



# Beyond Exams: Understanding the Impact of Classroom-Based Language Assessment through a Scoping Review

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**APA Citation:**

Wong, D. L. S., Chew, S. Y., & Ng, L. L. (2026). Beyond exams: Understanding the impact of classroom-based language assessment through a scoping review. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 19(1), 64-89. <https://doi.org/10.70730/SNXC9954>

Received  
03/01/2025

Received in  
revised form  
09/08/2025

Accepted  
29/09/2025

**ABSTRACT**

Traditional language assessments have often relied on standardized tests, which emphasize discrete skills and overlook real-life language use. These assessments frequently result in test anxiety and reduced motivation among English language learners (ELLs). To address these challenges, policymakers in countries such as Finland, Australia, Japan, and Malaysia have implemented Classroom-Based Language Assessment (CBLA). This approach emphasizes teachers' professional judgment, ongoing monitoring, and feedback. However, concerns persist regarding the subjectivity and reliability of CBLA in measuring language proficiency. It is therefore essential to examine whether CBLA is an effective alternative despite these criticisms. This scoping review investigates the impact of CBLA on ELLs' language proficiency. Following Arksey and O'Malley's framework for

	<p>conducting scoping reviews, 15 studies published between 2011 and 2024 were retrieved from the Web of Science and Scopus databases, with additional relevant studies sourced from ERIC and JSTOR. The review focused the impact of CBLA on various areas of ELLs' language proficiency. Key areas examined included language skills, grammar and vocabulary knowledge, and intercultural competence. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of CBLA depends on ELLs' proficiency, age, targeted skills taught, and classroom settings. Future mixed-method studies should combine observation of classrooms, interviews of teachers and ELLs to develop CBLA models that promote effective language development for ELLs in diverse settings.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> classroom-based language assessment, formative assessment, language learning, English language learners, scoping review</p>
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## Introduction

Misaligned language assessment practices can obscure ELLs actual abilities, misguide instruction, and reinforce systemic inequalities in multilingual classrooms. In response to growing concerns over the limitations of standardized testing, there has been a global shift toward more contextualized and inclusive assessment practices, which is the Classroom-Based Language Assessment (CBLA). CBLA refers to assessment which is planned, implemented, and interpreted by teachers as part of everyday classroom instruction (Davison & Leung, 2009). While it shares characteristics with formative assessment such as providing ongoing feedback and supporting learning, CBLA includes both formative and summative functions, always closely aligned with instructional goals and the specific contexts of ELLs (Rea-Dickins, 2004). Unlike general formative assessment, which can occur outside of instruction or across different subjects, CBLA is embedded in language learning tasks and emphasizes teacher judgment, learner involvement, and real-time classroom interaction (Leung & Scott, 2009).

Traditionally, language assessments have relied on standardised tests, which tend to focus on discrete language skills and fail to capture the complexity of language use in authentic contexts (Akintunde, 2023). Such tests often pressure ELLs to prioritize exam performance over genuine language development. The high-stakes nature of these assessments can exacerbate test anxiety, and affect learners' motivation in learning English

(Aydin et al., 2020). To address these issues, policymakers in countries such as Finland (Franco, 2020), Australia (Davison, 2004), Japan (Saito & Inoi, 2017) and Malaysia (Tan et al., 2022) initiated CBLA as an effort to shift from traditional, test-centric approaches language assessment.

CBLA has been increasingly recognized for building ELLs' linguistic competencies. Based on the principles of formative assessment by Black and William (1998), CBLA involves monitoring, evaluating, documenting, and applying data on learners' learning tasks to track their progress (Rea-Dickins, 2001). This continuous assessment helps teachers to identify ELLs' strengths and weaknesses, followed by personalizing feedback to meet the needs of each learner (Tajeddin et al., 2022). It also encourages active participation among ELLs by involving them in assessment activities such as group work, discussions, projects and peer evaluation (Chen, 2020; Poerwanti et al., 2023). These activities, which mimic real life language use allow ELLs to practise language skills in meaningful contexts (Norhasim & Mohamad, 2020).

