

Examining ways Rural Primary Schools' English Teachers Adapt the Imported Textbook Through their own words

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Abstract

English curriculum in Malaysia, aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), has recently incorporated imported textbooks, marking a shift away from locally-developed textbooks. This study sought to explore how English language teachers in rural primary schools utilised the imported textbook in their lessons. Employing a qualitative approach with a Single Case Study design, the research focused on four English teachers in plantation settlement schools in Pahang. Data collection methods included classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis. Thematic analysis, supported by NVivo, was used to analyze the data. This article presents a segment of the overall study, concentrating on the ways these teachers adapted imported textbooks in their English lessons. The key findings reveal that the teachers planned their actions through addition and deletion alongside a few inadvertent actions. These results offer insights into the practical application of imported textbooks by teachers in rural primary schools and shed light on their teaching strategies. Moreover, this study sets the stage for future research in this area, with the hope that the findings will inform stakeholders and contribute to the educational objectives of the country.

Keywords: English Teaching and Learning, Cefr, Imported Textbook, Primary School, Rural Area

Introduction

Background

It is a normality to observe the existence of a textbook or guidebook in an English language classroom. This is no different in Malaysia's primary school as the provided textbook by Malaysia's Ministry of Education (MOE) is of a high reference status. Mat Hussin et al. (2016) stress that textbooks' usage is obligatory in Malaysia's public schools as textbooks are fully-funded by the government and billions of Ringgits has been allocated to support the free

textbook initiative. In the context of English language teaching, the ministry's commendable effort to ensure all pupils in public schools have standardised English textbooks has prepared pupils a well-equipped material environment. Thus, ensuring a homogenous English learning throughout the nation. It could also be theorised that different layers of backgrounds in Malaysian public school system, especially the national primary schools' pupils are equally treated especially in terms of their locality (rural versus urban) and income (high income earners versus low income earners) by having a standardised textbook system.

In an English language classroom, it is customary to find a textbook or guidebook. This practice is also observed in Malaysia's primary schools, where the textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education (MOE) hold its prominence. Mat Hussin et al. (2016) emphasize the mandatory use of textbooks in public schools in Malaysia, as they are fully funded by the government with billions of Ringgits allocated to support the free textbook initiative. The Ministry's commendable efforts in ensuring that all pupils in public schools have standardized English textbooks have created a well-equipped material environment for students. This initiative guarantees a consistent English learning experience across the nation. It can also be argued that the standardized textbook system in Malaysian public schools, particularly in national primary schools, ensures equal treatment for students from different backgrounds, including those from rural and urban areas, as well as high and low-income families.

Therefore, the implementation of standardized textbooks in Malaysia ensures that all Malaysian children and pupils have an equal opportunity to learn English. This is crucial considering the enduring significance of the English language, which has been deeply ingrained in the country's history for decades. The teaching and learning of English in Malaysia can be traced back to the pre-independence era, and it has continued to be a prominent aspect of education till present times. This can be attributed to the colonial period when various imperial powers had an influence on Malaysia, which was then known as Malaya, before its merger with Sabah and Sarawak in 1963. The demand for English language education has persisted throughout the century, particularly at the beginning of the 20th century when English was seen as a pathway to employment opportunities (Mohd Sidek & Wahi, 2018). Furthermore, Dumanig, David and Symaco (2012) outline that the demand for English has been further amplified by internationalization, cross-border education, and the need for technical proficiency in the era of globalization.

Due to globalisation, MOE has CEFR being aligned into its English curriculum. CEFR is widely recognized as a global benchmark for international standards, alignment, and calibration (MOE, 2018). In order to align with CEFR, the local textbooks have been replaced with imported textbooks that are in line with CEFR standards. To start, these imported textbooks were introduced for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils for the 2018 academic year. The decision to change the textbooks was based on the fact that the local Malaysian material developers failed to produce materials that were aligned with the CEFR standards (MOE, 2018; Johar & Abdul Aziz, 2019). Currently, the use of imported English textbooks has completely replaced locally-published English textbooks in primary school English classrooms. However, this change in textbook choice has inevitably led to issues and potential complications for students, parents, teachers, and the entire English language teaching and learning ecosystem. Despite the reasons given for implementing this change, it is inevitable that there will be

repercussions that need to be addressed in order to either sustain or abolish this initiative, particularly for English teachers who are the main implementers of the curriculum.

Purpose

The main pur

pose of this research is to address the previously mentioned issue by closely examining how teachers adapt the imported textbook in an actual classroom setting. The study specifically concentrates on a rural school environment to better understand how teachers incorporate the imported textbook into their teaching practice. By studying how teachers adapt the imported textbook in a selected rural area, this research aims to reveal important insights into their teaching methods, particularly in terms of how they customize the imported textbook to suit their teaching and learning contexts.

