

BETWEEN THE IDEAL AND REALITY: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-BASED ORAL ENGLISH ASSESSMENT

Hamzah Md.Omar
Paramasivan Sinnasamy
Universiti Malaysia Sabah

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors related to the implementation of School-based oral English assessment in rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division, Sabah. First of all, the study aimed to find out the extent of implementation of school-based oral English assessment by the English Language teachers based on selected demographic factors. Secondly, it was aimed at finding out whether the English Language teachers are familiar with the content, function and the process of implementation of School-based oral English assessment. Next, this study aimed to find out the level of English Language teachers' perception towards the implementation of school-based oral English assessment. Then, this study went on further to identify the relationship between the implementation of school-based oral English assessment with the influencing factors such as content, function and perception of the teachers. Finally, the study aimed to find out the most influencing factor on the implementation of school-based oral English assessment. A total of 56 English Language teachers (respondents in the study) from 14 rural secondary schools in three rural areas under Sandakan Division were sampled and administered with structured questionnaires. Independent Samples T-Test, One-Way ANOVA, Correlation Analysis ('r') and Multiple Regression analysis were used for this study. It was found that there is no significant difference in the implementation based on demographic factors; the teachers have a positive perception towards the implementation of school-based oral English assessment; there is positive correlation between the implementation and the influencing factors; and, finally the function factor is the most influential factor.

Introduction

The School-based Oral English Assessment (SBOEA) was implemented in 2002 in Malaysia. The aims and objectives of this mode of assessment are noble and well-intentioned in line with the communicative language teaching approach adopted in Malaysian schools. Teachers, themselves are expected to carry out this oral assessment on their students throughout their five years in the secondary schools. Sad to say, the manner in which the oral proficiency is evaluated is questionable. It seems that most teachers are also unsure of the criteria and how the School-based Oral English should be carried out. There are also cases of non-English option teachers carrying out the assessment.

Ultimately how effectively the School-based Oral English Assessment is implemented is in the hands of teachers themselves. The success or failure of any programme is in the hands of the teachers as classroom managers and implementers at grass-root level. This fact has been emphasized by former Education Director-General from 1974 to 1985, Tan Sri Dr Murad Mohammad Nor, when commenting on the New Education Blueprint (The Star, 2007), who said:

The most important part in the implementation of any plan, is the teachers. However good the plan, it will be of no use if the teachers do not implement it well.

Very often we hear and read in the newspapers about the deteriorating standard of English, especially of those from the rural areas. There have also been numerous statements regarding this issue in the newspapers. Among them is a statement by Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussien Onn, “the Government’s education agenda was to bridge the gap between schools in rural and urban areas, provide adequate quality teachers, improve school infrastructure especially in the rural areas, and provide access to quality education”. (Daily Express, 29 November 2006, p. 7). The former Chief Minister, Datuk Mohd. Salleh Tun Said Keruak, has urged the Education Ministry to consider providing additional incentives to teachers posted to the remote areas and outlying islands around Sabah. He has further said that such incentives were needed to motivate teachers to provide quality education to rural students. He believed that “the lack of facilities, attitude of teachers have contributed to the poor performance of rural students (Daily Express, 29 November 2006, p. 4). Invariably, tests and assessments form an integral component of the teaching and learning process. Despite the on-going revolutionary advances towards supplementing the traditional process of teaching and learning, tests as a teaching-learning tool are very unlikely be expunged from our local education system (Ong, 1999). Right from Primary 1 through secondary schooling and at university level, tests in their various forms continue to be organized, conducted and sat for. In Malaysia, the principal ones are the Primary School Assessment (UPSR);

the Lower Secondary Assessment Examination (PMR); the Malaysia Certificate of Examination (SPM); and Higher School Certificate (STPM). Apart from this there are various forms of other tests and assessments, both formative and summative that are carried out at all levels in a school year. So tests and assessments are part and parcel of all Malaysian students' lives.

