

# Criteria of a Good ELT Textbook: Malaysian Teachers' Perception

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**Abstract** The use of internationally and locally published English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks is crucial to aiding in teaching and learning. However, choosing the right textbook or developing one has been known to be a challenging task. Various frameworks have, therefore, been proposed by different researchers to outline the criteria that should be taken into consideration in the process of developing, selecting, and evaluating ELT textbooks. These criteria would be the main focus of this study to improve language programmes in Malaysia. This study aims to determine the criteria that make a good ELT textbook based on the perception of seven ESL secondary school teachers in Malaysia. Face-to-face interviews have been administered to collect data, which are analysed through thematic analysis. The findings of this study have revealed eleven criteria that are deemed crucial for a good ELT textbook, which include Culture and Cultural Introduction. These eleven criteria should be taken into consideration for the selection and evaluation of ELT textbooks, as well as to develop or to supplement the existing frameworks, primarily in the teaching of English as a second language in Malaysia.

**Keywords** Criteria, ELT Textbook, Perception, ESL Teachers, Face-to-Face Interview

educational material in this modern world of technological advancement and information saturation [1]. An English language teaching (ELT) textbook has been an essential pedagogical tool in many English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. Despite the progress in Internet and other educational resources, ELT textbooks continue to play a significant role in teaching and learning [2–4]. Many studies have highlighted the extent of ELT textbooks in assisting teachers and learners in the teaching and learning processes and procedures [5–9]. Although there would be no one textbook that can cater to all teaching and learning needs [10], textbooks continue to contribute to the enhancement and quality maintenance of educational outcomes [11].

Within the context of Malaysia, where English is a second language, textbooks assist teachers and learners in attaining the targeted language outcomes. The Ministry of Education in Malaysia has emphasized the importance of learners to be proficient in the English language [12–13] through the Education Blueprint 2013 to 2025. Since 2013, the blueprint has been implemented to raise the education standard in Malaysia, which includes enhancing the English language teaching and learning processes [14]. Hence, millions of ELT textbooks have been purchased to replace the textbooks published locally. This move is based on the education transformation to have the English language curriculum to be aligned with the Common European Language of Reference (CEFR) as part of the improved education standards by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The replacement of locally published ELT textbooks comes with the hope to enhance the standards of

## 1. Introduction

Textbooks still appear to be the most sought after

English among the learners [15]. Moreover, the use of imported textbooks is a way forward to implement the new curriculum across all the public schools in Malaysia [16].

Additionally, the importance of textbooks gradually increases with every teaching and learning phase [17]. The achievement of any English language programme has been found to correlate with the ELT textbooks used [1]. Nonetheless, past studies have acknowledged the benefits of textbooks for teachers and learners, which results in the process of choosing a suitable textbook being challenging [18], specifically in establishing the quality of ELT textbooks [17]. Hence, several frameworks have been suggested to assist in the evaluation of ELT textbooks, which are based on several criteria that hope to facilitate teaching and to promote the development of language skills among learners.

## 2. Literature Review

Different researchers have outlined different criteria deemed important to assist in evaluating ELT textbooks. The differences and similarities of the criteria in these frameworks reflect the context of teaching and learning. In the field of ELT textbook evaluation, the first set of published criteria by Tucker [19] consists of two categories; internal and external. The internal category comprises of criteria related to pronunciation, grammar, and content. Meanwhile, criteria related to durability, quality of editing and publishing, the competence of the author, level, guidance for non-native teachers, availability of supplementary materials, and authenticity of language fall under the category of external criteria.

Comparably, [20] has proposed six criteria whereby the criterion of subject matter was also acknowledged by Tucker (1975). Other criteria include bibliographical data, support for teaching and learning, the availability and cost, aims and goals, vocabulary and structures, exercises and activities, layout and physical makeup. Additionally, [21] outlined a framework with eight criteria. They are aims and approaches, design and organisation, language content, skills, topic, methodology, teacher's guide, and practical considerations. Criteria such as topic, aims and approaches, and teacher's guide are similar to the criteria proposed by Tucker [19] and Skierso [20]. Also, McGrath [10] has proposed criteria which include practical considerations, support for teaching and learning, context relevance, learner appeal as well as aims and content.

