TESL In-Service Teachers' Experiences When Evaluating
an Oral History Workbook

AZLINA ABDUL AZIZ
Faculty of Education,
The National University of Malaysia, Malaysia
azlina1@ukm.edu.my

ROSMIZAL MAKHTAR
Faculty of Education,
The National University of Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in English curriculum has led to the use of CEFR aligned foreign textbooks in Malaysian schools. However, the application of CEFR English textbooks from the United Kingdom has encountered a few oppositions as the advocates of Malaysian-based textbooks believe that English should be written contextually by emphasizing the local cultures and histories. In lieu of this, a group of in-service teachers in a Master's course had developed and evaluated each other's Oral History materials. The research objectives are to find out what are the material evaluation criteria frequently attended to by in-service TESL teachers when evaluating an oral history workbook and to what extent the in-service teachers have gained from evaluating oral history workbook developed by their peers. A mixed methodology research approach using basic frequency count, percentage value and qualitative data was employed in this study. Data was gathered from 109 in-service TESL teachers via their Personal Reflective Journal (PRJ), which they had written after evaluating an oral history workbook based on Tomlinson's and Mukundan's evaluation checklists. The findings identified the frequently attended criteria by the in-service teachers and that there are new criteria that can be added to the evaluation checklists. It is anticipated that this study could encourage educators to develop their own classroom materials, and material evaluators to consider the use of locally based English textbook and a revision to the material evaluation checklists to reflect current 21ˢᵗ century pedagogy.

Keywords: Common European Framework Reference; Material Evaluation Checklist; TESL; In-Service teachers

INTRODUCTION

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is currently recognized globally as the standard language proficiency framework to be utilized. Therefore, the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Malaysia has taken the initiative to utilize CEFR aligned foreign English textbook from the United Kingdom for English language instruction for both primary and secondary schools. According to Abdul Aziz et al. (2019), the Standard-Based English Language Curriculum for Secondary (SBELC) curriculum would utilize foreign English textbooks as the main source to teach the syllabus. The MOE aspires to produce students who can attain international standards of proficiency level; hence, the transformative initiative was taken.

However, the transformation has been widely discussed among educationalist, scholars and policymakers as it has disclosed mixed responses (Johar & Abdul Aziz, 2019). As the learners' intercultural skills have been embedded in the English curriculum, the main issue that lingers around is whether the foreign English textbook is able to fulfill the need of local learners (Abdul Rahim & Jalalian Daghigh, 2019). Moreover, in a study exploring the experiences of student-teachers in developing oral history texts by Abdul Aziz et al. (2019), they expressed the view that there is a hidden message that English texts produced in the UK by its native speakers are unmistakably, progressively superior in terms of language and content, and that

they are the only main experts of the English language. Additionally, the content of foreign English textbook does not emphasize the voice of the local people and culture. The absence of local cultural awareness in foreign English textbook should be further discussed and considered by policy makers. Therefore, the absence of learners' own culture in foreign English textbook has driven the researchers to explore the experiences of TESL in-service teachers when evaluating oral history workbook, which has been developed contextually, whereby it is based on local context and the Malaysian culture. In this study, the in-service teachers produced an oral history workbook, evaluated each other's work based on Tomlinson's and Mukundan's material evaluation checklists, and wrote reflections on their experiences evaluating the materials.

The workbook, which consists of a written Oral History text, lesson plans and activities, is used to develop the four skills i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking. However, in this paper, we are only reporting on the in-service teachers' experiences when evaluating the oral history workbook rather than their experiences developing the materials as this study is an extension of a previous research conducted by Abdul Aziz et al. (2019). This research seeks to answer the following questions: 1) What are the material evaluation criteria frequently attended to by in-service TESL teachers when evaluating an oral history workbook? and 2) What are the experiences of in-service TESL teachers when evaluating an oral history workbook?

LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

There are three theories underpinning this study. They are Material Evaluation Principles, Contextualized Learning Materials and Oral History as Part of Cultural Awareness.

MATERIAL EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

Tomlinson (2013) defined material evaluation as a process that involves determining the value of a set of instructional materials. He further explained that this process involves making decisions about the impact of the materials on users of instructional materials and this process attempts to measure some criteria by using material evaluation checklists. Tomlinson (2013, p. 2) has provided a set of material evaluation checklists which include:

    1) the appeal of the materials to the learners,
    2) the credibility of materials to learners, teachers, and administrators,
    3) the validity of the materials,
    4) the reliability of the materials,
    5) the ability of the materials to interest the learners and the teachers, and
    6) the ability of the materials to motivate the learners.

The criteria listed indicate that the needs of learners should be identified before designing and developing material evaluation checklist.