English language has been accorded second language status in Malaysia. Great emphasis has been given to it in both the primary and secondary schools' Malaysian English Language syllabus on the oral and speaking component. Previously these components had been examined using the services of external examiners. This had been the usual practice in testing the two components. However, the past decade has seen a shift from the traditional way of testing to the new way – better known as Alternative Assessment. With this change in the trend in testing, various forms of alternative assessment such as School-based assessment have been implemented. Black and William (1998) found that recent assessment studies have shifted away from focusing on restricted forms of tests, and moved towards the interaction between assessment and the classroom. Their findings on teachers' practices in formative assessment revealed several key weaknesses:

1. Current classroom assessment practices generally encourage superficial and rote learning, concentrating on recall of isolated details, usually items of knowledge which pupils soon forget.
2. Teachers do not generally review the assessment questions they use and do not discuss them critically with their peers, so there is little reflection on what is being assessed.
3. The grading function is over-emphasized and the learning function under-emphasized.
4. The assessment does not bring about the desired washback effect.

It has been found that formative assessment is not well understood by teachers (Wier:1994) and is weak in practice and that the implementation of formative assessment calls for deep changes both in teachers' perceptions of their own role in relation to their students and in their classroom practice.

A preliminary survey was carried out before the present study. This was done by interviewing the English language teachers and moderators on how the School-Based Oral English Assessment is being implemented in their schools. It was found that the assessment was not implemented according to guidelines and objectives provided by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate (2002 & 2003). In some schools the school-based oral English assessment was carried out for the sake of fulfilling the administrative directives.

Therefore, several questions could be posed regarding the effective implementation of SBEOA by the teachers in the rural secondary schools in Sandakan division regarding their familiarity with the content, the objectives and the guidelines provided by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate and their perception towards School-Based Oral English Assessment.

Rationale of the Exploratory Study

Recently, various statements have been made about the standard of English Language in the rural areas and forms of incentives that have been announced for teachers serving in rural areas. Consequently, steps are being taken to improve the standard of English Language proficiency of the students, especially in the rural areas. Oral proficiency of the students has been the concern. With this in mind, this exploratory study aimed to determine whether the English Language teachers in the rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division are familiar with content, objectives and the guidelines as provided by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate and how the school-based oral English assessment is implemented in their schools. This would also provide data regarding the demography of the English language teachers in the rural secondary schools. The insight gained from this study could be useful for future reference and planning; and to further enhance the implementation process in these rural secondary schools.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this exploratory study are:

1. To examine whether there are any differences in the implementation of School-Based Oral English Assessment among the teachers in the rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division based on selected demographic factors.
2. To investigate whether the teachers in the rural secondary school in Sandakan Division are familiar with the aims and objectives, the grading criteria, the guidelines and the process of implementing the School-based Oral English Assessment (Influencing factors).
3. To find out what is the perception of the teachers in the rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division towards the implementation of oral English assessment.
4. To find out whether there is any relationship between the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment in rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division and the influencing factors.

Methodology

This exploratory study was conducted on all English language teachers in the rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division, which includes the Sandakan, Beluran and Telupid districts. In Sandakan District there are three rural secondary schools, six in Beluran District and in Telupid District there are five secondary schools. A total of 14 rural secondary schools were involved. The population encompassed all the English Language Teachers in these schools. There are about 65 English language teachers in these rural secondary schools. A quantitative approach was used to conduct the study by way of a self-constructed questionnaire. A survey method was used. The questionnaire was given to all the English Language teachers in the rural secondary school in Sandakan Division, Sabah where the schools are easily accessible by road. The researcher went personally to these secondary schools to administer the questionnaire. For the other schools the questionnaire was sent via the Principals and teachers who usually come to Sandakan town for their weekends.

