

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results analyzed in Chapter Four are further interpreted. Section 5.1 probes into the textbook writing process and principles, and section 5.2 general and distinctive features of the textbooks. Section 5.3 compares teachers' and writers' expectations about their ideal textbooks and then discusses the compromise between them. Finally, the main points of Chapter Five are summarized in section 5.4.

5.1 Textbook Writing Process and Principles

The production of the English textbooks is discussed according to the writing process, principles, and difficulties encountered in dealing with teacher users' involvement.

5.1.1 Writing Process

The results presented in Chapter Four showed that the compilation of Textbook A generally followed the specific procedures illustrated in Figure 5-1 (for more details, please see Figure 4-1). It was found that materials writing followed a linear order and also a considerably "dynamic" process.

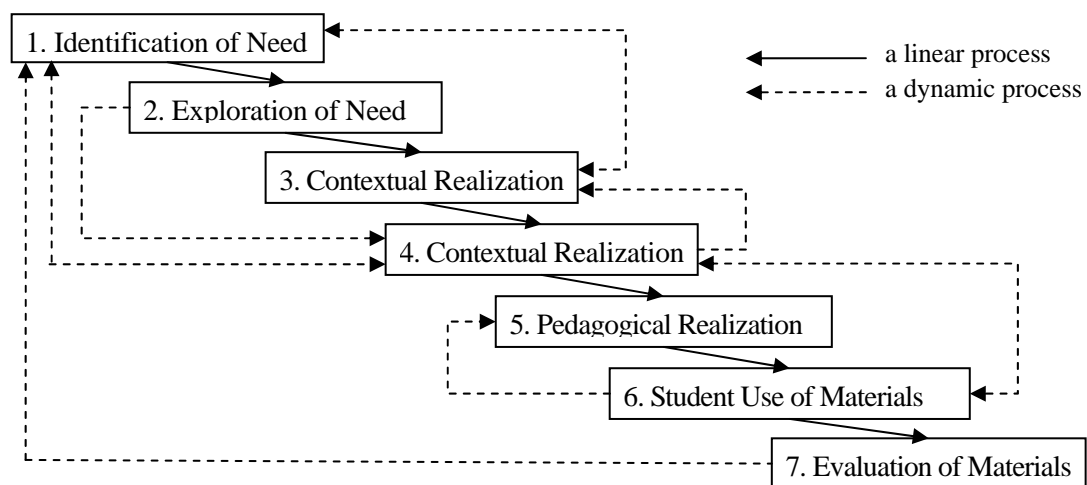
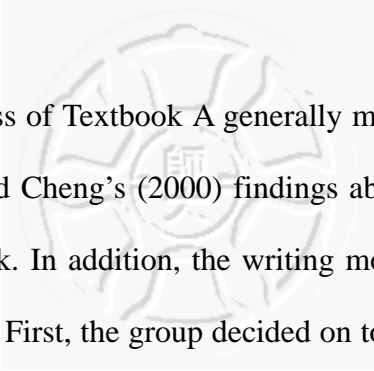


Figure 5-1: A Path through the Production of Textbook A



The compilation process of Textbook A generally matches Shih's (2000) models of materials compilation and Cheng's (2000) findings about the writing process of a junior high English textbook. In addition, the writing model was like what has been discussed in Prowse (1998). First, the group decided on topics, functions, skills focus, treatment of grammar, vocabulary, format of a unit and a lesson. Then units were allocated to each member. Second, writers went back to devise units, and later sent back to the coordinator (i.e., the editor(s)) for checking and consulting. Finally, the group met again with the coordinator and the consultants to obtain the general agreement for all lessons.

However, a slight difference was found in that there was more “dynamic” nature in the production of Textbook A, which is regarded as an important element in producing an ideal textbook (Jolly & Bolitho, 1998; Prowse, 1998). Three essential components were generalized for promoting the construction of the textbooks.

One essential element that turns the writing process into the dynamic process is the continuous interaction between the textbook writers and users (i.e., school teachers) (Jolly & Bolitho, 1998). According to the results of the questionnaire and interview, there were three ways for the writers to gather the users' evaluation and suggestions. The first was to conduct a needs survey on teachers and learners before the compilation began (refer back to Excerpt 4-24). The second was through the experience sharing from time to time among the teacher writers. As one of the interviewees (W2) revealed, since they were all experienced teachers, they knew well about both teachers' and learners' needs. The third one was by publishers' collecting users' while- or after-using suggestions, which was usually conducted by salesmen, through regular seminars or official websites.

The second component is the self-regulation and self-evaluation that the writers kept doing throughout the compiling process. That is, “the human mind does not work



in the linear fashion [...] when attempting to find solutions to problems” (Jolly and Bolitho, 1998: 97). As one of the writers revealed in the interview (see Excerpt 5-1):

[Excerpt 5-1]

After I finished the draft design of the activity...I used that blueprint in my class, and observed or predicted what kind of situations happened or would happen during the activity. Then, I **modified it according to my observation or prediction**....(from W2)

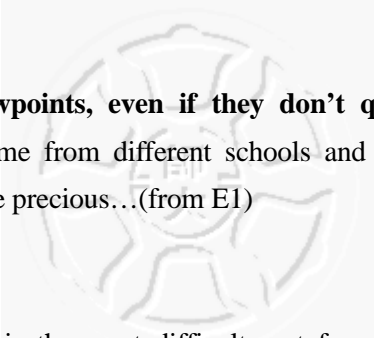
One of the teacher users (B1) also appreciated the adaptation of the in-use textbook every year, where the self-evaluation of the writers was found dynamic.

The third reason is the feature of the teamwork, which can trigger the animate nature of the writing process. All of the interviewed writers revealed that textbook compilation could never be completed without critical but harmonious teamwork. Just as the meaning of “writing together⁴⁶” in Prowse’s (1998) findings, the interviewees in the present study have reflected, “each of us should read the other’s unit and criticize it with the constructive viewpoints” (E1 and W1). In addition, in line with Cheng’s (2000) study, the present results showed that the textbook writers’ teaching experiences, their characteristics, and the students they taught placed an important role in textbook compilation. As the editor (E1) and the writer (W2) expressed in the following excerpts, the critical but constructive atmosphere of the team helped accomplish their masterpiece.

[Excerpt 5-2]

There are more than ten people in our meeting, including three editors and high school teachers. So, in each meeting, there would be a plenty of opinions shared. Actually, **it’s good for the team-work**...I mean, **everyone likes to**

⁴⁶ As one of the interviewees in Prowse (1998: 130) revealed, “ writing together means [...] sitting down at a table together[, and] meet[ing] for a whole evening at a time and are very strict with ourselves.” Another interviewee also showed the importance of getting rid of “ego-problems” in team work; “otherwise, it must be awful and time-consuming” (p.131).



share their own viewpoints, even if they don't quite agree with each other...Since they come from different schools and have diverse students, everyone's opinions are precious...(from E1)

[Excerpt 5-3]

To design an activity is the most difficult part for me...But I'm glad that everyone would help each other **by brainstorming in the meeting...**So, if I am trapped in the process of activities designing, just pose my confusion in the meeting, then **everyone would contribute their own opinions to me. That's why I really appreciate to work with my team members...** (from W2)

To sum up, it was found that the accomplishment of the textbooks had to undergo a dynamic process, where users' viewpoints, writer's teaching experiences, and teamwork all served as important factors interacting with one another. Most important of all, coordinating the writers' opinions and activating the creative process helped accomplish the textbook compilation.

5.1.2 Writing Principles

Compared with the eleven principles generated by Bell and Gower (1998) in their study of writing for a global coursebook (see Table 3-6 for specific explanations), it was found that some of their principles were found in the present study, while some were unique only for local situations (see the details shown in Table 4-18).

