Evaluating English coursebooks for Indonesian vocational schools: A SQRAR-based material analysis in the EFL context

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

English learning materials play a pivotal role in supporting vocational high school (SMK) students in acquiring language competencies relevant to both academic progression and workplace demands. This study evaluates the quality, relevance, and pedagogical suitability of government-issued English coursebooks for Grades 10, 11, and 12 used in Indonesian vocational schools. Employing the SQRAR (Structure, Quality, Relevance, Appropriateness, and Readability) evaluation framework, expert reviewers in English language teaching assessed the coursebooks based on content organization, contextual alignment, linguistic features, and usability. The findings show that while the materials generally align with the national curriculum, several aspects require enhancement—particularly in integrating vocationally contextualized content, improving readability, and strengthening task authenticity. The study highlights the need for systematic revisions and adaptive learning resources that better reflect the linguistic, professional, and communicative needs of vocational students. Recommendations include embedding workplace discourse, incorporating industry-relevant tasks, and enriching multimodal resources to ensure that English materials more effectively support students' future employability in diverse vocational fields.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid technological advancement and industrial transformation, such as Industry 4.0, vocational education must adapt to meet the evolving demands of the labor market. This includes integrating modern skills such as digital literacy in the graphic design area, data analysis in the statistical field, and technological proficiency in the automotive technology field into the curriculum (Wardina et al., 2019). One of the main benefits of integrating technology in vocational education is its flexible nature, meaning that instruction can be modular and can be closely aligned to the requirements of students and employers, which makes the graduates more employable (Samani, 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that they receive the necessary support and resources to succeed in their chosen fields (Cahyadi et al., 2022; Zhuang, 2023).

For students in Indonesian vocational high schools (SMK), English is not only a requirement of academic work, but the entrance to more career chances, jobs that refer to the broader work, which involves communicating with international customers, colleagues, and business partners (Azir et al., 2024; Hamid et al., 2024; Nurhasanah & Kurniawan, 2023). Thus, the quality and effectiveness of the English-language books used in these schools are essential to students' language proficiency development. The development of English coursebooks, especially those provided by the government, serves as the foundation for language teaching in many schools. These coursebooks are designed to be in line with the national curriculum and to be suitable for special needs students, including students in vocational high schools (Ferdaus & Novita, 2023; Mustika & Amri, 2023). Nevertheless, the suitability of such materials for the practical and professional needs of vocational students where English is needed for use in their future work environments is still a matter of concern

(Marlin et al., 2024; Nurhasanah & Kurniawan, 2023). Research results showed that English coursebooks for vocational learning materials were still considered unable to bridge the gap between the theoretical nature of language learning and the practical use of language in vocational contexts (Abidah et al., 2023; Fadlia et al., 2022; Salsabilla et al., 2022). Therefore, an evaluation is required to determine the causes of this issue.

Existing studies consistently reveal that vocational English coursebooks often fail to bridge the gap between language learning theory and workplace needs (Abidah et al., 2023; Fadlia et al., 2022; Salsabilla et al., 2022); however, a substantial research gap remains. These previous assessments have typically been too narrowly focused or lacked a structured approach for evaluating the design issues as a whole across the entire curriculum (grades 10-12). This study directly fills the gap. A brief note on the present research is its use of the SQRAR (Survey, Question, Read, Analyze, and Recommend) method. This comprehensive evaluation model was applied to assess all government-produced English coursebooks critically. By applying this structured academic context framework across all three grade levels, this study moves beyond a generalized recognition of an overall problem to a detailed, multi-layered analysis of how the strengths and weaknesses of the materials play out in practice.

English materials evaluation is a dynamic process for assessing the effectiveness, appropriateness, and quality of study materials in language instruction. The review process must be conducted to ensure that the materials accommodate a variety of learners and align with educational goals. Several frameworks and standards are required for the evaluation, and they can be classified as: pre-use, in-use, and post-use evaluation (Alkhaldi, 2010; Mukundan et al., 2011; Solhi et al., 2020). Against this backdrop, the current study critically reviews the English coursebooks used in Indonesian vocational schools to teach 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-grade students. The latter will be evaluated using the SQRAR (survey, question, read, analyze, and recommend), a novel model for evaluating teaching materials. By engaging content-area academics in ELT as raters, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of their strengths and shortcomings. The material's appropriateness for vocational students and its compliance with the national curriculum will be evaluated.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform policy and instructional design in vocational education. By identifying gaps or areas for improvement in the current coursebooks, the study offers valuable insights into how English materials can be better adapted to support the linguistic and professional needs of vocational students. Furthermore, the findings may contribute to practical solutions to the broader discourse on the role of English language teaching in vocational education and its importance in preparing students for the global workforce. Ultimately, this study aims to enhance the quality of English learning materials for vocational schools, fostering more effective language acquisition that supports students' career readiness and success in the 21st-century labour market.

In addition, the study can be seen as a direct response to an urgent workplace-based problem: the demand for English-language materials that are truly work-ready and colloquial to equip Indonesian vocational students with the skills they need to forge successful future careers. Although a disconnection between the two has long been recognized, this is the bridge between recognition and remediation. Using the SQRAR systematic evaluation method, this project goes beyond a general critical assessment of government-issued coursebooks and provides an evidence-based, in-depth diagnostic analysis. A commitment to producing tangible, actionable recommendations for the future will directly lead to materials grounded not only in the curriculum but also in a curriculum fit for purpose in the 21st-century vocational world of work.

METHOD

This research is qualitative, evaluative, and uses the SQRAR (survey, question, read, analyze, and recommend) method to evaluate the textbooks in a systematic way (Sukarno, 2024). It aims to assess the quality of English coursebooks used in Indonesian vocational high schools (SMK) for grades X, XI, and XII. The assessors were a purposive panel of three expert assessors members, who were chosen in such a way as to provide a fair and thorough assessment of the materials: a specialist

in English Language Teaching (ELT) to give strong orientation to the theoretical basis, a specialist in curriculum and materials development to comment on instructional design, and a working professional vocational teacher of English to offer views on classroom respect. The tool employed was a standardized review book, developed and refined to encompass 80 specific factors relevant to the vocational setting. Although there was a scoring element to the checklist, the numerical data were primarily used to support the judgment; the underlying analysis in this study is qualitative, with participants' rich, narrative sense-making and rationales for the scores. Triangulation across these various expert perspectives maximized the study's validity. Inter-rater reliability was assessed by having all three raters complete a standardized checklist, and all discrepancies were reconciled through consensus to ensure uniform application of the scoring criteria.

The "Survey" step involves surveying the English coursebooks prescribed by the Indonesian government for vocational high school students. The selected coursebooks cover a range of topics and language skills relevant to the curriculum for each grade level. The next is the "Question" stage. At this stage, the researchers construct a set of guiding questions, informed by expert input from English language teaching (ELT) and instructional design, to identify 26 criteria for an optimal coursebook. The dimensions concerned with the needs of vocational education were as follows: the curriculum, typography, relevance, Industrial Revolution 4.0, Society 5.0, character education, culture and local wisdom, higher order thinking skills (HOTS), and 21st-century learning/21st-century skills, also known as 4C's, consisting of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. A set of 80 criteria is developed and refined for the context of vocational institutions, with a focus on general and topic-specific use of English.

