



The Perception of the Role of Post-Lesson Discussion in the Professional Development of Omani English Teachers

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of Omani senior English teachers and teachers towards the role of post-lesson discussion in developing teachers. The study findings illustrated that both SETs and teachers hold a positive attitude towards the importance of feedback in developing effective teachers and that cooperation governs the relationship between them during feedback sessions. Also teachers play an active role in the lesson discussion and they themselves decide on future goals. Indeed; all participants think that feedback is useful for their development; hence – like SETs – they make valuable suggestions about making post-lesson discussion more beneficial and more effective.

Keywords: Senior English teachers, post-lesson discussion, feedback sessions, Oman.

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1. Introduction

It is part of our human nature to change and develop as we proceed in life. Likewise, teachers need change and professional development [1], as they advance in their career. Supervision can lead this development and make it a conscious process through visits and PLD during feedback sessions. Thus, post-lesson discussion (PLD) is a key factor in the development of any educational system as a whole and in particular for the professional development (PD) of practising teachers, hence a great importance should be given to it. It is a mixture of discussion and giving feedback on a performed lesson as a way to improve teaching as well as develop teachers professionally. In the Omani context, PLD plays an important role and is regarded as one of the essential tools to develop the teachers professionally and enables them to critically think on their teaching through reflecting upon their performance, which in turn might help develop their teaching practice. However; in spite of the importance of PLD, some Omani teachers, especially the novice ones, view it merely as a way to justify to the observer (supervisors or Senior English teachers) their methods, decisions taken, and materials used in the classroom while teaching without taking into consideration that it is a means for PD. This attitude is in fact understood as the role of these agents is not merely improving teachers'

practice but more practically controlling them and seeing whether they are following the set curriculum or not.

Actually, there are few studies that have been conducted in the English language teaching (ELT) field in the Omani context [2] about this issue and most of them focus on PLD from supervisors' points of view and state the importance of PLD. This current study will add to the field of education— particularly in the Omani context— by making a contribution to highlight the importance of PLD in developing the Omani teachers professionally. So, this study aims to carry out an investigation about the Senior English teachers' (SETs') and teachers' perceptions of PLD and its effectiveness in the professional development of teachers within the Omani context of ELT.

However, there are only few Omani researcher who has investigated this area. A study by [3] revealed that SETs talk more than the teachers in PLD and the talk tends to be more directive than collaborative and with minimum criticism. Another study was done by [2] and this revealed a positive attitude toward PLD that was perceived as beneficial. Further research was done by [4] who concluded that supervisors do not really engage in beneficial PLD with teachers, rather they suffice themselves with merely writing reports.

This current study, complementing all the previous ones, will aim to investigate the perceptions of the teachers of the role of PLD in the professional development of Omani English teachers. As such, the study's focus questions are:

- 1- What are the perceptions of teachers towards the role of PLD in their development?
- 2- What are the perceptions of senior teachers towards PLD as a professional development tool?
- 3- How do teachers respond to the PLD?
- 4- What suggestions and changes would teachers and SETs like to see in the PLD process?

This research is structured as follow. The next section will firstly set a background for the study in which some information about ELT in Oman as well as the reform of the education system, the roles of teachers in the reform, the SETs' roles and the rationale for this study are argued. Secondly, it states a literature review related to the topic, discussing different views. Thirdly, the research design and findings are discussed. Then, the study draws conclusions about the perceptions of PLD among both SETs and teachers and how they see that it affects the teachers' PD. This will lead into a section in which implications for future practice are outlined.

2. The Study Context

English has an important role in Oman; it is recognised as a tool for Omanisation, modernisation, and getting a good job [5]. It is also a tool of transition [6] as well as a means of continued development [7]. Therefore, there has been a tremendous investment in ELT and it was "placed at the heart of [Oman's] educational planning" [6] as it is seen the only tool of national development since it is the language of science, technology, business, and international communication. With regard to the teaching approach adopted with the reform of education system in Oman, it is communicative and naturalistic. This requires a high level of communicative competence from the part of teachers.

With the educational reform in Oman "which was characterised by curriculum renewal, teacher development and infrastructure growth" [8], teachers are expected to be "critical reflectors, needs analysts, competent language users and professionals, skilled and autonomous decision makers" [5]. For this reason, there have been a lot of "in-service training sessions to help teachers update their continuing development in theoretical, methodological and curriculum development to allow them to reflect on all aspects of their work" [6]. Within this reform, English teaching in Oman is actually no longer "teacher-centred" as [6] claims; indeed with the reform of the educational system in Oman the whole curriculum has become more "learner-centred" and it caters for all the learner's needs [8]. Indeed, "[t]eacher development programmes supported the evolution of the new curriculum" [8]. These include the post-lesson discussions (PLDs), as part of the observation process, which are crucial in improving teachers practice and making them critical autonomous practitioners.

Since 1995 and as part of the educational reform in Oman, the Ministry of Education "embarked on a human

resource development programme" [9] that aims at upgrading the diploma-holding teachers. Within this programme, the project of BA (TESOL) was launched in collaboration with the University of Leeds "to develop a well-qualified, well-trained, well-supported and well-informed staff" [10]. This has enabled more than 800 teachers to obtain a BA in TESOL studies from 1999 to 2009 [11]. These teachers could possess professional skills, acquire the ability to carry out investigations and analyse their students' needs. This commitment of the Ministry does not stop at this achievement; continuous development programmes such as workshops, training days, seminars and annual conferences are constantly held at the level of Supervision Departments and Directorates General of Education throughout the Sultanate to update teachers' knowledge and equip them with new skills that would serve the change in the curriculum. To enhance this aim, SETs were also given the chance to attend training courses held by the Supervision Department in each region. Moreover, new preparation books were devised which contain, along with the lesson preparation sections, a Reflection section where teachers are supposed to write their reflections about their taught lessons.

Although there has been a mixture of expatriate teachers from different countries with different pedagogical backgrounds, nowadays more and more Omani teachers have been entering to the field and replacing these expatriates in response to the Omanisation policy. However, different cohorts of Omani teachers have proven to suffer from a lack of linguistic and communicative competence [5] that would hinder them from implementing the aims of the reform policy. What is more, I would largely share [6] view that these teachers also need to update their knowledge and keep abreast of new developments and reform. Therefore, it is essential that an efficient professional programme should be adopted to develop these teachers and improve their performance in their classes in an attempt to make it closer to the aspirations of the Ministry's reform aims; hence the importance of supervision and post-lesson discussion (PLD) since supervisors and assistants (SETs) are the agents who can take care of the implementation of the reform.

