



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

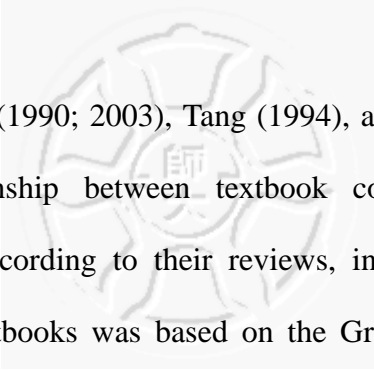
Language textbook compilation is a dynamic and comprising process, with lots of factors involved and with different needs to meet (Bell & Gower, 1998; Jolly & Bolitho, 1998). However, the whole process “rather than trying to arrive at a final, definitive state,” is often “continuing open-ended,” since the evaluation of products (i.e., textbooks) will set out right after (Donovan, 1998: 149). To understand the textbook compilation and evaluation as a whole process, the following sections explore the two issues from three aspects. In section 2.1, issues in English textbook compilation and evaluation are reviewed—the influence of language teaching methodology, learners’ learning process, and teachers’ perceptions. Section 2.2 discusses four studies of textbook compilation and evaluation, including Chen (2002), Cheng (2003); Ko, 2005; Yeh, 2003). Section 2.3 summarizes the main points of this chapter.

#### **2.1 Issues in English Textbook Compilation and Evaluation**

Research concerning English textbook compilation and evaluation is wide in range and variety. The following sections discuss three major issues that influence the process and the product of textbook compilation—language teaching methodology, learners’ learning process, and teachers’ perceptions.

##### **2.1.1 Language Teaching Methodology on English Textbook Compilation and Evaluation**

The compiling process and the product of English textbooks are significantly influenced by the contemporary curriculum guidelines and teaching pedagogy for English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) learners (Bell & Gower, 1998;



Jolly & Bolitho, 1998). Su (1990; 2003), Tang (1994), and Shih (2000; 2002b) have indicated a close relationship between textbook compilation and curriculum guidelines of the time. According to their reviews, in the 1950s and 1960s, the compilation of English textbooks was based on the Grammar Translation Method, which focused on memorization of grammatical rules and vocabulary. In the 1970s, the curriculum criteria focused on the mastery of four language skills, and the priority was in reading and writing. In the 1980s, the principles for textbook writing were determined by the Cognitive Approach, with more emphasis on language accuracy than fluency. Nowadays, with the commencement of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s (McDonough & Shaw, 1993)<sup>8</sup>, the framework of textbook design has highlighted the fundamentally communicative prosperities of language, such as authenticity, real-world simulation, and meaningful tasks.

Communicative Language Teaching (also labeled as the Communicative Approach) is a worldwide trend of English teaching pedagogy for now. Its influence on the textbook compilation can be noticed in the ways of syllabus design. As the following compiling guideline indicates, the local published textbooks are now following a “communicative syllabus:”

Second, textbooks should follow a ‘communicative syllabus.’  
In addition to listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, students should learn to use the appropriate language to *communicate in real life through communicative contexts.*  
(Shih, *et al.*, 2001: i<sup>9</sup>)

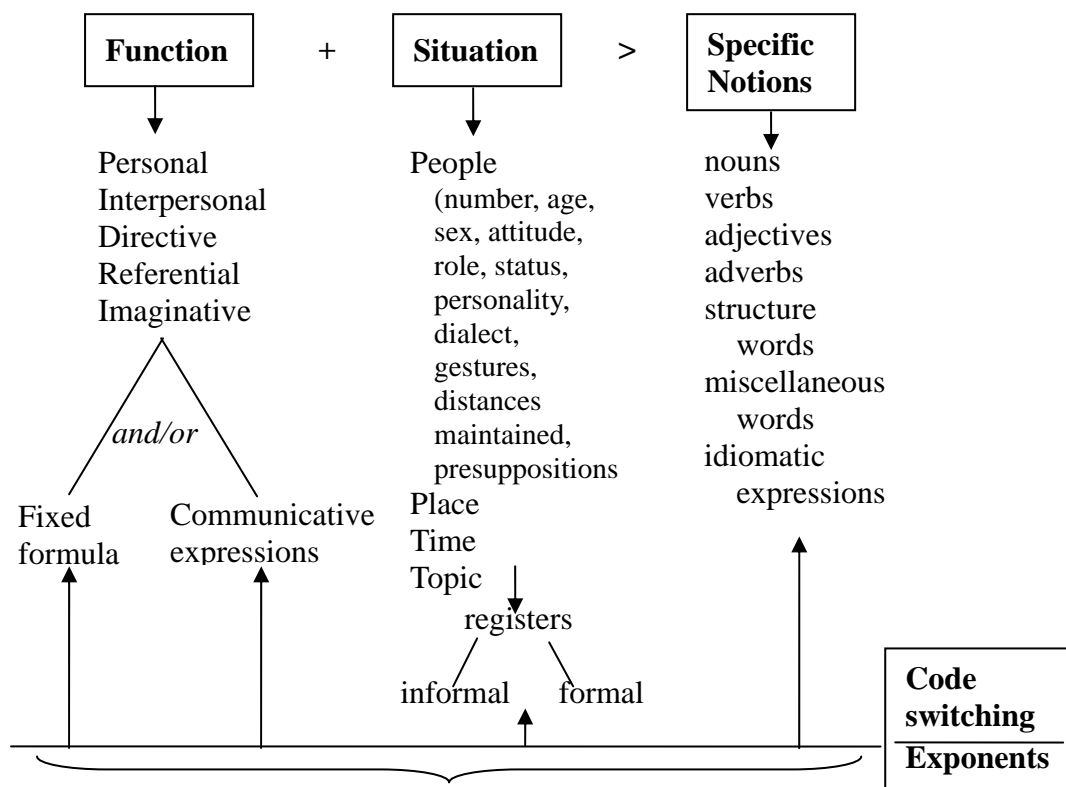
The idea of a ‘communicative syllabus’ (also termed as a ‘functional’ or/and

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<sup>8</sup> According to McDonough and Shaw (1993: 20), “the communicative approach is essentially a manifestation of the 1970s,” when the mastery of language structure was no longer sufficient for learners. More details about its historical background can also be found in Johnson (1981).

<sup>9</sup> The extracted statements are presented in Chinese and translated into English by the researcher.

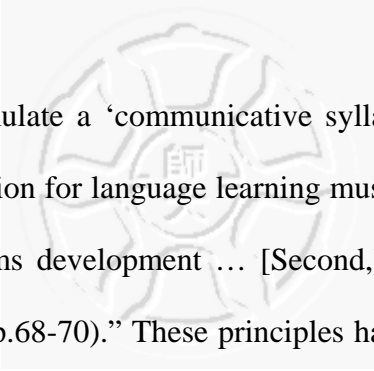
‘notional’ syllabus<sup>10</sup>), with the main concern with ‘communicative capacity,’ contrasts with the grammatical and situational types (Wilkins, 1976: 18). The terms ‘notional’ and ‘functional,’ proposed by Wilkins (1976), are borrowed from linguistics where it is used in describing grammars based on semantic rather than formal criteria. Johnson (1981) set out the distinction between these two terms<sup>11</sup>. ‘Notions’ are rather abstract concepts (e.g., frequency, duration, dimension, location, quantity and so on) which are closely related to grammatical categories in English. ‘Functions,’ on the other hand, refer to the practical uses to which we put language, most usually in interaction with other people. Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) expanded the concepts of the Notational-Functional Syllabus, as can be seen in the following diagram:



**Figure 2-1: Expanded Diagram of the Notional-Functional Syllabus (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983: 28)**

<sup>10</sup> Various researchers labeled these two terms as the ‘communicative language approach,’ and there is really no agreed usage (Yalden, 1983: 68).