The third phase is "Read," in which the researchers meticulously read the textbooks and assess their content against the previously established criteria. This phase centres on an assessment of how well the materials facilitate language development, practical application in vocational contexts, and the clarity of instructional content. After reading the coursebooks, there is an "Analyse" phase in which the data collected from the survey and the responses to the guiding questions are analyzed. The analysis is conducted using descriptive qualitative methods, in which the researchers categorized and interpreted the strengths and weaknesses of the coursebooks according to the criterion of suitability. The evaluation will assess the suitability of the coursebooks for a broad range of vocational students, including those in English for specific purposes (ESP) and those with low proficiency.

The last is the "Recommend" stage. Recommendations for the redesign of coursebooks will be based on the analysis. These suggestions are expected to improve the contextual relevance of the content, the readability and interest of the materials for students, and the fit of the materials to students' vocation-specific needs. The suggestions will also clarify how the coursebooks must be adapted to enhance the acquisition of language skills and the practical competencies required for vocational careers. The use of the SQRAR approach in this study ensures that the data reflect both the strengths and the shortcomings of the English coursebooks. A descriptive qualitative analysis can provide a more thorough understanding of how the coursebooks function in the vocational education context. It may assist in assessing the effectiveness of English language proficiency among SMK students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines three coursebooks developed by the Indonesian government and published in 2022. They are Work in Progress (for grade X) (Hermawan et al., 2022), English for Change (for grade XI) (Astuti et al., 2022), and Life Today (grade XII) (Hardini et al., 2022). Those books are the most commonly used coursebooks in state vocational high schools and the most recent government-published coursebooks under the Kurikulum Merdeka umbrella. Those books were then evaluated using the dynamic evaluation method online system at https://www.sqrar.com.
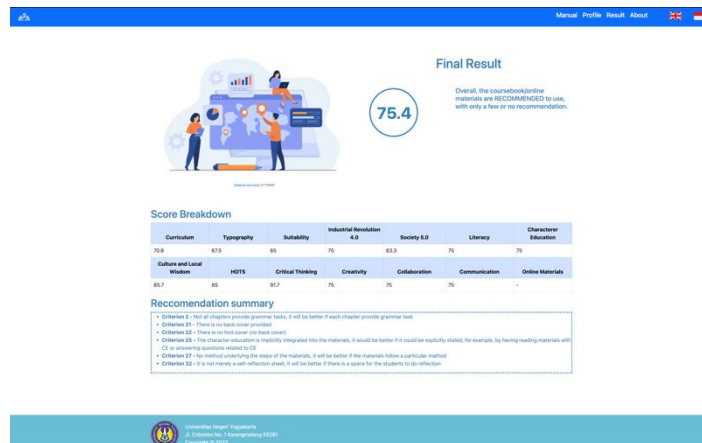
Figure 1. Evaluation Result of *Work in Progress* Coursebook (for grade X)

Table 1. Evaluation Result of Work in Progress Coursebook (for grade X)

Dimension	Score
Curriculum	70.8
Typography	67.5
Suitability	65
Industrial Revolution 4.0	75
Society 5.0	83.3
Literacy	75
Character Education	75
Culture and Local Wisdom	85.7
HOTS	85
Critical Thinking	91.7
Creativity	75
Collaboration	75
Communication	75

Table 1, which depicts the content in Figure 1, presents the results of the materials evaluation for the Work in Progress Coursebook (for grade X). The evaluation yielded an overall score of 75.4. This suggests that the coursebook is recommended for use, with only a few areas requiring improvement. The breakdown of scores indicates that the curriculum received 7/10, whereas typography, suitability, and culture and local wisdom received lower ratings of 6/10. The coursebook performed well in areas such as the Industrial Revolution 4.0, Society 5.0, creativity, and higher-order thinking skills, all of which received a score of 8/10. Other areas, like character education and collaboration, were rated 7/10.
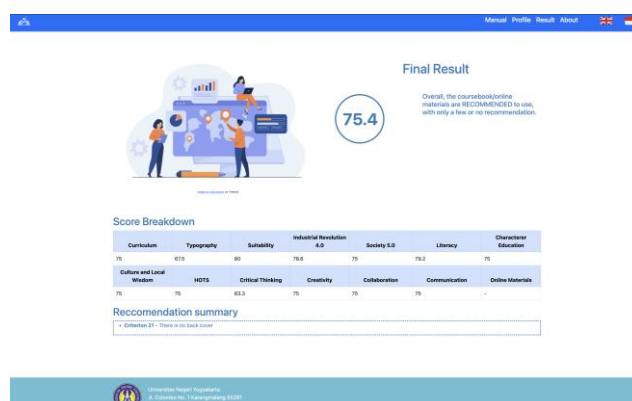

Figure 2. Evaluation Result of *English for Change* Coursebook (for grade XI)

Table 2. Evaluation Result of English for Change Coursebook (for grade XI)

Dimension	Score
Curriculum	75
Typography	67.5
Suitability	80
Industrial Revolution 4.0	78.6
Society 5.0	75
Literacy	79.2
Character Education	75
Culture and Local Wisdom	75
HOTS	75
Critical Thinking	83.3
Creativity	75
Collaboration	75
Communication	75

Table 2 shows the content of Figure 2. It presents the evaluation results for the Work in Progress Coursebook for Grade X, yielding an overall score of 75.4. This indicates that the coursebook is recommended for use, with only a few minor improvements. The breakdown of scores is as follows: the curriculum scored 7/10, typography 6.75/10, suitability 7/10, and Industrial Revolution 4.0 scored 8/10. The Society 5.0 and character education received a score of 7/10. The culture and local wisdom section scored 6/10, and HOTS (higher-order thinking skills) was rated 8/10 (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication), with 7/10.

Figure 3. Evaluation Result of *English for Change* Coursebook (for grade XI)

Table 3. Evaluation Result of *Life Today* Coursebook (for grade XII)

Dimension	Score
Curriculum	70.8
Typography	65
Suitability	70
Industrial Revolution 4.0	71.4
Society 5.0	66.7
Literacy	75
Character Education	75
Culture and Local Wisdom	71.4
HOTS	75
Critical Thinking	75
Creativity	75
Collaboration	66.7
Communication	66.7

Table 3 presents Figure 3, which shows that the Grade X coursebook received an overall score of 70.7, indicating that it is not recommended for use in its current form. Several areas need significant improvement, as outlined in the recommendation summary. The score breakdown is as follows: curriculum 7/10, typography 6.5/10, and suitability 7/10. The coursebook scored 7/10 for Industrial Revolution 4.0, but lower ratings were given for Society 5.0 (6/10) and character education (6/10). The culture and local wisdom section scored 7/10, and HOTS (higher-order thinking skills) scored 7/10. Critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication all received lower scores, averaging between 6.5/10 and 7/10.

