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Dual Perspectives: How English Lecturers Perceive Peer and Supervisor Observations

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Abstract. This study aimed to elicit working English language lecturers' perceptions of their peer and supervisor observations. Since a new researchers-made questionnaire was developed for this study, the reliability of the survey was measured through a pilot study with 20 lecturers before distributing the final version. Two Applied Linguists specialists worked on the statements to ensure validity. A comprehensive perception questionnaire was used and answered by 40 English language teachers from the Preparatory Studies Center. Moreover, all 21 items in a 5-point Likert scale in the questionnaire were analyzed individually to ensure the homogeneity of statements based on the reliability index through factor analysis. The results showed a high reliability index equal to Cronbach's alpha 0.995. In addition, the study's findings revealed that lecturers preferred peer observation more than supervisor observation, as it fosters professional development, increases the functionality of instructional techniques, and reduces observation anxiety. However, the results also showed that the supervisor's observation process was more precise and transparent. The findings of this study are helpful for teachers, supervisors and organizations. For teachers, the preference for peer observation suggests that it can be an effective tool for professional development, enhancing instructional techniques, and reducing anxiety associated with evaluations. For supervisors, the study underscores the importance of maintaining clarity and transparency in the observation process, which can build trust and improve the overall effectiveness of evaluations. For organizations, these insights can inform the design and implementation of observation and evaluation systems, balancing the benefits of both peer and supervisor observations to create a more supportive and constructive environment for professional growth.

Keywords: Peer observation; Supervisor observation; Professional development

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1. Introduction

Excellent education requires competent instructors to achieve their objectives. Instructors are required to participate in specific professional activities to improve their pedagogical skills, broaden their knowledge of classroom instruction, and demonstrate the efficacy of lessons in enhancing learning outcomes. Reflective practice is an opportunity for professional growth that instructors may use to assess teaching (Tosriadi et al., 2018). This process helps instructors advance professionally, is crucial for teachers' jobs, and is essential for continuous teacher education (Ahmed et al., 2018). Reflective practice entails instructors critically scrutinizing their instructional principles and methods. One method of promoting reflective practice among instructors is to motivate them to participate in classroom observations as a component of their professional growth (Farrell, 2011).

Class observations record educational practices and processes, such as instructional materials and how they are organized and presented. It describes the types of language instructors and pupils use and the nature of verbal exchanges between them. The observation of classrooms also covers how instructors and students are socially organized into various groups (e.g., entire classrooms, groups, and pairs), the social structure of the groupings, and the types of tasks that occur within them. Affective behaviors, including instructors' motivation, practices, and learners' engagement degrees, are other observation criteria (Spada, 2019).

Assessing and documenting information regarding classroom occurrences is sometimes described as classroom observations. Classroom observations often introduce teachers who have not previously considered new teaching techniques. Therefore, observation is crucial in every phase of teachers' careers. In addition, many instructors, especially seasoned instructors, are not always conscious of the nature of their relationship with certain pupils. Enhancing instructors' classroom teaching is an essential objective of classroom observation. By receiving feedback, instructors may become aware of how their classrooms operate and implement desired adjustments (Halim et al., 2018).

Classroom observation is essential for studying and evaluating teaching, measuring and assessing the efficacy and quality of instruction. Typically, evidence from various sources supports the information gathered through classroom observations, including student assessments or performance, examinations of instructional materials, administrative evaluations, and teachers' self-evaluations. However, the evaluation technique that offers the most direct information regarding teachers' instruction is classroom observation (MacDonald, 2016).

Any observation method in the classroom must consider the potential for at least three viewpoints on classroom activities, including the instructor, student and observer viewpoints. The fundamental goal of observation in the classroom is to give a teacher a chance to get feedback from an impartial, knowledgeable observer and to engage in discussions about teaching with a mentor relevant to their

teaching situation. Additionally, information on teachers' actions will be gathered, and stakeholders will be informed of the assessment of the classroom learning environment (Jogan, 2018). Managers, peers, outside assessors, and researchers can observe classes through systematic studies and evaluations (Halim et al., 2018).

