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Primary School Teachers' Perceptions on The Effectiveness of CEFR Textbooks in Malaysia: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

The frequent changes in the ELT curriculum revolve around the many issues regarding English language textbooks in Malaysia. The current 'Super Minds' and 'Get Smart' textbook was chosen from a plethora of international textbooks from European countries created based on the CEFR curricula. Albeit many pros and cons regarding textbook selections for the current textbooks, not much substantial research has been conducted on the effectiveness of these textbooks. This systematic literature review aims to identify teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of CEFR textbooks. This systematic review focuses on the criteria in the CEFR textbooks based on the teachers' perceptions. It is hoped that this systematic review is able to provide an insight to maximise the effective features of a textbook in the selection of future textbooks.

Keywords: CEFR, Textbook, Teachers' Perceptions, Textbook Criteria

Introduction

In 2015, the English Language Roadmap 2015-2025 was established to align English Language Education to the Common European Framework of Reference (henceforth CEFR), producing a CEFR-aligned curriculum effective in primary and secondary schools. This decision was made based on the Cambridge Baseline Results Report 2013 (Bernama, 2017), which mapped the performance of Malaysian pupils of English to CEFR (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015).

CEFR has been widely researched in various countries, covering areas such as adaptation (Bucar et al., 2014), application (Nagai & O'Dwyer, 2011), assessment (Zheng et al., 2016; Michel, 2018) and teacher's opinions and expectations (Alih et al., 2021; Hairan et al., 2019). Nevertheless, little is known about the effectiveness of CEFR textbooks on teachers' perceptions, creating a research gap for challenges faced in teaching the English language in primary schools. During the implementation period of CEFR in Malaysian schools, there were many pros and cons to the CEFR textbooks, such as the cultural and practical aspects, especially regarding textbook selections from European countries (Michel, 2018). Thus, this systematic literature review focuses on the primary school teachers' perception of the effectiveness of CEFR textbooks in the Malaysian setting.

Research Objective and Research Question

This systematic literature review aims to identify the views of MOE primary English language teachers on the suitability of CEFR English language textbooks to assimilate with our multiracial and culturally diverse context.

1. To identify the Malaysian Primary School English teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of CEFR textbooks.

Based on the study's objectives, problem statement, and rationale, the study's research questions are formulated according to systematic literature review approach. This systematic review aims to answer this specific research question:

1. What are the Malaysian Primary School English teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of CEFR textbooks?

Literature Review

In this section, the author will discuss findings from previous studies on the definition of textbooks, characteristics of effective and ineffective textbooks and the use of CEFR-aligned primary school textbooks in teaching English.

Definition of Textbooks

Textbooks are simply books designed for teaching and learning; according to Lappalainen (2011), a textbook can be any book created and published for education, or any book can serve as a teaching tool in the classroom. Nonetheless, Venezky (1992) observed that "from a single set of curriculum rules, an endless number of textbooks may be created," each with its own interpretation of the guidelines' objective. Textbooks, as according Cunningsworth (1995), should allow students to engage in self-directed learning, assist teachers in presenting materials efficiently, serve as a source of ideas and activities, serve as a reference for students, and include a curriculum that will aid pupils in achieving learning standards and novice teachers in gaining the confidence to teach the pupils.

Characteristics of effective and ineffective textbooks

Typically, the most effective textbooks mix contemporary and classic language teaching methods to meet the different needs of learners. They combine 'learner development,' 'task-based approach,' and 'cross-curricular topics' with a grammar framework and extensive practice of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and functions (Hairan et al., 2019). Textbooks are essential because they significantly influence teachers', pupils', and families' opinions on school subjects (Ravitch, 2004; Valverde et al., 2002).

Some ineffective aspect of using textbooks for teaching and learning is that textbooks cannot cater to learners' diverse needs (Hairan et al., 2019). Therefore, this leads to novice teachers using textbooks as a reference without considering the learners' needs (Michel, 2018). Moreover, many textbooks are not regularly revised and are no longer current, which may contain activities that are no longer practical (Lodhi et al., 2019). Learners might not reap the full benefits of using a textbook, thus, inevitably decreasing learning productivity and efficiency.

Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that textbook selection is based on a set of criteria that suit the needs of the pupils. Teachers should decide ideal judgement regarding the insight of textbook selection as they would choose the most suitable textbooks gauged based on their perception of pupils' needs to encourage better teaching and learning process.

