

Measuring The Effectiveness of Year 5 English Textbook in Teaching Listening and Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in Malaysia has increased the need to evaluate English language textbooks that support communicative competence. This study evaluated the effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in developing listening and speaking skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed, combining an evaluation of the ELT-TEC textbook with survey responses from 30 English-language teachers in Malaysian government primary schools. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses were analysed through thematic analysis using NVivo 15. The findings indicate that the textbook generally supports oral language development through structured listening and speaking activities. However, teachers identified limitations related to support for lower-proficiency learners, authentic communication, cultural relevance, and classroom implementation. The study recommends enhancing CEFR-aligned instructional materials by incorporating more authentic tasks, differentiated learning activities, culturally relevant content, and greater professional support for teachers.

Keywords: CEFR-aligned textbook; English Plus 1 Year 5; listening and speaking skills; textbook evaluation; Malaysian ESL.

INTRODUCTION

Most Malaysian primary school English classrooms have one constant; the textbook. Where supplementary materials are scarce, the textbook is not just the main resource; it is often the only resource. This makes the choice of textbook, and its quality, a decision that shapes everything else that happens in the room (Richards, 2021).

Malaysia adopted the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in 2018, folding it into the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025. The goal was clear; to raise English standards to meet international benchmarks. New CEFR-aligned textbooks followed, designed to develop all four skills through communicative, learner-centred approaches (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). Among those four skills, listening and speaking matter most for actual communication.

The CEFR recognises this, pushing learners toward authentic interaction, meaning negotiation, and confident social participation (Council of Europe, 2020). In Malaysian ESL classrooms, where English use outside school is limited, these classroom opportunities become even more critical. *English Plus 1 Year 5* is the textbook Malaysian primary schools currently rely on. It claims to develop communicative competence through integrated language activities, with listening and speaking tasks mapped to CEFR learning outcomes. However, curriculum alignment on paper means little if the classroom activities themselves feel inauthentic or disconnected from students' actual lives. Teachers know this better than anyone. Previous Malaysian studies show that even well-intentioned CEFR materials often require heavy teacher adaptation to work in mixed-ability classrooms with limited time and resources (Kassim & Hashim, 2023; Zulkiply & Nasri, 2024).

Textbook evaluation matters because it helps determine whether instructional materials actually support what the curriculum claims to achieve. A proper evaluation looks at language content, task design, cultural relevance, and opportunities for real communication, then identifies where things fall short (Mukundan & Ahour, 2010). Teachers' perspectives are indispensable here; they reveal practical strengths and problems that no textbook analysis alone can capture (Richards, 2021).

Most existing Malaysian research has looked at CEFR implementation broadly or at general textbook quality. Few have specifically examined how *English Plus 1 Year 5* supports listening and speaking development, and fewer still have combined textbook evaluation with teachers' live classroom experiences. This study fills that gap.

English Plus 1 Year 5 is evaluated in three ways; its effectiveness for developing listening and speaking skills, teachers' perceptions of its usability in CEFR-aligned classrooms, and the practical strengths, limitations, and implementation challenges that shape how it actually performs on the ground.

Purpose and Objectives of Study

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in supporting the development of listening and speaking skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners. Specifically, the study explores teachers' perceptions of the textbook's effectiveness and usability in CEFR-aligned English language classrooms and identifies its pedagogical strengths, limitations and implementation challenges. By integrating textbook evaluation with teachers' perspectives, the study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations to improve CEFR-aligned instructional materials and enhance the teaching and learning of oral communication skills in Malaysian primary schools. To achieve these aims, the study pursues the following objectives:

- i. Evaluate the effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in supporting the development of listening and speaking skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners.
- ii. Explore teachers' perceptions of the textbook's effectiveness and usability in CEFR-aligned English language classrooms.
- iii. Identify the pedagogical strengths, limitations, and implementation challenges of the textbook to inform future improvements in CEFR-aligned instructional materials.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The adoption of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has reshaped English language teaching by emphasising communicative competence over the mastery of discrete linguistic knowledge (Council of Europe, 2020). Consequently, English language textbooks are expected to support learners' ability to communicate effectively through meaningful listening and speaking activities rather than relying solely on grammar and vocabulary exercises. In ESL classrooms, where textbooks often serve as the primary instructional

resource, the quality of textbook design significantly influences learners' opportunities to develop oral communication skills (Richards, 2021).

Although CEFR-aligned textbooks are intended to promote authentic communication, their effectiveness depends not only on curriculum alignment but also on the quality of learning activities, cultural relevance, and adaptability to local classroom contexts. Previous studies have reported that while CEFR-based textbooks generally support communicative language teaching, teachers frequently adapt textbook activities to accommodate learners with different proficiency levels and classroom realities (Kassim & Hashim, 2023; Zulkipli & Nasri, 2024). These findings suggest that evaluating both textbook content and teachers' classroom experiences is essential for understanding the practical effectiveness of CEFR-aligned instructional materials.

