

Issues and Challenges in The Implementation of The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in Malaysian Primary School

Shazrina Jamain, Khairul Jamaludin

Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia Pengarang

Koresponden

Email: p118266@siswa.ukm.edu.my

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Abstract

The English Language curriculum in Malaysia has undergone a transformation with the adoption and implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This study aims to contribute to the understanding of how the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is interpreted and implemented in the English language curriculum of primary schools in Malaysia. Additionally, it seeks to identify steps that can be taken to enhance the implementation and address potential challenges. The research methodology employs a document analysis approach to assess issues and challenges in implementing the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the English language curriculum of primary schools in Malaysia. The study's findings are analyzed with a focus on identifying key issues that arise during the implementation of CEFR in the teaching of English in primary schools. The study's findings reveal three main issues and challenges faced by teachers in implementing CEFR in primary schools. These include limited awareness and knowledge among teachers, a lack of training and professional development courses aligned with CEFR, and a shortage of teaching and learning resources aligned with CEFR. Based on the research findings, the researcher proposes further studies involving additional methodologies such as surveys, interviews, or direct classroom observations to gain a deeper understanding of practical experiences in implementing CEFR. The findings will inform educational policymakers and stakeholders, enabling them to formulate targeted strategies for improving the effectiveness of CEFR implementation.

Keywords: Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)₁, Issues₂, challenges₃, Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE)₄, primary schools₅

Introduction

The educational reforms in Malaysia following the launch of the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 on September 6, 2013, have progressively transformed

the education structure. This aligns with the aspirations of the National Education Philosophy (1987), Vision 2020 (1991), and the National Principles (Rukun Negara) of 1973. In Malaysia, education aims to produce high-quality individuals capable of contributing to themselves and society, competing holistically in physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and personality aspects (known as JERIS). In the context of global development and globalization, every country aspires to create a globally competitive human capital. Therefore, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) has committed to enhancing the quality of the education system in Malaysia in line with the National Transformation 2050 (TN50) agenda for the development of high-quality human capital. According to Tan Jia Yuh and Husaina Banu Kenayathulla (2020), curriculum transformation aims to enhance learning in terms of content, pedagogy, and assessment. This is in line with the goals of the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) to shape knowledgeable, leadership-oriented, critically thinking, bilingual proficient, ethically and spiritually practiced students with a national identity (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2016). Recognizing the importance of English proficiency as a lingua franca, KPM has taken proactive steps to improve English language skills among students. These measures include the implementation of the MBMMBI policy and the reform of the English Language Curriculum by replacing the Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) through the adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This implementation began at the primary school level in 2017, providing training and courses to teachers for a week. Imported textbooks from Cambridge, known as SuperMind, were introduced for Year 1 and Year 2. Student language proficiency assessments are conducted based on the six levels according to CEFR standards.

English Language Education Reform in Malaysia

According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2013), the goal of the English Language Curriculum in Malaysia is to ensure effective learning and teaching of English to acquire good and communicative language skills. The curriculum aims to cultivate communication abilities in English, build listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, and encourage understanding of culture and values related to the English language. In line with the goals of the National Education Philosophy (1987) and the Malaysian Education Development Plan, the Ministry of Education Malaysia is highly committed to improving the mastery of the English language among students so that they can meet global standards. To meet these needs, educational reform needs to be implemented according to global standards. The Malaysian Ministry of Education, in alignment with its National Education Development Plan (2013-2025), introduced the CEFR as part of a broader effort to enhance the English language education system. The CEFR, a widely recognized language proficiency framework, has been implemented globally, proving effective in various educational settings.

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) has taken a proactive approach to transform the education system in Malaysia through the implementation of the National Education Development Plan (2013-2025). This plan introduces 11 shifts to improve the education system, with the second shift emphasizing ensuring that every child in Malaysia is proficient in both Malay and English. In 2013, the English Language Standards and Quality Council (ELSQC) was established by the government to develop 'The Roadmap for English Language Education 2015-2025' (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2019). This roadmap represents a ten-year reform aimed at enhancing English language education among Malaysian students. The launch of this reform demonstrates the government's commitment to improving English language proficiency among the nation's students. According to Brown, as reported by

Saadiah & Kaladevi (2009), adequate exposure to listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills in English is crucial for students. However, the mastery of the English language among Malaysian students is still considered weak (Chan & Melor, 2016).

