

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Roles of the Textbook in General

Textbooks have long been considered to carry a certain degree of importance in English language teaching. As Cunningsworth (1995, p.7) pointed out, English textbooks can play the following various roles.

1. A resource for presentation material (spoken and written)
2. A source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction
3. A reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.
4. A resource of stimulation and ideas for classroom language activities
5. A syllabus (where they reflect the predetermined learning objectives)
6. A resource for self-directed learning or self-access work
7. A support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence

Textbooks are a vital element in almost every language program. Many language courses throughout the world today cannot suffice without the extensive use of commercial textbooks.

Richards (2001, p.1) indicated the general functions the textbooks can

serve:

1. Textbooks can serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom especially in ESL and EFL situations.
2. Textbooks may provide the basis for the content of the lessons, the balance of skills taught and the kinds of language practice the students take part in.
3. Textbooks may serve primarily to supplement the teacher's instruction.

Richards (2001, p.1) also pinpointed the different functions of the

textbook for learners and teachers.

1. For learners, the textbook may provide the major source of contact they have with the language apart from inputs provided by the teacher.
2. For inexperienced teachers, textbooks may serve as a form of teacher training. They provide ideas on how to plan and teach lessons as well as formats that teachers can use.

Based on the previous scholars' points of view, a consensus on the role of textbooks in general seems to be reached. They both hold the opinions that textbooks can serve as a guideline for the content of the lessons. Teachers can follow the principles, which the textbook has established, to carry out the instruction. With the help of the textbook, teaching can become more efficient and diverse. In addition to playing the role as a helper for teachers, textbooks can be the information providers for learners, especially when students do the self-directed learning or when language

inputs come only from textbooks or teachers such as in EFL classes. To sum up, yielding many pedagogical benefits for both of the teachers and learners, textbooks play a significant role in English language teaching.

2.1.1 Roles of Textbook in Taiwan

It seems inevitable for EFL teachers to rely heavily on the textbooks, because they may be the only materials that can provide language inputs for learners. Between teachers and textbooks, in Taiwan, the role of the English textbook for senior high schools used to be predominant. Two reasons can account for the phenomenon.

First, the wash-back effect reinforces the supremacy of the textbook. Besides playing the multiple roles stated above, the textbook is also regarded as a guideline to Joint Colleges Entrance Examination, the sole learning material for students to study for the Entrance Exam.

Second, the prevalence of Grammar-Translation teaching method reinforces the supremacy of the textbook, which puts much emphasis on grammar and vocabulary, and the memorization of declensions, conjugation, and other syntactic features.

Despite these reasons, in recent years, the pedagogical pendulum has swung more to the communicative language teaching. The predominant role of the textbook has gradually declined to be replaced by task-based and authentic materials aimed at enhancing students' communicative competence. Moreover, thanks to today's competitive textbook market, teachers and students can select from a wide range of English teaching and learning materials. Rather contradictory to the prior situation, the prescribed textbook compiled by NICT was treated as a bible, unquestionable and indispensable. Although the textbook in Taiwan is being transformed to play a new role, one element about the role of the textbook is unchanged, as revealed by Grainger (2001, p. 8).

Textbooks can be seen as the window through which students come to know the language they learn and the wider context this language is used in. Although textbooks alone cannot provide students with all the knowledge they require, they are the major tools in enabling learners to progress.

2.1.2 The Possible Disadvantages of Using Textbooks

As Sheldon (1988) showed, perhaps due to inexperience, time limit, or other pressures, teachers are often discouraged from developing their own materials, and have no choice but to use ready-made textbooks. However, even with hundreds of textbooks for teachers to choose from, there is no guarantee that using textbooks will not yield negative side-effects. One major disadvantage of using textbooks is that

inexperienced teachers may rely heavily on it, restraining students' creativity and teachers' professional development. As Lamie (1999) suggested, teachers often overemphasize the role of the textbook, viewing it as more important than the curriculum itself rather than as a tool used to fulfill the goals of the curriculum. Actually the ideological circumstance occurs only when the course materials are seen as the English teacher's servant rather than the master (Cunningsworth, 1984).