Research Instruments

The research instrument was designed based on the following influencing factors: content, objectives of the School-based Oral English Assessment as provided by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate and the perception of the teachers and the process of implementation. Three influencing factors identified are function, content and perception (B1, B2, and B3). The items in Sections B and C used the Likert scale. A Likert scale asks an individual to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether she or he strongly agrees (SA), agrees (A), is undecided (U), disagrees (D), or strongly disagrees (SD) with each statement (Gay, 1996). The research instrument used in this exploratory study was divided into three parts:

Section A

Demography of the teachers, such as age, gender, highest academic qualification, teaching qualification, option and number of students taught

Section B: Influencing factors

The function factor refers to the aims and objectives of the Malaysia English language Curriculum, the aims and objectives for the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment and instructional designs for classroom teaching and learning. There are ten statements in this section (see Section B1)

Section B 1: Functions

1. The constructs given are sufficient to assess the students oral English proficiency
2. The marks of SBOEA show the actual proficiency level of the students.
3. The students feel the marks of SBOEA are valuable to them.
4. The teacher who does the assessment should be made accountable for the marks given.
5. Class lessons are specially carried out in order to prepare students for the SBOEA.
6. The SBOEA motivates the students to learn.
7. Parents enquire about the marks awarded for their children's oral English assessment.
8. The models given by LPM are sufficient to assess the students' oral performance.
9. The criteria/descriptions given by LPM are sufficient to assess the oral proficiency of the students.
10. The students try to improve their oral skills in order to prepare for SBOEA.

The next influencing factor is content. It refers to the criteria, constructs, the grading score and other guidelines given by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate. These refer to the following guidelines:

1. Pentaksiran Lisan Berasaskan Sekolah (PLBS) Tahun 3 – 6 (SK/SJK) (2003)
2. Pentaksiran Lisan Beraskan Sekolah (PLBS) Tingkatan 1 – 3 (2003)
3. Pengendalian Ujian Lisan Berasaskan Sekolah.(ULBS) Tingkatan 4 – 5.(2002)

In this section, ten statements were posed (see Section B2).

Section B 2: Content

1. The criteria for oral English assessment given by LPM for SBOEA is sufficient to assess the oral proficiency of the students
2. The criteria/constructs for assessment given by LPM for SBOEA are suitable to assess the proficiency level of the students.
3. I am familiar with all the guidelines provided by Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia for SBOEA.
4. Briefing on the procedure of SBOEA is sufficient to carry out the oral assessment effectively.
5. The instruments and guidelines provided by the Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia for SBOEA are sufficient to carry out the oral English assessment.
6. I am familiar with the objectives of SBOEA.
7. I am familiar with the procedure given by LPM to carry out the SBOEA.
8. Briefing given to me is sufficient in order to carry out the oral assessment systematically.
9. I need further training to carry out the SBOEA effectively.
10. The activities for the models given by LPM are suitable

The final influencing factor is perception. It refers to the teachers' belief regarding the way the school-based oral English assessment should be implemented. Fifteen items were designed to assess teachers' belief of SBOEA (see Section B 3).

Section B 3: Perception

1. I believe SBOEA is a good method of assessing oral proficiency levels of students.
2. I believe the SBOEA is a waste of time
3. I believe SBOEA can achieve its objectives.
4. I believe we should go back to the previous method of assessment.
5. I believe the previous summative Oral English Format is better than the present SBOEA.

Section C: Implementation Factors

Implementation factor refers to the guidelines and procedures given by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate i.e., the way the School-based Oral English Assessment should be implemented. 35 items were used to assess teachers' perception on the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment.

1. I believe SBOEA is a good method of assessing oral proficiency levels of students.
2. I believe the SBOEA is a waste of time
3. I believe SBOEA can achieve its objectives.
4. I believe we should go back to the previous method of assessment.
5. I believe the previous summative Oral English Format is better than the present SBOEA.
6. I feel the SBOEA is not able to achieve the objectives of the School based Oral English assessment.
7. I feel modifications need to be made for the proper implementation of SBOEA.
8. I feel I can carry out the SBOEA confidently
9. I feel the SBOEA is not testing what it is supposed to test. There is no validity in the assessment of oral proficiency.
10. I feel it is too time consuming to carry out the SBOEA in the class.
11. I will carry out the oral assessment confidently as specified by LPM.
12. I will prepare the students for SBOEA
13. I will familiarize myself with all the guidelines given by LPM to carry out the SBOEA
14. I will strictly follow the suggested models by LPM for assessment
15. I will strictly follow the criteria for assessment given by LPM.