Researchers believed that the validity and reliability of the material evaluation checklist should be verified by experts before it is able to be used by material evaluators (Ali, 2018). Based on the criteria provided by Tomlinson, teachers or instructional material developers can adapt and adopt it when developing their instructional materials according to their students' language needs and proficiency levels. Tomlinson also suggested that material evaluation checklist should be established before materials are created, and it is used to make decisions about the approach, procedures and activities to be adopted as well as to observe the material development and its consequent use [as cited in Maroko, 2013).
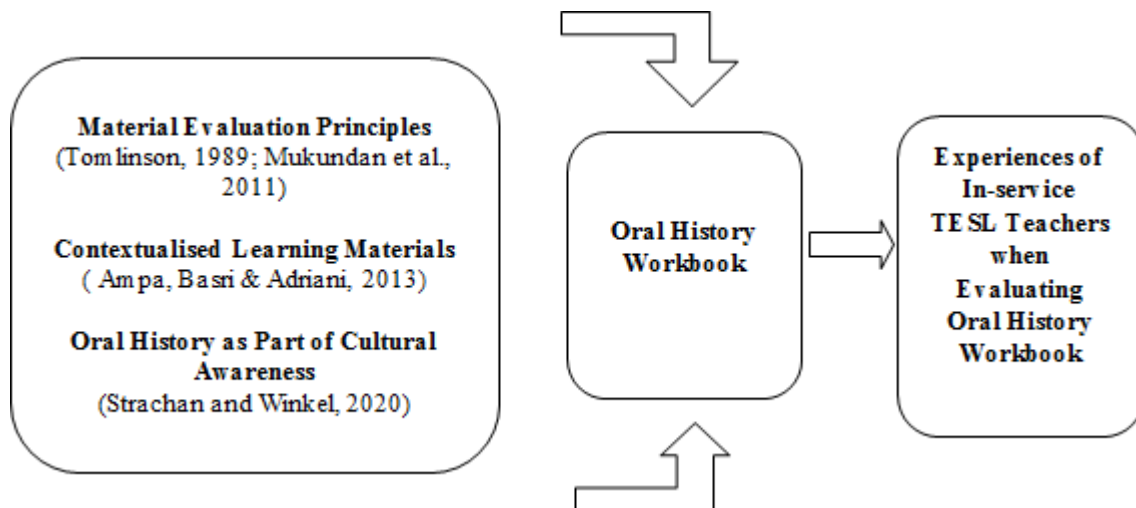
FIGURE 1. Conceptual Framework

The principles of material evaluation were then further expanded by Mukundan et al. (2011). Mukundan et al. (2011) examined the principles of material evaluation by developing an English language textbook evaluation checklist. The purpose of the study was to improve on Tomlinson and Mukundan et al's evaluation checklist. The results of the study are anticipated to be beneficial for English as a second language (ESL) teachers, curriculum designers, and instructional material developers and evaluators. Mukundan and Nimehchisalem (2012) believed that the assessment is made simpler, more objective and effective when it depends on a substantiated instrument. This indicates that teachers as instructional material developers and consumers can adopt and adapt the material evaluation checklist from Tomlinson and Mukundan et al. to cater to students' language needs as well as to achieve their teaching and learning objectives. In this research, we had utilized both Tomlinson's (Appendix 1) and Mukundan's checklists (Appendix 2) to evaluate Oral History materials by a group of TESL in-service teachers.

CONTEXTUALIZED LEARNING MATERIALS IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Learning materials are commonly the most significant part of language pedagogy considering they provide language input and exercise necessary for language learning to occur (Ampa et al., 2013). Meanwhile, contextualization can be characterized as an effort to create a real-life situation based on students' experiences of their real lives circumstance (Rohayati, 2013). Ampa et al. (2013) defined contextualized learning material as materials that allow learners to process new data and knowledge on their own based on previous reference. This suggests that learners naturally seek meaning in context that corresponds to their schemata. Furthermore, contextualized material is believed to be able to offer a promising method in assisting learners to learn more efficiently (Baker et al., 2009). This is because contextualized materials are able to help students to relate the content of what they are learning to the authentic life content that they have experienced.

A good learning material can guarantee certain desirable results such as in encouraging learners to become more independent, even in circumstances where educators may not be prepared to teach effectively (Ahmed, 2017). Besides, the first thing that should be considered when developing contextualized texts is the inclusion of recognizable situations whereby the content includes situations that are realistic to learners (Saqlain et al., 2014). The main aim in utilising contextualised materials is to offer learners such models that were straightforward and have a place with their own local context. Language input in learning materials also cannot merely be

understandable but also memorable to the point that language is contextualized by utilizing germane themes for students (Bourke, 2006).

A research conducted by Rohayati (2013) revealed that the application of contextualization was effective in enhancing students' vocabulary mastery. This showed that contextualization does play a significant role in improving students' language learning. Moreover, Rohayati (2013) also suggested the teachers who intend to carry out contextualization need to choose a proper context based on students' experiences and real live situations and to create a lively classroom atmosphere as well. Therefore, the suitability and effectiveness of language learning materials deserve critical considerations since they are such a key element of language classroom (McGrath, 2013).