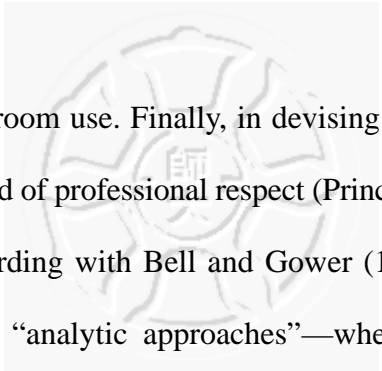
Based on the data gathered from the interview with Textbook A writers, the principles employed at different steps of the compiling process were Principles 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. However, Principles 4 and 5 were not fully adopted. Still others, not found in Bell and Gower's (1998) findings, were Principles (a), (b), and (c), as summarized in Table 5-1:

Table 5-1: A Comparison of the Principles Employed in the Compiling Process of Textbook A and in Bell and Gower’s (1998) Study

Principles Generalized from Bell and Gower’s (1998) Study	Principles Employed in Textbook A’s Compilation
1. Flexibility	1. Flexibility
2. From text to language	2. From text to language
3. Engaging content	3. Engaging content
4. Natural language	4. Natural language*
5. Analytic approaches	5. Analytic approaches*
6. Emphasis on review	6. Emphasis on review
7. Personalized practice	7. Personalized practice
8. Integrated skills	8. Integrated skills
9. Balance of approaches	9. Balance of approaches
10. Learner development	10. Learner development
11. Professional respect	11. Professional respect
Others	Others
--	(a) Systematical organization
--	(b) Contextual and communicative exercise
--	(c) Practical for classroom use

Note. The principles with the Arabic numerals are the ones that can be found in Bell and Gower (1998), while those with the letters a, b, c in the parentheses are the ones generated by the writers from Textbook A. The one with an asterisk “*” represents “partial modification or partial use” of the principle.

With regard to the syllabus organization, learner development (Principle 10) and integrated skills (Principle 8) were taken into consideration. During the process of content arrangement, the topics were considered (Principle 3) and realized with the simplified natural language (Principle 4). The language components were firstly extracted from the text (Principle 2), designed in personalized example sentences (Principle 7) and with analytic practices (Principle 5), then placed into a systematical organization, and most important of all, emphasized on the review (Principle 6). As for the activity design for the language skills, most principles were followed, including the flexibility to move activities around (Principle 1), personalized activity designs (Principle 7), exercises for the integrated skills (Principle 8), balance approaches of learning four skills (Principle 9). Other principles for designing activities were like contextualizing communicative activities and implementing



languages in practical classroom use. Finally, in devising related resources, principles of flexibility (Principle 1) and of professional respect (Principle 11) were utilized.

The principles disaccording with Bell and Gower (1998) were Principles 4 and 5—“natural language” and “analytic approaches”—where the former was slightly modified and the latter “partially” employed in compiling Textbook A. The other three principles uniquely stressed in the present study were (a) the systematical organization of grammar points, (b) the contextualized design of communicative language practices, and (c) the practical use of classroom activities.

The differences mentioned above might result from the writers’ consideration of the local situations, especially when they encountered the dilemma of striking the balance between the theory and the practice. As the editor (E1) confirmed, “the practical situations should be highly concerned from time to time,” even though the textbook compilation was set to follow the theoretical principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Ministry of Education’s (MOE) curriculum guidelines (please refer back to Excerpts 4-1 to 4-3). Furthermore, the differences were found mostly in arranging contents and designing activities for language components and as language skills. These differences were also found to be the difficulties encountered by the writers.

As for the process of content arrangement, the writers reported that they had difficulties in “finding the suitable articles” (see Excerpt 5-4) and in “striking the balance between fun and serious topics and between authentic and simplified texts” (see Excerpt 5-5).

[Excerpt 5-4]

It is **difficult to find the suitable articles**...Sometimes, we would find the articles we like, but after discussion...**if the text did not that fit with students’ proficiency level or interests, then we would put that away**... **That’s why we usually ask the foreign editors’ help** to write the texts that really meet up our needs...(from E1)

[Excerpt 5-5]

Though **our priority is to include more ‘fun’ topics**, yet considering the ‘topic variety,’ we should still **find some texts about ‘serious’ issues also**. Actually, it was easy to find **an ‘authentic’ text** written by native speakers...but after a second thought, we would find **the length and the difficulty level were not that suitable for our students**. So it was hard to strike a balance...(from W1)

To solve these problems, the writers generally would resort to their foreign editors for help (see Excerpts 4-27 and 5-4). The advantages of doing so were to “realize the ideal topics” and to “perform the authentic texts,” while the disadvantages were (1) the communication difficulty they had with the foreign editors (see Excerpt 5-6), and (2) the dissatisfaction of the school teachers with the “unnatural language” (see Tables 5-2 and 5-3).

[Excerpt 5-6]

Not every foreigner is patient. Since **they hardly understand our local situations and needs**, we used to spend a lot of time in communication and articles revision. But after all, they are native speakers...**few of them would tolerate their articles to be revised again and again...** (from W1)

Table 5-2⁴⁷: Other Reflections on the Drawbacks of Textbook A

Aspect	Drawbacks (<i>n</i> =14)	<i>f</i> (%)
Content Arrangement	1. Lack of fun topics	2(7%)
	2. Loosely-organized texts	1(3%)
	3. Lack of topic variety	1(3%)
	4. Out-dated topics	1(3%)
	5. Inauthentic texts	1(3%)

Note. “*f* (%)” stands for “frequency count (percentage);” N=30.

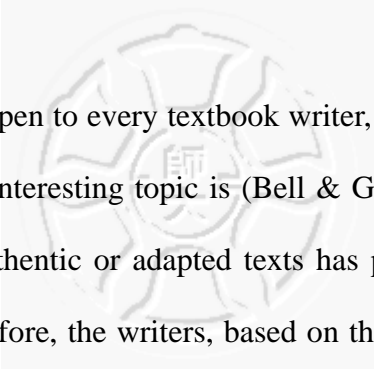
Table 5-3⁴⁸: Expectations for the Future Compilation of Textbook A

Ranking	Item	<i>f</i>	%
1	4. Increase the content interest	19	63.33
2	1. Increase the practicability of TM	18	60.00
2	10. Increase vocabulary activities	18	60.00
4	3. Enhance the practicability of teaching activities	16	53.33
4	7. Advance the topic variety	16	53.33
6	9. Increase integrated activities	14	46.67

Note. “*f* (%)” stands for “frequency count (percentage);” “N=30.”

⁴⁷ This table is extracted from Table 4-6.

⁴⁸ This table is extracted from Table 4-17



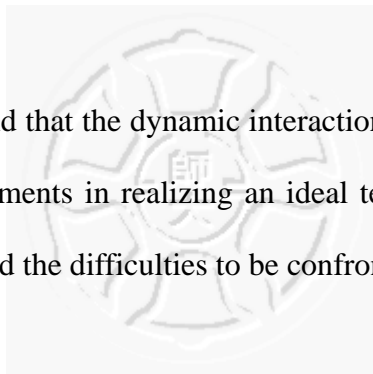
Such problem may happen to every textbook writer, since everyone has different perceptions about what an interesting topic is (Bell & Gower, 1998; Crandall, 1995) and the debate on using authentic or adapted texts has persisted for long (Crandall, 1995; Dunkel, 1995). Therefore, the writers, based on their teaching experiences and learners' learning performance generally would come to an agreement that "as long as the reading texts are comprehensible and challengeable, they would serve as good materials" (E1). This concept is in line with Nuttall's (1996) idea that "suitability," "exploitability," and "readability" are the main criteria for texts selection.

Another difficulty found in the present study is in designing activities for 'grammar practice' and 'extension exercise.' As explained in Excerpt 5-7, the writers had to modify the activities again and again to meet the principles of contextualization and practicality for classroom use.

[Excerpt 5-7]

We would have intensive meetings just to discuss and modify the activities we designed.... We wanted our grammar exercise to be realized in the meaningful contexts, **but sometimes we would find the contextualized exercises hard to design and too far-fetched...** (from W2)

A solution to this problem for Textbook A writers was generally to make good use of their "teamwork," through which more ideas could undergo discussion and brainstorming. It was also suggested that they usually generated their ideas "by observing students' daily life more often" (W3). However, the effects of such solution fell in two sides. The advantages resided in "the realization of the Communicative Language Teaching" (E1), whereas the dissatisfaction with the basic mechanical practices followed (reflected by A2 and A3). The analytic approaches, thus, were desired to be employed more in grammar instruction. Moreover, the practicality of teaching activities was expected to be enhanced with up to 53.33 % of the approval rate from Textbook A respondents.



To sum up, it was found that the dynamic interaction and consolidated teamwork served as the important elements in realizing an ideal textbook, notwithstanding the principles to be modified and the difficulties to be confronted during the process.

5.2 Teachers’ Perceptions about the Textbooks in Use and the NICT Textbooks

This section presents the teachers’ overall perceptions about the features of the textbooks in use in section 5.2.1 and a comparison with the NICT textbooks in section 5.2.2.

5.2.1 Features of the Three Sets of Textbooks in Use

Based on the results gathered from the questionnaires and interviews, the common features shared among the textbooks in use were found to exhibit in their syllabus organization ($M_A = 3.01$; $M_B = 2.87$; $M_C = 2.57$ in Table 5-4), activity design for language skills ($F = 1.48$, $p = 2.33$), and offering related resources ($F = .46$, $p = .63$). See Table 5-4 for details.

