

## A Theoretical Evaluation of the English Textbooks for Grade 12 Students under the National Foreign Language Project 2008 – 2020

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### Abstract

This paper sets out to examine the effectiveness of the two English textbooks for grade 12 students in delivering the Vietnam National Foreign Language Project (Project 2020). At surface level, the textbooks were designed to correspond closely with the two major goals established by Project 2020, including communicative competences and intercultural communication. However, a comprehensive analysis and evaluation, substantiated by the literature, revealed that in terms of communicative competences, the implementation of the textbooks in the classroom remained quite problematic and incompatible with what they were originally set out to achieve. Meanwhile, with regard to intercultural communication, the lack of a multilingual English model and advocacy of native speakerism were found potentially to hinder students' ability to successfully communicate with global English users. With this in mind, the researcher proposed several measures to optimize the given textbooks in delivering Project 2020.

### Keywords

Vietnam National Foreign Language Project, Project 2020, textbook evaluation, communicative competences, intercultural communication

### Introduction

As the rise of English as a medium of global communication seems “unstoppable” (Graddol, 2006, p. 24), English was made a major foreign language in Vietnam. Despite the emergence of English as the most popular foreign language (Canh, 2007), earlier attempts to boost the English ability among young Vietnamese people fell short of initial expectations (Loc, 2005). The underlying cause of this problem was an oversight of communicative competences, as at the time students were encouraged to memorize rather than engage in real-life communication (Canh, 2011). The ever-growing demand for a highly skilled workforce that could meet basic communication needs in English naturally called for a radical overhaul of language policy, teaching methodology, curriculum development, testing and assessment. In response to this, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) introduced a national project called “Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System, period 2008-2020” on September 30, 2008. Under Project 2020, a new series of textbooks was rolled out in order to prepare students to communicate in multicultural settings (Hoang, 2016).

This initiative has succeeded in drawing teachers' and students' attention to authentic and cross-cultural communication rather than discrete grammar and vocabulary as traditionally practiced. However, a number of problems are yet to be resolved. In terms of communicative competences, several pertinent issues include a predominant focus on vocabulary and grammar, lack of innovative teaching methods, and negative washback effects of high-stakes and large-scale testing (e.g., the National High School Graduation Examination) on teaching and learning

(e.g., Nguyen, 2017; Nguyen, 2018). With regard to intercultural communication, current teaching and assessment practices in Vietnam continue to prioritize monolingual and monocultural norms that originated from Anglophone countries (Ho & Nguyen, 2019). Sadly, this does not reflect the reality of the use of English in a globalized society, where non-native English models are more common than native varieties.

The aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the new English student textbooks and, in particular, those of grade 12, in delivering their two established goals - communicative competences and intercultural communication. While there have been a number of studies attempting to investigate the efficiency of the new English textbooks, most have simply been reporting teachers' challenges in implementing them and offering solutions (e.g., Hoang, 2015; Nguyen, 2017), leaving the picture rather unclear as to whether the core objectives of Project 2020 are being realized. In this regard, the present study hopes to shed some light by assuming the position that textbooks are a dynamic artifact to be evaluated against the two most pronounced objectives of the new curriculum. Recommendations for relevant stakeholders in the process of English Language Teaching (ELT) textbook development and implementation are subsequently presented.

### **Context of the Study**

#### **The National Foreign Language Project 2008 - 2020 (Project 2020)**

The ultimate goal of Project 2020 was that “by the year 2020 most Vietnamese youth who graduate from vocational schools, colleges and universities will gain the capacity to use a foreign language independently. This will enable them to be more confident in communication, further their chance to study and work in an integrated and multi-cultural environment with a variety of languages. This goal also makes language an advantage for Vietnamese people, serving the cause of industrialization and modernization for the country” (MOET, 2008, p. 1).

In accordance with the three levels of the Vietnamese general education, Project 2020 involved three pilot English curricula which were grounded on the principle of communicative language teaching (CLT) (Breen & Candlin, 1980; Munby, 1997; Richards, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2004) along with intercultural communication (Taba, 1962). In terms of communicative competences, the four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) were prioritized while themes or topics, language components (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar), and intercultural factors served as the means to promote students' English communicative competences (Hoang, 2016).

Regarding intercultural communication, Project 2020 sought to equip students with a deeper understanding of the people and culture in English-speaking and other nations in the world, as well as encouraging them to respect cultural diversity and reflect Vietnamese culture through English (MOET, 2018).

#### **The development of the ten-year English textbook series and the English textbooks for grade 12 students**

The critical role of textbooks in any English Language Teaching curriculum has been widely acknowledged in available literature (e.g., Davari & Moini, 2016; Dendrinos, 1992; Williams, 1983). For that reason, the MOET tasked the Vietnam National Institute of Education Studies (VNIIES) with developing a ten-year English textbook series for three levels of education namely primary, lower secondary and upper secondary (Hoang, 2016).

Three major innovative characteristics were observable in the development of the new textbook series. First, it marked the first ever collaboration between VNIES and international partners, including Macmillan Education and Pearson Education, on grounds of equality and mutual benefit. Previous partnerships with foreign publishers often found Vietnamese authors to be in a passive position compared to native co-authors and, as a result, heavily reliant on their decisions on selecting textbook content (Hoang, 2016).

Second, a chief series author was appointed, whose responsibility was to thoroughly investigate the three pilot English curricula and work closely with the chief grade author, authors of each separate grade and international publishers. The decision to have one chief series author in charge was a welcome change, since cohesion and consistency among textbooks of different grades and levels would be better established than when each level had a separate chief series author (Hoang, 2016).

Third, intercultural cooperation between Vietnamese authors and native publishers in developing the ten-year English textbook series was beneficial to both parties involved. Specifically, Vietnamese authors were offered ample opportunities to cultivate their professional knowledge and skills in textbook development in a global context, while foreign publishers were more aware of how irrelevant it might become when only outsiders were involved in developing textbooks to meet the educational needs of one particular country (Hoang, 2016).

The English textbooks for grade 12 students were developed by Vietnam Education Publishing House in accordance with the Pilot English Curriculum for Vietnamese Upper Secondary Schools (Hoang, 2016). In addition to laying emphasis on communicative competences, the textbooks adopted the learner-centered approach, meaning students would be empowered to take ownership of their learning, while teachers would serve as guides and facilitators of in-class activities. Psychological emotions of young students and the cultural characteristics of Vietnam and countries around the world, especially English-speaking countries, were portrayed in a respectful manner.

### **Analysis**

The study employed a qualitative approach, using a widely recognized textbook evaluation checklist as its framework, and evaluated the target textbooks accordingly. Relevant findings were also drawn from previous publications to corroborate the researcher's evaluative remarks. Cunningsworth's (1995) textbook evaluation checklist, which is one of the most established frameworks of textbook evaluation (López-Medina, 2021), was used as a basis for the analysis of the said textbooks. The textbook evaluation checklist covers criteria including aims, design and organization, language content, skills, methodology and practical considerations. Within the scope of the study, the checklist was adapted to exclude the practicality criteria. Furthermore, given that the studied textbooks include Communication & Culture and Projects beside language and skills, those sections were treated as parts of the textbook content to complement findings with regard to international communication and communicative competences. The result was a multi-pronged analysis of the given textbooks in terms of aims, design and organization, textbook content (language and skills, communication and culture, projects, topics), and methodology.

### **Aims**

In their introductory pages, the English textbooks for grade 12 claim to espouse communicative competences and cultural characteristics of English-speaking countries and those near Vietnam

(Hoang et al., 2016). At face value, this seems aligned with the general principles of Project 2020 which involve the cultivation of communicative competences as well as understanding of the people and culture from English-speaking and other nations in the world.

