

## Issues in the Practice of Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) in Malay Language Speaking Skills

Muhammad Nurfikri Shaari, Halimah Jamil

Department of Language and Humanities, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra  
Malaysia 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: halimah.jamil@upm.edu.my

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### Abstract

Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) was first implemented for pupils in 2017. CBA is a set of tests to see and track the extent to which pupils' achievements can be examined, especially in listening and speaking skills for Malay language subject. This study's methodology involved library research, specifically books, articles, and journals. In the implementation of assessment, various matters should be examined by the teachers to ensure that the weaknesses of the pupils and teachers teaching practice can be improved. For this reason, this concept paper investigates two main issues in the practice of CBA in Malay language speaking skills among teachers, which are lacks proficiency in conducting CBA and difficulty in determining pupils' assessment scoring. The results have significant ramifications that offer essential insights into teachers' assessment processes and expertise, as well as ways to enhance the use of CBA speaking abilities. In addition, this article suggests that to address the concerns identified, teachers' need an assessment training that should be increased. The authorities need to take drastic action to ensure that teachers receive exposure through regular training or workshops so that they truly understand and are knowledgeable in implementing CBA effectively especially in Malay language speaking skills assessment.

**Keywords:** Classroom-Based Assessment, Malay Language, Speaking Skills, Issues in Practice

### Introduction

The examination-oriented system was changed to a school-based assessment (CBA) system that involves primary and secondary schools across the country by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE). All pupils participate in CBA, including those in primary school (grades one through six) and senior school. (form one to form three). By integrating an evaluation system into the national education system, the government is attempting to change education through curriculum and assessment. A shift from an examination-oriented educational system (achievement tests and examinations) to a more comprehensive system is

represented by the curriculum and assessment included in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (PPPM) 2013-2025 (MOE, 2013). The purpose of this approach is to evaluate pupils' potential, preparedness for learning, and mastery.

According to Tan & Husaina (2020), the curriculum is transformed to improve learning from the aspects of content, pedagogy, and assessment. It is in line with the aspirations of the MOE to make pupils knowledgeable, possess leadership qualities, be capable of critical thinking, master bilingual skills, practice ethics and spirituality, and have a national identity (MOE, 2016). This is also supported by Jamil et al., (2017), who state that the transformation of the national education system centered on CBA, introduced by the MOE aims to assess pupils' potential, readiness to learn, and to test pupils' mastery and achievements. Mansor et al., (2020) stated that assessment is an essential component of students' education. Pupils and teachers can learn about the learning outcomes, strengths, and shortcomings of their pupils through assessments. As a result, evaluation is acknowledged as one of the essential components of instruction, allowing teachers to ascertain the degree of proficiency or understanding of their students (Tosuncuoglu, 2018)

CBA encompasses all matters involving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for teachers, pupils, and school authorities in formulating robust testing and assessment quality to evaluate pupils' performance levels, especially in achieving various language skills at the maximum level. In addition, the assessment in education also indirectly attracts the attention of parents to know their children's learning performance. (Brown, 2011). They added that all teaching strategies and methods, after feedback on the implementation of assessments, can also be detected through CBA, thereby improving the pedagogy used in the classroom. Interactions between students, teachers, or learning resources can all be used to carry out the speaking skills assessment. The assessment activities that will be used in the classroom are up to the teachers to organize and select. Teachers must exercise discretion to guarantee and promote positive student interactions (PPPBD, 2019).

MEB 2013–2025 has outlined 11 operational and strategic changes that must be made to realize the intended vision and satisfy the nation's future demands. Thus, the CBA, an evaluation tool used to gauge pupils' overall performance level, was introduced by the MOE in 2017. Teachers must perform their responsibilities as educators more effectively to implement CBA. According to Jamil et al., (2019), CBA is not meant to draw attention to the disparity in pupils' performance levels. Instead, it seeks to assist pupils in enhancing their learning in all aspects. CBA benefits teachers in addition to improving student development.

In the context of Malay language education, speaking skill assessment is part of language skills alongside reading, writing, and language arts emphasized in the Malay language curriculum. Oral assessment refers to the ability of students to convey information, opinions, feelings, as well as critical and creative ideas verbally with correct pronunciation and intonation in a polite manner. Emphasis is placed on the use of pronunciation that employs appropriate grammar (MOE, 2019; Jamil et al., 2019). The transformation of the national education system, which has shifted to CBA, has impacted its implementation among teachers with new demands in the assessment system. In the context of the challenges of implementing speaking assessment, teachers were found to have low competence and knowledge due to the short duration of the CBA course they attended, which resulted in them not clearly understanding

how the assessment should be carried out (Melissan et al. 2021; Jamil et al. 2019; Elfia et al. 2019; Arumugham & Ariffin, 2021).