Table 5-4: Overall Evaluation of the Textbooks in Use

Features	Textbook A		Textbook B		Textbook C	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Syllabus organization	3.01	.82	2.87	.87	2.57	.74
Content arrangement	2.94	.73	2.85	.78	<u>2.45</u>	.74
Activity design for language skills	<u>2.77</u>	.83	2.70	.77	2.53	.80
Presentation of language components	3.01	.71	<u>2.66</u>	.83	2.53	.76
Related resources	2.94	.88	2.77	.98	2.83	.85
Average	2.93	.80	2.77	.85	2.58	.79

Note. The top two highest scores in each textbook set are boldfaced, while the lowest one is underlined.

In addition, most of the interviewees mentioned that “the textbooks nowadays all provide a variety of topics” (A2, B3, C2, and C3). The finding can also be supported by the arrangement of the topics in the textbooks in use, where the general and literary topics were both enclosed and various types of themes were included (see Table 5-5).

Table 5-5: Topic Arrangement in the Textbooks in Use and the NICT Textbooks

Topic Type	Textbook A		Textbook B		Textbook C		NICT	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
General topics	50	69.4	55	80.9	62	86.1	65	77.4
Literature	22	30.6	13	19.1	10	13.9	9	22.6
Total	72	100	68	100	72	100	84	100

Note. *f* = frequency count; % = percentage.

One possible reason behind these common features is that the textbooks in use were compiled according to the curriculum guidelines issued after the textbook reform in 1995 (MOE, 1995), where the CLT principles were followed (Chen, 2002; Shih, 1998, 2002b). One of the emphases of the CLT principles is on that language should be learned through the communicative contexts (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983; Yalden, 1983). Hence, communicative activities are elaborately designed in the textbooks in order to provide learners with the balanced and integrated practice of four language skills (Grant, 1987; Littlewood, 1981). The reason for another common feature—topic variety—can be explained by the features of CLT principles as well, where learners' needs should be attained (Yalden, 1983). Thus, a variety of topics are provided to reduce the biases against certain groups of students (Su, 1990).

Despite the common features shared among the in-use textbooks, there are some distinctive features of each textbook set. According to the within-group comparison (see Table 5-4), Textbook A was famous for its moderate design of language components ($M = 3.01$). Textbook B was valued as a textbook with the diversity in content arrangement ($M = 2.85$) and Textbook C was appreciated for its friendly design of related teaching resources ($M = 2.83$).

The between-group comparison showed that Textbooks A and B shared many common features with each other except for the design of language components ($M_{(A-B)} = .35, p = .03$). As one of the interviewees revealed, Textbook A was appreciated for this

section due to the “appropriate design of example sentences for vocabulary instruction” (A2). Most of the interviewed writers said that the grammar points were instructed in situational contexts (see Excerpt 4-23), which was also praised by the users ($M_{(A-B)} = .40, p = .04; M_{(A-C)} = .53, p = .01$). One interviewee (A3) approved of the writers’ creativity in designing fun and meaningful contexts for students to learn grammar points. See the following example offered by the interviewee:

Table 5-6: An Example of Fun and Meaningful Contexts for Grammar Learning⁴⁹

<p>Sentence Pattern: $S + V...unless S + V... or Unless S + V..., S + V...$</p> <p>Practice:</p> <p>Once upon a time there was a frog. One day when he was sunbathing on a lily pad, he saw a beautiful princess weeping by the pond. Here is the rest of the story. Complete the conversation between the princess and the frog using the “unless...” pattern.</p> <p>1. Frog: What can I do for you? Princess: Could you help me get my ball from the pond? Frog: I won’t help you <u>unless you promise to take me to your castle.</u> <i>(The Princess promised to take him to her castle. Then the frog got the ball for her.)</i></p> <p>2. Frog: Hey, why are you going so fast? Wait for me! Wait! Princess: Stop shouting at me, frog. Frog: I won’t stop shouting _____. <i>(The princess walked slowly. Later they reached the castle.)</i></p>

Although there were no significant differences among the three textbooks in many aspects, Textbook B yet outfeatured the other two textbook sets in motivating students’ interests ($M = 2.70$) and providing a variety of topics ($M = 3.23$). Such advantages are shown in Table 5-7, where the Textbook B users gave more positive feedbacks on topic variety, and they especially treasured with the presentation of literary works like poetry. See Table 5-8 and Excerpt 5-8 for more illustrations.

⁴⁹ The example is extracted from Textbook A, Vol. III, p. 178.

Table 5-7⁵⁰: Aspects Featured by Textbook B

Featured Aspects	Textbook A		Textbook B		Textbook C	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Content Arrangement						
-- Help motivate students' interests	2.63	.67	2.70	.75	2.37	.76
-- Have topic variety	3.17	.59	3.23	.68	2.67	.80
Activity Design for Language Skills						
-- Provide plentiful exercises for listening skills	2.47	.78	2.70	.70	2.40	.62
-- Provide interactive practices for oral skills	2.53	.68	2.63	.89	2.27	.91
Other Related Resources						
-- Provide multiple ways for assessment	3.03	.81	3.07	.98	2.90	.84

Note. The highest score for each aspect is boldfaced.

Table 5-8⁵¹: Features of Content Arrangement for Textbook B

Features (<i>n</i> = 15)	<i>f</i> (%)
1. Bountiful topics	5(17%)
2. Topics which help motivate students' interests (e.g., topics related to students' daily life, interesting topics)	3(10%)
3. Topic unity/integration	1(3%)

Note. "*f* (%)" stands for "frequency count (percentage);" "N=30."

[Excerpt 5-8]

I like **the instruction of poetry**...for example, the first two volumes present the knowledge about "**rhymes and rhythms**," while the third volume introduce "**metaphors and similes**"...(they are instructed step by step)...(from B2)

Textbook C was appreciated for its offering of related teaching resources ($M = 2.83$, higher than other categories in Table 5-4), especially in providing "practical exercises⁵²" for sentence structures in the student book and in students' workbook ($M = 2.80$, higher than the other two sets in Table 4-5). A specific example is shown below:

⁵⁰ The table is extracted from Tables 4-2 and 4-3.

⁵¹ This table is extracted from Table 4-7.

⁵² "Practical exercises" are "step-by-step" pattern practices, where a grammar point is introduced with two practices. One is a mechanic one and the other is a more communicative one.

Table 5-9: An Example of Practical Exercises for Grammar Learning⁵³

<p>Sentence Pattern: <i>S + has/have/had + V-en</i></p> <p>Exercise A:</p> <p><i>Read the statements and finish the sentences on the next page (p.89) with the words given and the pattern above. The first one has been done for you.</i></p> <p>1. Cathy weighted 155 pounds. Now she weighs 110 pounds. (<i>lose/pound</i>) → Cathy <u>has lost 45 pounds</u>.</p> <p>2. Allen went to America for the first time two years ago. He went there again last year. (<i>be/America/twice</i>) → Up to now, Allen _____.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Exercise B:</p> <p><i>Michael and Leo are talking about the latest box office hit, “The Return of the King.” Complete the following dialogue with the words given and the pattern above.</i></p> <p>M: The movie <i>The Return of the King</i> hit the big screen last month and was an instant success.</p> <p>L: You’re telling me. Up to now, _____ (<i>the movie/bring in</i>) millions of dollars at the box office.</p> <p>...</p>

In addition, according to the interview data, the bountiful information Textbook C provided in its teachers’ manual and supplementary materials for students were also appreciated (see Table 5-10 and Excerpt 5-9).

Table 5-10⁵⁴: Features of Related Resources for Textbook C

Features (<i>n</i> = 15)	<i>f</i> (%)
1. Bountiful resources (e.g., TM, supplementary workbooks)	4(13%)
2. Clear layout	1(3%)

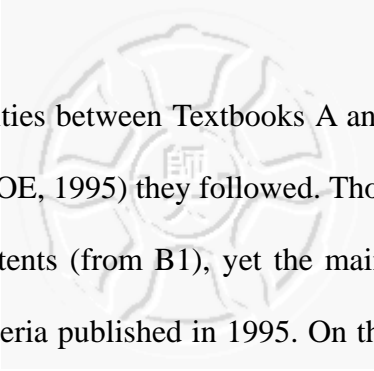
Note. “*f* (%)” stands for “frequency count (percentage);” “*N*=30.”

