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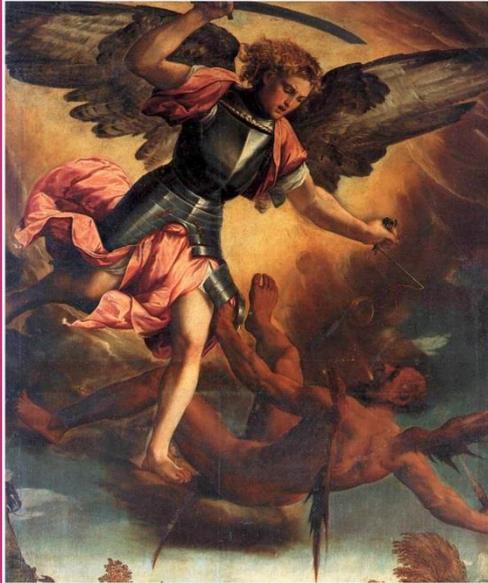
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The Impact of Cefr-Aligned Curriculum on Year2 Intermediate Pupils' Lbi Reading Screening

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Abstract

This study will investigate the impact of CEFR-aligned English Language curriculum on Literacy and Numeracy Screening (LINUS) particularly reading screening. This study was conducted with 3 English teachers and 61 Year 2 intermediate pupils from an urban school in Melaka. The data was collected via pre-test, post-test, questionnaire and interview. The results showed the positive impact of the new curriculum on pupils' reading screening compared to the use of the previous curriculum. Therefore, it is hoped that the new curriculum will help to improve the reading skills of the pupils thoroughly in ESL classroom.

Keywords: curriculum, LINUS, impact, screening, intermediate.

El impacto del curriculum alineado en el mcer en el ejercicio del año 2 luptura de la lectura de pupiles intermedios

Resumen

Este estudio investigará el impacto del currículo del idioma inglés alineado con el MCER en el examen de lectoescritura y números (LINUS), en particular en el examen de lectura. Este estudio se realizó con 3 profesores de inglés y 61 alumnos de segundo año de secundaria de una escuela urbana en Melaka. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de pre-test, post-test, cuestionario y entrevista. Los resultados mostraron el impacto positivo del nuevo plan de estudios en la evaluación de lectura de los alumnos en comparación con el uso del plan de estudios anterior. Por lo tanto, se espera que el nuevo plan de estudios ayude a mejorar las habilidades de lectura de los alumnos a fondo en el aula de ESL.

Palabras clave: curriculum, LINUS, impacto, screening, intermedio.

1. INTRODUCTION

A programme has been formed under the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 which is called a Linus programme. With the addition of English Literacy (LBI), Linus 2.0 was introduced as the extension of the previous programme. The implementation of this programme was to ensure all pupils to master basic reading, writing, and counting skills before they proceed to the upper primary level.

However, the English language curriculum has gone through another shift of transformation to strengthen the implementation of the KSSR curriculum which is called as Common European Framework Reference of Language (CEFR) aligned curriculum. The curriculum emphasizes on achievement based on the global scales for each skill implement in teaching and learning. The objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To investigate and analyse the result in LBI reading screening of Year 2 intermediate pupils, before and after implementation of CEFR aligned curriculum.
2. To identify aspects found in CEFR aligned curriculum that would enhance basic literacy skills.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development

Vygotsky is most recognized for his concept of Zone of Proximal Development or ZPD pertaining to the learning of children. His theory mentioned that with sufficient assistance, learners can accomplish a task successfully compared to learners who perform the task independently. According to Vygotsky (1978), much important learning by the child occurs through social interaction with a skilful tutor. ZPD has been expanded, modified, and changed into new concepts. The concept of scaffolding is closely related to the ZPD, although Vygotsky himself never mentioned the term; instead,

scaffolding was developed by other sociocultural theorists applying Vygotsky's ZPD to educational contexts.