The use of CEFR-aligned Primary School Textbooks

Over the years, frequent changes in the ELT curriculum pivoted around many issues regarding English language textbooks in Malaysia. The 'Super Minds' for Year 1 to 2, 'Get Smart' for Year 3 until 4 and 'Plus' textbook for Year 5 to 6 were chosen from a plethora of international textbooks created based on the CEFR curricula. Nawai & Said (2020) mentioned that most teachers posted in rural schools enjoyed using the old KSSR textbook developed locally and well suited to their pupils' level of proficiency and interest compared to the Super Minds textbook that explores international cultures such as the Halloween celebration and the four seasons.

Many seasoned teachers also find it tedious to prolong one topic for four to five weeks as the CEFR textbook has limited resources and issues to be covered per year (Bovellan, 2014). Even though non-textbook lessons are allowed, most teachers need to put in more effort to diversify a topic for an extended period. These issues pertain to the suitability of utilising international CEFR textbooks for rural pupils with different needs and levels of English language exposure. Hence, the teachers' perceptions in this area will be discussed in detail to determine the teachers' perceptions of the CEFR textbooks.

Teachers' perceptions can contribute significantly to improving English textbook selection as they are well versed with the environment in which their pupils live. This matter is undeniable, particularly in rural schools in Malaysia. Their pupils receive exposure to the language solely from their English teachers as they speak and even watch translated dubbed cartoons in their mother tongue at home. Chong & Yamat (2021) mentioned that 61% of teachers from their research viewed the 'Super Minds' textbook as lacking flexibility and unsuitable for in-depth learning. Most teachers opted to adjust and simplify the suggested activities as they did not support the goals and objectives of the Malaysian curriculum.

Din & Yamat (2020) carried out a quantitative study on the challenges faced by teachers using the 'Super Mind' CEFR textbook on 63 English Language primary school teachers, where the central issue includes the cultural aspect of the textbook. 46% of teachers agreed that the themes are not related to the relevant culture and environments, resulting in pupils' inability to express themselves fully. The units are also inappropriate with an ill-fitting vocabulary level that does not support pupil-centred learning (Johar & Aziz, 2018). It was surmised that the scarcity of contextualised learning inhibits pupils' discourse ability and slows down the teaching and learning process due to unsuitable themes. Case in point to the adoption of CEFR in Thailand, where each educational institute was given the freedom to choose their own textbook and teaching approaches within the range of the core framework. These sub-policies were issued to address the socio-economic discrepancies between the urban and rural pupils (Wuttisrisiriporn et al., 2020).

It is crucial to consider cultural differences and socio-economic factors in selecting textbooks to engage pupils' relatable experiences to build schemata in learning the English language (Michel, 2018), as textbooks are the essence of language learning and teaching lessons contributing many advantages for both teachers and pupils. In order to sustain pupils' strategic language development, a practical and holistically designed textbook should be carefully selected according to standardised criteria of effective textbooks.

Methodology

A wide selection of databases such as Google Scholar, Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), CORE, Research Gate, Semantics Scholar, and Academia were the sources selected to browse for related published studies ranging from 2018 to 2021. A variety of

research articles, conceptual papers and journals were chosen and tabulated in the analysing process.

The following terms were used to generate a search: CEFR, effective textbook, teachers' perceptions, and textbook criteria. However, this study only involves primary school English teachers and non-options teachers. Therefore, this study excluded the following; pre-service teachers and secondary school teachers. The number of articles selected is fifteen articles.

Findings & Discussion

This section discusses the four thematic themes divided into; teachers' perceptions on textbook layout, design and illustrations, teachers' perceptions of local and international culture introduction, teachers' perceptions on teaching-learning components and teachers' perceptions on supplementary materials and resources. Hence, the fifteen articles are tabulated to answer the research question and include an overview of the findings.