Problem Statement

The transformation of the existing English curriculum to one that integrates CEFR has raised various issues and challenges among teachers in terms of its implementation. One finding from recent research by Noor Azli and Aini Akmar (2020) indicates that the implementation of the curriculum and assessments aligned with CEFR remains a significant issue among English teachers in Malaysia, even though the country has entered its third phase of implementation. According to their study, despite two years of implementing the curriculum revised according to CEFR, English teachers still face challenges in designing assessments that align with CEFR based on the proficiency level. Problems and issues related to the integration of CEFR into the education system have also been revealed in several previous studies (Uri & Aziz, 2018; Aziz & Uri, 2017; Lo, 2018; Kok & Aziz, 2019).

The implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) in 2017 has triggered various reactions from the education community, especially teachers. In their role as implementers, teachers play a crucial role in determining the success and effectiveness of policies or initiatives introduced by MOE.

The change in the English curriculum to one that integrates CEFR brings along various implementation issues among teachers. Recent research by Noor Azli and Aini Akmar (2020) shows that the implementation of the curriculum and assessments aligned with CEFR remains a significant issue among English teachers in Malaysia. Despite two years of implementing the curriculum revised according to CEFR, English teachers still face challenges in designing assessments that align with CEFR based on proficiency levels. This problem is reinforced by Mohd Sallehudin and Nurul Farehah (2017), who state the lack of qualified and competent English teachers in implementing the curriculum aligned with CEFR. They also highlight the lack of awareness among teachers regarding the CEFR framework. Although there is research at the secondary school level, such as that conducted by Yueh (2018), which emphasizes the level of teacher readiness, research focusing on the issues and challenges in implementing CEFR among primary school teachers is still limited. Therefore, this writing is crucial to identify the issues and challenges faced by primary school teachers in implementing CEFR and to suggest steps to overcome them. This can help MOE plan and formulate proactive measures to improve the overall effectiveness of CEFR implementation.

Objectives Of The Study

In general, this writing aims to investigate and identify in detail the issues and challenges faced by primary school teachers in the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Additionally, it seeks to analyze and discuss proactive measures that can be taken by the Ministry of Education Malaysia to address the issues and challenges arising in the implementation of CEFR in primary schools.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the issues and challenges faced by primary school teachers in the implementation of CEFR.

2. Discuss proactive measures to address the issues and challenges in the implementation of CEFR in primary schools.

These objectives are directed towards providing a comprehensive understanding of the reality and challenges in the implementation of CEFR, and subsequently proposing appropriate actions to enhance the effectiveness of this process at the primary school level.

Research Methodology

This research methodology employs a document analysis approach to investigate issues and challenges arising during the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the English language curriculum of primary schools in Malaysia.

Methodology Steps:

Literature Review

Involves a literature review to analyze relevant past research on the implementation of CEFR in the Malaysian educational context. Identifies issues and challenges that may arise during the implementation of CEFR.

Document Analysis

Evaluates official documents, including English language curricula, CEFR guidelines, education policies, and other relevant documents. The focus of the analysis is to identify the extent to which CEFR has been integrated into the curriculum and how its implementation is carried out in teaching and learning.

Data Collection from Document Sources

Gathers data from the analyzed documents. Seeks clues on how CEFR is adapted into the curriculum, changes made in assessments, and suggested teaching strategies.

Data Analysis

Analyzes collected data with a focus on findings related to issues and challenges in the implementation of CEFR. Investigates how the curriculum and teaching reflect the concepts of CEFR, identifying necessary changes.

Research Findings

Generates research findings encompassing the results of document analysis. Provides an overall picture of the identified issues and challenges in implementing CEFR in the English language curriculum of primary schools in Malaysia.

