Improvement in Arabic Language Skills Through Implementation of Classroom Assessment (PBD) at Lower Secondary School Level

*[1]Hafilah Abd Satar, [2]Nik Mohd Rahimi Nik Yusoff and [3]Mohd Isa Hamzah

Abstract--- *Classroom assessment (PBD) is a continual process of evaluation in teaching to intensify student's mastery and teachers' teaching. This research attempted to explore the four forms of Arabic language advancement following the implementation of PBD in the classroom. The design of this qualitative research was a case study. The data were collected through extensive interviews of seven Arabic language teacher participants who were also appointed as the head coaches (JU) of PBD in five states in Malaysia. Interviewees were selected for purposive sampling on the premise that the study participants were proficient in Arabic PBD information. Subsequent study data were analysed with the aid of Nvivo 12 software. The findings confirmed that the results of the planned implementation of the Arabic language could change the objectives of the four Arabic language skills. These involved the four Arabic language skills emphasised throughout the course of instruction, students' skills assigned according to their competency level, objective improvement of Arabic language skills, early detection of their competency level, vocabulary improvement, sentence development ability and implicit syntax exposure. Substantially, the findings demonstrated that the execution of PBD could enhance the teaching and learning process of the Arabic language, particularly in terms of enhancing four Arabic language skills among lower secondary school students.*

Keywords--- *Classroom Assessment, Four Arabic Language Skills, Lower Secondary Levels.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of classroom assessment (PBD) which is one of the main components of school-based assessment (PBS) empowers continuous assessment process in teaching and learning. The country's educational system endeavours to provide students with a balanced and holistic education in line with the National Education Philosophy (FPK). Hence, the implementation of PBD in the Secondary School Standard Curriculum (KSSM) also facilitates the assessment process to be carried out to increase student achievement and strengthen teachers' teaching efficacy (MOE, 2018).

The implementation of PBD also creates cohesiveness between assessment together with teaching and learning that allows teachers to provide instant feedback to students, as well as to allow teachers to develop the teaching approach in the classroom continually. In line with this, the implementation of the PBD on Arabic language subjects is anticipated

Faculty of Education, UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
*Corresponding Author Email: ummubalqis1973@gmail.com

to empower the Ministry of Education (MOE) to enhance the objective of the four Arabic language skills among students to master the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in diverse circumstances.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Arabic is the language of the Quran which is the principal origin of reference in Islam. It is also recognised as a language of knowledge and has been offered as an additional language in selected schools under the supervision of the MOE. Nevertheless, earlier researchers like Jefridin Pilus (2011) declared that Arabic language subjects are usually challenging to learn, and students are less inclined to speak in a school environment except in minimal conditions. Abdullah Hamzah's (2018) study revealed that factors that impede students' ability to speak Arabic are self-esteem issues such as shame and fear of speaking Arabic. Subsequently, Abdullah Hamzah (2018) summarised that almost all participants expressed a lot of speech anxiety as a result of insufficient vocabulary.

Kamarulzaman's (2010) study determined that one of the flaws of Arabic language skills is the use of textbooks as a teaching tool and its irrelevance according to the student's language skills. Rosni Samah (2013), in her study among 200 post-secondary religious students in Malaysia, declared that writing skills are an essential skill used in answering exams. Even so, the results point out that students are still weak in sentence building skills.

Based on these issues and concerns, studies on the implementation of PBD in Arabic language subjects are still insufficient, particularly in terms of the form of the changes occurring to the four Arabic language speaking skills resulting from the implementation of PBD for Arabic subjects among lower secondary school students.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this study was to explore the implementation of PBD to enhance the objectives of four Arabic language skills among lower secondary school students.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was designed to answer the question "How can the implementation of the PBD improve the objective of four Arabic language skills among lower secondary school students."

V. RESEARCH CONCEPT

Executing PBD as best practices in the classroom assessment process can also work as a guide for teachers to plan assessment activities for students as a whole. Constant evaluation of students through formative assessment can present helpful knowledge on student's performance according to expected learning standards (Maki, 2002) whereas Brookhart (1997) emphasised that the purpose of school assessment could enhance student's self-efficacy and motivation. Consequently, it leads to enhanced student's accomplishment.

