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## A Critical Evaluation of Indonesian Kurikulum Merdeka: Alignment with Curriculum Goals for Receptive and Productive Language Skills

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**Abstract:** This study critically evaluates two Grade 12 English textbook Life Today used in Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka to determine the extent to which the textbook aligns with curricular expectations for developing senior high school students' receptive (reading, listening) and productive (speaking, writing) language skills. Anchored in the principles of textbook evaluation within English Language Teaching (ELT), the study examines how far the textbook operationalizes curriculum-mandated competencies and communicative goals. Using Williams' (1983) ELT Textbook Evaluation Checklist and qualitative document analysis, the study examines the textbook's linguistic content, instructional design, and methodological alignment. Findings show that the textbook strongly promotes receptive skills through contextualized reading passages, Genre-Based Approach (GBA) scaffolding, and communicative learning strategies. However, weaknesses are evident in productive skill development, including limited controlled grammar practice, insufficient distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary, and minimal guidance on pronunciation and L1–L2 contrasts. These gaps risk contributing to the receptive–productive imbalance commonly observed among Indonesian EFL learners. The study concludes that while the textbook offers rich input comprehension support, additional pedagogical intervention is required to strengthen learners' speaking and writing proficiency.

**Keywords:** textbook evaluation, EFL materials, receptive–productive skills, Kurikulum Merdeka, communicative competence

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## INTRODUCTION

Textbooks play a central role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, particularly in contexts where teachers and students rely heavily on them for instructional materials and achieve curriculum goals. Scholars argue that textbooks serve as both linguistic input and pedagogical guidance, shaping what teachers teach and how students learn (Tomlinson, 2012, 2014). As such, textbooks must not only provide accurate language models but also align with contemporary instructional methods. Because of this centrality, evaluating the quality and balance of textbook content is essential for ensuring that materials support comprehensive language development and align with current pedagogical approaches.

Modern English language teaching increasingly emphasizes communicative competence (Brown, 2007; Littlewood, 2014; Whyte & Whyte Revisiting, 2019), learner-centered instruction, and skill integration (Littlewood, 2014; Pearson, n.d.). Approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Cooperative Learning (CL), and the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) have become central to curriculum design in Indonesia, especially under the national *Kurikulum Merdeka*. These approaches highlight the need for meaningful interaction, contextualized language exposure, and scaffolded transitions from comprehension (such as reading and listening) to production (such as speaking and writing). Moreover, effective evaluation of textbooks can also reveal whether the textbook can develop learners' receptive and productive language skills.

However, previous studies have shown that many EFL textbooks tend to prioritize receptive skills due to their reliance on input-based activities and model analysis, while productive skills often receive less explicit scaffolding or controlled practice. Studies conducted in EFL settings show that reading and listening activities tend to dominate textbook content, while speaking and writing tasks often lack explicit scaffolding or controlled practice (Tomlinson, 2012; Widodo & Rozak, 2016). In particular, grammar and vocabulary instruction in textbooks frequently emphasize comprehension rather than production, leaving gaps in learners' ability to apply language features accurately in communication. Pronunciation, another essential productive skill, is similarly underrepresented or insufficiently contextualized in many EFL textbooks (Acton et al., 2024; Levis, 2020). These findings highlight the need for systematic textbook evaluations to ensure balanced skill development and alignment with curriculum goals.

Given these concerns, evaluating government-issued or widely used ELT materials becomes essential for understanding how instructional resources contribute to—or inhibit—learners' communicative competence. Williams' ELT Textbook Evaluation Checklist remains one of the most widely used tools for analyzing both linguistic and pedagogical features of textbooks (1983). By applying such frameworks, researchers can identify patterns in textbook design, uncover implicit pedagogical biases, and provide recommendations for improving material development. The present study contributes to this ongoing discussion by examining how the *Life Today* textbook supports (or fails to support) both receptive and productive language skills in Indonesian senior high school contexts (*Life Today BAHASA INGGRIS*, n.d.).

