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# Malaysian English Language Teachers' Willingness, Readiness, Needs and Wants to Develop Graphic Oral History ELT Materials

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**Abstract.** Non-native English language teachers have long been de-professionalized being adopters of preponderant globalized English language teaching (ELT) coursebooks that offer an insignificant contribution to their students' English language learning. This has spurred the design of the "Innovations in Materials Development" (IMD) module to train Malaysian English language teachers in developing graphic oral history ELT materials. This study reports on the initial (needs analysis) phase of the instructional design of the module; not only did the researchers examine the teachers' willingness and readiness to develop their ELT materials, but they also investigated the teachers' needs and wants to inform the design of the module. Qualitative findings from in-depth semi-structured individual interviews with five Malaysian in-service English language teachers showed that the teachers are willing to adopt the materials developer role; however, they are not ready as they lack ELT materials development experiences and training. In the context of the prospective module, they need training comprising ELT materials development principles and oral history and graphic novels as pedagogical tools. Moreover, the teachers expressed that they want the training to be practical and to involve group work, guidance, and materials samples. These findings established the need for the IMD module and helped the researchers identify and formulate the specific needs and wants of the teachers for the training to be efficient.

**Keywords:** English language teachers; ELT materials; graphic oral history; needs analysis; professional development

## 1. Introduction

Malaysia's aspiration to upgrade the quality of English language education in its public schools has led the Ministry of Education to adopt the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR) as a performance benchmark, ensuring that

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Malaysian students achieve a level of English language proficiency aligned to the international standards (Abdul Aziz & Makhtar, 2021; Don et al., 2015). The CEFR entailed utilizing ELT materials that align with its guidelines and objectives; thus, the local ELT textbooks were deemed inadequate, and the Ministry of Education decided to rely on imported UK-published coursebooks produced by Cambridge University Press and MacMillan (Abdul Aziz et al., 2019; Ahamat & Kabilan, 2022). Even though the decision may be perceived positively with the premise that the globalized coursebooks produced by international publishers with an extensive global presence will support the reform of ELT pedagogy and provide Malaysians with high-quality, 'native-speaker' English content that excels over locally produced textbooks, the decision has aroused well-grounded criticism from education experts and researchers in Malaysia. The imported coursebooks ignore the Malaysian local context and do not conform with the goals and objectives of the Malaysian English language curriculum (Abdul Rahim & Daghigh, 2020; Shak et al., 2021), has a high lexical density (Johari & Abdul Aziz, 2019; Shak et al., 2021) and are challenging for Malaysian teachers and students due to the foreign cultural content (Ahamat & Kabilan, 2022). In short, the researchers (Ibrahim et al., 2022) problematized the Malaysian government's decision and concluded that it is not the way to go if we were to enhance the quality of ELT in Malaysian schools.

Even though the context of this study is Malaysia, the problem is universal; the conflict between the local contexts and the globalized (predominantly British) coursebooks has stirred controversy in many countries (Can et al., 2020). The universal practice of adopting globalized native-speaker-produced coursebooks emanates from the pervasive set-up perception of the native speakers of the English language as the ideal favorable models of the language. Accordingly, it is taken for granted that those native-speaker-produced ELT coursebooks constitute proper trustworthy ELT materials. This contradicts the sociolinguistic reality of English as an international language and keeps non-native teachers and students pigeonholed as incompetent English users! Furthermore, it maintains the UK as the higher authority of the English language dictating its norms to the rest of the world through ELT materials and practices. Consequently, the ELT industry created a market dependency that perpetuated the legacy of the British Empire (Mishan, 2022). This is not an exaggeration; a considerable number of scholars deemed most globalized ELT coursebooks as Anglo-centric, neo-imperialistic ideological packages (Kanoksilapatham, 2018; Mishan, 2022; Pennycook, 2017) that capitalize on the native-speaker and western cultures while marginalizing the local versions of the English language and the local cultures and contexts.

