

DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF WRITING
ASSESSMENT LITERACY INVENTORY
(WALI) FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS
USING RASCH MODEL

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DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF WRITING ASSESSMENT
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SCHOOL TEACHERS USING RASCH MODEL

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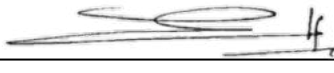
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to develop and validate the Writing Assessment Literacy Inventory (WALI) for the English primary school teachers focusing on three constructs which are practices, belief, and knowledge. The items of the instrument were mainly adapted based on the original instrument by Crusan et al., (2016) and input from literature in order to best suit the Malaysian context. This study used quantitative research approach using Rasch model in the data analysis. The draft instrument containing 56 items of original WALI was administered to 40 primary schools teachers for pilot study in order to measure the validity and reliability of this instrument. Based on the results of the pilot study, five items were removed from the original instrument. The real study involved 214 primary school English teachers from 32 schools in the district of Kinta Utara selected through simple random sampling technique. Rasch Measurement analysis was used to obtain important information about the validity and reliability of the instrument. The findings from the real study showed that WALI has good validity values as demonstrated by PTMEA CORR (0.04-0.63), and fit statistics, and the scale is functioning well. Item (0.97) and person (0.87) reliability also showed high values. Unidimensionality value showed acceptable range (27.6%, 31.3%) based on the analysis. The final version of the WALI contained 49 items. The level of writing assessment literacy of teachers is at an average level based on logit scores (0.99). From the results, it can be concluded that WALI has good validity and reliability values. Therefore, the instrument can be used in other primary schools in Malaysia. In addition, WALI will add to collection of assessment instrument in writing literacy, and it encourages the use of modern test theory in language testing.

Keywords: writing assessment literacy, Rasch Model, validity, reliability



PEMBANGUNAN DAN VALIDASI INVENTORI LITERASI PENTAKSIRAN KEMAHIRAN MENULIS BAGI GURU BAHASA INGGERIS SEKOLAH RENDAH MENGGUNAKAN MODEL RASCH

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk membangunkan dan mengesahkan Inventori Literasi Pentaksiran Kemahiran Menulis (WALI) untuk guru Bahasa Inggeris sekolah rendah yang memfokuskan pada tiga konstruk iaitu amalan, kepercayaan, dan pengetahuan. Item-item instrumen ini disesuaikan berdasarkan instrumen asal Crusan et al., (2016) dan input dari tinjauan literatur agar sesuai dengan konteks di Malaysia. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif menggunakan model Rasch. Draf instrumen yang mengandungi 56 item WALI ditadbir kepada 40 guru Bahasa Inggeris sekolah rendah untuk kajian rintis bagi mengukur kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan instrumen ini. Berdasarkan hasil kajian rintis, lima item dikeluarkan dari instrumen. Kajian sebenar melibatkan 214 guru Bahasa Inggeris sekolah rendah dari 32 sekolah di daerah Kinta Utara yang dipilih melalui teknik persampelan rawak mudah. Analisis Pengukuran Rasch digunakan untuk mendapatkan nilai kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan instrumen. Hasil dapatan dari kajian sebenar menunjukkan bahawa WALI memiliki nilai kesahan yang baik seperti yang ditunjukkan oleh PTMEA CORR (0.04-0.63), dan skala berfungsi dengan baik. Kebolehpercayaan item (0.97) dan individu (0.87) juga menunjukkan nilai yang tinggi. Nilai unidimensionaliti menunjukkan julat yang boleh diterima (27.6%, 31.3%) berdasarkan analisis. Versi terakhir WALI mengandungi 49 item. Tahap literasi penilaian penulisan guru berada pada tahap sederhana berdasarkan skor logit (0.99). Dari hasilnya, dapat disimpulkan bahawa WALI mempunyai nilai kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan yang baik. Oleh itu, instrumen tersebut boleh diguna pakai di sekolah rendah lain di Malaysia. Di samping itu, WALI akan menambah koleksi instrumen berkaitan literasi dalam pentaksiran kemahiran menulis, dan ini menyokong penggunaan teori ujian moden dalam pengujian bahasa.

