

Chapter IV

RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the present study are displayed in the following three sections below: the questionnaire for the teachers, the interview with the teachers and the interview with the textbook compilers. In the questionnaire section, the results are presented through descriptive statistics. As for the interview sections, the interviewees' opinions are concisely presented.

4.1 Questionnaire for the Teachers

The questionnaire originally planned to be distributed to 34 schools. However, because some of the schools showed an unwillingness to fill out the questionnaire, only 27 schools participated in the questionnaire and 380 copies were distributed¹. A total of 192 completed questionnaires were collected at the end of October 2004. The collecting rate was 50.5%. Out of the 192 questionnaires, only 185 copies were valid². Since the questionnaire consisted of four parts: the personal background information, external factors, internal factors, and others, the following dealt with the results of each part respectively.

¹ A table of the overall schools and the copies of the questionnaire being distributed and collected are attached in Appendix B

² Questionnaires that leave more than five items unfilled out are viewed as invalid and thus excluded from the statistics.

4.1.1 Personal Background Information

The results of the total subjects' personal background information were revealed thoroughly in Table 4.1.1a-k (see Appendix C). The items of "School type" (public vs. private), "School location" (urban vs. rural), and "Service years" (senior vs. young³) were important variables, because they were used to conduct the T-test analysis.

Among these 185 teachers, there were 19 (10.2%) male teachers and 166 (89.8) female teachers. 133 (71.8%) of the teachers were from schools located in Taipei City and 52 (28.2%) of the teachers were from schools located in Taipei County. That is to say, there were 133 urban school teachers and 52 rural school teachers in the present research. A total of 143 (77.3%) teachers were from public schools and 42 (22.7%) teachers were from private schools as tabulated in Table 4.1.1c (Appendix C). Teachers with a master's degree (78) and bachelor's degree (82) took up the majority, holding 42.1% and 44.3% of the total teachers. Most of the teachers (174, 94%) were English majors.

102 (55%) teachers had under 10 years teaching experience and 83 (45%) teachers had teaching experience above 10 years (refer to Table 4.1.1f in Appendix C). In other words, in the present study, there were 102 young teachers and 83 senior

³ In the present study, teachers with service years under 10 are regarded as young teachers and those with service years above 10 are regarded as senior teachers.

teachers. As for teachers' age, the majority of the teachers' age centered on 26-35 (41.7%). There were 84 (45.3%) teachers having not attended workshops on textbook selection in the recent two years, and as for those having attended, the majority of them (53, 28.6%) had attended two or three times. And the majority (87, 45.5%) of the total teachers had used two sets of textbooks. Last, 55.2% of the total 185 teachers adopted textbooks of publishing company F⁴, 34.9% adopted textbooks of publishing company S, and 9.9% adopted textbooks of publishing company L.

4.1.2 External Factors

Table 4.1.2a Descriptive Statistics of External factors among Total Subjects

External factors (total subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
Most students' English proficiency and learning needs	1	4.37	0.83
Opinions from teachers having used the textbook	2	4.13	0.86
Teachers' pedagogical belief and teaching method	3	4.02	0.91
Publishers' reputation	4	3.97	0.89
Salespersons' service	5	3.83	1.00

The external factors included 15 items. Table 4.1.2a⁵ above revealed the ranking, mean, and standard deviation (SD)⁶ of the top five external factors among

⁴ The representing letters of the three publishing companies were derived from the initial letter of the three publishing companies' English translation.

⁵ The complete data shown in Table 4.1.2 a was attached in Appendix D.

⁶ The three figures were based on the following calculation. The scale range was 1-5, with higher number indicating higher score. If a teacher assigned 5 to a specific item, the item scored 5. One specific item's total score was added from the entire subjects. Then, "mean" was derived from the final total score divided by the total number of the subjects. Thus, the more emphasized item got higher score and higher "mean", indicating higher ranking. As for standard deviation (SD), it showed the variation within one item. If two items got the same "mean", the item with lower SD ranked higher.

the total 185 subjects. It was shown that factors of most students' English proficiency and learning needs, opinions from teachers having used the textbook, and teachers' pedagogical belief and teaching method were the top three priorities the total teachers took into consideration when they selected textbooks.

