

Malaysian ESL Teachers' Language Assessment Literacy Issues in Implementing CEFR-Aligned Classroom-Based Assessment: How to Deal with Them?

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Abstract

Language assessment literacy (LAL) is a substantial element in language teachers' virtuosity. It is a must-have skill in language teachers to be able to assess students' language skills accurately and efficiently. Since the Malaysian education system is practicing CEFR-aligned Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA), Malaysian ESL teachers must possess solid assessment knowledge and carry out positive assessment practices to accomplish the idea of implementing the new assessment system successfully. For this reason, this review paper looks into three issues lingering around Malaysian ESL teachers' LAL, which are lack of assessment knowledge, poor assessment practices as well as prominent challenges faced by Malaysian ESL teachers in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA. The findings bear important implications that provide necessary ideas regarding Malaysian ESL teachers' assessment knowledge, practices and challenges to improve its implementation. Besides, this paper also recommends the increment of assessment training and the reduction of teachers' workload as a way to address the issues raised. Future research may center on the tailored training and support needed by ESL teachers, along with the mastery of assessment methods essential for enhancing their LAL which would indirectly lead them in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA effectively.

Keywords: Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR), Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA), English as Second Language (ESL), Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), Knowledge, Practices, Challenges

Introduction

Major reforms have taken place in the Malaysian education system moving from traditional assessment to the implementation of School-Based Assessment (SBA) in schools. These reforms have led to significant changes in the teaching and learning process and the national educational assessment system. The emphasis on public examinations has been reviewed and a new assessment system has been introduced. In 2021, the high-stake examinations namely

the Primary School Achievement Test or so-called *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR) and Form 3 Assessment or so called *Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3* (PT3) were abolished (Rethinasamy et al., 2021) due to the ineffectiveness of both to measure students' learning ability (Marzaini et al., 2023). Since the abolition, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has introduced Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) as a step towards a more progressive and continuous assessment system (MoE, 2019). Through CBA, particularly formative assessment, teachers are given full autonomy in assessing students. In the context of English language education, CBA is aligned with an international standard framework to assess languages proficiency, namely the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Through the integration of CEFR in the CBA system of English subject, Malaysian English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers manage to monitor and record their students' language development over time based on the international descriptive standards (Sidhu et al., 2018).

The LAL of Malaysian ESL teachers in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA remains a critical issue, characterized by inadequate knowledge and training in assessment practices, limited understanding of the CEFR framework, and challenges related to time constraints and workload pressures. These factors hinder the effective implementation of CBA aligned with CEFR standards, impacting the quality of language assessment practices in Malaysian ESL classrooms. Addressing these challenges is essential to enhance teachers' LAL and therefore, improve the overall implementation of CEFR-aligned CBA in ESL education in Malaysia.

In the context of Malaysian ESL education, there exists a research gap concerning the LAL of ESL teachers within the framework of CEFR-aligned CBA. Prior studies have highlighted a lack of comprehensive exploration into Malaysian ESL teachers' preparedness and awareness in adapting to CEFR-aligned CBA, indicating the need for further investigation in this area. This gap underscores the importance of examining and enhancing ESL teachers' assessment practices to align with the evolving educational assessment system, emphasizing the urgency for research to address these challenges and improve the implementation of CEFR-aligned CBA among Malaysian ESL teachers.

The rationale behind conducting this study on Malaysian ESL teachers' LAL in the context of CEFR-aligned CBA is multifaceted and crucial for several reasons:

1. **Educational Reform:** The Malaysian education system has undergone significant reforms, transitioning from traditional assessment methods to a more contemporary approach with the implementation of CEFR-aligned CBA. This shift necessitates a thorough understanding of assessment practices among ESL teachers to ensure the successful implementation of the new system.
2. **Quality of Assessment:** Effective assessment practices are essential for accurately evaluating students' language proficiency and progress. By enhancing ESL teachers' assessment literacy, the quality of assessments can be improved, leading to more meaningful and reliable evaluation of students' learning outcomes.
3. **Students' Learning Outcomes:** The proficiency of ESL teachers in conducting assessments directly impacts students' learning outcomes. A strong LAL among ESL teachers can result in better-informed instructional decisions, targeted feedback for students, and improved overall academic performance.
4. **Professional Development:** Enhancing ESL teachers' LAL contributes to their professional development and pedagogical skills. By equipping teachers with the

knowledge and skills to design and implement effective assessments, they can enhance their teaching practices and create a more conducive learning environment for students.