Based on the problem identified, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What strengths and weaknesses can be identified in the textbook's treatment of receptive and productive skills?
2. What pedagogical implications arise from the textbook's skill emphasis for EFL learners and teachers in the Indonesian context?

**METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the *Life Today* English textbook for Grade XII (*Life Today BAHASA INGGRIS*, n.d.). The evaluation focused on determining the extent to which the textbook supports receptive and productive language skills. A descriptive approach was selected because it enables systematic interpretation of textbook features without manipulating variables, allowing for in-depth examination of pedagogical qualities, linguistic content, and skill integration (Cresswell, 2014; Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2019), n.d.). The study used Williams’ ELT Textbook Evaluation Checklist as the primary analytical framework (1983). This checklist presented in Table 1 below consists of seven categories—General, Speech, Grammar, Vocabulary, Reading, Writing, and Technical—which include 28 indicators rated on a likert scale of 0 to 4 (0 = not at all, 4 = to the greatest extent). Each indicator was reviewed to determine how effectively the textbook supports language instruction. The framework was selected because it provides a balanced assessment of linguistic accuracy, methodological alignment, skill development, and material presentation.

**Table 1.** Williams’ ELT Textbook Evaluation Checklist (1983)

**A. General**

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|----------|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |          |
| 1. Takes into account currently accepted methods of ESL/EFL teaching. |              |   |   |   |          |
| 2. Gives guidance in the presentation of language items.              |              |   |   |   |          |
| 3. Caters for individual differences in home language background.     |              |   |   |   |          |
| 4. Relates content to the learners’ culture and environment.          |              |   |   |   |          |

**B. Speech**

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|----------|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |          |
| 5. Is based on a contrastive analysis of English and L1 sound systems.    |              |   |   |   |          |
| 6. Suggests ways of demonstrating and practising speech items.            |              |   |   |   |          |
| 7. Includes speech situations relevant to the pupils’ background.         |              |   |   |   |          |
| 8. Allows for variation in the accents of non-native speakers of English. |              |   |   |   |          |

**C. Grammar**

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|----------|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |          |
| 9. Stresses communicative competence in teaching structural items.            |              |   |   |   |          |
| 10. Provides adequate models featuring the structures to be taught.           |              |   |   |   |          |
| 11. Shows clearly the kinds of responses required in drills.                  |              |   |   |   |          |
| 12. Selects structures with regard to differences between L1 and L2 cultures. |              |   |   |   |          |

**D. Vocabulary**

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|----------|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |          |
| 13. Selects vocabulary on the basis of frequency and functional load. |              |   |   |   |          |
| 14. Distinguishes between receptive and productive vocabulary.        |              |   |   |   |          |
| 15. Presents vocabulary in appropriate contexts and situations.       |              |   |   |   |          |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 16. Focuses on problems of usage related to social background. |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

E. Reading

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|----------|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |          |
| 17. Offers exercises for understanding plain sense and implied meaning.   |              |   |   |   |          |
| 18. Relates reading passages to the learners’ background.                 |              |   |   |   |          |
| 19. Selects passages within the vocabulary range of the pupils.           |              |   |   |   |          |
| 20. Selects passages reflecting a variety of contemporary English styles. |              |   |   |   |          |

F. Writing

| Item   | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|----------|
|  | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |          |
| 21. Relates written work to structures and vocabulary practiced orally.  |              |   |   |   |          |
| 22. Gives practice in controlled and guided composition in early stages. |              |   |   |   |          |
| 23. Relates written work to pupils’ age, interests, and environment.     |              |   |   |   |          |
| 24. Demonstrates techniques for handling composition teaching.           |              |   |   |   |          |

G. Technical

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|----------|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |          |
| 25. Is up-to-date in technical aspects of textbook production and design. |              |   |   |   |          |
| 26. Shows quality in editing and publishing.                              |              |   |   |   |          |
| 27. Is durable and not too expensive.                                     |              |   |   |   |          |
| 28. Has authenticity in language and style.                               |              |   |   |   |          |

