

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CEFR ALIGNED ENGLISH LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS MODULE FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

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SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2023

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CEFR ALIGNED ENGLISH LISTENING AND
SPEAKING SKILLS MODULE FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

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THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

NATIONAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE
SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2023

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the All-merciful, the All-compassionate.

All praise is due to Allah, the Almighty for his sustenance, guidance, and the will He generously bestowed me to complete this doctoral thesis. It would also be impossible to complete this thesis if not for the help of the guidance, support, and kindness of the people around me, although there are only few names I could mention here.

Above all, I am honoured to have been supervised by my two supervisors, Associate Professor Dr Mazlina binti Che Mustafa and Professor Dr Raja Nor Safinas Binti Raja Hitam who have shown me the attitude, wisdom, and substance of a great scholar. They persistently conveyed the spirit of adventure in regard of research and scholarship, turning what is seemingly a journey of hardship into a series of adventure full of excitement, hope, and possibilities. Despite their commitment attending to their busy academic, professional, and administrative tasks, they have not only become my advisor; but also, my mentor and a guide. Without their guidance, acknowledgement, patience, and commitment, it would not be possible to complete this thesis.

 Thank you to my beloved husband, Azudin bin Mahmad sani who had provided me the financial support for my studies. I am indebted for his unequivocal support, patience, sacrifices that they had made, and especially in believing that I could do it despite the times when I would feel otherwise. Without him and our children, Razi, Umara, Raudhah and Umayah, this effort would be fruitless.

I would like to acknowledge all my colleagues of 'SK Sungai buaya, Preschool in the district of Kuala Langat, 'Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri Selangor' for the understanding, constant support and encouragement. I would also like to thank Sultan Idris Education University (UPI) and its staff for the academic and technical support, which have greatly facilitated this dissertation process.

My special gratitude also goes to my parents, Zailan bin Kamaruddin and Norazizah binti Abu for their continuous prayers, blessings and sacrifice. Also, I would like to express my appreciation to my siblings and family members for the motivation and encouragement that they have given me in countless ways.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my friends Ts. Dr. Mohd Ridhuan bin Mohd Jamil, Kartigesan a/l M. Veloo, Dr Hafsa Jantan, Viloshena A/P Ravandran@Ravindran, Dr Yee Bee Cho, Wan ziraiza bt wan ismail, Hafizah Bt Hamzah, Dr Zarina Ishak, Dr Noor Ahnis Othman, Haslinda Md Ali, Dr Nur Nazuha Beevi bt Abdul aziz, Noor Armila Bt Mohd Masrom, Suheil Alwardie Bin Mohd Roslan, Kartiyayni a/p Alagamalai, Saruchi Bin Sawal and Dr Muhammad Nidzam Bin Yaakob, for their help, guidance, and encouragement. Thank you all.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to develop The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module for Preschool Teachers using the Design and Development Research Approach. The study was conducted in three phases, namely the needs analysis, design and development, and evaluation. For the need analysis, a questionnaire was distributed to 368 Ministry of Education preschool teachers. The findings concluded that there was a need to develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module. The second phase was to design and develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module using Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM). The 14 expert panels reached the agreement on the module objectives, teaching strategies, teaching techniques, activities, teaching resource materials, and assessment methods. The findings of this phase have resulted a prototyped module. The third phase was the usability evaluation which involved 50 experienced preschool teachers evaluating the module using a questionnaire. The findings showed that the preschool teachers reached the consensus on the suitability and usability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module. In conclusion, this module helps preschool teachers to plan and deliver their teachings in CEFR aligned English focusing on listening and speaking skills. The implication of the study suggests that the module can be used as a guide which aligns with CEFR for teaching listening and speaking skills to preschool children.

PEMBANGUNAN MODUL KEMAHIRAN MENDENGAR DAN BERTUTUR BAHASA INGGERIS CEFR UNTUK GURU PRASEKOLAH

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk membina Modul Kemahiran Mendengar dan Bertutur Bahasa Inggeris selaras dengan The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages untuk guru prasekolah dengan menggunakan Pendekatan Penyelidikan Reka bentuk dan Pembangunan. Kajian ini dilakukan dalam tiga tahap iaitu analisis keperluan, reka bentuk dan pembangunan dan penilaian. Analisis keperluan menggunakan soal selidik yang diedarkan kepada 368 orang guru prasekolah Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia. Dapatan fasa ini merumuskan bahawa terdapat keperluan untuk membina Modul Kemahiran Mendengar dan Bertutur Bahasa Inggeris selaras dengan CEFR untuk guru prasekolah. Fasa kedua adalah reka bentuk dan pembangunan Modul Kemahiran Mendengar dan Bertutur Bahasa Inggeris selaras dengan CEFR dengan menggunakan Kaedah Fuzzy Delphi. 14 panel pakar terlibat untuk mencapai kesepakatan mengenai objektif modul, strategi pengajaran, teknik pengajaran, aktiviti yang sesuai, bahan sumber pengajaran serta kaedah penilaian. Dapatan daripada fasa ini telah menghasilkan modul prototaip. Fasa ketiga adalah penilaian kebolegunaan yang melibatkan 50 orang guru prasekolah yang berpengalaman dalam menilai modul menggunakan soal selidik. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa guru prasekolah mencapai kata sepakat mengenai kesesuaian dan kebolegunaan Modul Kemahiran Mendengar dan Bertutur Bahasa Inggeris selaras dengan CEFR. Kesimpulannya, modul ini dapat membantu guru prasekolah merancang dan menyampaikan pengajaran dalam subjek Bahasa Inggeris selaras dengan CEFR yang memberi fokus kepada kemahiran mendengar dan bertutur. Implikasi kajian ialah modul ini dapat dijadikan panduan selaras dengan CEFR bagi mengajar kemahiran mendengar dan bertutur untuk kanak-kanak prasekolah.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR	The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
DDR	Design Development and Research
ELL	English Language Learner
FDM	Fuzzy Delphi Method
MOE	Ministry of Education
NPSC	National Preschool Standard Curriculum
NPSCA	National Standard-Based Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Document
SOW	Scheme of Work
TPR	Total Physical Response

APPENDIX LIST

- A Letter of permission to carry out the study from the Ministry of Education Malaysia
- B Validity of methodology evaluation phase questionnaire
- C Validity of Design and development interview items
- D Need Analysis questionnaire in Bahasa Melayu version
- E Interview elements asked
- F FDM questionnaire
- G Evaluation Phase questionnaire

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Education is a prerequisite for the economic development of a country. In a developing country like Malaysia, the need to raise education to a higher level is crucial in realizing every citizen's progress. Education philosophy is the backbone to achieving the mission of national development and the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025), developed by the Government of Malaysia, is an initiative to change the education system in Malaysia towards a more dynamic direction in the acquisition of 21st-century skills (Maslawati Mohamad, Melor Md.Yunus, & Pamela, 2016; Wan Illina Wan Ishak & Maslawati Mohamad, 2018). The Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) has recorded several

aspirations where each pupil is expected to have the knowledge, thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual skills, ethics, and spirituality in line with the National Education Philosophy.

The Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) supports the aspirations of the National Education Philosophy to provide a balanced education as the fundamental aspiration for every pupil. Improving all pupils' Bahasa Malaysia and English proficiency was set out as an immediate priority (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The Ministry of Education Malaysia targets every pupil to have bilingual skills; mastering Bahasa Malaysia as the national language, English as a second language, and international communication language (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). Recognizing the importance of mastery of English as the second language and international language of communication in Malaysia, the researcher, took the initiative to develop the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to enhance the teaching of MOE preschool teachers in line with the government's desire to produce globally competitive teaching staff with higher potential.

