

Uncovering English Present Tense Constructs in CEFR-Aligned English Language Textbooks for Malaysian Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

English verb tenses are indispensable for accurately conveying the timing of actions or events, making them mission-critical for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in Malaysian primary schools. This groundbreaking study delved into the English present tense constructs in four CEFR-Aligned English Language Textbooks for Malaysian Primary Schools: Get Smart Plus 3 Student's Book, Get Smart Plus 4 Student's Book, English Plus 1 Second Edition Year 5 Student's Book, and Academy Stars 5 Year 6 Pupil's Book. Employing qualitative document analysis, the researchers uncovered seven pivotal aspects of present tense constructs, with a particular emphasis on contextual variations and the simultaneous application of two aspects within sentences. The findings offered game-changing insights for English language educators, dramatically enhancing their comprehension of the constructions and contextualisation of the present tense in educational resources. Additionally, the study underscored three mission-critical roles of English verb tenses in ESL learning, particularly highlighting their direct relevance to present tense constructs. This groundbreaking discovery paved the way for the formulation of cutting-edge teaching strategies, ultimately empowering learners to wield English verbs with unparalleled effectiveness in context.

KEYWORDS

CEFR-Aligned English Language Textbooks for Malaysian Primary Schools, English Present Tense Constructs, ESL Learners, Verb Tenses

1] Introduction

Including English verb tenses in CEFR-aligned English language textbooks for Malaysian primary schools represents a strategic initiative by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) to enhance ESL learners' proficiency. As English functions as a second language within Malaysia's education system, the curriculum focuses on developing proficiency across all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, while emphasising grammar and vocabulary. Research by Wang [1] indicates that a solid understanding of grammar significantly improves ESL learners' writing skills and aids in their reading and listening comprehension. Mastery of verb tenses enables learners to accurately express actions, events, and states, thereby enhancing clarity and detail in communication. Nijat et al. [2] further support this by highlighting that learning verb tenses contributes to effective language use. To cater to the diverse learning capacities of Malaysian ESL students, grammatical rules governing verb tenses must be taught in a manner that is both accessible and engaging. Recognising the critical role of language across various domains, the textbooks are designed with structured content and activities that foster essential language proficiency and grammatical accuracy. A key focus is the enhancement

of grammar instruction, particularly regarding verb tenses, through the integration of revised grammar sections within textbook modules. This approach aims to optimize the grammar learning experience for Malaysian ESL learners, ultimately facilitating their effective communication skills.

1.1] Problem Statement

English verb tenses, a cornerstone of ESL instruction in Malaysian Primary Schools, often present challenges for learners. These tenses, including past, present, and future forms with their respective simple, continuous, perfect, and perfect continuous aspects, are essential for conveying time, duration, and action completion [3]. Mastery of these tenses empowers ESL learners to express precise information and adhere to grammatical rules [4] [5]. However, the intricate interplay of tense and aspect can be daunting for ESL learners [6], necessitating effective instructional approaches.

Current CEFR-aligned textbooks aim to address these challenges by presenting verb tenses in contextually relevant scenarios. Nevertheless, research on the effectiveness of these materials in teaching present tense constructs, a crucial component of the ESL curriculum, is limited. This study seeks to identify the English present tense constructs employed in four CEFR-aligned Malaysian Primary School English Language Textbooks: Get Smart Plus 3 Student's Book [7], Get Smart Plus 4 Student's Book [8], English Plus 1 Second Edition Year 5 Student's Book [9], and Academy Stars 5 Year 6 Pupil's Book [10]. Furthermore, it aims to explore the significance of English verb tenses in ESL learners' language acquisition. Understanding how these tenses are taught and their impact on ESL learners' proficiency can enhance instructional strategies and foster effective language learning.

