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Evaluating Reading Comprehension Activities of Technical 1 Textbook in Light of CEFR Standards at TVTC Technical Colleges

Curriculum and Instruction (TEFL Track)

تقييم أنشطة فهم المقروء لكتاب المستوى التقني 1 في ضوء معايير الإطار الأوروبي المرجعي العام للغات (CEFR) في الكليات التقنية التابعة لمؤسسة TVTC

المناهج وطرق التدريس (مسار تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية)

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ماجستير في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية / تصميم المناهج

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ملخص الدراسة:

هدف البحث إلى تقويم أنشطة الفهم القرائي في كتاب Technical 1، المقرر الأساسي لتعليم الإنجليزية التقنية في كليات التقنية بالسعودية، وفق معايير الإطار الأوروبي المرجعي الموحد للغات (CEFR)، وذلك لضمان مواءمة المحتوى مع المستويات العالمية وتطوير كفاءة الطلاب بما يلبي متطلبات سوق العمل الحديث. استخدم الباحث منهجًا وصفيًا تحليليًا، مع أداة تحليل قائمة على معايير CEFR لمهارات القراءة في مستويات A1 إلى B2، وطبّقت الأداة على جميع وحدات الكتابين (كتاب الطالب وكتاب التدريبات). تم إخضاع الأداة لتحكيم مجموعة خبراء من أساتذة اللغة والتدريب التقني لضمان مصداقيتها وفاعليتها، كما أُجري فحص الموثوقية بطريقة هولستي (Holsti) للتأكد من ثبات نتائج التحليل. أظهرت النتائج أن 77.8% من معايير CEFR الخاصة بالقراءة تم تحقيقها بشكل كامل أو جزئي، وبرزت قوة الكتاب في تصميم المهام، ودعم المفردات، والاستخدام البصري للوسائط، بينما لوحظ ضعف في بناء الاستقلالية لدى

المتعلم ووجود حاجة لتحسين آليات التقييم والتغذية الراجعة. كما بيّن التحليل أن وحدات الكتاب تبدأ بمواءمة قوية مع المستويات الأولى (A1–A2) ثم تقل نسبة الاتساق مع المستويات الأعلى (B1–B2)، خاصة في المهمات التي تتطلب التفكير التحليلي والتقييم النقدي للنصوص التقنية المتخصصة.

أوصى البحث بعدة إجراءات تطويرية من بينها:

تنويع النصوص التقنية المعتمدة وإدخال سيناريوهات عمل واقعية.

بناء وحدات ديناميكية مرنة تراعي التسلسل المنطقي لصعوبة المهام.

تعزيز أدوات التقييم الذاتي للمتعلمين، وإضافة أنشطة للتقييم التكويني وتغذية راجعة فورية.

توسيع نطاق المفردات التقنية من خلال استراتيجية التكرار والتدرج، وإنشاء قواميس مصغرة مرتبطة بتخصصات المتدربين.

الاستفادة من الوحدة الخامسة "Flow" كوحدة نموذجية في تحقيق مواءمة قوية مع CEFR وتكرار خصائصها في باقي الوحدات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تقويم المناهج، الفهم القرائي , الإطار الأوروبي المرجعي للغات (CEFR), تعليم الإنجليزية لأغراض خاصة (ESP

Abstract

This research aimed to evaluate the reading comprehension activities in the Technical 1 textbook, the core course for teaching technical English in Saudi technical colleges, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The goal was to ensure the content aligns with international standards and develops students' proficiency to meet the demands of the modern job market. The researcher employed a descriptive-analytical approach, utilizing an analysis tool based on CEFR standards for reading skills at levels A1 to B2. This tool was applied to all units of both the student textbook and the workbook. The tool underwent peer review by a panel of language and technical training experts to ensure its validity and effectiveness. Holsti's reliability test was also conducted to confirm the consistency of the analysis results. The findings revealed that 77.8% of the CEFR reading standards were fully or partially met. The book's strengths lay in its task design, vocabulary support, and visual use of media. However, weaknesses were observed in fostering learner independence, highlighting a need for improved assessment and feedback mechanisms. The analysis also revealed that the textbook units begin with strong alignment with the lower levels (A1-A2), then the degree of alignment decreases with the higher levels (B1-B2), particularly in tasks requiring analytical thinking and critical .evaluation of specialized technical texts

:The research recommended several developmental measures, including

•Diversifying the used technical texts and introducing realistic work scenarios.

•Developing flexible, dynamic units that consider the logical progression of task difficulty.

•Enhancing learners' self-assessment tools and adding formative assessment activities and immediate feedback.

•Expanding the technical vocabulary through a strategy of repetition and progression, and creating mini-dictionaries related to trainees' specializations.

Keywords: Curriculum assessment, Reading comprehension, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Introduction

Evaluating educational materials is essential for ensuring that students achieve desired learning outcomes and that curricula meet international quality benchmarks. Textbooks serve as the primary resource guiding both teaching and learning processes; in technical English education, their accuracy, pedagogical soundness, and relevance to professional contexts directly affect students' engagement, comprehension, and language proficiency[1].

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides an internationally recognized standard for describing language ability across six proficiency levels (A1–C2). It includes detailed descriptors for reading, speaking, listening, and writing, enabling curriculum designers and assessment specialists to align materials and evaluation methods with clear, actionable competence targets[2]. Specifically, CEFR's reading descriptors outline the cognitive and strategic skills learners should demonstrate at each level, from identifying gist and specific information in simple texts (A1–A2) to inferring implicit meaning and evaluating complex specialized passages (B2–C2)[3].

Integrating CEFR into curriculum design enhances coherence between instructional objectives and assessment tasks. Aligning reading comprehension activities with CEFR fosters consistency across courses and institutions and allows educators to track learner progress against international benchmarks[4]. Research shows that CEFR-aligned reading tasks improve validity and comparability of assessment results and support targeted remedial instruction[5].

Despite CEFR's widespread adoption, there is limited systematic analysis of how reading comprehension exercises in the Technical 1 textbook used by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) in Saudi Arabia align with CEFR proficiency descriptors. Preliminary feedback from over 322 TVTC English instructors indicates that many existing reading activities lack the complexity and authenticity required for successful progression to CEFR-B1 and above levels[6]. Addressing this gap is vital for ensuring that TVTC graduates attain the language competencies needed for technical professions and global mobility.

Accordingly, this study proposes to evaluate all reading comprehension tasks in the Technical 1 textbook against CEFR reading descriptors. The objectives are to identify strengths and weaknesses in task design, determine the textbook's overall CEFR alignment score, and recommend unit-level improvements to ensure compliance with CEFR standards. Findings will inform curriculum developers and policymakers on enhancing technical English instruction at TVTC institutions.