These steps aim to gain a deeper understanding of CEFR implementation and contribute to considerations on how to enhance this process in the context of Malaysian education.

Literature Review

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is an international framework that helps measure the level of English proficiency at each educational stage (Wan Normi Hassan & Sarina Mohd Som, 2019). It functions comprehensively, transparently, and serves as a tool to determine language proficiency levels, encourage educational reforms, and establish

connections between curriculum, teaching practices, and assessments (Piccardo et al., 2019). The CEFR can facilitate the teaching and assessment processes and can have an impact on curriculum development (Moonen et al., 2013). This is because the CEFR presents a complex descriptive scheme to determine aspects of language proficiency (Piccardo et al., 2019). The framework's principles suggest that teachers' proficiency levels should be higher than those of students (Wan Normi Hassan & Sarina Mohd Som, 2019).

Officially introduced into the Malaysian education system in 2013 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013), the CEFR was implemented following the establishment of the English Language Standards and Quality Council (ELSQC) in the same year (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019). To enhance and empower English language proficiency among students in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education (KPM) collaborated with ELSQC and the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019). Therefore, the CEFR is a benchmark framework that can empower the education system internationally (Hazita Azman, 2016). The long-term plan of the CEFR covers three phases, with priority given to English language teachers (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019).

Every English language teacher is required to attend courses such as Professional Up-Skilling of English Language Teachers (Pro-ELT), the Native Speaker Programme, The Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Programme, and Expanded Specialist Coach (SISC) (Rozana Sani, 2016). Later, the ELSQC expanded the CEFR to all education levels, starting from preschool, primary school, secondary school, and university (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019). In 2018, the CEFR was comprehensively implemented in the preschool education system of the Ministry of Education Malaysia. Therefore, the ELSQC made updates and improvements in the implementation of the CEFR by selecting textbooks and support materials suitable for the education system in Malaysia at the primary, secondary, and university levels (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019).

Past Studies on Issues and Challenges in Implementing CEFR

There have been several past studies that have examined the issues and challenges in the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in primary schools in the context of education in Malaysia. One such study was conducted by Nawai and Said (2020), focusing on the challenges faced by English language teachers in rural primary schools in Sarawak in implementing CEFR. The study findings identified some key challenges faced by the teachers, including a limited level of awareness and understanding of the CEFR framework, a lack of teaching and learning resources aligned with CEFR, insufficient opportunities for professional development training related to CEFR, and time constraints. The study also indicated that most teachers had a limited level of awareness and exposure to CEFR. However, despite these challenges, they remained optimistic that this framework is crucial for enhancing English language proficiency among students in rural areas.

Next is a study conducted by Nurul Farehah (2023) aimed at investigating the challenges faced by English teachers in understanding CEFR and its framework. The study findings also indicate that most teachers have a limited understanding of CEFR, especially in the application of the CEFR framework. This is because survey results show that almost all teachers admit they are still unclear and uncertain about the detailed implementation process of CEFR, despite being exposed to information about CEFR. Teachers also express that they have not fully comprehended the framework and how to apply it in their teaching. In connection with this, they also face difficulties in understanding the descriptions of the six CEFR levels, especially

regarding their application in the classroom. Additionally, the study's findings state that the use of imported textbooks that are not adapted to the local context is a major challenge in implementing CEFR in the classroom. Furthermore, the study indicates that the preparation and planning of teaching materials aligned with CEFR based on the new curriculum are also another challenge in classroom practice for teachers.

Moving on, a study by Nii and Yunus (2022) that examines teachers' perceptions of the implementation of CEFR also found that, despite teachers showing a positive response to the implementation of CEFR, they generally agree that the CEFR framework is highly relevant to improving English language proficiency levels among students in the context of education in Malaysia. However, they also acknowledge facing challenges in its implementation in the classroom. Among the identified challenges are the lack of teaching and learning resources aligned with CEFR, making it difficult for them to plan teaching and learning sessions that align with CEFR. Additionally, they admit to being less familiar with the new approach of the CEFR framework due to limited knowledge and a lack of training and courses related to effective CEFR implementation.