[Excerpt 5-9]

...there are a lot of information about cultures in teachers’ manual...and it is quite **handy, convenient and time-saving** for teachers...the supplementary materials like multi-media CD-ROM and students’ workbooks really **benefit teaching and learning a lot**...(from C2)

⁵³ The example is extracted from Textbook C, Vol. I, pp. 88-89.

⁵⁴ This table is extracted from Table 4-8.



To sum up, the similarities between Textbooks A and B can be explained by the same curriculum criteria (MOE, 1995) they followed. Though Textbook B would have yearly adaptation in its contents (from B1), yet the main compiling principles were based on the curriculum criteria published in 1995. On the other hand, Textbook C is the latest textbook that joined the market, part of which followed the modified curriculum guidelines issued in 2003. Therefore, it was believed that Textbook C might have also strived for some distinguishing features of its own, such as separating the oral and listening practices from the reading texts or increasing the portion of informative topics (see Table 4-8).

The differences among the three in-use textbooks can be explained by the manipulation of the market mechanism (Haines, 1966; Lan, 2004). Ever since the editorial market opened, the publishers have encountered a great deal of competition on the market. It is inevitable for publishers to rectify the drawbacks found in other versions, especially the old standard ones, and to have their own features (Chen, 2002). Moreover, the textbook writers may have less writing experiences at the onset of the open market, though they may have experiences in teaching (Hsu, 2004). In addition, it is necessary to place users' needs as the top priority in the compiling process (Masuhara, 1998). However, users' needs are diverse. Thus, adaptations were done regularly to meet the users' needs. Such phenomenon also may be derived from one of the compiling principles in the curriculum guidelines (MOE, 1995), which states that textbook compilation should serve the students of different proficiency levels. Hence, the in-use textbooks set up their distinctive features in order to attain most of their target students.

5.2.2 Comparison with the NICT Textbooks

Results gained from Paired Samples *T*-test of the thirty-eight teachers' evaluation on the NICT textbooks and the in-use ones are summarized in Table 5-11. The overall

comparison showed that the in-use textbooks gained significantly higher appreciation than the NICT textbooks in three aspects: content arrangement ($t = 3.14, p = .00$), activity design for language skills ($t = 11.13, p = .00$), and providing related teaching resources ($t = 12.93, p = .00$). No significant differences were found with respect of syllabus organization and design of language components, though the NICT textbooks were not given higher scores for these two categories.

Table 5-11: Overall Comparison between Three In-use Textbooks and NICT Textbooks

Features	In-use		NICT		<i>t</i> - test	
	Textbooks		Textbooks		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Syllabus organization	2.89	.85	2.68	.97	1.58	.123
Content arrangement	2.83	.90	2.29	.99	3.14	.003
Activity design for language skills	2.83	.79	1.68	.98	11.13	.000
Presentation of language components	2.84	.85	2.80	.98	.22	.828
Related resources	3.03	.97	1.32	1.03	12.93	.000
Average	2.88	.71	2.15	.71	6.64	.000

Note. The highest score in each textbook set is boldfaced.

The specific aspects where the in-use textbooks have made significant progress can be seen in Table 5-12. As for the syllabus organization, it was found that the in-use textbooks significantly improved in fitting their syllabus design with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching ($t = 5.61, p = .00$). With the respect to the content arrangement, the in-use textbooks were significantly valued especially in motivating students' interests ($t = 3.18, p = .00$), and in presenting contents with a variety of topics ($t = 4.16, p = .00$) as well as text types ($t = 2.11, p = .04$). The other two aspects where the in-use textbooks gained significantly higher approval were their design for language activities ($t = 11.13, p = .00$) and offering of teaching resources ($t = 12.93, p = .00$).

Table 5-12: Features of the In-use Textbooks Compared with the NICT Textbooks

Features	In-use Textbooks		NICT Textbooks		<i>t</i> - test	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Syllabus Organization						
-- Meet with the Communicative Approach	3.08	.82	2.26	.86	5.61	.00
Content Arrangement						
-- Help motivate students' interest	2.68	.81	2.08	.91	3.18	.00
-- Show topic variety	3.24	.85	2.26	1.06	4.16	.00
-- Show text variety	2.92	.91	2.47	1.01	2.11	.04
Activity design for Language skills						
-- Provide plentiful exercises for listening skills	2.74	.76	1.42	1.06	7.42	.00
-- Provide interactive practices for oral skills	2.66	.91	1.45	.92	10.07	.00
-- Provide various trainings for reading skills	2.84	.79	1.92	1.00	5.16	.00
-- Provide basic trainings for writing skills	3.11	.76	1.79	.91	7.98	.00
-- Provide diverse integrated activities	2.82	.69	1.84	.95	7.31	.00
Related Resources						
-- Provide ample suggestions in TM	3.13	.99	1.66	.91	8.80	.00
-- Provide sufficient supplements in TM	3.32	.81	1.66	.99	9.31	.00
-- Provide practical exercises in Ss' workbook	2.84	.82	1.63	1.15	5.41	.00
-- Provide multiple ways for assessment	3.13	.91	.68	.74	14.26	.00
-- Provide supplementary materials	2.71	1.18	.95	.90	10.89	.00

Note: "Ss" stands for "students;" "TM" stands for "teachers' manual." N = 38.

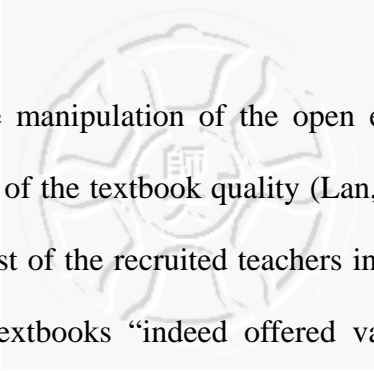
All of the satisfactions above also corresponded to the teachers' perceptions about the achievements in textbook functions in the open editorial system (see Table 5-13). Over half of the respondents (64.44%) approved of the multiple learning ways offered by the in-use textbooks, and about half of them (45.56%) agreed on the benefits of elevating teachers' power and of elaborating teaching techniques.

Table 5-13⁵⁵: Achievements Found in Textbook Functions in the Open Editorial System

Ranking	Achievements	<i>f</i>	%
1	Offer multiple ways of learning	58	64.44
2	Empower teachers	41	45.56
2	Elaborate teaching techniques	41	45.56

Note. N = 90

⁵⁵ This table is extracted from Table 4-15.



It may result from the manipulation of the open editorial competition, which encourage the improvement of the textbook quality (Lan, 2003). As Chen (2002) and Hsu (2004) have found, most of the recruited teachers in the present study perceived that the new sets of the textbooks “indeed offered various topics and texts that motivate students’ interest” (e.g., A2 and B2). Moreover, “the new textbook sets put more emphasis on the balanced and integrated training of the four language skills than the NICT textbooks” (e.g., A3 and C3). Most important of all, the service of the publishers was obviously improved especially in providing teachers with the bountiful supplementary materials and information (e.g., A1, B1, and C1). These satisfactions confirm not merely that the learners have been regarded as the center of the learning system, but that their learning process can smoothly proceed with the help of an effective and interactive medium (Cunningsworth, 1995; Tomplinson, 2004; Yalden, 1983).

On the other hand, the NICT textbooks were appreciated for certain features. For example, the respondents gave the NICT textbooks almost the same scores for the syllabus organization ($t = 1.58, p = .12$) and the presentation of language components ($t = .22, p = .83$). It was even found that the NICT textbooks earned the same satisfaction as the in-use textbooks in fitting with the limited class period ($t = .00, p = 1.00$) and in presenting important phrases ($t = .00, p = 1.00$). Most important of all, the NICT version outscored the in-use textbooks by “having good linkage,” “selecting adequate amount of vocabulary,” and “presenting sentence structures systematically” (see Table 5-14). Most of the interviewees who used the NICT version before (e.g., A2, B2, and C3) explained that the NICT textbooks, though containing monotonous topics, yet presented the vocabulary, phrases, and grammar points in a spiral way (refer back to Excerpt 4-18).

Table 5-14: Features of the NICT Textbooks Compared with the In-use Textbooks

Featured Aspects	In-use Textbooks		NICT Textbooks		<i>t</i> - test	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Syllabus Organization					
-- Have good linkage	2.58	.79	2.63	.88	-.30	.77
-- Fit with the limited class periods	2.66	.71	2.66	.91	.00	1.00
Presentation of Language Components						
-- Select adequate amount of vocabulary	2.87	.84	2.89	1.03	-.16	.88
-- Select important phrases to be introduced	2.95	.80	2.95	.90	.00	1.00
-- Present sentence structures systematically	2.55	.98	2.61	1.03	-.25	.80

In addition to the aforementioned features, the NICT textbooks were also appreciated for its selection of the some classical texts. For instance, one interviewee expressed, “all of the textbooks recruited the classical article like *I Have a Dream*, but [I think] the NICT textbooks did the best job in designing such text⁵⁶” (C3). Other classical texts found in the NICT textbooks, such as *Information, Please, Three Days to See*, and Robert Frost’s poems, were also recruited in the in-use textbooks. Another interview (C1) even introduced the story of Helen Keller to students by xeroxing the text presented in the NICT version mainly because it was better organized.