The introduction of systematic assessment of teachers and lesson evaluation, increased focus on professional skill development for new hires or honed skills for seasoned practitioners. Curriculum creators' more significant interest in classroom procedures have contributed to the increased scrutiny of what occurs as part of the teacher evaluation process. It is considerably more probable than in the 1970s or even the 1980s that one individual would watch another instructor teach while attending their class or that the instructor in charge of a student would be required to analyze lessons learned more in-depth than before (Wragg, 2002).

The rigorous examination of how instructors interpret the mechanisms that assess their accomplishments is often overlooked (Ficke, 2020). Teacher assessment is commonly described as a hierarchical and unidirectional procedure in which the administrator provides recommendations to enhance a teacher's performance based on a restricted number of classroom observations. The supervisor is commonly perceived as an executive of the facility rather than an authority in instruction, which results in an absence of confidence and credibility from the perspective of the educators. This leads to a passive evaluation procedure with low influence on teachers (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). How teachers perceive observation, coaching and feedback is influenced by how credible they think the evaluator is. Employees are more inclined to perceive the input from the evaluator as correct and implement the recommended improvements if they perceive the evaluator as credible (Marzano et al., 2005). Moreover, teachers are more inclined to use assessor comments to enhance their competence and seek possibilities for personal growth if they see the feedback as valuable (Tuytens & Devos, 2017). Principals are regarded by instructors as authorities inside the school, particularly when it comes to evaluating teaching. If an instructor perceives that a school leader lacks assessment proficiency, their faith in the truthfulness of the rating system is significantly diminished (Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003).

Classroom observations have been implemented in a few countries, with a primary focus on middle school (Kistner et al., 2015; Zepeda et al., 2018). In addition, research is scarce regarding how instructors interpret the observational feedback process cycle, as only a few investigations have been conducted on this topic. Educators and legislators closely examine the evaluation and feedback systems, which are still undergoing changes and development (Putman et al., 2018). Observational studies are required in various countries and age groups to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers assist students in acquiring knowledge and developing the ability to implement learning strategies (Granström et al., 2023). In addition, Peer evaluation of instruction has been less common in higher education since the 1950s despite instructors regularly using this approach. However, there is evidence that peer evaluation of instruction in colleges and universities is gaining traction and acknowledgment as a tactic that

can improve teaching (Harris et al., 2008). The growing interest in peer review is accompanied by the realization that instruction is a scholarly endeavor that may be evaluated in research (Quinlan, 2002). Thus, this study elicited teachers' perceptions to understand the effectiveness of peer and supervisor observation in the higher education system in Oman. The following questions were asked:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of peer observation?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the supervisor's class observations?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teacher Observation

The research on teacher evaluation has recognized its essential significance in improving the standard of instruction to benefit students' achievement. The quality of teachers is of utmost importance for any educational institution (Stronge & Tucker, 2003). However, teacher observation has been contentious when evaluating and improving professional skills (Sheal, 1989; Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Nonetheless, implementing any teacher assessment can support and strengthen the implementation of innovative teaching methods and enhance the learning experience for instructors (Harris, 1986).

According to Richards and Farrell (2005), instructors must be capable of self-reflecting, evaluating and developing specific expertise and abilities regarding various teaching-related topics. They must also broaden their understanding of the research, theory and teaching-related issues. Teachers should be able to assume novel roles and duties, such as supervisors, coach instructors, teacher-researchers, and material writers and establish productive connections with other instructors. Consequently, language instructors need frequent opportunities to advance their careers (Wong, 2004). Peer observation (PO) and supervisor observation are some of the innovative methods that institutions throughout the globe have used to help instructors improve professionally (Ahmed et al., 2018).

According to Danielson (2010), instructors may view teacher evaluations and observations as constructive exchanges that foster professional development or unfavorable demands that cause dissatisfaction.

According to studies on teachers' preparation, it is a crucial component of how language instructors are trained to instruct others. Teachers may recognize the humanistic quality that transcends conventional conceptions of them as a personality with unique beliefs, experiences, and values (Farrell, 2007). This feature may be necessary when considering teacher education as a collaborative endeavor in which many people participate. The essential premise is that development and training are two fundamental educational techniques used in instructional practice. Both approaches are crucial in preparing new teachers for their careers. Observation is a potent technique that participants may use to obtain information and knowledge about the classroom, according to the underlying premise (Cohen et al., 2000; Mackey & Gass, 2005). Numerous analyses and summaries of classroom observation studies have consistently found that various classroom practices significantly affect students' academic progress (Zaare, 2013).