1.2 Background of the Study

Ministry of Education focuses on the quality of teachers in terms of pedagogy, language proficiency, and professionalism (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2014). Preschool teachers ensure they meet the standard of language skills (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). Teachers responsible for teaching English must have substantial knowledge

background and active involvement in the teaching of English (Goodwyn, 1997). A clear understanding of a subject taught will determine the effectiveness of educational philosophy, teaching style, approaches, methods, and teaching techniques in the classroom (Brown, 2006). To teach English effectively, a teacher needs to know how the language works (Harmer, 2010). Teachers also need to know pronunciation features such as voice, stress, and intonation (Harmer, 2010). Therefore, preschool teachers need to strengthen grammar skills and vocabulary development as well as pronunciation and intonation practices in English so that the teaching process runs smoothly (Nor Fadila Mohd Amin & Adibah Abd. Rahim, 2010).

A study was conducted using Cambridge Assessment expertise in 2013, and the results showed that most pupils in Malaysia were very weak in English listening and speaking skills (KLC Language Centre, 2019). Pupils' level of motivation influences unsatisfactory English language achievements in learning English (KLC Language Centre, 2019).

Listening and speaking skills are skills that are closely related to each other and will result in a communication between individuals (Norshimar Akmar Hashim, 2021). Past studies have shown that listening skills are an integral part of communication (Almutairi & Shukri, 2016). Preschoolers speak based on how and what they hear from the environment (Norshimar Akmar Hashim, 2021). To address this issue, the MOE has introduced the CEFR to ensure that the level of English mastery in Malaysia is in line with international standards (KLC Language Centre, 2019). In 2015, the Ministry of Education

Malaysia launched a Roadmap for English Language Education in Malaysia; this roadmap would be in force until 2025 to align the standards of English taught in schools and institutions of higher learning with those of CEFR (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2017c).

Common European Framework of Reference is an international standard that aims to produce students who can communicate in any language or English. The adoption of CEFR in Malaysia illustrates the continuity in English education from preschool to higher education. (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2014; Norshimar Akmar Hashim, 2021).

In this regard, the Education Office of each district in all states in Malaysia, in collaboration with the Teacher Training Division (BPG) of the Ministry of Education, implemented a program to improve English professionalism for preschool teachers in 2013; under this initiative, all preschool teachers were to attend 12 joint meetings with selected mentors from June to October 2013 (Mofazri, 2013; Hussein Asian, 2013). All preschool teachers were required to sit for the Preschool Teachers English Proficiency Test (UKBIGP) in 2017 to measure their level of proficiency in English using CEFR (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2017c). This is a preparatory step for teaching CEFR English to preschool children (Nor Fadila Mohd Amin & Adibah Abd. Rahim, 2010).

Therefore, this study was conducted to develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module for preschool teachers.

1.2.1 CEFR in Preschool Education

The CEFR is an international standards framework that helps measure English proficiency at each level of education (Wan Normi Hassan & Sarina Mohd Som, 2019). CEFR functions comprehensively, and transparently, and is a tool used to determine language proficiency, drive educational reform, and link curriculum, teaching practice, and assessment (Piccardo et al., 2019). The education system in Malaysia aspires to produce pupils who are at least fluent in Bahasa Malaysia and English as a second language (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The principles of this framework state that the teacher must be at a higher level of mastery than the level of a pupil (Wan Normi Hassan & Sarina Mohd Som, 2019).

Common European Framework of Reference was officially introduced into the education system in Malaysia in 2013 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The implementation of CEFR in the national education system began with the establishment of the English Language Standards and Quality Council (ELSQC) in 2013 (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019). ELSQC has partnered with the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC) to assist the MOE in improving and strengthening English proficiency among pupils in Malaysia (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019). Thus, the CEFR is a standard framework that can empower the education system and raise it to an international level (Hazita Azman, 2016).

The CEFR Long-term Plan covers three phases; the first phase ran from 2013 to 2015 and involved the MOE focusing on English teachers (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019). During this period, English teachers were sent to attend various courses, including Professional Up-skilling of English Language teachers (Pro-ELT), the Native Speaker Program, the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Program, and the Expanded Specialist Coach (SISC) role for English Language (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015; Rozana Sani, 2016). For the second phase, ELSQC expanded the use of CEFR at all national education levels starting from preschool to primary school, secondary school, and university (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019). In 2018, CEFR was used extensively in the learning system in MOE preschools. Meanwhile, in the third phase of the long-term CEFR plan, ELSQC has been evaluating and improving the implementation of CEFR with the selection of appropriate textbooks and supporting materials that can be used in the CEFR teaching and learning process at the primary, secondary, and university levels (Wan Rowena Rusli & Aida Hanim A. Hamid, 2019).

Using CEFR in the education system can facilitate the teaching and assessment process and impact curriculum development (Moonen et al., 2013). This is because the CEFR presents a complex descriptive scheme for determining aspects of mastery of a language (Piccardo et al., 2019). In the CEFR scale, the emphasis is on listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The CEFR also sets six levels of mastery, namely:

Table 1.1

CEFR Level

CEFR Level
Proficient User
C2
Can understand virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently, and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
C1
Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, recognize implicit meaning, can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic, and professional purposes. Can produce clear structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors, and cohesive devices.
Independent User
B2
Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topic, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
B1
Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes, and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User
A2
Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment, and matters in areas of immediate need.

(Continued)

Table 1.1 (*Continuation*)

A1

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of the need of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows, and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

The CEFR emphasizes four skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills that every preschool child needs to master in English subjects. The target that preschool children need to achieve in the mastery of English as a second language is an A1 level (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2019).

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION									
THE ROADMAP (2015-2025)									
C E F R F O U N D A T I O N			MEB WAVES 1 - 3 (2013-2025)						C E F R F O U N D A T I O N
			PHASE 1 (2015-2016)		PHASE 2 (2017-2020)		PHASE 3 (2021-2025)		
	CONDITIONS FOR REFORM	LEAD AGENCY	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	
	Strong CEFR Foundation to achieve international standards	BPK	Set CEFR staged learning outcomes based on Cambridge Baseline 2013 study as a guide for preschool	Staged learning outcomes	Implement and monitor staged learning outcomes with DAP as a reference	Staged learning outcomes with DAP as a reference implemented and a report on implementation	Evaluate and revise staged learning outcomes with DAP as a reference	Appropriate staged learning outcomes	A1
			Develop CEFR descriptors suitable for the preschool stage of learning	CEFR descriptors	Validate the developed CEFR descriptors	The CEFR descriptors validated	Review and revise CEFR descriptors	Final CEFR descriptors	
	DAP-CEFR alignment	BPK	Alignment of the English language curricula, teaching and learning, and assessment to DAP and CEFR		Launching and monitoring of DAP-CEFR-aligned English language curricula, teaching and learning, and assessment		Review and revision of DAP-CEFR-aligned English language curricula, teaching and learning, and assessment		
	DAP-CEFR implementation and monitoring	ELSQC ELTC BPPDP	Setting up of an independent body responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the reform process		Monitoring of all actions required for reform		Review of and report on outcomes and efficacy of reform		

Continued

(continuation)