<sup>11</sup> The follow-up statements are cited from McDonough and Shaw (1993: 27).



The principles to formulate a ‘communicative syllabus,’ as Yalden (1983) has claimed, are: “[first,] provision for language learning must be considered as a process of language learning systems development ... [Second,] language-learning systems must be learner-centered (pp.68-70).” These principles have been confirmed by other researchers in that the learner is at the center of a communicative approach, with whose needs should take precedence in organizing the syllabus and in materials designing (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Harmer, 2001; Jolly & Bolitho, 1998; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Nunan, 1989; Savignon, 2002; Shih, 2002b).

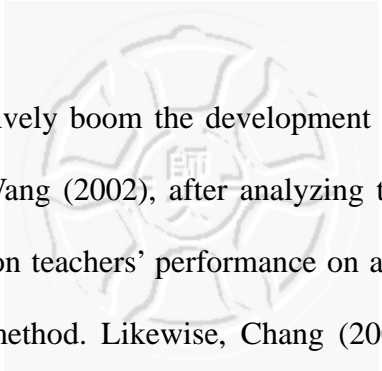
Hence, communicative textbooks are considerably different from traditional textbooks. One of the most distinctive features, specified by Grant (1987) is the design of communicative activities. Grant (1987) believes, with communicative activities, textbooks can achieve a good balance among four language skills, embrace both functions and forms of language, and reflect learners’ needs and interests. According to Littlewood (1981), the skills that should be covered are from linguistic competence<sup>12</sup> to communicative competence<sup>13</sup>. He proposed a framework which can determine the communicativeness of language activities. McDonough and Shaw (1993) also characterized seven implications of CLT in materials development, where a wider range of language appropriacy and accuracy is included, with learners’ proficiency levels as well as interests concerned in textbook compilation.

In Taiwan, more and more researchers have swelled to evaluate the effect of the Communicative Approach to English teaching and learning. Shih (1998, 2002b) sheds light on how the features of CLT could be integrated into the local curriculum design.

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<sup>12</sup> In Littlewood’s (1981) view, learners must “attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence” (p.6). That is, learners must learn how to manipulate the linguistic system, and to use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express their intended message.

<sup>13</sup> According to Littlewood (1981), learners must “distinguish between the forms and functions which they perform” (p.6). They also develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings in concrete situations and social contexts.



These features would positively boom the development of the Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum. By contrast, Wang (2002), after analyzing teachers' beliefs about CLT, found the negative impact on teachers' performance on and confidence in promoting such innovative teaching method. Likewise, Chang (2001), by collecting teachers' opinions, indicated some constraints that the CLT cannot fully support the real classroom activities. The reasons, interpreted by Chang (2001), might lie in the large number of the students in one class and the rigid form of the local examinations.

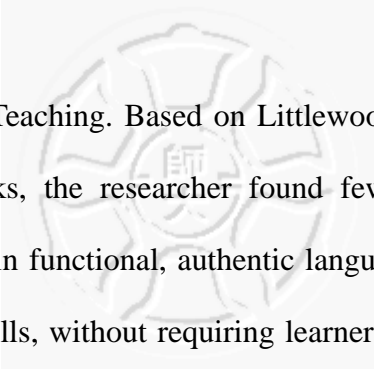
With the respect of the CLT influence on textbook evaluation, several studies have tackled the issue by comparing the traditional textbooks with the newly published ones. Su (1990), for instance, analyzed the standard textbooks<sup>14</sup> published by NICT (National Institute for Compilation and Translation) and reported that most of the recruited teachers were satisfied with the portion of vocabulary and text length, except for Volumes V and VI. However, biases against certain careers and social status were found and the illustrations could not facilitate learning or evoke students' attention. Besides, grammar points were presented unsystematically and the four language skills were unbalanced with only reading and writing realized. Based on Su's study, Yeh (2003) provided a more thorough understanding of the evolution in textbook contents by evaluating two sets of newly published textbooks<sup>15</sup>. The results showed that the reading texts of the NICT version were calculated as the most difficult one, while the new versions were easier.

Some studies evaluated the communicativeness of the textbooks through the analysis of their activity design. Hsu (2001) examined the language learning activities in two sets of junior high school English textbooks (a new version and an old unified version). The purpose was to see if the activity design followed the principles of

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<sup>14</sup> The traditional textbooks followed the 1983 curriculum criteria.

<sup>15</sup> The newly published textbooks followed the 1995 curriculum criteria.



Communicative Language Teaching. Based on Littlewood's (1981) and Pauston and Bruder's (1975) frameworks, the researcher found few of the language learning activities engaged students in functional, authentic language use. Most of them were merely structural pattern drills, without requiring learners to perform communicative tasks. Pan (2004), in line with Hsu (2001), found the communicativeness of the activities (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986) in five new sets of junior high school English textbooks were quite low. Moreover, the activities for the four language skills were neither integrated enough nor equally distributed in the textbooks. Therefore, more improvement is needed in the future textbook compilation.

Previous studies have discussed the quality of the communicative textbooks from different dimensions, such as syllabus design, the effectiveness of classroom activities, and language activity design in textbooks. Thus, the overall design of the language activities will be part of the investigation in the present study.

### **2.1.2 Learning Process on English Textbook Compilation and Evaluation**

One of the most important issues in materials development is that language textbooks should fit in with learners' learning process, mainly because learners are at the center of the language program (Cunningsworth, 1995; Jolly & Bolitho, 1998; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Nunan, 1989; Tomlinson, 2004; Savignon, 2002).

Cunningsworth (1995) has claimed four essential guidelines that coursebooks should follow so as to have a better interaction with learners. First, they ought to correspond to learners' needs, second, reflect the uses which learners will make of the language, third, facilitate the learning processes without dogmatically imposing a rigid method, and fourth, have a clear role as a support for learning. Tomlinson (2004) further specified several learning needs that materials "should" meet by following the compiling principles which most teachers agree contribute to successful learning and

those recommended by most researchers specialized in the field second language acquisition (pp.5-20):

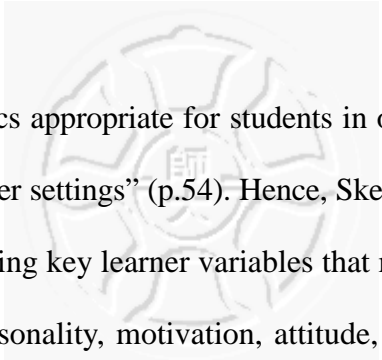


Materials should

1. achieve impact through novelty, variety, attractive presentation, and appealing content;
2. help learners to feel at ease;
3. help learners to develop confidence;
4. be perceived by learners as relevant and useful, if they have been taught;
5. require and facilitate learner self-investment;
6. expose the learners to language in authentic use;
7. draw learners' attention to linguistic features of the input;
8. provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes;
9. take into account that the positive effects of instruction are usually delayed;
10. take into account that learners differ in learning styles;
11. take into account that learners differ in affective attitudes;
12. permit a silent period at the beginning of instruction;
13. maximize learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement which stimulates both right and left brain activities;
14. not rely too much on controlled practice;
15. provide opportunities for outcome feedback.