Richards (2001, p.2) also suggested the potential defects of using commercial textbooks as follows.

1. They may contain inauthentic language.
2. They may distort content.
3. They may not reflect students' needs.
4. They can deskill teachers.
5. They are expensive.

In today's teaching environment, it seems unavoidable that both of the merits and demerits of the use of textbooks stand side by side. Thus, what matters is not "*whether*" the textbooks should be used or not but "*how*" teachers should use textbooks. If the textbook of a certain course program is judged to be unsuitable, remedial actions, such as adapting supplementary books, or providing appropriate guidance for teachers, should be taken (Richards, 2001). Therefore, a subtle balance should be maintained between *teachers* and *textbooks*. Ideally, it is a partnership that shares mutual goals to which both sides make their special contributions

(Cunningsworth, 1995).

2.2 Internal Factors vs. External Factors

The present study is not the first research adopting the terms of “internal” and “external” to classify the factors that may influence teachers’ pedagogical decision.

McDonough and Shaw (1993) proposed both internal and external evaluations to help English teachers to select textbooks. The internal evaluation addresses the following criteria: the presentation of the contents and skills in the material, the grading and sequencing of the material, the relationship of tests and exercises to learners’ needs.

On the other hand, the external evaluation addresses the following criteria: the context in which the materials are to be used, how the language has been presented and organized into teachable units, and the author’s views on language and methodology. To be more specific, the “internal” comprises the content, organization, and consistency of the material; the “external” is more concerned with the overt claims made about the materials by the author and the characteristics of a particular teaching situation.

Unlike previous scholars' definition, Woods (1996) referred to internal factors as factors that are internal to the decision-making process itself. In other words, "internal" is the structuring of decisions and the relationship of decisions to each other. Take temporal and logical relationships for example. Some decisions are made before or after others and some decisions are superordinated or subordinated to others. As for external factors, it is referred to as situational factors, which teachers take into consideration in making decisions. To be more accurate, they can be what teachers know, assume, or believe. Judging from the descriptions on the internal and external factors proposed by the previous three scholars, the present research is more similar to McDonough and Shaw's definition.

2.3 Internal Factors for Textbook Selection

Internal factors generally refer to the factors related to the design and rationales of textbook compilation, which teachers may take into account when selecting textbooks. To be more specific, Richards (2001, p.4) indicated that *content* and *pedagogical* factors illustrated below could be regarded as internal factors, which teachers may adopt to evaluate textbooks.

1. Content factors are questions related to the content and organization of the material in the book.
2. Pedagogical factors are questions related to the principles underlying the materials and the pedagogical design of the materials, including choice of activities and

exercise types.

2.3.1 Models of Checklists

In order to help teachers to be more critical in selecting textbooks, many scholars have proposed different models of checklists based on supposedly *generalizable criteria* (Sheldon, 1988). The checklist, generally speaking, is used as a tool for material evaluation or selection on internal criteria of textbooks itself. Recently, the literature on the checklists of the internal criteria for the textbook evaluation has become quite extensive. The following are some crucial models of the checklists proposed by different scholars.

William (1983) suggested that an evaluative checklist should contain seven categories: general features, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, and layout; and each category consists of five specific checking items. His textbook evaluation was essentially based on the following principles: the latest language teaching methods, pedagogical guidelines to nonnative-speaking teachers, and learners' needs.

Cunningsworth (1984, p.15-17), likewise, proposed four general guidelines of textbook evaluation. Based on the guidelines, an evaluative checklist is developed.

1. Textbooks should correspond to learner's needs. They should match the aims and objectives of the language-learning program.
2. Textbooks should reflect the uses (present or future), which learners will make of the language. They should be chosen to help students to use language effectively for their own purposes.
3. Textbooks should take account of students' needs as learners and should facilitate their learning processes, without dogmatically imposing a rigid "method".
4. Textbooks should have a clear role as a support for learning. Like teachers, they mediate between the target language and the learner.

