In addition, teaching academic writing conventions within students' actual text is enhanced through EAP tutors' feedback, which can be used to stipulate the academic conventions expected from students (Hyland, 2003). This aims to help students produce texts that have effective arguments, recognized through a good overall organisation, as well as evidence integration (Coffin et al., 2005).

The third aim is to highlight students' strengths and weaknesses of their writing by drawing their attentions to the assessment criteria and writing requirement. This aim is aligned with Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis, which emphasises that the learner's ability to bridge the gap between their current status and the required one can be best achieved when they 'notice' this gap. Similarly, feedback raises learners' awareness and helps them to notice the academic writing features. The last aim is to suggest how students can improve their subsequent writing task. The feedback comments are provided with a focus, not only on that particular piece of work, but also with information that can be used later on; this aim is referred to as feed-forward by Hattie and Timperley (2007). Indeed, this feed-forward is effective with the development of students' writing, especially if it directs them how to undertake future work (Sadler, 1998).

Even though it is reported that EAP courses do not primarily focus on language accuracy and development, they still share the same goal of preparing students to be independent academic writers in their subsequent studies, regardless of their focus and whether it is on the linguistic or the rhetorical aspects of their writing. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the role of EAP feedback is different from that of proof-readers or editors. Proof-readers are assumed to suggest, identify problems and provide corrections, whereas advisors are thought to elicit and enable the students to do this autonomously (Harwood, Austin & Macaulay, 2012). Hence, the role of the advisor is perceived more as an educator than as an editor.

2.3 Theoretical Framework Guiding Assessment Feedback

This section discusses the transformation of feedback from being merely based on comments transmitted to a passive recipient, to an approach where feedback is designed to consider students as active agents and enable them to construct their understanding.

Traditionally, the old paradigm of feedback was transmission-focused, which was mainly concerned with teachers providing information. Feedback in this manner is seen as only comments without considering what occurs, conceptualising it as a one-way transmission of information from teachers who are considered to be experts to the novice learners. Additionally, students are prevented from being involved in producing their own judgements regarding the feedback process, as they are viewed as passive recipients of the feedback information (Boud & Molloy, 2013); this view of feedback is cognitivist in its representation (Ajjawi & Boud, 2017). This has been called the 'gift' model by Askew & Lodge (2000), as it represents the transmission of feedback information to students who are not active in the feedback process.

The new paradigm is learning-focused, which aims for more of a partnership between teachers and students (Winstone & Carless, 2019). Being positioned as active constructors of feedback, students can establish ongoing dialogues to inform their own judgements with different people in different contexts (Boud & Molloy, 2013). In this model, not only do teachers dominate feedback, but also students can initiate the process through the identification of where feedback information can help them to improve their skills and actively seek it. This requires teachers to assist students to understand how to be productively engaged in feedback interactions, in order to maintain their active roles in the feedback process. Even though the extent of teachers' responsibilities can be an issue, students can have a certain level of agency in the feedback process. When they feel equipped to take productive action upon feedback and can implement it on following tasks, their possessed agency becomes greater. This paradigm aligns with social

constructivism theory, which focuses on the interdependence of social and individual processes in knowledge co-construction (Palincsar, 1998).

Feedback is viewed to be a facilitator within the socio-constructivist paradigm, which involves the different comments and suggestions that help to enable students to determine their own feedback revisions, and through the process of dialogue, this helps students to gain new understanding (Archer, 2010). Through interaction, shared and individual interpretations are developed, as feedback is seen as a social practice that is influenced by its participants' relationships (Price, Handley & Millar, 2011); while staff and students co-operate in learning communities (Evans, 2013). The social constructivist perspective of feedback relies on students' agency, as they are actively involved with the received comments (O'Donovan, Rust & Price, 2016). In such a relationship, Ajjawi and Boud (2017) state that both teachers and students' experiences and expertise are respected, as the shift from a receptive-transmissive model to feedback loops requires the involvement of all the participants in the feedback process. Hence, the thoughts and experiences of all the members are taken into consideration in order to create a dialogic space.

Winstone et al. (2017) stressed the significance of students' 'proactive recipience' of feedback, which indicates "a state or activity of engaging actively with feedback processes; thus, emphasising the fundamental contribution and responsibility of the learner" (Winstone et al., 2017, p.17). This emphasises the concept that the process of effective feedback is not one sided and requires a dialogue and partnership. Briefly, feedback in its new paradigm is a process and not a product, where students are the ones who drive the process. It is a process where their active involvement is essential to its impact. Students' abilities to evaluate the quality of their own work is central to their involvement in feedback processes within a new paradigm approach (Winstone & Carless, 2019).

Another important theory related to this study is social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), which views learning as emergent and situated (i.e. it occurs in a social context through observation). It explains human behaviour in terms of a three-way, dynamic, reciprocal model in which personal factors, environmental influences, and behaviour continually interact. Social cognitive theory synthesises concepts and processes from cognitive, behaviouristic, and emotional models of behaviour change. This also encompasses other theories that share the same conceptualisation, such as sociocultural theory. Feedback is viewed as a form of social interactions that help to achieve social and educational goals (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). SCT views learning as a "social phenomenon" that constitutes an important part of specific cultures and social settings. Hence, culture and society organise the mental activities that humans utilise in mediation processes

(Villamil & Guerrero, 2006). Within the SCT framework, feedback is considered to be a process where the learners adopt new knowledge by means of an assistant who can be a teacher, 'an expert agent', or a peer at the same level as the learner. This process consequently, as Ellis (2008) states, enables linguistic acquisition in different ways, which would not be able to be acquired independently.

Similarly, language learning from a socio-cognitive perspective arises through interaction with other people, either directly or indirectly by means of artefacts, such as teacher feedback. The mind and consciousness of the learner are the result of "the internalisation of socially and temporally bound modes of thinking, feeling, and behaving" (Villamil & Guerrero, 2006, p.23). It is assumed that one's learning and behaviour are influenced by contextual or environmental, cognitive or personal, and behavioural factors that act in a reciprocal manner. Using this theoretical lens, Han and Hyland (2019) state that students' engagement with feedback involves both cognitive and social aspects together. Students' cognitive responses to feedback, such as their noticing, understanding and beliefs are socially mediated and they choose to take or ignore this feedback depending on their beliefs and goals. In addition, the strategies that learners use to monitor their linguistic accuracy are mediated by social interaction as well. Learners' abilities to identify their errors depend on the received feedback that is adjusted to their developmental levels. This context influences the behavioural and affective engagement of the learners with written corrective feedback, as their revisions can be influenced by teachers' instructions and writing tasks, whilst their emotions are affected by support and encouragement. This indicates that variations could exist among individuals as a result of their background and prior experiences.

Aligning with Academic writing which is conceptualized as a learned skill through which the development of students' academic writing is supported and guided by educators and advisors particularly in their pre-sessional courses. Therefore, writing is often viewed as a product of collaborative work and imitation. Sociocultural theory connects with the writing's process approach ,where the students have the chance to write, revise and edit their drafts, as feedback provided by others is viewed as invaluable during writing's drafting phase. Accordingly, feedback enables a student to be supported by an advisor when they acquire text forms during composition processes through the provision of "concrete and situated assistance on the development of their writing and ideas" (Morton, Storch, & Thompson, 2014, pp.A-24). Hence, as stated by Bitchener and Storch (2016), advisor-student interaction instils shared responsibilities and cooperation, which coincides with sociocultural learning concepts in the co-construction of knowledge, instead of a top-down approach that does not function two ways. Chanock (1995) notes that through interactive feedback, students potentially perceive their advisors to be more amenable and

knowledgeable, and thus, the trust levels enable more useful insights into the academic expectations of the writing task. Correspondingly, feedback provides the outline of academic conjecture and assumptions, which are often known by academics, but not always by students (Wolsey, 2008). Consequently, feedback creates a guidance base for students, as they are able to develop better academic writing comprehension, and consequently, improve their decisions and thought process regarding the work, which ultimately raises the standard of the work.

Overall, feedback consists of a complex process and the role of students is important, as highlighted in the new paradigms. Students' agentive roles lie in their construction and creation of knowledge from feedback based on social constructivism theory. This perspective, along with sociocultural theory, pays attention to the contextual nature of learning and the construction of knowledge. It also gives importance to learners' self-regulation in exploiting other sources to advance their understanding of feedback. Meanwhile, the socio-cognitive perspective views students' responses to feedback as dynamic and socially mediated processes. The present study perceives assessment feedback as a social constructive process embedded within an interactive and dynamic educational environment, where students are active recipients who make sense of their teachers' feedback. In addition, their responses to assessment feedback are explained through the lenses of socio-cognitive theory, which considers learner's agency to self-regulate their learning inside a social context, as their responses to feedback require changes in behaviour, cognition and emotions.

2.4 Effectiveness of Feedback

Feedback functions are conceptualised as serving evaluative, as well as educative functions (Dochy & McDowell, 1997). Regarding the evaluation function, students are provided with information on their performance in the assessment task, whereas their development and task improvement are facilitated from an educative perspective (Hounsell, 2007). Feedback on assessments is endorsed by students due to its significance in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to improve their future grades, and enhancing their motivation (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). However, Boud and Molloy (2013) demonstrated that for the feedback to be effective, it should be seen as a process in which students understand its information and act upon them. In proposing this meaning of effective feedback, it is recognized that the feedback process is learner-centred and can be affected by their individual needs and context (Evans, 2013). Similarly, the current study considers that learners' involvement in the feedback process including their responses and what variables influence them could lead to enhancing its effectiveness.

A review of literature revealed that there are certain features that characterise effective feedback messages to form students' perspectives. These characteristics, besides others, are also highlighted in the prominent models related to feedback. The following sections present a discussion of these models, followed by the main studies that argue from students' perspectives the principles of effective feedback .

2.4.1 Models of Feedback

Several conceptual models have been proposed to understand the efficacy of feedback, including the types of feedback that teachers should provide, and the characteristics that improve its effectiveness (Crooks, 1988; Hattie & Timperley, 2007b; Kingston & Nash, 2011; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Shute, 2008). For example, Kluger and DeNisi (1996), in their review of literature determined that feedback was found to negatively affect performance in some of the studies; this led them to develop Feedback Intervention Theory (FIT). They focus in their model on the feedback that aims to close the gap between students' current level and the desired standard. The understanding of this discrepancy leads the students to either choose to work harder or reject the feedback altogether depending on the commitment to achieve one's goals. They referred to how the feedback could influence performance, as it can be focused upon three levels: (a) details that help to do the task; (b) the task in general; (c) processes that engage the student to complete the task. They argue that students usually process feedback at the task level, while its influence can be on receiving and attending to it. The assumption in this model is that students are aware of how to complete the task and the feedback is concerned regarding whether performance meets the standard expectations.

Similarly, adopting the same basic starting point of closing the gap between the current state and the desired one, the model by Hattie and Timperley (2007) is considered another seminal work in the field. They state that in order for the feedback to increase the levels of understanding and improve a student's performance and learning aims, it must address three specific questions that are student directed:

1. Feed-up: "Where am I going?
2. Feedback: "How am I going?"
3. Feed-forward: "Where am I moving to next? (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p.86).

The first concept relates to the aims that are required to be clear and achievable, while the second refers to student progress in attaining their particular goals, as well as to determine how this is successfully achieved. The third part relates to how certain steps are required, and how they should function in order to progress in a better manner. Hattie and Timperley (2007) clarify

four primary types of feedback: relating to the task; feedback about the task; feedback about the task's process; feedback about self-regulation; and feedback about the self. These forms can answer the aforementioned questions with different levels of effectiveness. At the task level, the feedback informs and verifies to the student whether the answer is correct or not. Indeed, feedback regarding the task's process is related to the promotion of a deeper understanding of the task details. The third level (i.e., self-regulation) includes a set of behaviours, such as planning, help-seeking, progress monitoring, evaluating success, and goal setting that students may engage in while they learn or perform a task (Zimmerman, 2000). The feedback at this level can be concerned with the plans to revise a written piece of work; the fourth level of feedback on the self-level focuses on the students' themselves away from the task. In particular, Hattie and Timperley (2007) draw attention to self-level praise that concentrates on ability and praise that concentrates on effort as the distinction between them is usually missed in the literature. Regardless of the focus of feedback on the self, Hattie and Timperley (2007) state that the level of knowledge and skills obtained, the learning context, and what is being learned are all determinant of the nature and level of optimal feedback.

Even though the existing models offer general insight into the feedback process, they do not take into account the way it is received by the individuals, including their characteristics that contributed to various reactions to feedback, as well as the appropriateness of the feedback and its function (Lipnevich, Berg & Smith, 2016). One explanation for this is that these models, with focus on the feedback characteristics, its purpose and the importance of the task are informed by formative assessment literature. They tend to situate feedback as something provided to students. Comparatively, other models informed by self-regulated learning focused on feedback as something that is received (Hattie & Gan, 2016; p.265) including students' cognitive engagement (Butler & Winne, 1995). These cognitive engagements include motivational and personal factors (e.g. Lipnevich et al., 2016), which are usually represented as antecedents to actual responses to feedback and considered as factors that start and end every feedback loop.

This focus on students' inner worlds is evident in the model by Winstone et al. (2017), in which they presented a model that illustrates students' *proactive recipience* of feedback, where they engage actively with the process of feedback. This model emphasises the internal processes, which include motivational and self-regulatory processes, (i.e., self-appraisal, assessment literacy, goal setting and self-regulation, engagement and motivation). These are the internal processes relevant to students. Their model also emphasises the interpersonal communication variables between the giver and receiver of the feedback. It emphasizes the interactions among these variables that occur within an effective feedback context to foster students' meaning making and acceptance of feedback.

Regarding the feedback/learning process, a model has been presented by Lipnevich et al. (2016) which studied what happens between the time when a student receives feedback and the time when a student starts to take action on that feedback. Lipnevich et al. (2016) offered a feedback-student interaction model that examined the complexity of factors and feedback that may impact student subsequent action and perceptions (or lack thereof). By way of explanation, Lipnevich et al. (2016) wanted to examine what makes students keenly engage in the feedback they receive, dismiss it, or merely ignore it. It is not probable to be effective in enhancing learning if feedback is not acted upon. Consequently, they see this model as an effort to explain in detail the process that underlies the potential level of effectuality of feedback. As stated by their model, feedback is constantly received in a context that might be more or less comfortable and familiar, and where the results would be perceived as significant or less; thus, the effects of such feedback will also vary.

In addition, feedback varies in tone, duration and complexity (among other features), and therefore, leads to differential perceptions, assessments, emotions and behavioral responses (Goetz et al., 2018). For example, positive feedback would be more likely to bring pleasure and pride, while social comparisons and judgmental feedback would elicit anxiety. Students can be happy and sad, confused or motivated, and thus, may act in an adaptive or maladaptive manner. These complicated contingencies between feedback, contexts and the student are affected considerably if the message that is received and considered by a student will be actionable, and if it will be used to enhance levels of performance and learning. Specifically, in this model, the first step in a cycle of effective engagement is students' perceptions of feedback (Lipnevich et al., 2016).

Van der Kleij and Lipnevich (2020) improved the model of Lipnevich et al. (2016) based on a synthesis of the main findings of a critical review of 164 studies on students' feedback perceptions between 1987 and 2018. In their model, they presented potential variables that need to be considered when exploring students' responses or perceptions of feedback. These variables were externally related to feedback characteristics (e.g. its mode and timing) and internal related to students (e.g. age, gender, self-efficacy, goal orientation, willingness to learn from feedback). These variables influence students' cognitive, affective and behavioral responses to feedback. This model explicitly illustrates the processes that students experience when they respond to feedback, starting with feedback as the input, and students' subsequent actions as the output. Overall, this model is more comprehensive, including the external, internal, and contextual factors.

These models, regardless of their underlying perspectives, share similar internal and external factors to represent the feedback process. Externally and as inputs, the tasks that are provided to students, and the types of feedback used, are to be considered important (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Lipnevich et al., 2016). In addition, the feedback that is provided externally from teachers is also another shared factor among these models. Characteristics of feedback could vary depending on the purpose and the messages that teachers intend to provide to students. For example, a teacher could use descriptive, rather than evaluative language to promote learning (Tunstall & Gsipps, 1996). Students' personal factors are also another group of shared variables in some of these models. These factors are internal in nature and include motivational beliefs, abilities and prior learning experiences (Van der Kleij & Lipnevich, 2020; Winstone et al., 2017).

Bangert-Drowns et al. (1991) called these personal factors "initial states", as they form the state that students are in at the time that they receive the feedback and influence the way in which they respond to feedback. Students' experiences, interests, goals and self -efficacy are shaped by their experiences with feedback. The personal factors are placed at the beginning of the process and interact continuously with external factors (feedback and context) making the experiences of subsequent processes unique for every learner. Therefore, understanding how students' respond to feedback requires an awareness of the characteristics and purposes of the feedback that teachers provide, as well as considering students' internal 'worlds' when they receive feedback. Feedback is considered the bridge in the communication between the giver's intention and the receivers' responses (Sadler, 1998); although students do not always receive feedback in the way the teacher has intended (Higgins et al., 2001). Simultaneously, students' cognitive and affective responses to feedback play an important role in their ultimate engagement with feedback, as well as the efficacy of the feedback on student learning or performance (Leighton, 2019). Thus, it is important to consider the receiver of feedback in order to increase its efficacy.

2.4.2 Principles of Effective Feedback: Students' Perspectives

Previous research has investigated the characteristics of the feedback message that could contribute to its effectiveness from a student perspective. This research is grouped under the following themes: feedback quality and quantity; the mode of feedback; focus of feedback; and the credibility of the feedback provider.

2.4.2.1 Feedback Quality and Quantity

In terms of feedback quality, students' perceptions regarding the features that constitute useful or high quality feedback varied significantly among studies. In a study by Nguyen and Filipi (2018),

the EFL participants revised feedback at three phases on their writing. These included: (1) peer/group written and oral feedback on the students' first drafts; (2) a teaching assistant's written and oral feedback on their second drafts; and (3) the lecturer's written feedback on their final drafts. This multiple-draft feedback approach was perceived to be of high quality feedback, as it helps language learners to engage effectively with it and improve their writing. Teachers are encouraged "to support writers through multiple drafts by providing feedback and suggesting revisions during the process of writing itself, rather than at the end of it" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p.1). In addition, several scholars (i.e. Black & Wiliam, 2009; Brookhart, 2017; Lee, 2016) maintained that there is a close and supportive correlation between quality feedback and formative feedback, which is a continuous assessment of students' learning that helps them to bridge the gap between their current state of learning and the desired effect.

In addition, detailed and individualised feedback were reported to be important aspects of good quality feedback on students' writing. Specifically, students tend to ignore feedback that is too general or not specific (Chiang, 2004; Evans, 2013; Lee, 2016; Zacharias, 2007); students appreciate feedback that is informative and can be used in the future. Thus, it needs to be specific and related directly to the individual student's requirements. Providing students with explanations and identifying areas that needs improvement following an assessment were found more useful than just providing them with corrective information, numerical grades or praise. In addition, this type has been associated with improvements in students' subsequent outcomes (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Shute, 2008). These findings indicate that students are aware of the useful impact of feedback on their learning development especially when it meets their individual needs.

The amount of details and its content are also important aspects that could influence feedback effectiveness. Brookhart (2017) suggested that teachers should prioritise students' learning goals and tailor the feedback amount and content to students' developmental levels. This is reflected in what Nicol & MacFarlane-Dick (2006) emphasised in regards that the content of effective feedback should be encouraging, motivational constructive, and descriptive, rather than judgmental and focus on both the outcome of the student work, but also on the processes leading to that outcome (Brookhart, 2017). Hattie and Timperley (2007) in their classification of types of feedback clarify that feedback relates to the task is more powerful, specifically when this causes higher levels of understanding than feedback in relation to the self, which is seen as the least effective type of feedback.

The message valence (i.e. positive or negative feedback) is also important to be considered when talking about the content of teacher feedback. It has been found that students respond more

positively to the former, as it aligns with their self-image and boosts their confidence (Forsythe & Johnson, 2017). Even though the results of such studies indicate that positive comments make some students more motivated and willing to take notice of the other comments, feedback scholars argue that praise does not seem particularly to have been considered a useful form of feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), as the information it contains might not be used in subsequent tasks in the future.

Comparatively, the negative or critical feedback provided to students' on their written texts augment negative emotions, such as disappointment and frustration that limit their responses to teacher feedback, and lead them to ignore it completely (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a; Sadler, 2010). Nonetheless, Mahfoodh (2017) in her qualitative study on EFL university students determined that negative emotions produced by critical feedback did not inhibit the successful use of teacher written feedback. This study, meanwhile, revealed that negative emotional responses, such as disappointment and frustration can yield positive actions or outcomes. Accordingly, it has been advised that effective feedback should contain both positive and negative components, in spite of the fact that the positive ought to increase the probability of a student to accept the negative (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a).

The timing of feedback was also considered another aspect that could enhance the quality of teacher feedback. Previous studies in general education and language learning found that timeliness is a main variable that influences students' perceptions and responses towards assessment feedback (Amara, 2015; Gan et al., 2020; Hyland & Hyland, 2006b; Poverjuc, 2011; Wingate, 2010). These studies illustrated that feedback should be provided in a timely manner to enable students to act on it, as they are still aware of their learning goals. It has been advised that the feedback should be given back to students not long following their submissions of their written assignments, and that one week after their submission is too late (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Mack, 2009). This actively demonstrates that for feedback to be useful to students, it must be provided quickly enough after submission.

Other research studies found that feedback usefulness depends on the task, regardless of the time when it is provided (Fluckiger et al., 2010). On the other hand, the delayed feedback has been argued to be more effective than the immediate form for students' learning (Butler, Karpicke & Roediger III, 2007). Similarly, this is supported by Ferguson (2011), who indicated that students were happy to wait and make use of the delayed feedback if it is good in quality. In contrast, Gibbs (1999) argues that the quality of feedback is not as important as the frequency, timing and method of providing feedback in helping students learn. Thus, for feedback to become effective, it should be provided at a relevant stage, which occurs during post-task completion. It is

possible to state that feedback is more relevant during the learning process, as this enables students to implement more quality adjustments and modifications to their work. It can be concluded that even though the timeliness of feedback is an important aspect of its effectiveness, it seems to depend on the individual needs of the learners.

2.4.2.2 Mode of Feedback

Another important aspect of effective feedback that appears to influence language learners' use of assessment feedback comments is the method used in the delivery of the information. Specifically, different feedback modes, such as handwritten notes, face-to-face dialogue and rubrics, have been demonstrated in the research literature. Ryan, Henderson and Phillips have (2019) clarified that choosing any specific mode to convey the feedback comments can either support or confine the level of the usability of feedback information. Feedback through teacher-student conferences helps to improve the development process and language learning for the students in relation to their writing abilities, as they are able to note and understand their writing, whilst negotiating and interacting with the teacher. This type of feedback has been advocated by L2 writing scholars, as it can help both teachers and learners to notice different issues related to a learner's writing (Ferris, 2003; Zamel, 1985).

Student-teacher interaction, or face-to-face feedback aims to discuss student writings' "intention, purpose and meaning" (White & Arndt, 1991, p.131). In particular, due to the clarification of meanings that occur during the meeting, this type of feedback is highly recommended for writing development (Gere & Stevens, 1985). What is more, this form of feedback is potentially more effective, as students are provided with the opportunity to interact with their teachers in a personal manner regarding their writing (Sommers, 1982; Zamel, 1985). This synchronous conversation with the teacher allowed learners to engage and co-create meaning (Nicol, 2010; Yang & Carless, 2013) as well as regulate learners' understanding and clarify any misconceptions with a knowledgeable other (Dawson et al., 2013). Therefore, feedback dialogues can be rich two-way exchanges that are personalised, detailed and usable (Ryan et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, as Ferris (2003) states, it "may be extremely stressful for some students, as it places additional burden on L2 students' aural comprehension and oral fluency" (p.40). Moreover, (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a) add that this includes a "considerable amount of time and required specialised interaction skills that have not been fully defined" (p.6). For educators, such challenges can affect interaction levels, as it lacks depth and understanding of the individual learner's requirements; whilst for learners, the information provided may not be used if they do not have the ability to point to the weaknesses of their work (Ryan et al., 2019). Indeed, it has been argued that when individuals represent and justify their knowledge, learning can occur by

engaging in a conversation with another person. For ESL learners, it was determined that students who have the ability to negotiate their own writing's meaning with their teacher are capable of incorporating the suggestions by the teacher into their reviewed and improved texts (Ferris, 2003). Furthermore, it has been noted that certain cultural and social factors can prove detrimental to the student-teacher interaction (e.g. teachers authority) (Ferris, 2003; Hyland & Hyland, 2019).

Instead, handwritten comments on hard copies of assessment tasks are considered the most common feedback mode provided by teachers in tertiary education (Chang et al., 2012). It has been found that teacher written feedback improves the focus on the text's linguistic accuracy, which includes grammar, vocabulary and structure (Ellis, 2005; Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Teacher written feedback is able to present extensive information, whilst providing commentary regarding the text's structure and content, in order to motivate students to focus on their learning and progress their writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006b). It is generally more sustainable than face-to-face conversations, and educators are able to facilitate comprehension by linking to the relevant section of the learners' work (Ryan et al., 2019). Nevertheless, some teachers do not fully agree that this is the most progressive way to improve students' writing skills. Likewise, Leki (1990) stipulated that written feedback may not be the most beneficial form of improving students' writing texts. However, this type of feedback seems to be the most valuable for students, especially when other factors are considered, such as timing, quality and quantity. Alternatively, digitally recorded feedback comments, using audio, video or screencast recordings could be a substitute to both face-to-face dialogue and text-based comments. Indeed, this mode is considered by educators as a more efficient and practical mode, which enables the provision of feedback comments in a concise format, clear and personalised manner (Ryan et al., 2019).

Overall, it is apparent that each mode can influence the effectiveness of feedback comments, as it has its own challenges and benefits that would impact the level of personalisation and usability. Therefore, a combination of modes when providing feedback comments is recommended in a limited number of studies in the language learning context (Ryan et al., 2019). For instance, in a study by Elola and Oskoz (2016), it was found that language learners preferred to receive written feedback comments on grammatical issues and verbal comments on the issues related to content, organisation and structure. The results also indicate that although the mode of feedback affected the instructor's comments quantity and quality, the learners reported that the feedback helped them to improve their writing regardless of the approach used in delivery.

2.4.2.3 Focus of Feedback

Even though it has been evident that the focus of teacher feedback could influence its effectiveness, there are different debates in the literature in regards to what teacher feedback should focus on. Fathman and Whalley (1990) state that "the major question confronting any theory of responding to student writing is where we should focus our attention" (p.299). There are many differences in how teachers analyse written texts, as certain teachers focus upon the textual form; whilst comparatively, others focus more on the content. Specifically, form feedback focuses on the text's spelling, grammar and punctuation; known as "grammar or surface-level feedback''. Comparatively, content feedback focuses on the text's organisation, word selection, writing coherence and the language genre (Grami, 2005).

Some researchers have provided debates regarding the correct use of different types of feedback that teachers need to use by examining students' preferences. Certain researchers state that feedback needs to mix between both content and form (Raimes, 1991); while others (e.g. Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Diab, 2005; Hamouda, 2011; Leki, 1991) show how in the context of ESL and EFL, students prefer teachers' feedback to focus more extensively on the surface-level of errors. Comparatively, few studies have demonstrated that students prefer feedback to focus on their written texts' content and organisation (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Oladejo, 2011). Hyland and Hyland (2006a) note that within L2 writing improvement it is a requirement by teachers to provide feedback to different written drafts, while focusing on all the different written aspects. However, Zamel (1985) highlights that a teacher should concentrate on one particular aspect of writing when reviewing one particular draft, as this will provide more concentrated improvement by the student without confusion. Additionally, teachers need to provide commentary prioritisation based on prior classroom discussions that are directed to individual students (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

Furthermore, certain studies (i.e. Diab, 2005; Leki, 1991; Zhu, 2010) evaluated L2 writing and how students have preferences in relation to different forms of feedback, which include comprehensive and selective error correction, alongside direct or indirect error correction. Specifically, different studies have shown students selecting comprehensive error correction and not selective error correction. Accordingly, the students remarked that they prefer to have all the errors corrected, as this would improve their levels of language fluency and accuracy (Oladejo, 2011). Diab (2005) presented a different questionnaire study that included 156 EFL Arab students, who were part of an English course at the American University in Beirut. They were asked to complete a questionnaire to determine their error correction preferences regarding both first and

second drafts of a written text. The findings show that the majority of students prefer full error correction, and in particular when receiving feedback for their final drafts.

In comparison to the comprehensive error corrections results, the findings from different studies in regards to direct and indirect error corrections demonstrated contrasting results through different contexts. Certain students preferred indirect feedback (Diab, 2005; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Leki, 1991); whilst other students preferred the feedback to be direct (Diab, 2005; Lee, 2005). Diab (2005) determined that most EFL students preferred teachers to highlight their errors and provide guidance (indirect feedback) through the initial draft on how to correct them, and subsequently provide direct feedback on the final written draft.

2.4.2.4 Perceived Credibility of the Feedback Provider

The effectiveness of feedback could stem from students' perceptions of the credibility of the provider (i.e. teachers) (e.g. Hyland, 1998; Tardy, 2006; Winstone et al., 2017). Teachers' competence or perceived knowledge and personality are important components of credibility, which is linked to students' engagement and self-motivation (Myers & Bryant, 2004); and is considered important in composing student feedback and persuasive messages (Zhang & Hyland, 2018). Also, learners might appreciate the feedback provided by teachers who are perceived as knowledgeable and have high levels of expertise. Previous research indicates that students value and appreciate their teacher feedback over their peers or other sources, as they perceive teachers as more knowledgeable and trustworthy (Hyland & Hyland, 2019b). The proficient enactment of formative assessment practices by a teacher can lead to comparatively large gains in student achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Hyland (1998) examined the impact of teacher written feedback comments on language learners' revision processes and found that students tend to evaluate the professionalism of the feedback provider before they decide whose feedback they are going to adopt. This was apparent in the way that the participants in the study by Hyland (1998) perceive EAP tutors' roles as being limited to language development.

Furthermore, teachers' personalities have been found to play a role in classrooms, as they are considered key to the achievement of success. Brosh (1996) regarded personality as the indivisible part of a teacher's self through which any learning condition can be affected by that specific teacher. As speech and behaviour represent personality, the teaching style of every instructor differ according to his/her personality. While the subject matter, expertise and skills allow effective communication, what the learner hears and receives does not rely solely on the material or skills, but on the speaker's personality or the essence of the personal relationship between the teacher and the student. This highlights the significant role of the teacher in the feedback process, as it can enhance or limit students' use of feedback. Meanwhile, even though the standards and

conditions for effective feedback are achieved, it does not ascertain that the feedback is effective, as it depends on how students' use and understand it (Carless, 2006; Price et al., 2010). The following section provides the research on students' experiences and the possible variables that are thought to influence their responses to assessment feedback.

2.5 Researching Students' Experiences with Assessment Feedback

As previously mentioned that, new paradigm feedback practices emphasise the active role of students in the feedback process. The literature revealed that the focus on students' as 'proactive recipients' of feedback (Winstone et al., 2017) included an investigation into their perceptions, engagement, responses, as well as uptake of the feedback. All of these are different terms that have been used in the literature to research student experiences with assessment feedback. In the literature, the term engagement, for example, has been discussed by Ellis (2010), who referred to it as the ways of students' reactions to corrective feedback. However, it has been argued that engagement had not been operationally clarified, and is used as a research construct without an operational definition (Svalberg, 2009). Considering it from a cognitive, affective and behavioural state is proposed by Svalberg (2009) to be a working definition of engagement in a language learning context. Similarly, students' responses to feedback have been referred to from cognitive (processing), affective (feelings) and behavioural (actions they take afterward) dimensions. In the current research, responses are used to refer to how students react to assessment feedback provided by teachers.

It has been found that how students engage and respond to feedback leads to the facilitation of writing development (Han & Hyland, 2015). However, Hyland and Hyland (2019b) stated that even though students' responses have pivotal roles in their learning, they remain an under-researched area. Students' responses can be analysed through cognitive, behavioural and affective elements that facilitate effective responses to teacher feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2019b). The cognitive dimension is concerned with the beliefs that language learners have in relation to knowledge (i.e. feedback and how they attend to it). The affective dimension refers to students' emotional reactions and their positive or negative feelings to feedback. The behavioural aspect of students' responses deals with students' uptake of feedback, and the revisions they make after they receive it (Ellis, 2010). These three components have been found to be closely interrelated, as students' affective reactions could influence both their cognitive and behavioral responses (Han, 2017; Han & Hyland, 2015, 2019a; Mahfoodh, 2017; Zhang & Hyland, 2018a; Zheng & Yu, 2018).

2.5.1 The Interplay between Emotions and Students' Responses

It has been argued that the educational value of feedback can be prevented by emotional reactions (Carless, 2006), where feedback may be "obscured by emotional static" , p.95). In addition, students' understanding and utilisation of feedback can be influenced by their emotional responses to teacher feedback (Zhang & Hyland, 2018). Furthermore, negative emotional effects or demotivation might cause students to ignore feedback comments (e.g. Poulos & Mahony, 2008), which can be worse for international students who are involved in a new learning community (e. g. Tian & Lowe, 2013). In fact, international students tend to find feedback more critical and upsetting in comparison to home students (Ryan & Henderson, 2018). In addition to the motivational effect, emotions can also directly affect cognitive processing of feedback. Positive emotions, for instance, can increase the focus of attention, whereas reduced attention can result from negative emotions (Huntsinger, 2013). Nonetheless, Ellis (2010) found it surprising that the affective perspective in corrective feedback has still not been fully explored, even though the literature criticises corrective feedback for how detrimental it is to students and their L2 growth.

The influence of the emotional aspect was evident in various studies. For example, Hyland (2003) found the level of engagement with form-focused feedback greatly varied among the students in her two case studies. She determined that the emotional reaction of the lower-intermediate student strongly influenced her responses to teacher feedback. DeNisi and Kluger (2000) suggested that one of the most common causes for the negative emotional responses is that when students interpret the feedback intended for the task-level at the self-level, and perceive it as a generalised criticism. This can result in negative feelings, such as anger, self-doubt or frustration and might lead to diverting attention from feedback. Similarly, the significance of affective factors was remarked upon by Storch and Wigglesworth (2010) among their case study students, who were influenced by their attitudes, beliefs, and goals. They stated that the impact of the affective factors was not just on the actions that students adopt to respond to feedback, but also on their willingness to accept and maintain the feedback.

Recently, in their case studies on L2 Chinese learners who were studying in EAP courses, Han and Hyland (2015) revealed the complex nature of students' responses to written corrective feedback. They suggest that the affective dimensions of the learners might hinder or limit students' cognitive and behavioural engagement with feedback. On the other hand, Mahfoodh (2017) investigated the influence of emotional reactions of EFL learners to teacher written feedback and students' success in revisions. Results have shown that negative emotional responses, such as disappointment, frustration and shock did not influence or limit students from using of teacher

written feedback effectively. Supported by Han and Hyland (2019b), two case studies of Chinese EFL university students demonstrated varied , dynamic and rich emotional reactions to written corrective feedback. They noticed the emergence of negative emotions in both cases, but they were not dominant. They concluded that written corrective feedback may cause positive and neutral emotions - not just negative emotions. They stated that students' negative emotions are not necessarily overwhelming, as these emotions can be only evanescent or might influence students' motivation and revision. Interestingly, they suggested that positive emotions might lead to a reduction in students' mental effort and less commitment to long-term learning goals.

Other research has tried to consider the reasons behind students' disengagement with feedback. In a recent study by Han (2017), it was found that learners' language proficiency influenced all the three dimensions of students' engagement with feedback. The low linguistic levels of the participants affected their ability to notice and correct errors resulting in the feeling of frustration and subsequently failings to successfully revise their work. Similarly, Zhang and Hyland (2018), as well as Zheng and Yu (2018) found that language proficiency, together with other learner factors, such as beliefs regarding learning, play a crucial role in students' responses to teacher written feedback. These results are important in highlighting the learners' characteristics and individual needs that might subsequently influence the way that students respond to the feedback. This supports what Candlin and Plum (1999) state, as "it may be the case that 'good' revision and 'good' feedback can only really be defined with reference to the individual writers, their problems, and their reasons for writing." (p.275). Indeed, the gap between receiving and acting on feedback can be wide, due to the complexity of how students make sense of, use, and respond to feedback.

The majority of research on feedback appeared to primarily focus on the examinations of the type of revisions which students make (or do not make) in response to different forms of feedback and how their feelings influence this, rather than determining the reasons behind such responses. Nonetheless, these studies are both provocative and inspirational, as they succeed in highlighting the complexity of factors and variables that may come into play and limit the success of feedback. The current study is concerned with two significant yet under-researched factors of self-efficacy and mindset beliefs, as being the two main factors related to the psychological aspect of the learners. The following is a discussion of these two factors.

2.6 The Influence of the Psychological Aspect on Students' Responses to Assessment Feedback

The factors that influence the learners' use of feedback include different individual, social, cultural and psychological factors. Even though these variables have been reported to play a crucial role in learners' use of feedback, the psychological aspects or the affected state of the learner seems to be an imperative central effect. Forsythe and Johnson (2017) believe that "feedback is an emotional business in which personal disposition influences what is attended to, encoded, consolidated and eventually retrieved" (p.853). Thus, in order to enhance the understanding of feedback, it is important to explore "the internal world of each student" (Black & Wiliam, 2009,p.26). In addition, Poulos & Mahony (2008) argued that "how the student interprets and deals with feedback is critical to the success of formative assessment and involves both psychological state and disposition" (p.144). Similarly, Fritz et al. (2000) argued that emotional and psychological factors have a powerful effect on mediating feedback. Due to the importance of the psychological status of the learners and the lack of research in this area, the current study focuses on the exploration of the extent of their influence on students' responses to assessment feedback. The following is a discussion of these constructs.

2.6.1 Self-efficacy

One of the most frequently cited proposed definitions of self-efficacy, which is also adopted in this study, is the one by Bandura (1986), in which he described self-efficacy as "people's judgment of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance; this is concerned, not with the skills one has, but with the judgments of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses" (p. 391). Hence, self-efficacy refers to a person's feeling of ability to proceed successfully in a specific situation or with a specific task. Similarly, Graham and Weiner (1996) emphasized that self-efficacy is "an ability construct ... that refers to individuals' beliefs regarding their capabilities to perform well" (p. 74). Another pioneer in self-efficacy research, Schunk (1996), suggests that self-efficacy beliefs describe "personal beliefs about one's capabilities to learn or perform skills at designated levels" (p. 360). Furthermore, self-efficacy as demonstrated by Bandura (1986) and Pajares (2003) is a context-specific assessment of an individual's capability to perform certain tasks, such as English language academic writing in this study, at a certain point of time.