Problem statement

This research seeks to tackle an issue identified in the existing literature by investigating the practice of adapting imported textbooks by English language teachers, specifically in rural primary schools. The introduction of imported textbooks represents a significant change in the educational landscape of Malaysia. Despite the favourable attitudes towards imported textbooks among rural primary school teachers, as highlighted by Bayuon and Hashim (2023), the utilization of imported textbooks is beset with challenges such as their foreign context (Johar & Abdul Aziz, 2019; Aripin & Yusoff, 2022), disparities in teacher training (Aziz, Rashid, & Zainudin, 2018), and notably, the preference for local textbooks over imported ones like Super Minds for Year 1 students, as observed by Katawazai et al. (2022). This preference is echoed at the secondary school level, where reports indicate that the imported secondary textbook (Pulse 2) is not suitable for learners, particularly those with lower proficiency levels and those in rural settings (Johar & Aziz, 2019; Shak et al., 2021). This discrepancy is attributed to secondary school teachers' insufficient understanding of CEFR implementation, leading to additional challenges and complexities in developing instructional materials based on imported textbooks (Uri, 2023).

Given the various factors at play, the compulsory use status of imported textbooks adds another layer of complexity to the situation. It is unrealistic to assume teachers can simply adhere to these materials without showcasing creativity and expertise in customizing them to cater to the specific needs of their pupils. It is crucial to emphasize that a textbook is always the centre of attention, as its efficacy hinges on how effectively it is employed by a proficient teacher (Aziz, 2017). A textbooks functions as a resource and is integrated by English teachers in their teaching practice. Teachers play a pivotal role in facilitating the content of the textbook and delivering it to pupils in an actual classroom setting. To some extent, pupils depend on teachers to interpret the textbook, particularly when their exposure to English is confined to the classroom walls. Teachers often encounter obstacles in adopting the standardized textbook to address the varied requirements of their pupils, especially in cases where pupils exclusively receive English instruction at school, particularly in rural areas. The adaptation of materials is paramount, especially when a novel and foreign learning resource is adopted and anticipated to be incorporated into everyday English lessons.

Study Objective

The Study Aims to Achieve the Following Objective:

- 1) To Examine Ways The Imported Textbook Is Adapted By Rural Primary School Teachers In Their English Lessons.

Literature Review

Textbooks play a crucial role in Malaysia's education system, as they are highly valued and serve as the main point of reference in English classrooms. MOE mandates the use of provided textbooks, which limits teachers' autonomy in selecting materials (Zakaria & Koay, 2013). As a result, teachers are compelled to develop their own practices to complement the textbooks (Ng, 2010). The effectiveness of these practices, whether positive or negative, has a significant impact on students' English learning outcomes (Zakaria & Koay, 2013). However, the inflexibility of textbook activities and materials can be constraining, leading teachers to question their usefulness (Newton, 2015). In Malaysia, local textbooks have faced criticism for their limited task-based activities and discrepancies between learner levels and syllabus requirements (Wan Musa, 2015). Moreover, challenges such as the shortage of qualified English teachers and large class sizes hinder the implementation of necessary changes (Lamie, 2005). Overall, while textbooks hold a prominent position in Malaysia's education system, there are concerns about their limitations and compatibility with students' needs and syllabus requirements. These issues, combined with practical constraints, emphasize the importance of teachers' role in adapting and supplementing textbook materials to ensure effective English language learning.

In spite of the problematic aspects found in the local textbook, including the absence of a connection between the curriculum and the real world (Mohd Sidek et al., 2014; Kumaran, 2010; Newton, 2015; Mohd Sidek, 2014 & Kai, Ismail & Abidin, 2018), deficiencies in vocabulary (Mat Hussin, 2016), its restrictive nature (Hooi & Knight, 2015), the mismatch between content and learners' proficiency level (Hassan & Selamat, 2002), and the overall lack of appeal (Ng, 2010), the imported textbook may not be an ideal choice for a typical Malaysian English lesson. This is particularly evident when considering its suitability to the Malaysian English education context and the level of support it offers in terms of learning materials. A designated textbook must be tailored to the unique and ethnically diverse characteristics of Malaysians (Mihat, 2015). However, the incorporation of foreign elements into the textbook has been shown to be expensive and has sparked concerns regarding its alignment with the Malaysian cultural context (Johar & Abdul Aziz, 2019; Aripin & Yusoff, 2022). Moreover, there have been reports indicating that teachers lack comprehension, training, and proficiency (Uri, 2023; Yasin & Yamat, 2021; Aziz, Rashid, & Zainudin, 2018), as well as knowledge, awareness, and exposure to CEFR (Uri & Abd Aziz, 2018). Despite the requirement to utilise the imported textbook (Zakaria & Koay, 2013) and the positive attitudes towards it (Bayuong & Hashim, 2023), teachers are left to decide independently whether or not to incorporate it into their daily teaching and learning practice. Furthermore, the imported textbook is considered inadequate for addressing the needs of low proficiency learners, specifically in rural areas (Johar & Aziz, 2019; Shak et al., 2021). Given these factors, teachers face a significant decision in order to effectively utilize the imported textbook to meet the needs of their students and the context in which they operate. Should they opt to continue using the imported textbook, it is crucial for them to modify it accordingly.