As it allows observers to discern various aspects of teacher behavior, such as how activities in the classroom are organized and how instructors and pupils interact, observation at school has been recognized as a successful instructional technique in the initial training of teachers (Blackmore, 2005; Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004). Classroom observation may promote professional development, sharing efficient teaching methods and providing unbiased criticism of a teacher's performance (Muijs, 2006). However, since classrooms are complicated, they may not be able to credibly witness all the features of teaching and learning, even though classroom observation helps record and learn about in-class interactions (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Many studies have examined how information gained through observation may be applied to one's practice and have emphasized the issue of using observation in the classroom as a foundation for evaluating the effectiveness of teachers. Teacher observation can be done by school administrators, subject matter experts, or authorized coaches to observe instructors and provide criticism or direction to improve their impact on classrooms and student learning (Devos, 2014; Strong et al., 2011).

2.2 Peer Observation

Peer Observation (PO) is a cooperative developmental activity whereby experts support one another while observing, clarifying and debating what they see, illustrating their comprehension of thoughts, behaviors, actions, and feedback, and experimenting with new ideas in front of the class (Bell, 2005). Similarly, in this procedure, one instructor watches another. After the classroom lesson, the observer is supposed to provide helpful feedback (Karagiorgi, 2012). Additionally, PO is a practice that gives instructors time to reflect on, think critically and receive feedback. As a result, it fosters collaboration and sharing of learning experiences among instructors, which may benefit both the teacher and the observer (Motallebzadeh et al., 2017).

PO allows seasoned educators to see how others approach the numerous classroom challenges they face daily. Reflections on a person's teaching can be sparked by seeing another instructor's actions. For the instructor being watched, the observer may provide an objective picture of the lesson (Richards & Farrell, 2005). PO fosters open discussion among participating instructors, supports risk-taking in the classroom, and enables interactions that impact the learning of instructors and pupils (Donnelly, 2007). In addition, PO offers instructors opportunities for long-term professional development to update their instructional practices (Santos, 2016).

According to Yiend et al. (2014), there are doubts about how much involvement in constructive teaching observations may improve instructors' critical thinking and practice. For instance, Martin and Double (1998) found that some teachers showed interest in participating in their peers' classes outside of the academic context and fulfilling the term rather than effectively evaluating the courses and critically analyzing teaching techniques. However, teacher observation is strongly encouraged to strengthen teaching practices in colleges and universities (Fletcher, 2018). Formative peer observation effectively provides feedback to particular instructors, shares best practices, and establishes a regional evaluative

improvement culture (Yiend et al., 2014). Bell and Mladenovic (2008) found that peer observation during instruction has several advantages under supportive conditions. In many professions, such as teaching K -12 students and social services, practicing observation is typical and expected for professional growth.

Peers can observe teaching in a classroom in several ways. Evaluation, developmental, and collaborative observation models have been widely accepted (Gosling, 2005; Yiend et al., 2014) and were used according to who performed the instructional observations and the intent of the observations. Sachs and Parsell (2014) stated that there are different perceptions and assumptions about peer observation in the educational context, which can be used to differentiate between several kinds of peer observation systems that institutions use. However, many different objectives exist for peer observation of teaching approaches and experiences. According to Martin and Double (1998), the purposes of peer observation of instructional methods include the following: (1) Develop and improve comprehension of one's methods for delivering the curriculum; (2) work with another instructor to develop and improve curriculum-planning abilities; (3) improve teaching methods and presentation designs via group practice; (4) participate in and develop interpersonal abilities through the sharing of perspectives regarding the evaluation of particular teaching effectiveness; and (5) determine areas of subject knowledge and teaching activities that require improvement.

The evaluation approach comprises management or academic personnel evaluating teaching quality to ensure adherence to requirements and to encourage best practices. Two alternative models exist, where an educational specialist serves as an observer in the developmental approach, and a colleague in academia serves as an observer in the collaborative model (Yiend et al., 2014). Smith et al. (2013) created a complex protocol, the Classroom Observation Procedure (COPUS), which involves coding data and essential training for academic institutions desiring a scientific approach to peer observation.

