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Effectiveness in Teaching Methodology: An Evidence on School-Based Assessment Implementation

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ABSTRACT

The main issue of newly adopted school-based assessment (SBA) in Malaysian education system in both primary and secondary school is the transition in adapting new system which affect teachers' daily workload. This study will look upon the differences among teaching principles from developed countries such as Netherlands, Korea, United Kingdom, United States of America has long implemented SBA in their education system and proposed an improvement to the current teaching methodology so that the SBA implementation could be applied successfully in the future. This research focused findings of a study about effectiveness in teaching methodology among Malay language teachers' on SBA implementation. The effectiveness of teaching methodology in the study was limited to three main objectives to: investigate whether teachers need any advanced training to increase teaching principles; investigate how effective teaching skills and assessment process needs to be emphasized; and investigate how the teachers deal with existing challenges while implementing the SBA. The methodology of study was qualitative in nature and data were collected from teachers in one of secondary schools in Seremban district with two teachers as a respondent. A total of two female teachers were involved as a respondent in the study. An interview was used as a study. The findings of this study showed teachers need to update their skills and knowledge continuously about learning and teaching with additional resources. On effective teaching, teachers must also continually refine their conceptual, pedagogical skills, classroom management, assessment and curriculum. Teachers need deep understanding of their subject area and a range of knowledge of effective strategies and practices that support student learning. The authorities must provide external learning opportunities for the teachers to implement school-based work that is enriched with ideas and knowledge from outside the school.

Keywords: School-based assessment implementation; effective teaching; teaching principles

Introduction

Education is a process of people to gain knowledge, build skills, attitudes and habits. It is a continuing process which will shows the results of educational process. In exploring this process, changes in education are often required. In 2012, Ministry of Education had replaced public examination with school-based assessment (SBA) in both primary and secondary school. The SBA involves students (standard one to standard six) in primary school and lower form students (form one to form three) in secondary school. The change of public examination-based to SBA is based on three main factors. Firstly, Tombari & Borich (1999) holds the view that students' knowledge and ability should be tested constantly throughout the year and not to be tested through summative evaluation. Malaysian Ministry of Education also reported that they need to abolish heavy examination to focus on developmental education. Secondly, the government hope students' communication and creative skills could be improved through SBA implementation. On the other hand, it can

also develop students' competencies in higher order thinking skills (HOTS) such as, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating (Ministry of Education, 2011). Thirdly, according to the Ministry of Education (2003), students will be no longer assessed by end-of-year examinations, instead they need to work in a team with their friends in which it could build their social skills especially interpersonal relationship.

Several countries such as Netherlands, Korea, United Kingdom and America have long implemented SBA in their education system. It is assumed that, even though they have implemented SBA for a long time, many researchers continue to investigate the relevant aspects related to SBA implementation (Board of Studies, 1998)

The implementation of SBA in Malaysia needs to focus on teachers' teaching strategies as an implementer in school needs to be accomplished. In terms of SBA, it is believed that the assessment benefits both teachers and students in several ways: ;1) the outcome data can be the evidence of teachers' teaching; 2) it helps teachers to monitor students learning directly in the classroom throughout the year and enables students to improve their learning before year-end assessment; 3) it provides teachers with appropriate data that can be used to select the ways of teaching that meet the learning requirement for each group of students; 4) the assessment data and the feedbacks can be used by students to enhance their knowledge and understanding; 5) it provides students an opportunity to upgrade their self-assessment in learning process; and 6) it allows students to make decisions on how they can obtain knowledge and skills (Thomas, Allman, & Beech, 2004).

Currently, SBA implementation is still in progress and it relies on teachers' support. They need to fully understand the advantageous of SBA. Furthermore, this paper seeks to explore the perspective of Malay language teachers in implementing the three skills, reading, writing and oral assessment, in Malay language subject for lower form students.

Purpose of the Study

As explained in the introduction, it is clear that this study investigate the perspective of teachers in implementing the three skills (reading, writing, and oral) that need to be assessed throughout the year. It also looks into teachers' capability to complete six bands for each skill; a total of 18 bands a year must be achieved by students. However, this study only focuses on oral skill assessment.

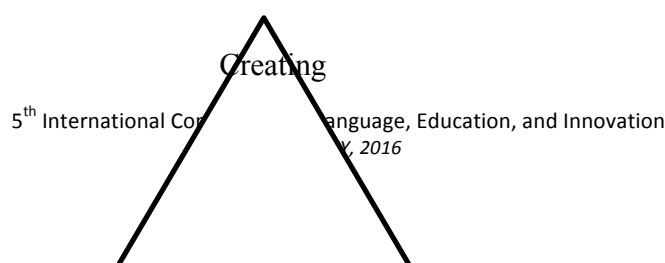
Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Investigate whether teachers need any advanced training to increase teaching principles.
2. Investigate how effective teaching skills assessment process need to be emphasized.
3. Investigate how the teachers deal with existing challenges while implementing the SBA.

