

International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research
 Vol. 21, No. 8, pp. 202-218, August 2022
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.8.12>
 Received Jun 7, 2022; Revised Aug 14, 2022; Accepted Aug 23, 2022

Using Graphic Oral History Texts to Operationalize the TEIL Paradigm and Multimodality in the Malaysian English Language Classroom

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Abstract. The adoption of commercial language-teaching materials produced in the United Kingdom, or the United States, is a common practice in English language teaching (ELT) worldwide. This is due to the wide perception of British and American English as the standard, favorable models of the English language. This practice, however, does not support the increasing and urgent shift to the teaching English as an international language (TEIL) paradigm, and it further perpetuates the hegemony of these Western countries over the market of ELT materials. In this paper, we seek to not only problematize the adoption of global commercial materials but also propose a conceptual model for composing effective local ELT materials for the Malaysian English language classroom. In doing so, we refer to the relevant literature and previous research. The proposed conceptual model embraces the TEIL paradigm as well as multimodality and executes them by utilizing oral history and the graphic novel as two powerful pedagogical tools. By combining these two pedagogies, the model accentuates the acknowledged pedagogical value of both oral history and the graphic novel and results in local-context and culture-based texts that are also consistent with the current nature of texts being visual and multimodal. Furthermore, the paper showcases some samples of graphic oral history texts composed by Malaysian English language teachers and student teachers in two projects.

Keywords: ELT materials; graphic novels; multimodality; oral history; teaching English as an international language (TEIL)

1. Introduction

Language-teaching materials are the nucleus of English language teaching (ELT) (Damayanti et al., 2018), contributing immensely to the teaching and learning of the English language (Bouckaert, 2019; Bouckaert et al., 2018; Tomlinson, 2016).

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ELT materials, especially textbooks, constitute the primary source of the English language input and practice that the students receive within the classroom. Thus, it can be said that the quality of English language education is shaped, to a great extent, by the quality of the teaching materials utilized in the classroom. Accordingly, the Malaysian Ministry of Education endeavored to upgrade the quality of ELT in its public schools where English is taught as a second language. They decided to cease the use of local Malaysian textbooks and to import global English coursebooks designed and produced by renowned international publishers in the United Kingdom for both primary and secondary English language classrooms (Abdul Aziz & Makhtar, 2021; Abdul Aziz et al., 2019; Abdul Rahim & Jalalian Daghigh, 2019). The assumption underlying the government's decision is that imported ELT materials from native English-speaking countries, especially the United Kingdom or the United States, will expose Malaysian English language learners to content written in high-quality, standard English superior to that of the local materials. Nonetheless, we agree with many of the critics of the government's move and contend that the attempt involves many issues and is, in fact, problematic.

Similar to all commercial ELT materials, which are usually perceived as irrelevant and unsatisfactory (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013), the imported coursebooks disregard the Malaysian context and culture (Abdul Rahim & Jalalian Daghigh, 2019). That is not surprising, as commercial global coursebooks produced by international publishers are often considered as being designed for everyone yet satisfying no one (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004). They are designed to be useable by different groups of English language learners from all over the globe in diverse contexts and cultures. Thus, such coursebooks comprise content based on the cultural elements and aspects relevant to the English-speaking countries without taking into consideration the local ELT settings where these coursebooks are going to be used. Furthermore, the imported materials are imposed upon the teachers and the students. Teachers continue to be passive consumers of materials, and students find difficulty in learning the language due to the foreign content and shy away from practicing the language or engaging in the English lessons (Can et al., 2020). What is worse is that the move reflects how we still consider ELT materials produced by native speakers as being of superior quality in comparison to locally developed materials. It also reflects our perception of native speakers as the sole and supreme authority of the English language. Those perceptions denote moving backward to revering the British culture and language and imply that Malaysians have not yet moved beyond the colonial mindset (Abdul Aziz et al., 2019).