Vygotsky studies are related to the current research as there is evidence of scaffolding found in the CEFR aligned curriculum as the teachers provide guidance to the pupils on learning the second language. In the CEFR aligned curriculum, scaffolding could be found as the pupils, teachers interact with each other. It can also be seen through the meaningful interactions between pupils who are more competent than the others.

Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition

As a novel strategy, This study also employed the theory of second language acquisition that is proposed by Stephen Krashen. He suggests five hypotheses on second language acquisition which gives focus on how adult and children attempt in learning other than their first language. Krashen advocated the immersion method, where second language learners are exposed to the foreign language as much as first language acquisition with more comprehensible input.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research focuses on the use of mixed method research. The use of this research design would cover the weakness in both quantitative and qualitative data of this study. Quantitative data is

driven from the pre and post-test based on the result collected by the teachers to screen the intermediate pupils' ability in reading the LBI LINUS constructs. Quantitative data was also collected through the questionnaire responded by three teachers who have been teaching the pupils before the transformation of the English curriculum from KSSR curriculum to CEFR aligned curriculum. For the qualitative data, the interview sessions were done to both teacher and pupil participants to strengthen the quantitative data collected to answer the research questions of this study. The use of semi-structured interview questions was planned and asked three teacher participants and five selected pupils participants that were chosen using systematic sampling (Cook, 2019; Sernadela et al., 2016; Mollaei et al, 2014).

There were 61, year 2 primary pupils in a local school who needs to take the screening test twice for the purpose of Linus programme and three English teachers teaching year 2, who were the respondents of this research. The pupils are intermediate. As for the teachers, they were selected as they have been teaching these pupils English subject since they were in Year 1 primary level. These teachers have more than five years teaching experiences and they have been teaching using KSSR curriculum and CEFR aligned curriculum for a period of time. The school is located in the district of Melaka Tengah.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

Research Question 1

Is there any difference on the impact of Cefr Aligned Curriculum on the year 2 intermediate pupils' result in Lbi reading screening?

a. A score of the learners improved in LBI reading screening result

There is a slight improvement in the pupils LBI reading screening result after the use of the CEFR aligned curriculum. This statement is derived from the score in the pre and post-tests, and teachers' interview responses. The teachers' interview responses revealed that the use of CEFR aligned curriculum has slightly improved the learners' score in their LBI reading screening as the curriculum enables the pupils to practice the language structure better compared to the previous.

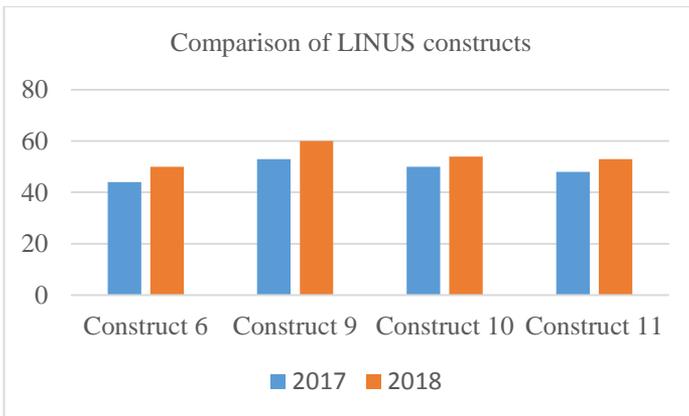


Figure 1: Comparison of full score in constructs 6,9,10, and 11 for 2017 and 2018

Figure 1 above shows the comparisons of full score in LBI reading screening for year 2 intermediate pupils in second phase 2017 and 2018. From the figure, the pupils' show an improvement of scores in a few constructs such as constructs 6, 9 10, and 11. There is 9.83% difference compared to the previous year which shows a sign of improvement for construct 6. As for construct 9, about 53 pupils scored 3 out of 3 responses in 2017. While in 2018, the number of pupils who scored all responses correctly increased to 60 pupils. There is a difference of 6.47%. As for construct 10 and 11, there is a slight increase of 6.55% and 8.21% consecutively. The number of pupils scored all correct for construct 10 and 11 improved from 50 to 54 and 48 to 53 consecutively.