Theory

Bloom's taxonomy and Anderson theory was used in this study. This theory was created in 1956 by the leader of educational psychologist, Dr. Benjamin Bloom, in order to promote higher forms of thinking in education. It is often used in designing educational, training, and learning process.



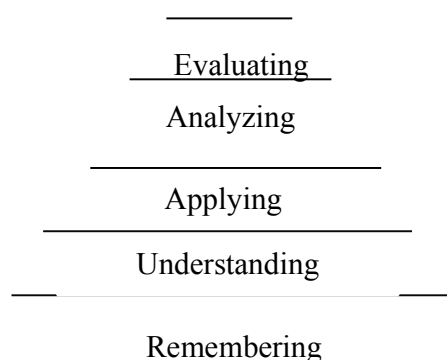


Figure 1: Bloom's taxonomy hierarchy

The assessment of oral skill component for Malay language subject is based on the level of students' achievement. They should master themselves by doing well in band one to band six according to the descriptors set. As discussed above, we can see the consistency of band one to band six that have been designed based on Bloom's theory as a part of learning process.

Skills	Band	Descriptor
		Form One
	6	Make considerate opinions on topics discussed by presenting critical pronunciation, intonation, and appropriate style to influence others.
	5	Express point of view and give rational opinions about something in a good manner.
Oral	4	Discuss and give relevant justifications by agreeing or disagreeing politely in various situations.
	3	Questioning something by using correct language forms and functions.
	2	Listen, understand, and tell something heard correctly.
	1	Interact with a matter that relates to daily life by using simple words.
		Form Two
	6	Consider and evaluate various rational opinions to overcome a problem.
	5	Justify a clear stand with reasonable grounds or provide a relevant information by using ethical speech style.
	4	Discuss with giving a rational view using appropriate speech style (word, expression, and sentence).
Oral	3	Express relevant opinions and debate in the right way about a topic that has been set.
	2	Listen and respond appropriately/-relevantly to issues/-matters spontaneously.
	1	Talk about current issues with simple sentences that can be understood.
		Form Three
	6	Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of ideas by responding to a strong reason using a precise expression and speech style (fluency, intonation, and tone) to convince others.
Oral	5	Checking several opinions and make appropriate inferences and give rational reasons in a good manner.

Skills	Band	Descriptor
	4	Negotiate a topic with presenting a rational reason appropriately.
	3	Discuss by agreeing or disagreeing others thoughts with a rational reason/-opinion.
	2	Listen and give opinions spontaneously and logically about an issue heard.
	1	Questioning and continuing discussion about an issue using correct language forms.

Table 1

Guideline For Student's Development (Malay Language) Oral Skill Assessment

The oral assessment is carried out throughout the year. Students must do well in this assessment and they must try to get the highest band as they can. Teachers will help the students and encourage them to speak and they will also give ideas regarding the descriptors.

As pointed out in the introduction of this paper, SBA was applied in Malaysian education system in both primary and secondary school since 2012. Zaltman et al. (1973) hold the view that there are two levels of change process; individual and organizational. The main focus of this study is to investigate the concerns of the teachers on the new oral assessment system which shows the change process is analyzed at the individual level.

Literature Review

According to the Malaysian Examinations Board (2003), school-based oral assessment was introduced in 2007. This oral assessment is conducted by teachers in the classroom from January until December. The achievement of students is based on four constructs; 1) grammar and vocabulary; 2) pronunciation and intonation; 3) fluency and rhythm; and 4) ethics and mannerism. Students' achievements are graded A, B, C, or D. The oral assessment should be completed twice a year. However, for form three students, their assessment marks will be monitored by the appraiser area (Pkw). The appraiser area is appointed by the State Education Departments to coordinate the score.

Malaysian Examination Board (2012) mentioned the SBA is a form of assessment in school. The Malaysian Examination Board (MEB) has the responsibility to plan and administer the SBA systematically. The procedure of giving scores and activities are also planned by the MEB. The implementation of SBA is a combination of school assessment given by teachers and confirmation of the appraisers in the National Achievement Centre (Begum, 2008)

Gopala et.al (2013), conducted a study on teachers' knowledge and issues in the implementation of school-based assessment: a case of schools in Terengganu. A total of 20 teachers were interviewed. The results showed that teachers mostly satisfactory knowledge of implementing SBA but have difficulty in the psychometrics of test analysis. In addition, teachers faced problems with lack of adequate staff numbers, lack of uniformity, and biasness in grading.

In their study on the benefits on the school-based assessment, Azlin et al (2013), data were collected from interviews involving three Year 1 Chinese language teachers. The result showed teachers need to be creative, using variety strategies in teaching process while assessing their students.