### **Purpose**

This paper aims to:

1. discuss main two issues faced by Malay language teacher in the practice of Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) in Malay language speaking skills; namely i) teacher lacks proficiency in conducting CBA and ii) difficulty in determining pupils' assessment scoring.

### *Assessment of Malay Language Education in Malaysia*

The Malaysia of Education (MOE) decided to abolish the exam-oriented education system to allow teachers to fully focus on their teaching duties, and students will also be free from pressure at the early stages of their schooling. The announcement of the abolition of examinations has sparked various reactions among educators, parents, and student's Malay language assessment in the context of education in Malaysia is implemented in schools, and teachers play an important role in conducting the assessment according to the procedures set by the MOE. Furthermore, assessment in this education system has long been practiced by foreign countries such as the United States, Korea, and the United Kingdom (Jamil et al., 2019). Therefore, for the advancement of the education system in Malaysia, the implementation of this assessment system must be carried out to test and measure the performance and performance levels of pupils to achieve better proficiency in various language skills. Some among them accept this issue as a positive change in the national education system, while others express dissatisfaction with it. (Arumugham & Ariffin, 2021). Given that it will be implemented in response to current demands, particularly to address social and economic needs, the change is crucial for education (Fullan, 2018).

CBA is described as a holistic assessment aimed at developing a generation of first-class minds who are skilled and of noble character. This is because CBA assesses pupils from various aspects, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, which are in line with the NEP that emphasizes the physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects. (JERIS).

In the meantime, CBA is implemented to understand the overall learning development of pupils (Arumugham, 2020). During the teaching and learning sessions conducted in the classroom, elements such as measurement, assessment, and evaluation can help teachers identify pupils' weaknesses (Mohd Haidzar & Norasmah, 2019). This can also help teachers take more progressive initiatives in adapting teaching techniques (KPM, 2018). Additionally, teachers play a role in the implementation process of CBA by administering student assessment instruments, conducting scoring, and recording student CBA at the school level (Zamri et al., 2010). Furthermore, CBA grants full authority to teachers to assess pupils based on the Performance Standards (SPi) set by MOE in the Curriculum and Assessment Standards (DSKP) to determine the pupils' Level of Mastery (TP). Therefore, effective assessment can provide accurate information regarding pupils' TP and the effectiveness of teachers' instruction.

In addition, as is widely known, the Standard-Based Curriculum for Secondary Schools (KSSM) Malay Language curriculum encompasses five skills that need to be assessed by teachers during the implementation of teaching and learning, namely listening and speaking skills,

reading skills, writing skills, language arts skills, and grammar skills. In the context of this concept paper, listening and speaking skills are complementary and cannot be separated. This is because the skills of listening and speaking have not been implemented optimally by teachers (Elfia et al., 2019). Therefore, Rozana Jaafar (2019) stated that listening skills need to be given serious attention by Malay language teachers because it is a primary skill in language learning. Good listening skills techniques can influence other language aspects including speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Speaking is thought to be the most difficult of the four language abilities (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) are challenging to develop since they are challenging to assess. (Nora'azian & Fadzilah, 2018; Navidinia, Mobaraki, & Malekzadeh, 2019). This is considering Elfia et al., (2019) discovered that teachers have trouble evaluating pupils' speaking and listening abilities. However, the teacher must emphasize this skill to see the pupils' fluency and proficiency in speaking Malay. Therefore, if pupils can speak Malay well, their abilities and potential can be explored through activities led by the teacher that align with the KSSM's goal of producing competent and competitive individuals on a global scale. Teachers must thus prioritize the DSKP's speaking and listening components to improve the academic achievement of their pupils in the Malay language.

According to Melissa et al., (2021), the content and focus of assessment may vary according to the type of test, such as written tests, speaking processes conducted in the context of the test, depending on the students' level of English proficiency. (Cheng et al., 2008). In this regard, assessment through various activities requires a broader scope of teaching and learning preparation, especially when the evaluation is conducted in the classroom. In addition, the planning carried out by teachers of different courses related to communication must also be well-organized so that assessments from the evaluation aspect can be conducted correctly. In this case, assessment can also be conducted outside the classroom according to the teacher's creativity in implementing evaluations, especially in listening and speaking skills.