Section C: Implementation

1. The present format of carrying out SBOEA is suitable
2. It is time consuming to carry out SBOEA during the lessons.
3. The weak students are reluctant to go through the assessment.
4. The classroom environment is suitable to carry out the SBOEA.
5. The SBOEA should be held outside the school hours
6. The SBOEA should be held out of the class within school hours
7. The classes are too large (more than 40 students) and it is difficult to carry out SBOEA.
8. There should be 2 assessors for the oral English assessment
9. The students are made aware of the criteria for assessment before the assessment.
10. Time should be spent on preparing the students for the Oral English Presentation.

11. Students who do not perform well are assisted to perform better during the next assessment.
12. Students who do not perform well are passed with minimum marks.
13. Students who do not perform well are re-assessed.
14. The SBOEA mechanisms are sufficient to monitor the students' rate of progress.
15. I carry out activities to help students to develop oral proficiency in preparation for the oral assessment.
16. I always make it clear to the students the criteria used for the assessment.
17. I carry out the assessment systematically as specified by LPM.
18. I need assistance in implementing the assessment in my class.
19. The assessment activities encourage students to improve oral English skills
20. The school-based assessment takes up too much of my teaching time in the class.
21. My students are particularly concerned about the way SBOEA is carried out.
22. My students are happy with the way the SBOEA is being carried out.
23. The students memorize the scripts for SBOEA.
24. I prefer my class's oral English assessment to be done by another teacher.
25. I prefer my class's oral English assessment to be done by assessors from another school.
26. I simplify the questions to suit the proficiency level of my students.
27. I strictly follow the scoring band that has been provided.
28. I am able to carry out the oral English assessment during the teaching and learning (P&P) in the class.
29. I strictly follow all the guidelines provided when carrying out the oral English assessment
30. I continue to assess my students despite having completed the required number of assessment or models.
31. The present school-based oral English assessment should be modified for effective implementation.
32. The present school-based oral English assessment should be continued as it is.
33. The present school-based oral English assessment is effective in assessing the students' oral proficiency level.
34. I find it difficult to carry out the school-based oral English assessment because my students are with very low proficiency in English.
35. The present School-Based Oral English Assessment should be continued but with major changes.

Data Analysis

All collected data were analysed using the “Statistical Package For Social Science (SPSS for Windows)” version 11.5. Descriptive and Inferential analysis were used. Descriptive analysis used in this study consists of the mean and frequency. The inferential statistic correlation analysis (*r*) and multiple regression (*enter*) analysis were also used. The multiple regression ‘*enter*’ was used to determine the factors that most influences the perception of respondents regarding perception toward the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment. The independent variables are content, function and perception factors. The dependent variable is implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment. The computer ‘*output*’ lists out the predictors in a regression form. The biggest independent predictor ‘*Beta*’ is the most influencing variable which will influence the dependent variable. According to Aaker et. Al. (1995), the values obtained from the regression table can be compared with the influencing factors. The bigger the value of the ‘*beta weight*’, the bigger will be the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variables. All *predictors*, that are $p = <0.05$ will be considered significant and anything more than that will be not be accepted as not being significant.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Background

There were 29 (45%) of the teachers who are below 30 years of age, 36 teachers with less than 5 years of teaching experience (51.8%) and about 50% of them teach large classes of about 45 - 50 students per class. The other interesting finding was that 25 respondents (44.6%) are non-English optionists or non-English majors. The distribution of respondents according to gender was 25 (44.6 %) male and 31 (55.4 %) re female. In terms of academic qualifications, 50 respondents (89.3%) are degree holders and 1 (1.8%) is a master’s degree holder. Of the 65 respondents, 55 (98.2 %) are trained teachers and only one is not a trained teachers. The distribution of respondents according to option is as follows; 31 (55.4 %) of the respondents are English option teachers and 25 (44.6) respondents are non-English option English Language teachers. The distribution of respondent according to the number of years of teaching experience shows that 29 (51.8 %) have less than 5 years of teaching experience; another 21 have between 6 to 15 years of teaching experience and only 6 respondents have more than 16 years of teaching experience.