Although the four guidelines seem to be considerably complicated, they all point to the single aspect of “*learners’ needs*”. Students’ learning needs are the important features for teachers to consider when selecting textbooks. After all, students are the main readers of the textbooks.

Cunningsworth’s checklist is quite comprehensive, and is made of eight major categories: aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topic, methodology, teachers’ books, and other practical considerations. Every category consists of four to seven specific checking items.

In fact, Cunningsworth has proposed two approaches to textbook evaluation. One of the approaches is called *in-depth evaluation*, which uses a checklist to examine how specific features of textbooks are dealt with, particularly those related to learners’ needs, syllabus requirements, how different aspects of language are dealt with and so on. The other approach is called *impressionistic*

evaluation, which is useful when one needs a preliminary sift through ample potential textbooks before he can do a more detailed analysis of the evaluation. Ideally, Cunningsworth suggested that a combination of the two approaches, involving the impressionistic overview of whole and the in-depth evaluation of representative samples of the material would lead to a sound basis for textbook evaluation.

Grant's (1987) checklist comprises three questionnaires. Every questionnaire contains ten questions designed to scrutinize if the coursebook is appropriate for learners, teachers and the syllabus and examination. The results added from the three questionnaires can show an overall performance of the textbook in question.

In order to shorten the time spent on textbook evaluation, Grant also suggested a more efficient evaluative approach called *CATALYST test*. It is an acronym in which C stands for communicative, A for aims, T for teachability, A for availability, L for level, Y for your impression, S for student's interest, and T for trying and testing. If a textbook can pass the CATALYST test, then it will be more meaningful to conduct further evaluation.

Sheldon (1988) listed seventeen categories in the checklist: rationale, availability, user definition, layout/graphics, accessibility, linkage, selection/grading,

physical characteristics, appropriacy, authenticity, sufficiency, cultural bias, educational validity, stimulus/ practices/ revision, flexibility, guidance and overall value for the money.

Every category consists of two to six questions to help teachers contemplate on the issues concerned. For example, one of the questions included in the category of appropriacy asks teachers *if the material is substantially enough or interesting enough to hold the attention of learners*. Another question included in the category of flexibility asks teachers *if the material can be exploited or modified as required under local circumstances, or it is too rigid in format, structure, and approach*.

Skierso's (1991) checklist is likely to be the most comprehensive, consisting of six categories: bibliographical data, aims and goals, subject matter, vocabulary and structure, exercise and activity, layout and physical makeup. The total number of the specific checking items included in this checklist reaches up to one hundred and eight. Moreover, realizing the importance of the teacher's manual, he also designed an evaluative checklist to examine the teacher's manual, which comprises four major categories: general features, supplementary exercise for each language skill, methodological and pedagogical guidance, and linguistic background

information. With a large number of aspects being covered, Skierso's model is considered to be the most complete one, which many teachers prefer to use as a reference.

Apart from the models of checklists proposed by international scholars, there are also a considerable number of checklists developed by scholars in Taiwan, which are introduced as follows. In 1998, Su conducted a study to evaluate local industrial vocational high school (IVHS) English textbooks. It is more suitable for the evaluation of textbooks for English for specific purpose (ESP)

Su's evaluation model is established on the following considerations.

1. the current IVHS teaching/learning situation
2. general guidelines of communicative language teaching (CLT)
3. notions and issues of English for specific purposes (ESP)
4. evaluation schemes and criteria already proposed by other researchers
5. an analysis of IVHS students' needs and wants

The checklist Su made includes eight categories: general features, listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, layout, and physical makeup. Every category consists five to twelve checking items.