Table 4.1.2b

Descriptive Statistics of External Factors among Subjects of Public and Private Schools

External factors (public school subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
Most students' English proficiency and leaning needs	1	4.35	0.82
Opinions from teachers having used the textbook	2	4.16	0.81
Teachers' pedagogical belief and teaching method	3	4.06	0.91
Publishers' reputation	4	4.00	0.89
Salespersons' service	5	3.90	0.96
External factors (private school subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
Most students' English proficiency and leaning needs	1	4.45	0.86
Opinions from teachers having used the textbook	2	4.00	1.04
Joint College Entrance Examination	3	3.97	0.94
Teachers' pedagogical belief and teaching method	4	3.83	0.90
Publishers' reputation	5	3.81	0.91
Salient T-test values		T	P-value
Teachers' various roles such as English teachers or mentors		-2.29	0.02*
School's leadership		-3.00	0.03*
Salespersons' service		2.12	0.03*
*P < 0.05			

To pinpoint the different priorities of the external factors public and private school teachers favored in selecting textbooks, Table 4.1.2b⁷ revealed the ranking, mean, and standard deviation of the top five external factors among the subjects of the

⁷ The complete data shown in Table 4.1.2b was attached in Appendix E.

public and private schools. It was clear that both of the public and private school teachers had nearly the same top five priorities of external factors except two factors: salespersons' service (public school teachers) and Joint College Entrance Examination (private school teachers).

Furthermore, T-test analysis showed different significance on three external factors between subjects of public and private schools. It appeared that when selecting textbooks, public school teachers considered salespersons' service more; private school teachers considered teachers' roles and school's leadership more.

Table 4.1.2c

Descriptive Statistics of External Factors among Subjects of Urban and Rural Schools

External factors (urban school subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
Most students' English proficiency and leaning needs	1	4.44	0.74
Opinions from teachers having used the textbook	2	4.07	0.89
Teachers' pedagogical belief and teaching method	3	4.02	0.94
Publishers' reputation	4	3.95	0.91
Salespersons' service	5	3.83	1.02
External factors (rural school subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
Opinions from teachers having used the textbook	1	4.26	0.76
Most students' English proficiency and leaning needs	2	4.17	1.00
Publishers' reputation	3	4.00	0.84
Teachers' pedagogical belief and teaching method	4	4.00	0.82
Joint College Entrance Examination	5	3.98	0.93
Salient T-test values		T	P-value
Teachers' English proficiency		-2.46	0.01*
Teachers' various roles such as English teachers or mentors		-2.92	0.04*
The price of the textbook		0.15	0.04*
*P < 0.05			

As shown in Table 4.1.2c⁸ above, the top five priorities of external factors between teachers of urban and rural schools were mostly like those of teachers of public and private schools. There were two factors different: salespersons' service (urban school teachers) and Joint College Entrance Examination (rural school teachers). T-test analysis pointed that rural school teachers were more significantly concerned about teachers' English proficiency, teachers' roles and the price of the textbook than urban school teachers.

Table 4.1.2d

Descriptive Statistics of External Factors among Subjects of Senior and Young Teachers

External factors (senior teachers)	Ranking	Mean	SD
Most students' English proficiency and leaning needs	1	4.37	0.83
Opinions from teachers having used the textbook	2	4.14	0.73
Teachers' pedagogical belief and teaching method	3	4.03	0.86
Publishers' reputation	4	4.03	0.76
Compilers' profession and academic status	5	3.90	1.02
External factors (young teachers)	Ranking	Mean	SD
Most students' English proficiency and leaning needs	1	4.37	0.81
Opinions from teachers having used the textbook	2	4.11	0,96
Teachers' pedagogical belief and teaching method	3	4.00	0.95
Publishers' reputation	4	3.92	0.99
Salespersons' service	5	3.86	1.06

⁸ The complete data shown in Table 4.1.2c was attached in Appendix F.

Likewise, as revealed in Table 4.1.2d⁹, senior teachers' top five priorities of external factors did not differ much from young teachers'. Most of them remained almost the same except two factors: compilers' profession and academic status (senior teachers) and salespersons' service (young teachers). Meanwhile, T-test analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between senior and young teachers.