While research on CBLA has examined its frameworks, teachers' assessment literacy and teaching practices (Fitriyah et al., 2022; Hamp-Lyons, 2009; Hill & McNamara, 2011; Leung, 2005; Lewkowicz & Leung, 2021), a recurring concern across the literature is the reliability of teacher judgment. Since CBLA relies heavily on teachers' professional judgment, their decisions can be influenced by personal beliefs, expectations, or institutional pressure which may result in inconsistent or biased assessments (Bachman & Damböck, 2018; Menon, 2022). This issue becomes even more complicated when assessment rubrics include vague descriptors such as “large”, “small”, “simple” or “complex” in the descriptors. This may lead to different teachers interpreting in different ways (North, 2020; Savski & Parabjandee, 2022). These ambiguities undermine the consistency and fairness of language assessment.

The concerns about assessment reliability is also intertwined with the realities of culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. ELLs often bring social identities and cultural backgrounds that do not align with the dominant norms embedded in school-based assessments (David & Govindasamy, 2007). When assessment tasks lack cultural relevance, teachers may unintentionally misinterpret learners' true language abilities (Arnot et al., 2014). In such contexts, it becomes essential for teachers to adopt inclusive assessment strategies that recognize learners' diverse experiences and ensure that all students are assessed on an equal footing (Sykes & Wilson, 2015; The Bell Foundation, 2024). These challenges do not only affect how teachers assess, but also shape how ELLs develop key areas of language proficiency, such as language skills (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening), vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and intercultural competence in diverse classrooms. Despite these growing concerns, there is a dearth of studies about how CBLA

directly affects ELLs themselves, especially in terms of its impact on their language development. Since ELLs are the primary recipients of these assessment outcomes, their voices are essential to understand how CBLA shapes their learning experience and language growth.

To address this gap, the present study conducts a scoping review to examine how CBLA impacts ELLs' language proficiency. A scoping review design is chosen to systematically map the breadth, scope, and characteristics of research on CBLA, aiming to clarify concepts, synthesize existing evidence, and highlight knowledge gaps (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Peters et al., 2021). This method is particularly useful for emerging, complex, or interdisciplinary topics and often lays the groundwork for subsequent, more targeted systematic reviews (Munn et al., 2018). Since CBLA is a rather recent implementation in languages classroom and involves multifaceted, cross-disciplinary aspects, a scoping review is conducted in this study.

This review focuses on studies published between 2011 and 2024 involving ELLs from preschool to tertiary education, across both ESL and EFL contexts. It specifically maps research on the impact of CBLA in three key areas of learner outcomes: 1) language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), 2) vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and 3) intercultural competence. By identifying what is currently known and where the gaps remain, this review aims to provide practical insights for educators and policymakers in shaping more inclusive and effective CBLA practices.

## **Methodology**

The current review paper followed the framework by Arksey and O'Malley (2005). The significance of the framework lies in its ability to provide clarity and rigour to the scoping review process. By outlining specific stages, researchers can systematically explore the breadth of a topic, which is particularly valuable in fields where literature is vast and diverse, hence it is often employed to identify gaps for future research (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). A rigorous scoping review methodology was employed in the present study. Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework delineates five key stages essential for the execution of a scoping review: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) selecting studies for inclusion, (4) charting the data, and (5) summarising and reporting the results. These stages were meticulously applied as follow:

### **Identifying the Research Questions**

The research questions served as the starting point for delineating the parameters of the study, and concepts contained in the research question were

defined to clarify the focus of the study (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The following research question was the starting point for defining the framework and the objective of this study: What are the impacts of CBLA on ELLs' language proficiency (language skills, grammar and vocabulary knowledge, and intercultural competence)? facilitated the study to encompass a broad definition of CBLA on ELLs, allowing articles focused on language proficiency, language skills and/or mutually vocabulary and grammar knowledge to be included. The focus of this review was on ELLs, ranging from elementary to tertiary level of education.

## Identifying the Relevant Studies

As indicated in Table 1, Scopus and Web of Science were used as the main databases to retrieve literature because they provide high quality journal articles, thus research data were claimed to be more trustworthy and reliable for review. Meanwhile, other databases such as ERIC and JSTOR were also used to mine relevant literature. They are among the largest open-access education databases, which might contribute some relevant articles to this scoping review. The following search terms were created using Boolean operators to capture a broad spectrum of relevant studies:

1. "Classroom-based assessment OR formative assessment AND English OR ESL OR EFL"
2. "Classroom-based assessment OR formative assessment AND learners"
3. "Classroom-based assessment OR formative assessment AND proficiency"
4. "Classroom-based assessment OR formative assessment AND vocabulary AND grammar"
5. "Classroom-based assessment OR formative assessment AND multicultural"

