

## Exploring Imported Textbook use in Rural Primary Schools' English Lessons

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### Abstract

Malaysia's Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)-aligned curriculum has introduced imported textbooks, thereby signalling the end of locally-developed textbooks. This research aimed to investigate the use of the imported textbook by English language teachers in rural primary schools' English lessons. Adopting a qualitative approach through a Single Case Study design, this study revolved around four English teachers from Pahang's plantation settlement schools. Data were collected through classroom observations, interview and document analysis. Thematic analysis, aided by NVivo, guided the data analysis process. The article reports a part of the whole study and it focused on one primary research question, which was examining the use of imported textbooks in the actual classroom setting. The main findings indicate that the participants used the provided textbook and its accompanying materials, and supplementing the imported textbook with other tangible and intangible resources. These findings shed light on the practical implementation of imported textbooks by rural primary school teachers and provide insights into their teaching practices. Furthermore, this study paves the way for future research in this area. Ultimately, it is hoped that these findings will inform stakeholders and contribute to the achievement of the educational goals of the nation.

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

### Introduction

#### Background

English education in Malaysia has a rich historical background, with its prominence dating back to the 19th century. During this time, the English language was highly valued due to the military prowess and economic influence of the British Empire. As a result, English became an international language, making it relevant even in the present day (Asha, 2012). In the early years, the curriculum in Malaysia was heavily influenced by the British education system, and textbooks were imported from Britain. This practice continued even after Malaysia gained

independence in 1957, despite the recognition by the local government of the importance of education in fostering national unity (Mohd Sidek & Wahiza Wahi, 2018). To address the need for a unified education system, the Razak Committee was established in 1955. This committee laid the foundation for a single-system education, with a focus on a standardized language of instruction. Bilingual education was seen as a potential threat to racial unity, hence the emphasis on a common language (Mohd Sidek & Wahi, 2018). A significant milestone in Malaysia's education system occurred in 1970 with the implementation of the National Education Policy. This policy aimed to address the need for Malaysian children to learn in the national language, Malay, which was given the status of a national language (Omar, 2012).

As Malaysia sought to develop its own curriculum and textbooks, the Ministry of Education (MOE) was established, along with dedicated divisions for curriculum development and textbook production. English textbooks were gradually replaced with locally developed materials, starting with the Old Primary School Curriculum and transitioning to the New Primary School Curriculum. This shift also extended to other subjects, with textbooks being written in Bahasa Melayu, the national language (Mohd Sidek & Wahi, 2018). In 2011, the KBSR curriculum was replaced with the Standards-Based Primary School Curriculum (KSSR), which aimed to uphold the Malay language while strengthening English language proficiency. This initiative, known as *Memartabatkan Bahasa Melayu dan Memperkukuhkan Bahasa Inggeris* (MBMMBI), reflects the ongoing efforts to balance the importance of both languages in the education system (MOE, 2018a).

From the 70's to 2017, the Ministry of Education has been working to produce and utilise local English textbooks for its primary and secondary school English instruction. The boisterous and continuous effort was abruptly halted with the introduction of the CEFR as a global benchmarking for international standards, benchmarking, alignment and calibration (MOE 2018a). The local textbooks were replaced by CEFR-aligned imported textbooks which were foreign imported English textbooks for Year 1 and Year 2 for the 2018 schooling years. The reasons for the textbook change lie on the materials' alignment to CEFR standards and that the local Malaysian material developers' lapses in producing CEFR-aligned materials (MOE 2018a; Johar & Abdul Aziz, 2019). Thus, this connotes a major issue with the local-based textbooks that are developed by local expertise which then prompts the decision makers to have a total revamp of the textbooks. Currently, the use of imported English textbooks has replaced locally-published English textbooks in primary schools' English classrooms. It is inevitable that issues and possible complications arise to pupils, parents, teachers and the whole English language teaching and learning ecosystem due to the change of textbook choice from imported to local in the 70's and a revert to imported textbooks. Albeit the reasons those given to implement a change, repercussions are inexorable to sustain or abolish that initiative.

#### Purpose

This study aims to address the issue mentioned above through a detailed examination of teachers' use of imported textbook in the actual classroom setting. The study specifically concentrates on a rural school setting to gain a better understanding of how teachers use the imported textbook in their teaching practices. By exploring teachers' actual use of the textbooks in a deliberately selected rural area, this study seeks to reveal insights into their

teaching practice specifically on how they actually incorporate the imported textbook into their English lessons.