5. **Policy Implications:** The findings of this study can have implications for educational policies and practices in Malaysia. By identifying the challenges faced by ESL teachers in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA, policymakers can develop targeted interventions and support mechanisms to address these challenges and improve the overall assessment practices in ESL education.
6. **Research Gap:** The study addresses a gap in the existing literature by focusing on the LAL of Malaysian ESL teachers specifically in the context of CEFR-aligned CBA. By exploring this under-researched area, the study contributes valuable insights and recommendations for improving assessment practices in ESL education.

Background

Raman and Yamat (2014) noted that the practice of CBA has long been implemented successfully in developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Finland, New Zealand, Canada, England and many more countries. This practice is followed by developing countries including Malaysia. CBA in Malaysia was formerly known as School Assessment starting in 2011, but was rebranded as CBA in 2016 (MoE, 2019). Starting early 2017, English subject's CBA was aligned with CEFR (Lee & Kassim, 2019). Although it has been implemented since 2011, only in 2018, CBA was implemented comprehensively (Curriculum Development Division, 2018).

The new national educational assessment system has led to a significant transformation in the role of Malaysian ESL teachers. This CEFR-aligned CBA requires ESL teachers to plan, design, implement assessment in their daily teaching practices as well as report and do follow-up actions according to the guidelines stated by the MoE (Isa et al., 2020). In line with the MoE's move to develop this new assessment system, ESL teachers are required to equip themselves with excellent LAL to ensure that students' ability and progress are assessed accurately, effectively, authentically and reliably. The implementation of CEFR-aligned CBA requires ESL teachers to assess students' language development in the four main language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing (Hopfenbeck, 2018). ESL teachers need to be skillful to design appropriate assessment instruments to increase and widen students' language knowledge by aligning it with CEFR principles (Pellegrino et al., 2016). The new assessment system requires ESL teachers to be language assessment literate as they are given full autonomy to assess students' language development.

Stiggins and Conklin (1992) defined assessment literacy as the ability to distinguish between sound and unsound assessment. Stiggins and Conklin (1992) stated that teachers who possess assessment literacy are familiar with the content and learning outcomes to be assessed; the purpose; the best way to assess students; develop quality instruments to assess students' performance; aware of possible problems that may occur regarding assessment; prevent problems; and aware of the consequences that may arise from inaccurate assessment. In term of language assessment literacy, Giraldo (2018) referred it to knowledge, skills, and principles in language assessment. He detailed that language assessment knowledge includes awareness of applied linguistics, awareness of theory and concepts of language testing and assessment, and awareness of own language assessment context. Whereas, skills encompass

instructional skills, designing language assessment skills, educational measurement skills, and technological skills. While the principles of LAL are about awareness of and action towards critical issues in language assessment.

What has become a big concern in our national educational system is that the LAL level of Malaysian ESL teachers has still not reached the expected level to effectively implement this new assessment system, as Malaysian ESL teachers claimed as not having solid knowledge in LAL (Quyen & Khairani, 2017). This statement is supported by Lim and Wun (2016) who stated that teachers lack knowledge of assessment literacy and this leads to the existence of problems in assessing students accurately. The low level of teachers' understanding of assessment literacy prevents students from fully unleashing their potential. Talib et al. (2014) found that Malaysian ESL teachers are not prepared to assess their students in the classroom because they do not have the necessary knowledge and assessment skills. The duration of teaching experience greatly influences teachers' perception of their knowledge and skills in assessment (Singh et al., 2022). Factors such as teacher orientation toward traditional assessment-centered teaching, curriculum requirements and myths about the proper use of assessment procedures prevent teachers from assessing students' learning effectively (Alaa et al., 2019).

