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# Extensiveness of School-Based Assessment Techniques Employed by English Subject Teachers to Improve Students' Language Proficiency in Public Secondary Schools in Manyoni District, Tanzania

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## **Abstract:**

*The study aimed to investigate the Extensiveness of School-Based Assessment Techniques Employed by English Subject Teachers to Improve Students' Language Proficiency in Public Secondary Schools in Manyoni district, Tanzania. The research was guided by the Constructivist Theory, which emphasizes active learning and knowledge construction. The study employed a convergent design under a mixed methods approach. The target population consisted of 3,098 Form 1 to Form 4 students, 38 English teachers and 19 school heads. Sampling techniques employed in this study include purposive (expert and total population) and stratified random sampling techniques to select 161 respondents. Data collection instruments were validated by MWECAU research experts in the field of education. A pilot study was conducted in two public secondary schools. The reliability of questionnaires for Likert-type items was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient whereby  $r = 0.839$  for teachers and  $r = 0.889$  for students, while that of qualitative was established through peer debriefing and triangulation. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were collected through an interview guide and a document analysis guide. Descriptive statistics were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 22. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study adhered to ethical considerations throughout the research process. The study found that vocabulary quizzes/tests were more widely used and valued by teachers compared to grammar quizzes/tests. The study concluded that vocabulary quizzes/tests were more widely used and valued by teachers compared to grammar quizzes/tests. The study recommended that teachers should employ a variety of assessment techniques, including vocabulary quizzes, grammar quizzes, reading comprehension tests, listening comprehension tests, and oral presentations.*

**Keywords:** School-based assessment techniques, English subject, and language proficiency

## **1. Introduction**

Assessment plays a crucial role in students' education. Assessment in the classroom evaluates students' understanding, guides teaching strategies, offers feedback, and highlights areas for improvement (Kigwilu & Mokoro, 2022). School-Based Assessment Tools (SBAT) refers to an educational assessment method that evaluates students' learning progress and achievements within the context of their school environment. Unlike traditional assessments that rely solely on standardized tests or external examinations, SBA incorporates a range of assessment strategies and tools that are designed and administered by teachers within the school itself (Imasuen & Iyamu, 2021). SBA aims to provide a comprehensive and holistic assessment of students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes by considering their performance in various learning activities conducted throughout the academic year. These activities (tools) can include projects, assignments, presentations, practical experiments, portfolios, group work, and other forms of classroom-based assessments.

Despite the importance of School-Based Assessment Tools (SBATs) in improving the teaching and learning process, Dube-Xaba and Xulu (2020) found that teachers in public schools lack clarity regarding SBAT, which negatively impacts the teaching and learning process, particularly in English subjects. English subject is taught in schools worldwide as it is considered the language of international communication, and proficiency in English is essential for academic success and employability (Gomes, 2020). However, the effectiveness of SBA in countries where English is a second language poses a challenge for teachers in conducting assessments in the classroom.

English language proficiency refers to an individual's level of competence and skill in using the English language (Leung, 2022). It encompasses various language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as well as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. English language proficiency is typically measured on a scale that ranges from basic or elementary proficiency to advanced or near-native fluency, with intermediate levels in between. Proficiency in English is important for effective communication in academic, professional, and social contexts and for accessing educational and employment opportunities in an English-speaking environment. It involves the ability to understand and express ideas accurately, fluently and appropriately in English.

In the Tanzanian context, secondary school education covers nine subjects, including English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Biology, Civics, Chemistry, Physics, Geography and History. With the exception of Kiswahili, all subjects at the secondary level are taught in English, making English language proficiency important in enhancing students' performance (Tarmo, 2022). In order to enhance English language proficiency, teachers employ various tools of assessment as part of the School-Based Assessment (SBA) in secondary schools. These assessments encompass quizzes, weekly and monthly tests, and mid-term, terminal, and annual examinations. In addition to formal assessments, teachers also incorporate regular informal activities into their teaching and learning strategies to foster students' English language proficiency. Classroom discussions, group projects, role-playing, debates, and presentations are examples of such activities that provide opportunities for students to practice and enhance their English language skills. However, its effectiveness in enhancing language proficiency is still questionable.