In addition to teaching students in their classes, SETs are gradually gaining ground to play a crucial role in the reform of the educational system in Oman. Indeed, besides seeing whether the teacher is implementing the curriculum or not, SETs are placed in a position to monitor and help teachers develop their performance inside and outside the classroom [8]. They offer a steady and continuous support to every single teacher essentially through PLD with the aim of encouraging them to reflect about their own teaching and consequently help them develop professionally.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Professional development: importance the observer's/supervisor's role

[12] stated that "[t]eacher development is a term used in the literature to describe a process of continual intellectual,

experiential, and attitudinal growth of teachers.” Thus, it is evident that PD is an achievement that teachers can reach throughout their career through reflective practice of their job. [12] put forward a variety of reasons for seeking opportunities of PD and they assert that the most important reason is the need to acquire new knowledge and skills, to change and to empower one’s self. They declare that this PD can occur at the individual level when teachers themselves look for opportunities to develop and progress either working alone (writing journals, teaching reflectively, making portfolios) or in collaboration with some colleagues (exchange of journals, peer visits, discussions, team teaching ...etc). PD can also take place through development programmes devised by institutions. Thus, [13] emphasises the necessity of teacher development programmes to reach a “balance between theory and practice”. [14] adds that “a primary goal for inservice teacher education is to give teachers ways of exploring their own classrooms”. Doing this would indeed produce reflective teachers who can deal creatively with different situations in their classes [15]. This aim of obtaining reflective and creative teachers who can view a situation from a variety of angles and provide various alternative solutions can certainly be achieved after observations and PLD sessions. Therefore, teacher educators should bare this in mind when they observe and discuss teachers’ lessons in the PLD sessions. Thus, it is imperative to see the significance of observation for PD. To do this, I will define observation and clarify its different aims and see how supervisors can play a crucial role in PD. This is the content of the next section.

According to [16] observation has many meanings other than to see and in the field of education it is the fact of “obtaining, and often recording, what we notice in order to support the elaboration of starting points for further work”. Thus, he categorises four purposes for observation: “for professional development, for training, for evaluation, and for research”. However, Bailey and others restrict observation into two broad types: judgmental or developmental. [17]. [18] also claims that observation is generally done to help the teacher with something he/she wants to work on or something that somebody else wants him/her to work on. It is also done to keep the teacher ‘policed’, or to keep him/her improving. So, it is evident that observation is mainly concerned with either developing teachers or keeping an eye upon them.

[19] indicates that “[c]lassroom observations generally form a part of any teacher training programme, whether initial training or in-service training.” This means that the teachers are expected to put into practice what they have learnt on their course and to implement what they have been told to do. Thus, in these training programmes, the supervisor’s role is – as [19] states it – to judge whether teachers are carrying out what they have been taught properly or not. This implies that we can teach and learn teaching pedagogy and that telling the teachers that what they are doing is right or wrong will ultimately lead to a better teaching behaviour.

Yet, [19] criticises this general tendency and argues that classroom visits “should as far as possible be

developmental rather than judgemental”; that is they should allow teachers the chance to build their own judgements about their teaching and sharpen their awareness of what happens in their classrooms. As such, these visits should aim at having the teacher and educator or supervisor work together to solve classroom problems and hence the teacher can continue to learn and develop [19].

In the same line of thought, [19]. [20] states that a supervisor is “anyone who has ... the duty of monitoring and improving the quality of teaching done by other colleagues in an educational situation” (quoted in [17]). [21] – also quoted in [17]) puts it clearly that “language teacher supervision is an ongoing process of teacher education in which the supervisor observes what goes on in the teacher’s classroom with an eye toward the goal of improved instruction”. In this way, supervision appears to be plainly concerned with PD.

Yet, as [17] indicates (quotation above), that teacher supervision is not concerned only with guiding language teachers to reach their full potential and the supervisor is not merely a “teacher developer”. It also incorporates other administrative responsibilities like guaranteeing that teachers stick to program policy, and even firing employees if needed. This view actually looks more realistic; nevertheless, I still think that the supervisor and especially the SET in our case should play a more developmental role than judgemental.

On the benefits of supervision, [22] claims that it provides the teacher with the chance to complain about what irritates him/her. She adds that “it is really a way of giving perspective” as it encourages the teacher to reflect and to learn to do his/her best and as such become wiser. This can be largely true, but how can this be achieved? To answer this question we will look below at the importance of PLD for observation/supervision and see how teachers and teacher educators perceive it.

3.2. PLD and supervision

PLD, also called feedback, debriefing, or supervisory conference, is “talk that takes place after lesson observation” [23]. It usually involves a trainer, a teacher educator, a supervisor (or a SET as representative of supervisor in Omani context) and a student teacher or a practicing teacher. According to [22] supervision means to have a time and a place to merely talk about some of what the teacher is doing at work “in confidentiality with someone who is well-informed.” And, he clarifies that the whole purpose behind supervision is to augment how the teacher does his/her work and how he/she enjoys it. This, of course, can be reached through PLD. From the same perspective, [24] sees that if supervision is “carried out positively and sensitively ..., it can be a supportive, rewarding, even enjoyable experience for both teacher and observer”. He adds that what is important in the observation process is not what the observer observes but rather the way he/she gives his/her feedback (researcher emphasis). Therefore, PLD is extremely crucial for the observation process and consequently for PD as it is

through it that teachers can be made aware of their practice. Hence, it is necessary to determine the aims of PLD, which is the content of the following section.

From the literature cited above, it is clear that the aims of PLD are certainly related to the aims of observation. So, the aims of PLD largely depend on the aim of the visit; whether it is for evaluating the teacher or providing help. Yet, for the SET in the Omani context, the aim is actually a combination of seeing whether the teacher is implementing the curriculum or not and to put him/her on the right path. This means that the SET as an educator has a crucial developmental role in the teachers' careers [20], and [21]. Admitting this fact, how feedback can be given?

[18] stated that anyone involved in the teaching field can interpret a taught lesson and she claims that the interpretation of a lesson "can be done aloud, silently, in written or taped form". That said it remains to see the appropriate time for carrying out PLD. Furthermore, [18] claims that a discussion on taught lessons "can be useful" at any time whether it is before the lesson, during the lesson, immediately after the lesson, or "well after the lesson". Immediate PLD is the discussion that occurs soon after the lesson finishes. On the other hand, delayed PLD means a discussion that takes place within 24 hours at maximum after the lesson delivery [23]. [25] suggests that delayed PLD, which he prefers to describe as "post-paration" as opposed to "preparation", would allow for better reflection and prevent the superficiality of "fast reactors". As well, it would provide a good chance where "feedback really does become a two-way process" as the teacher is given an opportunity to reflect upon his/her teaching and therefore to think critically and assess his/her teaching practice, something which would ultimately contribute to his/her own professional development. In that way, teachers can enhance their performance and their insights to teaching. In effect, teachers "may find it difficult to articulate their impressions instantaneously without time for reflection and rehearsal" (p.19). In the same line of thought, [23] see that delayed PLD would allow teachers enough time to think deeply about their lessons and evaluate their performance more reasonably.

Yet, immediate PLD, in researcher view, remains more adequate and practical for SETs and teachers as it is usually difficult to arrange for a meeting on another day due to the big load of work each has. In addition, immediate feedback will be preferred if people risk forgetting details of the observed lesson.