**Design and organization**

The given textbooks encompass a number of units, a number of lessons per unit, and the content of each lesson. The two textbooks each include 5 units, with 8 components per learning unit, including Getting Started (1), Language - Vocabulary, Pronunciation, Grammar (2), Reading (3), Speaking (4), Listening (5), Writing (6), Communication & Culture (7), and Looking Back & Project (8). A clear layout and consistent structure make it fairly easy for teachers and students to navigate the textbooks.

**Textbook content**

The content of the textbook is divided into language components and skills. Language is further divided into vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar, whereas skills comprise reading, speaking, listening and writing, in that order. Exercises are organized following a developmental level of difficulty, which is congruent with cognitive processes found in Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives.

**Language**

*Vocabulary*

On average, 5 to 6 new topical words are presented in the Vocabulary section of each unit (see Appendix 1). The new words are usually introduced alongside their English meanings in the form of a simple matching or gap-fill exercise. These are then practiced via a gap-fill exercise that helps check students’ understanding of the meaning of given words in context as well as their grammatical accuracy (see Figure 1).

Figure 1  
*Vocabulary Exercises in Unit 1*

**Vocabulary**

**1 Write the words given in the box next to their meanings.**

distinguished	achievement
respectable	talented
generosity	

1	gifted, having a natural ability to do something well
2	very successful and admired by other people
3	regarded by society as acceptable, proper and correct
4	kindness or willingness to give
5	something that has been obtained by hard work, ability or effort

**2 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in 1.**

- Alexandre Yersin, who had quite a \_\_\_\_\_ career in medicine, devoted his life to the poor and sick people in Viet Nam.
- Hard-working and \_\_\_\_\_ students should be given more opportunities to develop their skills.
- The new album is one of his greatest \_\_\_\_\_. It sold 50,000 copies just in the first week.
- After my father got a well-paid job at an international company, we moved to a \_\_\_\_\_ neighbourhood.
- Don't allow other people to take advantage of your \_\_\_\_\_. You should learn to give wisely.

It is clear that in this section, lexical items are taught discretely, allowing teachers and learners to focus on the items alone. However, one consequence that comes with teaching isolated vocabulary is that there is no room for students to apply those learned words or phrases into actual communication. This might go against the belief that language learners should both acquire knowledge of vocabulary receptively and use it productively (Waring, 2002).

### Pronunciation

The Pronunciation section of each unit revolves around one pronunciation feature, which can either be individual sounds, word stress, sentence stress, or intonation (see Appendix 2). Activities provided attempt to scaffold students' learning of pronunciation, starting with a listening input, followed by an exercise that asks students to identify and recognize the target pronunciation feature. This is subsequently practiced through a controlled approach wherein students have to repeat or practice the pronunciation feature with a partner (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

### Pronunciation Exercises in Unit 4

**Pronunciation**  
**Revision: The pronunciation of the verb ending -ed**

1 Listen and repeat. Pay attention to the ending -ed of the verbs.

reduced	used	copied
received	distributed	welcomed
developed	influenced	invented
introduced	provided	downloaded

**REMEMBER**  
 The verb ending -ed is pronounced:

- /t/ after voiceless sounds such as /p/, /k/, /s/, /f/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/ and /θ/.
- /d/ after voiced sounds such as /b/, /g/, /v/, /z/, /m/, /n/, /l/, /r/, /ð/, /dʒ/ and all vowels.
- /ɪd/ after the sounds /t/ and /d/.

2 Listen and repeat the sentences. Notice the verbs ending -ed.

1. The library reduced the number of print newspapers and magazines that they used to subscribe to.
2. The graph compares the amount of information received over a ten-year period.
3. Have you downloaded the files related to our social media project, which I emailed you yesterday?
4. Paper was invented before the printing machine.
5. New electronic devices have been developed to cater to users' ever-changing needs.
6. Social networking has influenced young people's way of life.

The Pronunciation section seems to emphasize repetition, through which English learners are expected to become more sensitive to phonological accuracy (Trofimovich & Gatbonton, 2006). Nonetheless, since the Pronunciation practice is mainly restricted to students listening to and repeating after a dialogue, how the target pronunciation features would be translated into speaking is completely absent from the textbooks.

### Grammar

The Grammar section of each unit comprises 1-2 target grammatical features (see Appendix 3). Grammar-focused exercises are structured from easy to more difficult. All intended grammatical features are put into full sentences rather than discrete points of grammar, which allows students to see how grammar can be incorporated into written texts (see Figure 3).

Figure 3  
Grammar Exercises in Unit 8

**Grammar**

**Reported speech: reporting orders, requests, offers, advice, instructions, ...**

**1** Rewrite the sentences in reported speech, using the appropriate verbs from the box in the correct tense.

ask    offer    tell    advise

- Our teacher: 'You must study hard for the final exams.'  
→ Our teacher \_\_\_\_\_.
- The job applicant: 'Could you tell me if the company provides computers for all employees?'  
→ The job applicant \_\_\_\_\_.
- The career adviser: 'You should develop your communication and planning skills.'  
→ The career adviser \_\_\_\_\_.
- My mother: 'I'll find information about short courses on organisational skills for you.'  
→ My mother \_\_\_\_\_.

**2** Complete the sentences, reporting what was said.

- 'Would you like to see me play in a football match?'  
→ The monitor invited \_\_\_\_\_.
- 'Could you tell me what skills I need in order to get this job?'  
→ The applicant asked the head of the human resources department \_\_\_\_\_.
- 'If you like, I'll find more information about the company that you are applying to.'  
→ My friend offered \_\_\_\_\_.
- 'Go ahead. Apply for the job.'  
→ His father encouraged \_\_\_\_\_.
- 'The working conditions at this factory are terrible!'  
→ He complained to his friends \_\_\_\_\_.
- 'No, I can't tell you what the director's salary is because that information is confidential.'  
→ She refused \_\_\_\_\_.

However, a lack of contextualized grammar could pose a serious cause for concern as grammar is usually presented in isolated sentences, and students are asked to use these grammatical features through exercises which involve grammatical manipulation or transformation. With this traditional approach, learners may be deprived of the opportunities to make connections between grammatical patterns, meanings of texts and uses in real-life communication (Nunan, 1998). For instance, in the unit above where students are taught reported speech (Unit 8), it starts with theories of different functions of reported speech, followed by exercises that ask students to rewrite sentences in reported speech. There is little to no reference to when it is contextually appropriate to use reported speech rather than direct speech.

### Skills

Each skill is organized around three stages including pre-, while- and post-stage. Pre-stage is designed to prepare students in a motivational, conceptual and linguistic manner for the content they will engage with during the lesson. The while-stage is essentially a focused practice, and the purpose of the post-stage is to encourage students to produce the language and knowledge learned in communication, often in the form of speaking and writing.

### Reading


Regarding the input, the chosen reading passages are suitable to the topic of each unit. Text types include mostly articles, with the occasional use of other genres such as website posts and job advertisements. Reading activities primarily focus on the development of two main micro skills - reading for main ideas and reading for specific information (see Appendix 4). There is a sense of progression in the sequence of activities (see Figure 4). Figure 4

Reading Exercises in Unit 1

**SKILLS**

**READING**  
Giving back to the community

**1 Discuss with a partner.**  
What do the people in the pictures need? What can you do to help them?  
Use the words under the pictures to answer the questions.



**2 Read two people's life stories and complete the table with facts about them.**

Name	Larry Stewart	Le Thanh Thuy
Born		
Died		
Nationality		
Health problems		
Dedicated life to ...		