Rating Scale: 4 = greatest extent | 3 = large extent | 2 = some extent | 1 = barely | 0 = not at all  
 Data were collected through systematic document analysis of the *Life Today* textbook, examining unit structures, sample texts, activities, instructions, and visual design (Bowen, 2009). Each criterion in Williams’ checklist was applied to relevant sections of the textbook, and scores were assigned based on observable evidence in the material. Notes and annotations were made to record specific features that aligned with or deviated from the checklist descriptors. Additional qualitative observations were recorded to capture nuanced interpretations of pedagogical strengths and limitations.

The analysis followed two stages. First, each indicator in the checklist was assigned a rating based on the degree to which the textbook met the criterion. Ratings and comments were then compiled into a full evaluation table. Second, thematic analysis was conducted to identify broader patterns across categories—specifically the distinction between receptive and productive skill emphasis. Indicators related to areas of weakness and strengths were identified and analyzed further. These patterns were used to formulate the discussion on pedagogical implications.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Emphasis on Receptive Over Productive Skills in the Textbook Evaluation**

The textbook evaluation of *Life Today* that covers Sections A–G reveals several indicators showing that *Life Today* provides greater strength in receptive skills (reading, viewing, vocabulary recognition) compared to productive skills (speaking, writing, grammar production).

**Strong Ratings in Receptive Skill Areas**

The evaluation indicates that the textbook demonstrates strong alignment with contemporary communicative methodologies, particularly Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Cooperative Learning (CL). These approaches prioritize meaningful interaction, contextualized language use, and collaborative learning environments, all of which support learners’ ability to comprehend and respond using English. By providing tasks rooted in familiar cultural and social contexts, the textbook effectively enhances receptiveness to language input and enables learners to interpret spoken and written language with greater ease. This emphasis on contextual engagement strengthens learners’ foundational comprehension skills, positioning receptive competence as a central pillar of the book’s pedagogical design. General evaluation of the textbook is provided in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** General Evaluation of ELT Textbook *Life Today*

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments   |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|--|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |  |
| 1. Takes into account currently accepted methods of ESL/EFL teaching. |              |   |   | ✓ | The book strongly integrates Genre-Based Approach (GBA), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and Cooperative Learning (CL) strategies, such as Think-Pair-Share and Jigsaw. It also emphasizes multimodal literacy and CEFR B1 competencies, fitting modern ELT practices and the curriculum objectives of <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> . |
| 2. Gives guidance in the presentation of language items.              |              |   |   | ✓ | Learning objectives are included in each unit. Those have been done by explicitly teaching grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, not to mention the structured scaffolding (BKoF → MoT → JCoT → ICoT → LRT), to highlight the language features in Scope and Sequence.   |
| 3. Caters for individual differences in home language background.     |              |   | ✓ |   | The book does not specifically accommodate mixed linguistic backgrounds. Though, it provides varied tasks of listening, writing, viewing, and speaking.  |
| 4. Relates content to the learners’ culture and environment.          |              |   |   | ✓ | The book strongly integrates Indonesian contexts, such as local environmental figures, waste issues, local cultural topics, public figures like Maudy Ayunda, Aan Mansyur, Greysia Polii. The tasks also related to students’ real-life social media, identity, and local environment.   |

In the reading component, the textbook’s use of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) further reinforces the strength of its receptive orientation. Through exposure to diverse models of text genres, students develop the ability to identify organizational patterns, linguistic features, and communicative purposes before transitioning to production. This systematic modeling process supports inference-making, critical reading, and comprehension of multimodal texts. Although GBA ultimately leads to production, the early phases of the cycle exploits the learners’ language input, which explains their ability to cultivate receptive literacy skills compared to its productive components. The detailed analysis of textbook literacy exposure is provided in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Reading Evaluation of ELT Textbook *Life Today*

| Item | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments |
|------|--------------|---|---|---|----------|
|      | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |          |