Table 1
Systematic Literature Review

No	Author/ Title	Research methodology/ Research Instrument	Research sampling	Research findings
1	Al Hadi et al (2020) Malaysian ESL Teachers' Perception towards CEFR-Aligned Textbooks	Quantitative survey research design The questionnaire consists of close-ended questions	- A total number of 116 English teachers who teach in the local primary schools participated in this study. - The participants of this study were chosen randomly through simple random sampling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the data, teachers have favourable attitudes on the use of these textbooks in the classroom. • Aside from this, there are no substantial differences in instructors' perceptions based on their educational backgrounds. • The study also found that instructors' experiences with CEFR-aligned curriculum did not influence their opinions of these textbooks.
2	Uri & Abd Aziz (2018). Implementation of CEFR in Malaysia: Teachers' awareness and the Challenges.	Quantitative research method. The researchers used both opened and closed-ended questions	- 331 secondary school English teachers from Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Selangor - identified using criterion sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the data, the majority of teachers knew very little about CEFR and had limited experience with it. • However, they were positive about the concept and believed that the framework was essential if Malaysians were to improve their English proficiency. • According to this study, teachers who do not want to utilise CEFR, teachers who lack sufficient training, and teachers who believe it will be difficult to implement CEFR in their classrooms are among the greatest obstacles.

3	<p>Nawai & Said (2020). Implementation challenges of Common European Framework Reference (CEFR) in a Malaysian Setting: Insights on English Teachers' Attitude.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A quantitative approach was used as the research design in this study. Survey questionnaires was used to collect the data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 60 English rural primary school teachers who taught Year 1,2 and 3 pupils using CEFR. - The participants were selected using criterion sampling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The data indicate that the majority of respondents had minimal knowledge of and experience to CEFR. Nonetheless, they were confident that the framework was necessary for enhancing the English competence of rural learners. Attitudes and preparedness of teachers, as well as a lack of training given by education authorities, posed the greatest obstacles to the successful implementation of CEFR in the classroom.
4	<p>Kok & Aziz (2019). English language teachers' perceptions on the implementation of CEFR-aligned curriculum among primary schools in Malaysia.</p>	<p>This descriptive research employed the mixed method design.</p> <p>This study employed a mixed method approach whereby data were gathered via questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 65 samples targeted for this research study are in-service English language teachers teaching Year 1 and 2 pupils. - The sampling technique used in this research is purposive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the data, instructors in Malaysia have conflicting opinions regarding the implementation of the CEFR. According to the findings, a high majority of teachers had insufficient knowledge and experience to CEFR. However, they were hopeful about the proposal and believed that a CEFR-aligned curriculum was essential for enhancing Malaysians' English ability. Based on the findings of this study, a lack of training, non-local textbooks, and insufficient ICT support and teaching & learning materials were among the most significant concerns and obstacles found.
5	<p>Alih et al (2021). Policy change implementation: The case of the CEFR in Malaysian ESL Classrooms.</p>	<p>The study utilized a mixed-method design which entails the use of questionnaire and semi-structured interview.</p> <p>The questionnaire was adapted from Bouckenoghe and Devos (2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 365 English language teachers - determined through the use of sampling table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite facing various obstacles, all teachers were optimistic about the introduction of the CEFR. The study also revealed that although teachers were emotionally prepared to accept the shift, their cognitive preparation for change depends on three crucial factors: time, group effort, and sufficient resources.