1.2] Research Objectives (RO)

This study was carried out to achieve the following objectives:

- RO1: To identify the various aspects of English present tense constructs utilised in CEFR-Aligned English language textbooks for Malaysian primary schools.
- RO2: To identify the significance of English verb tenses in enhancing language learning of ESL learners in Malaysian primary schools.

1.3] Research Questions (RQ)

Based on the RO, this study was guided by the following RQ:

- RQ1: What aspects of English present tense constructs are used in CEFR-Aligned English language textbooks for Malaysian primary schools?
- RQ2: How do English verb tenses contribute to the language learning of ESL learners in Malaysian primary schools?

2] Literature Review

2.1] English Language Learning

English is established as a second language in Malaysia's Education System [11] [12] [13] alongside the national language, Bahasa Melayu. Introduced from the foundational years of primary school (Year 1), English language instruction spans the entire primary education phase. The curriculum follows a gradual progression, building upon basic grammar and vocabulary concepts and advancing to more intricate structures [14] [15]. English verb tenses, a cornerstone of English grammar, are essential for ESL learners to accurately express actions, events, or states in written and spoken English. Wang [1] asserted that mastering grammar improves ESL learners' writing and comprehension skills, while Nijat et al. [2] highlighted the importance of clear and effective language use.

2.2] English Language Textbooks

Textbooks have been an educational tool for primary education since the 19th century [16], serving as the primal sources of subject knowledge [17]. They contain a complete collection of information on a particular subject at school that makes learning more dynamic. The revised Malaysian English Language Curriculum, the Standards-Based English Language Curriculum (SBELC) is now CEFR-aligned after adopting the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) as the framework to review the curriculum [18]. The adoption was made into the existing curriculum [14] using descriptors found in the CEFR-related documents [18], to meet the international standards of the English language [19] without changing Malaysia's current curriculum for language teaching, learning and assessments [14] and for improving English language education's outcomes in Malaysia [20]. The contents of the imported textbooks were contextualised in

Malaysia [18] to get quality CEFR-aligned textbooks that fit Malaysian learners as ESL learners, as addressed by the English Language Standards and Quality Council of Malaysia (ELSQC) [21].

2.3] English Verb Tenses

Verb tenses are the fundamental grammatical structures of sentence construction [3]. Therefore, the primary ESL curriculum typically prioritises verb conjugation, introducing ESL learners to regular and irregular verb forms across various tenses and aspects. Effective instruction necessitates a clear distinction between tense and time [4]. While interrelated, tense is a grammatical construct indicating when an action occurs relative to a specific point [22] whereas time refers to the actual moment of the action [5] [23]. Tense is intricately linked to time for it is expressed using tense which is the verb form [24], and the use of a single term can vary across different languages [25]. Therefore, understanding tenses involves more than just the concept of time; it also requires attention to verbs for variations in time can influence the verbs employed [24]. Verb aspects, on the other hand, provide different perspectives on the action itself [26] [27] [6] [23].

Beyond action verbs, ESL learners acquire the use of verbs "to be", "to have", and "to do" as main, auxiliary, and linking verbs. Modal verbs are also introduced to convey modalities such as ability, permission, or obligation. Unlike action verbs which conjugate, modal verbs have a fixed form and often combine with other verbs to express different meanings. Moreover, ESL learners must grasp the concept of Subject-Verb Agreement (SVA) to construct grammatically correct sentences. This principle mandates concordance between the subject and verb in terms of number and person [28]. As noted by Salleh et al. [28], if the components of a sentence do not match, the sentence is considered ungrammatical.

3] Methods and Methodology

This study employed a qualitative method, focusing on document analysis of four CEFR-aligned Malaysian Primary School's English Language Textbooks: Get Smart Plus 3 Student's Book, Get Smart Plus 4 Student's Book, English Plus 1 Second Edition Year 5 Student's Book, and Academy Stars 5 Year 6 Pupil's Book. The selection of these documents was based on factors recommended by Bowen [29]: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. A thematic analysis was conducted by utilising a data coding process to identify recurring ideas or patterns within the data texts. The thematic analysis allowed the researcher to discern patterns within the data, thereby eliciting emergent themes [29] [30]. The thematic analysis was conducted in manual work, ensuring a thorough examination of the data texts. This method provided a robust framework for understanding the English present tense constructs and the importance of English verb tenses in language learning for ESL learners in Malaysia.

4] Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and discussion of this study. They were concurrently presented in two subsections, namely according to the themes. Table 1 demonstrates the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data.

Table 1

Themes and sub-themes emerged from the data analysis.

Themes	Sub-themes	
Aspects of English Present Tense Constructs	C1	The Simple Present Tense
	C2	The Present Continuous Tense
	C3	The Present Perfect Tense
	C4	The Present Perfect Continuous Tense
	C5	The Simple Present and Present Perfect Tenses
	C6	The Present Continuous and Simple Present Tenses
	C7	The Present Perfect Continuous and Present Perfect Tenses
The Significance	S1	Communication Clarity
	S2	Expression Clarity
	S3	Writing Accuracy

Legend: C – Construct; S – Significance

4.1] English Present Tense Constructs Used in CEFR-Aligned English Language Textbooks for Malaysian Primary Schools

The results proceeded by the discussion are presented in this subsection to answer RQ1: What aspects of English present tense constructs are used in CEFR-Aligned English language textbooks for Malaysian primary schools? Based on a thorough examination of textbooks, the study identified seven key aspects of English present tense constructs, including contextual variations and the simultaneous use of aspects within sentences. The results are organised and discussed according to sub-themes (constructs) derived from the data analysis, as shown in Table 1. Each sub-theme is presented with examples (sentences) from the textbooks, providing a thorough understanding of the construct.

a) C1 – The Simple Present Tense

Assisting learners in mastering grammar in the simple present tense is essential [31]. This tense is commonly applied to express habitual or daily tasks or actions, including events [32], and general facts or truths that remain consistently applicable. To illustrate, the sentence *“She can sing and dance”* [7] used the modal auxiliary verb “can”, preceding the main verbs “sing” and “dance” in their root words to communicate ability affirmatively. Additionally, the sentence *“There isn’t any milk but there’s a cartoon of orange juice”* [8] leveraged the verb “to be” in the form of “is” as the linking verb in the first clause negatively and in the second clause affirmatively. This structure connected the existential there or subject “There” to the subject complement “any milk” and “a cartoon of orange juice”. The sentence *“He eats fish in the Amazon and at home, but he doesn’t catch fish at home”* [10] utilised affirmative verb tense in the first clause to express a habitual action or regular occurrence, and negative in the second to indicate a non-existence action. The main verb “eats” and the auxiliary verb “doesn’t” with the main verb “catch” following it in its base form to agree with the third-person singular pronoun “He”. The sentence *“They use sticks to play the game”* [8] communicated a habitual action verb tense in the affirmative, availing the main verb “use” that concurred with the third-person plural pronoun “They”.

The sentence *“I like playing video games, but I also like going out”* [9] expressed the verb tense affirmatively in both clauses, pointing out a preference using the main verb “like” which concurred with the first-person singular pronoun “I”. The sentence used the present participle verbs “playing” and “going out” after the main verb “like” to enlighten that both pastimes are appealing, making time pass agreeably. The passive voice sentence *“Lulu’s dress is made from plastic bag”* [10] employed the verb “to be” in the form of “is” to correlate with the singular subject “Lulu’s dress”, and the past participle verb “made” to detail the state of Lulu’s dress. Lastly, the sentence *“I often listen to pop music or rap, and I like some classical music, too”* [10] applied the main verbs “listen” and “like” affirmatively, indicating that these verbs agreed with the first-person singular pronoun “I”. In this sentence, the adverb of frequency “often” modified the main verb “listen”, informing how frequently the subject engages in the routine “listen to pop music or rap”.

