

Teachers' Knowledge and Belief on the CEFR Implementation in Malaysian ESL Classroom

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ABSTRACT : The development of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), has received widespread enthusiasm in language education. The CEFR has been used around the world for various purposes encompassing assessment, curriculum development and teaching purposes. Through comprehensive studies on the experiences of other countries that have implemented the CEFR, it is evident that the CEFR could enhance the English language teaching and learning process. Malaysia has currently implemented the CEFR in its English language education in an effort to align its system to the international standard so as to ensure that it is globally competitive. However, studies have shown that in order for a reform to achieve its intended goal, teachers' awareness and beliefs should be taken into account. Henceforth, a study is being carried out to investigate the implementation of the CEFR in the Malaysia English education system with a focus on teachers' knowledge and beliefs. This study utilized semi-structured interviews as the main data collection method involving English language teachers from different schools in Johor. The paper will be useful to gauge teachers' awareness on the CEFR implementation and contribute to the literature on the CEFR implementation in Malaysia.

KEYWORDS: Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), teachers' awareness, teachers' belief

I. INTRODUCTION

In the era where the pace and scope of economic, social and political change are unprecedented (Drucker 1995), the field of education has also been experiencing changes in the structural-functional of its system to keep up with various change forces (Kondakci et al., 2017). Improved students' outcomes, better teaching practices, operating efficiencies and national agenda (Goh et al., 2006) are among the drives that have spurred policy makers to roll out new policy in hope of improving the education system for the better. Malaysia, like any other countries in the world has taken numerous efforts to reform its education for the better. Needless to say, many programs have been done to bring about changes and improvements to boost the standard of English language education in Malaysia. The Common European Framework of Reference, also known as CEFR that Malaysian has adopted in its English education system is one of the initiatives by the ministry as a stepping stone to ensure that the English language education system in the country is globally competitive and can be seen as an effort to boost its education level align to the international level (The Roadmap, 2015-2025). However, little is known about this newly implemented reform especially in the context of Malaysian English language education. Although there exists a plethora of studies on the CEFR implementation, the existing literatures were only accentuated on the CEFR implementation in the European continuum. Henceforth, this study will attempt to bridge this gap by investigating the implementation of the CEFR in the Malaysian English education system with focus on the teachers' knowledge and beliefs.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The CEFR stands for the Common European Framework of Reference, was developed by the council of Europe to create educational and cultural unity among its Member States (Council of Europe, 2001). It is a measurement tool that was developed empirically in the year 1990 and was published officially in 2001. Originally, the CEFR was developed mainly for use in the European countries. However, its usage has spread worldwide to date as many countries around the world including Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Ecuador, Canada, Sweden, Spain and Finland have started adopting the CEFR to reform the English language program in their respective countries. The CEFR has been developed with two aims in mind. Firstly, it serves as a mean for language learning reflection for all language practitioners including language learners, on 'what and how' of language learning. Secondly, it also aims "to make it easier for practitioners to tell each other and their clientele what they wish to help learners to achieve and how they attempt to do so" (Council of Europe, 2001: p. 4). Despite the aims it serves, the framework also provides transparent and comprehensive view on language teaching and learning as

well as language assessment. As documented in the written document of the CEFR from the Council of Europe, The uses of the framework include 1) planning of language learning program in terms of making assumptions on students' prior knowledge and articulation with earlier learning, objectives and content, 2) planning of language certification in terms of the content syllabus of examination and assessment criteria and 3) planning for self-directed learning in terms of raising the learners' awareness on their present knowledge of the language, self-setting objectives, self-assessment and selection of materials for their individual learning purpose. The CEFR has become a 'common currency' (Van Huy and Hamid, 2015 and Figueras, 2012) in Europe and consequently, much effort has been concentrated on examining the use of this framework. For instance, Broek and Ende (2013) had undertaken a study to investigate the use of the CEFR in the European education system in examination, curriculum development, schoolbooks and teacher training. The study discovered that although the closed reference is evident between CEFR and the general approach to language learning, materials used (where the curricula and schoolbooks take into account on the contextual language use and CEFR 'can-do' statement) as well as teacher training, the links between the framework and language assessment appeared weak. In the area of teaching and learning whereby the CEFR is used as a tool to inform pedagogical practice by teachers. In using the CEFR for teaching and learning purpose, Maldina (2015) has investigated the role of the CEFR and Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics (SP) in foreign language teaching in a high school in Italy by focusing on teachers' cognition and instructional practices. The findings indicated that the CEFR has an indirect role in shaping teachers' curriculum development and instructional practices. However, this is highly dependent on the external language exams and textbooks used in the teachers' school. The limited knowledge on the CEFR due to the lack of education on the given construct is identified as the reason for the weak relationship between CEFR and teachers' practice in school. Because of this, teachers will not view the CEFR as a valuable tool to promote SP learning.