McDonough and Shaw (1993) proposed two factors that would affect materials design. One is characterized by the concept of 'individual differences,' while the other is under the heading of universal 'language acquisition.' They further narrowed down their ideas about "topic" selection in materials development, since "it is the most obvious way in which learners' needs and interests can be taken into account" (p.53).

Topic choice in worldwide textbooks may range from the field of world affairs, medicine, sport, social and family life, to everyday topics. However, due to the



individual differences, “topics appropriate for students in one educational environment may not be applicable in other settings” (p.54). Hence, Skehan (1989) and McDonough (1986) suggested the following key learner variables that material writers may need to take into consideration: personality, motivation, attitude, aptitude, preferred learning styles, and intelligence (cited in McDonough & Shaw, 1993: 55).

Other important elements that textbook writers should embrace in materials development are the training of learners’ language skills and strategies (Cunningsworth, 1995; McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Richard & Lockhart, 1996). McDonough and Shaw (1993) believe that language skills, such as reading and listening skills, can be practiced through a number of exercises and techniques designed in materials, and learning strategies can also be carried out through the activity design. Cunningsworth (1995) emphasized the importance to check if the coursebooks contain both the dimension of grammatical/lexical/phonological knowledge and of the abilities to use language skills in different situations. Richard and Lockhart (1996) even incorporated the concepts of learners’ beliefs into the discussion of language skills and strategies.

Although great stress has been placed on the relationship between textbook compilation and learners’ learning process, yet there remains considerable disagreement among different language learners. To evaluate students’ needs for their ideal textbooks, Su (1998), for instance, conducted a needs survey on local industrial vocational high school students. The results showed that most of the recruited students desired textbooks to provide career-oriented information, through which they could enhance their abilities to communicate in the future career. However, Chen (2002) found different viewpoints from the senior high students in Taipei. Most of the students showed their dissatisfaction with the improper transition of junior and senior high school textbook contents. That is, it was suggested more connection between



junior and senior high levels in English textbooks showed be emphasized.

Most of time, learners' needs for English textbooks are best known by teachers and teacher writers, for they are the ones who select or write materials (Masuhara, 1998). Yet, there often disagreement between textbook writers and teachers about what kinds of learning needs should be the prerequisite and how to satisfy every individual learner (Maley, 1998). For example, Ko (2005), after interviewing teachers and textbook writers, found the primary concerns of the general English teachers lied in students' English proficiency and learning needs as well as accurate and proper language use in textbooks. However, writers vary their concerns from students' proficiency, and the language skills to the accuracy of language and the variety of content themes.

There has not been much research which focuses on the evaluation of senior high English textbooks since the early 20th century<sup>16</sup>. Cho (2002), as an initiator, evaluated the culture or cross-cultural awareness in the two sets of textbooks (i.e., Far-east and Nan-yi). The findings though revealed the interviewees' awareness of culture or cross-culture, yet indicated the lack of the introduction to local or other cultures. Chang (2002), on the other hand, investigated the quantity of the new graphic word types in the first volumes of the six sets of senior high school English textbooks (i.e., Da-tung, Far East, Lung-teng, Nan-yi, San-min Volumes I and II). Significant differences were found in several aspects, such as word overlapping with junior high school English textbooks, the density of new words, selection of words by word frequency, and the number of new words. Chen (2003) explored the literary texts in three sets of new English textbooks (i.e., FE, LT, and SMC). Over 90 % of the teachers recruited in the study suggested certain percentages of literary texts should be

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<sup>16</sup> Most of the attention was directed to elementary and junior high school textbooks, because of the urgent need for the evaluation on the Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum.



presented in the future textbooks, and pre-reading activities can be better.

To sum up, most of the previous studies have drawn the attention to learners' needs when evaluating textbooks. Such issue can never be too overemphasized. Thus, what topics that can motivate learners' interests and what kinds of skills/strategies training can fit learners' needs are essential dimensions in compiling and evaluating a communicative textbook.

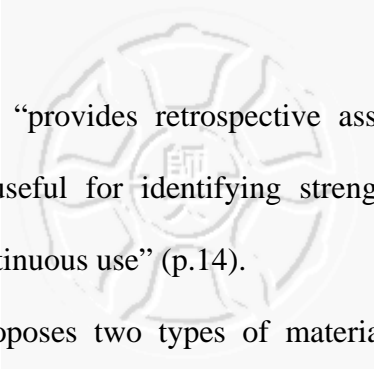
### **2.1.3 Teachers' Perceptions about Textbooks and Textbook Evaluation**

Recently the overwhelming quantity of published materials available on the current market has caused an intimidating experience for teachers and school administrators in selecting and evaluating language textbooks (Chou, 2003; Lan, 2003, 2004; Tsai, 2001). To alleviate such perplexity, a number of evaluative schemes have been produced, within which are two common foci—the types of evaluation and the criteria for it.

Concerning the types of materials evaluation, most of the researchers begin with the discussion of evaluation stages. Grant (1987), for example, assumes that there are three stages in the process of textbook evaluation, namely, initial evaluation, detailed evaluation, and in-use evaluation. The former two are employed before the textbook is adopted<sup>17</sup>, while the last one is for continuous evaluation. Cunningsworth (1995), in line with Grant, proposed three stages as well, that is, pre-use evaluation, in-use evaluation, and post-use evaluation. Both Grant and Cunningsworth agreed that the in-use evaluation can be applied whenever a newly introduced coursebook is being monitored or when an aging coursebook should be considered for replacement. Slightly difference from Grant (1987), Cunningsworth (1995) specifies more of the

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<sup>17</sup> According to Grant (1987), an 'initial evaluation' is only a quick look at a textbook in order to determine whether it is worth further 'detailed evaluation,' which helps decide how well the textbook will do, and whether to adopt it or not. These two stages are conducted before the textbook is adopted.



post-use evaluation, which “provides retrospective assessment of a coursebook’s performance and can be useful for identifying strengths and weaknesses which emerge over a period of continuous use” (p.14).

Ellis (1997, 1998) proposes two types of materials evaluation—a predictive evaluation and a retrospective evaluation. The predictive evaluation is similar to Cunningsworth’s (1995) ‘pre-use evaluation,’ which aims to determine which materials to use subjectively. On the contrary, the retrospective evaluation is like ‘post-use evaluation’ in Cunningsworth’s (1995) categorization, which examines the practicality of the materials with a more objective view. Ellis further indicates two dimensions of the retrospective evaluation, namely, a macro-level and a micro-level evaluation<sup>18</sup>. Unlike those who set up checklists for pre-use evaluation (e.g., Cunningsworth, 1995; Skierso, 1991<sup>19</sup>; McDonough & Shaw, 1993<sup>20</sup>), Ellis (1998) encourages the design of questionnaires for post-use materials evaluation, especially for micro-evaluation on particular tasks. Since Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979: 306) claim that “the ultimate evaluation of text comes with actual classroom use,” post-use evaluation has gained more and more attention.