Howard and Major (2004) also mentioned that there are a few factors that may influence English language teachers to develop their own teaching materials, regardless of the accessibility of commercially produced materials. Factors that affect teachers include contextualization, individual needs, personalization and timeliness (Howard & Major, 2004). Contextualization is a necessity when it comes to teacher-designed materials because commercially produced materials do not aim at any target group of students, nor particular cultural or informative context. This is clearly stated by Howard and Major (2004) that the current learning materials are loaded with discourse acts and events of which most English language learners will never experience.

ORAL HISTORY AS PART OF CULTURAL AWARENESS

Oral history is the progression of recording, safeguarding, and spreading our understanding of the past through life stories. It also stimulates the idea of learning from another person's experiences and enables students to link the learning content to their experiences in real life where it would match the interest in reading among the students (Abdul Aziz et al., 2019). Therefore, the use of oral history workbook in English language pedagogy can be a part of cultural awareness among second language learners in Malaysia. The voice of local people and culture shared in the oral history workbook can encourage learners to explore and gain a deeper understanding of other people's cultures. Malaysia, which is a home to multi-ethnic groups such as Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban, Bidayuh and Kadazan can offer many stories based on its multi-ethnic cultures. Additionally, the utilization of oral history workbook in the English classroom can also bridge the gap between different cultures and, in a way, challenge the underlying discrimination which is not commonly brought up and debated in professional settings. Cultural appreciation can also be imparted among language learners through oral history workbook as learners gain general knowledge of other cultures.

According to Strachan and Winkel (2020), oral history has become a vital instrument in academic circles in collecting first-hand experience. Anthropologists and historiographers, specifically, have utilized oral narratives for a considerable length of time as an instrument for examination and information assortment whereby first-individual records widen the extent of a request as they cast a focus on an individual or lived experience, providing nuanced understandings of lifeways and occasions over a significant time span. Additionally, a new viewpoint will be offered to learners as the culture and identity of others were integrated into oral history texts (Burgo, 2016). This implies that oral history can inculcate culture and identity awareness among students as they get to be exposed to other people's first-hand experiences. This claim is supported by Tseng (2002) as he believed that culture could change individuals' perceptions and it is important to broaden individuals' perceptions of the world (as cited in Burgo, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research employed a mixed methodology approach using basic frequency count, percentage value and qualitative data. The research design is beneficial in obtaining a deep understanding of the relationship between quantitative outcomes and qualitative discoveries of the in-service teachers' experiences in evaluating an oral history workbook.

RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANTS

The research was carried out in one of the public universities in Malaysia. The participants of this research were 109 TESL in-service teachers, who had enrolled in the course, 'Current Trends in Language Teaching Research' at the Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. In the course, they were required to create an oral history workbook based on the themes in the Standard-Based English Language Curriculum for Secondary Schools (SBELC). The Oral History workbook could serve as an additional workbook for the current English textbook. As they worked in groups, they were required to interview a member of the community based on the themes 'People and Culture' and 'Health and Environment', which could be found in the lower secondary form curriculum. Stories from local community would provide sources of authentic and contextualized narratives and thus help to raise cultural awareness amongst their pupils. Once they have transcribed the interview, the data was rewritten as an Oral History text, in narrative form, from the interviewee's perspective. Once they have created this Oral History text, they were asked to develop four lesson plans based on reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. The Oral History workbook they developed were exchanged between groups and evaluated using Tomlinson's and Mukundan et al.'s evaluation checklists. They were required to write a written reflection of their experiences in evaluating oral history workbook based on evaluation checklist adapted from Tomlinson (2008) and Mukundan et al. (2011). Before the researchers conducted the research, a consent letter was given to each in-service teacher to gain their consent to be the participants of the study. In addition, pseudonyms were also used in order to protect the participants' identities.

DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

A duration of four weeks was given to the participants to come out with a written reflection of the evaluation of each other group's Oral History material. The participants were required to share their experiences in evaluating oral history workbook based on Tomlinson's (2008) and Mukundan et al.'s (2011) material evaluation checklists. The participants did not necessarily attend to all the criteria in the checklists when evaluating the workbook as there are many items. Instead, they attended to criteria that they found to be important, and they were also encouraged to include other criteria that were not mentioned in the checklists. This process revealed the practicality of the checklists as the participants attached more significance to some criteria over the others when they reported their material evaluation experiences. The data were collected from 109 Personal Reflective Journal (PRJ) by the end of the 'Current Trends in Language Teaching Research' course. Each participant was asked to write a PRJ discussing the material evaluation criteria they had attended to when evaluating the oral history workbook. The researchers analyzed the data thematically by reading it line by line, which is then followed by creating codes that helped the researchers to determine the occurrence of themes related to the study. This thematic analysis approach searches and extracts the common patterns through multiple data readings (Yukhymenko et al., 2014). The occurrence of themes was recorded using basic frequency count to show the themes distribution patterns. The frequency count

would reveal which criteria of the material evaluation checklist were given greater importance by the in-service teachers as well as addition of new criteria that was not present in the material evaluation checklist. In total, 109 PRJs were collected, coded and analysed thematically following the material evaluation checklists as a guide.