Another study was done by Buckland (2010) to benchmark learning outcome at the Wall Street Institute (WSI) in Spain to the CEFR. The study looked into the possibility to match the WSI curriculum and learning outcomes to the CEFR. The study has proven an excellent correlation between the WSI levels and the CEFR can-do statement, with 80% matching. Buckland thus established that the alignment between the WSI and CEFR is plausible. As mentioned before, one of the aims of the CEFR is to provide for language program development one of which is used to set objectives for language program. This is especially true in Central and Eastern Europe. The introduction of the CEFR has triggered interests among language professionals to base their decision on setting up objective of their syllabi and curriculum on the CEFR levels. The different CEFR levels offer teachers with options for learning objectives, syllabus design, teaching method and testing and thus allow them to extend their range of teaching. Bérešová (2011) investigated the possibility of linking the national exam in English to the CEFR in Slovakia. The study pointed out that the CEFR is a useful tool to maintain the quality of teaching and learning as well as testing the target language. The study also maintained that the linking helps initiate strategic actions in developing three major areas in education namely the standard, evaluation and professional. Although the CEFR was developed to serve as a mean for synchronizing the language teaching, learning and assessment (Fulcher 2004), Fulcher (2010) indicated that there has been a growing enthusiasm on using the CEFR for standard-based assessment alone and this has out shadowed the initial purpose of the CEFR mentioned. One of the ways in which CEFR is used for standard-based assessment is through alignment of local test to the CEFR level. There has been a wide spread enthusiasm on the effort to align local scale to the CEFR. For instance, a recent study done by Harsch and Martin (2012) aimed to discover way to align local rating scale to the CEFR proficiency scales as a validation effort on their readily available rating scale. Despite validating their local rating scale, the study also aimed to look at the necessary adaptations and methods to convert the CEFR proficiency scales into a scale based on their local context as well as to provide training for their raters to use the rating scale developed. In the validation process, the researchers demonstrated the use of data-driven approach with close participation from raters in revising the scale. The study confirmed that the adaptations of the CEFR descriptors for local context rating purpose are permissible. The study suggested that although the approach used was not economical in terms of time and resources it demanded, the outcome of such project made all the investments worthwhile.

CEFR in Asia: In Japan, researches have been undertaken to study the effort to adapt the CEFR in exam and eventually lead to the development of their own framework which they labeled as the CEFR-J. The idea of developing such framework was initiated from the study done on the standard of English proficiency among Japanese employers, whereby 80% of the recorded employers fall under the A level (Non/basic user), less than 20% of them were categorized in the B level (Independent users) while very marginal of them were in C level (Proficient users) (Masashi, 2012). Stating the argument that the CEFR should be open and flexible for adaptation to any necessary situation (Council of Europe, 2001), the CEFR-J was developed with the inclusion

of certain sub levels into the CEFR original version. With the poor standard of proficiency among Japanese employers, the need to insert levels under the A level of the original CEFR is seen necessary. Therefore, the new CEFR-J was developed with numbers of adaptations. Firstly, the inclusion of three sub-levels under the A1 level of CEFR and create the 'pre-A1' level which comprises of the A1.1, A1.2 and A1.3 level. Secondly, the level A2 and B2 level are further divided into two sub levels and made the A2.1 and A2.2 as well as B2.1 and B2.2 levels. Finally, the CEFR-J also adapted the CEFR 'can-do' statement to the Japanese context.