Nonetheless, in tandem with concerns with regards to evaluating ELT textbooks, Garvin [22] proposed a well-known framework for quality. Considering a textbook as a product [23], the eight dimensions associated with quality encompass criteria related to performance, features, reliability, conformance, durability, serviceability, aesthetic, and perceived value. The criteria proposed by [22] for instance durability, features, and aesthetics have been

highlighted by previous researchers. Moreover, flexibility among other criteria is viewed as important by Cunningsworth [21], Sheldon [24], and Rudby [25]. The illustrations in an ELT textbook are also another criterion presented by researchers such as [26-28].

However, under different conditions, [29] has proposed an extensive set of criteria that can be divided into two categories; publication and design. Publication consists of criteria such as the published form of learner's materials, subdivision of learner's materials into sections and sub-sections, continuity, route, and access. Design includes criteria on aims, principles of selection, principles of sequencing, subject matter and focus, types of teaching and learning activities, participation, learner roles, teacher roles, and role of materials. Littlejohn [29] believes these criteria would provide comprehensive coverage of the methodological and content aspects of any set of materials. The criteria proposed by [29] share similarities with the other frameworks on criteria such as aims, subject matter, access, and activities.

Furthermore, criteria related to culture and cultural introduction have been appraised by researchers such as [20,21,24,28,30-33]. Recently, [33] has presented a set of criteria that is divided into two subcategories, which are external evaluation and internal evaluation. The external evaluation consists of criteria that involve the layout of the front and back cover, writer, load of materials, table of content, face validity, the periphery, learners, and context-related factors. Factors related to aims, approach, syllabus, linguistic aspect, teacher-related factors, student-related factors, classroom organisation, instructions, content, culture, lexis, skills, unit format, measurement and evaluation, and software are criteria for internal evaluation.

By comparing different frameworks such as the above, one can't help but notice the similarities and differences found in the criteria proposed within these frameworks. Among the similarities include criteria on layout, design, aims of the materials, activities, exercises, subject matter, content, and culture. Nevertheless, the differences in the criteria suggested in each framework create a unique feature that would suit the educational context in which it was developed. For example, within the Malaysian context, [34] have proposed two components in evaluating ELT textbooks, which are general attributes and learning-teaching content. The criteria on general attributes address aspects, such as syllabus and curriculum, methodology, suitability to learners, physical and utilitarian attributes, and efficient layout of supplementary materials.

On the other hand, the learning-teaching component includes general content, listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and exercises. Criteria such as physical attributes, supplementary materials, content, and exercises within the framework by [34] are similar to the criteria outlined by

other researchers. Despite the availability of different frameworks that address the vast range of criteria for quality textbooks, there is still a need to explore the criteria for a good ELT textbook, considering the different focuses and aims of a language programme. Thus, the perceptions and feedback from the end-users of textbooks should be taken into consideration to determine the relevant criteria. These criteria can be included in the existing framework to create a more comprehensive and contextualised structure in evaluating textbooks.

Furthermore, [35] assert that the development of language learning materials should be informed based on a detailed needs analysis, which is crucial for textbook selection and development [36]. Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify the criteria of a good ELT textbook to enhance the teaching and learning of English in an ESL classroom. With the recent use of imported ELT textbooks for the teaching and learning of English in Malaysia, it is important to identify the criteria of a good ELT textbook from the teachers' perception. Their perceptions will create a platform for discussion with contrast to the criteria proposed by [34] which are developed for the evaluation of ELT textbooks in Malaysia. Also, the criteria identified in this study would further contribute to the process of textbook evaluation in Malaysia.

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Research Design

A case study, which is an approach to qualitative research, was selected to determine the perceptions of teachers on the criteria of a good ELT textbook. The qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study due to its potential of providing rich and in-depth data within a real context [37].