FINDINGS

This study aims to explore the experiences of in-service teachers when evaluating oral history workbook based on Tomlinson's and Mukundan et al.'s material evaluation checklists. Based on the checklists, there are a few themes that can be derived, namely suitability for learners, teaching and learning content, and development of English language. This was developed after the data were rigorously analysed and the similarities in the criteria listed by Tomlinson (2008) and Mukundan et al. (2011) were identified. Based on the findings, the researchers also added three new criteria that were not mentioned in both material evaluation checklists. In the teaching and learning content theme, the 2 new criteria are i) To what extent do the activities/ lesson plans adhere to the CEFR? and ii) To what extent do the materials/ activities/ lesson plans utilize technology and 21stcentury learning? In the development of the English language theme, the new criterion is iii) 'To what extent do the materials/ activities enrich students' vocabulary'. The tables below (Table 1 – 3) shows the frequency count of each criterion mentioned in the 109 PRJs based on the respective main three themes.

SUITABILITY FOR LEARNERS

The first theme, 'Suitability for learners' was identified by grouping a few material evaluation criteria that fit within this main theme. Within this main theme, the in-service teachers are asked to examine how the material they are evaluating would be suitable for students in terms of its engagement, meaningfulness, and how interesting and challenging the materials are. Based on Table 1, the majority of the participants gave priority to 'To what extent are the texts likely to interest the learners' when evaluating the oral history workbook with the highest percentage of 54.1%. This shows that reading texts that would interest the learners are given priority by the participants when evaluating the workbook. In order to enhance students' reading skills, reading texts should be able to entice students to read more and better as well as to engage students with more relatively ubiquitous topics. The more students are able to improve their reading skills, the more knowledge students are able to grasp (Akbaşlı et al., 2016).

TABLE 1. Suitability for Learners criteria

Suitability for Learners	N	Percentages (%)
To what extent is the exposure to English in use likely to be meaningful to the target learners?	26	23.9
To what extent are the texts likely to interest the learners?	59	54.1
To what extent are the activities likely to engage the target learners cognitively?	44	40.4
To what extent are the activities likely to engage the target learners affectively?	16	14.7
To what extent are the activities likely to provide achievable challenges to the learners?	50	45.9

Meanwhile, the second most frequently cited criterion was 'To what extent are the activities likely to provide achievable challenge to the learners' with 45.9% occurrence. The participants considered this criterion as important because in order to advance language learners to the next level, challenges should be part of learning. Providing achievable challenges in language learning will also encourage learners to stay motivated to learn and improve their language skills.

The third frequently cited criterion that was given attention to by the TESL in-service teachers was, 'To what extent are the activities likely to engage the target learners cognitively'. This criterion comprises 40.4% occurrence. Language learners who are able to relate with the activities cognitively are usually exposed to meaningful learning. It is essential for learners to perceive activities as being meaningful because it will help the learners to retain the knowledge they gain for a long time. A study has shown that if learners do not deem a learning activity deserving of their time and effort, they probably would not take part in a satisfactory manner or may even withdraw from joining the activity altogether (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Next, the fourth frequently cited criterion used by the participants was 'To what extent is the exposure to English in use likely to be meaningful to the target learners' with a frequency of 23.9%. Al-Zoubi (2018), emphasized that the exposure to English among second language learners should be done and encouraged by educators in order to help learners improve their English language as it can affect learners' self-ability and apprehension of the target language. Therefore, the participants of this study have also utilized this criterion when assessing the materials.

The least attended criterion in this theme was 'To what extent are the activities likely to engage the target learners affectively' with 14.7% occurrence. This suggests that affective strategy is given less emphasis by the participants when evaluating the suitability of materials to teach English.

TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTENT

TABLE 2. Teaching and Learning Content criteria

Teaching & Learning content	N	Percentages (%)
To what extent do the activities/ lesson plans adhere to the CEFR?	54	49.5
To what extent do the materials/ activities/ lesson plans utilize technology and 21st century learning?	56	51.4
To what extent do the materials provide opportunities for cultural awareness?	32	29.4
To what extent are the materials likely to sustain positive impact?	18	16.5

Table 2 shows that the criterion that was most frequently used by the participants when evaluating the oral history workbook was 'To what extent do the materials/ activities/ lesson plans utilize technology and 21st century learning' with 51.4% occurrence. This is a new criterion that was identified by the researchers when analyzing the data and it is not listed in Tomlinson's and Mukundan et al.'s material evaluation checklists. The criterion was added in the checklist because the participants repeatedly mentioned it in their written reflections, and this shows that the participants also considered other criterion when evaluating the materials. As the world is gearing up towards technology-based education, the implementation of digital tools in the teaching materials, activities and lesson plans has been emphasized as it is the current need of the learners. The utilization of technology in English language learning is believed to be able to help the learners to learn faster and easier as everything is accessible and learnable (Sarica & Cavus, 2009). To add, in order to optimize students' learning through technology, teachers play a significant role in using technology in the classroom (Mofareh, 2019).