Nakatani (2012) examined the possibility of the CEFR in improving the students' proficiency in communication through communicative task completion among EFL learners, in this case the Japanese students. The result of the students' post-conversation indicated significant improvement in their communication. However, Nakatani conjectured that the result of such achievement may be elicited through the strategy training that the respondents have had and were aware of. Nonetheless, he believed that the CEFR could be beneficial in improving students' communication. Zheng et al. (2016) studied the possibility of application of the CEFR on the College English Test (CET) writing assessment in China. The study aims to investigate the practicality of the CEFR in China, whether it can be used to promote ELT in China at the tertiary level. It was found that the CEFR can be used if proper and necessary training is given to teachers on how to apply the CEFR in assessment. Prior to the training on the use of the CEFR, the teachers' knowledge were examined and it was revealed that the CEFR is quite unknown to the teachers from 'official' education as they exhibit little to no knowledge at all on the CEFR. Some of the respondents were even unaware of the CEFR, especially teachers who have little overseas experience. However, through the training given by the CEFR expert (from the British Council, United Kingdom), they testified that the CEFR can be a useful tool to promote ELT in China as the training given have instilled them with some knowledge on the CEFR and its use in assessing students' writing test. Hence, it can be said that familiarization on the CEFR will lead to a positive feedback and acceptance of the CEFR in the teaching and assessment of ELT in China. All the studies above have given empirical evidences that the CEFR implementation has the advantages to boost the English education system for the better. Although the CEFR has been proven to have potential in improving the education system, its implementation however has received mixed feedback from teachers around the world.

Views on the CEFR Implementation : Because the trend of implementing the CEFR has grown around the world, there are efforts to examine the views on its implementation. For instance, Goullier (2012) in his study on attitude on the CEFR implementation in France revealed two sides of feeling with one side filled with concern and fear because only with very little knowledge on the newly adopted framework they will be required to revolutionize their teaching practice, and feeling of enthusiasm on the other side as teachers view the CEFR as having a sense of 'magical thinking' and could be viewed as the new innovation in language education.

A study on the CEFR implementation in Poland by Komorowska (2012) revealed a complaint regarding the "insufficient dynamics of phonological competence development" (p.109). The complaint was a referent to the CEFR document, page 117 which deals with the brief discussion on pronunciation and prosody. The discussion did not suggest methods to teach pronunciation and prosody. In addition, Zou (2012) in his study in China reports a number of complaints which state that the CEFR document is not so well-known among people and is not user-friendly, thus could not be easily understood. The teachers also voiced out that the CEFR is not comprehensive enough to be used for testing as they still need something quantitative when dealing with language testing. Additionally, they also expressed their difficulties in constructing test using the CEFR "can do" statements. The complaints channeled through Zou's study suggested that the unfamiliarity of the system will lead to undesirable feedback and confusion among teachers. The previous studies have shown that the enthusiasm on implementing the CEFR to the English education system has spread worldwide. Alongside its implementation, positive and negative feedbacks from teachers were also reported. From all the studies, it can be posited that the CEFR has its own advantage to improve the English education system if proper execution is guaranteed. Therefore, Malaysia has recently implemented the CEFR to its English education system and is included in the current education reform, the Roadmap 2015-2025. Therefore, it is intriguing that teachers' knowledge and beliefs on the CEFR implementation be investigated to gauge their interaction to the newly implemented reform.

III. OBJECTIVES

The study aims to achieve two objectives which are:

1. To study the teachers' knowledge on CEFR.
2. To investigate the teachers' belief on the CEFR implementation.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study involved 7 English language teachers with 2 males and 5 females from different schools in Johor. All respondents were selected among secondary school teachers who have undergone training for CEFR. This is to ensure that the respondents were chosen among teachers who have background knowledge on the CEFR to ease the data collection. The study applied the qualitative methodology as it enables the researchers to explore and make sense of people's attitude or behaviour as well as their thinking. The data were collected through the use of semi-structured interviews. There are a few reasons that have influenced the decision to opt for interview in this study. Firstly, it provides rich and useful information that is not available through mere observation. Secondly, it allows participants to elaborate their responses for a comprehensive understanding on a certain issue. Lastly, it gives control to researchers on the types of information they receive because they will decide on themselves on the questions that will be asked in the interview. One-on-one interview type was used in this study where the researchers interviewed individual teacher one at a time. The interview guide consists of 14 open-ended questions mainly focusing on revealing teachers' knowledge on the CEFR and how has the CEFR affect their teaching method, assessment method as well as the materials used in their teaching. The interview also focused on their opinion on the feasibility of the CEFR in Malaysian English education system. During the interview, the researchers have also used some probe questions to seek for clarifications on the interviewees' answer. The interview data were transcribed in plain text in Microsoft Words and were organized accordingly prior to the analysis phase. This is to ensure that the analysis of the data could be done efficiently and systematically. The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis. The study used the 6-steps framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) as it offers a clear and useable approach to thematic analysis.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to further shed light on the dimensions of curriculum implementation, teachers' experiences were examined. The findings and discussion in the following will focus on the following elements:

1. General knowledge of CEFR: levels and aims and objectives of CEFR
2. Teaching method
3. Assessment method
4. Materials development

Teachers' knowledge : Table 1 below illustrates the data that represent teachers' knowledge on a few key elements of the CEFR implementation.