|   |  |  |  |   |   |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| 17. Offers exercises for understanding plain sense and implied meaning.   |  |  |  | ✓ | The textbook explicitly teaches explicit meaning (main ideas, purpose) and implicit meaning (inference, reading between the lines). Activities require students to provide evidence for implied meaning.                                  |
| 18. Relates reading passages to the learners' background.                 |  |  |  | ✓ | Strong cultural and contextual relevance are reflected in the book.   |
| 19. Selects passages within the vocabulary range of the pupils.           |  |  |  | ✓ | Passages are mostly accessible for CEFR B1 students. Some texts introduce higher-level vocabulary but are supported with pre-reading activities and glossing through context. Overall, it is manageable, though occasionally challenging. |
| 20. Selects passages reflecting a variety of contemporary English styles. |  |  |  | ✓ | The variety of texts exposes learners to different modern English styles and media genres.  |

The writing component is also reflected in Table 4 below which shows the textbook's receptiveness orientation in contrast to its productive function, as it places greater emphasis on analyzing composition models rather than guiding students through the complete writing process. Students are introduced to well-structured examples and genre features, which strengthens their ability to understand written texts but provides less explicit scaffolding for generating independent drafts, from brainstorming ideas, constructing ideas, sentences or arguments to text drafting.

**Table 4.** Writing Evaluation of ELT Textbook *Life Today*

| Item   | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments  |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |
| 21. Relates written work to structures and vocabulary practiced orally.  |              |   |   | ✓ | Writing tasks consistently build on grammar, vocabulary, and expressions taught in Listening and Speaking sessions.   |
| 22. Gives practice in controlled and guided composition in early stages. |              |   |   | ✓ | The textbook uses the GBA stages (BKoF → MoT → JCoT → ICoT) which provide guided composition, especially through modeling and joint construction. However, fully controlled tasks (e.g., substitution tables, sentence combining drills) are minimal.               |
| 23. Relates written work to pupils' age, interests, and environment.     |              |   |   | ✓ | Writing topics are highly relevant for Indonesian teens: social media posts, digital identity, waste management, healthy lifestyle, local environmental heroes, and financial literacy. The tasks also reflect students' lived experiences and contemporary issues. |
| 24. Demonstrates techniques for handling composition teaching.           |              |   |   | ✓ | The book handles the composition teaching techniques well by modeling texts, analyzing features, scaffolding writing through group work, peer-review, graphic organizers, and final independent drafts.   |

On the technical side (shown in Table 5), the textbook's accessibility—being widely available and free—ensures that it is easily accessible to teachers and learners. Overall, the constructions of language materials in the textbook has shown that it reinforces language input focused methodology, leaving teachers choosing the materials and promoting them to the learners, as a whole communicative competence or as a specific language skill exposure. The critical and

creative thinking skills of the teachers is also reflected on how they perform through and lead learners to compose their writing products, or leaving the learners to perform it alone.

**Table 5.** Technical Evaluation of ELT Textbook *Life Today*

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments   |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|--|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |  |
| 25. Is up-to-date in technical aspects of textbook production and design. |              |   |   | ✓ | The book features a modern layout, color visuals, multimodal texts, QR codes for audio/video, and digital-literacy-based tasks.  |
| 26. Shows quality in editing and publishing.                              |              |   |   | ✓ | The textbook is clearly edited, well-structured, and consistent. It follows the official standards of Kemdikbud with professional layout, proofreading, and coherent sequencing. Errors are minimal and formatting is clean.             |
| 27. Is durable and not too expensive.                                     |              |   |   | ✓ | As an official government-issued textbook, it is free, accessible on the Kemdikbud website, and printed copies are durable with good paper quality. T  |
| 28. Has authenticity in language and style.                               |              |   | ✓ |   | The book incorporates many authentic texts (social media posts, captions, blogs, public figures’ content, real-world posters). However, some texts are simplified for pedagogical purposes, so authenticity is present but not complete. |

**Weaker Ratings in Productive Skill Areas**

The evaluation also revealed a consistent pattern of weaker performance in areas related to productive language skills—including vocabulary use, speech, and grammar production — indicating that the textbook does not provide an equally strong foundation for expressive competence. Vocabulary is presented contextually and functionally, but without explicit distinction between items learners are expected to recognize and those they must actively produce. Additionally, the absence of sociolinguistic guidance limits learners’ ability to express themselves confidently in diverse contexts. As a result, students may understand lexical items in reading tasks but struggle to use them accurately and appropriately in speaking or writing.