This study is guided by Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982), Vygotsky's Scaffolding Theory (1978), and the English Language Teaching Textbook Evaluation Checklist (ELT-TEC) developed by Mukundan and Ahour (2010). Together, these perspectives provide a framework for evaluating whether *English Plus 1 Year 5* offers appropriate language input, meaningful opportunities for interaction, adequate instructional support, and learning activities that facilitate the development of listening and speaking skills.

CEFR and Oral Communication in Malaysian ESL Classrooms

The CEFR provides an internationally recognised framework for describing language proficiency across six levels (A1–C2), with communicative competence serving as its central principle (Council of Europe, 2020). At the primary level, learners are expected to develop basic listening comprehension and spoken interaction through meaningful communication rather than memorisation or repetition. At the A1 and A2 levels, learners should be able to understand familiar expressions, participate in simple conversations, and exchange information in everyday situations.

Malaysia adopted the CEFR in 2018 as part of its efforts to improve English language standards and align the national curriculum with international benchmarks (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2018). The introduction of CEFR-aligned curricula was accompanied by revised teaching materials, teacher professional development programmes, and new English language textbooks designed to promote communicative language teaching.

Despite these reforms, several studies have identified challenges in implementing CEFR-aligned instruction. Teachers frequently report difficulties adapting textbook activities to mixed-ability classrooms, managing limited instructional time, and providing sufficient support for learners with different proficiency levels (Kassim & Hashim, 2023; Zulkipli & Nasri, 2024). Researchers have also questioned whether some CEFR-aligned textbooks adequately reflect Malaysian cultural contexts or provide sufficient opportunities for authentic communication. These challenges suggest that curriculum alignment alone does not guarantee effective classroom implementation.

Listening and speaking remain fundamental components of communicative competence. Effective listening activities expose learners to comprehensible and authentic language input through varied speech models, while speaking activities should encourage interaction, negotiation of meaning, and collaborative communication (Newton & Nation, 2021). Consequently, evaluating how CEFR-aligned textbooks support these two skills is essential for determining their effectiveness in Malaysian ESL classrooms.

ELT-TEC as a Framework for Textbook Evaluation

Three frameworks were applied, though not equally. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) helps determine whether the listening materials give students language they can actually process. Vygotsky's scaffolding idea matters because teachers' opinions showed that they spend most of their time adapting tasks so students can achieve them. The ELT-TEC checklist developed by Mukundan and Ahour (2010) gives us a systematic lens for evaluating

textbooks across multiple dimensions: language content, learning activities, design and organisation, cultural relevance, and language-skill integration.

Table 1: Evaluation Dimensions for ESL Textbook Listening and Speaking Components

Dimension	Purpose of the Dimensions
Language Content	Accuracy, level-appropriateness, progression and grammar/vocabulary integration.
Exercises and Activities	Variety, authenticity, skill integration, engagement of students
Design and Organisation	Layout, clarity of instructions, logical sequencing
Cultural Relevance	Diversity, sensitivity and inclusion of local/global contexts
Listening and Speaking Integration	Whether oral skills are meaningfully integrated and scaffolded

Previous textbook evaluation studies have demonstrated that many ESL textbooks successfully address curriculum requirements but provide limited opportunities for authentic oral communication. Speaking activities often rely on controlled practice rather than spontaneous interaction, while listening tasks frequently lack diverse accents, realistic contexts, and differentiated support for learners with varying proficiency levels (Mukundan & Rezvani Kalajahi, 2013). Although teachers generally express positive perceptions of CEFR-aligned textbooks, they also report adapting textbook activities to address local classroom needs and learner diversity (Kassim & Hashim, 2023).

Most Malaysian studies have focused on overall textbook quality or on the implementation of the CEFR, rather than specifically examining how listening and speaking activities support the development of oral communication. Furthermore, relatively few studies have integrated textbook evaluation with teachers' classroom experiences to provide a comprehensive understanding of textbook effectiveness. Addressing this gap, the present study combines the ELT-TEC framework with teachers' perceptions to evaluate the effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in supporting listening and speaking skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the research methodology used in the study. It explains the research design, participants, research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis methods to evaluate the *English Plus 1 Year 5* textbook in developing listening and speaking skills.

Research Design

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design to evaluate the effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in supporting listening and speaking skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and then integrated during the interpretation stage to provide a comprehensive understanding of the textbook's effectiveness. The evaluation was guided by the ELT-TEC Checklist, Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Vygotsky's Scaffolding Theory, providing a theoretical basis for examining the quality of language input, scaffolding, and opportunities for oral language development.