#### Problem statement

This study aims to address a problem which is the gap in existing literature by investigating the use of imported textbooks in a real classroom environment, with a specific focus on rural primary schools. The introduction of imported textbook marks a fundamental shift in Malaysia's education scene. Despite the notion that utilizing imported textbooks could enhance the English language proficiency of Malaysian learners to a CEFR-benchmarked level, it has been documented that the secondary textbook imported (Pulse 2) is not suitable for learners, particularly those with low proficiency and those in rural areas (Johar & Aziz 2019; Shak et al 2021). This discrepancy is linked to secondary school teachers' inadequate grasp of CEFR implementation, resulting in additional burdens and difficulties in creating teaching materials based on the imported textbook (Uri, 2023). MOE (2015) highlights the issue of neglecting the curriculum when teachers prioritize exam preparation for their students, resulting in the textbook becoming irrelevant. On the other hand, Katawazai et al. (2022) found that teachers still show a preference for local textbooks over imported ones like Super Minds for Year 1 students. Despite the positive attitudes towards imported textbooks among rural primary school teachers, as noted by Bayuon and Hashim (2023), there is a discrepancy in the training received by teachers, as reported by Aziz, Rashid, and Zainudin (2018). These inconsistencies in training, along with other factors, could significantly impact the successful implementation of imported textbooks.

Furthermore, the foreign content in imported textbooks has been found to have a negative impact on Malaysian learners due to its foreign context, as argued by Johar and Abdul Aziz (2019) and Aripin and Yusoff (2022). Unfamiliar content and context place learners, especially those in rural areas, at a disadvantage. Unfamiliar subject matter and context can place students at a disadvantage, particularly those residing in rural regions. The introduction of concepts such as various seasons (snow, winter, spring, and summer), celebrations (Halloween), food items (carrots, peas, and steak), and other elements may present challenges for learners to comprehend, as these topics are often far removed from their existing knowledge base. The mandatory use of imported textbooks further complicates the situation, as it is unreasonable to expect educators to merely follow these materials without demonstrating creativity and expertise in adapting them to suit their students' needs. It is important to note that the blame should not solely be placed on the textbook itself, as its effectiveness depends on how well it is utilized by a competent teacher (Aziz, 2017). Textbooks serve as a tool and are implemented by English teachers in schools. Teachers act as facilitators of the textbook content and convey it to students in a classroom setting. Students, to some extent, rely on teachers to interpret the textbook, especially when their exposure to English is limited to the classroom environment. Teachers often face challenges in utilizing standardized textbooks to meet the needs of their students, particularly when students only receive English instruction at school, especially in rural areas. This situation necessitates a thorough examination. A comprehensive post-mortem analysis covering all aspects of English language teaching and learning would be beneficial. However, a study focusing on the role and use of the imported textbook in actual English lessons is a crucial initial step. Such a study would provide insights into the potential effectiveness and shortcomings that could lead to a decline in students' English proficiency.

### Study Objective

The study aims to achieve the following objective:

- 1) To Explore the use of Imported Textbooks by Rural Primary School Teachers in their Teaching and Learning Process In Class.

### Literature Review

#### A Pressing Need for Textbook In English Language Teaching (ELT)

To elucidate the utilization of textbooks by teachers as conceptualized within the framework of this study, it is essential to emphasize the significance of textbooks in the realm of English language instruction. Textbooks, or course books, have been a prevalent educational tool since the 15th century (Schmidt & Strasser, 2018). Despite the advent of technological advancements, textbooks continue to maintain their status as a preferred teaching aid among English language educators worldwide (Richards, 2014). It is imperative to acknowledge how textbooks have withstood the test of time amidst significant changes and innovations, remaining relevant alongside more technologically advanced materials. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) posit that the enduring relevance of textbooks lies in their ability to cater to specific educational needs, which may vary across different teaching contexts, yet consistently provide a reliable resource for teachers in various instructional settings.

