

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**LEGITIMATE PERIPHERAL  
PARTICIPATION OF TEACHERS IN  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CEFR-  
ALIGNED CLASSROOM BASED  
ASSESSMENT IN MALAYSIAN  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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## ABSTRACT

Malaysia's education has transformed due to the shift from an exam-centric culture to a more progressive assessment system. The enactment of Classroom Based Assessment signifies that the country is now moving towards enhancing the quality of the evaluation system. In the English language curriculum, the implementation of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has garnered significant global attention because it infuses the new approach into the assessment system. According to the existing research, the effective execution of educational reform relies on the stakeholders' understanding of the objectives of the curricular policy and their view of its relevance and practicality. Therefore, to shed light on this matter, the present study investigates the phenomena of internal stakeholders' Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) in implementing the CEFR-Aligned Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) in Malaysian schools. The LPP refers to the progressive integration of individuals into a community of practice through participation in peripheral activities, leading to eventual full participation in the community's core practices. Hence, this study investigated how stakeholders participate in the new assessment practices by focusing on the dissemination process, the clarity and utility of curriculum documents, and the execution of assessment at the grassroots level. This research adopted a qualitative approach by utilising interviews, observations, and document analysis to gather data from the sample of 9 ESL teachers, 4 English Panel Heads and 2 curriculum trainers who were involved in the implementation of the new assessment. A total of 4 secondary English lessons were also observed and systemically analysed. Findings reveal a substantial challenge in realizing assessment reform within the Malaysian education system. Despite the widespread recognition of the reform's potential to enhance the educational landscape, its implementation has fallen short of intended outcomes. The dissemination process and comprehensive curriculum documents, while well-intentioned, have not effectively catalysed teacher adoption of the reform. The resistance, stemming from a mismatch between teachers' practices and beliefs and those advocated in the policy, has hindered their ability to assimilate new approaches. Consequently, the legitimacy of teachers in implementing the reform remains elusive. This study emphasises the importance of understanding the stakeholder participation in educational reform. By shedding light on the challenges faced in classroom assessment implementation, it provides insights crucial for policymakers and educators striving to bridge the gap between policy enactment and classroom practice. Addressing these challenges is essential for realizing the full potential of assessment reform and its impact on Malaysian education.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Assessment plays a crucial role in the educational system. It is a means to collect and use information on students' knowledge, attitude, skills (Tosuncuoglu, 2018) and performance (Black & Wiliam, 2018) to improve their learning process. The data and feedback from the assessment could also be utilised by educational administrators to decide on new policies related to academic development (John, 2018). Given its importance, there will always be a need to design new assessment policies to enhance the quality of education. Notably, large-scale standardized testing like Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which disseminates data on assessments leading to ranking among countries around the world in a way have contributed to public pressure on the Ministry of Education (MOE) to revamp the educational system to standardise with the needs of a globalized world (Singer, Braun & Chudowsky, 2018). Although the drawbacks have been pointed out against large-scale examinations, the debate has indeed prompted a call for reformation in the overall educational assessment in Malaysia (Mundy, Green, Lingard & Verger, 2016).

In the context of Malaysian education system, effort has been taken to improve the quality of assessment system, especially in English Language teaching and learning. Malaysian education was previously criticized for emphasizing an exam-oriented culture (Chin, Thien & Chiew, 2019) as many high-stake examinations like *Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR), *Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3* (PT3) and *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) were conducted at both the primary and secondary school levels. This archaic exam-oriented system has sparked a heated debate as it was claimed to be ineffective in producing capable students equipped with continuous knowledge and skills comparable to the international standards (Rashid & Abdul Rahman, 2016). Therefore, the government began a reformation plan which saw the end of summative high-stake examinations like UPSR and PT3 in 2020 (Rethinasamy, Ramanair & Chuah, 2021) at the end of primary and lower secondary education. Students now have to sit for one high-stake examination which is *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) at the