Higher levels of peer observation in educational settings offer several advantages. According to Yiend et al. (2014), many individuals consider formative peer observation as a functional technique for providing feedback on teachers' teaching styles, measuring the teaching practice in the class, and improving the problematic areas of the teaching context. Peer teaching observation is increasingly being pushed to foster critical reflection on teaching methods. Additionally, many educational developers and organizations advocate teaching observation as a way for teachers to improve their pedagogical knowledge and colleagues (Bell, 2001; Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004).

According to Shortland (2010), professional relationships may be reinforced, fostering respect and trust between individuals, although providing feedback may be critical. Most observers agree that evaluative roles should be minimized as they may be limiting and dangerous because they might sometimes be judgmental rather than facilitate self-reflection processes (MacKinnon, 2001). University cultures are increasingly receptive to teaching and learning efforts,

such as curricular considerations and goal evaluation, backed by written policies, explanations and training. In addition, teacher training programs often include peer observation as an essential component of instructor growth since it may be, in principle, a transformative tool (Peel, 2005). Numerous studies have contended that PO may be used as a tool for development instead of a means of assessment. To obtain helpful input, the observer may choose the PO objectives. Consequently, instructors can implement PO's developmental goals (Donnelly, 2007; Mann, 2005).

Gosling (2005) clarified that the developmental method of PO promotes contemplation on the success of the participants' teaching, aids them in improving the quality of learning and teaching, encourages discussion and the dissemination of best practices, and raises awareness about students' educational experience. Therefore, if coworkers use PO for development goals and provide helpful feedback to one another, we can state that it is a handy and effective tool for development. Additionally, it would be beneficial for students to see other instructors in action (Marshall, 2004). As a result, instructors have several opportunities throughout the PO to question conventional thinking and self-perceptions and change their practices (Peel, 2005). Developmental PO may assist teachers with improving instruction in the classroom, increasing teacher confidence, learning more about classroom instruction, and changing their ideas on education (Bell, 2005). Colleagues also foster trust by encouraging cooperation to advance instructional strategies and methodologies. PO may enable the observer to model teaching techniques for those being watched. Collegiality may be developed by showing more respect for colleagues' methods (Quinlan & Åkerlind, 2000). It connects instructors who do not often have the opportunity to communicate and exchange information (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Forty English language lecturers from the Preparatory Studies Center (PSC) participated in this study and provided the required data. They were selected based on convenient sampling at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Shinas, Oman. UTAS Shinas provided a diverse culture of hiring teachers; therefore, teachers of various nationalities, such as Omani, Iranian, British, Pakistani, Indian and African, with different mother tongues. All were employees of the PSC. The age range of the lecturers was 28–63 years. The study population was comprised of a combination of 22 males and 18 females.

The minimum qualifications of a few teachers were bachelor's degrees; most of the other qualifications were master's degrees, and some lecturers had PhD qualifications. Some of these teachers had research and publication backgrounds. In addition, most teachers successfully passed (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults).

Finally, regarding lecturers' experience, five years of teaching experience was the minimum, and the maximum was 25 years. Lecturers were taught 18 hours a week over a 4-month semester length.

3.2 Research Instruments
A questionnaire was designed and distributed to collect data.

3.2.1 Perception Questionnaire
Since the study targeted the opinions of teachers on peer as well as supervisor observations, a researcher-designed questionnaire (Appendix 1) was prepared. The questionnaire contained 21 statements using the Likert scale scoring technique. In this case, 5 means Strongly Agree with the statement, 4 means Agree, 3 means Neutral, 2 refers to Disagree and 1 means Strongly Disagree.

To measure its reliability, the questionnaire was pilot tested with 20 English lecturers in PSC UTAS Shinas. The reliability of the data, using Cronbach's alpha, was 0.995, which made the questionnaire a highly reliable instrument. More information on the reliability and validity of the questionnaire is provided in the Data Analysis section. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 27. To measure the validity of the questionnaire in general, two Ph.D. holders within the same center, who were excluded from the study, were selected to make necessary suggestions and modifications before the primary implementation of the study.

To ensure that the implemented questionnaire had the highest standards and quality for use as an academic instrument in the educational setting, the reliability of the questionnaire was measured through a pilot study of 20 participants. Table 1 shows the reliability results for the entire questionnaire.