Construction of the Survey Instrument

The questionnaire was developed based on the English Language Teaching Textbook Evaluation Checklist (ELT-TEC) proposed by Mukundan and Ahour (2010). The ELT-TEC dimensions were reviewed and adapted to suit the objectives of the present study, with particular emphasis on evaluating the textbook's effectiveness in supporting listening and speaking skills within a CEFR-aligned primary ESL context. Items were generated from

five key evaluation dimensions: Language Content, Exercises and Activities, Design and Organisation, Cultural Relevance, Listening and Speaking Integration.

These dimensions were translated into 23 closed-ended items measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). To obtain richer insights into teachers' classroom experiences, five open-ended questions were also included to explore teachers' perceptions of the textbook's strengths, limitations, implementation challenges, and suggestions for improvement.

Before the main data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed by experienced English language educators to ensure clarity and relevance and was pilot tested with four English teachers. Feedback from the pilot study was used to refine the wording and organisation of the questionnaire before its administration to the study participants.

Samples of Study

The study involved 30 primary school English teachers from government schools across Malaysia. A sample of 30 participants is generally considered adequate for educational research and questionnaire-based studies, especially when the objective is to obtain preliminary insights rather than making population-level generalisations (Whitehead et al., 2016). Furthermore, a minimum of 30 respondents has been recommended for establishing questionnaire reliability (Bujang et al., 2024).

The participants were predominantly female (80%), aged between 25 and 60 years, with the majority aged 31 to 45 years. They represented diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Malay (40%), Chinese (6.7%), Indian (43.3%), and other ethnic groups (10%). Most participants held a bachelor's degree (70%) as their highest academic qualification, while several possessed a master's degree (30%). Their teaching experience varied, ranging from 1 to more than 30 years, with most having between 10 and 15 years. In addition, 83.3% of participants reported having attended CEFR-related training. This shows that the teachers were familiar with the CEFR framework and its implementation in English language teaching. A pilot test with four teachers was conducted to refine the survey instrument before full distribution.

Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Data were collected from two sources: textbook and teacher surveys. The *English Plus 1 Year 5* textbook was evaluated using the ELT-TEC Checklist, focusing on language content, authenticity, task design, interaction, cultural relevance and alignment with CEFR principles. Teachers' perceptions were administered via Google Forms. The questionnaire comprised 43 items, including demographic questions, 23 five-point Likert-scale items, and five open-ended questions exploring teachers' views on the textbook's effectiveness, challenges, and cultural relevance.

The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 31. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were computed to summarise teachers' perceptions of the textbook. These analyses addressed Objective 1, which evaluated the effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in supporting the development of listening and speaking skills, and Objective 2, which explored teachers' perceptions of the textbook's effectiveness and usability in CEFR-aligned English language classrooms. The findings were presented in tables and figures to facilitate interpretation.

The qualitative responses were analysed using NVivo Version 15 through thematic analysis. The responses were coded to identify recurring themes related to teachers' experiences, classroom challenges, student engagement, professional development, and resource adequacy. NVivo visualisations, including a treemap and coding frequency chart, were used to support the presentation and interpretation of the qualitative findings. These analyses addressed Objective 3 by identifying the textbook's pedagogical strengths, limitations, and implementation challenges and providing insights into areas for future improvement.

Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated during the interpretation stage to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in supporting the development of listening and speaking skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners. The integration of both datasets enabled the findings from Objectives 1, 2, and 3 to be interpreted collectively, thereby providing evidence-based recommendations for improving CEFR-aligned instructional materials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the textbook evaluation and the teacher survey to address the research questions. The first section presents the quantitative findings from the teacher survey. It is followed by the qualitative themes identified from teachers' responses. The final part integrates both datasets, providing a holistic interpretation of the textbook's strengths and areas for improvement.

Effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in Supporting the Development of Listening and Speaking Skills

The effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in supporting the development of listening and speaking skills was examined using descriptive statistics derived from teachers' responses to the questionnaire. Overall, teachers perceived the textbook to be moderately effective in facilitating the development of oral communication skills.

Table 2 presents teachers' perceptions of the textbook's effectiveness in supporting listening skills. The mean scores ranged from 3.33 to 4.10, indicating moderate to high levels of agreement across the evaluated dimensions. The highest-rated item was Listening Skill Development ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.662$), suggesting that teachers generally agreed that the textbook contributes positively to students' listening comprehension.

In contrast, Listening Skill for Low-Proficiency Students received the lowest mean score ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.028$), indicating that teachers perceived the listening activities as less effective for learners with lower English proficiency. Moderate ratings were also recorded for Audio Material Sufficiency ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.952$) and Defined Goals in Listening Tasks ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.999$), suggesting opportunities for improvement in the provision of listening resources and instructional guidance.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Key Survey Items on Listening Skills

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speaking Task Improves Communication	30	3	5	4.10	.662
Sufficient Speaking Activities	30	1	5	3.33	1.028
Speaking Task Alignment with CEFR	30	2	5	3.63	.890
Activities that Initiate Communication	30	2	5	3.70	.952
Balanced Activities for Pair, Individual, and Group Work	30	2	5	3.63	.999

As shown in Table 3, teachers also viewed the speaking components positively, with mean scores ranging from 3.40 to 3.77. Sufficient Speaking Activities recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.774$), indicating that the textbook provides an adequate number of opportunities for oral practice.