**Table 6.** Vocabulary Evaluation of ELT Textbook *Life Today*

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments  |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|---|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |
| 13. Selects vocabulary on the basis of frequency and functional load. |              |   | ✓ |   | Even though the topics are highly reliable (social media, environment, health, daily activities), the textbook does not explicitly reference frequency lists (e.g., BNC/COCA). Still, chosen vocabulary is functional and practical for CEFR B1 learners. |
| 14. Distinguishes between receptive and productive vocabulary.        |              | ✓ |   |   | The book does not explicitly label whether words are classified as “receptive” or “productive. While learners develop larger chunks of receptive vocabulary, it does not mean they can use it effectively in productive tasks like speaking and writing.  |
| 15. Presents vocabulary in appropriate contexts and situations.       |              |   |   | ✓ | Vocabulary is always introduced within meaningful contexts—posts, captions, dialogues, environmental texts, health topics, personal finance, etc. Students learn words through authentic or semi-authentic scenarios, enhancing retention and use.        |

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| 16. Focuses on problems of usage related to social background. | ✓ |  |  | Vocabulary use in the book however is not explicitly explored. Learners are unlikely to recognize vocabulary usage in different contexts, for example: digital communication style, formality levels, social context, or the sociolinguistic variations words might possess. |
|--|---|--|--|--|

In grammar instruction, the textbook provides rich model texts but limited opportunities for controlled practice or drilling that support productive accuracy. Grammar structures are not explicitly contrasted with Indonesian linguistic features, which reduces learners’ awareness of common L1-related errors, such as tense, articles, or subject–verb agreement. This lack of form-focused output practice may hinder students’ ability to transfer grammatical understanding into precise and independent language production.

**Table 7.** Grammar Evaluation of ELT Textbook *Life Today*

| Item  | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments  |
|---|--------------|---|---|---|---|
|   | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |
| 9. Stresses communicative competence in teaching structural items.            |              |   |   | ✓ | Grammar is consistently taught through meaningful communicative tasks, such as discussions, social media posts, debates, presenting, and collaborative tasks. Structures (e.g., subject questions, adjective phrases, simple past, conjunctions) are embedded in authentic contexts, not isolated drills. |
| 10. Provides adequate models featuring the structures to be taught.           |              |   |   | ✓ | Grammar features appear naturally within these texts before being practiced, through dialogues, descriptive texts, analytical exposition, narratives, procedure texts.  |
| 11. Shows clearly the kinds of responses required in drills.                  |              | ✓ |   |   | The book includes tasks requiring focused grammar practice, but they are embedded in communicative tasks rather than traditional drills. Instructions are generally clear, though explicit drill-based response examples are not always provided.   |
| 12. Selects structures with regard to differences between L1 and L2 cultures. |              | ✓ |   |   | Grammar selection is based on CEFR and curriculum progression, not L1–L2 cultural contrast. While contexts reflect Indonesian culture, the grammar items are universal and not chosen to address L1–L2 structural contrasts.  |

Another critical weakness identified in the grammar component is the limited availability of structured drilling and assessment activities. Without systematic drills or controlled practice, both teachers and students lack clear indicators of learners’ grammatical competence and progress. This absence of measurable practice makes it difficult to evaluate whether students have mastered foundational structures such as single clauses, compound sentences, and complex sentences. In productive grammar development, repeated and guided output is essential for helping learners internalize syntactic patterns and transition from recognition to accurate use (Zhang, 2020; Solihah & Emilia, 2020; Raissi, R., Hedayat, N., & Kazemirad, F., 2020). When textbooks do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to produce varied sentence types or receive feedback on their output, grammatical accuracy often remains underdeveloped. As a result, learners may understand grammar rules receptively but struggle to construct coherent and grammatically accurate sentences during writing or speaking tasks.

