

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature pertaining to the themes addressed in the present study. It synthesises previous research conducted in the realms of assessment, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and pedagogical approaches to teaching writing skills. The investigation at hand focuses on explaining teachers' perspectives on the implementation of assessments aligned with the CEFR for writing skills. Moreover, it examines the extent to which CEFR-aligned instruction in writing fosters students' attainment of internationally recognised English language proficiency standards. Within this chapter, attention is directed towards explicating the theoretical underpinnings of the research, exploring the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing writing skills assessments aligned with the CEFR, and describing strategies for enhancing writing proficiency through CEFR-aligned assessments.

2.2 UNDERPINNING THEORIES AND MODEL

This section thoroughly reviews and traces the theories and models pertinent to the assessment process addressed in this study. The literature review highlights the necessity for assessments of writing skills in ESL classes that adhere to the principles outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). By delving into

theories and models associated with the assessment of writing in ESL classes, this review establishes a robust theoretical foundation for the study. Specifically, three theories: social constructivism theory (SCT), cognitive development theory (Zone of Proximal Development, ZPD), and the Concerns-based Adoption Model (CBAM), along with two models: the process approach to writing and CBAM, are selected as pivotal pillars for this study. Each theory and model is comprehensively examined to enlighten its relevance and applicability to the study's objectives. Furthermore, the chapter clarifies the theoretical framework underpinning the research.

2.2.1 Social Cognitivism Theory (SCT)

Effective writing instruction requires a nuanced understanding of how students learn and develop as writers. Social Cognitivism Theory (SCT), with its emphasis on observational learning, modelling, and self-efficacy, offers a valuable framework for fostering writing skills. This review explores the theoretical underpinnings of SCT and examines its application in various pedagogical approaches for teaching writing. By incorporating SCT principles into writing instruction, teachers can create an environment where students learn through observation, build self-efficacy, and ultimately become more confident and skilled writers.

SCT, as proposed by Albert Bandura (1986), emphasises the role of social learning in cognitive development. Individuals acquire new knowledge and skills through observing others (modelling), interacting with the environment (enactive mastery), and verbal persuasion (social persuasion). Self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to succeed in a specific task, plays a crucial role in motivation and performance.

SCT posits that observational learning and self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by four main factors:

- a) Attention: Students need to focus on the modelling process, paying close attention to the strategies and techniques employed by the model.
- b) Retention: Students must be able to remember the observed behaviours and strategies.
- c) Motor Reproduction: Students need the physical and cognitive skills to replicate the observed behaviours.
- d) Motivation and Self-Efficacy: Students must be motivated to attempt writing tasks and believe they can succeed (Bandura, 1986).

SCT offers practical strategies for writing instruction across various age groups and skill levels, such as the following:

- a) Modelling: Teachers can model effective writing strategies through think-aloud, where they verbalise their thought processes as they write. They can also showcase exemplary student work or professional writing samples to demonstrate effective techniques (Graham & Harris, 2003).
- b) Collaborative Learning: Peer writing groups and workshops provide opportunities for students to observe and learn from each other's writing processes and strategies (Graham, 2001).
- c) Scaffolding: Teachers can provide structured support and guidance as students practice new writing skills, gradually reducing assistance as self-efficacy increases (Graham & MacArthur, 2001).

- d) Self-Evaluation and Goal Setting: SCT encourages students to reflect on their writing process, identify strengths and weaknesses, and set achievable writing goals. This fosters self-efficacy and a sense of agency in their writing development (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008).

Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of SCT-based approaches in improving writing skills. For example, Graham and Harris (2003) found that think-aloud modelling combined with scaffolding strategies significantly enhanced students' writing fluency and composition skills. Think-aloud modelling provides students with a window into the thought processes of a skilled writer. By verbalising their thought patterns as they write, teachers demonstrate essential strategies in real-time. This includes how to brainstorm ideas, organise arguments, craft effective sentences, and revise for clarity (Schunk, 2020). Students can observe these techniques in action, learning not just the "what" of writing but also the critical "how" behind it. This demystifies the writing process and makes it seem more achievable.

Additionally, MacArthur et al. (2001) showed that peer writing workshops based on social cognitive principles led to improvements in students' writing quality and self-efficacy beliefs. Peer writing workshops grounded in SCT can be a game-changer for students' writing development. Students get to witness their peers engage in various writing stages, from brainstorming and organising ideas to crafting sentences and revising for clarity. By observing how others approach these tasks, students gain valuable insights and strategies they can incorporate into their own writing. Imagine observing a peer tackle a challenging transition between paragraphs. Witnessing how

they use a specific phrase or transition word can equip you to handle similar challenges in your own writing.

A study by Bolourchi and Soleimani (2021) investigated the impact of peer writing workshops based on SCT principles on Turkish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. The study found that students who participated in the workshops demonstrated significant improvements in their writing fluency, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary usage compared to those in a control group. Additionally, the workshop participants reported higher levels of self-efficacy in their writing abilities.

A study by Zhang et al. (2023) investigated the effectiveness of a writing programme that integrated SCT principles with metacognitive strategies. The programme involved peer feedback sessions, self-assessment activities, and goal-setting based on observations from peers. Students in the programme showed significant improvements in writing quality, self-efficacy beliefs, and metacognitive awareness compared to a control group. This study showcases the power of integrating SCT with metacognitive strategies. Such an approach fosters a rich learning environment where students not only learn effective writing skills but also develop a deeper understanding of their own learning processes and the confidence to become self-assured writers.

In conclusion, Social Cognitivism Theory provides a compelling framework for understanding how students learn to write effectively. By incorporating modelling, collaborative learning, scaffolding, and self-evaluation strategies into writing instruction, teachers can foster observational learning and self-efficacy, ultimately improving students' writing skills. As research continues to explore the nuances of SCT

in the writing classroom, its potential to empower students to become confident and successful writers remains significant.

2.2.1.1 Scaffolding

Scaffolding, often referred to as 'Vygotsky Scaffolding', is an instructional strategy in which students work with a teacher or more experienced student to achieve their learning goals (Azi, 2020). To illustrate teaching in the zone of proximal development (ZPD), Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) coined the term 'scaffolding', which can be applied to the concept of learning. According to researchers, the sociocultural theory of mind and the concept of ZPD form the foundations of the scaffolding concept (Wells, 2001; Daniels, 2001; Berk, 2001). Nevertheless, the differences between ZPD and scaffolding are clearly understood and explained. Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) refer to scaffolding as an instructional technique that enhances learners' understanding and enables them to be independent in their learning process.

The concept behind scaffolding is that learners learn more when they work with people who have a wider range of skills and experiences than they do. Scaffolding means that learners internalise knowledge and learn the language they construct with more capable peers (Uri, 2021). It also means that a teacher helps a learner to accomplish a task that they would not otherwise be able to do (Janneke et al., 2019). These teachers or peers provide scaffolding for learners to expand their learning boundaries and learn more than they could independently. Through this support, knowledge learning evolves into new good teaching that is recognised and built upon. Teachers then use assessments throughout the lesson to track student progress. So in

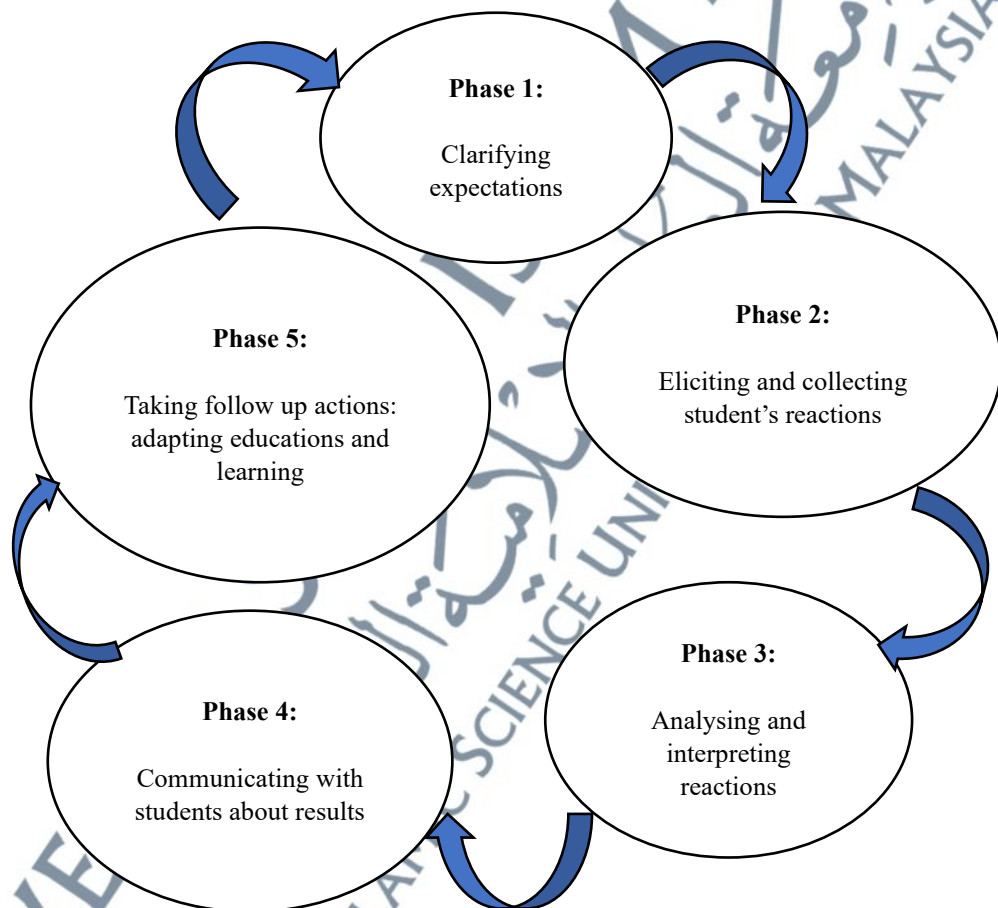
this study, teachers differentiate students according to their level. The aim is to support students in groups or pairs and develop their writing skills.

In addition, Vygotsky and Cole (1978) claimed that problem-solving tasks in which adults monitor and encourage collaboration with peers help learners develop their learning. Scaffolding is the most effective way for learners to succeed in activities they cannot do on their own, but the support must be tailored to the learner's needs (Piamsai, 2020). Scaffolding treats challenges and feedback as a learning mechanism, rather than just exposing students to superficial information. As a result, teachers who subscribe to this theory will be more professional as competent builders (Pradita et al., 2019).

In order to implement CEFR-aligned assessment using scaffolding, classroom assessment or formative assessment must first be digested by teachers. According to Gulikers and Baartman (2017), the most difficult part of the formative assessment cycle for teachers is the flexible delivery of instruction. Teachers need to go beyond surface-level understanding and identify the underlying reasons behind student errors or areas of difficulty. Most of the previous studies reviewed found a lack of follow-up and teacher responsiveness, or claimed that teachers were following up but did not specify how (Suurtamm et al., 2010). Teachers might be conducting formative assessments but failing to provide students with targeted feedback or additional support based on the results. This renders the assessment data somewhat meaningless and hinders student learning. Gulikers and Baartman (2017) examine various formative assessment programmes and create a more comprehensive cycle (see Figure 2.1).