In terms of the concept of adapting the imported textbook, it is accustomed as MOE has incorporated a framework for adapting imported textbooks, which was developed by

McDonough and Shaw (2003), into the 'Learning Material Adaptation' course in 2017. This was done prior to the implementation of imported textbooks in Year 1 and 2 in 2018 (MOE, 2017). The course consisted of four training sessions: 'Familiarisation', 'Learning Material Adaptation', 'Curriculum Induction', and 'Item Writing and Formative Assessment' (Abdul Hakim Ali Abdul Aziz, Radzuwan Ab Rashid & Wan Zhafirah Wan Zainudin, 2018). English teachers were selected and underwent a five-day training course at the national and state levels to become trainers. These trainers then conducted the material adaptation course at the district level, where representatives from each school attended. The knowledge gained from the course was later applied in their respective schools, particularly in utilizing the teachers' guide and Scheme of Work (SOW). McDonough and Shaw (2003) proposed five main techniques for adapting materials, which include adding, deleting, modifying, simplifying, and reordering. While there may be numerous ways in which teachers can use the imported textbook, it is noteworthy to closely observe how they actually use it within the research context of this study. As teachers are obligated to use the textbook in this context, it is plausible that they may incorporate some of the adapting techniques suggested by McDonough and Shaw (2003) as Shak et al. (2021) and Sandhakumarin and Tan (2023) highlight the preference for local modifications in order to effectively utilise the imported textbook. Given the qualitative nature of this study, it is likely that teachers may employ different adapting techniques, thereby expanding the range of techniques based on the research context. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the ways in which the imported textbook is being adapted.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach that focused on a Single Case Study design in order to investigate the ways the imported textbook is adapted in two rural primary schools situated in oil palm plantation settlements at Jengka, Pahang. Two English teachers from each school were purposefully selected based on specific criteria, such as their teaching background, experience in teaching English (particularly in attending imported textbook training) and in using the imported textbooks. Additionally, the selected schools had a commendable track record in terms of their pupils' English literacy rate as assessed according to a national-level assessment. Prior to their participation in the study, all four teachers were contacted and provided their consent after the study had received approval from the relevant authorities. To protect their identities, the teachers were assigned labels as S1, S2, S3, and S4. The primary data collection technique for this study was teacher interviews, which formed a crucial part of the overall research alongside classroom observations and document analysis for the main study. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the collected data, resulting in the identification of codes, sub-categories, categories, and themes using Saldana's (2013) coding cycle, with the assistance of NVivo as a data management tool. Several measures were implemented to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, including the use of triangulation, member checks, and external audits. Ethical standards were upheld by obtaining formal authorization for the research and ensuring the confidentiality of participants' information.

Findings

After completing the data analysis, it is important to note that this research has exceeded expectations by uncovering more information than anticipated. By examining the five main adaptation strategies outlined in the Adaptation Framework by McDonough & Shaw (2003) -

namely addition, deletion, modification, simplification, and reordering - it was found that the participants utilized various techniques from this framework as well as other methods that go beyond the specified strategies. Through the data analysis, two main themes emerged: planned actions and unintentional actions, each supported by relevant categories. These themes were developed by combining multiple categories, incorporating direct excerpts and findings, thus addressing the main research objective of investigating how the participants engage in textbook adaptation practices.

Planned Actions

Teaching and learning is a complex process that necessitates critical thinking to ensure its effectiveness. The findings of this study align with the adaptation techniques outlined in McDonough and Shaw's Framework of Adaptation (2003), highlighting two categories that revolve around the theme of planned actions by participants based on their use of imported textbooks. This theme emerges from the deliberate intentions and actions of participants as they adapt the imported textbooks, requiring careful consideration before implementation. The identified categories are addition and deletion.

The study indicates that participants predominantly incorporate addition as a key strategy in adapting their imported textbooks for classroom use. Building on the earlier findings related to their use of imported textbooks, participants were observed to introduce a variety of supplementary materials such as internet resources, handouts, and workbooks. Each additional material is thoughtfully integrated alongside the imported textbook, with planning undertaken prior to its inclusion in instructional activities.

Due to the recent surge in technological advancements, it is worth examining the impact on teachers in this study as they adapt imported textbooks. The internet serves as a platform for teachers worldwide to exchange and provide resources for one another to use in their teaching. This phenomenon is also evident in the English language teaching and learning context of this study, where teachers acknowledged incorporating additional materials from resources shared by other English teachers online. During an interview, S2 mentioned accessing 'other resources from Facebook page, from my friends who aah produce English teaching materials' (S2 First Interview Part 1) and expressed that she 'always takes teaching materials uhm supporting teaching materials from the Facebook page' (S2 First Interview Part 1). The Facebook page created by her friend provided a convenient source for downloading materials for her English lessons, which she frequently utilized to supplement the imported textbook. She specifically mentioned visiting 'Teacher Dilla' and an unnamed teacher who served as a 'Master Trainer for CEFR' (S2 First Interview Part 1).