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION									
THE ROADMAP (2015-2025)									
		PHASE 1 (2015-2016)		PHASE 2 (2017-2020)		PHASE 3 (2021-2025)			
CONDITIONS FOR REFORM	LEAD AGENCY	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	CEFR EXIT LEVEL (2025)	
CURRICULUM									
CURRICULUM	Alignment of learning standards	BPK	Adopt the CEFR as the reference for the development of the content and learning standards for EL Reinforce DAP as the reference for including pedagogical aspects in the content and learning standards for EL Provide the NPSC in English to encourage the use of English for the Thematic Module	CEFR used as the reference for the development of the content and learning standards for EL DAP reinforced as the reference for including pedagogical aspects in the content and learning standards for EL Teachers are provided with the NPSC in both bahasa Malaysia and English	Evaluate and monitor teachers' comprehension of the EL content and learning standards in the revised document	A comprehensive report of the evaluation	Review the EL content and learning standards in the revised document based on the evaluation report Review and revise CEFR descriptors	An improved document Final CEFR descriptors	A1
	Transition from one instructional language to another	BPK JNJK	Adopt DAP as the reference for planning daily schedules focusing on instructional language use	Appropriate sample schedules focusing on instructional language use	Evaluate and monitor the implementation of the schedules focusing on instructional language use	A comprehensive report of the evaluation	Review the schedules based on the evaluation report	A set of improved schedules	
	A highly immersive English-rich environment in preschools	ELTC BKK	Encourage an immersive English learning environment in preschools with school-based initiatives	An emerging immersive English environment	Implement and monitor school-based initiatives to encourage a highly immersive English environment	An emerging highly immersive English-rich environment in preschools	Review and improve school-based initiatives	A highly immersive English-rich environment in preschools	

Continued

(continuation)

THE ROADMAP (2015-2025)									
C U R R I C U L U M			PHASE 1 (2015-2016)		PHASE 2 (2017-2020)		PHASE 3 (2021-2025)		C E F R E X I T L E V E L (2025)
	CONDITIONS FOR REFORM	LEAD AGENCY	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	
	Parental and community engagement	PPD JPN PIBG	Design programmes to engage parents and the community in supporting preschool students' EL learning (e.g. teacher aides)	Programmes for parental and community engagement designed	Launch parent and community engagement programmes Monitor programmes	Community engagement programmes launched Monitoring reports submitted Broader opportunities to use EL in and outside school	Review engagement programmes	Increased effective EL engagement time	
T E A C H I N G & L E A R N I N G	TEACHING & LEARNING								
	DAP-informed pedagogy	ELTC JNUK IPTA/USM	Conduct courses on understanding and using DAP principles to inform practice	Awareness and understanding of DAP raised among In-service and pre-service teachers	Provide continuous professional development courses for the inspectorate to enable them to effectively monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogy using DAP principles	Inspectorate trained in DAP-informed pedagogy	Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogy using DAP principles	DAP-informed pedagogy used effectively	A1
	Minimum qualification for preschool teachers: English proficiency and academic qualifications	BPSM IPTA/USM	Appoint competent users of English to teach preschoolers (focus on retired local English teachers)	Competent users, particularly retired local English teachers considered for post of preschool teacher	Continue appointment of competent users of English	A body of EL proficient preschool teachers	Review the English language quality of preschool teachers	English language quality achieved among preschool teachers	

Continued

(continuation)

THE ROADMAP (2015-2025)									
TEACHING & LEARNING	CONDITIONS FOR REFORM	LEAD AGENCY	PHASE 1 (2015-2016)		PHASE 2 (2017-2020)		PHASE 3 (2021-2025)		
			ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	CEFR EXIT LEVEL (2025)
TEACHING & LEARNING	Minimum qualification for preschool teachers: English proficiency and academic qualifications	BPSM IPTA / USM			Implement the Bachelor's degree as the minimum qualification for preschool teachers to be achieved by 2025: a. Major English, minor Early Childhood Education or Preschool Education b. Major Early Childhood Education or Preschool Education, minor English c. Double degree consisting of English and Early Childhood Education or Preschool Education	Appointment requirements implemented	Review the appointment qualifications of preschool teachers	Minimum qualifications for pre-school teachers attained	
	ASSESSMENT								
ASSESSMENT	CEFR-informed assessment	BPK LP	Revise constructs and descriptors for performance standards to incorporate assessment on phonics (for 5+ age group) and HQTs complemented by a glossary of terminologies relating to constructs, descriptors and concepts used, guided by the CEFR Provide exemplars of developmentally and linguistically appropriate assessment tools for standardisation	A revised National Preschool Assessment Tool (NPAT) based on a CEFR-informed assessment framework Exemplars of developmentally appropriate and linguistically appropriate assessment tools	Monitor and evaluate CEFR-informed assessment	Evaluation reports on the effective use of CEFR-informed assessment by JNJK	Review the NPAT guided by the CEFR	A robust NPAT based on CEFR-informed assessment Developmentally and linguistically appropriate non-standardised and standardised assessment tools	A1

continued

(continuation)

THE ROADMAP (2015-2025)										
		PHASE 1 (2015-2016)		PHASE 2 (2017-2020)		PHASE 3 (2021-2025)				
CONDITIONS FOR REFORM	LEAD AGENCY	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	CEFR EXIT LEVEL (2025)		
ASSESSMENT										
ASSESSMENT	Institutional support for the development of assessment tools	PPD JPN	Mobilise teachers to develop collaboratively standardised assessment tools for testing listening and speaking skills	Standardised assessment tools for listening and speaking developed collaboratively	Train teachers to adapt valid assessment tools to create developmentally and linguistically appropriate assessment tools for all language skills (L, S, R, W)	Valid assessment tools adapted for all language skills Professional upskilling courses for teachers with advisory support on (a) English language assessment, and (b) adapting and developing standardised assessment tools by ELTC	Train teachers to create developmentally and linguistically appropriate assessment tools individually (or collaboratively) for own (or shared) use Evaluate assessment tools and upskilling courses	Developmentally and linguistically appropriate assessment tools created Evaluation report by JNJK to PPD and JPN	A1	ASSESSMENT
	Teacher competency in preschool assessment	BPSH	Recruit EL option teachers and/or competent users of English to (teach and) conduct assessment Assess pupils guided by exemplars	EL option teachers and/or competent users of English (teach and) conduct assessment Pupils are more comfortable in the use of language	Supervise, monitor and evaluate teachers' competency in assessment - to be carried out by PPD, JPN and JNJK Assess pupils guided by the exemplars and adaptations of valid assessment tools	An evaluation report on teachers' use of the exemplars and assessment tools Pupils are more confident in the use of language	Evaluate teachers' competency in assessment - to be carried out by JNJK Conduct student portfolio assessment	A report on teachers' competency in assessment Enforcement of the use of student portfolio assessment		ASSESSMENT

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION								
THE ROADMAP (2015 - 2025)								
		PHASE 1 (2015-2016)		PHASE 2 (2017-2020)		PHASE 3 (2021-2025)		
CONDITIONS FOR REFORM	LEAD AGENCY	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	CEFR EXIT LEVEL (2025)
MONITORING OF PROGRESS TOWARDS A QUALITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION SYSTEM								
International standard of Preschool EL education	ELSQC			Conduct a benchmark study for preschool students to establish the impact of initiatives on the EL proficiency of preschool students	A benchmark study report	Carry out an impact study on the reformed preschool EL education system	Students achieve minimum EL proficiency target	A1