The research conducted by Khair & Shah (2021) centered on the perceptions of teachers regarding the implementation of CEFR in primary schools throughout Malaysia. A total of 136 teachers took part in the questionnaire. The study uncovered a range of responses wherein teachers conveyed uncertainty in navigating the implementation of CEFR in the classroom. Challenges highlighted encompassed the insufficient training for teachers in utilizing "can do" statements and a widespread lack of familiarity with the CEFR framework.

Ramli et al. (2018) also found that the majority of teachers involved in their study expressed dissatisfaction with the level of training they received related to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The lack of CEFR-related training among teachers can hinder their ability to assess students' language skills effectively and plan instruction in line with CEFR. The deficiency in CEFR-related training poses a significant challenge as it prevents teachers from fully understanding the principles, skill levels, and explanations of CEFR. Without proper training, teachers may face difficulties in accurately assessing students' language abilities according to the levels set by CEFR, which can impact their ability to provide appropriate teaching and support.

Lo's study (2018) also found that many teachers did not understand CEFR or how to implement it in the classroom. His findings also indicated that most of them had limited awareness and knowledge of CEFR. However, they were optimistic that this framework is essential for improving English language proficiency among students in rural areas. Additionally, one of the main challenges identified was teachers' attitudes and readiness, as well as the lack of training provided by educational authorities, which acted as barriers to the successful integration of CEFR in the classroom. In conclusion, the study results highlight the need for greater support, professional training, and improved resources to help teachers overcome challenges in implementing CEFR in the classroom.

Issues And Challenges In The Implementation Of Cefr And Steps To Overcome Them

Based on a literature review referring to relevant past studies, the issues and challenges in the implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in the context of education in Malaysia can be formulated into three main issues, namely, limited awareness and understanding of CEFR among teachers, a lack of training and professional development related to CEFR, and a shortage of teaching and learning resources related to CEFR. These issues indicate that to enhance the implementation of CEFR among teachers in Malaysia,

efforts need to be made to increase awareness, provide adequate training and professional development, and ensure the availability of relevant resources aligned with the framework.

Limited Awareness and Understanding of CEFR Among Teachers

The findings of a study conducted by Nawai and Said (2020) indicate that limited awareness and understanding of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) are significant challenges in its implementation in primary schools. The study, conducted in rural primary schools in Sarawak, revealed that most teachers in the area had limited exposure and knowledge about CEFR, including methods to apply it in English language teaching in classrooms. This aligns with other studies by Khair & Shah (2021), Alih et al. (2020), Celik (2013), Kir & Sulu (2014), Lo (2018), and Vallax (2011), which also noted a lack of understanding and awareness among teachers in their respective countries regarding the implementation of CEFR in classrooms. Maria Belén Díez-Bedmar and Michael Byram (2018) also stated that the level of knowledge and awareness among teachers regarding the implementation of CEFR is still limited, despite its significant impact on the curriculum, teaching, and learning. Lo (2018) suggested that this lack of understanding and awareness is partly due to teachers' attitudes and emotions, such as anxiety and apprehension about changes in education.

To address this issue, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) is recommended to organize workshops and seminars specifically focused on CEFR to enhance teachers' understanding and provide them with practical skills in applying CEFR in teaching. Teachers may face challenges in achieving sufficient awareness and understanding of CEFR, affecting their ability to design and implement curricula aligned with this framework. Additionally, KPM is advised to provide comprehensive training to teachers on CEFR, including a detailed understanding of the six language proficiency levels and assessing student progress based on these levels. It is also crucial to ensure a sufficient number of qualified and competent English language teachers capable of implementing a curriculum aligned with CEFR through appropriate training and development programs (Mohd Sallehhudin & Nurul Farehah, 2017).

Regenerate

Steps and Recommendations to Address the Issue and Challenge of Limited Awareness and Understanding of CEFR Among Teachers

To address the issue of limited awareness and understanding of CEFR among primary school teachers, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) can implement the following steps and recommendations:

Conduct Special Workshops and Seminars on CEFR

MOE should organize specialized workshops and seminars specifically to discuss and educate teachers about CEFR. These sessions should be designed to provide in-depth understanding of CEFR principles, its implementation in teaching, and how to measure language proficiency.