Another participant also encountered a similar situation, where they obtained teaching materials from various websites. For instance, S3 mentioned visiting a website where she referred to 'Miss Ash and Teacher Fiera' for materials (S3 First Interview). These teachers provided her with materials that she found to be 'very useful' (S2 Interview on Lesson 1). She mentioned taking pictures from the website and incorporating them into her lessons, noting that they were highly relevant to the textbook. This highlights the fact that the materials produced by these teachers were able to complement the imported textbook, despite not being created by its publisher. By sharing their teaching materials, these teachers assisted other teachers in the adaptation of the imported textbook by incorporating additional resources.

Interestingly, these participants not only utilised teaching materials shared by other teachers, but also adapted their imported textbook by incorporating content from general websites. S3 expressed a preference of 'stream it from Internet' (S3 First Lesson Interview), especially

when the workbook she added lacked necessary audio. She mentioned obtaining the audio 'from aah YouTube' (S3 Second Third Lesson Interview). S4, on the other hand, mentioned using 'other websites' like 'BlogSpot' (S4 First Interview) to find additional materials, highlighting the importance of searching for specific resources online. It is worth noting that S4 was not the only one who began her daily teaching routine by searching for materials online in the morning before school as S3 too 'when I come to school I used to search for materials' (S3 First Interview). These participants effectively integrated internet resources to modify the imported textbooks according to their pre-planned lessons.

In addition to online resources, these participants incorporated physical handouts into their repertoire of material adaptations. These handouts were not sourced from the internet, as illustrated by S1's statement that he had to 'bought aaa shop, book shop' and that they were 'not provided by the government, by the aaa PPD (district education office)' (S1 Interview on Lesson 1). This indicates that the teacher went to extra lengths to purchase supplementary materials, namely the handouts, in order to adapt the imported textbook. By procuring his own additional materials due to the lack of resources from the MOE or PPD, he demonstrated proactive planning in adapting the textbook. A similar situation arose for S4, who had to 'find the task sheet from other' (S4 First Interview) and instructed her students to 'combine all the exercises in both books,' resulting in them having 'E1, E2, an exercise eh workbook' (S4 Lessons Interview). She used a few exercise books for her task sheets or handouts, which were then integrated with the workbook. These non-internet-based handouts or task sheets played a significant role in their approach to adapting the imported textbook. One of the key reasons for their inclusion in their teaching practices was their alignment with the content of the imported textbook. S1 described the handouts as 'It is the same content lah,' emphasizing that they were 'modified from the textbook' and 'not from somewhere else' (S1 Second and Third Lesson Interview). This indicates that the handouts were thoughtfully selected by these participants before being incorporated into their use of the imported textbook.

Interestingly, these handouts or task sheets are not exclusive to the teachers' planned additional materials in their imported textbook use. Two participants who were colleagues added the workbook in their lesson plans and integrated it in their actual observed lessons as reported in the previous section. The use of workbook was a choice of their school as stated by S4, 'my school used the workbook same as a textbook right now' (S4 First Interview) due to its coherence to the imported textbook. S3 reasoned that the workbook 'tally with the textbook' (S3 First Lesson Interview) and it resonated with that participant earlier when she complemented her colleague's thought by saying that 'the topic in the workbook is ahh similar with the textbook' (S4 Lessons Interview). The workbook came as an additional material whereby it did not supersede the imported textbook as it was used 'after they used textbook' (S3 First Lesson Interview) or 'finished all the questions in textbook, then I use workbook' (S4 First Interview). Their workbook use was identical due to its highly-related contents to the imported textbook and this proved to be beneficial to their pupils because 'to enhance' 'ahh if I teach them according to the textbook and then when they do the exercise in the workbook so it's related' (S4 Lessons Interview). The close connection between the imported textbook and the workbook, in which both were produced by a single publisher, not only enhance pupils' learning but it helped to make pupils 'can relate what they have learned in the textbook' (S3 First Lesson Interview). She supplemented that the close distance between both materials made it easier for pupils to use the workbook alongside the imported textbook where 'they can refer the textbook whenever they want to' when they 'do the exercise' (S3 First Lesson Interview).