Moreover, based on the results and scores above, further analysis is presented in the following section. This analysis examines whether the three coursebooks, designed for different levels, are suitable for vocational students. The appropriateness of each coursebook will be examined in further detail.

Curriculum

The assessment of the three English coursebooks provides significant insights into how they align with curriculum objectives, teaching approaches, the presentation and integration of grammar and vocabulary, skill development, and English for specific purposes (ESP) relevance. Each of these findings is then considered in relation to relevant educational and language acquisition theories.

Alignment with Curriculum Goals

The degree of alignment with the curriculum objectives varies across the three coursebooks. Work in Progress for Grade X is consistent with the broader aims of the curriculum, which are to develop students' multimodal English for personal and career-related contexts. However, this does not explicitly address the language requirements of vocational sectors such as engineering, hospitality, and tourism. This discrepancy is classified within the field of English for specific purposes (ESP), defining that "language teaching can be based on the analysis of learners´ target worlds in professional fields" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

English for Change for Grade XI is aligned with the curriculum to develop multimodal competencies in written and spoken forms. In accordance with communicative language teaching (CLT) that focuses on the acquisition of communicative competence in the performance of non-linguistic tasks, this book covers the general curriculum objectives appropriately (Richards, 2001).

Life Today for Grade XII appeals to the higher-level learners and indeed complements the overall curriculum aims. It is consistent with Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) specifically, its focus on cognitive development at the senior high school level, where learners are required to grapple with higher-order thinking skills. However, the three books share the same aspect that requires improvement. It is the failure to incorporate vocationally specific content for learners in specialized fields. It can be seen as a missed opportunity to apply language in practice.

Methodology and Approach

The teaching methods employed are less clear and less consistent with the approach promoted by the coursebooks. Work in Progress does not define a pedagogical model that offers a justification for how students learn, nor does it affect the efficiency of the instructional method. According to Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1973). The absence of an organized teaching approach may be confusing, as students require a well-structured context to construct knowledge and advance it over time.

By contrast, English for Change adopts the Genre-Based Approach (GBA), with a detailed, step-by-step cycle for each skill area (listening, speaking, reading, writing). This method is consistent with Vygotsky's Social Interactionist Theory (1978), which emphasizes the role of social interaction and scaffolding in learning. The gradient of language learning, using clear steps, places learners within their ZPD and enables this development. The GBA approach also promotes the use of authentic texts, thereby improving both academic and authentic language use.

Life Today also purports to use a genre-based approach, but because no GBA steps are outlined, it is unclear whether it adheres to this approach. From the standpoint of Behaviorist

Learning Theory (Skinner, 1954), in which learning is understood to occur through precise, repeatable processes, this ambiguity might be interpreted as a challenge. Words, phrases, prefixes, suffixes, and roots can be quite challenging for young children, especially without a concrete system (like the GBA) in place.

Grammar and Pronunciation Integration

The explicitness and relevance of the integration of grammar and pronunciation tasks underlie differences between the books. Work in Progress does not include grammar tasks as explicit grammar activities, although they can be indirectly practiced as part of various generalized offers for acquiring language, courtesy of the model of implicit learning of grammar suggested by Krashen's Monitor Theory (1981). Krashen (1985) argues that grammar is acquired subconsciously through exposure to language, which can explain why implicit incorporation is most evident in this book. However, for students in vocational fields, this lack of emphasis on grammar instruction may prove detrimental to the development of professional language structures.

English for Change also provides well-organized exercises in grammar, focusing on such key areas as verb tenses, conditionals, and modals. The exercises are in line with Swain's grammar-translation method (Swain, 1985), which treats explicit instruction as the most important one. Although these are well-designed exercises, they do not suit the workplace, reflecting a mismatch between traditional grammar-teaching methodology and the language of various industries. Between the lines, Life Today also implicitly includes grammar, following the Work in Progress model.

The pronunciation work in all three coursebooks is generally elementary and does not address pronunciation problems related to vocational needs. There are no specific pronunciation tasks on Work in Progress, but English for Change and Life Today have rudimentary drills. These tasks might benefit from a more concentrated focus on task types based on Chomsky's Transformational Grammar (1957), with syntax and pronunciation receiving more sophisticated treatment for vocational preparation contexts, for example.

Vocabulary Tasks

Vocabulary tasks across the three coursebooks mainly focus on general English, with limited attention given to domain-specific terminology. According to Nation's Vocabulary Learning Framework (Hofstede, 2001). Effective language instruction should focus not only on general vocabulary but also on the specialized lexicon necessary for professional success. Work in Progress offers vocabulary boxes to enhance students' general English lexicon, but does not target vocabulary relevant to specific vocational fields. Meanwhile, English for Change and Life Today offer more varied vocabulary tasks, such as identifying synonyms, recognizing keywords, and defining specific words. However, these exercises, while helping to expand students' general vocabulary, do not sufficiently address the technical language required in fields such as healthcare or business. This oversight is a missed opportunity to integrate ESP principles into the curriculum, which advocates for the use of specialized vocabulary to prepare students for their careers (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

In conclusion, the evaluation of the three English coursebooks highlights significant gaps in their alignment with curriculum goals, teaching methodologies, and the integration of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation tasks. While each coursebook demonstrates strengths in certain areas, such as multimodal skill development and the application of communicative language teaching principles, they collectively fall short in addressing the specific language needs of vocational learners. This oversight is particularly critical given the principles of English for specific purposes (ESP), which advocate for tailored language instruction that meets the demands of various professional fields (Maulani et al., 2022). Furthermore, the lack of explicit pedagogical frameworks in some coursebooks may hinder effective learning, as supported by Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes the necessity of structured learning environments (Korkmazgil, 2023).

Furthermore, the inclusion of grammar and vocabulary appears to be general in nature and does not include the specific lexicon that students in ESP are supposed to acquire (Solhi et al., 2020). This mismatch not only restricts the transferability of language skills in practice but also affects the

overall effectiveness of teaching materials in preparing students for future careers. It is for these reasons that educators and course writers should evaluate these coursebooks with a critical perspective and modify them to meet the educational requirements of students, thereby improving their experience and success in specific skills (Tosun & Cinkara, 2019). Further studies should work out course materials that implement ESP strategies more appropriately, so that the learners are provided with the language needed in their jobs or profession (Maulani et al., 2022).

Typography

The evaluation of the typography dimension in the three coursebooks reveals several important insights into their layout, design, font use, color schemes, illustrations, and overall content presentation. Each of these aspects plays a critical role in enhancing or hindering the learning experience.

Layout and Design

The organization and design of the coursebooks are major factors behind their accessibility and their user-friendliness. In Work in Progress, the format is simple and easy to follow, which is appropriate for vocational high school students of mixed/different abilities. This is consistent with Mayer's (2005) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which assumes that when people learn from simultaneous pictures and words, they process verbal and visual information in parallel streams. A neat, uncluttered appearance prevents learners from becoming overwhelmed and supports better learning. However, with Life Today, while the designs are thoughtful and enjoyable overall, there are some issues with specific elements, such as the scope and cycle section and mind maps, which are presented in portrait mode in the web version instead of landscape. This design failure may produce readability issues, as Sweller (1988) and his Cognitive Load Theory contend that, for a poorly designed layout, extraneous cognitive load can increase, thereby compromising reading and learning.