Figure 1.1. The English language education roadmap (2015-2025) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015)

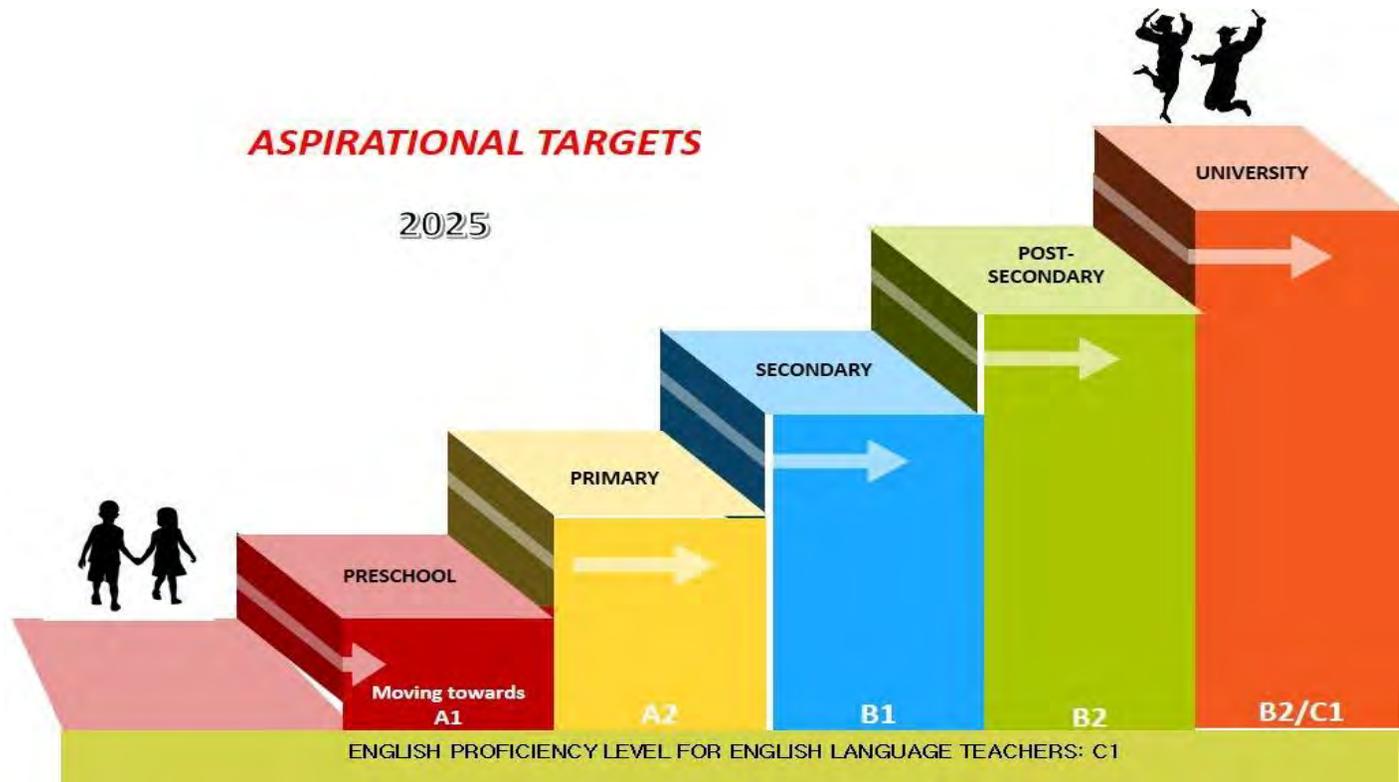


Figure 1.2. The roadmap sets aspirational targets based on CEFR (Zuraidah Mohd Don & Mardziah Hayati Abdullah, 2019)

Table 1.2

CEFR Level A1

UNDERSTANDING	SPEAKING	WRITING
<p>LISTENING I can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family, and my immediate concrete surrounding when people speak slowly and clearly.</p> <p>READING I can understand familiar names, words, and simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in the catalogs.</p>	<p>SPOKEN INTERACTION I can interact simply provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.</p> <p>SPOKEN PRODUCTION I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and the people I know.</p>	<p>WRITING I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in the form with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality, and address on a hotel registration form.</p>

1.2.2 Challenges of Preschool Teachers in Preschool English Lessons

Since 2010, there have been several changes to the National Preschool Standards-Based Curriculum. The Professional Circular letter No. 9 of 2010 states that English must be used as the instructional language or medium of instruction for at least 10 hours (600 minutes) per week in preschool classes that use Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction and six hours (360 minutes) per week for classes in preschools that do not use Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2017a). Accordingly, the national education policy and curriculum have set out that as much as 50% of learning time be used for English as the second language in teaching and learning sessions in preschools

starting in 2010 (Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum, 2010). This policy was intended by the MOE as a way to increase the use of English in early childhood education and at the same time to open opportunities for children to enable them to have more time to learn English (Siti Hamira Md Ngajib, 2019).

The Ministry of Education's decisions and changes have significantly impacted preschool teachers' abilities because English communication is not easy to master, especially for preschool teachers who did take the English language option during their college training (Zuraydah Zainal & Rohaty Mohd Majzub, 2015). This implementation requires a high level of commitment from all preschool teachers to ensure that they can master the skills of using English as a second language and interactional language and examine each method that will be used in the teaching and learning process (Zuraydah Zainal & Rohaty Mohd Majzub, 2015).

Each teacher must always be ready to transform themselves according to the current education (Mohd Fauzi Zailan, 2019). They need to equip themselves with knowledge of the field they are involved in, skills to convey information, and be ready to accept all the changes in the world of education (Mohd Fauzi Zailan, 2019). Thus, teachers play an essential role in realizing the aspirations of the MOE as well as improving the quality of education as teachers are agents for conveying information and must be wise in planning the learning process as best as possible (Mohd Fauzi Zailan, 2019).

Therefore, the CEFR-aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module was developed to assist preschool teachers in teaching English and enable them to carry out their duties and responsibilities in conveying information and educating children so that this younger generation can compete globally.

1.3 Problem Statement

A report issued by the Selangor State Education Department (2019) on the National Preschool Assessment Instrument for 2019 showed the percentage of six-year-old children from all over the state of Selangor with only 59% which is 11,133 children at level three for listening skills in English subjects, 54% or a total of 10,217 children for reading skills while a total of 11,156 children or 59% for writing skills. The percentages released showed that the children's skill was at a moderate level, and this is a challenge faced by preschool teachers to increase the percentage of children's mastery in listening, reading, and writing skills in English as a second language. CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module is not yet available in the MOE preschool education system. Therefore, the development of this module will also help teachers diversify their teaching methods to ensure that six-year-old MOE preschool children can achieve level A1 on the CEFR scale.

The element of knowledge is very much emphasized in the world of education (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2014). Preschool teachers must ensure they meet the language skills standard (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2014). Teachers who are responsible for teaching English must have solid knowledge and background as well as

active involvement in the teaching of English (Goodwyn, 1997). A baseline study in 2013 by MOE has shown that 62% of preschool teachers had an English proficiency level below the A scale, 25% were on the B2 scale and 13% were at the C1 level. According to the research above, 97 percent of teachers are interested in teaching English, but English language proficiency is still low. Surveys such as that conducted by Goh (2019) have shown that the preschool teachers' own lack of proficiency in the English language. In a study conducted by Goh (2019), it was shown that 92% preschool teachers' had low English proficiency level because they only can understand the main points of a short dialogue or passage if spoken at slower than normal speed and also need some repetition.