In response, the researchers believe it is time postcolonial Malaysia embraced a decolonial mindset (Mignolo, 2007) critical of the hegemonic ELT coursebooks and conceptualized English as an international language. In addition, we should enact the TEIL paradigm – an ELT approach that steers away from the notion of native-speaker superiority ingrained in colonialism and capitalizes on the local cultures in ELT materials (Matsuda, 2012; Mckay, 2003) – in the Malaysian context by training Malaysian teachers to develop their effective local ELT materials. Teachers have long been de-professionalized (Kumaravadivelu, 2016) being

consumers of prescribed coursebooks. Teachers can, however, develop high-quality ELT materials if they receive adequate training (Edwards & Burns, 2016); there should be more projects where teachers design their local materials. Disappointingly, teacher training programs and research have not given sufficient attention to the field of materials development (Garton & Graves, 2014; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). The researchers, therefore, propose the design of a project-based training to provide Malaysian in-service English language teachers with a quality training experience in materials development where they develop graphic oral history ELT materials for the Malaysian English language classroom. This study aims at conducting a needs analysis, which is an essential foundation step in the design of a new curriculum, and it involves examining the needs, attitudes, expectations, and preferred learning/teaching styles of the target audience (Thornbury, 2006). The researchers seek to determine if the teachers are willing and ready to develop their ELT materials and to identify their needs (contents) and wants in their prospective training to develop graphic oral history materials. Therefore, the guiding questions of this study are:

- a. What are the Malaysian English language teachers' perceptions (in terms of willingness) of developing their ELT materials?
- b. How far are the teachers ready to develop their ELT materials?
- c. What are the teachers' needs (contents) and wants to develop graphic oral history ELT materials?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Globalized ELT Coursebooks: pitfalls & a hegemonic paradigm

There is a preponderance of globalized ELT coursebooks around the world (Ibrahim et al., 2022). These coursebooks have always been subject to harsh criticism; they are commercial (Mishan, 2022), irrelevant and unsatisfactory (Banegas, 2017; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018), and one-size-fits-all (Mishan, 2022). Even though they are produced for worldwide distribution, they are imbued with cultural content and values that are foreign to the local contexts where they are utilized (Shah et al., 2014). They also do not meet the needs and interests of students or cater to their language proficiency levels (Casta & Hufana, 2016; Şimşek, 2017; Ulla, 2019), and teachers find them problematic due to their foreign content, inauthentic language activities, and inappropriate language levels (Ahamat & Kabilan, 2022; Casta & Hufana, 2016; Johari & Abdul Aziz, 2019). Despite these criticisms, the use of globalized ELT coursebooks is the norm in today's English language classrooms!

The reason is "Native-Speakerism," a commonly held belief that native English speakers are, culturally and pedagogically, superior to non-native English speakers (Holliday, 2015). Despite numerous challenges to native-speakerism by scholars, it continues to cast doubt on the professionalism of non-native English language teachers (Idrus et al., 2019). This results in a hegemonic top-down paradigm where the UK presumes authority over the English language and ELT practices and hegemonizes all the ideas, approaches, principles, and teaching materials. Through this top-down paradigm, the UK imposes its imperial power relations leading to a form of neo-imperialism in the ELT industry and materials, wherein linguistic and cultural colonization has replaced the geopolitical

colonization of the past (Mishan, 2022; Pennycook, 2017; Phillipson, 2012). The ELT industry is not a neutral endeavor; it is a cultural and political practice (Ping, 2018) dominated by major Anglo-centric publishing companies (Mishan, 2022) whose globalized coursebooks are predominant worldwide. In such a way, ex-colonies, such as Malaysia, are still under the shadow of the former colonizers, relying on the one-way flow of information prepared and mandated by the UK.

## **2.2 Global English, Local Perspectives: implementing TEIL through localized ELT materials**

English language education has long been dominated by the notion that native speakers are the ideal model of the language. This notion supported the hegemonic ELT approach where the globalized ELT coursebook is an instrument propagating the dictates of the British publisher. However, given that non-native speakers constitute the majority of English language users (Crystal, 2019; Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013), this perception needs to be challenged (Alptekin, 2002; Kachru 1985). Postcolonial Malaysia should detach English from its native-speaker associations and cease adhering to the native-speaker, particularly in ELT pedagogy. We need to conceptualize English as an international language and teach it from a professional perspective by adopting the Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) paradigm (Ibrahim et al., 2022). The TEIL paradigm perceives English as a global phenomenon with various forms known as world Englishes (Kachru, 1985). In such a way, the paradigm recognizes the importance of Malaysian English as a localized variety developed after the colonial period. In addition, it acknowledges the contributions of Malaysian English to the English language as a cultural resource, enabling Malaysians to express their realities within their unique contexts (Idrus et al., 2019; Marlina, 2018).