The Tanzanian government has implemented policies and initiatives to improve SBA in secondary schools, including the introduction of SBA by the Tanzania Institute of Education in 2005 (Tarmo, 2022). Teacher training and professional development programs have been emphasized, and in 2021, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology developed guidelines and standards for SBA to ensure consistency and quality in the assessment process. The 2014 Education and Training Policy (ETP) stress improving education quality with effective assessment methods (Ochieng & Yeonsung, 2021). It acknowledges the value of SBA in secondary schools and encourages teacher training programs, resources, and support for its implementation. Despite the emphasis on ETP and the introduction of guidelines and standards for SBA, the effectiveness of SBAT in improving English language proficiency at the secondary education level remains questionable.

Recently, researchers (Mkimbili & Ødegaard, 2020; Dina, Chale & Cole, 2022; Malyukova, 2019; Tarmo, 2022) have shed light on the detrimental impact of lack of understanding regarding assessment guidelines and standards on the effectiveness of school-based assessment tools in improving students' English language proficiency. Mkimbili and Ødegaard (2020) conducted a study revealing that many teachers were unfamiliar with the guidelines for SBA, leading to inconsistencies and inadequacies in its implementation. Similarly, Dina, Chale and Cole (2022) found that teachers' limited comprehension of assessment standards resulted in challenges when providing accurate and effective feedback to students. Therefore, the current study will investigate the extensiveness of school-based assessment tools employed by English subject teachers to improve students' language proficiency in public secondary schools in Manyoni district, Tanzania.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

The lack of clarity in SBAT is a noteworthy concern in the Tanzanian education sector. Blundell (2021) reported that when assessments are not well-defined, it can be challenging for teachers to accurately measure students' language proficiency and provide effective feedback to support their language development. This lack of clarity leads to inconsistent instruction, limited feedback, and misaligned standards, which negatively impact students' language proficiency (Kunnan et al., 2022). Schools' administrators, quality assurers and other stakeholders raise concerns about the effectiveness of school-based assessment tools in improving students' language proficiency (Maliva et al., 2022). Despite the Tanzanian government's introduction of the English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP) in 2016 and Guidelines on Assessment Procedures in 2021, there still remain challenges in teachers' understanding of how to conduct school-based assessments. The reviewed studies by Edith (2021), Joseph and Osaki (2022), Makewa et al. (2023), Mwakapina et al. (2022) and Vedasto (2021) explore different aspects of English language education in Tanzania, including assessment, teaching and learning strategies, and the link between language proficiency and academic performance. However, there is limited availability of studies that investigated the extent of school-based assessment tools employed by English subject teachers to improve students' language proficiency. This critical gap in the existing literature necessitates further exploration to fully understand the impact of SBAT on improving students' language skills. Therefore, the current study will investigate the extensiveness of school-based assessment tools employed by English subject teachers to improve students' language proficiency in public secondary schools in Manyoni district, Tanzania.

### *1.2. Research Question*

To what extent do school-based assessment techniques employed by English subject teachers improve students' language proficiency in public secondary schools in Manyoni district, Tanzania?

### *1.3. Significance of the Study*

The research is significantly important to various stakeholders, including policymakers, the Ministry of Education, education stakeholders, and the wider knowledge community. By examining this specific context, the study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform policy decisions and guide the development of the curriculum. Understanding the effectiveness of current assessment practices in promoting language development is crucial for policymakers to refine assessment policies and procedures that align better with students' needs and learning objectives. The findings from this study would also offer practical recommendations to teachers and educators on optimizing assessment strategies to foster

language growth, thereby improving overall instructional practices. By shedding light on the relationship between SBAT and language proficiency, this research contributes to the broader educational discourse and influences the enhancement of the Tanzanian education system. The study outcomes will directly impact students' academic success and future career prospects by preparing them for higher education and the workforce.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Constructivist Theory, which was developed by Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and John Dewey in the 1950s. The Constructivist Theory states that learning is an active process in which individuals construct their understanding and knowledge by actively engaging with new information and relating it to their existing mental frameworks. It emphasizes that learners are not passive recipients of information but active participants in the learning process. According to constructivism, learners build their understanding through a process of constructing meaning based on their prior knowledge, experiences, and interactions with the environment. They actively seek to make sense of new information by connecting it to what they already know and by engaging in activities that promote exploration, inquiry, and reflection.

In the context of the study, Constructivist Theory suggests that School-Based Assessment Tools (SBATs) should align with the principles of constructivist learning. Students' language proficiency can be enhanced when they are actively engaged in meaningful language activities and assessments that promote their active participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Through authentic and contextually relevant assessments, students can actively construct their understanding of the English language, apply their knowledge in real-life situations, and develop higher-order language skills.