**Table 1**

### *Summary of the Searches*

Search Terms	Database	Search Results
Classroom-based assessment OR formative assessment AND English OR ESL OR EFL	WOS	16,499
	Scopus	122
	ERIC	10,704
	JSTOR	44,297
	WOS	11,491

Classroom-based assessment OR	Scopus	61
formative assessment AND English OR	ERIC	288
ESL OR EFL AND learners	JSTOR	1,747
Classroom-based assessment OR	WOS	10,022
formative assessment AND English OR	Scopus	22
ESL OR EFL AND proficiency	ERIC	139
	JSTOR	1,302
Classroom-based assessment OR	WOS	9,417
formative assessment AND English OR	Scopus	10
ESL OR EFL AND vocabulary AND	ERIC	5
grammar	JSTOR	720
Classroom-based assessment OR	WOS	9,450
formative assessment AND English OR	Scopus	29
ESL OR EFL AND multicultural	ERIC	14
	JSTOR	523

### Selecting Studies: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Using the Boolean operators as the strategy, a record of 116,862 articles were yielded as indicated in Figure 1. At this stage, no filters or deduplication were applied. The number represents the total raw results across the four databases. The distribution of search results per database and term is shown in Table 1. To narrow the scope, a limiter for accessible full-text articles was applied across all databases, followed by deduplication using Endnote. This reduced the number of articles to 63,836. Waffenschmidt et al. (2019) advocated that retrieved articles must be screened at two levels: 1) title and abstract screening and 2) full-text screening. To abide by this recommendation, titles and abstract screening of the identified articles were performed by applying subject filters within respective database. These filters were applied to ensure relevance to the fields of education, linguistics, and language learning:

1. Web of Science: “Linguistics”, “Educational Research”, “Cultural Studies”
2. Scopus: “Social Sciences”, “Arts and Humanities”
3. ERIC: “English as a Second Language”, “English as a Foreign Language”, “Language Proficiency” and “Second Language Learning”
4. JSTOR: “Linguistics,” “Education,” and “Cultural Studies”

These resulted in an exclusion of 52,298 records, with 11,538 articles remaining for full-text assessment. The following level employed was the

screening of the full text articles. At this stage, studies were assessed using the following inclusion criteria:

1. Studies were published between 2011 and 2024
2. The study focused on classroom-based or formative assessment in the context of English language learning from early childhood to tertiary level
3. The study addressed at least one of the following impacts: language skills development, grammar and vocabulary knowledge or intercultural competence

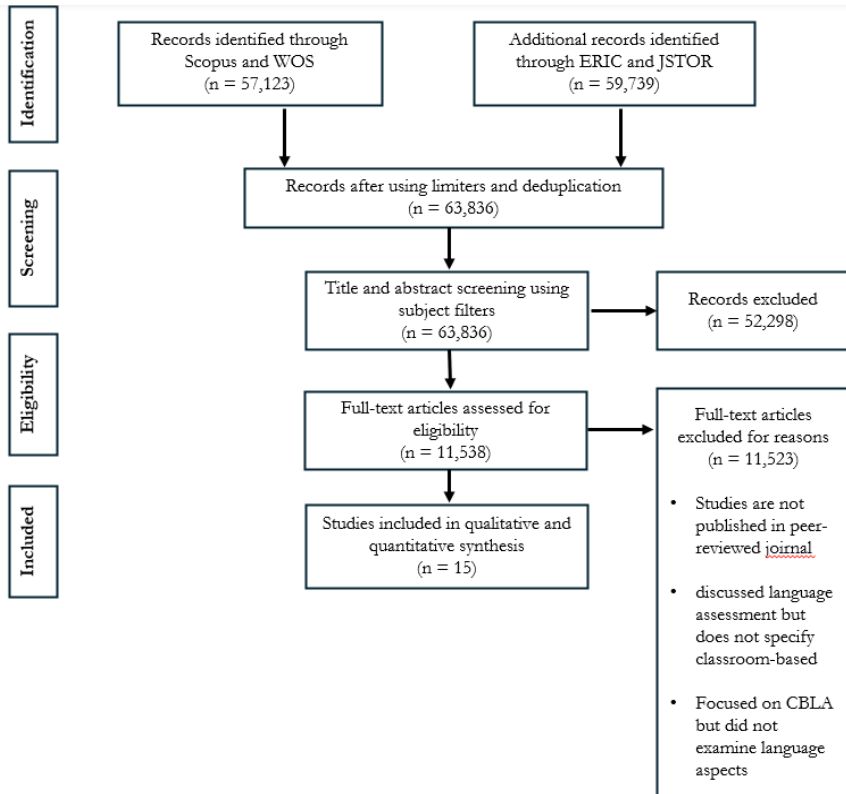
Studies were excluded if they:

1. were not published in a peer-reviewed journal
2. discussed language assessment without specifying classroom-based
3. focused on CBLA but did not examine language aspects

Following this process, a final total of 15 studies were included in the synthesis. The full selection process is illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram in Figure 1. Two independent reviewers conducted the screening process at each stage. After applying the criteria, only 15 articles were included in the current review. Figure 1 stipulates a concise study selection process using PRISMA flow diagram as suggested by Moher et al. (2010).