#### 3.2. Participants

**Table 1.** Participants' Profile

Participants	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Highest Qualification
T1	Female	44	13 years	Master's Degree
T2	Female	46	22 years	Bachelor's Degree
T3	Female	36	9 years	Bachelor's Degree
T4	Male	32	9 years	Master's Degree
T5	Female	53	30 years	Bachelor's Degree
T6	Male	41	13 years	Bachelor's Degree
T7	Female	50	26 years	PhD

The participants in this study consisted of seven

secondary school ESL teachers from Malaysia. These seven teachers were selected through purposive sampling. This method of selection was employed to better facilitate the data collection of the phenomenon that was being investigated [38]. The inclusion criteria for this sampling were (i) ESL teachers from public secondary schools in Malaysia (ii) have more than five years of teaching English experience, and (iii) had taught using English language textbooks that were either locally published or imported. These seven ESL teachers have been teaching English to ESL learners aged between 13 and 16 in different public schools across Malaysia. Table 1 presents a summary of the participants in this study.

#### 3.3. Instrument

Before conducting the interviews, a critical review of relevant literature was carried out, which resulted in twenty-one interview questions being prepared. An interview protocol was developed based on the components suggested by [38], which included details of the interview, introduction, interview questions with probes, as well as closing instructions. The interview questions in this study elicited the teachers' perception on what they like and dislike about the imported ELT textbook they were currently using and to make a comparison, they were asked to comment on what they liked and disliked about the locally produced ELT textbooks used before the change to imported textbooks was implemented. Besides, the teachers were asked to share their opinions on what makes an ELT textbook appealing to them and their learners and the features they would look for when choosing a textbook. Last but not least, the teachers were asked to share their opinions on the criteria found in the literature pertinent to the Malaysian setting such as content and culture.

#### 3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The interviews in this study were conducted face-to-face to ensure the teachers could respond to the questions spontaneously. Once the teachers who fit the criteria were identified, the date and time of the interviews were pre-scheduled based on the availability of the teachers. Therefore, the interviews were conducted at different venues and time. All seven teachers were well-informed of the purpose of the interview and expectations of them. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and a voice recorder application on the mobile phone of the interviewer as a backup. On average, each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.

#### 3.5. Data Analysis

A thematic analysis, which is a form of data analysis for qualitative studies, was performed in this study. The

first step to the analysis was to transcribe the interviews conducted. After the interviews were transcribed, the transcripts were emailed to the respective teachers as part of the member checking process. This was done to ensure the validity, credibility, and accuracy of data. The teachers were required to cross-check, acknowledge, and approve the data. The checked transcripts were imported into Nvivo 15, a qualitative data analysis computer software to organise, analyse and find insights into the qualitative data gathered through the face-to-face interviews.

The transcripts were read and analysed to develop the main categories and codes. The interview data were reviewed and analysed a few more times to ensure the consistency and reliability of the analysis. The analysis was then checked and verified by two English lecturers

with a PhD qualification from two public universities in Malaysia to determine the Cohen Kappa inter-rater reliability index value. The Cohen Kappa inter-rater reliability value of the codes was above 0.61K, which indicated the codes to be substantial to almost perfect agreement [39].

#### 4. Results

Eleven criteria emerged based on the analysis of the data gathered. Figure 1 displays the criteria of a good ELT textbook based on the perception of seven ESL teachers in this study.