The second commonly cited criterion that was given attention to by the participants was 'To what extent do the activities/ lesson plans adhere to the CEFR' with 49.5% response. This new criterion is also included by the researchers when analyzing the data. As the MOE decided to implement CEFR in 2013 as an initiative to reform English language education, the participants of this study also considered this new criterion as important when assessing materials. The availability of content or learning standards in the oral history workbook are

also vital because the materials were developed with an aim to meet students' needs.

Meanwhile, the third regularly cited criterion that was used by the participants was 'To what extent do the materials that provide opportunities for cultural awareness' (29.4%). Most of the oral history texts developed by the participants undeniably evoke and reiterate the cultures of other people. Hence, this criterion is significantly important even though the participants did not mention this criterion as frequently as the previous ones. Oral history texts also allow the readers to explore and learn about other people's stories which are not mentioned in the historical records (Walbert, n.d.). Therefore, oral history texts, especially texts that are developed locally need to be given greater recognition as it offers more interesting local stories than the ones in the foreign English textbook.

The criterion that was the least frequently attended to by the participants was 'To what extent are the materials likely to sustain positive impact' where only 16.5% of responses was recorded. It can be concluded that this criterion is the least preferred criterion in this theme because the participants put more emphasis on cultural awareness, which is more relevant to the oral history workbook.

DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

TABLE 3. Development of English Language criteria

Development of English language	N	Percentages (%)
To what extent do the materials provide exposure to English in authentic use?	17	15.6
To what extent do the materials provide opportunities for learners to gain feedback on their effectiveness of their use of English?	10	9.2
To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for meaningful use of English?	42	38.5
To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for learners to make discoveries about how English is used?	5	4.6
To what extent do the materials/ activities plans enrich students' vocabulary?	42	38.5

Two criteria that scored the highest value in this theme were: 1) 'To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for meaningful use of English', and 2) 'To what extent do the materials/ activities enrich students' vocabulary'. Both have a frequency of 38.5% respectively. The latter is a new criterion that was added by the researchers as the participants repetitively mentioned the criterion in their written reflections.

The second most frequently cited criterion that was used by the participants in evaluating oral history workbook was 'To what extent do the materials provide exposure to English in authentic use' (15.6%). This shows that a great emphasis should be placed on the use of authentic materials. The use of authentic materials in English classrooms can make the learning process significantly more engaging, imaginative and stimulating for learners (Zazulak, 2017). Similarly, authentic materials can be practical for the teachers to elicit authentic reactions from learners.

Meanwhile, the third most frequently cited criterion that was given attention to by the in-service teachers was 'To what extent do the materials provide opportunities for learners to gain feedback on their effectiveness of their use of English' (9.2%). This criterion highlights the responses that the learners can get after they have used the materials. However, based on the finding, it shows that the participants did not put much emphasis on this criterion. Klimova (2015) stated that feedback can be given formally or informally in English classrooms and the feedback-giving sessions should be established in an improvement-oriented manner. Teachers also should give feedback in a neutral and positive way to provide a good impact on students (Reynolds, 2013).

The least employed criterion in this theme was 'To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for learners to make discoveries about how English is used' with a frequency of

4.6%. Among all the criteria mentioned, this criterion is the least preferred among the participants when evaluating the materials.

DISCUSSION

The findings above found that the theme 'suitability for learners' was the most important criteria used by the TESL in-service teachers to evaluate the oral history workbook. Within this main theme, the criterion that was frequently mentioned by the participants in their PRJs was 'To what extent are the texts likely to interest the learners'. Meanwhile, the least attended theme in the material evaluation checklist was the development of English language and the subtheme that was least mentioned was 'To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for learners to make discoveries about how English is used'. In this section, we are only discussing the most attended criteria listed in each theme.

SUITABILITY FOR LEARNERS – THE VALUE OF ORAL HISTORY TEXTS

The findings of this study indicate that 54.1% of the respondents found the criterion 'how interesting the oral history text is' played a significant role during the evaluation process. A study by Horn (2014, p. 78) showed sufficient evidence that the utilization of oral history in English classroom demonstrates many benefits to learners which include "developing historical skills, content knowledge and historical context as it relates to significance and meaning of historical events". When evaluating the oral history workbook provided by the other participants, they examined the value of Oral History in improving pupils' knowledge of local culture and history and how these knowledge are suitable for the level of Form 2 pupils.

The majority of participants considered that the oral history texts developed by others were interesting and appropriate to students' level of knowledge. This aspect is evident in Akmal's written reflection. He stated,

> "Overall, the oral history texts written by members of Group 4 are appropriate for the intended learners. The authors have provided a clear storyline, and both appear appealing and informative to the readers".

One of the participants also mentioned that the oral history texts developed by their classmates were authentic as they represented real narratives and this can be observed from Nabila's written reflection,

> "Based on our evaluation for Group 9's work, I could say that both oral history texts were interesting to read and portrayed real stories from real people. It was not something that pupils can find in their textbook".