## Figure 1

*PRISMA Flow Diagram (Moher et al., 2010)*



## Charting the Data

Data from each included study were systematically extracted and organized using a structured charting form. The variables recorded included author(s), year of publication, study location, research design, sample characteristics, database source, and main findings. This allowed for descriptive comparison and transparency in reporting. Then, the findings from each study were sorted into three deductively defined domains based on the conceptual focus of this review:

1. Language skills which cover reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
2. Vocabulary and grammar knowledge which address lexical range and grammatical control
3. Intercultural competence which relates to the ELLs' ability to communicate and interact across cultural contexts

This categorization was based on an a priori framework developed from the review's objectives and refined through preliminary reading of the included studies. The assignment of studies into these domains helped clarify



the specific ways CBLA impacts ELLs' English language proficiency. A summary of all included studies, along with their characteristics and associated impact domains, is presented in Table 2 under the Results section. As is standard in scoping reviews, no formal quality appraisal of the included studies was conducted. This is consistent with methodological guidance provided by Pham et al. (2014), Daudt et al. (2013) and Tricco et al. (2018), who explain that the goal of a scoping review is to map the extent, range, and nature of research, rather than assess the quality of individual studies.

## Summarising and Reporting the Results

Results were synthesized to highlight trends, relationships, and gaps identified across the 15 studies. A narrative summary complemented by tabulation was provided to present a structured overview of CBLA impacts on ELLs' language proficiency. A PRISMA flow diagram was created to visually illustrate the article selection process, clearly displaying each step of inclusion and exclusion, from the initial search to the final 15 articles included in this review. The findings were synthesised to stipulate a comprehensive overview of the impact of CBLA on ELLs' language development. The findings highlight trends, insights, and gaps in the present research. The summarised findings served as a basis for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to understand the implications of CBLA for ELLs.

## Results

A total of 15 journal articles discussing impacts of CBLA on ELLs' language proficiency were selected. The impacts on language proficiency were categorised into three primary domains reflecting the different areas of proficiency: (i) language skills; (ii) vocabulary and grammar knowledge; and (iii) intercultural competence. These categories illustrate the breadth of the influence of CBLA on ELLs' proficiency. Table 2 summarises all 15 studies according to the year of publication, country, research design and sample, key findings, database of retrieved articles and the dominant domain of impact. The studies were predominantly from Asian (Malaysia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Iran, Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon) and Western countries (United States, Finland, United Kingdom, and Morocco). Of the 15 studies that were scrutinized, 7 (46.7%) related to teachers' perceptions. There were 4 (26.7%) related solely to ELLs. 1 (6.7%) study involved both ELLs and teachers' opinions, while another 1 (6.7%) study explored views from ELLs, teachers and parents. Remaining 2 (13.3%) studies were focused on experts' views and theory-based respectively.

Studies on the impact of CBLA mainly reported its effects on language skills, describing how CBLA influences ELLs' language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. These studies described how their respondents developed their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through CBLA within the classroom teaching and learning of English language. 3 studies emphasised on the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Courtney & Graham, 2019; Pan, 2020; Yazidi, 2023), 2 were on reading skill (Lalani & Rodrigues, 2012; Buckley et al., 2017), and the remaining were on speaking (Farmasari, 2022) and writing (Khairallah & Adra, 2017) skills respectively. These made up to a sum of (46.7%) studies examining this aspect of language skills impact among ELLs from various countries, particularly in developed and developing economies. Of these, 4 (26.7%) were of qualitative nature (Lalani & Rodrigues, 2012; Farmasari, 2022; Khairallah & Adra, 2017; Yazidi, 2023), 2 (13.3%) were quantitative (Buckley et al., 2017; Pan, 2020) and 1 (6.7%) was mixed method (Courtney & Graham, 2019).