Font and Color

The use of fonts and colors is another critical element in the coursebooks' design. All three coursebooks use readable fonts, and the color schemes are designed to enhance readability and engagement. According to Vanderheiden's Theory of Readability (2009), using appropriate fonts and color contrast significantly enhances text legibility and student engagement, which is evident in these coursebooks. However, English for Change exhibits text overcrowding, which can affect the overall user experience. A more mindful arrangement of text and space, possibly with the addition of illustrations, could reduce cognitive load and improve clarity.

In Life Today, although the fonts and colors are well chosen, an issue with inappropriate use of punctuation and capitalization is observed, such as the word "god" being written without capitalization. This minor yet significant detail can affect the professionalism and attention to detail in the coursebook, which is important for fostering a respectful and formal tone, especially in educational materials. According to Halliday's Functional Grammar Theory (1978), the appropriate use of punctuation and capitalization contributes to the clarity and meaning of the text. In educational contexts, maintaining consistency and accuracy in writing is essential for promoting effective learning and maintaining students' trust in the material.

Illustrations

Illustrations play an important role in supporting the content of each coursebook, although their relevance and engagement vary. The Work in Progress includes engaging illustrations, though they lack relevance to vocational contexts such as offices, workshops, or hotels. This indicates a potential mismatch between visual resources and vocational students' needs. Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction (1985) stipulate that visual aids should support the content being learned and help the students to build a mental image of the material. Adding relevant pictures for vocational learners can also support engagement and understanding, helping to bring the learning content to life.

English for Change has pictures designed for the workplace, but readers are "less inclined" to relate. As Mayer's (2005) Multimedia Learning Theory states that visual elements should not only illustrate content but also stimulate learning. More dynamic and engaging imagery could enhance student motivation and facilitate deeper learning.

In Life Today, the pictures are somewhat more closely linked to the discussion, but they require more interaction with the tasks in each unit. This is consistent with Paivio's (1986) Dual Coding Theory, which posits that combining verbal and visual information enhances memory. To make the illustration more effective for learning and easier for students to accept, multimedia information should be more closely integrated into tasks and activities, with greater interactivity and contextual relevance.

Content of Each Unit

The content structure across the coursebooks is generally clear, but there are differences in how units are organized and presented. In Work in Progress, each chapter follows a particular pattern. This structure provides students with a variety of task types that cater to different learning styles, reflecting Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (1983). Such diverse activities, ranging from listening tasks to reflections, ensure that all students can engage with the material in ways that suit their individual strengths.

English for Change also follows a similar pattern, but it varies the tasks to enhance students' listening skills. These varied tasks support Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which emphasizes the importance of active learning through concrete experiences. By providing students with multiple modes of interaction, the book enables learners to deepen their understanding through varied approaches.

Life Today organizes each unit around six skills, following the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) and providing reflection tasks at the end of each unit. This reflects the principles of Vygotsky's Social Constructivism (1978), in which learning is understood as a social process involving reflection and collaboration. The inclusion of reflection tasks enables students to engage more deeply with the content and encourages them to think critically about what they have learned.

In conclusion, the evaluation of typography across the three coursebooks reveals significant insights into their layout, design, font use, color schemes, illustrations, and overall content presentation. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in shaping the learning experience, with Work in Progress demonstrating a clear, accessible layout that aligns well with Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, thereby reducing cognitive overload for vocational high school students. However, issues such as the design flaws in Life Today and the overcrowding of text in English for Change highlight the need for careful consideration of layout and font choices to enhance readability and engagement, as emphasized by Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (Alneaimi, 2024).

Furthermore, the integration of illustrations is vital for reinforcing content and maintaining student interest, as supported by Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory. The effectiveness of illustrations in each coursebook varies, indicating that more relevant and engaging visuals could enhance learning outcomes, particularly for vocational learners (Liao & Phongsatha, 2023). Lastly, the content organization reflects various educational theories, including Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory and Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which advocate for diverse task types that cater to different learning styles and promote active engagement (Isbilen, 2024; Poon, 2021). In addition, this evaluation demonstrates how principles from Cognitive Load Theory and Multimedia Learning Theory appear in government-produced vocational textbooks, thereby providing a single, concrete case for an essential educational field. In practical terms, these results have direct implications for textbook designers and educators, underscoring the need to improve font selection, avoid overcrowded text, and include more engaging visuals when preparing materials for vocational learners.

Overall, while the coursebooks exhibit strengths in typography, there are notable areas for improvement that could further enhance their effectiveness in supporting diverse learning needs. Future iterations should prioritize the integration of practical design principles, ensuring that

typography not only facilitates comprehension but also enriches the educational experience for all students.

Suitability

The analysis of the suitability dimension in the three English coursebooks under investigation reveals several key issues regarding the books' congruence with the economic backgrounds, language proficiency, cultural identities, and values of the potential users.

Economic Background

The suitability of the coursebooks to students' economic backgrounds is an essential factor in ensuring their accessibility. All three books are thoughtfully designed to meet students' economic needs and are also available as free PDF downloads on the SIBI website. The print edition is priced between Rp15,700 and Rp44,900, depending on the region. With free digital content, all students have access to the material regardless of their socioeconomic status, creating equal learning opportunities. Some students may be concerned about the cost of the printed version, but they have a free digital version, which helps somewhat.

Proficiency Level

The coursebook's language proficiency is also an important consideration in assessing its appropriateness for students. In Work in Progress, the linguistics and the typology of words are the intended language for the students of Grade X, especially at the E level of Kurikulum Merdeka. This is consistent with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978), which emphasizes the necessity of instructors adapting instruction to students' developmental levels. English for Change is thought to be suitable for students at the 'B1' level of CEFR based on the curriculum objectives designed for grade XI students. Life Today, on the other hand, is designed for students at F level in the Kurikulum Merdeka, who wish to progress to B2 level under the CEFR.

This proficiency level is generally consistent with Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, which posits that language learners learn best when the input they receive is just beyond their current level of competence but still comprehensible. The style in which books are written helps children connect language to the content taught in school. It is also consistent with Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), which emphasizes scaffolding learning to enable students to progress from simple to complex tasks.

Cultural and Moral Values

The infusion of culture and morality is a part of the coursebooks to ensure their relevance and significance. Work in Progress incorporates students' local language and culture throughout the materials, alongside topics related to the target language's cultures. This is also consistent with Gardner's (1983) Multiple Intelligences Theory, where effective education should attend to various cultural and cognitive differences. Culture is the second essential element in the coursebook, bringing the local culture into focus with respect to the target culture, thereby enhancing students' cultural awareness and sensitivity.