Table 1 Teachers' Knowledge on the CEFR Implementation

Knowledge on CEFR	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
Levels in CEFR	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Aims and objectives of CEFR implementation		/	/				
Teaching method	/	/	/	/		/	
Assessment method		/		/			
Materials development	/	/			/		

The key elements in any curriculum innovation implementation take into account on the general knowledge of the curriculum, itself, teaching method, assessment method as well as material development process (Bacchus et al., n.d and the Roadmap, 2015).Based on this consideration, the data collected through the interviews will be discussed from the point of views of the elements mentioned. From the data, all respondents testified that they were aware of the 6 levels in the CEFR. This knowledge was gained through the trainings that they have attended as well as through their own reading. However, being aware of all the levels does not entail knowing what each level signifies. As according to the data gathered, although all respondents have mutual knowledge of all levels in the CEFR, not all teachers are well versed on what each level indicates. They only mentioned the level of which students have to achieve at the end of every term of their study period. For instance, form 2 students need to achieve B1 level of CEFR at the end of their study period and form 5 students are aimed to achieve C1 as they exit the school.Apart from having the knowledge on the different levels in CEFR, having general knowledge on the CEFR also requires knowing the aims and objectives of the reform being implemented. Conversely, not all teachers were aware of the aims and objectives of implementing the reform. For instance, respondents 1, 4 and 5 mentioned that they are just implementing the reform because it was imperative for them to do so. Excerpts below are taken from the interview.

Respondent 1:

R1:We were just following, we were told to do so, so we are doing it. [Interviewer: ok. So..] That's it. <LAUGH>

Interviewer: so it's being implemented and you just implement it without knowing any of the objectives?

R1: ya

Respondent 5:

R5: I am not sure about the aims aa..ya..cause(because) we are not expla..(explain) aa we were not told about it at any time. So, ya..

The excerpts shown that the implementation of the CEFR in school happened almost instantaneously after the new reform is being rolled out by the ministry. Although all teachers have undergone training on CEFR implementation, complete and holistic understanding on the CEFR, itself are still remain vague to teachers. This is because, the implementation of the CEFR is tantamount to an imposition to teachers. With inadequate training hours as mentioned by most of the respondents, they felt that they lack the sufficient support to implement the change effectively in the classroom. This can be reaffirmed by the finding from Badugela(2012) which stated that teachers voiced out their concerned pertaining to the inadequate training hour accompanied education reform, where teachers mentioned that 3 days of training is simply not enough in return of a high success of reform implementation expected of them.

In relation to the teaching method, majority of the respondents believe that they have the knowledge of what teaching method is emphasized in the CEFR aligned syllabus. However, not all teachers have similar understanding and identify to the same teaching method under the CEFR aligned curriculum. Some of the teachers mentioned that the CEFR emphasizes on the speaking skill and thus they are now trying as much to change their teaching method from focusing on reading and writing towards speaking. Hence, communicative activities are frequently done in the classroom. Some even said that they think the CEFR focuses on all four skills. One of the respondents (R2) stated that CEFR emphasizes on the communicative part of the language. She also added that CEFR is not just about the language and passing exam, but more on what students can do with the language. When asked about the actual classroom practice, most respondents believe that the new reform has somehow influenced their classroom practice whereby they are moving towards communicative activities in which students are encouraged to use the language for communication. The following excerpts illustrate the teachers' views on this matter:

R2: before it was introduced I am more focused on in writing [Interviewer: ok] in writing and reading but after CEFR is introduced I'm I'm more focusing on their speaking [Interviewer: ya..ya] level. I'm more concerned on how they're able to use the language as compared to how they're going to just absorb and dump everything on their exam papers. (Respondent 2)

R3: ...I can say now I'm trying ey to do more communication activities [Interviewer: ok] so they can practice speaking mm and use the language they learn. (Respondent 3)

This is similar to the finding from Roehrig and Kruse (2005) where they found that the new curriculum implemented does affect the teachers' classroom practice where their teaching is now moving towards reform-based. However, two of the respondents stated they still have difficulty in conducting classroom lesson using the teaching method underlined in the CEFR syllabus. These teachers will still be using their usual teaching method in classroom. This finding simply shows that changing the way one teaches in classroom is probably the most difficult thing to do. As Elliot (1994) mentioned, the issue of implementing a new policy lies in the context of applying the theory of the policy into practice. Elliot argued that often teachers find it difficult to change their way of teaching when the new policy is in conflict with their common sense or the intuitive theory of what practice will work the best with their students.