Kata Kunci: literasi pentaksiran kemahiran menulis, Model Pengukuran Rasch, kesahan, kebolehpercayaan.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MOE	Ministry of Education
WALI	Writing Assessment Literacy Inventory
MEB	Malaysia Education Blueprint
AfL	Assessment for Learning
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
KSSR	Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah
KBSR	Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah
PADU	Performance and Delivery Unit
PAJSK	Pentaksiran Aktiviti Jasmani, Sukan dan Kokurikulum
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
NEA	National Education Association
NCME	National Council on Measurement Education
et al.	and others

SBA	School Based Assessment
HOTS	Higher Order Thinking Skills
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
UPSR	Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah
MBMMBI	Memartabatkan Bahasa Melayu, Mempekukuh Bahasa Inggeris
ALI	Assessment Literacy Inventory
CALI	Classroom Assessment Literacy Instrument
LAT	Literacy Assessment Test
T-Assess	Assessment Literacy Test for Malaysian teachers
IRT	Item Response Theory
CTT	Classical Test Theory
PT MEA	Point Measure Correlation
CORR	
MNSQ	Mean Square
ZSTD	Z Standardised Score

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Assessment in Malaysia has gone through a great deal of changes from time to time. A definition by William and Black (1998), assessment refers to the activities done by teachers and students in assessing themselves, which can provide feedback to improve teaching and learning. Theoretically, our assessment system should have shifted dramatically from highly summative to formative assessment. The term formative assessment is not all about giving grades and marks to the students, but rather to give information to the teachers as well as the students

about their learning progress (Colby-Kelly, 2014). There are still findings revealed that the teachers, students, as well as parents are still not ready to accept the change. The central examination still consumes the important part in most of the schools (Ong, 2010). The introduction to the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025) is the evidence that the Ministry of Education is committed to support this change for a more quality and better education to the citizen. The integration of the central examination and the school based assessment (now classroom assessment) along with PAJSK and Psychometric Assessment has been introduced, with the aim of provide more robust and holistic individuals. In addition, the 21st century skills are a must in order to achieve the vision of providing well rounded individuals aligned with the National Education Philosophy.

Classroom assessment has become more important (Popham, 2009; Colby-Kelly, 2014) due to assessment for learning (AfL) (Zhang and Soh, 2018) influenced classroom. Teachers are urged to provide a meaningful learning for the students and encourage the students to be autonomous learners. With the 21st century skills added in the line, the teachers must be able to assess and evaluate the students continuously and holistically, using wide range of strategies. Therefore, the data and information on students' overall performances can be gathered and explained to the stakeholders. It is not excessive to say that the teachers must have a strong bases, skills, knowledge, and principles of assessment in order to evaluate the students' performances (Popham, 2009; Xu and Brown, 2016; DeLuca and Johnson, 2017). Popham (2009) further remarked that inadequate knowledge on assessment can “cripple the quality of education” (pg.

4). This is to ensure that the results and the information on the students' performance are valid and reliable. It can be used to inform the stakeholders, and the teachers themselves can make decisions on their next teaching strategies and improve on their practices (Pastore and Andrade, 2019). With our current education system, teachers could not afford to only know on how to mark the exam papers and report the grades of the students, it is beyond the practice.

Teachers have to be assessment literate, who know on how to assess different forms of students' works, such as reports, students' journals, and creative tasks, to name a few. In addition, teachers have to questions whether or not their assessment practices are aligned with current education system to ensure their assessment quality. There are ample researches and studies that showed how good assessment practices and strategies improved teaching and create meaningful learning. Hence, it is undoubtedly vital for teachers to possess high level of assessment literacy.

1.2 Background of the Research

1.2.2 The conception of Assessment Literacy

Assessment literacy can be defined as skills, knowledge, and principles to evaluate and support students' learning through assessment (Popham, 2011). Assessment literacy has been a serious and important discussion for the past twenty years all over the world, especially in educational measurement field (DeLuca et al., 2016; DeLuca and Johnson, 2017; Scarino, 2017). One of the main important aspects of assessment literacy is to know the competencies of teachers in the field of assessment. Crusan, Plakans and Gebril (2016)

stated that “an understanding of good assessment practices-often referred to as assessment literacy- is critical for teachers” (pg.43). Experts in educational assessment have highlighted and put effort in determining what teachers need to possess in order to be assessment literate. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) and the National Education Association (NEA) has developed a number of standards that teachers need to equip themselves with. The seven important standards are:

- choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions;
- developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions;
- administering, scoring, and interpreting the results for both externally produced and teacher produced assessment methods;
- using assessment results when making decisions about individual students, planning teaching, developing curriculum, and improving schools;
- developing valid pupil grading procedures which use pupil assessment;
- communicating assessment results to students, parents, other lay audiences, and other educators; and
- recognizing unethical, illegal, and otherwise inappropriate assessment methods and uses of assessment information (p. 350).