This move by the Malaysian Government is, however, situated in a universal paradigm in ELT which favors Western perspectives and knowledge over local systems of knowledge (the perception of the West as the best!). They thus maintain the positioning of the West, especially the United Kingdom, as the global center of the English language dominating the field of ELT, while the rest of the world serve as the recipient and are center dependent. The center perpetuates its domination over the English language by generating all the approaches, strategies, principles, and techniques regarding English language learning and

teaching. In addition, the center formulates the teaching materials based on the ideas and principles they have established and continues to monopolize the process of materials development (Pennycook, 2017). This hegemonic approach involves a form of linguistic imperialism. The English language is utilized as a means to reproduce and perpetuate imperial power relations between the United Kingdom and its former colonies. This is achieved through a wide variety of ELT practices, such as the assessment criteria, curricular plans, teaching methods, and teaching materials, meant to perpetuate the hegemony of the center over the non-native speakers (Kumaravadivelu, 2016). However, it is mainly through the center-produced materials and teaching methods that the marginality of the vast majority is sustained (Kumaravadivelu, 2016). Therefore, many of the materials produced in these Western countries are considered no more than tools of imperialism or neo-imperialism, with content romanticizing and promoting Western cultures and values while ignoring and repressing local cultures (Kanoksilapatham, 2018; Khodadady & Shayesteh, 2016; Lekawael et al., 2018; Pennycook, 2017).

What exacerbates the problem is the conformation of the non-natives and ex-colonies to the hegemonic paradigm and their submission to the subordinate dominated role. They keep devotedly and comfortably depending on the one-way flow of information and the ready-made prescriptions prepared and mandated by the “authority” of the English language. Their minds are, therefore, still colonized and cannot think that they can have their own new ideas and produce materials relevant to their own needs and contexts. In a country with a colonial history, such as Malaysia, there should be sincere efforts to effectively disrupt the hegemonic paradigm imposed by the West on ELT practices and knowledge production. Postcolonial Malaysia should adopt a decolonized mindset (Mignolo, 2007) that is free of the perceptions and attitudes of colonialism. They should adopt a decolonial mindset that is aware of the Eurocentric tendencies and is critical of mainstream commercial materials that are meant to propagate the domination of the native-speaker model. We need to recognize the significance of English as the language of globalization and strive to teach it effectively without overlooking its historical realities as an instrument of colonial imperialism.

Changing the mindset is not enough, though. Malaysian educators need to become proactive towards decolonizing ELT practices and materials by composing local ELT materials relevant to the goals and objectives of Malaysians and reflecting the richness of the Malaysian multicultural and multilingual landscape. Those materials should also be innovative and significantly contribute to effective English as an international language teaching. In response, we propose this conceptual model to serve as a guide for local professionals (materials designers and English language teachers) to develop compelling, home-made ELT texts.

2. Conceptual Model

Producing effective ELT materials that contribute to the effective learning of English as an international language requires paying attention to not only the content of the materials but also the format of these materials. This conceptual

model, shown in Figure 1, considers this aspect by espousing the TEIL paradigm (informing the content) and multimodality (informing the format).