The findings were derived through surveys and interviews with different stakeholders including ELLs, teachers, and parents on their perspectives of language assessment in the classroom setting. The studies also reported reactions of ELLs towards formative and summative assessments, with 2 (13.3%) articles examining teachers' assessment practices (Lalani & Rodrigues, 2012; Courtney & Graham, 2019).

Vocabulary and grammar impact describes how CBLA influences ELLs' language proficiency from the aspect of lexicon and syntax knowledge. 5 (33.3%) studies were found on the vocabulary and grammar impact, which stood the second most studies identified in this scoping review. Overall, 2 (13.3%) of them were quantitative in nature (Sartaj et al., 2019; Yassin & Abugohar, 2022), 2 (13.3%) were of mixed-method (Saito & Inoi, 2017; Härmälä, 2023) and 1 (6.7%) was qualitative in nature (Nimehchisalem et al., 2023) respectively as displayed in Table 2. The total of six studies that discussed this aspect were from Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Finland. Findings of these studies were collected from stakeholders including parents, teachers and ELLs.

Compared to vocabulary and grammar impact, less studies on intercultural competence impact were found. Intercultural competence is about how well ELLs can perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself, and CBLA plays a big part in helping ELLs develop this skill. 2 (13.3%) of these studies (Kazemian et al., 2023; Tian et al., 2023), from developing countries, used a mix of methods to explore this impact (Table 2). These studies occurred in Iran, Vietnam and the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, only 1 (6.7%) study is of theoretical discussion by Sin and Isaacs (2023).

**Table 2***Summary of Information from the Selected Articles*

No.	Author, Year & Location	Research Design & Sample	Database & Main Findings	Dominant Domains
1	Lalani & Rodrigues (2012)  Pakistan	Qualitative  n=1 (Early year teacher)	<b>ERIC:</b> The teacher used assessment information to enable ELLs to work on their weak areas of reading, however, she thought that practices are more effective than assessment.	Language skill - reading
2	Buckley et al. (2017)  United States	Quantitative  n=79 (middle school teachers)  n=3375 (middle school students)	<b>WOS:</b> Implementation Validity Checklist - Revised (IVC-R) helps educators to refine their methods in Collaborative Strategic Reading for the enhancement of ELLs' reading skills.	Language skill - reading
3	Courtney & Graham (2019)  United Kingdom	Mixed method  n = 3,437 (young language learners from 4 countries)	<b>Scopus:</b> Game-based CBLA increases engagement and multimodal skill practice, but voice-recognition limits speaking assessment Scopus	Language skill - listening, reading, writing
4	Pan (2020)  Taiwan	Quantitative  n = 107 (undergraduate students)	<b>Scopus:</b> High proficiency ELLs prefer summative assessments as they can learn more in vocabulary and grammar during the preparation prior to the exam. Low proficiency students believe formative assessments enhance their motivation to learn English for listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.	Language skills - listening, speaking, reading, writing

5	Khairallah & Adra (2022)  Lebanon	Qualitative  n = 5 (tertiary students)	<b>WOS:</b> Co-constructed rubrics foster learner agency and clearer success criteria in L2 writing	Language skill - writing
6	Farmasari (2022)  Indonesia	Qualitative n=4  (primary school English language teachers)	<b>Scopus:</b> CBLA promotes peer scaffolding between More Proficient Students (MPS) and Low Proficient Students (LPS) to enhance ELLs listening and speaking skills effectively via sociocultural mediation.	Language skill - listening and speaking
7	Yazidi (2023)  Morocco	Qualitative  n = 5 (high school English language teachers)	<b>ERIC:</b> Formative engagement empowers ELLs to self-identify strengths and weaknesses and tailor strategies across all four skills.	Language skill - listening, speaking, reading, writing
8	Sartaj et al. (2019)  Pakistan	Quantitative  n = 20 (ESL teachers of higher education institutes)	<b>Scopus:</b> Ongoing teacher feedback loops accelerate vocabulary growth and grammar self-correction among ELLs.	Vocabulary and grammar
9	Saito & Inoi (2017)  Japan	Mixed method  n = 727 (junior and high school teachers)	<b>Scopus:</b> Formative feedback on lexico grammar accuracy promotes ELLs' communicative competence.	Vocabulary and grammar
10	Nimehchisalem et al. (2023)  Malaysia	Qualitative  n = 18 (9 young learners, 4 teachers and 5 parents)	<b>WOS:</b> Young ELLs prefer immediate formative feedback for lexico grammar; summative tasks yield broader skill gains	Vocabulary and grammar
11	Yassin & Abugohar (2022)  Saudi Arabia	Quantitative  n = 598 (undergraduate students)	<b>Scopus:</b> Mobile-assisted CBLA boosts lexico grammar in lower proficiency ELLs but lacks depth for advanced ELLs.	Vocabulary and grammar