A dialogue on the preparation of the Malaysia Education Development Plan 2015-2025 held in January 2014 emphasized the issue of Malaysian students who cannot communicate well in English from preschool to tertiary level. In this case, preschool teachers are to be part of the problem because all preschool teachers are responsible for teaching preschool children to communicate in English. The low percentage in terms of preschool teachers proficient in speaking English is a concern that needs to be addressed so that children's English language skills can be developed.

Albalawi and Nadeem (2020) study identified the problems that occurred in English language teaching and learning at a preschool level as students being unable to understand what the teachers are delivering. The results showed the absence of two-way communication between teachers and children during teaching. A lack of effective communication between students and teachers as a leading cause for a poor learning

environment and poor grades among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. The findings portray a predominant view that one of the greatest impacts of poor communication is poor outcomes on academic performance and engagement.

The children expected and waited for the teacher to provide them with the correct answers. This situation made the strategies used by teachers ineffective because the children did not understand the language used (Idrissova, Smagulova, and Tussupbekova, 2015). It made communication between teachers and children difficult. Therefore, continuous training needs to be done to help improve preschool children's mastery of English vocabulary by focusing on the basic language skill of listening (Idrissova et al., 2015).

Teachers need to take the initiative to provide children with early exposure. The lack of exposure to the use listening skills are usually neglected of English among preschool children is the main factor that causes them to be weak in the language. Indeed, exposure to listening skills allows them to understand the lessons delivered by the teacher (Junio, 2018).

An important element of developing children's listening skills is by making them active listeners (Sadiku, 2015). To mold children into active listeners, teachers need to play a role and be a model for the children in communicating activities in English (Norshimar Akmar Hashim, 2021). A study has shown that by preschool teachers in the process of teaching preschool English due to their low proficiency in the language (Sadiku, 2015).

Rohaty Mohd Majzub (2013) in her study suggested that the emphasis often given by teachers is on reading and writing skills. Preschool teachers rarely use English as a communication tool in daily learning such as outdoor activities and do not emphasize listening skills. To ensure that preschool children master English well, teachers need to apply effective teaching strategies that focus on listening and speaking skills because they are the basic skills for mastering a language. The consequences of these constraints have prompted researchers to produce a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module that focuses on listening and speaking skills to help teachers overcome the problems they face in ensuring the development of children's listening and speaking skills.

In addition, a study conducted by Yildirim (2016) found that preschool children were not motivated to learn English because preschool teachers were still using conventional approaches. The teachers were still constrained by teacher-centered teaching methods and still used drills which resulted in a dull learning atmosphere. In the same study, Yildirim (2016) stated that teaching strategies and techniques play an important role in children's learning. Therefore, teachers need to be creative to vary their teaching methods and strategies according to the class size and the level of mastery of the children.

In the preschool education system in Malaysia, each teacher has been provided with a scheme of work (SOW) as a guideline to define the structure and content of the academic system. The SOW is a complete document made into a preschool English annual plan that includes content standards, learning standards, topics for preschool English syllabus for children aged four and five or above, a scheme of work, and supporting

documents for each teacher's guidance (Amy, 2019). However, preschool teachers are placed in a challenging conundrum when they are required to process the SOW according to their creativity by referring to the National Preschool Standard Based Curriculum (revised 2017) without being supplied with modules, textbooks, or workbooks as provided for the year one, year two and year three children. Mainstream teachers who teach those children have been provided with complete documents to ensure that they can deliver lessons effectively. Among the documents prepared for mainstream teachers of CEFR English subjects are the syllabus, curriculum and assessment standard documents (DSKP), SOW, Super Minds textbooks, and Super Mind activity books (WordPress, 2020). Based on professional circular No. 1/2000, guidelines related to using workbooks in primary schools were specified. In line with that, the use of workbooks is also not allowed at the preschool level because the MOE encourages teachers to use their creativity to select, organize, process and diversify activities based on the Learning Standards according to the suitability of children and avoid dependence on workbooks in the teaching process (Bahagian Pengurusan Sekolah Harian, 2018). This situation requires a high level of knowledge competency to ensure that teachers can deliver lessons effectively (Bahagian Pengurusan Sekolah Harian, 2018). To address this problem, researchers will develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module prepared from the preschool SOW for children from five years old and above to help teachers implement the teaching process more effectively.

A positive attitude to accept any change is a crucial element in a teacher's competency (Roslan Abu Hassan, 2014). Potential teachers should have a positive attitude

toward any transformation in the world of education (Roslan Abu Hassan, 2014). However, the study by Mardziah Abdullah, Mariani Md Nor, Damaety, and Chee (2017) explained that preschool teachers are less skilled in teaching English due to low self-confidence and their pessimistic opinion on the use of English. A survey study conducted by Nur Nazuha Beevi Abdul Aziz (2017) has shown that preschool teachers have low effectiveness in teaching English. This situation shows that preschool teachers are less motivated, less confident, and constantly worried about English. This finding illustrates that the competency of preschool teachers in English teaching and learning is limited and makes it a challenge for them to teach English so that children can achieve the A1 level in CEFR. Therefore, the existence of this CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module and its focus on listening and speaking skills can reduce the anxiety of preschool teachers in the planning of exciting activities so that the teaching process becomes more effective. This is because the module's content will include suggested activities, delivery methods, and assessments to facilitate teachers in assessing children's achievement during the teaching process.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to help MOE preschool teachers in planning and implementing lessons. In addition, the development of this module can also help preschool teachers to diversify their teaching styles by using various strategies and teaching techniques that can attract children to learn English as a second language. This study also aims to identify teaching and learning

approaches, teaching materials, learning strategies involving activities, and appropriate assessments to be included in the modules to be developed.

In addition, this study involved a group of experts in the field of preschool CEFR English who were responsible for evaluating the modules developed. The development process of this module involved three phases, namely the needs analysis phase, the design, and development phase, and the evaluation phase.

1.5 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the need for developing a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module for preschool teachers.
 - a. Identify preschool teachers' perceptions of their English language competency.
 - b. Identify preschool teachers' level of acceptance of the development of a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module.
 - c. Identify the characteristics of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module needed by preschool teachers to help their teaching process.
2. To develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module for preschool teachers.
 - a. Identify the objectives of the appropriate CEFR aligned English Listening

and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views.

- b. Identify appropriate teaching strategies to be used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views.
- c. Identify appropriate teaching techniques to be used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views.
- d. Identify appropriate activities to be included in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views.
- e. Identify appropriate teaching resource materials to be used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the

- expert views.
- f. Identify appropriate assessment methods to be used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views.

3. Identify the usability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module for preschool teachers.

- a. Identify the level of suitability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the views of MOE preschool teachers
- b. Identify the level of usability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the views of MOE preschool teachers.
- c. Identify the level of satisfaction of preschool teachers with the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module.

1.6 Research Questions

Based on the study's objectives, problem statement, and rationale, the study's research questions are formulated according to three phases based on the design and development of the research approach.

For phase one of identifying the need to develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to help the teaching among preschool teachers, a need analysis was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the preschool teachers' perception of their English language competency?
2. What is the preschool teachers' level of acceptance of the development of a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module?
3. What are the characteristics of a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module needed by preschool teachers to help their teaching process?