Develop Online Learning Modules

Develop online learning modules that are easily accessible to teachers. These modules should cover CEFR concepts, suitable teaching strategies, and examples of their application in the classroom.

Conduct Training and Enhancement Programs

Provide specialized training and enhancement programs for English language teachers. These programs can include practical aspects of teaching according to CEFR principles and how to assess student progress, considering the six language proficiency levels.

Provide Teaching Resources

MOE should ensure the availability of teaching resources aligned with CEFR principles. Provide materials to assist teachers in integrating CEFR into their daily teaching, including textbooks, educational software, and digital resources.

Assessment and Feedback

Provide clear guidelines on assessment based on the CEFR framework. Offer quality feedback to teachers on how they implement CEFR in the classroom and provide guidance for improvement.

Incentives and Recognition

Recognize and incentivize teachers who have achieved a high level of awareness and understanding of CEFR. Establish a recognition system or incentives for teachers who successfully apply CEFR excellently.

Collaboration and Dialogue

Establish collaboration and dialogue platforms among teachers, school administrators, and education experts to share experiences and ideas on CEFR implementation. Provide space for questions and answers as well as open discussions.

Study Understanding of Local Needs

Conduct a study or assessment of teachers' understanding of specific local needs in certain locations or primary schools. Make adjustments to educational measures based on unique needs and challenges in each area. By taking these steps, it is hoped that primary school teachers can enhance their awareness and understanding of CEFR, ensuring more effective implementation in teaching English.

Insufficient Training and Professional Development Courses Related to CEFR

The inadequacy of training and opportunities for professional development related to CEFR is also a significant issue and challenge in the effective implementation of CEFR. According to Nawai and Said (2020), English teachers in rural primary schools rarely have access to training programs or workshops that focus on the implementation of CEFR. This lack of training hinders their ability to fully understand and apply the CEFR framework in their teaching practices. This finding aligns with a study conducted by Khair & Shah (2021) and Lo (2018), where he found that most teachers in Malaysia lack sufficient training to effectively implement CEFR. The study conducted by Ramli et al. (2018) also found that the majority of teachers involved in the study expressed dissatisfaction with the level of training they received related to CEFR. The lack of CEFR-related training among teachers can impede their ability to assess students' language skills effectively and plan teaching that aligns with CEFR. The deficiency in CEFR-related training is a significant challenge because it prevents teachers from fully understanding the principles, skill levels, and explanations of CEFR. Without proper training, teachers may struggle to assess students' language abilities accurately according to

the levels set by CEFR, impacting their ability to provide appropriate teaching and support. The lack of access or implementation of specific CEFR training and professional development can be a barrier. Teachers may require more intensive training focused on specific aspects of CEFR to integrate it effectively into everyday teaching.

In conclusion, to address these challenges, it is crucial for educational institutions and policymakers to invest in professional development programs that provide comprehensive training on CEFR. These programs should focus on helping teachers understand the principles of this framework, its application in language assessment, and the development of materials and activities aligned with its proficiency levels (Ramli et al., 2018). Additionally, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) needs to create a supportive and collaborative environment for teachers. This can be achieved by providing opportunities for teachers to share ideas and experiences, as well as receiving feedback from peers (Maxwell, 2015). Continuous opportunities for professional development should also be provided to teachers, allowing them to share their experiences with CEFR and learn new ways to use it in the classroom (Maxwell, 2015). The need for teacher training on CEFR is a significant challenge that can be addressed by offering comprehensive professional development opportunities, such as workshops and seminars (Nii and Yunus, 2022). Moreover, the Ministry of Education Malaysia should provide comprehensive training to teachers on CEFR, including a detailed understanding of the six language proficiency levels and assessing students' progress based on the six achievement levels in the CEFR framework (Lo, 2018).

Steps and Recommendations to Address Issues and Challenges of Insufficient Training and Professional Development Courses Related to CEFR

To address the issue of insufficient training and professional development courses related to CEFR among primary school teachers, the following are some steps and recommendations that can be implemented, particularly by the relevant authorities, including the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE).