The pivotal role of instructional materials, irrespective of their commercial nature, in the teaching and learning process cannot be overstated (Garton & Graves, 2014), particularly in today's digitally-driven landscape. For educators striving to achieve their learning objectives, textbooks serve as a fundamental educational resource (Crookes & Chaudron, 2001). Hall-Quest (1919) contends that textbooks serve as a repository of knowledge, embodying a collective wisdom derived from trial and error, continuous reflection, and rigorous testing. Thus, textbooks represent a meticulously crafted product designed to underpin and structure the teaching and learning process. In the realm of education, a textbook or course book is a meticulously crafted tool that serves to support and structure the process of teaching and learning. This significance of textbooks is further underscored by Tollefson (2007), who asserts that they are integral to the ideology of standard language in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), alongside dictionaries and grammar books. Despite the existence of grammar books and dictionaries, textbooks or course books continue to hold a prominent position in terms of educational resources. It is undeniable that textbooks or course books play a universal role in the teaching of foreign languages at both primary and secondary levels (Berry, 1951).

In summary, the requirement for a textbook in the teaching profession can be categorized into three main areas: explanations of content, examples, and tasks or exercises (Byrd, 2001). Therefore, it can be concluded that textbooks or course books are essential in the field of language teaching and learning. It is important to note that this study uses the terms 'textbook' and 'course book' interchangeably, as Garton and Graves (2014) acknowledge that although there may be some problems with this distinction, they are used for convenience. However, the term 'textbook' is preferred in this study, particularly due to its widespread usage in Malaysia, making it a significant factor that influences teachers in this research.

#### Textbook in Malaysia's ELT scene

Textbooks are highly regarded in Malaysia's education system, serving as the primary point of reference in English classrooms and MOE mandates the use of provided textbooks, leaving teachers with limited autonomy in selecting materials (Zakaria & Koay, 2013). Consequently, teachers are compelled to develop their own practices to supplement the textbooks (Ng,

2010). The effectiveness of these practices, whether positive or negative, significantly influences students' English learning outcomes (Zakaria & Koay, 2013).

However, the rigidity of textbook activities and materials can be restrictive, leading teachers to question their use (Newton, 2015). In Malaysia, local textbooks have faced scrutiny for their limited task-based activities and discrepancies between learner levels and syllabus requirements (Wan Musa, 2015). Additionally, 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 regarding their limitations and compatibility with students' needs and syllabus requirements. These issues, coupled with practical constraints, highlight the importance of teachers' role in adapting and supplementing textbook materials to ensure effective English language learning.

Despite the presence of problematic areas in the local textbook, such as the lack of connection between the curriculum and the real world (Mohd Sidek et al., 2014; Kumaran, 2010; Newton, 2015; Mohd Sidek, 2014 & Kai, Ismail & Abidin, 2018), vocabulary deficits (Nur Izyan Shamimi Mat Hussin, 2016), constricting nature (Hooi & Knight, 2015), incongruity between content and learners' level (Hassan & Selamat, 2002), and overall lack of appeal (Ng, 2010), the imported textbook may not be a perfect fit for a typical Malaysian English lesson. This is especially true when considering factors such as its suitability to the Malaysian English education scene and the amount of material support it provides. A designated textbook has to cater to the unique and ethnically diverse nature of Malaysians (Mihat, 2015), but integrating foreign elements into the textbook has proven to be costly and has raised concerns 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), teachers are on their own to decide whether to use it or not in their daily teaching and learning process. Worse, imported textbook is deemed unsuitable to cater low proficiency learners specifically in rural areas (Johar & Aziz 2019; Shak et al 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to explore the use of the imported textbook in actual rural primary schools' English lessons.

### **Methodology**

This study utilised a qualitative research approach that centred on a Single Case Study design to explore the use of imported textbooks in two rural primary schools that were located in oil palm plantation settlements at Jengka, Pahang. Two English teachers from each school were purposively-sampled based on selection criteria such as teaching option, experience in teaching English especially in attending imported textbook training and had been utilising the imported textbook in the previous years and the schools had a good track record on pupils' English literacy rate through national-level assessment. All four teachers were contacted earlier and they consented to be this study's participants after this study had been approved by the gatekeepers. Data collection techniques encompassed classroom observations through audio recording, and document analysis of the participants' completed lesson plans for this article as it is a part of the main study. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the gathered data, leading to the identification of codes, sub-categories, categories, and themes through Saldana (2013)'s coding cycle with the assistance of NVivo as a data management

tool. Various steps were taken to uphold the research's validity and reliability, including the incorporation of triangulation, member check, and external audit. Ethical standards were upheld by obtaining formal authorization for the research and ensuring the anonymity of participants' information.