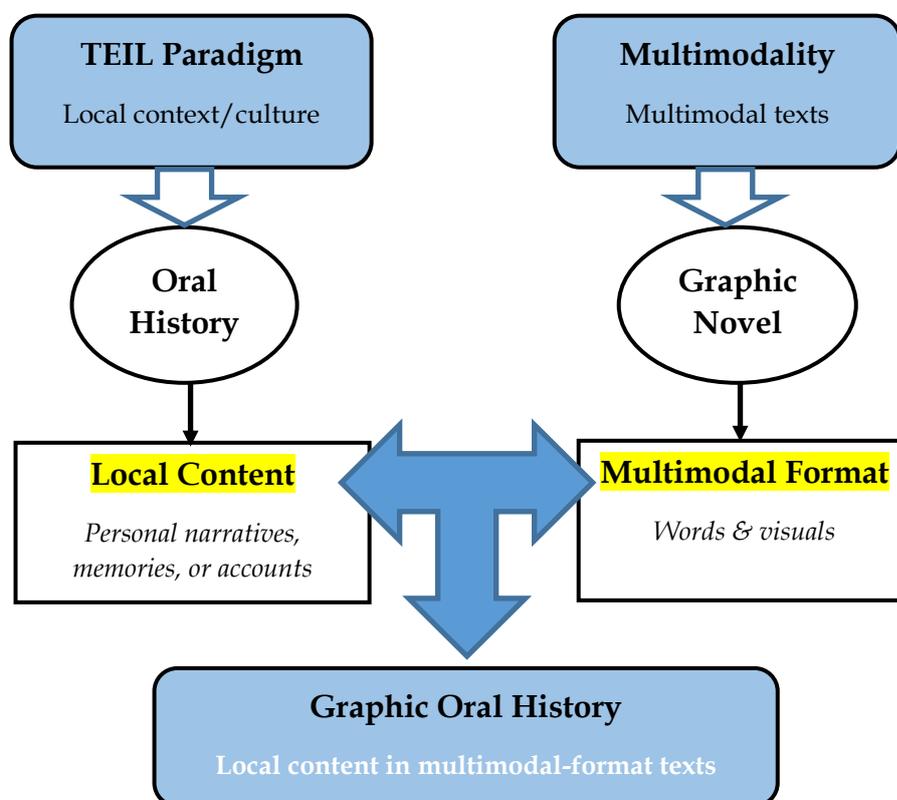


Figure 1: Conceptual model: Innovative fusion resulting in local multimodal English language-teaching materials

The two-sided model therefore addresses the lack of TEIL-oriented materials (Lwin & Marlina, 2018; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018) as well as the still limited incorporation of multimodal texts in many ELT contexts (Ganapathy, 2011; Yusof et al., 2017). The TEIL paradigm reflects the need for local, culturally responsive materials that capitalize on students' culture, identity, and communities. To operationalize the TEIL paradigm, oral history will be utilized as a pedagogical tool. By conducting interviews with local figures or community members who are relevant to a certain topic or phenomenon, we will create English content that capitalizes on students' local culture and is more rooted in our everyday life and inner values. On the other side, the pedagogy of multimodality entails the use of multimodal texts. The graphic novel as a multimodal text comprising words, pictures, and other conventions, such as panels, gutters, etc., will be used in the model to enact multimodality. Presenting the content redeemed by oral history in a graphic novel format will thus result in local visual narratives that can serve as effective, innovative instructional ELT texts responsive to TEIL and the visual multimodal world in which we live today. The following sections address each component of the conceptual model.

2.1 The Teaching English as an International Language Paradigm

The supremacy of the native speaker as an ideal linguistic example or model is not adequate anymore; the vast majority of English language users and learners all over the world are bilingual or multilingual speakers. It is therefore unreasonable to subject the majority, who utilize English mainly as a language of expanded interaction and communication in conjunction with one or even more other local languages they speak, to the minority's norms and particular linguistic features of the language. Kachru (1985) contended that the English native speakers have lost their entitlement or authority over the language as they are the minority. He further argued that it is incumbent upon the world community to recognize this sociolinguistic truth and its implication. The TEIL paradigm acknowledges that truth and perceives English as the world's global lingua franca regardless of any political or cultural associations, and more importantly without much attention to which countries speak it as a first language. Moreover, it recognizes many different local versions of English, which are collectively known as World Englishes or WE (Kachru, 1985). In that context, English is no more a single, monomodal entity; it is an international polycentric tool of communication with a wide variety of lexis, grammatical structures, and other discourse conventions (Marlina, 2018). In such a way, the TEIL paradigm represents an ELT perspective that steers away from the idea of native-speakerism embedded in colonialism. It also shifts the focus of ELT pedagogy from traditional Anglo-centric standards and norms of English as a native language towards localized usages and varieties (Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2012).

Postcolonial Malaysia needs to cease seeing the English language from the colonial perspective and teach it from a professional perspective by adopting the TEIL paradigm. The paradigm ultimately aims at helping students to communicate in English in a globalized world characterized by being culturally and linguistically diverse. Conveniently, the paradigm recognizes Malaysian English as a brand or a variety of World Englishes that has emerged in the postcolonial era and makes a remarkable contribution to the English language as a cultural resource with which people express their cultural values, perspectives, and worldviews (Marlina, 2018). McKay (2003) argued that the TEIL paradigm recognizes the significance of containing topics that represent the local culture and supports the use of a methodology relevant to the local teaching and learning contexts. By embracing the TEIL paradigm, Malaysians will confidently work towards localizing ELT practices and materials; they will recognize the contribution of its multilingual and cultural diversity to the English language and produce local content comprising their local version of English. The local content will value the traditional indigenous knowledge over colonial global influences, and it will favor the day-to-day realities of Malaysians in their actual local settings. In doing so, we will capitalize on local knowledge and cultures and use them as pedagogical content to make the English language a vehicle for locals to communicate their worldviews, cultural values, and socio-cultural realities.