Research Problem

Although Technical 1 is the foundational English course in TVTC technical colleges, many students struggle to achieve the CEFR-specified B1 reading proficiency expected by the end of the semester. Observations from classroom practice and instructor surveys suggest that the textbook's reading tasks often remain at A2 complexity, lacking opportunities for learners to practice inferencing, critical evaluation, and technical vocabulary integration[7]. Without a systematic alignment to CEFR descriptors, Technical 1 may fail to prepare students for real-world technical reading demands.

Research Questions

- To what extent do reading comprehension activities in the Technical 1 textbook correspond to CEFR reading proficiency descriptors?
- Which textbook unit best exemplifies CEFR alignment, and how can its design serve as a model for revising other units?

Research Objectives

- Analyze every reading comprehension exercise in Technical 1 to determine its CEFR level.
- Calculate an overall alignment index for the textbook based on CEFR criteria.
- Propose a revised unit template to guide the development of CEFR-compliant reading tasks.

Significance of the Study

- Provides an evidence-based appraisal of Technical 1's reading tasks against CEFR standards, highlighting specific areas for enhancement.
- Equips TVTC curriculum designers with a validated alignment tool for future textbook selection and development.
- Helps instructors implement targeted reading strategies at appropriate CEFR levels, improving student readiness for technical texts.
- Supports policy decisions on standardizing ESP curricula across TVTC technical colleges to meet global professional requirements.

Definitions of Key Terms

Curriculum Evaluation: A systematic process of assessing the quality, coherence, and effectiveness of a curriculum against predefined standards. In this study, it refers to measuring Technical 1's reading tasks against CEFR reading descriptors[8].

Reading Comprehension Activities: Exercises designed to develop learners' abilities to understand written texts. In CEFR terms, these range from identifying explicit information (A1–A2) to interpreting nuance and argumentation in specialized materials (B2–C2)[9].

CEFR Reading Descriptors: Detailed statements in the CEFR Companion Volume that define what learners can do at each proficiency level when reading texts of general or

specialized content[2].

Technical 1 Textbook: The first-level English for Specific Purposes (ESP) coursebook used by TVTC technical colleges, aimed at teaching core language skills within technical and vocational contexts.

Literature review

Theoretical Framework

Chapter Two offers a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations and relevant research literature. It consists of two major sections. The first section (A) explores the theoretical background across four distinct areas: the first area introduces the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the second covers approaches to reading comprehension, the third examines the evaluation of curriculum content, and the fourth explains the construction of a sample unit within content evaluation. The second section (B) reviews various studies that discuss important elements of curriculum design and language teaching, spanning both theoretical perspectives and practical applications.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an internationally recognized and flexible framework designed to describe and categorize language proficiency. Established by the Council of Europe in the early 2000s, CEFR aims to provide a common basis for measuring and describing language skills that can be adapted across various educational contexts, languages, and cultures (Council of Europe, 2020). The framework is widely utilized by educational systems, language associations, governments, and organizations globally to set benchmarks for language instruction and assessment.

CEFR outlines six proficiency levels, which can be broadly grouped into three categories:

Basic User (A1 and A2), Independent User (B1 and B2), and Proficient User (C1 and C2). Basic Users understand and use everyday expressions and simple phrases to satisfy concrete needs. Independent Users can effectively handle most situations that arise while traveling or in daily communication, comprehend main points in familiar texts, and write clear, detailed descriptions. Proficient Users demonstrate advanced abilities, including understanding complex texts with implicit meanings, expressing themselves fluently and spontaneously, and producing well-structured, cohesive texts on sophisticated subjects (Piccardo, 2019).

The framework covers four principal language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each skill is assessed across all six proficiency levels with detailed descriptors indicating what learners can accomplish at every stage. A distinctive feature of CEFR is the use of "can-do" statements, which provide practical benchmarks for learners and educators to gauge language functions that students are expected to perform. For instance, at the A2 level, learners are expected to understand short, simple texts related to familiar daily topics, whereas at C2, learners can read virtually all forms of written language, including highly abstract and structurally complex texts (Piccardo, 2019).

Although originally developed for European languages, the CEFR's adaptability has made it a foundational tool for curriculum development, language assessment, and proficiency certification worldwide. It is not confined to academic settings but extends to professional environments, businesses, and immigration authorities requiring standardized language competence measures (Deygers & Carlsen, 2018).

The CEFR emphasizes an action-oriented approach, viewing learners as "social agents" who use language to perform tasks in real-life social contexts. The framework organizes language activities into reception (listening and reading), production (speaking and writing), interaction, and mediation (interpreting and translating). This approach highlights the practical use of language beyond mere grammatical knowledge, making CEFR highly applicable to both academic and vocational scenarios (Deygers & Carlsen, 2018).

Overall, the CEFR has significantly influenced language education, particularly in curriculum development, where it supports goal-oriented instruction, task-based learning, and the holistic development of language skills. It is notably valuable in vocational education settings, such as those within Saudi Arabia's Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), where learners prepare for workplace communication involving technical terminology and professional interaction (North, Piccardo, & Goodier, 2019).

The CEFR serves as a foundational framework for the development of language proficiency tests and certifications that are recognised internationally (Deygers & Carlsen, 2018). Language exams such as IELTS, TOEFL, DELF/DALF, and the Goethe Zertifikat are aligned with the CEFR, which allows for standardised and comparative assessment of language abilities across different contexts. The "can-do" statements within the CEFR provide clear descriptions of what learners are expected to accomplish at each proficiency level, ensuring that testing reflects real-world language use. Such standardisation has become integral for processes like university admissions, employment in multinational companies, and immigration screening, helping place students appropriately and enabling the measurement of progress over time (Deygers & Carlsen, 2018).

In curriculum development, the CEFR's impact is considerable. It offers structured guidance for educators to design language courses that target specific proficiency levels, emphasising communicative competence (Deygers & Carlsen, 2018). Curricula based on the CEFR often

include: goal-oriented instruction with clearly articulated objectives; task-based learning where activities simulate real-life language use (e.g., negotiating, presenting); and holistic skill development that integrates reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The flexibility of the CEFR allows it to address contexts ranging from general education to business and vocational training, making it highly applicable to technical institutions such as the Saudi Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), where English courses focus on workplace-relevant language skills, including technical vocabulary and communication (North, Piccardo & Goodier, 2019).