Interestingly, the handouts or task sheets were not limited to being additional materials planned by teachers for use with imported textbooks. Colleagues, who were also participants, included workbooks in their lesson plans and incorporated them into their observed lessons, as detailed in the preceding section. The decision to use workbooks was made by their school, with S4 noting, 'my school used the workbook same as a textbook right now' (S4 First Interview), due to its alignment with the imported textbook. S3 explained that the workbook 'tally with the textbook' (S3 First Lesson Interview), a sentiment echoed by another participant who remarked, 'the topic in the workbook is ahh similar with the textbook' (S4 Lessons Interview). The workbook served as supplementary material, following the use of the textbook, as indicated by S3 stating, "after they use the textbook" (S3 First Lesson Interview), or 'finished all the questions in textbook, then I use workbook' (S4 First Interview). The consistent use of workbooks was due to their close relationship with the imported textbook, proving beneficial for students as it helped to reinforce their learning. S4 highlighted this by stating, 'to enhance' 'ahh if I teach them according to the textbook and then when they do the exercise in the workbook so it's related' (S4 Lessons Interview). The strong connection between the imported textbook and the workbook, both from the same publisher, not only enhanced students' learning but also enabled them to apply what they had learned. S3 emphasized that pupils 'can relate what they have learned in the textbook' (S3 First Lesson Interview), so that 'they can refer the textbook whenever they want to' when they 'do the exercise' (S3 First Lesson Interview). It has been noted that these participants incorporated additional physical resources, such as task sheets, handouts, and even an entire book as a workbook, into their use of imported textbooks. This was done as part of their deliberate efforts to adapt the imported textbook to their teaching methods.

While the majority of the participants' planned actions in modifying the imported textbook revolve around incorporating additional elements, it is important to acknowledge that they also made deliberate deletions from the original content. The act of deleting certain materials proved to be a crucial technique in adapting the textbook, as it served as a counterpart to the process of adding materials. Content deletion became necessary when the teachers encountered difficulties while using the imported textbook. For instance, they removed exercises and sought alternative exercises from external sources, which were not included in the provided textbook package. S1 acknowledged that "the outcome is better if I use the exercise from this book, not the exercise from the textbook" (S1 Interview on Lesson 1). This approach was evident in S1's classroom, where he distributed worksheets to his pupils intentionally omitting the exercises or activities found in the provided textbook.

He was not the only one who chose to omit certain parts of the imported textbook's content. S2 also mentioned that she 'did not use the pictures from the textbook because uhhh the pictures from the textbook are rather small' (S2 Interview on Lesson 1). Instead, she replaced them with her own set of pictures that she believed all her pupils in the class could see clearly. This was not the only omission she made. S2 also 'think it would be easy for me if I use the ingredients or the things that they are used to hear' (S2 Second Lesson Interview), rather than the vocabulary provided in the textbook. She felt that using words that the students were used to hearing would make it easier for them to understand. For example, she replaced the words in the original ingredient list with 'maybe the vegetables that are locally-farmed' (S2 Second Lesson Interview) because she believed it would be more relatable to her pupils. S3 also had issues with the vocabulary chosen by the imported textbook. She found out that it is 'quite aah difficult to pronounce, but I'm not sure whether they can still remember the word but for me, I don't think it is' (S3 Second and Third Lesson Interview). These teachers may

have chosen to omit certain parts of the imported textbook's content, such as exercises, pictures, and words, due to the possible challenges they faced in using them effectively.

Inadvertent Actions

The fact that teachers in this study planned their way of adapting the imported textbook proved that it was evident that a lot of thought-processes happened before the actual lessons commenced. Although the actions were not in abundance as their planned actions, this study uncovered another facet of the mechanics of their way of adapting the imported textbook which was their inadvertent verbal assistance to adapt the imported textbook during the observed lessons. These impromptu verbal actions transpired and acted as the imported textbook adapting mechanism. The adapting mechanism can be based on in situ situations such as a S2's need of explanation in her class for teaching a concept. She explained that 'before this I tried to aah to give the question first but then aah when they don't really understand what is it about then they cannot actually aah answer the questions. So, I thought maybe for grammar, I had to explain the concept first' (S2 Second Lesson Interview). The explanation was unplanned action of hers but it came to her as her pupils had difficulties in comprehending the focused grammar aspect. The explanation part was then being repeated as a S1 remarked that 'for their, what you call it, drilling, for them to keep on saying, to keep on reading the names of the animal' (S1 Second Third Lesson Interview). The unplanned actions that were related to providing more verbal language assistance to pupils was extended to the use of translation as being reported in the previous section. S3 explained that she 'have to translate it to Malay' (S3 First Interview) and this was aligned with her colleague's way of just 'translate it' (S3 Second Third Lesson Interview) when she needed to do it in her lessons. She believed that she would use English as her primary language when she taught her lessons as she stated that 'English first then, I translate to Malay after that' (S3 Second Third Lesson Interview).

The evidence of the participants in this study carefully planning their approach to adapting the imported textbook indicates that a significant amount of consideration and deliberation took place prior to the commencement of actual lessons. While the number of actions may not have been abundant as their planned actions, this study revealed an additional aspect of how the participants adapted the imported textbook through inadvertent verbal assistance during the observed lessons. These impromptu verbal actions served as a mechanism for adapting the textbook. This adaptation mechanism was often based on situational factors, such as a student's need for clarification in understanding a concept. S2 explained that 'before this I tried to aah to give the question first but then aah when they don't really understand what is it about then they cannot actually aah answer the questions. So, I thought maybe for grammar, I had to explain the concept first' (S2 Second Lesson Interview). Although unplanned, this explanation was prompted by her students' difficulties in comprehending the grammar aspect. Another participant mentioned that he encouraged his pupils to that 'for their, what you call it, drilling, for them to keep on saying, to keep on reading the names of the animal' (S1 Second Third Lesson Interview). These unplanned actions, aimed at providing additional verbal assistance to their pupils also extended to the use of translation, as mentioned in the previous section. One teacher stated that she 'have to translate it to Malay' (S3 First Interview) and it was echoed by another participant who simply mentioned the need to 'translate it' (S4 Second Third Lesson Interview) during her lessons. Despite intending to primarily use English as the language of instruction, this participant reverberated the fact that 'English first then, I translate to Malay after that' (S3 Second Third Lesson Interview). During the interview, she unequivocally responded with a resounding 'Yes' (S3 First Interview) when