This basic cycle is divided into the following phases, each involving students and teachers. In the first phase, expectations should be presented and discussed by teachers

in classrooms. In the second phase, data is collected on where students are achieving specific learning goals. In the third phase, the data is analysed to see if it is sufficient to understand what the student has achieved so far and where there are opportunities for progress. The fourth phase is about giving relevant feedback and engaging with the student. The fifth phase is about adapting the teaching behaviour to the needs of the student and revising the student's learning behaviour to meet the requirements of the learning activities.



Source: Gulikers and Baartman (2017)

Figure 2.1: The Formative Assessment Cycle

Gulikers and Baartman (2017) assign formative assessment to the fifth level.

According to Boud et al. (2018), formative assessment involves students in their

learning. After the assessment, the consequences for teaching and learning are often forgotten (Winstone & Boud, 2020). In this study, formative assessment aligned with the CEFR is introduced in ESL classes. Teachers encourage students to learn independently during assessments. Scaffolding helps students move from supported to independent work (VanLehn, 2016). ZPD and scaffolding improve students' writing (Azi, 2020). ZPD and scaffolding are powerful tools in a teacher's arsenal for fostering strong writing skills in students. By understanding a student's current capabilities and providing targeted support within their ZPD, teachers can empower students to overcome challenges, build confidence, and ultimately become successful independent writers. The activities in writing classes engage students. The lessons move their knowledge from current to potential development. When they are exposed to unfamiliar topics, the teacher's guidance can help students perform better. Students' progress can also be traced through classroom assessments and the CEFR.

2.2.1.2 Vygotsky's Theory of Development (Zone Proximal Development)

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) is another influential theory on second language acquisition. This theory is used in the creation of curricula and teaching methods for adults. Promoting achievement in ZPD helps in teaching and learning and is implemented with assessment and CEFR, which help teachers in this study. This method assesses a learner's ZPD in a particular instructional setting (Allal & Ducrey, 2000). A child's ZPD is based on what they can do on their own and with help (Panhwar et al., 2016). Vygotsky's ZPD is the difference between what an individual can achieve alone and with skilled help (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978; Singh & Richards, 2006). A child's growth also improves when he or she is around people with more knowledge (Helsby & McCulloch, 1996). When taught, the child learns quickly

and actively. ZPD is thus related to the development of potential and the idea that teachers should help students acquire skills by providing appropriate learning strategies.

Apart from this, the main premise of ZPD is that experienced learners increase their learning success by staying ahead of tasks that test them beyond their ability. Teachers can offer step-by-step tasks to self-directed learners (Vygotsky, 1997; Andersen & Watkins, 2018). Vygotsky's theory explains a child's development when he works alone, but when older people support him, it looks different (Wertsch, 1985). Students can write well, but they need help to motivate themselves and to learn. This study promotes ZPD, where teachers support students in assessing their writing skills, which are aligned to the CEFR. To help students grasp the focus of the lesson, teachers provide learning objectives. Students may know the writing procedures but have difficulty performing them. Therefore, teachers use assessments aligned with CEFR to help students write better. Teachers also provide students with CEFR rubrics for peer assessment. Students are given advice and a new task based on their previous knowledge. The teachers help them learn. This continues until students reach their final goals, such as writing with fewer errors and acquiring good writing skills.

Ultimately, by focusing on ZPD and utilising CEFR as a framework, teachers can create a dynamic and supportive learning environment for adult language learners. This approach fosters not only improved writing skills but also empowers learners to become more confident and independent users of the target language.

2.2.1.3 More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)

Effective writing instruction often involves scaffolding and guidance from a more knowledgeable other (MKO). This review explores the concept of MKO and its application in various pedagogical approaches to teaching writing. The MKO framework, originating from social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), posits that learning occurs within a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD encompasses the gap between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with support from a more knowledgeable other (MKO). This MKO can be a teacher, a peer, or even a digital tool that provides scaffolded assistance.

MKO principles offer valuable strategies for fostering writing skills across various age groups and skill levels. Here's how MKOs can be implemented in writing instruction:

- a) **Teacher as MKO:** Teachers can act as MKOs by providing explicit instruction, modelling effective writing strategies through think-aloud, and offering tailored feedback during the writing process. This support helps students bridge the gap between their current understanding and their potential for growth (Graham & Harris, 2003).
- b) **Peer MKO:** Collaborative learning environments like peer writing groups or workshops create opportunities for students to act as MKOs for each other. Students can offer constructive feedback on each other's work, share writing strategies, and engage in discussions that challenge and refine ideas (Graham, 2001).

- c) Technology as MKO: Digital tools like writing prompts, grammar checkers, and online writing platforms can function as MKOs. These tools can offer suggestions, identify areas for improvement, and provide resources that enhance students' writing skills (Lunsford, 2016).

A study by Wang and Chen (2022) investigated the relationship between MKO support and self-efficacy in writing among university students. The study's findings revealed that students in the experimental group who received MKO support demonstrated a significant increase in their writing self-efficacy compared to the control group. This suggests that MKO support plays a crucial role in boosting students' confidence in their writing abilities. The scaffolded approach provided by MKOs can help alleviate students' writing anxiety by equipping them with the necessary skills and strategies. Effective MKO support allows students to experience success within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), gradually mastering new writing skills and building a sense of accomplishment. Receiving constructive feedback and acknowledgement from an MKO can motivate students and build their confidence in their writing abilities.

Another study by Andrade and Leite (2021) examined the use of MKO principles within a culturally responsive teaching framework. They found that MKOs who are sensitive to students' cultural backgrounds and learning styles can provide more effective support and bridge the ZPD in a culturally relevant way. The study found that integrating MKO principles with CRT offered several benefits, such as acknowledging students' cultural backgrounds, fostering a more inclusive and engaging learning

environment, and motivating students to participate actively. Then, adapting MKO support to students' cultural backgrounds ensured the provided scaffolding was relevant and culturally meaningful, leading to more effective learning within the ZPD. Lastly, the culturally responsive approach empowered students to draw on their cultural knowledge and experiences in their writing, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their work.

In conclusion, the MKO framework offers a valuable lens for understanding how students learn to write effectively. By strategically utilising teachers, peers, and technology as MKOs, teachers can provide scaffolded support that empowers students to bridge their ZPDs and cultivate their writing skills. As research continues to explore the nuances of MKO-based instruction, its potential to empower students to become more confident and independent writers remains significant.

2.2.1.4 Concerns-based Adoption Model (CBAM)

In order to answer all the research questions, this study uses Fuller's (1969) Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), a new practice approach to school redesign. It is a theoretical model for facilitating change that helps leaders and researchers understand, guide, and monitor the complex process of change in education (Hall et al., 1974). Also, according to Hall and Hord (1987), policymakers, school leaders, including principals and senior assistant teachers, and teachers are the agents of change. Those responsible for change determine the success of a new educational practice. This strategy emphasises innovation, school transformation, best practices in the programme and new advances through external resources that teachers use (Hord & Hall, 2006). Teachers use creativity to achieve the goals of policymakers.

Changes in school and university policies would affect everyone and every system in place. However, CBAM assumes that educational reform is a personal experience and that how individuals adjust to new changes significantly affects outcomes. This is because CBAM studies emotional development and social constructivism (Hall & Hord, 2011; Hord & Roussin, 2013; Uri, 2021). Using this model, the researcher was able to explore teachers' views and understandings of CEFR-aligned assessment for writing skills as a new change in English Language Education Reform.

CBAM reveals teachers' concerns about changes in teaching. CBAM can assess development after changes in teaching. Increasing changes in the development process explain the recipient's anxiety. The recipient's concerns about change may evolve with planned development. Stages of Concern (SoC), Levels of Use (LoU), and Innovation Configuration (IC) form the CBAM paradigm (Hall & Hord, 2011). The CBAM model helps explain the implementation of change at each level (Mahyidin & Othman, 2020). The CBAM model, which measures psychological concerns in seven phases before and during innovation implementation, including teachers' pedagogical approaches, is widely used in education, especially abroad (Gabby et al., 2017).

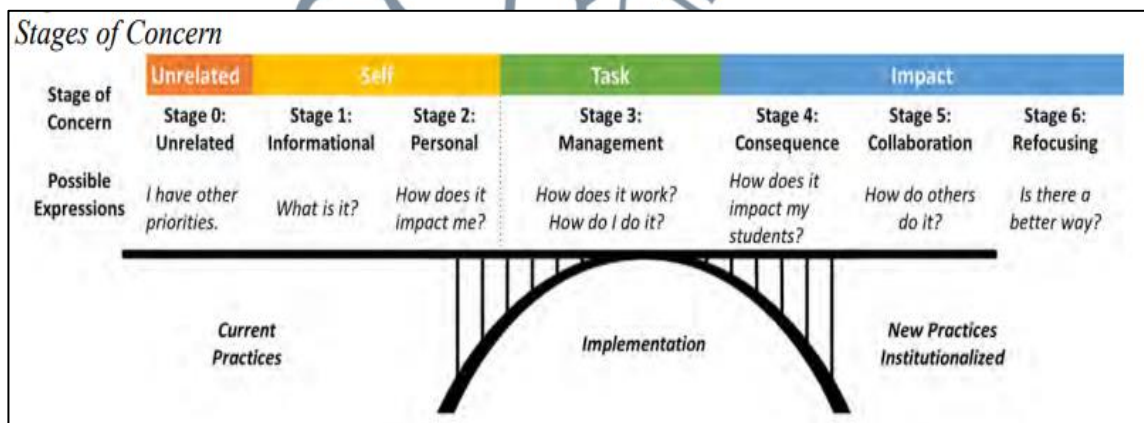
Hall and Hord (2011) found that people's feelings, thoughts, and reactions to change influence their concerns. The teacher is always thinking about how to deal with a situation. In this study, due to time constraints, only the SoC is used, and the researcher focused on the first stages, which consist of seven levels of concern: Awareness Level, Information, Individual, Management, Consequences, Collaboration, and Realignment. Table 2.1 shows the four and seven levels of concern for each change scenario.

Table 2.1: Stages of Concern, CBAM

Categories	Stages of Concern	Description of level
Unrelated	Awareness	The teacher has no interest or concern about any new implementation.
Self-concern (Focus on self)	Information	The teacher is interested and has an awareness of the new implementation.
	Personal	Teachers worry about their abilities and the impact on themselves and their routines in the implementation.
Task-concern (Focus on task)	Management	The teacher focuses on the task by using information and resources to implement new tasks.
Impact-Concern (Focus on the result)	Consequence	The teachers focus on innovation that has an impact on students.
	Collaborating	The teachers work with colleagues to improve innovation implementation efficiency.
Impact-Concern (Focus on the result)	Refocusing	Teachers have an idea of something that could make work better.

Source: Hall and Hord (2006)

Figure 2.2 shows the Stages of Concern, CBAM, by Hall and Hord (2020), with the possible expressions for each stage.



Source: Hall and Hord, (2020)

Figure 2.2: Stages of Concern, CBAM

Every person who implements a new idea must first take care of himself, then of the tasks, and then of the effects. The teacher's concern for creativity and the

implementation of the new policy will increase as he learns more through the invention. This improvement makes the invention successful. Thus, the CBAM model has the advantage of assessing Malaysian education reform in English. The CBAM model determines how individuals embrace change and innovation, and in this study, the individual is the teacher.