Speaking skill assessment can occur spontaneously during teaching and learning or in a planned manner through question-and-answer sessions or quizzes. Planned through question-and-answer sessions or quizzes. Speaking skill assessment is an easy and quick method of evaluation to detect students' progress or mastery (PPPBD, 2019). Speaking skill assessment is employed to gain information during conversations between; i) pupils with teacher, ii) pupils with pupils, and iii) pupils with learning materials.

#### *Issues Related to Speaking Skills Assessment*

In the implementation of CBA, teachers play a key role in ensuring that CBA can be successfully carried out. This assessment is said to be of high quality because it encompasses several dimensions, namely aligning with the goal of improving teaching and learning practices, being assessed transparently, efficiently, and trusted by many educators (Noor Su'adah, 2014). The purpose of CBA is also to assist teachers in gathering information that can be utilized to customize lessons and assist students in becoming more proficient in the language such as completion of tasks, projects or peer assessment in the classroom (Black & Wiliam, 2018). CBA was strategically planned, conducted, scored, and reported in accordance with the procedures. In general, there are three standards; namely Content Standard (SP), Learning Standard (SP), and Performance Standard (SPi) for CBA that have been recognized in the DSKP

and as a sign of equitable pupils' evaluation procedures. Teachers' perceptions of their assessment knowledge and abilities are significantly influenced by the length of their teaching experience (Singh et al., 2022). Moreover, teachers are unable to successfully assess students' learning due to a few factors, including curricular requirements, teacher attitude toward traditional assessment-centred teaching, and misconceptions regarding the appropriate use of assessment processes (Alaa et al., 2019). However, several issues have arisen regarding teachers' competence in implementing CBA, these include:

#### *Teacher Lacks Proficiency in Conducting CBA*

Researchers recognize that it is a difficult task, in part because CBA research has shown less clarity in the application of assessment concepts over times (Baird et al., 2014; Bennet, 2011; Wiliam, 2011). The educational system's transition from exam-oriented to assessment practices has caused a range of responses from various stakeholders. For instance, Arumugham & Ariffin, (2021) in their study found that there are among them who accept this change as a positive change in the national education system and there are also those who express dissatisfaction with this matter.

Arumugham (2020) stated that the introduction of CBA in Malaysia education system allowed for the most effective testing and evaluation of students with varying potentials and abilities. Additionally, this will lessen the strain that exams place on students, freeing up more time for things like creating presentations and learning exploration. Malaysia's implementation of CBA came as a surprise and was a little hurried. As a result, neither teachers nor students are adequately or earlier prepared. Additionally, the teachers are required to complete CBA before they have the chance to receive comprehensive training and courses. However, although the teachers have been briefed, attended courses, and undergone several series training, yet they still feel less confident in assessing students. As a result, even though some teachers can successfully implement assessment of learning (AoL), assessment for learning (AfL), and assessment as learning (AaL) in the classroom, they still need help and support to incorporate assessment into their teaching and learning (Arumugham, 2020; Dorin & Yasin, 2019; Salleh et al., 2019). This can be proven after receiving training, teachers show improvements in their methods, and teachers also demonstrated noticeably more focused teaching methods (Knight et al., 2019). It is undeniable that there are teachers with a high level of knowledge in implementing CBA (Hanapi et al., 2021) and teachers conduct CBA using various activities and assessment methods during the T&L process aimed at measuring student achievement. (Ilhavenil et al., 2020).

Moreover, Hanapi (2020) & Singh (2021) found that there are still teachers who lack knowledge in manage tests according to the assessment levels set in the DSKP, which in turn causes teachers to lack confidence in conducting assessments. This is due to the limited time to adapt to CBA skills, as well as the lack of knowledge and readiness that contribute to their lack of confidence in assessment. The incompetence of teachers in conducting assessments, insufficient knowledge and skills and lack of confidence in assessing students, in carrying out assessments can lead to several implications, namely producing unfair assessment results for students and causing them harm.

According to Nora'azian & Fadzilah (2018), speaking abilities are challenging to develop since they are challenging to assess. However, the teacher must emphasize this skill to see the



pupils' fluency and proficiency in speaking Malay. Therefore, if pupils can speak Malay well, their abilities and potential can be explored through activities led by the teacher that align with the KSSM's goal of producing competent and competitive individuals on a global scale. Teachers must thus prioritize the DSKP's speaking and listening components to improve their students' academic performance in the Malay language. As a result, it can cause doubts and distrust among parents towards the teachers' responsibilities at school (Said et al., 2022).