questioned about her pupils' understanding of the material when she incorporated translation into her teaching thus making it a dire need for her to do it.

The inadvertent verbal assistance provided goes beyond than further explanations, repetition, and translation. In the case of S2, she would connect the content she taught to her own experiences by sharing stories and using them to relate to the material in the imported textbook. She mentioned that she 'will try to find uhhh maybe some how to say but unless I tell stories form, stories from what I heard or watched, So I will relate, try to relate for example that aah if I have watched uhm movie from let's say Mexican movie or something, I will tell them and then try to, or the cartoons that I have watched' (S2 First Interview Part 2). By relating the content to her personal stories or experiences, she was able to enhance the implementation of her lessons. When comparing these unintentional verbal actions to planned actions, it becomes evident that the inadvertent assistance provided by the participants sheds more light on how they adapt the imported textbook in their teaching practices. Despite the differences in depth between their planned and inadvertent actions, the unintentional actions of teachers when adapting the textbook in their English lessons play a significant role in understanding how they adapt the imported material. These unintentional actions may be related to the methods teachers use to incorporate the imported textbooks into their lessons and how they adapt them in practice. Overall, whether the participants' actions are planned or spontaneous, they hold equal importance and deserve recognition for the effort they put into adapting the imported textbook.

Discussion

It would be relatively straightforward for English teachers in Malaysia to adopt imported textbooks along with the teachers' guide and SOW. Byrd (2001) emphasizes that teachers heavily rely on textbooks for explanations, examples, and exercises. Shangeetha (2010) reported over a decade ago that a significant number of English teachers still depend on textbooks for teaching. This is consistent with the findings of this study, where participants did not completely disregard the imported textbooks. Elsner (2018) suggests that textbooks can save teachers time by providing a variety of activities and texts. However, this study reveals that participants have partially adapted the imported textbooks to suit their needs, despite it is perceived challenging (Uri, 2023). Thus, local modifications are often preferred by teachers to accommodate the use of imported textbooks as argued by Shak et al. (2021) and Sandhakumarin and Tan (2023). The changes made by the participants were primarily based on the techniques of adding and deleting, as outlined in McDonough and Shaw's Framework of Adaptation (2003). These changes were planned before the lesson, and the participants focused mainly on physical materials such as handouts, task sheets, pictures, and workbooks. They chose to omit exercises, pictures, and words from the imported textbooks in their lessons. This preference for straightforward and clear-cut techniques indicates that the participants did not feel the need to modify, simplify, or reorder the finer content elements of the imported textbook.

The decisions to add or remove elements from the imported textbooks are a result of the thought processes that took place during lesson planning. These decisions are influenced by various factors, shaping the teaching practices of the participants. Williams and Burden (1997) suggest that teachers' beliefs are shaped by their personal values, spatial conceptions, and worldview, leading them to tailor their teaching methods to align with the institutional preferences. Jensen (2001) notes that educators often find it challenging to deviate from their established teaching routines and tend to conform to the teaching methodologies endorsed

by their institutions. The participants' exposure to textbook adaptation techniques during training sessions reinforces their confidence in using the imported textbooks effectively. While it is difficult to completely break away from the theoretical foundations that guide their teaching practices (Broughton et al., 1980), the observed actions of adapting textbooks may not precisely mirror all the techniques proposed by McDonough and Shaw (2003), but key strategies are still evident. Participants may unconsciously modify materials based on their evolving teaching beliefs, honed over their teaching careers. These decisions reflect the choices they have consistently made, particularly in the lead-up to each lesson.

As reiterated before, this study also did not limit itself to the framework of adaptation by McDonough and Shaw (2003). The exploratory nature of this study, another aspect of adaptation made by the participants emerged from the dataset. This refers to the inadvertent actions made during the teaching and learning process. The participants' sensitivity to pupils' responses during the use of imported textbook led to impromptu verbal actions such as further explanations, repetitions/drills, translations and sharing of personal experiences to supplement the imported textbook use in their lessons. Naturally, the participants' actions during lesson will come up as ordinary but upon a closer inspection, the participants' actions have their own grounds. Sidhu, Kaur and Lee (2018) report that there is an element of repetition and questioning in their participants' teaching practice especially in their school-based assessment language activities that they have conducted in classes. Their deliberate actions such as repetition and questioning not only serve as their ways to adapt their imported textbook but these actions are directly-linked to assessment particularly the school-based assessment. It is widely conceptualised that repetition can be attached to the concept of drilling where reoccurrences of a same word or concept take place in a lesson. Drilling is associated repetition and even for questions, the questions are likely to be repeated as the lesson progresses.