Table 1: The results of the reliability measure

Cronbach's alpha	N of Items
.995	21

As can be observed in Table 1, Cronbach's alpha was 0.995, which was very close to 1 and ensured the high reliability of the questionnaire. To ensure that the instrument could be used with confidence, the reliability of each item was measured separately, and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The reliability measure of statements separately

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's alpha if Item Deleted
s1	65.9000	509.042	.944	.995
s2	65.8000	511.326	.938	.995
s3	65.9000	509.042	.944	.995
s4	66.0000	510.316	.958	.995
s5	65.9000	511.358	.970	.994
s6	66.0500	509.208	.948	.995
s7	65.8500	512.661	.911	.995
s8	65.9500	511.524	.932	.995
s9	65.9500	508.997	.980	.994

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's alpha if Item Deleted
s10	65.8500	510.134	.958	.994
s11	65.9500	508.997	.980	.994
s12	66.0500	508.050	.938	.995
s13	65.9500	508.050	.903	.995
s14	66.0000	508.000	.935	.995
s15	66.0500	509.208	.948	.995
s16	65.9000	511.358	.970	.994
s17	65.8500	511.292	.973	.994
s18	65.9500	511.524	.932	.995
s19	65.9000	511.358	.970	.994
s20	65.8500	511.292	.973	.994

As shown in Table 2, the reliability results for each item separately confirmed that all items were highly reliable and trustworthy for use in an academic environment.

3.3 Procedures

The study was conducted in the first semester (fall semester) of the 2023–2024 academic year at the UTAS, Shinas, Oman. Before the distribution of the main questionnaire, it was announced that the survey would be used to conduct a research study regarding observation in higher education; therefore, the lecturers' responses would be voluntary and anonymous. The questionnaire was transferred to Microsoft Forms and distributed among the lecturers through their college's official emails. Lecturers were given three days to submit their answers, and the form prevented them from submitting responses after the deadline.

3.4 Data Analysis

To analyze the perceptions and opinions of lecturers toward peer observation and supervisor observation, the results of the researchers-made questionnaire were quantitatively analyzed using the SPSS 27.0 application. In addition, the Microsoft 365 applications were also used to add some visual information.

Table 3 below shows the descriptive analysis of lecturers regarding per and supervisor observation.

Table 3: Results of perceptions in peer vs. supervisor's observations

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement14	40	2	34	177	**4.43**	4.914
Statement11	40	2	5	161	**4.03**	.832
Statement12	40	2	5	157	**3.93**	.829
Statement10	40	2	5	156	3.90	.900
Statement3	40	3	5	156	3.90	.591
Statement21	40	2	5	154	3.85	1.001
Statement15	40	2	5	153	3.83	.712
Statement5	40	2	5	149	3.73	.933
Statement13	40	2	5	149	3.72	.751
Statement4	40	2	5	148	3.70	.992

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Statement16	40	2	5	145	**3.63**	.897
Statement17	40	2	5	143	**3.58**	.747
Statement1	40	2	5	143	3.58	1.059
Statement9	40	2	5	142	3.55	.986
Satement2	40	2	5	141	3.53	.933
Statement8	40	2	5	140	3.50	.751
Statement20	40	2	5	140	3.50	.751
Statement19	40	2	5	139	3.47	.905
Statement7	40	2	5	139	**3.47**	.933
Statement18	40	2	5	137	**3.43**	.636
Statement6	40	2	5	136	**3.40**	.841

Table 3 reveals that statements 14, 11 and 12 received the highest attention from lecturers, with mean scores of 4.43, 4.03, and 3.93, respectively. In statement 14, participants claimed that whenever there was an opportunity to observe a peer's class, this class observation positively impacted teaching techniques and strategies. In statement 11, lecturers believed that any type of support that they received from their peers was helpful in the teaching process. Finally, in statement 12, the lecturers claimed that the support they received from their supervisors was also useful. In contrast, statement 6 received the lowest mean score (3.40), indicating lecturers' lack of satisfaction. This statement states that supervisors' process of observing a class is generally fair. Statement 18, with a mean score of (3.43), was also at the bottom of the list. It could be interpreted that lecturers did not believe that supervisors' observations positively affected their teaching strategies. Finally, statement 7, with a mean score of 3.47, revealed that supervisors' class observations were not considered as an opportunity for professional development. More details are provided in the following discussion to clarify lecturers' perceptions of peer (P) and supervisor (S) observations. Since the questionnaire covered the statements of both peer observation and supervisors' observations, the statements followed a binary system. Therefore, a comparison of the related items was conducted as follow:

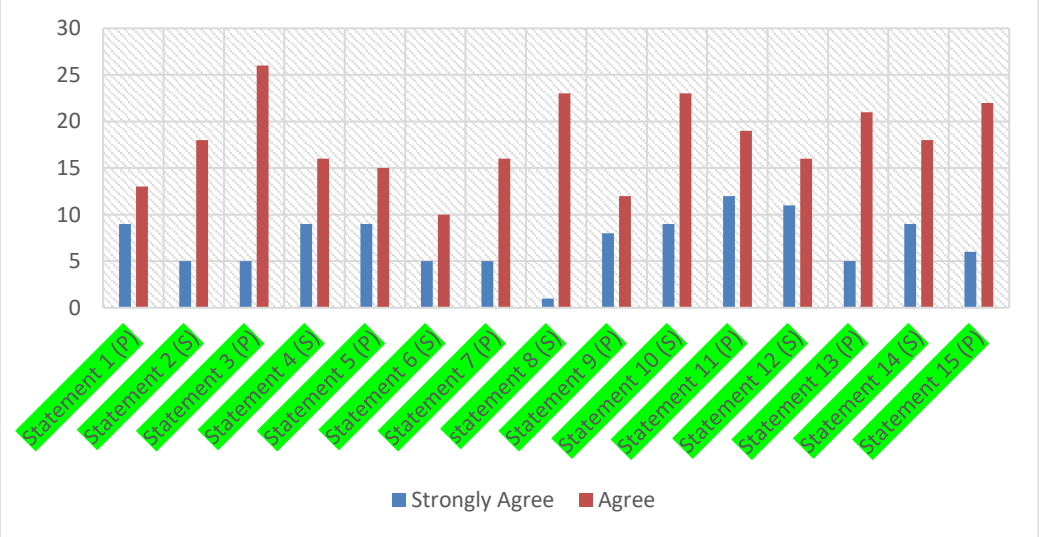

Figure 1: The comparison of lecturers` opinions on peer and supervisor class observations

As shown in Figure 1, 22 lecturers stated that the process by which a supervisor should observe a lecturer's class (statement 1) was more transparent than a peer observation procedure (statement 2). In addition, statements 3 and 4 were compared to determine the perception of lecturers using the criterion of peer and supervisor observations. As seen in Figure 1, the two statements revealed that lecturers felt more comfortable with the peer observation process (31 people) than within the process of supervisor observation (25 people).

The comparison of statement 5 (peer observation process is fair) with statement 6 (supervisor observation is fair) revealed that the lecturers believed that the procedures of peer observation were fair in comparison to supervisors. Statements 7 and 8 compared lecturers' opinions on the potential of peer and supervisors' observations in professional learning. As shown in Figure 2, lecturers strongly believed that peer observation helped develop and improve professional learning. In statements 9 and 10, lecturers' perceptions of the helpfulness and transparency of peer and supervisor feedback were measured, and it was determined that most lecturers believed peer observation was more helpful and transparent than supervisor observation.

Statements 11 and 12 elicited lecturers' perceptions of the level of support they received in both types of observation, and it was found that the amount and type of support they received from their peers was more helpful than the support they received from supervisors. In the other three statements, 13, 14 and 15, a comparison was made between receiving and visiting a peer in the class and receiving a supervisor and their impacts on the instructional approaches and practices. The results revealed that having peers in class significantly affected the lecturer's instructional techniques. However, lecturers strongly believed that having a supervisor in class directly influenced their instructional approaches. A descriptive analysis of the results was used to continue the comparison of the statements.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of lecturers` opinions on peer and supervisors class observations

						Percentiles	
	N	**Mean**	**Std. Dv.**	**Min.**	**Max.**	**25%**	**50% (Median)**	**75%**
Statement16 (S)	40	3.62	.897	2	5	3.00	4.00	4.00
Statement17 (P)	40	3.58	.747	2	5	3.00	4.00	4.00
Statement18 (S)	40	3.43	.636	2	5	3.00	3.00	4.00
Statement19 (P)	40	3.48	.905	2	5	3.00	4.00	4.00
Statement20 (P)	40	3.50	.751	2	5	3.00	4.00	4.00
Statement21 (S)	40	3.85	1.001	2	5	3.00	4.00	5.00