Speaking Task Alignment with CEFR and Activities that Initiate Communication both obtained mean scores of 3.67, reflecting teachers' moderate agreement that the speaking activities promote communicative language use and align with CEFR expectations. However, Balanced Activities for Pair, Individual, and Group Work received the lowest rating ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.894$), suggesting that the textbook could provide greater diversity in collaborative learning activities.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Key Survey Items on Speaking Skills

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speaking Task Improves Communication	30	2	5	3.43	.817
Sufficient Speaking Activities	30	2	5	3.77	.774
Speaking Task Alignment with CEFR	30	2	5	3.67	.711
Activities that Initiate Communication	30	2	5	3.67	.844
Balanced Activities for Pair, Individual, and Group Work	30	2	5	3.40	.894

Overall, the quantitative findings indicate that *English Plus 1 Year 5* effectively supports the development of listening and speaking skills. Nevertheless, improvements are needed to better accommodate learners with lower proficiency, diversify communicative activities, and strengthen listening support.

The findings indicate that *English Plus 1 Year 5* generally supports the development of listening and speaking skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners. Teachers' positive evaluations suggest that the textbook provides structured opportunities for oral language practice that are broadly consistent with the communicative objectives of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020). The moderate-to-high mean scores also suggest that the textbook serves as an effective instructional resource for developing students' communicative competence.

The high rating for listening skill development suggests that the textbook provides learners with meaningful listening input. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, language acquisition occurs most effectively when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency (Krashen, 1982). However, the lower rating for support provided to low-proficiency learners indicates that the listening tasks may not always provide sufficient scaffolding for students with limited language ability. Previous research has similarly reported that authentic listening materials can be challenging for learners when they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary, rapid speech, or unfamiliar accents without adequate instructional support (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

Similarly, teachers acknowledged that the textbook contains an adequate number of speaking activities. Nevertheless, lower ratings for the balance of pair, individual, and group work suggest that greater variation in communicative task design is needed. This finding aligns with Vygotsky's Scaffolding Theory, which emphasises that language learning is enhanced through guided social interaction and collaborative learning experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). A greater variety of collaborative speaking activities would enable learners to receive peer support while gradually developing independent oral communication skills.

The findings also support previous studies on CEFR-aligned textbooks in Malaysia. While such textbooks generally promote communicative language teaching, teachers often report difficulties in adapting activities to accommodate mixed-ability classrooms and diverse learner needs (Kassim & Hashim, 2023; Zulkipli & Nasri, 2024). Likewise, Mukundan and Rezvani Kalajahi (2013) argue that textbook effectiveness depends not only on curriculum alignment but also on the authenticity, flexibility, and suitability of learning tasks for different learner profiles. Consequently, although *English Plus 1 Year 5* demonstrates considerable strengths in supporting listening and speaking development, further enhancement of scaffolding strategies, differentiated activities, and authentic communicative tasks would improve its effectiveness in Malaysian primary ESL classrooms.

Overall, the findings indicate that *English Plus 1 Year 5* provides a solid foundation for oral language development within the CEFR framework. However, strengthening support for lower-proficiency learners, increasing

opportunities for authentic interaction, and diversifying collaborative speaking activities would further enhance the textbook's capacity to develop communicative competence.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness and Usability of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in CEFR-Aligned Classrooms

Teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness and usability of *English Plus 1 Year 5* were explored through thematic analysis of the open-ended survey responses using NVivo 15. Four major themes emerged from the analysis: Professional Development, Teaching Challenges, Student Engagement, and Resource Adequacy. Each theme comprises two related sub-themes that describe teachers' experiences in implementing the textbook in CEFR-aligned English language classrooms. The themes, sub-themes, frequencies, and illustrative quotations are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Themes, Sub-themes, Frequencies and Illustrative Quotes

Themes	Sub-themes	Freq.	Illustrative Quotes
Professional Development (13)	Lack of training opportunities	8	"Teachers are expected to assimilate the content by themselves, which is tedious on top of all the other work."
	Need for mentorship	5	"We used to have good textbooks previously... the content could be improvised to match CEFR standards, but guidance is lacking."
Teaching Challenges (13)	Classroom management	7	"Students from rural areas or with low proficiency find it tough to cope with audio and may lose interest, disrupting classroom learning."
	Time constraints	6	"Editing the audio speed and preparing scripts is tedious for teachers on top of all the other work that is expected of them."
Student Engagement (13)	Low motivation	9	"The textbook uses high-level topics and language like C1/C2, while our students are mostly just reaching A2... they struggle to relate."
	Participation issues	4	"Students should be encouraged to be involved in day-to-day conversations, so it is more relevant and meaningful for them."
Resource Adequacy (11)	Insufficient materials	6	"Include more real-life dialogues, authentic listening materials, and practical speaking tasks... this will make learning more meaningful."
	Limited access to technology	5	"Students from rural areas struggle with audio... having a local tone would help them cope better and reduce the need for extra teacher intervention."

