

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO  
TEACHER WRITTEN FEEDBACK IN  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ESSAYS**

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## ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in Malaysian English language education system has emphasized Teacher Written Feedback (TWF) as a tool to improve student English writing skills. This practise of TWF can be viewed as a significant effort to reform language assessment in writing skills. Given that the implementation of TWF in formative assessment is still in its early stage, no reported research was found on the overall success of TWF practices on students' writing performance. This research was conducted timely to determine the perception of giving written feedback to students' writing tasks. The purpose of this research is to explore teachers' perceptions and practices in providing TWF for secondary school students' writing tasks. In addition, factors contributing to the successful implementation of written feedback in writing were investigated. The factors were challenges, critical success factors, motivator, hygiene, self-beliefs and self-efficacy. This research adopted a combined approach of a sequential explanatory mixed method, utilising a survey design for quantitative method as the central approach and a case study design for qualitative method as supporting data. The quantitative study included 323 non-residential public secondary schools' English teachers selected using proportionate stratified random sampling from ten District Education Offices in Selangor. A regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the factors significantly predict and contribute to the practices of TWF. The results show that challenges, critical success factors, motivation and hygiene factors were significant predictors to teachers' written feedback practices. In contrast, teachers' self-beliefs and self-efficacy were not found to be significant predictors. The qualitative research part involving semi-structured interviews of 15 heads of English panel was completed using purposive sampling to investigate secondary school English language teachers' perceptions and current practices of providing TWF on writing essay. Data collection was then transcribed, coded, and analyzed. From the content analysis, ten themes emerged and supported the seven categories of constructs. The practices' themes were indirect TWF, lack of practices and limited feedback. The challenges' themes were lack of management's involvement and workloads; the critical success factor's theme was student performance; the motivator factor's theme was students' performance; the hygiene factor was management support; the self-belief's theme was direct teacher written feedback; and the self-efficacy theme was low self-confidence in TWF practices and lack of awareness of writing methodology providing TWF to the students. This qualitative data fills in the literature gap by providing an understanding of views and practices of TWF among secondary school teachers in improving student writing skills. The implications of this finding reflect the need for education stakeholders, district officers and policymakers to engage deeply with the nature and effect of change at the start of the TWF implementation phase. This research can assist various parties to design effective training on TWF to improve student English language writing, as well as raise awareness of the need for updated professional development opportunities on the topic of providing TWF during writing instruction. Acknowledging the factors affecting teachers' practices of giving good TWF is imperative in ensuring that students improve their writing ability. It is important that teachers have the analytical skill to identify students' writing weaknesses, give constructive comments and assist them to write better. Future studies can establish best practices modules to guide teachers in implementing TWF effectively.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>AUTHOR’S DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>LIST OF SYMBOLS</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study	4
1.3 Statement of the Problem	7
1.4 Research Objectives	14
1.5 Research Questions	14
1.6 Scope of the Research	16
1.7 Significance of the Research	17
1.7.1 Theoretical Aspect	18
1.7.2 Practical Aspects	19
1.8 Limitations of the Research	20
1.9 Operational Definitions of the Research	22
1.10 Structure of the Thesis	24
1.11 Summary	26
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1 Introduction	27
2.2 Overview of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)	28

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Education is seen as a tool of a well-developed nation. The younger generation should be educated and trained to develop them as holistic individuals, competitive at local and global levels. However, there are reports that many graduates from Malaysian public universities are unemployed due to their lack of English language skills (Mustapha, 2002). To inspire Malaysians towards achieving the status of a developed nation, the government announced the reintroduction of English as the medium of instruction in Science and Mathematics in 2002. The system was called Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English, or in Malay Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik Dalam Bahasa Inggeris (PPSMI). However, it was abolished in 2008 due to widespread opposition and reports of incompetent teaching of the subjects (Ponnan, 2014). It was claimed that PPSMI disadvantaged certain groups of students and there was a lack of time to train teachers before implementing the policy.

In addition, many sources are highlighting Malaysian graduates' weaknesses in employability (MOE, 2012a; MOE, 2012b; MOE, 2015; Hazita, 2016; Qasim, Ahmad, Omar, Zulkifli & Abu Bakar (2018). The same concern for bilingual proficiency was implied in the Malaysian Higher Education Blueprint 2015- 2025 (MOE, 2015) as cited in Mahmood and Yamat (2020). The Malaysian Ministry of Education has tried to find ways to improve classroom instruction in preparing Malaysian secondary school students to become better in academic achievement. As a result, education policies have been expanded to meet the needs of the national development plans. To replace the previous failure, another policy named Uphold the Malay Language and Strengthen the English Language, or in Malay Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris (MBMBI), was introduced by the Ministry of Education in 2009. Approving the MBMBI policy, the Malaysian Education Plan (MEP) announced the use of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) by the Council of Europe (2001) for the assessment of all languages.