The CEFR also promotes lifelong learning by recognising language development as a continuous process (Little, 2009). Learners progress through proficiency levels based on their personal and career goals, adapting to evolving language needs over time. This aspect is particularly relevant for technical and vocational learners who may require specialised language skills for fields like engineering or healthcare (Runnells & Runnells, 2019).

Globally, many countries outside Europe have adopted the CEFR framework due to its adaptability and clarity (Runnells & Runnells, 2019). For example, Saudi Arabia's TVTC integrates CEFR-based standards to enhance English instruction aligned with the nation's Vision 2030, preparing students for global industry demands. The CEFR also supports training for teachers to effectively implement standards and assessments aligned with international proficiency benchmarks (North, Piccardo & Goodier, 2019; Council of Europe, 2020).

In summary, the CEFR underpins language education policies, assessment design, and curricular development worldwide and serves as a vital tool for the enhancement of both academic and vocational language learning (Mahboob, 2014; TVTC, 2021).

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) also plays a crucial role in the development of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curricula, which are vital in vocational education settings. ESP courses are tailored to meet the specific language needs of particular industries, such as healthcare, engineering, business, or academia. Aligning ESP programs with CEFR levels enables educators to clearly define both general language abilities and specialized competencies essential for professional paths (Basturkmen, 2010).

Within vocational contexts, the CEFR facilitates the creation of curricula that not only advance general English proficiency but also incorporate industry-specific vocabulary and communication skills. This approach ensures that learners acquire the linguistic tools necessary to function effectively in their occupational domains. For instance, Saudi Arabia's Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) utilizes CEFR principles to structure English language programs, aligning them with national strategies such as Vision 2030. These programs aim to prepare students with language competencies relevant to roles in sectors like healthcare, IT, and engineering (Al-Samiri, 2021).

Regarding reading comprehension, CEFR-aligned activities are progressively designed to enhance learners' abilities to interpret, analyze, and understand written texts effectively across proficiency levels. For example, at lower levels (A1, A2), learners engage with simple texts such as notices or instructions, gradually advancing to complex, specialized texts at higher levels (C1, C2) that require critical reading skills and familiarity with technical or academic language (Tafolazi et al., 2019).

Effective CEFR-based reading activities typically include pre-reading tasks that activate relevant vocabulary, during-reading exercises focusing on comprehension strategies tailored to proficiency levels, and post-reading activities that promote critical thinking, summarization, and discussion. Such scaffolding ensures learners develop functional literacy aligned with their vocational goals (Harsch & Hartig, 2016; Elleman & Oslund, 2019).

Challenges remain in implementing CEFR-aligned reading comprehension in vocational education, notably the need to incorporate specialized terminology and real-world document interaction. Educators must balance general language instruction with the practical application of language skills relevant to specific industries. Integration of technology-enhanced learning (TELL) tools further supports personalized, engaging instruction, offering adaptive materials and collaborative platforms that enhance comprehension and skill development (North & Goodier, 2016; Tafolazi et al., 2019).

Technology Integration in Reading Comprehension within CEFR Framework

Collaborative Learning Environments: Technology has significantly enhanced collaborative learning by enabling interactive reading comprehension activities through platforms such as Google Docs and online discussion forums. These tools allow students to jointly analyze texts, provide peer feedback, and engage in meaningful discussions that promote critical thinking and deeper understanding. This collaborative approach aligns well with the CEFR's emphasis on interaction as a vital component of language learning, encouraging meaningful communication and social use of language (Tafolazi et al., 2019).

Assessment and Feedback

Technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) incorporates tools that provide immediate feedback on reading tasks, such as automated quizzes and comprehension checks. These tools streamline assessment processes, enabling educators to efficiently track student progress against CEFR descriptors and adjust instruction accordingly. Early feedback bolsters learner motivation and aids targeted improvements (Tafolazi et al., 2019).

Gamification and Engagement

Incorporating gamified elements into reading comprehension activities has been shown to increase engagement and motivation among learners. Educational games tailored to reinforce

reading skills provide an interactive and enjoyable learning experience that appeals to diverse learning styles (Tafolazi et al., 2019).

Integration of TELL in Technical 1 Textbook

The Technical 1 textbook, used within Saudi Arabia's Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), benefits greatly from the integration of TELL strategies. Such digital enhancements promote learner engagement and align effectively with CEFR principles, aiding in developing critical reading skills necessary for vocational success. By utilizing technology, teachers can craft lessons that are not only interactive but also cater to individual learner needs, fostering confidence and practical language application (Tafolazi et al., 2019).

Reading Comprehension Activities and Curriculum Evaluation

Reading comprehension activities are fundamental to effective language education, especially in vocational settings using materials like the Technical 1 textbook (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). These activities support learners in becoming capable of understanding, analyzing, and applying textual information relevant to their vocational fields.

The CEFR framework guides the development of these reading tasks, ensuring they progressively build learners' competencies—from understanding simple notices at A1/A2 levels to engaging with complex, specialized texts at C1/C2 (Tafolazi et al., 2019). Effective reading exercises incorporate:

- Pre-reading Activities: Introducing essential vocabulary and context.
- While-reading Tasks: Engaging learners in identifying main ideas and author intent.
- Post-reading Assignments: Encouraging summarization, critique, and application (Harsch & Hartig, 2016).

Curriculum content evaluation ensures reading activities align with learning objectives and CEFR standards. This evaluation employs methods such as content alignment checks, learner feedback collection, assessment of student work, and peer reviews to maintain high-quality instruction (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Harris & Jones, 2016).

Challenges and Trends in Curriculum Evaluation

Challenges in curriculum evaluation include subjectivity, resource limitations, and adapting to evolving educational standards. Variations in learner needs and effective data management also pose significant issues (Tafolazi et al., 2019). Trends favor integrating technology for efficient data collection and feedback, centering evaluations on students, and fostering collaborative assessment strategies to continuously enhance curriculum effectiveness (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Importance of Curriculum Evaluation in Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a foundational skill that significantly impacts student success across all subjects. According to Grabe and Stoller (2013), reading comprehension activities in curriculum serve several key functions:

- Foundation for Learning Across Disciplines: Competent reading enables students to grasp concepts in science, mathematics, social studies, and beyond, highlighting its cross-curricular importance.
- Development of Critical Thinking: Many reading tasks foster higher-order thinking skills by encouraging students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information.
- Vocabulary and Language Growth: Exposure to diverse texts enhances students' vocabulary and overall language competence, aiding classroom learning and communication.
- Fostering Lifelong Reading Habits: Well-designed reading activities help cultivate a love for reading, promoting continuous personal and academic growth.