Assessment literate teachers supposedly have to be certain and well informed of these standards (Zhang and Soh, 2018; Xu and Brown, 2016; Rohaya Talib, Mohd Najib Ghafar, and Hamimah Abu Naim, 2014). One of the characteristics that assessment literate teachers do, they, make better

decisions (Popham, 2009). It is clear that, if teachers and other stakeholder want the students to be independent learners, and receive better education, Popham (2009) suggested that teachers should attain extra; of assessment literacy. Therefore, in order for teachers to be assessment literate, all of the standards must be practiced and implemented in their respective contexts. It is also important for the teachers to have information on students' current achievement, improvement, and help students to eventually be the owner of their own learning. However, with higher assessment standard, along with the higher quality of education, pressures the teachers to strive for the best, especially in assessment literacy. In education, the assessment is part of the teachers' learning, and always a part of teachers' responsibilities. To construct a valid and reliable assessment is not an easy task. Teachers have to look into multiple considerations before assessing students. This is where the assessment literacy takes place. Teachers have to be knowledgeable, possess skills, principal, and ethics in assessment so that the evaluations made to the students are useable, fair, valid and reliable (Lian, Yew and Meng, 2014). Pastore and Andrade (2019), regard assessment literacy as vital to aid teacher in utilising the information of students' learning and achievement to give useful feedback on students' learning needs and to improve on the teachers' teaching strategies.

Since the implementation of School-Based Assessment (SBA) in Malaysia in the year 2011, numerous efforts have been employed by the Ministry of Education in order to ensure the education and the assessment system to be on par with the current needs of assessment. Apart from assessing

the students summatively, the formative approach is being emphasized to make full use of learning experience and for the students to be the owner of their own learning. The improvement in our education system is apparent when teachers are encouraged to use various teaching and learning styles to accommodate the teaching and learning process. As stated in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025), “the quality of teachers is the most significant school-based determinant of students outcomes”, (pg.137, Ministry of Education, 2011).

1.2.3 Visualizing Assessment in Malaysia

Starting from KBSR (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah), KSSR (Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah) has been taking over the education system with a more holistic and it is hoped to produce a wholesome individuals based on the National Education Philosophy. With KBSR, the education is more to rote learning, examination-driven (English Language Education Reform in Malaysia, The Roadmap 2015-2025) and the emphasize is given to the memorisation of fact and recalling information, which is a total opposite with the 21st century agenda. Realising this fact, the Ministry of Education has been gathering efforts to improve the education system and restructuring the curriculum has been one of the initiatives.

The birth of the new curriculum, namely KSSR, has been an eye opener for many. With the new curriculum, the assessment system and strategies have been changed gradually. The aim is for the teacher and students to benefit

learning through effective assessment practice in the classroom, and to be able to provide pupils with basic language skills which enable them to communicate effectively, suitable to their level of development. The focus is for the students to be able to grasp the knowledge using higher order thinking skills (HOTS), rather than remembering information and recalling facts. The aspiration has not yet becoming a reality, given the fact that the teachers are still struggling to manage and strategize efficient assessments strategies that can benefit both themselves and the students. Teachers are still confused on what kind of assessment to do and whether the assessment can benefit students' learning.

Prior to the 21st century learning, the use of mind mapping, VLE Frog and many more efforts have been introduced in order to make the learning fun and interactive. However, these efforts are to maintain and improve teachers' pedagogical knowledge. The Ministry of Education has detected the misalignment in the standard between the National assessments with the international assessment standard. The clear picture of this can be captured with the discrepancies in testing foci, whereby the international standard assessment tests for higher order thinking skills, whereas the national assessment are still concentrate towards content knowledge (Ministry of Education, 2011). Here, we can clearly see the differences in assessment strategies and these simultaneously reflect teachers' assessment capabilities.

The School Based Assessment (SBA) has been implemented for about eight years now, but only in the year of 2018, after seven years of implementation,

the Ministry of Education supplied the teachers with the Classroom Assessment Implementation Guide. For more than seven years teachers have to work on their own with their assessment strategies. The emphasis on the assessment system and practices has been nearly neglected. There are very limited numbers of specific module, rubric or even strategies on how to assess students when it comes to classroom assessment. Therefore, teachers depend on their prior knowledge, experience, and their own sets of beliefs on assessment and fail to give enough attention to formative assessment. Hence, summative assessment becomes habitual and become the only assessment used to report on students' progress and achievement. There is no reinforcement to the teachers to check on the psychometric elements of their assessment method. Teachers are offered "one-off" courses to add on their knowledge of assessment. It calls for urgent assessment literacy measures to be conducted to the teachers, in order to gain knowledge about the assessment literacy of the English language teachers of primary schools.