With respect to the evaluative criteria, since researchers have different considerations, the questionnaires or checklists they develop vary, as shown in Table 2-1:

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<sup>18</sup> According to Ellis (1998), a ‘macro-evaluation’ involves an overall assessment “carried out for accountability and/or developmental purposes by collecting information relating to various administrative and curricular aspects of the programme” (p.218). A ‘micro-evaluation,’ on the other hand, deals with more “specific aspect of the curriculum or the administration of the programme” (p.219). In the case of teaching materials, a ‘micro-evaluation’ will concern whether a particular task is effective or efficient.

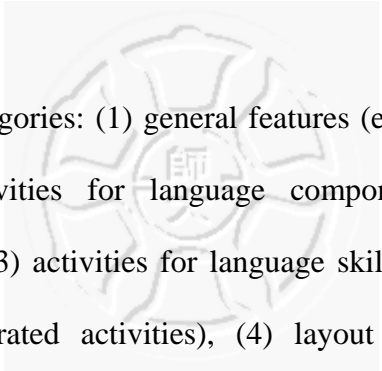
<sup>19</sup> Skierso (1991) envisages a three-step procedure in the pre-use evaluation phase. First, identify relevant contextual information relating to the students, the teacher, the course syllabus and the institution. Second, analyze the features of the textbook followed by an overall rating of the text. Third, actually judge the acceptability of the textbook by rating and weighting specific evaluative criteria.

<sup>20</sup> McDough and Shaw (1993) suggest that teachers begin with an ‘external evaluation,’ such as the examination of the book cover and the table of contents; then, followed by ‘internal evaluation,’ like the presentation of skills in the materials, and the relationship between exercises and tests.

**Table 2-1: A Variety of Evaluative Criteria Found in Previous Research**

Researchers	Evaluative Criteria
1. William (1983)	7 criteria: <b>general, speech, grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing</b> , and the technical part (e.g., the layout)
2. Grant (1987)	CATALUST test: <b>C – Communicative</b> , A – Aims, <b>T – Teachability</b> , A – Available Add-ones, L – Level, Y – Your impression, S – Student interest, T – Tried and tested
3. Sheldon (1988)	17 key points: rationale, availability, user definition, layout/graphics, accessibility, linkage, selection/grading, physical characteristics, <b>appropriacy, authenticity, sufficiency</b> , cultural bias, educational validity, stimulus/practice/revision, <b>flexibility, guidance</b> , and overall value for money
4. Skierso (1991)	2 entries: a. textbook itself (6 elements): bibliographical data, <b>aims and goals, subject matter, vocabulary and structures, exercises and activities</b> , layout and physical makeup. b. <b>teacher’s manual</b> (4components): general features, supplementary exercises for each language skill, methodological and pedagogical guidance, and linguistic background information
5. Cunningsworth (1995)	8 criteria: aims and approaches, design and organization, <b>language content, skills, topic</b> , methodology, teachers’ books, practical considerations
6. Richard (1998)	3 entries: a. <b>teacher factors</b> : e.g., the quality, the practicality of teacher’s manual, or the clarity of the teaching points b. <b>learner factors</b> : e.g., the appropriateness and the attraction of the content for learners c. <b>task factors</b> : e.g., whether objectives can be achieved or whether the challenging activities are provided
7. Harmer (2001)	8 criteria: layout and design, instructions methodology, <b>language study activities, language skill activities, topics</b> , cultural acceptability, usability, and <b>teacher’s guide</b>

The common evaluation criteria proposed by most of the researchers are further classified by Shih (2000). According to Shih (2000), a materials evaluation scheme



should comprise seven categories: (1) general features (e.g., aims/goals, methods, or topic selection), (2) activities for language components (e.g., pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar), (3) activities for language skills (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing, or integrated activities), (4) layout and design, (5) teachers' manual/guide, (6) students' workbook, and (7) other related teaching/learning aids (e.g., CDs, tapes, and flash cards). Based on the empirical observation, Shih further promotes a condensed scheme (i.e., within two pages<sup>21</sup>), which can encourage a more efficient and effective evaluation.

In addition to Shih (2000), many ELT scholars in Taiwan have also generated practical frameworks for local teachers and administrators to apply. For instance, based her framework on the needs survey for vocational high school students and on the ESL/EFL pedagogy, Su (1998) generates eight components (generality, listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and layout). Huang (1999) also recommends ten criteria<sup>22</sup> for senior high school textbook selection, which match the compilation structure. The NICT formulates a reviewing framework for senior high English textbook writers to follow<sup>23</sup> (Shih, 2000).

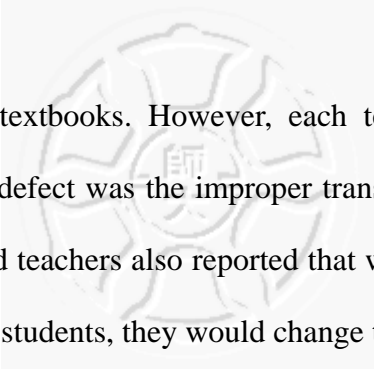
Although plenty of suggestions have been provided, yet no one is certain about the criteria and constraints that should actually be operative in ELT (English Language Teaching) contexts (Sheldon, 1988), until materials evaluation is put into real practice. Chen (2002), as one of the example, collected the questionnaires about textbook selection from the English teachers and students in 92 senior high schools in the greater Taipei area. She found that most teachers thought the new textbooks were

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<sup>21</sup> It has been found in Shih (2000) that teachers and textbook reviewers prefer a concise checklist which is "no more than two pages long" (p.218).

<sup>22</sup> They are content, dialogue, vocabulary and idioms, grammar, activities, workbooks, teacher's manual, layout and price, supplementary materials, and the whole set of materials.

<sup>23</sup> According to Shih (2000), two conditions are involved. One is prerequisite and the other is general criteria. The former one stipulate that the basic requirements, such as the whole set of textbooks and supplementary materials should be handed in. For the later, four main items are scrutinized, that is, content and organization, language features, layout and design, and technique design.



superior to the old NICT textbooks. However, each textbook had its merits and demerits. The most serious defect was the improper transition with junior and senior high materials. The recruited teachers also reported that whenever the textbooks were not suitable for the levels of students, they would change to other sets.

Li (2003) also investigated the predictive evaluation, use, and retrospective evaluation of an EFL textbook in a Taipei junior high school. Among the six teachers participating in the study, 3 of them were proponents for the use of the new textbook, while the other 3 were opponents. The result showed that in spite of their different choices, all the teachers were mainly concerned about the difficulty level of the textbook and students' proficiency levels. Besides, there were some contextual constraints that affected teachers' use of the textbook, such as the time limit, the large class size, incomplete picture of the whole textbook series, students' individual differences, and the shortage of teaching equipments in classrooms.