Bandura (1997) hypothesised that "expectations of personal efficacy determine whether coping behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences" (p. 191). Likewise, Schunk (1989)

explains how beliefs and judgments of one's abilities can affect academic outcomes. As students start working on a certain task, they have various self-efficacy beliefs that differ according to their abilities, attitudes and previous experiences, as well as situational aspects, such as teacher feedback, which all affect how they work. They start to pick up cues regarding how well they learn and predict their future performance. Hence, they become motivated once they realise that they are making progress and becoming more skilful, which boosts their self-efficacy to perform better. Hence, believing in their abilities and receiving positive feedback and assurance of progress, may alter their self-efficacy levels and increase motivation, which in turn improves their learning experiences. This indicates that self-efficacy is considered to be a strong predictor of learning success.

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy stems from four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, emotional and physiological states. The first source is mastery experience, which relates to one's meaningful engagement in activities and is deemed to be an effective form of better understanding and helps to make sense of self-efficacy. This is because success in task completions improves self-efficacy; while contrastingly, a lack of completion reduces it. When particular situations are mastered, the level of one's self-efficacy is increased, while an individual's opinions of their own abilities are altered when completing other tasks in different situations. Indeed, self-efficacy is advanced through continued success, although minimal failures have been shown to not prove too detrimental on and individual's perception of their capabilities (Bandura, 1977). Instead, to recover from a failure and, subsequently, succeed would promote someone's' motivation and ambition. The second source of self-efficacy is vicarious experiences, which relates to the observations of peer students and teachers in order to use them as examples. Observing other individuals' successful performance levels can improve the belief of a person to replicate the success when undertaking a similar task. Likewise, when other people are seen to overcome different barriers, an individual is often encouraged to work more diligently to complete certain tasks.

The third source of self-efficacy is social persuasion, which stems from tutor/teacher/peer feedback. When a student receives positive comments it becomes more probable that self-efficacy will increase in comparison to receiving negative feedback and criticism (Bandura, 1977). What is more, when the positive feedback is received from more prestigious, knowledgeable, and respected individuals, the greater that self-efficacy is influenced. Correspondingly, people are able to develop their beliefs in their own abilities and skills when they are informed of their successes and capabilities. Contrastingly, social persuasion that focuses on a person's negative aspects often results in an individual who actively avoids certain challenges and becomes less motivated (Bandura, 1986). Indeed, negative feedback has been shown to be more ineffectual than positive

in regards to people's abilities, as criticism creates self-doubt and feelings of self-inefficacy. In accordance, when students' capabilities are focused on by a teacher, self-efficacy levels are increased, whereas students fail to increase their self-efficacy when they are informed of their lack of capabilities (Bandura, 1977).

The fourth source to provide self-efficacy relates to an individual's emotional and psychological state. Anxiety and stress can result in reduced expectations of success in most people, as their perceptions of their own abilities and skills is diminished (Bandura, 1977). However, there are certain situations in the process of learning that can provoke anxiety, as students can lose confidence and feel that control is taken away from them. As a result, individuals who fail to comprehend and believe in their own abilities may fail to continue in their own development or when attempting to complete certain tasks, even when the challenges may appear minimal. Comparatively, when self-efficacy is more elevated, anxiety or fear can incentivise an individual (Piniel & Csizér, 2014); while low self-efficacy can result in negative emotions or psychological consequences that decrease the capability to progress. As Bandura (1994) noted, "It is not the sheer intensity of emotional and physical reactions that is important but rather how they are perceived and interpreted" (p.75). Therefore, it is vital to note that these four particular sources are understood by teachers in order for them to help learners to advance their levels of self-efficacy (Johnson, Edwards & Dai, 2014). Indeed, teachers' knowledge about these sources can help them direct their feedback comments in a way that help to promote a student's sense of self-efficacy, and consequently use it more effectively.

Accordingly, Handley, Price and Millar (2011) theorised that learners with higher levels of self-efficacy (i.e. a greater belief in their ability to bring about desired outcomes) might be more willing to expend their efforts to engage with feedback. This was supported by Pitt and Norton (2016), who also observed that students' abilities to process, comprehend and utilise feedback is influenced by their confidence and emotional maturity. Indeed, the perceived self-efficacy can influence the actions that individuals take, the efforts they are willing to make, and the degree of persistence they demonstrate when they encounter challenges (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 2006). In other words, the delivered feedback goes through the receiver's filters with which he/she starts to realise the world of practice, the feedback provider, and his or her own abilities.

Wingate (2010) argued that individuals who fail to have high levels of self-efficacy or a lack of confidence in their abilities commonly do not take the opportunities that are provided to them to improve or build their confidence. In addition, self-efficacy can continue to diminish in students, with them also failing to develop expectations of success, when received feedback is challenging to comprehend or implement. Similarly, previous studies have examined the influence of the

mode and focus of feedback upon students' perceptions of feedback. Specifically, they have concluded that feedback is believed to be valuable depending partially on the compatibility between feedback and one's self-assessment (e.g. Lee, 2008). Students who positively assess their abilities might be able to deal with the received feedback regardless of its type. In contrast, those who are less confident tend to avoid the feedback or ignore it. Ferris et al. (2013) also reported that students' abilities to make use of teachers' feedback are influenced by their confidence levels.

2.6.1.1 Significance of Self-efficacy: Empirical Findings

Self-efficacy within an academic context, which is referred to as academic self-efficacy, has been found to influence students' willingness to participate, work hard, show persistence, as well as influence their responses to negative emotions (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, academic self-efficacy has been determined to mediate the correlations between students' perceptions of feedback and their academic attainment. In a recent study by Adams et al. (2019), positive associations were found between academic achievements and students' confidence or self-efficacy levels, in which they could achieve their desired grades and adopt suitable study behaviours. It was highlighted that the use of feedback, through the perceptions of its quality and quantity, was associated with self-efficacy and in the achievement of intended grades and adoption of productive study skills.

Similarly, self-efficacy in language learning and L2 university settings was found to be a predictor of general academic success and achievement (Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Tilfarlioglu & Ciftci, 2011; Wang, Spencer & Xing, 2009). Specifically, writing self-efficacy was evidenced to significantly contribute to writing performance (Pajares & Johnson, 1996). It refers to how students perceive and evaluate their own writing skills (McCarthy, Meier & Rinderer, 1985); and their beliefs in successfully performing writing tasks at any stage (Shell, Murphy & Bruning, 1989).

In L2 contexts, recent studies in relation to the effects of writing self-efficacy found positive correlations between perceived self-efficacy and L2 writing performance (Hetthong & Teo, 2013; Raoofi & Maroofi, 2017; Woodrow, 2011). For example, Hetthong and Teo (2013) examined the correlation between self-efficacy and writing performance in regards to paragraphs and sub-skills (e.g. grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary). These findings demonstrate that self-efficacy in L2 writing is able to improve a student's writing ability. Additionally, L2 writing self-efficacy was found to be a predictor of their writing performance. In one particular study, Woodrow (2011) analysed the writing self-efficacy of 738 Chinese university students who completed a questionnaire, which focused on micro-skills in writing, including the use of vocabulary, and macro-skills, including when and how to organise paragraphs. That study,

through structural equation modelling, demonstrated that writing self-efficacy is beneficial in predicting essay scores. Woodrow (2011) also found that self-efficacious students demonstrated enhanced motivation and more intent to study, which resulted in better levels of performance in writing.

2.6.1.2 Assessment Feedback and Self-Efficacy

It has been argued that teacher feedback on students' L2 writing could decrease their confidence. Likewise, Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1997) argued that teacher feedback on students' grammar should be abandoned, not only because of its ineffectiveness, but also due to the fact that it has harmful effects on students' confidence levels; however, they both agreed that the existing data was insufficient to determine whether error correction is effective in improving L2 writing accuracy. Nonetheless, Zacharias (2007) found that students prefer teacher feedback, which focuses on language, compared to feedback on content, as they believe it to be more helpful. This is because students' find teacher feedback on content more general and sometimes contradictory. Students also admitted that the amount of teacher feedback contributed greatly to their emotional state and confidence in writing; they would feel discouraged from writing when they received too much feedback. Similarly, other researchers (i.e. Andrade & Evans, 2013; John Bitchener & Ferris, 2012) suggested that the more quantity of constructive feedback students receive, the less confident they become.

However, teacher feedback was found to increase students' self-efficacy in writing over a course of study in L2 contexts. In a longitudinal study conducted by Zhang and Province (2018), the development of 59 graduate students were analysed through an academic writing course that totalled 14-weeks of sessions, and the questionnaire findings highlights a significant increase in students' self-efficacy in writing. Additionally, the data from the interviews highlighted that mastery experiences through practice and social persuasion in relation to feedback helped to improve the writing confidence levels of students. That particular study highlighted the important role of tutor feedback and its influence on students' writing self-efficacy.

In addition, another study was also conducted by Ruegg (2018), who compared the changes in students' L2 writing self-efficacy over one academic year; the investigation was conducted with two groups of Japanese students. The first group received teacher feedback, while the other group provided and received peer feedback on every preliminary draft for the whole period. The results demonstrated that constructive feedback provided by the teacher was noticeably more than that provided by student peers, with the teacher group showing higher levels of self-efficacy. Therefore, even though students in the teacher feedback group would often receive less positive comments in the feedback, learner self-efficacy increased in all four investigated aspects of

writing: organisation, support, grammar and overall writing ability. This concurs with Caffarella and Barnett (2000), who stated that students who perceive feedback as constructive and relevant have a higher self-efficacy for their writing skills.

Nonetheless, Piniel and Csizér (2014) in their conducted research failed to determine any improvements in self-efficacy in students during an EAP course, and the students commonly complained about the lack of feedback on their written work, which could be perceived as demonstrating the importance of social persuasion in self-efficacy development. Teacher feedback, though, does not always increase confidence levels in students, as other variables can be influential. These can include the frequency and form of presenting the feedback, the attitude of the teacher/tutor in regards to feedback, how the feedback is shown, and the level of connection and trust between teachers and students, which can often stem from the atmosphere within the classroom (Hyland & Hyland, 2019b).

Another recent study conducted by Gan et al. (2020) investigated the associations between English language self-efficacy of Chinese university students and their feedback behaviour and preferences in an academic English course setting. The results from the survey, which had been distributed to 194 English major undergraduate students showed that there was a positive relationship between the four domains of English language self-efficacy (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and learners' feedback behaviour and preferences. This demonstrates that learners with higher self-efficacy in speaking and reading tend to accept feedback that would help them to improve their learning strategies from both teacher- and student-feedback practices (i.e. self/ peer feedback). Interestingly, a negative correlation between students' perceived writing competence and self/peer feedback preference was found, which suggests that students generally want teachers/tutors to provide accurate and fair feedback on academic writing when they are shown to have high levels of self-efficacy, and thus, they do not show a desire for other creative feedback practices, such as self/peer feedback (O'Donovan, 2017).

In a nutshell, most previous research demonstrated the influence of students' self-efficacy on their writing performance. In regards to feedback, the few existing studies aimed to trace the influence of teacher as well as peer feedback on the levels of students' writing self-efficacy except for the study by (Gan, Hu, Wang, et al., 2020) where they examined the relationships between learners' self-efficacy and their feedback behaviour and preferences. Their comprehensive study is important ,even with the use of one single method, as it provided an empirical evidence of the significant influence of English language self-efficacy on both feedback behaviour and preferences. Likewise, the current study aims to add to this lack in research by exploring the influence of students' writing self-efficacy on their responses to assessment feedback. The

difference is that this study is not concerned with the effect of self-efficacy on students' behaviour or preference but with its influences on their positive as well as negative emotional responses to assessment feedback using a mixed methods design (see chapter 3).

2.6.2 Learners' Mindset Beliefs

The mindset literature focuses on the impact that an individual's construct of ability has on their motivation and perceptions of their own and others' achievements. This work draws heavily from theories of self-efficacy, which focus on the amount of control an individual believes that they have over their ability. The ascending behaviours that stem from those beliefs influence the way in which individuals cope with challenges. The more self-efficacious a person is, the more persistent they are, and those who cease their coping efforts prematurely will retain their self-debilitating and defensive behaviour (Bandura, 1977). This is discussed by Dweck (2000) in relation to implicit theories that focused on the concept that each individual develops beliefs and basic assumptions concerning the malleability of human characteristics, including ability, intelligence and personality. They are called "implicit theories", because they are "largely or poorly articulated" (Dweck, Chiu & Hong, 1995, p.267). After extensive research over the last three decades and discovering the strong impact that these self- theories have on human lives, Dweck et al. (1995) established the basis for implicit theories. Dweck (2006) states that individuals who hold such beliefs regarding themselves influence strongly what they want and how they succeed in a specific area. They also influence the way people think, feel and act, shape their environments, and provide their experiences with a different meaning (Dweck, 2000).

Dweck (2000) proposed two types of implicit theories of entity theory and incremental theory; which she referred to later as 'fixed mindset' and 'growth mindset', respectively (Dweck, 2006). Individuals with a fixed mindset assume that personality traits, such as intelligence cannot be changed because they are fixed. In contrast, people with a growth mindset believe that such traits are flexible and still have the opportunity to alter or develop them. Many studies have proved that each theory (or mindset) is linked to a network of joint beliefs, such as achievement beliefs, effort beliefs, and beliefs on ability, goal orientation and reactions to failure situations that people endorse in order to provide an explanation of their behaviour (Plaks, Levy & Dweck, 2009; Ryan & Mercer, 2012). Empirical research has shown that such beliefs influence academic performance; in particular, incremental beliefs appear to yield better results than entity beliefs (Blackwell, Trzesniewski & Dweck, 2007; Chen & Pajares, 2010).

In addition, a strong association between mindset and individual learner's goals was found. These are goals that people pursue toward achievement based on the achievement goal theory, which are divided into two main types: performance goals and learning goals (Elliott & Dweck, 1988). Individuals who pursue performance goals "seek to maintain positive judgments of their ability and avoid negative judgments by seeking to prove, validate, or document their ability and not discredit it" (Elliott & Dweck, 1988, p. 5); and those who pursue learning goals "seek to increase their ability or master new tasks" (Elliott & Dweck, 1988, p. 5). An individual learner's goals are important and linked to emotional investment "since this provides a framework for interpreting, and responding to, events, that occur" (Yorke, 2003, p.488). When seeking performance goals, one demonstrates his/her abilities to receive positive judgements and avoid negative ones on performance, to appear intelligent rather than stupid. People who set such goals try to avoid mistakes by getting involved in completing tasks that they already know they can be successful at and avoid challenging tasks.

Individuals with learning goals, contrastingly, are concerned with increasing their intelligence by mastering new skills and understanding new things instead of concentrating on demonstrating their current levels of ability (Elliott & Dweck, 1988). Storch and Wigglesworth (2010) reported that students who are driven by the goal of developing their learning showed high uptake of feedback. This indicates that students who set learning goals are more likely to make use of assessment feedback, due to their ambition to improve their writing and enhance their learning experiences. On the contrary, those with performance goals may tend to ignore or disregard feedback, as it could draw attention to their incompetence. Therefore, they may end up avoiding assessment feedback on their written assignments.

It is crucial to understand that these goals are usually in conflict in reality, as one is more important than the other; although Dweck (2000) states that both goals are universal and absolutely normal and could be achieved at the same time. The problem is when the emphasis on performance goals increases, as this could lead to missing learning opportunities and stimulate a helpless response in case of failure. It has been demonstrated how the focus on performance goals lead to a helpless response when facing challenges, whereas a mastery-oriented response is provoked by focusing on learning goals (Dweck, 2000). Furthermore, the association between learners' mindsets and achievement goals was found to be strong, as learners' orientations toward either performance or learning goals are directed by their mindset beliefs (Dweck, 2000). This was evident in many studies that used questionnaire measures and task choices, and found that students with growth mindset beliefs showed more tendency toward learning goals, while students endorsing fixed mindset beliefs, had more tendency toward performance goals (Bandura & Dweck, 1981; Dweck, 2000; Mueller & Dweck, 1997; Robins & Pals, 2002).

Furthermore, adopting to adaptive or maladaptive cognitive, affective, and behavioural patterns in students' learning pursuit is a result of a meaning system that is created based on their beliefs regarding the malleability of their intelligence (Dweck, 2000; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). Given their deep-seated belief in the malleability of their abilities, learners with a growth mindset typically pursue learning goals concerned with developing or maintaining their competence, and show adaptive mastery-oriented response patterns involving "the seeking of challenging tasks and the maintenance of effective striving under failure" (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p.256). Individuals with a fixed mindset, comparatively, due to their belief in the stability of their intelligence, results in those learners pursuing performance goals to project a positive image and validate their abilities. They also display maladaptive helpless response patterns "characterised by an avoidance of challenge and a deterioration of performance in the face of obstacles" (Dweck & Leggett, 1988, p.256). Faced with challenging tasks, individuals with a growth mindset and learning goals adapt their behaviour to reach the desired development in their competence, whereas individuals with a fixed mindset and performance goals withdraw from the task and, consequently, lose interest in pursuing their desired goals.

Likewise, previous research indicates different attribution patterns associated with responses to failure situations (Diener & Dweck, 1978). Attributions relate to causality perceptions, which allocates a certain reason for why an incident might have occurred (Weiner, 2010). The helpless pattern is allied with the attribution of failure to different factors that individuals perceive as uncontrollable, such as a lack of ability. In contrast, the attribution of failure in the mastery-oriented pattern is associated with lack of effort, and thus, the concentration in this pattern is more on improving performance through making more effort (Dweck, 2000). Similar attribution styles were also found in another study that examined college learners' mindsets, causal attributions, and responses to failure, as well as success situations (Robins & Pals, 2002). Questionnaires were distributed 6 times during the 4 years of college; the fixed mindset learners attributed failure to ability and success to other external uncontrollable factors, while the growth mindset learners attributed success to effort, although they did not attribute failure to a lack of effort. These attribution styles indicate that fixed mindset learners showed a helpless response in both failure and success situations; attributing both results to uncontrollable factors, and even when they succeeded, they attributed success to luck. This study provides evidence that fixed mindset learners could react in a helpless manner, not only in failure situations, but also in times of success.

2.6.2.1 Language Learning Mindsets

Dweck et al. (1995) stated that the mindset beliefs that an individual have in arts is distinct from that in maths, suggesting that mindset beliefs are domain-specific. In the language domain, the belief of the malleability of language learning ability refers to language mindset beliefs (Lou & Noels, 2019). In order to understand the particular nature of mindsets in the language learning area, and to conceptualise it, an exploratory study was undertaken by Mercer and Ryan (2010). They interviewed nine university students in-depth, who were in their first year, in relation to their beliefs on the nature of intelligence and language learning efforts. Their language mindsets were similar in characteristics to those observed in educational psychology. While some student responses indicated either a fixed or a growth mindset, other students have the characteristics of both with one being more dominant. The researchers, therefore, concluded that mindsets are best interpreted as a continuum, in which strong fixed mindsets and growth mindsets are placed at either extreme, while the majority of learners are in the middle of this continum. Thus, considering language learners as having a tendency towards a certain mindset in varying degrees is argued to be more appropriate. Murphy and Dweck (2010) supported this argument, stating that "people find entity and incremental views of intelligence plausible; however, they tend to endorse one theory more chronically than the other" (p.283). Furthermore, some studies found that language learners can have different mindsets for language skills, one mindset for speaking and another for writing (Mercer & Ryan 2010).

In the domain of writing, little attention has been given to writers' beliefs regarding the malleability of their writing ability (Bruning et al., 2013). The influence of implicit theories or mindset beliefs of writing on students' responses to writing instructions has been investigated by Limpo & Alves (2014). A planning intervention was provided to 109 fifth and sixth graders over a period of 12 weeks, in which they were taught strategies for both planning opinion essays, and self-regulation strategies. Findings showed that better writing performance was displayed by intervention students, in comparison to control students who received standard instructions for writing.

In addition, results showed that the more intervention students conceived writing as an incremental skill, the better the quality of their texts at the pre-test stage, and the more text quality improved throughout instruction. However, the researchers did not reliably relate the improvement of the quality of students writing to implicit theories only, as it might be resulted from a close teachers–students' collaboration during the intervention. Subsequently, Limpo and Alves (2017) tested the mediating role of achievement goals and self-efficacy when they examined the association between learners' beliefs in writing skill malleability and writing

performance. Findings indicated that the extent to which students pursued achievement of mastery goals in writing was predicted by their beliefs regarding the malleability of their writing skills and that mastery goals were positively associated with students' self-efficacy beliefs. Indeed, it appears that students are inclined to increase their writing skills when they view it as an incremental skill that can be developed.

2.6.2.2 Mindset Beliefs and Assessment Feedback

Despite the great general interest in the mindset framework during the last decade, limited empirical research has been conducted on the relationship between mindset and feedback (Forsythe & Johnson, 2017). In a recent study by Cutumisu and Lou (2020), they examined the role of mindset as a moderating effect on the relationship between university students' critical feedback-seeking and learning. They found different results regarding the influence of mindset on students' learning behaviour. They reported that there was not a correlation between students' fixed mindsets and their aim to seek critical feedback and revise or learning outcomes. It was anticipated that students who endorsed more of a fixed mindset would be more likely to select positive feedback, rather than criticism. However, it was also found that one's mindset in general has little to do with a student's orientation towards constructive feedback and that other variables could have led them to seek more constructive criticism or critical feedback. However, they found that when students endorse more growth mindset beliefs, the critical feedback had a significant impact on their learning. It did not influence their willingness to ask for a critical feedback but it affects the way they respond to it.

In a study by Forsythe and Johnson (2017), students' views on feedback and their personal characteristics were explored to examine the extent to which they can predict students' engagement, appreciation, and response towards the feedback they receive. More specifically, they looked at the effect of students' mindset on the way they respond to feedback, their ability to integrate feedback and the actions they take based on that information. In the study, questionnaires were distributed to 222 undergraduates who came from different disciplines, such as social science, arts and languages and business. The results showed that students' attitudes towards feedback and their behaviour are influenced by the way they interpret their ability. In addition, it was found that the number of fixed mindset students outweighs those who hold growth mindset beliefs in the population of the study. Results indicated that fixed mindset students were more likely to adopt defensive or maladaptive behaviours as a means to protect their self-esteem. Despite showing an interest in changing their behaviour as a response to feedback, they are working on detaching themselves from the thoughts and feelings surrounding their feedback. These defensive behaviours in fixed mindset students could also increase levels of

concern, as students' responses to feedback are possibly expected to provoke mechanisms that could play a role in restoring and protecting their self-esteem, and these mechanisms will be at the expense of learning opportunities (Crocker et al.,2006).

In the field of language learning, Papi et al. (2019) added that they were the first to investigate feedback-seeking behaviour in second language learning, focusing on achievement goals and mindset beliefs as predictors of feedback-seeking behaviour. The questionnaire results from 287 college students demonstrated that growth L2 mindsets and learning goals were strong predictors of feedback seeking behaviour using both monitoring (taking information through observing) and inquiry (asking for feedback directly) from teachers and others. Consequently, this suggests that learners are not concerned with their egos or self-esteem when seeking corrective feedback, as their focus is to develop their language learning competence. However, fixed L2 mindsets and performance goals used the method of inquiry when seeking feedback. Even though they perceive it to be of low learning value, as it will not lead to an improvement in their abilities, they tend to use it to improve their performance. Similarly, Another study by Papi et al. (2019) where feedback-seeking behaviour has also been investigated in a second-language writing study, which sampled 128 foreign language writers from a US university. It was found that growth language mindset predicted the value of feedback. It also indirectly predicted the strategies of feedback monitoring and feedback inquiry. In comparison, fixed language mindset predicted the cost of feedback seeking (Papi et al., 2019).

Another study in the context of ESL examined the correlation between language learners' implicit theories of writing intelligence, their writing motivation, and their orientation (i.e. attitudes toward written corrective feedback) (Waller & Papi, 2017). A questionnaire was developed and distributed to 142 ESL writers and the findings indicated significant relationships between all the constructs. Learners' orientation toward WCF was significantly predicted by their implicit theories of writing intelligence and students who have an incremental theory of writing intelligence (i.e. growth mindset) are keen to receive and seek more WCF, as it could help them to improve their writing competence. On the other hand, those who have an entity theory of writing intelligence (i.e. fixed mindset) demonstrated a tendency to avoid WCF, as they consider it as an 'invalidation' of the positive image they have been trying to reveal. Overall, findings of previous research has highlighted the significance of the learners' psychological aspects and the influence upon their responses to feedback. This has provided the base for the current study to be established taking into account the vital role of the psychological factors in the experiences of the international students with assessment feedback in EAP contexts.

2.7 Significance of the Study

Based on the aforementioned reviewed literature, the significant role of assessment feedback in students' learning experiences is apparent. Students seem to be aware of the importance of assessment feedback and its role in developing their writing skills. Nonetheless, findings of previous research indicate that even though students value assessment feedback, they do not respond to it in an effective manner. Several studies have highlighted that researching the factors that affect students' responses to assessment feedback may help in increasing the understanding of both their negative and positive responses. This understanding could form a base knowledge that can be used to enhance their experiences with assessment feedback in the UK. Unfortunately, it seems that there is a dearth in research regarding the reasons or factors that cause such variations in students' responses and influence learners' effective use of feedback in improving their academic writing. However, limited research appears to focus on exploring these factors and investigating the connection with students' responses to assessment feedback. Furthermore, previous studies relied heavily on using only single methods to investigate these factors in which they used either qualitative methods (e.g. Mahfoodh, 2017;Han and Hyland, 2019) or quantitative methods only (e.g. Forsythe & Johnson, 2017; Ruegg, 2018; Papi et al., 2019) with the former being the mostly used method.

The studies reported regarding the factors that influence students' feedback experiences did not aim solely to investigate such factors. They aimed to either explore or investigate students' preferences or perceptions towards feedback in general. These studies, however, were informative and provide information on certain factors that require further investigation. The current study examined self-efficacy and mindset beliefs, inter-alia, which are two of the important psychological factors that can affect students' responses to assessment feedback. More specifically, the study focused on exploring the influence of self-efficacy and mindset beliefs on students' responses to assessment feedback. The literature highlighted that these two constructs are related to each other. A model was proposed by Wood and Bandura's (1989) in which they hypothesized that individuals' mindset beliefs would influence their self-efficacy. This means that people with growth mindset beliefs can possess a higher level of self-efficacy than those with fixed mindset beliefs. Furthermore, the study by Limpo and Alves (2017) concluded that students' beliefs in writing skill malleability, achievement goals and self-efficacy influence their writing performance. They examined the mediating role of self-efficacy and achievement goals to find out the association between students' mindset beliefs and their writing performance. In addition, the moderated effect of mindset beliefs has been supported in previous recent studies (e.g. Cutumisu & Lou, 2020). They found that the correlation between seeking critical-feedback and revision and learning outcomes is moderated by students' mindset beliefs. However, the moderating effect of

mindset beliefs in relation to self-efficacy has not been examined yet. Therefore, the present study looks at this relationship. In addition, it explored the correlations between the emergent factors and students' emotional responses, which is also another underrepresented domain (Han & Hyland, 2019a).

More importantly, studies regarding the experience of international students abroad are very minimal and explore their educational experience in its entirety. Consequently, the current study has attempted to add to the research into this group of students by exploring their experiences with assessment feedback during their study in the UK, with specific relevance to their academic writing. The study contributes to the lack in knowledge by exploring and investigating the influence of these factors on students' responses to assessment feedback. It is also hoped that the results of this study contribute to the overall knowledge base in this field.

Furthermore, the present study contributes to the growing body of research that views students as significant agents in the feedback process. This is achieved by taking into account the way students respond to assessment feedback during their academic writing. In addition, the study adds to the extended literature on the influence of the psychological factors, as well as other underlying factors on students' ways to respond to assessment feedback. Beside this theoretical implication, the study's findings have practical implications as well, as it may be of interest to EAP teachers and administrators at tertiary institutions who are looking to improve ways to support the writing development of students. It may also be of interest to all the educators who are willing to gain an insight into the factors that influence students from benefiting from the provision of feedback, as it provides a comprehensive understanding of how students' responses are affected by various factors that relate to their current context and to their psychological state. This thesis, therefore, provides a platform for future research, which aims to build a complete picture of the process involved in students' response to assessment feedback.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the various meanings of assessment feedback including the meaning adopted in the present study in which it is seen as a process where information from an agent i.e. teachers is provided for students to help them improve their current state of learning. It also discussed the shift in feedback paradigms from being primarily concerned with it being provided by teachers into the focus on the learning and the active role of the students. It also discussed how this new feedback paradigm aligns with social constructivism theory. Moreover, it reviewed the previous models that focused on the characteristics of effective feedback and most importantly the ones that are concerned with the role of students and the factors that could

influence their responses to feedback. Students' perspectives on the constituents of effective feedback have been reviewed as well followed by the previous research conducted to examine their experiences of assessment feedback. It also discussed the impact of emotions on their responses to assessment feedback. In addition, the influence of self-efficacy and language mindset beliefs as two interrelated psychological aspects and their influence on students' responses to assessment feedback were illustrated. Finally, the chapter concluded with highlighting the significance of this study in relation to the literature review. The chapter that follows describes the methods and procedures used to achieve the aim of this study.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter provides an explanation of how the aim of this study was achieved; thus, a detailed explanation of the current study's design and methodology will be presented. This will commence with an explanation of the research design followed by a thorough description of the data collection instruments. Additionally, a detailed description of the interviews will be shown with an explanation of the design and content of the questionnaire. Subsequently, information regarding the target population of the study and how they have been selected will be presented. This is followed by a description of the piloting phase for both research instruments (interviews and questionnaires), followed by examining the validity and reliability of these instruments. After that, the data collection procedures and the methods used for analysis are presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief note on the ethical considerations that were taken into account when conducting this study.

3.1 Aim and Research Questions

The present study seeks to explore the experiences of international students with assessment feedback on their academic writing. The overarching aim is to explore how international students would describe their experiences with assessment feedback in relation to their academic writing in the UK pre-sessional courses. The study also aims to explore the students' responses and the possible reasons behind the variations in their responses toward assessment feedback. Therefore, the study has aimed to answer the following research questions upon its completion:

1- How do international students respond to assessment feedback on their academic writing?

2- What factors influence students' responses to assessment feedback in the UK pre-sessional courses?

3- To what extent do these factors predict students' responses to assessment feedback?

3.2 Research Paradigm and Design

In order to address the above research questions, this research was guided by the philosophical assumptions of the pragmatic paradigm (Peirce, 1878). Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) state that there are specifically two main paradigms present in research studies, which are interpretivism and post-positivism. In relation to the interpretive paradigm, it normally connects with qualitative research methods and tools (such as interviews), as these aim to gain a greater level of comprehension of individuals' perspectives regarding a studied social topic (Guba & Lincoln,

1994). The post-positivism paradigm supports the use of quantitative methods (i.e. experiments, surveys and numerical data), with the focus on being able to determine cause-and-effect relationships, such as the factors and/or variables involved in the outcomes (Merriam, 1998). Both paradigms have been shown to have strengths and weaknesses, and a conjunction of the two in a mixed-method form is more beneficial to produce richer findings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In the current study, the choice of pragmatism as a research paradigm has enabled the researcher to employ various methods and adopt different world views in order to analyse and interpret the data. In addition, it helps to remove restrictions of the existed dichotomy between the two above mentioned paradigms.

Within a research process, pragmatism is stated that "knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in post positivism); there is a concern with applications – 'what works' – and solutions to problems .... instead of methods being important, the problem is most important, and researchers use all approaches to understand the problem" (Creswell, 2003, p. 11). Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggested that "paradigms as basic belief systems are based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions" (p.107). These three assumptions are examined in the following section with reference to the pragmatic paradigm in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the international students' experiences with assessment feedback in the UK.

A. The Ontological Assumption

The nature of existence and reality is the concern of ontology. It seeks to answer the question "what is the form and nature of reality and therefore, what is there that can be known about it?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). The nature of the pragmatic paradigm is oriented and focuses on solving real world problems by investigating the multiple realities of those who are involved in it (Feilzer, 2010). In the current study, the purpose is to explore the experiences of international students with assessment feedback in EAP contexts and the potential variables that might affect these experiences, in order to determine what could work best for them. This study focuses on exploring the reasons that could lead to variations in students' experiences with assessment feedback and use the findings to provide practical suggestions that could lead to improvements in these experiences and increase feedback effectiveness. Accordingly, there are variations in the ontological part of this study, which was not restricted to one particular form of reality.

B. The Epistemological Assumption

The epistemological assumption is concerned with "what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.

108). Hence, it is concerned with the distinction between subjectivism and objectivism, which involves the influence of the researcher's values and experiences on the research process and findings. Following a pragmatic approach could potentially enable the acceptance of different points of views and reconcile these perspectives together. In the current study, subjectivity (see heading 3.7.1.1) was attained by the use of semi-structured interviews that helped in exploring the varied responses of the participants' to assessment feedback and the variables that affect them. The use of interviews offered "indirect information filtered through the views of the participants" (Creswell, 2014, p. 186). Objectivity, contrastingly, was obtained through the use of a close-ended questionnaire to determine the relationships between the resulted factors and students' responses to assessment feedback. Therefore, the objective and subjective perspectives on knowledge were combined in the current study.

C. The Methodological Assumption

The concern of the methodology relates to the means used to determine whatever is believed to be known. Pragmatism, as Creswell (2014) demonstrated, "opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis in the mixed methods study" (p.12). The pragmatic approach adopted in the current study allowed the application of a more functional approach and a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods, which provided the required priority to the research questions and problems. The researcher has a belief that a more comprehensive overview with better level data is produced through the use of pragmatism, as a mixed method design presents findings from both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

3.2.1 The Mixed Methods Approach

Various approaches can be adopted in order to gather data that will be used to infer and interpret, as well as to provide explanations and potential predictions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). In order to achieve the study aim, a mixed methods approach has been chosen, as it allows for the employment of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods (Creswell, 2014). Within this paradigm, the scope of investigation can be broader and the researcher gains the ability to draw more in-depth conclusions (Dornyei, 2007). Furthermore, higher levels of validated evidence can be obtained with the use of corroborative comparisons of the two sets of data using qualitative and quantitative means (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Clark, 2011). The reason for selecting this approach is that the use of these strategies reduced potential weaknesses that a solitary method can incur and increasing both internal and external levels of validity (Creswell, 2009; Dornyei, 2007). In addition, quantitative and qualitative forms function

together to produce a more thorough analysis with more robust advantages (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Moreover, a mixed methods approach is considered a powerful paradigm, where the most informative, balanced, complete, and useful research results can be provided. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) indicated that "mixed methods research is an intellectual and practical synthesis based on qualitative and quantitative research" (p.129). In addition, mixed methods approach has been shown to be "particularly suitable when researchers are interested in both, developing a detailed view of meaning of a phenomenon (in-depth qualitative analysis of a limited number of cases), and generalising the findings (quantitative methods)" (Spitzlinger, 2011, p.6).

Nevertheless, the use of mixed-methods and a pragmatic approach has several weaknesses that need to be addressed. The use of different methods results in the researcher being required to develop a deep understanding of more forms in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study (Creswell & Clark, 2011). This difficulty, however, has been overcome in the current study by registering in different modules and attending different workshops both inside and outside the university, which helped the researcher to increase the understanding of the methods used and the best ways for their analysis. Furthermore, conducting the piloting phase for the instruments used in this research enabled validation and helped the researcher to increase confidence levels in using the mixed-methods approach. A further disadvantage is that adopting such an approach requires substantial effort and time from the researcher to use separate methods to achieve the research purpose. However, the nature of the full-time PhD study provided me with the time needed to conduct this research.

3.2.2 The Sequential Exploratory Strategy

Mixed methods research designs utilise both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to collect and analyse data in a single research project, which is able to be conducted in a simultaneous/parallel or sequential order (Creswell, 2014; Dornyei, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In the former design, data collection and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative methods are conducted simultaneously; in the latter, which is adopted in the current study, "the researcher conducts a qualitative phase of a study and then separate quantitative phase or vice versa" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 46). Hence, one type of data serves as the basis for the second phase of data collection and analysis; this two-phase sequential design has been classified into three basic types: sequential explanatory strategy, sequential exploratory strategy and convergent design (Creswell, 2014).

In the sequential explanatory designs, quantitative research is conducted and analysed initially, followed by qualitative research. This design is used to explain the initial quantitative data results with qualitative research. Contrastingly, sequential exploratory designs start with a qualitative research phase that explores participants' views. The data of this phase is analysed first in order to develop into the second quantitative phase. The qualitative phase initially progresses a new instrument that best suits the sample under study or identifies specific variables that are required to be examined in a follow-up quantitative phase. In the convergent design, quantitative and qualitative data are merged; both forms of data are collected simultaneously and integrated in the interpretation phase (Creswell, 2014).

The exploratory sequential design was deemed appropriate to achieve the aim of the current study, as it provides the researcher with the opportunity to dig deeper into the participants' experiences and explore other variables with the intent of using the participants' views to develop and test a questionnaire with the sample of this study. The following figure (Figure 3.1) demonstrates the chosen design and steps for this research.