Now that the researcher has tackled the issue of PLD and stated its importance for supervision and PD, let's now see how teacher educators (or SETs) and teachers perceive PLD. This is the topic of the next section.

3.2.1. Teacher educators' and teachers' perceptions of PLD

Teacher educators are "often viewed as authorities who are expected to prescribe what teachers should do to be effective" [26] to the point, [17] quotes [27] to say that educational supervisors "serve as liaisons to get people into contact with resource people who can help". That is, they try to help teachers as far as possible by solving their

problems, giving appropriate suggestions, and recommending ideas. Yet; this view, as Bailey sees, is far too humane; indeed these liaison people such as supervisors or SETs have other more negative administrative roles as they carry out the orders of higher administrators. As such some of them may have a tendency towards exercising authority and being more directive than cooperative.

[21] differentiates between six models for observation: "(1) directive, (2) alternative, (3) collaborative, (4) nondirective, (5) creative, and (6) self-help—explorative". And, he clarifies that the first model is the traditional one that has been used by the teacher educators whereas the remaining five models- which are known as cooperative - represent models that can be used instead [28]. Indeed, the directive type of interaction is quite rejected by most teachers and it often leaves a lot of discomfort among all parties (teachers and supervisors).

[29], from his part, indicates that the usual directive relation should be changed into a method of giving alternatives of techniques and strategies from which the student teacher or the teacher can choose without feeling that the educator is preferring or imposing one. [29] states that by giving alternatives we adhere to the concept of 'teacher development' as we help the teacher think independently. For [29], this is opposed to 'teacher training' as the latter means only teaching student teachers how to teach.

It is usually the case in most contexts neither experienced teachers "do not want to be told how to teach" [26] nor to be frequently visited as they feel that they have taught enough to be able to know what to do. However, I would largely reject this attitude as it is too unrealistic; indeed, any one needs to be observed, discussed about his/her options, and his/her views should be shared with others for the benefit of all parties involved in the teaching/learning process [24]. Almost all sources mentioned above suggest that trainee teachers or new comers to the teaching field need pre-/in-service training and certainly some kind of feedback. However, all the literature sources that I consulted agree that these novice or future teachers hate much criticism and a lot of guidance and directivity. Rather, they tend to feel at ease with the human school of training [27] and cooperative relations that believe in the constructivist approach which sees individuals as social beings with their own thoughts and beliefs and who interact with their environment rather than merely implement theories they learn from educators [1].

3.2.2. Problems associated with observation and PLD

The literature concerned with the issue of PLD reveals a lot of problems associated with supervision and PLD. [30] reveals three major problems: (1) much of the observation is "unsystematic and subjective", (2) most observation is done to evaluate the teacher, and (3) PLD meetings tend to focus on the teacher's behaviour rather than on developing his/her skills. Due to these factors, PLD tends to be impressionistic and supervisors see themselves as standards; as a result, teachers see them as a threat and

become more defensive, which may hinder positive feedback. [31] also see that the lack of a clear objective framework for giving feedback makes the session “haphazard criticism” which personalise and degrade what should normally be a professional analysis. This in turn leads teachers to be over-defensive and frustrated while the trainer or observer ‘impotent’ [31]. Having tackled all the above points related to PLD, its importance for supervision and PD, and the problems faced in feedback sessions, it remains now to see how can PLD sessions be more successful; this is what I am going to speak about in the section below.

3.2.3. How can we make PLD more acceptable and effective?

Specialists suggest a lot of ways to reach more effective PLD sessions. For example, [30] suggests a good alternative for conducting a PLD session. He proposes that such a meeting should be composed of four phases which are climate-setting, review, problem-solving, and finally goal-setting (see appendix 1 for more details). Moreover, he preaches trainers, and implicitly all teacher educators, to be positive in nature and to ‘catch people doing something right’, rather than always trying to ‘catch people doing something wrong’. In this context, [30] admits that much is more needed to be done in training senior teachers. In particular, they would benefit from the type of supervisory-skills training courses provided for other supervisors; courses in time management, oral presentation skills, and supervisory techniques like ‘coaching’ (particularly important in the observation process) certainly seem as relevant to supervisors of teachers as they are to supervisors elsewhere. And, he relates to a great extent the improvements in education and training to the improvements in the quality and effectiveness of teacher supervision.

In the same way, [20] suggest four stages for the PLD session: (1) establishing the facts, that is seeing what happened, (2) discussing the objectives and achievements, (3) generating alternatives (what else could have been done?) and (4) self-evaluation: (what have the teacher learned?). Supporting this view, [31] strongly claim that “the only way to proceed is to provide a structured, largely depersonalised approach with the trainer leading the session in a clear, planned and constructive way”. Moreover, [32] suggests a change in the focus of observation. He sees that instead of focusing on the identification of the techniques and strategies experienced teachers employ it would be better to use observation to collect information that can be used to develop a deeper understanding of how and why teachers teach in a way or another and the different ways teachers present their lessons. Doing this will enable an ongoing guidance of language teachers which is labelled by [33] as “clinical supervision”

More importantly, various writers agree on a new type of language that should prevail during the PLD sessions which would make the supervisory dialogue more fruitful (see for example [20], [18] calls for fruitful feedback and a language that is different from that of a taxi driver: ‘I

wouldn’t really start from here!’ [22] also agrees that good language used in the PLD session would make it very fruitful and welcome. Language used should not “set up a kind of hierarchy in the supervision”. Houston also insists that confidentiality is essential. Moreover, she encourages the idea of reflection and self-critique quoting [42]’s words: ‘internal supervisor’ (p.15). Still, [1] clarifies and reminds that teachers are “unique individuals, with their own personalities, idiosyncrasies, hopes and concerns” and he assures that they have beliefs, attitudes and feelings towards their work. He adds that all of these elements change over time, which means that professional development is a normal process along one’s career; it only needs to be framed and directed towards the right path by more experienced people and here appears the role of SETs and teacher educators. [1] raises the attention that teachers are social beings that interact with their learners and the curriculum they teach, which means that they should not be all treated in a unique and static way. Again, [1] insists on the fact that teachers come to the field with an already-possessed professional knowledge that should be respected. Therefore, to use the words of [1] there should be a “social constructivist, collective orientation” in the relationship between the SET and teachers in order to “develop a sense of what might be called a community of learning” that is characterised by mutual trust and cooperation rather than authority and directivity. To him, SETs, as teacher educators, need to create a “safe environment characterised by trust, patience, support and encouragement” in which teachers can “talk frankly about their professional practice, or to experiment with teaching ideas.” [1].