Hsu (2004) investigated the current usage status of the published English textbooks for senior high schools in northern Taiwan and explored English teachers' perceptions about those materials. Most of the teachers held a positive view about the new textbooks<sup>24</sup>. However, only 38.2 % agreed that the contents in the textbooks were consistently arranged according to the difficulty level of the texts. Less than half considered the content design could foster students' speaking ability (29.8 %) or writing ability (40.4%). Furthermore, it was recommended that the topics should be related to "current affairs" (46.5%), "living information" (35.8%), "western culture" (34.0%), and "literary work" (32.1%)<sup>25</sup>. Overall, teachers' observations were shown to

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<sup>24</sup> Over seventy percent of the participants agreed that the textbook contents corresponded well to students' level (78.6%), met students' interests (71.8%), and related to their daily lives (74.1%). As high as 89.6% of them even showed their satisfaction with teachers' manuals, since they could help teachers locate the answers to the questions in the textbooks. There was also a high ratio of the participants (86.9%) that reported the workbooks were considerably satisfactory, because they could help students review the texts and serve as a homework as well as classroom exercises.

<sup>25</sup> Though these are the topics highly appreciated by the English teachers, yet it is still problematic for

be consistent to some extent in that the new textbooks were more communicative.

To sum up, a plenty of studies have proposed different constructive evaluation frameworks and the effectiveness of the schemes from teacher users' perspectives. To provide a more comprehensive view in future textbook compilation, teachers' perceptions cannot be neglected.

#### **2.1.4 Summary**

According to the previous studies of textbook compilation and evaluation, more and more research has placed the emphasis on the factors that influence textbook compilation and evaluation, including the CLT pedagogy, the learners' learning process, and a variety of teachers' perceptions. However, the considerable attention was drawn only on analyzing a small portion of English textbooks. Very few studies provided a thorough view from all the three dimensions. Thus, a more complete as well as specific observation is needed.

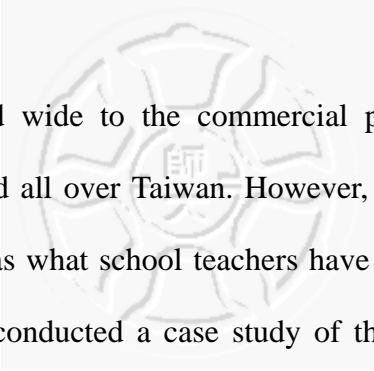
## **2.2 Related Studies of Textbook Compilation and Evaluation in Taiwan**

This section reviews major studies of English textbook editing process. Section 2.2.1 reviews Cheng's (2003) study of the developmental process of English textbooks for junior high schools. Section 2.2.2 discusses Chen's (2002) study of textbook selection for senior high school students in Taipei. Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 also examine studies of newly published English textbooks for senior high students. Ko (2005) are probed into textbook compilation from the teachers' and writers' viewpoints, while Yeh's (2003) study focused on the content analysis of the textbooks.

### **2.2.1 Cheng (2003)**

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textbook writers to live up to their expectations (Hsu, 2004: 52).



As the market opened wide to the commercial publishers, various types of textbooks have mushroomed all over Taiwan. However, the quality of the textbooks may not be as satisfactory as what school teachers have expected (Chen, 2002; Lan, 2002). Cheng (2003) thus conducted a case study of the developmental process of English textbook editing and reviewing to tackle with the issues such as the writers' belief, the editing process, the content composing, and finally the teachers' reflections.

The material included was the first volume of the junior high school English textbook published by Tung-ho<sup>26</sup>. Two versions for the first volume were analyzed (the sample and formal versions). In order to detect the revising quality, the researcher compared the two versions in terms of vocabulary, texts, activities, and the Competence Indicators. Moreover, two editors and five teachers were further interviewed<sup>27</sup>.

The writers reflected that they followed some principles of textbook writing. First of all, the textbook content should go well with the learning objectives of the new curriculum published in 2000. Namely, the junior high materials had better be consistent with the elementary materials, but teachers can adopt different methods. Secondly, the content should be arranged in sequence. In order to satisfy the learning needs of different students, the content writing should, thirdly, take different levels of students into consideration<sup>28</sup>. The fourth consideration about textbook design

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<sup>26</sup> Considering the production secrets, many commercial publishers were reluctant to provide their opinions on textbook compiling, except the alias Tung-ho Publisher. However, only the first volume of the textbook was offered, since other versions were still under reviewing at that time (Cheng, 2003:12).

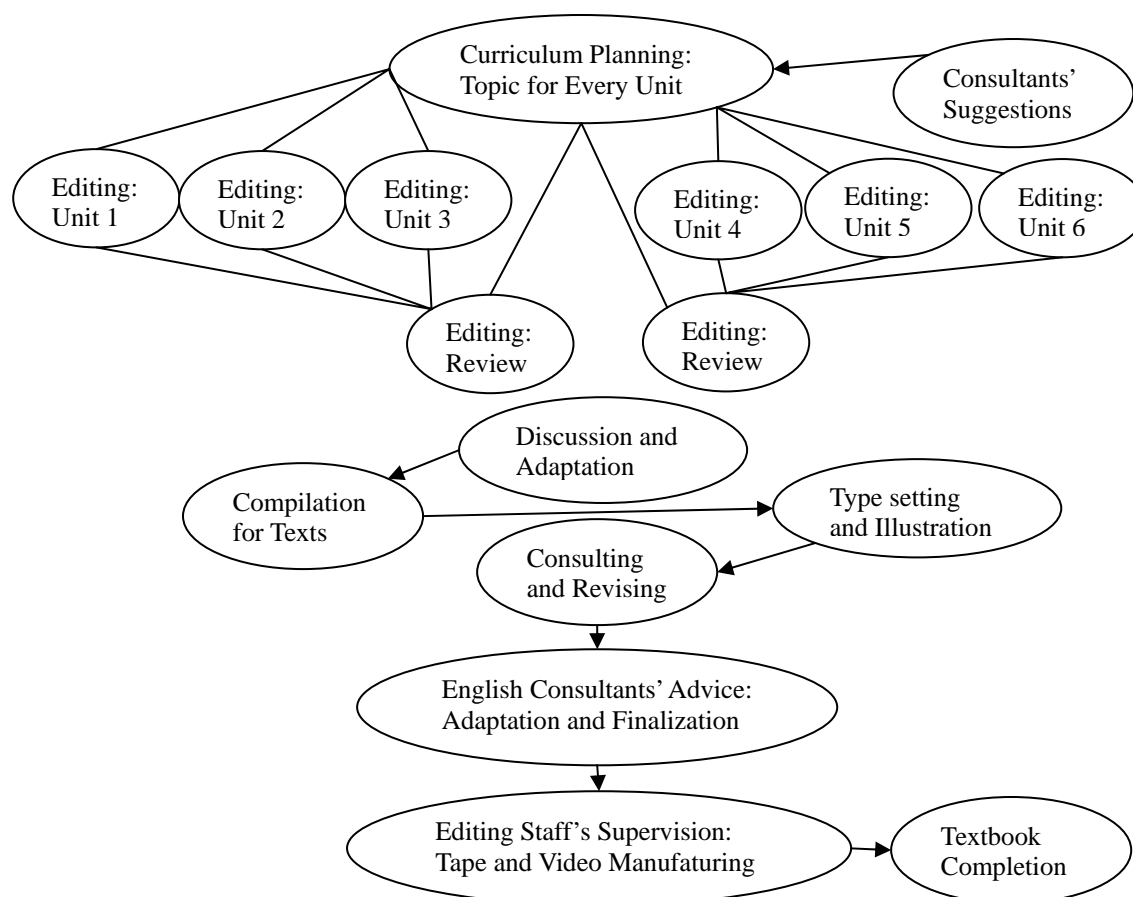
<sup>27</sup> The interview questions for the teachers were centered on how they reflected to the textbook editing. As for the textbook compilers, their considerations for editing, the process of compiling, and ways of material designing were involved. Finally, the collected data were analyzed with the intention to determine whether or not teachers' and editors' opinions agreed.