The findings reveal that there is a slight improvement on the percentages of pupils fully passed a few constructs in the 2018 screening test. This could be because of the use of the basic structure of the English language was exposed to the pupils widely in the classroom. Moreover, most teachers have generally stated that the pupils' language proficiency has improved by the use of the CEFR aligned curriculum because of a few factors.

Jahrine (2019) mentioned that in order for the material to be comprehensible, it needs to be slightly beyond the level of competence, not so easy that children can get bored, but not so difficult that they get frustrated. CEFR aligned curriculum uses the materials that suit the competency level of 8 years old children as the

texts used in the curriculum was easy to be understood by the pupils which reflect on Krashen's theory. As for Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, it is clearly seen that the pupils learn the language in a non-stressful environment as the materials used is not pressuring the child as the text focus on simple sentence structures or at word level only. Ullah (2013) highlighted in their research that as a consequence of stressful learning environment, some students become less interested during the reading lesson. Therefore, suitable and contextual reading text found in CEFR aligned curriculum enable the pupils to read better compared to the previous year.

b. Shortcomings of CEFR aligned curriculum with its use on LINUS LBI reading screening

There are some shortcomings in the curriculum that could not be neglected as it will affect the teaching and learning progress in classrooms. One of the teachers responded that the material of the new curriculum is very limited in teaching reading skills to the pupils.

Another main perception put forth by the teacher is pupils are mostly reluctant to learn using the curriculum as they need to keep repeating the focus language and grammar for several times.

Statements	No of teacher responded in the Likert scale					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Pupils enjoy the lesson all the time.			1	2		3.66	2.53
Pupils are motivated to acquire language focus using the curriculum all the time.		2	1			2.33	0.58
Pupils are very responsive during the		2	1			2.33	0.58

lesson all the time.					
Pupils are always curious to learn all the time while the teacher uses the curriculum.	1	1	1	3.00	0.82
Pupils give attention throughout the lesson all the time.	3			2.00	2.31
Pupils give cooperation to learn in the classroom all the time.	2	1		2.33	0.82

Table 1: The Ongoing Process of Implementation

Table 1 indicates the ongoing process of implementation which focus on teacher’s perceptions on the pupils’ readiness and acceptance of the new curriculum. Out of 3 teacher respondents, 2 teachers with the mean (3.66), SD, 2.53), agreed that pupils enjoy the lesson all the time the teachers use CEFR aligned curriculum in the classroom. This illustrates that the CEFR aligned curriculum provides an enjoyable lesson to the pupils in learning the second language. However, there is a time when the pupils were not enjoying the lessons. In addition, 2 teachers with the mean (2.33), SD, 0.58) disagreed that pupils are motivated to learn while using the curriculum. This shows that even though the pupils enjoyed the lesson but they were not motivated in acquiring the language focus that contains in the CEFR aligned curriculum. Similarly, 2 teacher respondents with the mean (2.33), SD, 0.58) disagree that pupils are very responsive during the lesson all the time. This result also indicates that pupils learn passively during the lesson despite the interesting materials used by the teachers during the lessons.

For the next item, it is found that one teacher respondent agrees to the statement, one teacher respondent was not sure or has a neutral feeling towards the situation and one teacher respondent disagree that the pupils are curious all the time. The finding shows that the mean is 3.00 with a standard deviation of 0.82. It can be concluded that the teachers show the different opinion that the pupils are always curious about learning as curiosity is a feeling that sometimes could not be seen easily. Nevertheless, for the next item used in the questionnaire, all of the teacher respondents disagreed that the pupils pay their attention throughout the lesson all the time with the mean (2.00), SD, 2.31). As for the next item, two teachers disagreed that the pupils gave full cooperation all the time while the teacher conducted the lesson using the CEFR aligned curriculum with the mean (2.33), SD 0.82). The findings show that the curriculum has not yet attracted the pupils in giving their full cooperation while the teacher taught using it.