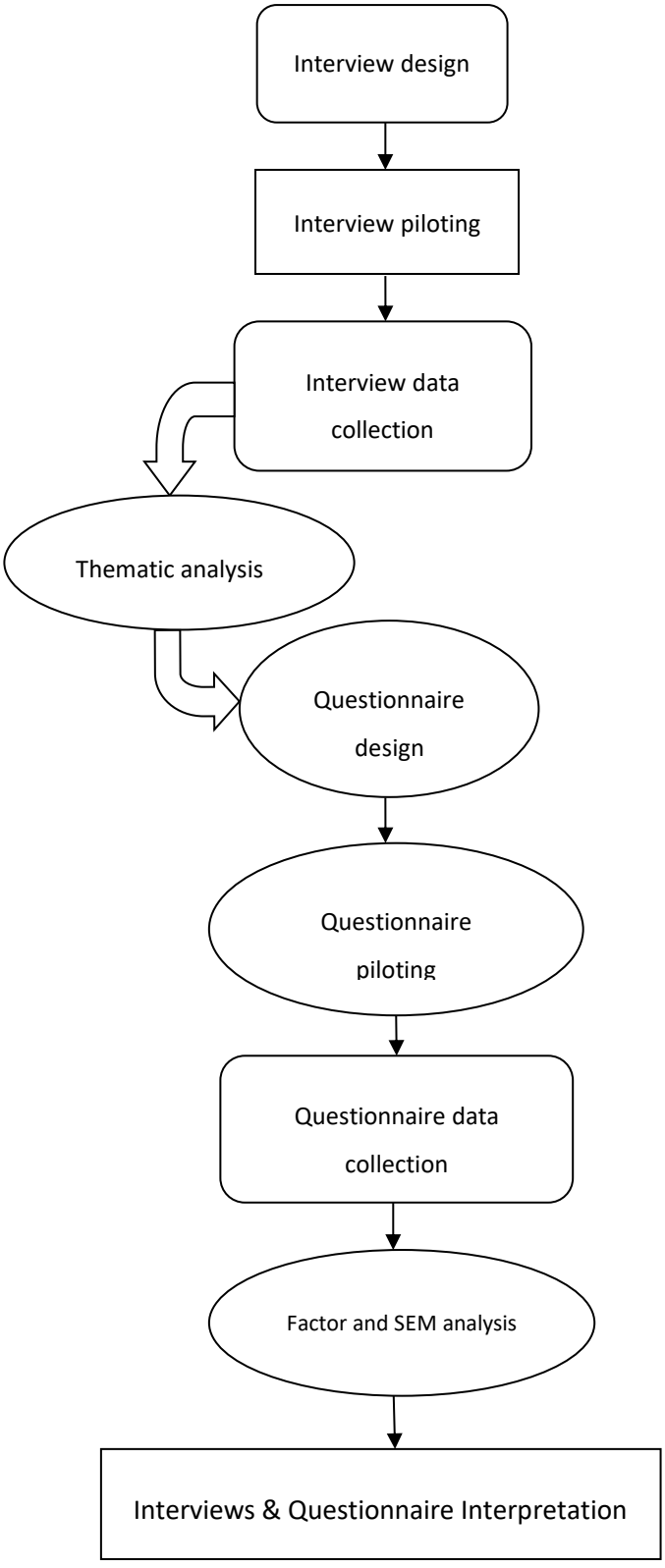


Figure 3-1 The Chosen Mixed Methods Design

The first phase is using interviews as a qualitative data collection method in order to explore the participants' responses in regard to their experiences with assessment feedback in its both forms (formative and summative). It also intended to explore the factors that could influence their responses. The resulted themes from the qualitative data were subsequently used to develop the

questionnaire in order to test the influence of the appeared factors on students' positive, as well as negative responses to assessment feedback.

3.3 Instruments

As aforementioned, the current study combined both qualitative and quantitative methods. The following is an explanation of the instruments used in the study: interviews and questionnaires.

3.3.1 Interviews

Due to the exploratory nature of the current study, the use of a qualitative method was the most beneficial form, as it helps to evaluate the reasons for the occurrence of a phenomenon, as well as how it occurs, together with presenting details of individuals' specific experiences (Creswell, 2003; Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). In the current study, the area of interest is based on exploring international students' experiences of assessment feedback in both forms of formative and summative, and how it affects their academic writing in English academic courses in the UK. Specifically, interviews are considered a valuable method of exploration into the construction and negotiation of meanings in a natural setting (Cohen et al., 2011); interviewing requires respect for and curiosity in regards to people's opinions, and a systematic effort to really listen to and understand what people tell you, with the aim of exploring and describing the quality and nature of how people behave, experience and understand a certain phenomenon (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). In addition, Brown (2005) notes that qualitative research has the potential to form hypotheses, which is a significant strength. Kvale (1996) also explains that the qualitative research interview is a base to develop knowledge.

In relation to exploring individual experiences, attitudes and perceptions, interviews are considered valuable sources that can provide natural information. Indeed, interviews are viewed as the "gold standard" in qualitative research (Silverman, 2006, p. 291); as the researcher is allowed to interact and share thoughts with participants while keeping the focus on the purpose of such conversations (Burgess, 1984; Dornyei, 2007). It is also considered among the main tools in qualitative research that not only is able to help in revealing participants' attitudes and behaviours, but also to go beyond and explore their feelings and thoughts in which this study is interested (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014; Patton, 2002). In accordance, in the current study, interviews were a good source of obtaining participants' views in regards to the feedback they received where they were able to express their feelings, expectations and attitudes. They were also able to share their thoughts and beliefs regarding their experiences in improving their academic writing with the assistance of the formative feedback specifically. In addition, this

method has been used widely when researching students' responses to assessment feedback, and was found effective in producing rich data (e.g. Hyland, 1998).

The interviews were semi-structured, directed by a list of predetermined questions that aim to help maintain interviews within similar parameters and leave space for other topics to be discussed. Dornyei (2007) states that semi-structured interviews help interviewers to be more flexible to introduce additional questions that might arise during the interviews in a more exploratory manner. Additionally, as Rabionet (2011) states, semi-structured interviews help to explore themes from the participants that are closely related to the study's research questions. Hence, the semi-structured interviews are a primary method of data collection during the initial study phase, which help to acquire in-depth information in relation to learners' experiences with assessment feedback.

The questions of the interview were developed based on the research questions, together with an extensive literature review. Previous research on learners' experiences with assessment feedback helps in developing the interview questions. However, general questions had been set in order to enable the participants to talk about their feedback experiences on their academic writing, as this would allow their personal experiences to be shared more freely and potentially for new constructs to emerge. The general prearranged questions were divided into two categories:

1- Students' previous feedback and writing experiences before they joined English for Academic Study (EAS).

2- Students' current perceptions and reactions to assessment feedback in their academic writing.

It became evident that the interest was not only in what influenced their experiences, but also in how they were affected and why they responded to the feedback in a particular way. Thus, it was important to listen carefully and ask for more details regarding any interesting or unusual responses. The participants were asked about their previous feedback and academic writing experiences, as the influence of such experiences on learners' responses to the feedback have been reported widely in literature; therefore, it was important to catch this information in advance. They were also asked about their perceptions on their academic writing. Moreover, questions were asked about their assessment feedback experiences, expectations, feelings and thoughts, their attitudinal and emotional reactions, the reasons for these reactions (see Appendix A). The participants were met after they had received their first formative feedback on their written assignments.

These predesigned questions were used as a tool to encourage participants to share and reflect on their experiences. The students were asked to elaborate and fully describe their experiences.

As aforementioned, the interviews were semi-structured and other questions have been generated during the interviews based on the participants' answers. The generated questions helped to ascertain more in-depth information and explore the reasons for the participants' responses, such as asking: why do you think no challenges have been found in using the feedback? What did you do with the comments that affected you negatively? Why? What does it indicate or mean receiving a negative feedback?.

The same participants were invited again for second interviews after they received their second formative feedback. In the first interviews, the participants were not asked to submit a revised draft after they had received the feedback. However, they were asked to submit a second revised one after the second formative feedback. Therefore, it was of great interest to meet them again to determine whether any new data would emerge. In addition, the aim was to reach a saturation point in which no new data was found; Sandelowski (2008, p. 875) labels this 'informational redundancy'. A similar description of data saturation has been provided by Grady (1998) in which he states that:

> "New data tend to be redundant of data already collected; in interviews, when the researcher begins to hear the same comments again and again, data saturation is being reached... it is then time to stop collecting information and to start analysing what has been collected" (p.26).

Furthermore, Given (2016) considers saturation as the point at which "additional data do not lead to any new emergent themes" (p. 135). Thus, relatively similar questions were arranged prior to the second interviews. In addition, after participants received their final grades along with the summative feedback, they were invited for the third interviews. The main purpose was to explore whether students' responses and emotional reactions towards assessment feedback would remain the same or change. Accordingly, similar questions to the second interviews were asked, along with new ones that were related to the context of summative feedback (see Appendix C for interview sample).

3.3.2 Questionnaires

The current research used a questionnaire as an instrument to collect data for the quantitative phase. Questionnaires are "information-collection methods used to describe, compare or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences and behaviour" (Fink, 2013, p. 1). It is a quantitative research method that aims to collect self-reported data from individuals, and the typical instrument used for this purpose is an online questionnaire. The purpose of using questionnaires in the current study was to determine the relationship between the factors that

emerged from the qualitative phase, and students' responses to assessment feedback more generally. It was primarily adopted because it is considered an efficient way for collecting data from a larger sample in an easy and quick manner (Dawson, 2006). Furthermore, the questionnaire as a method is considered less expensive and provides more privacy protection, due to the anonymity it offers (Cohen et al., 2011; Kumar, 2019). Nonetheless, there are several limitations that questionnaires suffer from. The following is an illustration of these limitations and how they have been addressed.

3.3.2.1 Limitations of Questionnaires

Among the limitations of the questionnaires is the vagueness of its content, which could potentially be due to the wording of certain items. Gillham (2008) states that the variation in respondents' answers is due to the way that items are worded, which often occurs when assessing abstract concepts, such as perceptions and attitudes. Further limitations include low return rates, lack of opportunity to clarify the meaning to respondents, missing or inaccurate data (Kumar, 2019); and the challenge of providing certain serious responses that are not fallacious (Gillham, 2008). Certain steps have been taken to address these limitations and improve the collected data.

- The purpose of the questionnaire has been explained to the participants, emphasising the importance of providing honest responses in order to achieve the desired outcomes that the study aimed to ascertain.
- Multi-items scales were used in the questionnaire to make sure that all items were clear and understandable, following the recommendations of utilising a minimum of two items to focus on the areas of investigation, where the target item is questioned various times from acutely alternate perspectives, which also helps to avoid the fallibility of single items (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012).
- A piloting phase was undertaken with a sample from the same targeted population.
- Instead of a paper-based survey, an online web survey (Smart Survey) was implemented, as it would help to control the tools and improve response rates (Scornavacca, Becker, & Barnes, 2004). In this method, particular filters and/or requirements are able to be defined, which can include entering numbers/letters to open-ended questions, or by placing a question as either optional or obligatory, which increases participants' rates of response, as they are unable to proceed to the next question when an obligatory one remains unanswered. Further, web surveys are automated data forms of entry that help to save time, and produce greater levels of data accuracy (Bryman, 2016).

- Rather than through a generic number system, written responses were used (agree, disagree) in order to avoid misrepresentation of an individual's opinions, as stated by (Swain, Weathers, & Niedrich, 2008).

3.3.2.2 Questionnaire Design

As previously stated, the qualitative results informed and facilitated the design of the quantitative phase of the current study. The questionnaire consisted of ten multi-item scales based on the main higher-level themes that emerged in the qualitative phase of the study: students' cognitive responses (CR), affective responses (AFR), and behavioural responses (BR) towards assessment feedback. This was also combined with their responses towards critical feedback (CF), external variables including quality and quantity of feedback (QQF) and mode of the feedback (MF), students' perceptions of the teacher's role (TR); and finally, learner-related variables, including their previous learning experience (PLE), self-efficacy in writing (SE) and language mindset beliefs (LMB) (see Appendix B).

Involving learners in the item-generating process by focusing on their ideas and perceptions is considered a standard recommendation in questionnaire design theory that can help in improving the instrument (Dörnyei, 2003). Therefore, some of the items were developed based on the results of the qualitative phase of the study, while others were adapted from reliable well-known questionnaires in the field. The BR or use of feedback scale was adapted from Gibbs and Simpson's (2004) assessment experience questionnaire (4 items. $\alpha = .74$). The CF scale (6 items, $\alpha = .94$) was adopted from Can and Walker (2011); the SE scale was adopted (7 items $\alpha = .847$) from Bruning, Dempsey, Kauffman, et al. (2013); while the LMB scale was adapted from Lou and Noels (2017). For the adapted scales, some minor modifications were made in order to make the items more precise for the context of the study. For LMB, referring to *language learning* was replaced with *academic writing skill*, while for the BR scale, frequent words such as "always" and "usually" were added.

The questionnaire was comprised of "closed-ended" items, which asked the respondents to choose from continuum of responses by ticking the appropriate box. Thus, it was decided that a Likert scale was the most relevant form of measurement, as it presents "a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response, whilst still generating numbers" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 386). Moreover, this is a closed-ended form that includes a characteristic statement that functions together with 5-6 options that respondents have in order to show whether they "agree" or "disagree", as this ranges from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (Dornyei, 2007). Correspondingly, in the current study, the self-report items were measured using a five-point Likert-scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Some additional questions in regard to personal and background information were also included, such as students' ages, gender, their mother tongue, their major, their previous experiences with feedback and academic writing and proficiency levels. All these demographic questions were selected based on previous research on teacher feedback regarding students' academic writing.

3.3.2.3 Description of Scales

The following is a brief description of the scales/variables used in the first version of the questionnaire which provides an explanation of what each variable represents.

1- Cognitive Responses to Assessment Feedback (CR): this scale measures students' thoughts, beliefs and values towards assessment feedback.

2- Affective Responses to Assessment Feedback (AFR): this scale measures students' emotions or feelings (positive or negative) regarding feedback.

3- Behavioural Responses to Assessment Feedback (BR): this scale measures students' behavioural intentions or the actions that can be done (possible acts) for using the feedback.

4- Students' Responses to Critical Feedback (CF): this scale measures students' responses and reactions to negative or critical feedback.

5- Quality & Quantity of Feedback (QQF): this scale measures students' opinions regarding feedback its clarity, specificity and quantity.

6- Mode of the Feedback (MF): this scale measures students' preferences for the type of assessment feedback, whether oral or written.

7- Teacher Role (TR): this scale measures students' perceptions of the teacher role as a feedback provider.

8- Previous Learning Experience (PLE): this scale measures the influence of the students' previous learning experience on their responses to teacher feedback.

9- Self-efficacy in Writing (SE): this scale measures students' confidence in their ability to perform successfully in academic writing in terms of ideas and conventions.

10- Language Learning Mindset Beliefs (LMB): this scale measures the tendency towards either a growth or a fixed mindset. The former describes people believing that intellectual abilities can be changed and developed, while the later describes those who believe that abilities are innate and cannot be changed. A high score in this scale represents a more tendency towards fixed mindset

beliefs. Scores for growth mindset items were correspondingly reversed prior to statistical analysis. See (Table 3.1) below:

Table 3-1: Questionnaire Scales and Items

Scales	**No. of Items**	**Sample Items**
Cognitive responses to assessment feedback	5	Teacher feedback is useful
Affective responses to assessment feedback	5	I always feel satisfied about my teachers' feedback, it is like what I expected
Behavioural responses to assessment feedback	4	When I received my teachers' feedback I tried to work on all the comments
Students' responses to critical feedback	6	I am scared to receive critical/negative written feedback
Quality & quantity of feedback	6	Receiving lots of comments and suggestions is useful to develop my writing
Students' preferences of the mode of the feedback	4	Talking to my tutor helps me to understand the written comments
Students' perceptions of teachers' roles	7	Teacher contradictory feedback is one of the reasons why I ignore it.
Previous learning experiences	4	I know how to use teacher feedback, due to my previous experiences
Self-efficacy in writing	7	I can structure my written assignments
Language learning mindset beliefs	10	My natural ability to learn academic writing will always remain the same.

3.4 Sampling and Participants

The following is a description of the sample of this study for both the qualitative phase as well as the quantitative phase. It also includes justifications for choosing this sample.

3.4.1 The Qualitative Phase

When designing the sample plan for a research topic and setting, various issues need to be taken into account. According to Dornyei (2007) viability issues, such as money, time and respondent availability are important aspects that should be considered. The choice of the sample was selective based on a number of reasons, which are explained below. The target population of the current study is international students who are studying in EAP courses in the UK. This context of study was selected mainly because the focus of the programme is on developing students' academic writing and, therefore, feedback is received formatively. Another reason is that students came from different backgrounds and different disciplines, which will enrich the data acquired. Consequently, purposive sampling or selective sampling is deemed appropriate to achieve the goal of the study, as it will help to explore the experiences of a variety of students who came to continue their study in the UK. This is a nonprobability sampling technique in which the participants are chosen purposefully. Patton (2002) states that it can be assumed that qualitative inquiry samples are selected purposefully, in order to provide cases that have more in-depth evidence.

Regarding the sample size, the number of students who attended the chosen course amounted to 22, including students from China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; all of them have been invited to join the interviews. The advice by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (1994) was followed, as they suggested that, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding, the number of participants should not be specified, as sampling continues until no new substantive information is gained. This form of sampling is known as saturation, which is the primary emphasis of qualitative research methods. Accordingly, 10 participants were included in this phase of the study. The participants who agreed to took part in the study were from China and Saudi Arabia only. Therefore, caution needs to be taken when generalizing the findings of this study as it does not represent the whole population of international students in the UK. It is worth mentioning that the saturation point was reached following the interview with participant number seven. However, three more participants were added in order to ensure that additional data do not appear, which would not develop the concepts found any further, but merely repeat what had already been revealed (Dornyei, 2007). Information from the participants and their characteristics are presented below (Table 3.2):

Table 3-2: Participants' Demographic Information

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Discipline	Nationality	Study level	IELTS Score	Previous Feedback Experience	
A	Female	25-30	English Studies	Saudi	Postgraduate	5.5	No experience	
B	Male	30-35	Business	Saudi	Postgraduate	5.5	No experience	
C	Female	20-25	Business Analysis and Management	Chinese	Postgraduate	6.5	Limited experience	
D	Female	20-25	Design Management	Chinese	Postgraduate	4.5	Limited experience	
E	Female	30-35	Business	Saudi	Postgraduate	6	Limited experience	
G	Female	25-30	Computer Science	Saudi	Postgraduate	5.5	Limited experience	
H	Female	25-30	Risk Management	Saudi	Postgraduate	6	Limited experience	
J	Female	20-25	Business Management	Chinese	Undergraduate	5	No experience	
F	Male	25-30	Applied Linguistics	Saudi	Postgraduate	5	No experience	Piloting
I	Female	30-35	Applied Linguistics	Saudi	Postgraduate	5.5	No experience	

The participants are studying in an English for Academic Study (EAS) course, which targets international students who intend to continue their undergraduate or postgraduate study in the UK, and would like to improve their language and academic study skills prior to starting their degree programme. These courses help to familiarise learners with the British academic context in terms of essay writing, listening to lectures, note taking, attending seminars, utilisation of the library, time management, and many other skills. The EAS course is divided into three parts and

students can apply for all the three parts or part two and three according to their IELTS scores. Each part of the course lasts for 12 weeks, although the IELTS requirement differs for each part. The minimum IELTS entry score for part A is 4.5 overall, part B is 5.0, and part C is for those who did not achieve the required level for their degree programmes in part B.

Participants of the current study were all selected from level 2 or part B for two particular reasons. Firstly, the language proficiency of the participants at this stage can help them communicate much better, as the interviews were conducted in English. The English language was chosen because it was the common language between the researcher and the participants. In addition, the participants showed their preferences to conduct the interviews in English. Secondly, the focus of the programme at this level is on developing students' listening, reading and writing skills in academic English, which contrasts from part A, which is considered an introductory course for the general language skills. Consequently, choosing level B can assist the aim of the study to be fulfilled, as it concentrates on the assessment feedback on academic writing.

3.4.2 The Quantitative Phase

The sample selection for this phase of the study was convenient, as it was selective rather than randomised. This means that sampling is done on the basis of the availability and ease of data collection. In other words, the group of individuals who are accessible to the investigator (Dornyei, 2007). The target population of the current study, as previously mentioned, was international students who are studying in pre-sessional courses in the UK including both undergraduates and postgraduates students (see Table 4.2). This context of the study was selected mainly due to the focus of these programmes being on developing students' academic writing and, therefore, feedback is received formatively, as well as summatively. Regarding quantitative research studies and the size of the sample, it has been noted by Dörnyei and Csizér (2012) that the optimal size can change between different questionnaires, which needs to be decided upon by the researcher after following a few key guidelines. Initially, the researcher needs to plan for potential unplanned circumstances, and to contemplate different subgroups within the sample, which can often act differently amongst each other. Moreover, the research needs to provide a sample with a sufficient amount of learners in order for the findings to be at a significant level, and for the sample results to have a normal level of distribution, with sampling procedures providing a cross-section range of a total of 1%-10% of the population.

In addition, Dornyei (2007) mentioned that the number of participants in a quantitative study depends on the type of study. In the current study, it is essential to provide a sufficient sample

size for the factor analysis to be performed. For exploratory factor analysis (EFA), it is recommended that 50 is the minimum number of the sample size in order for EFA to be conducted (de Winter, Dodou, & Wieringa, 2009). Comparatively, for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) to produce reliable results, there is no specific agreement regarding the sample size, although it is recommended to have 200 cases, as it is considered the basic requirement (Hair, Black, Babin, et al., 2009). Following DeVellis (2003) suggestion that the greater the sample size, the more powerful are the statistical tests, 211 participants were included in the analysis of EFA, while for the CFA there were 436 observations.

3.5 Piloting

There was a piloting phase prior the main study. The following is a detailed description of this phase for both instruments that were used in this study.

3.5.1 Interview Piloting

A pilot study was undertaken prior to collecting data for the main study in order to examine the appropriateness of the interview questions in terms of content clarity, procedures, and the results that it might yield. The significance of piloting has been widely emphasised in the literature as a crucial step to address any potential practical issues (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002), in order to strengthen interview questions by identifying any limitations or flaws, and to modify them (Kvale, 1996). It is “a small-scale version of the real thing, a try-out of what you propose so its feasibility can be checked” (Robson, 2002, p. 185). Therefore, predesigned interview questions have been used in the piloting stage to ensure that they answer the research questions. Two PhD colleagues reviewed the questions in relation to its language, wording and relevance; following this step, minor modifications have been implemented.

Subsequently, after obtaining the permission needed, two participants have been invited to conduct the pilot study, which was conducted one month before the main data collection. Participants were selected based on purposive sampling and their willingness to participate. More information about participants is available in (Table 3.2) above. After setting the time and place for the interviews, participants were met individually, and they were provided with the information sheet and asked to sign the consent forms (see Appendices D and E). They were also informed that the interviews would be recorded and the data would be treated confidentially.

The piloting phase aimed to test the appropriateness of the questions. Therefore, short notes were taken during the interviews. Moreover, participants provided useful comments on the interview questions. Most of their comments were on the clarity of some of the questions which

were difficult to understand without further explanation. This is due to their language level that could not help them to understand some of the vocabulary used. Another comment was on the repetition of some of the questions, as it has been determined that they provided similar answers. Subsequently, some of these questions were edited to suit the participants' language proficiency levels, as well as to enhance clarity and comprehension, while others were deleted due to repetition.

After completing the pilot phase, respondents' verbatims were transcribed and initial thematic analysis were applied. This step was beneficial as it helped in the exploration of the nature of the data and for the researcher to become familiar with the analysis procedures. Results of this initial analysis showed some recurrent themes that were apparent in the data of the main study as well. For instance, learners' positive responses to formative feedback, students' perceptions of the teacher's role, learner's expectations, goal orientations, and previous learning experiences were also found in the main study findings. In general, the pilot study was a crucial step that enabled the examination of the accuracy of the instrument, as well as helping the researcher to notice mistakes and, thus, to improve the skills required to undertake the following interviews. Therefore, questions have been refined and modified. Moreover, the researcher consulted certain recommended studies that assisted in the preparation stage and helped to develop required skills required to devise a rich set of data from the interviews.

3.5.2 Questionnaire Piloting

Similar to the qualitative phase of the current study, a pilot stage was carried out to examine the appropriateness of the questionnaires to be used in the study in terms of content clarity, layout and procedures. The importance of piloting has been widely emphasized in the literature as a crucial step to check the clarity of wording, the validity and reliability of the items, the time and method specified for collecting data (e.g. Creswell, 2009; Dornyei, 2007; Loewen & Plonsky, 2015). Based on these considerations, piloting was administered to the instruments of the current study (the questionnaire).

Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009) suggested that piloting of questionnaire items is implemented by asking 3-4 people to review the items and to provide feedback that provides initial insight into the clarity and usability of questionnaire items. Thus, 4 PhD researchers in Modern Languages and Education were asked to review the questionnaire. Each of them reviewed it separately, while the researcher was present to ask in regard to any confusion or misunderstanding. The participants were also asked to comment on the questionnaire format and layout. Even though most of the questions were clear and easy to understand, valuable comments were provided that helped to

modify certain items that were potentially ambiguous or lengthy and complex. Based on their recommendations and comments, some other items were rephrased, and some phrases were omitted, with different items made shorter and easier to understand. In terms of layout, the selections were placed in a vertical, rather than a horizontal order, which was easier to follow and more compatible with the mobile version.

Subsequently, the questionnaire was piloted informally with two students from the sample, and it was noted that the repetition of some questions was considered boring and, therefore, these were changed to emphasise their differences. This step was also beneficial, as it helped to check the suitability of the language level. Both respondents agreed on the clarity of the items, except the word "emotive" in one of the statements that measures learners' self-efficacy. The participants could not understand the word "emotive" in this statement *"I can avoid emotive language when I write"*, as they were not aware that it is a synonym of the word emotional. Thus, the word was changed to "emotional" to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding. Following this, the final electronic version was distributed to a larger group of individuals who shared the same characteristics as the target population of the study. Following Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009) suggestion for the typical number for questionnaire piloting should range between 50 (+/- 20) as aforementioned, 50 participants were included in this phase. The questionnaire was distributed during the summer of 2018 through the assistance of EAP teachers at the University of Southampton. All the participants had to sign the consent forms, where they were informed that their information would be treated confidentially and for research purposes only. The results of this phase are presented in Section 3.6.2.

3.6 The Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

This section discusses the validity and reliability of the methods used in the current research. According to Nunan (1992) "reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained from a piece of research. Validity, on the other hand, has to do with the extent to which a piece of research actually investigates what the researcher purports to investigate" (p. 14).

3.6.1 Validity and Reliability of Interviews

Creswell (2003) argues that validity is considered "as a strength of qualitative research", whereas "reliability and generalisability play a minor role" and are used "in a limited way" in a qualitative inquiry (p. 196). *Credibility* and *dependability* are the terms that are sometimes used in qualitative research to refer to validity and reliability, respectively. In order to ensure the validation and accuracy of the results obtained from qualitative methods, there are various strategies that have

been proposed by different researchers (i.e. Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). One of these strategies is the triangulation of data sources, which was employed in the current study by combining qualitative data (obtained from semi-structured interviews) and quantitative data (from questionnaires), in order to provide stronger evidence of the study findings. Another strategy that was recommended in the literature and employed in the current study was the use of member-checking. Further, the final themes, along with their descriptions, were presented to the participants, and they were asked to read through them. They all confirmed that the themes were accurate, as it reflected what was felt and resonated with their experiences. Another employed strategy was peer debriefing, where one of the researcher's colleagues was located to check the data. This was used as another strategy to ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis of the interviews (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This step also helped to ensure that key points had not been overlooked or overemphasised.

3.6.2 Validity and Reliability of Questionnaires

Through piloting, content validity and face validity can be established. Content validity is measured to determine the appropriateness of the items or scales by asking a set of reviewers who have some understanding about the subject matter (Litwin & Fink, 2003), while face validity is checked to determine "the familiarity of our instrument, and how easy it is to convince others that there is content validity to it" (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015, p.108). Both the content and face validity were checked in the piloting phase, when four colleagues were asked to assess the constructs of the questionnaire following the suggestion of many researchers (e.g. Johnson & Christensen, 2004), who referred to asking some experts to judge the suitability of an assessment tool. Some modifications were made after the piloting phase based on the recommendations of the participants. Consequently, two other PhD colleagues were asked to check the instrument again and examine the appropriateness of the constructs. They both reported that all the items are related to the measured constructs. Therefore, it was decided that the questionnaire achieved an acceptable content and face validity. In addition, the reliability of the questionnaire (i.e. the internal consistency of the items in each scale) was assessed (Creswell, 2003). Hence, the SPSS version 26.0 was used to analyse the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients, which helped to examine numerous multi-item scales' reliability coefficients (see Table 3.3).

Table 3-3: The Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient of the Questionnaire's Scales

Scales	No of items	Cronbach's α
Cognitive Responses	**5**	**.876**
Affective Responses	**5**	**.705**
Behavioural Responses	**4**	**.880**
Responses to Critical Feedback	**6**	**.912**
Quantity & Quality of Feedback	**6**	**.501**
Mode of the Feedback	**4**	**.480**
Teacher Role	**7**	**.701**
Previous Learning Experience	**4**	**.603**
Language Mindset Beliefs	**10**	**.731**
Self-efficacy in Writing	**7**	**.948**
Total	**58**	**.733**

It can be seen that the majority of the scales showed a reasonable reliability ranging from .6 and .9 except for the scales of the quantity and quality of feedback and mode of feedback. It has been decided not to remove these scales at this stage as this study will run an exploratory factor analysis and the reliability of the scales will be assessed again (See chapter 4 for more information).

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The procedures that were taken to conduct the main study is demonstrated in this section.

3.7.1 Procedures for Conducting the Interviews

The main study took place in the beginning of the EAS course in January 2018. The data collection process started after completing the Faculty of Arts Ethics Approval Form provided by the University of Southampton (see Appendices D & G). Following this, an email was sent to the EAS programme director to gain permission and help to gain access to the students. The researcher was presented to the students at the end of the class and they were invited to take part in the study. For those who were interested in participating, they were asked to provide their contact details, and they were assured that participation in the interviews would be completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any moment. The participants were contacted to arrange interviews and dates, which were scheduled to fit students' timetables, and not to disrupt their regular classes. All interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis in a separate quiet office in the university. Students were initially thanked for their interest in participation, and after

explaining the purpose and procedures of the interviews, participants were informed about the issue of confidentiality and asked to sign a consent form; they were also provided with an information sheet in which study purpose was explained in detail (see Appendix E). Some of the participants who spoke Arabic (the native language of the researcher) used some phrases in their first language in the interviews in order to express themselves freely and fluently and to avoid any misunderstanding.

The first interview took place a few days after the participants had received their first formative feedback, which was in week 7. The interviews started with general warm-up questions in relation to the participants' experiences in learning English in the current course in order to establish a comfortable and friendly atmosphere. Pre-prepared interview questions were used as a guide and other questions were asked during the interview based on students' responses. Interviews were audio-recorded, and notes were taken to avoid any unforeseen in recording. Students were subsequently thanked again at the end of the interview and reminded that the second phase of the interview would take place after they received their second formative feedback.

In order to avoid losing the recorder or the data, the recordings have been saved on the researcher's personal computer under a protected file. The data was then transcribed and a memo attached to each participant that included their demographic information, summaries about their feedback experiences and on any interesting events or comments. This process of attaching memos to raw data that comes in a form of short narratives helps the researcher to document any thoughts regarding data throughout all stages of analysis and generate a rich understanding of the data set (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). This step facilitated the comparisons made later between the first and second interviews' data, as well as to check the saturation point. One month later, the same participants were contacted again to arrange the second interviews after they received their second feedback. Moreover, memos for participants were revisited in order to clarify any ambiguities and elaborate on any interesting quotes.

Dates and times were scheduled that fit the timetables for those who were willing to take part in the interviews. Participants were met one by one in a similar quiet room in the university; they were welcomed and thanked for their participation and commitment. The interviews started with general questions regarding their impressions of the recent feedback that they had received. The questions were also prepared in advance, which guided the interviews, while other questions were asked based on the students' responses during the interviews. They were also asked why they responded to some of their experiences in a certain manner. They were thanked again at the end of the interviews. In total, there were from 60 to 80-minutes recordings for each participant by the end of the second data collection wave. Following this, after one month, participants

received their summative feedback, along with the grades. They were keen to keep the researcher updated and to share their experiences. A total of 8 participants agreed to meet again and conduct the final interviews which followed similar procedures to the previous ones.

3.7.1.1 Researcher Role

It is suggested by scholars (e.g. Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) that the researcher can take various roles when conducting research. These roles can differ from being a member of the researched group (an insider), to being a stranger to the group being researched (an outsider). In the current study, a balance was trying to be reached between my position as being an insider and an outsider as well. Being an EAS student who was enrolled in an EAP course in the past and in the same context makes me an insider researcher. However, my role as a non-participant of the EAS course being researched helped me to maintain objectivity. It should be noted that the position of being an insider-researcher benefited the study in various ways. One of the main advantages is that I have a good understanding of the educational practices of the context of the study. In addition, this role facilitates gaining the participants' trust as I share some of their characteristics. According to Young (2004), it can be difficult for the researcher to maintain participants' trust if they do not have any common key features such as gender, language or educational level.

Having recognised the researcher influence on data analysis, the effect of my role on participants' responses was tried to be minimised to ensure validity. The possibility of this effect can increase in qualitative research as building warm and friendly relationship is something the researcher would seek, to encourage disclosure of information and experiences by participants. Given that interviews are based on human interaction, the impact of the researcher on participants' responses seems undeniable. However, I was aware of the necessity to detach myself from the research process to avoid any influence on the participants' responses and reach a balance between considering my perspective and maintaining a level of sensitivity as a researcher. For example, my role as a researcher and not as an instructor or a student from the same level of the participants helped me to be objective. This position means that I do not have a role that might discourage the participants or make them worried to take part in the research (see Appendix C for an illustration of my interviewing strategy).

3.7.2 Procedures for administering the questionnaires

The current study aims to explore the experiences of international students with assessment feedback in the pre-sessional courses in the UK. Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed electronically to ensure a high response rate. The link was sent to different groups of students allocated in different pre-sessional courses around the UK. The intention initially was to target

students at the University of Southampton. Due to time constraints, however as the pre-sessional course has fixed starting dates (usually summertime), it was obligatory to search for other available or on-going pre-sessional courses around the UK. Thus, a search for these running courses was conducted through the assistance of Saudi clubs in the UK, who helped in sending the link of the questionnaire to all the students who were studying in the pre-sessional courses at the time of data collection. Subsequently, a question was added at the beginning of the questionnaire *"Have you recently received a written feedback from your teacher on your written assignment"?,* and the students had to indicate whether it was formative feedback or summative. This question was important in ensuring that only the targeted populations would answer the questionnaire (see table 4.2 in the results chapter for more information on the pattern of responses actually achieved).

In the questionnaire, there was a consent form outlining the aim of the study and to inform that participation in this study is voluntary and all data obtained would be treated confidentially and used for research purposes only. They were all provided with consent forms to sign that present information on study details and ethical issues (see Appendix F).

3.8 Data Analysis

As the present study employed a sequential exploratory design, qualitative data analysis was undertaken initially, as the results were used to facilitate the design of the questionnaires. This was then followed by quantitative data analysis.

3.8.1 Analysis of the Interview Data

Following data transcription, thematic analysis was implemented of the qualitative data while adhering to its general guideline principles. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that this method is vital in identifying specific themes from data sets, which are subsequently organised and detailed accordingly. It has been stated that "applied thematic analysis approach is a rigorous, yet inductive, set of procedures designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible" (Guest et al., 2012, p.15). In total, there have been six individual stages for the thematic analysis that have been presented by Braun and Clarke (2006): comprehension of the data sets; coding the data by identifying initial codes; the creation of relevant themes from the data; design of a data map in order to present a review of the themes; names and definitions provided to the themes; and the last stage is producing a final report.

Thematic analysis was done inductively and deductively. The data was read several times before initial codes were provided to the transcripts, which was undertaken through the NVivo Version

11 that functions for coding of the full set of interviews. A single paragraph was used as a unit of analysis, which was for complete answers to each interview questions; with numerous codes given to different responses. Additionally, the transcripts of the interviews were reread in order to provide a more in-depth assessment of the codes following the first round of coding. Subsequently, the analysis was conducted on the broader level of themes where codes have been sorted into potential themes with data extracts placed together based on the main themes. This was an iterative process as the data and emergent findings were revisited several times by rereading the different transcripts. Following the creation of the different themes and subthemes (see Chapter 4), the themes were reviewed and the relationships between the codes, themes and subthemes were reviewed in order to determine how these themes developed together, with other themes moved to provide the key themes. After the development of adequate data representation, theme names were then reviewed and refined after comparing them to previous literature to determine whether the data extracts were coherent and internally consistent. This enabled the possibility to adjust the themes when necessary, and to provide a final written report that analysed the whole set of data under these themes.

3.8.2 Analysis of the Questionnaires' Data

The data was analysed using factor analysis (FA), which consists of a number of statistical techniques, the aim of which is to simplify complex sets of data. It is an analytic statistical tool that can be used to discover the main underlying dimensions of a set of variables, attributes or responses (Oppenheim, 1992). According to Cohen et al. (2011), FA is a method of grouping together variables that have something in common and is a process by which the set of variables is reduced. It refers to a group of statistical procedures which are designed to determine the number of different constructs assessed by a group of measures. These unobservable constructs are referred to as common factors (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2011). Therefore, FA is considered a worthy analytical tool that can help in identifying a scale's important properties and empirically determine how many constructs or latent variables underlie a set of items (DeVellis, 2003). In addition, FA is deemed an appropriate tool for new discoveries, theoretical investigation and test construction (Kline, 1994). Additionally, in scale development, FA is considered an essential tool that could enable either the determination, refinement or reduction of the number of factors underlying a set of items (Pallant, 2005).

In deciding that FA was suitable for the current study, both exploratory and confirmatory analysis approaches were chosen, as they are appropriate for the research objectives. Selecting either exploratory factor analysis (EFA) or confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), or both, relies on the objectives of the study, whether it is to reduce the amount of variables, explore the relationships

between them or to develop theoretical constructs (Williams, Onsman, & Brown, 2012). EFA is a data-driven approach used to determine an appropriate number of factors, as well as the pattern of factor loadings, especially when there is little theoretical or empirical basis for the number of factors and variables that these factors are likely to influence. CFA is usually driven based on a theoretical and empirical basis with a priori specification of the factor loadings (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum et al., 1999). In addition, the scales contained a mix of positively and negatively worded items. The negatively worded items are indicated in (Appendix B) with the code "(R)" which means that these statements have been reversed. During data preparation, these items were reverse scored so as to accommodate statistical data analysis.

3.8.2.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA was used in the current study to reach satisfactory conclusions in regards to the number and nature of the main constructs and their items (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2011). EFA is appropriate for new scales as well, and it could be used when a researcher has no potential prediction for the amount of constructs to be measured (Costello & Osborne, 2005). In the current study, some of the factors that appear in the questionnaire were developed based on the interview responses. Even though some of the questionnaire items are adapted and adopted from previous research, the current study has been applied in a different context with a different population and, thus, EFA is appropriate for this study. Additionally, EFA prepares the variables to be used for later statistical analysis (i.e. CFA).