Therefore, the TEIL paradigm provides an invaluable opportunity to celebrate the diverse range of English language varieties and promotes a more inclusive approach to ELT. TEIL shifts ELT pedagogy from predominant Anglo-centric norms of English as a native language towards localized usage and world varieties of English as a lingua franca (Matsuda, 2012; McKay, 2012). At the root of the TEIL paradigm is local context and culture; it focuses on comprising local-culture-based topics relevant to the local communities, recognizes the importance of utilizing a methodology appropriate to the local educational context, and acknowledges the expertise of bilingual teachers (McKay, 2003). Thus, by embracing the TEIL paradigm, we do not limit ourselves to only British-based materials, and we aim to help our students to communicate in English in a globalized world characterized by being culturally and linguistically diverse. We need to develop local ELT texts (Pennycook, 2017; Toledo-Sandoval, 2020) for ELT to be successful; local ELT materials surpass the global coursebook for providing both teachers and learners with content that is: familiar and relatable (Abdul Rahim & Daghigh, 2020), authentic (Garton & Graves, 2021), and pedagogically adaptive to the local contexts (Ulla & Perales, 2021). Therefore, there must be a willingness to develop local ELT materials relevant to the goals and objectives of Malaysians and significantly contribute to effective ELT. These effective materials need to be designed by local professionals (Ibrahim et al., 2022).

### **2.3 Training Teachers to Develop Graphic Oral Histories: enabling teachers to adopt the role of ELT materials developers**

Who should develop the local ELT materials? The local teachers; teachers should develop local ELT materials (Tomlinson, 2014; Ulla & Perales, 2021) since they know their students' needs, interests, and language proficiency levels. However, teachers have long been de-professionalized being passive recipients of knowledge and methodologies, imposed by the top-down, hegemonic paradigm (Kumaravadivelu, 2016). Numerous studies have shown how native-speakerism negatively affects the professional development of 'non-native speakers' (Kiczkowiak, 2022). For example, Vanha (2017) and Alhamami and Ahmad (2018) concur that commitment to available ready-made coursebooks constrains the teachers' creativity and deskills them. Therefore, to enable Malaysian teachers to develop effective ELT materials drawing on their context and culture, it is imperative to provide them with quality training. A well-designed, contextually relevant, and practical approach to teacher training in materials development could have a significant impact (McGrath 2013). However, despite being recognized as a professional development opportunity (Bouckaert, 2019; McGrath, 2013; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018), materials development is often neglected in teacher training programs (Garton & Graves, 2014; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). To address this gap, the IMD module seeks to offer in-service English language teachers in Malaysia high-quality training in materials development. The module caters to the need for effective local materials; it encourages teachers to develop local multimodal ELT materials in the form of graphic oral histories.

According to Ritchie (2003), oral history is a method of collecting spoken stories and commentaries from people who have experienced a historical event or social phenomenon. It serves as a valuable research tool and an effective way of teaching social studies, English, and other skills in a culturally responsive manner (Gay, 2018; Vodniza, 2016). The IMD module uses oral history as a pedagogical tool that aligns with the TEIL paradigm (Ibrahim et al., 2022). As part of the module, English language teachers record interviews with local figures and community members on a particular topic or phenomenon. These interviews are then transcribed and transformed into a narrative that becomes local content for English language teaching materials. To ensure that the materials are effective, the IMD module employs the graphic novel format, which combines linguistic and visual elements to cater to the multimodal nature of contemporary texts. The graphic novel is a popular, engaging, and motivating pedagogical tool that has been shown to increase second language acquisition (Ibrahim et al., 2022; Kwon, 2020; Seglem & Witte, 2009). In the IMD module, teachers will present their local oral history narratives in a graphic novel format. This innovative fusion of oral history and the graphic novel can create local multimodal English language teaching materials that contribute to the effective teaching of English as an international language.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Context & Scope

