# Please Don't Get Tired of Interim Assessment Practice in Malaysia!

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**Abstract**
The Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) has announced the abolition of Level 1 examinations for primary schools and has established assessment as the method for measuring, evaluating, estimating, and reporting students' achievements comprehensively. This change aims to minimize dependence on examinations while giving teachers autonomy to assess the full progress of students continuously and without being bound by examination schedules. To alleviate the burden on teachers, KPM has initiated a phased assessment system or interim assessment, where examinations are no longer conducted either at the school level or center level for students from Year 1 to Year 3 starting in 2019. Therefore, this concept paper aims to list three main challenges in implementing interim assessment for the practice of Arabic language assessment in Malaysia. In addition, this concept paper also proposes solutions to each of these challenges and explains the implications and further recommendations. The three main challenges are the competence of teachers in conducting interim assessments of Arabic language (IAAL), students' lack of understanding of interim assessments of Arabic language (IAAL), and the difficulty in selecting suitable interim assessments of Arabic language (IAAL). This concept paper is unique because there has not been much exploration of interim assessment in the Arabic language in past studies, whereas these challenges need to be identified to establish appropriate interventions for the target audience. Further recommendations can be made by the Ministry of Education Malaysia through relevant discussions on interim assessment, especially involving the Arabic language. This study needs attention because interim assessment appears to be sidelined compared to other dominant assessments such as formative and summative assessments. The implications of this study are to improve assessment in a more targeted and accurate manner. Additionally, positive effects indirectly arise through pedagogical diversity that can be mapped with interim assessment in the Arabic language.
**Keywords:** Interim Assessment, Interim Assessment of Arabic Language (IAAL), Teacher Autonomy, Assessment, Formative, Summative.

**Introduction**

Academic experts argue that the examination system will narrow the true meaning of education when it is made the ultimate goal of learning. The fixation of educators and parents solely on achievement performance causes students to develop unbalanced and imperfectly. Indeed, the examination system, often without realization, has also killed the diversity of students' potential, talents, and abilities to further develop. Furthermore, the system is narrow and somewhat closed, unable to measure students' true academic mastery.

*Types of Assessment*

Commonly, society in Malaysia only knows about academic assessment occurring in two conditions: through formative assessment and summative assessment. However, there is another type of assessment that is rarely mentioned despite its significant role in measuring knowledge and individual development, which is Interim Assessment. This assessment method has long been used but is rarely adapted in the country's formal education system. Moreover, among educators, awareness of the existence of this assessment is lacking, considering its functions and roles are rarely advertised as a tool for measuring students' progress.
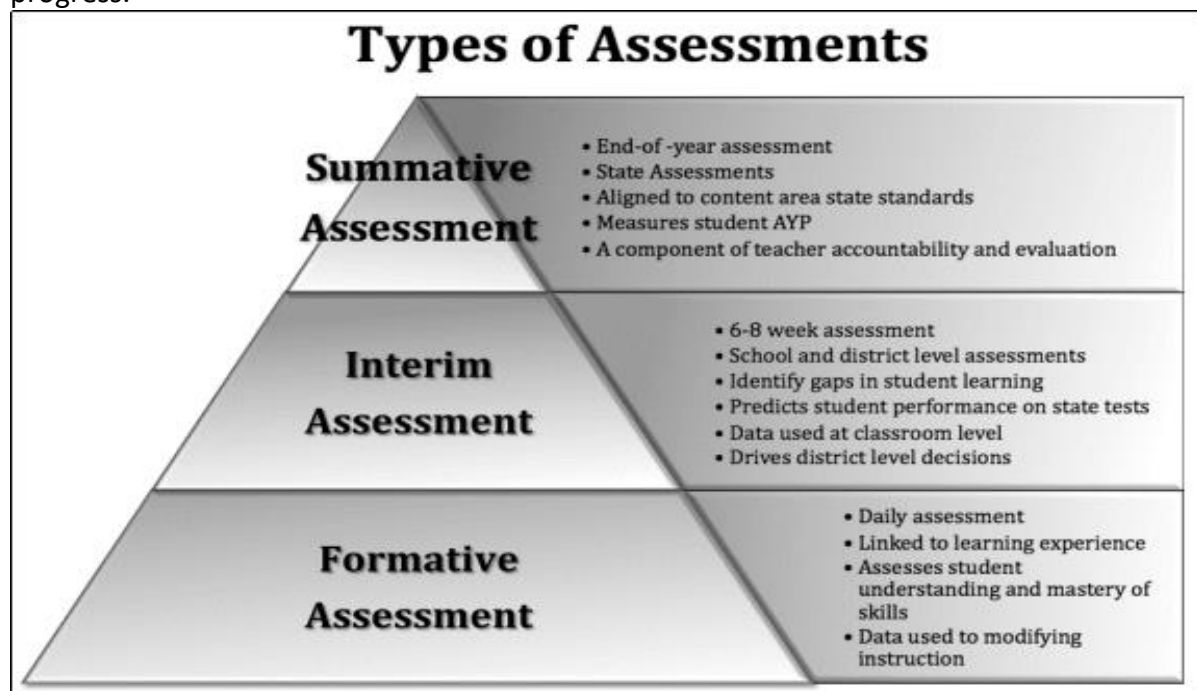