As far as assessment method is concerned, only 2 of the respondents seemed to have knowledge on how to assess students according to the CEFR standard. Most of the teachers were still confused on this aspect of the curriculum. Confusion of this aspect of the implementation is evident in the excerpts below:

R1: ok actually, like we also have like in-house training about assessment [Interviewer: ok] they say like formative and then like summative but we are not really doing it like for now I think <LAUGH>ya because even for the school examinations we are still following PT3 format, ya so there is like a missing link if you ask me. (Respondent 1)

R6: <LAUGH>haa.. this I'm definitely confuse with. [Interviewer: really?]ya because aa you know what, I was not sure in the training we didn't do much of the assessment, although mm I know it is formative, but like aa how to say, aa to actually do it, I don't really mmm [Interviewer: know?] aaya. (Respondent 6)

This is in line with the study by Zou (2012) where teachers have channeled their complaints regarding the use of CEFR in the education system in China, in which the study suggested that the unfamiliarity of the system will lead to undesirable feedback and confusion among teachers. Materials development is probably the element that brings most problems to teachers. All teachers said that they used the material prescribed by the ministry (the textbook) in implementing the CEFR in classroom. The use of textbook among teachers can be explained in two folds. Firstly, the teachers stated that using the textbook is the safest way to stay abreast with the CEFR syllabus. Because the textbook is prescribed by the ministry, using it for teaching and learning can guarantee the classroom lesson is aligned to the CEFR syllabus. Secondly, using textbook will save them more time rather than having to develop their own material. Most of the teachers also said that there are too many things required of them, leaving them very little time for other tasks. There are also some teachers that despite all constraints, still willing to take up the extra works to develop other non-textbook materials as supplement for their teaching because the textbook is simply incomprehensible to their students. Contextualization is the major concern raised by the teachers pertaining the textbook prescribed by the ministry. Because most of the contents in the textbook is internationalized, it is not easily comprehended by the students especially those with limited language capacity. The excerpt below shows evidence of this issue:

R1: so we have 1 textbook called PULSE 2 [Interviewer: ok] so I'll be using that textbook. one thing to comment about the textbook is not based on Malaysian context...is more like it's suitable for the other like overseas kids [Interviewer: hmm.] it's not for Malaysian kids [Interviewer: alright] like certain terms or like certain things they don't understand...when it comes about the understanding maybe it would be difficult for them to understand because they don't see it (Respondent 1).

However, as the teachers mentioned developing their own materials that better suited their students would require tremendous effort from them and the self-developed materials also needed to be properly prepared to suit the CEFR standard. Because there are many other works required from the teachers, they sometimes avoid taking up extra works to develop their own materials. Hence, using the prescribed material namely the textbook is the best and most economical choice they have. The varying knowledge that teachers have on the CEFR can be explained from various perspectives. Firstly, the varying input that teachers received from the training they attended. The teachers from different school have received different training delivered by different speakers with which different input might have been transmitted to teachers. Because the CEFR training applied the concept of 'cascade training' as its core paradigm (The Roadmap, 2015), only a selected few called the 'master trainers' will be trained by experts in the field on the first stage of training. This type of training indicates that a trainer trains other trainers who then train others (Elder, 2015). It is a top-down approach considered as a method to diffuse knowledge in an organization (Jacobs, 2002). In the case of the CEFR training for teachers, the selected master trainers who were involved in the first stage of training will then be responsible to conduct 'in-house training' for their fellow teachers at their respective schools on how the CEFR should be implemented. However, with this mode of training, the issue with regards to the status of the master trainers is inevitable. Because teachers did not get first hand input directly from the experts, the input that they have gotten from the master trainers might be different from one teacher to another and the input is also given based on the personal interpretation of the master trainers that may or may not be as it is on the first stage of training by the experts. This has been highlighted in previous studies by Elder, 2015 and Karalis, 2016 where they found out that this model allows for a high dilution rate and by the time it reaches the final target group, it has lost some of its real value.