<sup>28</sup> To solve the linkage problem, the recruited editor arranged two sessions for each lesson. The first session dealt with the basic knowledge that every learner need to acquire. The second session was an extension part, which served only as a reference for learners, rather than requirement (Cheng, 2003:77).



highlights more on the practice of reading and writing skills<sup>29</sup>. Last but not least, the content ought to be interesting and systematic that students are able to maintain the motivation of English learning step by step.

As to the editing process, the investigation result is shown in Figure 2-2:

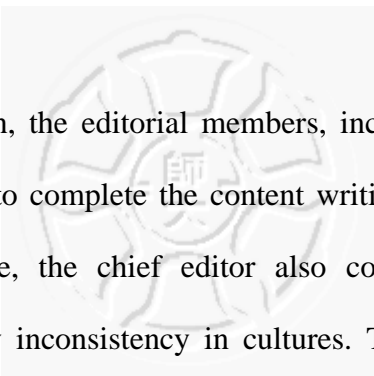


**Figure 2-2: The Editing Process of Tung-ho Publisher in 2000 (Cheng, p.98)**

Based on the information shared by the recruited interviewees, the editorial team was mainly made up of middle school teachers with years of experience in teaching English<sup>30</sup>. The writing plans were first organized on the basis of the current

<sup>29</sup> According to the Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum Guidelines, speaking and listening are the focus in elementary schools, while reading and writing will be expected to get more attention in junior high, with the intention to balance and integrate the learning of the four language skills.

<sup>30</sup> Although most of them were from North Taiwan, yet the gap among different districts did not exist, since some of the editorial members were growing up in south parts of Taiwan.

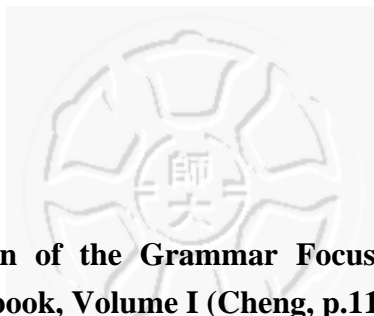


curriculum guidelines. Then, the editorial members, including the staff and the art designers worked together to complete the content writing and revision, typesetting and illustration. Meanwhile, the chief editor also consulted the English native professors if there was any inconsistency in cultures. The editorial meetings were scheduled interdependently to gather all the opinions from the team members, especially at the time to decide the revision and to confirm the content.

Moreover, the interviewees' reflections were collected about the content writing of the revised version and the unrevised one. The composing skeletons were both based on the latest curriculum guideline published by NICT in 1994. Thus, a close relationship was found between the vocabulary and the content design. For each unit, the vocabulary selection matched well with the content. Besides, the topic and the grammar parts displayed a well-balanced design in both two versions. The recruited editors even reported that they had tried their best to revise the sample version on a rigid principle—one topic for one lesson (shown in Tables 2-2 and 2-3):

**Table 2-2: A Comparison of the Topic Design on the Two Versions of Tung-ho Textbook, Volume I (Cheng, p.115)**

	Before Modification (Sample Version)	After Modification (Formal Version)
Lesson 1	Greetings	Greetings
Lesson 2	Introduction	Introduction
Lesson 3	People's relationships and jobs	People's relationships and jobs
Lesson 4	Classroom Items	Classroom Items
Lesson 5	<b>Classroom Language</b>	<b>Request</b>
Lesson 6	Appearances	Appearances
Lesson 7	<b>Locations and activities</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Lesson 8	<b>Numbers 0-9, telephone number and telephone talk</b>	<b>Locations</b>
Lesson 9	<b>Sports and other skills</b>	<b>Telephone numbers and telephone talk</b>
Lesson 10	<b>Describing the Scenery</b>	

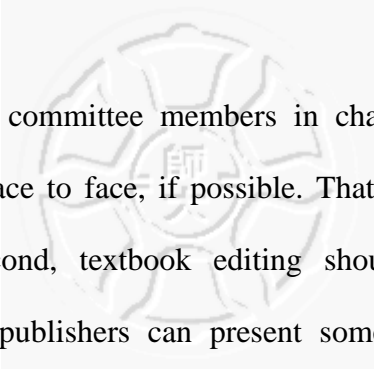


**Table 2-3: A Comparison of the Grammar Focus on the Two Versions of Tung-ho Textbook, Volume I (Cheng, p.116)**

	Before Modification (Sample Version)	After Modification (Formal Version)
Lesson 1	(1) Pronouns ( <i>I, you</i> )	(1) Pronouns ( <i>I, you</i> )
Lesson 2	(1) <i>What...?</i> (Q&A) (2) Possessive pronouns ( <i>my, his, her, your</i> )	(1) <i>What...?</i> (Q&A) (2) Possessive pronouns ( <i>my, his, her, your</i> )
Lesson 3	(1) Demonstrative pronouns ( <i>this, that</i> ) (2) Personal pronouns ( <i>he, she</i> )	(1) Demonstrative pronouns ( <i>this, that</i> ) (2) Personal pronouns ( <i>he, she</i> )
Lesson 4	(1) <i>Be V. + Subject...?</i> (Q&A) (2) Pronoun ( <i>it</i> )	(1) <i>Be V. + Subject...?</i> (Q&A) (2) Pronoun ( <i>it</i> )
Lesson 5	(1) Imperatives	(1) Imperatives
Lesson 6	(1) <i>Who...?</i> (Q&A) (2) <b>Conjunction and for adjectives</b>	(1) <b>Adjectives</b>
Lesson 7	(1) <b>Where...?</b> (Q&A) (2) Present Progressive	(1) Present Progressive (Q&A)
Lesson 8	(1) <b>Countable nouns with plural forms</b> (2) <b>Pronouns (<i>they</i>)</b> (3) <b>Possessive pronouns (<i>their</i>)</b>	(1) <i>When...?</i> (Q&A) (2) <b>Prepositions (<i>in, on, under</i>)</b>
Lesson 9	(1) <b><i>can</i> (Ability)</b> (2) Demonstrative pronouns ( <i>these, those</i> ) (3) Possessive pronouns ( <i>our, your</i> )	(1) <b>Countable nouns with plural forms</b> (2) <b>Personal pronouns (<i>they</i>)</b> (3) Possessive pronouns ( <i>their</i> )
Lesson 10	(1) <b><i>There is/are...</i></b>	

Besides, the activities were designed under the consideration of the students' proficiency levels as well as their interests and prior knowledge. Finally, it was found that the reviewers' opinions also played an important role during the textbook compiling.