**Table 8.** Grammar Identification in the Textbook of *Life Today* (Life Today BAHASA INGGRIS, n.d. p. 54)

**Activity 3: Review text**

After writing the story based on the narrative schematic structures. Swap the text to another group. Proofread the text by checklisting (V) the element of schematic structures and linguistic features found in the text. (you can do the task by writing it in the book or paper or by typing it digitally using google docs or other docs apps)

| Schematic Structures | Yes/No | Linguistic Features | Yes/No |
|----------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| Title                |        | Past tense          |        |
| Orientation          |        | Action verb         |        |
| Complication         |        |                     |        |
| Evaluation           |        |                     |        |
| Resolution           |        |                     |        |
| Coda (optional)      |        |                     |        |

**Table 9.** Written Task in the Textbook of *Life Today* (Life Today BAHASA INGGRIS, n.d. p. 55)

**Written form**  
Story plan

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Title   |  |
| Orientation (introduces the characters and settings)                            |  |
| Complication (the problem)  |  |
| Evaluation ( suspense which makes the reader want to find out what will happen) |  |
| Resolution (problem is solved)  |  |
| Coda (optional. conclude a story with a short comment on what happened)         |  |

**Visual form story**  
Storyboard

| Pictures | description of the scenes |
|----------|---------------------------|
|          |                           |
|          |                           |

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Similarly, the textbook’s approach to speech omits contrastive phonology and offers little exposure to diverse English accents. Without explicit guidance on English–Indonesian sound differences, learners may continue to struggle with pronunciation challenges typical of Indonesian learners. Limited accent variation also restricts learners’ confidence and flexibility in oral communication.

**Table 10.** Speech Evaluation of ELT Textbook *Life Today*

| Item   | Rating (0–4) |   |   |   | Comments  |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1            | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |
| 5. Is based on a contrastive analysis of English and L1 sound systems. | ✓            |   |   |   | The book provides pronunciation features such as word stress, sentence stress, and intonation, but does not explicitly compare English sound patterns with Bahasa Indonesia (L1). No contrastive phonology, |

|   |  |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
|   |  |   |   | minimal pair comparisons, or explanations of L1–L2 interference are included.  |
| 6. Suggests ways of demonstrating and practising speech items.            |  |   | ✓ | Clear practice methods: pronunciation drills, guided listening, dialogues, modeling, stress marking, and activities like Inside-Outside Circle, Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share, role-plays, and recorded listening tasks. Teachers are guided to model pronunciation before practice.                    |
| 7. Includes speech situations relevant to the pupils' background.         |  |   | ✓ | Speech tasks relate to students' daily life: social media interactions, digital identities, environmental problems, personal money management, group discussions, miscommunication with friends, and school-based contexts. Clearly aligned with Indonesian adolescents' lives.                    |
| 8. Allows for variation in the accents of non-native speakers of English. |  | ✓ |   | The book does not explicitly discuss acceptable accent variation. Audio recordings often imply standard accents. However, many Indonesian public figures are referenced, implicitly encouraging exposure to non-native English models. Still, explicit recognition of accent diversity is limited. |