**3 Find the words or expressions in the text that have the following meanings. Write them in the correct spaces.**

- people who do not have enough food or money \_\_\_\_\_
- make something known to someone \_\_\_\_\_
- unknown to other people \_\_\_\_\_
- remove a body part in a medical operation \_\_\_\_\_
- start, make something important begin \_\_\_\_\_
- something remembered from the past \_\_\_\_\_

**4 Read the stories again. Answer the questions.**

- What did Larry Stewart do to help those in need?
- Why was he called 'Secret Santa'?
- How has his act of kindness influenced other people since his death?
- What did Thanh Thuy do to help other people?
- What title was Thuy awarded?
- How does *The Tuoi Tre* manage Thuy's Dream Programme?

**5 Discuss with a partner.**  
Have you ever taken part in the Sunflower Festival to support Thuy's Dream Programme?

- If yes, what did you do during the festival?
- If no, would you like to do it in the future and how would you help? Give your reasons.

Following a lead-in task to activate students' background knowledge of the topic of the reading text, a reading input, along with two comprehension activities, is displayed. A vocabulary exercise (e.g., find words or expressions that have the following meanings, word form, etc.) often serves a complementary role in facilitating students' understanding of the reading texts while attempting to build their lexis. The introduction of vocabulary in context is an innovative point, given that language is context-sensitive and so, without context, it is challenging for learners to retrieve the meaning of words or phrases (Thornbury, 1999). At the final stage, students are asked to answer questions closely linked to the reading texts.

*Speaking*

Speaking content is relevant to the topic of each unit (see Appendix 5). Speaking activities progress from a lead-in exercise to controlled practice tasks (e.g., dialogue completion, vocabulary revision, etc.) to free practice (see Figure 5).

The majority of speaking tasks feature various interactional patterns as students are asked to speak to a partner, a small group or the whole class. This variation of interaction is compatible with the assertion that English classrooms should expose students to the target language, the process of which lies heavily on classroom interaction to foster real-life communication (Brown, 2007).

Figure 5

Speaking Exercises in Unit 7

**SPEAKING**

**Talking about the risks of artificial intelligence**

**1** Work in pairs. Discuss the following questions.

Do you know the name of this person? What is he famous for?



**2** Read and complete the following news item with the words in the box.

evolution    consequences    efforts  
destruction    form    threat    technology

**Stephen Hawking warns A.I. could end mankind**

Professor Stephen Hawking told the BBC that (1) \_\_\_\_\_ to create thinking machines pose a (2) \_\_\_\_\_ to humans and the development of full artificial intelligence could end human existence. His warning came in response to a question about the (3) \_\_\_\_\_ that he uses to communicate. The device which he uses is a basic (4) \_\_\_\_\_ of A.I. He thinks the primitive forms of artificial intelligence developed so far have already proved very useful. However, he fears the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ of creating something that can match or surpass humans could lead to their (6) \_\_\_\_\_ because humans would not be able to compete with A.I. due to their slow biological (7) \_\_\_\_\_.

**3** Work in pairs. Complete the conversation using the information in 2 and practise it.

Nam: Did you read Professor Stephen Hawking's interview about artificial intelligence?

Mat: No, I didn't. (1) \_\_\_\_\_?

Nam: The BBC.

Mat: What did he talk about?

Nam: He talked about (2) \_\_\_\_\_.

Mat: Why is it risky to develop artificial intelligence?

Nam: Because (3) \_\_\_\_\_.

Mat: I still don't understand that.

Nam: Professor Hawking thought that humans couldn't compete with A.I. because of (4) \_\_\_\_\_.



**4** Work in groups. Prepare a talk about the risks of artificial intelligence to present to the class using the ideas from 2 and 3. Add your own ideas if there are any.



*Listening*

Listening content is connected to the topic of each unit (see Appendix 6). The British accent was chosen for recording purposes and the CDs were recorded by the authors of the publishing partners themselves (Hoang, 2016). The two most emphasized listening sub-skills are listening for general ideas and listening for specific information. Listening activities are organized in an increasingly complex order (see Figure 6).

Figure 6



Listening Exercises in Unit 7

LISTENING

The future of A.I.

1 Match each word in column A with its meaning in column B.

A	B
1 malfunction (n)	a. a person who studies the future and makes predictions about it based on current trends
2 implant (v)	b. kill or destroy somebody completely
3 futurist (n)	c. failure to work normally because of a fault or bad design
4 complicated (adj)	d. insert or fix something in a person's body, especially by surgery
5 exterminate (v)	e. an illegal attempt to harm someone's computer system, or the information on it, using the Internet.
6 cyber-attack (n)	f. difficult to analyse, understand, or explain

2 Listen to the conversation between Nam and Mai. Decide whether the following statements are true (T), false (F), or not given (NG). Tick the correct box.

		T	F	NG
1	Mai met Kurzweil in a conference about A.I.			
2	Kurzweil is one of the leading American scientists in the development of A.I. technology.			
3	He believes that computers will be more intelligent than humans by 2029.			
4	According to this scientist, humans will be more powerful and have better memories.			
5	Nam and Mai will be in their thirties by 2029.			
6	According to some predictions, if A.I. machines become more intelligent than humans, they will destroy the world and kill humans.			

3 Listen again. Answer the following questions.

1. What is the article that Mai read about?
2. Besides being a computer scientist, what is Kurzweil famous for?
3. What is Mai's opinion of Kurzweil?
4. What did the scientist say about the ability of computers to think?
5. What does Kurzweil call the tiny robots implanted into human bodies?

4 Work in groups. What do you think about Kurzweil's ideas?



A typical listening lesson starts with a lead-in activity aimed at connecting what students already know with what they will hear in the recording, then listening comprehension tasks such as multiple choice questions (MCQs), short answer questions, true/false (T/F) exercises and, lastly, a speaking output task where students work in pairs or groups to answer a question relevant to the listening content.

Writing

Writing content is tailored to the topic of each unit and centered around two main text types - essays and descriptive reports of simple charts. Other genres include reports and CV or job application letters (see Appendix 7). Writing activities are structured in a way that allows learning to be scaffolded (see Figure 7).

Figure 7  
Writing Exercises in Unit 5

**WRITING**

**What makes me Vietnamese**

**1** Work in pairs. Give the reasons why language is often considered the most important cultural identifier.

*Example:*

*Language is the most important cultural identifier because it allows me to communicate with my family and community.*

**2** Read the following essay on language as defining a person's cultural identity. Complete the essay, using the correct form of the words in the box.

feature	unique	share	demonstrate
unify	express	unite	invade

For most people, (1) \_\_\_\_\_ one's cultural identity is often a way to show who they are and how they relate to others. It can be (2) \_\_\_\_\_ through their language, food, clothing, beliefs, music and festivals. Among these (3) \_\_\_\_\_, language is what makes me Vietnamese. There are several reasons for this.

Vietnamese is the language that can (4) \_\_\_\_\_ the people of my country in the face of any danger. Although there are over fifty ethnic groups, we all use Vietnamese as the official language. It is the means of communication at school and in my community. It allows me to experience and (5) \_\_\_\_\_ my culture.

I am also proud to speak a language that has a long history. Although my country used to be (6) \_\_\_\_\_ by other countries, the language has always been kept alive. Modern Vietnamese developed from an ancient form similar to other Asian languages. It is written with the Latin alphabet combining letters with tone markings.

In conclusion, Vietnamese as the community and national language is the most powerful (7) \_\_\_\_\_ force. That is why it is also the most meaningful part of my cultural identity. This beautiful and (8) \_\_\_\_\_ language defines me as a person and I am very proud of it.