All in all, Cheng did an elaborate study of the complex process of textbook compilation. As Cheng mentioned in the study, the textbook editing was a commercial secret for some publishers, which thus increased the difficulties in the related study. Therefore, it was suggested that the reviewing system should be advanced and the



criteria be consistent. The committee members in charge of textbook evaluation should advise the writers face to face, if possible. That way, their opinions can be exchanged efficiently. Second, textbook editing should not be regarded as a commercial secret. If the publishers can present some parts of the forthcoming textbooks beforehand, their textbooks will surely get improved on the basis of abundant and worthy suggestions. Furthermore, more textbook sets should be investigated and analyzed. Finally, it was found that there was no linkage problem between elementary and junior high materials, but no further discussion was reported. Therefore, a similar study is worth replicating on senior high textbooks in the future.

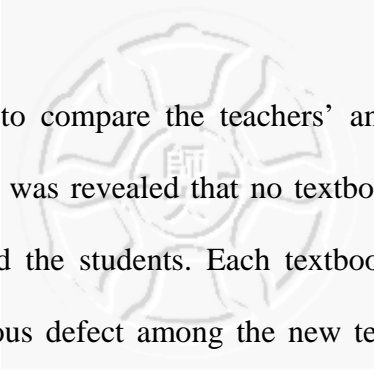
### **2.2.2 Chen (2002)**

With the commencement of the open editorial system, textbook selection has been a general problem for English teachers. Chen (2002) thus investigated the English textbook selection in senior high schools in the greater Taipei area by comparing teachers' and students' perceptions about the six sets of new textbooks employed at that time.

The first issue was to compare the old MOE English textbooks and the new commercial textbooks published after 1999. It was shown that most teachers thought the new textbooks were superior to the old MOE textbooks.

The second focus was to survey the members involved in textbook selection in each school. It was found that the selection committee in each school was usually composed of the English teachers. But the students' opinions about the new textbook sets had been collected before the textbook selection.

The third one was to observe the patterns and procedures of textbook selection in each school. The results showed that the evaluation checklists were employed by more than half of the teachers.



The fourth issue was to compare the teachers' and the students' perceptions about the new textbooks. It was revealed that no textbooks were perfectly meet the demand of the teachers and the students. Each textbook set had its strengths and weaknesses. The most serious defect among the new textbooks was their improper transition with junior high school English materials.

The fifth issue was to find out the reasons why the teachers would change textbooks and the consequences of their doing so. The prior reason was due to the unsuitable textbooks for the students' levels.

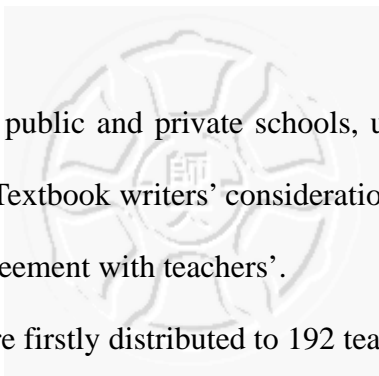
The last was to determine the ideal textbook in the teachers' minds. The result showed that there was indeed no perfect textbook existing. It was emphasized that teachers should make use of the advantages of any textbook and tailor the content to their students' needs.

However, some limitations were expected to be reduced in the future research. One is that since only teachers in the great Taipei area were recruited, the findings may not be generalized to the situation in other countries. Besides, the comparison between the MOE textbooks and the new textbooks was only conducted in the interview instead of the questionnaires. Thus, the results may not be generalizable to all the teachers. Last, due to the unbalanced participants in each textbook version, the results might not reflect the whole situation of using textbooks.

Accordingly, the present research would recruit teachers from other countries, balance the participants in each version, and employ questionnaires as well as interviews to elicit more reliable results.

### **2.2.3 Ko (2005)**

Ko (2005) investigated the factors that English teachers of senior high schools in Taipei would take into consideration when selecting textbooks. He mainly compared



the different opinions from public and private schools, urban and rural schools, and senior and young teachers. Textbook writers' considerations were also explored to see if their concerns were in agreement with teachers'.

The questionnaires were firstly distributed to 192 teachers at 34 schools in Taipei city and county. The interview was further conducted for further information. In addition, 6 textbook writers from four different publishing companies were interviewed to generate more thoughts.

The first finding revealed that teachers' primary concerns was their students' English proficiency and learning needs as well as accurate and proper language use in textbooks (see Table 2-4), regardless of their service years, the school locations, and their school types.

**Table 2-4: The Factors' Ranking Based on Teachers' Questionnaire Survey (extracted from Ko, p. 75, 111-131)**

Ranking	Internal factors	External factors
1	The textbook uses accurate and proper English.	Most students' English proficiency and learning needs.
2	Reading articles are interesting and informative.	Opinions from teachers having used the textbook.

*Note.* Internal factors concern more about the content, organization and consistency of the material, while the external factors are more related to the overt claims about the materials made by the author and the characteristics of a particular teaching situation (McDonough & Shaw, 1993, cited in Ko, 2005:15).

The second important finding was that teachers with different backgrounds had different opinions about textbook selection. For example, public school teachers would care about salespersons' service and textbooks' intact packages, whereas private school teachers considered more about the Joint College Entrance Examination, and school's leadership. Likewise, urban school teachers emphasized more on salespersons' service, Communicative Language Teaching and cultural components. But rural school teachers were more concerned about teachers' various roles (such as teachers, mentors or administrative personnel), their own English



proficiency, and textbooks' prices. However, no significant differences were found between senior and junior teachers.

Generally speaking, internal factors such as appropriateness, naturalness of the target language, or the content organization were the primary concerns for senior high English teachers in selecting textbooks. However, external factors, such as learners' English proficiency and learning needs, the Joint College Entrance Examination, school's administrators, and salespersons' service, were under consideration as well. Therefore, it is suggested that publishing companies should take external factors into more account to ensure the forthcoming textbooks can be more comprehensive and meet teachers' and students' needs. Lastly, teachers should base their judgments on their own professional knowledge in textbook selection and evaluation.

#### **2.2.4 Yeh (2003)**

Yeh (2003) examined the content differences between traditional and newly published English textbooks for senior high schools. The content of English textbooks was compared and analyzed in terms of vocabulary frequency, the difficulty level of articles, as well as themes and paragraph précis.

Three sets of English textbooks were reviewed—Far East, Lung-teng and NICT (National Institute for Compilation and Translation) versions. For each set, five volumes (from 1 to 5) were examined. The study adopted “frequency band” in *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary* (1995) for vocabulary analysis, “Lix formula” for the readability by Bjornsson (1968), and “themes and paragraph précis form” for topic selection. These tools were employed respectively to analyze how the vocabulary was distributed among the textbooks, how articles were arranged in the textbooks, and how topics and paragraphs in each lesson were organized.