Diagram 1: Types of Assessment.

Diagram 1 illustrates the representation of three types of assessment in determining students' performance and achievement. Bulkley et al. (2010) assert that each type is used concerning specific targets, and the frequency of these assessments is implemented. At the bottom is formative assessment, which shows the implementation of assessment throughout the teaching and learning process. In the middle is interim assessment, which is an assessment conducted depending on a specified period, for example, between 6 to 8 weeks. Teachers will first identify problems or topics that are difficult for students to understand, and during this period, teachers will provide guidance. At the end of the session, the teacher will provide a set of tests to determine the increase in knowledge regarding the topics guided or vice versa. Furthermore, the top part represents summative assessment, which refers to the overall assessment for the current academic year's learning session, such as end-of-semester

exams and end-of-year examinations. These can also be considered general examinations conducted at the state or national level. All three assessments have long been used but are now being renamed in line with the needs of 21st-century learning.

*Formative Assessment*

Formative assessment is defined as a process of assessment integrated by teachers during the teaching and learning process to track students' knowledge achievement. This assessment aligns with planned learning objectives and is a combined process of ongoing and embedded teaching and learning (Brookhart, 2007; Azhar & Shahrir, 2007; Stiggins & Chappuis, 2006). The implementation of this assessment does not occur formally as it depends on activities planned by teachers such as discussions, observations, oral questions, written exercises, homework, projects, portfolios, self-assessment, developmental assessment, and dialogue (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brookhart, 2007; Cizek, 2007; Chappuis & Chappuis, 2008; Harlen, 2007; Scherer, 2007). Activities like these stimulate critical and creative thinking grounded in higher order thinking Skills (HOTS) elements and encourage students to provide rapid and more proactive responses in learning as stated in the Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura,1997).

Based on the Self-Efficacy Theory, direct feedback received from students has a positive influence on the teaching and learning practices employed. Cowie and Bell (1999) define formative assessment as a process used by teachers to recognize and provide feedback on students' work outcomes and efforts to improve knowledge during the learning process. The main tendency of this assessment is not actually for scoring or grading students but rather to provide understanding and identify weaknesses that exist during the teaching process. Indirectly, teachers can correct mistakes by conducting more systematic and organized early preparation, especially in selecting suitable levels for specific topics and preparing teaching aids to make the teaching and learning process more effective and efficient (Scriven,1967).

*Interim Assessment*

Perie, Mario, and Gong (2009) explain that each assessment has different levels of importance and functions, as well as how frequently it is used. The position of interim assessment in the middle of the pyramid diagram is often overlooked and implemented by teachers or schools. Perie et al (2007) provide a general definition of interim assessment as a simple-scale assessment located between formative and summative assessments. Its function is to assess students' knowledge and skills relative to the specified period and is designed to report students' performance in the classroom, school level, or district level.