The focus on the local context and culture in ELT entailed by the TEIL paradigm (Lwin & Marlina, 2018) resonates with the massive body of research and literature that advocates local ELT materials in comparison to materials that depend on the

target language's culture. Global commercial materials might cause unnecessary difficulty to English language learners due to the social and cultural dissimilarities and this, in turn, can result in the learners' inability to understand or engage with teaching materials (Grabe, 2014). For language teaching to be successful, ELT materials need to be associated with the learner's home culture and provide them with authentic activities that enable them to communicate about their own real lives (Toledo-Sandoval, 2020). Several studies (Can et al., 2020; Jabeen & Shah, 2011; Kanoksilapatham, 2018; Kirkpatrick, 2007) have shown that local-culture-based ELT materials have a more positive influence on the English language learners than foreign-culture-based materials and texts. In addition, some of these studies demonstrated that the learners' cultural identity could be marginalized if they were to be exposed to ELT materials that solely focus on the culture of the target language. Therefore, by adopting the TEIL paradigm, the conceptual model seeks to develop local content for ELT materials; that local content will be obtained using oral history.

2.2 Oral History: A Pedagogical Tool Contributing to the TEIL Paradigm

Oral history is the collection of spoken stories, memories, and personal commentaries through recorded interviews of people who lived through a historical event or social phenomenon (Ritchie, 2003). The recordings of the interviews are transcribed, edited, and then placed in a library or archives and may be used for research, publications, documentaries, museum exhibitions, or any other form of public presentation. By recording and documenting the spoken stories of people who lived through past events or significant phenomena, oral history serves as a research method that plays a significant role in writing the histories of societies and communities (Ritchie, 2003). It enables us to learn about those past events and thus have a deeper understanding of them. Oral history has come to prominence as a tool in writing history due to the appearance of social historians such as Paul Thompson, who called for "history from below". This type of history revolves around and gives priority to common people's lives as part of their writing. This is opposed to conventional history writing, which focused mostly on the elite group of people with high social status, such as politicians and diplomats, while neglecting ordinary people, such as farmers, workers, and women (Boon Kheng, 2007). Thompson (2000), one of the pioneers of oral history as a research methodology in the social sciences, considered oral history as the history of ordinary people and marginalized groups. Utilizing oral history can be beneficial, especially to those individuals who are historically and traditionally marginalized within the dominant culture and society because of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs. Therefore, by including the unheard and unseen within the great majority, oral history helps to constitute history that revolves around society as a whole. In doing so, oral history attempts to steer history readers away from what imperialism has left behind and represented as symbols of greatness (Yeoh, 2003).

Besides being a research method contributing to the construction of histories, oral history has been implemented in the classroom as an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing the study of history-related topics and other important learning skills (Dutt-Doner et al., 2016). It has been used extensively in classroom contexts

as a significant teaching strategy since the late 1960s to enhance the teaching and learning of social studies and history at all school levels (Montero & Rossi, 2012). In these contexts, students were exposed to oral history related to their immediate families and local communities. Vodniza (2016) used traditional storytelling and oral history as an effective pedagogy in his classes to support students in discovering identities and traditional values. He found that oral history supported his teaching to a great extent, especially in terms of communicating indigenous traditional knowledge and cultural practices from generation to generation by helping students to learn stories from their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. By connecting students to their traditional practices and fostering a deeper understanding of their community and culture, students learn to recognize and celebrate their culture and heritage. Therefore, oral history research can be a revolutionary pedagogical instrument (Ayers & Ayers, 2013) that is culturally responsive (Gay, 2018). It validates the students' local cultural heritage, context, and prior experiences, and this results in the learning process being more adequate and successful.