In order to help English teachers of our elementary schools to select

textbooks, Shih (2000) carefully designed a very complete model of checklist. This checklist is made up of nine categories: general features, content theme and functions, four language skills, language components (letters for alphabet, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar), layout, and physical makeup, teachers' manual, workbook, audio aids, and other teaching aids. Every category consists of two to ten checking items. Although Shih's checklist is primarily designed for evaluating the English textbooks of primary schools, the basic evaluation principle remains the same, regardless of the target students. It is, therefore, widely adopted or taken for reference by our English teachers of different levels.

Compared to the previous models, Tseng's (2003) checklist is concise, because instead of being divided into categories, it contains only twenty specific checking items. Although not as comprehensive as other checklists, Tseng's checklist does include some exclusive items. For example, one item, which requires textbooks to provide students with a progress chart for self-studying, is shown only in Tseng's checklist.

To sum up, although there are many evaluative checklists available, they may or may not include the issues or elements that reflect the concerns of the teachers in selecting textbooks. Therefore, as Garinger (2001, p.8) suggested, selecting

particular items to create a personal evaluation index is the best way to ensure that the realities of each individual learning situation are addressed.

2.3.2 Rationales and Scoring Systems of the Checklist Models

Despite the fact that the previous eight models of checklists are developed according to diverse rationales, Shih (2000, p.217) indicated that they still share three features in common.

1. Textbooks should correspond to students' interests, needs, level of proficiency and the socio-cultural background.
2. Textbooks should correspond to the Curriculum Guidelines and reflect the aim of teaching.
3. Textbook compilation should be based on the theories of second language acquisition and on the latest language teaching methods.

In addition to sharing the similar rationales, most of the checklists adopt different elaborated scoring systems. Generally speaking, the scoring systems can be divided into five types. *The first type* is that every item of the checklist is assigned a series of evaluative numbers in which the higher number normally indicates the higher scores. The total score is added by the marked numbers (Grant, 1987; Tseng, 2003).

The second type is the same as the first type except that every item is given a weight value. Different items have different weight values depending on the

degree of importance carried by each item. The total score is multiplied by both of the numerical scores and weight values (William, 1983; Skierso, 1991; Shih, 2000). *The third type* is that instead of giving scores to every specific checking item, the evaluative scores are distributed to every category to which several items of the checklist are subordinated. The distributed evaluative scores may vary from one category to another, according to the relative importance of the category. For example the category of general features acquire more scores than that of physical makeup because the former contains more checking items and is more essential than the latter (Su, 1998).

The fourth type is that the checklists only list the items worthy of teachers' attention in selecting textbooks and do not provide a very specific scoring system (Cunningsworth, 1984; Sheldon, 1988). *The last type* of scoring system proposed by Tucker (1975) is an innovative one whereby textbooks are assigned numerical scores, which are then plotted on a 'Value Merit Product Graph', the object of which is to compare the resulting score curve against an ideal target profile drawn up in advance by the teacher.

In brief, the five stated scoring systems may appeal to different teachers, based on their personal experience or needs. However, most important of all, after

evaluating the merits and demerits of every scoring system, teachers should choose the most appropriate one, so that an optimal textbook can be selected.

2.4 External Factors for Textbook Selection

External factors generally refer to the factors related to the entire educational environment and the people concerned, which teachers may take into account when selecting textbooks. External factors are more subtle in affecting teachers' textbook selection, though they are not as conspicuous as internal factors. In addition to pointing out content of the textbook per se mentioned previously as internal factors, Richards (2001, p.4) also indicated that *program, teacher, and learner* factors could be regarded as external factors, which teachers may consider in evaluating textbooks.

As Sheldon (1988, p.237) revealed, "the selection of a particular core volume signals an executive educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial and even political investment". It implies that external factors cannot be disregarded in their influence on how teachers select textbooks. The external factors can refer to either some people concerned or the entire educational environment as stated above, but no matter what they are, without doubt, they do carry certain degrees of importance affecting teachers' decision on selecting the

optimal textbooks.