During the interview, the pupils were asked “Did you enjoy the lesson that was taught by the teacher? Which lesson you enjoy or did not enjoy? Why? Most of the pupils responded that they were bored with a lot of repetition because they have learnt the words before and they are very confident to use the words. However, the teachers always repeat the same words and the pupils expecting to learn more.

Research Question 2

What are the factors that enhance reading skills while using Cefr aligned curriculum?

a. Structure of the planned curriculum

From the teachers' perspectives, the curriculum has been planned and structured systematically and provides opportunities for the teacher to conduct lessons that could highlight the language and grammar focus as well as the skills that need to be taught and developed by the pupils.

The finding reveals that the structure of the planned curriculum has also impact on the teachers' ability to plan and conduct lessons pertaining to reading skills as they are more confident and have a better understanding with the use of the CEFR aligned curriculum in teaching the English language. To support, John Trim in his interview stated that expertise produces a solid structure of knowledge, understanding and practice shared by all through the CEFR curriculum. The teachers also believe that the reasons why the pupils enjoyed the lesson and had fun while using the textbook were because of the words, illustrations and story that is planned and written in the textbook.

b. Support received for the curriculum

According to Vygotsky, a person's construction of knowledge is the result of the internalisation of external dialogue that they use when performing a learning task that is guided by a more knowledgeable person (VanDriel et al., 2018). The idea proposed by Vygotsky has perceived in CEFR aligned curriculum as teachers were given a lot of scaffolding by the expertise from Cambridge English which helps them to conduct lessons using the curriculum.

No of teacher responded in the
likert scale

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
I attended professional development activity regarding CEFR				1	2	4.67	3.1
I am very familiar with CEFR documents as I received information about it			1	2		3.67	2.53
JPN or PPD officers provided support to the teachers related to CEFR				3		4.00	4.62
School administrators provided support to the teachers related to CEFR				2	1	4.33	2.15

Table 2: Support Given to the Teachers Related to CEFR

Table 2 indicates the support given to the teachers related to CEFR. Out of 3 teacher respondents, 2 teachers with the mean (4.67), SD, 3.1) strongly agreed that the government provided professional development activity that the teacher attended to fully understand and familiarize themselves with the content of the CEFR aligned curriculum. Next, 2 teacher respondents with the mean (3.67), SD, 2.53) slightly agree that they are familiar with the documents related to CEFR curriculum that could support their teaching and learning sessions in the classroom. This result represents that the training and workshop given to the teachers were adequate and enable them to fully utilised the documents provided under the new curriculum and how to use to documents to develop the pupil's language skills. As for the third item, all the teachers with the mean (4.00), SD, 4.62,) slightly agreed that JPN and PPD officers provided support to them related to the new curriculum implemented in the education system.

Lastly, one teacher respondent strongly agreed that school administrators provided support to the teachers related to CEFR aligned curriculum with the mean (4.33), SD 2.15).

c. Scaffolding between teachers and pupils

Scaffolding between teacher and pupils plays an important role in the pupils’ acquisition of the second language. The teacher should act as a role model to the pupils so that the correct structure of the second language could be perceived by the pupils without the interference of the mother tongue. The table below shows the questionnaire items that the teachers responded to support the statements.

Statements	No of teacher responded in the Likert scale					Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
I model the language before the pupils read independently				3		4.00	4.62
I guide the pupils on a reading task before the pupils’ do it individually				2	1	4.33	2.2
I chunk the reading tasks before asking the pupils to read independently			1	2		3.66	2.53
The suggested lesson outlines in the SOW allow teachers to guide the pupils during a reading task				2	1	4.33	2.2
The lesson outlines in the SOW encourage teachers to model the language				3		4.00	4.62

Table 3: Questionnaire Items on Scaffolding Between Teachers and Pupils

Table 3 indicates the questionnaire responses for the scaffolding between the teachers and pupils. From the data, it is revealed that all the teachers slightly agreed to the statements that they model the language before letting the pupils read individually with the mean (4.00), SD, 4.62). For the second item, out of 3 teachers, one teacher strongly agrees with the mean (4.33), SD, 2.2) for the statement that the teacher guided the pupils on reading tasks before the pupils do it independently. Next, 2 out of 3 teachers slightly agreed to the third statement with the mean (3.66), SD 2.53) while a teacher responded not sure or have a neutral feeling on the statement. This shows that most of the teachers have been helping the pupils to develop their reading skills in a few steps before they could understand the reading text. As for the next statement, one teacher strongly agreed to the statement with the mean (4.33), SD 2.2).