**3** Which is the most important cultural identifier or the feature that defines your cultural identity? First, discuss your ideas in groups of four. Then decide on the most important feature and write an essay of 180-250 words.

You can choose one of the following cultural identifiers:

- Festivals and cultural practices
- Shared values and beliefs
- Traditional food
- History
- Education

**• Introduction**

Definition of cultural identity

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thesis statement

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**• Body**

First reason

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Second reason

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**• Conclusion**

Summary of the reasons

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Following a lead-in activity to encourage activation of background knowledge, controlled practice exercises (e.g., gap-fill, matching) give students chances to either brainstorm and develop ideas for their writing or provide language input, concluded by a free practice task that requires students to produce a complete writing output.

## Communication & culture

The newly added section - Communication & Culture - is regarded as an attempt to incorporate intercultural content into English textbooks (Chau & Truong, 2019) (see Appendix 8). Specifically, in the Communication section, students are often given a listening comprehension task (e.g., MCQs, sentence completion) and then asked to speak in pairs or groups (see Figure 8).

Figure 8  
*Communication Exercises in Unit 1*

**Communication**  
Family stories

**1** Listen to An's story. Complete the statements about the story. Write from 1 to 3 words in each blank.

1. An enjoys reading books about \_\_\_\_\_.
2. An's friends call her a \_\_\_\_\_ encyclopaedia because she can answer all their questions about \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Sometimes she has a feeling that the people in the books she has read are \_\_\_\_\_.
4. She spent her two months' holiday in \_\_\_\_\_.
5. To An, her grandparents were as heroic and worthy of \_\_\_\_\_ as many historical figures, and their stories were even more interesting and more \_\_\_\_\_ than those in the books she has read.

**2** Discuss the question in pairs.  
Do you think family stories should be told to children? Why or why not?

Figure 9  
*Culture Exercises in Unit 3*

**Culture**  
The greenest countries and cities in the world

**1** Quickly read the text and answer the questions that follow.

**A GREEN PLACE TO LIVE AND ENJOY LIFE**

If you are tired of modern life and you want to contribute more to building a better planet for future generations, think about the following places. According to the Global Green Economy Index (GGEI) 2014 – a detailed assessment of the performance of each country in every continent in the global green economy – Germany and some Scandinavian countries ranked top of the list. The top five countries included Sweden, Norway, Costa Rica, Germany, and Denmark. In addition, the ten greenest cities were Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Vancouver, London, Berlin, New York, Singapore, Helsinki, and Oslo.

**Green Stockholm, Sweden**

Stockholm dwellers are fortunate to live in one of the greenest capitals in the world. And they try their best to keep it that way. The city is well known for its cycle paths and lanes full of commuters wearing helmets. For people who prefer public transport, there are buses and taxis that run on renewable energy, which is really good for the environment. Besides, both public and private transport can use upgraded biogas produced by waste-water treatment plants applying advanced technologies.

Visitors to Stockholm will be amazed to see that all hotels, hostels and guest houses are environmentally friendly and certified with eco-labels. It's so great that almost 100% of the household waste in the city is recycled and is used for heating and electricity; and drinking water is always of very high and reliable quality. There is no doubt to say that waste in Stockholm is converted into valuable resources. With the recycling revolution and effective waste management, Stockholm has been reducing the amount of waste to rubbish dump to less than 1%.

**2** Work in pairs. Discuss the question.  
What should people in big cities in Viet Nam do to make their city become a green city like Stockholm?





1. What are the top five countries and ten cities according to GGEI 2014?
2. How do Stockholmers travel around in the city?
3. How do Stockholmers make their public transport sustainable?
4. How do the people in Stockholm treat waste?

Quite similarly, the Culture section consists of a reading comprehension task (e.g., T/F/NG, short answer questions), after which students discuss a question in pairs or groups (see Figure 9 above). What is interesting to note here is that questions given in the Culture section are localized - that is, students are asked to discuss or reflect on a particular aspect of Vietnamese culture. This could be perceived as an acknowledgement of the need to embed local culture into the textbooks instead of prioritizing the target culture exclusively, which stems from the belief that foreign language learners bring their first culture into the classroom (Risager, 2007). Below is an example of how tasks in the Culture section are organized.

### Project

The newly added Project section usually entails two parts, the first of which is a prompt while the second is a task statement that explicitly tells students what they need to do. Projects are done in groups and require the use of multimedia (e.g., video clips), graphics (posters) or oral presentations (see Figure 10).

Figure 10  
*Project Exercises in Unit 7*



**PROJECT**

**Work in groups of four. Do some research on one of the following topics.**

- a kind of robot that is in use in fields such as entertainment, medicine and industry: its appearance and functions, its cost, where it is used, its popularity, etc.
- a popular science-fiction film about artificial intelligence: the title, plot summary, characters, the cast (actors and actresses), setting, and ratings

**Then present the results of your research to the class. Include some video clips and relevant captioned pictures in your presentation.**

The inclusion of Project is clearly a way to imbue project-based learning into the curriculum, where the emphasis is put on collaboration, critical engagement with real-world problems of the modern day, cultivation of diverse solutions and use of language in an authentic context (Haines, 1989).

### Topics

The two textbooks encompass a total of 10 topics, each of which is dealt with during ten 45-minute periods (see Appendix 9). The selection of topics for the textbooks is claimed to be compatible with Vietnamese cultural and social values while allowing for international culture to be embedded (MOET, 2018).


The introduction of culture into each topic is based on the belief that second language acquisition is inextricably linked to not only linguistic but also cultural acquisition (Savignon, 2007). Throughout each topic, various cultural content (e.g., visual illustrations, descriptive texts) encompasses those associated with the Inner Circle (where English is the primary language) (see Figure 11), Outer Circle (where English is the second language) (see Figure 12), and Expanding Circle (where English is the foreign language) (see Figure 13) (Kachru, 1986), and is often integrated into listening or reading materials, as seen below.

Figure 11  
 Reading Input about a Famous Writer from Scotland, an Inner Circle Country (Unit 1)

**Culture**  
 The creator of Sherlock Holmes

**1** Read the text about Arthur Conan Doyle and decide whether the statements about it are true (T), false (F), or not given (NG). Tick the correct boxes.

**Arthur Conan Doyle**



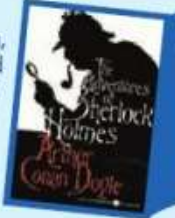
Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was a Scottish writer and physician. He is best known for his creation of Sherlock Holmes – a brilliant London-based detective famous for his logical thinking and ability to solve difficult cases.

Born in Edinburgh in 1859 into a prosperous family, Doyle was strongly influenced by his mother, who was a well-educated woman. In his early childhood, she used to tell him vivid stories which sparked his imagination. The second person who had a great impact on his writing career was Dr Joseph Bell, a professor at the medical school where Doyle studied from 1876 to 1881. Dr Bell's keen powers of observation later inspired Doyle to create his fictional detective character, Sherlock Holmes.

Doyle's active life provided him with vivid experiences for his stories. With a great love for adventure, he would never miss a chance to travel. He took a surgeon's position on a whaling ship sailing for the Arctic Circle. He served as a volunteer doctor in the Langman Hospital in South Africa during the War of Independence in 1900. He also acted as a war journalist during the First World War.

Doyle's writing career started during his time at medical school. After graduation, he set up his own medical practice, which was not very successful initially, so he started writing stories again while waiting for patients. He wrote 21 novels and more than 150 short stories. He also published poems, articles, memoirs and plays on various subjects. His most well-known works are the novels and stories with Sherlock Holmes and the fantasy novel *The Lost World*, which were made into successful films.

Doyle died at the age of 71, after a heart attack. In his honour, a statue of him was built in Crowborough, where he lived for almost 23 years.