In the ELT context, Montero and Rossi (2012) argued that utilizing oral history leads to a culturally responsive pedagogy that legitimizes and endorses the learners' lived experiences, stories, and histories to serve as content within the English language classroom. Jones (1998) conducted a study in an undergraduate course at the National Tsinghua University of Taiwan to investigate the significance of English as a foreign language (EFL) students' drafting of oral histories in their academic writing. The study reported many pedagogical benefits of writing family oral histories in the EFL writing classroom and concluded that oral history is an excellent way to spark students' interest and to teach them academic writing. Furthermore, a recent study was conducted in Saudi Arabia (Strachan & Winkel, 2020) to investigate the development of an oral project for undergraduate EFL students in a Saudi private university. The project aimed at reconnecting the undergraduates to their familial heritage while providing them with a distinctive educational experience. The project not only enabled the university EFL students to acquire a deeper understanding of their local heritage, but it also led to the improvement of their English language skills.

Therefore, given the potential of oral history as a powerful, culturally responsive pedagogy, we believe that it is the practical, ideal tool to redeem the local-context- and culture-based content necessitated by the TEIL paradigm. Oral history will provide content based on local issues, familial lived experiences, and local communities of the learners, and that will motivate the learners and engage them in the learning process (Christodoulou, 2016). Use of oral history corresponds with research by Canagarajah (2016) and Kachru (1986), who were in favor of localizing the teaching content and utilizing ELT materials that are culturally responsive to the local learners' needs by relying on their experiences in their local environments and settings. In the context of the proposed conceptual model, Malaysian materials designers or English language teachers will take on the role of oral historians and follow some of the procedures and best practices for conducting oral history research approved by the Oral History Association (OHA, 2022). They will study a local topic by conducting recorded (audio/video)

interviews, based on a well-prepared interview guide comprising relevant questions, with members of the local community whose experiences are specifically relevant to the topic. They will then transcribe the recording and, finally, convert the interview transcript into a narrative or story that will serve as the local content of the ELT materials. The question now is: How can we best present that local content?

2.3 Multimodality

To answer the previous question, the conceptual model considers the types of texts in which students are mostly engaged nowadays. Students are immersed in a visually oriented world where visuals are a crucial component in almost all sorts of communications. What we perceive as “text” is broader now and includes various blends of modes (print, images, etc.). This change in the nature of texts has, in turn, impacted how we now conceptualize literacy, with the foremost literacy of the 21st century being visual (Burmark, 2008). Therefore, it is no longer sufficient to solely rely on and use traditional printed texts; learners need to learn to comprehend and produce both words and images. To cater to this shift in how we now perceive texts and literacy and to help students develop the new set of competencies required to succeed in the classroom as well as in their everyday lives, the New London Group (1996) convened and introduced the document *A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures*. The document reflected a change in the pedagogy of literacy. It centered on the interplay between the various modes of meaning and brought about the transition from traditional print-based texts towards acknowledging a more broadened and pluralistic concept of literacy that incorporates the many modes used in today’s communications.

The New London Group’s pedagogical approach to multiliteracies signaled the need for students to acquire new literacy competencies. That need has given rise to multimodality and multimodal approaches in the field of education and teaching curricula. According to Siegel (2012), multimodality is the concurrent use of more than one mode in a single text or event. Each of these modes, such as words, images, sound, movement, etc., has its affordances, or ways of creating meaning (Kress, 2009). While conventional literacy practices focused on the printed word, multimodal literacy recognizes the current dominance of technology and its reliance on image, sound, and animation along with the text. To underscore the significance of multimodality in English language learning and teaching, Royce (2007) presented the term *multimodal communicative competence*, a concept concerned with how English learners can become proficient in terms of comprehending and composing meanings multimodally. Therefore, to address multimodality within the English language classroom so that we teach useful literacy practices for today’s age, we need to use multimodal texts such as websites, picture books, graphic texts, and graphic novels.