To this view, [34] inserts the ‘individual worth of the person’ and the ‘belief in person centeredness’ which would increase feelings of ‘respect, empathy and honesty’ towards the other person. Consequently, feedback sessions, as [35] suggests, “don’t have to be a ritual, or strenuous or harrowing”. Instead, they should be “positive, useful, humane, and ... varied.” This leads to say that SETs should refrain from playing the role of knowing-all and trying always to highlight the weaknesses of the teachers giving them advice and telling them what to do. Instead, they should pave the ground for the teachers to speak about their weaknesses themselves and think why things do not go as wished. The SETs also should make “supportive comments” [36] on the strong aspects of the teacher’s practice. Indeed, giving teachers “very clear breakdowns of ‘what they should have done’ is actually demotivating and undermines this safe environment” [36] in which teachers can feel free to think retrospectively about their teaching. Therefore, SETs should try to push forward the teacher’s ability to reflect deeply on his lesson through thought-directing questions or asking for clarifications. To this view, [30] says that the focus of classroom observation needs to shift more towards colleagues working together and towards teacher development rather than teacher evaluation in order to improve the quality of instruction.

Finally, it should be clearly stated that for a systematic and objective approach to observation to be applied there

should be a level of expertise, effort, and time [30]. Moreover, the classroom observer should not behave as a judge and a threat but as a guide and mentor and at the same time he/she should acknowledge and respect the teacher's experience, discuss alternative approaches, and the need to avoid being too negative [30]. In the end of this literature review, it is important to mention that almost all the literature that dealt with the issue of PLD have spoken about teachers who are actually under training not practising teachers. This may indeed affect their engagement, attitudes and reactions; something which may largely differ from those of experienced teachers. This is what the researcher unveiled as he proceed in analysing the data collected from a sample of teachers in various schools in Muscat region in the Sultanate of Oman, which the researcher discussed.

4. Research Design

The study is based on questionnaires as according to according to [37], questionnaires are "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" as quoted in [38]. This actually represents what the study did to achieve the research questions. The questionnaires was divided into two sections; both open ended questions and multiple choice questions from which respondents can choose. Thus, mixed method is employed in the present study. Both quantitative and qualitative approach are used in this study.

4.1. Method

In the present study questionnaires are used to collect the three types of data that a questionnaire can yield about the respondent: factual, behavioural, and attitudinal (appendices 2 and 3). Indeed the questionnaire was divided into 3 parts: part 1 consists of some classification questions that elaborate some information about the respondents. As for part 2, it contains some questions that deal with the respondents' personal history relating to the topic of researcher concern. Part 3 deals with the attitudes of the respondents towards the topic that I am studying (PLD in Omani context). Thus, the questionnaires I used provide both quantitative and qualitative data; they provide quantitative data since they contain a variety of response options from which the respondent can choose and we can collect quantities of data as well as some statistics. The questionnaires I devised also provide some qualitative data where I asked some open-ended questions and left the respondents free to answer the way they believe right, something which may compensate for the absence of interviews in the study. So, the study is both statistical and interpretive [39].

4.2. The participants and procedures

The participants can be considered typical as they represent various age groups with various experience ranges and from both sexes. They are 10 SETs and 20 teachers who teach in various male and female schools in Muscat region. All of them teach in the state school

system in Cycle Two of basic education and the secondary level. As such, they can be considered as representatives of Muscat region. These SETs and teachers received the questionnaires and were asked to tick in a box if they accept to participate in the study. These teachers were contacted through SETs and teachers in the area with whom the researcher has contacts.

The study used two questionnaires for this study: one for SETs and another for teachers. These questionnaires were modified from [40] questionnaire to suit this study and they were piloted with SETs and supervisors whom the researcher contacted as well as university colleagues and one of the researcher's professor who suggested some adjustments to the questions formation which the researcher took into consideration. Then, the researcher contacted some SETs and teachers whom they already know and asked them to provide help to carry on the study; researcher asked them to speak to other teachers and SETs of their schools and other schools. When the researcher obtained their agreement to help, the questionnaires were sent via email to potential participants in Muscat region directly or via other colleagues and the researcher kept reminding them now and then and urging them to take it seriously for the sake of objectivity and reliability of the study. It took me about two weeks to get agreement to participate in the study. Then, the researcher spent two other weeks collecting data and fortunately all the responses of the 10 SETs and 20 teachers who participated in the study were usable. When finished, the researcher analyzed and presented the quantitative data collected by the questionnaire in table form according to frequency [41]; the questionnaire's qualitative data were analyzed by identifying themes and categorizing the data accordingly [14]; [39]. Typical of the qualitative study, the study used a descriptive language based on the statistics the researcher obtained from the analysis. As for categories, they actually emerged from the data which the researcher coded from the open-ended questions as well as the option-giving questions.

4.3 Research issues

As indicated from the title of this research, the study is concerned with a general research issue namely the perceptions of the SETs and teachers of PLD sessions and their role in PD within the Omani context of ELT. So, as the title presupposes, the study is essentially qualitative and its aim is to draw general conclusions from the present study's questions which the study posed. To achieve this, the study used both option-giving questions and open-ended questions to assure variety of data that the researcher would gather. After data has been gathered, the researcher just interpreted it to draw general conclusions without any prior judgement or intervention. So, typical to qualitative studies, it can be concluded that the present study is inductive [39].

While the study has been carried out, the researcher carefully recorded and analyzed all of the data and presented it in a fair and unbiased manner, thus this research claims the credibility for this study which also responds to the idea of transferability as the findings can

be applied to other contexts in Oman; indeed, the researcher has provided a complete description of the participants (the researcher has used the first names of SETs and teachers: appendix 4), the context and the steps of the study so that “readers can determine to what extent the findings might be applicable” [39]. Furthermore, this study is reliable as this study provided comprehensive details about the procedures and organised data in an easily usable way.

Finally, researcher has kept in line with the ethical issues; the researcher has informed the participants that it is optional for them to answer the questionnaire and that once they do all their information and replies will be kept in high secrecy and confidentiality. Indeed, under no condition will anyone access them as they are stored in the researcher’s personal computer and the researcher got rid of them as soon as they complete the present study. In addition, no names of participants or schools mentioned inside the text of this study nor the study findings revealed to schools.

5. Analysis, Results and Discussion

In presenting the results to these research questions, this study handled the answers to both questionnaires simultaneously then conclusions have been drawn. In this section, this study discuss the results of the questions that relate to type, time, duration and aims of feedback in both SETs’ and teachers’ questionnaires. This section was divided into two main parts: part one discuss the type, time and duration of feedback under the subheading ‘practicalities’ and part two deal with the aims of feedback.

5.2.1 Practicalities

The following two tables show the results for the first 4 questions in the SETs’ questionnaire whose respondents were 10, and 2.5 in the teachers’ questionnaire whose respondents were 20. These results are analysed and discussed as follow (see Table 1 and 2).