As previously mentioned, this study went beyond the framework of adaptation by McDonough and Shaw (2003). The participants in this exploratory study demonstrated a novel approach to adaptation, which involved unintentional actions during the teaching and learning process. The participants' responsiveness to pupils' reactions while using imported textbooks led to spontaneous verbal actions such as providing additional explanations, conducting repetitions/drills, offering translations, and sharing personal experiences to enhance the use of imported textbooks in their lessons. While these actions may seem routine, a closer examination reveals that they were grounded in specific reasons. Sidhu, Kaur, and Lee (2018) observed that their participants often incorporated repetition and questioning into their teaching practices, particularly in school-based assessment language activities. The deliberate use of repetition and questioning by the participants not only facilitated adaptation to imported textbooks but also directly related to assessment, specifically school-based assessment. It is commonly understood that repetition can be likened to drilling, where the same word or concept is repeated throughout a lesson. Repetition is closely linked to drilling, and in the case of questioning, questions are likely to be repeated as the lesson progresses. Pupils' understanding of the language concept being taught is evaluated and assessed through a series of focused repetitions and questions. This formative assessment process is essential for meeting the MOE's requirements for in-class assessments. The unforeseen actions taken by the participants reveal aspects that were not anticipated in their initial plans. Each lesson possesses a distinct dynamic, making it challenging to predict its progression and delivery, necessitating quick thinking from the participants to ensure successful lesson delivery.

Consequently, their spontaneous actions are instrumental in adapting the imported textbook in conjunction with their planned strategies.

In essence, the participants navigate this process by providing additional support through pre-planned materials during the lesson preparation stage. Throughout the lesson, they must rely on their quick thinking and experience to address unexpected teaching scenarios, resulting in actions that go beyond the initial material framework. By implementing these scaffolding strategies, it becomes clear that relying solely on the imported textbook is a limited approach. Instead, participants are encouraged to further enhance the textbook content through extended explanations. These explanations act as a bridge between the textbook and the students in the classroom, facilitating a deeper understanding of the material. The combination of planned and spontaneous actions contributes to the participants' practice of adapting the imported textbook effectively.

Based on the participants' textbook adaptation practices, connections are established to enhance the understanding of their actions. The inclusion of materials and scaffolding-like strategies, as well as the removal of content by all participants, distinguishes their adaptation techniques from other methods such as modification, simplification, and reordering within the specific material framework. The participants' textbook adaptation approaches are relatively straightforward, as they retain most of the imported textbook content but make minimal adjustments compared to the other techniques that require more extensive modifications. It might be tempting to assume that these participants are taking shortcuts by not fully adapting the textbooks, but a closer examination of their actions reveals otherwise. It is important to recognize that these participants are constantly engaged in lesson planning, with daily lesson plans subject to review by school administrators at the end of each teaching week. The process of lesson development is time-consuming, with various factors influencing their decisions. Notably, these participants operate within a centralized system overseen by the Ministry of Education (MOE). In line with the educational norms and practices of Asian nations, structural syllabi, as highlighted by Chung (2005), are integral to the functioning of teachers in Malaysia, with MOE through its divisions providing the framework for curriculum development and teaching materials. Despite Elsner's (2018) emphasis on the benefits of textbooks for teachers in terms of lesson planning and ideas for standardized teaching and learning, they also come with mandated instructions in the form of a Scheme of Work (SOW) that dictates how the lessons should be implemented in schools. SOW not only provides suggested activities for all 160 English lessons in an academic year, but it also determines the order in which the textbook units should be delivered, the content and learning standards for each individual lesson, and the specific section or page number that should be focused on. While SOW allows teachers to customize the delivery of the lessons to some extent, it is rigid in terms of the order of delivery, the chosen standards that determine the specific skills to be taught, and the parts of the imported textbooks that should be emphasized. This imbalance within SOW raises further considerations.

Due to the prevailing circumstances surrounding SOW, participants are constrained in their ability to adapt the imported textbook. They are only able to make modifications to lesson activities and contents that do not deviate significantly from the original imported textbook's core concepts, as highlighted by Aziz, Rashid, and Zainudin (2018). The implementation of reordering as an adaptation technique, such as adjusting the sequence of units or pages in the imported textbook, is deemed unfeasible. Participants are required to adhere to the sequential order of the imported textbook, moving from the initial unit to the final unit. It is important to note that SOW should not be entirely faulted, as it complements the imported

textbook and aligns with Richards' argument that it ensures consistency in individual lessons and the overall learning experience (2014). The lack of flexibility and personalization in textbooks, as discussed by Schmidt and Strasser (2018), becomes evident in the implementation of the imported textbook, directly impacting the participants involved in this study.