2.4 The Graphic Novel: An Innovative Multimodal Pedagogical Tool

To pedagogically address the current multimodal nature of texts, the proposed model utilizes the graphic novel as a multimodal pedagogical tool (Jamil & Abdul Aziz, 2021). A graphic novel is a fiction or nonfiction narrative presented in a comic book format, and it is also known as sequential art (Eisner, 2008). It

integrates words with pictures, and thus represents a multimodal text that caters to both print literacy and visual literacy. According to Gallo and Weiner (2004), a graphic novel presents the same reading experience of the traditional literary text in addition to images and words working cumulatively, making a graphic novel a text that one not only reads but also sees. It is worth noting that graphic novels are not a genre; they are a format for recounting a story or communicating information (Woolston, 2014). Moreover, they do not have to be novels; they include both fictional and nonfictional work, as well as full-novel-length and short narratives or stories. The way graphic novels integrate print and visuals provides an engaging reading experience in reading (Begoray & Fu, 2015). They are popular with teenagers (Griffith, 2010) and have gained more and more acceptance and respect as quality literature over the years (Pantaleo, 2015). An example of a popular graphic novel is *American born Chinese* (Yang & Pien, 2006). In this award-winning graphic novel for excellence in young adult literature, the author managed to address some serious issues, such as racism against Chinese immigrants, culture, racial identity, and stereotyping.

The unique mix of the two abundant modes – the linguistic mode and the visual mode – in graphic novels have made educators realize their potential as a pedagogical tool (Seglem & Witte, 2009). A significant body of research has highlighted the significance and value of graphic novels as multimodal texts in the English language classroom. The novels have been found to provide motivation and engagement for struggling and hesitant readers (Brozo et al., 2013; Öz & Efecioglu, 2015); improve learners' language learning strategies, critical thinking, and comprehension (Basol & Sarigul, 2013; Öz & Efecioglu, 2015; Sabbah et al., 2013); and aid teachers in teaching new lexical items (Basal et al., 2016; Öz & Efecioglu, 2015). The appealing illustrations of graphic novels offer contextual clues to the written text; thus, they provide support and a sense of confidence to struggling or remedial readers. In that regard, Krashen (2004) considered graphic text materials an optimal instrument contributing to enhanced student engagement and self-confidence in reading. He further indicated that the use of graphic materials could boost language learners' interest in the language and thus increase their foreign- or second-language acquisition and learning.

Furthermore, graphic novels cater to a wide variety of learners and their learning styles (Öz & Efecioglu, 2015); they contain words and pictures, so they appeal to visual as well as verbal learners. Besides, these visual texts can be acted out or played by kinesthetic or spatial learners, who can also perform some of the actions in the novel. Teachers could also involve their students in activities by asking them to prepare and conduct interviews or role play some of the characters' facial expressions in the graphic novel. To engage tactile learners, the teacher could ask them to sketch a drawing based on the theme or some of the actions taking place in the graphic novel. Teachers could also assign learners to design or develop a small representation or model of the setting in the graphic novel. Evidently, numerous activities can be fully used in the English language classroom based on a graphic novel, and they can all help to address the different learning styles and the individual needs of the learners. Therefore, considering the many advantages of the graphic novel as a pedagogical tool, materials designers or English language

teachers will transform the local oral history narratives into a graphic novel format; they will combine multimodal resources (words, images, and graphic novel conventions) to construct meaning. The outcome of the model is graphic oral history narratives that could be utilized in Malaysian ELT contexts as instructional texts.

2.5 Graphic Oral History Texts: An Innovative Fusion

On its own, oral history is an innovative language pedagogy (Burgo, 2016). Using oral history will generate authentic local narratives founded on learners' community, capturing some of the salient cultural elements from the many communities that form Malaysia. It provides a platform to assemble anecdotes, life experiences, and traditional knowledge from family or community members, which cannot be found in global commercial coursebooks (Abdul Aziz et al., 2019). The use of local cultural content in ELT materials provides learners with content familiar to their reading schemata and can enhance English proficiency and cultural awareness (Yahya et al., 2017). Moreover, as Harmer (2012) contended, the learners become involved in content that is based on themselves and their own real lives and in such a way they learn the English language better.

Furthermore, since 21st century students are exposed to multimodal texts, the local content will be converted into a graphic novel format. The graphic novel is an innovative multimodal pedagogical tool (Kwon, 2020) that is popular, visual, motivating, engaging, and overall increases second language acquisition. By developing graphic oral history narratives and using them as teaching texts, we are meshing the two innovations and their educational strengths. The texts will not only appreciate students' local culture and experiences. They will also be consistent with the recent, updated content standards in English language arts and literacy, expecting all students to use a wide variety of modes beyond language. Pedagogically, graphic oral history texts will serve as effective ELT materials contributing to the effective teaching of English as an international language. In conjunction with effective teaching practices, those texts will be delivering quality content in a multitude of modalities and will have strong pedagogical significance.