2.2.1.5 The Relevance of the Theories and the Model

Effectively assessing writing skills within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) framework necessitates a comprehensive approach that goes beyond simply evaluating the final product. This approach should consider the learning process itself and provide opportunities for student growth. Thus, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), scaffolding, More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), and the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) can be implemented to create robust CEFR-aligned writing assessments.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) emphasises the role of observation in learning. In the context of CEFR-aligned writing assessments, SCT principles can be applied by incorporating tasks that allow students to observe strong writing techniques. This can be achieved through the use of model essays or peer work that demonstrates the important criteria for different CEFR bands. These models serve as examples, showcasing effective organisation, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy within the targeted CEFR level. Furthermore, SCT highlights the importance of self-efficacy, a student's belief in their ability to succeed. CEFR-aligned assessments that provide clear and constructive feedback while celebrating progress can foster self-efficacy. This

positive reinforcement motivates students to continue developing their writing skills and strive for improvement within the CEFR framework.

Scaffolding is a teaching strategy where teachers provide temporary support to help students complete tasks beyond their independent capabilities. In writing assessments aligned with the CEFR, scaffolding can take various forms. Offering prompts with varying levels of difficulty and tailored to different CEFR bands allows students to demonstrate their current abilities while also providing a stretch goal for growth. Additionally, providing graphic organisers or sentence starters can support students, particularly those at lower CEFR levels, in planning and structuring their writing effectively. Finally, offering checklists aligned with CEFR descriptors can guide students towards ensuring their writing meets the key criteria for their targeted level. By strategically using scaffolding, assessments can provide the temporary support needed for students to showcase their full potential within the CEFR framework.

Next, the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) framework emphasises the role of individuals with greater knowledge or expertise in supporting learning. In writing assessments, MKOs can play a crucial role by offering valuable feedback throughout the writing process. Teachers can act as MKOs by providing formative feedback that helps students identify areas for improvement and suggest strategies aligned with CEFR criteria. Furthermore, when structured effectively, peer review allows students to act as MKOs for each other. By providing constructive feedback based on CEFR descriptors, students engage in self-reflection and collaborative learning, which enhances their understanding of effective writing within the framework.

In addition, the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) sheds light on the concerns teachers experience throughout the adoption of new practices, such as CEFR-aligned assessments. Understanding these concerns is crucial for successful implementation. During the initial stages (Stage 1), teachers might have concerns about the purpose and benefits of CEFR-aligned assessments. Providing clear explanations and professional development opportunities can alleviate these concerns and ensure teachers understand the value of this approach. As teachers move to Stage 2, they might require information on how to implement CEFR-aligned assessments effectively. Here, providing training materials and examples can equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills. Finally, in Stage 3, teachers might have personal concerns about their ability to use the assessments effectively. Mentorship and collaborative planning can address these concerns and foster confidence in using CEFR-aligned assessments to guide student learning.

Therefore, by integrating these theories, CEFR-aligned writing assessments can be transformed into a rich and student-centred experience. SCT principles guide the design of tasks that promote learning through observation, modelling, and fostering self-efficacy. Scaffolding provides temporary support to help students demonstrate their CEFR-aligned writing skills, while MKOs offer valuable feedback throughout the process, aligned with CEFR descriptors. Finally, understanding teacher concerns through CBAM helps ensure successful implementation of the assessments. This combined approach creates a holistic and dynamic assessment experience that not only evaluates writing skills within the CEFR framework but also actively promotes student learning and growth. By providing opportunities to observe strong examples, receive constructive feedback, and practice writing within the CEFR framework, students can

develop a deeper understanding of their writing strengths and weaknesses, ultimately leading to a more comprehensive grasp of their language proficiency.

In conclusion, effectively assessing writing skills within the CEFR framework requires a multifaceted approach that moves beyond simply evaluating the final product. By strategically integrating Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), scaffolding, More Knowledgeable Other (MKO), and Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) principles, teachers can create robust CEFR-aligned writing assessments. This student-centred approach fosters a dynamic learning environment in which students can observe strong examples, receive constructive feedback throughout the writing process, and practice their writing skills within the CEFR framework. Ultimately, this comprehensive approach leads to a richer assessment experience that not only evaluates writing proficiency but also empowers students to develop their writing skills and gain a deeper understanding of their strengths and weaknesses within the CEFR framework.

2.2.1.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework constructed in this study attempts to look at some relevant elements and essential features that form the basis of AfL practice in the classroom. This theoretical framework combines language and assessment theories with the integration of the process approach into the writing model.

In this study, assessment aligned to the CEFR is carried out using the writing process. Teachers can better assess their students when they use a standardised language framework, such as the CEFR. The learning theories in this theoretical framework help teachers in assessing writing skills and prepare lessons. Adapting these models helps to

address all the research questions of this study, which focus on teachers' views on CEFR-based assessment and writing skills, as well as their challenges and solutions in ESL teaching. Second language teaching, learning, and assessment are based on several ideas. Social constructivism places teachers at the centre of learning. Teachers use the writing process model to teach basic writing skills. Students also contribute to learning. A social constructivist teacher ensures that students interact organically to generate new learning and learn from each other (Shah, 2019). Vygotsky's scaffolding-based Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) supports peer collaboration. Scaffolding helps learners in ZPD achieve their goals (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978).

Thus, each theory adapts the process approach to writing. Teachers can use the process approach to focus on social constructivism, scaffolding, and CEFR-aligned assessments at each stage of writing. Teachers also need to apply all instructional theories. According to social constructivism, teachers must ensure that students are on the right learning path to achieve learning outcomes. Therefore, ESL teachers in this study need to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities in implementing CEFR-aligned writing assessments. In implementing CEFR-aligned assessment for writing skills, the researcher collected viewpoints, relevant challenges, and the solutions of teachers.

2.3 IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING WRITING SKILLS

English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers need to have a high level of language proficiency. Proficiency in writing is crucial for effective communication, critical analysis, and self-expression. Students benefit significantly from the enhancement of these skills, as they are essential for promoting self-expression,

meaningful conversation, and academic and career success (Hibbin, 2016). Teaching students the art of writing is both enjoyable and beneficial, despite the challenges that may arise. Writing instruction can be tailored to different ages and ability levels, but certain basic principles apply to all forms of writing instruction.

In addition, writing instruction should include constructive criticism, integration of various academic areas, and frequent writing practice. When students master their writing skills, they can improve their communication, critical thinking, and lifelong learning (Wijaya, 2022). Writing proficiency is essential for personal and professional development, as individuals can influence society by sharing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Mastery of written communication is crucial for success in the 21st century for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Academic writing requires purposeful, meaningful communication and language. It demands cognitive, communicative, and basic writing skills (Zhu, 2019). Writing fosters imagination, creativity, and comprehension, while also requiring reflection and creative thinking to form opinions. Given the importance of communication in an increasingly interconnected global culture, writing must be taught in schools (Hyland, 2015).

In today's professional landscape, good writing skills are in high demand across many professions and are therefore crucial. Zhu (2019) asserts that new entrants in the workplace need strong writing skills, emphasising their importance for job searches and career advancement. From pre-school to university, English is taught as a second language in Malaysia. ESL learners who are proficient in a second language benefit from teachers who employ suitable techniques to improve their writing skills.

2.3.1 Challenges Faced by English Teachers in Teaching Writing

Writing in English is often considered the most challenging of the four language skills, requiring careful consideration of various aspects such as correct spelling, punctuation, syntax, lexicon, and the organisation of sentences and paragraphs. Despite its challenges, there are crucial elements that can aid ESL students in their writing progress. Genre, which refers to the established conventions and standards of literature, plays a significant role in this regard (Wilder, 2012).

English teachers must possess a thorough understanding of the challenges students face in writing. They should assist students in developing and articulating their ideas clearly when assigning writing tasks. Moreover, teachers need to guide students through the multiple stages of the writing process, each requiring specific sub-skills. Consequently, teachers must effectively support students through engaging and nurturing activities.

Teaching writing is acknowledged as a complex endeavour, encompassing elements such as grammatical precision, rhetorical effectiveness, intellectual depth, and critical judgement (Heaton & Mickelson, 2015). Issues with syntax, sentence structure, tense, and spelling often stem from students' insufficient mastery of the language, highlighting the importance of language proficiency in producing high-quality written work. Correct grammar is essential for effective communication, providing readers with the clarity needed to understand the content. Students who encounter grammar difficulties may face obstacles in constructing coherent sentences.

Motivating students to write is also a crucial task for today's teachers. Research indicates that students' lack of motivation in writing is not merely due to behavioural issues; rather, it often stems from feelings of autonomy and the perceived complexity of writing tasks (Asep, 2017; Abrar, 2016). Encouraging intrinsic motivation among students is essential to overcoming these challenges.

The inclusion of students with diverse abilities in the classroom presents another significant challenge for teachers when teaching writing skills. Mixed-ability classrooms require teachers to cater to varying skill levels while meeting the individual needs of all students (Asep, 2015). Teachers employ diverse strategies to accommodate varying writing talents and strive to create inclusive learning environments that support each student's development. Insufficient expertise in teaching writing poses yet another challenge for teachers, particularly those new to the profession (Guendoğmuş, 2018). Novice teachers may experience stress due to their limited professional background and require time to familiarise themselves with effective teaching practices tailored to their students' abilities and interests.

Furthermore, the allocation of adequate time for teaching writing is a persistent challenge influenced by factors such as teacher workload, curriculum demands, and students' writing proficiency levels. Effective teaching strategies play a crucial role in enhancing students' writing skills, underscoring the importance of teachers' commitment to supporting students' writing development through structured tasks and meaningful feedback.

In conclusion, teaching writing in ESL contexts demands comprehensive understanding, perseverance, and adaptation to various challenges. By addressing these

challenges with informed strategies and dedication, teachers can foster students' proficiency and confidence in writing, thereby promoting their overall language acquisition and academic success.

2.4 COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is a widely recognised standard for describing language proficiency across Europe and increasingly around the world. Developed by the Council of Europe, the CEFR provides a clear and comprehensive framework for describing language ability. The CEFR establishes a six-level scale, ranging from A1 (Breakthrough or Beginner) to C2 (Mastery or Proficiency), which defines the skills and knowledge expected of learners at each level. These levels are not age-specific and can be applied to learners of any age group.

The CEFR outlines general guidelines for effective language learning, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices. It emphasises a communicative approach, where the focus is on developing learners' ability to use the language effectively in real-world situations. Then, CEFR also promotes language learning, which serves as a common reference point for educational institutions, employers, and learners themselves. It facilitates transparency in language qualifications and allows for easier comparison of proficiency levels across different language programs and certifications.

CEFR regulates curricula, syllabuses, examinations, textbooks, and more (Council of Europe, 2001). As an international framework, the CEFR helps learners, teachers, curriculum designers, examination boards, and educational administrators to

recognise and organise their efforts (Uri & Abd Aziz, 2018). The CEFR is used in 40 languages in addition to English. According to the Council of Europe (2001), implementing the CEFR as a national language framework standard promotes mobility, lifelong learning, and a common metalanguage across language competence systems and international borders in education.

National educational reforms are reshaping schools with the CEFR (Uri & Abd Aziz, 2018). English curriculum assessment, teacher training, and the appropriateness of CEFR levels are important improvements. As part of the redesign, English language proficiency is emphasised and assessed in primary and secondary schools. Teachers help to customise lessons by providing direct information to students. Azman (2016) and Rahman et al. (2021) have traced the evolution of Malaysian English language instruction towards the CEFR approach, as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Educational Reform in Malaysia

Reform	Year	Details
First Reform	1982	The Integrated English Language Syllabus for Primary and Secondary Schools (KBSR/KBSM) was introduced in 1982.
Second Reform	1997	The SMART way of teaching Maths, English, Science, and Malay was implemented in 1999.
Third Reform	2012	Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (MEB).
Fourth Reform	2015 (Started in 2013)	English Language Education Roadmap for Malaysia 2015-2025, introducing the CEFR.