	T	F	NG
1. Arthur Conan Doyle's stories about Sherlock Holmes were the first detective stories in the world.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The two people who had a strong influence on Doyle's writing career were his mother and Dr Joseph Bell.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Doyle's mother inspired him to write about Sherlock Holmes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Doyle's life experiences were sources for many of his stories.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. <i>The Lost World</i> and his novels and stories about Sherlock Holmes were made into films.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. A statue of Sherlock Holmes was built in London.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**2** Work with a partner. Find some Vietnamese writers of detective stories and talk about their lives and works.

Figure 12  
 Listening Input about Singapore, an Outer Circle Country (Unit 5)

**LISTENING**  
**Cultural diversity in Singapore**

**1** You are going to listen to a talk about cultural diversity in Singapore. What do you know about this city-state? Look at the information below. Guess and write the name of each ethnic group in the blank.

**SINGAPORE**  
 Official languages: English, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil  
 Ethnic groups: Chinese, Malays, Indians, Eurasians and other  
 Currency used: Singapore dollar (SGD)

Figure 13  
*Photos and Reading Input about Thailand, an Expanding Circle Country (Unit 2)*

**Communication**  
**The urban world in 2050**

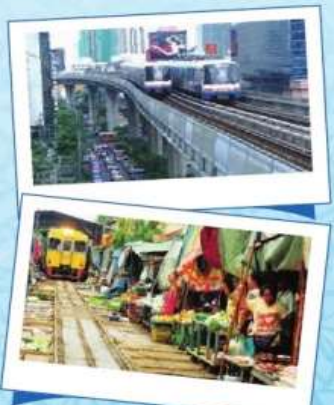
**1** Listen to a talk about predictions for life in cities in 2050 and choose the correct option in each of the following sentences.

- By 2050, 50/70 per cent of the world's people will live in cities.
- Energy, especially *electricity/oil*, will be very expensive.
- Human resources/natural resources* are running out due to the excessive exploitation.
- Many people will probably have their workplaces *close to/far from* where they live.
- It will be difficult to provide enough water, gas and electricity for *really big cities/the countryside*.
- Many people from the countryside will move to *smaller cities/big cities*.

**2** Work in groups. Which of the predictions in 1 are likely to come true to the city you live in, or a city in Viet Nam that you know most about? Make some more predictions about that city in 2050.

**Culture**  
**Urbanised Bangkok**

**1** Look at the two photos of Bangkok, Thailand. What aspects of city life do they show?



**2** Read the text about urbanisation in Bangkok. Answer the questions that follow.

**A**s the capital city of Thailand for over 200 years, Bangkok has an important role to play. Its growth is the world's window on the growth of Thailand. Its urbanisation rate has increased gradually over the past 50 years, bringing apparent and wide-ranging benefits to the country. These include economic, social and cultural ones. In terms of economic benefits, the national income statistics have shown that Bangkok and the surrounding areas usually generate more than 50% of the gross domestic product. Regarding the social benefits, Bangkok's inhabitants have access to better services and facilities compared to any other area of the country. Moreover, as a national centre of art and culture, Bangkok provides many opportunities and facilities for leisure and sport activities, and entertainment.

**H**owever, urbanisation has also resulted in massive problems. For example, thousands of migrants live in the modern slums surrounded by poverty, crime and drugs, and with no hope of getting a job. Traffic congestion is another big problem in the city whose road system is unable to cope with the increased number of cars. The traffic congestion combined with the large concentration of factories has severely affected the air and water quality. Despite the problems, Bangkok still continues to attract more and more migrants every year. The problems of traffic congestion, pollution and urban slums will continue to grow worse if the government does not take any measures to reduce the negative effects of urbanisation.

- What is the role of Bangkok in Thailand?
- What benefits has urbanisation brought about?
- What problems has urbanisation caused?

**3** Discuss the question below.  
 What are the similarities and differences between the urbanisation in Bangkok and that in Ha Noi?

Besides the international culture, several elements of the local culture are shown. For instance, there are several pictures which demonstrate different aspects of Vietnamese society (see Figure 14), and a number of tasks require students to process input or produce output that is linked to their home culture (see Figure 15).

Figure 14  
*Photos about Vietnamese Women (Unit 2)*



Figure 15

*Inclusion of Vietnamese Historical Figures in a Speaking Output (Unit 1)*

- 3** Work with a partner. Use the information below or your own ideas to talk about one of the historical figures below.

**King Le Loi/Le Thai To (1385 – 1433)**

**Facts:**

- determined leader of Lam Son uprising against the Ming invaders (1418 – 1427), suffered hardship and difficulties
- freed the country and became King in 1428

**Reason for being respected:**

- his perseverance during the ten years' war

**Interesting legend:**

- the history of Sword Lake in Ha Noi: the return of the magical sword to a golden turtle after the war against the invaders


**Methodology**

Overall, the textbooks seem to embrace student-centered learning and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). With regard to the former, a large number of activities such as pair-work or groupwork are designed for collaborative settings where students will take on the role of negotiators with their teachers and classmates, as well as taking responsibility for their own learning. With this approach, teachers, rather than assuming a dominant role as often seen in traditional classrooms, act as facilitators and mentors for their students.

Meanwhile, the use of Communicative Language Teaching is shown in a number of aspects and aligned with Richards's (2006) principles of CLT. First, the textbooks seem to emphasize real-life communication. For example, in Unit 8: "The world of work", students are expected to write a curriculum vitae (CV) to support an application for employment, and this task is definitely applicable as students get older and enter the job market. Second, proportionate coverage of all four macro skills and allowance for skill integration at pre- and post- stages, which are characteristic of CLT, are noticeable in the textbooks. For example, every listening and reading lesson is accompanied by a speaking task at the end, giving students chances to use listening and reading inputs as prompts for further discussion on the same topic. Also, there is an increased number of cooperative activities, which is in line with the shifting role of learners in a CLT classroom from the traditional individualistic approach (Richards, 2006). Furthermore, classroom activities focus on meaningful and interpersonal interaction through pair sharing, groupwork or group-based projects, which is one of the underlying assumptions pertinent to CLT (Richards, 2006).

**Evaluation**

Based on the given analysis, the researcher evaluates the effectiveness of the textbooks in delivering Project 2020, including the two main aspects: communicative competences and intercultural communication.

### **Communicative competences**

In terms of communicative competences, the researcher evaluates the mentioned features of the two textbooks against the learning outcomes for grade 12 students (see Appendix 10).

#### **On the surface**

On the surface, the new textbooks have touched upon the majority of the stated communicative competences. Specifically, in terms of reading, various reading inputs and task types connected to familiar topics leave sufficient room for students to practise reading for gist and specific information, as well identifying the logical flow of written texts. Nonetheless, the ability to summarize short texts of everyday use is not yet explored within the given textbooks, since most exercises (e.g., short answer, T/F) revolve around lower cognitive levels. Also, a higher degree of diversity in text genres may be advisable, since types of texts, other than academic articles, can help increase engagement and prepare students for real-life reading.

In terms of listening, a range of listening topics and task types give students ample opportunities to listen for main ideas and specific information on familiar topics encountered in daily life (e.g., writing a good CV, choosing a career, using social media). More challenging and academic listening content such as news and interviews (e.g., Unit 1, Unit 3 and Unit 9) has also been integrated into the textbooks. However, it is worth noting that the ability to follow simple instructions such as recipes and the names of common utensils is nowhere to be found in the listening content.