Therefore, in implementing CBA, teachers need to enhance their knowledge and understanding of assessment towards students. In this regard, the teaching and learning conducted by the teachers still show that they can link the curriculum, teaching, and assessment because the content taught to the students encompasses the material provided in the DSKP. But there is a difference in the way CBA is implemented, which is solely through homework drills and tests. As a result, tests and drills may be the only activities used in assessments, leaving out other activities that might produce a less accurate picture of students' proficiency levels.

Thus, the aim of this research is to gain more understanding regarding the issues in the practice of CBA in Malay Language speaking skills. Based on above findings, several drastic steps that should be taken by all parties so that the implementation of the speaking skills assessment can be carried out according to the proper procedures. Assessing students' speaking abilities involves teachers using a variety of methods to discover more about their development and learning success. This type of evaluation might convey, demonstrate, or demonstrate exactly what the learning objectives have been fully met.

Teachers, as implementers, should be given exposure not just once but periodically from time to time according to suitability and improvements in terms of attending workshops, courses, and practical sessions in line with the developments in the implementation of assessments itself. In this case, it proves that teachers must first master and understand the implementation of CBA and speaking skills assessment because that is the most fundamental or essential basis. If the implementation of CBA itself is not understood by the teachers, how can they successfully apply it to the students? In this regard, the MOE should not only take the initiative by organizing workshops or training course but also assess the level of understanding of Malay language teachers regarding the actual implementation of CBA.

#### *Difficulty in Determining Pupils' Assessment Scoring*

The decision to change the assessment method received a negative response from parents when they questioned the fairness of teachers in evaluating their children's performance. Arumugham & Ariffin (2021) mentioned that the elements of curriculum changes, quality assurance, professional judgment and final formation and evaluation techniques are still beyond the comprehension of teachers. When determining the scoring of students' speaking skills assessment, teachers will refer to the DSKP, specifically the SPi, which contains performance levels (TP1 to TP6) for teachers to measure and determine the scores achieved by the students. Teachers can use the DSKP's as the best guide to measure students' TP and conduct transparent evaluations, particularly when teaching and learning take place in a classroom. Hanapi et al., (2021) stated that a lack of knowledge will cause teachers to be less confident in scoring, which in turn will result in scoring not being done transparently. Furthermore, it has an impact on the learning development of the pupils. This is consequence

teachers are unable to recognize changes in their pupils' learning development, their skills and talents will be wasted (Jamil et al., 2019; Hanapi et al., 2021). Rosli et al., (2022) revealed inconsistencies among Malaysian primary school teachers reporting on their understanding of PBD. Meanwhile, all teachers should be periodically exposed to how to report CBA, prepare transit records, and format student mastery reports (Jamil et al., (2019).

Additionally, teachers implement CBA to determine students' SPi must be knowledgeable about the TP (Said et al., 2020). In this situation, a teacher's inexperience with assessments may cause them to miss the learning progress of their students, which could lead to biased results reporting and a concealment of the students' actual potential (Kenayathulla & Yuh, 2020). Havnes et al., (2012) and Sach (2013) mentioned that in managing the scoring of oral assessments, teachers need to integrate attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, and philosophies in teaching and learning because they indirectly influence the effectiveness of the quality of assessment to be evaluated for students. Therefore, teachers need to prepare themselves with knowledge and skills to conduct assessment scoring and subsequently evaluate students fairly and according to the correct guidelines. (Gottheiner & Siegel, 2013). This claimed is supported by Balang et al., (2021) who claimed that most teachers fabricate their pupils' skill levels to satisfy the demands of their superiors and academic norms. This demonstrates that educators lack a basic understanding of the new evaluation.

As a result, according to Arumugham (2020), teachers' knowledge of how to set student TP based on the SPi in the DSKP is limited. Ruzlan & Arsaythamby (2017) also addressed this issue and discovered that teachers engaged in unfair behaviour when assigning TP to students during assessments, which led to the reported assessments being erroneous. Mahaya et al., (2019), who claim that parents will become distrustful and doubtful because of inaccurate CBA reporting. When parents questioned the fairness of teachers' evaluations of their children's accomplishments, the decision to alter the assessment methods was met with less than positive feedback. The findings of a survey that was carried out in several schools revealed that parents were not entirely aware of the methods and strategies of assessment that teachers employed. Only a report card displaying the students' TP, which range from TP1 to TP6, is provided to parents; no explanation of the methods used for assessment is provided Mustaqim (2022).