Black et al. (2003) also described that one of the main constituents of teacher assessment practices to improve student learning is through question and answer activities, feedback and self and peer assessment. Question and activity activities also support teacher-student interaction efficiently. Therefore, it encourages a more productive learning atmosphere (Aisah Hasmam, 2017; Zamri & Nor Azah, 2011).

Faculty of Education, UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
*Corresponding Author Email: ummubalqis1973@gmail.com

Based on the findings of Jefridin Pilus (2011) and Habibah (2016), it established that verbal questioning techniques are often associated with the element of teacher feedback on student responses. In other contexts, the integration of Arabic language vocabulary memorisation strategies can be done through language skills whether through listening, speaking, reading and writing in an integrated manner according to the student's learning activities (Aisah Hasmam, 2017).

Consequently, the accomplishment of PBD promotes student learning through formative assessment, specifically assessment for learning and assessment as learning. At the same time, the implementation of PBD evaluates students' level of progress after a certain period through a summative assessment which is also called assessment of learning (MOE, 2018).

VI. METHODOLOGY

The design of this qualitative research was a case study. The study participants consisted of seven Arabic language teachers teaching at the lower secondary school and were head coaches of Arabic Language coaches at five selected schools in Malaysia. Participants were selected by purposive sampling technique (Merriam, 2009) based on the study participant who was competent in classroom assessment information (PBD) of Arabic subjects. Survey data were collected through meticulous interviews of seven Arabic language teachers and student interviews for each teacher participant in groups. Subsequent study data were analysed to create themes and subthemes employing Nvivo 12 software.

VII. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The findings of this research answered the research question regarding the form of change that takes place in the objective of four Arabic language skills as a result of the implementation of Arabic language PBD in lower secondary school. The conclusions of this investigation explained some of the critical themes for change in the Arabic language skills objectives, among them; four Arabic language skills emphasised throughout instruction, students' skills assigned according to their competency level, objective improvement of Arabic language skills, early detection of their competency level, vocabulary improvement, sentence development ability and implicit syntax exposure. The details of the theme description are as follows;

1) Emphasis on Four Arabic Language Skills

The objective change in Arabic language skills as a result of the implementation of the PBD is to highlight the four fundamental Arabic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. All seven study participants supported this statement. Examples of GBA7 teacher statements confirmed the new KSSM curriculum that emphasises the four Arabic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing skills as follows;

"As for KSSM, it focuses on improving these four language skills solely ... listening, speaking, reading and writing skills" (TBG-GBA7, 2019)

Likewise, GBA7 further emphasised that the objectives of the Arabic language feature the following four language skills;

Faculty of Education, UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
Corresponding Author Email: ummubalqis1973@gmail.com

"The teacher teaches the language skills, not the language science, which means the teacher teaches the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and then writing" (TB-GBA6, 2019).

Triangulation of P1GBA7 student interview data also revealed that the new curriculum emphasises four language skills such as "Later, I will differentiate each of the skills in the classroom, so we can see that even in one title, it covers all four skills" (TBP1-GBA7, 2019).

Based on the examples of the interview excerpts, it was indisputable that the four Arabic language skills were highly emphasised to students as the result of the implementation of PBD includes listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

2) Emphasis on Four Language Skills Based on Student's Competency Level

The objective change of the four Arabic language skills as a result of the implementation of the PBD also leads to the four Arabic language skills assigned based on the level of student competency level. All seven study participants confirmed this statement. For example, GBA3 teacher said that their Arabic language skills to suit the student level as follows; "Students must master the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing…following the steps of implementation depending on their potential" (TB-GBA3, 2019).

The same thing demonstrated by GBA2 teacher who explicated that the assessment of language skills was implemented based on the student's level of mastery as follows; "create questions accordingly with the standards of my students" (TBG-GBA2, 2019).