English language has always been a second language, or even a foreign language, in certain regions and districts. The goal of the English language education in Malaysia is always to produce well-proficient individuals in the language, and be able to perform the language on par with the international standard. Along with the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025, the Ministry of Education ensure that the English language in Malaysia goes through the same transformation, namely the English Language Education Reform in Malaysia 2015-2025 was created. For several years, even after the introduction of MEB, the assessment system was still slow-paced, and

teachers still execute the teaching-to-test method, especially in the level two (year 4 to 6) in primary schools, because of the pressure to produce the best results for the Primary School Evaluation Test or UPSR (Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah).

Not long since the implementation of KSSR, the Ministry of Education decided to introduce the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) gradually, starting in 2018. The learning materials were first given to the preschool, Year 1 and 2, as well as the Form 1 students in secondary schools. CEFR is introduced as a mean of improving performance in English language on par with international standards (English Language Education Reform in Malaysia, The Roadmap 2015-2025). The aim of CEFR is to support English performance based on international standard, and it is done to uphold national aspiration of MBMMBI (Memartabatkan Bahasa Melayu, Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris) policy. English learning in Malaysia gives more attention on reading and writing, less on listening and speaking, although the teachers try to incorporate the core skills in daily activities. CEFR is more concerned on core competencies and communicative strategies, which requires the students to possess adequate level of language skill for learning and work purposes. This is done without neglecting the other skills in which the other skills are being taught simultaneously with speaking skills.

It is still difficult to teach of skills, even though the Ministry of Education adopted the modular approach for the English language for primary schools which consists of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. However, the

skills that are being emphasized are reading and writing, less of speaking and listening, because the skills being tested in the UPSR are the reading and writing skills.

1.2.4 Writing Assessment

Assessment literacy is one of the most important elements in considering assessment success. Teachers have to know their current assessment level in order to improve themselves and be able to maintain their pace in assessing students' ability in English language. Past researches have contribute to the level of assessment literacy of teachers (Rohaya et al., 2013; Lian and Yew, 2016; Lian et al., 2014; Yamtim and Wongwanich, 2014), however, there is still a scarcity in the studies of assessment literacy for English language skills. The former studies described assessment literacy in general, in which the research cannot sufficiently prove the ability of the teachers in assessing skills in English language of the students. Therefore, there is a need to look into assessment literacy in specific skills in order to widen the perspective of assessment literacy, not only in general assessment literacy, but also the skills in assessing the students based on specific skills of English language such as reading, writing, listening, or speaking.

As writing is one of the main skills in English language, and teachers are really familiar with the activities and strategies to teach writing, there is an urgent need to know how the teacher assess and score writing skills of students. Writing has also been the main focus of the English language

teachers, mainly because of the immense pressure in writing performance in the UPSR. Numerous strategies to assess writing have been circulated by language assessment experts, and one of the strategies is the use of scoring rubric.

Brown (2007), listed several types of classroom writing, which are imitating or writing down, intensive writing, self writing, display writing, and real writing. Imitating or writing down can involve copying letters, words, or even sentences. This type of writing benefits the lower level of primary school pupils, in order to recognize the words and letters in English. Intensive writing involves producing and learning grammatical structure and concepts in writing task. Guided writing, which is common in the level two in primary schools, is regarded as intensive writing. It requires the students to write set of sentences based on given simulators. Diary entry and journal writing are powerful tools to assess students' writing. Students share their feeling and thoughts freely without thinking too much about mechanics of writing. It is also a good form for the students to experience authentic writing task. Real writing is perceived as an important medium for students to express their writing proficiently. Example of real writing as listed by Brown (2007) is academic writing.

In assessing writing skills, teachers have to aware that writing tasks of the students require extensive measure. Therefore, Brown (2007) suggested that in assessing written work, teachers have to be sensitive in correcting students work. Multiple drafts are important for the students to identify their weakness

in writing task (Brown, 2007; Lee, 2017). However, teachers are encouraged to comment holistically on written work, and avoid rewriting students' sentences, because the students will be discouraged to improve on their writing skills, because it has been done for them.

Objective of the curriculum based on KSSR English writing skill is for students to be able to write a wide range of text using appropriate language, style and form through a variety of media. Other than that, students are expected to use correct and appropriate rules of grammar in writing. The KSSR English is based on modular approach in which the students will be taught language skill per day, starting from speaking skills, listening skills, writing, and grammar (for primary level two). However, in CEFR, the focus is on the core competency and what the students "can do".