Source: Ministry of Education (2013)

One of the most progressive education reforms in Malaysia is underway. In our globalised world, English language learning is crucial, so efforts are being made to improve the instruction of English (Gill, 2013). The fourth reform comes after the third. Table 2.3 shows the three stages of the third reform (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Table 2.3: English Language Education Roadmap Phases

Phase	Year	Details
First Phase	2013-2015	- Formation of the English Language Standards and Quality Council (ELSQC) (November 2012). - Elevating the English proficiency of school teachers.
Second Phase	2015-2016	- Set CEFR levels against each educational level, from pre-school to university. - School-Based Assessment (SBA) syllabus and curricula were aligned with the CEFR. - Selected CEFR-aligned textbooks and support materials. - Validation of the CEFR levels set.
Third Phase	2016 onwards	- Evaluate, review, and revise the implementation of the CEFR in previous phases. - The development of CEFR-M.

Source: Ministry of Education (2015)

Based on the exact phases of the reform, the 2015-2025 Roadmap shows three waves of CEFR implementation. The waves illustrate the efficient planning of the CEFR in Malaysia. The implementation of the CEFR plan is a practical process. There are three different waves (Ministry of Education, 2015), as depicted in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Waves of the Reform

Wave	Year	Details
Wave 1	2013-2015	- Training for English teachers - Developing the descriptors
Wave 2	2016-2020	- School-Based Assessment (SBA) to the CEFR - Textbook selection
Wave 3	2021-2025	- Development of CEFR-M by the CEFR special task force - Evaluation of the selected textbooks and support materials

Source: Ministry of Education (2015)

The literature suggests that the CEFR-aligned assessments have minimal in-depth research on them. Lo (2018) and Rahman et al. (2021) studied teachers, while Geranpayeh and Abd Rahman (2018) presented the CEFR-aligned Malaysian University English Test (MUET). This study helps ESL teachers utilise a CEFR-aligned assessment, filling the research gaps. In collaboration with the Heads of English Language Panel and SISC+, teachers offer a CEFR-aligned writing skills assessment in ESL classrooms.

2.4.1 CEFR in Classroom Assessment Practice

Formal assessment, like summative assessment, is the final step in a first-class teaching and learning cycle to demonstrate student learning. Today, assessments based on the CEFR is possible in the classroom. Therefore, certain assessment criteria and techniques are needed to apply what has been learned in the classroom. Several European countries use the CEFR as an assessment framework (Willems, 2016), and more than 40 countries, including Malaysia, recognise it. The CEFR defines language proficiency in the broadest sense and helps teachers track their students' progress.

The implementation of CEFR-based assessment represents a significant shift towards a more dynamic and learner-centred approach to language education. By providing a clear framework, promoting continuous progress tracking, and informing instructional decisions, CEFR has the potential to improve teaching practices, motivate students, and ultimately enhance language learning outcomes. However, successful implementation requires addressing teacher training needs and ensuring a balanced assessment approach that considers broader communication skills.

CEFR classifies users as basic (A1, A2), independent (B1, B2), and proficient (C1, C2), which has implications for European language teaching, learning, and assessment (Figueras, 2012; Barni, 2015; Foley, 2019). Alderson (2017) pointed out that 'Can Do' statements are typical reference levels for assessing language proficiency. They provide clear descriptions of observable behaviours, making it easier to assess a learner's ability to perform specific tasks in real-world situations. Foley (2019) highlighted that the CEFR is a realistic and increasingly popular tool for assessing the language of instruction. It offers a valuable framework for assessing the language of instruction in a more objective, standardised, and communication-focused way. By aligning assessments with specific subject areas and teacher needs, CEFR can contribute to improving the overall effectiveness of instruction delivered through the medium of a second language.

The CEFR is used in several studies to assess teaching (Fulcher, 2009). By providing a standardised and communication-focused approach, CEFR can contribute to improving the quality of instruction and ensuring that teachers have the language proficiency necessary to deliver content effectively to students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. To continue students' learning, the CEFR covers primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels in Malaysia. Lecturers in universities and colleges have also adopted the CEFR.

Mahmud (2018) examined the English vocabulary and grammar proficiency of 26 *Majlis Perwakilan Pelajar* (MPP) and 29 Peer Counsellors (*Pembantu Rakan Siswa*) (PRS) student representatives from Malaysian Polytechnics using the CEFR levels. The study employed the British Council's CEFR test and found that all students met the

International English Standard at target B1 and B2 levels. The effective utilisation of CEFR by students suggests its potential to enhance teaching practices. However, the study highlights the importance of addressing teacher training needs, maintaining a balanced assessment approach, and considering the specific context of Malaysian Polytechnic education for successful CEFR implementation.

Sidhu et al. (2018) investigated the implementation of CEFR in ESL primary classrooms by examining TESL-qualified teachers randomly selected from Damansara schools. Their study, which utilised surveys, interviews, and document analysis, revealed inadequate formative assessment of School-Based Assessment (SBA) and a lack of understanding among teachers regarding the CEFR-aligned ESL curriculum. Furthermore, teachers provided minimal critical commentary on students' assignments, and self- and peer-assessments were discouraged, hindering the promotion of independent learning. The findings emphasise the significance of addressing teacher training, curriculum support, and the promotion of active learning strategies to ensure the successful implementation of CEFR-aligned SBA in Malaysian ESL classrooms. Bridging these gaps can empower teachers to leverage the full potential of CEFR, fostering a more effective and learner-centred approach to language acquisition.

Another study found that the CEFR introduced by teacher trainers had no impact on assessment practices. Baldwin and Apelgren (2018) conducted a study involving six Swedish university teacher trainers, including the course organiser, to examine the impact of the CEFR on assessment practices. Despite the introduction and implementation of CEFR-based learning outcomes, the study revealed that the CEFR descriptors were controversial and had minimal influence on assessment practices.

Teacher trainers found the CEFR confusing, resulting in limited integration into classroom settings. This study sheds light on the challenges associated with implementing CEFR in teacher training and emphasises the importance of considering contextual factors, addressing potential resistance, and focusing on practical application to bridge the gap between theory and classroom practice. By tackling these challenges, teacher training initiatives can equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to harness the potential of CEFR in enhancing language assessment practices.

In contrast to the findings of Le (2018) and Read (2019), this study reveals that teachers prioritise self- and peer-assessments when implementing assessments aligned with the CEFR. Teachers actively facilitate self- and peer-assessment activities, leveraging their expertise to gauge student learning effectively. Consequently, students experience increased autonomy and confidence in their learning journey. This phase empowers students to take ownership of their learning process. By utilising Assessment for Learning (AfL) principles, the CEFR framework integrates seamlessly into the assessment process. Le's (2018) research demonstrated the positive impact of CEFR-aligned assessments on non-English-speaking primary school students at a university in central Vietnam, highlighting the benefits of self- and peer-assessments and CEFR-aligned tasks in improving second language acquisition. Overall, this study highlights the value of integrating self- and peer-assessments and CEFR-aligned tasks to nurture student independence, cultivate a sense of accountability for learning, and enhance second language acquisition outcomes.

In summary, the CEFR presents a comprehensive framework for evaluating language proficiency across diverse educational contexts. Its advantages include

providing a common platform for assessing language skills, promoting uniform assessment practices across institutions and nations, and prioritising communication skills alongside grammar and vocabulary mastery. By emphasising real-world language usage, CEFR assessments ensure relevance and applicability. Additionally, the framework enables educators to monitor student progress towards specific proficiency levels (A1-C2) and utilise assessment data to inform instructional strategies tailored to individual student needs. Through the integration of self- and peer-assessment strategies aligned with CEFR, students are empowered to take ownership of their learning journey, fostering independence and deeper engagement with the language acquisition process.

2.4.2 Views on the Implementation of CEFR

The integration of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) into educational settings has elicited diverse reactions, as highlighted in Goullier's (2012) study examining French individuals' perspectives on CEFR implementation. Initially, there was widespread apprehension and uncertainty stemming from the unfamiliarity with the new framework, necessitating teachers to adjust their instructional approaches. However, amidst these challenges, some educators have embraced CEFR with optimism, viewing it as a potential catalyst for advancing language education practices. To ensure the effectiveness of CEFR in bolstering education systems globally, continued research on its implementation is imperative.

Darmi et al. (2017) conducted a Malaysian study exploring the integration of English language courses with the CEFR framework among university lecturers. Using a quantitative approach, the study surveyed 25 lecturers using CEFR-based statements

and investigated existing CEFR-aligned English courses in Malaysian universities. Surprisingly, the results unveiled disparities between lecturers' assessments of students and the proficiency expectations outlined by the CEFR for university learners. This study emphasises a significant concern regarding the potential inconsistency in implementing the CEFR framework for assessing English language proficiency in Malaysian universities. By addressing potential causes through standardised training, curriculum alignment, and collaborative efforts, educators can ensure a more uniform and effective application of the CEFR, ultimately benefiting students.

Numerous studies have delved into teachers' attitudes towards the CEFR framework. Musoeva's (2019) research on Uzbek EFL teachers and Tosun and Glover's (2020) study on Turkish EFL teachers both indicate a general endorsement of CEFR implementation among educators. Many of the teachers in these studies had undergone CEFR-related training or familiarised themselves with the framework materials. These findings highlight the potential for successful CEFR integration when teachers demonstrate support and proactively engage with the framework. By effectively addressing persistent challenges and providing ongoing support, policymakers and educators can leverage the CEFR to enhance the English language learning experience for students.

Indeed, research by Dez-Bedmar and Byram (2019) uncovered that while many Hispanic teachers held positive attitudes towards the CEFR, some lacked a precise understanding of its intricacies. Similarly, Tosun and Glover (2020) observed that Turkish teachers recognised the significance of the CEFR but expressed a need for more comprehensive training on its application across various subjects. Studies conducted by

Celik (2013) and Yakışık and Gürocak (2018) in Turkey further emphasised this gap, with public school teachers exhibiting less familiarity with the CEFR compared to their counterparts in private schools, who often received more specialised training. While the support of teachers for the CEFR is encouraging, these studies highlight the importance of addressing knowledge deficiencies and enhancing training opportunities to ensure successful implementation. Through targeted training initiatives and fostering a deeper understanding of the framework, educators can wield significant influence over the CEFR's potential to improve language learning outcomes for all students.

Yuece and Mirici (2019) studied 11 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers who implemented a ninth-grade programme based on the CEFR EFL. The results showed that the CEFR descriptions were inappropriate for grade 9 EFL. Short lessons also hindered the use of the CEFR in the classroom (Yuece & Mirici, 2019). Alih et al. (2020) found that English teachers lacked support for CEFR implementation. After several years of implementing the CEFR in ESL classrooms, it is important to assess progress. Studies suggest potential challenges with implementing the CEFR framework in EFL classrooms, particularly at the secondary level, as well as the need for further research on adapting the CEFR for specific contexts and grade levels. Additionally, ensuring teachers have the necessary resources and support is crucial for successful implementation.

Yakışık and Gürocak (2018) interviewed 105 Turkish public and private state school teachers about the CEFR and how they used it in their teaching. Most of the participants understood the CEFR. Private school teachers were better trained in the CEFR than public school teachers (Yakışık & Gürocak, 2018). Despite these

challenges, teachers are willing to learn and teach English to their students. It is important to support teachers in every way possible. They should be given the chance to improve so that the CEFR assessment in the classroom supports ESL teaching and learning. This study emphasises the importance of addressing disparities in teacher training to ensure successful CEFR implementation. Through ensuring equal access to training opportunities and cultivating a supportive atmosphere for professional growth, teachers can play a critical role in connecting the potential of CEFR as a valuable strength in enhancing ESL teaching and learning experiences for all students.