Elfia et al., (2019) discovered that teachers have trouble evaluating students' speaking and listening abilities. Teachers are reluctant to examine pupils' verbal skills and lack the expertise necessary to evaluate their speaking abilities. When the speakers engage in oral interaction during the assigned tasks, speaking should be evaluated directly. When grading pupils' speaking abilities, some signs of speaking skill assessment should be looked at. Teachers thus disregard the protocols for accurately evaluating pupils' speaking abilities. Therefore, it is important to identify the needs of teachers and the challenges they have when using CBA for speaking skills in the classroom. Then, a solution that is appropriate for teachers' needs should be suggested.

In addition, it can be difficult to evaluate a student's language proficiency, particularly if they have different linguistic backgrounds. Developing a test that fairly evaluates each student's language proficiency while correctly measuring their proficiency can be challenging (Franchis & Mohamad, 2023). This study supported by Marzaini et al., (2023) claimed that teachers' is

lacking when it comes to creating and implementing evaluation tools for CBA in the classroom practice.

In conclusion, the findings from the researchers above indicate that Malay language teachers do not understand how to score speaking skills assessment, which requires them to refer to the SPi that contains the performance levels (TP). The data obtained in this study found that teachers stated they referred to the TP (TP1 to TP6) to assess student evaluations. Based on what is said and implemented in the classroom, it proves that they score themselves, according to their own views and perceptions, and not based on the DSKP. This situation occurs when the study participants do not understand what is required by the TP statement because it is too subjective.

Furthermore, some teachers were found to be unsure of how to determine their students' SPi, which made them more likely to help pupils' and give them higher scores. Biased scoring among teachers results from this circumstance. Thus, it is necessary to expose teachers to appropriate scoring techniques, and the best way to do this is to do so on a regular basis while also providing training and oversight from higher authorities. Assessing speaking skills proficiency is more challenging than writing proficiency, particularly when comparing its reliability to the other four language skills. In order to measure scoring effectively and consistently, researchers underlined that stakeholders must provide teachers with supervision, training, and advice (Lazaraton, 2014 & Winke, 2012). Therefore, teachers need to prepare themselves with knowledge and skills to conduct assessment scoring and subsequently evaluate students fairly and according to the correct guidelines. (Gottheiner dan Siegel, 2013).

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

As a summary, this research has consequences for educators, school administrators, legislators, and other stakeholders in the country's educational system. For educators to further improve their assessment abilities, policymakers might organize the development of professionalism through a series of regular courses and training connected to assessment implementation and evaluation. Any modifications to educational policies proposed by the MOE must be implemented by schools and teachers acting pro-actively and taking the initiative.

As was previously mentioned, evaluating speaking and listening abilities is more difficult than it first appears. This is since it is closely linked to learning performance, particularly for students in the classroom. But every change has a way to address different problems, particularly when it comes to tests involving Malay language proficiency, which frequently cause teachers and the MOE to worry. However, the assessments used in the Malaysian educational system act as a catalyst for quality evaluation since they allow for the exploration of teacher quality and the simultaneous improvement of student weaknesses, which can then be addressed to improve students' mastery of language skills, especially speaking and listening. CBA is the most accurate way to gauge pupils' speaking skills proficiency in the language they are learning. It gives students the chance to apply their knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in a real-world setting and shows their learning progress through completion (Williams, 2016; Ojung & Allida, 2017).



The CBA system, which is the mainstay of Malay language education, requires teachers to be more proactive and braver in embracing changes that integrate teaching and learning with oral assessments in the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to familiarize themselves with the new teaching environment and not neglect the practice of assessment or implement it separately. The scoring of oral assessments is conducted to determine the extent of student learning achievements to be attained based on the established TP. The teacher, as an assessor, must first prepare themselves with sufficient knowledge on how to carry out the assessment scoring for the students to be evaluated. The scoring carried out is based on established criteria and is not done arbitrarily. Teachers are responsible for determining student scores transparently, fairly, and justly as outlined in the DSKP. The effectiveness of any modifications made by the MOE to enhance the country's educational system is determined by the implementing agents, who are teachers. One of the initiatives taken by the MOE to achieve the objective of world-class education is 21st-century learning, which is carried out through the PPPM (2013-2025).

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