The results of this evaluation indicate that the *Life Today* Grade 12 textbook aligns closely with contemporary communicative approaches by offering rich, contextualized input that effectively supports receptive skill development (Zhang & Zhang, 2022). This finding corresponds with recent scholarship emphasizing that high-quality ELT materials should promote meaningful interaction, authentic text engagement, and multimodal comprehension (Celce-Murcia, M., Dörnyei, Z., & Thurrell, S. (1993), n.d.; Lopriore, 2018). The textbook's use of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA), which introduces learners to model texts before asking them to analyze and interpret features, demonstrates strong alignment with research on scaffolded reading and literacy development (Asbar et al., 2025; Dias, 2020; Emilia & Hamied, 2015). Similarly, the incorporation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles and Cooperative Learning (CL) strategies enhances opportunities for peer interaction and meaning-making, supporting the development of communicative competence (Azkarai, 2023; Gillies, 2016). However, a deeper analysis reveals several weaknesses in the development of productive skills—particularly grammar production, writing fluency, pronunciation, and productive vocabulary use. These findings align with broader research showing that many EFL textbooks prioritize input-based activities at the expense of structured output practice (Gass et al., n.d.). The limited presence of explicit pronunciation instruction or L1–L2 contrastive analysis is notable, especially given the strong influence of first-language sound patterns on second-language speech production (Saito et al., 2011, 2021). Without explicit scaffolding, learners may continue to struggle with persistent pronunciation errors, affecting intelligibility and confidence. Similarly, the textbook's emphasis on vocabulary recognition, rather than productive use, reflects findings from vocabulary acquisition studies showing that learners need repeated, purposeful output opportunities to develop productive vocabulary mastery (Nation, I. S., & Nation, I. S. P. (2001), n.d.).

In addition, the textbook offers limited controlled grammar practice and minimal explicit guidance in the writing process beyond analyzing model compositions. This imbalance may hinder learners' ability to produce accurate and well-structured texts, echoing studies indicating that controlled-to-free production sequences are essential for supporting grammatical accuracy in EFL writing

(Zhang & Zhang, 2022). These findings collectively suggest a potential receptive–productive gap, a well-documented issue in EFL contexts where learners demonstrate strong input comprehension but weaker expressive abilities (Widodo & Rozak, 2016). In Indonesia, where English exposure is primarily school-based, such gaps may be amplified if textbooks do not sufficiently scaffold productive skills.

Pedagogically, these findings highlight the need for teachers to supplement the textbook with targeted productive-skill activities. For instance, pronunciation drills informed by English–Indonesian phonological contrasts, explicit grammar instruction followed by guided output, structured writing stages, and productive vocabulary tasks could help strengthen learners’ ability to transition from comprehension to independent production. These recommendations align with current research advocating for balanced input–output instruction to support comprehensive communicative competence (Tomlinson, 2012, 2014). Ultimately, while the textbook provides a strong foundation for receptive literacy, successful classroom implementation requires teacher mediation to ensure more balanced skill development, particularly within the communicative goals of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Life Today Grade 12 English textbook effectively supports receptive skill development through contextualized reading materials, Genre-Based Approach (GBA) scaffolding, and communicative methodologies. However, the analysis also reveals notable gaps in productive language development, including limited controlled grammar practice, insufficient focus on productive vocabulary, and minimal guidance on pronunciation and L1–L2 contrasts. These weaknesses indicate a potential receptive–productive gap, where learners demonstrate strong comprehension but struggle with accurate and fluent speaking and writing. To address these concerns, future research should examine how multiple textbooks across grade levels integrate productive skills or investigate how teachers mediate these shortcomings in classroom practice. Comparative studies between government-issued and commercial textbooks may also provide broader insight into material quality within Indonesian EFL settings.

The findings underscore the need for teachers to supplement textbook use with additional output-focused activities to strengthen learners’ productive competence. Teachers should incorporate pronunciation practice, explicit grammar instruction, guided writing stages, and targeted productive vocabulary tasks to support learners’ transition from comprehension to independent language production. Integrating more interactive speaking tasks, such as role-plays, debates, and peer feedback sessions, can also help address gaps in oral fluency. Furthermore, professional development programs should emphasize strategies for balancing receptive and productive skills, ensuring that teachers are equipped to enhance textbook-based instruction with meaningful communicative practice. Through these pedagogical interventions, learners can achieve more balanced and holistic communicative competence aligned with the goals of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

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