As shown in Table 4, Professional Development was one of the most prominent themes, with 13 coding references. Teachers highlighted the lack of CEFR-related training opportunities and emphasised the need for continuous mentoring to improve their understanding of the textbook and its implementation. Several respondents reported that they were expected to familiarise themselves with the textbook independently, making the transition to CEFR-aligned teaching more challenging.

Another major theme identified was Teaching Challenges, which also recorded 13 coding references. Teachers described difficulties in managing mixed-ability classrooms and adapting textbook activities within limited instructional time. Many respondents explained that lower-proficiency learners struggled with some listening activities, requiring teachers to modify tasks, adjust the pace of lessons, or prepare supplementary materials to facilitate learning.

Student Engagement emerged as another significant theme, with 13 coding references. Teachers reported that some students lacked motivation because several topics and language expressions exceeded their current proficiency level or were insufficiently related to their everyday experiences. Respondents also observed that students were less willing to participate in speaking activities when tasks relied heavily on scripted dialogues rather than authentic communication.

The fourth theme, Resource Adequacy, received 11 coding references. Teachers expressed the need for additional authentic listening materials, more practical speaking activities, and improved technological support, particularly in rural schools where access to digital resources was limited. They also recommended incorporating more localised contexts and familiar accents to enhance learners' comprehension and participation during oral communication activities.

To complement the thematic findings, Figure 3 presents a treemap generated using NVivo 15 that illustrates the relationships among the coded themes. The relative size of each section represents the frequency of references, with concepts related to speaking, listening, activities, students, and culture appearing most prominently, reflecting the key areas emphasised by teachers during the analysis. Three major themes emerged from the analysis: (1) Clarity and Authenticity of Audio Materials, (2) Speaking Tasks and Real-Life Relevance, and (3) Teacher Adaptation and Scaffolding. Figure 3 presents a treemap visualisation of these themes and their relative prominence in the dataset.