This study is from a doctoral dissertation that seeks to design a module to train Malaysian in-service English language teachers in developing local multimodal ELT materials in the form of graphic oral histories. The researchers utilized the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation & Evaluation) framework for the systematic design of the module. The scope of this paper is the analysis phase; the researchers carried out an analysis that initially sought to establish the need for the module by examining the teachers' willingness to develop their ELT materials and their readiness to adopt the materials developers' role. Then, the teachers' specific needs and wants were identified and formulated.

#### 3.2 Research Method, Data Collection & Participants

This study is exploratory; the researchers collected data on the teachers' willingness, readiness, needs, and wants. Therefore, the qualitative approach seemed the most appropriate, with in-depth individual semi-structured interviews as the data collection instrument. Furthermore, the researchers employed purposive sampling to understand and gain insight from a sample from which the most could be learned (Merriam, 2009). In the context of this study, the most convenient sample to illuminate the research questions was Malaysian male and/or female in-service English language teachers. Thus, twenty-five in-service English language teachers, who were doing their Executive master's in TESL at the Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), were approached (emailed) and invited to participate in the study. Nine teachers expressed interest in participating in the study, and five teachers participated in semi-structured interviews during April 2022, after which data saturation was reached.

The first author conducted audio-recorded interviews online via Zoom (for safety reasons during the Covid 19 Pandemic). Each interview lasted between 30 and 40 minutes, based on an interview guide (Appendix 1) comprising 12 open-ended questions corresponding to the research questions. Two TESL experts reviewed and approved the interview guide (Merriam, 2009). The five interviewees were female, holders of Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) degrees in TESL, and they were in-service English language teachers working in public schools (4 in primary schools and 1 in secondary school). The participants' age ranged between 28 and 31, while their English language teaching experience ranged between 5 and 7 years. Table 1 summarizes the background of the participants.

**Table 1: Participants' background**

Teacher	Age	Degree	ELT Experience
T1	30	B. Ed in TESL	5 years (primary school)
T2	31		6 years (primary school)
T3	31		7 years (primary school)
T4	29		5 years (secondary school)
T5	28		5 years (primary school)

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The audio-recorded semi-structured interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006); the researchers read through the data multiple times, divided responses into segments/categories of information, then labeled them with codes and finally collapsed codes (similar codes) into themes relevant to answering the research questions.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 English language teachers' willingness to develop their ELT materials

Thematic analysis of interviews revealed that all interviewed English language teachers held positive perceptions towards developing their ELT materials. These perceptions reflect their desire and willingness to adopt the ELT materials developer role in their professional contexts. All interviewees believed that the ability to develop ELT materials is a necessary core skill or competence for English language teachers catering to their articulated needs to localize the content and provide their students with language more suited to their proficiency level. Furthermore, all interviewees agreed that training in materials development would benefit them as English language teachers, and they expressed interest in undertaking that training when it is available. Thus, the researchers identified: the need to localize content, the need to grade the language, and the need for training as themes reflecting the teachers' willingness to write their ELT materials. Table 2 presents the three themes, their frequencies, and selected interview excerpts.

**Table 2: Teachers' perceptions (willingness) toward developing their ELT materials**

Themes & Frequencies	Selected Interview Excerpts
<i>Need to localize content</i> (N= 5)	<p>It is very important for teachers to develop their materials. I mean the books are generally ok, and the topics are somehow interesting, but I think the problem is that they are too global, and we have to spend a lot of time to make students understand them. Sometimes they don't get the connection because I am teaching in a rural area, so they find things which are not in Malaysia very weird. Sometimes we ourselves the teachers are confused, so you can imagine how the students would feel! (T2)</p> <p>Developing materials is very necessary for us English teachers; it is part of our duty. I am not satisfied with the textbook. It is not localized with our Malaysian context. Almost 80 % of the content is foreign about the UK context. It is a problem for my students. That is why I usually mix and match with the old Malaysian textbook. Some of the materials in the old textbook (the local) are really more relevant to the local students. (T5)</p>