The results of the above interview determined that four Arabic language skills were given to students in stages based on the actual level of students' ability for listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

3) Objective Improvement of Four Arabic Language Skills

Subsequently, the changes in the objectives of the four Arabic language skills as a result of the implementation of the PBD also leads to an increase in the objectives of the four Arabic-language skills. Six study participants approved this statement. The following are excerpts of GBA6 teacher who confirmed that student achievement has improved as a result of the implementation of PBD as follows:

"Through PBD, the student's success is growing ... students master the vocabulary. They can speak and create simple sentences" (TBG-GBA6, 2019).

The same situation was further reinforced by GBA7 teacher who proposed improved pupils' skills in speaking and writing as well as PT3 Arabic language results as follows; "Yes, student's achievement grew. They master the vocabulary. So, they can speak and compose (the sentences). During PT3, many of them scored an A" (TBG-GBA7, 2019).

The same finding was supported by the statement of GBA7 teachers who told that students have high scores such as the following excerpt; "It works like this, in every chapter I teach, I will evaluate should the goals are to be accomplished... should the student achieves it, I will score him with it a six-band" (TBG-GBA7, 2019).

Faculty of Education, UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
*Corresponding Author Email: ummubalqis1973@gmail.com

Based on the interview excerpts, it is clear that there was an improvement in student attainment in four Arabic language skills as well as PT3's Arabic language achievement as a result of the implementation of the Arabic language PBD.

4) Early Detection of Competency Level

The objective change in Arabic language skills as a result of the implementation of PBD leads to the early detection of student competency level without the need for tests or examinations. It was agreed upon by the five study participants. Example of an excerpt from GBA1 teacher are as follows; "Through PBD, students can be facilitated at the early stage, without needing to wait for the examination ... early detection" (TBG-GBA1, 2019).

The constant assessment also enables students' achievement of the four language skills to be recognised instantly throughout the next teaching process such as the following statement;

"Let us observe what happens in the classroom ... if the student can read (in the Arabic language), then, I will score her or him with six- band" (TBG-GBA7, 2019).

Through PBD, teachers can quickly identify their student's level such as the following GBA2 teacher's statement; "Through PBD, I can make early detection of the student level I am teaching" (TBG-GBA2, 2019).

The results of the above interviews clearly recorded that continuous assessment through the PBD can detect the student's developmental stage quicker without the need for tests or examinations. As a result, teachers can adapt the teaching method to satisfy the needs of the students.

5) Increased Proficiency in Arabic Vocabulary Among Students

The objective change in Arabic language skills as a result of the implementation of the PBD also leads to increased proficiency in Arabic vocabulary among students. It was agreed upon by all seven study participants such as the following GBA1 teacher sample; "KSSM renders numerous vocabularies. It presents numerous words in the textbook". (TBG-GBA1, 2019).

The mastery of the Arabic language can also be enhanced as the same word is repeated over a long time as follows:

"We read, we hear, we repeat the same thing in the form of words, prose, sentences and forms of paragraphs. Therefore, the mastery of vocabularies grows better" (TBG-GBA7, 2019).

The equivalent point was further reinforced by the GBA3 teacher who declared that through this PBD, numerous students comprehended the following vocabulary;

"The change in the objective language of its skills further emphasises the mastery of the vocabulary contained in the textbook" (TBG-GBA3, 2019)

Based on the excerpts of the above interviews, it was apparent that the vocabulary of the students has developed as it has been repeated over a long period by introducing new words into Arabic short sentences.

6) Improved Ability to Build Arabic Language Sentences Among Students

Faculty of Education, UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
Corresponding Author Email: ummubalqis1973@gmail.com

The objective change in Arabic language skills as a result of the implementation of the PBD has enabled the students to be exposed to Arabic sentences. It was agreed upon by all seven study participants. Examples of excerpts of GBA2 teacher who recommended that Form Three students are trained to compose simple sentences as follows;

"Once the pupils enrolled as Form Three students, we will require them to present (their work) in the form of essay...when it comes to accomplishment, they should be able to compose short essays by then". (TBG-GBA2, 2019).