6	<p>Roberts & Aziz (2020)</p> <p>Criteria of a Good ELT Textbook: Malaysian Teachers' Perception</p>	<p>A case study, which is an approach to qualitative research, was selected</p> <p>The interview questions were utilised</p>	<p>- The participants in this study consisted of seven secondary school ESL teachers.</p> <p>- Seven teachers were selected through purposive sampling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleven factors deemed essential for an effective ELT textbook have been identified in this study, including Culture and Cultural Introduction. • These eleven criteria must be taken into account while selecting and evaluating ELT textbooks.
7	<p>Takal et. al (2021).</p> <p>An Evaluation of 'Get Smart' English Language Textbook from the Perspectives of English Teachers.</p>	<p>A mixed method design of quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews was used.</p>	<p>- 38 ESL lecturers from primary schools in Malaysia have been studied for their perspectives on Get Smart textbook.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both the questionnaire and interviews revealed that Get Smart is one of the most useful books for ELT in Malaysian elementary schools. • However, there are areas that require improvement, such as the lack of creativity in the visuals, the difficult vocabulary, the social and cultural mismatch, the use of difficult words in grammatical explanations, and the absence of sentence and paragraph structures in the writing section. • These results indicate that the Get Smart textbook is adequate, but there are still areas that want work.
8	<p>Wuttisrisiriporn et al (2020).</p> <p>A Situational Analysis of EFL Textbook Selection in Thai Public Schools.</p>	<p>A mixed-method was implemented.</p> <p>An online open-ended questionnaire asking for all reasons considered in this process was used.</p>	<p>- The participants were 30 EFL teachers</p> <p>- Respondents were chosen by purposive sampling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study's finding indicates that EFL textbooks are selected based on whether they adhere to the Basic Education Core Curriculum, the textbook's content, the Ministry of Education's textbook quality approval, and price. • However, the analysis reveals that a systematic evaluation of an EFL textbook is not conducted prior to its use, which might have a negative impact on the teaching and learning results in an EFL classroom.
9	<p>Din & Yamat (2020)</p> <p>Challenges faced by teachers in using supermind textbooks.</p>	<p>Quantitative survey research design</p> <p>The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions.</p>	<p>- 63 respondents involved Primary English teachers.</p> <p>- distributed to each school through the District office and via schools' email.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The collected data revealed that teachers experience obstacles when using the Super Mind textbook, particularly with regard to its cultural and practical features.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is very advised that future planning be conducted while selecting new textbooks.
10	Johar & Aziz (2019). Teachers' perceptions on the pulse 2 textbook.	Case study: qualitative research Open-ended interviews	- Five English teachers teaching Form 1 & 2 Purposive sampling method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings revealed contradictory responses from respondents, indicating that several components of Pulse 2 regarding cultural content and student participation were perceived both favourably and negatively.
11	Goh & Aziz (2020) Using Pulse 2 to Teach and Assess Malaysian Pupils Speaking Skill.	Quantitative research design using survey method. Close-ended questionnaire	- 30 Malaysian secondary school teachers who had been using Pulse 2 for at least one year since 2018 - Purposive sampling method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the findings as a whole, the speaking activities were largely deemed useful for teaching speaking ability and simple to implement for speaking assessment. In conclusion, it is evident that despite being written by a foreign textbook author, the speaking activities in Pulse 2 are largely regarded as helpful by local ESL teachers.
12	Shak et al (2021). Revisiting PULSE 2 Textbook after Three Years: Have Teachers Changed Their Mind?	Qualitative semi-structured interview	- eight secondary school teachers - purposive sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the data, respondents favoured using imported English textbooks with local changes in their language classrooms. The majority believed that the level of language content and skills provided by PULSE2 did not match their students' ability. They also complained about the challenging foreign material of PULSE 2, indicating that, even after three years of use, they had not changed their minds.
13	Michel 2018. EFL Materials—from Adoption to Adaptation:Operational Aspects of Textbook Development by Teachers.	Conceptual article Outline of textbook adaptation	- Diverse textbook evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The author gives both theoretical and practical ideas for textbook development to teachers. However, he emphasises that textbook development is a difficult task that requires teachers to have a strong grasp of English, sufficient classroom experience, and a thorough understanding of teaching and learning theories.
14	Nawawi et al (2021). CEFR for Languages and Its Effective	Systematic literature review	- 10 research studies in Asia and especially Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers must have a clear understanding of what the framework is

	Implementation in Secondary Schools in Malaysia.			<p>and how it might assist them in teaching and guiding students in the proper way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently, many students have not learned the new curriculum and rely solely on government-supplied materials such as textbooks and activity booklets.
15	Chong & Yamat (2021). Teachers' Implementation of CEFR-aligned Curriculum: A Preliminary Study.	A quantitative survey research design A closed-ended questionnaire	- 20 Malaysian primary school ESL teachers - Convenient random sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The direction of the CEFR-aligned curriculum is positive. However, the overall readiness for execution must be enhanced, and the allocated resources must be utilised to their maximum capacity.

Teachers' Perception on Textbook Layout, Design and Illustrations

It is vital to evaluate every detail in selecting an excellent textbook to ensure that the textbook is reliable and competent. In the diverse literature on textbook analysis, authors such as Joiner (1974); Cunningsworth (1984); Sheldon (1988); Skierso (1991); Byram (1994); Brown (2001); Kilickaya (2004) suggest different evaluation checklists. The majority of teachers agreed that evaluation checklists should include criteria pertaining to the physical characteristics of textbooks, such as layout, logistical, and organisational features, in addition to criteria of methodology, objectives, teaching approaches, and cultural information.