<i>Need to grade the language</i> (N= 5)	Sometimes the textbook is not relevant to the students' level, especially years 5 and 6; it is quite hard for them, so we need to able to create our own materials. (T1)
	Also, the language is too high for our students. I don't think the grammar sections in the books are suitable for L2 learners. They are more suitable for L1 learners. We rely on the textbook, but we also need to create other more relevant materials or activities to cater for our students especially the grammar sections. (T2)
<i>Need for Materials development training</i> (N= 5)	Training will be very good, of course. It will be very beneficial. I will attend for sure because I think developing ELT materials is part of our core business as English teachers, so we need to know how to do it well. (T3)
	I think it (training) is a much-needed thing for us to know how to do it adequately and properly. (T4)

All research participants recognized the importance of materials development and demonstrated a willingness to develop their ELT materials. This willingness stemmed from their dissatisfaction with the globalized textbook they were using; the book contained foreign content unfamiliar to the Malaysian English language students. The fifth interviewee, for example, said materials development was a necessary part of their job as English language teachers because she was not satisfied with the textbook, which was about the UK context. Similarly, the second interviewee voiced concern over the foreign content alien to the Malaysian culture and context; she believed the content could confuse the learners and the teachers. Another factor contributing to the interviewees' dissatisfaction with the CEFR-aligned textbooks was the language level. The language mismatched the proficiency level of their students; it was difficult for the students. Thus, the teachers expressed the need to develop materials with language graded to the level of their students. The first interviewee, for instance, said that the language was challenging for her primary school students, and thus, she needed to create her ELT materials. Furthermore, the teachers' willingness to develop their ELT materials was apparent in their positive perception of training in materials development. All research participants expressed the need for materials development training, and they stated that they would undertake the training when it is available as it would benefit them and enable them to develop adequate ELT materials catering to their students' needs.

#### **4.2 English language teachers' readiness to develop their ELT materials**

Research findings showed that the participants were not ready to develop their ELT materials. All five interviewees had not developed or adequately evaluated ELT materials before; they had just adapted some materials from available online resources or books. In addition, all interviewees had not engaged in systematic or formal training, in their TESL education or professional development training, in materials development or evaluation. Thus, the researchers identified the two themes: "no prior experience" and "no prior training" as themes demonstrating

the unreadiness of the participants to develop ELT materials. Table 3 summarizes research findings pertaining to the participants' readiness.

**Table 3: Teachers' readiness to develop their ELT materials**

<b>Themes &amp; Frequencies</b>	<b>Selected Interview Excerpts</b>
<i>No prior experience</i> (N=5)	<p>I have never developed materials myself. I sometimes adapt quizzes and games from some websites.... (For evaluating materials) I just ask myself if the language is suitable to my students' level. I mean vocabulary and grammar. Will my students understand the language or not? (T3)</p> <p>If you mean (developing materials) from scratch, then no. But sometimes I mix and match with the old coursebook.... I usually do it (materials evaluation) by impression by looking through the materials to determine if it is suitable or not. (T5)</p>
<i>No prior training</i> (N= 5)	<p>During my degree we focused mostly on the pedagogies, and we have learned some theories which are somehow related to materials development. But just theories, we didn't apply. In my professional life, we have received training on CEFR, but we haven't received any training on materials development or evaluation. (T1)</p> <p>Never had training in materials development. Two years ago, we attended CEFR training during a professional development course. We were introduced to CEFR and learned how to use the book according to CEFR. That is all! (T4)</p>

The first identified theme concerning the teachers' readiness to develop their ELT materials is "no prior experience." All five participants reported that they had not created their ELT materials before. Instead, they mostly adapted some activities, games, quizzes, or worksheets from other online resources or books. The third interviewee, for instance, said she had never developed teaching materials and that her experience in materials development is limited to adapting some quizzes or games from online resources. Likewise, the fifth interviewee said that sometimes she mixed and matched with the old textbook (adaptation); she had never created her materials. As for evaluating ELT materials, all participants indicated that they did it informally, i.e., by relying on their impression or intuition. Their evaluation of materials was deciding whether they suited their students' level.