Another study by Nawai and Said (2020) on CEFR implementation involves 15,000 of Malaysia's 60,000 English teachers whom the Ministry of Education considers unqualified to teach. Two-thirds of the English teachers also failed. They performed poorly and had little understanding of the CEFR. This incompetence could affect the monitoring and assessment of language skills in schools and institutions. The study found that teachers are reluctant to implement the CEFR. According to Muhammad Uri and Abd Aziz (2017), many teachers are not aware of the CEFR. The CEFR framework is not familiar to teachers. Addressing the lack of teacher knowledge and preparedness regarding the CEFR is crucial for its successful implementation in Malaysia. By investing in comprehensive training programs and providing ongoing support, policymakers and teachers can ensure that the CEFR becomes a valuable tool for effective language assessment and improved learning outcomes for students.

Alih et al. (2021) found that teachers support the implementation of the CEFR. Despite the obstacles, 365 English teachers were willing to adopt the change. A questionnaire assessed teacher preparation, and a semi-structured interview elicited

difficulties from randomly selected teachers. Teachers' lack of motivation, insufficient resources, facilities, and time, as well as students' low English proficiency, hindered the implementation of the CEFR-aligned curriculum in schools. Nevertheless, teachers were willing to use the CEFR to improve teaching and learning. This study offers a message of hope. While challenges exist, teachers' willingness to embrace the CEFR is a positive sign. Through prioritising teacher training initiatives, mitigating resource constraints, and taking into account varying student proficiency levels, teachers can apply significant encouragement to the enhancement of English language instruction and learning through the implementation of the CEFR in Malaysia.

Phoolaikao and Sukying (2021) found limited research on Thai stakeholders' views of the CEFR. A total of 200 Thai fourth- and fifth-year English teachers were surveyed about the CEFR. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used to collect the data. According to the quantitative data, the participants understood the CEFR, especially the assessment of the categories and the descriptions of the standard levels. The qualitative data showed that the Thai teachers in training barely understood the CEFR. However, the teachers were enthusiastic about using the CEFR. The statistics show that Thai stakeholders need to be more involved in the education system and more aware of the effectiveness of implementing the CEFR. This study reveals both positive aspects (teacher enthusiasm) and areas for improvement (knowledge gaps among trainees and stakeholder awareness). By addressing these challenges through targeted training, communication, and collaboration, Thailand can create a more informed and supportive environment for successful CEFR implementation.

Additionally, Kaur and Jian (2022) conducted a study to investigate primary school teachers' views on the implementation of the CEFR in the Malaysian curriculum in 2018. A total of 500 primary school teachers were surveyed using a questionnaire that included 11 closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. The results showed that the majority of teachers had a positive perception of the implementation of the CEFR-aligned English curriculum. The study suggests that a significant number of Malaysian primary school teachers view the CEFR-aligned curriculum positively. This positive perception can serve as a strong foundation for successful CEFR implementation in primary English language education.

The studies reveal a mixed picture regarding the implementation of the CEFR framework in educational institutions. While some teachers embrace the CEFR as a potential breakthrough, others experience initial concern due to unfamiliarity. Therefore, this study explores teachers' views on the implementation of the CEFR for writing assessment in the third wave of the 2015-2025 Roadmap, 2021-2025. The first and second waves of CEFR implementation need to be evaluated, reviewed, and revised.

2.4.3 CEFR Issues in ESL Classroom

Regardless of policy or transitions, it falls upon the competent expert to confront the challenges in education. The implementation of the CEFR, while valuable, is never without its flaws. Teachers require additional time and comprehensive information to effectively implement the CEFR into their practices. They have voiced concerns over constraints such as time limitations, classroom availability, heavy workloads, and inadequate in-service training, all of which have impeded the seamless adoption of

CEFR-aligned SBAs (Sidhu et al., 2018). Even now, teachers continue to struggle with issues of time management, classroom availability, workload distribution, and CEFR-aligned instruction. Difficulties in CEFR implementation can pose significant obstacles to ESL teaching.

There were tensions among teachers as they navigated the utilisation of the CEFR for test creation and assessment, stemming from initial misconceptions before fully grasping its essence (Smith, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020). They found it necessary to rectify their assumptions regarding the CEFR and its associated guidelines (Don & Abdullah, 2019). The adoption of the CEFR was deemed an ineffective reform strategy. While the CEFR serves as a reference framework, policymakers are tasked with crafting the blueprint for educational planning (Council of Europe, 2001; Don & Abdullah, 2019; Smith, 2019). There was an underlying assumption that the CEFR would facilitate comparisons of Malaysian students' proficiency levels with those of proficient speakers (Don & Abdullah, 2019). It is noted that a well-informed and well-trained teaching force, coupled with clear policy guidelines, is crucial for overcoming implementation challenges and harnessing the potential of the CEFR framework for effective educational assessment.

Abd Aziz and Uri (2017) explored participants' challenges in implementing the CEFR in the English classroom. The CEFR was unknown to most teachers. The results showed that teachers lacked motivation and expertise to apply the framework in their teaching. English teachers are not well acquainted with the CEFR, so it is difficult to incorporate it into their lessons. Teachers need to be prepared to use the CEFR material

effectively. This study emphasises the importance of addressing teacher knowledge and motivation to ensure successful CEFR implementation.

Le's (2018) research emphasises the necessity of incorporating CEFR principles into general English instruction. It demonstrates that teachers possess the potential to guide students towards achieving learning objectives aligned with the CEFR, provided they receive training in CEFR-aligned assessment methods. To facilitate this process, local universities, colleagues, and peers should offer support to teachers as they acclimatise to this approach. Consequently, it is imperative for local educational institutions to provide comprehensive training and resources to empower teachers. This study offers a positive outlook on the CEFR's potential for improving English language learning. However, it highlights the crucial role of ongoing support and training for teachers to ensure successful implementation.

Sidhu et al. (2018) conducted a study examining the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing a CEFR-aligned curriculum. Employing surveys, interviews, and document analysis, the study revealed that while teachers exhibit a strong grasp of the CEFR framework, they lack proficiency in assessment techniques and the implementation of CEFR-aligned curricula. Factors such as limited time, large class sizes, heavy workloads, and insufficient in-service training were identified as barriers to effective CEFR integration in the classroom. Thus, while teachers possess a good understanding of the CEFR framework, addressing the practical application gap and the various implementation barriers is crucial for its successful integration into the classroom.

In their study, Azli and Akmar (2019) discovered that 30 lower secondary teachers encountered challenges in devising assessments aligned with the CEFR framework. Malaysian secondary ESL teachers participated in the study by completing Google Form questionnaires that were randomly distributed among them. Despite the regularity of student assessments, teachers exhibited a preference for utilising textbook exercises for self- and peer-assessment aligned with the CEFR rather than employing portfolios or scrapbooks. Many teachers opted for straightforward lesson plans to implement their understanding of the CEFR. This study highlights the need to bridge the gap between teacher understanding of the CEFR and its practical application in assessment. By providing targeted support and fostering a culture of collaboration, teachers can develop more effective assessment practices that benefit student learning within the CEFR framework.

Abd Aziz and Uri (2017) conducted a mixed-methods study examining the enquiries raised by Fatima (2019). The research involved interviews with two senior officials from the Malaysian Ministry of Education and a survey of 331 English language secondary school teachers across Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, and Selangor. The findings revealed that inadequate teacher preparation, a lack of awareness and knowledge regarding the CEFR, as well as resistance and negative attitudes towards the adoption of CEFR-aligned curricula, emerged as significant barriers. This study emphasises the importance of addressing teacher preparedness and attitudes to overcome resistance and ensure successful CEFR implementation in Malaysia.

Nawai and Said (2020) conducted an investigation into the challenges encountered by English teachers in rural primary schools in Sarawak regarding the

implementation of the CEFR. Additionally, they sought to understand these teachers' perspectives on the government's strategy for implementing the framework. It involved interviews with 60 rural primary English teachers. The data revealed that the majority of these teachers lacked prior experience with the CEFR. This study highlights the importance of acknowledging the unique challenges faced by rural primary school teachers with CEFR implementation. By providing tailored training, accessible professional development, and culturally appropriate resources, teachers can ensure a more inclusive and effective implementation process that benefits all students.

Aziz et al. (2018) highlighted the need for better alignment between textbooks and the arranged curriculum and work plan. While English teachers are encouraged to maintain flexibility in their teaching approaches and adapt to varying conditions of instruction and learning, there is room for improvement in supporting them. Many teachers express a desire for more workshops, seminars, and in-service training opportunities, particularly focused on the practical implementation of the CEFR. This study highlights the importance of addressing these needs and ensuring that teachers feel empowered and supported in implementing the CEFR framework effectively by providing adequate resources and training.

Alias et al. (2021) conducted observations of primary school teachers delivering writing lessons aligned with the CEFR framework. Their findings revealed that the teachers tended to prioritise teacher-centred instruction over fostering student autonomy. The researchers noted that this preference for traditional teaching methods persisted because the teachers lacked familiarity with the new approach. Mohd Dzaquan (2020) suggests that this resistance to change may stem from teachers' limited

understanding of the CEFR or their utilisation of ineffective learning methodologies. This study emphasises the importance of promoting a shift towards student autonomy within the CEFR framework. By providing teachers with opportunities to observe effective practices, engage in reflective teaching, and address their concerns, teachers can move towards a more student-centred approach that empowers students to take ownership of their learning.

Mohamed et al. (2021) investigated the difficulties faced by English teachers in implementing the CEFR. Their study involved interviewing 117 English teachers from primary schools in Johor Bahru. The interviews covered various aspects such as teachers' English proficiency, classroom activity design, student engagement, available materials, workload, and performance. The researchers found that these challenges were interconnected and primarily arose from several factors, including a lack of training related to the CEFR, insufficient teaching and learning resources, time constraints, and a policy that prohibits student streaming based on language proficiency levels. These factors collectively contribute to the considerable challenge English teachers encounter in effectively implementing the CEFR.

Another recent study by Alih et al. (2021) indicated that despite the challenges, teachers are willing to embrace change because of their belief in the CEFR framework. The researchers emphasised that adequate cognitive preparation for teachers necessitates time, collaborative teamwork, and access to necessary tools. They argued that only under these conditions can teachers effectively implement the CEFR. Despite the problems highlighted in classroom settings by previous studies, many teachers,

teacher educators, and researchers concur with Alih et al. (2021) regarding the desirability of implementing the CEFR in educational settings.

The CEFR is renowned for its promotion of learner autonomy, emphasis on learners' capabilities, and facilitation of language usage through diagnostic assessment (Morrow, 2004). As a global standard for language learners, its application in Malaysian schools holds significant importance in comprehending the present landscape of language education. Hence, this study delves into the challenges encountered by English teachers in integrating the CEFR into their instructional practices.

In conclusion, a multi-pronged approach is needed to address the challenges and harness the potential of the CEFR framework in Malaysia. By providing teachers with the necessary training, resources, and support, policymakers and educational institutions can empower teachers to implement the CEFR effectively and improve language learning outcomes for students.