Providing Regular Training Programs

MOE and educational agencies need to organize regular training programs related to CEFR for English language teachers in primary schools. This program should be comprehensive, covering all aspects of CEFR implementation, including assessment, teaching, and the use of teaching materials.

Conducting Workshops Specifically for Rural Teachers

For teachers in rural areas, organizing special workshops or online training sessions should be considered. This ensures that teachers in remote or rural areas also have equal opportunities for training related to CEFR.

Developing Online Learning Modules

Developing online learning modules that can be accessed by teachers at any time. These modules can include practice materials, self-assessment tests, and other relevant learning resources related to CEFR.

Providing Funding for Training

Providing funds or subsidies to teachers who want to attend training courses or seminars related to CEFR. This can incentivize teachers to enhance their skills in implementing CEFR.

Professional Development Course Organization

Conducting specialized professional development courses for English language teachers with a focus on CEFR. These courses can be led by experts in the field of CEFR and English language.

Experience and Knowledge Exchange

Encouraging the exchange of experiences and knowledge among teachers who have undergone CEFR-related training with those who have not. Dialogue sessions and forums can be organized to enable teachers to share effective strategies in implementing CEFR.

Collaboration with Higher Education Institutions

Collaborating with higher education institutions to provide courses or modules that cover CEFR aspects in the English teacher curriculum.

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation

Continuously monitoring the effectiveness of the provided training and courses. Gathering feedback from teachers to improve and align training programs based on their needs. By taking these steps, it is hoped that English language teachers in primary schools will have sufficient opportunities to enhance their proficiency in implementing CEFR more effectively.

Lack of Resources and Teaching Materials Aligned with CEFR

One of the issues and challenges in implementing CEFR in primary schools is the lack of teaching aids that align with CEFR in terms of textbooks, teaching aids, and assessment instruments. The findings of the study by Uri (2023) indicate that the shortage of teaching resources aligned with CEFR, such as textbooks, teaching materials, and quality assessment instruments, is a challenge in the implementation of CEFR in Malaysia. The same issues and challenges are also mentioned in studies by Ramli et al. (2018), Nawai & Said (2020), Mohd Don et al. (2019), Nii and Yunus (2022), and Alih et al. (2021). According to Ramli et al. (2018), although CEFR provides comprehensive explanations and guidelines for language learning and teaching, without suitable resources, teachers may face difficulties in developing teaching and activities aligned with this framework. This limitation can hinder their ability to implement a student-centered approach that promotes the specific language skill development outlined in CEFR.

Uri (2023) further identifies another challenge related to teaching and learning resources in the classroom, namely the use of imported textbooks that need to be adapted to the local context. While the use of imported textbooks is acknowledged as attractive based on Uri's study (2023), the content of these textbooks is often too foreign to be applied in the education context of our country, which consists of various ethnicities and cultures. His findings align with the study conducted by Sabbir (2019), stating that the content of the Supermind textbooks used is too "foreign" and challenging for urban and rural students with low proficiency in English. Additionally, the Supermind textbooks used have not been aligned with the existing curriculum (Aziz, Rashid, & Zainudin, 2018). Consequently, teachers face challenges in teaching and learning because the Ministry of Education (KPM) only provides Supermind textbooks without workbooks. This poses a challenge for teachers who have to prepare their own worksheets if students' parents cannot afford to buy the Supermind workbooks.

In conclusion, the lack of resources, teaching materials, and assessment instruments is a significant and substantial challenge that needs to be addressed. This is particularly crucial

because these issues are prevalent in most countries that implement CEFR in their English language teaching curriculum. To address this issue, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) needs to provide access to high-quality teaching resources and materials specifically designed to support the implementation of CEFR. These materials should be designed to help students develop the skills and knowledge required to achieve the language proficiency levels set by CEFR (Alih et al., 2021). The availability of resources and teaching materials aligned with CEFR may pose a challenge. The lack of well-designed and CEFR-compliant teaching materials can limit teachers' ability to provide in-depth and meaningful instruction.