Ashraf and Zolfaghari (2018) asserted that assessment cannot be separated from the teaching and learning process. Teachers should find ways to engage students in assessment through classroom activities. In addition to assessing students for learning, teachers can also perform assessments to track students' progress and achievement (Earl, 2003). Assessment is not limited to a single purpose (Djoub, 2017) and teachers need to be aware of their role to integrate assessment elements into their classroom activities and professional practice (Abell & Siegel, 2011). Jaba (2013, as cited in Singh et al., 2022) claimed that teachers are responsible for determining the results to be assessed, creating assessment instruments, analyzing and reporting the assessment results and making follow-up actions in CBA. To ensure that the assessment carried out is authentic, reliable and accurate, it requires solid knowledge and assessment skills (Veloo et al., 2016).

Assessing a student's language skills can be challenging, especially when students come from diverse language backgrounds (Franchis & Mohamad, 2023). It can be difficult to create an assessment that accurately measures each student's language skills and provides a fair assessment. Thus, it is clear that Malaysian ESL teachers need to have good language assessment literacy to assess, monitor and track the level of students' learning (Kim et al., 2018) accurately and effectively.

Purpose

This paper aims to:

1. discuss main three issues faced by Malaysian ESL teachers in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA
2. provide recommendations to address main three issues faced by Malaysian ESL teachers in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA

Malaysian ESL teachers' assessment knowledge in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA

A study conducted by Aziz (2011, as cited in Singh et al., 2022) indicated that secondary school ESL teachers in Malaysia have a very low level of understanding of test reliability. The result

of the study showed that secondary school ESL teachers' understanding of testing was rather vague. In the study's interviews, the secondary school ESL teachers interviewed did not show a clear understanding of reliability and its concepts. In addition, the findings also showed that Malaysian ESL teachers generally do not follow good test development model practices, particularly regarding the use of test specifications.

Based on the research of Marzaini et al. (2023), Malaysian ESL teachers' LAL is at a low level in designing and developing assessment instruments to assess students in CBA-aligned with CEFR. ESL teachers only have a surface understanding of the use of CEFR descriptors in assessing students' performance. ESL teachers still have a low level of LAL because most of them are still unclear how to design assessment instruments aligned with the CEFR in CBA. This can be very worrying as a low level of assessment literacy will result in poor assessment practices when assessing students (Ergul & Cetin, 2021). This is supported by Yusof and Othman (2019) as well as Yusoff and Lee (2018) who stated the importance of having readiness in terms of knowledge and skills in carrying out assessments.

The studies of Singh et al (2022); Wilson and Narasuman (2020); Singh et al (2021); Aziz et al (2020); Khan et al (2023); Lee and Kassim (2019); Lee and Kassim (2020) also showed that teachers have limited knowledge and skills in administering assessments. Teachers need significant support from school administrators to effectively implement the curriculum and assessment practices (Franchis & Mohamad, 2023). The studies of Wilson and Narasuman (2020); Singh et al (2021); Sabbir (2019); Aziz et al (2020); Lee and Kassim (2020) also found that teachers face difficulties in choosing assessment contents. As a result, they often rely on outside sources such as reference books, rather than on their own expertise in selecting appropriate contents for assessments. The inability of teachers to master the skills in implementing CBA and lack of knowledge affects their confidence in assessment (Lo, 2006).