b) C2 – The Present Continuous Tense

Learning present continuous tense equips ESL learners with language knowledge and skills for describing actions happening in the present. Aryadi [33] stated that the present continuous tense details a current and an ongoing action or event. Additionally, this tense demonstrates a progressing action during speaking [34] [35] [36]. The multiple uses of the present continuous tense illustrate its relevance in expressing ongoing actions. For example, the affirmative sentence *“We’re picking up rubbish”* [8] disclosed the corresponding between the auxiliary verb “are” with the first-person plural pronoun “We”, and the use of the present participle verb “picking up”, delineating an occurrence of a single ongoing action. The affirmative sentence *“They’re having a break from their maths class and they’re doing eye exercises”* [9] utilised two present participle verbs, outlining multiple ongoing actions at some point in the present. The auxiliary verb “are” in both clauses concurred with the third-person plural pronoun “they”. The sentence conveyed that the subject “they” is doing eye exercises contemporaneously with the break they are having from the maths class.

c) C3 – The Present Perfect Tense

The present perfect tense is often used to express experiences or actions that have occurred at an unspecified time in the past, emphasising their connection to the present moment. Most commonly, it is spelt out as indicating an action or event that happened in the past and continues to the present [37] [38] [22] [39]. In the present perfect tense, the verb phrase “have got” is commonly used to express possession or ownership, both affirmatively and negatively. For example, the sentence *“You haven’t got a shell”* [7] expressed the verb tense negatively, implying the agreement between the auxiliary verb “haven’t” with the second-person pronoun “You” and indicating the subject does not have a particular object “a shell”. In Year 6, the learning becomes more complex using the auxiliary verb “to have” in the form of “have” along with the past participle verbs other than the verb “got”. In contrast, the sentence *“I’ve flown to lots of different countries and I’ve written about most of them in my blog”* [10] utilised verb tense affirmatively, demonstrating the agreement between the auxiliary verb “have” with the first-person singular pronoun “I”, and indicating the subject ‘I’ has completed both

actions in the past and have relevance to the present. The main verbs “flown” and “written” are in the past participle forms, adhering to the verb forms in the present perfect tense.

d) C4 – The Present Perfect Continuous Tense

According to Taylor [40], the present perfect continuous tense is utilised for communicating an action or event that began in the past and continues into the present, to indicate an activity or event that has recently ended and has current implications, to emphasise the action rather than its completion, and to describe actions or events that are more transient. Other uses include describing an activity that has recently ended or just come to an end [41], conveying the notion of activity, task, or work that was in progress until a recent point in time or the current moment of speaking [42], and detailing an activity that is ongoing and has not yet finished [24].

The various uses of the present perfect continuous tense highlight its relevance in expressing ongoing actions and their significance to the present. For instance, the sentence *“I’ve been a dentist for 50 years”* [10] used the verb phrase “have been” where “have” is the verb “to have” and it agreed with the first-person singular pronoun “I”, and “been” is the past participle form of the verb “be” and is used to evince an ongoing action in the present perfect continuous tense. In this sentence, the verb phrase “have been” expressed the verb tense in the present perfect continuous, revealing that the subject started his or her career as a dentist sometime in the past, has continued for 50 years, and is still relevant to the present. The duration “50 years” highlights the length of time the action has been ongoing. This sentence did not utilise a present participle verb which should appear after the past participle “been”. Thus, to effectively express this ongoing action that started in the past and continues to the present, the sentences can be revised to *“I have been practising as a dentist for 50 years.”* The present participle verb “practising” proceeded the verb phrase “have been” in the sentence effectively inform the duration of the action and its relevance to the present, underscoring that the subject’s career as a dentist is not only a past achievement but also a current job.

e) C5: The Simple Present and Present Perfect Tense

While the simple present tense conveys routines, regular habitual actions and universal truths [43] [44] [45] [46], the present perfect tense addresses past experiences relevant to the present [37] [38] [22] [39], indicating how actions can be ongoing or habitual and still connect to the current circumstances. Learning to use these two tenses in a single sentence enables ESL learners to communicate habitual actions and connect past experiences to the present, thereby elevating their language proficiency and comprehension.