Primary writing content standards focus on the students' ability to learn to write, to use information to communicate, describing people or things, and organizing written work. The content standard of writing task based on CEFR English writing curriculum is as follows:

4.1 Form letters and words in neat legible print using cursive writing

4.2 Communicate basic information intelligibly for a range of purposes in print and digital media

4.3 Communicate with appropriate language form and style for a range of purposes in print and digital media.



Deborah Crusan, a prominent scholar in second language writing assessment asserts that writing skills as both important and complex. Individuals pour meaning into writing, and are able to convey what they cannot express through spoken language. Crusan (2010) clearly says that “without the ability to access writing, to notice good writing, to understand what we are saying and what we are meaning to say, we, as teachers and as writers of language, sacrifice a valuable venue of communication” (pg. 9). She adds that fluency in language can be achieved through writing, especially to those who are struggling with the language. The importance of assessing writing task for teachers is that they can impart knowledge of self- assessment among students, in which they are able to evaluate their own written work, whether it is good or they need further improvement. Weigle (2007) as cited in Crusan (2010), reminded that assessment is vital for writing teachers.



Written task is both a process and product oriented. However, modern education focuses more emphasis on process, rather than product. Scarino (2017) urged teachers of languages to “reconceptualised assessment” for students to be able to benefit from the process rather than product. This is because product-oriented learning is less able to show improvement in fluency of non-native students in which Scarino (2017) described as “intercultural capability”.





1.3 Statement of Problem

Assessment system in Malaysia has shifted from the traditional method of assessment to a holistic assessment system since approximately 8 years ago. In Malaysian context, because of the time limitation, very fast-paced education demands, and heavy workloads of teachers, become factors in hindering the teachers from improving themselves in the knowledge of assessment. In addition, there has been an escalating interest of high quality professional practice, resulted in assessment literacy of teachers become more and more important, thus the domain of assessment has been made broader and specifically comprehensive (Pastore and Andrade, 2019).



Most of the time, teachers are just satisfied with their current assessment methods and assessment is regarded as different part of learning. Lian and Yew (2016) argued that inaccuracy in teachers' assessment of students was due to the fact that teachers possess low level of assessment literacy. DeLuca and Johnson (2017) showed consent in this matter and that the capability of teachers in assessment can be questioned, in which research findings showed that teachers maintained low levels of assessment knowledge and skills, especially new teachers. Malone (2013) proclaims that assessment should be integrated in teaching, inform decision on teaching, and improve it. Thus experts and researchers in assessment regard assessment literacy as a necessity of effective teachers (Gotch and French, 2014; Crusan et al, 2016; Hailaya et al., 2014; Khadijeh and Amir, 2015; Malone, 2013).





Failures in good assessment literacy and practices may be detrimental to the education system, and may be worst for the education receivers, which are the students. Declining results of the writing skill in UPSR showed that something is not quite right with the writing skills assessment, after all the focus and resources had been given to writing skills all this while. Writing skill performance of the primary school students has decreased in percentage, from 77.1% in 2016 to 73.6% in 2017 (PADU, 2017). As much as the focus and importance given on writing skill, ironically, in recent 2018 MEB Annual report by PADU, the performance of writing skill in UPSR has slightly increased for only about 1%, which is 74.6 % (MEB Annual Report, 2018). However, if we were to make comparison, the result is seen as low compared to the year 2016, which the declining percentage is bigger than the increment percentage. Hence, it is a wakeup call to gauge on the teachers' writing assessment literacy, to find out why the writing skill ends up with the stated result, after all the efforts on writing skill have been done.

The results by PADU raised on the questions on the quality of teacher assessment practices. According to Rohaya et al., (2013, 2014), there were only 13.33% of highly assessment literate teachers, which made the remaining 87% as mediocre and poor in assessment literacy. Previous study by Suah (2012), as cited in Lian and Yew (2016), the assessment literacy of teachers was weak. The contexts of the previous studies are different, in which there are specific gaps that need to be filled in. The previous studies focus on the secondary school teachers as well as the pre-service teachers, whereby there are no specific studies that focus on primary school teachers. Therefore, it is important to measure the assessment literacy level of the primary



school teachers in order to fill in the gap of the previous studies. Ministry of Education hopes to raise the education standard by upgrading assessment (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2011). One of the efforts is to redesigning the school curricula to align with international standards. To be able to do that, the capability of the teachers to conform to assessment standard and possess assessment literacy standard must first be diagnosed.