According to Eisner (1987), a textbook outline a substantial amount of the curriculum's content, organisation, goals, and presentation of specific themes. Allwright (1981) concurs that language learning is such a complex process that textbooks cannot suit the diverse demands of pupils around the globe. There really is no textbook that fulfils the needs of all pupils, educators, schools, and curriculums. Each textbook has benefits and drawbacks; hence, no textbook intended for the mass market can be ideal for a specific group of pupils. Richards (2005) emphasises that textbooks provide a lesson's overall structure and outline. According to Wuttirisiriporn, Vinitchevit, and Usaha (2020), a textbook evaluation checklist should include eight distinct evaluation categories: (1) layout, design, and physical composition; (2) unit organisation; (3) content, topics, and language; (4) language teaching methods and activities; (5) the four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing); (6) vocabulary; (7) grammar; and (8) accompanied/supplementary materials. Accordingly, teachers concurred that the physical appearances of textbooks should be put under consideration to identify the effectiveness of the textbook itself.

According to Din & Yamat (2020), 57.1% of teachers agreed that the CEFR textbook covers are attractive, and most teachers agreed that the illustrations are colourful and attractive. Based on the study by Roberts & Aziz (2020), most teachers agreed that one of the essential criteria of a good textbook is the layout, design and illustrations. The components of the layout and design of the textbooks are organisation and presentation of language contents and activities that include aspects such as learning objectives, vocabulary list, references, glossaries, information on topics, functions, structure, or grammar and skills (Litz, 2005) as cited by Roberts & Aziz (2020). Besides that, a good textbook based on the teachers' view should be well organised in terms of contents, and the learners should be able to

navigate through the books comfortably as the pages are not overcrowded. A good textbook should provide the teachers or learners with a list of vocabulary, CEFR descriptors, a glossary and a clear table of content highlighting the learning standards for each unit in the textbook. As we can see, the CEFR textbooks for year three had provided a glossary for the topic at the beginning of the topic.

Alih et al (2021) stressed the necessity of the illustrations in a good textbook where the illustrations, including charts, models, pictures, and photographs found in a textbook, helps clarify and contextualise information better. This has been supported by Takal et al (2021) in their study when the teachers commented that learners prefer visuals, such as pictures and graphs, instead of lengthy and condensed texts in one of the interviewed sessions. The teachers also commented on the necessity for the pictures in a textbook to be functional in helping the learners, especially for learners with low proficiency. It is undeniable that illustrations, layout and design with the elements of colourful and attractive are beneficial for visual learners. Hence, a textbook's layout, designs and illustrations are essential to maximising the effectiveness of the CEFR textbook for either teachers or learners.

Teacher's Perception of Local and International Culture Introduction

The Super Minds textbook received commending and positive reviews from most teachers as it was easier for them to conduct their lessons as the textbook was tailored in accordance with the CEFR curriculum. The textbook caters to each learning standard and content standard as stipulated in the CEFR DSKP. Even the organisations of the lessons are created to suit the module's structure. Based on the CEFR curriculum, teachers are given a teachers' module to guide their lesson plan. This Super Minds textbook also helps teachers benefit from the guide as it contains specific pages for each language skill. Besides, this textbook's visuals and thematic approach enhance pupils' interest and engage them during the lesson.

In their study, Kok and Aziz (2019) stated that the level of CEFR-aligned curriculum is manageable for most pupils as it was designed to suit pupils' proficiency levels. However, many respondents disagreed with the statement as there is a huge disparity regarding pupils' proficiency levels in urban and rural areas in Malaysia. It was recognised that the imported textbooks had numerous references to international cultural features that may have been unfamiliar to teachers and even more so to students from rural backgrounds who had limited exposure to these cultures.

The majority of the CEFR textbook's material comprised of unrelated European references to Malaysian children's customs and festivities. Furthermore, the excessive incorporation of foreign cultural allusions will confuse both pupils and teachers and would be the primary cause of some pupils' difficulty in adapting. The textbook's content has created a debate over the focus on European celebrations and festivities from halfway around the world instead of the local culture. Some asserted that these were problematic and unsuitable for use in Malaysian English language classrooms. Others maintained that the internationally distributed textbooks would help Malaysian children expand their knowledge base and these internationally distributed textbooks were of superior quality to local publications.

The existing CEFR-aligned curriculum lacks localised learning tools and content. Despite the fact that the textbook was produced locally, the information was taken directly from European textbooks without any adjustments for the local culture. The controversy around the unsuitable textbook was the subject of numerous researches aimed at eliciting the views of educators. It must be evident that utilising a textbook whose content differed utterly from the sociocultural experience of students was a tremendous challenge that exceeded their will

to study and ability to assimilate the content and acquire the language simultaneously. This action would be detrimental to effective language acquisition. Nevertheless, the findings of Kok and Aziz's (2019) investigation contradicted the previously examined studies.