All of the books integrate character education through the Pancasila Student Profile, which focuses on the development of students' moral and ethical values. The implicit integration aligns with Freire's Critical Pedagogy (1970), which advocates for education that fosters critical thinking and social consciousness. By implicitly integrating moral and ethical values, the coursebook encourages students to reflect on their surroundings and develop a strong sense of civic responsibility.

In conclusion, the evaluation of the suitability of the three English coursebooks reveals their alignment with students' economic backgrounds, proficiency levels, and cultural and moral values. The accessibility of these coursebooks is commendable, particularly with the availability of free digital versions, which promotes equity in learning opportunities for students from diverse economic backgrounds. This accessibility is crucial in fostering an inclusive educational environment, as highlighted by Ningsih et al. (2024), who emphasize the importance of integrating moral and intellectual values in education to support student development in digital contexts .

Moreover, the proficiency levels targeted by each coursebook are well-aligned with established educational theories, such as Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Krashen's Input Hypothesis. These theories advocate for instructional materials that are appropriately challenging yet comprehensible, facilitating language acquisition and cognitive development. However, the references provided (Franz & Teo, 2018; Nhung, 2019) do not directly support the claim regarding the alignment of proficiency levels with these educational theories. Therefore, I will remove these citations.

Additionally, the integration of cultural and moral values within the coursebooks enhances their relevance and impact on students. By embedding local culture alongside the target language's culture, the materials promote cultural sensitivity and awareness, aligning with Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory. This approach not only enriches the learning experience but also encourages students to engage critically with the content, fostering a sense of civic responsibility as advocated by Freire's Critical Pedagogy (Glisan et al., 2013). However, the reference (Merchan & Slate, 2017) does not support the claim made about civic responsibility and should be removed.

Industrial Revolution 4.0

The analysis of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 dimension, through three English coursebooks, focuses on how technology was incorporated and issues related to these contents. These considerations are important for students to recognize, as they will continue to live in a digital, networked world when they return to academia or the professional environment.

Use of Technology

The integration of technology into coursebooks is uneven, yet it affects students' readiness to address the challenges of IR 4.0. The impact of ICT use in professional and vocational environments, however, was least emphasized in Work in Progress and English for Change. However, they do encourage technology through activities such as barcode scanning and publishing students' work via links. This corroborates Mishra and Koehler's (2006) Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model, which asserts that technology must be infused with pedagogy to enhance the relevance of content and learning. The activities in the coursebooks will leave students familiar with digital tools, yet perhaps with a stronger connection to professional technology use in the context of the 'outside world' – such as digital collaboration, industry-specific software, etc.

Meanwhile, Life Today utilises technology to a lesser extent, requiring students in each unit to access input materials using barcodes or links. Although this is superior to the other two books, the limited use of ICT alone does not fully prepare students for IR 4.0. The effective use of technology in education extends beyond mere digital tasks, as Selwyn's Education Technology Theory (2016) demonstrates, and it requires developing proficiency and critical engagement with technology. Life Today could expand its complexity to include higher-order technological tools and activities that replicate realistic digital contexts in which students develop work and life readiness.

Connection to Global Issues

Another essential element in preparing students to face the challenges of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0) is the integration of coursebooks with global issues. Through increased attention to global matters, Work in Progress can help to enlarge the scope of students' vision beyond the confines of what is familiar: the 'world next door', as evidenced in its apparent regard for integration into the larger world of IR 4.0.

Work in Progress is primarily driven by themes of teenage life, such as graffiti and movie reviews. While these may be topics of interest to general students, they do not necessarily have a strong connection to global problems, such as environmental degradation, the global business environment, or technological advances. This constraint could be expressed in terms of Freire's (1970) Critical Pedagogy promotes learning that prepares students to act as knowledge workers and fosters curiosity about the issues that shape their world.

English for Change addresses both global and local issues more effectively following the latest reform, yet it still offers only a few vocational topics. The contents in this book resonate with hallmarks of our times, including economic hardship, environmental degradation, and social justice.

This responds to UNESCO's (2005) framework for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which recognizes global issues as essential to the development of students' critical and creative thinking skills.

Life Today, by contrast, is slightly concerned with global affairs. The subjects covered are not well aligned with current global challenges: technological disruption, climate change, the future of work, etc." This does not address the omission and could be explained by referring to Bell's Theory of Social Learning (2009) whereby global issues must be incorporated into the curriculum to enable students to develop the knowledge and skills to solve problems that are highly interconnected and complex, regardless of the profession they will enter.

In conclusion, the evaluation of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 dimension across the three English coursebooks reveals the extent of technology infusion and the linkage to global issues that it provides for learners to meet the demands of our world today. Work in Progress and English for Change incorporate some technological dimensions, such as barcode scanning, but fail to provide students with the requisite level of digital literacy to adequately meet the requirements of IR 4.0, as highlighted by Mishra and Koehler's TPACK framework (Askari & Baumgartner, 2024). Conversely, technology integrated into Life Today fails to prepare students for minimal tech integration effectively.

In general, the coursebooks lay the foundation for how the implications of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 will be taught, and there is clear room for further integration of technology, with a focus on global issues, to better prepare students for future academic and career paths. The next generation of such materials needs to emphasise these aspects, so that their students emerge as not only technically capable but also international citizens and engaged.

Society 5.0

The analysis of the Society 5.0 dimension in the three textbooks focuses on open discussions, public speaking, and mini-research activities. These aspects are essential for nurturing skills suited to Society 5.0, which emphasizes the integration of technology and society, grounded in human-centered values.

Open Discussions

The facilitation of open discussions in coursebooks is a key element in preparing students for the complex societal challenges of Society 5.0. Work in Progress and English for Change provide minimal prompts for open discussions but lack deeper engagement with real-world issues. Meanwhile, Life Today encourages open discussion but does not include scenarios in which students directly address professional or societal challenges. According to Vygotsky's Social Constructivism (1978), social interaction is a more effective means of promoting learning, and discussion is an important vehicle for knowledge construction.

Although Work in Progress raises several questions, they are not enough to lead students to think more about how collaborative competencies could be applied to comments made in society and the world based on critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and how the problems that are likely to emerge in Society 5.0, such as environmental, social, or technological problems, concerning company life, could be dealt with.

Presentation/Public Speaking

The development of presentation and public speaking skills is vital in the context of Society 5.0, where effective communication is essential for participating in an interconnected world. Work in Progress promotes basic presentation skills but does not include situations closely related to real-life vocational demands. This is consistent with Gardner's (1983) Theory of Multiple Intelligences, which emphasizes the importance of developing various forms of intelligence, such as verbal-linguistic, through hands-on activities. However, vocational-related scenes are scant. Therefore, students are unable to apply these skills in real-world settings, which would have supported their vocational success.

English for Change encourages the creation of presentations as the writing tasks within the GBA. This uptake, which follows Feez and Joyce's (2002) theoretical work, enables explicit student involvement with language in doing genre-related tasks, with presentations as a means of creating and representing knowledge. While the structure is complete, the emphasis on written-to-spoken output continues to restrict opportunities for more spontaneous, authentic, or real-world presentation contexts, as advocated by Society 5.0, such as social communication in agronomy and information technology in professional settings.