Meanwhile, for phase two of developing a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to help learning among MOE preschool teachers, the development phase was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the objectives of the appropriate CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views?
2. What are the appropriate teaching strategies used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views?
3. What are the appropriate teaching techniques used in the CEFR aligned English

Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views?

4. What are the appropriate activities to include in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views?
5. What are the appropriate teaching resource materials to be used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views?
6. What are the appropriate assessment methods used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views?

In phase three evaluating the usability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module among MOE preschool teachers the evaluation phase was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of usability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module?
 - a. What is the level of suitability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the views of MOE preschool teachers?
 - b. What is the level of usability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the views of MOE preschool teachers?
 - c. What is the level of satisfaction of preschool teachers towards the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module?

Table 1.3

Research objectives and research question by phase

Phase	Research Objective	Research Question
Phase 1: Need Analysis	Identify the need to develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to help the teaching among MOE preschool teachers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the preschool teachers' perception of their English language competency? 2. What is the preschool teachers' level of acceptance of the development of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module? 3. What are the characteristics of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module needed by preschool teachers to help their learning process?
Phase 2: Design and development research	Develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to help the teaching among MOE preschool teachers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the objectives of the appropriate CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views? 2. What are the appropriate teaching strategies used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views? 3. What are the appropriate teaching techniques used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views? 4. What are the appropriate activities to include in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views? 5. What are the appropriate teaching resource materials to be used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views? 6. What are the appropriate assessment methods used in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the expert views?

(continued)

Table 1.3 (Continuation)

Phase 3: Evaluate the usability	Identify the usability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module for MOE preschool teachers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the level of suitability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the views of MOE preschool teachers? 2. What is the level of usability of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module according to the views of MOE preschool teachers? 3. What is the level of satisfaction of preschool teachers towards the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module?
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1.7 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Every research study requires a solid theoretical framework to complete the work. This researcher applied the Teaching Strategy Model (Norshimar Akmar Hashim, 2021) in this work as a base for the module design and development. Three theories underpin the module's development. The first is the Instructional Theory of Gagne (1984), which will be used as a guide by the researcher to focus on how to structure materials to improve the teaching process. In addition, the language teaching and development activities that will be developed in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module are based on Cognitive Theory and Behaviorist Theory. To further strengthen this study, the researcher will use Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory (1982) as a guide to see the role that needs to be taken by a teacher to teach English as a second language to preschool children. To further strengthen the English teaching process of preschool

teachers, the researcher also presents an Iceberg Model (Spencer & Spencer, 1993) to be applied in the English teaching context based on the suitability and importance of the elements found in the selected model.

The researcher will utilize the Second Language Acquisition Theory, Teaching Strategy Model, Instructional Theory, Gagne Theory of Instruction, and Iceberg Model as the foundation on which to study the teaching needs and the role that a preschool teacher should play to teach English as a second language before developing the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module.

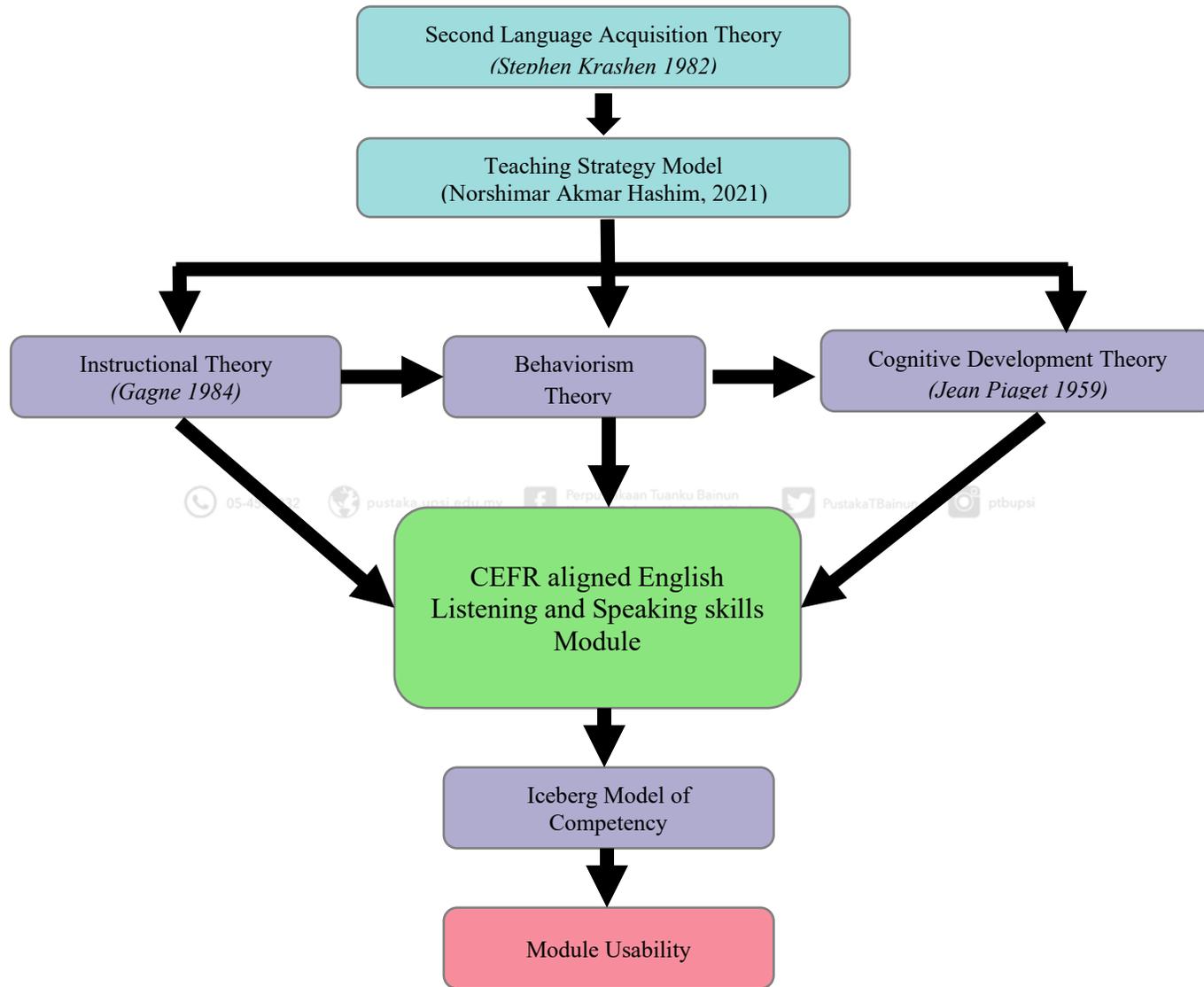


Figure 1.3. Theoretical Framework of the study

1.8 Conceptual Framework

The focus of this study is to develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to help the teaching among MOE preschool teachers. The construction of this module will involve two components included in the CEFR namely listening and speaking skills. The researcher will develop modules to help facilitate the teaching process of teachers to improve children's understanding of the components of listening and speaking in English.

According to Yahya and Wood (2015), the conceptual framework will discuss several things that are related to:

05-4506832 **i. Research objective** my  Perpustakaan Tuanku Bainun
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- Based on the problem statement, the main objective of this study is to develop a CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module for preschool teachers aimed at assisting teachers in the process of planning and implementing lessons effectively.

ii. Theories used to support variables to meet research needs

- Based on the objectives of the study, problem statements, and research questions, the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module will be developed to help the quality of teaching of preschool teachers. In this case, the conceptual framework will show the theory that will be applied in the module development process. The theory used will describe the phases

involved in the teaching and learning process so that it can be communicated effectively.