### 2.1. Strengths of the Constructivist Theory

Constructivist Theory recognizes that learners actively construct knowledge and meaning based on their prior knowledge, experiences, and interactions with their environment. In the context of language proficiency, this approach acknowledges the unique backgrounds and abilities of students in Manyoni district, Tanzania. By considering students' individual needs, interests, and cultural contexts, the extensiveness of School-Based assessment tools (SBATs) can be tailored to meet their specific language learning goals. Constructivist Theory emphasizes the significance of meaningful learning experiences that connect new knowledge to existing understandings. In the context of the study, SBATs provide opportunities for students to apply their English language skills in real-life situations, or authentic tasks can contribute to their language proficiency. By engaging in relevant and purposeful assessments, students can develop a deeper understanding of the English language and its application in their lives.

### 2.2. Weaknesses of the Constructivist Theory

Constructivist approaches often emphasize authentic and context-specific assessments that reflect real-life language use. While this can enhance students' language proficiency, it may raise concerns about the reliability and validity of assessments. It is crucial to ensure that assessments accurately measure students' language skills and provide meaningful insights into their proficiency levels. Without standardized assessments, it may be challenging to gauge students' progress consistently and make reliable comparisons.

### 2.3. The Relevance of the Constructivist Theory to the Study

Constructivist Theory suggests using authentic assessments that reflect real-life language use. In Manyoni district, English SBAT can be designed to mirror the language skills and contexts relevant to the students' lives. Assessments can focus on tasks that require students to use English in authentic situations, such as writing letters, engaging in conversations, or presenting information. This application ensures that assessments are meaningful and aligned with the students' experiences, thereby promoting language proficiency that is applicable in their daily lives. Constructivist Theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction and collaboration in learning. SBAT can incorporate collaborative assessment strategies, such as group projects, discussions, and peer feedback. This application provides opportunities for students to engage in meaningful language interactions, negotiate meaning, and learn from their peers. Collaborative assessments foster language development by promoting communication skills and exposing students to diverse perspectives, thereby enhancing their language proficiency.

## 3. Empirical Literature Review

This section reviews recent literature conducted in various countries worldwide regarding SBATs. Subsections have been organized based on the research questions, and each segment covers the review from developed countries, least developed countries, developing countries and local contexts.

### 3.1. School-Based Assessment Tools Used by Teachers to Improve English Language Proficiency

A study conducted by Cho et al. (2022) investigated the impact of self-assessment on the development of critical thinking skills among Korean middle school students. The study used a mixed-methods design, including pre- and post-tests, interviews with students, and analysis of students' self-assessment reflections. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that self-assessment can be an effective way to develop students' critical thinking skills. Students who engaged in self-assessment demonstrated significant improvements in their critical thinking skills compared to those who did not. However, the study was limited by its focus on only one grade level (middle school), which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study did not address the potential limitations or challenges of

implementing self-assessment in the classroom, which could impact its effectiveness. Therefore, this study included a sample secondary education level where the effectiveness of SBAT is the focus of the government.

Puad and Lalu (2021) conducted an exploration study at Islamic boarding schools to explore six secondary school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' views on classroom-based assessment at an Islamic boarding school in Lombok, Indonesia. Researching teacher views is important as a significant curriculum reform that mandates teachers' use of formative assessment practices within the classroom, which is planned for implementation by the Indonesian government in 2020. Results from this study found that teachers tended to view classroom-based assessment from summative rather than formative perspectives. However, the study only relied on interviews as a data collection method, which may limit the triangulation of data sources. Furthermore, the study did not explore the effectiveness of the SBAT in assessing students' attitudes and behaviour in classrooms alongside their academic ability.

Mussa et al. (2020) carried out a study that examined the level of awareness and extent of utilization of innovative instructional strategies by science teachers for teaching science in senior secondary schools in Kebbi State, Nigeria. The research is quantitative in nature; a descriptive survey research design was adopted. A sample of 252 science teachers was drawn from all science teachers in public secondary schools in Kebbi State, Nigeria. A questionnaire validated by experts was used as an instrument for data gathering. Findings from the study revealed that 19 (67.86%) out of 28 innovative instructional strategies were not known by science teachers, while 5 (17.86%) were known but not utilized by the teachers. A descriptive survey design provides a broad view of the extent of utilization and level of awareness of innovative instructional strategies by science teachers. The study's primary aim was to explore innovative instructional strategies within science teaching. As a result, it might lack depth or specifics related to assessment tools used in English language proficiency enhancement, limiting its relevance to the theme.