Table 1: Questionnaire Results for SETs: Practicalities

Questions	Answers’ options	Respondents’ answers
1.1. When you observe a teacher teaching a lesson, what kind of feedback do you give?	Only oral feedback	-
	Only written feedback	-
	Oral and written	10
	No feedback	-
1.2. When do you give feedback?	Immediately after the observed lesson	6
	Later the same day	4
	The next day	-
	Later than this	-
1.3. If you give oral feedback, approximately how long does the feedback session last for?	Less than 15 minutes	5
	15-30 minutes	5
	30-60 minutes	-
	More than 60 minutes	-
	I don’t give oral feedback	-
1.4. If you give written feedback, what form does it take?	A checklist of criteria	-
	A formal, written report	10
	Informal written notes about the lesson	-
	A checklist of criteria and written comments	-
	Other form	-
	I don’t give written feedback	-

Table 2: Questionnaire Results for Teachers: Practicalities

Questions	Answers' options	Respondents' answers
2.2. When a senior teacher observes you teaching, what kind of feedback do you receive?	Only oral feedback	-
	Only written feedback	-
	Oral and written	20
	No feedback	-
2.3. When do you receive feedback?	Immediately after the observed lesson	8
	Later the same day	12
	The next day	-
	Later than this	-
2.4. If you receive oral feedback, approximately how long the feedback session last for?	Less than 15 minutes	11
	15-30 minutes	7
	30-60 minutes	2
	More than 60 minutes	-
	I don't receive feedback	-
2.5. If you receive written feedback, what kind of form does it take?	A checklist of criteria	-
	A formal, written report	20
	Informal written notes about the lesson	-
	A checklist of criteria and written comments	-
	Some other form	-
	I don't receive feedback	-

5.2.1.1 Type of feedback

As the figures in the two tables above indicate, all SETs said that they give both oral and written feedback and they added that the written feedback takes the form of a formal, written report. This is totally consistent with the teachers' response (see appendices 6 and 9 for all statistics of quantitative data). This means that a kind of talk really occurs in which there may happen an exchange of ideas from which culminates a report to be written. This is actually typical to what usually happens in schools (the researcher own experience) and to the Ministry's English Department's directions. At the same time, the written feedback comes in the form of reports which is quite normal as this is recommended by the Ministry itself. However, these reports are usually general and only few points are mentioned in detail. A good alternative - which was also suggested by some respondents - would be the checklist form that would focus on different aspects of the teaching process.

5.2.1.2 Immediate or delayed?

All SETs who answered the questionnaire claimed they give immediate feedback: above half of them said they give feedback immediately after the observed lesson while less than half said they give feedback later on the same day. Teachers also agreed with this response though less than half of them stated they receive feedback immediately after the observed lesson while more than half said they receive feedback later on the same day. This is quite

explainable; SETs in Oman usually have quite enough free periods during the working day so they can usually plan their visits beforehand and choose appropriate times for them and the teachers to be visited. Teachers also do not teach the whole working day and they are informed about the visit at least one day before it occurs and as such they are able to prepare themselves and reflect about their lessons.

5.2.1.3 Duration of feedback sessions

Half of SETs said the feedback session lasts less than 15 minutes while the other half said their feedback session lasts between 15 and 30 minutes. However, a few more than half of the teachers said the feedback session lasts less than 15 minutes and 7 said it lasts between 15 and 30 minutes, while only 2 declared it lasts between 30 and 60 minutes but no one stated that feedback lasts more than one hour or that he/she does not receive any. So, almost all respondents agree that the feedback session lasts less than 15 minutes or between 15 and 30 minutes at maximum. This may indicate that SETs may not discuss everything in detail rather they focus on certain chosen teaching aspects. It may also indicate that the teachers visited are already somehow professionally developed and that they have their own experiences and theoretical knowledge as [1] suggests. These results ultimately reflect the experience range of the participants among whom the majority have more than 10 years of teaching and are well-informed about the criteria of successful teaching practice.

5.2.2 Aims of feedback: evaluation or professional development?

Concerning the aims of feedback, with both groups it is clear that the majority considered the main aim to be that of helping teachers develop professionally and at the same time evaluating their teaching. Two other aims are noted by a few teachers (4), namely evaluating and providing

help to teachers equally or evaluating teachers' teaching and also providing help. This latter aim was also mentioned by 2 SETs. However, only one SET only one alleged he/ she only help the teachers develop professionally while no teacher mentioned this.

Table 3: Aims of feedback

Qs 1.5 & 2.6 / what are the aims of feedback?			
Answer options	SETs' responses	Answer options	Teachers' responses
Only to evaluate his/her teaching.	0	Only to evaluate your teaching.	0
Mainly to evaluate his/her teaching, also help him/her develop professionally as a teacher	2	Mainly to evaluate your teaching, also help you develop professionally as a teacher.	4
To evaluate his/her teaching and help him/her develop professionally as a teacher	0	To evaluate your teaching and help you develop professionally as a teacher.	4
Mainly to help the teacher to develop professionally, but also to evaluate teaching	7	Mainly to help you develop professionally as a teacher, but also to evaluate your teaching.	12
Only to help the teacher to develop professionally.	1	Only to help you develop professionally as a teacher.	0

So, it is clear that both SETs and teachers agree that the SET visits a teacher mainly to help him/her develop professionally. This reflects what is actually required and expected from the SET in The Sultanate as a deputy of the supervisor; his/her main role is to guide and help teachers who need support following the supervisor's directions. This is exactly the role of teacher educator whose job is not to evaluate or judge but rather to guide and help the teacher diagnose his/her weaknesses so as to overcome those [19]. All in all, the issues which the study has dealt with under this section of 'experiences of feedback' reveal that there is a great awareness of the importance of PLD in the educational system and that it is really executed. Then, below the study unveiled the participants' views about the content of feedback.

5.3 Content of feedback

This table below indicates that the majority of SETs and teachers agreed that feedback includes positive points about the lesson and suggestions about what could have been done differently. All SETs also agreed with the majority of teachers that feedback contains negative points about the lesson and advice about how teachers could improve their teaching.

Yet, only a small minority of both teachers and SETs said that feedback includes discussions about teachers' teaching practice in general, things the teacher was worried about and other issues. Moreover, 4 SETs and a good majority of teachers said that the feedback also includes the teacher's own opinion about the lesson.

Table 4: Content of feedback

Q: What does the feedback include?		
Answer options	SETs' responses	Teachers' responses
Positive points about the lesson	6	20
Negative points about the lesson	5	17
Suggestions about what he/she could have done differently in the lesson	6	18
Advice about how he/she could improve his/her teaching in general	5	16
Goals to work on in the future	5	8
Your own opinion about the lesson	4	14
discussion about his/her teaching practice in general not just the observed lesson	2	6
Discussion about things that he/she were worried about	4	7
Anything else	2	2

So, these responses generally reveal that PLD tackles different issues that are raised by the teachers' class performance and that teachers play a major role in their self-evaluation.

positive points outweigh the negative ones. This overlaps with teachers' responses: the overwhelming majority of teachers admitted that feedback includes more positive points than negative ones; only two, indeed, declared that feedback contains more negative points than positive ones.

5.3.1 Which is more: positive or negative points?

As the table indicates, all SETs claimed that once their feedback contains both positive and negative points the

Table 5: content of feedback: positive or negative?