- iii. How variables are placed in the teaching module development process.
 - Development of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module will go through several processes in the design and development based on theories and models as contained in the framework process at the methodological level.
- iv. Theories and models involved in the module development process and how they are integrated until the research process is over.
 - Theories and models used in each phase of the methodology are intended to guide module development.

The design and development of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module apply the Teaching Strategy Model of English Listening and Speaking skills in preschools that were developed by Norshimar Akmar Hashim (2021). Among elements that will be adapted from this model for developing the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module are the following: design the content, determine the teaching objective, let children speak individually, create fun activities, use their sentences, provide a variety of activities, give contextual vocabulary, and do the evaluation. Besides that, the development of this module will be based on five phases in Gagne's teaching and learning process model namely: motivation, comprehension, storage, recall, and generalization. This researcher also took viewpoints from Gagne's nine instructional events to ensure that the modules developed can help MOE preschool teachers in teaching and, at the same time,

help them deliver lessons more effectively. In addition, the language teaching and development activities that will be developed in the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module are based on Cognitive Theory and Behaviorist Theory.

Overall, the conceptual framework aims to illustrate how the aim of the research is fulfilled through the connection of the variables, theories, framework, and models to develop the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module. The module, as mentioned, is to serve as a guide in the effective incorporation of listening and speaking skills, which can enhance the English language in preschool education. The conceptual framework shows that the teaching strategy is an independent variable to use CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module. The dependent variable is the preschool teachers when using the module.

This development study will go through three main phases: the first phase of needs analysis, the second phase of design and development, and the third phase is evaluating the module. The Fuzzy Delphi method will be used in this study as a data collection process to obtain views from a panel of experts on the issues being studied. Briefly, the framework of the study can be described using Figure 1.3 below:

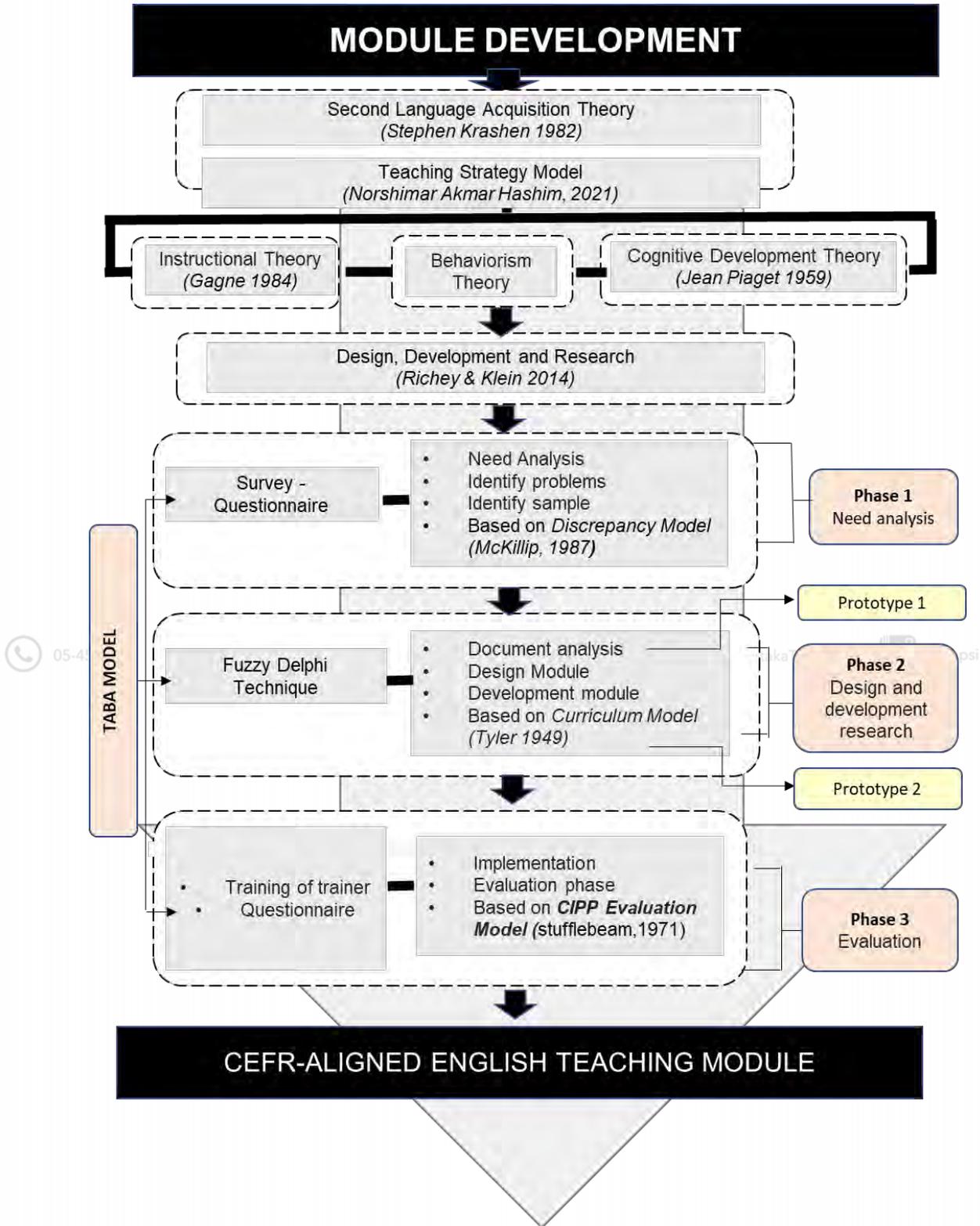


Figure 1.4. Conceptual framework

1.9 Operational Definition

This section will present some of the terms used in the study. The definition of each term used in this study can help researchers to understand each term discussed (Ashay & Hariyadi, 2013).

1.9.1 Teaching Module

The module is also material that can guide teachers in implementing the teaching and learning process with more focus and effectiveness (Daryanto, 2013). In education, the term “module” refers to an instructional unit that focuses on a particular topic. Although the details and activities vary according to the specific context, such as course and student level, most educational modules include information about the topic, focus on student-centered learning activities and culminate in a project for students to demonstrate understanding (Arceo, 2020).

1.9.2 Ministry of Education Preschool Teachers

Preschool teachers are responsible for stimulating children's learning in the age range of 5 to 6 years (Homiestwu, 2015). Thus, the MOE has stipulated that every preschool teacher must have vital training in the field of preschool education (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2020). Trained preschool teachers are needed because their wisdom and effort

are crucial in ensuring the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Homiestwu, 2015). Preschool teachers have a role in implementing teaching, learning, and assessment according to the National Preschool Curriculum (Bahagian Pengurusan Sekolah Harian, 2018). They are also individuals whose role is to stimulate curiosity and increase the motivation of preschool children so that they are ready to learn (Bahagian Pengurusan Sekolah Harian, 2018).

1.9.3 Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

Common European Framework of Reference is used to help measure the level of mastery at each level of education (Nurul Huda Husain, 2019). CEFR is implemented in Malaysia's education system as a MOE initiative to ensure that the English language education system in the country can be competitive globally (Nurul Huda Husain, 2019).