The implementation of this assessment is periodic and is usually administered by classroom teachers, school authorities, or district education offices, and the scores obtained can be used for stakeholders (Crane, 2008). This assessment uses a set of instruments containing a combination of several topics to be used as items, depending on multiple-choice formats Perie, et al (2007) or how teachers produce instruments according to the appropriateness of the level. Moreover, the frequency of tests can be administered every few weeks to track students' progress (He.,2013). Most teachers report interim assessment results for student progress and identify skill gaps that lead them to modify curriculum and instructions (Christman et al., 2009; Clune & White, 2008; Stecher et al., 2008).

The original role of this assessment is only simple, however, significant impacts can be obtained, especially in predicting performance in standard tests and improving students' achievements. Performance and achievement information are very useful, especially for schools or district education departments (Goertz, Olah, & Riggan, 2009). The periodic

administration of this assessment also helps students improve weaknesses in learning and specific topics with guidance and teaching by teachers practically. Interim assessment is also often referred to as a hybrid assessment between formative and summative assessments because its function can measure the effectiveness of teacher instruction and assessment of a program.

*Summative Assessment*
Summative assessment is an assessment method that acts as a standard measure of overall learning but does not measure student performance during the teaching and learning process (Dudek et al., 2018). The difference between summative assessment compared to formative and interim assessments lies in the main goal of assessment. Typically, summative assessment focuses on the ultimate learning goals by reporting students' marks, grades, and scores. Usually, this assessment is used for large-scale examinations such as end-of-semester exams, end-of-year exams, and public exams such as the Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM), Malaysian Higher School Certificate (STPM), and Malaysian Higher Religious Certificate (STAM).

The administration of this assessment is usually carried out formally and according to a schedule set by the school or Examination Board. The difference between summative and formative assessment is a good relationship because both assessments complement each other in promoting student learning. Therefore, with the existing knowledge, teachers can choose suitable teaching strategies, interventions, and assessment methods so that the assessments conducted can benefit students (Gersten, Jordan & Flojo, 2005).
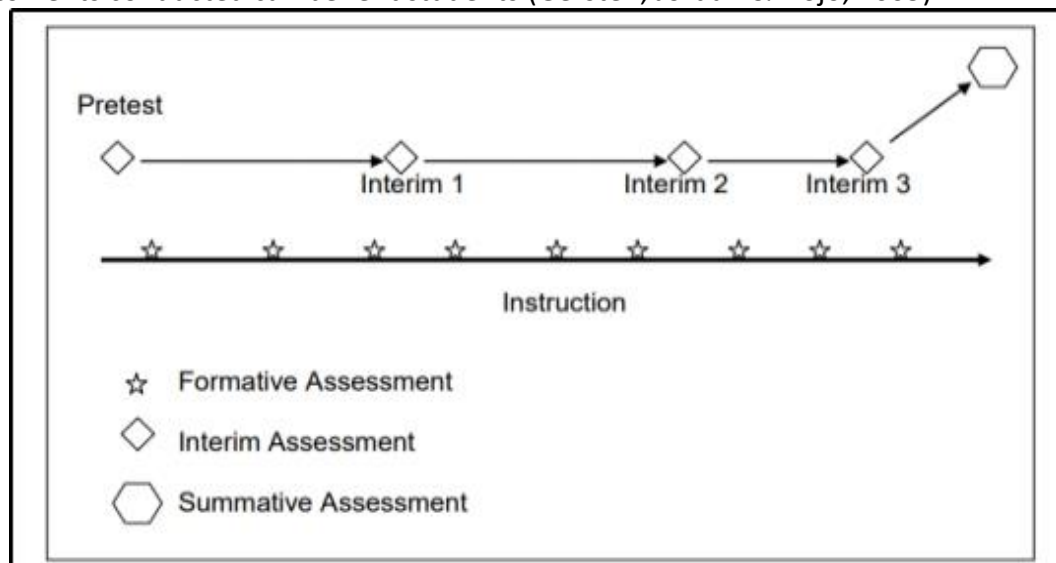


Diagram 2: Interaction Scheme between Instruction and Formative Assessment, Interim Assessment, and Summative Assessment.