Steps and Suggestions to Address the Issue and Challenge of Lack of Training and Professional Development Courses Related to CEFR

To overcome the issue and challenge of the lack of resources and teaching materials that align with CEFR, the following are several steps and suggestions that can be implemented by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM).

Development of Local Teaching Materials

KPM and stakeholders need to allocate resources and funds for the development of teaching and learning materials that align with CEFR, especially materials that are local and can reflect the cultural context of Malaysia.

Alignment of Textbooks

Imported textbooks or books used should be aligned with the local curriculum and the needs of Malaysian students. KPM can collaborate with local publishers to ensure that imported textbooks are suitable for the cultural and linguistic diversity in Malaysia.

Involvement of the Local Community

Encouraging the involvement of the local community, teachers, and language experts in the development of teaching materials. Research and development should involve local stakeholders to ensure the authenticity and suitability of teaching materials with the culture and context of students.

Use of Alternative Learning Resources

Promoting the use of alternative sources such as online resources, instructional videos, and applications that align with CEFR. Providing guidelines and online resources accessible to teachers to facilitate the preparation of effective teaching materials.

Development of Local Assessment Instruments

Ensuring that assessment instruments used are well-adapted to the local educational context. Involving assessment experts and teachers in the development of assessment instruments that align with CEFR and the needs of Malaysian students.

Exchange of Teaching Materials Among Teachers

Establishing a platform or system for the exchange of teaching materials among teachers to share developed and effective teaching materials for CEFR.

Training for Teachers in Developing Teaching Materials

Providing training and guidance to teachers in developing their own teaching materials that align with CEFR. Providing incentives to teachers who successfully produce high-quality teaching materials.

Organization of Teacher Creativity Programs:

Organizing teacher creativity programs that emphasize the development of innovative and relevant teaching materials in line with CEFR. Providing recognition and rewards to teachers who successfully produce high-quality teaching materials. By implementing these steps, it is hoped that the lack of resources and teaching materials that align with CEFR can be addressed, and teachers can more effectively implement the curriculum.

Conclusion

The implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in Malaysian primary schools is a long-term process. It involves careful planning, collaboration among various stakeholders, and the development of appropriate resources and assessment tools. Patience and perseverance are crucial qualities to navigate the diversity in this implementation process. CEFR provides a framework for language teaching, learning, and assessment that can contribute to more effective language education in Malaysia. However, adapting the existing framework to fit the local context and ensuring successful integration into the education system require time and effort. To implement CEFR effectively, it is essential to involve all relevant parties, including policymakers, curriculum developers, educators, and parents. Collaboration among these stakeholders is crucial to garner support, exchange ideas, address concerns, and ensure a smooth implementation process. This may involve training programs for teachers to help them understand the principles and methodologies of CEFR.

Another critical aspect is the development of suitable resources aligned with CEFR guidelines. This includes textbooks, teaching materials, and assessment tools that reflect the CEFR levels and descriptions. Adapting or creating these resources requires careful consideration of specific language needs, cultural contexts, and the educational goals of Malaysian primary schools. Additionally, continuous monitoring and assessment of the implementation process are necessary to identify any challenges, make necessary adjustments, and measure progress. Feedback loops contribute to improving the effectiveness of CEFR implementation continuously and addressing any emerging issues. In summary, the implementation of CEFR in Malaysian primary schools requires a long-term vision, dedication, and collaboration from all involved parties. While it may take time, the patience and perseverance in striving toward this goal will contribute to the improvement of language education and the development of better language skills among students. In conclusion, the implementation of CEFR in Malaysia is a complex process. While there are numerous challenges to be addressed, there is also significant potential for improvement. The Ministry of Education is committed to effective CEFR implementation and is collaborating with stakeholders to address identified challenges. The Ministry acknowledges that CEFR implementation requires significant changes in the national education system. Challenges include curriculum and instructional material adjustments, human resource development, and assessments aligned with CEFR principles. Furthermore, strong support from all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the community, is crucial for success in implementing CEFR.

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