12	Härmälä (2023)  Finland	Mixed method n = 338  (Finnish compulsory school language teachers)	<b>Scopus:</b> Frequent formative feedback among most Finnish teachers increased ELLs' grammar and vocabulary knowledge.	Vocabulary and grammar
13	Kazemian et al. (2023)  Iran	Mixed method n = 32 (language assessment experts)	<b>Scopus:</b> Culturally embedded formative tasks enhance ELLs' intercultural dialogues and linguistic confidence.	Intercultural competence
14	Tian at al. (2023)  Vietnam	Mixed method n = 63  (Vietnamese university EFL teachers)	<b>Scopus:</b> Confucianist assessment values constrain intercultural engagement, illustrating cultural beliefs as a boundary condition.	Intercultural competence
15	Sin & Isaacs (2023)  Location not stated	Not stated	<b>WOS:</b> Theoretically, Ecological CBLA framework highlights classroom environment and sociocultural influences as drivers of inclusive assessment.	Intercultural competence

## Discussion

This scoping review synthesized findings across 15 selected studies to understand the impact of CBLA on ELLs' language proficiency. Three primary themes emerged: (1) language skills, (2) grammar and vocabulary knowledge, and (3) intercultural competence. Each theme provides insights into the efficacy and challenges of CBLA in diverse educational contexts.

### Impact on ELLs' Language Skills

Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory views assessment as a social process where learning occurs through interaction. In line with this approach, CBLA embeds assessment into daily instruction to foster ELLs' language development. However, its effects are not uniform. The impact of CBLA varies across ELLs' proficiency levels, the specific skill (listening, speaking, reading, or writing), and the classroom context.

First, ELLs with different levels of proficiency indicate discrete responses to CBLA. Pan (2020) conducted a qualitative study involving 107 participants and discovered that high-proficiency ELLs among the undergraduates preferred summative-oriented CBLA tasks as it allowed them consolidate their grammar and vocabulary knowledge in exam preparations. In contrast, low-proficiency ELLs favoured formative tasks due to better reflection of real-world use of English and opportunities to develop overall four language skills. These findings suggest the need to align CBLA practices with ELLs' existing language abilities because a one-size-fits-all approach may cause some ELLs underserved. Karami et al. (2024) further supported this via the emphasis on differentiated assessment strategies to avoid marginalizing less proficient ELLs (Karami et al., 2023). When considered alongside with findings from Yazidi (2023) that formative nature of CBLA enhances ELLs' productive and receptive skills through identifying strengths and weaknesses and altering strategies, it becomes clear that lower proficiency ELLs particularly gain the most from formative tasks.

While both Pan (2020) and Yazidi (2023) emphasized balanced impact of CBLA on ELLs' all language skills development, other researchers argued that CBLA is more effective when targeting on specific skills. In reading, the effectiveness of CBLA lies in the repeated practices and feedback offered to ELLs. For instance, Lalani and Rodrigues (2012) demonstrated that repeated readings, timing tasks, and tracking errors helped ELLs shift from decoding to comprehension. To further complement these efforts, Buckley et al. (2017) also proposed the need for consistency in implementation by introducing the Implementation Validity Checklist-Revised (IVC-R) tool to support assessors in monitoring reading progress reliably. Although IVC-R is said to be a reliable reading assessment tool, the practical use of it is yet to be established in a typical classroom setting. This is because the IVC-R has not been widely tested among different teachers where time, resources and teacher-training could be their hindrances. Looking at the big CBLA really comes into its own when we zoom in on a particular skill like reading. This contrasts with the claims made by Pan (2020) and Yazidi (2023) and highlights the importance of balancing general skill development with focused, skill-specific strategies.

Meanwhile, in writing, the development of writing skill benefits from CBLA practices that include rubric negotiation and co-construction of assessment criteria. Khairallah and Adra (2022) found that when ELLs engaged in defining success criteria, they gained a clearer understanding of expectations and greater control over their writing outcomes. By co-constructing rubrics, ELLs exercise agency over their learning goals and develop crucial assessment literacy, which, in turn, they learn not just to perform, but to understand and critique the criteria that they are assessed

(Andrade & Du, 2007). This process increased ELLs' sense of ownership and improved writing performance (Zhao & Zhao, 2023). However, such practices are challenging to apply in large classrooms or for teachers unfamiliar with CBLA. Limited time and resources often lead educators to default to simpler methods, which may not capture the complexity of language learning (Tsagari, 2016).