### Findings

After identifying and detailing all the participants and their basic information, a significant amount of data was collected. The data were then retrieved, sorted, coded, and analysed in order to gain insights into the participants' teaching practices, specifically their use of textbooks. The transcripts from interviews and classroom observations, along with cross-referencing their lesson plans, were coded and organized into categories. These categories formed the foundation of the themes that emerged from the analysis, which were consistent across all four participants. In this section of the study, the findings and discussion will focus on the participants' textbook use. These themes include the use of provided materials and the use of other materials that fulfil the main objective of this study. Each theme is constructed by combining multiple categories, using actual excerpts and findings, thus addressing the main study objective.

#### Use of Provided Materials

The primary question that arises regarding the use of textbooks is whether English teachers actually utilise the textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education (MOE). This question allows for the possibility of both affirmative and negative responses. However, this study takes an additional step to delve into the process of teachers' textbook use. To accomplish this, the study focuses on the theme of "Use of Provided Materials," which encompasses two major categories: the use of the textbook itself and the use of the accompanying audio materials that are provided by MOE. These categories offer valuable insights into addressing the aforementioned intriguing question, particularly when supported by the participants' classroom observations and lesson plans. Within this section, the subsequent layers of analysis are presented, illustrating how both categories contribute to the development of the stated theme.

To start, the use of the imported textbook as a code is firmly established through the comprehensive compilation and analysis of evidence from all four participants, particularly their documented classroom observations and lesson plans, which reflect their authentic teaching practices. The participants' utilization of the textbook is evident in the following excerpts such as *All right, open your students' book now* (S1T1 second class observation), *Okay now, buka (open) your textbook, open your textbook, I want you to look at the shopping list. Do you love shopping?* (S1T2 first class observation), *Everybody take out your Super Minds book* (S2T1 first class observation) and *Okay, take out your textbook* (S2T2 third class observation). From the aforementioned excerpts, it is evident that the participants consistently demonstrated their reliance on textbooks by providing oral instructions to their pupils. The act of opening the textbook was readily observable during classroom observations, confirming that the participants indeed incorporated the use of textbooks in their lessons. While this may appear to be a straightforward observation, it serves as a foundation for delving deeper into understanding how the participants utilize textbooks. This finding prompts further exploration into the participants' practices, including the act of acknowledging the presence of the textbook and instructing students to retrieve and open it for that day's lesson.

The use of textbook through the provided material which the textbook itself can be supported through the use of pages in the textbook such as *Alright. Wait wait. Page 36, Super Mind book, page 36. Yes, 36, 36. Alright* (S1T1 first class observation). *Turn to page 49* (S1T2 first class observation), *Okay, everybody turn to page 24* (S2T1 first class observation) *Okay, for today, open your textbook page 24. page 24, textbook* (S2T2 second class observation). These actions are further corroborated in their lesson plans where the participants have explicitly indicated the specific page numbers corresponding to the lesson, indicating that they went beyond simply placing the textbook on their students' desks without using it. This observation further highlights the deliberate nature of the participants' imported textbook use. The evidence for this can be found in the examples provided, where the participants clearly stated the precise page numbers they utilized in their lesson plans.

CCE	Language
Materials	Get Smart Plus 4 –Student's Book: page 49, Activity 3

(S1T2 Lesson Plan on Unit 5)

Pre-lesson	1. Pre-lesson task 10: SAY WHAT'S MISSING
<b>Lesson delivery ( SB PAGE 35 )</b>	2. Put the grid on the next page on the board. Use your own pictures for the images of animals.