The second identified theme is "no prior training"; all five interviewees disclosed that they had not engaged in any materials development/evaluation-related training, whether in their TESL preparation program or the few professional development workshops they had undertaken. The first interviewee stated that the focus of their TESL preparation program was the pedagogies and theories of teaching English; the teachers had not had the chance to develop any ELT-related materials. While two interviewees had not had any professional development

training, three interviewees had participated in professional development training. However, that training was solely on the CEFR, according to the first, second, and fourth participants; the teachers were introduced to the CEFR and teaching according to the CEFR. Therefore, based on the interview findings, the participants expressed a lack of materials development/evaluation experiences and training; the teachers are not yet ready to develop ELT materials, and, thus, adequate training is required.

#### 4.3 English language teachers' needs and wants to develop graphic oral history ELT materials

The needs (module contents) and wants (what the training should be like) of the English language teachers in the context of the proposed module were identified toward the end of the interviews. Regarding the main topics of the IMD module, interview findings showed that the in-service teachers possess no knowledge of oral history. Moreover, they have very limited/minimal knowledge in relation to the principles of materials development and graphic novel design. Findings pertaining to the participants' wants or what they perceive as important aspects they would like to have in their training demonstrated three themes: (1) practical, (2) group work, and (3) guidance & examples. Tables 4 and 5 present the participants' needs and wants to develop graphic oral history ELT materials.

**Table 4: Teachers' needs to develop graphic oral history ELT materials**

<b>Themes &amp; Frequencies</b>	<b>Selected Interview Excerpts</b>
<i>Minimal knowledge of the principles of materials development</i> (N=5)	I'd say below average. I know that we need to make sure that the materials are relevant to the students' level. (T1)  Very limited. I think materials should be related to the syllabus because we have to follow the framework provided to us. (T4)
<i>Unfamiliarity with Oral history</i> (N=5)	What is oral history? I have never heard of it. (T3)  I don't know anything about it. (T2)
<i>Minimal knowledge of Graphic novel design</i> (N=5)	we use the jungle with year 4 to teach the language art. I have never tried to create something similar. Maybe some PowerPoint presentations every now and then. I don't know much about creating a graphic novel. (T2)  I have only created some comic strips. That is all! I don't know much about creating a graphic novel. (T4)

**Table 5: Teachers' wants to develop graphic oral history ELT materials**

<b>Themes &amp; Frequencies</b>	<b>Selected Interview Excerpts</b>
<i>Practical training</i> (N=4)	I think enough with lecturing and theories; we need to actually develop materials and get feedback from the instructor. It needs to be actually training! (T1)  We don't want it to be theory-based, but rather project based. we need to practice. Give the participants the chance to develop materials. (T4)
<i>Group work</i> (N=3)	It Should also involve group work. (T2)  Maybe a group project so that the process is easier. (T5)
<i>Guidance &amp; examples</i> (N=3)	and then guide us so that we know we are on the right track. We also need examples to have a clear view of the targeted materials. (T2)  lots of examples and samples of the target materials... we also want step by step guidance and support in the process. (T4)

When asked about rating their knowledge of the principles of materials development, all interviewees indicated that it was minimal; three interviewees stated that it was limited, while two interviewees said it was below average. The teachers' knowledge of materials development principles was: a) the materials should be suitable to the target learners' proficiency level, and b) the materials should be in line with the syllabus. The fourth interviewee, for example, said her knowledge of the principles of materials development was limited, and the materials needed to conform to the syllabus they were following. As for oral history, all research participants were not familiar with it; they had never heard of it. Furthermore, all participants reported that they knew nothing about creating a graphic novel, even though four interviewees used the jungle book (a graphic novel format) with primary school students in their Language Arts classes. The second interviewee stated that she used the jungle book in year 4 (primary); she had never tried creating similar graphic materials. Further, she did not know much about creating a graphic novel. Therefore, the researchers conclude that teachers need the following main topics in the IMD module:

- a) ELT materials development and evaluation (the principles)
- b) Oral history (as research method, as a pedagogical tool, conducting oral history)
- c) Graphic novels (as a multimodal pedagogical tool & creating a graphic novel).