Before interpreting the results, it is important to decide on the factor rotation to be performed and whether it is orthogonal or oblique (DeVellis, 2003). Orthogonal rotation assumes that the factors are uncorrelated and independent of one another statistically; while oblique rotation assumes the factors are correlated. Kline (1994) suggested that in case a simple structure resulted from an orthogonal rotation, then the Varimax rotation package should be chosen, which is the one performed in the current study. The other option is to choose an oblique rotation with the Direct Oblimin package if this provides a better simple structure. In the current study, the selection of an orthogonal rotation was decided upon after conducting both Varimax and Direct Oblimin, as it was found that similar results were yielded. Subsequently, a principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation, which assumes that the factors are uncorrelated, was performed. Following Hair, Black, Babin, Barry and Anderson (2009), certain criteria were followed in order to make sure the data would be appropriate for EFA; these criteria included the following:

1. The sampling adequacy was tested by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, which ranged between 0 and 1. The KMO value must exceed 0.5 to perform FA. A KMO value of 0.6 is suggested as a minimum value to achieve a good FA (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman, 2007).
2. The sphericity was tested by Barlett's test. A statistically significant Barlett's test of sphericity must be less than .05, which indicates the sufficient correlation between items in order to proceed.
3. For communalities, each item should be more than .50 for most variables.
4. Factors with eigenvalues must be greater than 1.0.
5. Percentages of variances explained are usually 60% or higher.
6. The factor loadings of +/-.30 to +/-.40 are minimally acceptable, while values greater than +/-.50 are generally considered necessary for practical significance with cross-loaded not higher than .30.

In reporting the EFA analysis in the next chapter, the selected factor, along with its reliability, is discussed. Factor loadings that were larger than 0.4 were reported, as this minimum is conventionally regarded as a meaningful loading to be reported (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

3.8.2.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The verification of the results with a CFA is preferred after completing an EFA (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2011; Kline, 1994). CFA is used in order to confirm a specific pattern of relationships that are predicted based on a theory or previous analytic results and to test the validity of the defined factorial structure in the instrument (DeVellis, 2003). It is also conducted to test or confirm hypotheses or theories concerning the structure of underlying groups of variables (Pallant, 2005).

The analytical procedures that were conducted in the CFA analysis of the questionnaire items were as follow:

1. Based on the hypothesised conceptual framework, a model was specified and was evaluated by considering the goodness-of-fit indices and parameter estimates that are discussed in the following chapter.
2. A complete CFA model was established, which allowed to move to the other stage of analysis - SEM.

3.8.2.3 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM is a multivariate statistical technique that permits for hypothesis testing regarding the interrelationship of multiple variables, both dependent and independent ones (Byrne, 2013). SEM

also helps to examine whether the collected data reflects the proposed hypotheses (Hair et al., 2010). The selection of SEM is based on the fact that it offers a systematic mechanism that enables the relationships between factors to be validated and tests the proposed model. Further, there are several significant aspects regarding SEM: Firstly, unlike EFA, it takes a confirmatory approach rather than a descriptive one; secondly, the relationships among factors are free of random measurement errors, as SEM estimates the error variance patterns; thirdly, both unobserved latent variables (which are identified on a theoretical basis) and observed concrete variables (corresponding, e.g., to specific questionnaire items) can be incorporated into the analysis; finally, "there are no widely and easily applied alternative methods for modelling multivariate relations, or for estimating point and/or interval in direct effects" (Byrne, 2001, p.4).

Using SEM, the researcher is the one who identifies the relationships among variables based on prior experience, theory or research aims (Hair et al., 2010). In the current study, the researcher needed to decide on which were dependent and independent variables, and then the proposed relationship could be translated into a model where it was represented in a path diagram known as "path analysis". This is represented by a straight arrow showing the influence of one variable (independent) to another (dependent).

What is more, in addition to FA, descriptive statistics are used to analyse the questionnaire data. Descriptive statistics describe the data by providing a summary and by graphical plotting of numerical data (Cohen et al., 2011; Thomas, 2013). Quantitative analysis involves statistical techniques using SPSS to determine the kurtosis, skewness, mean, and standard deviation of the data (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Certain ethical considerations need to be taken into account before conducting any research. Neuman (2006) refers to ethics as "what is or is not legitimate to do, or what 'moral' research procedure involves" (p.129). Miller and Brewer, (2003) stated that ethical responsibility is "essential at all stages of the research process, from the design of a study including how participants are recruited, to how they are treated through the course of these procedures, and finally to the consequences of their participation" (p. 95). Cohen et al. (2011) asserted that research ethics aimed to ensure the participants' safety throughout the research process. Therefore, for the current study, ethical approval was attained from the ethics committee at the University of Southampton prior to commencing data collection for the research (see Appendix G). After receiving the approval, an email was sent to EAP coordinators to ask their permission

and to enable access to the participants. The researcher then met the participants, before conducting the interviews, when they were informed about the aim of the study and its nature and were provided with the participation information sheet (see Appendix D). They were asked to sign the informed consent form, which highlighted the study's aims and the anticipated time duration of the interviews. The participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any moment during the study without providing any explanations. In addition, their permission to record the interviews was sought and they were assured that their provided information would remain confidential and be used only for the purpose of the current research. Moreover, the participants were offered to receive a copy of their results if they were interested once the study was completed. Furthermore, they were informed that their identities would remain anonymous and no names would be disclosed when analysing and reporting the data.

Similarly, the questionnaires were distributed online and the participants had to read and sign the consent forms, which covered the same ethical concerns, as aforementioned, before they can complete their participation. There were no questions in the questionnaire that asked the participants about their names or the place of the EAP programmes they had joined. Furthermore, even though no risks were predicted from participation in this study, attempts were made to ensure that the participants did not experience any level of harm or risk, as safety and privacy were respected at each stage, and respect was shown to individuals' interests and dignity throughout each stage of their participation. In addition, the participants were provided with the researcher's contact details in both phases of the current study in order to enable them to ask any questions in relation to the research when required.

3.10 Chapter Summary

The methodology of the study has been presented in this chapter, which has detailed the main concepts of the mixed methods strategy, as well as stating why it was chosen as the most relevant form to address the set research questions. The interviews and questionnaires were subsequently detailed, as well as the reasons for their value in data collection. Moreover, the pilot study and its findings were detailed, with the focus on the data collection tools' validity and reliability. The sampling procedures were also described, as well as the procedures for data collection, which was followed by details of the methods used to produce an analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data. Further, the research's ethical considerations were also presented, as it was imperative that the participants' rights were upheld at all times. Moving into the following chapter, the data analysis and results will be detailed, with the focus on how they have been able to present answers to the study's research questions.

Chapter 4 Study Findings

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of both phases of this study. It starts with the results of the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews. It also provides the findings of the questionnaire and presents the results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis as well as the results of the structural equation modelling. In addition, it introduces the results of the hypothesis tests.

4.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

This phase aimed to explore how international students react to the assessment feedback in relation to their academic writing. It also aimed to explore the factors that influence them and lead to the existence of different reactions towards assessment feedback. Eventually, two broader conceptual themes have been identified; for these themes to be represented, different approaches can be followed. According to Guest et al. (2012), there are three ways to structure the section that present the thematic results: (1) by high-level themes (i.e. conceptual high-level themes constitute sub-headers); (2) by research questions (i.e. each sub-header is a specific question that is followed by reviewing all the themes associated with that question); or (3) by population or subgroup (i.e. groups are sub-headers followed by data summary for each group). The current study's results are presented using the first strategy - high-level themes, along with the subthemes. An overview of the broad themes and codes, as well as definitions for each code is provided in the following table.

Table 4-1: The Conceptual Themes and Subthemes of the Qualitative Phase

Themes	Subthemes	Codes	Subtheme description
Students' Responses to Assessment Feedback	Cognitive Responses	- Reliance on feedback to improve academic writing. - Assessment feedback and future learning.	Statements show learners' beliefs and perceptions of the role of assessment feedback to improve their academic writing.
	Behavioral Responses	Actions taken by students	Statements related to the actions taken by learners to make use of assessment feedback.
	Affective Responses	-Positive feelings -Negative feelings	Statements related to participants' positive feelings (e.g. excitement, happiness) and negative feelings (shock and depression) to assessment feedback.

Themes	Subthemes	Codes	Subtheme description
Potential Reasons Affecting Students' Responses to Assessment Feedback	Feedback-related Variables	-Quality and quantity of assessment feedback -Mode and timing of feedback	Includes codes related to assessment feedback, which are its quality, quantity, mode and time of delivering feedback.
	Students' Perceptions of the Teacher's Role	-Facilitator role -Inhibitor role	Statements related to students' perceptions of the influence of the teacher in either facilitating or inhibiting students' uptake of assessment feedback.
	Learner-related Variables	-Expectations - Previous learning experiences -Language mindset beliefs - Goal orientation -Attribution styles -Resilience -Self-efficacy	Codes related to learners' emotional and psychological state that contribute to their reactions to assessment feedback. These include their expectations, previous learning experiences, language mindset beliefs, goal orientation, attribution styles, resilience and self-efficacy.

4.1.1 Students' Responses to Assessment Feedback

The analysis of the interview data has revealed that the participants in general recognise the importance of the assessment feedback, and whether it is formative or summative, as well as value its usefulness in improving their academic writing. Thematic analysis of their responses, as shown in (Table 4.1) revealed three main types of responses aligned with previous literature; these responses are going to be discussed separately. It is worth mentioning that the categorization of these responses is based on previous literature following (Hyland and Hyland, 2019b) way of researching students' experiences (see section 2.5).

4.1.1.1 Cognitive Responses

In the current study, the cognitive dimension of the participants' responses involved their beliefs, thoughts and opinions regarding assessment feedback and its role in developing their academic writing.

Reliance on Feedback to Improve Academic Writing

This code or subtheme refers to the students' reliance on the assessment feedback as a source to develop their academic writing. There were variations in the participants' responses regarding their reliance on the feedback as a main source to improve their academic writing. Some of them mainly depend on teachers' feedback to improve their academic writing.

(#F) *"because of it I found I can do much better and achieve my goals"*

(#E) *"I depend on the feedback as it is an opportunity to improve myself"*

(#H) *"I rely basically on the feedback to improve"*

However, others considered assessment feedback in general to be a guidance tool that cannot be relied on completely.

(#B) *"I don't depend that much, I depend on reading more"*

(#D) *"I don't rely on it that much"*

Those participants referred to many ways other than feedback that can be used to improve their academic writing, such as reading academic articles and practicing. Nevertheless, they return to it to understand and determine the weak areas that they need to improve. Moreover, other participants found it a good source to understand more about the assessment criteria, and as a result, contribute to the enhancement of their assessment literacy. They also learn the academic writing conventions through their teacher feedback, as commented by one of the participants (#H) that she learned how to structure an argument in her essay after she read the feedback comments and asked for clarification in subsequent tutorial sessions with her teacher.

> "*The feedback comments said that I need to have a counter argument for the points I discussed but I did not get this at the beginning until my tutor gave me examples on how to structure the argument".* (#H)

The participant stated how the feedback helped her to notice one of the conventions and improve her weaknesses through feedback. She also reported that she has limited experience with academic writing in her country and the feedback that she received helped her to realise the academic writing conventions and work required to improve them. In addition, students believe that the constructive feedback is more valuable and can help them improve, even if it annoyed them. They think that feedback comments that include praise could enhance their confidence, although this will not lead to any kind of improvement in their academic writing.

Assessment Feedback and Future Learning

Almost all of the participants were satisfied with the formative and summative feedback comments, as as one of them stated that *"it helps me to notice my mistakes" (#B).* Others also indicated that they did not know what are their mistakes or weaknesses prior to assessment feedback. The feedback helped them to notice these mistakes, in order to avoid them in the future (i.e. "feedforward").

(#C)*"before the feedback I don't know what my problem is but after the feedback I know"*

(#A) *"The last feedback helped me to notice some mistakes that I didn't pay attention to. Before the feedback I didn't notice such mistakes at all"*

(#G)*"I knew my mistakes so that I can work on avoiding them in the future"*

The formative feedback also provided guidance on how to improve their future assignments, which participants found useful and appreciated.

> (#D) *"there were suggestions and more recommendations on how to develop my writing"*
>
> (#E) *"The good thing is that it wasn't an assessment only but there were suggestions and more recommendations on how to develop my writing"*

Apparently, this feedforward feature, which is demonstrated in the literature as a main aspect of effective feedback, resulted in an increase of students' satisfaction levels with assessment feedback, and subsequently formed their positive responses. All the participants emphasised the benefits gained from the assessment feedback that helped them to notice their mistakes and improve their future drafts accordingly. Even though the data showed some evidence that students benefit from assessment feedback and make use of it in their future learning, it occurred when the feedback is understandable to them and it is found to be meaningful. Accorodingly, students who understand what to do and why they should do it in a specific way, transfer these comments and generalise them to their future assignments.

4.1.1.2 Behavioural Responses

This subtheme is concerned with students' subsequent actions that are taken after they had received their feedback. Most participants took action following the comments on their written assignments, even if they instilled negative feelings in them. They perceived the formative feedback as a facilitator and found it to be an opportunity to improve and pass the course. Some preferred to work independently to address the comments, while others asked for more explanation from their tutor, preferring to discuss these comments face to face. Nonetheless, some students find this very stressful, as it places an additional burden on their oral fluency, as well as their aural comprehension. Language learners in the context of the study seemed keen to seek, as well as to receive their teacher's feedback. When they were asked what they did after they received feedback, participants stated that they initially read the feedback to justify the grades they received on their essays, although it was only provisional marking that enabled them to know their current status. Subsequently, they read it to determine the weaknesses in their

work and improve them. One of the participants stated that *"I read all the comments and highlight the relevant ones, the comments that I feel it is important to work on" (#G).* As previously stated, students seem to make use of the comments they find meaningful, and then focus on them.

On the other hand, two participants did not demonstrate the same level of interest in the case of summative feedback. They were more interested to know their final grades and make sure that they pass the course regardless of the feedback comments. For example, one participant mentioned that *"my goal is to pass the course and I just read the comments to know why I did not get a higher mark" (#B).* He also commented on the possibility of learning from the summative feedback, saying that "*the feedback comments are really useful, but the mark I received is more important for me because I want to pass…this is the reason I am doing this course" (#B).* It is apparent in the data that the importance of formative feedback outweighs that of summative feedback. The formative feedback helps them to notice their mistakes and work on them in order to achieve better final results. Accordingly, once they reached their goals and passed the course, the feedback comments became less important.

4.1.1.3 Affective Responses

This subtheme is concerned with the participants' mixed and conflicting emotional reactions to the assessment feedback they received from their teachers. It demonstrates the emotional consequences of the assessment feedback. Predominantly, the participants expressed their feelings towards the feedback they received; half of the participants showed positive feelings towards their feedback and demonstrated various reasons of their feelings. For instance, one of the participants felt happy because she found the formative feedback an opportunity for her to improve, while another felt more confident about improving her work.

> (#A) *"I am very happy with my experience with the formative feedback, it is not graded and it gives us the chance to improve"*
>
> (#E) *"It builds my confidence by learning the drawbacks from feedback"*

Other participants justified their positive feelings stating that:

> (#E) *"I got encouraged, the general feedback was motivating and the negative comments were on minor issues for me"*
>
> (#F) *"I am satisfied because I see that I am on the right track"*
>
> (#G) *"I took all the comments positively because I want to improve my writing"*

Participant (#E) demonstrated that the comments on issues, such as grammar, are a good indication for her because these are considered minor issues, and will not produce a negative effect. The other participant's (#F) demonstration of satisfaction is because the feedback reassured him that he was doing well, while the last one (#G) focuses on his goal to improve. In the case of summative feedback, most of the participants showed feelings of happiness and satisfaction about it; for example: *"I felt so positive about it because I felt that I achieved what I want"* (#E). The feeling of achievement was the main reason behind these positive feelings. In sum, the participants' sense of happiness seems to be related to the opportunities they find to help them in improving their academic writing, as well as meeting their expectations. This pleasure upon receiving such comments can be explained in terms of teacher scaffolding via feedback, where previous educational experiences with academic writing and feedback had been none or limited.

Comparatively, some of the participants experienced negative feelings after they received their formative feedback. Participants mentioned various reasons behind these feelings, such as expectations:

> (#B) *"I got disappointed when I receive the same grade. I was shocked because I thought I would get a high score"*

This particular participant did not comment at first on the feedback, and focused on the provisional grade that was provided. His disappointment was mainly due to the grade and not the feedback. When he was asked about the feedback, he stated that "*not all the comments are clear for me and not all of them can be addressed".* He stated that he read the feedback to find a justification for the grade and he felt disappointed because the comments was not convincing. The other participant said *"I felt shocked because the results and notes were unexpected" (#F)*. This participant's expectations led to the feelings of shock and anger when he read the comments. Others felt negative at first, but changed later as one of the interviewees stated *"I was very sad and disappointed when I received the feedback but when I knew that the grade equals 6 in IELTS, I felt satisfied" (#H).* The other one stated that *"I got disappointed, but I am always thinking of the positive side of the feedback and how these comments will develop my skills in writing" (#C).* Indeed, the participants mitigated their negative feelings by focusing on their goals, which were either the grade or in relation to improving their skills.

Feeling towards Critical Feedback

Most of the participants were willing to respond to critical or negative feedback, rather than to abandon it. The participants admitted the negative impact of the critical feedback on their

emotions, although some showed various levels of resilience in the face of responding to unexpected or, as they described it, negative feedback. This included the control and regulation of emotions, considering obstacles as a part of their learning journey, and remaining positive despite the existence of setbacks. Some participants perceived the negative comments on their work as their best source of learning and improvement. They indicated that, in order to improve their learning experience, they should learn from these mistakes and increase their efforts. Even when they experienced negative feelings upon first receiving the feedback, they were able to recover and overcome their emotions to achieve their goals. They knew how to interact positively with the difficulties that they faced, due to their awareness that these are part of the journey. The following is an example of how they responded to negative feedback:

> *"I put my learning goal in front of me to remember and go back to the track I should be on" (#F).*

This participant felt shocked and depressed when he first received his feedback; however, he described a strategy that he uses to overcome the influence of the undesirable feedback. In addition, other participants show how they felt in striving to master challenges and perceive the negative feedback as a source for learning and improvement. The negative comments seem not to discourage them or demotivate them.

> *"I think of it as a learning opportunity to see my strength and improve my work. Even if it annoys me at the beginning, I still think of it positively and use it to improve my writing" (#E).*

> *"the negative feedback means that I need to improve myself and push me to do my best, I need to work hard and do my best to improve myself" (#G).*

On the other hand, although the majority of the participants were resilient in facing the negative feedback, others showed a different type of resilience. Hence, they seem to adopt maladaptive strategies to avoid the negative impact of the feedback. The following are two examples stated by two different interviewees:

> *"I got disappointed when I receive the same grade and feedback and I become careless" (#B).*

> *"I got disappointed and I ignored the feedback because of this feeling" (#A).*

These two participants appeared to adopt maladaptive strategies, such as carelessness and ignorance after experiencing negative feedback. Interestingly, those two participants did not lose interest in learning or improving themselves. However, they did not demonstrate that they are

going to try to put more effort to improve. Thus, it could be stated that their adopted strategies helped them to control their negative feelings, as they are helpful initially, as a survival technique. Therefore, the multifaceted nature of their emotional reactions to assessment feedback appears to be caused by some contextual variables, such as their first experience with assessment feedback in the UK, and their willingness to improve their writing via teacher feedback, in addition to the language used by the teachers in the feedback.

4.1.2 Reasons Affecting Students' Responses to Assessment Feedback

Three main categories have been identified from the analysis of the data, which seem to be pertaining to the factors influencing international students' responses or reactions to assessment feedback. These variables or reasons are classified under three categories including: feedback-related variables, teacher-related variables, and learner-related variables.

4.1.2.1 Feedback-Related Variables

When responding to the teacher formative feedback, several variables were reported by the participants and were found to either facilitate or inhibit students' proper uptake of this feedback. These include the feedback quality in terms of specificity and clarity, quantity, mode and timing; see the following discussion for each variable.

Quality and Quantity of Feedback

In line with previous research (e.g. Henderson, Ryan & Phillips, 2019), data show that issues related to feedback quality such as its specificity and clarity caused some participants to not respond to their feedback efficiently. Some learners found it difficult to respond to the comments that are general and not clear. For example, one of the participants states that *"some comments in the feedback are over generalised and I don't know how to use them"* (#F). With regards to clarity, the need for clear feedback was related to a desire for feedback that is less confusing, unclear or vague. Some participants also commented that *"some of the comments are not clear and I am trying to focus on the most important ones"* (#D). Another participant also stated that *"sometimes I can't understand what the markers want me to work on and correct"* (#A). Meanwhile, another commented on the clarity of handwriting *"tutor's hand writing was a bit difficult to read"* (#F).

In comparison, the majority tend to found teachers' feedback to be clear and related to their work. This resulted in facilitating its use and increasing students' satisfaction. The following are examples:

"I found the feedback clear for me and all related to my work" (#I).

"I'm happy with the feedback because I can understand it and focus on how to improve my work" (#J)

"The feedback is good because it is clear and understandable" (#H)

It was evident in the data that the clear and specific feedback resulted in a better response from the learners, as they found it easy to address and help them to improve their work. On the other hand, learners who found the feedback to be general or vague tend to either ignore it completely or seek for further clarifications from their tutors.

With regard to the volume or quantity of feedback, some students commented unfavourably on the feedback that is very detailed. One student mentioned that:

"I feel confused if I received lots of comments and suggestions and especially contradictory feedback" (#B).

While,

"I felt shocked when I saw the paper full of comments. The feedback comments were a lot and I thought there is a serious problem with my writing" (#I).

The participants considered the amount of feedback, which is full of comments, to be confusing and shocking. Hence, the detailed feedback was a source of confusion and threat, instead of guidance. Participant (#I) felt uncomfortable to read all the comments on her work and waited for days to be able to read it; she commented on this "*I was really scared to look at all the comments; I tried to scan it at first because I wanted to make sure nothing is serious about my work; after few days, I read it carefully and tried to work on it".*

Others commented on whether it is detailed sufficiently or not. One participant stated that "*it wasn't that detailed maybe because it is formative feedback and not that much in its length"* (#E).

"I wished if I saw more comments on my work; it was not that detailed and included only comments on grammar; I felt that the tutor did not read my work very well" (#H).

On the other hand, those participants were looking for more detailed comments on their writing; only comments that focused on grammar were not favoured by most of the participants and considered superficial. Indeed, they asked for more detailed feedback on the content, rather than grammar. The variations in their responses might be related to their individual development,

where each student looks at the assessment feedback based on their individual needs. On the other hand, participants did not pay attention to the feedback quantity and did not report any issues in regards to it. This might be due to their interest in the grades they received, which were their primary concerns in the case of summative feedback.

Mode and Time of the Feedback

Most of the participants showed a preference for the oral feedback, along with the written one. This mode of delivering feedback is highly recommended in the literature due to the clarification of any misunderstanding provided in the meetings. In the interviews, it appeared that the oral feedback was important in assisting the participants to understand the written one. This provides them with the opportunity to ask and discuss their writing issues directly with their tutors. The following are examples illustrating the importance of oral feedback for the participants:

> *"the written feedback was superficial focusing only on grammar and structure but in few minutes the oral feedback helped me to notice a lot of important points that I didn't consider; the oral feedback was more direct than the written one"* (#A).

> *"I couldn't understand the written feedback without meeting my tutor and asking her about it"* (#G).

Interestingly, form-focused feedback seems not to be important for this group of participants, although the language accuracy is an essential element in academic writing. As a result, this led them to aim for oral feedback to discuss the content and concepts of their essays, regardless of the language mistakes that can be assigned to proof-readers.

Another important factor that appeared to influence students' responses and attitudes towards feedback stemmed from the time provided to them. In case of formative feedback, many participants expressed their concerns, saying that *"there is no time to address all the comments I've received"* (#G). Consequently, they are not able to use their feedback efficiently *"because I have no time to address all the comments, I ended up ignoring some of them and trying to focus on the important ones"* (#A). This indicated how the time assessment feedback is provided is able to limit its usefulness and contribute to students' levels of dissatisfaction.

4.1.2.2 Teacher-related Variables

The role of the teacher has been referred to on more than one occasion in the data. Almost all of the participants commented on the roles of their teachers in either facilitating or hindering their use of the assessment feedback, more specifically, formative feedback. The important role of the teacher was evident in enhancing learners' feedback and assessment literacies. All the

participants were confident in using and understanding their feedback because they had been informed how to use it. One of the participants mentioned that:

> *"the teacher gave us a sheet of the correction codes and individual tutorials that helped to understand everything about the feedback" (#D).*

Another participant also commented that *"I am very confident using the feedback because our teacher dedicated a lot of time and effort explaining how to use it and what each symbol means" (#E).*

This understanding of the feedback includes the terminologies used, which seems to help learners manage it more efficiently and use it productively. Yet, only one of the participants stated that some terminologies are too difficult to understand *"the tutor gave us advanced instructions that I find difficult to apply" (#B).* This difficulty might be attributed to the learner language proficiency or other individual differences, which resulted in not being able to understand all the comments in the feedback.

In addition, some participants expressed their views in relation to the ways that teachers provide them with the formative feedback. The following are examples:

> *"the tutors sometimes give us different comments on the same area; this upset me and confuses us all; the feedback is contradictory, each tutor tells us something different" (#B).*

> *"I feel there is no unified system teachers can follow when they give us the feedback; I discussed one of the comments on word choice with my tutor to ask what is wrong with it because I am sure it was right and I got surprised when she told me that nothing is wrong but she doesn't prefer this word" (#E).*

The contradictory feedback that is either provided by the same teacher or others seems to inhibit learners' utilisation or responses to their feedback; students were upset because they did not know what was the reason for this contradiction. This has led them to suspect their teachers' comments and sometimes ignore them. Moreover, one participant mentioned that due to her teacher's feedback, she stopped looking for other ways to improve her academic writing *"I felt her feedback is subjective*, *so I had to do what she thinks is right*" (#E). Specifically, the students perceive the feedback in this way and think of their teachers as less credible and less authoritative.

Moreover, teachers' styles or the language they use appeared to influence learners' responses and the use of the feedback. Some participants elaborated on what can make them avoid using their feedback; they stated the following:

> *"the teacher style in the feedback determines how I will use it" (#G).*

> *"I prefer to use the feedback of one of my tutor because the tone in her feedback seems kind; I love her style" (#I).*

The learners' perceptions of the credibility of the teacher in relation to their professionalism and positions as markers appeared to influence how students use the feedback comments. The participants appreciated the feedback provided by teachers who are perceived to be kind and knowledgeable. For example, participant (#A) stated that she trusted one of her tutor's feedback and preferred him over others: *"I like to see his comments and read them carefully and I feel happy when I knew that he is the marker; he is so supportive, kind and old teacher; he knows how to advice student and can understand us better".* Accordingly, the feedback from senior academics is appreciated more as they are seen as valid and reliable.

All these comments indicate the important role of the teacher and how students perceive his/her credibility to be able to influence their responses and uptake of the feedback. The teachers' role has been found to be a strong subtheme in the current study, as all the participants voiced their opinions in regards to their teachers' roles in the feedback process.

4.1.2.3 Learner-related Variables

It is important to consider feedback from the perspective of how it is received, such as learners' individual, social, cultural and psychological factors. These variables have been reported to be crucial in learners' use of the feedback, as well as the psychological aspects of the learners, which seem to direct the way students respond to assessment feedback. Moreover, different subthemes have emerged that are related to learners. These variables include their expectations, previous learning experiences, their mindset beliefs, goal orientations, attribution styles, resilience and self-efficacy.

Previous Learning Experience

Participants varied in their general previous learning experiences. In regard to their experiences with assessment feedback; some participants had limited experiences, while others do not have any. Those with limited experience reported that the feedback they used to receive in their previous academic learning was basic, as it focused on grammar correction only. Thus, they find the feedback culture in the UK totally different from the one they had in their countries of origin.

Two of those participants did their MA degree in the USA, where they first experienced teacher feedback on their written assignments. Others were Chinese undergraduate students, whose experiences with feedback started from secondary school, although it was limited compared to the one in the UK. Consequently, previous learning experiences seem to influence participants' responses and attitudes toward assessment feedback. While some of them had a limited experience with feedback, other participants have no experience in either academic writing or using feedback. For many of them, it was the first time to be exposed to such academic environments in which formative feedback is expected to play an important role in learning.

> *"Here, it is my first experience with academic writing and formative feedback; I think this is why I still struggle" (#A)*

> *"I don't have any experience with English writing in my previous studies especially academic one and of course with feedback as well" (#B).*

For others, their previous experiences were either limited or different from the current one.

> *"My experience with writing was not academic and is not like here in the UK; it was in essays format and the feedback I used to receive was on grammar only and has nothing to do with the content. It was totally different" (#G)*

Learners' experiences have been considered in the literature as a fundamental determinant of whether or not one is able to perform certain tasks. Similarly, participants' responses to assessment feedback might be influenced by their previous learning experiences in the context of feedback. Even the negative emotions they have experienced when they first received feedback might be due to the lack of experience in dealing with feedback. This was evident in one of the interviewees' answers, who noticed the gradual change of her responses to feedback. She used to be shocked, disappointed and unable to understand how to use the feedback at the beginning of her study; but her attitudes ultimately changed at a later stage:

> *"At the beginning, I did not understand these comments which affected me negatively but now I feel I am much better because I got used to it" (#G).*

Another participant also commented *"the difficulties with understanding feedback can be overcome by practice; the more feedback I get, the more I feel I can understand"* (#B). Apparently, the role of previous learning experiences is an important factor that seems to either facilitate or obstruct learners' use and acceptance of feedback, as well as influence their responses.

Expectations

One strong subtheme that appeared in the data and seems to affect students' responses to assessment feedback is their expectations. This was revealed in both formative and summative feedback data, with the latter being more apparent as learners' satisfaction with the grade and feedback comments was influenced by their expectations. Almost all of the participants' responses, including their feelings and use of the feedback, were affected by the expectations they had before receiving it. The participants when asked in regards to their first impression about feedback, answered the following:

> *"I felt good about the feedback, almost as expected"*(#G)
>
> *"The last feedback I got was very good and expected; I am happy with it because the formative feedback helped me to notice my mistakes and I was able to avoid them"* (#H).

The feedback for those two participants met their expectations and influenced them positively, which was also clear, even if it was not expected for some participants. Consider the following examples:

> *"The grade and the feedback were better than what I expected. I expect the worst because I did not work on the assignment regularly"* (#A).
>
> *"It was good and it was much better than my expectations"* (#D).

The participants here lowered their expectations towards feedback. Thus, their feelings and attitudes were positive, as it was better than what they had expected. However, this was not the case with all of them, as one participant was disappointed when he received his second formative feedback "*I expected a better grade…I was disappointed because I made the same mistakes and there were other new mistake; I did not expect this grade"* (#B). Due to his expectations, this participant was negatively affected and expressed negative responses towards his feedback. These examples indicate how learners' expectations can have an influence on the way they react or utilise the feedback. It seems that these expectations strongly influence how students respond to assessment feedback, especially their affective responses. Thus, the negative feelings they have experienced were due to the feedback provided, which was against their expectations.

Language Mindset Beliefs

This subtheme includes learners' beliefs regarding language learning and how they perceive their ability in learning a language. With regards to the concept of innate ability in language learning,

participants' responses show that they do not seem to be convinced that people are born with an innate ability to learn languages. When asked about the main factors for language learning, all participants attributed successful learning to malleable traits that are controlled by the learner; these include: "the desire or passion to learn", "determination", self-autonomy and "intrinsic motivation". Consider, for example, some of the participants' opinions:

> *"Talent or ability may have a role in the accent, but effort is definitely the important factor to improve your language" (#A).*
>
> *"A passion to learn is the key for successful language learning" (#*G).
>
> *"I would say motivation; may the students have different types of motivations such as sometimes you want to pass this course and you are motivated to have better grades, sometimes you are passionate so your motivation is personal motivation so you are passionate about developing yourself" (#E).*
>
> *"The first and the most significant factor is the autonomy of learners to work hard on their own to write more and read more" (#F).*

These participants explicitly attributed successful learning to personal choices that a learner is in control of. Attributing successful language learning to controllable traits or factors that can be developed make learners feel that the whole learning process is under their own control. In addition, participants were asked about their perceived ability in academic writing. All of them believe that it is a malleable trait that can be changed and developed; they believe in the malleability of their writing ability and language learning in general. In particular, one participant stated that:

> *"people are different in abilities; some of them are good in critical thinking, so they can develop arguments in writing essays; some can learn faster than others based on differences in abilities, so they would change dramatically in writing"* (#F).

Even though this student believes that some can learn faster than others, abilities are not innate and could be developed. Other participants also share the same belief that people have different abilities in language learning and success cannot be attributed to this innate gift. They almost negated the idea of gifted ability and believe that with practice and hard work everything could be attained. These beliefs expressed by participants indicated that they have a tendency towards growth mindset beliefs as they believe in the malleability of their abilities to develop their language skills. Such beliefs would positively influence students' responses to learning

experiences, and more specifically to assessment feedback, as the comments provided are aimed at helping them to improve their academic writing.

Goal Orientations

Participants' goal orientation is another subtheme that was apparent in the participants' responses, and which seem to play a role in their responses to assessment feedback. This relates to their goals in learning English, which can be divided into learning goals and performance goals. Even though the majority of learners show an interest in learning the language for internal instrumental motives (e.g. passing the language course), some of them have shown a change in their preferences in studying English for some contextual reasons. Additionally, some participants have clearly demonstrated their orientation towards learning goals in regard to English learning, as they showed a desire to improve their skills, including academic writing and to increase their abilities. Therefore, they exploit each opportunity to achieve their goals, as the following highlights:

> *"The feedback is an opportunity for me to improve my writing and I'll make use of it"* (#E).
>
> *"I do not have to study this course but I chose it because I want to learn more and improve my English"* (#H).

These statements demonstrate that the learner is interested in improving their skills because of the mere desire to learn. These examples show the participants' inner motives to learn the language for the purpose of developing their skills that could serve them for different purposes or have some different driving sources. Meanwhile, the other participants seemed to have an orientation toward performance goals; their ultimate goal was to pass the English course. This does not mean that they were not interested in learning, but at this period of time (EAS course), their short-term goal was to attain the required marks that would enable them to continue their subsequent studies. Participant (#B) explained this as follows: *"now, I need to achieve the required mark and pass the course; it is a stressful situation and I just want to finish it".*

This participant explained his current goal, which is to achieve the required score and pass the course. He did, however, clarify that the situation is stressful and that it was a short-term goal in the set period of time. This affected the way he used feedback, as he stated: *"I ignored the unrelated comments because it's related to those who are proficient".* Overall, he is focusing on attaining his current goal, which resulted in ignoring any feedback that he was unable to understand or what he considered to be unrelated. Another participant with a performance goal also stated that *"I wanted to see the grade because it will determine if I will work more or no"*

(#G). The participant here was not interested in the feedback to learn, but in the grade, as her goal was to pass the course as well.

Another participant mentioned how she has to change her goals from learning to performance, justifying that her goal setting at the moment was affected by her current situation of work pressure, due to the number of courses that she studies. Moreover, when elaborating on their goal orientation, participants with performance goals have explained some reasons that led them to think of passing the course as an ultimate goal. Study pressure and the load of work was a factor mentioned by several participants; another participant explained this as follows:

> *"I have other assignments to do and there is no time to focus on improving my skills; you know we want to pass at the end; I know I chose this course to improve my language but the time is limited and I have to work on many assignments at the same time" (#G).*

This means that she could have other goals which could be learning goals in the future, and this is apparent from her statement that she would have the capacity to learn English later on, justifying that her goal setting at the moment was affected by her current situation of work pressure, due to the number of courses she is studying. This participant clearly explained her alterations in goals from learning to performance goals, clarifying how she was interested in practising the language in her own time in order to master it. She further explained that the stress of studying is what prevented her from continuing with the same level of effort and motivation to learn, and what she thinks of at the moment is just to pass the course.

Another participant also mentioned in the second interview another factor that could have led her to change her goal orientation as follows: *"I worked hard to improve but I still receive the same feedback on the same issue; I gave up and now I just want to pass"* (#E). Receiving the same feedback after the effort, this participant's aim to improve seems to have resulted in her losing motivation to work and improve. Thus, her ultimate goal changed to just focusing on passing the course.

Attribution Styles

This subtheme focuses on the factors that participants attribute their failure and success to. It concentrates on the interpretations people inclined to make, in order to explain their successes and failures (Weiner, 1976). In the current study, the interviewees attributed their feedback comments, along with the grade they received, to either effort, ability or the teacher. Most of these attributions were made to effort, as shown in the data, as can be seen in the following example: *"maybe because I didn't practice I received the same comments every time… Or maybe*

because I am a bit careless" (#B). This form of attribution is expected to impact learners' positively in most cases, as indicated in previous research (e.g. Andrews & Debus, 1978; Perry et al., 1993). This kind of attribution should not affect participants' positive responses towards feedback, whether it is formative or summative. The same participant, after he received his summative feedback and achieved the required score, mentioned, *"because I put more effort and I followed the suggestions of the formative feedback, I got this result"* (#B). Indeed, this participant, who first attributed his failure to effort, seems to increase this effort and achieve his goal.

On the other hand, one of the participants related feedback to students' language ability.

> *"my tutor gives the feedback based on the student's level; the feedback is more detailed for those who are advanced and superficial for the weak ones; when I read her feedback for me, I felt negative and I blamed myself and I got disappointed"* (#A).

The participant here thinks that the proficient language learners receive detailed feedback, while others do not. She assumed that because she considers herself a beginner in English, the feedback she received is different in terms of its quantity. This resulted in the existence of negative feelings, including blame and disappointment. She attributed feedback comments to her ability, assuming that the quantity of feedback comments is determined by a learner's ability. This form of attribution, as argued in the literature, can negatively affect learners' motivation and, consequently, alter their responses to assessment feedback. This is because the participant attributes the feedback she received to a stable factor (i.e. ability). However, it depends on the beliefs that learners hold regarding their language ability, and whether it is stable or can be changed as previously discussed.

Other participants attributed their failure to use feedback efficiently to their teachers. All the participants mentioned the teachers' role in either facilitating or hindering the use of the feedback. They attributed the negative, as well as positive, feelings and uptake of the feedback to the teaching style and mode of delivery. Most importantly, the contradictory feedback provided by the same teacher or other teachers was among the main factors affecting students' reactions and uptake of the feedback. However, although all of them discussed the role of the teacher as a significant factor that contributes to the successful use of the feedback, it was apparent in the data that it does not completely obstruct or affect the usefulness of the feedback.