Recently, the educational system in Taiwan has undergone a tremendous reform in which many new policies were implemented. With the implementation of these educational policies, more and more people have taken notice on the educational matters directly relevant to themselves. As a result, they spend more time supervising government and fighting for their own educational rights.

What impact the trend has brought to the new textbook selection policy is that teachers, who make the core decision on selecting textbooks, have to take more careful consideration in making pedagogical decisions. They have to consider the requests from all aspects: governmental educational policy, school principal's leadership, school faculty's efficiency, school spirit, teachers' background, students' English proficiency and needs, parents' expectations, peer pressure, and even the anticipations from the society. The significance of influence from these external factors is, thus, no less than that from internal factors in selecting textbooks.

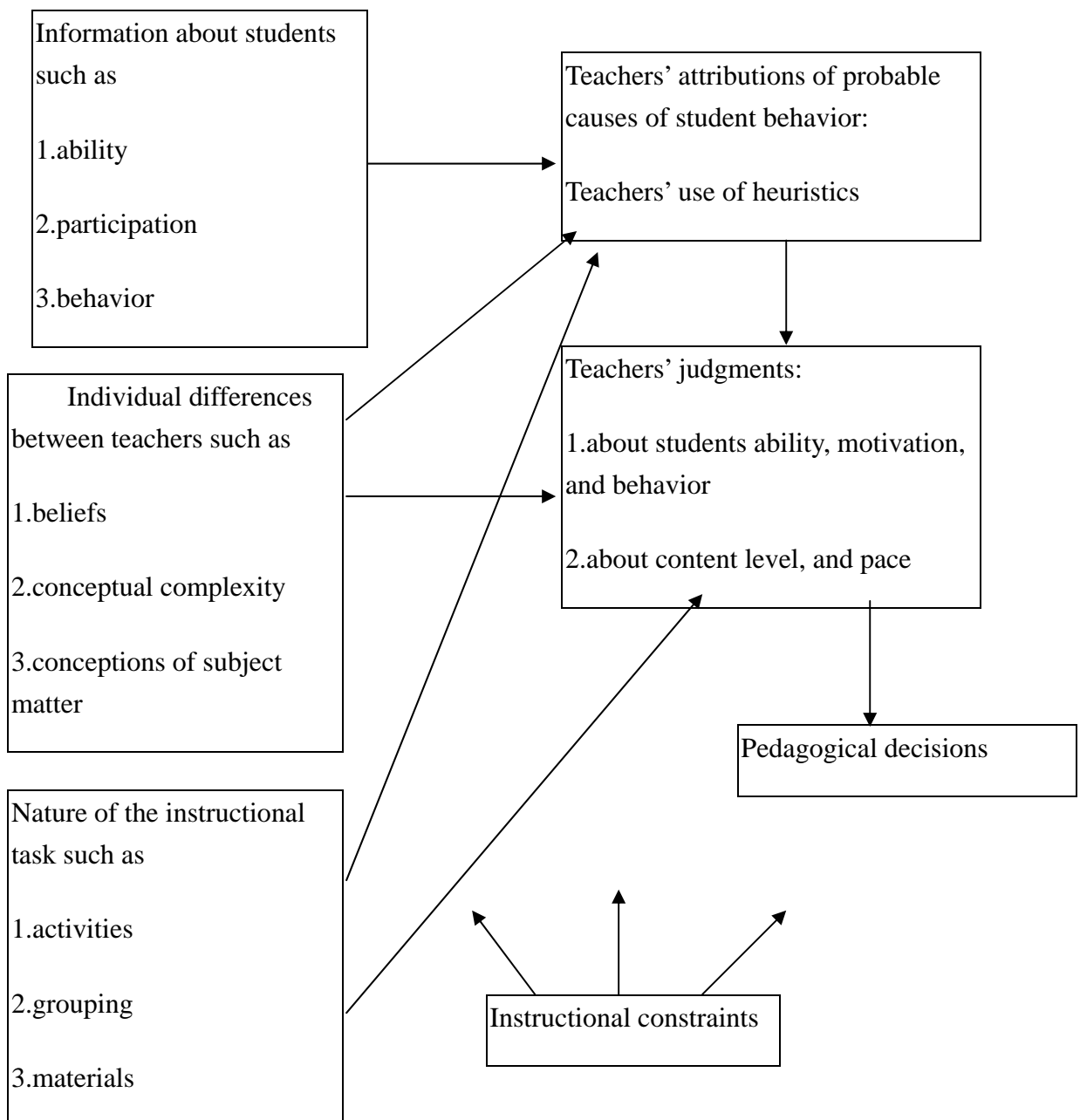
In reality, several evaluative checklists mentioned previously have already included some items concerning external factors, even though most of the included categories refer to internal factors. For example, the money spent on the textbooks is a factor included by some of the checklists (Cunningsworth, 1995;