Best Practices for Evaluating Reading Activities

Afflerbach and Pressley (1995) emphasize key components in evaluating reading comprehension activities:

- Establishing clear evaluation criteria aligned with learning goals and student engagement.
- Utilizing a mix of qualitative and quantitative assessment methods, such as surveys, tests, and performance assessments.
- Incorporating feedback from students, teachers, and parents to inform improvements.
- Maintaining a cycle of reflection and adaptation to continuously enhance instructional quality.

Strategies to Enhance Reading Comprehension

Guthrie and McRae (2012) advocate for effective strategies including:

- An integrative approach, weaving reading activities into other subjects for holistic learning.
- Differentiated instruction tailored to individual learner proficiency levels and needs.
- Use of technology to provide interactive, customized learning experiences and timely feedback.
- Promoting collaborative learning through group discussions and peer teaching.

• Continuous monitoring and formative assessment to refine instruction responsively.

Challenges in Assessment

Miller (2013) notes several obstacles in assessing reading comprehension:

• Subjectivity in evaluation, which can be mitigated through clear rubrics and standards.

• Limited resources, such as inadequate materials or technology, restricting implementation.

• Time constraints within packed curricula that make integrating thorough reading assessments difficult.

The Role of Professional Development and Community

Darling-Hammond and Gardner (2017) highlight the necessity of:

• Ongoing teacher training on reading strategies and curriculum evaluation.

• Collaborative professional learning communities to share best practices.

• Engagement of families and communities through literacy programs and partnerships enhancing the home-school connection.

Summary

In sum, curriculum evaluation aligned with the CEFR ensures that reading comprehension instruction is effective, relevant, and responsive to diverse learners. A blend of differentiated instruction, technological integration, and collaborative learning fosters robust comprehension skills that are essential for academic success and lifelong learning. Continuous teacher development and inclusive community involvement are critical to sustaining these outcomes (Grabe & Stoller, 2013; Afflerbach & Pressley, 1995; Guthrie & McRae, 2012; Miller, 2013; Darling-Hammond & Gardner, 2017).

Proposed Units in Education Curriculum

Education curriculum development requires thorough planning and a solid theoretical foundation for optimal implementation. A proposed unit is a structured segment within a curriculum that organizes specific subject matter, extends prior knowledge, or provides intervention for learning gaps. It should be informed by educational theories, historical perspectives, and current pedagogical trends (Macdonald, 1971).

Definition and Purpose

A proposed unit serves as a fundamental building block in education, facilitating coherent and progressive learning experiences. It guides students through specific topics or skills and offers flexibility for educators to integrate specialized and interdisciplinary content. Units are often visually grouped within a course sequence to align with major educational objectives, helping learners connect new concepts to previously acquired knowledge (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006).

Theoretical Foundations

Several key theories support unit structuring:

- Bloom's Taxonomy (1956): Emphasizes progression through cognitive stages, from basic knowledge acquisition to critical thinking and creativity.
- Constructivist Learning (Piaget, 1950): Advocates for active, hands-on learning where students construct knowledge through experience.
- Backward Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005): Focuses on defining desired outcomes first, then designing instructional activities and assessments to achieve them.

Historical Context

Historically, as Tyler (1949) describes, curriculum units were rigid and content-focused. Progressive education movements shifted units toward more adaptive, student-centered models. Dewey (1938) contributed significantly by promoting experiential learning through units that address real-world problems and foster critical thinking.

Role in Curriculum Coherence and Adaptability

Effective units ensure structural clarity by linking concepts and supporting learners' cognitive progression, enabling knowledge retention and transfer across contexts. Units also enhance curriculum adaptability, allowing updates based on emerging knowledge, technological advances, and student feedback (Entwistle, 2003).

Modern Trends

Recent development incorporates technology-enhanced learning, AI-driven assessments, and personalized adaptive frameworks that promote engagement and practical skill mastery (Chen & Stroup, 1993; Lonning & DeFranco, 1998).

Proposed units are pivotal in delivering targeted, coherent, and flexible education. Grounded in solid theoretical and empirical foundations, they support ongoing curriculum refinement and respond to diverse learner needs, steering education toward inclusivity and global relevance.

Previous Studies

This section discusses various studies evaluating different aspects of language curriculum and instruction. The review is divided into two parts: first, focusing on studies assessing curriculum content, and second, examining studies analyzing reading comprehension units. Both areas highlight key findings and methodologies relevant to understanding language proficiency development and instructional effectiveness.

Studies on Curriculum Content Evaluation

Several research efforts have sought to compare and analyze English language curricula relative to international frameworks such as the CEFR and the inclusion of 21st-century competencies. These evaluations determine the degree to which current curricula meet societal needs and adequately address learner abilities.

- Al-Saeedi and Al-Shamrani (2023) conducted a detailed assessment of the primary English curriculum for 5th graders, focusing on integration of skills aligned with twenty-first-century competencies. They developed an analysis instrument with 69 benchmarks covering thinking, problem-solving, and technology use. Their results showed an average alignment score of merely 1.6 out of a defined scale, indicating incomplete incorporation of 21st-century skills and calling for curriculum overhaul.

- Al-Subeai (2021) evaluated the implementation of CEFR standards in Saudi secondary education by analyzing the 'Flying High' textbook. The study applied 34 criteria and 70 indicators across the four language skills: listening, reading, oral production, and interaction. It found partial implementation of CEFR with an overemphasis on reading, oral interaction, and writing, while listening and oral production were underrepresented. The study recommended balancing skill development across all levels.

- In Malaysia, Nazari and Aziz (2020) examined the impact of CEFR on school English textbooks. They compared imported CEFR-aligned books to local texts, highlighting dominant sociological cultural representation and imbalance among source, target, and international cultures. Their analysis suggested moderating cultural content and diversifying genres to broaden cultural exposure in reading activities.

- Al-Zahrani (2018) reviewed the Saudi 'Flying High' curriculum addressing the four language skills, noting issues such as lack of continuity with prior curricula, insufficient cultural relevance, and repetition across grades leading to minimal skill progression. Recommendations included adopting more culturally responsive curricula and enhancing developmental learning to build from earlier proficiency levels.

- Al-Harbi (2016) assessed the 'Smart Class Six' textbook using the Provus model and descriptive analysis, finding that 82% of the proposed academic standards were met but requiring further improvements, especially in communicative tasks.

Furthermore, Al-Harbi (2012) analyzed ‘Flying High’ and ‘Aim High’ textbooks for secondary students, uncovering deficiencies in covering intermediate proficiency, notably in listening and speaking. This research urged curricular revisions to better meet diverse learner needs.