Resilience

This subtheme refers to the learners' beliefs regarding themselves and how they take control of their feelings that resulted from negative or unexpected feedback. The data revealed that one of

the factors that helped some participants to be resilient in the face of any difficulties or negative emotion aroused by the feedback is to have a tough personality. Some interviewees made statements that reflect their resilience in the face of learning challenges and setbacks during their language course. They embraced difficulties and perceived them to be challenging rather than threatening. They believed that mistakes and failure experiences are the best source for learning, development and growth, as it helped them to improve and learn new information. Consider the following examples:

> *"I prefer to receive constructive feedback that helped me to improve. I don't care about the bad feelings it caused, I came here to learn and as you know no pain, no gain" (#E).*

> *"The feedback on my mistakes never affected me personally. I consider it a chance to learn because I am basically here to learn and improve myself. So any word in the feedback will help me even if it is negative" (#H).*

> *"I do not feel bad at all and if I experience such a feeling, it does not take that long because I believe the feedback will help me to improve at the end and I am here to learn and mistakes are the best source to do so" (#G).*

When the participants were asked about how they overcome difficulties and negative emotions that feedback might stimulate, they reported that they seek their tutors' help. In addition, they use other sources that can help them to improve and address their feedback comments, such as reading academic articles, practicing, and planning well before they write. They also indicated that the desire to learn and improve makes them resilient in the face of difficulties. To sum up, variables that are related to psychological concepts, such as participants' language mindset beliefs, goal orientations, resilience and attribution styles, were evidently imperative to the variations in language learners' various responses towards assessment feedback. These concepts have been linked to what Dweck (2006) has introduced as growth mindset and fixed mindset (see section 2.6.2).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to students' beliefs regarding their abilities in academic writing and the capability of the use of assessment feedback and to adhere to the academic writing conventions. In regards to their capacities to address their assessment feedback comments, most of the participants talked confidently about their abilities to use their feedback and improve their academic writing. They also indicated that the role of the teacher was the main reason behind their confidence. One of the participants mentioned that *"I am very confident in using the*

feedback; our teacher guidance was of a great help for me" (#E). Comparatively, another participant showed a different level of self-efficacy, who stated that *"I am not that confident about using the feedback the way I should use it, but I think I will be able to do so later by practicing"* (#B). The participant was evidently not sure about his ability to use the feedback appropriately, although he is hoping to change this through practice. Being reluctant to use assessment feedback could lead to the ignorance of important comments or misuse of them.

Participants also expressed their capacities in terms of following academic writing conventions and a generation of ideas. They showed different levels of confidence to perform successfully in writing. For example, the participants demonstrated higher confidence in mastering some of the writing conventions, such as formatting and an appropriate use of references. Others assessed themselves positively in terms of word selection. However, the formative feedback they received from their teachers seems to influence their beliefs regarding this ability. Participant (#E), for example, stated that:

> *"The area that I feel most confident about in writing is choosing the right academic words in my essays but our tutor's comments make me feel less confident and when I asked her to explain what's the problem with the words I used, she commented that I don't like such words. It appears to me a matter of a preference only".*

This example illustrates how feedback comments influenced the learner's self-efficacy and how she was about to lose the belief that she had about her writing skills in terms of word selection. This participant gained confidence about her writing due to her previous experience of being a student in the USA. However, the formative feedback comments led her to question this confidence in her ability. On the other hand, the feedback comments could help in enhancing learners' self-efficacy in writing. In particular, one of the participants said that *"the feedback comments make me feel more confident about my writing; I was not sure about the structure of my essay and whether I wrote a good argument or not".* These examples illustrate how the participants judged their abilities in writing via the feedback comments.

4.2 Conceptual Framework

To sum up, variables that are related to psychological concepts, such as participants' learning beliefs, goal orientations, self-efficacy and attribution styles could influence language learners' various responses to assessment feedback. The possible relationships between all the previously mentioned variables and students' responses to assessment feedback are presented in the following figure (4.1). This is an initial conceptual model that has been created to illustrate how

all these variables could be related. Previous literature highlighted the possible influence of these variables on students' responses to assessment feedback which confirmed later in the interview data. However, the empirical evidence of its influence on students' responses to assessment feedback seems lacking.

These variables can be divided into external factors: feedback-related variables / teacher role; and internal factors (i.e. learner-related variables). Among the external factors, the teacher's role can have an influence on the students' responses to assessment feedback, as he/she is the producer of the feedback. Moreover, these external factors can have an immediate influence on the learners and their responses to assessment feedback. The learners' characteristics or variables also influence their responses to assessment feedback. These variables are moderated by learners' mindset beliefs. Additionally, findings of previous research showed that learners who hold growth mindsets tend to endorse more positive responses to practice, learning, feedback, as well as a greater ability to deal with setbacks, and significantly better performance over time. They also believe that human qualities are malleable and that they are specifically changeable through hard work. On the other hand, those who hold a fixed mindset believe that these qualities are fixed, and thus, cannot be changed (see Dweck, 2006; Dweck & Molden, 2005).

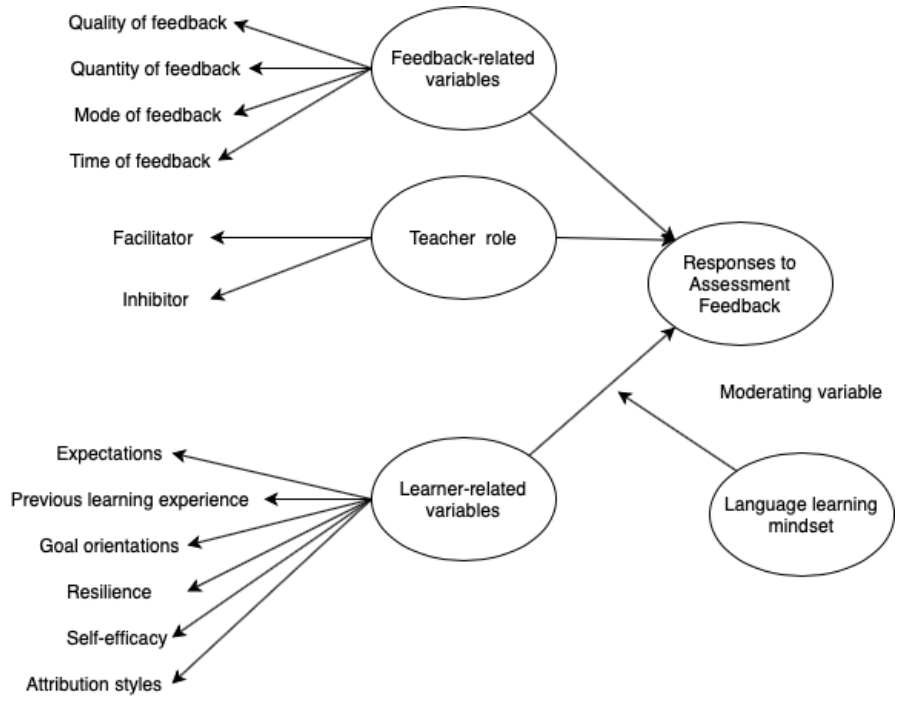


Figure 4-1: Conceptual Framework of the Factors Influencing Students' Responses to Assessment Feedback

4.3 Quantitative Data Analysis

In this section, findings of the questionnaire are analysed and the results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis are presented. In addition, the structural equation model was used, as it is considered the most widely used technique to examine the relationships between the resulted factors from the qualitative phase in the current study. It also includes the assessment of the hypotheses of this study.

4.3.1 Questionnaire Analysis

The aim of the questionnaire was to test the hypotheses resulted from the qualitative study, as well as to determine the strongest influential factors on international students' responses to assessment feedback. The first section presents the demographic information of this phase of the study, followed by the results of EFA, CFA and SEM. SPSS and Smart survey software were used to analyse the results of demographic data and EFA results. The Mplus software was used to estimate the model fit in the measurement model, and to analyse the results of the structural model.

4.3.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The questionnaire was sent to various EAP courses around the UK. The number of responses that were obtained for EFA was 211 and 436 responses for CFA. The demographic information of the participants is summarised in (Table 4.2) below

Table 4-2: Demographic Information of the Sample

	EFA		CFA	
	Frequencies	Percentage	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender				
Male	83	39.34%	140	32.1%
Female	128	60.66%	296	67.9%
Age				
18-24	16	7.58%	150	34.4%
25-35	103	48.82%	237	54.4%

	EFA		CFA	
	Frequencies	Percentage	Frequencies	Percentage
>=35	84	39.81%	49	11.2%
Mother tongue				
Arabic	192	91%	400	91.7%
Other/ Chinese	19	9%	36	8.3%
Reasons for joining pre-sessional course				
Undergraduate	24	11.32	37	8.5%
Postgraduate	187	88.68%	399	91.5%
Previous Feedback experience				
Yes	107	50.71%	212	48.6%
No	104	49.29%	224	51.4%

Based on the scales and measures explained previously (see Section 3.3.2), the mean score of the participants' positive responses to assessment feedback was 3.84 out of 5 and the mean score of the negative responses to assessment feedback was 3.16, indicating that they have positive responses to both general and critical feedback. In addition, the mean score of the participants' language mindset beliefs was 2.27, suggesting that most of the participants had more tendency towards growth mindset beliefs. Their mean score in self-efficacy was 3.80, which shows that the participants were moderately self-efficacious regarding their academic writing skills. In terms of their negative perceptions of the teacher's role as a feedback provider, the mean score was 3.22, indicating that the participants perceive the teacher as a negative influence on their uptake of the feedback. Concerning their preferences of the mode of the feedback, the mean score was 3.48, suggesting that the participants tend to prefer the oral feedback over the written one.

4.3.1.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

All the 58 items of the learners' responses were subjected to principal component analysis (PCA) using SPSS version 26. Prior to performing PCA, and in order to ensure that the scoring of the

items was always in the same directions (i.e. that a high score means a positive response to assessment feedback) the scoring was reversed on the negatively worded items (see Appendix B).

Subsequently, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 and above. The KMO value was .847, exceeding the recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached the statistical significance of (sig<0.05); this supports the factorability of the correlation matrix. Both of these indicate the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

The Following step was to decide upon the number of factors that would best explain the data. In the first run (see Appendix H), the analysis showed 16 factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1, which explained 65.466% of the variance. The first three factors explained the largest variance of the data: 12.757%, 8.047%, and 5.767%. In this run, two items were deleted (TR7 and MF3), as they were beneath the threshold which is .4. Another run with 56 items was conducted after deletion of these two items, which resulted in 66.642% of the variance explained, but with the same first factor structure.

The first factor included 14 items, which basically expressed learners' responses (i.e. BR, CR and AFR) response items. It also included two QQF items, which can express students' responses as well. The second factor consisted mainly of all 6 CF items that are about learners' responses to critical feedback, which used to be negative, together with one AFR item that expressed learners' negative responses towards feedback. The third factor consisted of 5 LMB items and 2 TR items, where TR2 was double loaded with factor 6. The reason for this combination between LMB and TR items is that the 2 TR items indicate something in relation to learners' mindsets, especially TR2, which is *"teachers are the ones who should be blamed when I fail using the feedback".* This sentence can indicate that those who agree with it might adopt a fixed mindset. Meanwhile, the other TR item loads negatively with this factor; the fourth and fifth factors consisted of only 3 items (i.e. SE and MF items). Factor 6 consisted of 3 TR items, with one cross loaded highly with factor 3. Factor seven contained 3 different items: QQF5, PLE3 and TR4; all of these three items are similar, as they all relate to the role of teachers. Factor 8 has 4 items, including 3 PLE items and one TR item where all the items share the same concept of reasons that help either the utilisation of or ignore assessment feedback. The rest of the factors, starting from factor 9 to 16, contained 2 or 1 item per factor, except for factor 15, which includes 3 items. It consisted of 2 LMB items and one SE item, where they all shared the concept of ability.

However, as the data was difficult to be interpreted, another run was required. When deciding upon the amount of factors to retain, the inspection of the scree plot was considered (see Figure 4.2). In addition, previous research suggested that each factor should have a minimum of 3 items

(Hair et al., 2010). Considering the factors that have only one or two items, as well as the double-loading between some factors, a second run of EFA was conducted. Thus, 8 factors were requested in the second run.

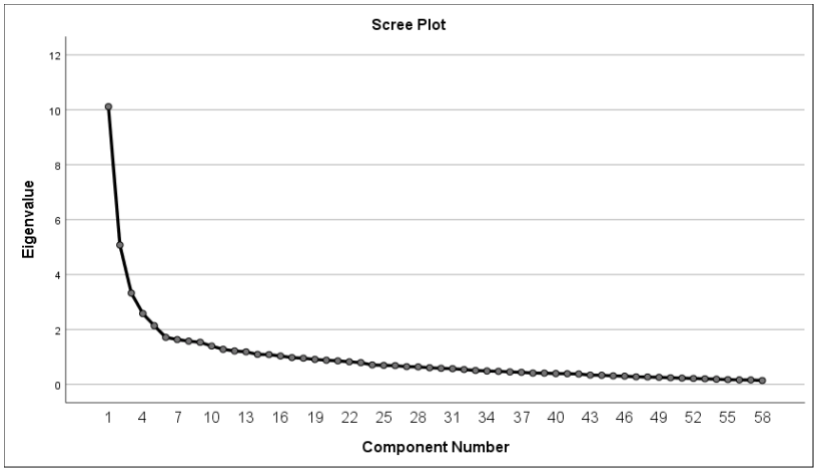


Figure 4-2: The 8 Factors Scree Plot

The point of inflection is at factor 8, which indicates that the previous points with the higher eigenvalues are the ones that contribute most to the explanation of the total variance; this supports conducting 8 factor solutions.

In the second run with the 8 factors solution, 49.591% of the total variance was explained. In addition, six items did not load with any factor, as they were beneath the specified threshold, which is .4 and were deleted (TR6, PLER3, SE4, LMB6R, LMB8, AFR2). Thus, another run was undertaken and resulted in the deletion of another two more items (PLE4 and LMB4), as their loading was less than .4. In the following run, the remaining items explained 53.655% of the total variance. Indeed, the factor structure was clear this time, despite the existence of some negatively loaded items and two cross-loaded items (TR5, TR2). Moreover, there are only 2 items in factor 8 (see Appendix H). Separately, another run was conducted that extracted 7 factors only. This resulted in the deletion of three items (QQF1, QQF5, PLE2), as they did not load with any factor; while factor 7 consisted of only two items. As it is recommended that each factor or component should have at least 3 items, another run was conducted with 6 factors extracted. The resulted scree plot (see Figure 4.3) also highlights that the seventh point was where the slope of the line changed most sharply. Thus, it was decided to reduce the number of factors to 6 after inspecting the scree plot.

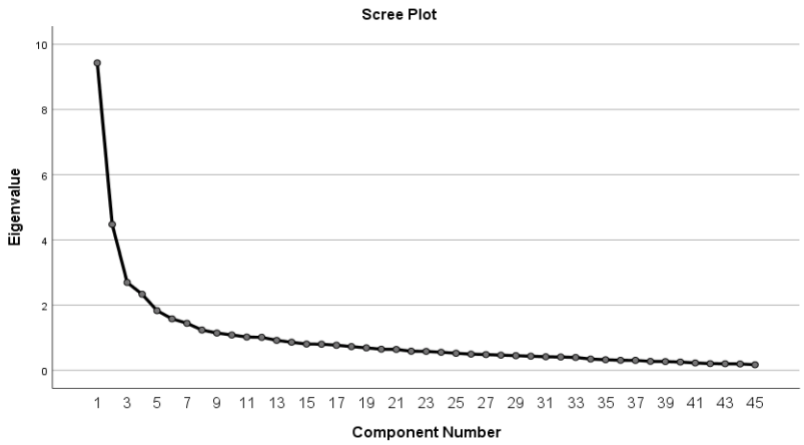


Figure 4-3: The 7 Factors Scree Plot

With the 6 factors solution, the percentage of the variance was reduced to 47.675%, which is noticeably lower than with 7 factors. However, by looking at the Varimax rotated matrix, the six factors are much clearer with less double loading and negative loading. Yet, 2 items' loadings (PLE1, QQF6) were beneath the threshold of .4; thus, they were deleted. Subsequently, another run was carried out; this time the percentage of the total variance explained rose to 51.377%, suggesting that it was a good move (see Appendix H). The following table represents the last factor structure:

Table 4-3: EFA Factor Structure

	Factor					
Questionnaire items	1	2	3	4	5	6
BR1	.717					
CR1	.714					
CR2	.711					
AFR1	.706					
BR3	.704					
CR5	.681					
CR3	.664					
BR4	.656					
CR4	.639					
BR2	.620					
QQF4	.606					
AFR4	.567					
QQF3	.562					
QQF2	.548					
AFR3	.544					
TR5	.503					

	Factor					
Questionnaire items	1	2	3	4	5	6
CF3		.784				
CF5		.755				
CF2		.752				
CF1		.745				
CF4		.739				
CF6		.692				
AFR5		.520				
LMB6			.737			
LMB2			.732			
LMB3			.678			
LMB7			.600			
LMB5			.484			
LMB1			.457			
SE2				.709		
SE6				.675		
SE5				.649		
SE3				.619		
SE1				.613		
SE7				.607		
MF1					.814	
MF2					.773	
MF4					.755	
TR1						.722
TR2						.566
TR4						.528
TR3						.511

Forty-three items remained in the final structure. The first factor consists of CR, BR, and AFR items, which are all related to students' responses to assessment feedback. It also has 3 QQF and one TR item, which also expresses learners' responses to assessment feedback. The second factor contains their responses to the critical negative feedback. This resulted in producing two dimensions for these responses: one is 'positive responses to assessment feedback'; while the other is 'negative responses to critical feedback'. The third and fourth factors include two components of the factors that are related to the psychological aspect of the learners and that are assumed to influence their responses to assessment feedback .i.e. LMB and SE items. On the

other hand, the fifth and sixth factors contain MF and TR, which are two main components of the external factors. Thus, the final factor structure includes 6 components with 43 items. It is worth mentioning that these components contain a mix of positively and negatively worded items. However, this combination could contribute to having some factors with negative items to be separate (e.g. NR). Furthermore, each component had a high level of internal consistency, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha (see Table 4.4)

Table 4-4: Final Structure's Codes and Cronbach's Alpha

Construct	Code	Cronbach's alpha
Positive responses to assessment feedback	PR	.908
Negative responses to critical assessment feedback	NR	.872
Language mindset beliefs	LMB	.741
Self-efficacy	SE	.784
Mode of feedback	MF	.745
Teacher's role	TR	.615

4.3.1.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Measurement Model

CFA is a statistical method used to assess whether the data fit a hypothesised model using a number of fit indices (Hair et al., 2010). In contrast to EFA, the measurement model in CFA is specified in a priori, in order to confirm or reject the hypothesised relationships between the variables (Hair et al., 2010)The latent variables (i.e. factors) in the CFA are unobservable, which cannot be measured directly, but rather indirectly using observed variables (i.e. manifest variables). In addition, the items' validity and reliability for measuring the constructs were examined when performing CFA (Hair et al., 2010). The software used in CFA was Mplus version 8.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 2009), which used robust diagonally weighted least squares as an estimation technique because the data was deemed ordinal.

Normality

The data needs to be normally distributed in order for the CFA to be performed. In addition, normality, as well as proper model specification, are pre-requisites for the SEM to be performed (Kline, 2011). The normality of the data distribution for items (variables) of the study was assessed using Skewness and Kurtosis values (Finney & DiStefano, 2006). Skewness represents the non-symmetry of normal distribution, which means that if the frequency distribution of the data does not fit a symmetrical distribution, then there is a lack of normality. Kurtosis measures the extent

to which flattening or peaking in the frequency distribution of the data is beyond the normal distribution (Katz, Elmore & Wild, 2014). The distribution of the variables is considered to not be severely non-normal when its skewness is >2 and kurtosis >7 (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995). Based on the results presented in the appendices (see Appendix I), all the variables were approximately normally distributed, and hence, CFA can be performed.

Goodness of Fit

Inspecting goodness-of-fit (GOF) indices is an essential step to assess whether the data fits the model of interest, as it shows "how well a specified model reproduces the observed covariance matrix among the indicator variables" (Hair et al., 2010, p.632). Multiple GOF indices need to be evaluated, as it is not wise to determine whether a model has a good or poor model fit across all situations using only one index (Hair et al., 2010). In this study, two types of indices were used: absolute fit indices and incremental fit indices. Specifically, the absolute fit indices "refers to measures of overall goodness-of-fit for both the structural and measurement models; this type of measure does not make any comparison to a specified null model (incremental fit measure) or adjust for the number of parameters in the estimated model (parsimonious fit measure)" (Hair et al., 2010, p.630). The GOF indices can be identified using absolute fit indices, such as: χ^2/df, RMSEA and incremental fit indices, such as: CFI and TLI (Kline, 2011). The acceptable levels of underlying fit indices are shown in Table 8 below; while the cut-off values used in the current study were based on the recommendations by several researchers (Hair et al., 2010; Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen, 2008).

Table 4-5: Fit Indices used for the Absolute and Incremental Fit Indices

Fit Indices	**Abbreviation**	**Acceptable Level**	**Description**
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	RMSEA	≤0.08	It better represents how well a model fits a population, not just a sample used for estimation. It tries to correct for both model complexity and sample size by including each in its computation. Lower RMSEA values represent a better fit. With a cut value of 0.05 or 0.08.
p-value of RMSEA	(PCLOSE)	>0.05	

Fit Indices	Abbreviation	Acceptable Level	Description
Standardised Root Mean Square Residual	SRMR	≤0.08	It is widely used and defined by Hair et al. (2010) as "*attempts to correct for the tendency of* x^2, *the goodness of fit test statistic, to reject models with a large sample or large number of observed variables*".
Comparative Fit Index	CFI	≥0.90	It represents the proportion of differences in the sample covariance matrix and this model, assuming that all the items are uncorrelated and ranges from 0 to 1. CFI equals or above .97 the model is fit.
Tucker Lewis index	TLI	>.90	TLI of .95 indicates the model of interest improves the fit by 95% relative to the null model and is preferable for smaller samples.
Goodness of Fit Index	GFI	>.95	Scaled between 0 and 1, with higher values representing a better model fit.

Hair et al. (2010) recommended that reporting three to four fit measures would be sufficient to prove a model's fit. In this study, five fit indices representing the absolute and incremental fit were reported in order to determine the fit of the model. The CFA was then performed with the model specified based on the EFA result. The six constructs, students' negative responses to critical feedback (NR), positive responses to assessment feedback (PR), language mindset beliefs (LMB), self-efficacy in L2 writing (SE), students' perception of the teacher role as a facilitator to use assessment feedback (TR), students' preferences of the mode of feedback (MF) were assessed in the CFA model. The measurement model was performed using six constructs and 43 observed variables. The measurement model achieved an acceptable fit index: X^2= 1061.471, TLI = .97, CFI = .98, GFI= .94, RMSEA = .03, RMSEA 90% [.02, .03], SRMR = .06. These values meet the required acceptable level compared to the cut-off values of fit indices, which suggests that the model fits with the collected data (for model parameter estimates and factor covariances (see Appendix J).

The Validity and Reliability of the Constructs

The reliability and validity tests were checked after assessing the measurement model to ensure the goodness of the instrument.

Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

In order to examine the reliability of the constructs, composite reliability was used in the current study. Hair et al. (2010) defined composite reliability as measuring "*reliability and internal consistency of the measured variables representing a latent construct*". Moreover, Hair et al. (2010) suggested that values between 0.6 and 0.7 are acceptable, although good reliability should be higher than 0.7. Table 4.6 below demonstrates the reliability scores for each latent construct; all the reliability scores were above 0.7, which indicates that all the constructs are reliable. Cronbach's alpha was also used to assess the internal consistency for each construct (George & Mallery, 2003). The results in (Table 4.6) show that the Cronbach's alpha of the constructs were above .70 with the exception of TR and MF, although, as they have a good composite reliability, it can be assumed that the constructs are reliable. According to Taber (2018) Cronbach's alpha coefficient values of more than 0.7 are considered good, but values of more than 0.5 are still acceptable. Nunnally (1994) indicated that 0.70 should be the threshold, however, newly developed measures can be accepted with an alpha value of 0.60. In the present study, the cut off value for the alpha coefficient was set at 0.60 for all the scales (self-developed scales) as these scales are considered to be used for the first time. It should be noted that one item (TR1) has been deleted in order to improve the Cronbach's alpha of the TR factor.

Table 4-6: Construct Reliability

Construct	**Composite Reliability**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
Positive responses to assessment feedback	0.911	0.895
Negative responses to assessment feedback	0.899	0.868
Language mindset beliefs	0.840	0.769
Mode of the feedback	0.819	0.589
Self-efficacy	0.866	0.814
Teacher's Role	0.811	0.653

Construct Validity

It is vital to test the construct validity as a prime step before moving to SEM analysis. Construct validity refers to "the extent to which a set of measured items actually represent the theoretical latent construct that those items are designed to measure" (Hair et al., 2010). In order to assess the construct validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity were tested as recommended by (Straub, Boudreau & Gefen, 2004).

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the "extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs both in terms of how much it correlates with other constructs and how distinctly measured variables represent only this single construct" (Hair et al., 2010). This indicates that the construct is truly distinct from others with regard to the extent to which it correlates with other constructs, as well as how this single construct is represented distinctly by its measured variables (Brown, 2006; Hair et al., 2010). It is important to examine discriminant validity is to ensure that the conclusions drawn from the results regarding the relationships between constructs are correct (Farrell, 2010); it can be examined by comparing the square root of AVE with construct correlations (Hair et al., 2010). Discriminant validity is satisfying when the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct is more than its correlation with other constructs. Moreover, Hair et al. (2010) suggested removing the variables with low factor loading to improve the AVE. Therefore, some variables were deleted to improve the AVE for the latent constructs; the items that were deleted were PR13, MF2 and LMB1.

Table 4.7 below shows that the results achieved a satisfactory level of discriminant validity (based on the square root of AVE), where the value on the diagonal was higher than the correlation with other constructs. This suggests, therefore, that the measured items have more in common with the latent construct than associated with any of the other latent constructs, which provides strong support for discriminant validity.

Table 4-7: Discriminant Validity of the Six Constructs

	NR	PR	LMB	MF	SE	TR
NR	**0.749**					
PR	0.298	**0.651**				
LMB	-0.331	-0.168	**0.721**			
MF	0.054	0.203	-0.143	**0.835**		
SE	0.258	0.461	-0.307	0.189	**0.720**	
TR	0.361	0.174	-0.291	0.016	0.085	**0.768**

The square root of average variance is extracted (diagonal) of each construct, with the correlation with other constructs (off-diagonal).

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is concerned with the correlation between the items and the corresponding constructs (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The items can be said to measure their constructs if the correlation is high (Hair et al., 2010). The convergent validity is examined using the AVE for every construct, where the AVE needs to be ≥ 0.5 to achieve convergent validity (Holmes-Smith, 2001). This is also suggested by Hair et al. (2010), who stated that the AVE score of >0.5 is considered an ideal score. The results of the measurement model demonstrated the convergent validity of the latent construct used in the model, as all of them were >0.5, except the construct PR, which had a value of 0.424 as illustrated in (Table 4.8). The convergent validity of the construct is still considered adequate when the AVE is <0.5, and its composite reliability is >0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Accordingly, the composite reliability of the PR construct was considered good, as it was higher than .06 as indicated previously (see Table 4.6).

Table 4-8 Convergent Validity

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
NR	0.562
PR	0.424
LMB	0.520
MF	0.697
SE	0.518
TR	0.589

4.3.1.4 Evaluating the Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

The nature and importance of the relationships among factors are examined in the structural model (Hair et al., 2010). It has to be specified which factors are related to each other and the nature of each relation. These factors or latent constructs are divided into exogenous (independent variables) and endogenous constructs (dependent variables). In the current study, the exogenous constructs or predictors are TR, SE and MF, while the endogenous or dependent variables are PR and NR. In addition, the effect of the moderating variable: language mindset beliefs were examined. The LMB factor has been treated as a moderating variable to investigate

its influence on the relationship between self-efficacy and students responses to assessment feedback.

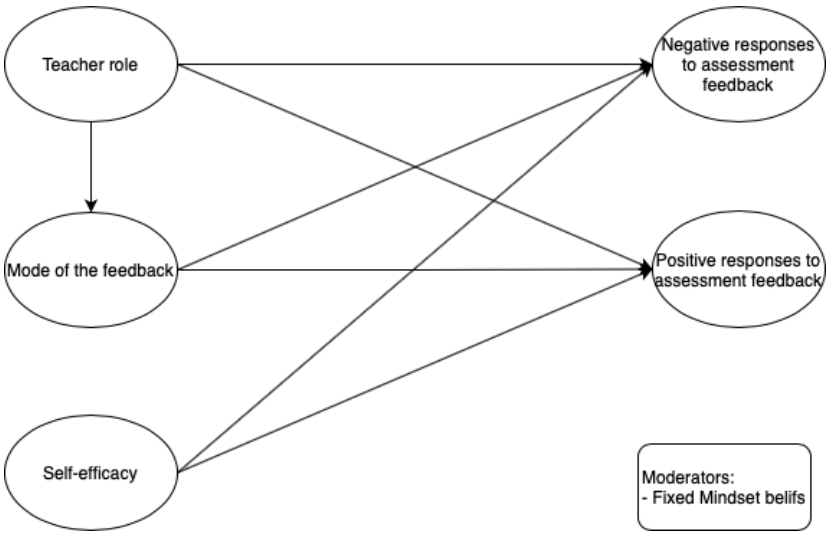


Figure 4-4: The Hypothesised Model

In order to evaluate the structural model, GOF indices were examined as an initial step to check how well the proposed model fits the data. In addition, the coefficient of determination R^2 is the most widely used measure in the assessment of the structural model, which is a measure of the model's predictive accuracy. The coefficient value is a representation of the amount of variance in the endogenous constructs explained by all of the exogenous constructs connected to it (Hair et al., 2016). The R^2 values are between 0 and 1 with higher values, which generally indicates higher levels of predictability. The value of R2 of NR=.22 and for PR=.25.

The fit indices presented in (Table 4.9) below display values that are recommended by Hair et al. (2010); thus, the proposed model fits the collected data.

Table 4-9: Structural Model Fit Measure Assessment

	χ^2	TLI	GFI	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	SRMR
Criteria	1-3	>.90	≥ 0.90	<0.05	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≤0.08
Obtained	1253.997	0.95	0.94	.04, 90%	0.997	0.96	.07

Note: χ^2 = Chi-square; TLI= Tucker Lewis index; GFI= Goodness of fit index; RMSEA= Root mean square error of approximation; NFI= Normated fit index; CFI= Comparative fit index; SRMR; Standardised Root Mean Square Residual. (Hair et al., 2010).

After assessing the model's GOF which are clarified in (Table 4.5) , hypothesised relationships were tested (see Figure 4-5). The model was defined with 38 measurement items that were loaded on six latent constructs. Nine casual paths were examined in this analysis using the covariance matrix to test the model based on the p-value and path estimation. Assessment of Hypotheses

The p-value was used to evaluate the statistical significance of the relationship between the latent variables with the cut-off of 0.05. In addition, path coefficients (β) are obtained in this step for the assessment of the structural model, in order to test the hypothesised relationships between the constructs; each hypothesis represents a path in the structural model. Meanwhile, path coefficients represent the strengths of the relationships between the two constructs. In order to define the contribution strength of the constructs, Cohen (2013) recommends the following cut-off values: 0.02 (small); 0.15, (medium); and 0.35 (large) effects of an exogenous latent variable on an endogenous latent variable. Regression coefficient of less than 0.02 indicate that there is no effect. See (Figure 4.5) for the results of the hypothesised relationships, where the bold paths represent strong relationships.

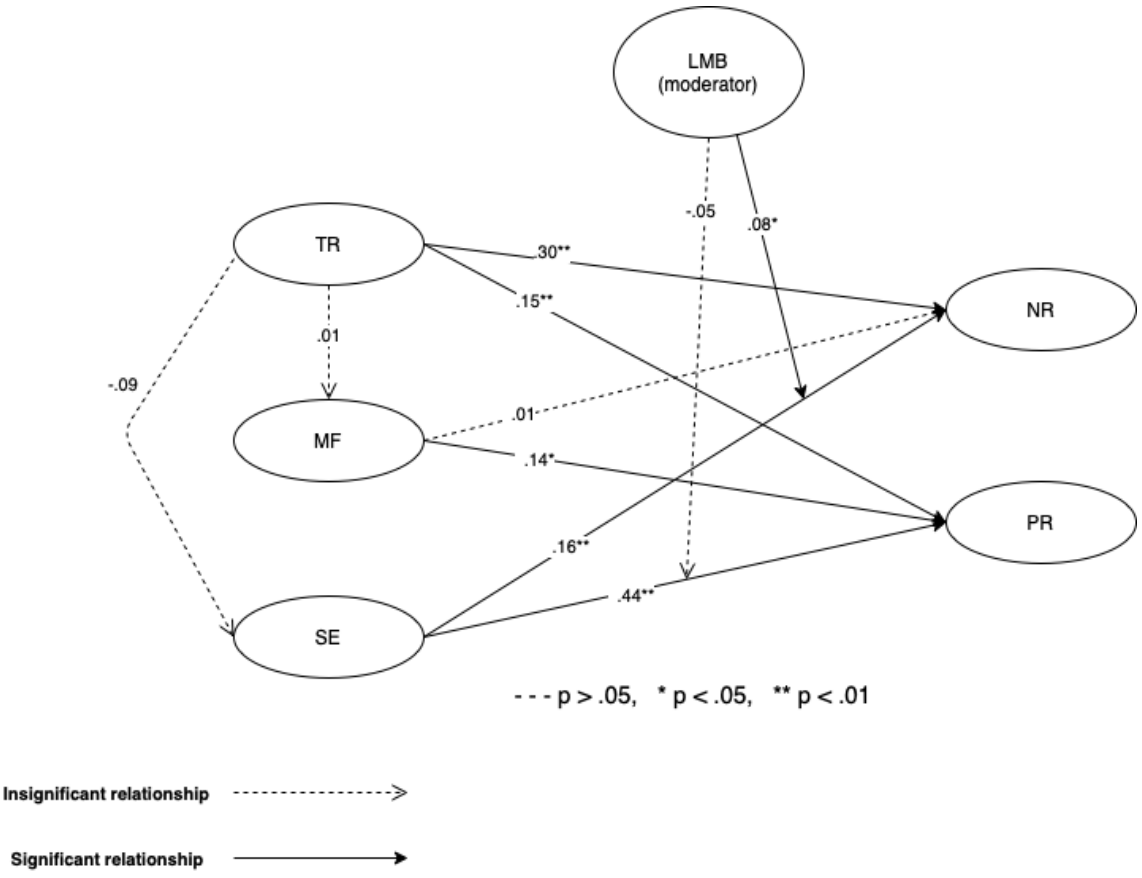


Figure 4-5: The Structural Model of the Proposed Relationships between the Variables

H1: (a) *The perceptions of the teacher's role as a feedback provider predict international students' negative responses to assessment feedback.*

The teacher's role is assumed to be one of the important factors that influence students' responses to assessment feedback. The effect of students' perceptions of the teacher's role on their negative responses to critical feedback (CF) was statistically significant with a medium effect size (β=.30, p-value= < 0.001), and hence, there was a positive relationship between students' perceptions of the teacher's role and their negative responses to critical feedback.

H1: (b) *The perceptions of the teacher's role as a feedback provider predict international students' positive responses to assessment feedback.*

In comparison, the effect of the teacher's role on students' positive responses to assessment feedback (PR) was statistically significant with a medium effect size (β=.15, p-value= < 0.001), and hence, there is a positive relationship between students' perceptions of the teacher's role and their positive responses to assessment feedback. These results support hypotheses H1 (a and b), which indicate that the teacher's role has a significant influence on students' responses (both positive and negative) to assessment feedback on their academic writing.

H2: (a) *There is a positive relationship between the mode of assessment feedback that students prefer and their negative responses to assessment feedback.*

The results as shown in the figure above indicate that the relationship between the mode of feedback (MF) that students prefer and their negative responses (NR) (β=.01p-value= > 0.05) is not significant and have a low effect size as well. Thus, this hypothesis is not supported.

H2: (b) *There is a positive relationship between the mode of the assessment feedback that students prefer and their positive responses to assessment feedback.*

Students' preferences of the mode of feedback significantly predict their positives responses to assessment feedback on their academic writing with medium effect size (β= .14p-value= < 0.05). Hence, students' preference of oral feedback is associated with the increase in their positive responses to assessment feedback. As a result, only the second part of hypothesis H2 (b) is supported.

H3: (a) *There is a positive relationship between learners' self-efficacy in L2 writing and students' negative responses to assessment feedback.*

The effect of students' self-efficacy (SE) in academic writing has a significant influence on their negative responses to assessment feedback with a medium effect size (β=.16p-value= < 0.001). This suggests that an increase in SE results in an increase of students' negative responses to critical assessment feedback. Therefore, this hypothesis is supported.

H3: (b) *Learners' SE in L2 writing positively influences their responses to assessment feedback*.

SE contributes significantly to students' positive responses to assessment feedback with a large effect size (β=.44 p-value= < 0.001). Hence, the increase in students' SE is strongly associated with the increase in their positive responses to assessment feedback. Therefore, H3 is fully supported.

H4: *There is a relationship between learners' perceptions of the teacher role as a feedback provider and their preferences of the mode of the feedback.*

Results show that learners' perceptions of the teacher's role have no effect on their preferences of the mode of the feedback and have a low effect size (β=.01 p-value= > 0.05). Thus, hypothesis H4 is not supported.

H5: *There is a relationship between learners' perceptions of the teacher role as a feedback provider and their self-efficacy.*

The relationship between learners' perceptions of the teacher's role as a feedback provider and their levels of self-efficacy in writing is not significant and the effect size is small (β=.09 p-value= > 0.05). Thus, this hypothesis is not supported.

Moderation Hypotheses Test

When the relationship between two related constructs is affected or changed by a third construct, it is known as a moderating effect (Hair et al., 2010). One moderating variable was identified in this study based on the literature and the interview results, which is learners' language mindset beliefs (LMB).