This is because dilution of the quality of knowledge is likely to happen when involving many stages of training before it could reach the teachers as master trainers might have interpreted the real thing differently from what is intended. Apart from that the master trainers may also not be well equipped with the necessary skills to train other teachers or that they were already burdened with mountainous workloads themselves that they could not simply take up another responsibility of being a master trainer (Aziz et al., n.d). Secondly, teachers' initiatives to find the information about the reform on their own to supplement the input obtained from the training. Because many teachers testified that depending solely on the training is simply not enough in order to work the reform effectively. They believe some initiative from the teachers, themselves need to be done to understand how the reform can be best executed. Some teachers mentioned that initiatives like searching more info about the reform from the internet or through reading materials will be able to supplement the knowledge they have gained in the training. However, because teachers are burdened with many other responsibilities, some may not be willing to invest their time and effort to learn more about the reform. Apart from their core business of teaching, teachers are also expected to be responsible for students' discipline and plan for other co-curricular activities such as school sport's day and any other events (Ahmad Zabidi, 2013). Sheela (n.d) in her study pointed out that other clerical works like updating and keeping thorough record of students' result online have also added to the

mountainous responsibilities that are required of the teachers. Considering the numerous things required of them, some teachers might be reluctant to take calculative effort and initiatives to try to understand the reform on their own. Because other teachers are willing to work the extra time just to make sense of the change and some are not, the gap between the knowledge of these teachers is evident. As Bouckenoghe (2010) claimed, the outlook of the change will vary from one person to another based on the change recipient own initiatives to understand the change.

Teachers' Belief : Although teachers reacted quite diversely from each other on the CEFR implementation, all teachers exhibit positive belief towards the change. Despite being discontent with the constant changes in the English language education system, they all have a firm belief that through proper and systematics implementation of the new reform, the quality of English language education can be uplifted. The excerpts below from different teachers illustrate the prevalence of this belief.

R2: *I think it's possible [Interviewer: ok] however it cannot be achieved in like the shortest 5 years time, I don't think in that amount of time it would be achieved. It [Interviewer: oo..] needs to have at least 10 years.*(Respondent 2)

R4: *... I believe it can aa..improve the system, but not do..hmm.. just don't do it like.. in a rush. We don't have to rush things out. Maybe in 10 years or more aa.. we can see the result, just not now la.*'(Respondent 4)

R6: *...yes, I think it can, aaya, to me I believe so. But mm just not immediately la, we need to see it in like five to ten yeas aa from now maybe can, because teachers still need to aa organize and transform right? so we need time and to aa get use to the CEFR.*(Respondent 6)

R7: *... of course it can increase the quality, I think so la.. if they can give proper way like training, enough materials kanaa.. oo and maybe check on us once in a while keaa to see how we doing with the new change right. Constant support la I can say, then maybe it will work, I believe this way. Just give us some time, and don't change it again.<LAUGH>* (Respondent 7)

From the excerpts above, it is evident that teachers need to be given more time and constant support to ensure success of the new change. Although the reform is imperative for all teachers to be implemented in school, it is important to note that for a change to work effectively, it requires more than directives and procedures (Aziz et al., n.d). Other covert factors such as change readiness (Kondakci et al., 2017 & Holt et al., 2007), organizational trust (Zayim and Kondakci, 2015 & Winardi and Priyanto, 2016), motivation (Lehman et al., 2002), quality of personnel and leadership (Rafferty et al., 2013, Badugela, 2012 & Bouckenoghe, 2010) are not only necessary but also important prerequisites to successful change implementation. Hence, in order for the new change to be implemented successfully, these factors are indispensable.

VI. CONCLUSION

The CEFR implementation in Malaysia can be seen as a significant effort to reform the English language education system in the country for the better. Given that the implementation is still on the stage of infancy, the study is not undertaken to assess the overall success of the CEFR implementation as it is believed that it is still too early to draw firm conclusions. However, based on the findings and discussions in the previous section, the study can be concluded in three folds. Firstly, curriculum reform is undoubtedly a complex process and to expect total success and smooth implementation in a short period of time is simply unrealistic. Secondly, curriculum implementation requires teachers to take up new roles and responsibilities as well as to change their practice to suit the new standard. Hence, continuous effort and support from all parties especially support from colleagues and authorities are very important. Lastly, teachers' preparation for the change implementation through in-service and pre-service training is essential. Trainers who are in charge to deliver the trainings to teachers should be chosen among experts to ensure effective interventions in all stages of the change implementation. Given that the CEFR is still on its early stage of implementation, issues are inevitable. Thus, acknowledging their existence and trying to work within the prevailing constraints are important to ensure that the curriculum reform does contribute to increase the quality of education in the country.

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