In the textbooks, the sentences *“We’ve got some cans of lemonade, but we need some water”* [8] and *“Musa needs to travel to the city soon and he hasn’t got a horse”* [10] expressed the verb tenses in both the simple present and present perfect tense. The combination of tenses enhances the meaning and contexts of the sentences, using the simple present and present perfect tense, respectively to convey urgent needs and current situations and accentuate states that started in the past and are still applicable. The first clause in the first sentence is in the present perfect tense, recognised by the auxiliary verb “have” and the main verb “got” in the past participle form. The construction implied that the state of having cans of lemonade began at some point in the past and continues up to the present. The second clause is in the simple present tense, specifying a current need for water together with the state of having cans of lemonade. The main verb “needs” in the first clause in the second sentence expressed the verb tense in the simple present tense, communicating a necessity for the subject “Musa” to travel, whereas the auxiliary verb “hasn’t” and the past participle verb “got” expressed the present perfect tense verb, indicating a state of there being nothing (horse) available in the past and still relevant to the present. The main verb “needs” and the auxiliary verb “hasn’t” concurred with the singular subject “Musa” and the third-person singular pronoun “he”, respectively.

f) C6: The Present Continuous and Simple Present Tense

In the textbooks, both the present continuous and simple present tense verbs were employed concurrently within a single sentence. For instance, the affirmative sentence *“It’s snowing and it’s cold”* [7] employed the verb “to be” in the form of “is” as both the auxiliary verb and linking verb in the first and second clauses. The structure demonstrated the concord between this verb and the third-person singular pronoun “It”. The first clause conveyed the verb tense in the present continuous tense using the present participle verb “snowing”, denoting an ongoing current action. In contrast, the second clause represented the verb tense in the simple present tense, utilising the adjective “cold” to detail the current state or condition of the subject “It”. In the affirmative sentence *“The children are leaving the park when they see something”* [8], the first clause employed the verb in the present continuous tense. The auxiliary verb “are” preceded the present

participle verb “leaving” to indicate the agreement with the subject “The children.” In the second clause, the main verb “see” agreed with the third-person plural pronoun “they” to form the simple present tense. This structure illustrated an ongoing action in the present interrupted by a single action occurring simultaneously.

Uncovering these two English tenses helps address some issues that embed ESL learners’ learning and mastery of tenses. Aryadi et al. [33] found that the learners have difficulties differentiating between the present continuous and simple present tenses. This highlights the necessity for concentrated attention on the fundamental comprehension of English language tenses. Furthermore, the learners frequently reported difficulties in constructing sentences using these two tenses, and complexities of irregular verbs that contributed to their confusion [33]. The current study which uncovers aspects of the present tense constructs in educational textbooks can potentially assist English language teachers in adding understanding to their language instruction when addressing their learners with the structures and patterns of present continuous and simple present tense sentences.

g) C7: The Present Perfect Continuous and Present Perfect Tense

Both the present perfect continuous and present perfect tense verbs were employed concurrently within a single sentence in the textbooks. This sentence structure highlighted the distinction between ongoing actions and completed experience, deepening learners’ understanding of verb tenses. The first clause in the sentence *“I’ve been sailing, but I’ve never tried kayaking”* [10] employed the verb in the present perfect continuous tense affirmatively, using “have been sailing” to communicate that the subject began sailing in the past, and it continues to the present. The second clause utilised the verb in the present perfect tense negatively, incorporating the auxiliary verb “have” along with the past participle verb “tried” and an adverb of frequency “never” to impart that the subject “I” has not experienced kayaking. In both clauses, the auxiliary verb “have” concurred with the first-person singular pronoun “I”, keeping to the grammar rule of both present tense aspects.