4.1.3 Internal Factors

Table 4.1.3a Descriptive Statistics of Internal Factors among Total Subjects

Internal factors (total subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
The textbook uses accurate and proper English.	1	4.56	0.65
Reading articles are interesting and informative.	2	4.47	0.69
Contents include a variety of themes and genres.	3	4.41	0.69
Language tasks vary, and increase students' motivation.	4	4.37	0.81
The textbook provides an intact package such as workbooks or teacher's manual.	5	4.34	0.75

The internal factors included 32 items. As shown in Table 4.1.3a¹⁰ above, it revealed the ranking, mean, and standard deviation of top five internal factors among the total 185 subjects. The accurate and proper English, interesting and informative reading articles, and a variety of themes and genres were the top three crucial factors the total teachers considered in textbook selection.

⁹ The complete data shown in Table 4.1.2d was attached in Appendix G.

¹⁰ The complete data shown in Table 4.1.3a was attached in Appendix H.

Table 4.1.3b**Descriptive Statistics of Internal Factors among Subjects of Public and Private Schools**

Internal factors (public school subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
The textbook uses accurate and proper English.	1	4.58	0.62
Reading articles are interesting and informative.	2	4.51	0.68
Contents include a variety of themes and genres.	3	4.44	0.68
Language tasks vary, and increase students' motivation.	4	4.42	0.74
The textbook provides an intact package such as workbooks or teacher's manual.	5	4.36	0.75
Internal factors (private school subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
The textbook uses accurate and proper English.	1	4.47	0.76
Reading articles are interesting and informative.	2	4.34	0.70
The textbook aims to develop four language skills.	3	4.31	0.73
Contents include a variety of themes and genres.	4	4.28	0.73
The textbook provides adequate amount of vocabulary.	5	4.26	0.92
Salient T-test values		T	P-value
Content themes do not include biased and stereotyped concepts.		2.06	0.04*
*P < 0.05			

To identify the different priorities of the internal factors public and private school teachers considered in selecting textbooks, Table 4.1.3b¹¹ above respectively revealed the ranking, mean, and standard deviation of top five internal factors. It was indicated that both of the public and private school teachers had almost the same top five priorities except two factors: textbook's intact package (public school teachers) and adequate amount of vocabulary. (private school teachers). Besides, through T-test analysis, only one factor showed the significant difference. It

¹¹ The complete data shown in Table 4.1.3b was attached in Appendix I.

seemed that public school teachers were more concerned with if content themes included biased and stereotyped concepts.

Table 4.1.3c

Descriptive Statistics of Internal Factors among Subjects of Urban and Rural Schools

Internal factors (urban school subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
The textbook uses accurate and proper English.	1	4.62	0.64
Reading articles are interesting and informative.	2	4.52	0.65
Contents include a variety of themes and genres.	3	4.49	0.67
Language tasks vary, and increase students' motivation.	4	4.43	0.85
The textbook provides an intact package such as workbooks or teacher's manual.	5	4.41	0.74
Internal factors (rural school subjects)	Ranking	Mean	SD
The textbook uses accurate and proper English.	1	4.37	0.63
Reading articles are interesting and informative.	2	4.34	0.78
Language tasks vary, and increase students' motivation.	3	4.23	0.70
The textbook provides adequate amount of vocabulary.	4	4.21	0.77
The textbook aims to develop four language skills.	5	4.19	0.76
Salient T-test values		T	P-value
Task design corresponds to Communicative Approach.		2.40	0.01*
Contents include a variety of communicative functions.		2.02	0.04*
Content themes are updated, reflecting current cultures.		2.93	0.04*
Teacher's manual provides cultural and other information.		2.49	0.01*
*P < 0.05			

As displayed in Table 4.1.3c above¹², urban school teachers' top five priorities of external factors differed slightly from rural school teachers'. The different factors were presented below.

1. The textbook provides an intact package such as workbooks or teacher's manual.

¹² The complete data shown in Table 4.1.3c was attached in Appendix J.