The participants were asked explicitly about the defining features of an efficient training experience in materials development. Almost all teachers (N=4) agreed they would like practical training. The first and fourth interviewees, for instance, voiced their frustration with the theory-oriented lecturing and expressed their eagerness to a materials development training that is practical or project-based where they develop their ELT materials. In addition to practical-oriented training, three interviewees suggested it should involve some form of group work. For example, the fifth interviewee pointed to the probability that incorporating group work in the training would make the materials development process manageable

for the teachers. Finally, in terms of the teachers' wants, three interviewees stated they would like to receive guidance and examples/samples of the materials they are developing. For instance, the fourth interviewee would like the training to include plenty of samples and examples of the target materials. She added that she wanted guidance throughout the materials development process.

## 5. Discussion

Research findings showed that in-service English language teachers are willing to develop their ELT materials. This is in concert with Tomlinson (2012), who reviewed the materials development field and concluded that teachers are more determined than ever to develop and localize their materials as they are more critical of commercial ELT publications. It also coincides with Ulla and Perales (2021), who found that teachers perceive developing their ELT materials for their English language classrooms positively. Furthermore, the teachers' concerns and dissatisfaction with the globalized commercial coursebook, which ignite their willingness to develop their ELT materials, are well established in the literature and previous research. According to Banegas (2017), commercial ELT coursebooks are far from satisfactory; they are a source of frustration for teachers and students (Can et al., 2020). Teachers encounter difficulties when utilizing commercial materials for English Language Teaching (ELT), as such resources contain language activities that are not relevant, inappropriate language levels for students, as well as western concepts that may be unfamiliar and difficult to explain, hence, making it challenging to relate to the students (Ahmat & Kabilan, 2022; Casta & Hufana, 2016; Johari & Aziz, 2019; Shak et al., 2021; Ulla, 2019). In addition, most commercial ELT coursebooks may offer a negligible contribution to the students' English language learning, considering their needs, interests, and language level (Casta & Hufana, 2016; Şimşek, 2017; Ulla, 2019; Ulla & Perales, 2021). Therefore, the researchers have established the teachers' willingness to develop their ELT materials; this is essential in this study as teachers need to be motivated and demonstrate a willingness to undertake training in materials development for the prospective module to be successful.

Furthermore, the study showed that the teachers are not ready to develop their ELT materials. The lack of materials development experiences and training contributing to the unpreparedness of the in-service English language teachers to write ELT materials falls right at the heart of the problem that instigated this research and resonates with Ulla and Perales (2021), who found that English language teachers lacked materials development experiences and training. The area of materials development seems to be undermined in teacher training programs and continues to be under-researched (Garton & Graves, 2014; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). In the same context, Ulla (2019) investigated English language teachers' perceptions of commercial ELT materials in a Thai University and found that one of the main reasons teachers rely on the commercial coursebook is their lacking of skills to develop their ELT materials. Thus, providing training in materials writing among these teachers becomes crucial. As Ulla and Perales (2021) contend, in order for teachers to develop their ELT teaching materials, there is a need for materials-writing training to assist teachers; without these training opportunities, teachers would always count on teaching

materials already prepared for them even if such materials are either too difficult or too easy for their students. Therefore, in this study, teachers are willing, yet they are not ready; the researchers have thus established the need for the IMD module.

Regarding the English language teachers' needs or contents in the module, the researchers find them not surprising and justified. The teachers need training in materials development/evaluation; English language teachers lack the knowledge and skills to develop their ELT materials (Ulla, 2019). In addition, they need to be introduced to oral history since they have not heard of it; even though oral history enhanced the teaching of history and social studies at all school levels (Montero & Rossi, 2012), its role in the English language classroom as an innovative culturally responsive pedagogy (Ibrahim et al., 2022) has received little attention. Finally, the teachers need training on the graphic novel as an example of an innovative multimodal pedagogical tool; despite the increasing incorporation of multimodal practices in ELT, research showed that English language teachers lacked the skills to develop and deliver multimodality in their English language classroom (Li, 2020).