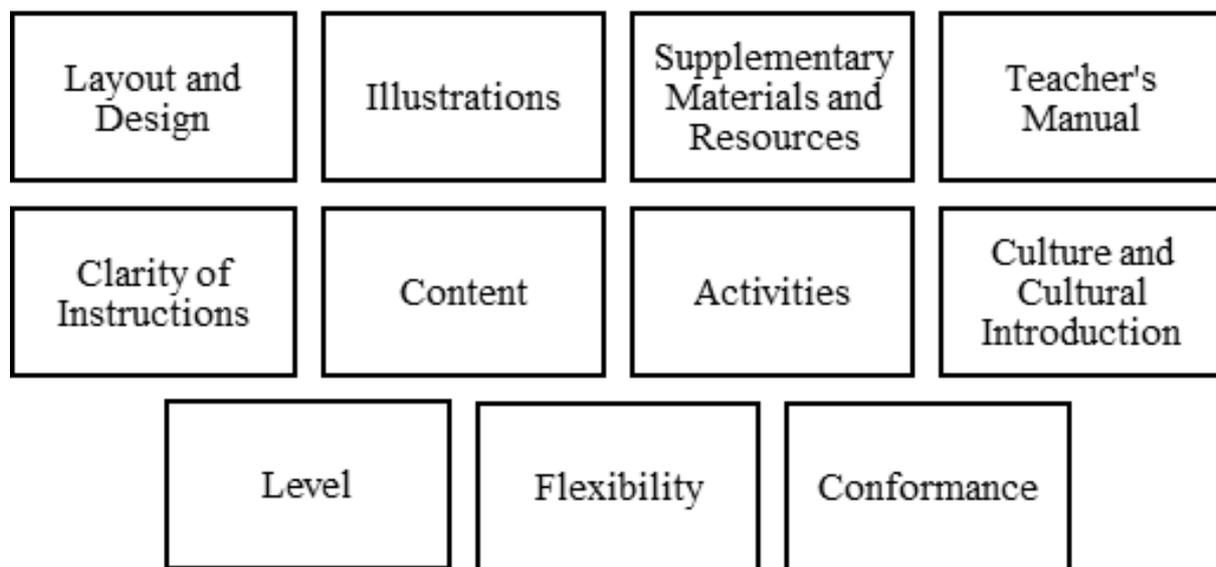


Figure 1. Criteria of a good ELT Textbook

#### 4.1. Layout and Design

The majority of teachers agreed that the layout and design of an ELT textbook were one of the essential criteria of a good ELT textbook. The layout and design of the textbook were referred to as the organisation and presentation of language content and activities, which included aspects such as learning objectives, vocabulary list, references, glossaries, as well as information on topics, functions, structure, or grammar and skills [40]. Below were a few excerpts from the interviews conducted;

*"...last but not least I think maybe they should have a glossary. I think most books have it." (T1)*

*"Let's say there are 8 learning standards, for example, so a good textbook, I look at the front page, the writer would specify, in this chapter you will cover this particular learning standard. So when a teacher looks at it, she will know all the learning standards to be covered." (T2)*

The teachers in this study commented that a good ELT textbook needed to have an organised presentation of content. The pages should also not be overcrowded, whereby learners should be able to navigate through the books comfortably. Besides, a good ELT textbook would provide users with a list of vocabulary, CEFR descriptors, glossary, and a thorough table of content that highlights the learning standards for each of the units in the textbook. Thus, the layout and design of an ELT textbook are important for these teachers.

#### 4.2. Illustrations

Illustrations in an ELT textbook were another crucial criterion mentioned by the teachers in this study. According to [40], illustrations included charts, models, pictures, and photographs found in a textbook to clarify and contextualise information. Some of the responses from the teachers during the interviews are included below.

*"In my opinion, the students, youngsters, they like colours, something like non-linear texts, so that it would be appealing to them. They like more pictures, rather than very compact, comprehension texts." (T6)*

*"..it has to come with a lot of pictures, there are visual learners, the lower secondary students, they are more attracted to a topic with visuals in it. So I think the visuals should be appealing to the students." (T4)*

*"...there are a lot of pupils in Malaysia who are not able to read properly and when we get them at our level Form 3, Form 4, and even at Form 5, how can you get your pupils to produce something if they can't read. So pictures would be one of the best aid I would say". (T2)*

The teachers commented that the pictures in an ELT textbook should not only be appealing but functional to help learners, especially those with low English proficiency. Illustrations are therefore regarded as a useful aid for teaching and learning, specifically, for visual learners. During one of the interviews, a teacher commented that learners prefer visuals, such as pictures and graphs, instead of lengthy and condensed texts. Nonetheless, one of the teachers had stressed the importance of culturally sensitive illustrations and pictures. Hence, illustrations are an important criterion that makes a good ELT textbook for the teachers in this study.

#### 4.3. Supplementary Materials and Resources

Supplementary materials and resources are defined as skills development materials [41], which may include a collection of communicative activities, grammar, phonology, and vocabulary practice activities, including resource materials for teachers. These materials and resources should support and enhance teaching and learning. Below are the responses for the mentioned criterion.

*"...if we look most of the books come with CD, comes with Teacher's Guide, and they also have Student's Book, activities and so on, we'll also have this Scheme Of Work which I think very much complete where they gave you a very good explanation and instruction, how to go about teaching the particular topic and skills." (T1)*

*"There should be a suggestion in order to find out more or you can try and Google... and they will give a few websites that would be helpful. That would be a good feature to have in a textbook". (T2)*

*"But I believe listening is one of the important skills for students to learn so the book comes with audio and it helps the teachers also, definitely." (T6)*

Based on the interviews conducted, the teachers found that having supplementary materials and resources was an important criterion to consider. The teachers had expressed the importance of a good ELT textbook that can provide additional materials and resources that would support teaching and learning. For this reason, supplementary materials and resources are perceived as important for the teachers in this study.