(urban school teachers)

2. Contents include a variety of themes and genres. (urban school teachers)
3. The textbook aims to develop four language skills. (rural school teachers)
4. The textbook provides adequate amount of vocabulary. (rural school teachers)

To show the further differences of urban and rural school teachers' internal factors, T-test analysis pointed out that urban schools teacher were more concerned with the factors below:

1. Task design corresponds to Communicative Approach.
2. Contents include a variety of communicative functions.
3. Content themes are updated, reflecting current cultures.
4. Teacher's manual provides cultural and other information.

Table 4.1.3d

Descriptive Statistics of Internal Factors among Subjects of Senior and Young Teachers

Internal factors (senior teachers)	Ranking	Mean	SD
The textbook uses accurate and proper English.	1	4.49	0.64
Reading articles are interesting and informative.	2	4.39	0.67
Contents include a variety of themes and genres.	3	4.37	0.64
Language tasks vary, and increase students' motivation.	4	4.35	0.71
The textbook provides an intact package such as workbooks or teacher's manual.	5	4.28	0.72
Internal factors (young teachers)	Ranking	Mean	SD
The textbook uses accurate and proper English.	1	4.62	0.65
Reading articles are interesting and informative.	2	4.54	0.71
Contents include a variety of themes and genres.	3	4.44	0.73
The textbook aims to develop four language skills.	4	4.41	0.78
Language tasks vary, and increase students' motivation.	5	4.40	0.90

As shown in Table 4.1.3d¹³, senior and young teachers had almost the same top five priorities of internal factors, except two factors:

1. The textbook provides an intact package such as workbooks or teacher's manual.

(senior teachers)

2. The textbook aims to develop four language skills. (young teachers)

Likewise, T-test analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between senior teachers and young teachers.

4.1.4 Others

This part contained seven items, which dealt with questions not answered by the scale ranging from 1-5. Instead, subjects chose the most proper one from several possible answers, and replied one open-ended item that required subjects to provide reasons. The results of this part were thoroughly demonstrated in Table 4.1.4 a-g. (see Appendix L)

Among the 185 teachers, besides the factors listed in the questionnaire, 180 (97%) teachers did not think of any other factors they would add to. Only five teachers came up with some different factors on textbook selection listed below.

¹³ The complete data shown in Table 4.1.3d was attached in Appendix K.

1. students' reaction to the textbook
2. students' previous experiences
3. the preparation time teachers need to spend on the lesson
4. the relevance to daily life
5. the facilities in the school that are available for a particular set of textbook

Of the five factors, there was only “the relevance to daily life” counted as internal factor, and the rest of the four factors were counted as external factors.

When it comes to what factors (external, internal or both factors) teachers would take into more account in selecting textbooks, the majority of the teachers (122, 68.7%) referred to both factors, and only 5% of the total teachers referred to external factors.

The majority of the teachers (107, 52.9%) revealed that their schools' textbook selection committees were made up of only English teachers, whereas 83% of the private school teachers indicated that their textbook selection committees constituted members more than English teachers. In other words, besides English teachers, most of the private schools had the principal, the section chair of the academic affaire, or other school faculties as the members of the textbook selection committee.

When selecting textbooks, more than half of the teachers (120, 66.2%) have used checklists to evaluate textbooks, and the majority of them (70, 36.9% out of

66.2%) adopted the checklists provided by the schools. Among the teachers having used the checklist, only 22.8 percent of them felt satisfied with the checklists.

The open-ended item required teachers to account for whether they were satisfied with the checklist or not. The majority of teachers pointed out that the checklists they used did not cover sufficient items. Even for teachers satisfied with the checklists, they indicated that their checklists were barely accepted.

If the textbook did not meet teachers' expectation, most of the teachers (71, 46.7%) would reconsider internal factors, 27.6 percent of the total teachers would reconsider external factors, and 19.7 percent of the total teachers would reconsider both factors.

To have a more comprehensive consideration, most of the teachers (101, 52.7%) showed that they would prefer discussing with colleagues, followed by reading books or journals (52, 27.1%). Only 20.2 percent of the teachers would like to attend workshops.