Kimani and Njoroge (2019) conducted a study to evaluate the extensiveness of school-based assessment in improving English language proficiency in public secondary schools in Kenya. The methodology used was a descriptive research design, and data were collected through questionnaires. The findings showed that school-based assessment had a positive impact on students' language proficiency and can be used to track their progress. The authors concluded that school-based assessment should be integrated into the teaching and learning process in public secondary schools in Kenya as a means of improving students' language proficiency. However, the study includes the use of questionnaires as the sole data collection method, which may yield biased or incomplete data, and the descriptive research design, which only provides a general overview of the impact of school-based assessment on language proficiency without exploring its tools. A mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Maliva (2022) conducted a study to investigate secondary school English language teachers' classroom practices in the assessment of oral language skills in Tanzania. The study was informed by a phenomenological research design. Data were collected in six schools through interviews with eight (8) teachers, classroom observation and documentary review. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Findings revealed that classroom oral language assessment in secondary schools was sparingly conducted in the studied schools. However, the study focused only on English language teachers, and it would have been beneficial to include students, heads of schools and ward education officers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of classroom-based assessment tools for improving students' language proficiency.

#### **4. Summary of Literature Reviews and Demonstration of Knowledge Gap**

The existing empirical studies have provided valuable insights into various aspects of school-based assessment (SBA) and its potential to improve English language proficiency. Kimani and Njoroge (2019) conducted a study to evaluate the extensiveness of school-based assessment in improving English language proficiency in public secondary schools in Kenya. Cho et al. (2022) demonstrated the positive impact of self-assessment on the development of critical thinking skills in English language arts. Maliva (2022) conducted a study to investigate secondary school English language teachers' classroom practices in the assessment of oral language skills in Tanzania; however, despite the valuable contributions of these studies, none of them has specifically delved into the comprehensive utilization of SBAT to improve student's English language proficiency. Hence, there is a research gap that needs to be addressed. Therefore, the current study will investigate the extensiveness of school-based assessment tools employed by English subject teachers to improve students' language proficiency in public secondary schools in Manyoni district, Tanzania.

#### **5. Research Methodology**

This study employed a convergent parallel design under a mixed research approach. The purpose of using this design was to collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously and compare the results to obtain a more complete understanding of the research problem. The researcher mixed the two databases by merging the results during interpretation to ensure the two data sets conform. The design enabled the evaluator to collect a large amount of data from a variety of respondents for a short period of time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study targeted 3,098 Form 1 to Form 4 students in public secondary schools in Tanzania, focusing on language proficiency development. Both probability and non-probability sampling were employed in sampling respondents who participated in this study.

The study involved 38 English teachers and 19 school heads. The study took a sample size of 161 respondents from a target population of 3137 individuals. Data were collected using questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis guides. Data collection instruments were validated by MWECAU research experts in the field of education. A pilot study was conducted in two public secondary schools. The reliability of questionnaires for Likert-type items was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient whereby  $r = 0.839$  for teachers and  $r = 0.889$  for students, while that of qualitative was



established through peer debriefing and triangulation. The study adhered to ethical considerations throughout the research process. Descriptive statistics were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 22. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically according to Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest that the analysis of qualitative data follows six steps, which are: organize and prepare the data for analysis, read or look at all the data, start coding all of the data, generate a description and themes, interrelate themes/description and interpreting the meaning of theme/description.

## 6. Research Findings and Discussion

The study aimed to investigate the SBA tools used to improve English language proficiency among students in public secondary schools in Manyoni district. The information to address this research question was obtained from students and English subject teachers using questionnaires, while heads of schools and DSEO used interview guides. The percentage of less or equal to 20=extreme minority; 21 - 49=minority; 50 - 59=moderate; 60 - 69=majority; 71 - 89=greater majority; 90 - 99=extrememajority; 100=overwhelming majority (Taherdoost, 2019). The responses of students and English subject teachers are presented in table 1.