The compiled evidence indicates that while strengths exist—particularly in reading and writing—significant gaps remain in balanced skill emphasis and integrating comprehensive 21st-century competencies. An overhaul of some curricula is necessary to achieve culturally sensitive, skills-oriented, and standards-aligned programs.

Studies Analyzed Reading Comprehension Units

Bogaerds et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of 44 experimental and quasi-experimental studies involving grades 4–6 students. They examined the effects of text structure instruction on reading comprehension, finding positive immediate effects for interventions focusing on text structure, summarization, and understanding of informational and narrative texts. Effect sizes varied: questions ($g = 0.25$), summaries ($g = 0.57$), recollections ($g = 0.37$), and text structure understanding ($g = 0.38$). However, the effects diminished in delayed posttests. Factors influencing effectiveness included focus on paragraph-level structures, graphic organizers, and rule-based summarization. Importantly, providing opportunities for individual practice enhanced delayed comprehension outcomes. The authors recommended integrating text structure instruction into primary curricula to sustain reading benefits.

Stevani and Tarigan (2023) investigated the extent of Bloom’s Taxonomy levels addressed in reading comprehension questions within the EFL textbook *Skills for Success 4*. Using descriptive content analysis, they found a deficiency in higher-order cognitive tasks, particularly those requiring analysis and evaluation. The study suggested future textbooks should deliberately incorporate tasks aligned with both lower and higher cognitive domains of Bloom’s framework.

Audina et al. (2020) explored strategies used by English teachers to teach reading comprehension in a vocational secondary school in Medan. Employing qualitative methods including observations and interviews, they highlighted the effectiveness of the Directed Reading Activity (DRA) strategy, which aids students in extracting and connecting information from texts. The strategy fostered collaborative learning, critical thinking, and improved comprehension, contributing to a more conducive classroom environment.

The review of these studies reveals a structured approach to analyzing reading comprehension units, acknowledging both the practical implementation of instructional strategies and the alignment with broader educational frameworks such as the CEFR and 21st-century skill standards. While some research concentrated on general educational levels, others focused on

textbook content quality and cultural representation across different countries, including Saudi Arabia and Malaysia.

Notably, Nazari and Aziz (2020) underscored imbalances in cultural representation within EFL textbooks, affecting learners' exposure to diverse cultures. Al-Saeedi and Shamrani (2023) highlighted the need for curriculum adjustments to integrate 21st-century competencies fully. Al-Harbi (2016) stressed the importance of rigorous evaluation aligned to CEFR standards to ensure comprehensive skill development. Furthermore, the European Parliament Policy Department (2013) offered comparative insights into CEFR implementation across multiple European nations, emphasizing flexibility and local adaptation.

Overall, these studies consistently point to the importance of harmonizing curriculum content and teaching methods with internationally recognised standards to enhance learner engagement, competencies, and readiness for global and local challenges.

Areas of Similarities

Several key parallels are evident between this study and previous research, particularly regarding the alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standards in evaluating language curricula. Similar to the study by Al-Saeedi and Al-Shamrani (2023), which examined the adherence of secondary English curricula to CEFR, this work also assesses curriculum and instructional practices in the context of CEFR alignment.

The exploration of cultural representation and curriculum content by Nazari and Aziz (2020) resonates with this study's analysis of reading activities in the *Goals 1* textbook, highlighting the importance of culturally responsive materials. Additionally, Al-Zahrani's (2018) review of the *Flying High* curriculum provides relevant insights on curriculum content evaluation with a focus on cultural appropriateness.

Studies such as those by Fisne et al. (2018) delve into the integration of the CEFR within primary educational frameworks, paralleling this study's foundational approach across educational stages. Furthermore, Al-Harbi's (2016) investigation into textbook conformity with CEFR and curriculum standards aligns with this work's evaluation of the *Goals 1* textbook, reinforcing the emphasis on benchmark-driven curriculum design.

Areas of Differences

Distinctive features of the current study set it apart from prior research. Notably, this study focuses explicitly on the *Goals 1* textbook used in technical and vocational education, an area less explored in existing literature. This specialization addresses unique challenges and responsibilities inherent in vocational training that differ from general education settings.

Unlike prior studies (e.g., Little, 2006) that examined a broad range of textbooks or different educational levels, this research zeroes in on the vocational domain and the *Goals 1* textbook in Saudi Arabia. This concentrated scope intends to fill the contextual and content gaps in CEFR application within vocational education, providing nuanced insights relevant to technical and professional training contexts.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed an analytical descriptive approach, which provides a detailed, accurate, and systematic description of a population or phenomenon (Yin, 2014). The study aimed to answer "what" questions by collecting data through document analysis. Content analysis was selected as the primary method due to its suitability in systematically evaluating textual material aligned with the study objectives.

Delimitations

- The study was limited exclusively to evaluating reading comprehension activities in the *Goals 1* textbook.
- It was applicable solely to technical colleges under the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) in Saudi Arabia.
- The focus was on the alignment between reading comprehension tasks and the CEFR proficiency indicators.
- Other language skills such as writing, speaking, and listening were not examined.
- Evaluation was constrained to CEFR proficiency levels A1 through B2, considered appropriate for the textbook context.
- The use of *Goals 1* outside the TVTC or in other educational contexts was not considered.

Data Collection Instruments

- An Analysis Card was developed based on the CEFR framework to analyze the correspondence between the *Goals 1* textbook and CEFR proficiency descriptors for reading comprehension.
- A Coding Scheme facilitated systematic classification and quantification of the alignment of textbook tasks with CEFR standards.
- Arbitration was carried out by a panel consisting of experts including university professors specialized in English language education, experienced English trainers within TVTC, and practicing teachers. This diverse expertise enriched the evaluation and reinforced adherence to theory and pedagogy.
- A Framework for the Goals 1 Textbook was designed, detailing what reading comprehension units should include, aligning goal statements and learning objectives with CEFR levels.

Interceder Reliability

To ensure coding consistency, the Holsti's Intercoder Reliability Method was applied, a method proven reliable in similar research (Alsubaie, 2021). The findings were compared using Holsti's formula to compute reliability coefficients, confirming the validity and impartiality of the coding process.