4.2 Interview with the Teachers

The interview of the present research was aimed at probing more detailed information on the factors English teachers took into consideration when selecting textbooks, and meanwhile helping to explore the questions that were not covered in

the questionnaire. Thus, right after the results of the questionnaire were reported, an interview was conducted with ten different teachers. The ten teachers were coded as T1 to T10 hereafter, and their background information was tabulated in Table 4.2 (see Appendix M). In terms of school type, of the ten teachers, six of them came from public schools and four from private schools. In terms of school location, of ten teachers, seven came from urban schools and three from rural schools. As for service years, five were senior teachers and five were young teachers. The results of the interview with the teachers were revealed below.

1. Name at least six factors (either internal, or external factors) that you consider most in selecting English textbooks and give your reasons.

When answering this question, teachers unanimously replied that “students’ English proficiency ” was their main concern. As T1 pointed out, the textbook’s difficulty degree should match students’ English proficiency. Whether the textbook was too easy or too difficult for a particular group of students would no doubt result in unnecessary troubles. Thus, to avoid students’ resistance, and to smooth the progress of class teaching, he regarded students’ English proficiency as the most essential factor in selecting textbooks.

Apart from the factor of “students’ English proficiency, ” all teachers agreed with, other factors teachers raised, though slightly different from one to

another, all referred to the internal factors, such as the variety of tasks, the amount of vocabulary or the language skills being covered, which implied that internal factor itself was still the most vital consideration in textbook selection.

2. What kinds of difficulties have you confronted when selecting your own textbooks?

This question intended to investigate if teachers had encountered any personal pressure, which influenced their decision- making. Private school teachers were the focused subjects because the school authorities of private schools were more likely to intervene in the educational policies than those of public schools. Among the four private school teachers being interviewed, two teachers T8 and T9 indicated that their textbook selection committees constituted only English teachers, whereas the other two teachers T7 and T10 revealed besides English teachers, they had the principal and the section chair of the academic affaire as the members of the textbook selection committee. Though not influenced by the school, T8 pointed out that they respected the school authorities' opinions and followed school's leadership, whenever they made any pedagogical decisions.

As for other interviewed teachers, they claimed that they were able to express their own opinions in textbook selection. Nevertheless, T3 indicated that once teachers got used to a set of textbook, they might be reluctant to make any

changes. Furthermore, the decision on the textbook selection depended on the opinions of the majority of the committee members. As a result, even if a minority of teachers, indeed, hoped to change the textbook, they would not be successful.

3. If you were to become unsatisfied with a textbook in the middle of an academic year, what would you do?

Most of the teachers indicated that they had not encountered such a problem, but if they did, they would provide more supplementary teaching materials to help students, rather than switch to another set of textbook in the middle of the semester.

On the other hand, T8 revealed that one year, her school had experienced such a situation, because students' English proficiency did not meet teachers' expectation. Her school took a drastic measure to switch to another set of textbook, right after the first monthly exam.

Her school held the opinion that textbook was the main guideline for both teachers and students. If the textbook failed to meet the needs for both parties, the teachers would have to provide supplementary teaching materials or to use a new set of textbook, instead. No matter which alternation they took, it would cause troubles for teachers.

4. Are you familiar with the Curriculum Guidelines for the Senior High School that underlies the rationale of the English textbook of the senior high school? Do you feel that it is the most important guiding principles for the internal factors in selecting textbooks? Why or why not?

Among the ten teachers, only four of the public school teachers (T1, T4, T5, and T6) were conscious of the Curriculum Guidelines for the Senior High School. However, after further interrogated, teachers showed that they merely knew the underlying principle for Curriculum Guidelines was Communicative Approach without knowing the detailed aspects of the Curriculum Guidelines. Not fully understanding the Curriculum Guidelines for the Senior High School, the four teachers did not regard it as the most important guiding principle for the internal factors in selecting textbooks, not to mention those teachers unfamiliar with the Curriculum Guidelines.

Although not thinking of Curriculum Guidelines for the Senior High School as a crucial factor, all teachers pointed out that the NITC would censor the textbook to see if it was based on the Curriculum Guidelines before it was published. Therefore, they did not pay much attention to the Curriculum Guidelines.