The display of Diagram 2 illustrates the analogy of the frequency of administering each assessment according to its function and necessity. The abundant star symbol represents formative assessment. It also explains that this assessment method is often conducted by teachers, continuously, and this concept is adapted for classroom assessment. Meanwhile, the square symbol represents interim assessment. The number of squares is relatively fewer compared to stars, indicating that the assessment frequency is administered periodically. Logically, this assessment can reduce the teacher's workload in measuring students' mastery because it is conducted periodically. The implementation of this assessment is in the form of

tests, and students' achievement results are recorded in the form of marks, scores, or aggregates and collected each time this test is conducted. Furthermore, the single hexagon symbol located at the highest position compared to stars and squares refers to summative assessment as it is less frequently used even though it is large-scale. Summative assessment is the ultimate pinnacle in determining the extent of a student's achievement throughout the academic year.

1.5 Assessment Practices in Education in Malaysia

Changes in the Malaysian education system also impact the examination system, especially with the introduction of School-Based Assessment (PBS). It is a holistic assessment covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in line with the National Education Philosophy (FPK) and the national curriculum. Therefore, this change can narrow the learning gap, reduce the effects of exam-oriented learning, foster creative and critical thinking grounded in higher-order thinking Skills (HOTS) elements, sharpen communication skills and effective idea delivery, and empower problem-solving skills among students (Pailai et al., 2017).
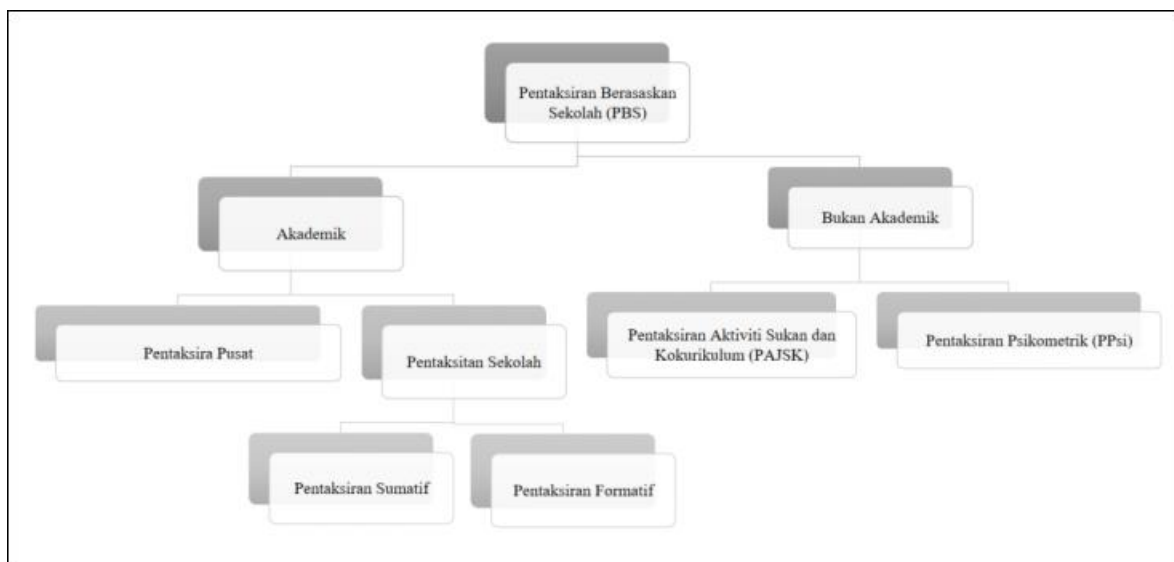


Rajah 3: School-Based Assessment components (PBS)

In the above diagram, all components represent the flow of School-Based Assessment (PBS). These components depict a comprehensive and optimum overview of students' academic and non-academic learning progress. There are two branches of academic assessment used to assess students' cognitive abilities, namely central assessment and school assessment. Central assessment usually focuses on assessments in the form of public examinations, with questions provided by the Malaysian Examination Board (LPM). Meanwhile, under school assessment, there are two divisions: summative assessment and formative assessment. Both assessments are fully managed by teachers and the school according to specific assessment goals.

1.6 School-Level Assessment Practices

Alternative assessment methods or performance assessments are often used by primary school teachers. The assessment approach is considered flexible as children prefer to use kinesthetic skills during the teaching and learning process, especially when activities involve movement. Meanwhile, secondary school teachers tend to prefer traditional assessment techniques (1998) such as written exams (Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003) to assess students.