As for the vocabulary, the distribution of the new words<sup>31</sup> was affected by themes and phraseology<sup>32</sup> because the infrequent words appeared in certain unusual genres such as poems or cultural-specific articles. Besides, the vocabulary frequency among the three versions was similar, as can be seen in Table 2-5:

**Table 2-5: A Comparison of the Vocabulary Frequency in Three Versions**

Version \ Frequency	Far East		Lung-teng		NICT	
	No. of words	Percentage	No. of words	Percentage	No. of words	Percentage
	128	7.21	129	7.47	207	9.03
	351	19.76	336	19.46	429	18.71
	384	21.62	358	20.73	498	21.73
	445	25.07	398	23.05	486	21.20
	298	16.78	293	16.97	369	16.10
No frequency marks	102	5.74	110	6.37	128	5.58
Not in the dictionary.	68	3.83	103	5.96	175	7.64
Total	1776	100.00	1727	100.00	2292	100.00

*Note.* The frequency mark indicated the word with the most frequent counts ( ) to the least frequent one ( ).

It was found that the NICT version possessed the largest size of frequency words, while the Lung-teng version had the smallest. However, the distribution of vocabulary frequency in Table 2-6 appeared different among three textbook set:

**Table 2-6: A Comparison of the Vocabulary Frequency Distribution in Each Volume**

Version \ Volume	Far East		Lung-teng		NICT	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Volume I	22.58	4.89	29.58	5.55	23.57	12.67
Volume II	25.33	7.05	25.67	5.29	31.00	12.35
Volume III	28.08	6.51	27.58	6.87	33.64	10.93
Volume IV	30.42	7.83	29.42	4.69	33.14	13.86
Volume V	44.08	6.24	31.67	5.25	42.36	8.75
Mean Scores	30.10		28.78		32.74	
SD	8.35		2.26		6.72	

<sup>31</sup> The words analyzed included “words for production” and “words for recognition.”

<sup>32</sup> Phraseology is a particular way in which words and phrases are arranged when saying or writing something (Yeh, 2003: ii).



*Note.* SD was calculated to decide to what extent one volume deviated from the others. That way, Far East Version was found to have the most stable pace in increasing the distribution of vocabulary frequency, from the least amount of the word frequency to the most one volume by volume.

As can be seen above, Far East was determined to have the most moderate pace in increasing its word frequency volume by volume.

As for the text difficulty, the results from the Lix formula shared that the three versions all presented the article arrangement from simple to complicated sentences. The NICT version was determined again as the most difficult one among the three versions (*Lix M* = 39.91). The text difficulty was also presumably affected by phraseology in that more complex articles were usually composed by more words. Therefore, the Lung-teng version was considered to contain the longest reading texts averagely more than the other two versions (*M* = 606.78), because it involved more dialogues and stories which were usually regarded as the more lengthy ones.

Finally, the comparison of topic types and paragraph organization were further examined<sup>33</sup>. In terms of topic types, each version had its own way to categorize their topics. The Far East version mixed up the text with topics and then designed one theme for one lesson, while the Lung-teng version combined two themes in one lesson. The NICT version targeted the common topics such as daily lives<sup>34</sup>. Considering the paragraph organization, the three versions all exhibited a wild diversity in their text composing.

In sum, Yeh not only conducted a detailed content analysis of the senior high English textbooks, but also completed an explicit comparison between different versions. Moreover, the following insightful and practical recommendations were contributed for future materials design. Firstly, some articles related to certain professional knowledge should be designed carefully. Secondly, the readability of the texts should be considered in order to meet students' levels. It is suggested that teachers

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<sup>33</sup> The text difficulty can never be determined simply by the length or the word use of the text; hence, topic types and organization of paragraphs were further examined (Yeh, 2003: 129).

<sup>34</sup> The result was indirectly inferred from Su (1991), because the NICT version did not categorize their text or topic types in the syllabus.

or writers choose the proper articles according to the Lix formula, since it serves as a good indicator of the material difficulty. Lastly, the themes in each lesson should be vivid and relevant to students' life in order to match their interests and learning process. In this case, the paragraph précis had better be well-organized in connection with the topics in order to provide students with a better concept about the lesson.

### 2.2.5 Summary

The previous studies all tackled with the English textbook compilation, but from different perspectives. Cheng (2003) demystified the compiling process of a junior high English textbook investigating the editors' opinions. Chen (2002) examined the teachers' and the students' perceptions about the newly published textbooks in the phase of textbook selection. Ko (2005) explored teachers' attitudes toward the compilation of new textbook sets. In Yeh's (2003) study, new English textbooks for senior high were analyzed. A better picture of the related studies is shown in Table 2-7:

**Table 2-7: A Summary of the Related Studies**

	Textbook Versions	Compiling Process	Teachers'/Students' Perceptions	Content Analysis
Cheng (2003)	2 sets of <b>J</b> (B1) (sample vs. formal)	1. Curriculum guidelines 2. Content design 3. Students' level 4. Activity design for reading & writing		1. Topic design 2. Vocabulary design 3. Grammar focus
Chen (2002)	6 new sets of <b>S</b> , and 1 NICT version		Teachers' & students' perceptions in the phase of textbook selection	
Ko (2005)	4 new sets of <b>S</b>	1. Ss' level 2. Authenticity 3. Skills 4. Topic variety	1. Internal factors: (language use, topics) 2. External factors: (Ss' level, Ts' opinions)	
Yeh (2003)	NICT vs. 2 new sets of <b>S</b> (B1~B5)			1. Vocabulary design 2. Readability 3. Themes & paragraph arrangement

*Note.* The boldfaced “S” stands for “senior high English textbooks,” while “J” for “junior high English

textbooks.” “Ss” represents “students,” and “Ts” “teachers.”

Among these studies, Cheng (2003) is considered as the most related research to the present study since it investigated the development of the textbooks. However, the focus was on the compiling process of junior high textbooks, which might be different from that of senior high. Chen (2002) thoroughly examined the users’ (including teachers and students) perceptions about the new senior high textbooks but the results might not be generalizable due to the limited survey area, the unbalanced number of teachers from each version, and unemployment of both questionnaires and interview. Yeh (2003) analyzed senior high textbooks, but writers’ or teachers’ opinions were not collected as in Ko (2005), where writers’ ideas were not explored in detail. None of them dealt with the developmental process of the textbook editing directly for senior high schools. Neither did they gather a thorough view both from textbook producers (i.e., writers) and users (i.e., school teachers). Therefore, a complete picture should be provided about how the new English textbook sets for senior high learners are compiled and adapted. Meanwhile, a direct and genuine editing framework should be established for writers and teachers.

### **2.3 Summary of Chapter Two**

In this chapter, the issues in related to textbook compilation have been reviewed. The factors influencing textbook compilation and evaluation were also discussed. It was found that no study directly investigated the developmental process of the textbook editing, particularly for senior high schools. Besides, a great deal of attention was drawn to teachers’ viewpoints about textbook evaluation. Few studies gathered writers’ voices or conducted an analysis of the content itself. Therefore, to gain a more through view about the current senior high English textbooks, the present study aims to probe into teachers’ and writers’ thoughts, and the textbook itself.