i.	Vocabulary quizzes/tests	Teachers	VSE		SE		ME		LE		VLE		Mean $\bar{x}$
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
		Students	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	50.0	8	50.0	4.5
		Teachers	24	18.8	56	43.8	44	34.4	4	3.1	0	0.0	2.2
ii.	Reading comprehension tests	Teachers	3	18.8	11	68.8	2	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.9
		Students	72	56.3	36	28.1	16	12.5	4	3.1	0	0.0	1.6
iii.	Writing assignments	Teachers	3	18.8	10	62.5	3	18.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	2.0
		Students	28	21.9	56	43.8	28	21.9	16	12.5	0	0.0	2.3
iv.	Oral presentations	Teachers	5	31.3	11	68.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.7
		Students	48	37.5	48	37.5	24	18.8	8	6.3	0	0.0	1.9
v.	Grammar quizzes/tests	Teachers	0	0.0	4	25.0	4	25.0	4	25.0	4	25.0	1.8
		Students	16	12.9	60	48.4	36	29.0	12	9.7	0	0.0	2.4
vi.	Listening comprehension tests	Teachers	10	62.5	6	37.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.4
		Students	28	21.9	36	28.1	40	31.3	16	12.5	8	6.3	2.5
vii.	Spelling quizzes/tests	Teachers	10	62.5	6	37.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.4
		Students	40	31.3	52	40.6	24	18.8	12	9.4	0	0.0	2.1
viii.	Peer assessment	Teachers	6	37.5	10	62.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.6
		Students	68	53.1	40	31.3	12	9.4	8	6.3	0	0.0	1.7
ix.	Self-assessment	Teachers	0	0.0	12	75.0	4	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2.3
		Students	16	12.5	48	37.5	16	12.5	32	25.0	16	12.5	2.9
x.	Rubrics	Teachers	10	62.5	6	37.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.4
		Students	24	18.8	48	37.5	24	18.8	24	18.8	8	6.3	2.7
		Teachers											2.8
	Total mean score	Students											2.0

Table 1: Teachers' and Students' Responses on the SBA Tools Used to Improve English Language Proficiency (n=16, n=128)

Source: Field Data, (2023)

Source: Field Data (2023) 1= (VLE) Very Low Extent, 2= (LE) Low Extent, 3= (M) Moderate, 4= (HE) High Extent, 5= (VHE) Very High Extent and Resp=Respondents

Data in table 1 show that 50% of teachers indicated to a very large extent that teachers use vocabulary quizzes/tests to make students language proficient, while the remaining 50% of teachers and a minority (34.4%) of students indicated to a large extent, 43.8% of students indicated to a small extent and 18.8% of students indicated to a very small extent. Furthermore, a minority (25%) of teachers indicated to a very large extent, a minority of teachers (25%) and an extreme minority (9.7%) of students indicated to a large extent, a minority of teachers (25%) and a minority of students (29%) indicated to a moderate extent, a minority of teachers (25%) and a minority of students (48%) indicated to a small extent and extreme minority students (12.9%) indicated to a very small extent that teachers use grammar quizzes/tests to improve language proficiency among students. The data implies that vocabulary quizzes/tests are more widely used and valued by teachers compared to grammar quizzes/tests. While a significant proportion of teachers perceive these assessments as highly beneficial for enhancing language proficiency, students' engagement and perceived benefit vary, with a range of responses indicating differing levels of reliance on these assessments for language proficiency improvement.

The findings align with the research conducted by Vandergrift and Goh (2022) in Tanzania, which supports the notion that teachers acknowledge the significance of vocabulary and frequently utilize quizzes/tests to evaluate and strengthen students' vocabulary acquisition. By incorporating vocabulary quizzes/tests into their teaching practices, teachers can assess students' progress in acquiring new words, reinforce their learning, offer feedback and foster an

engaging learning environment. These assessments are valuable tools for teachers to support students' vocabulary development and enhance their overall language proficiency. During the face-to-face interview with heads of schools, claimed:

*I strongly believe that vocabulary and grammar assessments play a vital role in language learning. Vocabulary forms the building blocks of effective communication, and a strong grasp of grammar enhances students' ability to express themselves accurately. By assessing vocabulary and grammar through quizzes/tests, we can identify students' strengths and weaknesses, provide targeted instruction, and track their progress over time (HoD 7: Personal communication, April 25, 2023).*

Another head of school said:

*Vocabulary and grammar are essential components of language proficiency. Assessments allow us to measure students' understanding and application of these aspects. Vocabulary quizzes/tests help students expand their word knowledge and develop their ability to use words in context, while grammar quizzes/tests ensure they have a sound understanding of sentence structure, syntax, and grammatical rules (HoD 3: Personal communication, April 25, 2023).*

The information from the heads of schools implies that both vocabulary and grammar assessments are valued for their role in supporting language proficiency development. These assessments serve as tools to evaluate students' language skills, guide instruction, and contribute to their overall language growth. These findings concur with constructivism theory, which affirms that learners build their understanding through a process of constructing meaning based on their prior knowledge, experiences, and interactions with the environment. They actively seek to make sense of new information by connecting it to what they already know and by engaging in activities that promote exploration, inquiry, and reflection.