Despite the importance of incorporating variations in teacher's guides, textbooks, and teaching methods, Tollefson (2007) argues that there is a lack of such variations. Consequently, teachers are reduced to mere numbers, controlled by the strict authority of the textbooks (Hooi & Knight, 2015). In reality, teachers often find themselves relying on materials handed down to them by the authorities, and it is their responsibility to make the most of these resources (McDonough & Shaw, 2003). This study provides evidence of this phenomenon, as participants resorted to adding and deleting content to supplement the imported textbook. However, it is encouraging to note that despite these limitations, the participants still adhered to the prescribed curriculum and utilized the imported textbook in their teaching, as reported by Aziz, Rashid, and Zainudin (2018).

Apart from SOW and its impact on the participants' utilization of textbooks, it is important to consider that they are also influenced by other factors that can shape their decisions regarding the use of the imported textbooks. Elsner (2018) highlights the significance of adapting materials to meet the individual needs of learners as a characteristic of effective language teachers. Additionally, Richards (2014) suggests that teachers often engage in improvisation with materials, whether through their own initiative or by utilizing the provided textbooks. Despite the predetermined content standards, learning objectives, and specific page references outlined in the SOW, there is still room for enhancement as MOE encourages the development of supplementary materials to complement the prescribed textbooks (Zakaria & Koay, 2013). This provides English teachers in Malaysia with the opportunity to tailor their pupils' English learning experiences to align with the diverse and multicultural nature of Malaysian society (Mihat, 2015). However, the incorporation of foreign elements in textbooks has been a subject of debate, with concerns raised about its relevance to the Malaysian cultural context (Johar & Abdul Aziz, 2019; Aripin & Yusoff, 2022).

Additionally, teachers are reported to lack understanding, training, competency (Uri, 2023; Yasin & Yamat, 2021; Aziz, Rashid, & Zainudin, 2018), knowledge, awareness, and exposure to CEFR (Uri & Abd Aziz, 2018). Despite the obligation to use the imported textbook (Zakaria & Koay, 2013) and positive attitudes towards it (Bayuong & Hashim, 2023), these aforementioned challenges are factors to be considered especially when imported textbook is deemed unsuitable to cater low proficiency learners specifically in rural areas (Johar & Aziz 2019; Shak et al 2021). With these factors are considered, it is a big decision for teachers to make in order to fully utilise the imported textbook to suit their pupils and the context they are in. If they choose to stick to the imported textbook, it is highly imperative for them to adapt the imported textbook accordingly and this study has unveiled their imported textbook's adaptation pattern. Moreover, it is worth to note that teachers lack comprehension, training, expertise (Uri, 2023; Yasin & Yamat, 2021; Aziz, Rashid, & Zainudin, 2018), knowledge, awareness, and exposure to CEFR (Uri & Abd Aziz, 2018). Despite the requirement to use the imported textbook (Zakaria & Koay, 2013) and the positive attitudes towards it (Bayuong & Hashim, 2023), these aforementioned difficulties must be taken into account, particularly when the imported textbook is considered unsuitable for addressing the needs of low proficiency learners, specifically in rural areas (Johar & Aziz 2019; Shak et al 2021). Given these factors, teachers face a significant decision in order to effectively use the

imported textbook to meet the needs of their pupils and the specific context they are in. If they opt to adhere to the imported textbook, it is crucial for them to adapt it accordingly, and this study has revealed the pattern of adaptation employed by teachers for their imported textbooks.

In conclusion, the participants' adaptation of the imported textbook was primarily divided into two categories. The initial category encompassed their deliberate actions, focusing on adding and removing sections of the imported textbook during their English lessons. These adaptation efforts were further supported by the second category, which involved their unintentional actions. While not as overt as their planned adjustments, the participants also spontaneously provided additional explanations in response to specific classroom circumstances. Despite the differences in intention-wise, both categories contributed to the overall process of how the participants adapted the imported textbook.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the nationwide education initiative involving the integration of imported textbooks into CEFR-aligned curriculum necessitates a continuous review process to ensure a seamless implementation. While the concept of 'one size fits all' may be considered trite, it is widely acknowledged that the imported textbooks may not cater to the diverse needs of Malaysian students. Despite the structured nature of education in Malaysia and the dissemination of materials from policymakers, it is commendable to note the teachers' ongoing efforts to customize the imported textbooks to suit their specific contexts and requirements. The dedication of teachers in enhancing their students' English language learning, despite the challenges encountered in utilizing imported textbooks, deserves recognition. The issue of support remains a critical concern that must be addressed at both the school and policymaker levels. It is evident that these teachers will persist in using imported textbooks, having discovered ways to make effective use of them. However, it would be highly advantageous to expand their repertoire of imported textbook usage to enhance the English language teaching and learning experience in their classrooms, with the provision of adequate support in terms of input, manpower, and resources. This study sets the stage for further investigations into the use of imported textbooks in the teaching and learning landscape of Malaysia, ultimately enriching the English learning experience for pupils.

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