Numbers of studies have been done regarding teacher assessment literacy measures. Most of the studies focus on the assessment literacy in general (Zhang and Soh, 2018; DeLuca, La Pointe McEwan and Luhanga, 2016; Xu and Brown, 2016; Pastore and Andrade, 2019). The Assessment Literacy Instrument (ALI) by (Mertler and Campbell, 2005) is an eminent assessment literacy measure of all time, and it has been used in numerous researches around the world. The instrument has been used widely and has been adapted in various contexts and the numbers of related instruments have been increasing ever since. In Malaysia, studies in assessment literacy began to show growth, because researchers realised that the role of the teachers as assessors are vital in developing our education system. Literacy Assessment Test (LAT), (Rohaya, Mohd Najib and Hamimah, 2014), Assessment Practice Inventory for Teacher Educators (Siti Eshah et al., 2015), T-Assess (Assessment Literacy Test for Malaysian teachers) (Rohaya Talib, Mohd Zaki Kamsah, Mohd Najib Abd Ghafar, Megat Aman Zahiri Megat Zakaria, and Hamimah Abu Naim, 2013) are among the assessment literacy measures in Malaysia. Lian and Yew (2016) aimed at developing framework for teachers and assessing the assessment knowledge for preservice teachers (Lian et al., 2016).

However, as all of these measures assess the teachers on their general skills in assessment, it is evident that there is scarcity of instrument in assessing the teachers' assessment literacy in specific skill, such as writing skill of the students. How well the teachers can assess students in their writing skill, especially in English language. Lam (2019) stated that although the assessment literacy has become a significant research agenda, there is a still insufficient measure in exploring assessment literacy in second language writing. Therefore, this particular study is aimed at developing an instrument for teachers to gauge on their assessment literacy in writing skill to fill in the need to expand the knowledge of assessment literacy in specific skill, especially in English language learning.

A study conducted by Crusan et al., (2016), exhibited the assessment literacy in writing classroom in United States of America classroom context, in tertiary level of education. Therefore, the researcher intends to extend this study in Malaysian English classroom context, especially in writing classroom for the primary school English language teachers, as the researcher found it to be important to assess the assessment literacy starting from the primary level teachers, which later on will set a benchmark on a quality of assessment of the second language teachers in Malaysia. The researcher will adapt and developed the instrument to suit Malaysian context for the primary school teachers in Malaysia.

1.4 Objective of the Research

The main purpose of this proposal is to develop an instrument on writing skill assessment literacy, which specifically aims to:

- 1) develop the Writing Assessment Literacy Inventory (WALI) for English language teachers in primary schools.
- 2) validate the Writing Assessment Literacy Inventory (WALI) for English language teachers in primary schools.
- 3) analyse the reliability degree of the developed instrument.
- 4) assess the literacy level of writing assessment of the English language primary school teachers.

1.5 Research Questions

This study is aimed at answering these particular research questions:

- 1) What are the steps in developing the writing assessment literacy instrument for English language teachers?
- 2) To what extent does the Writing Assessment Literacy Inventory (WALI) demonstrates the evidence of construct validity as shown in the Rasch Measurement Model in term of :
 - a) measurement scale?
 - b) unidimensionality?
 - c) item polarity or point-measure correlation?
 - d) item fit?
- 3) What is the reliability degree of the WALI instrument in term of:
 - a) item reliability and separation?
 - b) person reliability and separation?
- 4) What is the English language teachers' literacy level in writing assessment?

1.6 Conceptual Framework

Measuring teachers' writing assessment literacy is insufficient with knowledge of the teachers as the only construct. It will depend on literary works that show importance of incorporating several constructs other than knowledge. Knowledge on assessment will affect assessment activities of the teachers in some way, however, researchers have noted the incorporation of knowledge base, beliefs, and practices of assessment will have better influence on assessment activities.

Crusan et al., (2016), believed that assessment literacy for second language teachers should be incorporated with teachers' knowledge, belief, and practices because content about assessment alone is not sufficient (Xu and Brown, 2016) without the integration of the concepts. Drawing upon constructs by Crusan et al., (2016) and findings of literature review, the three constructs which are knowledge, belief, practice will be used to measure writing assessment literacy of the English language teachers using the adapted instrument and analysed using Rasch model to establish validity and reliability.

The researcher will adapt the existing instrument by Crusan et al., (2016) to fit Malaysian context of writing assessment. The framework is derived from the constructs by Crusan et al., (2016) in which follows the Standards for Teacher

Competence in Educational Assessment of Students (AFT, 1990) in the instrument of examining teachers' writing assessment literacy. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), outlined seven important standards for teachers to be able to assess pupils' work correctly and confidently. These standards have been referred by teachers, researchers, and even the stakeholders until currently (Crusan et al, 2016). This instrument utilised the standards by the AFT in order to assess the writing assessment literacy of teachers. The standards are as listed below:

1. Teachers should be skilled in choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.
2. Teachers should be skilled in developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.
3. The teacher should be skilled in administering, scoring and interpreting the results of both externally-produced and teacher-produced assessment methods.
4. Teachers should be skilled in using assessment results when making decisions about individual students, planning teaching, developing curriculum, and school improvement.
5. Teachers should be skilled in developing valid pupil grading procedures which use pupil assessments.
6. Teachers should be skilled in communicating assessment results to students, parents, other lay audiences, and other educators.
7. Teachers should be skilled in recognizing unethical, illegal, and otherwise inappropriate assessment methods and uses of assessment information.