3. Projects and Samples

3.1 Personal Narratives of Malaysian Youths' Schooling Experiences

The first project was conducted in the context of teacher education with Year 3 teaching English as a second language (TESL) students in the Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). The student teachers composed their narratives on the topic "Memorable high school experiences". Then, they reconstructed the personal narratives into a graphic novel form. The outcome of the project was a published book containing 16 personal graphic stories that represent real, significant high schooling experiences (Abdul Aziz & Chang, 2021). The stories dealt with issues such as daydreaming in an uninteresting class, receiving undesired attention from the opposite gender, failing to live up to your parents' expectations, and being subject to bullying by friends at school. By using the real lived experiences of Malaysian student teachers as ELT materials, English learners will be reading authentic familiar

content to which they can relate. Besides, presenting this content in a graphic story format results in engaging multimodal texts. Teacher trainees' written reflections on their perceived learning outcomes from the project showed that they valued the project as a practical, engaging activity that enhanced their writing skills, creativity, and self-confidence in their ability to develop local multimodal ELT materials. Figure 2 shows a sample from the trainees' graphic oral history narrative "The bitter taste of popularity", in which the narrator recounted her inspiring story of being subject to bullying at school and how she managed to overcome that traumatic experience.



Figure 2. A sample from the graphic oral history narrative "The bitter taste of popularity"

3.2 The Covid-19 Pandemic From the Local Perspective: Malaysian Front-Liners' Stories

The second project was conducted in the context of English language teacher professional development with in-service English language teachers doing their Master of Education in TESL, UKM. After receiving some input sessions on designing and evaluating ELT materials, oral history, and the conventions of graphic novels, 105 in-service English language teachers were assigned to work in groups to develop and evaluate graphic oral history texts and teaching activities for their English classrooms. The teachers conducted oral history interviews with Malaysian front-liners (doctors, nurses, food delivery drivers,

cleaners, etc.) who had been boldly battling against Covid-19. The teachers then presented the front-liners' Covid-19 pandemic accounts graphically. Moreover, they cooperated with a reputable local animation studio and turned the graphic oral histories into 2D animations. The project could serve as an attempt to document this current global phenomenon from the local Malaysian perspective, and the produced graphic oral histories could be made available to the public to raise their awareness and appreciation of front-liners. In addition, as the teachers reported in their reflections on the project and their developed materials, the project was an invaluable professional development experience. It actively engaged them with their community and led to the creation of interesting local multimodal ELT texts which, according to them, are more relevant and interesting to their students than the coursebooks they are currently using. Figure 3 is a sample from a group's graphic oral narrative "Suffering in silence". The narrative was obtained from a male nurse who recounted what he and other healthcare workers had been through during the pandemic.