5. Are you familiar with some checklists for internal factors in evaluating textbooks? Do you believe they are helpful to you in selecting textbooks?

Which type of scoring systems do you favor? And why?

More than half of the teachers being interviewed admitted using checklists to select textbooks. Six (T1, T2, T3, T5, T7, and T10) teachers indicated that they had adopted the checklist provided by the schools to select textbooks. Among the six, only two (T3 and T10) teachers were satisfied with the assigned checklists. As for the rest four teachers not satisfied with the assigned checklists, they revealed that the checklist they used was too simplified to cover the items they would take into consideration. Sometimes, they even discarded the checklist. Instead, they took impressionistic approach to evaluate the textbooks.

As for scoring systems, all teachers preferred to assign a specific score to an item rather than to mark a point ranging from 1-5, because assigning a score ranging from 1-100 made a more substantial sense than a scale from 1-5. The more detailed a score was, the more meaningful it was.

6. Can you think of any other channels for obtaining the information about textbook selection such as workshops, reference books or relevant journals?

Which is more effective? And why?

The majority of teachers held the opinion that discussing with colleague was the most effective way to help them select textbooks. Discussing with colleagues was the easiest channel to obtain information, because English teachers tended to be arranged to sit in the same office. Once a teacher needed to exchange information, he could simply discuss with the teachers sitting next to him.

Attending workshops, however, was the least effective way. According to one teacher of the rural school (T9), she revealed that workshops held by publishers might offer subjective information on textbook selection because they often took the advantage of the workshops to promote their textbooks. Furthermore, she mentioned that most of the workshops were held in Taipei City, quite a long distance from rural schools, which might discourage teachers of rural schools from attending.

7. What contributions do you think the senior teachers and young teachers can respectively make to the selection of textbooks?

Of the ten teachers, five were senior teachers and five were young teachers. Most of the teachers told that there was hardly any difference between senior and young teachers, as far as the textbook selection was concerned. One young

teacher (T6) pointed out that senior teachers were also very active to follow new trends of English teaching, without simply sticking to the tradition.

On the other hand, one senior teacher (T1) identified that after the market for textbooks was open, service years did not necessarily guarantee using more sets of textbooks. To pass the screen examination for teaching jobs, young teachers had to be prepared for various sets of textbooks, because textbooks might vary from one school to another. Therefore, young teachers sometimes were acquainted with more sets of textbooks than senior ones were.

8. Do you think the present school policy of textbook selection can yield more benefits for students than the prescribed textbook published by MOE? And why?

As a whole, teachers being interviewed all agreed that the current school policy of textbook selection could be more beneficial for students than the prescribed textbook published by MOE. They thought that the market mechanism helped to examine the quality of the textbooks, and to sift the inappropriate textbooks. What's more, T3 indicated that compared with prescribed textbook censored by MOE, the present textbooks were not only censored by NICT, but also screened by school teachers. Through a series of examinations, and discussion conducted by a group of professional teachers, the present textbooks, no doubt, could yield more benefits for

students than before.

9. If there were no Joint College Entrance Examination, how would you select your own textbooks?

When it comes to Joint College Entrance Examination, all the teachers admitted that it was inevitable for them to take the Exam into more or less consideration, because the present Joint College Entrance Examination still focused much on reading and writing skills. To make students well-prepared for the Exam, they would surely select a textbook, which put much emphasis on the two skills. Moreover, a private school teacher (T7) even revealed that in order to boost the rate of college admission, they were under more pressure than public school teachers. Therefore, in addition to selecting a good textbook, they even helped students subscribe to English magazines so that students can be more proficient in reading and writing skills.

If there were no Joint College Entrance Examination, the majority of teachers told that they would select a textbook aimed at developing the four language skills, a textbook that could provide a package for a balanced language skills training. And they all preferred this ideal situation, because Joint College Entrance Examination did result in some side-effects for our current English teaching.

10. Do you agree that besides teaching students grammatical knowledge, the English textbook should also make students more conscious of foreign cultures, and develop a global point of view? And do you take culture component as one of your crucial factors when selecting textbooks?