*Teacher Assessment Practices*

Classroom assessment, known as formative assessment, is a measurement method practiced by teachers to obtain information about students' progress and achievements continuously (Nordin, 1986; Airasian, 2001; Desforges, 1989; Jacobs & Chase, 1992; McMillan, 2008). Various learning activities are designed based on learning objectives and success criteria to meet the demands of the curriculum and subject teacher requirements in the classroom (Abu Bakar Nordin, 1986; Airasian, 2001; Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1984). Teachers indirectly assess students based on their reactions, feedback, and engagement in learning activities. At the same time, teachers promptly provide feedback, corrections on mistakes, and address students' weaknesses (Chappuis & Chappuis 2008; Cheah 2010; Guskey & Jung 2013; Heritage 2007, 2010; Wong & Kaur 2015). Formative assessment becomes less successful when student-centered teaching processes fail, and teaching and learning occur one-sidedly (Gareis & Grant 2013). Therefore, there is a need to develop a concept paper related to the challenges of interim assessment in the Arabic language in Malaysia because identifying these challenges will directly impact other aspects such as pedagogy.

The main reason interim assessment in Malaysia needs to be further studied is that there are almost no extensive studies on interim assessment in the Arabic language, especially in the context of primary schools. We need to understand that the development of the interim assessment field is essential to generate more dynamic assessment styles and not remain in a comfortable cocoon. Additionally, researchers realize there is a significant opportunity to develop the field of Arabic language interim assessment through digital and computer-based assessments, in addition to conventional methods. This study also makes a significant contribution to the field of assessment measurement by developing practical approaches for teachers in language-based interim assessments. This writing also opens up significant opportunities to enhance understanding of the types of Arabic language interim assessments that can be associated with alternative assessments. Furthermore, this study provides essential insights to teachers, students, and administrators by changing the mindset that assessment is broader and adaptable. This aligns with the development of modern assessment in the industry 4.0 era, where the Malaysian Ministry of Education requires information for improving assessment methods through continuous training and intervention for all teachers, especially novice teachers who have served for less than three years. What is crucial is that the original goal is not deviated, i.e., learning standards must be achieved effectively. Listing the main challenges in Arabic language interim assessment will help the education community shift teaching and assessment styles from teacher-centered to student-centered.


**Literature Review (Interim Assessment)**
*Interim Assessment with Formative Assessment*
Previous studies abroad on interim assessment were very popular from the late 1990s to 2010. After that period, studies were still conducted, but the issues discussed were not as intense as in previous years. Among the frequently conducted studies are those examining the role of interim assessment equated with formative assessment from a traditional perspective as both are adapted from Bloom's Model (Bloom et al., 1971). Typically, this assessment is better known as traditional assessment because the ultimate goal of the assessment is to identify weaknesses in the instructional process.

Based on the findings, interim assessments can be given scores or marks and the reporting method can be more meaningful. While formative assessment is conducted alongside the teaching and learning process and its main function is to report on students'

understanding of progress and learning objectives achieved. However, as explained by Perie et al. (2007), interim assessment lies between the formative process used by teachers to monitor progress during instruction and the summative process usually used to assess overall achievement at the end of learning in the form of accountability and standards.

*Interim Assessment for Teaching and Learning Improvement*
Previous studies have found that scholars are very keen on researching the connection between instructional planning and improvement in interim assessment. This is because interim assessment serves as an effective medium to help teachers and administrators understand, track, and evaluate students' performance growth. This approach demonstrates a sustainable way to enable teaching quality and optimize student performance (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Crooks, 1988; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Natriello, 1987). Nabors Olah, Lawrence, and Ringgan (2010) conducted a study in Philadelphia and found that teachers identified students' performance weaknesses, identified areas that were not mastered, and conducted remediation within 6 weeks using interim assessment. As a result, weak students were able to recover and keep up with their peers in subsequent learning.