In terms of speaking, students are expected to describe their experiences and events, dreams and hopes and ambitions, and give reasons for their opinions or plans. The textbook writers seem to have taken this into account, as the overwhelming majority of speaking activities require students to justify their choices (e.g., express opinions about a preferable place of living - Unit 2) or discuss their ambitions (e.g., talk about dreams - Unit 9). Projects also have a part to play in enhancing students' speaking competences.

In terms of writing, the textbooks feature mostly essays on familiar topics which allows students to select their chosen topics with personal preference, along with descriptive reports on simple charts. Other genres such as reports, CV and job application letters are also available to students so that they are better prepared for real-life writing.

Last but not least, the explicated linguistic knowledge is rather an exhaustive list of linguistic features learned in grade 12, whereas how these might help with acquisition of communicative competences is hardly investigated. This is indeed reflected in the way language components in the textbooks are designed, as language features are presented and practiced separately, with little connection to the four macro-skills.

#### **On a closer look**

It is noteworthy that the given list of communicative competences reflects a prescriptive approach to curriculum in which all learning outcomes have been prescribed (Ellis, 2004). The predetermined objectives raise concerns as to what underlies the decision to set these outcomes and whether the stated communicative competences are subjective choices made by curriculum developers. This practical but narrow focus may fail to acknowledge the emergent nature of



learning (Jefferies & Nguyen, 2014), and simplify the concept of curriculum to “how things ought to be ...” while overlooking “how things are in real classrooms” (Ellis, 2004, p.5). Therefore, in order to fully comprehend the dynamics of curriculum in action, several findings from the literature were elicited as reference points to provide an insight into how textbooks are used in real life teaching practices.

First, unequal attention is given to the four communicative competences, and teachers continue to place an undue emphasis on grammar and vocabulary (Nguyen, 2017). Similarly, students find little interest or motivation to learn all four macro skills, especially listening, speaking and writing. The reason for this lies in the test-driven culture of Vietnam, where instead of playing a complementary role in the curriculum, testing is deemed a crucial factor in deciding teaching and learning content (Vu, 2017). Specifically, Hoang (2017) reported that listening and speaking were often left unpracticed, given that the National High School Graduation Examination did not include assessment of such skills.

Second, teachers’ enactment of the textbooks remains incongruent with the pedagogical principles underpinning the textbooks (Nguyen 2017). Although a number of innovative pedagogical practices have been suggested, such as the use of alternative assessment methods and application of technology into teaching and learning (MOET, 2012), Duong (2016), when discussing the modern assessment paradigm and methods to assess students’ competences, revealed that teachers’ assessment practices were highly traditional and lacking in innovation and experimentation, which would not allow students to be tested on their cognitive abilities. Similarly, Nguyen’s (2017) study on three grade 12 classes found that teachers more often than not resorted to traditional approaches such as giving students exercises to do for the most part of the class and raising questions for students to answer. Although the scalability of Nguyen’s (2017) finding should be subject to scrutiny due to a small sample size of three classes only, it has drawn attention to the perpetuation of a teacher-centered model in contemporary teaching practices. Heavy reliance on traditional knowledge-transmission methods may, in the long run, compromise the effectiveness of the theoretically sound methodologies that textbook developers might have tried to promote in the first place.

Finally, inadequate time is considered another unresolved issue. In Nguyen’s (2018) study on five high school teachers, four noted that they often ran out of time when conducting “Language” lessons, which consisted of three components but were only taught within one 45-minute period. Several participants also called attention to the fact that teaching “Writing” within only 45 minutes was challenging, and that more time should be devoted to teaching this skill.

### **Intercultural communication**

In this section the researcher evaluated the studied textbooks in terms of intercultural communication. Several findings from existing scholarship were once again used to substantiate the researcher’s evaluation. These include ELT textbooks’ tendency to privilege the English of Anglophone countries and the assumption that students would mostly use English to communicate with non-Asian speakers, while strategies to handle communication breakdowns were also neglected (Nguyen et al., 2021).

One laudable feature of the given textbooks is that they have combined cultural content embodying all three concentric circles (Kachru, 1986) with those of Vietnam. Incorporation of local culture into textbooks can help raise students’ awareness of their home culture and empower them to popularize the local culture through the target language (McKay, 2002),

which is closely linked to what Project 2020 set out to achieve. This view is also echoed by Margana (2009) who advocated that language learning will be significantly more meaningful if it is linked to students' life experiences and, in this case, experiences in their home country.

On the other hand, the selection of the British accent for recording implies the predominance of British English linguistic norms in ELT textbooks (Ho & Nguyen, 2019). The focus on native-speakerism and neglect of plurilingualism of those responsible for developing the textbooks reveals a hidden curriculum (one that consists of implicit attitudes, knowledge and behaviors experienced by students while in school) (Skelton, 1997), that is the overwhelming influence of the Western culture in second language acquisition in general and ELT coursebooks in particular. If the primary goal of ELT is to educate learners to communicate in global contexts, then ELT textbooks must represent both the native varieties of the Inner Circle and those of Expanding and Outer Circles (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020). Hence, more empirical research is warranted to determine whether the given textbooks could prepare Vietnamese students for real-life cross-cultural communication in the 21st century.

In addition, the fact that textbook content remains heavily oriented towards monolingual and monocultural norms of English-speaking countries reflects a fundamental assumption that learners would mostly communicate with non-Asians. As an international language, English is now used not only in countries where it is regarded as a native language (e.g., UK, US, Canada) but also in those where it is considered a second language (e.g., Singapore, Finland, Malaysia), and as a foreign language (e.g., South Korea, Japan, China). In real-world contexts, native speakers are often seen to communicate with non-natives and non-native speakers interact with each other (Dang & Seals, 2018). Hence, in a time when the world is increasingly interconnected, it is more important for interlocutors to produce intelligible speeches than confining themselves to Standard English.

The underrepresentation of different legitimate English varieties also seems to largely ignore the reality of the use of English in Vietnam. In fact, in businesses such as trade and tourism, Vietnamese speakers are likely to converse with interlocutors coming from all around the world instead of native speakers only (Ton & Pham, 2010; Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, 2019). This has serious implications for Project 2020 as to whether the design and development of the textbooks at hand suffice to capture the changing sociolinguistic reality of English and allow their users to capitalize on their multilingual repertoires (Nguyen et al., 2021).

Last but not least, strategies to handle communication breakdowns, which are part and parcel of cross-cultural communication, have been overlooked in the textbooks (Nguyen et al., 2021). There is little to no indication of types of communication strategies that can be used to make up for low levels of language proficiency, which leaves ample room for further investigation into how the textbooks and their implementation can help students to bridge gaps in intercultural communication.

It is interesting to note that Project 2020's English textbooks at primary and secondary levels have also received criticism for their heavy emphasis on the communicative and cultural norms of Anglophone countries (Dang & Seals, 2016; Nguyen & Cao, 2019). This points to a larger narrative about the principles underpinning the portrayal and representation of linguistic and cultural identities in the whole textbook series. Failure to acknowledge the linguistic and functional diversity of English suggests the need for more theoretical and empirical research into how English textbook materials can allow Vietnamese students to communicate with

global English users and achieve mutual intelligibility.

### **Conclusion & Implications**

To summarize, this paper seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the two English textbooks for grade 12 students in delivering Project 2020 in terms of communicative competences and intercultural communication. At surface level, the textbooks are soundly grounded on the two mentioned goals. Nevertheless, regarding communicative competences, the implementation of the textbooks in the classroom remains unaligned with their original intentions due to overt attention to grammar and vocabulary, lack of interaction between teachers, students, textbooks and other learning materials, and time constraints. Meanwhile, in terms of intercultural communication, overemphasis on native speakerism and underrepresentation of other English varieties may prevent students from acquiring the ability to successfully engage in multicultural dialogues.