Above all, the NICT textbooks were mostly appreciated for its spirally-organized presentation of grammar points and its selection of classical texts. As Chen (2002) interpreted, the evidence found in the present study implies that the NICT version has indeed been a good model for the new textbook sets. These thus explain the reason why up to 43.33% of the respondents expected the standard version to join the open editorial market (see Table 4-18).

⁵⁶ The interviewee explained that the NICT textbook always extracted the most authentic and essential parts when classical articles like *I Have a Dream* were taught.

5.3 Compromises between Writers and Users

Section 5.3.1 interprets the mismatch between textbook users' and writers' perceptions about the in-use textbooks, and section 5.3.2 presents the compromises between them.

5.3.1 Users' Expectations and Needs

Although up to 75.55% of the recruited teachers were satisfied with the open editorial market with multiple textbooks to be chosen, it was shown that they still had some expectations about the textbooks in the future (see Table 5-15). Their expectations can be classified into five categories (i.e., linkage management, topic arrangement, activity design for language skills, grammar organization, and offering of related resources).

Table 5-15⁵⁷: Ranking of the Needs for the Future Textbook Compilation

Ranking	Needs	<i>f</i>	%
1	Increase the content interest	46	51.11
2	Increase the practicability of teachers' manual	44	48.89
3	Enhance the practicability of teaching activities	41	45.56
3	Enhance activity integration	41	45.56
5	Advance the topic variety	38	42.22
6	Improve the introduction about vocabulary knowledge	37	41.11
7	Increase the readability of the texts	35	38.89
8	Increase the text variety	34	37.78
9	Improve grammar activities	27	30.00
9	Improve writing activities	27	30.00
11	Enhance syllabus organization	22	24.44
12	Improve speaking practices/activities	19	21.11
12	Improve reading practices/activities	19	21.11
14	Increase the difficulty levels	16	17.78
15	Improve listening practices/activities	11	12.22
16	Others	2	2.22

Note. The teachers were told to select more than one item, if necessary. The number of items that one respondent had selected ranged from 1 to 11.

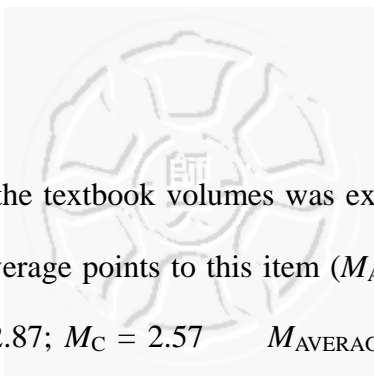
⁵⁷ This table is derived from Table 4-17. The number “*f* (frequency count)” for each item is gained by summing up the number of “*f*” (frequency count) for each textbook set in Table 4-17. Then, the ranking is rearranged.

Reasonable Amount

One of the needs is the reasonable amount of the materials because the item “fitting with the limited class periods” was least satisfied in terms of the syllabus organization ($M_A = 2.80$; $M_B = 2.77$; $M_C = 2.33$). Since they all had limited class periods, they would often feel that they had to cover everything in the book within a short period of time. Therefore, it was often “a common dilemma among the textbook writers” (A3, B2, and C1) to decide on the amount. Most teachers reflected that they only had an average of five class periods per week, which were not enough for them to cover twelve units in one semester. One of the interviewees (A3), though appreciated the bountiful contents writers provided, still revealed, “Even if there are about eighteen weeks in one semester, yet some class periods would be used up for the school activities like a sports day or a class singing contest.” Therefore, the real class periods would be more limited and some units would be assigned as self-reading materials. Even some activities like oral practices would be considered unimportant and then be removed, “not to mention those placing at the end of the textbooks” (C2). Another reason why the teachers need the textbook to be revised might arise from the fact that “students’ ability has generally degraded so that more time would be needed to absorb the materials provided by the writers and teachers” (A2 and C2), as can be seen in Excerpt 5-10:

[Excerpt 5-10]

The class time is very limited, especially for those first graders.... because **students used to do multiple choices**, rather than really “read” and “write”...and **their grammar knowledge is very fragile**. Thus, we teachers would **spend a lot of time instructing reading and writing skills, even helping them catch some basic grammar**. Time is really not enough...
(from C2)



Better Linkage

Better linkage among the textbook volumes was expected because the recruited teachers gave lower-than-average points to this item ($M_A = 2.73 < M_{AVERAGE} = 3.01$; $M_B = 2.53 < M_{AVERAGE} = 2.87$; $M_C = 2.57 < M_{AVERAGE} = 2.57$, also refer back to Table 4-1). Some interviewees (e.g., A2, B2, and C2) recommended that the linkage management begin with the vocabulary control, where the portion of the vocabulary learning can be enlarged gradually. Such expectation was supported by up to 41.11% of the recruited teachers in enhancing the vocabulary knowledge with related instruction in collocation (see Table 5-13). Moreover, echoing to Chen's (2002) findings, these needs were found in the linkage between junior high and senior high textbooks, regardless of the version differences (see Table 5-16).

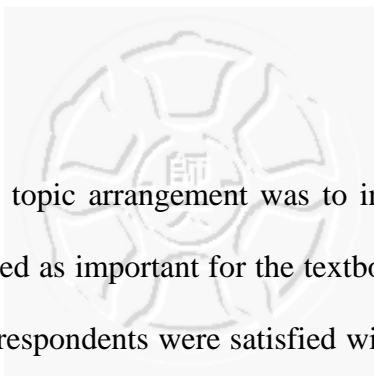
Table 5-16⁵⁸: Teachers' Expectations about the Linkage Management for the Textbooks in the Future

Version	Expectations	<i>f</i> (%)
Textbook A	Needs for better linkage (e.g., huge gap between Volumes IV and V)	2(7%)
Textbook B	Needs for better linkage materials for 1st graders	1(3%)
Textbook C	Needs for smoother linkage (e.g., reduce difficult patterns shown in Volume I)	2(7%)

Note. "*f*(%)" stands for "frequency count (percentage)," N=30.

The consequence would be like what one teacher revealed in the interview, "If the texts suddenly turn complex; for example, they contain longer or complicated sentences, students would easily feel frustrated and then give up learning" (B2). Following Yeh's (2003) text analysis, the difficulty level in each textbook should be manipulated with care to avoid the gap between the volumes.

⁵⁸ This table is extracted from Table 4-6 to Table 4-8.



More Interesting Topics

The prior need for the topic arrangement was to increase students' interests in topics. This was also reflected as important for the textbook compilation in the future (51.11%). Even though the respondents were satisfied with the topic variety provided by the writers ($M_A = 3.17$, $M_B = 3.23$, $M_C = 2.67$), they still expected more interesting topics to be selected to motivate learners (see Table 5-17). For example, one interviewee (A1) of Textbook A anticipated more topics dealing with the stories about ordinary people “that can really move learners” and “that students can easily identify themselves with” (see more details in Excerpt 4-6). An interviewee (C2) of Textbook C suggested the writers include more fancy and fashionable topics in their textbooks, such as pop songs, latest movies, or famous people but still alive.

Table 5-17⁵⁹: Teacher Expectations about the Topic Selection for the Textbooks in the Future

Version	Expectations	<i>f</i> (%)
Textbook A	Needs for fun topics	2(7%)
Textbook B	1. Needs for more topics related to daily life (e.g., news or essays)	3(10%)
	2. Increase topic variety (e.g., especially lack of scientific texts)	3(10%)
Textbook C	1. Needs for other general topics (i.e., too much science topics, or informative texts)	3(10%)
	2. Needs for inspirable topics	1(3%)
	3. Needs for interesting topics (esp. in Volumes III & IV)	1(3%)

Note. “*f*(%)” stands for “frequency count (percentage);” N=30.

More Topics in Different Fields

To increase topic variety was also mentioned by 42.22% of the teacher users, which indicated that more topics in different fields were expected to be selected. Actually, the in-use textbooks have earned a great deal of appreciation in providing a wide range of topics, compared with the NICT textbooks ($M = 3.24$, $p = .00$). As

⁵⁹ This table is extracted from Tables 4-6 to 4-8.

shown in the Table 5-18, the topics included in the in-use textbooks covered a variety of areas ranging from social issues like family and humanity to science fields like health and technology.