Franchis and Mohamad (2023) posited that Malaysian ESL teachers need to master the principles and be proficient in language assessment practices. In particular, they need to understand the principles of language assessment that should be used in formal assessment as well as in other types of assessment (Singh et al., 2022). They should understand the different types of assessments, how to develop authentic and reliable assessments, and how to interpret and use assessment results to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and learning activities. The effectiveness of CBA and assessment methods depends on the knowledge of teachers (Tierney et al., 2011). The studies of Wilson and Narasuman (2020), Singh et al (2021); Lee and Kassim (2019), as well as Aziz et al (2020) pointed out that ESL teachers have limited knowledge of assessment standards and assessment types aligned with CEFR (Singh et al., 2021). They are also not used to performing formative assessments Khan et al (2023); Wilson & Narasuman (2020) and do not have sufficient understanding to analyze the information collected through students' assessments.

While most of the previous studies showed that Malaysian ESL teachers' LAL level is at an unsatisfactory level, there are also past studies that showed Malaysian ESL teachers to some extent, have a good mastery of assessment literacy, which shows they have solid and clear knowledge of assessment and its implementation (Singh et al., 2022). They can relate assessments to belief systems, students' autonomy, motivation, peer assessment, self-

assessment, dynamic assessment, alternative assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment and even centralized examinations.

Through the findings of the studies presented, it can be seen that the level of knowledge of Malaysian ESL teachers in assessment, especially in CBA-aligned with CEFR, still does not reach the level desired by the MoE. Knowledge of language assessment is very important to be mastered by ESL teachers to ensure that the assessment carried out is authentic, reliable, meaningful and effective. This lack of knowledge does not merely affect ESL teachers, but in fact, it has even a greater impact on students. ESL teachers need to master various knowledge of assessment, particularly of language skills so that the assessment is carried out effectively and has a positive impact on teaching and learning process, students' performance and well-being. Teachers' competence in assessing students can increase students' engagement and arouse their interest to actively involved in learning activities.

Malaysian ESL teachers' language assessment practices in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA

The reform in the assessment system has also led to changes in the practice of ESL teachers' teaching and learning process in classroom (Marzaini et al., 2023). These changes demand ESL teachers to be fully language assessment literate in order to be able to accomplish the aim of implementing CBA-aligned with CEFR effectively. Ironically, Marzaini et al (2023) claimed that Malaysian ESL teachers have a low level of LAL to implement CEFR-aligned CBA in their classroom practices. The studies of Arumugham (2020); Suppian et al (2020) and Yusoff and Lee (2021) revealed that CBA is often implemented not in line with the objectives set. Ulas and Aksu (2015) explained that this problem occurs due to autonomous differences between policy planning and policy implementation.

Arumugham (2020) also claimed that many teachers tend to practice exam-oriented assessments when assessing students because they use CBA only to meet the requirements of the instructions of superiors (Suppian et al., 2020). This claim is supported by Balang et al (2021) who claimed that most teachers falsify their students' mastery levels to meet the standards set by their superiors and educational standards. This shows that teachers do not understand the basics of the new assessment.

A study conducted by Veloo et al. (2016) revealed that the CBA practiced by secondary school ESL teachers in Malaysia is at a moderate level. This statement is supported by the findings of the study by Talib et al. (2014) who found that teachers in Malaysia are not able to understand and implement SBA and its implementation is at an unsatisfactory level. Ali et al (2015) as well as See and Saw (2012) pointed out that teachers also face the problem of inability to construct examination instruments. Nair et al (2014), as cited in Singh et al (2022) also revealed that teachers are biased and give high marks to their favorite students because they cannot present a standard rubric that shows transparency in giving marks.

Although studies shown that Malaysian ESL teachers have a low level of LAL in implementing CBA-aligned with CEFR in their classroom practice, there are also Malaysian ESL teachers who implement CBA as visioned by the policy makers. Among the types of assessment practiced by Malaysian ESL teachers include portfolio, peer assessment, online assessment, self-assessment and worksheet (Franchis & Mohamad, 2023). This statement is supported by the study of Singh et al (2020) who reported Malaysian ESL teachers assess students through a

variety of classroom activities, worksheets, group work, role plays, games, presentations and reading aloud and ask students questions based on the unit or topic taught.