As far as cultural component was concerned, teachers showed two types of opinions. According to urban school teachers, they indicated that one of the English textbook's functions was to display western cultures. Especially for urban city students who had plenty of opportunities to experience different cultures, textbooks should deal with all the relevant cultural issues.

As for rural school teachers, they held a slightly different idea. Although they also recognized the importance of cultural component, they pinpointed that students in rural areas, who tended to be low proficient, still struggled with the language rules, not to mention the ability to appreciate the cultural concept conveyed by the reading article. As a result, they did not pay as much attention to cultural component as to other factors.

4.3 Interview with the Textbook Compilers

Six compilers of four different publishing companies were interviewed, and the six textbook compilers were coded as C1 to C6 hereafter, and their background information was tabulated in Table 4.3 (see Appendix N). The interviewees of company D¹⁴ consisted of a university professor, and two teachers of senior high schools. The interviewee of company F consisted of one teacher of senior high school. The interviewees of the rest two companies S and L consisted of one professor respectively. Generally speaking, the professors being interviewed all had rich experiences of textbook compilation. They either had compiled several English readers or used to compile English textbooks of junior and senior high schools published by NICT. Likewise, the English teachers being interviewed were very senior in English teaching and had plenty of experiences of textbook compilation. C2 of the company D had even compiled English textbooks for general senior high schools and industrial vocational high schools as well.

1. What members constitute the compilation panel? And how are they selected?

Confirmed by the rest compilers, the professor (C1) of company D revealed that the compilation panel mainly consisted of 15 or 16 members. Of them, two or three were university professors including native speakers of English, and the

¹⁴Likewise, the representing letters of the four publishing companies were derived from the initial letter of the four publishing companies' English translation.

rest of the members were English teachers of senior high schools. They were invited to join the panel because some of them used to be professors' students, who earned professors' trust and some of them were reputable for their English teaching. Teachers of the compilation panel were all from public senior high schools located in big cities of Taiwan such as Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung.

2. What factors do you generally take into account when compiling textbooks?

Why do you think those factors are important for textbook compilation?

The six compilers pinpointed the most crucial factor about which they felt concerned. Interviewees of company D (C1, C2, and C3) focused on the general students' English proficiency, and interviewee of company F (C4) took the authenticity of the material into more consideration. On the other hand, interviewee of company S (C5) thought highly of the training of the four language skills, and to the interviewee of company L (C6), the variety of content themes were the main concern.

The professor of company D (C1) indicated that when undertaking the English textbook compilation for junior high schools published by NICT, he found that it seemed to be a gap between the English textbooks for junior high and those for senior high. Most of the first graders of senior high school complained that the textbook was too difficult. Therefore, he attempted to compile a textbook that could cater for the general students' English proficiency, or even for the students of

low-intermediate English proficiency. The interviewee of company F (C4) showed that they considered highly of authenticity because an authentic material was more able to convey the meaning of an article and to bring students to the natural language of English. As a result, they tried not to tailor the authentic material as much as they could.

The interviewee of company S (C5) believed that the four language skills should be trained from the very beginning. Thus, even in the textbook for the freshmen of the senior high school, they had designed writing tasks, which differed from other sets of textbooks with writing tasks only for the senior graders. On the other hand, the interviewee of company L (C6) put much emphasis on the variety of the content theme, because they believed that a textbook with various topics or themes could appeal to students of different interests.

3. Is there a needs analysis conducted before the compilation? And who is the target subjects?

The interviewees of the four publishing companies showed that they did conduct a needs survey before the compilation. C4 gave a clear explanation, indicating that before they started to compile, the publishing company had conducted a needs analysis with teachers as the subjects. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers in different schools in Taiwan. They attempted to investigate what types of

reading passages were favored by the majority of teachers.

4. Do you compile textbooks for students of different school types such as public or private, urban or rural schools?

All the interviewees indicated that they did not intend to compile textbooks for students of different school types. Instead, they only considered students of different levels of English proficiency and students of intermediate level were their target users. However, the professor of company D (C1) did point out that although they did not design a textbook for students of different school types, teachers of the compilation panel came from different areas of Taiwan, and they also consulted the needs survey presented by the publishing company. Their textbook was expected to meet the needs of average students.