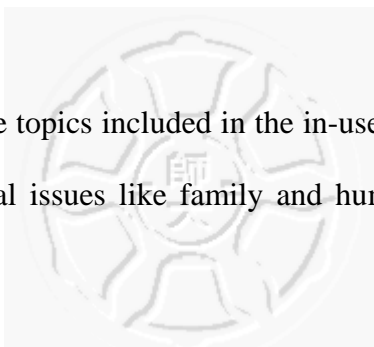


Table 5-18: Topic Arrangement of Textbooks in Use and NICT Textbooks⁶⁰

Topic Type	Textbook A		Textbook B		Textbook C		NICT	
	<i>f</i> (%)	R	<i>f</i> (%)	R	<i>f</i> (%)	R	<i>f</i> (%)	R
Art and fashion	1 (2.0)	11	1 (1.8)	9	3 (4.8)	9	3 (4.6)	7
Family and humanity	0 (0.0)	13	3 (5.5)	7	1 (1.6)	13	2 (3.1)	10
Geography	3 (6.0)	6	1 (1.8)	9	3 (4.8)	9	3 (4.6)	7
Health and sports	2 (4.0)	9	6(10.9)	4	5 (8.1)	6	6 (9.2)	5
Interpersonal relationship	1 (2.0)	11	9(16.4)	2	8(12.9)	1	5 (7.7)	6
Language and communication	8(16.0)	2	5 (9.1)	5	4 (6.5)	7	13(20.0)	1
Language learning	4 (8.0)	5	1 (1.8)	9	2 (3.2)	12	2 (3.1)	10
Life and culture	12(24.0)	1	3 (5.5)	7	3 (4.8)	9	8(12.3)	4
Nature and environment	3 (6.0)	6	8(14.5)	3	8(12.9)	1	9(13.8)	2
People	5(10.0)	4	12(21.8)	1	7(11.3)	4	9(13.8)	2
Psychology	2 (4.0)	9	5 (9.1)	5	4 (6.5)	7	2 (3.1)	10
Science and technology	6(12.0)	3	1 (1.8)	9	8(12.9)	1	3 (4.6)	7
Others	3 (6.0)	6	0 (0.0)	13	6 (9.7)	5	0 (0.0)	13
Total units	50(100.0)		55(100.0)		62(100.0)		65(100.0)	

Note. *f* (%) = frequency count (percentage); R = ranking. The top three highest three ratings in each textbook set are shadowed.

Yet, the recruited teachers had expectations. For instance, Textbook B users, though most satisfied with its topic variety ($M_B = 3.23 > M_A = 3.17 > M_C = 2.67$), suggested that Textbook B writers provide more texts about science and technology⁶¹ (10%) or more topics related to daily life like news reports (10%). On the other hand, Textbook C respondents expected to have other writing styles of articles rather than the “informative” ones⁶² (refer back to Excerpt 4-7). The writers of Textbook A had

⁶⁰ Only general topic types were coded in this table; literary works were excluded. The coding system was based on the topic types for junior high English textbooks listed in the Nine-Year English Curriculum Guidelines (see Appendix J).

⁶¹ One of the reasons explained by Teacher B3 was that the students of science majors would then be interested in the topics related to the science field.

⁶² According to Teachers C1 and C3, the articles included in Textbook C appeared to be monotonous,

reflected from the teachers' feedback that "more diverse and authentic tone should be devised" (E1 and W2) as well. That is, the readers considered that "most of the texts were devised by a single writer, even by a non-native speaker" (W1). Thus, more diversity in the writing tone is necessary.

More Practical Activities

Despite the fact that the in-use textbooks were highly advanced in activity design of language skills in the open editorial system ($t = 11.13, p = .00$), up to 45.56 % of the recruited teachers expected to "enhance the practicality of the teaching activities." The major need lies in "reduce[ing] the portion of language activities" (A2 and A3) and "placing the most practical activity in the textbooks" (A1 and C2). The "practical" activities that the recruited teachers highlighted are the ones that can be finished in the limited class period and the ones that help prepare students for the college entrance exam. Thus, even though Textbook A was highly appreciated for its creativity in activity design ($M_A = 2.77 > M_B = 2.70 > M_C = 2.53$), yet the users still pinpointed the needs for more practical activities, such as "basic mechanical practices" (A1), "vocabulary and writing activities" (A2). Other suggestions can be seen in Table 5-19.

Table 5-19⁶³: Teacher Expectations about the Activity Design for the Textbooks in the Future

Version	Expectations	<i>f</i> (%)
Textbook A	1. More exercises for reading skills (e.g., pre- and post-reading questions)	1(3%)
	2. Needs for more "motivating" activities	1(3%)
	3. Needs for more class period	1(3%)
Textbook B	1. Needs for more authentic conversation	2(7%)
	2. Needs for more interesting conversation	1(3%)
	3. Reduce mistakes found in the writing activities	1(3%)
Textbook C	Needs for more oral and listening practices (<i>i.e.</i> , more unity and integration of the four language skills)	1(3%)

Note. "*f*(%)" stands for "frequency count (percentage);" N=30.

because "most of them are too informative." Sometimes, the readers could hardly get the main theme.

⁶³ This table is extracted from Tables 4-6 to 4-8.

Systematic Presentation of Grammar Points

Another expectation of the teachers was concerned with the organization of the grammar points. Responding to the category about the design of language components, the recruited teachers showed a strong need in responding to the item “presenting sentence structures systematically” ($M_A = 2.83$; $M_B = 2.37$; $M_C = 2.30$, ranked the lowest in Table 4-4). Compared with the NICT textbooks, the in-use textbooks received lower appreciation in this aspect ($t = -.25$, $p = .80$). Some teachers (e.g., A1, A2, B1, and C2) had the ideal that the grammar points could be instructed in one unit and later reviewed in another, just as the treatment in the NICT textbooks⁶⁴. Students thus would be provided with more chances to exercise and recapture their grammatical knowledge. Other specific expectations for improving the grammar instruction for the in-use textbooks can be seen in Table 5-20 and Excerpt 5-11.

Table 5-20⁶⁵: Teachers’ Expectations about the Grammar Instruction for the Textbooks in the Future

Version	Expectations	<i>f</i> (%)
Textbook A	Needs for more appropriate order of sentence patterns	1(3%)
Textbook B	1. Needs for more spiral organization	2(7%)
	2. More appropriate selection of the grammar points	1(3%)
	3. Needs for more balance in patterns instruction	1(3%)
Textbook C	1. More delicate design of the patterns’ title/instruction	2(7%)
	2. Reduce mistakes in patterns presentation	2(7%)

Note. “*f*(%)” stands for “frequency count (percentage);” “N=30.”

[Excerpt 5-11]

Grammar instruction of Textbook A is **not sequentially organized**. The senior high freshmen usually feel terrified and frustrated by **grammar learning in Volume I, which is much more difficult than the later volumes**. However, the patterns instructed in Volume II are too easy for students, even the usage of some phrases is also introduced as a pattern. In Volume III, the grammar learning appears to be more difficult again, so

⁶⁴ For example, according to the interviewee (A2), the reason the NICT was appreciated for its grammar organization had to do with the repetition of the sentence patterns taught in different volumes.

⁶⁵ This table is extracted from Tables 4-6 to 4-8.

there is a huge gap between Volume II and Volume III. (from A2)

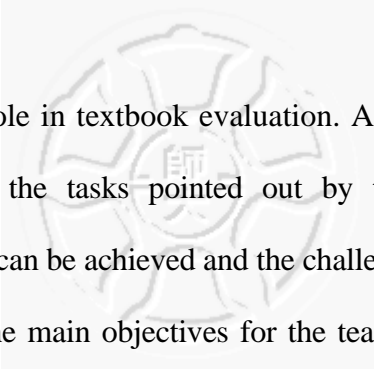
More Useful Resources

With regard to the needs for learning/teaching resources, the recruited teachers expected the writers to provide them with sufficient and useful supplementary materials, even though the in-use textbooks have earned more appreciation than the NICT textbooks ($t = 12.93, p = .00$). For example, some teachers recommended the publishers to provide “more practical and related supplementary materials like outside readings” and “better services,” etc. (A1 and C2). Moreover, the teachers also gave lower points to the design of the workbooks ($M_A = 2.63; M_B = 2.60; M_C = 2.80$, also refer back to Table 4-5). As the teachers explained in the interviews, the workbooks were expected to “provide more test items which are related to those in the Joint College Entrance Examination (JCEE)” (B2) “than the communicative or creative exercises” (A3). See Excerpt 5-12 for more explanations.