Qs 1.9 & 2.8 Answer options	Does feedback contain more positive or negative points?	
	SETs' responses	Teachers' responses
More positive points	10	18
More negative points	0	2
Not applicable	0	0

5.3.2 Who decides future plans?

The table shows that all SETs agree that the teachers themselves decide on the future goals in a feedback session. In parallel, the huge majority of teachers stated that they themselves determine the future goals in the feedback session and only a few said the SET does. This indicates that feedback is led in a quite professional way

and implies that teachers can reflect upon their own teaching. Yet, it can be affirmed that this shared answer assures the existence of PD in the feedback sessions; it also implies as mentioned above that teachers take an active role in the discussion and that the relationship between the SET and teachers is quite positive.

Table 6: who decides on future goals?

Qs 1.10 & 2.9 / Who decides on future goals?			
Answer options	SETs' responses	Answer options	Teachers' responses
You	0	You	17
Teacher	10	The Senior Teacher	3
Not Applicable	0	Not Applicable	0

5.3.3 SETs and teachers relationship: cooperative or directive?

All of the SETs who replied to the questionnaire said they listen to teachers' opinions about the observed lessons. At the same time, all teachers agreed that the SETs listen to them when they express their opinions about their observed lessons. And, answering the question whether they like to receive feedback by the SET, the supervisor or both, 8 out of 20 teachers said they prefer to receive feedback by the SET and argued that SETs are

closer to them as they know their strengths and weaknesses as well as their students and consequently they feel at ease with them. At the same time, 12 teachers said they prefer to receive feedback by both the SET and the supervisor claiming that two heads are better than one as they have different experiences and they may have different views and ideas; yet, no one said he/she wants to receive feedback by the supervisor only. The following table illustrates this:

Table 7: Who do you prefer to receive feedback from?

Q. 1.13 Answer options	Do you prefer to receive feedback by: Teachers' responses
Supervisor	0
Senior Teacher	8
Both	12

However, surprisingly, the table below reveals some unexpected answers to the question about how often teachers would like to be visited by SETs:

Table 8: How often do you like to be observed by a senior teacher?

Q. 2.1	How often do you like to be observed by a senior teacher?
Answer options	Teachers' responses
Once a month	8
Twice a month	4
Once a semester	7
More than that	1

As it clear, some teachers said they would like to be visited only once a semester as they think they have enough experience and that one time is enough to exchange views with the SET. This really contradicts the concept of PD as a continuous process. Yet, quite a large number of the teachers claimed they like to be observed once or twice a month saying that they need to get their SETs' feedback and to evaluate their teaching practice and development. Whereas, one teacher declared he/she likes to be seen more than that justifying his preference by saying: *"Because I like to improve my teaching, when someone observe me I will take the feedback and do better next time"*.

These generally positive responses are indeed supported by the adjectives the majority of teachers used to describe their SETs: *"sympathetic"*, *"friendly"*, *"very kind and respectful"*, *"cooperative and flexible"*, and *"considerate"*. Teachers also added that SETs clarify ideas with examples, give the chance for the teacher to talk

and express his/her views, give advice, and do not focus on negative points; yet, contrary to all this, one teacher described her SET as being *"unclear and sometimes in a hurry"* although she is friendly.

So, these results confirm that the relationship is cooperative rather than directive, which adheres to [21] and [29]'s views. They also inform that real discussions take place in the feedback sessions, which is largely advocated by all the writers whom the researcher consulted in review of relating literature in Chapter 3. As well, they indicate that both SETs and teachers see feedback as an efficient tool for PD.

5.3.4 Role of observed teachers in feedback sessions

As I concluded earlier, the table below indicates that more than half of SETs admitted teachers play an active role in the PLD.

Table 9: teachers' role in oral feedback

Qs 1.12 & 2.10	Do teachers have an active role in the oral feedback?	
Answers	SETs' responses	Teachers' responses
Yes	6	19
No	4	1
Not Applicable	0	0

Some SETs described the active role of teachers; one SET states that teachers express their opinions about their lessons and justify their practice and the way of teaching *"freely and verbally"*. A second one says that: *"it depends on the teacher and their experience. Some elaborate and reflect more showing awareness of their performance while others still developing and expect the ST to provide them with whole feedback"*. Others reveal that teachers are guided through questions to think and reflect about their lessons and a different SET divulges that *"the role that the teacher plays depends mostly upon his willingness to improve or not"*.

In accordance with these views, all the teachers but one believed they have active roles in the feedback session while the other teacher said she does not feel she plays an active role in the feedback session. So, these responses point out that there is a strong belief among both SETs and teachers in the necessity of teachers' active participation in the feedback to ensure positive results and real development. This attitude reflects what actually happens as it is the teachers themselves who determine the future goals they will work on; which indeed leads to effective

teachers who are empowered by the ability of self-critique and independent reflection stressed by [22].

5.3.5 Teachers' feelings

In response to the open questions related to feelings, all the teachers but one provided a number of adjectives to describe how they felt before the encounter. These included 'nervous' and 'worried' (8 respondents) while others claimed they felt 'normal', 'at ease', 'ready', 'confident' or 'eager' (11 respondents). With regard to their feelings during the encounter, some teachers said they feel relaxed, confident, focused and attentive and others feel engaged, active and at ease (15 respondents); while some feel anxious, astonished and see themselves as receivers of comments (4 respondents). Yet, the responses all the 19 teachers who described their feelings revealed that they share the same feelings when feedback finishes: thankful, satisfied, happy and excited as they feel their positive and active role in the discussion, which makes them feel a sense of improvement.

Teachers justified their negative feelings by the lack of confidence in their performance or by their prejudice about

the SET's feedback. On the other hand, they justified their positive feelings by their self-confidence and determination to acquire new techniques and put them into practice; one teacher for example said "[I] Want to know, things i missed, improve my job" and another commented

that his feelings are due to "le]xperience and self-confidence". These feelings really reflect an interest among teachers in the PLD and PD and that they really perceive feedback as an efficient tool of their career development, which is quite clear in the following section.

5.4. Attitudes towards feedback

5.4.1. Usefulness of feedback

Table 10: usefulness of feedback

Qs 1.6 & 2.15		Is feedback useful?	
Answers	SETs' responses	Teachers' responses	
Yes	10	20	
No	0	0	

All SETs who responded to the questionnaire assumed that feedback is useful for both novice and experienced teachers as they believe that anyone is in the process of lifelong learning and that no one can reach perfection. One SET, for example, said: "new teachers are still developing while experienced teachers need to be updated". Another SET declared that "the teaching/learning process does not have an end so every teacher has to learn what is new to be able to cope with the teaching situation". In the same way, a third one stated that "it give them an insight of the alternatives that might be useful for them regardless their experience". He also added that "sometimes teachers cannot reflect upon themselves".