Chong and Yamat (2021) reported that the publics' initial reaction toward CEFR had generally been favourable, even though many new changes needed to be adopted gradually. Some researchers asserted that embracing the CEFR curricula and using foreign textbooks that are linked with it would enhance students' English proficiency by equipping them with the best available resources. Some respondents even claimed that importing English textbooks based on the Common European Framework of Languages (CEFR) curriculum was the best way to improve the English standard in schools. Overall, the shift from domestic to foreign textbooks should have been conducted with care and consideration.

In conclusion, the CEFR textbook has less content on Malaysian culture as it is solely from the Cambridge University Press, and no amendments have been made to suit the Malaysian context. Some adaptations should be made instead of fully adopting foreign content. A combination of both local and international content could prove a more balanced material, especially for primary-level pupils.

Teachers' Perception on Teaching-Learning Components

"Teachers utilise competencies at their disposal in a variety of contexts, under a variety of conditions, and under a variety of constraints to engage in language activities involving language processes in order to produce and receive texts about themes in particular domains, activating those strategies that seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be completed" (Gomez-Rodriguez, 2010). This concept implies that language competency is the capacity that enables learners to communicate effectively in a foreign language, in authentic circumstances, and through real-world tasks. Being proficient requires negotiation of meaning and social interaction in the target language, in addition to knowledge of the linguistic code.

Generally speaking, CEFR textbooks emphasise themes with listening skills, which introduce the topics to the students. Then, students will engage in speaking, reading, and writing. According to Takal et al (2021) survey conducted, 92.4% of respondents thought that the textbook adequately addressed all four language skills. In terms of authenticity, background knowledge, inquiries, and associated exercises, they concurred that listening is the most honed skill compared to others (Shak et al., 2021; Uri & Abd Aziz, 2018; Takal et al., 2021). This is a positive aspect, as the four language abilities are the summit of language and will ultimately propel learners to greater heights. According to Pérez-Hernández (2020), these four skills are distinct and can exist independently, yet they are inextricably linked. In addition, she emphasised that listening and speaking are very complementary abilities that are applicable in both real-world circumstances and good written communication. There are other objections against the claims stated by Perez-Hernandez (2020); Nawai & Said (2020), and Michel et al (2018); their investigation revealed that the textbook placed a disproportionate amount of emphasis on reading and writing, which is regarded as a deficiency. Before engaging in conversation, Nawai & Said (2020) claimed that students must master the language in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

The grammar element is taught implicitly rather than explicitly in the CEFR textbook, and all four language skills are linked through a selected theme. Grammar is integrated into the instruction of various language skills. The grammatical elements are intended to heighten students' knowledge of the language's underlying patterns (Pentaksiran, 2020). It is because

the CEFR-aligned curriculum emphasised on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as mentioned by (Wuttisrisiriporn et al., 2020). Therefore, the CEFR textbooks should contain more activities on listening and speaking skills, as grammar elements are taught implicitly throughout the lessons. Due to the characteristics of the activities, "where the general aspects of the speaking activities, speaking skills, pronunciation, and extended tasks do provide sufficient input to assist teachers in delivering lessons," many teachers viewed the use of speaking activities in CEFR textbooks like Pulse 2, which is used in secondary schools, favourably (Goh & Aziz, 2020; Syafiq et al., 2021). Thus, teachers consider that a good CEFR textbook must include teaching and learning components that incorporate all integral abilities.

Teachers' Perceptions on Supplementary Materials and Resources

Another criterion on the teacher's perception on the effectiveness of CEFR textbooks is a teacher's manual. Roberts & Aziz (2020), in her study on Criteria of a Good ELT Textbook: Malaysian Teachers' Perception cited Cunningsworth (1995); a teacher's manual provides teachers with answers to the exercises, suggestions for alternative activities, ideas to handle the language materials, and guidelines for effective language programmes. Thus, the findings in their study stated that a teacher's manual could contribute to one becoming an effective teacher and provide confidence due to the availability of answers to the exercises provided in the textbook.