[Excerpt 5-12]

...some of the exercises, such as “sentence-combing” or “crossword,” are **not challenging enough**. Actually, I cannot deny that such kind of design is creative and interesting, **but the truth is that we don’t test students in this way and that class period is very limited. What they need to do** is like “blank-filling” or “cloze for vocabulary,” which **simulates the test item in our monthly or JCEE exams**... (from A3)

Another need for related resources is “to increase the practicality of the teachers’ manual” (48.89%, the second priority as shown in Table 5-16). The practicality in the teachers’ mind referred to the “convenient and easy-to-carry” reference book, where “specific instruction steps are presented in detail” (A1 and E1) and “bountiful teaching activities are provided” (C2 and W3). In other words, such need indicates that “task factors” (Richard, 1998) and “teachers’ manual” (Skierso, 1991) are playing



more and more important role in textbook evaluation. As has been stated in Richard (1998), the practicality of the tasks pointed out by the teachers show that the teaching/learning objectives can be achieved and the challenging activities are provided. In line with Chen (2002), the main objectives for the teachers in the present research were to prepare their students for the college entrance exam and further education.

5.3.2 Writers' Compromises

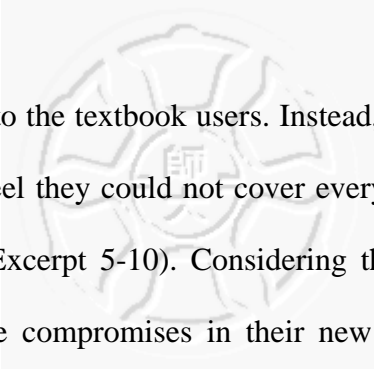
In reality, textbook writers are believed to be “confronted with not only the harsh realities of commercial publishing but by some of the diverse needs of potential users” (Bell and Gower, 1998: 125). Such is also true in the present study that the recruited writers reflected some problems and pressure from the publishers and official reviewers to the school teachers and students. Even so, it is writers who usually make a compromise, though sometimes they may have their own insistence⁶⁶. To overcome the aforementioned difficulties and to produce a workable textbook, compromise are made time after time during the compilation process. The compromises found in the present research⁶⁷ are discussed below.

Fixed Content with Flexible Use

Being aware from the initial feedback that some teachers might feel they had to cover everything in the book, Textbook A writers thus employed the principle of “flexibility” in textbook compilation. For example, they used to “provide teachers with as many communicative language activities as possible in the textbook” (E1), and they believed that “teachers could make a ‘flexible’ use of it” (E1). Yet, their idea

⁶⁶ The editor (E1) revealed in the interview that when confronted with the criticism from the teachers, the publisher, even the official reviewers, “usually, ‘we’ (writers) are the one to make compromise, yet sometimes we would insist on our own point.”

⁶⁷ Most of the compromises found in the present research were mainly derived from Textbook A writers, since only Textbook A writers accepted the interview.



seemed not fully conveyed to the textbook users. Instead, it brought pressure to some teachers since they might feel they could not cover everything in the book given the limited class periods (see Excerpt 5-10). Considering these complaints, the writers thus planned to make some compromises in their new adaptations—“reducing the portion of activities by only presenting the most practical one or two in the student book and then removing the rest of activities to the resource books” (W2).

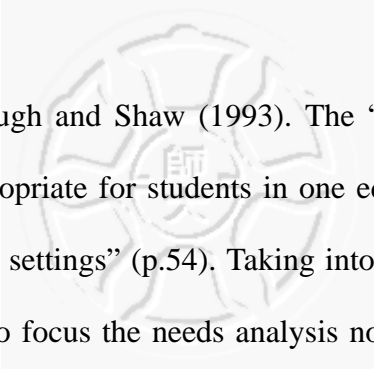
Simplification of the Text Difficulty

In response to the teachers’ needs for better linkage between the volumes, the writers were found to have taken the difficulty level of the vocabulary and sentence patterns into serious consideration at the onset of the textbook compilation (see Excerpt 4-27). Nonetheless, the teachers still expected to have smoother linkage not only among the volumes but between the junior and senior high curriculums. Recognizing the teachers’ needs, the writers tried to adapt the textbooks. Take Textbook A for example. Books V and VI had undergone a process of adaptation⁶⁸ because “there was a gap between Book IV and Book V” (A2 and A3). In doing so, the teachers found that some easy patterns like “*some...others...*” were introduced in the later volumes, while difficult patterns such as the usage of participle phrases appeared in the early volumes. For this part, the writers also made a compromise in that more difficult patterns would be revised or provided with more instructive suggestions in the future editions (E1).

More Fun Topics with “Moral” Teaching

One of the writers’ explanation for the teachers’ needs for more interesting topics

⁶⁸ According to Writer W1, “the text complexity of Books V and VI was simplified in the second edition in order to bridge the gap between them.”



can be noticed in McDonough and Shaw (1993). The “individual differences” was mentioned that “topics appropriate for students in one educational environment may not be applicable in another settings” (p.54). Taking into account of diverse learners, writers are thus suggested to focus the needs analysis not only on language learning process but also on learners’ cultural background (Nelson, 1995).

As Bell and Gower (1998) pinpointed, “[writers] could not please everyone” (p.128). More often than not, the writers would resort to their instincts and experiences to search for the suitable and interesting topics. However, the fact is that even if the writers had done some compromises in striking a balance among the variety of topics, it was still a knotty issue. To deal with it, the writers of Textbook A chose to persist in maintaining their features of topic selection (refer back to Excerpt 4-21) and take the teachers’ opinions (see Excerpt 5-13) into consideration as well.

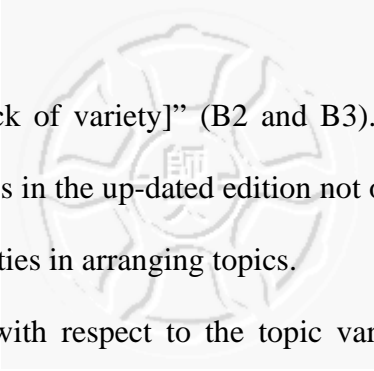
[Excerpt 5-13]

Everyone has different taste, even if we had kept searching various topics especially fun topics for long...The topics we selected may be interesting to us or to certain groups of students, but may not be that attractive to others. **Even the teachers have different perceptions from students, but since they are the ones to select the textbooks, most of the time we would take teachers’ needs into consideration...**(from E1)

More Topics in Different Fields

In response to teachers’ needs for more variety in topic arrangement, Textbook B was observed to make an obvious compromise in the annual adaptation. Although most of the users of Textbook B agreed that Textbook B had a variety of topics ($M_B = 3.23 > M_A = 3.17 > M_C = 2.67$), yet some teachers still expected that “[it] should not put a series of similar topics together⁶⁹ because such kind of arrangement would

⁶⁹ Textbook B used to put two related topics into one theme. Usually, there would be 6 themes in one volume, such as “environmental issues,” “health and sports,” and “literary works,” etc.



make [the readers] feel [lack of variety]" (B2 and B3). Consequently, Textbook B tended to change some topics in the up-dated edition not only to meet the users' needs but also to avoid the difficulties in arranging topics.

Another compromise with respect to the topic variety can be noted from the interview with the writers of Textbook A. According to the writers (E1 and W1), many teachers reflected that the writing style of Textbook A was monotonous and not authentic⁷⁰. Such comments were believed to arise from the solution to the difficulties in searching for the suitable topics, where the foreign editors were invited to help realize the ideal articles⁷¹. In order to meet these teachers' needs, the writers planned in their future compilation to "reduce the portion of the texts written by the foreign editors" and "try best to search for authentic reading materials containing suitable topics and then do further adaptation" (E1 and W1).

Inclusion of More Mechanical Drills for Language Skills

Based on the interview with the writers of Textbook A, one of the biggest compromises they made was to "reduce the portion of the follow-up language activities," which was once devised as "a top feature" and "a great deal of efforts was placed in" (E1, W1, W2, and W3). The main reason was the limited class time (see Excerpt 5-10). The teachers thus expected to enhance the "practicality" of language activities (see Excerpt 5-12). In view of this, the writers determined to simplify the activity design and remove the extra activities into the resource books. But the writers still insisted on their ideal (see Excerpt 5-14).

⁷⁰ "Some of the recruited teachers doubted the texts were all from the same person, who might be a non-native speaker" (W1).