Lee and Kassim (2020); Singh et al (2021); Lee and Kassim (2019); Jonglai et al (2021) exposed that the use of worksheets is one of the most popular teaching strategies used by Malaysian ESL teachers in classroom to ensure assessment takes place. There are also Malaysian ESL teachers who use portfolio assessment in their classrooms (Singh et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2022). Portfolio assessment is an excellent substitute for conventional methods of evaluating written and oral results (Franchis & Mohamad, 2023). It does not only display the learning process but also covers various aspects of language learning and products. It is a more authentic assessment of performance, based on how students perform a particular task or project, rather than by answering sets of questions, even if those questions are designed to be like in real situations (Müller-Lyaskovets et al., 2023, as cited in Franchis & Mohamad, 2023).

Singh et al (2022); Wilson and Narasuman (2020); Singh et al (2021); Jonglai et al (2021); Othman (2019) exposed that majority of Malaysian ESL teachers use SBA and peer assessment (Singh et al., 2022; Aziz et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2021; Ma'arop & Samad, 2020). Additionally, Singh et al (2022); Aziz et al (2020); Khan et al (2023); Singh et al (2021); Jonglai et al (2021) also affirmed that there are also Malaysian ESL teachers who incorporate peer assessment in their classrooms.

Through the findings of the studies shown, it can be seen that the assessment practices of Malaysian ESL teachers in assessment, especially CEFR-aligned CBA, still do not reach the level desired by the MoE. Proper and effective assessment practices are very important for ESL teachers to master and practice to ensure that students' progress and development are assessed systematically and objectively. This lack of practice will not only affect ESL teachers, but it will also give a greater impact on students. ESL teachers need to master a variety of assessment practices especially for language skills so that students' strengths and weaknesses can be identified and appropriate feedback can be given to improve their mastery.

Challenges faced by Malaysian ESL teachers in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA

- **Time Constraints**

Most Malaysian ESL teachers claimed that CEFR-aligned CBA implementation takes a lot of their time to plan and design assessment instruments, report students' progress as well as to record assessment evidence (Marzaini et al., 2023). ESL teachers need to design assessment instruments that suit the needs and skill levels of different students. This process takes up a lot of time of ESL teachers. In addition, Malaysian ESL teachers also claimed that the process to key-in students' progress in both offline and online systems takes a lot of their time, mainly the online, due to unstable servers. They also have to wait till the server is back stable to key-in students' progress records. Singh et al (2021) claimed that time constraints cause ESL teachers fail to complete the units set out in the syllabus. The time constraints to perform teaching and learning activities also undermine the motivation of ESL teachers to cover all the topics that need to be taught. In the study of Sidhu et al (2018), ESL teachers revealed that besides heavy and numerous administrative work and teaching responsibilities, they were also frequently sent to take certain courses outside of school which consumed their teaching

time. They claimed that with little time remaining, CBA became hard on them and caused them to neglect it.