They also realized that the narrative form used to develop oral history texts makes the texts more interesting to pupils as Vienna mentioned,

> "The story telling technique used by the author was captivating and it made the readers hunger for more stories. Overall, the text managed to grasp the attention and interest, both at the same time with excellent word choices, suitable for Form 2 readers".

Oral History texts in the workbook, which are developed by the TESL in-service teachers, provide authentic real-life experiences of people within the community. Students will find the text relatable, informative, interesting and affirming. It challenges the stereotypes and the generic representations of communities often found within textbooks written for the

purpose of brevity and simplicity. The Oral History texts in the Oral workbook present a more nuanced and complex representations of individuals with the community written in a narrative, appealing format.

TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTENT – INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

The ever-evolving world has seen a constant progress in the education system along with the introduction of new theoretical approaches which are deemed fit in catering to the needs of second language learners. The 21st century classroom has introduced several sets of skills which can be implemented by teachers in order to improve their teaching as well as learners' experiences in the ESL classroom. The participants stated that language acquisition can be encouraged through the integration of the 21st century skills which comprises of the 4Cs, namely communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity to connect the learners with the language content taught in the classroom. This can be seen from Ain's written reflection. She stated,

> "Next, the other group did include the four skills in the 21st century classroom which were communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. This had shown that they were following the latest format of the lesson plan. The skills were clearly shown in their gallery walk activities, brainstorming, and writing the ending of a story".

In order to ensure that the integration of technology and 21st century learning can be implemented efficiently, teachers should consider the availability of facilities in schools that can aid students' learning. School facilities such as the internet, LCD projectors, and laptops should be accessible for teachers and students to use for academic purpose. Badriah mentioned it in her written reflection,

> "…I find some of their lesson plans don't cater to the schools in the interiors. The activities they suggested require access to the internet and laptops. Being a teacher from a suburban area, this is still an issue, I wonder how the teachers in rural area will implement the activities in their classrooms. Plus, the group didn't provide any other activity for the lesson in case technology fails. They should have considered this before they come up with the lesson plan since this has been mentioned in the first lecture".

Richards and Rodgers (2001) pointed out that learners who are involved in cooperative context are encouraged to take charge of their own learning process throughout the phases of planning, monitoring as well as assessment. Besides, students of today are known as digital generation which suggests that they have advanced technological literacy skills that can be beneficial for their language development (Pazilah & Hashim, 2018). Therefore, they are very much drawn to the incorporation of technology in ESL classroom because the use of gizmos is very enticing to them [34]. Based on the participants' written reflections, they stated that the oral history workbook, which incorporated 21st century learning, allows learners to do self-learning and self-exploration in academic setting. Kasturi wrote that,

> "After reading this text, I am very sure that pupils who do not know much about this topic will definitely do some reading on this topic, which is a good thing. It helps pupils to do some self-learning. This will integrate the 21st century-based learning as pupils need to do things on their own and not solely depend on their teachers.",

Similarly, Harry stated that,

> "I agree with the evaluators as learner-centered teaching and learning strategies optimize pupils'

opportunities to learn effectively in the class. Self-exploration during lesson promotes active learning and creative thinking. Henceforth, this must be taken into serious consideration as pupils must be allowed to learn and engage in a dynamic learning environment as a part of the requirement to develop effective and efficient 21st century learner".

Throughout the evaluation process, the participants of this study also learnt a lot from each other. They have gained invaluable experiences which can be beneficial for their future career prospect in terms of technology utilization in ESL classroom. They believed that the integration of technology will provide interesting activities to learners. One of the participants, Chua, expressed this aspect in his written reflection,

"Moreover, I could also learn some of the creative yet innovative idea through evaluating lesson plans of another group. Some of the ideas are quite useful, fits in the learning objectives and on par with the 21st century learning. I would be able to refer some of the useful and interesting activities in my future lessons".

Meanwhile, Hanisah wrote in her written reflection regarding the usefulness of 21st century activities in education,

"The lesson plans complied with almost all the criteria we looked through from the given list. We learnt a lot on how to go about planning for 21st century activities in the lessons. I learnt that a lot from evaluating other group's work. I even learn on how to set up activities using Quizlet, an online quiz. It was very easy and interesting to the teenagers".

Additionally, the integration of technology into literacy teaching promotes a more dynamic and interactive learning environment in terms of more collaboration of ideas based on peer feedback and positive interactions. This would drive students into deeper learning and exploration with the language. If done correctly, the chances of achieving active and meaningful learning will be likely and students will be able to apply the knowledge obtained to any content area of the tasks given at hand (Zakaria & Abdul Aziz, 2019). This is evident in Catriona's written reflections, as she wrote,

"After my group reviewing the weaknesses in our lesson plans, it has prompted us to look into efforts to overcome them. We need to rethink some alternative teaching strategies which reflect 21st century learning as well as revise the instructions in the lesson plans to make them more explicit. Therefore, feedback by peers is invaluable as it helped my group to look at our own developed materials and lesson plans in order to discover our strengths and weaknesses and re-evaluate them".