H6: *Learners' fixed mindset beliefs moderate the relationship between their self-efficacy and their positive as well as negative responses to assessment feedback.*

Results demonstrate that learners' language mindset beliefs (fixed mindset) moderate the influence of their self-efficacy on their negative responses to assessment feedback (β=.08 p-value= < 0.05) with a small effect size. As indicated in H3 (a), the increase in learners' SE resulted in a decrease in their positive responses to assessment feedback and this relationship was found to be moderated by learners' fixed mindset beliefs. Comparatively, it does not moderate this influence of SE on their positive responses to assessment feedback (β= -.05 p-value= > 0.05) on their academic writing.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the findings of both qualitative and quantitative phases of the current study. It first presented the results of the interviews which aimed to explore the responses of international students to their teacher assessment feedback on their academic writing in EAP contexts. The interviews also aimed to explore the variations in these responses and the potential factors that could influence them. Results showed that students' responses were divided into cognitive, behavioural and affective responses. The cognitive responses demonstrated that students generally hold positive thoughts about assessment feedback whether it is formative or summative and they believed in its usefulness. Furthermore, most of the participants were keen to address the received feedback comments especially the formative one and considered it a significant opportunity to improve their academic writing. The actions they take were in the form of reading the feedback several times and discuss it with their teachers orally. On the other hand, students showed different affective or emotional responses towards assessment feedback. In addition, the interviews revealed some of the factors that were assumed to affect these responses. These factors were divided into feedback- related factors, teacher- related factors and learner- related factors which are summarized in the conceptual model mentioned above (see Figure 4.1 section 4.2).

Furthermore, this chapter presented the results of the questionnaire which was developed based on the interview results. In analysing the questionnaire, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling were performed. In the exploratory factor analysis, the items were reduced (see Appendix L) and the reliability of the instrument was checked. In addition, the final factor structure has been decided which included six components with 43 items. These components or constructs were *students' positive responses to assessment feedback (PR)*, *students' negative responses to assessment feedback (NR), preferences of the mode of feedback (MF), perceptions of the teacher role as a feedback provider (TR), students' writing self-efficacy (SE) and their language mindset beliefs (LMB)* (See Appendix K for the final version of the questionnaire). In the confirmatory factor analysis, the proposed model which is constituted of these six constructs was tested and was found valid and reliable. In addition, the Goodness of Fit was tested to examine if the proposed model is fitted with the data. This was done by checking the suggested indices in previous literature and results were found in the ranges that are recommended. The SEM analysis showed that students' self-efficacy followed by their perceptions of the teacher role as a feedback provider contributed significantly to their positive as well as negative responses to assessment feedback whereas their preferences of the mode of the feedback contributed significantly to their positive responses to assessment feedback only. In addition, language mindset beliefs was found to significantly moderate the relationship between

students' self-efficacy and their negative responses to assessment feedback. The following chapter will discuss and explain these findings in light of previous literature.

Chapter 5 Discussion of Findings

The current study aimed to explore how international students respond to their teacher assessment feedback on their academic writing in the pre-sessional courses in the UK. It aimed to reveal their reactions and explore the possible factors behind the variations in their responses toward assessment feedback. Analysis of their responses and perceptions are relevant and important in order to understand the factors that could influence their reactions, and subsequently, potentially affect their uptake of the feedback.

The study was conducted in an EAP context, as this selection was inspired by the lack of research into this group of language learners and their experiences of assessment feedback. Several findings in relation to how the participants responded to their teacher feedback have been presented in Chapter Four, which are related to the research questions that guide this study:

1. How do international students respond to assessment feedback?
2. What factors influence students' responses to assessment feedback in the UK pre-sessional courses?
3. To what extent do these factors predict students' responses to assessment feedback?

The first question aimed to explore participants' responses to teacher assessment feedback through interviews. The second and third research questions intended to identify the factors that could affect students to transform assessment feedback into practice and the extent of the influence of these factors on their responses. Therefore, the results of both qualitative and quantitative phases of this research are discussed in this chapter. Additionally, the chapter provides an overview of the key findings linked to the research questions with regard to the literature. In particular, the discussion connects the results together and provides supporting references for the study's results and also proposed possible explanations for these findings.

5.1 Students' Responses to Assessment Feedback

Students' responses and perceptions of assessment feedback are considered a precursor to their engagement and actual utilisation of it (Handley et al., 2011). Therefore, it was crucial to explore how the participants in the current study perceive, comprehend, value and respond to their teacher assessment feedback. In other words, it focuses on how they experience and receive feedback both from cognitive and affective perspectives. In this study, even though the findings demonstrated that the participants showed different conflicting reactions to the feedback that they had received regarding their assignments, they demonstrated generally positive responses in

relation to their beliefs and thoughts about assessment feedback and their willingness to engage with it. In terms of their cognitive responses, they believed that assessment feedback to be a significant source that they could rely on to advance their academic writing. They considered it to be a guidance tool that they could utilise to determine their weaknesses mistakes, in order to avoid them in the future. This is similar to Poverjuc's (2011) study who concluded that ESL students usually value their teacher's feedback and expressed their appreciation.

In addition, Hyland and Hyland (2019) demonstrated that language learners highly appreciated their teachers' feedback, and trusted them as a source of knowledge. Similar to the findings of this study, the participants found that both formative and summative feedback are useful in terms of understanding their weaknesses and explaining the grades that they received. In addition, the language learners in the context of the study seemed to want to seek, as well as to receive their teacher's feedback. They demonstrated different levels of interest to address the relevant comments that they thought of as helpful in improving their final drafts. These results, which included students' willingness to respond to, seek clarification, and take notice of feedback, as well as perceiving it as important and useful, have been noted as significant aspects that students are required to have in order to successfully engage with feedback (Handley et al., 2011; Jonsson & Panadero, 2017).

In relation to the affective aspect, the assessment feedback provided to the participants was not without its emotional consequences. Overall, the feelings were different among the participants, as some of them expressed feelings of happiness, excitement, satisfaction and acceptance of their teacher's feedback. Others show feelings of disappointment, anger, sadness and confusion; these feelings varied depending on the type of feedback they received. For example, students who received comments on grammar tended to accept the feedback comments and considered such feedback as minor. Others felt happy and satisfied when the comments showed their weaknesses and provided them with the chance to improve. Comparatively, the vague or overgeneralised comments led some of the students to feel disappointment or sad. Similar to the findings of Mahfoodh (2017), it was found that EFL students expressed various emotional responses to teacher written feedback, and these varied feelings were associated with the type of feedback comments that students received on their writing.

Mahfoodh (2017) found that students' feelings of happiness and satisfaction with teachers' feedback was related to different feedback aspects, such as grammar and editing or providing information that were easy for them to address. On the contrary, he reported that feelings of dissatisfaction and anger were attributed to students' inabilities to understand the feedback comments. In this study, it seems that the negative emotions were evanescent and did not affect

participants' engagement with feedback. These results are consistent with Mahfoodh (2017), together with Han and Hyland (2019), who also found that the emergent negative emotions did not influence or limit students to use teacher written feedback effectively. These feelings were temporary and usually emerged initially when reading the feedback, and would then gradually disappear.

In contrast to what previous research has indicated that most students do not use or engage with the feedback that they receive about their writing (e.g. Evans, 2013), the participants in this study showed interest to use the feedback comments to improve their writing. Even though they had experienced negative feelings, it seemed not to discourage them or inhibit their use of feedback. They appeared resilient in the face of being able to respond to unexpected or, as they described it, negative feedback. A possible explanation for this might be the interplay between students' cognitive and affective reactions to assessment feedback. Students in the qualitative phase commonly believe in the usefulness of their teachers' feedback and its role in developing their writing seems to outweigh their negative feelings towards it. Similarly, this is what Li & Curdt-Christiansen (2020) concluded in their study on five Chinese postgraduate students' reactions towards teacher feedback that affective reactions can be moderated by their changing cognition of the feedback content. Learners' cognition of the learning scaffolding function of critical feedback helped in relieving frustration over the feedback and enabled more effective engagement with it.

Furthermore, a possible explanation is that students' feedback literacy could help them control their emotions and think of feedback as an opportunity to improve, leading eventually to a longer-term uptake of the feedback. They showed that they developed some traits that indicate they become literate students. Feedback literacy is related to students' understanding of what feedback is and how it could be managed effectively. It also includes managing their capacities and dispositions to use feedback productively and to be able to appreciate teachers' roles and themselves in the feedback process (Carless & Boud, 2018). Feedback literate students continue to work through emotional balance, which results in a more objective perception of the critical feedback received, as they are more open to accepting suggestions, which develops better and more progressive dialogue with teachers. The participants in the qualitative study showed their awareness and appreciation of teacher assessment feedback and they seemed able to control and overcome their negative emotions. Likewise, self-regulated students are also reported to have the ability to proactively pursue their goals, even if they encounter challenges or circumstances that obstruct their learning, as they have the activate tactical or strategic steps to advance their learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

In addition, it is worth noting that such awareness and appreciation of feedback seems to evolve over time. The participants were in level B when they participated in the interviews, and most of them reported that they have limited experiences with formative feedback in their home countries. They stated that the feedback they used to receive was either in the form of merely grades or brief comments that would congratulate them on their success, or request more effort. This perception of assessment as a measurement was different from the goal of formative feedback in the new learning environment, which is developing learning. The participants were exposed to formative feedback in the previous levels, which could contribute to their current level of awareness.

Previous studies, such as Tian and Lowe (2013) reported the gradual change of Chinese students' attitudes towards tutor feedback in a 12-month longitudinal multiple-case study in a British university. They found that students expressed intense initial emotional reactions that obstructed their engagement with the content of feedback, as it was contrary to their expectations and different from their previous learning experience. This dissonance led them to interpret formative feedback comments as summative judgement of their work and themselves. Subsequently, students tended to view the feedback more positively and considered it to be a vital medium in which they could understand the demand of the new academic culture. These results could provide a possible explanation for the participants' capability to manage their negative feelings.

5.2 Factors that Influence Students' Responses to Assessment Feedback

The findings of the current study revealed that there were several factors that seem to influence students' responses to feedback. These factors were first explored in the interviews and later examined in the quantitative phase through the use of SEM analysis. There are four factors that have been found to influence both students' positive and negative responses to assessment feedback: self-efficacy, mode of feedback, teacher's role and language mindset as a moderator. The SEM results showed that SE was the strongest factor to influence students' positive responses to assessment feedback, whereas the teacher's role was the strongest factor to influence students' negative responses to assessment feedback. The following is a detailed discussion of all these factors.

5.2.1 Influence of Self-efficacy on Students' Responses to Assessment Feedback

Bandura (1997) stated that teacher feedback is one of the main sources from which SE originates. He mentioned that SE develops better when receiving positive feedback, although negative feedback or criticism could undermine it. Furthermore, he believed that individuals are persuaded

through such comments to believe that they have the necessary abilities to succeed. Thus, when individuals are faced with criticism, they easily become victims of self-doubt and feel self-inefficacy. A teacher who confirms students' capabilities may enhance their SE, whereas a teacher who tells students that they are incapable may weaken their SE (Bandura, 1997).

Results from the interviews showed that the formative feedback that students received on their drafts could influence their confidence in writing. One participant illustrated that feedback comments affected her confidence in word choice, in particular, which she considered a confident area for herself. In comparison, another participant expressed that teacher feedback contributed to enhancing her SE in writing. This demonstrated that students tend to judge their abilities in writing through their teachers' feedback comments. In addition, some of them expressed their willingness to receive more constructive feedback, while others seek positive feedback to enhance their confidence and provide them with positive feelings. These findings are also in line with previous studies that noticed a development of students' SE, due to teacher feedback over a period of academic writing courses (Ruegg, 2018; Zhang & Province, 2018) indicating the significant influence of teacher feedback on students' SE in writing, especially with students whose English proficiency level was low.

Furthermore, the results of SEM demonstrate that students' SE in writing significantly and positively predicted their negative responses, as well as their positive responses to assessment feedback, respectively. It has also determined that learners' fixed language mindsets significantly moderate the correlation between their SE and the negative responses to teacher written feedback. Apparently, students' confidence in their abilities to adhere to academic writing conventions influences their responses to assessment feedback. This means that high self-efficacious learners seem to adopt feelings and thoughts of positivity to assessment feedback. Moreover, high levels of SE predicted students' negative responses to assessment feedback. It has been demonstrated in previous research (e.g. Gan et al., 2020) that high SE is usually accompanied by positive feelings, competence and embracing challenges, such as constructive or critical feedback. Furthermore, the individual's perceived efficacy was found to influence the uptake of feedback and improved learning, as Winstone et al. (2017) proposed that students' willingness to spend longer time reflecting on and acting upon teachers' feedback is influenced by high SE.

Interestingly, the SEM results showed that negative responses to assessment feedback were predicted by high SE. It was anticipated based on literature that high self-efficacious learners would have less negative responses towards critical or negative assessment feedback. Previous research highlighted that students with low SE tend to respond negatively to critical or negative

feedback (Poulos & Mahony, 2008), due to high self-esteem that protects them against criticism (Young, 2002); while high SE learners are more willing to engage with feedback, even if it is negative (Wingate, 2010). However, the relationship between high SE and students' negative responses in the current study was moderated by students' fixed language mindset beliefs, which could explain this result. Students who endorse more of a fixed mindset believe that personal attributes and abilities are fixed and cannot be changed.

Due to their deep seated belief in the malleability of their abilities, growth mindset learners were reported to seek and respond to critical feedback as they are characterised by their willingness to engage with challenging tasks and adapt behaviours to reach their desired goals (Dweck, 2000). However, results of this study support previous research studies (e.g. Forsythe & Johnson, 2017), which have found fixed mindset individuals to engage less with the academic feedback that they receive, as they believe that attempts at improvement will be useless. They tended to adopt maladaptive behaviour and detach the thoughts and feelings surrounding feedback to protect their self-esteem. In addition, fixed mindset individuals were also found to avoid written corrective feedback, as it threatens the positive image they expose to others (Waller & Papi, 2017). These results are reflected in the quantitative findings of the present study, as fixed mindset students have a belief in their writing abilities and the negative or critical feedback is considered a threat of such beliefs. Thus, their negative responses to assessment feedback especially critical or negative one increase. It moderated the relationship between students' self-efficacy and their negative responses to assessment feedback.

5.2.2 Teacher's Role in the Assessment Feedback Process

The qualitative data analysis showed the significant role of the feedback provider, who was the teacher in this study. The way students perceive their teachers evidently helps to determine how they respond to the feedback they receive. The SEM results also showed that students' perceptions of the teacher significantly influence both their positive and negative responses to assessment feedback. Such results indicated that students' perceptions of the feedback provider could affect the extent to which they are eager to engage with and act on the feedback. This means that the teacher has the capability to affect students' responses in general, either in a positive or negative manner.

Hyland (1998) found that the students tend to evaluate the professionalism of the feedback provider before they decide upon using it. Hyland (1998) also found that the participants do not trust the expertise of EAP teachers in commenting on the content or the organisation of their texts. Likewise, Hyland and Hyland (2019b) produced these findings and concluded that students'

appreciation and value of teacher feedback over other sources is due to the perceptions they have of teachers as knowledgeable and trustworthy. Similarly, the results of the current study showed similar and important dimensions related to the teachers and its influence on students' responses. One of these dimensions was related to students' perceptions of the teacher's characteristics, such as the level of knowledge and experience. Specifically, one of the interviewees mentioned that she prefers to receive formative feedback from one specific teacher, as she believes that due to his age he would have more knowledge and experience. She felt that such characteristics made her perceive this teacher as a credible source of feedback. This could indicate that the feedback from senior academics is appreciated more, as they are seen as more valid and reliable.

Furthermore, the written feedback carries a heavy informational load with varied comments on both form and content, which aims to offer students with the assistance needed to develop their academic writing. This goes beyond justifying a grade as teachers provide suggestions, criticism and explanations that helps students to understand the writing context and what is expected from them (Hyland & Hyland, 2019b). Therefore, the language used and how students' interpret it and respond to it is vital and should be taken into consideration. This stresses the significance of the perspective by Hyland and Hyland (2019b) that written feedback should not be seen as only a mere informational channel that facilitates students' development, but also engage with the writers and make them feel this feedback is a response to a person, not only a transcript. Thus, it is important to pay attention to the ways teachers choose to express their feedback comments, as it can influence students' subsequent revisions. This was evident in the qualitative results of the current study concerning the language teachers use in conveying the feedback messages, which seems to influence students' responses and utilisation of feedback as well. The participants demonstrated that the tone of some of their teachers is "harsh" and results in them avoiding reading the feedback and sometimes, consequently, ignoring it. Contrastingly, other participants showed their willingness to address all the feedback comments, due to the tone of the language that teachers used as they described it.

In addition, it has been noted from the qualitative analysis that the participants appeared to consider the hierarchical relationship between them and their teachers. One of the participants, in the present study, mentioned that she has to respond to her teacher's feedback, even though she was not convinced and did not agree with it. A potential explanation for this might be that this participant came from a background (i.e. Saudi Arabia) where the teacher has an authoritative role and is perceived as an expert and main source of knowledge. Students in such contexts should respect this source and are not expected to negotiate in return. It could be said that the feedback culture is missing in this context, as summative assessments are the dominant format of

testing and remain as the prominent evidence collection method for learning at Saudi Arabian universities (Darandari & Murphy, 2013). This corresponds with previous studies (e.g. Tardy, 2006; Tian & Lowe, 2013) that highlight the influence of students' previous learning experiences and their influence on students' responses to teachers' feedback. They found that students' negative responses towards teacher feedback are affected by their expectations, which were the results of their previous learning experiences.

These results help to better understand the interpersonal aspect of feedback, which is a critical aspect and can play an important role in shaping the relationship between teachers and students, especially with L2 students, where different factors, such as language proficiency and cultural aspects could have an impact on processing feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2019b). In addition, teachers' feedback practices implied how the relationships could be structured between teachers and students, as they reflect teachers' beliefs regarding language, learning, writing and relationships (Lee, Leong & Song, 2017). Students through feedback exchanges could elicit such beliefs and adjust to the interactional context. Furthermore, realising the interpersonal aspect of feedback was found to influence the ways that teachers use to provide feedback in previous research (Hyland & Hyland, 2019b). They were aware of the impact of their responses on their relationships with students. Teachers in pre-sessional contexts considered their principal roles as experts to guide students and help them in understanding the appropriate academic conventions in order to successfully pass and gain entry to their respective disciplines. Therefore, they were found to use more directive language on issues, such as references and paragraph structure, on ESL writing essays. However, they were studious in phrasing their comments and balance between criticism, praise and suggestions. They tend to mitigate their responses to students' writings and were reserved at certain points to criticise students' ideas (Hyland & Hyland, 2019b).

Indeed, the content of the teacher feedback, and the way it is delivered, could have significant implications on students' responses and their development. Moreover, the quantity of feedback also seems to influence students' responses. It has been found through the analysis of the interviews that the participants who received detailed feedback felt their teachers evaluate their work and paid careful attention to it. However, others felt threatened and believed that they have serious problems with their writings. These variations among the participants reflected Sommers' (1982) observations that students can feel dismissed and insulted, while others feel respected and taken seriously, even though they receive the same level of feedback comments, due to the differences in phrasing the tones of the messages they received. These differences in the interpretation of teachers' feedback comments might be due to various factors related to students' themselves, such as their SE, as aforementioned.

5.2.3 Effectiveness of Face-to-Face Feedback

The interviews' data highlighted some factors that are related to the characteristics of the feedback content. The participants reported different challenges that could limit the feedback effectiveness, such as its quality and relatedness to their work. The specific and individual feedback was found more useful, especially if it is accompanied with more interactive modes of feedback, such as face-to-face feedback and was provided in the appropriate allocated time. Moreover, students who received clear, detailed and specific feedback were more satisfied and happy with teacher feedback, contrary to those who found it to be general or would focus only on surface errors, such as grammar and lead them to ignore it. Ryan et al. (2019) found that issues related to the feedback, such as its specificity, quality and volume were among the major challenges that hinder students' use of feedback. Similarly, Lee (2016) and Zacharias (2007) reported that students tend to ignore feedback that is too general or not specific to their individual needs.

Face-to-face feedback was found to be useful, as it reduces the ambiguity of the written comments. It has been used in the new paradigm of feedback practices to motivate the development of an active student role in feedback exchanges, with the aim to move away from teacher-dominated forms of communication and enable students to solicit and engage in feedback interactions (Winstone & Carless, 2019). Such interactions, as Carless et al. (2011) stated, contribute to students' learning, due to the negotiation of meanings and sharing of interpretations, as well as being able to clarify students' expectations. This was apparent in the qualitative findings of the current study, as most of the participants look for and sought face-to-face feedback with their teachers. They were eager to meet their teachers after they received the written formative feedback. They found it effective, as it provides them with the opportunity to ask questions and obtain more clarification regarding their work.

In addition, the SEM results showed that a significant relationship between students' preference of oral or face-to-face feedback and their positive responses to assessment feedback does exist. It was found that the mode of feedback as a factor moderately predicts international students' positive responses towards assessment feedback. However, finding no significant relationship between the mode of feedback and students' negative responses in SEM could indicate that this mode of feedback was generally perceived well by participants. This was apparent in the participants' responses during the interviews. For instance, one of the participants mentioned that discussing the feedback orally helps her to feel more positive about it. This might be due to the clarifications of feedback comments and negotiation of meanings between the students and teachers, which makes this type of feedback highly recommended. It is concurrent with other

research findings (e.g. Agricola, Prins & Sluijsmans, 2020) that found the oral or verbal feedback was perceived better by students in terms of quality, timing, quantity and usefulness when compared with written feedback.

From a socio-constructivist perspective, learners active roles in the feedback process and their communication with teachers could help them make sense of the information provided through this interaction and lead to a better understanding of teacher feedback (Boud & Molloy, 2013). Such conversations between students and teachers enable students to take a more active role, as they can ask for more feedback and suggestions to improve their writing, verify their understanding of the feedback comments and to make sure it is clear for them. Additionally, Nicol and Macfarlance-Dick (2006) suggested that students during the feedback dialogue are not passive recipients and they have an opportunity to engage their teachers in discussions with them regarding feedback. Therefore, the effectiveness of feedback can be increased through the interaction that occurs during the feedback exchange. These conversations could be a solution for the problems associated with the written feedback, such as misinterpretation and misunderstanding, which can contribute to more positive responses to teachers' feedback (Agricola et al., 2020). This encourages better levels of focus on students as active feedback receivers, who are expected to respond to and utilise the feedback.

Furthermore, even though it has been argued that such meetings can be very stressful for ESL students, due to their varied levels of language proficiency (Ferris, 2003; Tian & Lowe, 2013), students in the context of this research found it an opportunity to clarify any misconceptions, which also allowed them to engage more. These meetings also appeared to be influential in helping students to overcome the negative feelings they encounter initially when reading their feedback comments. Such conversations could enhance their understanding and provide them with the opportunity to express their feelings towards their teacher's feedback. Tian & Lowe (2013) also found that some Chinese students were able to re-engage with feedback after meeting their tutors and found explanations and reassurance that would help them to regain self-confidence that was affected by feedback.

5.2.4 The Moderating Effect of Mindset Beliefs

The mindset beliefs that a person develops in relation to the malleability of his or her ability and intelligence whether it is fixed (cannot be changed) or growth (can be developed and changed), could influence the way they respond to feedback. It was examined as a moderating factor that affects the relationships between the aforementioned factors and students' positive as well as negative responses to assessment feedback. The moderated effect of mindset beliefs has been

supported in previous recent studies (e.g. Cutumisu & Lou, 2020). They found that the correlation between seeking critical-feedback and revision and learning outcomes is moderated by students' mindset beliefs. In the present study, it was found that fixed mindsets significantly moderate only the relationship between students' SE and their negative responses to assessment feedback. Wood and Bandura (1989) proposed a model that explains the relationship between SE and mindset. They theorise that individuals' mindset beliefs would influence their levels of SE and, ultimately, their performance. It seems that students with fixed mindsets have a belief in their abilities in writing, while the negative or critical feedback is considered a threat to such beliefs. Thus, their negative responses to assessment feedback, especially critical or negative one, increase.

Furthermore, previous studies have proven that the mindset of individuals entails a network of joint beliefs, such as beliefs in abilities, goal orientations, and reactions to failure situations (Plaks et al., 2009). Likewise, students' beliefs regarding the malleability of their abilities contributed to adaptive or maladaptive cognitive, affective and behavioural responses (Dweck, 2000; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). Qualitative results of this study showed that the participants have a higher tendency to growth mindset beliefs. In addition, most of them demonstrated a tendency towards learning goals, as they showed a desire to improve their skills, including academic writing, and to increase their abilities during the academic course. On the other hand, one participant showed a greater tendency towards performance goals where he wanted just to pass the course, which seemed to affect the way he responded to teachers' feedback.

Previous literature has reported that students' high uptake of feedback is driven by a goal to improve their learning (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010). This means that learners who set learning goals are more likely to make use of the feedback they receive, as they are more motivated to learn and improve their writing. In comparison, learners with performance goals might ignore or not use the feedback, as it could draw attention to one's incompetence. Thus, they might avoid the feedback they receive on their writing. Furthermore, the participant whose goal was just to pass felt frustrated about certain comments and thought that they are suitable for only proficient students. This result is explained by what DeNisi and Kluger (2000) suggested that students with performance goals could interpret the criticism they received at the self-level, and not the task level, which resulted in negative feelings, such as self-doubt, anger, or frustration.

These achievement goals were found to be associated with learners' mindsets, as it directs learners to focus more on either learning or performance goals (Dweck, 2000). Many studies have found that students endorsing more of a growth mindset, have more tendency toward learning goals, whereas students with a fixed mindset show more orientation toward performance goals

(Bandura & Dweck, 1981; Cury et al., 2006; Dweck, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Mueller & Dweck, 1997; Robins & Pals, 2002). This relationship is not surprising, as the mindset forms the core of the individuals' belief system and works as a framework that shapes their achievement goals (Dweck, 2000). Additionally, Limpo and Alves (2017) found that students' beliefs regarding the malleability of their writing skills predicted the extent to which they pursued mastery goals in writing. Specifically, stronger incremental beliefs were associated with a greater orientation towards mastery goals. It seems that the more students viewed writing as an incremental skill that is liable to development, the more they were oriented to increasing it.

In addition, the mindset of the individual influences the meanings or attributions they provide to certain incidents that occur to them. The belief in the that lack of effort, for instance, is the reason for failure, and makes them implement more effort to avoid it, whereas believing that the lack of ability is what causes this failure, might make them upset and frustrated if they believe this ability is uncontrollable. Ascribing difficulties and challenges to stable factors impedes motivation, while ascribing them to unstable factors, such as effort, elevates hope and motivation (Weiner, 2010). This indicates that the subsequent behaviour and motivation of learners is influenced by the way they perceive the cause of their current status and their explanations of it. What was interesting to determine during the analysis of the interviews was that most of the participants attributed the critical or unexpected feedback that they had received to the effort they put in their written assignments; while others attributed it to their ability and feedback providers (i.e. teachers). These attributions are important because they help in improving levels of understanding regarding students' motivation to learn.

From a constructivist perspective, learners try to understand their reality by actively attaching meanings to their learning situations (Williams & Burden, 1999). Those who attributed the negative feedback they received to the lack of effort are expected to spend more time in improving, as they believe that effort is something controllable and can be changed over time. Comparatively, those who attributed feedback to ability, luck or teachers might see a decline in interest or motivation, as these attributions are classified as uncontrollable (Weiner, 2010). It is worth noting that the attributions that learners make can be modified. Previous studies found that changing attributions of failure from low ability to a lack of effort resulted in improvements of students' performances (Perry et al., 1993). This indicates that changing students' attributions from stable and uncontrollable to more controllable and unstable ones could result in positive responses and higher uptake of teacher critical feedback.

To conclude, the four factors model in this study demonstrated the influence of some of the variables on both students' positive and negative responses to assessment feedback. These

factors have been mentioned in previous models in the literature (e.g. Lipnevich et al., 2016; Van der Kleij & Lipnevich, 2020). Their models are similar and presented an overview of the potential variables that could influence students' perceptions of teacher feedback based on systematic reviews of previous existing research. Even though the current study did not cover all the mentioned variables in their conceptual models, it further advances the literature, as it provides the kind of consistency among the variables under investigation, which, therefore, contributes in building a vigorous evidence base in the field of assessment feedback, especially in the context of this study.

5.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the results of both qualitative and quantitative results. It has also provided a description of important results found in the present study in relation to previous research, with a critical eye on some important aspects of the international students' experiences with assessment feedback. The next chapter will provide a conclusion to the current research, summarising the main results and providing contributions to this study, as well as its limitations, and suggesting certain implications for future research.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This chapter presents a conclusion from the key findings of the study followed by a discussion of its implications from both theoretical and practical perspectives. It concludes with outlining the limitations of the current study, along with recommendations for future research.

6.1 Summary of the Research Findings

This study was undertaken in order to find out the experiences of international students with assessment feedback in the pre-sessional programmes in the UK. Of particular interest, the current study was conducted to explore their responses to assessment feedback and the various factors that either facilitate or limit their use of assessment feedback and the extent of their influence on their responses. In order to obtain vivid data that can help in understanding such experiences, both interviews and questionnaires were used sequentially and were able to provide interesting insights into students' experiences including their responses to assessment feedback. Moreover, data from interviews has provided insights from learners' experiences with assessment feedback, and has explained potential reasons for the variations in the ways they respond to feedback, both cognitively and affectively. It provided a closer look at the various factors that influenced their responses to assessment feedback and helped in designing the questionnaire. Data from the questionnaire has also revealed the extent of the influence of these factors on both students' positive and negative responses to assessment feedback.

The qualitative findings of the current study showed that students in the pre-sessional programme value and appreciate the assessment feedback on their academic writing, whether it is formative or summative. They perceive it as a valuable source that helps them to improve and develop their writing, as well as enhance their understanding of the assessment requirement in their new academic environment. Furthermore, they describe their experiences with assessment feedback as a useful journey that enlightens their knowledge, even though they faced some factors or challenges that could affect these experiences. The study also highlights that the process of feedback involves a complex interplay between the cognitive and affective dimensions that could be affected by different factors. Furthermore, the study found that most of the participants have had little or no experiences with assessment feedback in their countries of origin. However, this lack of experience did not seem to influence their perceptions regarding the significant role of assessment feedback or affect the way they respond to it. The participants considered it as a facilitator to better understand the writing requirements, assessment expectations, and the new academic culture. Considering students as active agents in the process

of feedback, the study has offered deep insights into the reasons behind international students' positive, as well as negative responses to assessment feedback. In brief, this research has addressed the question of how these factors could influence students' responses to assessment feedback and the extent of this influence on their responses.

Unlike some of the previous research (e.g. Evans, 2013), the findings of the current study have revealed that L2 international students value and seek assessment feedback. Furthermore, they do not consider the feedback as only a justification of the grades they receive, but also as a source of knowledge that they need to exploit in order to improve their learning. The findings suggest that the students are aware of the usefulness of the role of the feedback to advance their academic writing, even though they feel upset or disappointed about it. Contrary to previous studies (e.g. Wiliam & Black, 2002), which contend that students are more interested in the grades than the feedback, and subsequently ignore the feedback when it is presented together with the grades, the situation was different in this study. The interviewees showed equal interest to both marks and feedback, which was apparent in the situation of summative feedback. All the participants were motivated to read the summative feedback to understand why they receive this grade and to know their weaknesses.

The study also demonstrated that the negative feelings or responses following assessment feedback did not lead to students actively ignoring it. On the contrary, they showed some control over these feelings and kind of awareness regarding their emotional state. They did not tend to show a defensive response to the criticism they received and thought of it as an opportunity that would help them to learn. Further, demonstrating a level of understanding, students were proactive in acquiring feedback and were motivated to understand what teachers expect from them when undertaking assignments, such as cue-conscious or cue-seeking behaviours identified in the literature (Miller & Parlett, 1974; Yang & Carless, 2013). The findings also contrast what Forsythe and Johnson (2017) argued in regards to students not welcoming the feedback comments that challenge them to adopt new perspectives. Additionally, the findings of the study suggest that the participants were concerned with the quality of assessment feedback. They would want the constructive feedback that is composed of a balance between criticism and praise.

Furthermore, the study offered insights into the complexity of the factors that influence student responses to assessment feedback. Various factors related to the feedback message, the feedback provider and to students themselves have been revealed in the interview data and were confirmed in the questionnaire results. Some of these factors appeared as challenges that require strategic approaches to be overcome, such as the contradictory, vague and general feedback.

Being aware of their active role in the feedback process, the participants were aiming for an interaction with their teachers, instead of considering it as a one-way transmission feedback. This strategy helped them to clear the confusion that resulted from the written feedback comments. The present study emphasised the significance of the dialogic and interactive mode of feedback and indicated its influence on students' levels of satisfaction with their experiences in the new academic culture.

In addition, the study highlighted the significant impact of students' perceptions of the teachers who provided them with feedback on their writing. The study demonstrated that the teacher is an important factor that can predict students' positive as well as negative responses to assessment feedback. The language used, the tone, and the expertise of the feedback provider were found among the issues that could compromise the effectiveness of assessment feedback. This factor, as participants revealed, can enhance their positive responses to assessment feedback and can limit their engagement depending on the previously mentioned characteristics. The participants in the current study showed their willingness to receive constructive feedback in a softer tone that would motivate them to negotiate the feedback comments with their teachers.

Another important factor through which students filter the feedback received is their self-efficacy (SE) and mindset beliefs. The psychological aspects of the learners influence the way they respond to assessment feedback. The findings of this study constitute an empirical evidence that students' SE in writing had a significant influence on their positive, as well as negative responses to assessment feedback. Furthermore, similar to previous research (Cutumisu & Lou, 2020) the mindset beliefs that students hold regarding the malleability of their abilities in writing were found to be significant moderators in this relationship. This indicates the catalyst function of the psychological factors related to students and its influence on their responses to assessment feedback, as empirically supported in the current study.

From the aforementioned findings, this study suggests that the notion of assessment feedback in academic English courses needs to be extended from the perception that it is a mere 'telling' approach or information transmission to viewing it as an iterative process whereby students make sense of information from various sources and use it to enhance their academic English learning in general and their academic writing specifically. In addition, for the feedback to be an effective opportunity, teachers need to interact with their students and make use of these interactions in order to understand students' individual needs and help them overcome any challenges resulted from the written feedback. Furthermore, teachers could exploit students' motives to learn and encourage them to engage more with assessment feedback. Teachers can help in the development of students' levels of SE via balanced feedback that includes both positive and

critiques simultaneously. The study also identifies that feedback that is specific and oriented to students' individual requirements could lead to more positive responses, which will help this feedback to be utilised.

6.2 Research Contribution

The current study has explored how international students studying in EAP programmes in the UK respond to assessment feedback provided by teachers. Previous work outlined that students tend to ignore or do not use feedback provided by teachers (e.g. Evans, 2013; Hyland & Hyland, 2019a). While previous literature suggests that it is important to explore the reasons that led to students' ineffective response (Winstone & Carless, 2019), there is still a paucity of research that examined the influence of these reasons on students' learning experiences of assessment feedback. Further, the affective dimension of students' responses to assessment feedback in L2 learning remains an under-researched area (Han & Hyland, 2019b). Therefore, the current study adds to literature by exploring students' responses to assessment feedback by taking into account their affective responses and the factors that influence their responses with the aim of helping to improve their learning experiences. This study demonstrates how the effective response to assessment feedback can be affected by certain factors that could limit its benefits. It provides an empirical investigation of the influence of these factors that were referred to in the literature and were identified in the interviews in this study and confirmed later in the questionnaire. The connections between these factors and students' responses were confirmed in the SEM model, which revealed the strength of the influence of each factor on students' responses to assessment feedback.

The current study also contributes to the literature by focusing on the active role of students as active constructors who have agency in the feedback process, as well as outlining the factors that could affect them. It reveals the variations in their responses and what could lead to such differences in the way that they respond to assessment feedback. Further, it adds to research on the EAP contexts and the experiences of international students who are undertaking these courses. By uncovering the factors that influence their experiences, EAP teachers' awareness in regards to what could limit the effectiveness of the feedback they provide can be increased, and international students' experiences with assessment feedback can consequently be enhanced.

In addition, previous research demonstrated the significant influence of the psychological aspect of the learner on their overall performance (Dweck, 2006; Gan, et al., 2020; Papi, et al., 2020). The current study has sought to contribute to the growing, although limited literature on the role of students' SE, as well as their language mindset beliefs in their experiences of assessment feedback. This study showed that students' levels of SE significantly predict their responses to

assessment feedback, while their language mindset beliefs were found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between SE and students' responses.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the knowledge base by highlighting the importance of the mode used to deliver feedback. Previous research indicated that the foundation of a successful feedback process is the relational dimension supported by the dialogues between teachers and students (Price et al., 2010). This study confirms that students find the interactions that occur when discussing feedback face-to-face enhance their understanding and narrow the differences between their perceptions of feedback and that of their teachers. It creates an opportunity for their voices to be heard and to take an active role in the feedback process.

Another contribution of the current study is to assess feedback research by using a mixed-method approach in exploring international students' experiences of assessment feedback, something which is lacking in the assessment feedback literature. In fact, previous research has generally focused on using a single-method approach, such as interviews (e.g. Han & Hyland, 2019a; Hyland, 2003; Zhang & Hyland, 2018). In addition, previous studies did not empirically investigate the influence of the emergent factors on students' responses to assessment feedback. Conceptual models have only been developed based on previous studies that were systematically reviewed (Lipnevich et al., 2016; Van der Kleij & Lipnevich, 2020). Therefore, the mixed-method design of the current study was adopted with the aim of providing empirical evidence of the factors mentioned in previous research. The use of interviews was important to further analyse the experiences of international students in EAP contexts, especially as there is a lack of research into this group. Furthermore, the questionnaire helped to examine the relationships between these factors and students' responses to assessment feedback. Nonetheless, despite these contributions, the study still has certain limitations that will be discussed in the following section.

6.3 Research Limitations

Even though the findings of this study are useful, it has a number of limitations that need to be acknowledged. Initially, this study adopted an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design, where the interview phase informs the design of the questionnaire. Even though Dornyei (2007) encouraged the use of the participants' voices in the questionnaire design, it was one of the limitations that there was only a small number of participants in the qualitative phase and was conducted in one institution. In addition, most of the participants were mainly from two groups: Arabs and Chinese with the dominance of Arab-background students. Including more participants from different EAP programmes in the UK and from various nationalities might yield different perspectives on the phenomena under research.

Another limitation is that the current study focused on international students' responses to assessment feedback provided by teachers only. It does not consider other sources of feedback such as peer feedback and how it could influence students' development in academic writing. In addition, the investigation of the current study was limited to assessment feedback on academic writing; exploration into students' experiences of assessment feedback in the other skills might result in different responses and different factors. Additionally, even though the quantitative data results were integrated with the qualitative results, it is still limited to the context of EAP programmes in the UK. Therefore, caution needs to be taken not to generalise these results to other groups of students, even within UK higher education. The inclusion of other participants who share the same contextual information of those in the current study might enrich the results of this research.