#### 4.4. Teacher's Manual

Teacher's manual was another criterion mentioned by the teachers during the interview. A teacher's manual provides teachers with answers to the exercises, suggestions to alternative activities, ideas to handle the language materials, and guidelines for effective language programmes [21]. The responses of the teachers concerning this criterion are listed below.

*"The Teacher's Manual would have some of the, what we call that, the lesson plans, ways to... suggested activities, so I know it's a very good book by looking at the... activities suggested from the Teacher's Manual." (T4)*

*"...they have teacher's copy, so the suggested activities are there and then the answer is I mean at the same page. I am not saying that we need the answers all the time, but sometimes when we go to the lessons, we need something to refer to" (T6)*

*"It's just a textbook by itself and there's no answers. So teachers have to source their own answers whether their answers are right or wrong, nobody knows..ahh.. whereas if you have a Teacher's Manual like this, you get the answers so that help the teachers because some we know the answers. Sometimes it is good to have confirmation whether your answer is right or wrong." (T7)*

Teachers in this study mentioned that having a teacher's manual was the desired criterion that supplements an ELT textbook. Moreover, a teacher commented on the extent of guidance that a teacher obtains from a teacher's manual can contribute to one becoming an effective teacher. Another teacher also commented that with the availability of a teacher's manual, answers to the exercises given provided confidence for the teachers. Thus, the teachers in this study assert that a teacher's manual is an important criterion that complements a good ELT textbook.

#### 4.5. Clarity of Instructions

The teachers in this study considered an ELT textbook to be good when the instructions are clear. [42] defined clarity of instructions as having all instructions to the exercises, activities, and tasks to be exceptionally clear and suited for the level of the learners. Below are some of the responses by the teachers in this study.

*"They will look at the instructions and they will know what to do because a good textbook means even without the presence of the teacher, the child would be able to do the activities, they will understand what to do and the teacher just supports." (T2)*

*"...instruction should be simple, brief, straightforward. So, we're looking at all that for a student. So, that would encourage students to learn the language and master it." (T1)*

The teachers commented that the instructions in an ELT textbook should be clear and easy for learners to understand. The instructions should inform learners what is required of them, especially during self-directed learning. Clarity would ensure learners are able to understand and complete the activities, tasks, and exercises in the textbook. Therefore, clarity of instructions is an important criterion for the teachers in this study in

determining the quality of an ELT textbook.

#### 4.6. Content

Content consists of language items, skills, and communicative strategies that learners are to learn for language learning [21]. The majority of the teachers in this study expressed concerns over the content to qualify as a good ELT textbook. Below were some of their responses regarding this aspect.

*"...content for me personally, it should be a mixture of both local and also international." (T2)*

*"...so of course there should be themes. It should be thematic." (T2)*

*"I think they need up-to-date content." (T7)*

*"Local and a little bit of foreign because we're in globalisation era, so they still need to learn about what's happening out there. So a little bit of foreign content should be there." (T3)*

According to the teachers in this study, the content of an ELT textbook should address the four language skills, which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It should also be thematic. Besides interesting and relevant topics, learners should be exposed to local and global content. Another essential aspect highlighted by the teachers was the importance of the content to be up-to-date and one that inspires learners. It can be concluded here that teachers in this study place great emphasis on the content of an ELT textbook.

#### 4.7. Activities

Moreover, the selection of language activities in an ELT textbook is also highly considered for a good ELT textbook. According to [43], activities can be particular types of classroom procedures directed at communicative language, which involved learners using the language to achieve a specific outcome [44]. Some of the responses cited from teachers are listed below.