Life Today also emphasizes presentation skills through writing tasks. Despite being in line with the Genre-Based Approach, as presented by Christie and Derewianka (2008), this method also lacks opportunities for learners to practice public speaking in vocational or societal contexts. The book's presentations are well organized but insufficient for the spontaneous public speaking that students will encounter in the professional and social arenas of Society 5.0.

Mini-Research

The incorporation of mini-research tasks into the coursebooks is an important way to engage students with real-world issues and encourage independent inquiry, skills that are essential in Society 5.0. In Work in Progress and Life Today, mini-research elements are rarely present. In other words, not all units include a mini-research project. In English for Change, mini-research tasks are minimal, typically consisting of activities such as observation or the search for specific information.

While some units consist of mini-research tasks that encourage inquiry, they do not focus on vocational or societal challenges. According to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), learning is enhanced through concrete experiences, reflective observation, and abstract conceptualization. The minimal mini-research tasks in English for Change could be expanded to include more vocationally and societally relevant challenges, thereby enabling students to develop deeper insights into real-world problems.

In summary, an examination of the Society 5.0 dimension in the context of the three English coursebooks demonstrates a lack of open discussion, presentation/ public speaking tasks, and mini-research in each of the coursebooks examined, which are needed to equip students with the skills to cope with the complexities of contemporary society. Moreover, to better meet the demands of Society 5.0, these coursebooks should place greater emphasis on open discussions of current affairs, provide more opportunities for impromptu speaking exercises, and include numerous mini-research tasks related to occupational and societal problems. Not only would these enhancements support the development of important communication and critical thinking skills, but they would also begin to equip students to succeed in a connected, technology-enabled world, as embraced in the new educational paradigms of Society 5.0 (Johnson & Howard, 2019).

Character Education

The evaluation of the character education dimension across the three coursebooks focuses on the integration of moral values and accommodation for diverse learners. These elements are vital for fostering students' ethical development and ensuring that educational materials cater to the needs of all learners.

Moral Values

All three coursebooks emphasize significant moral values, such as responsibility and honesty. However, such values are not directly relevant to professional ethics and workplace behavior, particularly of vocational students. Work in Progress presents important moral values but does not address work ethic, a significant topic in vocational learning. This gap can be elucidated by using a framework such as Kohlberg's (1981) stages of moral development, which highlight developmental stages at which people engage in moral reasoning and make ethical decisions. In that way, if it could interweave moral values with workplace values, Work in Progress might better help students hit the ground running in real professional situations.

Likewise, English for Change addresses general moral values but fails to emphasize professional and workplace ethics. This void is also observed in Life Today, where important values such as responsibility and honesty are addressed, but not explicitly linked to workplace utility. The

Social Learning Theory states that learning frequently results from watching and imitating the behavior of others (Bandura, 1977). To align more closely with students' vocational requirements, these coursebooks might incorporate scenarios that require the use of machinery to apply moral values in workplace contexts, such as making ethical decisions in a business setting or communicating professionally in a team.

Accommodation for Diverse Learners

Accommodating diverse learners is another key area of character education. Work in Progress is described as inclusive and accessible to learners with varying English proficiency levels, which supports Tomlinson's Differentiated Instruction Theory (2001). This theory supports altering the what, the how, and the product of learning to accommodate all students. The coursebook's inclusive design accommodates students with varying levels of proficiency. However, additional differentiation strategies would be welcome for vocational students to address language needs in specific occupational areas. English for Change is also accessible to a broad range of learners, but it lacks explicit differentiation strategies tailored to vocational students specializing in various fields. This issue can be addressed through Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (1983), which suggests that learners have different strengths and preferences. English for Change could adapt to the diverse learning needs of vocational students by incorporating varied teaching approaches and activities, such as task-based and project-based learning. Differentiation could be especially crucial in vocational education, where students specialize in areas that require distinct language skills and knowledge.

Life Today is less inclusive and accessible to learners with varying levels of English proficiency. This limitation could be linked to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978), which emphasizes that learners progress best when tasks are within their ZPD—neither too easy nor too difficult. To be accessible to a range of learners, Life Today might provide additional scaffolding or support for students at lower proficiency levels while simultaneously challenging students at advanced levels. This may mean incorporating visual aids (inspired by this post), glossaries, and differentiated tasks that enable students at diverse levels to understand and engage with the content.

In conclusion, the analysis of the character education dimension in the three coursebooks suggests a positive integration of moral virtues, such as responsibility and honesty, but with much less evidence, attitudes related to work ethic and the professional environment are crucial for vocational students. This gap can be addressed by introducing cases that link moral values to real-life professional settings, job situations, and policy making, thereby improving students' ethical reasoning and decision-making skills, as articulated in Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development (Ningsih, 2024).

In addition, Work in Progress is shown to integrate inclusive and accessible policies and practices to support diverse learners. However, it could leverage more specific differentiations to better meet the needs of vocational students, according to Tomlinson's Differentiation-based Theory of Instruction (Deng & Badiane, 2021). English for Change also demonstrates signs and possibilities of addressing a diversity of learners, but not in clear/obvious strategies targeting the general differences and preferences recognized in Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (Shaw & Stoll, 2021). Finally, Life Today fails to provide sufficient scaffolding for learners at different proficiency levels, which could be decomposed using a proper scaffolding method consistent with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Tucker-Drob et al., 2014).

Thus, to improve professional morality education in these textbooks, it is necessary to explicitly incorporate professional ethics, prioritize diverse teaching methods, and ensure the accessibility of study materials for students with different learning abilities. In this way, course books can help prepare students for academic success and cultivate an ethical and responsible approach to participation in their future workplaces and society.

Culture and Local Wisdom

The "Culture and Local Wisdom" across the three coursebooks is analysed in terms of the integration of the students' local culture, the target culture (English-speaking countries), and the international culture in the materials. Sensitivity to the coursebook's cultural factors is important for developing students' international consciousness without undermining their regional identity and values.

Local Culture Integration

This infusion of local culture is important for making the coursebook more relevant to students' lives and for fostering a sense of cultural pride. Work in Progress offers a more indirect introduction to local culture through its materials. However, it is rather superficial in its integration of local knowledge and traditions into the learning process. This approach can be explained through Vygotsky's Social Constructivism (1978), in which learners develop understanding through scaffolding of learning experiences against a known cultural backdrop. Though Work in Progress affirms local culture, it so far lacks an explicit link to students' daily cultural realities, like local traditions, rituals, or history.

English for Change, by contrast, is more directly informed by students' local culture. It contains cultural references to legends, traditional foods, or other cultural details, which tend to enhance the alignment between course content and students' cultural contexts. According to Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory (1983), one way to enhance engagement and learning is to include cultural content relevant to learners' backgrounds. The presence of this material helps students understand the materials as they pertain to their lives and cultures, and to value children's cultural heritages as they learn the language.

Life Today also includes more subtle cultural immersion, a few celebrity references, and references to Indonesian culture. The introduction of these is valuable to students' understanding of culture, though it is not particularly extensive. In his Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), Freire argues for a relevant curriculum that returns to students' unique contexts to nourish their learning. If these ties between cultural touchstones and local customs, traditions, and societal values were made more explicit in Life Today, it would help strengthen this connection.