6.4 Study Implications

The results of the qualitative and quantitative components of the current research have contributed to assessment feedback research and complemented each other by exploring the experiences of the international students who are studying in academic English programmes in the UK, together with the factors that influence these experiences. It has empirically explored the connection between these factors and students' responses to assessment feedback. Based on these findings, the following are suggested practical implications for pedagogy and research.

By understanding students' responses to assessment feedback, teachers in EAP programmes might determine certain ways to promote the effectiveness of the feedback provided to their students. Teachers need to be aware of the impact of the feedback provided on their students' emotional responses. Specifically, the significance of these emotions should not be overlooked, as Poulos and Mahony (2008) argue that negative feelings lead students to blame themselves for their performance, which could lead them to withdraw from their study if they lose confidence in their abilities. In addition, the negative feelings might affect students in improving their writing effectively and to feel negative regarding their learning experiences. Therefore, it is important for teachers to realise that assessment feedback is often characterised by strong emotions on the part of students, as they look at it as an opportunity that they can use to achieve success and move to their subsequent graduate studies. Teachers, therefore, need to distance themselves from perceiving feedback as a transmission process that informs students of both their weaknesses and strengths, and think of students as active recipients who construct meanings from feedback comments. This is by understanding that the consideration of feedback as a form of dialogue provides learners with the opportunity to discuss it with their tutors. An important

finding was that meeting teachers to discuss written feedback helped in reducing the negative feelings that students experienced after reading the written feedback comments.

Furthermore, teachers can foster the effectiveness of their feedback and reduce its influence on students' emotions by taking into consideration the tone of the language they use in their assessment feedback via achieving a balance between criticism and praise. The use of language, constructiveness, focus on the product and not on the students themselves, politeness are all vital to be considered (Boud, 1995). In addition, the feedback needs to be provided at a time when it is still relevant for students. The qualitative findings demonstrated that students sometimes failed to address the feedback comments and missed the opportunity to improve their subsequent written work, due to the delay time in receiving it.

Another aspect that teachers need to pay attention to is not only the content and timing of feedback, but also the social dimension of it. The feedback process is shaped through the social relationship between the students and teachers (Higgins et al., 2001). In tutor-to-student feedback situations, this is especially important, due to the power asymmetries that characterise the relationship. In the tutor–student interaction, students often perceive a lack of power, and in feedback situations, this power asymmetry may become especially pronounced and problematic due to the dual role of the tutor, because of both the process of assisting and passing judgement on the student (Higgins et al., 2001). In order to enable students to interact confidently, teachers need to eliminate the perception of power asymmetry through feedback preparation activities where students understand the process of providing and receiving feedback, as well as its purpose (Värlander, 2008). This involves developing feedback literacy among students via peer feedback, and analysing exemplars, so that they are able to self-evaluate their work, appreciate the role of feedback, manage affect, and uptake feedback more effectively (Carless & Boud, 2018).

Enhancing students' SE and mindsets are other aspects that need to be considered in order to enhance a positive experience with assessment feedback. The way feedback is provided can affect students' motivational beliefs either positively or negatively, which subsequently influences how and what they learn (Juwah et al., 2004). These factors emphasise the importance of the psychological dimension, as it plays a critical role on how students respond and act upon feedback. It is argued that these beliefs affect the learning goals that students set for themselves and influence the amount of effort they apply (Gan et al., 2020). Meanwhile, due to the empirical evidence yielded in the current study of a positive linkage between writing SE and students' responses to assessment feedback, it is suggested that enhancing students' competence in writing should be provided with special consideration in these programmes, which could be achieved

through positive feedback and encouragement. In particular, previous research (e.g. Gan et al., 2020) found that a good level of English language SE is likely to function as a catalyst for students' feedback engagement.

Another similar related aspect is students' mindset beliefs regarding the malleability of their writing skills. Previous research found that learners with an incremental theory of writing intelligence take advantage of WCF and are more likely to analyse teachers' comments, while those with an entity theory of writing intelligence are more likely to look at the grade and immediately discard the paper (Waller & Papi, 2017). Whilst the present study did not examine the direct effect of mindset beliefs on students' responses, it did determine that fixed mindset beliefs was a significant moderator of the relationship between students' SE in writing and their negative responses to assessment feedback. Students who endorse fixed mindsets believe that their abilities in writings cannot be changed, and thus, become negative to any criticism they receive from their teachers. This suggests that teachers need to pay careful attention to the feedback they provide to their students, as it has been reported that it results in a strong influence upon their motivational beliefs (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). It was also found that the type of feedback that learners receive from educators has an effect on their mindset, motivation and coping patterns (Rattan, Good & Dweck, 2012).

In a number of studies (e.g. Dweck, 2007; Mueller & Dweck, 1998), it was shown that the kind of criticism or praise given can directly develop a helpless or mastery-oriented pattern. Therefore, a balance between criticism and praise is recommended (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Moreover, these comments should focus on students' work and not on their personal traits, as these comments may result in learners judging themselves by their performance and attributing outcomes to personal traits (Dweck, 2000). Teachers should focus on the process of learning when providing feedback (e.g. *you have done a great job, your writing is improving, continue practicing to improve your referencing*). This kind of praise helps learners internalise growth mindsets (Pomerantz & Kempner, 2013).

Previous research has found a relationship between teachers' mindsets and the feedback they provide to their students (Kraker-pauw et al., 2017). The way teachers provide assessment feedback is important, as their beliefs could nurture growth mindset. Growth-oriented feedback promotes students' motivation and enhances their learning, while fixed feedback emphasises basic qualities (e.g., intelligence or talent) and characteristics as fixed traits (Kamins & Dweck, 1999). Therefore, teachers should consider the ways that are able to support the development of a growth mindset when dealing with their students, especially those with fixed mindset beliefs. Furthermore, teachers need to initially believe in the malleability of their students' abilities in

writing and that they can be developed via the feedback that focuses on the process of learning. The extent to which they believe their students can develop their language learning abilities, can have a significant impact on their teaching and the way they react to both learners' success and failures. Teachers with a fixed-view of language learning are expected to have a negative influence on learners' motivation and achievement, as they are more likely to be less motivated, less supporting and to directly or indirectly promote those fixed beliefs (Rattan et al., 2012; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). This indicates the importance of ensuring that language teachers themselves have growth mindset beliefs with regards to language learning before asking them to apply any growth mindset strategies in class.

Growth mindset beliefs could also be spontaneously embedded in many teachers' practices and feedback, although it is necessary to make sure that all teachers are aware of this concept and how to implement it, as well as to promote it in the language classrooms. Dweck (2015) indicated that teachers might claim to have a growth mindset, even though it is not reflected in their actions. Therefore, it is vital to make teachers aware of their mindsets explicitly, as well as their students' mindsets. This awareness would enable them to improve their feedback styles in order to encourage the promotion of growth language mindset beliefs among their students and to contribute to the increase in the effectiveness of feedback. Through their feedback, teachers can encourage their students to endorse a growth mindset by teaching them how to improve their academic writing and become self-regulated learners. Further, they can teach students that their abilities in academic writing could be changed by increasing effort levels and minimising the teacher's role, especially outside the classroom.

6.5 Future Research

While the results of the current mixed-methods study can be insightful, much can be still gained in future research. The findings raised other additional questions, which were beyond the scope of the current study and require further exploration. For instance, the findings from the interviews suggest that international students value, seek, and appreciate the assessment feedback provided by teachers and tend to show more positive responses to it. Future longitudinal studies are required to explore these responses from the beginning of the journey in more details and the way it evolves over the time, considering the influence of the previous learning experiences. Furthermore, future research needs to examine how students' positive responses or engagement is connected to their uptake of assessment feedback. It is still not clear whether students' engagement with assessment feedback will lead to an effective use of feedback or not. Such a relationship can be examined by using a case study approach which would allow researchers to trace how the participants' views of and engagement with assessment

feedback affect the way they use it. Additionally, the current study focused on students' perspectives only; thus, future research could include teachers' perspectives and what they consider when providing assessment feedback. It can also explore their reactions to students' responses, in order to portray a holistic picture of students' experiences of assessment feedback.

In addition, this study highlighted some of the cultural elements that appeared to influence how students perceive their teachers. It is worth investigating the impact of such perceptions on students' interactions with teachers when negotiating assessment feedback. This can be conducted by videotaping these meetings and exploring the difficulties the participants encounter to articulate their opinions regarding assessment feedback. Furthermore, the significant influence of the psychological aspect of students was evident in this study. The role of language mindset beliefs and their influence on students' responses to feedback is worth further exploration. Lou and Noels (2020) state that the type of feedback that students receive influences their mindsets and satisfaction. There remains a need to explore the differences between students' uptake and responses to assessment feedback based on the mindset beliefs they endorse and its influence on their overall achievement. Similarly, students' SE as academic writers can be affected, and they might doubt their abilities depending on the type of the feedback they receive. This invites future research to explore the influence of the provision of assessment feedback on these psychological constructs by adopting an experimental study design where researchers can measure both pre- and post- received of feedback. Furthermore, due to the important role of teachers' practices and feedback in promoting growth mindset beliefs among learners, future research should examine the mindset beliefs of teachers and explore strategies that enable teachers to provide feedback that could develop growth language mindsets.

In addition, it would be interesting to explore students' perspectives of assessment feedback during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how it contributed to shaping these responses and the challenges they encounter. Finally, similar research could be undertaken to examine or develop the resulted model in the present study by exploring other factors that could potentially influence students' responses to assessment feedback.

To conclude this thesis, the concern with assessment feedback is because of the belief in what Bill Gates stated that "we all need people who will give us feedback. That's how we improve" which emphasises that assessment feedback can be a door through which students can develop their skills and enhance their learning when understanding what could influence their experiences.

Appendix A. **Interview Questions**

Demographic information

- What is the name of your degree and discipline?
- How old are you?
- 20–25 25–30 30-35 35-40 older…
- What is your home language?
- What do you do apart from being a student? You may mention your occupation (if applicable)
- Nationality:
- IELTS score before joining the course:

Previous learning experience:

- How was your experience with L2 writing before you joined the course?
- Have you ever received feedback on your writing before you joined the course?
- If yes, what kinds of feedback you used to receive before you joined the course?

Students' beliefs about their abilities in academic writing

1. How good are you at academic writing essay? Why?

Very poor	**Poor**	**Fair to average**	**Good**	**Excellent**
1	2	3	4	5

- Do you think your current ability in writing in general can be changed? How or in what way?
- What do you think the factors contributed to reach this level? What are the factors that you think might prevent you from improving your writing?
- What do you think the factors that contributed to the success of some language learners?
- (5) What do you find difficult in academic writing? How can you overcome these difficulties?
- Do you rely on teachers' feedback to improve your writing? What are the other ways that you use to improve writing?
- Do you prefer to get good feedback that you will not learn from or a constructive feedback that help you improve your writing? explain.

- Do you believe that successful language learners have natural gifted ability? Explain or How?
- So which is more important the natural talent or hard work?

Students' views and emotional reaction to feedback to their writing

- Talk about the effort you spent on this assignment and your expectations before and after receiving the feedback.
- How did you feel about the feedback you received on your essay assignments? Describe your feelings.
- How did you manage your negative emotions?
- What are the challenges you face in using the feedback?
- How helpful do you think was the feedback you received? How will you use it? *What kind of changes have you made on your work after receiving this feedback?
- How confident you are in your understanding of the feedback you received, do you think you are capable of using the feedback to improve your writing? Elaborate?
- Did you receive guidance on how to understand and use feedback?
- How was the quality of feedback in terms of details and relevance to your work? How easy was the language used in the feedback? How useful do you find markers' comments or feedback in improving your essay assignments?
- What are the areas that you received feedback on and that affected you negatively? Why?
- What did you do with the comments that's not interested to you?
- How do you prefer to receive the feedback? written or oral? focus on form or content? direct or indirect? comprehensive or selective?

General questions

- If you don't receive feedback, would you go and ask for it? Why?
- Have you tried to receive a feedback from a friend in your class? Why ?
- Do you think the feedback you received can help you in the future assignment? How?
- Does the feedback help you to understand your current status in writing, your strengths and weaknesses and the level you need to achieve?
- What does it indicate or mean receiving a poor or negative feedback?
- How would you feel if your friends receive good feedback and you do not? Will this affect your use of the feedback?

- How do you think the English course you have registered for can help you to improve your writing in your future study/field?

Appendix B. First Version of Questionnaires

Demographic Information

1. How old are you?

- under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-54
- 55+

2. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

3. Mother tongue:

4. Reason for joining pre-sessional course

- It is required for a Bachelor degree
- It is required for Masters or PhD
- Other (please specify):

5. Major of your intended program

6. IELTS score before joining the pre-sessional course:

7. Experience with academic writing before joining pre-sessional course: (More than one answer)

- Report
- Short essay
- Exam
- Summarising essay
- None
- Other (please specify):

8. Do you have an experience with feedback on your writing before joining the course?

- Yes
- No

Item code	**Statement**	**Scale** **Please tick (✓) once per question**				
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Factor 1: Cognitive Responses (CR)						
CR1	Q9. Teacher feedback is useful					
CR2	Q13. Teacher feedback helps me notice my mistakes					
CR3	Q18. I can understand more about assessment criteria from teacher feedback					
CR4	Q19. I believe that teacher feedback is an important source to improve my academic writing					
CR5	Q22. I believe that the feedback comments can help me in my future assignments					
Factor 2: Affective Responses (AFR)						
AFR1	Q10. Teacher written feedback often makes me feel more confident about my academic writing.					
AFR2	Q14. I hardly feel happy about my experience with teacher written feedback. **(R)**					

Item code	Statement	Scale Please tick (✓) once per question				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
AFR3	Q15. I usually take my teacher feedback positively, whether the comments are good or bad					
AFR4	Q17. I always feel satisfied about my teacher feedback, it is like what I expected					
AFR5	Q21. I feel sad and disappointed whenever I receive my teacher feedback. **(R)**					
Factor 3: Behavioural Responses (BR)						
BR1	Q11. I always used the feedback I received from my teacher to go back over what I had done in my work.					
BR2	Q12. When I received my teacher feedback I tried to work on all the comments.					
BR3	Q16. I paid careful attention to the written feedback on my work and tried to understand what it was saying.					
BR4	Q20. The feedback I received from my teacher usually encouraged me to go back over material covered in the course.					
Factor 4: Quality & Quantity of Feedback (QQF)						

Item code	**Statement**	**Scale** **Please tick (✓) once per question**				
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
QQF1	Q23. Some comments in the feedback are too general.					
QQF2	Q24. Receiving lots of comments and suggestions are useful to develop my writing.					
QQF3	Q25. The feedback comments are clear for me					
QQF4	Q27. I can understand what the markers want me to work on and correct					
QQF 5	Q28. My teacher's handwriting is difficult to read. **(R)**					
QQF6	Q26. Receiving lots of comments indicate there is a serious problem with my writing. **(R)**					
Factor 5: Mode of the Feedback (MF)						
MF1	Q59. The oral feedback helps me to notice a lot of important points.					
MF2	Q60. The oral feedback is more direct than the written one.					
MF3	Q61. I can understand the written feedback without meeting my tutor.					

Item code	Statement	Scale Please tick (✓) once per question				
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
MF4	Q62. Talking to my tutor helps me to understand the written comments					
Factor 6: Teacher Role (TR)						
TR1	Q42. A good relationship with my teacher can affect the way I use his/her feedback					
TR2	Q43. Teachers are the ones who should be blamed when I fail after using their feedback. **(R)**					
TR3	Q44. The tone of my teacher's feedback can affect the way I use it.					
TR4	Q47. Teacher contradictory feedback is one of the reasons why I ignore it. **(R)**					
TR5	Q49. Teacher feedback supports me to exercise more effort.					
TR6	Q45. Teachers' explanations of how to use feedback helps me to understand it					
TR7	Q50. Teacher feedback related to the task is more important than personal feedback.					
Factor 7: Previous Learning Experience (PLE)						

Item code	**Statement**	**Scale** **Please tick (✓) once per question**				
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
PLE1	46. Having no previous experience with feedback affects the way I respond to it					
PLE2	48. I know how to use teacher feedback due to my previous experience					
PLER3	58. I ignore using feedback because I have no previous experience how to use it					
PLE3	63. I can understand teacher feedback much better if I had used it in my previous learning					
Factor 8: Critical Feedback (CF)						
CF1	29.The feedback process affects me emotionally. **(R)**					
CF2	36.I lose self-confidence when I receive critical/negative written feedback. **(R)**					
CF3	39.Critical/negative written feedback affects me emotionally. **(R)**					

Item code	Statement	Scale Please tick (✓) once per question				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
CF4	55. I am scared to get critical/negative written feedback. **(R)**					
CF5	56.I lose my motivation to work on my paper further when I receive critical/negative written feedback. **(R)**					
CF6	57.Having critical/negative written feedback makes me feel embarrassed. **(R)**					
Factor 9: Self-efficacy in writing (SE)						
SE1	64. I can support my ideas with evidence					
SE2	65. I can use references correctly.					
SE3	66. I can write grammatically correct sentences.					
SE4	51. I can avoid emotional language when I write					
SE5	52. I can use many academic words in my writing.					

Item code	Statement	Scale Please tick (✓) once per question				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SE6	53. I can structure my written assignments					
SE7	54. I can write complete formal sentences.					
Factor 10: Language Learning Mindset Beliefs (LMB)						
LMB1	30. I have a certain fixed amount of ability to learn academic writing					
LMB2	31. Each person's ability to write in English is stable and cannot be changed					
LMB3	32. People can't really learn a new skill in English well after they reach adulthood.					
LMB4	33. How well a person learns a foreign language does not depend on age; anyone who works hard can be a fluent writer in that language. **(R)**					
LMB5	34. People who try hard and spend very long hours to study writing in English lack the natural ability to improve other skills					
LMB6R	35. I can improve my ability to learn academic writing **(R)**					

Item code	Statement	Scale Please tick (✓) once per question				
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
LMB6	37. My natural ability to learn academic writing will always remain the same.					
LMB7	38. I believe that the ability to write in English language is a natural innate talent that is out of a person's control to change.					
LMB8	40. Some people can write in English very easily because they have a special natural ability.					
LMB9	41. Everyone could do well in academic writing if they try hard, whether they are young or old**. (R)**					

Appendix C. **Sample Interview**

- Your degree and discipline?
- Master in Risk management and insurance
- Age: 25-30
- Gender: Female
- Home language: Arabic
- Job: Teaching assistant
- Nationality: Saudi
- IELTS score: 6
- Why did you join this course?
- I got a good IELTS score but I did not feel I master the language and I chose to start from level B because I want to get familiar with the system here and learn the language more.

Interview 1

- **Interviewer**: What kind of experience do you have with feedback and academic writing before joining this course?
- ***Participant:*** I was good in writing during my study in America but here it is different. I don't get high marks like others in my class.
- **Interviewer**: So you compared your grade to others?
- ***Participant:*** Yes and I felt mine was ok and my experience is different because it was not academic like here. They care about quantity but not quality like in the UK.
- **Interviewer**: Have you received feedback on your writing before?
- ***Participant:*** Yes and it was very simple for example on the articles and their correct usage.
- **Interviewer:** How good are you at academic writing essay? Why?
- ***Participant:*** Fair to average 3. I still learn but I think I am good at writing.
- **Interviewer:** What do you think the factors contributed to reach this level?
- ***Participant:*** I like grammar and I am good at it and I like writing in Arabic and English.
- **Interviewer:** Do you think your current ability in writing in general can be changed? How or in what way?
- ***Participant:*** Yes, if I focused I will achieve what I aiming for.
- **Interviewer:** What are the factors that you think might prevent you from improving your writing?

- ***Participant:*** I do not think there are any obstacles. Everything is available and if you need help you will get it.
- **Interviewer:** What do you find difficult in academic writing? How can you overcome these difficulties?
- ***Participant:*** The main problem I faced is the use of some academic words. I use some words that I think it is academic and I read them in scientific papers but I have been told that it is not academic.
- **Interviewer:** What do you think the factors that contributed to the success of some language learners?
- ***Participant:*** I think the environment has a role. People who live with people communicate in English or those who have passion or watching a lot of movies, all these can help.
- **Interviewer:** Do you rely on teachers' feedback to improve your writing?
- ***Participant:*** Yes, I relied heavily on the feedback because I try to learn from it and use it in my future assignments.
- **Interviewer:** Do you prefer to get good feedback that you will not learn from or a constructive feedback that help you improve your writing? explain.
- ***Participant:*** The constructive one of course because you will learn from your mistakes.
- **Interviewer:** Talk me through your current experience with the feedback you received on your writing. Tell me what do you think about it and what were your expectations.
- ***Participant:*** I spent an effort working on this assignment. I felt it is fair according to their standards. I felt that all the comments are true.
- **Interviewer:** How did you feel about the feedback you received on your essay assignments? Describe your feelings.
- ***Participant:*** I felt sad and disappointed but after few days when I knew that the provisional grade equals 6 in IELTS I felt good.
- **Interviewer:** This helped you to overcome your negative feelings?
- ***Participant:*** Yeah because I was very upset.
- **Interviewer:** What are the challenges you face in using the feedback?
- ***Participant:*** Those related to handwriting but the tutor explained for each one of us and helped us a lot.
- **Interviewer:** How confident are you in using this feedback?
- ***Participant:*** Very confident and I see that I am able to use it.
- **Interviewer:** How helpful was the guidance you received on using the feedback?
- ***Participant:*** It helps us understand and made everything clear for us.
- **Interviewer:** How was the quality of feedback in terms of details and relevance to your work?

- ***Participant:*** It was clear.
- **Interviewer:** How easy was the language used in the feedback?
- ***Participant:*** Clear and easy.
- **Interviewer:** What are the areas that you received feedback on and that affected you negatively? Why?
- ***Participant:*** One of the comments confused me because she put x on a paragraph and didn't mention what wrong with it.
- **Interviewer:** Did you ask her about it?
- ***Participant:*** No, I ignored the comment and I thought that she might want me to use another way.
- **Interviewer:** How do you prefer to receive the feedback? written or oral ?
- ***Participant:*** Both because you might not be able to use the written only and need more clarification and the oral only might be forgotten.
- **Interviewer:** Focus on form or content?
- ***Participant:*** I think both are important because when you think about it what is the purpose if the grammar is correct and the content is not and vise versa the right or good content is not enough if it is full of grammar mistakes.
- **Interviewer:** Direct or indirect?
- ***Participant:*** Direct.
- **Interviewer:** Comprehensive or selective?
- ***Participant:*** I prefer it to be comprehensive so I can know my strength and use it in the future
- **Interviewer:** If you received a feedback that is against your preferences will you still use it?
- ***Participant:*** I will go and ask for more and I am sure if the feedback is only one word, it is going to be useful and beneficial.
- **Interviewer:** Does the feedback help you to understand your current status in writing, your strengths and weaknesses and the level you need to achieve?
- ***Participant:*** Yes, before the feedback I did not pay attention to my mistakes and the feedback helped me to realize them.
- **Interviewer:** What does it indicate or mean receiving a poor or negative feedback?
- ***Participant:*** It refers to my work only although some might consider it negatively but we are here to learn.
- **Interviewer:** How would you describe your experience with the formative feedback?
- ***Participant:*** I found it very important because it is important you learn from your mistakes and what you should improve. There are also no grades and this push you to

work hard for the summative assessment. I am very happy with the formative assessment and satisfied.

Interview 2

- **Interviewer:** How was the last feedback you get?
- ***Participant:*** The last feedback I got was very good and I am happy with it because the formative feedback helped to notice my mistakes and I was able to avoid them. So, the last feedback was very simple basically about the articles and quotation marks but she was happy with the content and I was able to address them all in half an hour. I was very happy.
- **Interviewer:** What did you do after you received the feedback? How did you respond to it?
- ***Participant:*** I edit all the mistakes immediately because I thought I might forget.
- **Interviewer:** How did you perceive the comments?
- ***Participant:*** They were positive. The tutor is not expert in my discipline, which is business, and for example she asked me to explain one of the well-known terms in business and I told her that it is clear and no explanation is needed.
- **Interviewer:** Would it be for yourself or only your work?
- ***Participant:*** No at all I did not judge myself at all. These comments are related to the work not me. The comments were minor and for example if I missed a comma or plural or wrong tense, these are only typos and it happens.
- **Interviewer:** Will you take all the comments into consideration?
- ***Participant:*** Yes of course I will. It helped me to notice what's wrong with me.
- **Interviewer:** What were the challenges you face in using the feedback?
- ***Participant:*** It wasn't challenges in its meaning but for example there was a comment 'wrong word' and I thought it's correct and asked her to tell me the right answer. Meeting her helped me to clear all the confusion and helped to understand especially for the comments that is not clear like a question mark on the whole paragraph, this was not clear to me what does she want.
- ***Participant:*** I trust her opinion but I felt that she doesn't read carefully because when I read my work again I found some mistakes that she did not pay attention to or maybe did not notice. It also confused me at the beginning that maybe it is correct but when I asked another tutor she told me no it is a mistake and need to be corrected.
- **Interviewer:** Are you happy with the quantity of the feedback?

- ***Participant:*** I wished if there is more, it was simple and not detailed enough.
- **Interviewer:** What doesn't indicate for you that the feedback quantity was less than expected?
- ***Participant:*** I put a lot of effort in this assignment but in regards to the content she was satisfied and if she focused more she might find the mistakes I found.

Interview 3

- **Interviewer:** Tell me what is your impression about the results you received recently on your writing?
- ***Participant:*** I am generally happy with my results and I am happy because I passed.
- **Interviewer:** What about the feedback? Have you read it?
- ***Participant:*** Of course I was interested to read it and understand why I did not get a higher mark.
- **Interviewer:** Can you tell me more about your thoughts and feelings about this feedback?
- ***Participant:*** It is not that detailed but it gave me a general overview about my progress and the areas that I need to improve in the future. I felt it is fair.
- **Interviewer:** Do you find it as important as the formative feedback on your drafts?
- ***Participant:*** Both are important and useful but actually the formative feedback is more important because we still work on the assignment and there is still a room for improvement while this feedback is just to know why you received such a grade. However, for me it is still important.

Appendix D. **Participant Information Sheet**

Study Title: An Exploration Study of the Factors Influencing the Feedback Experience of the International Students in the UK.

Researcher: Ashwaq Althowibi

ERGO number: 46743

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What is the research about?

This study is aimed towards fulfilling the requirements of PhD degree. I am a PhD student in department of Modern Languages at the University of Southampton. The study I am conducting aims to explore the feedback experience of the international students studying in the UK in relation to the factors that influence their use of feedback. In order to find out more about this experience, you will be asked about your general feedback experience and the factors that may affect your use of it in your academic writing, and what possible suggestions would help to improve your experience of the feedback you receive.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been chosen for this study because you are an international student who is doing a pre-sessional course prior to his/her postgraduate study in a UK university. You have been asked to participate in the study to find out more about your feedback experience on your academic writing and what factors or challenges affect your uptake of the feedback you receive.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be contacted by email to conduct face-to face/skype/ phone interviews . The interviews will take place after you receive the first feedback on your written assignment and it might last for a duration of approximately 30 minutes each. You will also be asked to send copies of some of your feedback you have received. You may also receive self-report questionnaire by email, which you are required to answer and send back to me. The interview will be tape-recorded and will be securely saved.

Are there any benefits in my taking part?

You will benefit by thinking deeply about your feedback experience and the extent to which it can help you improve your academic writing. You may also benefit by identifying the possible challenges you encounter while dealing the feedback you receive, which may enhance your learning experience in general. Additionally, your input could help contribute to the current knowledge in terms of students' feedback experiences and the factors that can influence their use of it.

Are there any risks involved?

There is very low risk involved in the study. You may experience discomfort or distress while talking about your feedback experience and the challenges you encounter. It will be ensured that not to ask any personal questions that might cause discomfort. In addition, you have the right to not answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable to answer.

What data will be collected?

The data will be collected is your feedback experience by the researcher herself. This is will be collected by means of interviews and surveys. Your information will be anonymised and codes will be used to protect your information. Only the researcher and the supervisor will access the data.

Will my participation be confidential?

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

This present study complies with the Data Protection Act as stated by the University of Southampton. The data collected will be stored for the duration of the research project and afterwards using my personal google drive account. Only me and my supervisors will have access to the data and any third party when required by the University of Southampton. Your contact details will be retained for future contact, which will be stored in my personal google drive account.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. When you decide to withdraw from the study after already taking part in it, the data collected will be destroyed. If you decide to withdraw through the research process (e.g. during interviews), again any data collected will be destroyed.

What will happen to the results of the research?

The results of the study will be published once the research project is finished. You will receive a copy of the results when the study is published. The anonymised research data may be available for future research projects. The research data will be stored for a minimum of 10 years as per University of Southampton policy. Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent.

Where can I get more information?

To answer any further questions that you may have after reading this information sheet, you could contact my supervisor Ying Zheng

Building 65 Faculty of Humanities University of Southampton Avenue Campus Highfield Southampton SO17 1BF United Kingdom

Room Number: 3027

Email Address: Ying.Zheng@soton.ac.uk

What happens if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk).

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information

that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where

you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer (data.protection@soton.ac.uk).

Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.

Appendix E. **Interview Consent Form**

Study title: An exploration study of the factors influencing the feedback experience of the international students' in the UK

Researcher name: Ashwaq Althowibi

ERGO number: 46743

Participant Identification Number (if applicable*):*

Please initial the boxes if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet 1/1/2019 and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	
I understand that my responses will be anonymised in reports of the research.	
I agree to take part in the interviews and questionnaires for the purposes set out in the participation information sheet and understand that these will be recorded using audio and taking notes.	

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Name of participant (print name)/ ……

Signature of participant/ ……

Date/ ……

Name of researcher/ ……

Signature of researcher /……

Date/……

Appendix F. **Questionnaire Consent Form**

[An Exploratory Study of the Factors that Influence the Assessment Feedback Experience of International Students in the UK]

Faculty of Arts and Humanities - Consent Form for Research Participants (52597)

I am *Ashwaq Althowibi* a *PhD* student at the University of Southampton. I am requesting your participation in a study regarding *your experience with teacher formative feedback on your academic writing and the factors that might affect using it* . The study should last approximately _*25*_minutes. You will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire. Personal information will not be released or viewed by anyone other than researchers involved in this project.

Any information you give will be kept completely confidential and in no cases will responses from individual participants be identified. As with any piece of research it is important to consider whether there are any risks to participants. The study involves minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life). There may be no direct benefit to you other than the sense of helping the public at large and contributing to knowledge.

All responses are treated as confidential, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only. Participants should be aware, however, that the experiment is not being run from a 'secure' https server of the kind typically used to handle credit card transactions, so there is a small possibility that responses could be viewed by unauthorised third parties (e.g., computer hackers). However, the data would appear only as a string of numbers. In addition, all research data will be stored on the University of Southampton severs on the University of Southampton network.

Visitors to this web site are welcome to complete the study, although they will receive no credit or monetary compensation. Participation is voluntary, refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

If participants have further questions about this study or would like to have a copy of the thesis, they may contact the principal investigator, *Ashwaq Althowibi at* afa1u16@soton.ac.uk.

If participants have further questions about their rights or if they wish to lodge a complaint or

concern, they may contact RIG Manager, RIG Team, University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17 1BJ. (Phone: 02380 595058, Email: rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)

For information about how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal information when you take part in one of our research projects, please see our Privacy Statement: https://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf

_____ Please tick (check) this box to indicate that you consent to taking part in this survey.

Appendix G. **Ethical Approval Letters**

Approved by Faculty Ethics Committee - ERGO II 52597

University of Southampton

ERGO II – Ethics and Research Governance Online https://www.ergo2.soton.ac.uk

Submission ID: 52597
Submission Title: An Exploratory Study of the Factors that Influence the Assessment Feedback Experience of International Students in the UK
Submitter Name: Ashwaq Althowibi

Your submission has now been approved by the Faculty Ethics Committee. You can begin your research unless you are still awaiting any other reviews or conditions of your approval.

Comments:

•

Click here to view the submission

Approved by Faculty Ethics Committee - ERGO II 46743 Red Category

University of Southampton

ERGO II – Ethics and Research Governance Online https://www.ergo2.soton.ac.uk

Submission ID: 46743
Submission Title: An exploration study of the factors influencing the feedback experience of the international students' in the UK
Submitter Name: Ashwaq Althowibi

Your submission has now been approved by the Faculty Ethics Committee. You can begin your research unless you are still awaiting any other reviews or conditions of your approval.

Comments:

•

Click here to view the submission

Appendix H. Exploratory Factor Analysis

First Run

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%
1	10.114	17.437	17.437	10.114	17.437	17.437	7.399	12.757	12.757
2	5.075	8.749	26.187	5.075	8.749	26.187	4.667	8.047	20.804
3	3.324	5.732	31.918	3.324	5.732	31.918	3.345	5.767	26.571
4	2.579	4.447	36.365	2.579	4.447	36.365	2.478	4.272	30.843
5	2.136	3.683	40.048	2.136	3.683	40.048	2.349	4.050	34.893
6	1.712	2.952	43.001	1.712	2.952	43.001	1.909	3.292	38.185
7	1.633	2.816	45.817	1.633	2.816	45.817	1.882	3.245	41.431
8	1.576	2.717	48.534	1.576	2.717	48.534	1.873	3.230	44.660
9	1.533	2.643	51.177	1.533	2.643	51.177	1.870	3.225	47.885
10	1.396	2.407	53.584	1.396	2.407	53.584	1.511	2.605	50.490
11	1.277	2.202	55.786	1.277	2.202	55.786	1.505	2.596	53.085
12	1.217	2.098	57.885	1.217	2.098	57.885	1.480	2.552	55.637
13	1.186	2.045	59.929	1.186	2.045	59.929	1.459	2.515	58.152
14	1.092	1.883	61.813	1.092	1.883	61.813	1.426	2.459	60.611
15	1.085	1.871	63.684	1.085	1.871	63.684	1.414	2.437	63.048
16	1.034	1.782	65.466	1.034	1.782	65.466	1.402	2.418	65.466
17	.976	1.683	67.149						
18	.953	1.643	68.792						

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%
19	.911	1.570	70.362						
20	.881	1.519	71.881						
22	.857	1.478	73.358						
23	.824	1.421	74.779						
24	.792	1.365	76.145						
25	.708	1.221	77.366						
26	.694	1.196	78.562						
27	.683	1.178	79.740						
28	.647	1.116	80.855						
29	.638	1.100	81.955						
30	.607	1.047	83.002						
31	.585	1.008	84.010						
32	.573	.987	84.997						
33	.542	.934	85.931						
34	.506	.873	86.804						
35	.488	.842	87.645						
36	.476	.820	88.466						
37	.455	.784	89.250						
38	.440	.758	90.008						
39	.412	.710	90.718						
40	.411	.708	91.426						
41	.395	.682	92.108						

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%
42	.390	.673	92.780						
43	.379	.654	93.434						
44	.339	.584	94.019						
45	.333	.574	94.592						
46	.312	.537	95.130						
47	.300	.517	95.647						
48	.276	.476	96.123						
49	.270	.465	96.588						
50	.258	.444	97.033						
51	.242	.418	97.450						
52	.229	.394	97.845						
53	.216	.372	98.217						
54	.205	.353	98.570						
55	.189	.327	98.897						
56	.175	.301	99.198						
57	.164	.282	99.480						
58	.161	.277	99.757						
	.141	.243	100.000						

Appendix H

Factor structure of the first run

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
AFR1	**.734**	.088	.036	.092	.065	-.094	.018	-.050	-.040	-.042	-.039	.062	-.165	.019	.072	.039
CR1	**.729**	.097	-.060	.058	-.081	-.051	.070	.029	.070	.043	.032	-.180	-.043	.047	.141	.002
CR3	**.719**	.040	-.040	-.004	.179	-.001	-.021	.099	.068	-.213	.073	.038	-.050	-.049	-.075	-.089
CR2	**.711**	.136	-.141	.118	.034	.095	-.052	-.029	-.026	.166	.077	-.026	.014	-.118	.045	-.016
CR5	**.709**	-.019	-.114	.126	.016	-.088	.087	-.044	.048	-.068	.048	-.095	.149	-.034	-.003	.202
CR4	**.673**	.054	-.219	.012	.106	-.172	.064	-.045	.133	-.121	.141	.075	.200	.172	-.092	.140
BR4	**.669**	.001	.084	.145	-.081	-.072	.053	.075	.115	.063	-.122	.111	-.139	.076	-.099	.067
BR1	**.667**	-.111	-.117	.254	-.004	.108	.227	-.140	-.035	.198	-.087	.027	-.141	-.003	-.206	-.188
BR3	**.660**	.086	-.152	.213	.076	.100	.027	-.070	.009	.356	-.021	.045	.150	-.023	.042	.036
AFR4	**.580**	.145	.227	-.040	-.040	-.147	.036	.059	.019	.018	-.036	.063	-.147	.096	.257	-.055
QQF4	**.579**	.026	.009	.067	.118	-.125	.233	-.123	.101	.009	-.002	-.057	.083	.129	.072	-.271
AFR3	**.563**	.397	.138	.038	.068	-.043	-.109	.064	.033	.165	.002	-.057	.003	.064	.207	.051
BR2	**.544**	.039	-.039	.202	-.038	.170	.158	-.136	.114	.431	-.129	.124	.036	-.009	-.273	-.065
QQF2	**.501**	.000	-.148	-.100	-.053	.015	-.062	-.198	.085	-.059	-.378	.240	.254	.296	.098	.038
CF3	.022	**.800**	-.020	.023	-.021	-.179	.040	.062	-.124	-.020	-.017	-.005	-.009	.186	-.066	-.107
CF5	.215	**.752**	-.139	.069	.110	-.013	.003	-.271	.103	.024	-.042	.013	-.101	-.089	.073	.070
CF4	.001	**.750**	-.116	.011	.166	.118	-.086	-.113	.163	-.017	.008	.026	-.011	-.027	.033	.008
CF1	.084	**.737**	-.049	.073	-.058	-.097	.142	.036	-.147	-.182	-.078	.033	.147	.125	.026	-.095
CF2	.224	**.728**	-.079	.007	.029	-.130	.168	-.128	-.028	-.091	-.070	-.012	-.182	.029	.027	.001
CF6	-.008	**.706**	-.178	.006	.003	.014	-.062	-.052	.176	.045	-.025	.055	-.127	-.126	.041	-.029
AFR5	.293	**.456**	-.103	.096	.038	-.124	.246	-.033	-.137	-.416	-.261	-.026	.013	-.147	.078	-.047
LMB6	.013	-.006	**.741**	-.034	.054	.060	.121	-.046	-.027	.020	.253	-.150	.163	.007	.034	.054
LMB2	.033	-.239	**.706**	-.133	-.037	.021	-.044	.044	.073	-.079	.078	.013	-.084	-.126	-.147	.069

LMB3	-.095	-.264	**.607**	-.187	.012	.147	-.098	.094	.141	-.046	-.079	.172	.047	-.063	-.154	.094
LMB7	-.136	-.261	**.581**	-.047	-.052	.047	-.008	.118	-.115	.099	-.140	-.029	.377	-.151	.115	-.052
TR2	-.129	-.124	**.523**	-.039	-.065	.450	-.234	.202	-.045	.075	-.071	.008	-.058	.006	.088	-.081
TR6	.226	-.174	**-.429**	.041	.229	.189	.052	.091	.178	.133	.047	.036	.050	.080	.161	.010
LMB5	-.015	-.190	**.406**	-.034	.226	.008	-.020	-.009	-.207	.157	.001	.401	.219	.031	.007	.095
SE3	.191	.016	-.121	**.771**	.058	.028	-.022	.089	.032	.060	-.069	-.010	-.152	-.016	.072	-.050
SE1	.239	.060	-.135	**.702**	.058	-.103	.035	-.023	.108	-.023	-.042	-.042	.172	.333	.056	-.011
SE2	.191	.070	-.084	**.675**	.107	-.107	.046	-.092	.290	-.087	-.015	.100	.069	.023	.036	.020
MF1:	-.010	.135	-.005	.093	**.807**	-.015	.061	.102	.054	.079	-.095	-.076	.040	.009	.066	-.012
MF2:	-.005	.112	.087	.025	**.796**	.084	-.136	.103	.152	-.023	.004	-.045	-.011	.074	-.037	-.215
MF4:	.185	-.043	-.145	.049	**.732**	-.003	-.069	-.061	-.089	-.048	.055	.104	-.002	.069	.044	.165
TR1:	-.105	-.058	-.029	-.216	.087	**.724**	-.008	.027	.123	-.068	.027	.033	.093	.038	.102	-.172
TR3:	-.115	-.139	.166	.054	-.011	**.707**	-.038	.028	-.110	-.086	.020	-.032	.105	-.002	-.096	.160
QQF5:	-.070	-.294	.090	-.002	.160	.074	**-.696**	.015	-.041	.067	-.033	.161	.000	-.081	.135	.071
PLE2:	.253	-.220	.097	.002	-.018	.015	**.600**	-.047	.137	-.006	-.086	.149	-.262	.035	.103	.205
TR5	**.449**	.117	-.179	.183	.062	-.031	**.478**	.084	.069	.060	-.114	.197	.069	-.076	.221	.205
PLE3	.153	-.084	.017	.080	.255	-.025	-.045	**.685**	-.001	.172	-.174	-.027	.141	.167	-.102	.098
TR4	-.103	-.320	.027	-.005	.008	.236	-.032	**.624**	.115	-.167	.137	.094	-.040	-.235	.108	-.239
PLER3	-.209	-.146	.240	-.215	-.041	-.080	.159	**.527**	-.134	.222	-.049	.043	.157	.023	.155	-.015
PLE1	-.089	-.204	-.034	.102	.017	.195	-.235	**.494**	.000	-.096	.397	.116	-.065	.252	-.157	.176
SE5	.119	.050	-.021	.214	.094	.030	.034	-.020	**.746**	-.027	-.068	.118	-.003	.113	.037	-.063
SE6	.309	.052	.016	.361	.015	-.080	.278	.022	**.543**	.047	.115	.112	-.069	.004	-.063	.015
AFR2	-.191	.150	.023	.046	-.034	.198	.042	-.130	.037	**-.740**	-.041	.005	-.012	.010	-.026	-.035
QQF6	.038	-.154	.094	-.096	-.049	.005	-.021	-.051	-.015	.045	**.825**	.051	.064	.062	.093	.013
SE4	.052	.084	-.005	.048	-.052	.015	-.039	.087	.274	.017	.024	**.768**	-.007	.036	.042	-.014
QQF1	.019	-.115	.144	-.102	.050	.075	-.299	.060	.368	.123	-.149	**-.475**	.282	.075	.118	.258

Appendix H

LMB8	-.012	-.178	.203	.016	.034	.170	-.099	.120	-.002	.016	.065	-.001	**.711**	-.073	-.085	-.002
LMB1-R	.113	.047	-.219	.165	.175	.064	.104	.098	.107	.027	.086	.019	-.109	**.705**	.098	.019
LMB4	.129	.189	-.142	.267	.052	-.024	-.193	.043	.102	-.037	.126	.061	-.060	.377	**.513**	-.163
LMB9	.142	.016	-.365	.094	.285	.324	.112	-.056	-.091	-.003	-.004	-.081	-.110	.135	**.512**	.015
SE7	.249	.148	-.155	.358	-.062	-.096	.093	-.059	.358	-.004	.210	.194	-.024	-.232	**.436**	.076
LMB1	.218	-.164	.352	-.052	-.080	-.109	.220	-.051	-.015	.069	.048	.057	.048	.113	.027	**.603**
QQF3	**.525**	.045	.070	.016	-.028	-.081	.063	-.062	.050	.009	-.038	.183	.075	.140	.113	**-.558**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]

a. Rotation converged in 40 iterations.