A number of implications for policymakers and teachers are to be discussed to maximize the effectiveness of the grade 12 English textbooks in delivering Project 2020. These recommendations are framed around the belief that the learning as a process that takes place in a classroom is largely unpredictable (Eisner, 1967), and so curriculum materials, in this case textbooks, should be treated as descriptive rather than prescriptive. The following recommendations are categorized into those relevant to communicative competences and intercultural communication.

#### **Communicative competences**

First, in terms of the washback effects of high-stakes and large-scale testing on teaching and learning, teachers should be encouraged to pay equal attention to all four macro skills, which could motivate their students to do the same (Nguyen, 2018). Although teachers may be aware of the washback effects of testing, in reality they are under constant pressure from the MOET to fulfill their administrative responsibilities (Vu, 2017). Thus, the MOET is highly advised to rethink how it could minimize the detrimental effects of its testing system, especially considering the National High School Graduation Examination.

Second, there is an urgent call for increased training and retraining programs focused on the ten-year English textbooks series (Hoang, 2016). It is crucial that teacher training takes into consideration the need for participants to discuss solutions with their trainers and colleagues when reflecting upon their own teaching experiences (Nguyen, 2018). Derived from the belief that “collective teacher knowledge” can be developed by teachers talking to each other (Barnett & Hodson, 2001), there should be multiple opportunities for teachers to share perspectives or insights concerning their classroom practices .

Thirdly, the National Foreign Language Project should invite voices from teachers and students, those who are the direct beneficiaries of the Project. Project 2020 has been downplaying the involvement of Vietnamese high school teachers and their students, who are the direct beneficiaries as well as enactors of the Project and its textbooks (Hoang, 2017). It is worth noting that teachers and students remain key players in the classroom rather than objects to be controlled, which justifies their right to interpret and implement curriculum in a way that best fits their teaching and learning contexts (Einsner, 2001). This thus leads to the compelling need to offer teachers and students who are using the new textbooks ongoing opportunities to embrace their agency (Brown, 1995). For instance, teachers and students should be encouraged to submit feedback so that curriculum and textbook developers could see what works and does not work in real-life teaching and learning. Textbook authors should also have the chance to

observe teachers' in-class practices so that they can bridge the gap between their textbooks and real-world teaching contexts of Vietnam (Hoang, 2016).

With respect to the issue of inadequate time, rather than treating the textbooks as a rigid plan that needs to be followed through, teachers should be more flexible with their use of textbooks. They may decide which tasks students can prepare at home and which parts should be emphasized in class, depending on their own teaching contexts (levels of students, their interests, etc.) (Nguyen, 2018). For instance, with "Language" lessons, teachers can assign students to do vocabulary exercises at home whilst in-class time could be devoted to communicative activities.

### **Intercultural communication**

In line with the shift towards English as an International Language (EIL), it makes sense that linguistic pluralism rather than native-like competence be promoted and made the focus of classroom and assessment practices. Hence, wider coverage of English models used by multilingual users from the Outer Circle and Expanding Circle is a pertinent concern worthy of further investigation. Several English variations, particularly peripheral varieties (e.g., Singaporean English, Malaysian English), should be embedded more frequently into classroom activities to reflect the diversity of English varieties in contemporary communication (Ho & Nguyen, 2019). Informed decisions are therefore needed regarding how and the extent to which English varieties should be incorporated into one's teaching practices, since it is acknowledged that teachers as enactors of curriculums are under various influences including but not limited to the culture and climate of their schools, the district and national education systems (Harris & Burn, 2011).

Regarding communication breakdowns, communication strategies that can be used to make up for low levels of language proficiency such as avoiding, paraphrasing, borrowing, appealing for assistance and mime (Tarone, 1981) should be explored to prepare learners for communication with speakers of vastly diverse backgrounds.

In terms of culture, there should be a balanced blend of three main sources which are the learners' local culture, the target culture and the international culture (McKay, 2002). More opportunities to expose students to multicultural communication should be made available in school and out-of-school settings (Newton, 2016). Given contextual constraints in language teaching and learning in Vietnam where English is spoken as a foreign language, integration of role-plays into teaching culture can be a consideration to help students engage more deeply with intercultural aspects and understand what it means to be multicultural English users. However, one concern with this approach is that cultural biases may likely be formed (Byram & Felming, 1998). In order to address this potential prejudice, cultural role-plays should be complemented by activities that help both teachers and students examine their cultural beliefs and perceptions (e.g., cultural shock and differences), so students can learn to treat international conversations emphatically and thoughtfully

Changes are crucial to enhancing textbook efficiency. Nevertheless, it is imperative that any changes would have to be carefully scrutinized in relation to unique contextual characteristics. Curriculums are always under various influences such as social conditions, community groups and parents, professional associations and centralized bureaucracies that are heavily influenced by national and international testing programs (Wiles & Sugg, 1954). Any curricular innovations can only be successfully enacted if collaboration exists among relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to language policy planners, textbook developers and

teachers (Dang & Seals, 2016).

### APPENDICES Appendix 1

Unit	Vocabulary
Unit 1: Life stories	distinguished, respectable, generosity, achievement, talented
Unit 2: Urbanization	urbanization, overload, industrialization, agricultural, switch off
Unit 3: The green movement	mould and mildew, depleted, clutter, pathway, dispose of, asthma
Unit 4: The mass media	the mass media, addicted, efficient, social networking, cyber bullying, instant messaging
Unit 5: Cultural identity	assimilate, maintain, national costumes, custom, cultural practices, multicultural
Unit 6: Endangered species	survival, conservation, vulnerable, habitat extinct, evolution, endangered, biodiversity
Unit 7: Artificial intelligence	incredible, activate, capable, resurrect, emotion
Unit 8: The world of work	apply, recruit, qualification, relevant, probation
Unit 9: Choosing a career	option, career, career advice, secure, workforce, temporary
Unit 10: Lifelong learning	flexible, voluntary, self-directed, self-motivated, self-improved, lifelong learning

### Appendix 2

Unit	Pronunciation
Unit 1: Life stories	Homophones
Unit 2: Urbanization	Vowels: Diphthongs
Unit 3: The green movement	Assimilation
Unit 4: The mass media	The verb ending- <i>ed</i>
Unit 5: Cultural identity	Assimilation
Unit 6: Endangered species	Linking vowel to vowel
Unit 7: Artificial intelligence	Sentence stress
Unit 8: The world of work	Stressed words (exceptions)

Unit 9: Choosing a career	Unstressed words
Unit 10: Lifelong learning	Intonations of question (revision)

### Appendix 3

Unit	Grammar
Unit 1: Life stories	Review: the past simple vs. the past continuous Definite and indefinite articles Omission of articles
Unit 2: Urbanization	The subjunctive in <i>that</i> -clauses after certain verbs and expressions
Unit 3: The green movement	Simple, compound, and complex sentences Relative clauses with <i>which</i> referring to the whole clause
Unit 4: The mass media	Prepositions after certain verbs The past perfect vs. the past simple
Unit 5: Cultural identity	The present perfect vs. the present perfect continuous Repeated comparatives to say that something is changing
Unit 6: Endangered species	The future perfect Double comparatives
Unit 7: Artificial intelligence	The active and passive causatives
Unit 8: The world of work	Reported speech: reporting orders, requests, offers, advice, instructions, ...
Unit 9: Choosing a career	Phrasal verbs (consisting of a verb, an adverb, and a preposition) Adverbial clauses of condition, comparison, manner, and result
Unit 10: Lifelong learning	Conditionals Type 3 Mixed conditionals of Type 2 and Type 3