Triangulation of P2GBA2 student interview data also explained that students are trained by composing the following sentences;

"They master it (Arabic language) better ... they become more expert at composing sentences, more skilled at reading excerpts, better at writing, more competent at making sentences, they can compose five sentences" (TBP2-GBA2, 2019)

The results of the above interview registered that students are trained to compose sentences of lower secondary school level as the result of Arabic language PBD implementation. They are trained to build simple sentences so that they can be used in conversation or writing.

7) Implicit Teaching of Arabic Syntax in Arabic Language Skills

The objective change in Arabic language skills as a result of the implementation of the PBD leads to an implicit (indirect) exposure to Arabic syntax that directly affected its use while teaching four Arabic language skills. It was agreed upon by all seven study participants who exposed only the implicit Arabic syntax.

Example of an excerpt of GBA3 teachers who convinced that vocabulary teaching is conducted directly without specific topics such as the following; "We continue to practice, continue to use Arabic syntax" (TBG-GBA1, 2019).

The same statement was made by the GBA6 teacher who submitted that the Arabic syntax was only indirectly covered as follows; "If the teacher still wants to teach Arabic syntax, it is his or her passion to do so, on the subject and predicate (*mubtada' khabar*), the teacher will not enjoy KSSM approach" (TBG-GBA6, 2019).

Based on the interview excerpts, it was self-evident that teaching Arabic language syntax is given implicitly when the teachers practice four Arabic skills in the classroom.

VIII. DISCUSSION

Based on the verdicts of this research, the implementation of PBD allows teachers to continually monitor students' progress throughout the teaching and learning process in the classroom. It also expects teachers always to present instant feedback to help students learn. This situation is slightly different from examination-oriented assessments that focus more on completing syllabus even if the student has not mastered any of the lessons (Ab. Halim, 2014; Hamimah & Rohaya, 2014). This statement is in line with the findings of Ruhila Adnan's (2012) study that formative assessments carried out throughout the study do not have to wait for the results of the examination to determine the student's level of achievement.

Faculty of Education, UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
*Corresponding Author Email: ummubalqis1973@gmail.com

The conclusions indicated that there had been an improvement in the achievement of four Arabic language skills if a lesson to be taught to students also takes into account their actual level of mastery. It is reinforced by the findings of Wan Mohd Zuhairi (2017) who stated that although the topic of Arabic language teaching was given to a group of students, the language proficiency was graded according to the level of mastery of the students.

The outcomes of the study also revealed that the achievement of the four Arabic language proficiency goals based on students had mastered a large number of Arabic vocabulary. The results of the implementation of the PBD also enabled students to engage in four Arabic language skills actively, especially in speaking skills. It is in line with Abdullah's (2018) study, which explained that mastery of second language vocabulary is essential, and even failure to understand Arabic vocabulary causes students to misunderstand the information conveyed. To achieve this, the findings of Aisah Hasmam's (2017) study also concluded that Arabic language teachers need to guide students in understanding the meaning of vocabulary by increasing the number of verbal questions and discussions with the students.

The study results proved that Arabic vocabulary among students increased after the administration of PBD in the classroom. It is because students are exposed to the same vocabulary over a long period before moving on to new topics. It is in line with the statement of Aisah Hasmam (2017), which asserted that repetition techniques in Arabic vocabulary training activities and recitation individually or in groups could assist develop vocabulary among students.

IX. CONCLUSION

Predominantly, the findings of this study recorded that through the execution of the planned Arabic language PBD, it elevated the level of student performance in four Arabic language skills as desired by the MOE. The advances of four Arabic language skills were achieved as students were introduced to a large number of Arabic vocabulary and were frequently repeated over an extended period. Furthermore, the implementation of Arabic language PBD promoted active student engagement in a variety of teaching and learning activities outlined in the classroom.

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Faculty of Education, UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.
*Corresponding Author Email: ummubalqis1973@gmail.com