- **Lack of Training**

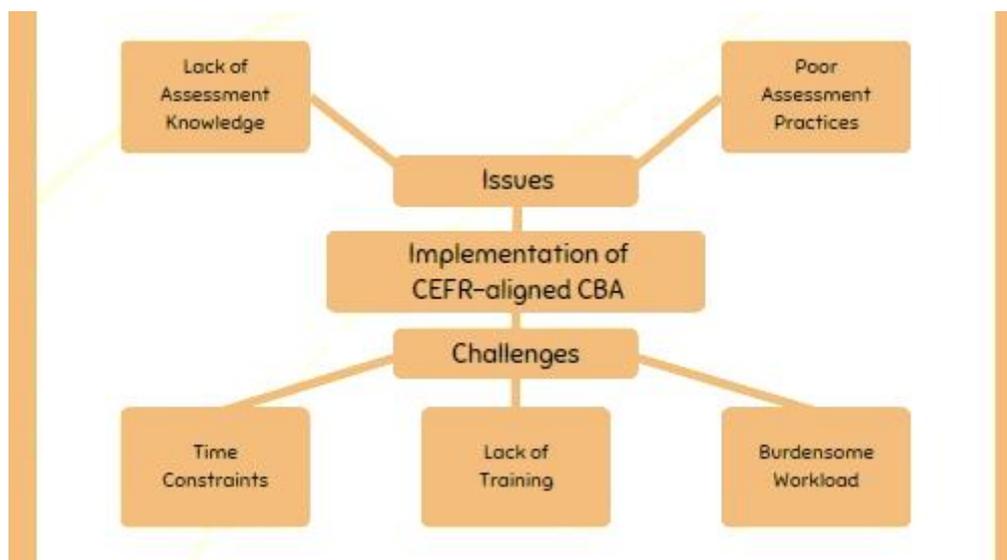
Malaysian ESL teachers claimed that they have not received adequate training in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA as desired by the MoE (Marzaini et al., 2023). Due to lack of training, ESL teachers get confused and make mistakes in the implementation of the assessment. ESL teachers stated that they need continuous training that could help them assimilate the assessment in their daily teaching and learning process, in particular in terms of assessing students' language performance. ESL teachers noted that the lack of training hinder their attempts to experiment with more activities that would allow them to evaluate students' performance (Singh et al., 2022). The lack of training result in the uncertainty and incompetence of teachers in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA. A study by Singh et al (2021) revealed that ESL teachers have a limited understanding of the rationale for the implementation of CBA and lack of confidence in conducting assessments due to lack of knowledge. There are also a number of ESL teachers who are confused in implementing this new assessment system. Although guidelines are given, not all can be used 100% in a real classroom setting (Singh et al. 2021). These gaps occur due to a lack of relevant and practical training in helping ESL teachers implement CEFR-aligned PBD easily and effectively.

- **Burdensome Workload**

Malaysian ESL teachers claimed that CEFR-aligned CBA is rather a tedious and complicated process (Marzaini et al., 2023). The full autonomy given to ESL teachers to implement CBA has increased the workload of ESL teachers. Apart from the duty and role as subject teachers who need to implement CBA in their teaching and learning process, ESL teachers also need to do various clerical work including reporting and recording students' progress in the online system provided. This adds another burden to the existing workload. Worsening the matters, ESL teachers in the study of Singh et al (2021) claimed that the workload has resulted in them not being motivated to cover all the topics that needed to be taught. Furthermore, implementing time-consuming CBA causes them to run out of energy. The findings of Sidhu et al (2018) revealed that workload is one of their biggest challenges in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA as most of them have to teach at least four ESL classes, coupled with other administrative tasks that demand a lot of work and documentation, leaving them little time to implement effective CBA.

Based on the findings of the studies presented, it can be seen that ESL teachers face the challenges of time constraints, lack of training and burdensome workload in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA. These challenges expressed by ESL teachers are in line with what is said in the study of (Darmi et al., 2017). ESL teachers have different views on the CEFR. There are ESL teachers who are still unsure how the CEFR can help improve pupils' English skills. However, there are also ESL teachers who are positive about the implementation of the CEFR. A study by Uri & Aziz (2018) exhibited that about 200 ESL teachers in Malaysia agree that they are familiar with the concept of CEFR. However, they expressed high concerns over the implementation of the CEFR in Malaysia as they are uninformed and uncertain about their role in the change (Lo, 2018). Therefore, proactive initiatives must be taken immediately by the higher authorities to help ESL teachers overcome these challenges effectively and

successfully, thus contributing to the optimal and effective implementation of PBD aligned with CEFR.