### Appendix 4

Unit	Content	Text types
Unit 1: Life stories	Read for specific information about two people's life stories	Article

Unit 2: Urbanization	Read for specific information in an article about urbanization and its causes	Article
Unit 3: The green movement	Read for general ideas and specific information in an article about soot pollution	Article
Unit 4: The mass media	Read for general ideas and specific information in article about forms of mass media	Article
Unit 5: Cultural identity	Read for specific information in a passage about cultural identity in today's modern society	Article
Unit 6: Endangered species	Read for general ideas and specific information and identify different opinions about protecting endangered species	Website post
Unit 7: Artificial intelligence	Read for specific information in an article about artificial intelligence applications	Article
Unit 8: The world of work	Read for specific information in job advertisements	Job advertisement
Unit 9: Choosing a career	Read for general ideas and specific information about career advice on websites for secondary school leavers	Website post
Unit 10: Lifelong learning	Read for general ideas and specific information in an article about lifelong learning	Article

### Appendix 5

Unit	Content
Unit 1: Life stories	Talk about a historical figure
Unit 2: Urbanization	Discuss key features of urbanization and express opinions about a preferable place of living
Unit 3: The green movement	Discuss lifestyle choices and decide if they are environmentally friendly

Unit 4: The mass media	Talk about social networking
Unit 5: Cultural identity	Talk about the ways to maintain cultural identity
Unit 6: Endangered species	Talk about how to protect endangered species
Unit 7: Artificial intelligence	Talk about the risks of artificial intelligence
Unit 8: The world of work	Discuss skills and qualities needed for getting a job
Unit 9: Choosing a career	Talk about ambitions and dreams (future jobs)
Unit 10: Lifelong learning	Give a presentation about how to keep learning throughout life

### Appendix 6

Unit	Content
Unit 1: Life stories	Listen for specific information in a talk show about privacy and lessons learnt from people's life stories
Unit 2: Urbanization	Listen for general ideas and specific information in a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of urbanization
Unit 3: The green movement	Listen for general ideas and specific information in a talk show about a school's Go Green Initiative
Unit 4: The mass media	Listen for specific information in a conversation about social media: language-learning apps
Unit 5: Cultural identity	Listen for general ideas and specific information in a talk about cultural diversity in an Asian country
Unit 6: Endangered species	Listen for specific information in a talk about why animals are in danger of extinction
Unit 7: Artificial intelligence	Listen for specific information in a conversation about the future of A.I.
Unit 8: The world of work	Listen for general ideas and specific information about how to write a good CV



Unit 9: Choosing a career	Listen for main ideas and specific information in an interview with school leavers about the positive and negative points of some careers
Unit 10: Lifelong learning	Listen for specific information in a talk show about a successful lifelong learner

**Appendix 7**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Content</b>
Unit 1: Life stories	Writing a life story
Unit 2: Urbanization	Describing a line graph about the rate of urbanization
Unit 3: The green movement	Writing an essay about the advantages and disadvantages of a green lifestyle
Unit 4: The mass media	Describing a pie chart showing the use of online resources
Unit 5: Cultural identity	Writing an essay about the most important feature that defines someone's cultural identity
Unit 6: Endangered species	Writing a report about endangered species
Unit 7: Artificial intelligence	Writing an essay about the advantages and disadvantages of intelligent machines
Unit 8: The world of work	Writing a CV to support an application for employment
Unit 9: Choosing a career	Writing a job application letter in response to an advertisement
Unit 10: Lifelong learning	Writing a description of a bar chart about barriers of lifelong learning

**Appendix 8**

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Communication and Culture</b>
Unit 1: Life stories	Family stories The creator of Sherlock Holmes
Unit 2: Urbanization	Discussion on sustainable urbanization Urbanization in Bangkok, Thailand
Unit 3: The green movement	The green movement in Vietnam

	The greenest countries and cities in the world
Unit 4: The mass media	Learning English with video Social media apps
Unit 5: Cultural identity	Migration and cultural identity Festivals that help ethnic groups in Vietnam to maintain their cultural identity
Unit 6: Endangered species	Bringing extinct species back to life How sea turtles are protected in Malaysia
Unit 7: Artificial intelligence	Artificial intelligence in science-fiction films People's attitudes towards intelligent machines
Unit 8: The world of work	Issues related to a job application The job seeking experiences of an English school leaver
Unit 9: Choosing a career	Summer jobs Taking a year out
Unit 10: Lifelong learning	A famous lifelong learner Lifelong learning in different countries

### Appendix 9

Unit	Topic
Unit 1	Life stories
Unit 2	Urbanization
Unit 3	The green movement
Unit 4	The mass media
Unit 5	Cultural identity
Unit 6	Endangered species
Unit 7	Artificial intelligence
Unit 8	The world of work
Unit 9	Choosing a career
Unit 10	Lifelong learning

### Appendix 10

Themes	Topics	Communicative competences	Linguistic knowledge
<p>Our lives Our society Our environment Our future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leaving school and choosing a career</li> <li>- Life stories</li> <li>- Urbanization</li> <li>- The mass media</li> <li>- Cultural diversity</li> <li>- Green environment</li> <li>- The world of work</li> <li>- Artificial intelligence</li> <li>- Lifelong learning, etc</li> </ul>	<p><b>Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand and identify the main points of dialogues, monologues of 230-250 words on familiar topics regularly encountered in life, work, school, etc., within the scope of the curriculum.</li> <li>- Follow simple instructions such as recipes, how to use common utensils, etc.</li> <li>- Listen and guess meanings (through the expressions and feelings of the speakers) in familiar monologues and conversations in everyday life</li> <li>- Understand the main points of news programs, broadcasts, interviews, etc., on familiar topics which are clearly delivered in simple language, and with illustrative images.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pronunciation</b></p> <p>Diphthongs Words with stress (specials cases) – Words without stress Sentence stress, assimilation, linking vowels with vowels Question intonation (consolidation and extension) Homophones</p> <p><b>Vocabulary</b></p> <p>Words related to themes and topics of Grade 12.</p> <p><b>Grammar</b></p> <p>Present perfect (consolidation and extension) Past simple and past continuous Types of sentences: simple, compound, complex sentences (consolidation and extension) Articles (consolidation and extension) Reported speech: commands, requests, offers, advice and instructions. Relative clauses with which referring to a whole clause. Prepositions after some verbs Phrasal verbs (including verbs, adverbs and prepositions) Double comparison showing changing</p>
		<p><b>Speaking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pronounce clearly and relatively accurately 47 words with or without stress, sentence stress, assimilation, and liaison.</li> <li>- Speak and interact with fellow speakers about familiar topics, express personal views and exchange information about the topics covered in the curriculum.</li> <li>- Describe in simple discourse familiar topics, narrate a short story closely related to the topics covered.</li> <li>- Present preparedly the</li> </ul>	

		projects on the topics in the curriculum.	things Sentences of reason: active and passive Adverbial clauses of condition, comparison Adverbial clauses of manner, result ...
		<p><b>Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read and comprehend the main points, specific contents of a text of 280-300 words on current and familiar topics.</li> <li>- Read and understand the argument flow of texts, identify main conclusions in texts using clear language.</li> <li>- Read to find and summarize short texts of everyday use such as simple letters, brochures, using words and structures from the original texts.</li> </ul>	
		<p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Write simple connected and coherent texts of 180-200 words; write short reports based on suggestions, providing factual information and reasons for the recommendations made in the reports; collect short information from several sources and summarize it.</li> <li>- Complete (write/fill) administrative forms such as resumes, letters of application for employment, etc.</li> <li>- Write descriptive texts of simple charts and tables.</li> </ul>	

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