The interesting point to note here is that 44.6% of the English language teachers in these rural schools are non-English option teachers. Ideally they should all be English option or English major teachers.

Difference in the Implementation

Descriptive Statistics were used to find if there is a significant difference in the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment and Demographic factors. The results show that there is no significant difference in the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment and demographic factors, highest academic qualification, trained/temporary teachers, English/non-English option, teaching experience and the number of students taught. This indicates that these factors do not have a significant influence in the implementation of oral English assessment in the rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division, Sabah.

Teachers' Perception of the School-based Oral English Assessment

In determining whether the respondents are high or low in their perception regarding perception towards the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment, the result from the questionnaire on the items regarding perception shows that the teachers have a positive perception towards the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment (Table 1).

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Perception

Range of Points	Frequency	%
15 - 45	6	10.7%
46 - 63	50	87.3%
Total	56	100%

Teachers' Knowledge of the Content, Functions and Implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment

The three factors that might influence the teachers in the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment are knowledge of the content and function of the system as well as perception factors. Overall the findings show that the English Language teachers in rural secondary schools show a positive perception (mean: 3.3707) towards the School-based Oral English Assessment. The findings also indicate that the English language teachers in the rural secondary school in Sandakan Division are familiar with the content (mean: 3.5964), functions (mean: 3.5429) and implementation procedures (mean: 3.5988) of the School-based Oral English Assessment (Table 2).

Table 2: Teachers' Knowledge of the Content, Functions and Implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment

Factors	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perception	56	2.80	4.20	3.3707	.30212
Content	56	2.30	4.90	3.5964	.52222
Function	56	1.80	4.80	3.5429	.63643
Implementation	56	2.91	4.63	3.5988	.30836

Correlation between the Implementation of School-Based Oral English Assessment with Other Influencing Factors

The Pearson '*r*' correlation analysis is used to determine the relationship between the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment with factors that might influence it.

There is a positive correlation between the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment in rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division, Sabah with other influencing factors. The results are as follows:

- a) the content factor shows a positive and a medium strength correlation ($r = 0.366^{**}$) and the p value is significant at .006 (<0.01 level).
- b) the function factor shows a positive and a strong correlation ($r = 0.520^{**}$) and the p value at .000 is significant at the 0.01 level.
- c) the perception factor shows a positive and a medium strength correlation ($r = 0.371^{**}$) and the p value is significant at .000 (<0.01 level).

Table 3: Correlation between Implementation of School-Based Oral English Assessment with Other Influencing Factors

Correlation List	Type Of Correlation	"r"	Strength Of The Correlation
Implementation With Content	Positive	.366**	Medium Strength
Implementation With Function	Positive	.520**	Strong
Implementation With Perception	Positive	.371**	Medium Strength

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

All the influencing factors showed a positive medium to strong strength correlation in the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment. This shows that there is a medium correlation of the three factors in the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment.

Factors influencing the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment

The independent variables used in this study are content, function and perception. The dependent variable is implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment. The intercept value (59.427) is the '*constant*'. The findings from the regression output '*enter*' shows that the biggest Beta weight is function, 0.424, followed by perception, 0.282. Thus, the most influential factor is function with a beta weight of .424 and a *p* value of 0.013. Whereas, the perception factor with a beta weight of .282 and a *p* value of .019, significant at the <0.05 level, is the least influential. This indicates that the two factors play an important role in influencing the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment. Whereas, the content at a beta weight of .053 and *p* value of .744 is the least influencing factor to the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment.

Table 4: Factors Influencing the Implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment

Variables	B	SEB	Beta	t	p
Content	.114	.348	.053	328	.744
Function	.747	.291	.424	2.564	.013
Perception	.697	.287	.282	2.426	.019
(Constant)	59.427	16.453		3.612	.001

Discussion

According to Stern (1983) the finest and most up-to-date curriculum ideas may not be accepted if they are imposed upon the teachers concerned without having made sure that the changes to new curriculum demands are understood by them. The willing participation of the teachers in implementing the curriculum changes is recognized as an essential aspect of introducing a new curriculum. This recognition

and realization will bring about positive attitude towards the School-based Oral English Assessment.