(S1T1 Lesson Plan on Unit 3)

1. Teacher holds the flashcard of, e.g. the lizard, and say I like lizards. Look happy.
2. Put the flashcard of, e.g. the cat, on the other side of the room and say I don't like cats. Look unhappy. Repeat for two other animals.
<b>3. Refer SB p 37 pupils look at the pictures in their Student's Book. Elicit what is in the picture (a spider). Tell pupils the spider is speaking</b>
4. Check pupils understand the happy mouth means like and the sad mouth

(S2T2 Lesson Plan on Unit 2 and 3)

From the use of imported textbook, the use of provided materials which is focusing on the textbook itself has progressed from just the act of asking pupils to take out the textbook to various ways of using the textbook such as using a page, starting a discussion to varied means to integrate pictures and visuals in the textbook. Other than the textbook, the audios that are provided in a CD are interesting to look at in the participants' textbook use. The audios here are the audio clips that accompany the textbook which are going to be used in certain activities in the textbook. Throughout the classroom observations, several instances were documented in terms of the use of audio from the textbook in their lessons.

Through the use of the imported textbook, the incorporation of provided materials that centres around the textbook itself has evolved beyond simply instructing pupils to retrieve the textbook. This evolution includes diverse methods of utilizing the textbook, such as referencing specific pages, initiating discussions, and incorporating images and visuals. In addition to the textbook, the audio resources found on a CD that accompanies the imported textbook also play a significant role in the participants' engagement with the textbook. These audio clips are designed to complement the textbook and are incorporated in various activities within the textbook. Classroom observations have revealed numerous instances where teachers incorporate audio from the textbook into their lessons such as this instance

All right. Please listen very carefully and answer and check the answer. (played audio) (S1T1 Second class observation). Interestingly, all audio usage examples in the study were provided by a single participant, out of all the participants involved. However, by conducting a thorough comparison between the classroom observations and the participants' lesson plans, it was observed that audio usage was documented in the lessons of all four participants. The following excerpts are taken from their respective lesson plans.

Pre-lesson  
1. Pre-lesson task 10( SAY WHATS MISSING ) with the song on SB p24  
Lesson delivery

(S1T1 Lesson Plan for Unit 3)

Listening Comprehension

- Tell the pupils that they are going to listen to a conversation and then answer the questions.
- Have pupils read the questions first.
- Play the CD twice and pause after each part so that pupils have enough time to circle the correct answer.

(S1T2 Lesson Plan for Unit 5)

Lesson delivery:

1. Pupils listen and chant about toys.
2. Pupils listen and stick the correct pictures.
3. Pupils listen and say the sentence structure.
4. Pupils listen and sing the Emma song.

(S2T1 Lesson Plan for Unit 2)

Lesson Delivery

1. Teacher asks ppl look at the picture. Elicit what toys and numbers they can see. Play the recording. Students follow the song in their Student's Books.p24

(S2T2 Lesson Plan for Unit 2 and Unit 3)

The classroom observation reveals that the participants incorporate audio materials into their teaching practice, as evidenced by their lesson plans. Both the textbook and the audio materials are utilized by the participants for instructional purposes, including providing instructions and playing songs. Consequently, the theme of 'Use of Provided Materials' encompasses two primary categories: the utilization of the textbook and the integration of audio materials. It is evident that the participants actively incorporate the provided materials, namely the textbook and the accompanying audio materials, into their teaching practice.

#### Use of Other Materials

In the context of pedagogical practice, it is intriguing to delve deeper into the use of textbooks by participants, rather than solely focusing on the prescribed materials provided by the MOE. Consequently, during the analysis, codes that form categories unrelated to the use of provided materials reveal a surprising theme of 'Use of Other Materials' which adds novelty to this study. This theme is underpinned by two categories: use of handouts and workbooks, and use of real objects. Each category is delineated in detail to enrich the understanding of



the theme, despite the fact that not all categories are applicable to every participant. Initially, the use of handouts is evident among participants who furnish pupils with paper-based task sheets, instructions, or notes. Within this category, two codes, namely use of handout and use of notes, are merged due to their similarity, both pointing towards the utilization of handouts. The term 'handout' is not arbitrarily coined by the researcher, but rather has been consistently observed during classroom observations. An illustrative example such as *Look at the handout that I gave you just now* (S1T1 First Class Observation). Interestingly, the term 'handout' was employed to denote a document distributed to pupils for the purpose of facilitating their engagement in the task. Conversely, another participant did not employ the term 'handout', instead referring to it simply as 'paper', *okay no okay now look at your paper* (S1T2 First Class Observation).

Upon comparing the classroom observations of the participants with their lesson plans, additional similarities in terminology were identified. It was observed that the term 'worksheet' was also used to describe the paper-based materials that were handed out to their pupils.