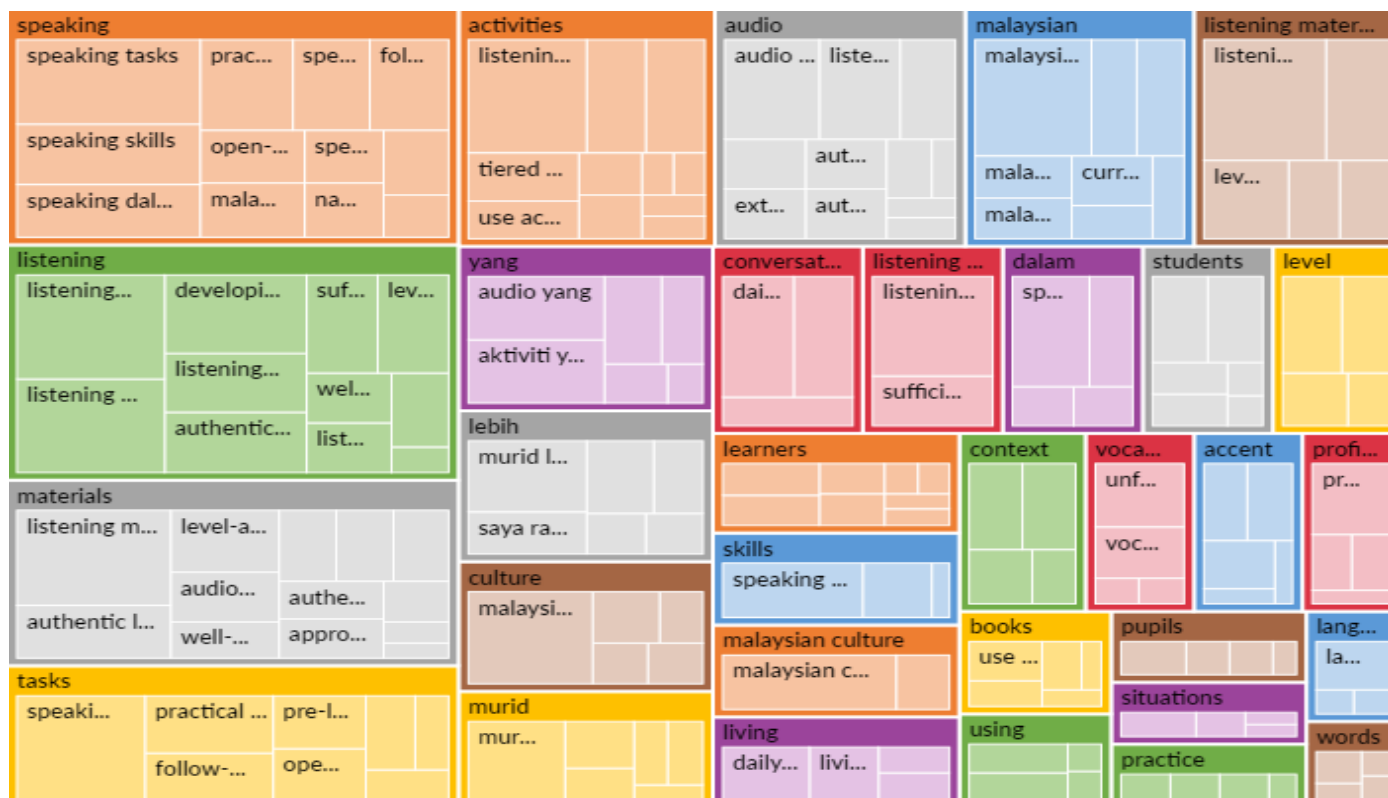


Figure 1. Treemap Visualisation of Themes Identified from Teachers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness and Usability of English Plus 1 Year 5.

Theme 1: Clarity and Authenticity of Audio Materials

Teachers generally perceived the listening materials as clear and appropriate for classroom use. However, many respondents indicated that some recordings were delivered too quickly, contained unfamiliar accents, or lacked contextual relevance for Malaysian learners. One teacher commented, *"The listening tracks are clear, but some students find them too fast."* These responses suggest that although the textbook provides adequate listening resources, improvements are needed to accommodate learners with different proficiency levels and learning needs.

Theme 2: Speaking Tasks and Real-Life Relevance

Teachers acknowledged that the textbook includes a variety of speaking activities, particularly role-plays and guided conversations. Nevertheless, many respondents perceived these activities as lacking authenticity and spontaneity. For example, one teacher remarked, *"Role-plays are beneficial, but they do not reflect real-life situations."* This indicates that while the textbook promotes oral interaction, the activities may not sufficiently prepare learners for authentic communicative situations beyond the classroom.

Theme 3: Teacher Adaptation and Scaffolding

Another recurring theme was teachers' adaptation of textbook activities to suit learners' proficiency levels and classroom contexts. Many teachers reported modifying speaking tasks, simplifying instructions, or providing additional examples to facilitate student participation. As one respondent explained, *"I often modify speaking tasks to suit my students' proficiency levels."* These responses indicate that teachers play an important role in supplementing the textbook to address the diverse needs of learners in CEFR-aligned classrooms.

Figure 4 presents the frequency distribution of the auto-coded themes generated using NVivo 15. The chart shows that themes related to speaking, students, tasks, listening, and activities were the most frequently referenced by participants, indicating that teachers' perceptions centred primarily on the textbook's role in facilitating oral communication and classroom interaction. Themes related to culture, accent, and materials were also evident, reflecting teachers' concerns about the authenticity and contextual relevance of the textbook.

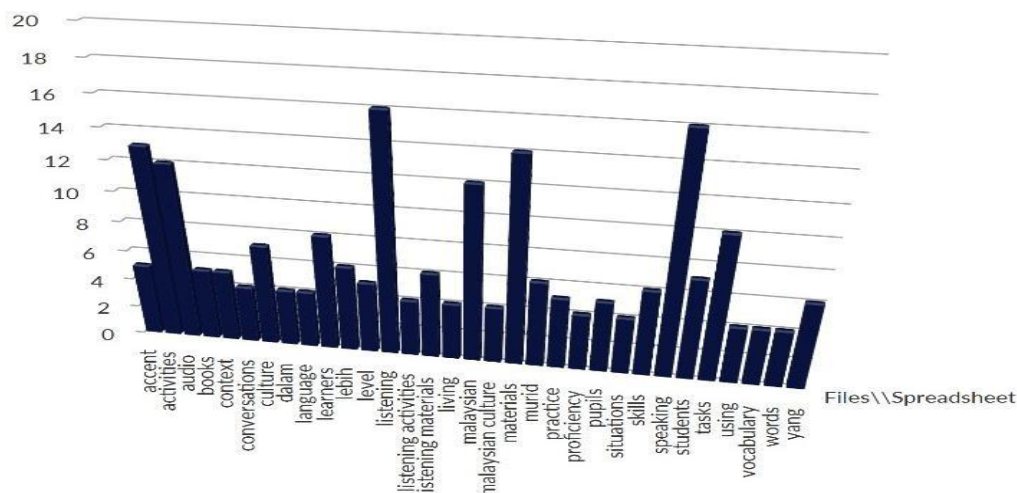


Figure 2: Distribution of Coding References Across Auto-coded Themes in ESL Textbook Evaluation

Note. Themes include “listening”, “speaking”, “accent”, “culture”, and others based on NVivo auto-code results.