Recommendations

As a measure to minimize the shortcomings, several efforts should be made to further improve the knowledge and practice of Malaysian ESL teachers' assessment, including increasing assessment training and reducing teachers' workload (Khalil & Awang, 2016). ESL teachers need to be guided and trained through continuous training that exposes them to different CBA techniques. ESL teachers should also be exposed to the assessment principles that must be adhered to when making decisions about students' learning and achievement in the classroom. Franchis and Mohamad (2023) asserted that to assess students effectively, it is important for ESL teachers to have solid knowledge and understanding of key assessment principles such as validity, reliability, and fairness. By receiving proper training, ESL teachers can understand these principles better and apply them in their assessment methods effectively.

In addition, the MoE should include content knowledge of assessment and practical guidelines for ESL teachers to follow in future teachers' continuous professional development (CPD) programs. Singh et al. (2022) reported that teachers who partake in CPD programs are more likely to demonstrate high mastery of assessment knowledge than teachers with low CPD exposure. Otherwise, teachers who lack CPD training tend to have problems in assessing students' learning in classroom. To produce ESL teachers who are competent in language assessment depends on the knowledge of assessment and pedagogy in their teaching and learning process. Although Malaysian ESL teachers have gained exposure to assessment knowledge during their studies, that knowledge can only help them theoretically not practically. Therefore, more hands-on and practical CPD training is needed to help them apply the knowledge learned in a real classroom environment (Singh et al., 2022).

As also revealed in the previous studies, time constraints become a challenge for Malaysian ESL teachers in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA Marzaini et al (2023) effectively. Franchis and Mohamad (2023) suggested to the relevant superiors to reduce unnecessary workload and

programs in a way of giving ESL teachers more time to prepare authentic and reliable assessment instruments and carry out meaningful and effective assessments.

Finally, it is time for the issues of knowledge, practice and challenges in the implementation of CEFR-aligned CBA to be successfully addressed so that the assessment can be implemented effectively. Malaysian ESL teachers need to constantly improve their assessment knowledge, evaluate their assessment practice, adapt it well to students and look for opportunities for improvement.

Conclusion

Malaysian ESL teachers lack of assessment knowledge, conduct poor assessment practices and struggle with time constraints, lack of training as well as burdensome workload in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA. As a way to address the issues, assessment training should be increased and teachers' workload should be reduced. All the efforts to improve the teachers' LAL will be no avail if no full cooperation given by all the respective stakeholders. All of the findings presented have several implications regarding the lack of assessment knowledge, the weakness of assessment practices and the challenges faced in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA among Malaysian ESL teachers. Evidently, the LAL and assessment practices of ESL teachers in Malaysia still do not reach the level desired by the MoE. The challenges mentioned also pose an obstacle to the effective implementation of CEFR-aligned CBA among ESL teachers. The issues of ESL teachers lack of solid assessment knowledge, practices as well as challenges in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA need to be handled properly and wisely. The new national educational assessment system requires teachers who are knowledgeable and practice positive and effective assessment practices. Poor assessment practices could be more severe if no right immediate action taken to address the issue effectively. It will be pointless of having solid knowledge without a great practice.

By drawing on the prior studies and extending the investigation to Malaysian ESL teachers' LAL in CEFR-aligned CBA, the current study contributes to the field by providing specific insights into the challenges faced by teachers in this context. The recommendations offered in the study to increase assessment training and reduce teachers' workload, align with the broader literature in enhancing assessment practices in language education. Therefore, the study adds to the existing body of knowledge by offering practical solutions tailored to the Malaysian ESL context and by emphasizing the importance of LAL for improving students' learning outcomes in language education. Although there is a lot of previous literature on CBA, until now, mostly discuss to a limited extent the readiness and awareness of teachers in adapting to it. Research which discusses ESL teachers' LAL in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA is still few and far between. Therefore, future research on the topic should be carried out more and deeper as an effort to gain a better understanding and reliable information which can infer the overall picture of ESL teachers in implementing CEFR-aligned CBA. Future research might also focus on the specialized training and assistance required by ESL teachers, as well as the assessment techniques they must proficiently grasp to enhance their LAL. This enhanced LAL could subsequently empower them to effectively implement CEFR-aligned CBA.

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