From their part, all teachers expectedly agreed that receiving feedback is a useful experience for them. They all said that receiving feedback gives them the chance to see where they stand and to know other people's opinions about their performance. They also agreed that receiving feedback would enable them to improve themselves and find out how others see them; for instance, one teacher stated that "li]t is beneficial to see things through the eyes of another person" and another admitted that "lw]e can always learn from any observer's comments as they may see what we can't". Indeed, all

teachers but one said that feedback is useful for both novice and experienced teachers; they all justified their opinions by claiming that knowledge is endless and that anyone needs to update his/her knowledge in order to develop his/ her performance. They implicitly agreed that good feedback improves teachers' teaching and enriches them with more ideas; one teacher said that "le]veryone needs feedback to improve and develop their practice". Another added: "le]veryone is still learning" and a third teacher put it clearly that "lg]ood feedback improves the novice teacher's teaching and adds more ideas to the experienced ones".

Hence, unsurprisingly all respondents agreed that feedback is very useful and they well-justified their views. This reflects a deeply positive attitude towards PLD sessions and a great concern with PD. Indeed, One SET stated that "it give them an insight of the alternatives that might be useful for them regardless their experience." He also added that "sometimes teachers cannot reflect upon themselves." This is quite in line with the idea that some people need to learn how to reflect and that PD is an ongoing process as advocated by many who wrote in this field and I consulted in Chapter 3.

5.4.2 Following up of previous feedback

The table below shows SETs' answers to whether they follow up feedback or not:

Table 11: following up of feedback

Question 1.7. Do you always follow-up the points raised from the previous feedback session?	Answers			More than half of SETs
	Yes	No	NA	
	6	4	1	

claimed they follow up the points they raise in a previous feedback session and they reasoned for that by saying that it is a way to ensure that teachers have overcome the difficulties and have tried the suggested teaching techniques. One SET, for instance, said it is a way "to develop performance and to make sure that teaching technique is carried out"; another SET says that if feedback points "are neglected or not stressed, they will be forgotten and you will find them repeated over and over

again" and he adds that some teachers "need this badly". From his part, a third SET justified his answer by stating that it is a way "to see if the teacher he/she applied the feedback points which we raised together at the last session".

On the other hand, 4 SETs admitted they do not check the points discussed in earlier feedback sessions and they reasoned for that by stating the fact that there are different contexts and techniques for different lessons and by the

heavy load they have; one said: “each lesson has its own circumstances”, and another argued by saying: “because of the time limit and due to the heavy load that I have” whereas the third one did not reason for his answer and the fourth claimed that he does unless he forgets!

So, although SETs’ answers to the other questions reflect a great understanding of their role as teacher developers and as guides to their colleague teachers to ameliorate their teaching performance, their answers to this question about following previous feedback were astonishing: they did not indicate a real engagement in the process of PD for the teachers working with them! This may be explainable by the big workload imposed on them, yet I would argue that these SETs should be deeply aware of the crucial role of following up previous discussions and recommendations for teachers’ PD which is, as [21] states, an endless process.

5.4.3 Teachers’ responses to feedback sessions

The participants were asked about how teachers respond to feedback, the SETs commented on this issue differently and although some admitted that there are teachers who neglect feedback and do not benefit from it, the majority of SETs stated that teachers take feedback seriously and play an active role in the discussion. Indeed, they said that teachers think reflectively about their observed lessons and express their points of view trying to give other possible ways of dealing with similar activities in the future. Some SETs said that teachers also answer their questions about the lesson delivery giving examples and justifying their choices.

On the other hand; some SETs stated that there are some teachers who do not like PLD and keep arguing and defending simply because they feel that the observer is somehow like a judge. But, they admitted that when the SET proves that it is not the case and that their role is only to raise the awareness of teaching process they feel secure and free to reflect truthfully. These views may contradict some responses to the questions about the aim and content of feedback as well as the relationship between SETs and teachers; yet, they clearly indicate that teachers respond differently to feedback though the majority have a positive attitude towards it. This is explainable by the fact of how they perceive the role of their SETs and the aims of the visit as well as how these SETs behave during observation and feedback. However, despite these controversies, the analysis of teachers’ answers about their role in feedback sessions enhances the idea that they generally hold positive ideas about PLD sessions in their PD. Thus, in the following section, the study stated some significant suggestions about improving feedback sessions which both SETs and teachers came out with.

5.5 Suggestions

SETs’ and teachers suggestions were answers to two questions. Firstly;

Question 1: Can you think of anything that could have been done differently to make the feedback more useful?

SETs and teachers suggested many ideas. One SET argued that SETs should be good listeners to what the teacher reveals during feedback sessions and should try to make feedback more fruitful. This requires that giving feedback should be in a very polite and honest way as another SET suggested. Others proposed making feedback sessions as short as possible and focusing only on a few points. These points should be made known beforehand to the teacher who will bear them in mind when planning and teaching. Moreover, this would make the teacher more able to carry on the PLD freely and more confidently. Meanwhile, another SET suggested that the present way of narrating what happened and commenting on it in a report should be changed with a checklist or any readable feedback that teachers would access easily and attentively. Still, one SET proposed that teachers should be trained to write lesson observation reports about themselves with the help of the senior teachers. More importantly, a SET recommended that

“...telling the teachers more about the importance of lessons feedback should be a primary goal in their course of education before they are actually appointed as teacher”. He added that “it is equally important to have a trial period for newly appointed teachers where they are asked to reflect, receive feedbacks and build future plans for their lessons based on all this”. He also went on to say that teachers “should be told that they will not be finally appointed as permanent teachers unless they prove their ability of using feedbacks to solve their teaching problems...”

This view is indeed consistent with the views of other SETs who see that the Ministry should deliver workshops for both SETs and teachers on giving and receiving feedback and use more experienced people like supervisors to explain the process and the importance of the feedback and refer to some sources that deal with feedback.

Two teachers also enhanced these views and said they should be given new educational sources such as websites and books; they put forward that new strategies, methods, books and websites should be discussed. Moreover, 3 others said that SETs should establish good relationships with teachers and that feedback should be more focused and deeply discussed through checklists. They added that feedback should be given for a purpose and should aim to improve the teacher and techniques used. One teacher also pointed out that pre-discussion should be there as it makes the feedback more useful, while another suggested that the SET can get teachers to watch the same lesson being taught by another experienced teacher, so that they will be able to see what I could have done better.

Question 2: Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experiences of receiving feedback?

SETs suggested many valuable ideas among which were these most significant ones which were not mentioned earlier:

“...Some points should be considered such as sharing ideas and making sure that the lesson requirements can come true to satisfy ST’s need as well as the teacher is always in need of refreshing teaching methods by trying the best manners of teaching skills...” They also stated that:

“...The most important thing is the relation between teachers and their seniors, I mean if everything is done completely and in a correct way without any clashes among teachers, so the work will be completed in a very soon time. Teachers will be honest and active when they do their jobs even when they deal with their students and their preparation books without any mistakes or cheating! As happened in some school with normal teachers...” Furthermore:

“...ST should have some characteristics as a team leader advisor and being able to persuade and analyse but above all fair away from being prejudice...” They also added:

“...Relationship plays an important role in utilizing and facilitating the feedback process if not anything will collapse...Feedback should be introduced earlier in the colleges and universities...”