Similarly, Norzila (2013) in her study on school-based assessment: transformation in educational assessment in Malaysia identified administrators and teachers having difficulty in accepting the changes made in the policy. She claimed teachers do not get sufficient

information on SBA, lack of relevant training, insufficient materials on SBA for teachers to refer in case they had a problem during implementing on SBA.

According to Johnson, Mehta, and Rushton (2012) in their study on GCSE modern foreign language (speaking component) identified timetabling is the major difficulties in conducting French oral skill possibly due to the need to schedule on oral session for each student. Furthermore, increased of workload and administration were also the major problem in this subject.

Suseela and Sim (2010) conducted a study on teachers' perspectives of school-based assessment in a secondary school in Kuala Lumpur. A total of two English language teacher were interviewed and observed. The results showed insufficient guidelines on the implementation process, lack of teachers' knowledge base, and lack of external monitoring of school-based oral English assessment (OEA).

Ministry of Education should provide sufficient guidelines for teachers for the implementation of oral assessment. One of the teachers has mentioned:

Those days using the old format, we were provided with the criteria for grading. But in this new form, the criteria are not stated clearly. Those old forms are better than this new form. We knew the criteria of the old form in detail. We have sections such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. But in this new form, we do not have that kind of criteria. We just listen in general and give the mark based on the bands given: Excellent (10-15), good (6-9) and so on.

Another teacher concurred with the earlier teacher's statement by saying that:

School-based Oral English Assessment is very subjective. It is subjective because the marks given are left to the discretion of the teacher – human being – without any structured format. So it is very...very subjective.

Methodology

This study applied qualitative case study method and the data were collected through a semi-structured interview in order to obtain in-depth information. A total of two females teachers were involved in this study. Data were collected from teachers in the same school. This section reviews the oral skill in Malay language subject whether the objectives of teaching and learning process are achieved or not with SBA implementation conducted by teachers in the classroom. The interview questions were related to the topic concerned. The interview protocol was also developed.

Findings

The data from this study were obtained by conducting interviews. The respondents in this study were Malay language teachers who have been teaching more than eight years. The interview analysis revealed three themes ; 1) reliability in grading on the implementation of school-based Malay language oral skill; 2) insufficient time on the implementation on school-based Malay language oral skill; and 3) poor knowledge-base of teachers on school-based Malay language oral skill.

Themes	Respondent A	Respondent B	Deal
Reliability in grading	The reliability is questionable because teachers assess students themselves and of course	There is no specific construct to be evaluated like those days using the old	Both teachers having problems to implement the assessment

Themes	Respondent A	Respondent B	Deal
	there must be bias. Teachers always want their students and school to achieve high performance. Marks were given based on the overall views of the teachers.	format. For example: pronunciation, grammar, intonation, and fluency. Teachers are given band one to band six to assess students but we do not know how to determine the band because they did not explain it clearly.	grading. The respondents had their worries to meet the student band.
Insufficient time	Oral skill is assessed individually. I have about 35 students in my classroom and I teach three classrooms. I did not manage to assess all students throughout the year because some students were always absent. Not only that, I have to attend a lot of courses and a lot of works to be done.	I am having a problem to assess band four to band six for oral skill. This is because students and teachers were busy with examination preparation. Even though, we have implemented SBA, the examination-based still remain in my school. This is one of the obstacles.	It was evident that the respondents did not have enough time to implement the oral assessment. This is due to load of works, need to assess more than 35 students in one classroom, and examination-based still implemented in school.
Poor knowledge-base	I do not know much about SBA implementation. I have to teach lower form students due to shortage of teachers. -I have experienced teaching upper form students for more than ten years and this new education system is really new to me.	SBA has been implemented for almost four years, but until now-, I 'am still not sure how to conduct the assessment and I think we need to attend training course so that we can conduct it properly in the future.	The teachers indicated a need of possible training to increase their knowledge in conducting oral assessment effectively.

Table 2
The Transcription of Interviews

Skills	Band	Descriptor	Students			
		Form One	1	2	3	4
Oral	6	Make considerate opinions on topics discussed by presenting critical pronunciation, intonation, and appropriate style to influence others.	/		/	

5	Express point of view and give rational opinions about something in a good manner.	/	/	/
4	Discuss and give relevant justifications by agreeing or disagreeing politely in various situations.	/	/	/
3	Questioning something by using correct language forms and functions.	/	/	/
2	Listen, understand, and tell something heard correctly.	/	/	/
1	Interact with a matter that relates to daily life by using simple words.	/	/	/