Herman's study (2017) identified the potential of interim assessment in encouraging instructional planning, assessing program or teaching approach effectiveness, and predicting students' efficiency for further action, especially for at-risk students. Three speculations regarding this assessment are: firstly, assisting teachers in adjusting instruction and curriculum to address students' learning needs; secondly, evaluating and improving teaching programs; and thirdly, predicting the likelihood of student performance achievement at the end of the year (Perie et al., 2009).

*Interim Assessment during the COVID-19 Pandemic*
Schools in the United States ceased operations and reopened in the fall of 2020, but an unprecedented number of students were found to be unable to participate in learning (Harris et al., 2020). This raised concerns among schools and states, especially regarding management strategies. Therefore, schools used records and results from interim assessments in 2019 to make direct estimates for the current school year to support teacher and student strategies, management financing, curriculum redesign, and guidance (Perie, Marion, & Gong, 2009).

Furthermore, the US Department of Education issued an action plan to administer summative assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), which included language exams, science exams, and mathematics for the 2019-2020 school year. However, the ministry still conducted standard assessments of reading, writing, mathematics, and other subjects online (Lake & Olson, 2020; Marion et al., 2020; Olson, 2020) using an interim assessment approach to track students' current progress. Most of the items were already available in question banks and had estimated parameters standardized by national and international exams such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The results obtained from these exams will be used to predict student achievements in the current year.

*Interim Assessment as an Alternative Assessment for Students with Disabilities*
The primary education law in the United States, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), offers states the option to use a series of statewide interim assessments throughout the academic

year that produce summative assessment scores as a substitute for one annual exam (Herman 2017) for students with disabilities. A study by Boyer and Landl (2021) found that there is a wealth of technical documentation reviews available for sample interim assessments for this group to commercialize their use. Therefore, most test developers suggest that interim assessments can be used to make instructional decisions, especially for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities (Browder et al., 2020), compared to formative and summative assessments. Based on this statement, it is evident that interim assessments can be used as needed and may be more effective in improving the performance of students with disabilities in elementary school (Konstantopoulus, Li, Miller & Van Der Ploeg, 2016).

**Research Objectives**
This study aims to list the three main challenges in implementing interim assessment for the practice of Arabic language assessment in Malaysia. Additionally, this concept paper also proposes solutions to each of these challenges and explains the implications and further recommendations.

**Challenges of Interim Assessment**
4.1 Incompetent Teachers in Implementing Interim Assessment of Arabic Language (IAAL)
The role of Arabic language teachers in assessment encompasses all levels, starting from planning, implementation, assessment, evaluation, reporting, and follow-up actions according to the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education (MOE). This study reflects the knowledge of Arabic language teachers, especially regarding IAAL based on issues and information from PBD as reported by the MOE (MOE, 2013).

Based on studies conducted by Ruslina (2003); Radin (2008), there are several problems commonly faced by teachers in implementing assessments related to key issues such as lack of understanding, skills in setting mastery levels, assessment training, and guidance received by teachers for assessment, as well as teachers' ability related to workload and time constraints. Meanwhile, the findings of Abdul Zubair's study (2007) generally reported that nearly half of the study participants among teachers had never received exposure to training and specific exposure related to assessment management and handling, and Arabic language teachers are certainly not exempt from this problem.

The lack of information about assessment results in teachers being unsure and less proficient in managing assessment tasks, especially for IAAL in the classroom. Mohammad Azahar (2006) reported that factors such as teaching time also affect assessment, as well as the allocation of time and scheduling arrangements. Usually, the allocation of three teaching periods will be implemented at once or separated into two periods and one period on different days. This also negatively affects teachers in managing time along with the assessment tasks of IAAL. Such disruptions will affect the motivation of teachers in management and learning, including assessment activities.

*Second Challenge: Students' Lack of Understanding Interim Assessment of Arabic Language (IAAL)*
The second challenge relates to understanding IAAL. Most primary school students, especially Level 1 students, have little knowledge about the concept of IAAL implementation by teachers. Students become confused about whether teachers are conducting a formative assessment or an interim assessment because the concepts of assessment are almost the same. Previous studies have found that the role of interim assessment is often equated with

formative assessment from the perspective of traditional assessment because both are adapted from Bloom's Model (Bloom et al. 1971). This causes students to be unable to participate in IAAL because they assume that teachers are only assessing rather than measuring their knowledge.