Target Culture Integration (English-Speaking Countries)

In these coursebooks, there is a range in the extent to which culture (specifically, the cultures of English-speaking countries) should be included, as culture is important to understanding the world of English. Work in progress features also target cultural content, such as idioms used in English-speaking countries. Contrary to Kramsch's Theory of Language and Culture (1993), incorporating aspects of the target culture enables learners to grasp the nuances of language use and communication in specific cultural contexts. This is crucial for preparing students for an English-speaking world and a globalized workforce in which ethical conduct is essential.

English for Change has made a broader attempt to incorporate the target culture by including materials related to the cultures of English-speaking countries, such as sayings, customs, and habits. This aligns with Byram's (1997) Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, which posits that an individual must understand their own culture and possess knowledge of the Other's culture to communicate effectively across expanding national and cultural borders. This coursebook introduces learners to various aspects of the target culture and equips them to navigate cross-cultural communication in both personal and professional contexts.

On the other hand, Life Today has a few references to the target culture. Although the coursebook contains a limited number of elements that contribute to the target culture, it is neither in-depth nor comprehensive. Halliday (2010) posits that knowledge of target cultures aids students in engaging meaningfully with language in their broader social and cultural contexts. If elements of the target culture were integrated more fully into Life Today, students would be better prepared to use English in culturally informed ways across different contexts.

International Culture (Beyond Target and Source Cultures)

Including international cultures (the cultural environments of countries other than the target and the students' local culture) can increase students' global awareness and broaden their perspectives. Work in Progress and English for Change also introduce international culture by exposing students to various learning areas (e.g., sports and stories) and, in turn, to the cultural features of the source and of international culture. Hofstede's five dimensions of culture theory (2001) suggests that studying in multicultural environments will enable students to adopt a more cosmopolitan approach to their lives and become more adaptable in diverse cultural settings.

Life Today, by contrast, contains minimal international culture. Although it does include international aspects (e.g., other countries' currencies and economic habits), this treatment is perfunctory. Broadening these horizons could enable students to gain a deeper appreciation of global issues and cultures, a crucial skill in an increasingly interconnected world. In Merriam's (2001) Theory of Lifelong Learning, she argues that learning should extend beyond classroom walls and incorporate global perspectives to prepare students for an increasingly globalized world.

In conclusion, the culture and local wisdom sections of the three coursebooks vary in their integration of local, target, and international cultures, which is crucial for fostering students' global awareness while honoring their local traditions. On the one hand, English for Change is distinctive in the sense that it explicitly integrates local cultural elements, particularly folklore and their own traditional foods, which resonates well with the local wisdom-based education, helping to promote students' engagement and appreciation of their heritage (Fernando & Yusnan, 2022). On the other hand, Work in Progress and Life Today merely give an indirect local cultural reference, which gives a little contribution to connect the learning of the students with the situation in the place where they are living at in line with the major role of local wisdom in educational models (Sudjarwo et al., 2018).

In addition, such representation of sights and sounds of the target culture which students associate with English-speaking countries and explore beyond their immediate environment, that are inherent in the coursebooks, is not very noticeable in Life Today, and which, according to Almasi (2011) is very important for gaining cultural awareness for effective communication in the 21st century. This demand for depth comes to the fore especially in discourse about cultural learning in language education. (Uge et al., 2019). The limited presence of international culture in Life Today also suggests that greater exposure to international culture is needed to cultivate a global mindset. (Arjaya et al., 2024).

On the whole, it is necessary to add more explicit references on local practices, professional ethics, and various cultural backgrounds to improve these coursebooks. In this way, coursebooks can make greater contributions to students' local and global orientation, ensuring a robust cultural identity while preparing them to take their rightful place and make meaningful contributions to an interconnected world. This approach aligns with the growing emphasis on local wisdom in education and may supplement character education and foster a deeper understanding of cultural values (Anderson, 2021; Umbase et al., 2018).

Higher Order Thinking Skills

The analysis of the "HOTS" dimension in the three coursebooks assumes that critical thinking, cognitive skills, and task complexity are embedded as the objects of evaluation. These factors are fundamental in the development of higher-order thinking skills in students, which are necessary for problem-solving, decision-making, and professional careers.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is an essential component of higher-order thinking skills. In Work in Progress, some problem-solving and analysis tasks appear in the coursebook, but they remain at a relatively low level. According to Paul and Elder's Critical Thinking Theory (Abdullah, 2006), critical thinking is a process through which one applies higher-level intellectual analysis to appraise and reflect on information from diverse perspectives and to make rational decisions. Assignments in Work in Progress might develop fundamental problem-solving skills, but do not require students to engage in analysis or evaluation at a level relevant to their future work.

In English for Change, activities are developed to encourage learners to think critically and solve particular problems, for instance, through case studies. These activities are rated better on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), thus analyzing, evaluating, and creating at the higher level of cognitive development. Case study assignments, in particular, prompt students to apply their reasoning to real-life situations, thereby eliciting the sorts of analysis and evaluation that complex problem-solving demands. However, English for Change does not go far enough to promote the generation of solutions to professional problems among students, which would be an additional step toward audience level 7.

Life Today includes critical-thinking tasks that require students to analyze and evaluate, but, as with English for Change, it does not prompt students to devise solutions to real-world professional problems. This limitation can be conceptualized with Anderson and Krathwohl's Cognitive Process Dimensions (2001) that argued that higher-order thinking extends beyond analysis and evaluation to include applying knowledge to solve real-world problems. The introduction of such vocational scenarios would help students to make links between theoretical studies and job characteristics.

Gradual Complexity

Another important factor to consider is the sequence of increasing task complexity in developing other forms of thinking. In Work in Progress, the exercises progress in a sensible yet lightly scaffolded manner. The activities in English for Change increase in difficulty, but the resources are also straightforwardly academic and general. In addition, selections from Life Today contain tasks with good sequencing but are academic, with little application to vocational areas.

The slow increase in complexity can be attributed to Sweller's (1988) Cognitive Load Theory, which proposes that tasks should progress from less to more complex to avoid overloading students' working memory. Although Work in Progress adds complexity by not providing the scaffolding and context of real-world applications, it has not enabled higher-order thinking. Moreover, the small, task-oriented approach is indicative of a greater emphasis on project-based learning (Thomas, 2001), where they also worked on long-term projects that became more challenging over the years, like in real-life problems. Life Today integrates vocationally based projects that can adequately prepare students for the challenges they face in the real world and thus facilitate higher-order thinking. They cannot ask students to rote-learn information and then retrieve it for testing purposes, as this is unnatural; therefore, Life Today was a better mechanism for encouraging higher-order thinking in real life and during study.