Overall, the qualitative findings indicate that teachers regarded *English Plus 1 Year 5* as a useful instructional resource for developing listening and speaking skills in CEFR-aligned classrooms. Nevertheless, they consistently highlighted the need for greater teacher support, more authentic communicative activities, increased cultural relevance, and additional instructional resources to enhance the textbook's effectiveness across diverse Malaysian primary school contexts.

The qualitative findings indicate that teachers generally viewed *English Plus 1 Year 5* as a valuable resource for supporting oral language instruction in CEFR-aligned classrooms. However, they also perceived several limitations that influenced the effectiveness of its classroom implementation. These findings reinforce the view that the effectiveness of a textbook depends not only on its content but also on how teachers adapt and implement the materials to meet learners' needs (Richards, 2021).

Teachers' concerns about the authenticity of listening materials and speaking activities align with the communicative principles underpinning the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020), which emphasise meaningful interaction in real-world contexts. Although the textbook provides structured opportunities for oral practice, teachers perceived that many activities remained highly controlled and offered limited opportunities for spontaneous communication. Similar findings were reported by Mukundan and Rezvani Kalajahi (2013), who observed that ESL textbooks often prioritise language accuracy over authentic communication, thereby limiting learners' communicative competence.

The need for teachers to modify textbook activities further highlights the importance of instructional scaffolding in language learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), learners develop more effectively when teachers provide appropriate support within their Zone of Proximal Development. The frequent adaptation of activities reported by participants suggests that teachers actively scaffold learning by adjusting tasks to accommodate students with varying proficiency levels. This finding also supports Kassim and Hashim (2023), who reported that Malaysian teachers regularly adapt CEFR-aligned materials to better address local classroom contexts and learner diversity.

Teachers also emphasised the importance of culturally relevant content and authentic communication. Previous research has shown that learners are more motivated when instructional materials reflect familiar contexts and meaningful communicative situations (Gilmore, 2007). Incorporating more local contexts, diverse accents, and open-ended speaking activities could therefore improve students' engagement and strengthen the communicative value of the textbook.

Overall, teachers perceived *English Plus 1 Year 5* as an appropriate resource for CEFR-aligned English language teaching. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that its effectiveness could be enhanced by increasing the authenticity of listening and speaking activities, incorporating more culturally relevant materials, and providing greater flexibility to support learners with diverse proficiency levels.

Pedagogical Strengths, Limitations, and Implementation Challenges of *English Plus 1 Year 5*

The quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to identify the pedagogical strengths, limitations, and implementation challenges associated with the implementation of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in CEFR-aligned English language classrooms. The integration of both datasets provides a more comprehensive understanding of the textbook's effectiveness by combining teachers' ratings with their classroom experiences.

Overall, the findings indicate that *English Plus 1 Year 5* possesses several pedagogical strengths. The quantitative findings presented in Tables 2 and 3 show that teachers generally perceived the textbook as effective in supporting the development of listening and speaking skills, with moderate to high mean scores across most survey items. In particular, teachers rated highly the textbook's contribution to listening skill development and the provision of speaking activities, suggesting that it offers structured opportunities for oral language practice. These findings are consistent with the communicative principles of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

(CEFR), which emphasises the development of listening comprehension, spoken interaction, and spoken production through meaningful communicative activities (Council of Europe, 2020). They also support Richards' (2021) assertion that well-designed textbooks provide a systematic framework for language learning and remain central instructional resources in ESL classrooms.

The qualitative findings further reinforced these positive perceptions. As presented in Table 4, teachers acknowledged that the textbook provides organised learning activities and encourages classroom interaction through listening and speaking tasks. However, they also reported regularly adapting the textbook to suit students' proficiency levels and classroom contexts. This finding supports Vygotsky's Scaffolding Theory, which emphasises that teachers play a crucial role in facilitating learning by providing appropriate guidance and support within learners' Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). The findings also reflect previous research showing that teachers frequently adapt CEFR-aligned materials to address learners' diverse needs and classroom realities (Kassim & Hashim, 2023).

Despite these strengths, the integrated findings identified several pedagogical limitations. Quantitative results revealed comparatively lower ratings for support provided to lower-proficiency learners and for the balance of pair, individual, and group speaking activities (Tables 2 and 3). Similarly, the qualitative findings indicated that teachers perceived some listening materials as being delivered too quickly or containing unfamiliar accents, while several speaking activities were viewed as overly structured and offering limited opportunities for spontaneous communication (Table 4). These findings are consistent with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which suggests that language acquisition is facilitated when learners receive comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current proficiency level (Krashen, 1982). Listening materials that are insufficiently scaffolded may therefore reduce learners' comprehension and confidence. Likewise, previous studies have reported that authentic communication is more effectively promoted through open-ended and meaningful speaking tasks rather than scripted dialogues (Gilmore, 2007; Newton & Nation, 2021).