As a result of this confusion, problems arise when students are less capable of grasping ideas during the implementation of IAAL by teachers. Furthermore, students' nonchalant attitude, lack of interest in learning foreign languages, and lack of focus have hindered the assessment activities conducted (Hassan Basri, 2005; Ishak Rejab, 1992; Khairuzaman Kadir, 2003; Muhammad Azhar, 2005; Nik Mohd Rahimi, 1999; Rusni Abdul Latif, 2007; Zawawi Ismail & Rahimi Saad, 2005, myZawawi Ismail, 2005). Therefore, these negative effects have led to less satisfactory reported achievements by teachers and numerous weaknesses. Consequently, the achievements of students have less impact after assessment because this group perceives assessment as an ancillary activity during teaching and learning.

*Third Challenge: Difficulty in Selecting Suitable Interim Assessment of Arabic Language (IAAL)*
The third challenge is related to the selection of appropriate instruments and methods for PIBA in primary schools, especially when dealing with the diversity of students' characteristics based on ethnicity, culture, religion, and so on (Zawawi, 2001). Through Surat Pekeliling Ikhtisas, KPM bil.8 Tahun 2016, the Ministry of Education has stated that Arabic language at the primary school level is an additional subject alongside Chinese, Tamil, Kadazandusun, Iban, and Semai languages. This requires school administrators to determine suitable additional subjects for students' needs. If a school decides that students should take Arabic language classes, then all students must comply with the school's decision without reference to religious or ethnic differences.

In Sabah, especially, many students from various ethnic and religious backgrounds are learning the Arabic language as an additional subject. Non-Muslim students, in particular, face difficulties and require a certain period to master the subject as they are learning something new from their usual routine (Maryumi Matlin & Harun Baharudin, 2019). Therefore, it becomes a challenge for teachers to prepare PIBA instruments as they need to consider the suitability and difficulty level of the teaching topics for students. Some teaching topics may not be suitable for implementation through PIBA if they have a very high level of difficulty. Moreover, there is a further concern when all language skills need to be assessed, with final decisions made about students before reporting to schools, PPD, and JPN. Therefore, this requires teachers to make sacrifices in optimizing the use of DSKP more carefully, especially in preparing suitable IAAL according to students' needs.

**Suggested Improvements**
*Proposed improvement for the first challenge:*
Building the competency level of teachers in conducting Interim Assessment of Arabic Language (IAAL)
The original purpose of each type of assessment is to provide results that allow educators to adjust instructions and curricula to meet the requirements. It is an alternative action (Browder et al., 2005) to obtain information regarding students' achievements continuously, and its effect enables teachers to make improvements, especially in terms of teaching, from time to time. However, there are still teachers who are not competent in conducting assessment activities, which undoubtedly causes problems in obtaining information about students' knowledge and understanding. Therefore, PIBA needs to be expanded in terms of

its functions and capabilities in handling school assessments, especially when facing problems with a large number of students. Thus, schools, PPD, and JPN need to collaborate to promote the use of IAAL because this assessment is flexible and can be adapted to the needs and refers to the subjects taught by teachers.

The results of IAAL training can enhance the quality of teaching and assessment when teachers can conduct continuous assessments based on student's strengths and needs (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006) comprehensively and more systematically. As a result, teachers are more motivated and confident in managing and planning their time efficiently by setting appropriate activities for both teaching and assessment. In addition, student involvement also plays a role in contributing to the effectiveness of PIBA when they can express their abilities after receiving continuous guidance from teachers (Moore 1999) through scores and marks obtained.

*Proposed improvement for the second challenge:*
Improvement for students' lack of understanding of Interim Assessment of Arabic Language (IAAL)
Arabic language teachers should be prepared and equipped with sufficient knowledge, understanding, and skills before taking on the responsibility of educators (Jefridin Pilus, 2002). This includes mastering the administration of IAAL and even delivering important information in stages about its implementation concept. Gradual exposure can provide students with a clearer understanding of the function and methods of this assessment. Clear instructions will help students better understand what the teacher is trying to convey and what is expected during the IAAL.