⁷¹ According to the writers (E1, W1, and W2), it was a dilemma to struggle between the ideal of finding suitable topics and the choice of authentic texts. "To face up to the difficulties in finding texts with a suitable topic of the right length, at the right level of comprehensibility, as well as an accessible degree of humor," the workable compensation for the authenticity was then to resort to foreign editors' helps. More details can be referred back to Excerpt 4-25.

[Excerpt 5-14]

...I still hold a strong belief in the activity design. **I insisted to put at least one communicative activity in each unit**, even though I know some teachers dislike to conduct the classroom activities....Besides, **we put our ideas and suggestions in teachers' manual or other resource books, just as teachers' reference, whether they want to use it or not**....(from E1)

Another compromise came from the teachers' needs for more basic mechanical drills in grammar. Originally, the writers of Textbook A wanted to teach grammar in meaningful contexts, so most of the pattern practices were designed within the conversations or the stories related to the topic of the unit (refer back to Excerpt 4-23). Nevertheless, the users expected to get more basic mechanical drills and some straightforward instruction (see Excerpt 5-12 for example). Understanding the teachers' considerations and the difficulties in realizing the grammar instruction in real contexts (refer back to Excerpt 5-7), the writers agreed on the later adaptations as follows.

[Excerpt 5-15]

Sometimes we would find...we tried so hard to design this part **but ended up with little appreciation**...Then, we started to consider making some **adaptations**...For example, we may **present only two practices** in each pattern introduction—**one for mechanical drills, one for contextualized conversation**...the space for grammar instruction is thus getting smaller...(from W1)

More Explanations for Grammar Points in the Teachers' Manual

Despite the fact that “the principle of ‘systematic organization’ was employed in the arrangement of grammar points” (E1), there were still some complaints from the recruited teachers (e.g., A1). For example, the teachers reflected that “the usage of participle phrases should be formally instructed as long as it appeared in the main text” (E1). The writers understood the teachers' request, but they had their own consideration (see Excerpt 5-16).

[Excerpt 5-16]

...we kept explaining that **we would introduce the grammar points from the easy one**. So, we cannot introduce the usage of the participle phrases **in Volume I, because it is too difficult for students**....But we definitely would formally introduce the usage of it in 'Volume II'...On the other hand, we have to **maintain the text authenticity**, so we cannot flexibly remove it from the main text, even if it appears in Volume I. On the other hand, So **what we can do is to treat it as 'a grammar for recognition'**... (from E1)

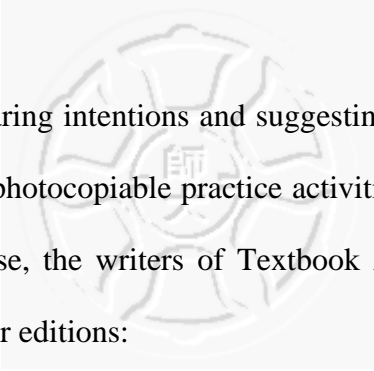
The writers had their ideal to teach difficult patterns “as ‘a pattern for production’ in the later volumes” (E1). However, it was not easy for them to do so. Therefore, they provided more instructive suggestions in their later adaptations. For example, the difficult grammar points were further explained in the teacher’s manual in the later volume (see Excerpt 5-17).

[Excerpt 5-17]

...In the past, **we only picked up the two important grammar points to be instructed in the section of grammar focus**, even though there may be more than two points...We didn’t present too much information about the other points, **because the teachers were supposed to have their own interpretation**...But **since the teachers still asked for more supplementary information about the other grammar points**, we would consider providing more of it in the teachers’ manual...(from E1)

More Supply of Related Resources with Flexible Use

In the very beginning of designing the teacher’s manual, all of the writers agreed to provide only the significant information rather than every detail. The belief the writers held was to “respect teachers’ professional knowledge” and to “present teachers with flexibility” (E1). However, such principle did not work on the competitive market. As have been explained in Bell and Gower (1998: 126), teachers “naturally want[ed] an easy life,” so they generally would like to have a textbook that they do “not [do] too much preparation.” In addition, they may expect the teacher’s



manual to “go beyond declaring intentions and suggesting ideas to providing its own resources in terms of extra photocopiable practice activities” (p.127). In spite of their unwillingness to compromise, the writers of Textbook A still decided to make the following adaptations in later editions:

1. List out detailed explanation for each grammar point;
2. Provide photocopiable materials instead of the websites only;
3. Print a compact ‘user-friendly’ book which combines the contents of teacher’ manual and textbook for students;
4. Note down the instruction to the classroom activities with detailed steps rather than rough suggestions.

Another compromise was made in the workbook, where the writers originally planned to include various communicative exercises. Due to the needs analysis (see Excerpt 5-14 for example), the writers decided to make some changes in the forthcoming textbooks, as follows:

1. Reduce open-ended question items;
2. Provide more of the items related to what JCEE would test;
3. Provide specific answers to those open-ended questions;
4. Provide more free-from-charge supplementary materials for students.

To sum up, as Hutchinson and Torres (1994: 318) indicate, “Nothing that happens in education is anything more than a workable compromise, and we cannot uniquely condemn textbooks because they are not perfect.” As a matter of fact, the gap between the writers’ and teachers’ conceptions never arisen from no reasons. One possible reason, pointed out by one of the writers (W2), sprang from the lack of the compiling time and experiences. Additionally, “the teachers’ needs were not sometimes known until their use of that volume” (W2). This way, the unity inside one volume may be solid while that of the whole set may not. Another key factor is believed to reside in

the lack of the communication between the teacher users and writers. Table 5-21 shows a better picture of how compromises were reached for Textbook A:

Table 5-21: Contrast between Teachers' Expectations and Writers' Compromises for Textbook A

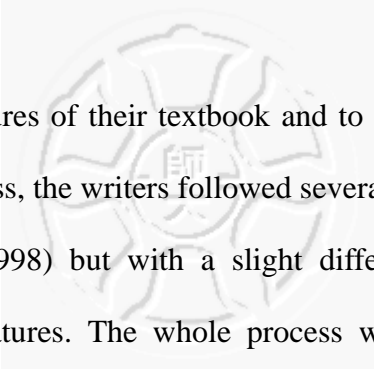
Category	Teachers' Expectations	Writers' Compromises
Syllabus organization	-- Less portion of content	→ -- Fixed content but with flexible use
Content arrangement	-- More interesting topics	→ -- Include more interesting topics but with "moral" teaching inside
	-- More topic/text variety	→ -- Fully acceptable: a) Reduce the portion of the texts written by foreigners b) Collect more materials from the authentic readers
Activity design for the language skills	-- Less portion of the expansion activities	→ -- Fully acceptable: Move the extra activities to the resource books
	-- Enhancement in the practicality	→ -- Fully acceptable: More mechanical drills to exercise students' language skills
Presentation of language components	-- Smoother linkage	→ -- Fully acceptable: Simplify the text difficulty
	-- Enhancement in the practicality	→ -- Fully acceptable: More mechanical drills to exercise students' linguistic knowledge
Related resources	-- More teaching suggestions	→ -- More instructional suggestions
	-- More supply of the supplementary materials (e.g., outside readings)	→ -- More photocopiable materials but with more emphasis on the flexible use
	-- More 'test-oriented' exercises and less creative questions in the workbooks	→ -- More emphasis on the flexible use

Note. The teachers' expectations that fully accepted by the writers are italicized and boldfaced, while the rest compromises are "partially acceptable" or "unreasonable but acceptable"⁷² (from W3).

5.4 Summary of Chapter Five

The findings of the present study have been further interpreted. On the whole, the compilation of a textbook was found to undergo a dynamic process, where the writers

⁷² According to one of the writers (W3), some of the expectations from the teachers were unreasonable, but due to the customers-oriented market, the writers had no choice but to accept the users' opinions.



had to adjust the ideal features of their textbook and to make the compromises time after time. During the process, the writers followed several principles which mostly fit with Bell and Gower's (1998) but with a slight difference to fit with the local situations and textbook features. The whole process was not completed until the teachers set out the evaluation. It was found that the teachers were generally satisfied with the in-use textbooks, even more than the old NICT textbooks in terms of the activity design and teaching resources. However, some of the teachers still appreciated the NICT textbooks especially for its presentation of language components. On the other hand, due to the competitive open editorial market, the teachers showed more expectations and needs. Thus, the writers generally would have to consider the users' needs and their own ideals and try to find an acceptable way out. Above all, more communication should be desired between the textbook writers and users. More suggestions for pedagogical implications and future research will be given in Chapter Six.