On the other hand, CBLA's role becomes more complex when technology is involved. Courtney and Graham (2019) observed that game-based assessment tasks stimulated ELLs' engagement and supported listening, reading and speaking skills. Although the incorporation of technological use is effective in language development, it may not be the most persuasive approach in the implementation of CBLA. Overlooking technological barriers such as inaccurate voice recognition and limited access to digital tools may restrict the effectiveness of these technological tools, particularly in schools with under-resourced settings (Ibache, 2019; Shadiev et al., 2019; Sun, 2023). These inequities call for the need of considering digital access in assessment practices to achieve educational equity, particularly for ELLs from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Selwyn, 2016).

In context where digital issues undermine CBLA, peer learning offers an effective sociocultural alternative to enhance listening and speaking skills among ELLs. For instance, Farmasari (2022) showed that More Proficient Students (MPS) assisted Less Proficient Students (LPS) in structured assessment tasks, providing real-time modeling that aligned with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. Although peer-scaffolding fosters learner autonomy, it also demands careful teacher assessment literacy to ensure equitable learning experiences, especially in large classrooms with ELLs of diverse proficiency levels (Dooley & Bamford, 2018).

## **Impact on ELLs' Grammar and Vocabulary Knowledge**

Findings also deduced that CBLA impacted ELLs' grammar and vocabulary knowledge development. Through the emphasis on ongoing feedback, it allows ELLs correct grammatical and lexical errors and improve their understanding in the language structure (Saito & Inoi, 2017; Sartaj et al., 2019). However, this is only effective to a certain extent, depending on the ELLs' age and proficiency level. While young ELLs favour formative assessment methods such as short presentations, quizzes and peer review, inconsistent feedback practices often became the challenges of CBLA in developing grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Härmälä, 2023; Nimehchisalem et al., 2023). Teachers offered only cursory corrections and the delayed feedback often left the ELLs unsure of how to proceed. Meanwhile, the scenario is totally opposite for tertiary ELLs who prioritizes summative over formative

assessment because they believe they learn more through self-preparation before examination without relying on the teacher (Pan, 2020). At this point, it is evident that there are teachers who lack assessment literacy. Without proper training in formative assessment techniques, teachers may find it struggling to deliver high quality feedback (Berisha et al., 2023).

Furthermore, while learning grammar and vocabulary could be challenging and mundane, CBLA is impactful through the incorporation of digital quiz platforms such as Kahoot and Quizizz for more engaging and motivating practices among the ELLs (Yassin & Abugohar, 2022). This encourages learning autonomy among ELLs to involve them directly in the assessment process. However, the sustainability of these digital quiz platforms should not be overlooked, for instance, the capability of providing detailed feedback. Kahoot and Quizizz were online quiz platforms which heavily rely on multiple choice questions, and this concerns the limited opportunities for ELLs to reflect critically on grammar and vocabulary learning (Kacatl & Klímová, 2019). A follow-up through teacher-guided CBLA activities such as reviewing error logs or using checklists allow for more in-depth grammar discussions and help advanced ELLs improve their writing (Lau et al., 2024). When ELLs evaluate their own work, they begin to understand the criteria, what and how their language use is assessed, and set meaningful learning goals (Andrade & Du, 2007). This active role also helps shape them in becoming active participants in their own progress rather than passive recipients.

### **Impact on ELL's Intercultural Competence**

Another impact of CBLA is that it can foster intercultural competence when activities are drawn on the funds of knowledge that are carried by the home and community life, such as cultural, linguistic and practical resources that are owned by the ELLs (Moll et al., 1992). By adding funds of knowledge into assessment such as eliciting family narratives or community celebrations, CBLA tasks empower ELLs by linking the learning in the classroom to experience (Kazemian et al., 2023). For example, a teaching unit can direct the ELLs to develop vocabulary lessons using local tradition festivals or marketplace conversations based on home culture (Shrestha, 2016). By doing this, ELLs do not only grow confidence in communicating across cultures, but also engage more deeply by making learning personally relevant.