2.4.4 Implementing CEFR to Improve ESL Learning

The quest for effective English language learning (ESL) methods is an ongoing journey for teachers worldwide. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has emerged as a prominent framework, offering a standardised approach to assess and describe language proficiency. Nakatani (2012) explored the efficacy of the CEFR in enhancing the communicative skills of EFL learners, particularly Japanese students, through the performance of communicative tasks. The study observed a significant improvement in students' communication abilities following the implementation of CEFR-based instruction. Nakatani attributed this

improvement to the strategic training the participants consciously applied during their tasks. He expressed confidence in the potential of the CEFR to enhance students' communicative proficiency.

On the other hand, Zheng et al. (2016) investigated the integration of the CEFR into the assessment of the University English Test (UET) for writing in China. Their study aimed to ascertain the significance of the CEFR in the Chinese context and its potential to enhance English language teaching (ELT) in higher education. The researchers found that the effective utilisation of the CEFR for assessment depended on teachers receiving adequate training. Prior to training, formal education teachers exhibited limited knowledge of the CEFR. Moreover, some respondents, particularly those with less subject knowledge, displayed unfamiliarity with the CEFR.

Uri and Abd Aziz (2018) surveyed 331 secondary English teachers and conducted in-depth interviews with two senior ministry officials to investigate stakeholders' concerns regarding the integration of the CEFR into the curriculum and the assessment of Form Five English language teaching. As highlighted by Cambridge Basics Research (2013), a significant proportion of Malaysian students are operating at a low pre-intermediate level in English proficiency. Consequently, the adoption of the CEFR framework was deemed essential to enhancing English language proficiency among students.

The CEFR also aims to standardise all examinations, including SPM, with the intention of achieving international recognition for Malaysian exams. Participants noted that despite SPM being a challenging Malaysian exam, its international recognition remains limited compared to the CEFR, which serves as the benchmark for language

proficiency. One participant highlighted the disadvantages of the SPM criteria, stating that while Malaysian students may achieve high grades abroad, their significance may not be universally understood. Conversely, possessing a B2 level of proficiency aligned with the CEFR provides clearer comprehension internationally. This discrepancy has led many test developers and academics to align assessments with the CEFR framework. Despite varying reactions from teachers worldwide upon its introduction, CEFR expert training has yielded positive results, particularly in China. Teachers reported an improved understanding of the CEFR and its application in assessing students' writing abilities. Enhanced familiarity with the CEFR is anticipated to foster positive reactions and widespread acceptance of its role in English Language Teaching (ELT) and assessment practices in China.

Overall, the CEFR offers a valuable framework for improving ESL learning. However, successful implementation requires addressing teacher training needs, considering existing student proficiency levels, and ensuring alignment with national exams. By overcoming these challenges, teachers can maximise the CEFR's capacity to enhance communication skills, standardise assessment procedures, and ultimately enhance English Language Teaching (ELT) practices holistically.

2.5 CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

Teaching and learning are intrinsically linked with assessment, forming an essential triad that drives educational progress and success. High-quality assessment and a variety of assessment techniques that are relevant to instruction, adequately demonstrate student achievement, and are fair to all require a comprehensive understanding of all intended learning outcomes, experts say. First and foremost,

teachers must consider the purpose of assessments. Whether the goal is to measure student understanding, track progress over time, inform instructional decisions, or evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum implementation, the assessment system chosen should be tailored to meet these objectives. Developing reliable grading systems, providing assessment results for different audiences, and detecting unethical, illegal, and inappropriate assessment methods can all be based on assessment results (Alkharusi et al., 2012; Mokshein et al., 2015).

Assessments serve as a cornerstone in guiding the design, delivery, and evaluation of course effectiveness (Brown & Lee, 2015; McMillan, 2015). According to Martin and Ndoeye (2016), assessment is a means to gauge student comprehension and progress in learning. Yambi and Yambi (2020) broaden the scope of assessment, encompassing observations, performance evaluations, project assessments, paper-and-pencil tests, and value judgements on learning development. Black and William (2018) define classroom assessment as a process involving observation, data collection, analysis, and interpretation, aiding teachers in making informed decisions about student learning. Through the systematic collection, analysis, and utilisation of assessment data, teachers gain insights into students' subject knowledge (Black & William, 2018).

Teachers employ a diverse array of tools and methodologies to gauge student learning, skill development, academic requirements, and preparedness (Islam & Stapa, 2019). This process of assessment is ongoing within the classroom environment, constituting a continuous evaluation by teachers (Rosli et al., 2022). Additionally, classroom assessment involves the systematic utilisation of various assessment techniques by teachers to measure student performance during classroom activities and

ascertain the attainment of learning objectives (Narinasamy & Nordin, 2018). Formative and summative assessments, as delineated by Shepard (2019), are integral components of this process. Essentially, assessments encompass any actions undertaken by teachers to gather data on student learning progression within the classroom (Basera, 2019). Through these assessments, teachers gain insights into student progress and tailor their instructional strategies, accordingly, thereby contributing to the overall improvement of teaching and learning experiences.

A study by Black and William (2020) provides an extensive review of research on classroom assessment practices, including formative and summative assessments, and their impact on student learning outcomes. It explores various aspects of classroom assessment, such as assessment design, implementation, feedback provision, and its influence on instructional decision-making. The study also discusses the challenges and opportunities associated with effective classroom assessment practices and offers recommendations for teachers to enhance assessment practices in their classrooms. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the role of assessment in the teaching and learning process. By understanding the principles and practices of effective assessment, teachers can create supportive learning environments that promote student success.

In conclusion, classroom assessment constitutes a methodical formative assessment process, generating insightful reflections on student learning that are shareable with stakeholders and conducive to performance enhancement. Through assessment, teachers differentiate the most effective learning tools, aiming to foster student engagement and experimentation with diverse learning options. Utilising this

information, teachers refine their instructional strategies, striving towards the attainment of learning objectives. The subsequent section delves into various types of assessment methodologies.

2.5.1 Types of Assessment

It is imperative that teachers recognise the vital role of classroom assessment in collecting data on student learning. As highlighted by Amua-Sekyi (2016), assessments serve to foster interaction within the classroom environment. Both summative and formative assessment practices are permitted in Malaysia.

Summative assessments serve as pivotal tools in guiding learning processes. These assessments involve the evaluation of students' performance and understanding based on specific materials covered within a learning programme. Summative assessments are typically utilised to achieve several objectives. Firstly, they offer a conclusive judgement on a learner's performance throughout a programme, providing insights into their potential future achievements. Additionally, summative assessments are instrumental in certifying performance and conferring qualifications, thereby validating students' competencies within a given subject or discipline. Furthermore, these assessments play a crucial role in aiding decisions regarding students' enrolment in subsequent learning programs, offering valuable information to inform selection processes. Ultimately, summative assessments yield formal evidence of learners' competence, offering tangible outcomes that validate their educational achievements (Awoniyi & Fletcher, 2014).

The outcomes of summative assessments extend beyond the classroom, manifesting in socially significant forms such as tests, grades, academic reports, and certificates. These results not only provide valuable insights into individual student performance but also contribute to broader educational systems by facilitating informed decision-making processes. Through summative assessments, teachers and stakeholders gain a comprehensive understanding of students' capabilities, facilitating the development of targeted interventions and strategies to support their ongoing learning journeys (Bhat & Bhat, 2019).

Formative assessments provide continuous feedback to students. They are frequently employed to evaluate learners' progress and understanding, pinpoint learning requirements, and adjust instructional strategies accordingly (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brookhart, 2018). Homework and formative assessments are used to track learning progress throughout the school year. Thus, formative feedback encourages students to engage in dialogue with teachers (Gray & Diloroto, 2016). Table 2.5 below shows the difference between summative and formative assessments.

Table 2.5: The Difference between Summative Assessment and Formative Assessment

Summative Assessment	Aspect	Formative Assessment
A formal assessment records student achievement at a specific level of education.	Concept	A formal or informal assessment identifies or assesses a student's mastery of knowledge and progress in the classroom.
Assess the level of student achievement based on several units of learning and the grading of students in the classroom.	Aim	Assess students' mastery and progress to address teaching and learning issues at an immediate rate.
Perform formal or informal assessments during teaching and learning sessions. It is conducted individually, in groups, or comprehensively.	Activity	Formal exams are conducted over several lesson periods in classes or class forms.
It can be employed during class or at the end of each month.	Period	It can be implemented during the first semester (mid-year) and the second semester (end of the year).
Assessments are conducted informally (through observation and question-and-answer sessions) or formally (involving a pencil-and-paper test in a short time).	Form	The assessment form is formal (pencil-and-paper test or oral test) within a specified time.
To immediately enhance teaching and learning deficiencies, as well as student mastery, or to perform enrichment and recovery activities in the classroom.	Action	Conducted to place students in appropriate classes or groups. Next, plan and modify lessons or curriculum.

Source: Black and William (2009) & Black et. al (2003).

Teachers must grasp the significance of both summative and formative assessments in the realm of teaching and learning. With the integration of School-Based Assessment (SBA) into global and international education systems, formative assessments have garnered increased attention (Farmasari, 2020). The incorporation of SBA has breathed new life into formative assessment within national assessment frameworks. Notably, Malaysia has placed a strong emphasis on formative assessment, as evidenced by the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025, which advocates for the use of formative assessments to evaluate students' higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Furthermore, the Malaysian Roadmap for English Education Reform 2015-2025 highlights the implementation of the Common European

Framework of Reference (CEFR), signalling a significant shift in the national assessment context.

Traditional assessment benefits teachers who are proficient in summative assessment. This includes testing students using appropriate methods (Gierl & Zhu, 2021). The CEFR is only now addressing teachers' knowledge of formative assessment. To teach, teachers need to know the basics (McLaughlin & Halpin, 2022). Teachers need to understand the goals of the policy and the education curriculum in order to achieve them (Smith & Johnson, 2022). The CEFR requires teachers to understand the principles of formative assessment. Thus, it is important to shift the focus from traditional summative assessment to a more formative approach aligned with the CEFR. Teacher training must provide comprehensive training to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective formative assessment practices within the CEFR framework. Moreover, researching teacher views on formative assessment can inform training programs and support successful CEFR implementation.