	Component															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Q10. AFR1:	.734															
Q9. CR1:	.729															
Q18. CR3:	.719															
Q13. CR2:	.711															
Q22. CR5:	.709															
Q19. CR4:	.673															
Q20. BR4:	.669															

Q11. BR1:	.667															
Q16. BR3:	.660															
Q17. AFR4:	.580															
Q27. QQF4:	.579															
Q15. AFR3:	.563															
Q12. BR2:	.544									.431						
Q24. QQF2:	.501															
Q39. CF3:		.800														
Q56. CF5		.752														
Q55. CF4		.750														
Q29. CF1		.737														
Q36. CF2		.728														
Q57. CF6		.706														
Q21. AFR5:		.456								-.41 6						
Q37. LMB6			.741													
Q31. LMB2			.706													

Q32. LMB3			.607													
Q38. LMB7:			.581													
Q43. TR2			.523			.450										
Q45. TR6:			-.429													
Q34. LMB5:			.406									.401				
Q66. SE3:				.771												
Q64. SE1:				.702												
Q65. SE2:				.675												
Q59. MF1					.807											
Q60. MF2:					.796											
Q62. MF4:					.732											
Q42. TR1:						.724										
Q44. TR3:						.707										
Q28. QQF5:							-.696									
Q48. PLE2							.600									
Q49. TR5	.449						.478									

Q63. BLE3								.685							
Q47. TR4								.624							
Q58.PLER3								.527							
Q46.PLE1								.494							
Q52 SE5									.746						
Q53.SE6									.543						
Q14.AFR2										-.740					
Q26.QQF6											.825				
Q51.SE4												.768			
Q23.QQF1												-.475			
Q40.LMB8													.711		
Q35. LMB1-R														.705	
Q33. LMB4															.513
Q41. LMB9															.512
Q54.SE7															.436
Q30. LMB1															.603

Q25. QQF3	.525															-.558

Second run after deleting all the items beneath .4

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%
1	9.582	19.961	19.961	9.582	19.961	19.961	7.165	14.927	14.927
2	4.653	9.693	29.654	4.653	9.693	29.654	4.490	9.353	24.281
3	2.762	5.753	35.407	2.762	5.753	35.407	3.239	6.749	31.029
4	2.445	5.094	40.501	2.445	5.094	40.501	3.004	6.259	37.288
5	1.855	3.865	44.366	1.855	3.865	44.366	2.268	4.724	42.013
6	1.588	3.309	47.675	1.588	3.309	47.675	2.160	4.501	46.513
7	1.451	3.023	50.699	1.451	3.023	50.699	1.838	3.830	50.343
8	1.419	2.956	53.655	1.419	2.956	53.655	1.590	3.312	53.655
9	1.301	2.711	56.366						
10	1.140	2.375	58.741						
11	1.078	2.245	60.986						
12	1.038	2.163	63.149						
13	1.007	2.098	65.247						
14	.981	2.043	67.290						
15	.886	1.847	69.137						
16	.878	1.828	70.966						
17	.811	1.689	72.655						
18	.777	1.618	74.273						
19	.761	1.584	75.857						

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%
20	.711	1.481	77.339						
21	.659	1.374	78.713						
22	.638	1.330	80.043						
23	.606	1.263	81.306						
24	.595	1.240	82.547						
25	.578	1.205	83.751						
26	.529	1.103	84.855						
27	.522	1.087	85.942						
28	.490	1.021	86.963						
29	.471	.981	87.944						
30	.460	.959	88.903						
31	.446	.928	89.831						
32	.426	.887	90.718						
33	.421	.878	91.596						
34	.398	.830	92.426						
35	.362	.754	93.180						
36	.347	.723	93.903						
37	.325	.678	94.581						
38	.309	.643	95.224						
39	.292	.608	95.832						
40	.287	.597	96.430						
41	.265	.552	96.982						

Appendix H

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%
42	.256	.534	97.516						
43	.232	.484	98.000						
44	.218	.453	98.453						
45	.203	.422	98.876						
46	.194	.405	99.280						
47	.182	.380	99.660						
48	.163	.340	100.000						

Factor structure of the remaining items

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CR2	**.722**	.098	-.141	.069	.031	.018	-.054	.019
CR1	**.720**	.108	-.066	.097	-.050	-.093	.037	.074
BR3	**.714**	.010	-.112	.200	.082	-.049	-.149	-.134
AFR1	**.705**	.117	.015	.070	.077	-.113	.130	.033
BR1	**.692**	-.139	-.155	.173	-.053	.032	.179	-.229
CR5	**.679**	-.047	-.039	.142	.057	-.235	.034	.034
CR3	**.669**	.082	-.006	.034	.159	.053	.092	.143
BR4	**.650**	-.014	.087	.215	-.074	-.076	.110	-.020
CR4	**.646**	.036	-.120	.126	.145	-.280	.051	.146
BR2	**.603**	-.062	-.015	.235	-.072	.037	.000	-.328
QQF4	**.598**	.084	.003	.141	.090	-.070	.132	-.056
AFR4	**.579**	.211	.187	.035	-.028	-.033	.101	.124

AFR3	**.575**	.391	.129	.085	.094	-.073	-.177	.065
QQF3	**.567**	.146	.008	.068	-.082	.156	.068	-.037
QQF2	**.537**	-.005	-.092	.008	.036	-.054	-.060	-.320
TR5	**.461**	.054	-.087	.279	.129	-.138	.420	-.112
CF3	.030	**.783**	-.087	-.030	-.020	-.166	-.028	-.021
CF5	.212	**.742**	-.173	.131	.102	-.109	.030	-.105
CF2	.205	**.740**	-.120	.018	.029	-.174	.203	-.082
CF1	.083	**.733**	-.088	.005	-.022	-.086	.103	-.074
CF4	.003	**.733**	-.141	.110	.165	.068	-.081	-.029
CF6	-.010	**.690**	-.195	.114	-.024	.027	-.009	-.035
AFR5	.235	**.502**	-.121	.004	.068	-.102	.343	-.218
LMB6	.015	.021	**.738**	-.067	.023	-.015	-.039	.120
LMB2	-.019	-.168	**.717**	-.088	-.106	.075	.026	.117
LMB3	-.121	-.222	**.677**	-.059	-.041	.221	-.043	-.011
LMB7	-.112	-.239	**.610**	-.119	-.074	.126	-.156	-.166
LMB5	.017	-.203	**.475**	-.092	.214	.029	-.012	-.029
LMB1	.194	-.215	**.469**	-.002	-.015	-.388	.160	.067
LMB9	.187	.004	**-.409**	.042	.393	.211	.149	.016
SE2	.174	.067	-.087	**.720**	.108	-.144	-.031	-.057
SE6	.284	.044	.068	**.655**	-.017	-.055	.256	.078
SE5	.110	.077	.023	**.645**	.080	.141	.041	-.023
SE1	.250	.032	-.175	**.634**	.097	-.195	-.118	-.075
SE3	.190	-.012	-.223	**.625**	.040	.016	-.058	-.059
SE7	.240	.174	-.134	**.567**	-.048	-.050	.166	.253
MF1	-.013	.127	.027	.139	**.808**	.011	-.029	-.090
MF2	-.014	.153	.075	.109	**.754**	.225	-.148	.030

Appendix H

MF4	.175	-.064	-.104	.003	**.753**	-.101	-.032	.058
TR1	-.050	-.062	-.037	-.102	.132	**.703**	-.031	-.003
TR4	-.128	-.288	.047	.089	-.004	**.561**	.091	.336
TR2	-.110	-.094	.461	-.072	-.074	**.549**	-.189	.022
TR3	-.096	-.192	.153	-.053	.036	**.494**	-.094	-.026
PLE2	.249	-.223	.151	.158	.006	-.082	**.623**	-.065
QQF5	-.057	-.275	.054	-.047	.146	.163	**-.589**	.139
QQF1	.019	-.129	.228	.079	.080	-.044	**-.543**	-.083
QQF6	.056	-.149	.074	-.071	-.054	-.056	-.030	**.734**
PLE1	-.118	-.268	-.010	.100	.081	.192	-.145	**.557**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CR2	.722							
CR1	.720							
BR3	.714							
AFR1	.705							
BR1	.692							
CR5	.679							
CR3	.669							
BR4	.650							
CR4	.646							
BR2	.603							
QQF4	.598							
AFR4	.579							
AFR3	.575							
QQF3	.567							
QQF2	.537							
TR5	.461						.420	
CF3		.783						
CF5		.742						
CF2		.740						

CF1		.733						
CF4		.733						
CF6		.690						
AFR5		.502						
LMB6			.738					
LMB2			.717					
LMB3			.677					
LMB7			.610					
LMB5			.475					
LMB1			.469					
LMB9			-.409					
SE2				.720				
SE6				.655				
SE5				.645				
SE1				.634				
SE3				.625				
SE7				.567				
MF1					.808			
MF2					.754			
MF4					.753			
TR1						.703		
TR4						.561		
TR2			.461			.549		

TR3						.494		
PLE2							.623	
QQF5							-.589	
QQF1							-.543	
QQF6								.734
PLE1								.557

7 Factor Solution

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%
1	9.428	20.951	20.951	9.428	20.951	20.951	7.180	15.955	15.955
2	4.476	9.946	30.897	4.476	9.946	30.897	4.429	9.842	25.797
3	2.695	5.988	36.885	2.695	5.988	36.885	3.207	7.127	32.924
4	2.334	5.187	42.073	2.334	5.187	42.073	2.988	6.640	39.563
5	1.830	4.067	46.140	1.830	4.067	46.140	2.249	4.997	44.560
6	1.578	3.506	49.645	1.578	3.506	49.645	2.175	4.833	49.393
7	1.442	3.204	52.849	1.442	3.204	52.849	1.555	3.456	52.849
8	1.236	2.747	55.596						
9	1.143	2.540	58.136						
10	1.084	2.408	60.544						
11	1.021	2.269	62.813						
12	1.011	2.246	65.059						
13	.919	2.041	67.101						
14	.861	1.913	69.014						

15	.806	1.791	70.804						
16	.801	1.780	72.584						
17	.769	1.708	74.293						
18	.727	1.616	75.908						
19	.689	1.530	77.438						
20	.648	1.439	78.878						
21	.641	1.425	80.303						
22	.586	1.302	81.604						
23	.581	1.290	82.895						
24	.554	1.231	84.125						
25	.523	1.163	85.288						
26	.496	1.102	86.390						
27	.483	1.074	87.464						
28	.464	1.031	88.495						
29	.449	.997	89.492						
30	.432	.961	90.453						
31	.415	.923	91.376						
32	.408	.906	92.282						
33	.394	.876	93.158						
34	.346	.769	93.927						
35	.325	.721	94.649						
36	.307	.682	95.331						
37	.306	.679	96.010						
38	.275	.611	96.620						
39	.269	.598	97.218						
40	.255	.566	97.785						

41	.225	.500	98.285						
42	.205	.456	98.741						
43	.201	.446	99.187						
44	.195	.433	99.620						
45	.171	.380	100.000						

Factor Structure

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
CR1	**.720**	.112	-.077	.090	-.054	-.078	.098
CR2	**.714**	.098	-.140	.062	.040	.039	.031
AFR1	**.709**	.129	.017	.080	.062	-.133	.030
BR1	**.706**	-.130	-.149	.183	-.057	.006	-.239
BR3	**.701**	.014	-.106	.183	.105	-.013	-.114
CR5	**.685**	-.046	-.050	.135	.053	-.224	.068
CR3	**.671**	.084	-.009	.045	.144	.036	.134
BR4	**.654**	-.002	.088	.220	-.086	-.090	-.022
CR4	**.646**	.040	-.126	.125	.139	-.273	.164
QQF4	**.607**	.092	-.005	.147	.072	-.088	-.055
BR2	**.606**	-.057	-.008	.227	-.053	.046	-.317
AFR4	**.577**	.231	.175	.035	-.050	-.036	.129
QQF3	**.562**	.141	.028	.087	-.073	.134	-.080
AFR3	**.553**	.394	.130	.068	.117	-.028	.084
QQF2	**.534**	.005	-.086	.001	.039	-.047	-.307
TR5	**.503**	.081	-.123	.288	.060	-.190	-.072
CF3	.014	**.776**	-.074	-.025	.005	-.155	-.032

CF5	.208	**.753**	-.179	.127	.091	-.100	-.079
CF2	.215	**.748**	-.125	.032	.006	-.199	-.073
CF4	-.011	**.738**	-.145	.100	.170	.094	-.011
CF1	.081	**.736**	-.090	.011	-.023	-.092	-.074
CF6	-.020	**.694**	-.201	.107	-.023	.047	-.021
AFR5	.262	**.512**	-.134	.025	.025	-.160	-.216
LMB6	.019	.016	**.729**	-.077	.042	.003	.153
LMB2	-.013	-.175	**.725**	-.076	-.103	.055	.110
LMB3	-.119	-.225	**.685**	-.055	-.033	.210	-.017
LMB7	-.117	-.243	**.620**	-.127	-.050	.135	-.168
LMB5	.020	-.204	**.491**	-.080	.221	.008	-.047
LMB1	.217	-.194	**.442**	-.011	-.043	-.392	.127
LMB9	.207	.014	-.437	.040	.350	.197	.047
SE2	.171	.062	-.080	**.718**	.125	-.136	-.060
SE6	.306	.056	.052	**.663**	-.050	-.083	.091
SE5	.118	.078	.013	**.643**	.065	.138	-.010
SE3	.180	-.018	-.202	**.629**	.064	.020	-.088
SE1	.240	.018	-.159	**.628**	.139	-.169	-.081
SE7	.248	.192	-.153	**.572**	-.097	-.063	.267
MF1	-.006	.121	.020	.140	**.815**	.006	-.083
MF2	-.023	.143	.077	.109	**.772**	.230	.014
MF4	.179	-.062	-.113	.000	**.751**	-.098	.072
TR1	-.043	-.060	-.059	-.118	.123	**.720**	.024
TR2	-.121	-.108	.474	-.077	-.047	**.565**	.010
TR4	-.121	-.299	.047	.110	-.027	**.525**	.294
TR3	-.094	-.188	.140	-.072	.038	**.517**	.003

QQF6	.045	-.150	.063	-.079	-.050	-.020	**.746**
PLE1	-.135	-.289	.000	.101	.107	.218	**.535**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

6 Factor solution

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.360	21.766	21.766	9.360	21.766	21.766	7.132	16.585	16.585
2	4.392	10.213	31.980	4.392	10.213	31.980	4.355	10.129	26.714
3	2.610	6.070	38.050	2.610	6.070	38.050	3.197	7.435	34.148
4	2.328	5.414	43.464	2.328	5.414	43.464	3.010	7.000	41.148
5	1.827	4.249	47.713	1.827	4.249	47.713	2.250	5.233	46.381
6	1.575	3.664	51.377	1.575	3.664	51.377	2.148	4.996	51.377
7	1.235	2.873	54.250						
8	1.179	2.742	56.993						
9	1.106	2.572	59.565						

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
10	1.049	2.439	62.004						
11	.948	2.205	64.209						
12	.867	2.016	66.225						
13	.847	1.970	68.195						
14	.811	1.886	70.081						
15	.787	1.831	71.912						
16	.779	1.812	73.724						
17	.735	1.708	75.432						
18	.696	1.618	77.050						
19	.675	1.570	78.620						
20	.643	1.496	80.116						
21	.601	1.398	81.514						
22	.583	1.356	82.870						
23	.542	1.260	84.130						
24	.522	1.214	85.344						
25	.492	1.144	86.488						
26	.485	1.129	87.616						
27	.478	1.111	88.727						
28	.451	1.049	89.776						
29	.423	.984	90.760						
30	.417	.969	91.729						
31	.398	.926	92.656						

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
32	.362	.842	93.498						
33	.346	.804	94.301						
34	.314	.730	95.031						
35	.306	.711	95.742						
36	.276	.643	96.385						
37	.271	.631	97.017						
38	.259	.603	97.620						
39	.226	.526	98.146						
40	.214	.498	98.644						
41	.203	.472	99.116						
42	.195	.453	99.569						
43	.185	.431	100.000						

Factor Structure of 6 Factors Solution

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Q11. BR1: I always use the feedback I received from my teacher to go back over what I had done in my work	**.717**	-.111	-.164	.170	-.057	-.001
Q9. CR1: Teacher feedback is useful	**.714**	.108	-.060	.105	-.048	-.076
Q13. CR2: Teacher feedback helps me notice my mistakes	**.711**	.100	-.130	.072	.045	.039

Q10. AFR1: Teacher written feedback often makes me feel more confident about my academic writing	**.706**	.130	.030	.086	.064	-.138
Q16. BR3: I paid careful attention to the written feedback on my work and tried to understand what it was saying	**.704**	.026	-.110	.180	.108	-.015
Q22. CR5: I believe that the feedback comments can help me in my future assignments	**.681**	-.048	-.036	.145	.058	-.224
Q18. CR3: I can understand more about assessment criteria from teacher feedback	**.664**	.078	.012	.057	.149	.033
Q20. BR4: The feedback I received from my teacher usually encouraged me to go back over material covered in the course	**.656**	.006	.095	.214	-.088	-.102
Q19. CR4: I believe that teacher feedback is an important source to improve my academic writing	**.639**	.036	-.102	.138	.143	-.276
Q12. BR2: When I received my teacher feedback I tried to work on all the comments	**.620**	-.030	-.030	.202	-.058	.034
Q27. QQF4: I can understand what the markers want me to work on and correct	**.606**	.094	-.003	.153	.077	-.085
Q17. AFR4: I always feel satisfied about my teacher feedback, it is like what I expected	**.567**	.224	.193	.051	-.045	-.033
Q25. QQF3: The feedback comments are clear for me	**.562**	.150	.023	.090	-.068	.137

Q24. QQF2: Receiving lots of comments and suggestions is useful to develop my writing	**.548**	.030	-.105	-.022	.032	-.063
Q15. AFR3: I usually take my teacher feedback positively whether the comments are good or bad	**.544**	.396	.144	.076	.119	-.031
Q49. TR5: Teacher feedback supports me to exercise more effort	**.503**	.081	-.122	.293	.064	-.189
Q39. CF3: Critical/negative written feedback affects me emotionally	.011	**.784**	-.071	-.027	-.001	-.166
Q56. CF5: I lose my motivation to work on my paper further when I receive critical/negative written feedback	.203	**.755**	-.181	.138	.094	-.095
Q36. CF2: I lose self-confidence when I receive critical/negative written feedback.	.211	**.752**	-.124	.038	.004	-.203
Q29. CF1: The feedback process affects me emotionally	.080	**.745**	-.090	.007	-.029	-.105
Q55. CF4: I am scared to get critical/negative written feedback	-.016	**.739**	-.144	.106	.171	.093
Q57. CF6: Having critical/negative written feedback makes me feel embarrassed	-.025	**.692**	-.202	.118	-.021	.051
Q21. AFR5: I feel sad and disappointed whenever I receive my teacher feedback	.267	**.520**	-.143	.020	.022	-.171
Q37. LMB6: My natural ability to learn academic writing will always remain the same.	.006	.010	**.737**	-.066	.044	.016

Q31. LMB2: Each person's ability to write in English is stable and cannot be changed	-.020	-.184	**.732**	-.071	-.103	.063
Q32. LMB3: People can't really learn a new skill in English well after they reach adulthood.	-.119	-.224	**.678**	-.064	-.037	.212
Q38. LMB7: I believe that the ability to write in English language is a natural innate talent that is out of a person's control to change.	-.112	-.237	**.600**	-.139	-.054	.138
Q34. LMB5: People who try hard and spend very long hours to study writing in English lack the natural ability to improve other skills	.020	-.197	**.484**	-.089	.218	.008
Q30. LMB1: I have a certain fixed amount of ability to learn academic writing	.210	-.196	**.457**	-.007	-.046	-.392
Q41. LMB9: Everyone could do well in academic writing if they try hard, whether they are young or old.	.206	.007	**-.431**	.051	.358	.202
Q65. SE2: I can use references correctly.	.171	.064	-.083	**.709**	.127	-.141
Q53. SE6:I can structure my written assignments	.298	.044	.062	**.675**	-.042	-.074
Q52. SE5: I can use many academic words in my writing.	.114	.067	.011	**.649**	.073	.148
Q66. SE3: I can write grammatically correct sentences.	.184	-.016	-.207	**.619**	.067	.015
Q64. SE1: I can support my ideas with evidence	.242	.027	-.163	**.613**	.139	-.179
Q54. SE7: I can write complete formal sentences.	.230	.165	-.130	**.607**	-.081	-.041

Q59. MF1: The oral feedback helps me to notice a lot of important points	-.007	.124	.015	.130	**.814**	.001
Q60. MF2: The oral feedback is more direct than the written one	-.027	.142	.078	.103	**.773**	.226
Q62. MF4: Talking to my tutor helps me to understand the written comments	.173	-.067	-.104	.005	**.755**	-.096
Q42. TR1: A good relationship with my teacher can affect the way I use his/her feedback	-.041	-.059	-.063	-.121	.127	**.722**
Q43. TR2: Teachers are the ones who should be blamed when I fail using the feedback.	-.121	-.109	.468	-.084	-.048	**.566**
Q47. TR4: Teacher contradictory feedback is one of the reasons why I ignore it	-.128	-.320	.070	.120	-.020	**.528**
Q44. TR3: The tone of my teacher's feedback can affect the way I use it.	-.089	-.182	.135	-.086	.036	**.511**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

	Factor					
Questionnaire items	1	2	3	4	5	6
BR1	.717					
CR1	.714					
CR2	.711					
AFR1	.706					
BR3	.704					
CR5	.681					
CR3	.664					

BR4	.656					
CR4	.639					
BR2	.620					
QQF4	.606					
AFR4	.567					
QQF3	.562					
QQF2	.548					
AFR3	.544					
TR5	.503					
CF3		.784				
CF5		.755				
CF2		.752				
CF1		.745				
CF4		.739				
CF6		.692				
AFR5		.520				
LMB6			.737			
LMB2			.732			
LMB3			.678			
LMB7			.600			
LMB5			.484			
LMB1			.457			
LMB9			-.431			
SE2				.709		
SE6				.675		
SE5				.649		
SE3				.619		
SE1				.613		
SE7				.607		
MF1					.814	
MF2					.773	
MF4					.755	
TR1						.722
TR2						.566
TR4						.528
TR3						.511

Appendix I. **Normality**

Table A: normality using kurtosis and skewness

Items	**Kurtosis**	**Skewness**
PR1 Q10. Teacher feedback is useful	1.954	-1.256
PR2 Q11. Teacher written feedback often makes me feel more confident about my academic writing	.362	-.786
PR3 Q12. I always use the feedback I received from my teacher to go back over what I had done in my work	1.736	-1.128
PR4 Q13. When I received my teacher feedback I tried to work on all the comments	.844	-.977
PR 5 Q14. Teacher feedback helps me notice my mistakes	3. 009	-1.396
PR6 Q15. I usually take my teacher feedback positively whether the comments are good or bad	.125	-.680
PR7 Q16. I paid careful attention to the written feedback on my work and tried to understand what it was saying	3.010	-1.260
PR8 Q17. I always feel satisfied about my teacher feedback, it is like what I expected	-.532	-.131
PR9 Q18. I can understand more about assessment criteria from teacher feedback	.503	-.760
PR10 Q19. I believe that teacher feedback is an important source to improve my academic writing	2.673	-1.452
PR11 Q20. The feedback I received from my teacher usually encouraged me to go back over material covered in the course	.028	-.674
NR1 Q21. I feel sad and disappointed whenever I receive my teacher feedback	-.552	.439
NR12 Q22. I believe that the feedback comments can help me in my future assignments	2.270	-1.354
NR2 Q23. The feedback process affects me emotionally	-.683	-.128
NR3 Q24. I lose self-confidence when I receive critical/negative written feedback.	-.697	.311
NR4 Q25. Critical/negative written feedback affects me emotionally	-1.009	-.032
NR5 Q26. I am scared to get critical/negative written feedback	-1.013	.171
NR6 Q27. I lose my motivation to work on my paper further when I receive critical/negative written feedback	-.762	.382
NR7 Q28. Having critical/negative written feedback makes me feel embarrassed	-.845	.157
PR13 Q29. Receiving lots of comments and suggestions is useful to develop my writing	.332	-.842
PR14 Q30. The feedback comments are clear for me	-.171	-.459
PR15 Q31. I can understand what the markers want me to work on and correct	-.011	-.617
LMB1 Q32. I have a certain fixed amount of ability to learn academic writing	-.585	-.422
LMB2 Q33. Each person's ability to write in English is stable and cannot be changed	.591	1.063
LMB3 Q34. People can't really learn a new skill in English well after they reach adulthood.	.821	1.173

LMB4 Q36. People who try hard and spend very long hours to study writing in English lack the natural ability to improve other skills	-.931	.245
LMB5 Q37. My natural ability to learn academic writing will always remain the same.	.342	.835
LMB6 Q38. I believe that the ability to write in English language is a natural innate talent that is out of a person's control to change.	-.505	.518
TR1 Q39. A good relationship with my teacher can affect the way I use his/her feedback	-.514	-.560
TR2 Q40. Teachers are the ones who should be blamed when I fail using the feedback.	-.529	.413
TR3 Q41. The tone of my teacher's feedback can affect the way I use it.	-.195	-.507
TR4 Q42. Teacher contradictory feedback is one of the reasons why I ignore it	-.705	-.020
PR16 Q43. Teacher feedback supports me to exercise more effort	1.205	-.898
MF1 Q45. The oral feedback helps me to notice a lot of important points	.071	-.689
MF2 Q46. The oral feedback is more direct than the written one	-.795	-.197
MF3 Q47. Talking to my tutor helps me to understand the written comments	1.159	-.929
SE1 Q48. I can support my ideas with evidence	1.767	-.987
SE2 Q49. I can use references correctly.	.585	-.770
SE3 Q50. I can write grammatically correct sentences.	-.020	-.546
SE4 Q51. I can use many academic words in my writing.	.832	-.852
SE5 Q52. I can structure my written assignments	.765	-.796
SE6 Q53. I can write complete formal sentences.	1.998	-.941

Appendix J. **Parameter Estimates**

Factor	Indicator	Std. Est.	p	Std. Error
PR	PR1	0.643	< .001	0.053
	PR2	0.630	< .001	0.051
	PR3	0.578	< .001	0.052
	PR4	0.581	< .001	0.055
	PR5	0.666	< .001	0.052
	PR6	0.630	< .001	0.054
	PR7	0.681	< .001	0.054
	PR8	0.585	< .001	0.047
	PR9	0.582	< .001	0.051
	PR10	0.633	< .001	0.053
	PR11	0.591	< .001	0.052
	PR12	0.638	< .001	0.055
	PR13	0.457	< .001	0.053
	PR14	0.539	< .001	0.046
	PR15	0.610	< .001	0.043
	PR16	0.524	< .001	0.046
NR	NR1	0.567	< .001	0.054
	NR2	0.623	< .001	0.049
	NR 3	0.834	< .001	0.043
	NR 4	0.724	< .001	0.047
	NR 5	0.638	< .001	0.058
	NR 6	0.824	< .001	0.046
	NR 7	0.653	< .001	0.054
LMB	LMB1	0.175	0.008	0.069
	LMB2	0.698	< .001	0.060

	LMB3	0.718	< .001	0.057
	LMB4	0.399	< .001	0.068
	LMB5	0.613	< .001	0.060
	LMB6	0.748	< .001	0.058
TR	TR2	0.740	< .001	0.062
	TR3	0.592	< .001	0.057
	TR4	0.613	< .001	0.063
MF	MF1	0.839	< .001	0.105
	MF2	0.459	< .001	0.082
	MF3	0.692	< .001	0.088
SE	SE1	0.690	< .001	0.051
	SE2	0.633	< .001	0.045
	SE3	0.638	< .001	0.051
	SE4	0.554	< .001	0.055
	SE5	0.679	< .001	0.050
	SE6	0.686	< .001	0.051

Factor Covariances

		Std. Est	p	Std. Error
PR	↔ NR	0.317	< .001	0.058
PR	↔ LMB	-0.164	0.035	0.072
PR	↔ TR	0.230	0.002	0.072
PR	↔ MF	0.121	0.039	0.066
PR	↔ SE	0.523	< .001	0.051
NR	↔ LMB	-0.366	< .001	0.053
NR	↔ TR	0.426	< .001	0.057
NR	↔ MF	0.063	0.323	0.063
NR	↔ SE	0.287	< .001	0.059

Factor Covariances

	Std. Est	p	Std. Error
LMB ↔ TR	-0.402	< .001	0.065
LMB ↔ MF	-0.096	0.148	0.067
LMB ↔ SE	-0.354	< .001	0.069
TR ↔ MF	-0.074	0.338	0.078
TR ↔ SE	0.130	0.044	0.072
MF ↔ SE	0.177	0.002	0.072

Appendix K. **Final Version of the Questionnaire**

Demographic Information

1. How old are you?

○ 18-24

○ 25-34

○ 35-54

○ 55+

2. Gender

○ Male

○ Female

○ Prefer not to say

3. Mother tongue:

4. Reason for joining pre-sessional course

○ It is required for a Bachelor degree

○ It is required for Masters or PhD

○ Other (please specify):

5. Major of your intended program:

6. IELTS score before joining the pre-sessional course:

○ **4/5**

○ **5.5/6.5**

7. Do you have an experience with feedback on your writing before joining the course?

○ Yes

○ No

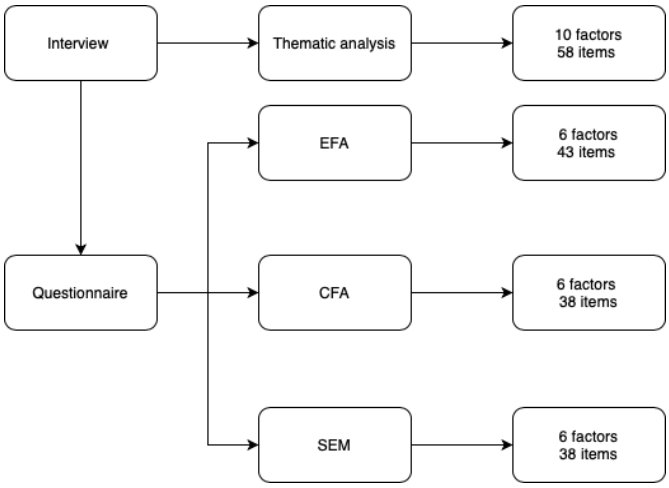
Item code	Statement	Scale Please tick (✓) once per question				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Factor 1: Positive responses towards assessment feedback (PR)						
PR1	Teacher feedback is useful					
PR2	Teacher written feedback often makes me feel more confident about my academic writing.					
PR3	I always used the feedback I received from my teacher to go back over what I had done in my work.					
PR4	When I received my teacher feedback I tried to work on all the comments.					
PR5	Teacher feedback helps me notice my mistakes					
PR6	I usually take my teacher feedback positively, whether the comments are good or bad					
PR7	I paid careful attention to the written feedback on my work and tried to understand what it was saying.					
PR8	I always feel satisfied about my teacher feedback, it is like what I expected					
PR9	I can understand more about assessment criteria from teacher feedback					

Item code	Statement	Scale Please tick (✓) once per question				
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
PR10	I believe that teacher feedback is an important source to improve my academic writing					
PR11	The feedback I received from my teacher usually encouraged me to go back over material covered in the course.					
PR12	I believe that the feedback comments can help me in my future assignments					
PR13	I can understand what the markers want me to work on and correct					
PR14	Teacher feedback supports me to exercise more effort.					
Factor 2: Negative responses towards critical feedback (NR)						
NR1	I feel sad and disappointed whenever I receive my teacher feedback.					
NR2	The feedback process affects me emotionally					
NR3	I lose self-confidence when I receive critical/negative written feedback.					
NR4	Critical/negative written feedback affects me emotionally					

Item code	Statement	Scale Please tick (✓) once per question				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
NR5	I am scared to get critical/negative written feedback					
NR6	I lose my motivation to work on my paper further when I receive critical/negative written feedback					
NR7	Having critical/negative written feedback makes me feel embarrassed					
Factor 3: Students' preferences of the mode of the Feedback (MF)						
MF1	The oral feedback helps me to notice a lot of important points.					
MF2	Talking to my tutor helps me to understand the written comments					
Factor 4: Students' perceptions of the teacher role (TR)						
TR1	Teachers are the ones who should be blamed when I fail after using their feedback.					
TR2	Q44: The negative tone of my teacher's feedback can affect the way I use it.					
TR3	Q47: Teacher contradictory feedback is one of the reasons why I ignore it.					
Factor 4: Self-efficacy in writing (SE)						
SE1	I can support my ideas with evidence					

Item code	Statement	Scale Please tick (✓) once per question				
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
SE2	I can use references correctly.					
SE3	I can write grammatically correct sentences.					
SE4	I can use many academic words in my writing.					
SE5	I can structure my written assignments					
SE6	I can write complete formal sentences.					
Factor 5: Language Learning Mindset Beliefs (LMB)						
LMB1	Each person's ability to write in English is stable and cannot be changed					
LMB2	People can't really learn a new skill in English well after they reach adulthood.					
LMB3	People who try hard and spend very long hours to study writing in English lack the natural ability to improve other skills					
LMB4	My natural ability to learn academic writing will always remain the same.					

Appendix L. **Questionnaire Item Analysis Stages**



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