The use of 21st learning and technology has become an important focus for teachers when creating teaching and learning materials since they are stated and emphasised in the Malaysian English curriculum. It can no longer be excluded from material development and evaluation checklists as they are shown to be given priorities by the in-service teachers even when these two criteria were not listed in the material evaluation checklists. Thus, the checklists could be updated to include 21st century learning and use of technology.

DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE – MEANINGFUL LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Many researchers believe that the ability to use English language effectively is an added value that will help students to move into their career phase where current employers are seeking potential employees who are proficient in English language (Md Yunus et al. 2013). Therefore, in order to expose students to meaningful use of English, the majority of participants agreed that language learning activities should be established according to students' language proficiency and preferences. One of the participants, Jane, agreed on this aspect as she wrote,

"I also learnt that at times, even though the materials might be suitable to our own preferences, it might not be other people's cup of tea. Therefore, instead of creating materials based on our own liking, we should always prioritize our learners' needs in their learning process".

They also realized the importance of placing consideration for students with different abilities. Nasha wrote, "The next lesson that I obtained would be the importance of developing learning materials which are at par with pupils' proficiency levels by taking into consideration the intermediate and low proficiency pupils if it is a mixed-ability class".

Moreover, the participants also mentioned about the importance of employing student-centered learning in the English classroom where it allows students to be independent learners. As mentioned by Harry,

"As an educator, it is necessary to have a progressive lesson with the incorporation of learner-centered teaching and learning strategies. From the given critique, these aspects are crucial to induce discovery, collaborative and even independent learning".

Other than that, teachers also play an important role in providing appropriate learning materials to students to ensure that they can experience engaging and meaningful learning during classroom activities. Amila addressed this view in her written reflection,

"All in all, this project has given me an insightful experience as we are exposed to the secondary school syllabus which showed that the topics and themes are to be more serious and should not be taken lightly. From this, my mind is now widely opened and think that classroom activities are not merely taken as it is from the textbook. As teachers, we need to be wiser in providing the materials that make learning more meaningful and relevant for the pupils as it is crucial for the growth in their teen years".

One of the participants also stated that the teachers should be fully prepared in terms of lesson plans and activities. This is to ensure a smooth transition of the learning activities and that teachers can handle any circumstances that might interrupt the flow of the lesson. This is illustrated by Sofea,

"Besides that, after evaluating other group's oral history texts, lesson plans and materials, I realized that a lesson plan is the basis of everything. A lesson plan ensures that pupils acquire knowledge through activities that have appropriate teaching and learning strategies. If a teacher teaches without preparing a lesson plan beforehand, a lesson might become havoc and he would not be prepared to overcome problems faced in a classroom".

STUDENTS'VOCABULARY ENRICHMENT THROUGH THE USE OF ORAL HISTORY WORKBOOK

Vocabulary is important in English language learning because it is the backbone of proper language command. Students who can master vocabulary surely have little to no problem in English reading proficiency. According to Huckin (1995), English language learners depend on vocabulary knowledge to a great extent and the scarcity of that knowledge is the greatest hurdle for learners to get over [as cited in Alqahtani, 2015). Therefore, to enrich students' vocabulary, the addition of a glossary at the back page of oral history texts should be encouraged. The participants were aware that glossary is important in reading materials as Suresh wrote in his written reflection,

"The selection of vocabularies for instance wasn't on par with the glossary or list of words that students in lower secondary should acknowledge. For example, there were terminology that described the process of funeral and death occurrence in the Iban community. As readers, we might wonder what those terms mean. The writer should have listed these terms and defined them for references purposes".

Meanwhile one of the participants commented on how the absence of glossary may affect readers that come from different cultures. Agnes wrote,

"The only thing they forgot to include is the glossary. Glossary is very important because they are using unfamiliar words in the text and students who are going to read the text is not just Iban. So, they need the glossary to find the meaning of the words in the text".

Aside from attempting to meet students' language proficiency, the use of complex words in reading activity can give more vocabulary exposure to the students. Quoting from one of the participants' reflections, Amy stated, "For the Reading Skill, we could also use simpler words intended for the pupils to understand easier but using complex words can actually expose pupils to more vocabularies". Interestingly, the participants also learnt a lot of new vocabularies from the evaluation process, as one of them mentioned;

"Throughout the evaluation of their oral history texts, I learned quite a lot of new vocabularies and phrases from their texts. The biggest challenge for me is to watch for their errors especially in the choice of words and the sentence structures", Adlin

Moreover, a participant believed that teaching vocabulary should not be differentiated according to students' language proficiency level. Instead, teachers should increase the difficulty of vocabulary learning so that students can enhance their vocabulary expansion. Also, standardizing vocabulary learning can be implemented to help the underachieving students to feel motivated to learn and strive harder in English language classroom. Ravitha wrote this in her written reflections,

"I do not believe in having an easier material or easier vocabulary to the weaker students, but the teacher needs to provide more guidance and motivate the pupils to try better in the class. I could relate this during one of my practicum lesson when I provided an easier version of the task sheet and when she compares it to her classmates who got a difficult one, she got demotivated as she felt that I am having a lower expectation on her compared other friends. This saddens her and she stopped attempting my task. This could be one of the reasons why I do not accept the suggestion and write only one set of vocabulary for all the pupils instead of each set for each level".