This result reveals that the scheme of work documents where teachers used as a guideline to plan lessons related to CEFR aligned curriculum encourages the teachers to give guidance to the pupils in developing their language skills. Lastly, all teachers responded that they slightly agreed to the statement that the lesson outlines in the scheme of work allow the teachers to model the language with the mean (4.00), SD, 4.62). It shows that teachers believe that the documents provided suggestions for the teacher to model the language before the children use the language independently. Tapping into the pupils' prior knowledge such as offering hints and suggestions, also lead them to the connections a bit, which enable the pupils to grasp the

content as their own, is considered as one of scaffolding. Hence, scaffolding can be seen through the teachers and pupils' interactions.

d. Scaffolding among the pupils

The result of this study also focusing on the scaffolding that took place during the interactions between the pupils while using the CEFR aligned curriculum. The results for the interview sessions indicates that a lot of scaffolding methods have been used in the lessons using the CEFR aligned curriculum. It also shows that the interactions between the pupils have been one of the factors that impact on the improvement of the pupils' reading skills.

The findings of this research indicate that CEFR helps to nurture collaboration among learners. This is similar to the concept of scaffolding proposed in chapter 2 where high students' engagement could be achieved through peer collaboration. This interaction is regarded as scaffolding which brings benefits to language learners. Knestrick (2013) supported that by stating that scaffolding helps to reduce anxiety and uncertainty among children.

e. Teachers' Involvement

For the CEFR aligned curriculum, teachers get the autonomy to plan the lesson according to their pupils' readiness and ability.

Öztürk (2012) mentioned that instructional plans have a crucial function in helping teachers participate in the planning of instructional practices, which enables teachers to create a unique design for their own students. He also added that it has been observed that teachers have a larger area of autonomy in the application stage, which is made

possible by the privacy nature of the classroom environment, which is partially detached from the effects of the outer world.

f. Challenges in implementing the CEFR Aligned Curriculum

Even though the curriculum shows that pupils' reading skills developed better compared to the previous curriculum based on their score in the LINUS program, however, there are a few challenges that the teachers need to face in implementing the new curriculum through their teaching practices.

5. DISCUSSION

Using the CEFR aligned curriculum benefits young learners in a lot of ways. One of it was, they were exposed on the knowledge that is not from their surrounding which enables them to learn about others' culture better. Not only that, but it also sparked the pupils' curiosity and thinking as they were attracted to learn about something they have never known before. The use of this new curriculum has impacted the teachers' delivery of knowledge as the teachers are given access and power in delivering the language according to the written framework. With the use of this new curriculum, teachers are well aware of the suggested activities and techniques in delivering particular skills which allows teachers to think or use the possible ways suggested while delivering the lessons.

Based from the result of this study, policymakers could understand the shortcomings of this new curriculum and help the ministry in providing better and improved version of curriculum that could be useful even though the curriculum is adapted from a global curriculum. Furthermore, policymakers can educate society on understanding the benefits of this curriculum on learners' acquisition of basic fundamental English language.

6. CONCLUSION

The CEFR aligned curriculum has contributed to the participants' improvement in their reading skills. This can be seen from the result collected in their LBI reading screening after the use of the curriculum in teaching and learning. The curriculum should be driven by a lot of aspects that could cater to the needs of young children especially if the English language is not their mother tongue. Furthermore, learning using curriculum that is used globally benefits the children more as they could absorb the new knowledge about global culture and how to respect the difference among each other. Hence, it is hoped that by the use of this CEFR aligned curriculum, the young Malaysian learners could be able to use the English language effectively with full fluency and accuracy so it could uphold the mission and vision in our education system.

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