Sheldon, 1988). The budget for the textbooks is such a sensitive issue that it often involves something that may not be directly relevant to English teaching per se. What is more, the textbook compilers' credentials (education and experience) and publisher's reputation are another two external factors provided by Brown's checklist (1995). It is quite natural for teachers to take these two factors into consideration, because textbooks, which are compiled by excellent compilers and reputable publishers, tend to attract more attention and trust from teachers.

Since textbooks selection is one of the major pedagogical decisions teachers make during the teaching process, Shavelson and Stern's pedagogical decision-making model (1981, p.472), shown in Figure 2.4, may shed some light on what potential factors may directly or indirectly influence teachers' selecting textbooks. As shown in Figure 2.4, most factors influencing teachers' pedagogical decisions refer to external factors, because they result either from the entire educational environment (to program itself) or from the people concerned (the teachers and learners). Take the *instructional constraint*, related to the entire educational environment, for instance. It can be the limitation, set by the school authority, such as teaching hours, class size, and teaching facilities, etc. As for the people concerned, the model deals with students' background information and teachers' individual differences, which profoundly influence the textbook selection.

However, Shavelson and Stern’s model still fails to reflect the whole picture. Many factors, I think, should be added to make the model more complete, e.g. entrance exam, principals’ leadership, colleagues’ pressure, and so on.

Figure 2.4 Shavelson and Stern’s Pedagogical Decision-Making Model



In summary, it may be concluded that English teachers' decisions on textbook selection result from the interaction between internal and external factors. Both types of factors exert a certain degree of influence on teachers' decision-making. Disregarding any one of the factors in consideration may lead to an unfavorable consequence. In order to ensure that an optimal textbook is selected, it is very essential for teachers to take both internal and external factors into account, instead of focusing on any one of them.

2.5 Textbook Compilation

Materials development is a field of both research and practical experiences, because it involves principles and procedures of the design, and implementation and evaluation of language teaching materials (Tomlinson, 2002). Normally, material writers are responsible for the principles and procedures of the materials design, publishing companies take charge of the implementation of the materials development, and governmental institutes and material users conduct the evaluation of the materials. Byrd (1995) proposed the following five points to help material writers establish the underlying principles for material development.

1. The material should be formatted to meet the particular needs of the teachers and students.
2. The material should be contextualized above the sentence level.
3. The material should be written in a style appropriate to the academic context.

4. Presentation of the readings in the material can be used as basics for class discussion of important current issues.
5. The material should use a reference system to indicate the source of the material as a way of avoiding both plagiarism and violation of copyright law.

With these basic principles for material development in mind, material writers may embark on the writing process. However, most of the time, writers do not work alone. Instead, they tend to form a professional team, especially for the task of textbook compilation. To be more specific, Richards (2001, p.268) indicated that in a large-scale of compilation project, the following people might be involved in the compilation panel.