(American Federation of Teachers, 1990)

Researcher also includes the characteristics of writing assessment by the Curriculum Development Division (2011) and 21st century education to best suit current Malaysian education context. The instrument also took into consideration of the writing assessment issues to better fit Malaysian context

of primary school English subject. The Curriculum Development Division (2011) detailed out the issues of writing assessment that the teachers must be aware in their writing assessment. The researcher will use the elements to be added in the instrument.

The researcher also included the 21st century education that has been launched in 2018. This is to support the campaign of 21st century learning which incorporated five important elements which are communication skills, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, values and ethics (PADU, 2018). Therefore, it is important to also incorporate these elements in the instrument, which can help the researcher to find the answers on how teachers incorporate the writing assessment with the 21st century learning.

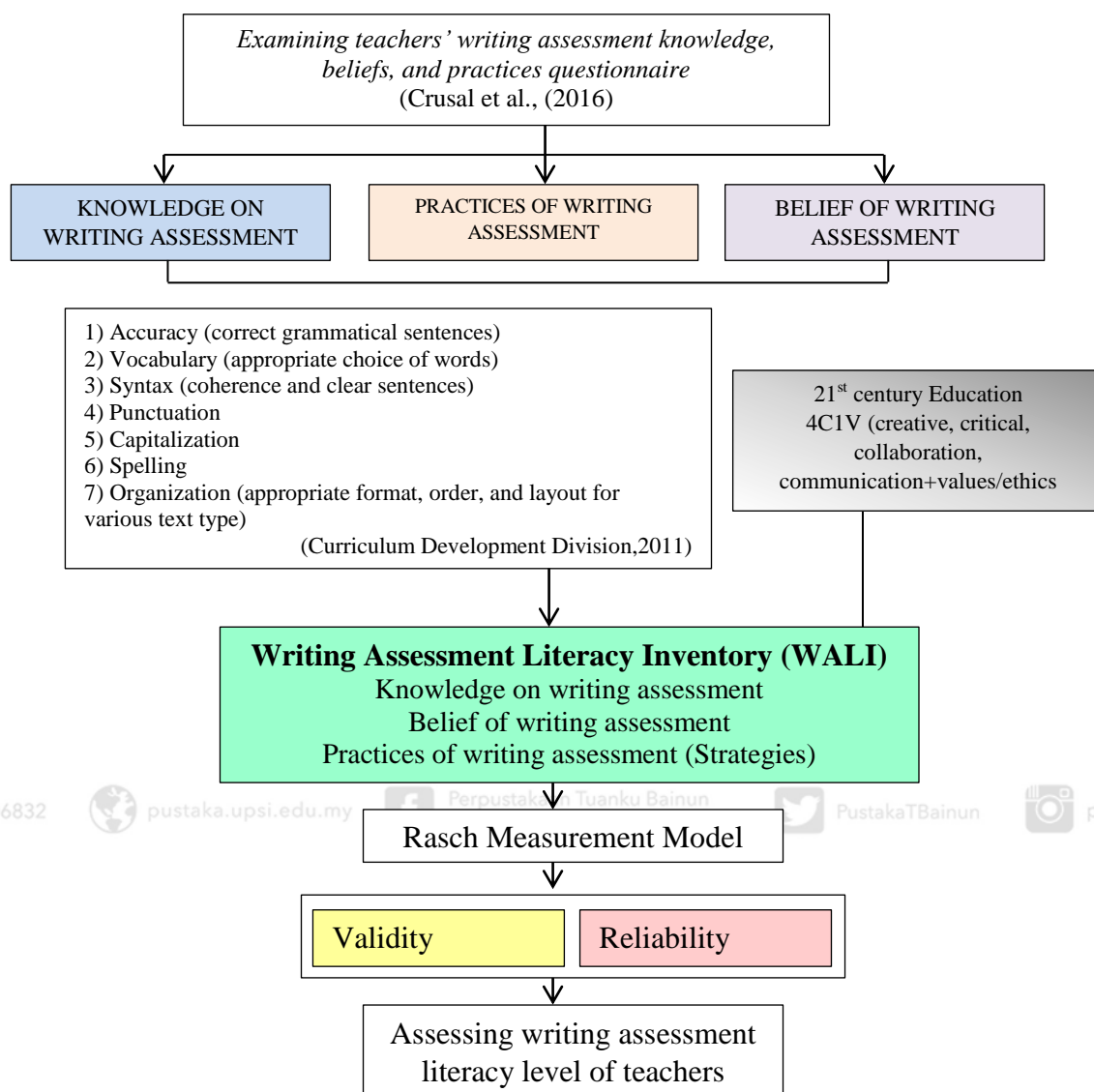


Figure 1.0 Conceptual framework



1.7 Significant of the Research

The target population of this research includes the English language primary school teachers, which have teaching English language experiences in Malaysian classroom. The teachers who teach English language classroom has certain knowledge of assessment practices, their own beliefs and principles of the classroom assessment. However, the case of assessment literacy in English language teachers cannot be simply elaborated because there are very limited literatures on this issue, especially in primary school setting. Therefore, it cannot be said that teachers are very confident in their own knowledge of assessment literacy and the implementation of assessment in the classroom.



Results from this study will provide immediate feedback of the assessment literacy level of English language teachers, as well as how confident they are in assessing the students in writing classroom. Therefore, by evaluating the teachers' current understanding of assessment, more professional development courses based on specific needs especially in language assessment may be needed to help teachers to fully understand the role of assessment for students and how it can benefit schools, parents and community. The findings of the study might help the teachers to overcome their weaknesses and using their own strength to further help them in the professional career. Moreover, this study will help language teachers and to offer support in understanding that there are much more important aspects in assessment rather than assigning marks to the students per se. It will also help the teachers to



acquire the knowledge of assessment in order to help them to be better assessors and evaluators (Hughes, 2008) of students' learning in language classroom context.

The result of the study will give information to the stakeholders of the current needs of language teachers, in term of assessment literacy and how can the stakeholders offer resources to support the language teachers in practising good assessment.

1.8 Scope of the Research

This current research will be employed to the English language primary school teachers in Malaysian classroom. The scope of the research will be on writing assessment literacy particularly, and to gauge the teachers' knowledge, belief, and practices in assessing students' written works. Because the questionnaire is adapted from a different context, it is therefore important for the researcher to fit the overall item in the questionnaire to match with Malaysian primary English classroom context, so that the terms are easily comprehended by the teachers in Malaysia.