*"...there should be having a variety of activities..." (T1)*

*"Activities should be current I would say, engaging and something that requires pupils to think out of the box. That would be a good criterion to be placed in a textbook." (T2)*

*"...things that they can do, they like. If you yes, can ask them to go online, something that they love, hands-on thing." (T7)*

*"Maybe more on problem-solving activities. Activities like that can develop their creativity for them to be more innovative. Activities like that." (T3)*

The teachers in this study expected a good ELT textbook

to include a variety of engaging activities. The activities in an ELT textbook should be diverse throughout the chapters. Besides, the activities should cater to the different levels of the learners. Hence, the activities in an ELT textbook contribute to what makes a good ELT textbook from the perception of the teachers in this study.

#### 4.8. Culture and Cultural Introduction

The teachers in this study agreed that culture and cultural introduction was a criterion worth introducing in an ELT textbook, whereby a good ELT textbook would expose learners to different cultures without being confined to familiar cultures. According to [45], culture would be considered as a set of principles or systems that included cultural products, background information, behaviour, attitudes, and cultural knowledge that people use to interpret experiences. Cultural introduction, on the other hand, refers to the integration of different cultures in a textbook [30]. The excerpts below cited the responses of the teachers on this aspect.

*"Because I think those books are produced for International market where probably they might only have one kind of, they are not multiracial like our Malaysians, so I think in our country it's important to have them exposed to local and international culture."* (T2)

*"...the imported one is lacking of the local culture. So it just focuses on promoting, international culture..."* (T1)

*"It's all very British or White culture, it's all very, that's not Asian at all, so that's what's missing because I think no Asian books have ever been published under CEFR. So that's what's missing because we tend to learn about all these cultures in UK, in US but none about our own neighbour like Thailand or Vietnam which I think is also important, Asian culture which I think is lacking. So the pupils are very well-versed with all these cultures and at the same time they are so exposed on TV but the other Asian culture they're not so exposed. That's very much lacking in the textbook."* (T7)

The teachers, therefore, believe that learners should be exposed to source culture, target culture, and international culture [45]. The American or British culture should not dominate the English language textbooks, especially when learners from around the world would use the textbook. This aspect of an ELT textbook is considered important for the teachers in this study.

#### 4.9. Level

The level of an ELT textbook is also addressed by the teachers who participated in this study. The level of a textbook was defined by [42] as one that is suited to the age

and level of learners. Below are some of their responses.

*"So the most important thing is that I think the textbook should be able to cater for levels of students because we must face the fact that in this school particularly some of the students cannot utter a word so we have problem, yes."* (T6)

*"I think some of the exercises on that the older textbook, it's easier, I think it suits that level of the students. You can go the high proficiency students and also like there are some questions on the textbook usually the first five questions would be, it suits all the levels, the five questions usually suit, especially the reading comprehension, the first five questions suit all the levels. So when it goes to the last three or two questions, which are usually question number 7 and 8, it needs higher-order thinking so you need to have that schemata for you to answer that topic."* (T4)

The teachers in this study agreed that the content and exercises should cater to the different proficiency levels of the learners to qualify as a good ELT textbook. The exercises should be diverse so that learners with varying proficiencies can attempt different sets of exercises made available for them. Thus, they believe that a good ELT textbook should be able to cater to the different proficiencies of learners.

#### 4.10. Flexibility

Teachers in this study also found flexibility as another crucial criterion for a good ELT textbook. Flexibility would mean teachers and learners can use the materials in the textbook flexibly. The textbook would allow for differentiation in how teachers and learners can use the textbook by providing an element of choice [21]. Therefore, teachers can easily adapt and supplement activities to suit the needs of their learners. The responses to this criterion are found below.

*"I also want the textbook to give me the freedom to either add on other activities or if I feel like, this is boring, I do something else, as long as the skills that I am supposed to teach is delivered in my lesson."* (T2)

*"Even if it's in the textbook it's fine you know if you can't do this you can do this or something like that. So it's a choice that the pupils can also make, that "Teacher, I cannot do this, can I do this?". So it will be good because right now the textbook that we have is, I mean local produced is all...gauged for one level they do not care about those better or those that are not good. So if you have textbook that caters to all, even one textbook but you say OK if you have done this, you've completed you can continue with this. If you cannot do this, do this. So the pupils have the choice."* (T7)

The teachers agreed that flexibility is an essential feature that they look for in an ELT textbook. The teachers in this

study preferred a good ELT textbook to give them the freedom to choose activities suitable for their learners. A good ELT textbook should also allow learners to have the freedom to complete activities that they can manage to achieve the lesson objectives. For these reasons, flexibility is another criterion teachers in this study believe would make a good ELT textbook.