In contrast, one of the participants believed that teachers should not hasten students' language learning by presenting too many new vocabularies as it would have made low-proficiency students feel intimidated to learn the words. This is evident from Nasha's written reflection, "The other group has created a lengthy oral history text with difficult vocabularies which might be incomprehensible for under-achievers. In my opinion, a teacher should not rush pupils' learning by introducing many new vocabularies in one lesson as this would scare them".

CONCLUSION

The participants' PRJs revealed the criteria they frequently attended to as they evaluated the Oral History workbook using Tomlinson's and Mukundan et al.'s material evaluation checklists. The experiences of in-service TESL teachers when evaluating an oral history workbook disclosed 3 important criteria that can be added to Tomlinson's and Mukundan et al.'s material evaluation checklists. The three added criteria that were found in the findings were:

1) 'To what extent do the activities/ lesson plans adhere to the CEFR';
2) 'To what extent do the materials/ activities/ lesson plans utilize technology and 21st century learning' and;
3) 'To what extent do the materials/ activities enrich students' vocabulary'.

These criteria were not included in the two evaluation checklists, but were regarded as important criteria by the TESL in-service teachers. The criteria are relevant to the current education scenario as 21st century learning and the use of technology are emphasised in the Malaysian CEFR aligned English curriculum. Furthermore, the vocabulary in Oral History texts provide examples of socially and culturally specific words which could be used to describe the experiences of students. Thus, we would like to suggest that it can be included in the material evaluation checklist. Despite having different opinions in certain aspects of the checklists, the participants have gained invaluable experiences throughout the evaluation process. The input that the participants have obtained certainly will hone participants' skills in English language teaching and encourage them to become better teachers. The three themes derived from the findings can be a set of future references for English teachers and material evaluators to assist them to develop a good English workbook.

Based on the findings, it is hoped that this study will assist curriculum designers and English instructional material developers to incorporate local culture in their English instructional materials. It is also anticipated that this study can be beneficial for English policy makers to reconsider the choice of instructional materials used in local English classrooms and to evaluate them contextually. This is to ensure that ESL learners can benefit much more from the instructional materials which are based on local content that promote local cultures and histories. ESL teachers should also take part in designing instructional materials that promote local stories which are closely related to their students' lives. This will provide students with an engaging and meaningful English language learning while helping them to have better retention of the language learned.

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APPENDIX 1

Material evaluation guidelines (Tomlinson, 2008)

No.	Evaluation guidelines
1.	To what extent do the materials provide exposure to English in authentic use?
2.	To what extent is the exposure to English in use likely to be meaningful to the target learners?
3.	To what extent are the texts likely to interest the learners?
4.	To what extent are the activities likely to provide achievable challenge to the learners?
5.	To what extent are the activities likely to engage the target learners affectively?
6.	To what extent are the activities likely to engage the target learners cognitively?
7.	To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for learners to make discoveries about how English is used?
8.	To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for meaningful use of English?
9.	To what extent do the materials provide opportunities for learners to gain feedback on their effectiveness of their use of English?
10.	To what extent are the materials likely to sustain positive impact?
11.	To what extent do the materials help the learners to make use of the English speaking environment outside the classroom?
12.	To what extent do the materials help the learners to operate effectively in the English speaking environment outside the classroom?
13.	To what extent do the materials treat English as an international language?
14.	To what extent do the materials provide opportunities for cultural awareness?

APPENDIX 2

Material development checklist (adapted from Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2012)

No	Development Guidelines
1.	**Suitability of learners**
a.	It is compatible to the age of the learners.
b.	It is compatible to the needs of the learners.
c.	It is compatible to the interests of the learners.
2.	**Learning teaching content**
a.	Most of the tasks are interesting.
b.	Tasks move from simple to complex.
c.	Tasks objectives are achievable.
d.	Cultural sensitivities have been considered.
e.	The language in the textbook is natural and real
3.	**Reading**
a.	Texts are interesting.
b.	Texts are culturally relevant.
c.	Texts are culturally appropriate.
4.	**Vocabulary**
a.	The load (number of new words in each text) is appropriate to the pupil's level.
b.	There is a good distribution (simple to complex) of vocabulary load across the texts.
5.	**Activities**
a.	They are adequate.
b.	They are learner friendly.
c.	They match the syllabus specifications.
d.	The activities can be exploited fully.
e.	Activities can work well with methodologies in ELT.
f.	They help students who are under/overachievers.
g.	Activities are developed to initiate meaningful communication.
h.	Activities have achievable goals and take into consideration learner capabilities.
i.	Activities are balanced between individual response, pair work and group work.