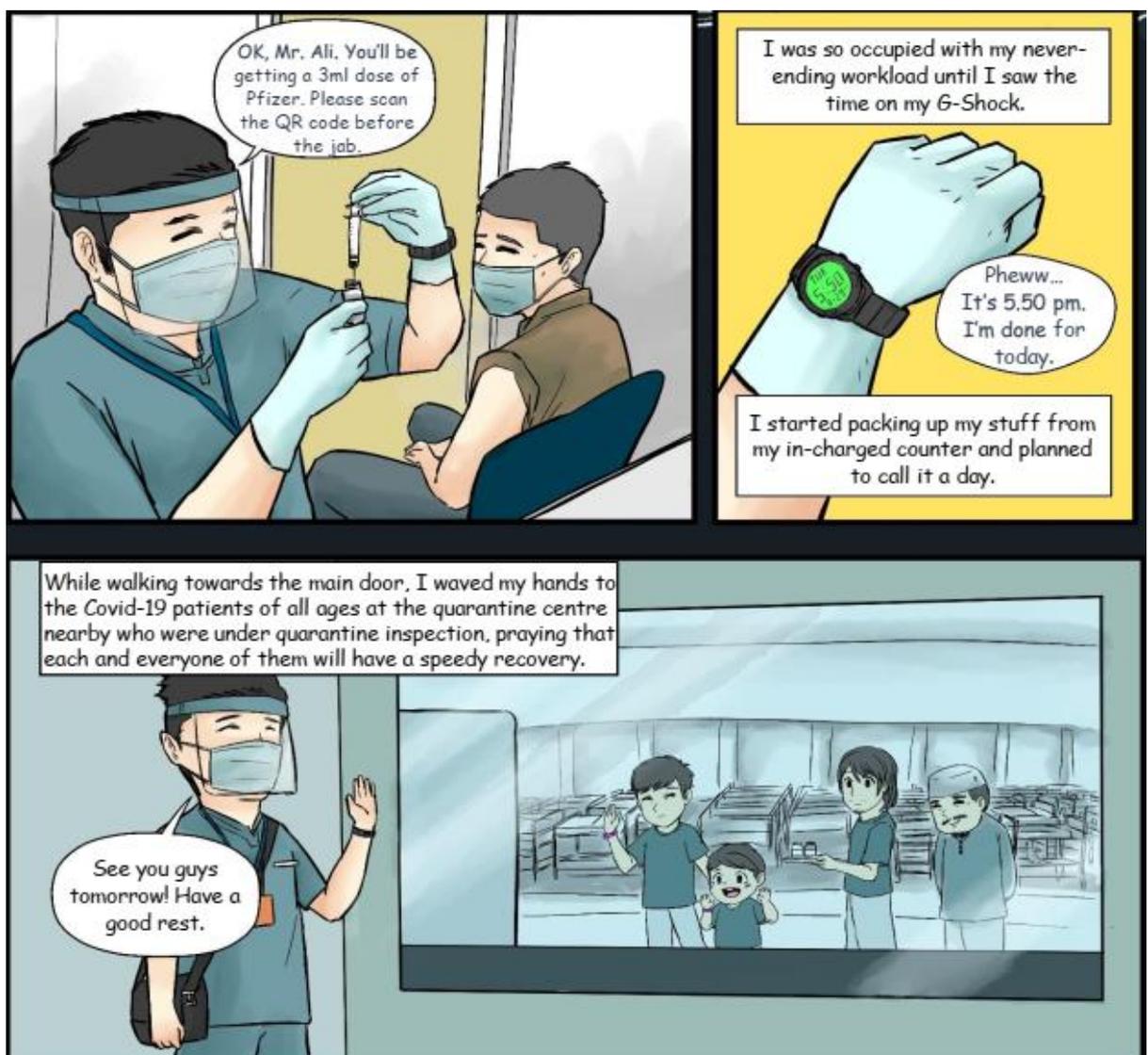


Figure 3. Snapshot from the graphic oral history narrative "Suffering in silence"

4. Conclusion

Adopting commercial, globalized ELT materials, which are usually mass produced in the West, is problematic; those materials are generic and may contain cultural or social elements that may not be convenient for local students. Furthermore, those imported materials and coursebooks are usually Anglo-centric and undermine the local varieties of English and have not satisfactorily conceptualized English as an international language. Therefore, Malaysians must not undermine the contribution of their local culture and languages to the English language, and they should not doubt themselves, their expertise, or their capability of developing efficient local ELT materials. They must strive to teach English effectively while maintaining the balance between the perceived importance of English as an international language and the passion for nation building and preserving its local cultural heritage. Thus, the proposed conceptual model in this paper is of relevance here. It provides Malaysian materials designers and English language teachers with a guiding framework that enables them to develop effective local multimodal ELT materials in the form of graphic oral history texts. By developing graphic oral history materials, these professionals will be enacting the TEIL paradigm and multimodality in their English language classrooms. Even though this paper addressed the Malaysian context particularly, the proposed model could be beneficial and relevant to many other similar ELT settings and contexts that aspire to innovatively teach English as an international language.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank UKM for its support for this research via its Grants GG-2021-008 Dana Khas Penyelidikan FPEND Pembelajaran Futuristik, TAP-K017393 Tabung Agihan Penyelidikan (TAP), and GGPM-2017-126.

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