

THE IMPACT OF EXAMINATION SYSTEM ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BAHASA MELAYU CURRICULUM
IN THE LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, there is a growing awareness of concerns in the relationship between examination system and curriculum development. Many research has been conducted on the impact of examination on the implementation of the language curriculum. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the Malaysian examination system on the implementation of the Bahasa Melayu curriculum at the lower secondary level.

Data for this study were collected from questionnaires distributed to 50 Bahasa Melayu teachers teaching in the lower secondary level and interviews conducted to 10 Heads of Bahasa Melayu Panel in 10 secondary schools.

The findings of this study indicate that there is a negative backwash effect of the examination on the process of teaching and learning Bahasa Melayu, which includes the teaching strategies used, materials used and the skills taught in the classroom.

The widely use of workbooks which provides exercises similar to the examination format show that teachers are more concerned in preparing

students for the examination, rather than focusing on the skills suggested in the syllabus.

The teaching of Bahasa Melayu in the lower secondary level is found to be very teacher centred and not student centred, where teachers play a dominant role in imparting knowledge to students.

The pressure for students' success in public examination has made school based tests, which is considered to be a formative achievement test appeared to be a summative proficiency test. There is a misconception among teachers between achievement test and proficiency test.

The study also revealed that there is a neglect in the teaching of certain skills suggested in the Bahasa Melayu syllabus. Teachers failed to cover all the skills listed in the syllabus as they cannot afford to give emphasis on skills that are not tested in the examination.

The implementation of the Bahasa Melayu curriculum can be considered a failure, if students failed to communicate well literary and orally as too much concern is put on the examination.