Furthermore, the teachers' wants are reasonable and congruent with the literature and previous research. The teachers want the training to be practical; this makes perfect sense as the skills required of an effective material developer can only be gained in a quality, hands-on, monitored experience (Tomlinson, 2013). Tomlinson has emphasized the 'monitored experience,' which echoed in the teachers' second request for the training to involve guidance and examples. Providing examples is a form of support to the teachers; the teachers can refer to models of what their end product should look like in developing the materials. Finally, the English language teachers expressed interest in the training to involve group work believing that working in groups would make the process of developing materials less demanding. This agrees with Tomlinson (2013), who believes that the materials development process is a challenging task that requires teamwork and expertise. Therefore, it is necessary to scaffold materials development for teachers by providing them with group work opportunities, guided support, and exemplary models.

## **6. Conclusion, Implications & Limitations**

To conclude, results have shown that the in-service English language teachers' perceptions of developing their ELT materials are positive; the teachers viewed materials development as a necessary core skill catering to their needs to localize the content and suit the language to their students' proficiency levels. In addition, the teachers recognized the value of training in materials development; they expressed interest in undertaking materials development training believing it could be beneficial to them. These findings reflect the teachers' willingness to adopt the role of the ELT materials developers. All participants, however, are not ready to develop ELT materials; they had not participated in any experience or training focused on materials development/evaluation. With regard to the teachers' needs and wants in the proposed module, all participants have not heard of oral history. In addition, their knowledge of the principles of ELT materials

development and graphic novel design is minimal. The teachers, therefore, need to: learn about and practice ELT materials development/evaluation; learn about and practice conducting oral history and developing oral history texts; learn about graphic novels and practice developing the oral history text into a graphic novel format. Additionally, for the training to be efficient, the teachers requested practical training, involving group work as well as guidance and examples. These findings established the need for the IMD module, and they provided the researchers with necessary information regarding the training needs and wants to inform the design of the IMD module where teachers will develop graphic oral history ELT materials.

This research responds to the need for training teachers in developing their ELT materials. The findings pointed to the teachers' willingness to compose their local materials and their need for quality training to enable them to do so. The study could spark interest in materials development training; universities and professional development providers may recognize the value of engaging teachers and teacher trainees in developing their local multimodal ELT materials. The study could also provoke interest in oral history and graphic novels as innovative pedagogies in ELT. Furthermore, researchers may gain insights from this study and seek to conduct more needs analyses to develop more materials development training courses or modules to train teachers in developing effective ELT materials. Even though the study focused on the Malaysian context, similar contexts could benefit by recognizing the importance of developing local multimodal materials and engaging local teachers in developing them through quality systematic training.

One limitation of this study is the small sample size of only five Malaysian English language teachers, which may not represent the larger population of non-native English language teachers. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts or populations. Additionally, the study relied solely on qualitative data obtained through individual interviews, which may limit the scope of the findings. Data collection methods, such as surveys or focus group discussions, could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the teachers' needs and wants. Finally, the study was in the context of Malaysian in-service English language teachers, and the findings may not apply to other countries or regions where the educational and cultural contexts may differ.

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## **Appendix 1**

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

The purpose of this interview is to identify your needs in training to develop & evaluate local multimodal ELT materials [graphic oral history texts and teaching activities]. Your responses are very important for my study as they will shape the development of the training module. All your responses will be confidential.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

- Could you briefly tell me about yourself, your education background and teaching experience?
- What ELT materials are you currently using?
- Do you think teachers should be able to develop their ELT materials? Why/why not?
- Have you developed your ELT teaching materials before? If yes, what types of materials?
- Have you evaluated ELT materials before? How did you do it?
- What training, if any, have you received in materials development/evaluation?
- Do you think there is enough training for teachers in the area of MD?
- How do you rate your knowledge of the principles of materials development?
- How much do you know about oral history?
- How much do you know about graphic novels and creating them?
- How do you perceive a formal training module where you learn to develop local graphic ELT materials?
- In your opinion, what characterizes an effective training experience in materials development?