#### Hot Seat

- Ask pupils to complete their worksheet.
- Call pupils to come in front and guide them to talk about their friend menu based on their worksheet. [C.S.2.1.1]

(S1T2 Lesson Plan on Unit 5)

#### **TEACHING AIDS:**

worksheet                  flashcards                  Superminds textbook

(S2T1 Lesson Plan on Unit 2)

#### Post Lesson

1. Teacher distributes worksheet. Asks pupils to identify the words, write missing letter and sing in group.

(S2T2 Lesson Plan on Unit 2 and Unit 3)

In addition to the materials provided by the MOE, the participants in this study exhibited the adoption of supplementary handouts that were not part of the provided materials. It is important to highlight that a handout is simply a piece of paper, and interestingly, this study has also observed instances where workbooks were employed. It is noteworthy that workbooks are not included in the materials provided by MOE, but are used in conjunction with the textbook such as *The old one, the textbook and also the workbook* (S2T1 Second Class Observation) and *Ah, the Supermind workbook* (S2T1 Second Class Observation). The workbook had the same title as the textbook, as mentioned earlier. It is worth noting that the use of the workbook was limited to one school, while another school in the study did not incorporate a workbook into their English lessons. Additional evidence can be gleaned from excerpts of both participants' lesson plans provided below.

Lesson delivery:  
 1. Pupils listen and tick the box in the workbook.  
 2. Pupils put the story in order.

(S2T1 Lesson Plan on Unit 2)

Lesson Delivery  
 1. Teacher asks them to refer to the workbook page 44.

(S2T2 Lesson Plan on Unit 2 and 3)

Following the classroom observations and lesson plans, it has been observed that the participants' use of various teaching materials extends beyond traditional paper-based resources. In addition to these materials, real objects have been identified as valuable tools in their teaching practice. For instance, a participant incorporated a tangram into her lesson, providing each pupil with a tangram and utilizing objects within the classroom to teach about the different shapes found within the tangram such as in these instances: *I will give him a ha a tangram* (S2T1 Third Class Observation) and *Okay, everybody can you see triangle in this classroom?* (S2T1 Third Class Observation). The illustration of the tangram in the textbook prompted the participant to actualize the concept by introducing a physical tangram. This aligns with her lesson plan, which specifically included the tangram as a tangible object in its design. The participant successfully implemented her lesson in accordance with the pre-established plan.

Post-lesson: Pupils play with the tangrams given by the teacher.

(S2T1 Lesson Plan on Unit 2)

All and all, this study has found out that the imported textbook has been used by all the participants and there are instances of the use of other materials that are not provided by MOE such as handouts, worksheets, a workbook and real objects alongside the imported textbook. With these results, it is interesting to discuss these further to understand the dynamics of the whole situation.

### Discussion

Throughout the study, all the participants have been documented to use the imported textbook, which supports the idea that textbooks are the preferred teaching tool for English teachers, despite the advancements in technology for teaching and learning (Richards, 2014). However, MOE (MOE, 2015) highlights the possibility that teachers may disregard the textbook's use and relevance due to their focus on examinations. Nevertheless, the universal significance of textbooks in foreign language teaching, as emphasized by Berry (1951), remains true in this study as the imported textbooks were consistently used in all observed lessons and documented in the teachers' lesson plans. It can be concluded that all participants adhere to MOE's directive of using the provided imported textbooks, as explicated by (Zakaria and Koay 2013). This demonstrates the participants' compliance with MOE, as there is no evidence of non-compliance, and all teachers have clearly utilized the provided imported textbooks according to the specific class they taught thus resonating positive attitude towards imported textbook as reiterated by Bayuon and Hashim (2023). Since this study primarily

focuses on government-based schools, it is worth noting that the imported books, provided to pupils without any fees (Ng, 2010), are fully utilised by both teachers and pupils in English lessons.