Data in table 1 show that an extreme minority (3.1%) of students indicated to a large extent, an extreme minority (12.5%) of teachers and (12.5%) students indicated to a moderate extent, the majority (68.8%) of teachers and the minority (28.8%) of students indicated to a small extent, an extreme minority (18.8%) of teachers and a majority (56.3%) of students indicated to a very small extent that reading comprehension tests are used to improve language proficiency among students. An extreme minority (9.4%) of students indicated to a large extent, an extreme minority (18.8%) of students indicated to a moderate extent, a minority (40.6%) of students and teachers (37.5%) indicated to a small extent, and a majority (62.5%) of teachers and a minority (31.3%) of students indicated to a very small extent that quizzes/tests improve language proficiency among students.

The data implies that both teachers and students have varying perceptions about the effectiveness of reading comprehension tests and spelling quizzes/tests in enhancing language proficiency. The majority of respondents seem to consider these assessment methods to have limited impact, with only small percentages attributing moderate or significant improvement to them. During the in-person interviews with the head of school, the head of school reported: *"Reading comprehension tests and spelling quizzes/tests are certainly integral parts of our language education. From my perspective, they serve as valuable tools, but their effectiveness can vary"* (HoS 3: Personal communication, April 25, 2023). The information provided by the head of school generally implies that reading comprehension tests and spelling quizzes/tests are considered important components of the school's language education curriculum. The head of the school acknowledges their significance in the overall language learning process. Furthermore, the DSEO also claimed that:

*Reading comprehension tests and spelling quizzes are essential tools for developing language proficiency. When students take reading comprehension tests, they test their ability to understand the text and their capacity to grasp context, analyze information, and draw inferences. These skills collectively enhance their overall language comprehension and critical thinking abilities (DSEO: Personal communication, April 25, 2023).*

The information from DSEO suggests that reading comprehension tests and spelling quizzes are valuable tools for enhancing language proficiency. When students participate in reading comprehension tests, they not only assess their understanding of the text but also develop important skills such as grasping context, analyzing information, and making inferences. These skills contribute to overall language comprehension and critical thinking abilities. These findings reflect what was proposed by the study of Gopal et al. (2023) in Malaysia, which found that reading comprehension assessments, including tests that measure understanding of text, have been shown to improve students' reading comprehension skills. These assessments help students develop strategies for comprehension, such as making predictions, summarizing, and making connections to prior knowledge.

Data in table 1 show that the majority (62.5%) of teachers and a minority (21.9%) of students indicated to a very small extent, a minority (37.5%) of teachers and students (28.1%) indicated to a small extent, a minority (31.3%) of students and an extreme minority (12.5%) of students indicated to a moderate extent and large extent and an extreme minority (6.3%) of students indicated to a very large extent that listening comprehension tests improve language proficiency among students. A minority (31.3%) of teachers and a minority (37.5%) of students indicated to a very small extent, the majority (68.8%) of teachers and a minority (37.5%) of students indicated to a small extent, and an extreme minority (18.8%) of teachers and students (6.3%) indicated to a very moderate and large extent that oral presentation improves English language proficiency among students. The data imply that there is a difference in perceptions between teachers and students when it comes to the impact of listening comprehension tests and oral presentations on improving language proficiency. While a majority of teachers perceive limited impact, a range of opinions exists among students, suggesting that the effectiveness of these methods might be perceived differently depending on the individual.