The comparison of statements 16, 17, and 18 in Table 4 revealed that lecturers believed in having a peer in the class as the observer could better reflect on their teaching techniques (statement 16) than receiving the peer in the class (statement 17). Based on the mean score of statement 18, lecturers did not believe that the class observation by a supervisor would reflect their teaching strategies. The

comparison of the last three statements (19, 20, and 21) focused on observation and students' class engagement. As shown in Table 5, lecturers believed that students showed high engagement during the supervisor's observation (statement 21), followed by statement (20), where the peer comes to a class for observation.

4. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to elicit lecturers' perceptions of peer class observations and supervisors' class observations. After distributing a questionnaire among the participants and analyzing the responses through SPSS and diagrams, it was found that lecturers had positive opinions and attitudes toward class observations. Although the participants believed that the process in which a supervisor visited a class was more explicit, transparent and effective for the student's engagement in the class and that the supervisor's comments were more critical and direct, the lecturers preferred peer observation. This could be justifiable to some extent, as visiting or receiving a colleague was less stressful due to friendship and warm social relationships outside of the educational context. In addition, regarding qualifications, certifications and teaching experiences, most of the colleagues were regarded as equals, which led to accepting peer observation more readily than supervisor observation. Finally, it can be stated that when a peer colleague observed the class, there was sufficient awareness of the exercises and activities in the book to be covered; therefore, the process of monitoring the class, understanding the materials developed for the practice by the pupils, and types of techniques and activities by the observer were better understood. This could be another reason why participants believed peer observation could help them feel more comfortable during observation.

Participants believed that peer observation was an opportunity for professional development and promoted teaching strategies in the process. It could be claimed that in the place of objective and bias-free peer observation, encouraging or critical comments could help the teacher make the necessary changes to their teaching style. It would be possible for the teacher to improve their teaching strengths and modify the weaknesses in handling some kinds of activities in the future or covering similar subjects and exercises. In addition, some peers or supervisors who received professional teaching certificates, such as the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Speakers of Other Languages and the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Speakers of Other Languages, could give true and honest comments on the observed teaching process. This could be helpful for observers to modify their old strategies to the newest and most practical teaching techniques as well.

The current study's findings shared similarities with other studies on observation. In a study by Atkinson and Bolt (2010), a course of action research was designed and implemented among ten academic staff members to measure teachers' perceptions of class observation by an expert. Data was collected through questionnaires and class observations. The results revealed that the participants considered class observation as an evaluation of their teaching strengths and

weaknesses. In addition, class observations allowed people with common interests to benefit from knowledge and experience.

In another similar study, Tosriadi et al. (2018) measured EFL teachers' perceptions of peer observation as a method of professional development. An in-depth interview was conducted to elicit all the required data, and the study results were that teachers believed peer observation could improve their professional development. It was stated that feedback from observations was an helpful point of development. The findings align with the study by Zaare (2013), who investigated the significance of classroom observation to suggest better techniques and strategies for effectively developing and using teachers` capabilities. The study's results revealed that peer observation could improve teachers` self-awareness and self-reflection on their current practice.

In another study with similar results by Motallebzadeh et al. (2017), 20 EFL teachers were engaged in peer observations to determine the impact of such observations on the professional development of teachers as well as a reflective instrument for their own teaching practices. The results revealed that peer observation could be a significant reflective tool for increasing professional development among EFL teachers. Santos (2016) conducted a similar study to develop a peer observation program for extension to a language school. After conducting interview sessions with some teachers, it was found that peer observation was a critical factor in developing teachers` identities professionally and could be considered a functional instrument for developing teaching strategies.

In a similar study, Whittaker et al. (2023) engaged 10 medical students as observers of 27 teaching sessions led by other students with pre- and post-observation meetings. The required data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. The study found that feedback from class observations helped observers to increase their confidence in teaching. In addition, participants reported that they learned more about the functional meaning of good teaching practices.