In the implementation of any changes to a curriculum or programme, the teachers at grassroots level play an important role in their effective implementation. To a great extent their perception towards the change influences the way they perceive the change and implement the changes. According to Quinn (2000) perception is a process that combines both sensing and interpreting. Information comes from the outside world through our senses. Factors like past experiences, emotions, motivation, and what other people infer have a strong influence on Perception. Perception also involves cognitive, affective and behavioural factors. The findings from this study on perception based on these three factors have shown positive responses from the respondents.

Studies by Pillay (1995) and Fauziah (2002) show that our students are poor in oral or speaking skills. Basically this involves the proper implementation of various programmes and how the teachers as implementers perceive the changes that are taking place. According to a study done by Weir (1994) teachers have indicated negative feelings towards the school-based assessment. They have complained that it is being imposed on them and also about time constraints. During the preliminary study some teachers expressed the same feelings that the school-based assessment has been imposed on the teachers and also that it is too time consuming. They have to concentrate on the teaching and learning process as well as assessment at the same time.

The findings from this study also show that the teachers are faced with time constraints and handling large numbers of students but at the same time they have indicated a positive perception towards the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment. Further studies are needed on the effects of these constraints on the effectiveness of its implementation.

Teachers should be knowledgeable, be confident and have the ability to teach students. According to Hughes (1980), in order to be an effective teacher they should be well educated and they should not only impart knowledge to students but should also be creative and innovative. Findings from this study show that, as far as academic qualifications are concerned, 91.07% are graduate teachers and the rest are diploma holders. Furthermore, 98.2% of them have a teacher training qualification. This shows that the respondents, apart from having the necessary academic qualifications, are also trained teachers. The other interesting finding is that 25 respondents (44.6%) are non-English optionists or non-English majors. The study shows this factor too does not influence the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment.

It would be interesting to examine the actual proficiency level of these teachers in relation to the proficiency level of the students. About 44.6% of the respondents are below thirty years old. This shows that a large number of teachers are new or young teachers. Furthermore, the findings reveal that 51.8% of the teachers have less than five years of teaching experience. From this it can be said that the majority of the teachers are young with less than five years of teaching experience. It is also common knowledge that there is a high rate of teacher turnover or the frequent transfer of teachers from rural areas.

According to Wier (1994), it has been found that formative assessment is not well understood by teachers and is weak in practice and that the implementation of formative assessment calls for deep changes both in teachers' perception of their own role in relation to their students and in their classroom practice. However, this study shows that the teachers have understood the purpose of formative assessment and have positive perception toward this form of assessment.

From the preliminary study it was found that the assessment was not implemented according to the guidelines and objectives provided by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate. This study shows that the teachers are familiar with the content, guidelines and objectives of the School-based Oral English Assessment. Apart from this, the findings also show that the teachers are positively inclined towards the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment. As to the question of how effectively it is implemented, further study is needed to assess how effectively the assessment is being implemented in the classroom.

The findings show that there were no significant differences in the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment by the English language teachers and the demographic factors. Secondly, the English language teachers were found to be familiar with the content, function and the process of implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment. Next the study shows that the English Language teachers' have a positive perception towards the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment. In addition, this study shows that there is a positive correlation between the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment and the influencing factors: content, function and perception of the teachers. Finally, the most influential factor with regard to the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment is the function factor, followed by perception. The content factor has the least influence over the implementation. There is a positive correlation between the perception towards the implementation of the School-based Oral English Assessment and the content and function of the School-based Oral English Assessment.

Conclusion

This study has given an insight as to whether the English language teachers in the rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division are familiar with the content, objectives and the guidelines provided by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate and their perception regarding the implementation of the School based Oral English Assessment. It has also provided a data base on the demography of the English language teachers in the rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division. The insight and the data gained from this study could be useful for future reference and planning and to further enhance the implementation process in these rural secondary schools.

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