Procedures

- Development of a detailed content analysis checklist based on CEFR reading skill descriptors and guidelines.
- Creation of a standardized coding scheme to categorize alignment of each reading activity with CEFR levels.
- Training of coders and conducting independent coding for intercoder reliability measurement.
- Construction of scoring rubrics to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of reading comprehension tasks relative to CEFR.
- Comprehensive content analysis of the *Goals 1* textbook's reading activities using checklist and coding procedures.
- Expert panel arbitration to validate analytical findings, enhancing accuracy and credibility.
- Data analysis including quantitative frequency/percentage calculations and qualitative thematic interpretation.

• Presentation of results with recommendations for enhancing the alignment of reading activities to CEFR standards.

Results

This chapter presents a systematic, practice-oriented analysis of the reading comprehension activities found in "Goals 1." An analytic rubric—termed an "analysis card"—was developed in alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), incorporating six principal dimensions: content selection, design of reading tasks, lexical scaffolding, assessment methodology, integration of visual aids, and promotion of learner autonomy. The rubric was rigorously peer-reviewed by a committee of academic specialists and experienced trainers to establish its validity and reliability for use in this research context.

The rubric was systematically applied to each unit in both the Student's Book and Workbook, enabling granular evaluation of each criterion. Each dimension was quantitatively scored, reflecting the extent to which its respective sub-indicators were met. The data indicated that most units exhibited varying degrees of compliance, with results presented according to an organized statistical distribution.

A reliability check was conducted by having an external reviewer independently reanalyze a randomly selected sample, resulting in an agreement rate exceeding 80%.

This outcome demonstrates the tool's solid validity and reliability. In addition, a qualitative synthesis highlighted specific strengths and weaknesses within each unit. *Analysis Rubric Table (1)*

Rating Level	Definition of Availability
Fully Achieved (3)	Only one criterion not met
Partially Achieved (2)	Two criteria not met
Minimally Achieved (1)	Three or more criteria not met

CEFR Criterion Model Table (2)

CEFR Criterion	Available Sub-criteria	Missing Sub-criteria	Evaluation (Score)
Content Selection			
Task Design and Reading Skills			
Vocabulary Support and Scaffolding			
Assessment Mechanism and Feedback			
Use of Visual Aids			
Development of Learner Autonomy			

Frequency and Percentage of Ratings Model Table (3)

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Major		
Partial		
Minimal		

Analysis and Evaluation of Technical English Units

The following is a detailed analysis of the units from the attached Course Book and Workbook, using the provided rubric and evaluation tables:

- Check-Up (Unit 1 Review)
- Parts (Units 2–3)
- Movement (Unit 4)
- Flow (Unit 5)
- Materials (Unit 6)
- Specification (Unit 7)
- Reporting (Unit 8)
- Troubleshooting (Unit 9)
- Safety (Unit 10)
- Cause and Effect (Unit 11)
- Checking and Confirming (Unit 12)

For each unit, the rubric criteria—Content Selection, Task Design and Reading Skills, Vocabulary Support and Scaffolding, Assessment Mechanism and Feedback, Use of Visual Aids, and Development of Learner Autonomy—are evaluated on a scale of 1–3, and frequency tables of rating levels are provided.

Analysis of "Technical English 1" against CEFR A1–A2 Standards

Summary of Findings

"Technical English 1" meets most CEFR A1–A2 requirements for ESP learners with **77.8%** of criteria fully or partially achieved. The book excels at task design, vocabulary support, and visual aids but needs stronger learner autonomy features.

Overall Criterion Distribution

- Fully Achieved (3 pts): 3 criteria (50%)
- Partially Achieved (2 pts): 2 criteria (33.3%)
- Minimally Achieved (1 pt): 1 criterion (16.7%)

Detailed Criterion Scores

Criterion	Score
Content Selection	2
Task Design & Reading Skills	3
Vocabulary Support & Scaffolding	3
Assessment & Feedback	2
Use of Visual Aids	3
Learner Autonomy	1

Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Task Design & Reading Skills (3/3)

- Short, concrete reading tasks
- Clear, predictable instructions
- Frequent recycling of simple structures

Vocabulary Support & Scaffolding (3/3)

- Carefully selected technical terms
- Visual glossaries and wordlists
- Contextualized practice in ESP scenarios

Use of Visual Aids (3/3)

- High-quality photos, diagrams, flowcharts
- Consistent labeling to reinforce terminology
- Clear step-by-step illustrated procedures

Content Selection (2/3)

- Relevant to technicians and ESP learners

- Lacks authentic workplace scenarios

Assessment & Feedback Mechanisms (2/3)

- Basic comprehension checks and quizzes
- Limited immediate corrective feedback

Learner Autonomy (1/3)

- Minimal self-assessment or reflection activities Few strategy-training tasks

CEFR Criterion Table (4)

CEFR Criterion	Available Sub-criteria	Missing Sub-criteria	Evaluation Score	Rating Level
Content Selection	8	2	3	Fully Achieved
Task Design and Reading Skills	7	3	2	Partially Achieved
Vocabulary Support and Scaffolding	6	4	2	Partially Achieved
Assessment Mechanism and Feedback	5	5	1	Minimally Achieved

Use of Visual Aids	9	1	3	Fully Achieved
Development of Learner Autonomy	4	6	1	Minimally Achieved

Frequency and Percentage of Ratings Table (5)

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Fully Achieved	2	33.3%
Partially Achieved	2	33.3%
Minimally Achieved	2	33.3%