The findings aligned with the English present tense constructs outlined in the educational resources. These constructs are ESL learners’ age-appropriate and they meet learners’ communicative needs by incorporating suitable vocabulary, especially in the formal language learning context. The sub-themes underscored the prevalent usage of the present tense constructs in the sentences, signifying the curriculum’s emphasis on the present tense for ESL learners across different primary school years. In previous research by Listia & Febriyanti [6], it was reported that the tense and aspect combinations posed challenges for ESL learners because they are grammatically complex, necessitating extensive explanation. However, this study’s findings highlighted that the combinations enable ESL learners to explore the grammatical system, strengthening their comprehensive understanding of grammar knowledge and fostering their overall effectiveness in using the English language. ESL learners are better equipped to navigate the nuances of the English language when their knowledge of the intricate relationships between tenses and aspects is strengthened. At the same time, fostering their practical application of this knowledge empowers their overall proficiency and confidence in conversing effectively in English.

4.2] The Significance of English Verb Tenses in Enhancing Language Learning of ESL Learners in Malaysian Primary Schools

The results proceeded by the discussion are presented in this subsection to answer RQ2: How do English verb tenses contribute to the language learning of ESL learners in Malaysian primary schools? The study uncovered three main importance of English verb tenses in ESL learners’ language learning, as presented in Table 1, particularly highlighting their direct relevance to the present tense constructs. They were presented and discussed according to the sub-themes.

a) S1: Communication Clarity

The study demonstrated that English verb tenses play a significant role in ensuring clarity in communication. This corresponds with Bukit [3] who asserted that tenses facilitate clear communication by effectively making a distinction between different timeframes. ESL learners need to possess a solid mastery of the verb tenses to communicate effectively in English. The proficiency relies on the usage of language in contextualised communicative events [47]. Learning English verb tenses assists ESL learners use the appropriate tenses to bring clarity into their communication, permitting them to convey precise messages and eliminate any potential misunderstandings. By using the correct verb tenses, ESL learners can communicate about or describe when an action, event, or state occurs, whether in the past, present, or future. For instance, in the present tense, ESL learners describe an ongoing single action that is happening in the present using the present continuous tense. It is achieved through the use of the combination of the auxiliary and present participle verbs,

which can be exemplified by the sentence “*We’re picking up rubbish*” [8]. In contrast, the sentence “*They use sticks to play the game*” [8] clarified different information, providing a single action “use” performed by the subject “They” in the context of both factual and habitual action in the simple present tense. This distinction demonstrates the difference between ongoing actions and those that are regular or factual.

b) S2: Expression Clarity

English verb tenses enable ESL learners to express meanings in both the written and spoken forms, accurately. The tenses indicate the time of an action, event, or state that is shown by the verbs. Furthermore, the verb tenses are fundamental to express the affirmative and negative, conveying a wide range of ideas – one’s ability; the existence of things; affirmation; intention; denial; agreement and disagreement; occurrence of an action, event or state; preference or interest; intention; obligation or necessity, advice or recommendation; possibility, etc. The simple present tense, as noted by Sartika [48] expresses regular actions in the present, facts, habits, and true things.

The sentence “*I’ve flown to lots of different countries and I’ve written about most of them in my blog*” [10] expressed the verbs in the present perfect tense affirmatively, conveying the idea of the occurrence of actions and that both actions were completed in the past and still relevant to the present. In contrast, the sentence “*There isn’t any milk but there’s a cartoon of orange juice*” [8] utilised the verbs in the simple present tense, both negatively and affirmatively, expressing the idea of the non-existence and existence of things in the present. Additionally, the sentence “*I like playing video games, but I also like going out*” [9] expressed verbs in the simple present tense affirmatively in both clauses, conveying the idea of preference or interest. On the other hand, the sentence “*She can sing and dance*” [7] employed the simple present tense verb, expressing the idea of one’s ability in the affirmative using the modal auxiliary verb “can” preceding the main verbs “sing” and “dance”.