However, without the right framework to guide implementation, CBLA can replicate linguistic injustice by prioritizing dominant cultural expectations over marginalized views (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020). Over emphasis on summative nature of CBLA may transform intercultural tasks



into superficial “checkbox” exercises rather than genuine and critical reflections (Tian et al. ,2023). Limiting ELLs engage in meaningful dialogue about culture will not only hinder critical, but also perpetuate exclusion among the ELLs (Sin & Isaacs, 2023). These pitfalls indicate areas of weakness in teacher intercultural assessment literacy. Many teachers have not been trained to apply ELLs’ cultural backgrounds in assessments. Instead, they insist on summative assessment and strict grading, which continue to favour dominant cultural norms over all ELLs’ voices (Beljanski & Bukvić, 2020; Jackson, 2011). Without proper training in multicultural teaching and learning strategies such as using ELLs’ funds-of-knowledge teaching and creating awareness-oriented rubric, teachers are in no position to co-design assessments with ELLs or develop tasks that genuinely reflect diverse cultural perspectives (Moll et al., 1992).

Teachers should collaborate with ELLs and their communities to create assessments which draw on ELLs’ own languages and cultural experiences (Banks, 2015). Next, professional development in the area of critical multicultural education and funds-of-knowledge pedagogy trains the teachers to design and conduct the assessment in ways that empower marginalized learners and strengthen their identities (Gay, 2018; Moll et al., 1992). Third, reformation of school and curriculum to allow flexible grading that values ELLs multilingual responses, with constant reflective communities of teachers to provide systemic support to maintain fair and inclusive implementation of CBLA (Byram, 2008)

## **Conclusion**

The present scoping review synthesized findings from 15 selected studies at how CBLA influences ELLs’ development in three areas of proficiency: language skills, grammar and vocabulary knowledge, and intercultural competence. The review demonstrates that the effectiveness of CBLA depends on ELLs’ proficiency, age, targeted skills taught, and classroom settings. That said, the implementation of CBLA does not often guarantee a success. Formative, low-stakes tasks benefit less-proficient ELLs, whereas advanced ELLs gain more from summative, reflective assessments. Culturally responsive tasks and peer scaffolding can enhance intercultural competence, but only when teachers possess adequate assessment and intercultural literacy. If teachers are not well-equipped with assessment literacy, it is possible that CBLA may slip back into a rigid and test-focused model. This could reinforce traditional practices that fail to recognize ELL’s cultural and linguistic strengths. It is also shown that heavy grading loads and emphasis on standardized test results may further discourage teachers from prioritizing individualized and formative feedback for ELLs (Frinsel et al.,

2024). Both policy reforms and teacher training are essential to improve feedback consistency and boost overall language development among ELLs.

Overall, CBLA has great potential to move beyond traditional assessment and support more meaningful learning. To realize its full potential, schools need structured support such as dedicated ongoing professional development in formative assessment techniques, sufficient time for collaborative rubric design, and user-friendly digital platforms for rapid feedback. In sum, this review has shown that CBLA enhances ELLs' language proficiency across the three identified domains: language skills, grammar and vocabulary knowledge, and intercultural competence, which had answered the central research question.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

Principally, this scoping review has brought a different perspective to the impact of CBLA on developing the language proficiency of ELLs. Indeed, CBLA demonstrates positive outcomes in ELLs' language proficiency, but only if it is implemented with attention to ELLs's profile, equity, identity, and teacher capacity. Sustainable theoretical framing and a focus on agency, assessment literacy, and ELLs' identity will guide more inclusive and effective practices. Also, to be comprehensively inclusive, CBLA should offer flexible pathways: 1) implement CBLA at low-stakes, digitally formative and peer-based for younger or less proficient ELLs, 2) more formal and reflective assessments for advanced ELLs, 3) share consistent feedback between teachers with ELLs and their parents and 4) assessment designs which are more culturally responsive and justice-driven. Such efforts can create more consistent and supportive learning environment across ELLs from diverse age groups and contexts.

The current research has also limits. Many studies are of small and localized samples, which majority focus on Asian or Western contexts. Very few explained clearly how the assessments were employed or what long-term impact they had. This makes it difficult to draw broader conclusions or compare across places. Future mixed-method studies should combine observation of classrooms, interviews of teachers and ELLs to develop CBLA models that deliver an inclusive learning environment for ELLs in diverse settings.

### **Acknowledgements**

The present paper is fully funded by the Universiti Malaya Faculty of Languages and Linguistics Research Grant (UMFLLRG) Project Number: UMG012N-2024.

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