In the modern literature, Assessment of Learning (AoL), Assessment for Learning (AfL), and Assessment as Learning (AaL) represent three philosophies of learning, as noted in Table 2.6

Table 2.6: Types of Assessments in the Classroom

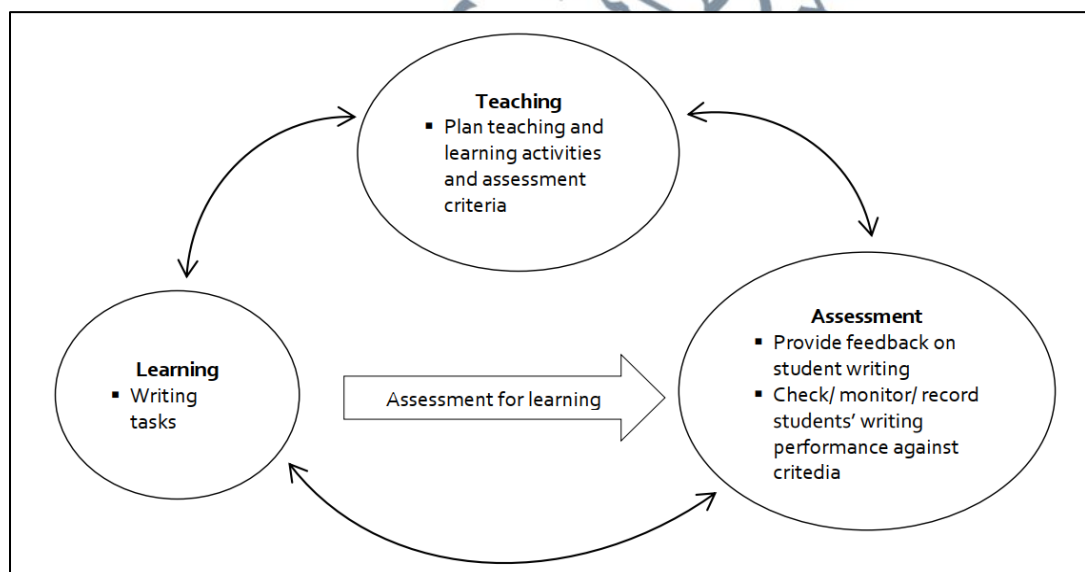
Assessment	Of Learning	For Learning	As Learning
Type	Summative	Formative	Formative
What	Teachers determine the progress or application of knowledge or skills against a standard.	Teachers and peers check progress and learning to help learners determine how to improve.	The learner takes charge of their own learning, asks questions about their learning and the learning process, and explores how to improve.
Who	Teacher	Teacher & Peers	Learner & Peers
How	Formal assessments collect evidence of student progress and may be used for achievement grading on grades.	Includes formal and informal assessment activities that are part of learning and inform future learning planning.	Learners use formal and informal feedback and self-assessment to help understand the next steps in learning.
When	Periodic report	Ongoing feedback	Continual reflection
Why	Ranking and reporting	Improve learning	Deeper learning and learning how to learn
Emphasis	Scoring, grades, and competition	Feedback, support, and collaboration	Collaboration, reflection, and self-evaluation

Source: Sparks (1999); Schraw (2001); McNamee and Chen (2005); Fenwick and Parsons (2009); Chappuis et al. (2012); Rowe (2012)

Studies show that Assessment for Learning (AfL) helps students learn more effectively. In AfL, students actively participate by analysing the material, connecting it to what they already know, and figuring out how to improve (Sadler, 1998). They also reflect on their own learning and make adjustments as needed. These strategies, called metacognition, make students more aware of their learning process and help them plan their studies better (Berry & Adamson, 2011). This approach, where students take responsibility for their learning alongside meeting teacher expectations (also known as "studenting"), as noted by Brookhart (2010), allows writing skills to flourish through teacher guidance, peer input, and AfL itself.

2.5.2 Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Nowadays, the focus of assessment is on assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning (Singh et al., 2017). This research focuses on Assessment for Learning (AfL), which emphasises formative assessment and provides evidence of student learning. AfL requires teachers to support their teaching with evidence of students' knowledge, understanding, and skills. AfL takes place in the classroom, and good assessments can help students become more competent learners (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Kapur, 2020). AfL is not just about proving that you are learning, but also about improving learning. According to Black et al. (2003), AfL can be structured to gather information that improves learning. Fitriyah and Jannah (2021) have illustrated teaching, learning, and assessment in Figure 2.3.



Source: Fitriyah and Jannah (2021)

Figure 2.3: Interrelationships between Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Figure 2.3 depicts a cycle of teaching, learning, and assessment involving teachers. Teachers can use AfL methods to teach students lifelong learning, thinking,

and consistency (Black & Wiliam, 1998ab; Bennett, 2011). AfL teachers identify and share with students their learning intentions and performance standards. The AfL emphasises student-centred learning processes and needs (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Yin et al., 2014). Students need to work with teachers to monitor their learning. Berry (2011) explains that children actively share learning data with teachers, peers, and parents. Assessment and learning help them to shape their learning and track their progress.

AfL provides students with assessments that go beyond testing their knowledge (Singh et al., 2017). Teachers can assess their AfL methods by discussing learning objectives with students (Pang, 2020). AfL also monitors learning quality and provides ongoing feedback to drive learning and teaching, which has been shown to improve learning (Westbroek et al., 2020). Thus, before teachers teach, they need to ensure that students understand the learning objectives in order for them to focus and perform well in class. Teachers can then share the success criteria with students in the next lesson so that they can evaluate their progress at the end (Thomas et al., 2004; Herrera & Macas, 2015). This sharing helps students grasp the key elements of the lesson and relate them to the learning objectives. Teachers employ AfL strategies to guide instruction, facilitate learning, and evaluate student writing in ESL classes (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Wiliam, 2011). AfL teachers need to provide students with good feedback on teaching and learning, as relevant and appropriate feedback can motivate and encourage students. Assessment enhances learning (Brown, 1990; Kapur, 2020), in which students naturally want the quickest way to pass their 'test'.

Lee (2007) identifies three reasons for using AfL in the writing classroom: (a) collegial feedback among learners; (b) a coordinated effort that includes pedagogy,

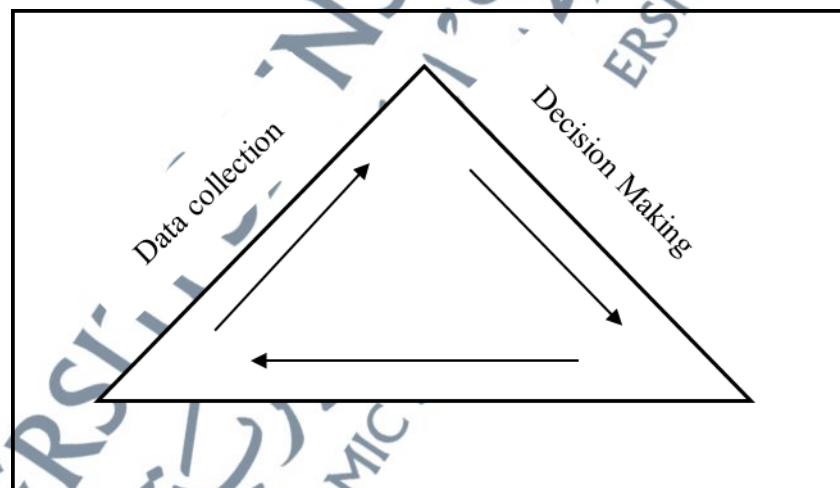
assessment, student learning, teacher-student interaction, and encouragement; and (c) an emphasis on summative rather than formative potential. AfL can be taught with students. Rather than treating children as test subjects, teachers should set them goals and engage them in learning (Britton, 2015). Students are also encouraged to take ownership of their learning and assessment. However, these three factors that hinder AfL in the classroom need to be addressed for it to be successful (Sardareh et al., 2014): (a) all teachers should complete the provided teacher training on AfL; (b) teachers need to fully understand and integrate AfL into their teaching and learning; and (c) if the online system provided is not user-friendly and does not support teachers in implementing AfL, it can lead to a negative impression as teachers need to maintain additional AfL implementations and focus on these three requirements.

Teachers need to be well versed in AfL before implementing it. To improve learning, students also need to understand AfL. In addition, the Ministry of Education should support teachers in implementing AfL without burdening them with bureaucratic tasks such as more paperwork that requires additional expertise. Since there are no criteria for assessing activities, teachers have to create their own grades (Oyinloye & Imenda, 2019). Teachers can assess their students against the CEFR. The main framework for language acquisition maps six dimensions that help teachers assess instruction. Thus, learning objectives based on the CEFR can help students achieve their goals.

2.5.3 The Assessment Process

Assessing the learner's needs is the most important goal (Black et al., 2003). Assessments should be aligned with tracking learner development, ensuring that

teachers consistently connect classroom assessment to teaching and learning processes (Popham, 2009), but this is rarely noticed. Teachers assess students by evaluating exercises, notes, test answers, self and group work, asking questions, having conversations, and observing classroom behaviour. Teachers spend much of their time evaluating and assessing (Achen & Lumpkin, 2015). Nevertheless, the focal point of a lesson should centre around the interaction between the teacher and the students, whether explicitly acknowledged or not. Assessing teaching and learning involves considering four crucial elements. Firstly, why do teachers pose questions to the class? Secondly, which content and learning objectives align with the assessment criteria or standards? Thirdly, what assessment methods and strategies can be employed to evaluate students? And lastly, how can teachers gauge the acquisition of knowledge? Refer to Figure 2.4 for guidance on the assessment process.



Source: Drummond (2003)

Figure 2.4: The Assessment Process

Figure 2.4 shows three phases of assessment. According to Drummond (2003), an assessor collects data on student performance. Professional decisions and follow-up are made based on data and assessment results. In-class assessment is done through oral

questions (Jiang, 2020). Teachers can assess students' understanding by examining their daily responses. Classroom assessment integrates assessment and evaluation to improve teaching and learning. Classroom assessment allows teachers to analyse materials, learning processes, and teaching techniques (Achen & Lumpkin, 2015).

Traditional assessment methods focus on student performance and assign grades based on classroom learning. Teachers emphasise the importance of assessing learning throughout different stages of instruction, including before, during, and after teaching sessions. Effective assessments should encompass various aspects of students' experiences, skills, abilities, performance, understanding of mechanical tasks, and personality traits (Harlen, 2007; Shepard, 2000). This holistic approach ensures a more thorough understanding of students' overall development and progress.

In the realm of learning, these criteria can serve as avenues for data collection. Techniques such as oral questioning, classroom activities, exercises, and homework assignments enable teachers to discern students' strengths and areas needing improvement (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Assessments can take place throughout the lesson without time pressure as students respond to teachers. In buildings that are difficult to review, classroom assessment can test students' skills in a more traditional, authentic, and practical way (Llosa, 2011). Assessment data improves student learning and teacher quality (Reynolds et al., 2006).

2.6 CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PRACTICES BY TEACHERS

Assessment and education are constantly evolving. In Malaysia, there has been classroom assessment since the School-Based Assessment (SBA) of 2011. In the 21st

century, classroom assessment has been improved and more closely observed to improve teaching (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Black, 2014; Barnes, Fives & Dacey, 2017; Narinasamy & Nordin, 2018). Teachers' views of assessments are changing as standardised assessments are replaced by class assessments. Teachers used to conduct class assessments, but these were short rounds of questions and answers. If Malaysian schools adopt the SBA, student learning should improve. Teachers are key to the new assessment system (Majid, 2011). Teachers can assess students and create assessments for lessons.

Giraldo (2018) suggests that language teachers make high-quality assessments to improve students' language skills. This requires language assessment skills. A Malaysian classroom assessment informs parents about their children's development. Teachers assess children's learning and share their scores with parents and authorities (Patak et al., 2016). In this way, parents learn about their children's performance. Dorin and Yasin (2019) studied teachers' preparation for classroom assessments. Knowledge, skills, and attitude determine teachers' preparation for the assessment. Students' subject knowledge was assessed using a standardised classroom assessment. In the Curriculum and Assessment Criteria document, the performance standards for all standard subjects in the primary curriculum include this level of understanding. Despite their long history, not all teachers are able to conduct classroom assessments. In the study, data was collected through a questionnaire. A total of 170 Padawan primary school teachers responded. The data from the study was analysed descriptively. The study revealed that the teachers were moderately to very well prepared for classroom assessments.

Isa et al. (2020) studied the assessment autonomy of teachers in Malaysia. The study examined the impact of assessment reforms on teacher autonomy by demographic and whether mid-year and end-of-year assessments are still used for classroom assessment. A quantitative survey of 58 Grade 1 primary teachers was conducted with a randomly selected sample. This survey showed that teacher autonomy is important and that there is a deviation from it in education; more than half of the respondents still used assessments in teaching. In conclusion, issues of teacher autonomy were explored, and school administrators, the District Education Office, the State Education Department, and the Malaysian Ministry of Education were advised on how to empower teachers and conduct impact studies.