5. Is there an open channel for teachers to express their feedbacks on the textbook?

The interviewees showed that it was very welcome for teachers to express their feedbacks on the textbooks they compiled. Their publishing companies provided a variety of channels for teachers to express their opinions, channels such as e-mails, telephone, or through the salespersons. C4 even pointed out that members of the compilation panel were required to visit schools so that teachers could convey their feedbacks directly to the compilers. Moreover, C3 indicated that besides teachers,

students were also invited to “find fault” with the textbook. Those who did find anything wrong in the textbook would be rewarded with a free set of English readers.

6. Is the textbook subjected to regular revision during certain period of time?

Based on what is the textbook revised?

According to the interviewees, after completing the compilation task, they seldom held any more meetings. That is to say, unless there was a serious problem found in the textbook, they would not hold any meetings to make a considerable revision on the content.

As for the minor mistakes such as misspelling, grammatical mistakes, and other questions raised by the teachers, the section concerned of the publishing company would deal with them. Nevertheless, the professors of companies of D, S, and L mentioned that in addition to teachers’ opinions, compilation panel sometimes would take the initiatives to revise the textbook so that the content could be more updated. For example, the professor of company D (C1) showed that they revised a lesson introducing a great Chinese-American sportsman¹⁵. With the retirement of the sportsman, the compilation panel decided to replace him with a more current figure. Likewise, the professor of company L (C6) indicated that themes related to technology stood more chances to be revised than other themes.

¹⁵ It here refers to Michael Chang, a famous Chinese-American tennis player.

7. Is there any checklist offered by your publishing company to help teachers with textbook selection? Do you recommend that teachers should use a checklist to select the potential sets of textbooks?

Of the four companies, only company F offered the checklist. Basically speaking, all the interviewees took a positive attitude toward using checklists to select textbooks. They showed that checklists were effective tools to aid teachers in selecting textbooks. Checklists gave teachers a general picture of what factors a good textbook should include.

However, the professor of company D held a slightly different point of view. He mentioned that although checklists enabled teachers to specify the important factors of a good textbook, teachers' profession should be the main resource for them to make the right pedagogical decisions, independently of any exterior help or influences.

8. Does your publishing company hold the workshops on textbook selection regularly? Are they held in both urban and rural areas?

All the interviewees revealed that as far as they knew, their companies did hold workshops regularly, and they were often invited to host workshops, too. However, they were not sure whether their companies organized workshops in rural areas as well. Having many years of hosting and attending workshops, C2 suggested

she seldom participated in the workshops held in rural areas, even if in the middle or southern parts of Taiwan, the workshops she attended took place in the urban areas rather than rural ones.

9. What are the role differences between a textbook compiler and a textbook user?

The question was particularly addressed to the teacher compilers of company D and F (C2, C3, and C4). They pinpointed that as compilers, they designed a textbook that was appropriate for average students with intermediate level and was able to be used under any general pedagogical circumstances.

However, as textbook users, they had to face different limitations resulted from the actual classroom situation. For example, C4 revealed that although he preferred adopting authentic materials in the textbook compilation, reading authentic materials might be too difficult for some of his students. Therefore, there seemed a gap between the two situations.

10. What are the current trend and future prospect for textbook compilation?

All the interviewees unanimously indicated that Communication Approach was the current trend of textbook compilation. As for the future prospect, authenticity was the answer given by interviewees of company D (C1, C2, and C3). They believed in the near future, students had more opportunities to contact with native speakers of

English. As a result, they should present as much natural English as possible.

On the other hand, the interviewee of company F (C4) indicated that multi-media teaching aids would be the future prospect for textbook compilation.

According to him, advanced modern technology should be involved in the textbook compilation so that more user-friendly multi-media teaching aids could be invented to help students to learn English. The interviewees C5 and C6 held the opinion that because today's pedagogical trend focused more on the pragmatic function of the language, a shift to the grammatical function of the English language might be the future prospect. A more balanced emphasis on both of the pragmatic and grammatical functions would be the new trend the textbook compilers strive for. After all, lacking in either of them definitely could not lead to the mastery of a language.