1.9 Definition of Terms

The following term are defined in the context in which they are used in the research:

1.9.1 Assessment Literacy

Assessment Literacy in this particular research will be used upon English language teachers. Assessment literacy is defined as knowledge, skills and abilities, belief, and practices in practical language assessment, whether it is standardized or classroom

based, comprehending the process, principal and concept of assessments, as well as to understand the origins, reasons, and impacts of assessment towards individual, society, and institutions, (Fulcher, 2012).

1.9.2 Writing Assessment

For this particular study, writing assessment refers to the practice of evaluating and assessing writing skills and writing tasks/test, process or product of writing, particularly English writing skills for primary school students.

1.9.3 Writing Assessment Literacy

Writing Assessment Literacy is the capability and competency of English language teachers in recognizing, identifying and understanding of knowledge base on writing and writing assessment, belief on writing assessment and practices of writing assessment in writing classroom. The three constructs which are knowledge, belief, and practices of English language teachers will be assessed in this particular study.

1.9.4 Writing Classroom

Writing classroom refers to any activities related to writing second language in English language classroom. Writing includes the construction of sentences, formation of words, elaborating points, and composing essays. Therefore, in relation to this study, the term writing classroom will refer to aforementioned definition.

1.9.5 English language teachers

English language teachers refer to the individuals who teach English language to the primary school students in Malaysia.

1.9.6 Primary School Students/Pupils

Primary school students/pupils refer to the students or pupils learning in the primary school level in Malaysia classroom context. The word “students” and “pupils” will be used interchangeably which refer to the same meaning throughout the study. The primary level education in Malaysia requires the children from the age of 7 until 12 years of age to be learning in the Malaysia’s public schools.

1.10 Summary

This particular chapter serves as an introduction to overall chapter in this paper. It acts as an overview of the study the researcher intended to work on. Starting from the general assessment information, the researcher moves on to the specific of assessment literacy and the how assessment literacy can facilitate teaching and learning. It is also discuss on views of the scholars on the use of assessment and the importance of assessment literacy for teachers. The researcher highlights on the problems that generates the needs to do this research. Four main objectives of the research have been proposed in order to fill in the gap of previous research. The findings of the research will hope to add to the pool of literature in the field of writing assessment, as well as assessment literacy. The researcher also hopes to create awareness to the



stakeholder in the field of assessment literacy especially in writing assessment so that eventually it will benefit the learners, teachers, and education system at large.