Despite the fact that it has been established that all participants use the imported textbook, it is also discovered that they have taken the initiative to include supplementary materials in their teaching. Elsner (2018) highlights the importance of adapting materials to meet the specific needs of learners as a characteristic of effective language teachers. Additionally, Richards (2014) suggests that it is common for teachers to make modifications to materials based on their own judgment or the provided textbook. While the content standards, learning objectives, and specific page references are outlined in the Scheme of Work that must be adhered to, there is still room for teachers to enhance the mandatory textbook with additional resources, as recommended by MOE (Zakaria & Koay, 2013). Therefore, English teachers in Malaysia have the chance to personalize their students' English learning journey even before they step into the classroom and through this study, it is proven that they have gone the extra mile in using the imported textbook despite the lack of understanding, training, competency (Uri, 2023; Yasin & Yamat, 2021; Aziz, Rashid, & Zainudin, 2018), knowledge, awareness, and CEFR exposure (Uri & Abd Aziz, 2018) as reported of their counterparts.

Their imported textbook use must be linked to the potential shortcomings of said textbook. The deficiencies found in the imported textbook are believed to originate from the textbook itself and the external factors surrounding it. The weaknesses in the imported textbook primarily revolve around issues of inadequate material coverage and inappropriate content, as indicated by the research findings, leading the users to make adjustments to the imported textbook. When compared to the local textbook, which is considered unsuitable for rural areas (Hall, 2015) and inadequate in representing various ethnicities (Puspalata & Ramesh, 2016), the imported textbook clearly falls short in its original context. It is widely acknowledged that Malaysia is home to diverse ethnic groups, making it unique, according to Mihat (2015), for a nation like this to develop a curriculum that is sensitive to its linguistic and cultural diversity. Without proper curriculum planning that includes the selection of appropriate English textbooks for nationwide use, there is a risk of tipping the balance between the pursuit of globalization and meeting local needs. When the imported textbook is introduced alongside its accompanying revised curriculum, it brings forth several issues that align with the findings of this study. The issue of relevance, particularly in terms of the prominent foreign cultural context, has been reported by Aziz, Rashid, and Wan Zainudin (2018), Johar and Abdul Aziz (2019), Alih, Raof and Yusof (2021), Katawazai et al. (2022), Aripin and Yusoff (2022), and Rashid and Sandaran (2022). Interestingly, this concern is echoed by the participants, including the lack of materials, as reported by Tiong and Yunus (2022). The use of imported textbooks undoubtedly introduces foreign elements, as highlighted by Lopez-Barrios and de Debat (2014), who state that these textbooks are designed for the global market. Teachers need to take this into consideration when using such textbooks.

To sum up, it is found out that all participants' imported textbook use revolves around the imported textbook. After all, it is apparent that the participants actually use the imported textbook in their English lessons and they supplement the imported textbook by adding handouts, a workbook, and even bringing real objects to the classroom. The supplementation of the imported textbook comes as no surprise even though Elsner (2018) emphasizes the importance of textbooks as a valuable resource for language teachers due to the wide range of texts and activities they offer. These materials can be adapted by teachers to meet the specific needs of their students. Wan Musa's research (2015) supports this idea, showing that

many teachers make modifications to textbook content and activities to better suit their learners' proficiency levels. The consistency between Elsner's and Wan Musa's studies suggests that the practice of adapting textbooks is a common and essential practice among language teachers and it has to be commended.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the question of whether English teachers in Malaysia use or disregard the provided imported textbook is prompted by this study's main objective. This study's findings suggest that this question may be an unspoken truth of using any provided materials by MOE and surprisingly, they have integrated additional materials alongside the use of the imported textbook in their English lessons. However, the significant aspect of the current situation lies in the existence of numerous thought-provoking imported textbooks used by English teachers in rural primary schools. These textbooks provide insights into the mechanisms of their use in specific contexts and situations, which can contribute to a better understanding of the overall use of imported textbooks by the nation's English teachers. It is worth noting that the use of imported textbooks by English teachers resembles a routine, making it challenging to adopt new and different approaches on a daily, weekly, monthly, or even yearly basis. Nor et al. (2018) emphasize the difficulties faced by teachers in applying new teaching techniques. Consequently, it is only a matter of time before they find ways to function effectively as English teachers, relying on the textbook as suggested by Mat Hussin et al. (2016). Despite the issue of a lack of materials, it is considered a viable option for teachers to reduce the time spent on producing their own teaching materials and instead focus more on their actual teaching responsibilities (Tiong & Yunus, 2022). This study paves way for more studies to be carried out to further understand the imported textbook use in Malaysia's teaching and learning scene eventually enriching pupils' English learning experience.

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