Table 3
Assessment in the classroom x by respondent A

Skills	Band	Descriptor	Students			
			1	2	3	4
		Form One				
Oral	6	Make considerate opinions on topics discussed by presenting critical pronunciation, intonation, and appropriate style to influence others.				
	5	Express point of view and give rational opinions about something in a good manner.				
	4	Discuss and give relevant justifications by agreeing or disagreeing politely in various situations.	/		/	
	3	Questioning something by using correct language forms and functions.	/	/	/	/
	2	Listen, understand, and tell something heard correctly.	/	/	/	/
	1	Interact with a matter that relates to daily life by using simple words.	/	/	/	/

Table 4
Assessment in the classroom y by respondent B

Skills	Band	Descriptor	Students			
			1	2	3	4
		Form One				
Oral	6	Make considerate opinions on topics discussed by presenting critical pronunciation, intonation, and appropriate style to influence others.				
	5	Express point of view and give rational opinions about something in a good manner.				
	4	Discuss and give relevant justifications by agreeing or disagreeing politely in various situations.	/		/	
	3	Questioning something by using correct language forms and functions.	/	/	/	/
	2	Listen, understand, and tell something heard correctly.	/	/	/	/
	1	Interact with a matter that relates to daily life by using simple words.	/	/	/	/

The findings obtained indicated that teachers have different opinions on the reliability of school-based implementation grading in oral skill. Most teachers assess students according to their own interpretation and judgement. Suseela and Sim Kwan Hoon (2010) also discovered similar findings in which their respondents expressed that the grading format needs to be improved.

In addition, -teachers do not have enough time to conduct oral skill assessment as there are too many students in the classroom and individually assessment takes quite some

time. Furthermore, respondents also indicated that students who are always absent indirectly hinder the teachers from completing the assessment before the year ends. They also indicated that examination is still conducted. This causes time constraint for teachers to complete the oral skill assessment since they need to concentrate on examinations. According to Kapambwe (2010), the large sizes of class was the major problem. At the same time, absenteeism among student was also affects their performance.

The findings obtained from interview also indicated that both teachers did not have much knowledge and understanding of the school-based implementation of oral skill. One of the teachers is new to teaching lower form students and that teacher is not familiar with the SBA. It is completely different from the upper form format in teaching Malay language. Secondly, the teacher is still unclear with the procedure to practice the assessment. Both respondents obviously need to attend training courses to improve their practice of school-based Malay language oral skill.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the concerns of two Malay language teachers in secondary school on the implementation of SBA for Malay language oral skill. Fraenkel & Wallen (2006) have pointed out other crucial matters need to be considered, that are reliability and validity of the assessment which include appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of the tests in the grading process. As we can see, both respondents indicated that they concern about the reliability of grading in oral skill assessment. They pointed out that they have doubts in giving grades to students based on this new oral assessment format. The way of giving marks in SBA is unclear compared to the old format in which it has four constructs to be evaluated by teachers. The respondents also had their worries when students do not meet the band targeted and teachers help students by grading their band according to overall view. The possible explanation for this might be that teachers try to give the best band for their students. It seems that the ministry needs to consider necessary revision on the guideline of grading.

Another important finding found was that both teachers experienced insufficient time to implement the school-based oral assessment. The respondents claimed that they did not have enough time because there are redundancies in school-based implementation and examination based are still held in schools. Therefore, it seems that SBA of students' achievement is not reliable. The school administrators are more confident to use examination results to show the actual students' achievement. It is obvious that the examination interferes the process of oral assessment.

The results of this study showed that teachers' knowledge and skills in implementing school-based oral assessment are still in poor level albeit guidelines provided by the Ministry. According to Kapambwe (2010), it is hard for teachers to implement SBA. The teachers showed that they did not have much understanding on how to conduct the oral assessment. This finding indicates that teachers need to attend courses or workshop to face the challenges and to improve- their practice of school-based oral assessment. This finding is consistent with previous research; which also found that teachers need to attend courses frequently to give the teachers more exposure on how to conduct the assessment more efficiently Suseela and Sim Kwan Hoon, (2010).

As we can see, there are six levels of achievement; these levels are called bands. Teachers assess students based on guideline for student development set according to the level of achievement. It is no doubt, the consistency of band one to band six that have been designed based on Bloom's theory; remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Limitation

There are some limitations need to be considered in this study. Firstly, the respondents were- -two Malay language teachers who teach lower form students. Secondly, the study was conducted at the same secondary school in Seremban district. Thirdly, the SBA, as a new education system, is in the fourth year of implementation.

Recommendation and Conclusion

The theory of Bloom's used in this study is crystal clear show the consistency of band one to band six in the guideline for student development for Malay language. Taxonomy was designed to show the student behaviors through the classification which will produce outcomes of the learning process. The authorities must provide external learning opportunities for the teachers to implement school-based work that is enriched with ideas and knowledge from outside the school. Although this study addressed the reliability in grading, insufficient time, and poor knowledge-based among teachers on the implementation SBA Malay language oral skill, it is necessary to have an in-depth investigation on SBA for instance, writing and reading skills that need to be highlighted.

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