Project director: responsible for overall management of the project, for setting goals and ensuring that the targets are met

Writers: those responsible for writing all components of the course

Media specialists: a person who can help with such aspects as use of audiovisual materials and computer software

Editor: a person who reviews everything that the writers have produced, and prepares the final version of the materials for the publication or duplication

Illustrator: someone responsible for preparing and selecting art and illustrations

Designer: the person who is responsible for the layout, type style, graphics, and the overall format of the materials.

After the people concerned in the compilation panel are found, there are some typical stages involved in the material writing process, as Richards (2001, p.268) specified below.

1. First draft

2. Comments on the first draft
3. Second draft
4. Further comments
5. Tryout of the materials
6. Final revisions of the materials

In reality, more complicated procedures seem to be involved in the compilation process. As one publishing company (Lung-Teng) pointed out, there may be ten stages in textbook compilation listed as follows.

1. The publishing company invites reputable scholars (e.g. university professors) and senior high school teachers to form a textbook compilation panel.
2. The compilation panel holds regular meetings to discuss the traits of the compilation, the content and organization of the textbook, and other related affairs.
3. After the first draft is completed, compilers have to examine the text with scrutiny.
4. Photographs presented in the textbook are collected to make sure the illustrations can match the text.
5. Layout and cover of the textbook are designed.
6. A number of senior high school teachers are invited to make comments and provide opinions on the first draft of the textbook.
7. After receiving feedbacks from teachers, compilers revise and proofread the

textbook.

8. The final version textbook is sent to the printing house.
9. The textbook is censored by NICT to see if it follows the Curriculum Guidelines for the Senior High School.
10. The textbook is revised based on the feedbacks from NICT. Revision continues until the license is permitted. Then the textbook is allowed to be published.

The several stages of textbook compilation may not be one-directional. Instead, it is dynamic and multi-directional, like a recycling hoop, especially in the process of revision. Just as Carey and Briggs (1977, p. 286) commented, “many activities (of the textbook compilation) occur simultaneously and one often works one part of a product through a phase of design and then cycles back and begins the same phase again with another part of the product.” Likewise, Jolly and Bolitho (1998) indicated that trial and evaluation are vital to the success of any materials. Moreover, Shih (2001) also pointed out that the content of the textbook should be continually re-edited and re-compiled so that it can keep up with the current trend of society and the expectation of the general public.

After the compilation task is completed, the textbook is censored by NICT to see if it complies with the Curriculum Guidelines for the Senior High School.

The current Curriculum Guidelines of the Senior High School were proposed by MOE in 1995, and the new tentative Curriculum Guidelines will be promulgated in 2005.

Shih (1998) pinpointed six crucial features of the Curriculum Guidelines for the Senior High School illustrated as follows.

1. The Curriculum Guidelines are based on communicative syllabus with the aims at developing students' four language skills and training students to perform various communicative functions.
2. The Curriculum Guidelines are learner-centered, designed to meet learners' learning needs, and activate learners' motivation, and interests.
3. Students' learning strategies are highly emphasized. The Curriculum Guidelines place much emphasis on cultivating students' reading skills. Therefore, reading skills such as skimming, scanning, and guessing from the context are expected to be included in the textbook to be censored.
4. The Curriculum Guidelines strike a balance between the grammatical and pragmatic competence of English. In other words, though the communicative competence is the main teaching focus, students are still expected to acquire the basic grammatical competence of English.
5. The Curriculum Guidelines pay much attention to vocabulary teaching. Textbooks are required to cover two types of vocabulary, one for production, and the other

for recognition.

6. Teacher's manual is an essential component of the entire textbook package. The Curriculum Guidelines require every set of textbook should include teacher's manual, which provides relevant information on teaching tips and cultural backgrounds.

In view of the procedures of the textbook compilation and the main traits of the Curriculum Guidelines for the Senior High School, to develop a good textbook, without doubt, takes plenty of efforts t. Moreover, through the censorship of NICT and the scrutiny of every school, it is hoped that the textbooks being compiled are more able to meet teachers' and students' needs and expectations.