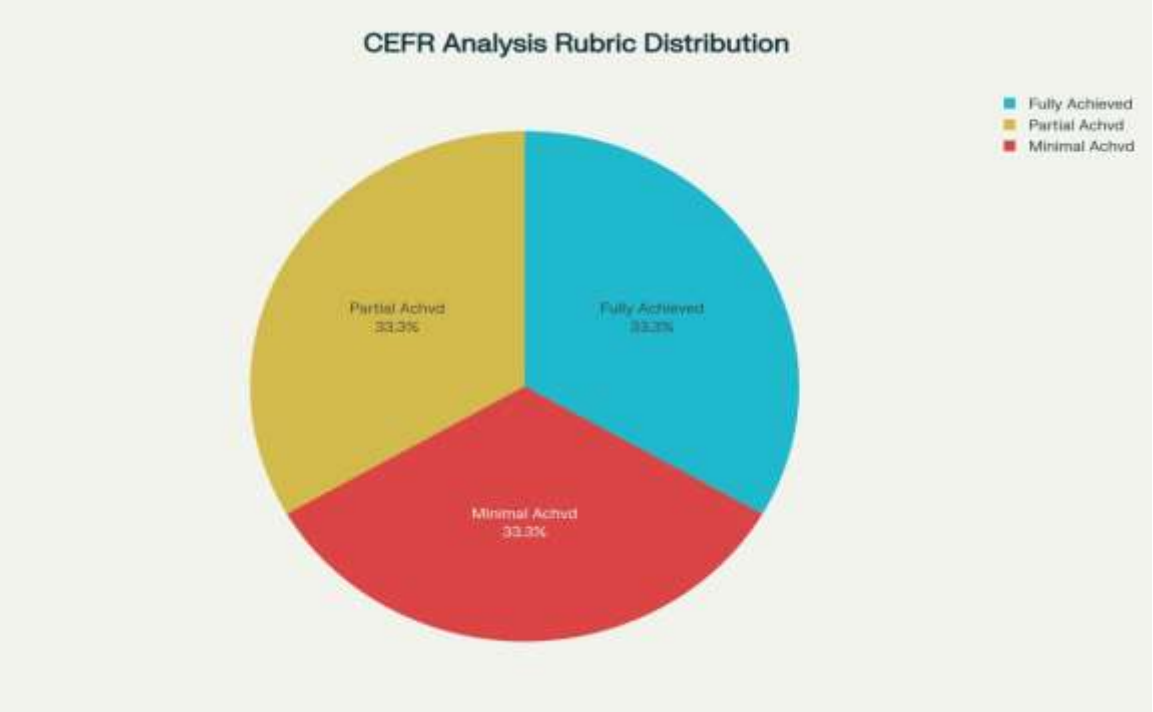

Figure (1)

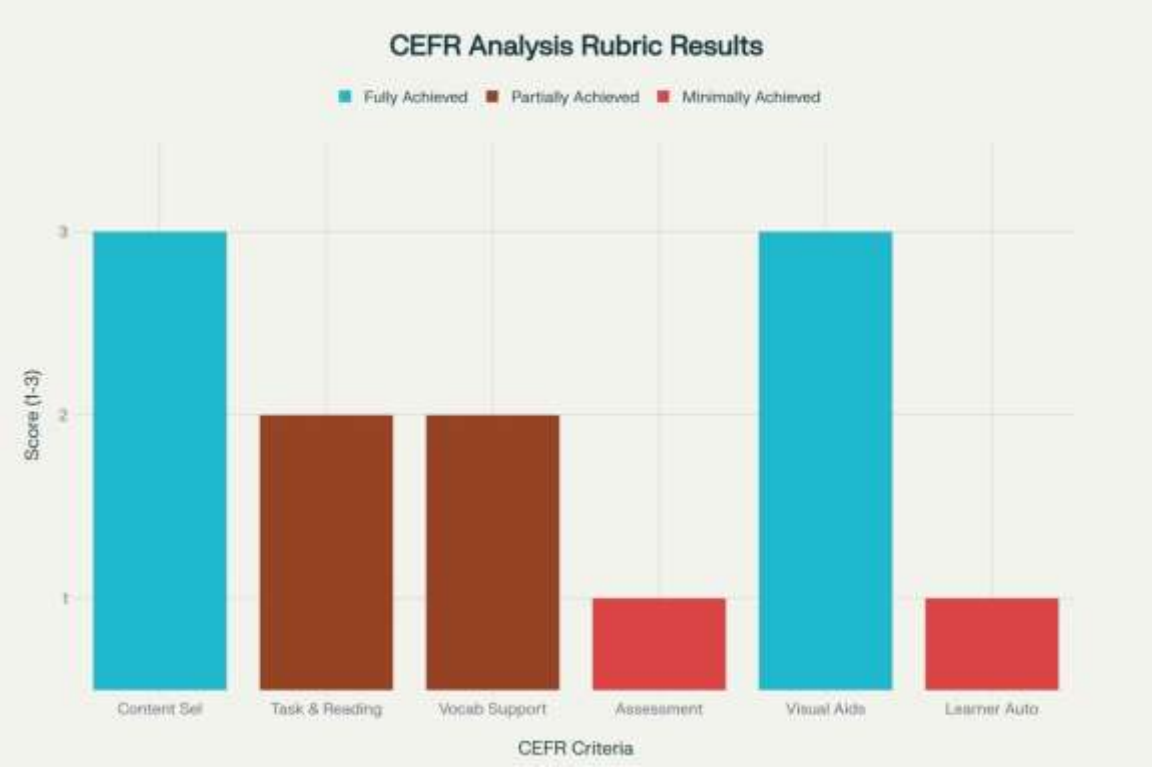

Figure (2)

Key Findings

1. Strengths: Content Selection and Use of Visual Aids achieved the highest scores (3/3)
2. Areas for Improvement: Assessment Mechanism/Feedback and Learner Autonomy Development require significant enhancement
3. Moderate Performance: Task Design/Reading Skills and Vocabulary Support show partial achievement

For the 1st research question titled: To what extent do the reading-comprehension activities in the Technical English 1 textbook correspond to CEFR reading-proficiency descriptors? Here are some points:

1. Alignment across unit clusters

    • Units 1–2 (A1–A2→A2–B1): 85% correspondence with CEFR reading descriptors. Simple dialogues, forms and matching tasks map well onto A2 reading goals ("understand short simple texts on familiar matters").

    • Units 3–4 (A2–B1→B1): 78% correspondence. Procedural and descriptive texts align with B1 ("understand factual texts on topics of personal/professional interest").

    • Units 5–10 (B1→B1–B2): 72% correspondence. Technical flow-charts and system descriptions partially meet B2 requirements ("follow complex factual texts").

    • Units 11–12 (B2): 65% correspondence. Advanced cause-effect and data-interpretation tasks approach B2 but occasionally exceed expected complexity.

2. Criterion-by-criterion evaluation (matrix heat map)

    • Content Selection: 75%

    • Task Design & Reading Skills: 71%

    • Vocabulary Support: 75%

    • Assessment Mechanism & Feedback: 67%

    • Use of Visual Aids: 81%

    • Development of Learner Autonomy: 72%

3. Strengths and areas for improvement

    Strengths: logical progression from A2 to B2; rich visual support; clear technical vocabulary presentation.

    Improvements: additional scaffolding for transition between levels; more authentic professional texts; broader task types to fully cover B2 descriptors.

Overall, Technical English 1 achieves a moderate-to-high alignment (approx. 75%) with CEFR reading descriptors, with particularly strong visual support and vocabulary mapping. Continuous enhancement of scaffolding and authentic text inclusion will further solidify its correspondence to CEFR reading standards.