#### 4.11. Conformance

Last but not least, the teachers mentioned conformance as a criterion that needed to be considered in good ELT textbooks. [23] classified conformance as the extent a textbook could meet the pre-set education policies, curriculum, national ideology, and objectives. Below are the responses to the criterion discussed.

*"At the end of the day, what is your LO, you're learning objectives and your learning objectives must be tied in the learning standard that you are supposed to teach your pupils. So what's your learning objectives, if whatever books you used are able to help you achieve your LO, at the end of the lesson." (T2)*

*"So that's one thing I want to look and make sure that whatever textbook is suggested, goes hand in hand with the curriculum." (T7)*

*"Alright I think I won't know whether the book is good or not OK, by using the book, in terms of whether I am able to achieve my learning objectives or not." (T5)*

A textbook should, therefore, address the scope of content given in the curriculum guidelines. The teachers in this study believe an ELT textbook should help them achieve the lesson objectives. Moreover, it should resonate well with the national curriculum. Thus, conformance is a criterion that teachers in this study view essential.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study have shown similarities and differences in the criteria proposed by the seven ESL teachers with past studies. Similarly, the teachers in this study have concluded that criteria such as layout and design, content, activities, teacher's manual, as well as supplementary materials and resources which are common criteria proposed by many other previous researchers to be crucial for a good ELT textbook. Nonetheless, other criteria such as illustrations, clarity of instructions, culture and cultural introduction, level, flexibility, and conformance are also believed to be essential for a good ELT textbook. The criteria proposed by the teachers in this study are aligned to the various criteria outlined in the frameworks proposed by previous researches.

However, in the context of Malaysia, in comparison to the criteria proposed by [34] and the findings of this study, there are similar criteria as well as criteria deemed

important by the teachers in this study which are not included in the framework by [34]. This aspect of the analysis makes the findings of this study unique as both research findings are rooted in the Malaysian context. All the criteria by which are general attributes, methodology, suitability to learners, physical and utilitarian attributes, efficient layout and supplementary materials, and learning-teaching content are found to be similar to the criteria proposed by the teachers in this study. Although the criteria may have been named and labeled differently, the evaluative function of these criteria is the same as the ones in this study.

Nevertheless, the criterion on culture and cultural introduction which is deemed important by the teachers in this study is not evident in the framework proposed by [34]. Nonetheless, this criterion has been included by previous researchers in their frameworks. This particular criterion concerning culture is now gaining recognition, especially where imported textbooks are used in second language settings, just like in Malaysia. Since the teachers in this study have acknowledged this criterion, the future frameworks proposed within the field of textbook evaluation should consider this criterion in the evaluation of ELT textbooks, particularly in Malaysia, where English is taught and learned as a second language.

## 6. Conclusions

This study has brought attention to the eleven criteria that make a good ELT textbook. The eleven criteria found to be important for the teachers in this study are Layout and Design, Illustrations, Supplementary Materials and Resources, Teacher's Manual, Clarity of Instructions, Content, Activities, Culture and Cultural Introduction, Level, Flexibility and Conformance. These criteria are similar to the criteria proposed by previous researchers in the field of textbook evaluation. Different researchers have acknowledged these criteria found to be important within their settings.

In comparison to the framework developed by Mukundan and Nimechisalem [34] also within the Malaysian context, criteria such as general attributes, methodology, suitability to learners, physical and utilitarian attributes, efficient layout and supplementary materials, and learning-teaching content were criteria similar to the criteria proposed by the teachers in this study. However, the criterion on Culture and Cultural Introduction was not a criterion found in the framework by [34]. Thus, the criterion on Culture and Cultural Introduction which is found to be important among the teachers in this study contributes to the uniqueness of this study.

Moreover, textbook writers and developers can take note of the criteria deemed important amongst the teachers in this study especially the criterion on Culture and Cultural Introduction during the process of development, selection,

and analysis of ELT textbooks particularly in Malaysia. The similarities and differences found within the frameworks proposed by previous researchers highlight the importance of certain criteria within the context in which it was developed.

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