Arumugham (2020) studied how Malaysian primary school teachers assess their students. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the classroom were the central themes. Qualitative methods were used to study teachers' assessment practices. Ten teachers were selected to study classroom assessment. The researcher interviewed and observed them during data collection. Three themes revealed how teachers integrate curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the classroom. However, the experts believe that all teachers need to be monitored and supervised so that they interpret and use classroom assessments correctly. They noted that authorities may need to address gaps to meet implementation targets.

Lee et al. (2020) examined the experiences of a teacher who worked with an elementary school teacher in an approach called Instructional Guidance Implementation of Classroom Assessment, using three components of the Cycle Impact Model. The researchers documented classroom observations, teacher assessments, and teacher

interactions. Teachers better understood assessment as learning. According to the Curriculum and Assessment Standards Document, a collaborative approach can help teachers consider multiple instructional tactics to help students understand their achievement needs. However, teachers could share more information about different teaching styles, model instruction, and create appropriate checklists to help teachers use different strategies. For effective classroom assessment, the instructional coach and the teacher need to communicate and confer.

Salleh et al. (2019) then investigated teachers' understanding of the three types of classroom assessment: assessment for learning, assessment of learning, and assessment as learning. A total of 500 teachers from Kedah completed an online cross-sectional questionnaire. The study used the Approaches to Classroom Assessment Inventory (ACAI) (DeLuca et al., 2016). Numbers and percentages were used to analyse the data. The results showed that most teachers used a classroom assessment method. Assessment was used for learning by 32.5-68.3% of the respondents and as a learning tool by 24.8-46.9%. These results show that teachers have experience with assessment in the classroom. Teachers preferred self and peer assessments (Tee et al., 2018). Teachers valued questions and discussions. In the end, the questions and discussions were mostly teacher-driven. This will not motivate children to master their studies. Students were spoon-fed and could not think critically. Teachers cannot assess students' performance if they do not stimulate thinking and discuss learning objectives. However, basic classroom assessment was well established.

Teachers expressed that they are burdened with an extensive workload. The inability of teachers to formulate and implement the test specification unit (JSU) poses

obstacles to the creation of assessment tasks (Wilson & Narasuman, 2020). Most teachers simply copy questions from previous test question books (Ali, 2006; Yahya et al., 2020). Utilising a test specification table (JSU) to ensure the quality and appropriateness of assessment questions derived from teachers' materials has been advocated as a beneficial practice (Ali, 2003). Most teachers are against school reforms (Avidov-Ungar & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2021). Teachers have oversight of curriculum, administration, and student assessment. Effective innovations, according to Ghavifekr et al. (2016), require teachers' attitudes and beliefs. This is critical to how teachers view innovation and its effectiveness as a learning and teaching tool for students. Lesson analysis helps teachers assess student learning and change their teaching style (Vlachou, 2018). Teachers then show parents how lesson assessment can be another way to share student achievement (Vlachou, 2018). Teachers evaluate their teaching based on student performance.

In addition, by evaluating lessons, teachers learn how much knowledge students have about what they are learning. According to a study, some teachers' methods are ineffective (Yahya et al., 2020). Teachers reused old questions, which reduced the authenticity of the questions (Kelly et al., 2018). Therefore, the findings of this study were to assess writing instruction using the CEFR in a Malaysian setting. Teachers need more theory and practise. Most of the above studies show that teachers use assessments in teaching and learning. They require additional training in assessment in teaching and learning. Thus, teachers need guidance to help students achieve their learning goals.

Table 2.7: Literature Matrix

No	Author & Year	Sampling/ Participant	Methodology	Aim	Finding
1.	Bolourchi & Soleimani (2021)	48 intermediate EFL learners	a quasi-experimental design including pre-test, treatment, and post-test	to assess the students' overall writing performance before and after the peer feedback sessions.	The findings indicated that the anxiety level of the experimental group receiving peer feedback decreased to a significant extent.
2.	Abrar, Failasofah, Fajaryani & Masbironotni. (2016).	M. N. 72 second-year EFL student teachers at the English teacher education program	A close-ended questionnaire	to investigate challenges in writing among EFL students at the English teacher education program.	Students' lack of motivation in writing is not merely due to behavioral issues; rather, it often stems from feelings of autonomy and perceived complexity of writing tasks.
3.	Gündogmus (2018)	51 primary school teachers	Semi-structured interviews	to identify the difficulties that primary school teachers experience in the primary reading and writing instruction.	Insufficient expertise in teaching writing poses yet another challenge for teachers, particularly those new to the profession.
4.	Mahmud (2018)	26 <i>Majlis Perwakilan Pelajar</i> (MPP) and 29 Peer Counsellors (<i>Pembantu Rakan Siswa</i>) (PRS)	It utilized a free online CEFR Test that was provided by the British Council at their website.	to gauge and compare the levels of English vocabulary and grammar scored by two student representative groups in a Malaysian polytechnic in accordance with the levels set by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).	All students met the International English Standard at target B1 and B2 levels. The effective utilisation of CEFR by students suggests its potential to enhance teaching practices.

Table 2.7, continued

No	Author & Year	Sampling/ Participant	Methodology	Aim	Finding
5.	Sidhu, G.K., Sarjit, K. & Lee Jia Chi (2018)	teachers in five randomly selected schools located in Damansara	Data were collected via a three-pronged procedure involving surveys, interviews, and document analysis from TESL	to investigate the implementation of the CEFR-aligned SBA in the primary ESL classroom	The implementation of SBA left much to be desired and was far from formative assessment. Though teachers expressed rather positive opinions on SBA, they lacked a full understanding of the method and admitted possessing a limited knowledge of the revised CEFR-aligned ESL curriculum altogether. Teachers provided little or no constructive feedback on assignments, and learners were not encouraged to reflect on assignments. There was little evidence of peer and self-assessment required for developing autonomous learners. Teachers cited time constraints, classroom enrolment, heavy workload, and lack of training as their main challenges against the effective implementation of the CEFR-aligned SBA.
6.	Baldwin, R. & Britt-Marie Apelgren, B.M, (2018)	30 higher education credit (HEC) courses within the teacher education programme.	60 hours of recorded teacher talk in 34 planning meetings and in written and verbal discussions	to discuss reaction to the introduction of CEFR by teacher educators as well as the influence on teacher assessment practice in courses for prospective teachers of English as a foreign language.	The adoption of the CEFR descriptors was contested and had a minimal influence on assessment practice. The aim of the paper is to explore possible reasons for the lack of influence, something that was not developed fully in the original case study

Table 2.7, continued

No	Author & Year	Sampling/ Participant	Methodology	Aim	Finding
7	Le, T.T.H. (2018)	Eight general English (GE) teachers who teach non-English major students at Hue University participated	Semi-structure in-depth interviews	to explore the impacts of the CEFR-aligned learning outcomes implementation on assessment practice for non-English major students at Hue University.	GE teachers modified the assessment activities in such a way that can aid their non-English major students achieve the required learning outcomes. The strong impact of the CEFR-aligned outcomes on the assessment practice could be seen in the appearance of CEFR aligned tests and the focus on students' self and peer assessments.
8.	Uri, M. & Abd Aziz, F. (2018)	331 secondary teachers.	English school Questionnaires	to investigate English teachers and Ministry of Education officials' views on the implementation of CEFR in Malaysia	Most of the teachers had very limited knowledge, minimum exposure and low level of awareness about CEFR.
9.	Darmi, R., Mat Saad, N. S., Abdullah, N., Puteh-Behak, F. Zakaria, Z. A. & Adnan, J.N.I (2017)	Twenty-five English language teachers	English Survey	to understand English language teachers' views on the English language proficiency courses in a local university, in Malaysia, based on CEFR scales	There are variations in teachers' views towards students' performance in English language proficiency courses, and this may not necessarily fit into the CEFR standards targeted for university learners, which is at Band 2 of CEFR global scale

Table 2.7, continued

No	Author & Year	Sampling/ Participant	Methodology	Aim	Finding
10.	Azly, N. & Akmar, A. M. K (2019)	30 teachers	Questionnaires	to identify the variety of assessment tools used by Malaysian ESL teachers that correspond to the current CEFR-aligned syllabus in their ESL classroom and their frequency of use	The majority of the ESL teachers have difficulty designing CEFR-aligned assessments based on the descriptors even after it has been implemented for two years but are able to frequently conduct various assessment activities using conventional tools such as group discussions, using i-Think maps, mind mapping and oral quizzes. Unsurprisingly, almost all of the respondents agreed to always rely on textbook exercises as their main tool to assess their students.
11.	Tosun, F. Ü., & Glover, P. (2020)	Eight teachers	Interview	to discuss the knowledge and use of the CEFR by a group of teachers. Eight teachers were interviewed about the CEFR and carried out an assessment task	teachers knew of the CEFR, had a positive view of its contribution to English Language teaching in Turkey, used CEFR-related practices such as self-assessment in class and could use CEFR tables to successfully assess sample performances. On the other hand, findings also show that the teachers had received little or no training about the CEFR, they had difficulty in applying the CEFR to their classroom assessment practices and they showed that they have only a vague idea of the CEFR proficiency levels for assessment

Table 2.7, continued

No	Author & Year	Sampling/ Participant	Methodology	Aim	Finding
12.	Isa, A. M., Mydin, A-A., & Abdullah, A. G. K. (2020)	10 studies	A systematic literature review was performed using four phases in Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA)	to collect and analyse previous studies on SBM practice in Malaysia to obtain an overview of the current form of management.	SBM implementation in Malaysia was at a moderate level and had used a combination of two models, administrative-control SBM and professional-control SBM.
13.	Tee, Y.M., Samuel, M., Norjuharuddeen, M.N., Renuka, V.S. & Hutkemri (2018)	24 secondary schools from across the country. 140 teachers.	Video recording as a form of observation.	to describe an overview of classroom practice in Malaysia, to provide essential empirical data to inform discussions in one of the most important areas in education, what happens in the classroom in relation to national aspirations, policies and practices	Classroom practice was largely the same throughout the country and lacked the kinds of activities widely associated with creating engaging and thinking classrooms.

The literature matrix provides a diverse range of studies focusing on English language education, particularly through the lens of CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) and its implementation in various contexts. Several studies highlight the challenges faced by teachers and students, such as limited knowledge of CEFR, lack of training, and difficulties in implementing CEFR-aligned assessments. Findings indicate that while CEFR has potential benefits, like reducing student anxiety and improving self-assessment, many teachers struggle with its application due to insufficient resources, time constraints, and limited exposure. Additionally, the literature explores the influence of peer feedback on writing, the role of motivation, and broader educational management practices in Malaysia. Overall, the matrix underscores the complexity of educational reforms and the need for more robust training and support for teachers.

2.7 SUMMARY

In conclusion, the review of theories and models concerning writing skills assessment aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) endeavours to explain the fundamental concepts and principles that inform this research. Consequently, the researcher has examined key considerations pertaining to theoretical frameworks, writing models, and the practical implementation of the CEFR within English as a Second Language (ESL) pedagogy. Moreover, this chapter provides a comprehensive synthesis of literature pertaining to classroom assessment practices and the utilisation of the CEFR framework, thus establishing a coherent foundation for the entire study. Previous studies, both nationally and internationally, have also served as valuable points of reference and inspiration for the present investigation. The subsequent chapter describes the methodology employed in this study.