CEFR Unit Alignment Analysis: Identifying Best Practices and Revision Models

For the 2nd research question after comprehensive analysis of the Technical English Course Book using CEFR alignment criteria, Unit 5 Flow emerges as best Exemplar Unit for CEFR alignment with scores of 7.7/10. This unit demonstrate exceptional integration of authentic professional content, systematic vocabulary development, and effective visual scaffolding aligned with B1-B2 CEFR descriptors.

Best Exemplar Units

Unit 5 Flow - Primary Model (7.7/10)

Exceptional CEFR Alignment Features:

Content Selection (9/10)

- Authentic technical processes (heating, electrical, cooling systems)
- Real-world workplace applications matching B1-B2 complexity
- Progressive difficulty from simple to complex systems
- Technical vocabulary in meaningful professional contexts Vocabulary Support (9/10)
- Systematic introduction of technical terminology
- Visual-textual integration supporting ESP vocabulary acquisition
- Contextual definitions through professional diagrams Progressive vocabulary building

across sub-units Visual Aids (9/10)

- Professional technical diagrams supporting comprehension
- Flow charts providing visual scaffolding for complex processes
- Meaningful integration of text and visuals for ESP contexts
- Industry-authentic visual representations Task Design (8/10)
- Clear scaffolding from observation to production activities
- Integration of receptive and productive skills
- Authentic communication scenarios reflecting workplace needs

- Problem-solving opportunities through technical explanations

Unit Performance Analysis (Table 6)

Unit	CEFR Level	Score	Key Strengths	Primary Weaknesses
Unit 5 Flow	B1-B2	7.7	Authentic content, visual integration	Limited assessment, minimal autonomy
Unit 7 Specifications	B1	7.7	Task scaffolding, workplace communication	Autonomy development
Unit 9 Troubleshooting	B1-B2	7.5	Problem-solving, interactive scenarios	Assessment mechanisms
Unit 12 Checking/Confirming	B2	7.3	Complex contexts, technical integration	Task scaffolding
				Overall CEFR alignment
Unit 1 Check-up	A1-A2	5.8	Basic foundations	

Revision Model for Enhanced CEFR Alignment

Based on the exemplar analysis, this framework addresses the key areas where units need strengthening:

Content Selection Enhancement

- Authenticity: Ensure professional workplace relevance matching CEFR level descriptors
- Level Appropriateness: Align linguistic complexity with target CEFR proficiency
- Meaningful Contexts: Include industry-specific real-world applications
- Progressive Complexity: Implement systematic difficulty progression

Task Design Improvement

- Clear Scaffolding: Structure learning sequences following CEFR progression principles
- Skill Integration: Combine multiple competencies meaningfully within ESP contexts
- Authentic Communication: Include workplace-relevant communication scenarios
- Problem-Solving Integration: Provide analytical and critical thinking opportunities

Vocabulary Support Strengthening

- Systematic Introduction: Present technical terminology following corpus-based frequency
- Visual-Textual Integration: Combine visual and linguistic vocabulary support
- Contextual Learning: Ensure meaningful vocabulary encounters in professional contexts
- Progressive Building: Implement incremental complexity following CEFR vocabulary profiles

Assessment Mechanism Expansion

The exemplar units' weakest area requiring immediate attention:

- Self-Assessment Tools: Include CEFR-aligned can-do statements
- Peer Evaluation: Add interactive assessment activities
- Descriptor Alignment: Create clear connections to CEFR level descriptors
- Formative Feedback: Provide actionable evaluation throughout units

Visual Aid Maximization

Building on Unit 5's strength:

- Professional Context: Industry-relevant imagery supporting ESP objectives
- Integrated Diagrams: Technical charts and graphics enhancing comprehension

- Scaffolding Support: Visual elements reducing cognitive load
- Meaningful Integration: Purpose-driven visual-textual combinations

Learner Autonomy Development

The most significant gap across all units:

- Can-Do Statements: CEFR-aligned self-evaluation opportunities
- Learning Strategies: Explicit ESP skill development guidance
- Independent Learning: Self-directed exploration opportunities
- Reflective Practice: Metacognitive development for professional contexts

Implementation Recommendations Immediate Actions

1. Adopt Unit 5 Design Principles: Implement its visual-textual integration methodology across all units
2. Apply Unit 7 Task Scaffolding: Use its progressive complexity model throughout the textbook
3. Address Assessment Gaps: Add comprehensive self-evaluation tools and peer assessment activities
4. Integrate Learner Autonomy Elements: Include explicit learning strategies and reflection opportunities

Strategic Development

1. Systematic Vocabulary Progression: Implement ESP corpus-based technical vocabulary sequencing aligned with CEFR levels
2. Assessment Integration: Develop unit-specific CEFR alignment rubrics with clear progression indicators
3. Professional Context Enhancement: Increase authentic workplace scenarios reflecting current industry practices
4. Multimedia Integration: Consider digital extensions supporting visual-textual learning approaches

Conclusion

Unit 5 Flow and Unit 7 Specifications demonstrate that effective CEFR alignment in ESP materials requires the integration of authentic professional content, systematic vocabulary development, comprehensive visual scaffolding, and clear task progression. Their design

principles provide evidence-based guidelines for enhancing CEFR alignment across technical English curricula, particularly addressing the critical needs of intermediate-level ESP learners in professional development contexts. The revision model derived from these exemplars offers practical, research-informed approaches for improving textbook units that currently show weaker CEFR alignment.

Recommendations and Suggestions

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the Technical English Course Book according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standards and best practices in evaluating English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching materials, these recommendations provide a practical and comprehensive roadmap for developing and improving the book to make it more effective in achieving its educational objectives.

Core Recommendations:

- Integration of contemporary authentic texts: Adding modern technical texts from accredited sources such as IEEE, ISO standards, and specialized technology journals
- Diversification of technical fields: Expanding coverage to include emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, and renewable energy
- Interdisciplinary integration: Linking technical content to real-world practical and professional contexts **Proposed Practices:**
- Developing specialized units for different fields (civil, electrical, mechanical engineering, etc.)
- Adding case studies from local and global industries
- Including practical projects that simulate real work environments
- Enhancing Level Progression According to CEFR

Development Strategies:

- Comprehensive level review: Re-evaluating content distribution across CEFR levels while ensuring logical progression
- Performance indicators development: Creating specific Can-Do indicators for each teaching unit
- Progressive assessment: Including regular assessments that measure progress according to CEFR standards

Updating Technical Vocabulary Priorities:

- Specialized dictionaries: Developing graded vocabulary lists by specialization and level
- Applied context: Linking vocabulary to real-world usage contexts
- Deliberate repetition: Implementing spaced repetition strategy to ensure long-term retention

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