Todd (2017) investigated teaching assistants' perceptions of peer observation as an instrument for professional development. In addition, the study analyzed the views of novice and experienced teachers on peer observation. The learners were divided into two equal groups, novice and experienced teachers, to discuss questions while collecting the data. The results found that teaching assistants considered peer observation beneficial for their progress in their professional careers, allowing them to learn new and up-to-date instructional practices. Although both groups of participants emphasized the role of peer observation in the learning process, novice teachers showed vulnerability in being observed and receiving feedback.

In contrast, the instructors with the highest academic qualifications exhibited negative attitudes toward monitoring head teachers. Additionally, there was no variation in attitudes toward supervision among teachers with varying levels of

teaching experience. Female instructors often exhibited more favorable sentiments than men toward the supervision behavior of head teachers (Wairimu, 2016). In a similar study, Watende (2007) used questionnaires to research elementary school senior teachers' supervision tasks in the Nyandarua district. The researcher concluded that instructors did not derive any advantages from being observed by external supervisors or head teachers.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This study attempted to elicit lecturers' perceptions of peer and supervisor observations. Forty English lecturers responded to a 21-item questionnaire through a 5-point Likert scale. The results revealed that peer observation could be a better tool than supervisor observation for providing comfortable observation sessions, updating teaching techniques and improving professional development. In addition, it was elicited that the supervisor's observation could be a directive influencer of employed instructional techniques by the teacher. It was also found that student engagement increased during the supervisor's presence in the class.

The results of this study are helpful for teachers, supervisors and organizations. As revealed in the study, observation provides new insights into the experience of constructive feedback from peers, leading to higher exposure to better and more functional teaching practices. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to visit other peers' classes voluntarily and have brief discussions on the lesson's objectives and suitability of teaching practices. As stated earlier, the process of the supervisor's class observations was clear and transparent; therefore, managers could provide a checklist of the criteria they would like to judge their teachers and provide them with more detailed and longer post-observation feedback sessions, as teachers stated that supervisors' feedback was more constructive as they directly and honestly reflected on the approaches and techniques that the lecturers used in the class. Organizations can create customized professional growth programs with peer observation as an essential element. These courses can teach colleagues to conduct themselves well, cultivate constructive feedback practices and create an environment of trust and collaboration among coworkers. Acknowledging the potential advantages of supervisor observations regarding lucidity and efficacy for student involvement, educational establishments could teach supervisors to provide constructive criticism in a nurturing fashion. Any unfavorable impressions connected with supervisors' observations may be minimized by highlighting the significance of empathy and transparent communication in the feedback delivery process.

This study has limitations that can be used as suggestions for future research.

- The target population of this study was English teachers working in Preparatory Center Studies in northern Oman. This prevents generalizing the study to other parts of Oman. Therefore, further studies should be conducted to learn more about teachers' attitudes toward observation in various parts of Oman.
- Second, the focus of this study was mainly on English teachers' perceptions, which could be seen as a research issue; thus, further studies are suggested to measure teachers' perceptions in other subjects.

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Appendix 1

The Perception Questionnaire of Teachers Regarding Peer and Supervisor Observations

1.	The process of peer class observation is generally transparent.
2	The process of supervisor class observation is generally transparent.
3	The process of peer class observation is generally comfortable.
4	The process of supervisor class observation is generally comfortable.
5	The process of peer class observation is generally fair.
6	The process of supervisor class observation is generally fair.
7	Peer class observation is an excellent opportunity for professional learning.
8	Supervisor class visit is an excellent opportunity for professional learning.
9	The feedback provided by the peer observer is helpful, specific and transparent.
10	The feedback provided by the supervisor observer is helpful, specific and transparent.
11	The support received from the peer observer is helpful, specific and transparent.
12	The support received from the supervisor observer is constructive and encouraging.
13	Receiving peers for class observation has directly impacted my instructional practices and approaches.
14	Visiting peer classes has directly impacted my instructional practices and approaches.
15	Receiving the supervisor for class observation has directly impacted my instructional practices and approaches.
16	Visiting peer classes promotes reflection on teaching strategies.
17	Receiving a peer for class observation promotes reflection on teaching strategies.
18	Receiving a supervisor for a class observation promotes reflection on teaching strategies.
19	Visiting peer classes has an evident positive impact on students' engagement.
20	Having a peer for class observation has an evident positive impact on my students' engagement.
21	Having a supervisor for class observation has an evident positive impact on my students' engagement.