Common European Framework of Reference was officially introduced into the education system in Malaysia in 2013 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The Road Map 2015–2025 illustrates the government's willingness to coordinate and integrate CEFR into the education system in Malaysia (Nurul Huda Husain, 2019). The target group involved in this plan is made up of Malaysian students from preschool children to university level and includes school teachers (Nurul Huda Husain, 2019). The CEFR principles state that a teacher must be at a higher level of mastery than a pupil's level (Nurul Huda Husain, 2019).

By 2018, CEFR was used comprehensively in the learning system in MOE preschools and the Ministry of Education has taken steps to provide information related to CEFR to preschool teachers as a whole (Mohd Afizi Md Ali, 2020). This action has been taken to ensure that all preschool teachers get sufficient knowledge related to CEFR and can apply CEFR in the teaching and learning of English at the preschool level.

1.9.4 Listening Skills

Listening skill is a basic skill that must be mastered by all individuals to become proficient in a language. The experience gained by children in the learning process allows them to listen and react verbally or non-verbally. Children who have been exposed to and are proficient in listening skills can acquire a sufficient vocabulary (Norshimar Akmar Hashim, 2021).

In this study's context, listening skill is based on the National Standard Based Preschool Curriculum and Assessment and is an elemental skill that must be mastered by every child. Listening skill has become a major focus of the CEFR-aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module development. The acquisition of listening skills among preschool students will indirectly develop their speaking skills (Norshimar Akmar Hashim, 2021). This researcher has thus taken the initiative to develop a teaching module that will help preschool teachers plan and implement teaching by applying a variety of methods, strategies, and activities that place priority on listening and speaking skills.

1.9.5 Speaking Skills

Speaking skill is the ability to convey information that can be understood by another individual. It is the most important skill to acquire foreign or second language learning. Among the four key language skills, speaking is deemed to be the most important skill in learning a foreign or second language (Rao, 2019). There is no doubt that proficiency in each skill is necessary to become a well-rounded communicator, but the ability to speak skilfully provides the speakers with several distinct advantages. The main advantages of speaking skills are to enable person to participate actively in pair or group activities in the classrooms, develop critical thinking among the learners and communicate effectively with others (Rao, 2019). The modern world demands for the requirement of communication skills for the learners and the English teachers have to teach the English Language learners the needed skills so that they will improve their abilities in speaking and perform well in real-life situations (Rao, 2019).

The skill comprises the ability to use simple words, phrases, and sentences. Referring to the CEFR Scale, the skill that preschool children need to master speaking skills is being able to communicate in basic English with the help of the teacher. In this study, speaking skill is part of the main focus in the development of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module. This module assists preschool teachers in planning and implementing lessons that can build children's mastery of speaking skills using simple words, phrases, or sentences and encourage them to communicate with their

peers using the English language. Table 1.4 shows a detailed description of speaking skills for scales A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2.

Table 1.4

Common European Framework of Reference scale (Cambridge University Press, 2013)

	Level	General Description
Proficient User		
C2	Mastery	Highly proficient – can use English very fluently, precisely, and sensitively in most contexts
C1	Effective Operational proficiency	Able to use English fluently and flexibly in a wide range of contexts
Independent User		
B2	Vantage	Can use English effectively, with some fluency, in a range of contexts.
B1	Threshold	Can communicate essential points and ideas in familiar contexts.
Basic User		
A2	Waystage	Can communicate in English within a limited range of contexts
A1	Breakthrough	Can communicate in basic English with help from the listener

1.10 Rationale of the study

Based on the problem statement that has been debated, there is an urgent need to develop CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to help preschool teachers in planning and implementing lessons. The existence of this module is implemented with a few rationales.

First, the researcher chose English listening and speaking skills as the scope of the study based on the rationale of the importance of English listening and speaking skills which is increasingly emphasized in the aspect of communication. It is therefore important for teachers to have resources and guidance on how to execute the appropriate teaching process. This study is conducted to help teachers in planning and implementing lessons for preschool English subject.

Secondly, the researcher chose to develop CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module content take into consideration on the cultural aspects in Malaysia because there is a lack of research in developing Preschool English teaching module.

Third, the researcher chooses the use of experts as a study sample based on the rationale of the study which looks at the experts' perspective on design thinking is still not much highlighted while according to Muhamad Ridhuan Tony Lim Abdullah (2014) if the experts chosen match the context of the study, it may increase the potentiality of communication thus, produce views and ideas that have a very useful impact. To fill the

existing research gap, this study uses experts as a sample of research in developing CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to help preschool teachers in planning and implementing lessons.

1.11 Importance of the Study

The findings of this study can be used as a reference for various parties involved in preschool educational institutions such as preschool teachers, teacher activity centers (PKG), and the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE).

This module can contribute creative ideas and provide facilities for preschool teachers to plan and deliver lessons for CEFR English subjects more effectively. This module can be used as a basis for teachers to diversify their teaching approaches to attract children to learn English.

The CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module is generally developed to help teachers deliver lessons in a more engaging and focused way to increase children's mastery of English. This module can reduce the burden of teachers in the planning of learning activities because it has been compiled based on the scheme of work (SOW) provided to each preschool teacher. The module also considers the level that children need to master, as included in the CEFR. Indirectly, teachers will be better prepared to teach English and, at the same time, reduces their anxiety when teaching English to preschool children.

Children will also benefit from this module, which enables them to learn and understand English in a fun learning environment as the built-in modules contain interesting activities and are suitable for the development of preschool children aged five to six years.

1.12 Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study are the weaknesses identified during the process of conducting the study and are beyond the researcher's control (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study's limitations are clearly stated and are commonly related to data collection and analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This study only involved preschool teachers. Therefore, this study did not involve other individuals such as primary or secondary school teachers. Given that the ability of each preschool teacher is different in terms of skills, qualifications, and language ability, then the limitation that can be seen is that this study is less to describe the overall perception of preschool teachers on the applicability of this module in the English teaching process.

This study only focused on developing the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module to assist preschool teachers in the teaching process. These findings will differ in terms of arrangement and teaching techniques if this study had been targeted at primary or secondary school teachers.

Before completing this module, researchers need to examine in detail the socio-cultural aspects of children in Malaysia because they are closely related to the development of these children's English language skills (Tabors, 2008). Thus, the limitation that can be seen is in terms of the current situation which is the Movement Control Order (MCO) caused by COVID-19. This government-sanctioned order restricted the researcher from crossing state borders to obtain more information to develop the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module.

This study also has limitations in terms of the study sample. As it only focused on expert consensus, the number of samples is small. The visible limitations are in terms of the transparency and honesty of experts selected to provide accurate, meaningful, and beneficial information to the study.

This study used a design and development approach that focused on the development of the CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module. Therefore, this study is more focused on the critical phase, which is the process of designing and developing the module itself. The study's limitations identified are based on preschool teachers' perceptions of the usability of the module in the final phase of the preschool teachers' English teaching and learning process. Therefore, this study can be further expanded by looking at the module's capabilities in improving preschool teachers' teaching and learning competencies.

1.13 Summary

In general, the production of this CEFR aligned English Listening and Speaking Skills Module can help preschool teachers in planning the teaching process more effectively. Preschool teachers can apply this module in their teaching, and their teaching will be more organized and structured according to the level found in the CEFR.

Teachers' teaching and learning approach will also be more engaging because this module provides creative activities. The module is also in line with the latest education system and takes into account the socio-cultural factors of children in Malaysia.