Teachers from their part came out with many useful ideas from which this study claimed the following most significant ones, each idea being quoted from one teacher:

- *“A reflective teacher will be more positive about feedback and they will be ready to listen and understand other’s feedback. But, the purpose of a visit should be made clear for what purpose: is it evaluation or giving support as both cannot be performed successfully at the same time”.*

- *“Receiving feedback must be made an integral part of teaching. Also, it is desirable to get the teacher’s response after a few days of receiving the feedback as to how he or she benefitted from the feedback. This way the senior teacher or the supervisor will know if the teacher benefitted from his visit and can check if the teacher is following the suggestions made.”*

- *“Feedback depends on the way the senior teacher gives. If the teacher feels that the senior teacher wants truly to help him developing his teaching, he will accept his instructions and will strongly try to achieve what they have agreed on.”*

- *“Supervisor or senior teaches have to know that they are giving teachers feedback or*

comments in order to help them improving their performance. They also should know how to deal with teachers. Teachers like to be appreciated because they are working hard in their job. Supervisors also should give teachers freedom in choosing their method of teaching”.

- *“Discussing without shouting and take the negative notes. Really, senior teacher or supervisor come to school to write negative notes not support or teach the teacher with experience or novice teacher”.*

“I hope all the ST are trained well to do their jobs because if they did it wrong, they’ll leave bad impression”.

To conclude, it is evident that the majority of respondents came out with well-valued suggestions regarding the improvement of PLD sessions to enhance their positive role in increasing teachers’ PD. This indicates that teachers who were part of this study are really aware of the importance of the issue and that they are really interested in reflecting about their performance and developing themselves as independent reflective teachers; it also reflects that SETs in general are engaged in this process of developing effective teachers. This is indeed what is recommended by [29] and many other writers about the issue of teacher training courses.

6. Implications and Conclusion

6.1. General Implications

The study findings revealed that both SETs and teachers are aware of the issue of PD and the importance of PLD in enhancing teachers’ performance as well as deepening and updating their theoretical knowledge. However, some responses indicated that not all SETs and teachers are really engaged in the process of PD due to various factors though many are really eager to improve their career as teachers. At the same time, SETs seem to do things on their own without following clear common guidelines from the Ministry. This leads the study to call for a clear programme from the Ministry to enhance the issue of PD which should be accompanied by an expert training for SETs to serve the purpose as it is apparent that some SETs are unclear about their role as teacher developers not controllers [30]. Indeed, the responses revealed some issues which I did not focus on as they are secondary to the researcher concern in this study: some SETs suggested being allocated more authority, which may reflect a negative viewpoint regarding their relationship with their teachers and vagueness as to their understanding of their primary role within the educational reform.

This study contributes to existing knowledge as there are only few Omani researcher who has investigated this area. For example, a study by [3] revealed that SETs discuss more than the teachers in PLD and the talk tends to be more directive than collaborative and with minimum criticism. Another study was done by [2] and this revealed a positive attitude toward PLD that was perceived as beneficial. Further research was done by [4] who concluded that supervisors do not really engage in

beneficial PLD with teachers, rather they suffice themselves with merely writing reports. Therefore. This study filled in the previous studies' gap by investigating the perceptions of Omani senior English teachers (SETs) and teachers towards the role of post-lesson discussion (PLD) in developing teachers. In addition, the study discussed types, time of feedback, responses of teachers to feedback sessions, their feelings and its effect in promoting professional development. Thus, this study attempted to find out whether these features are present in the post-lesson discussion in Omani schools and whether SETs and teachers reveal any other features that they see useful for improving feedback sessions.

So, it is imperative to set forward certain points that this study disclosed and state some recommendations for the amelioration of the role of feedback in meeting the aims of the reform in the educational system in Oman. For instance, while carrying out PLD sessions, there should be "less emphasis on prescriptions and top-down directives and more emphasis on an inquiry-based and discovery-oriented approach to learning (bottom-up)" [28]. This will enhance the idea of using appropriate checklists that will make the SET's observation focused and guide the discussion between the teacher and the SET. This will certainly be improved if, as one respondent suggested, a pre-lesson discussion takes place so as the teacher is informed about the focus of the visit and if a well-defined structure of feedback is followed. Furthermore, SETs should bear in mind that teaching is an art and that it is "something that depends upon the teacher's individual skill and personality" [43], consequently they should not confine themselves to some prescriptions and they should

6.2. Conclusion

Although this study was at a small scale, it is believed, this study clearly shows that Omani SETs and teachers have deep understanding of the issue of professional development and its importance in upgrading their knowledge and equipping them with the latest teaching techniques and approaches. SETs also seem to realise the importance of PLD as a tool for PD. Similarly, teachers have proven to understand the crucial role PLD plays in the observation process and for their own PD. Consequently, their responses to feedback sessions are largely positive; they play active roles during the discussion of their observed lessons with SETs with the aim of exchanging thoughts and gaining as much as possible from more experienced colleagues. On top of that, both SETs and teachers could reveal significant suggestions as to how to improve PLD sessions, which indicates that they are not mere followers of other parties but they are thoughtful and reflective people who can in the long run depend on themselves for their own PD.

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behave according to this conviction to make the PLD sessions contribute to teachers' professional development.

On the other hand, teachers should assimilate that what [44] call the self-directed teacher has to admit that modern man lives in a "continually changing" environment, therefore he/she has to find out "how to learn ... how to adapt and change" and that no information is safe and secure [44]. This idea of change in the human nature is also defended by [1] who sees that teachers need to respond to change or else "they risk being left behind" (p.4) and he sets two preconditions for this change: (1) the educational system should promote change, and (2) the teachers are willing to change.

Therefore; while SETs should bear this idea of change in mind during PLD sessions, teachers, from their part, should recognise the role of constructive criticism in promoting their careers and enhancing their performance. Indeed, "[a]n effective teacher is a person who assesses the needs and possibilities of a situation and creates and uses practices that have promise for that situation" [43]. Accordingly, I would like to state it clearly that in order to obtain or "prepare effective language teachers, it is necessary to have a theory of effective language teaching – a statement of the general principles that account for effective teaching, including a specification of the key variables in effective language teaching and how they are interrelated" [43]. Once this fact is admitted, the Ministry should provide efficient training courses and programmes for both SETs and teachers to ensure a successful implementation of its policies as regard to how PLD sessions take place.

Although the questionnaires have helped the study providing essential knowledge concerning the issue the present study tackled. However, this research still has some limitations. For example, the questionnaires are not so sufficient to cover the topic thoroughly. More tools could have been used such as interviews, however due to the researcher' location and the mode of study (on campus) the researcher could not have the tools to arrange for such interviews due to the inconvenience of people's time (summer holidays). Moreover, the researcher could not be sure of the degree of engagement from the part of the teachers and that their responses are really serious and represent their real opinions. More importantly, the number of participants is relatively limited, something which may not help in drawing appropriate generalisations. Hence, it is essential to put into consideration the deficient in the future researches.

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