Chong and Yamat (2021), in their study on Teachers' Implementation of CEFR-aligned Curriculum, stated that if only teachers are provided with a teacher's manual, CDs, videos and audio, then the learning can be optimised. 25% of teachers in their study claimed they were not provided with CEFR-aligned textbooks, CDs, videos and audios. Based on Alismail and McGuire (2015), as cited by Nawawi et al. (2021), the authorities need to provide appropriate technological tools to ensure an ideal process of the teaching and learning environment in the ESL classroom. The use of technology would initiate more dynamic teaching and learning occurring in the classroom; increase pupils' interest in learning the English language, as technology is an effective tool to boost learning for pupils.

Although many researchers have agreed that the CEFR curriculum has provided ample teaching materials and resources, it is vice versa in the study conducted by (Nawawi et al., 2021). According to Nawawi et al (2021), many teachers have difficulty attaining teaching materials and lack technological resources that suit learners' proficiency levels. Hadi & Shah (2020) stated that English teachers find it challenging to align the structure of CEFR with the textbook provided for ESL classrooms. Most of the teachers complain about the conceptualisation of the textbook. It is due to the internalisation of the content which causes low proficiency English learners to have a challenging time comprehending the materials in the textbook (Nawawi et al., 2021; Shak et al., 2021). Moreover, the teachers claimed that they have considerable workloads, which decreases their time searching and planning for other activities to suit the learning and learning sessions. Hence, having a good reference textbook would save them from creating the content from scratch.

Implications & Suggestions

This systematic literature review peered at the perception of the English Language teachers directly involved in the newly introduced CEFR-aligned curriculum and KSSR in 2013. It is crucial to ensure that the teacher and pupils can fully utilise the textbook as it is a valuable instructional material. English textbooks are excellent teaching resources for both teachers

and students. They offer an appropriate integration of language abilities, progressive development of language forms and functions, and step-by-step instructions for problem-solving exercises. In addition, the majority of English textbooks link the language-learning approach to the learners' interests and objectives, incorporating cross-cultural issues. In addition, it blends language studies with other topics, provides exact vocabulary based on semantic groups and context, and incorporates contemporary teaching methods to assist pupils in acquiring English efficiently and fluently. As the textbook is a sole resource for the pupils, and limited studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of the CEFR textbook for the teacher and pupils, the researcher intended to get an in-depth understanding of these issues.

These findings were substantial and warranted thorough investigation by the Malaysian Ministry of Education in order to identify an expedient resolution to this problem. This study suggests the need for a practical solution, such as incorporating more contextually and culturally relevant content in textbooks, as opposed to the CEFR global textbooks that lack cultural representations. These findings demonstrate that transnational cultures are prioritised above local cultures, which are subsequently neglected. Thus, the researcher emphasises the significance of ensuring that global ELT textbooks on culture representations are diverse and do not suppress learners' own cultures.

The findings of this literature review can be used as a reference for various parties involved in English language primary-level educational institutions, such as English teachers, teacher activity centres (PKG) and the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE). These CEFR English textbook selections generally help teachers deliver lessons in a more engaging and focused way to increase pupils' mastery of English. This can reduce the burden on teachers to plan learning activities because this textbook selection has been chosen based on the level pupils need to master, as included in the CEFR. Indirectly, teachers will be better prepared to teach English and, simultaneously, reduce pupils' anxiety about learning English, mainly for pupils from rural areas. Pupils will also benefit where they will be able to learn and understand English with a more culturally tailored approach to fit our 'salad bowl' and diverse community.

Consequently, it is recommended to conduct an analysis or comparison between locally written and global ELT textbooks using the Malaysian English Language Textbook Evaluation Checklist (MELTEC) that has been newly developed. Clear criteria will assure transparency, validity, and reliability during the textbook selection process. In addition, teachers play a paramount role in ensuring that the learning materials in the ELT textbooks facilitate learning and are suitable for the learners. Future researchers should investigate ESL school teachers' perspectives and the elements influencing their textbook evaluation decisions. Doing so ensures the MOE could consider other alternatives to better comprehend this issue and address its root causes.

Conclusion

Arising from the findings of this literature review, one major conclusion that could be drawn is that the CEFR-aligned curriculum is moving in a positive direction and has gained broad support from the teachers. However, the findings revealed several challenges and issues raised by the teachers at the time of imposition of the CEFR-aligned curriculum. Evidence from the literature review indicates the necessity for modifications and the correction of faults that happened during the initial phase of implementation. This information may help future researchers undertake a follow-up study. In conclusion, no curriculum will be flawless or free

from criticism, but it must be accepted by instructors and recognised to be educationally valid by the public at large.

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