c) S3: Writing Accuracy

Learning verb tenses gets ESL learners to understand the grammar rules that are applied to each tense, assisting them to conjugate and write grammatically correctly to accurately convey their ideas and avoid misinterpretations. For instance, the simple present tense sentence “*He eats fish in the Amazon and at home, but he doesn’t catch fish at home*” [10] employed the main verb “eats” and the auxiliary verb “doesn’t” that agreed with the third-person singular pronoun “He”. The main verb “catch” remains in its root word form as it appeared after the auxiliary verb “doesn’t”. However, this sentence still conveys similar meanings and is still understandable, informing ESL learners that the verbs are expressed in the present tense if the verbs are misused. For instance, the verbs “eat”, “don’t”, or “catches” are used instead of “eats”, “doesn’t”, or “catch” respectively. Nevertheless, in accuracy in a writing context, the sentence consists of the incorrect usage of verbs, indicating a deviation from the established English grammatical rule, SVA. Therefore, ESL learners need to comprehend English SVA to write correctly at the sentence level [49]. Concerning this, English language teachers are recommended to cultivate greater awareness of English SVA among their learners [50], and must prioritise the development of their learners’ comprehension knowledge of English SVA through effective pedagogical strategies [51] to assist them in dealing with English SVA-related issues.

In the sentence “*We’re picking up rubbish*” [8], the subject “We” is actively engaged in action occurring in the present, indicated by the employment of the auxiliary verb “are” and the present participle verb “picking up”. The sentence established English SVA for the auxiliary verb agreed with the subject or first-person plural pronoun, and the present continuous tense for the present participle verb “picking up” proceeding the auxiliary verb.

This study provided a novel understanding and interpretation of how importance are the English verb tenses in ESL learners’ language learning, precisely in the present tense context. The findings provided new insights into how communication clarity, expression clarity, and writing accuracy become the benefits of learning English verb tenses by ESL learners. For instance, accuracy in writing prevails ESL learners’ mastery, as noted by Taylor [47], the key to mastering grammar is being able to remember and use the rules, accurately. Most importantly, these three emerging sub-themes addressed how important and influential English present tense, and its aspects are for ESL learners to convey the correct information via communication, expression, and writing.

5] Limitations

Some limitations of this study include a lack of examples to express a wide range of ideas in the English present tense due to the small size of sentences in the affirmative and negative, and regular and irregular verbs examined from the textbooks. Moreover, this study is further limited by the examination of English present tense constructs in sentences only.

6] Conclusion

From a thorough analysis of English present tense constructs in four textbooks, the study identified seven aspects: simple present, present continuous, present perfect, present perfect continuous, and their combinations. The analysis uncovered a variety of sentence structures and patterns, aiding ESL learners in mastering grammar rules and verb conjugation. The study spotlighted the importance of clearly addressing the simple present and present continuous tenses at the primary level before introducing more complex tenses and their combinations. These insights offered valuable guidance for English language teachers, providing a framework to plan and design effective present-tense instruction.

The study also demonstrated how mastering the English verb tenses enhances communication clarity, expression clarity, and writing accuracy. By emphasising the influential role of verb tenses in overall language proficiency, this study emphasised the need for English language teachers to focus on its various aspects to ensure ESL learners develop a comprehensive understanding and application of these grammatical rules. The findings revealed the role of textbooks in representing English grammar in an age-appropriate, contextually rich manner, enhancing ESL learners' understanding and use of the language. In a nutshell, the findings could improve English language learning, particularly for ESL learners in Malaysian Primary Schools who require more support and opportunities to learn and use the language.

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9] Data Availability

No new data were created or analysed in this study. Data sharing does not apply to this article.

10] Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is **no conflict of interest**

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