Furthermore, the gradual, complex irony corresponds to cognitive developmental skills. Enhancing cognitive abilities is central to generating higher-level thought. Work in Progress features exercises that build from simpler activities—such as vocabulary comprehension — to more complex ones, such as parsing passages. This incremental development is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD, suggesting that learning should be scaffolded to build on prior knowledge and skills. Gradually raising the difficulty level makes tasks challenging at an appropriate level for students as they build their cognitive skills.

In conclusion, the analysis of the "Culture and Local Wisdom" dimension across the three coursebooks reveals differences in the integration of local, target, and international cultures, which are crucial for cultivating learners' global awareness while respecting their local values. These coursebooks should also more explicitly relate to local customs and professional ethics (Amalia et al., 2022), as well as to varied cultural perspectives, so that its effectiveness can be optimized. In this way, the coursebooks can equip learners with the skills they need to thrive in, engage with, and contribute to their local and global communities, fostering strong cultural identities and the ability to navigate a global society. It is also in line with the increasingly widespread recognition of the importance of local wisdom in education, which can enrich character education and help students develop a deeper understanding of cultural values (Iriaji et al., 2021; Subur et al., 2024).

21st Century Skills (4Cs)

The evaluation of the 21st-century learning skills dimension, also known as the 4Cs (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication), across the three coursebooks examines how the books support the development of these essential skills. The 4Cs are critical for preparing students for the challenges of the modern workforce, which requires problem-solving, innovation, teamwork, and effective communication.

Critical Thinking

One of the most prominent 21st-century learning skills is critical thinking, which fosters the capacity to analyse, evaluate, and create. In Work in Progress, critical thinking skills are enhanced through discussion activities that provide students with opportunities to express their opinions. Paul and Elder (2006) infer that such discussions, which involve students in analysing issues and making reasoned contributions, help develop critical thinking. The Work in Progress exercises also reflect these principles; however, the extent to which the book develops critical thinking is evident in real-life vocational problem-solving exercises. Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988) also proposes that introducing students to problem-related activities that they will encounter in future careers would enhance cognitive engagement and deepen learning.

In English for Change, likewise, critical thinking is promoted through discussion activities, but there are no problem-solving activities related to vocational problem-solving. Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) indicates that good critical thinking should include not only analysis and evaluation but also the creation of solutions, particularly in vocational contexts. The integration of work-based problem-solving situations would improve the students' ability to solve problems in their respective work areas.

Life Today also encourages critical thinking by engaging students in discussion tasks that enable them to share their perspectives. However, as with the others, it could do more to promote vocational learning through problem-based exercises related to professional contexts. Higher-order thinking includes both analysis, evaluation, and creation of new ideas (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). If such activities of critical thinking in the context of vocational situations were introduced to this coursebook, students could be better suited for future problems encountered as employees.

Creativity

Creativity, the ability to generate new ideas and think outside the box, is another crucial skill in the 21st century. Otherwise, the three sets of coursebooks leave room for somewhat creative discussions that relate to what the student has learnt; however, the connection to the type of tasks one would perform in a professional merger situation, where creativity would be applied in the form of solutions to unsatisfying problems, is not very clear.

The Creativity Model of Torrance (1974) asserts that creativity is a fundamental component of education and culture, but it is most effective only when used in a meaningful context. To better promote creativity, Work in Progress could include more activities that foster creativity in vocational contexts (e.g., developing marketing plans for a company or inventing a new product). By including more maker tasks tied to vocational fields, we would expand their opportunities to apply creative thinking to real problems, benefiting not only their creativity but also their professional development.

Collaboration

Almost everything in the modern workplace is built around the need for collaboration, and teamwork is a common thread across nearly all work environments. The three coursebooks involve pairs but do not represent teamwork in professional working conditions. There are rubrics in the course book for peer work, which is a solid beginning. Johnson and Johnson's Cooperative Learning Theory (1994) asserts that effective interaction in collaboration occurs only when roles are defined and everyone knows the goals. To more authentically model vocational teamwork, books should be designed to better support the development of team-based projects and tasks that reflect the style of teamwork students are likely to experience in their workplaces.

Communication

Effective communication is a cornerstone of success in both academic and professional settings. Work in Progress promotes communication skills but lacks adequate integration of real communication activities, such as project presentations or negotiations. According to Bovee and Thill's Communication Theory (2014) excellent communication is essential in all aspects of business, including presenting ideas, negotiating, and writing reports. Adding more tasks that require students to communicate effectively, such as presentations, discussions, and debates, would address this limitation in the coursebook's coverage of professional communication.

English for Change is concerned with general communication rather than being specific to any profession, as required in vocational fields. P21's Framework for 21st-century learning emphasizes the need to teach both written and oral communication skills in application-based scenarios. Task-based activities, such as project presentations or workplace negotiations, would enable English for Change to provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges they will face in their professional communication.

Life Today prepares students to use oral communication skills necessary in the workplace, such as delivering project presentations and engaging in other professional communication. This supports Bovee and Thill's (2014) Communication Theory, favouring students' mastery of expressing ideas and proposals effectively across all forms. While including communication-focused activities, Life Today does not lose sight of the importance of personalized instruction. It turns students into learners and learners into speakers, all while maximizing test scores and fluency.

In summary, the assessment of the 21st-century skills dimension—particularly the 4Cs (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication)—across the three coursebooks reveals strengths and areas requiring support and development to strengthen these competencies. Future coursebooks should include more project-based learning, vocationally relevant problem-solving tasks, and professional communication scenarios to better align with the requirements of 21st-century education. In this way, they can help students compete in the modern workforce, which demands higher-order thinking skills to succeed (Sulistiyawati et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

An evaluation of the English coursebooks for Grades X (Work in Progress), XI (English for Change), and XII (Life Today) indicates several strengths and weaknesses relative to a range of axes such as the match with the curriculum, the nature of content and context in the books and the extent to which the books relate with the world of work. Provided that the coursebooks generally reflect the broader educational goals, they are found to meet the needs of vocational students. Suggestions for enhancement include developing more industry-oriented content, integrating English for specific purposes (ESP), and strengthening connections to vocational contexts at the vocational level of language instruction, particularly in professional communication and real-life applications.

Therefore, to further enhance the effectiveness of these coursebooks, it is suggested that subsequent versions be complemented by more vocational-focused content (e.g., specialized terminology, technical writing, and professional communication activities). The coursebooks should include more project work and meaningful contexts to ensure that students are prepared to engage with the world of work. Furthermore, enhancing the integration of global and societal concerns, while promoting critical thinking and problem-solving, may equip students with the competencies necessary for their careers and academic pursuits.

Scientifically, this study contributes to the SQRAR framework as an innovative and systematic framework for appraising vocational English coursebooks. In practice, it provides publishers and curriculum designers with actionable feedback to enhance the material's relevance and readability. One primary limitation is that, although the study is based on expert judgment, it does not account for how teachers and students actually use these materials in the classroom. Hence, further observation-based research is necessary to investigate how these coursebooks can be effectively used in the classroom and how they compare with other ELT materials for vocational purposes, if we are to draw any general patterns from the use of government-issued ELT materials in vocational education. Furthermore, further research on other vocational topics will make a significant contribution to the field of vocational education.

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