The study also identified several implementation challenges that may affect the textbook's effectiveness. Teachers highlighted insufficient CEFR-related professional development, limited instructional time, mixed-ability classrooms, inadequate teaching resources, and restricted access to technology, particularly in rural schools (Table 4). These challenges required teachers to modify textbook activities by simplifying instructions, providing additional explanations, and developing supplementary materials to support learners with different proficiency levels. Similar implementation issues have been reported in Malaysian CEFR studies, where successful curriculum implementation depends not only on the quality of instructional materials but also on teacher preparedness, institutional support, and contextual factors (Mukundan & Rezvani Kalajahi, 2013; Zulkiply & Nasri, 2024).

Overall, the integrated findings demonstrate that *English Plus 1 Year 5* provides a useful foundation for developing listening and speaking skills within Malaysia's CEFR-aligned curriculum. Nevertheless, enhancing the textbook with more authentic communicative tasks, culturally relevant content, differentiated learning activities, and additional teacher support would strengthen its effectiveness in meeting the needs of diverse Malaysian primary ESL learners. These improvements would better reflect the communicative goals of the CEFR while supporting more inclusive and meaningful language learning experiences (Council of Europe, 2020; Richards, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in supporting the development of listening and speaking skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners by integrating textbook evaluation with teachers' perceptions in CEFR-aligned English language classrooms. Using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design,

the study combined quantitative survey data with qualitative responses to provide a comprehensive understanding of the textbook's effectiveness, usability, and implementation in classroom practice.

The findings indicate that *English Plus 1 Year 5* generally supports the development of listening and speaking skills and aligns with the communicative goals of the CEFR. Teachers perceived the textbook as providing structured opportunities for oral language practice through a variety of listening and speaking activities. However, the findings also revealed several areas requiring improvement, including greater support for lower-proficiency learners, more authentic and culturally relevant listening and speaking tasks, increased opportunities for spontaneous communication, and a better balance of collaborative learning activities.

The study further highlights that the effectiveness of the textbook extends beyond its content and design. Teachers play a crucial role in adapting learning activities to accommodate diverse learner needs, particularly in mixed-ability classrooms. Challenges such as limited professional development, insufficient instructional resources, time constraints, and restricted access to technology were identified as factors influencing the successful implementation of the textbook. These findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of CEFR-aligned instructional materials depends not only on curriculum alignment but also on the interaction between textbook design, teacher expertise, and classroom context.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of research on CEFR-aligned textbook evaluation by providing empirical evidence from Malaysian primary school teachers. The findings offer practical implications for textbook developers, curriculum planners, teacher educators, and policymakers in strengthening future CEFR-aligned instructional materials. Enhancing the authenticity, cultural relevance, flexibility, and inclusivity of textbook activities, together with sustained professional support for teachers, will better equip Malaysian primary ESL learners to develop effective listening and speaking skills and achieve the communicative competence envisioned by the CEFR.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

This study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of *English Plus 1 Year 5* in supporting the development of listening and speaking skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners. Nevertheless, several areas warrant further investigation to expand the understanding of CEFR-aligned instructional materials and their implementation in diverse educational contexts.

First, future studies should include a larger and more representative sample of teachers from different school types, geographical regions, and educational settings. A broader sample would improve the generalisability of the findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences with CEFR-aligned textbooks across Malaysia.

Second, future research should incorporate the perspectives of students alongside those of teachers. Investigating students' experiences, engagement, and perceived challenges when using *English Plus 1 Year 5* would provide a more balanced evaluation of the textbook's effectiveness in supporting oral language development.

Third, classroom observations and lesson recordings could be included to examine how teachers implement the textbook during actual classroom instruction. Such data would complement self-reported perceptions by providing direct evidence of how listening and speaking activities are adapted, delivered, and experienced by learners in authentic classroom settings.

Fourth, comparative studies involving different CEFR-aligned English textbooks or different primary school levels would provide valuable insights into the strengths and limitations of various instructional materials. Such comparisons could assist curriculum developers and policymakers in selecting and improving textbooks that best support communicative language teaching.

Finally, future research may adopt longitudinal or experimental research designs to examine the long-term impact of CEFR-aligned textbooks on students' listening and speaking proficiency. Measuring changes in learners' oral communication skills over time would provide stronger empirical evidence of the effectiveness of textbook-based instruction beyond teachers' perceptions alone.

Overall, future studies that integrate multiple stakeholder perspectives, classroom-based evidence, and longitudinal data will contribute to a deeper understanding of how CEFR-aligned instructional materials can be designed and implemented to enhance oral communication skills among Malaysian primary ESL learners.

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