At the same time, teachers should also make improvements in terms of administering and managing IAAL. A lax and careless attitude by teachers in administering IAAL needs to be avoided to ensure the quality of assessment. The data obtained through IAAL is concrete and can measure the level of mastery and understanding of students. Ironically, negative issues may arise from the students' perspective if they are still confused about the requirements of IAAL, especially for students who struggle to grasp the ideas behind this assessment. Therefore, teachers must be proactive and constantly enhance their skills by providing instrument set modules that have various levels to cater to students with diverse competencies.

*Proposed improvement for the third challenge*
Providing opportunities to choose and implement suitable interim Assessment of Arabic Language (IAAL)
The appropriateness in determining the difficulty level for each topic needs to be discerned through the moderation process. Arabic language teachers are encouraged to engage in this process, especially in selecting and establishing appropriate constructs in the IAAL question instrument set, to avoid touching on the sensitivities of ethnicity and religion, while at the same time ensuring that IAAL remains relevant across the diversity of students. Teachers' wisdom in unraveling and crafting the DSKP is crucial so that the assessment needs can be met as envisioned through the PPPM 2013-2025.

Teachers need to be proactive in teaching and learning by providing teaching aids as tools and motivators for learning. The use of teaching aids can attract interest, clarify teaching, and enhance the smoothness of teaching and IAAL assessment as much as possible. According to the study by Mohd Zaki Ismail, Kaseh Abu Bakar, Nik Farhan Nik Mustapha, &

Nurazan M Rouyan (2016), the limited and horizontally implemented strategies demand Arabic language teachers to teach students more effective learning strategies. They must be guided and trained to choose and use learning strategies effectively. In conclusion, this study presents various challenges but yields the same findings: the transformation of teaching and learning methods is the absolute power of a teacher that can have a significant impact on achievement.

## Conclusion

This concept paper has outlined three main challenges in Arabic language interim assessment, namely (a) the competence of teachers in conducting Arabic Language interim assessment, (b) students' lack of understanding of Arabic Language Interim Assessment, and (c) the difficulty in selecting suitable Arabic Language interim assessment. Among the proposed improvements included are (a) schools, PPD, and JPN need to provide training and clear understanding related to Interim Assessment of Arabic Language (IAAL) to teachers, (b) channeling understanding of IAAL to students to strengthen their knowledge of IAAL, and (c) teacher preparation by providing sets of question instrument modules containing various levels of difficulty for IAAL. This preparation should emphasize the element of respect for ethnic and religious diversity. Therefore, all parties need to be aware of and acknowledge the challenges in IAAL and strive to find the best solutions to address these issues over time.

## Implications

There are implications for this interim assessment of the Arabic language (IAAL), including its role as a continuous assessment tool that supports teaching and learning throughout the year. It is undeniable that teachers have varying levels of competence (AR Zaini et al., 2017) in determining suitable assessments for students, but IAAL can serve as a steppingstone for teachers to be more proactive and creative in diversifying high-quality assessment forms. On the other hand, students' overall development and knowledge can be quickly positioned according to difficulty levels through the instrument set modules provided by teachers. This will facilitate teachers in making reports and assumptions about students' knowledge in the future, for the stakeholders in the education industry and parents. Therefore, IAAL is also a supportive tool for teachers in assessment as it is highly flexible and not bound by specific time frames compared to summative assessments. The items in the instrument are based on learning topics designed to test students' knowledge, and at the end of PIBA, teachers can report on the improvement or decline in student achievement (Christman et al. 2011).

## Further Research

Starting from the challenges and improvements presented by the researchers, this study can serve as a basis for further research by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) through conducting a nationwide survey related to interim assessment, especially involving the Arabic language. This study needs attention because interim assessment seems to be marginalized compared to other dominant assessments such as formative and summative assessments. The next step of this study is a systematic literature review to identify research gaps from different perspectives, not limited to the Arabic language context only. The contributions of scholarly bodies will also expand widely to encourage teachers to use interim assessments more effectively in the future. This effort needs to be driven by us as teachers ourselves. If not, interim assessments will be buried and continue to sink into the currents of modernization.

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