In search for further information during a face-to-face interview, a head of school "4" said:

*Reading comprehension tests play a crucial role in developing students' language proficiency. They not only assess students' ability to understand written material but also contribute to vocabulary expansion and critical thinking. We've noticed that students who regularly engage in reading comprehension exercises tend to have a richer vocabulary and a better grasp of language nuances (HoS 4: Personal communication, April 25, 2023).*

Another head of school also claimed:

*Listening comprehension tests are undeniably valuable tools for improving language proficiency. They help students develop their auditory skills, grasp spoken language nuances, and enhance their overall comprehension abilities. Through these tests, students learn to understand different accents, intonations, and conversational contexts, which are crucial for real-world language usage (HoS 5: Personal communication, April 25, 2023).*

The information from the heads of schools implies that it emphasizes the role of comprehension tests in promoting well-rounded language proficiency. Both reading and listening comprehension tests contribute to vocabulary expansion, critical thinking, and an understanding of language nuances, whether written or spoken. These exercises seem to prepare students for effective communication in diverse language settings, which is an essential skill in real-world language usage. The researcher also asked students to indicate the SBA tools that are engaged in improving English language proficiency (see Table 1).

S/N	Responses	F	%
1.	Written Assignment	88	41.5
2.	Oral Presentation	36	17.0
3.	Grammar Quizzes	56	26.4
4.	Debate	32	15.1

*Table 2: Students Responses on the SBA Tools Used to Improve English Language Proficiency (n=128)*

*Source: Field Data, (2023)*

Data in table 2 indicate the distribution of responses by students for various assessment methods as 41.5% responded to written assignments, 17% responded to oral presentations, 26.4% responded to grammar quizzes and 15.1% responded to debate. The data imply that written assignments are the most prevalent assessment method among the surveyed students, followed by grammar quizzes, oral presentations, and debates. This distribution means that teachers rely more heavily on written assignments as a means of assessing student understanding and language proficiency. The findings are supported by Thi et al. (2023) in Malaysia, which revealed that there is a potential opportunity to explore and diversify assessment methods to better cater to different learning styles and provide a more comprehensive evaluation of students' language skills, critical thinking, and communication abilities. However, by incorporating a broader range of assessment methods, educators can promote student engagement, foster varied skill development, and obtain a more holistic picture of students' academic progress.

The study found that SBA tools were used to a small extent to improve English language proficiency by a mean score of 2.8 by teachers and 2.0 by students. This implies that SBA tools are used to a small extent to improve English language proficiency. The study found that teachers and students have varying perceptions about the effectiveness of different assessment methods for improving language proficiency. While some methods, such as vocabulary and grammar assessments, are widely recognized as valuable by both teachers and school heads, others, like reading comprehension tests, spelling quizzes/tests, oral presentations, and listening comprehension tests have varying degrees of perceived impact. The study also draws upon insights from heads of schools and DSEO, reinforcing the significance of these assessment methods in fostering language proficiency, communication skills, critical thinking, and vocabulary development.

The study generally found that vocabulary quizzes/tests were more widely used and valued by teachers compared to grammar quizzes/tests. A significant proportion of teachers perceived these assessments as highly beneficial for enhancing language proficiency, while students' engagement and perceived benefit varied. The study also revealed that reading comprehension tests and spelling quizzes/tests were considered important components of language education. However, their effectiveness was perceived to vary by both teachers and students, with only small percentages attributing moderate or significant improvement to them. Listening comprehension tests and oral presentations showed a difference in perceptions between teachers and students, with a majority of teachers perceiving limited impact, while a range of opinions existed among students. The study indicated that comprehension tests, both reading and listening, were considered valuable tools for promoting well-rounded language proficiency by enhancing vocabulary, critical thinking, and an understanding of language nuances, preparing students for effective communication in diverse language settings. These findings align with the perspectives of school heads and the District Secondary Education Officer, who emphasized the significance of these assessments in language proficiency development.

## 7. Conclusion of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusion is made:

The study concluded that School Based Assessments Tools Employed by English Subject Teachers on Improving Students' Language Proficiency in Public Secondary Schools to a high extent. Vocabulary quizzes/tests were more widely used and valued by teachers than grammar quizzes/tests. Additionally, reading comprehension tests and spelling

quizzes/tests were considered important components of language education, but their effectiveness varied according to both teachers and students. Listening comprehension tests and oral presentations showed differing perceptions between teachers and students. Comprehension tests, both reading and listening, were considered valuable tools for promoting well-rounded language proficiency by enhancing vocabulary, critical thinking, and understanding language nuances. The perspectives of school heads and the District Secondary Education Officer emphasized the significance of these assessments in language proficiency development.

## 8. Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

The study recommended adopting a comprehensive and balanced approach to language assessment, taking into account the various assessment tools and focusing on developing well-rounded language proficiency skills. Continuous collaboration between teachers, students, school heads, and education officers is essential to ensure the effectiveness of these assessments in promoting language proficiency.

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