



English language teachers' textbook use: adaptation techniques and their influence on students' learning experiences

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ABSTRACT

In the implementation of language teaching curriculum, textbooks serve an indispensable purpose. The realization of the embedded potential in textbooks or any curriculum material, however, depends on how they are used in the delivered instruction. As there are few studies in the English Language Teaching context that studied combining textbook use or adaptation with the learning opportunities it results, this study investigates the way teachers adapt textbooks and how it influences the learning experiences provided in the curriculum. A qualitative case study design was adopted based on data from larger research that investigates curriculum materials use in the middle school context. The findings revealed that the two prominent adaptation techniques the teachers used, 'addition' and 'omission', determine the potential learning opportunities. 'Addition' was employed to enhance 'form-focused learning' and to address exam-related needs and this purpose was achieved. Resulted from 'omission, however, the appropriate balance of language skill development could not be realized, and also opportunities for higher-order thinking skills development were denied. These findings suggest that adaptation practices need to be informed by principles that stems from pedagogical theory rather than on immediate and contextual determinants for integrating the affordances within the textbook.

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Introduction

In the realm of curriculum implementation, curriculum materials influence the delivery of the curriculum goals and guide the teaching and learning process. As revealed in the literature, textbooks are core curriculum material in classroom instruction and serve a vital purpose in interpreting the implementation of the curriculum. Textbooks profoundly influence the delivered instruction and represent the enacted curriculum (Smart et al., 2020), serve as a

clarifying mechanism for how to interpret and enact national standards (Choppin et al., 2022), and are intermediaries between the planned curriculum and what is actually taught in the classroom (Valverde et al., 2002). Other researchers also noted the critical role of textbooks in shaping students' learning experiences. McDonald (2016) drawing on various international studies, stated that textbooks significantly influence students' learning experience as classroom instruction and homework activities are heavily organized around the textbooks. In the same vein, Schmidt et al. (2001) argue that textbooks directly impact the content delivered in classrooms and, consequently, what students ultimately learn. Textbooks hence translate the national standards and shapes both the teaching practices and learner experiences.

In English Language teaching, as with other subject areas, the role that textbooks play is widely acknowledged, for it determines the goals, the content, and direction of instructional practice of English language teachers (Hinchman 2002; Littlejohn, 2011; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018; Rathert & Cabaroğlu, 2022). It is also recognized as the foundation of a curriculum in language programs. For instance, Richard (2014) notes: [textbook] "often determines the goals and content of teaching, as well as the methods teachers use..., provides a map that lays out the general content of lessons and a sense of structure that gives coherence to individual lessons, as well as to an entire course (p.19)." According to McGrath (2002), textbook serves as a foundation for the content and exercises with a balance of skills thought. Vitta (2023), referring how it is represented by different scholars, pointed interrelated roles of ELT textbooks' support for language learning-providing the language input and the practical activities and, curriculum planning to organize the input and the activities.

The realization of these embedded potentials in textbooks or any curriculum material depends on teachers' interaction with the components of the curriculum materials referred to as curriculum materials use. As Remillard (2005) defines it refers to "how teachers interact with, draw on, refer to, and are influenced by material resources designed to guide instruction" (p. 212). The dynamic role of both the teacher and the materials in the instructional context have been noted in scholars' discussions. McGrath (2002) and Januario and Manrique (2019) noted this by pointing out that teachers' active interpretation of the textbooks during instruction is essential to provide meaningful learning experience. In ELT context, Shaver (2010) explored how EFL teachers implemented curriculum materials and reached a teacher curriculum approach classification comprising "curriculum-transmission, curriculum-development, and curriculum-making." In what is distinguished as curriculum-development, teachers use the textbook as a resource and adapt it to the needs of the teaching and learning context.

Textbook adaptation, as one process in textbook use, has been referred to as a practice of making changes in the aspects of textbooks, as there exists a need to make it fit to the specific learning context. As Rathert and Cabaroğlu (2022) stated adaptation can focus on the language input provided as a content or the tasks provided to involve learners in. Saraceni (2013) referring to the possible gaps that ELT textbooks might have as a reason, pointed that adaptation is an inevitable process in the instruction. Related to why language teachers adapt textbook, Tomlinson and Masuhara (2018) identified five key influencing factors: the broader teaching context (including national and institutional influences), learner characteristics (such as age, interests, and learning styles), teacher-related factors (like beliefs, autonomy,

and experience), the specific course or lesson context, and the nature of the textbook itself (e.g., its methodology, content relevance, and presentation style).

Referring to ELT textbook adaptation, McDonough et al. (2013) provide a framework that comprises varied aspects considered in adaptation. Of which, the description of techniques of adaptation specified includes: "Adding (expanding and extending), Deleting/ (subtracting and abridging), Modifying (including rewriting and restructuring), Simplifying, and Reordering." The constructs of this framework, which deliver techniques by means of which adaptation is carried out, is used to conceptualize and guide our research. However, as our research also looks into the outcome of the adaptation process in terms of learning experience, it also considers what is provided by Nation and Newton (2009) as a framework. They named the language teaching components 'strands', which are opportunities for language learning and include in it: i) meaning-focused input (learning through listening and reading), ii) meaning-focused output (learning through speaking and writing), iii) language-focused learning (learning through direct vocabulary study, through grammar exercises and explanation) and fluency development. They argue that well-balanced language learning should consist of the 'strands' as it is through these four strands that learners achieve the learning goals of a language course. As the textbooks and the language syllabus used in our research context explicitly integrate components listed in the first three strands, these conceptualizations will be used as a framework to present findings and discussions of the second research question, which focuses on explaining the learning experience. In recent years, research on textbook use has been on the agenda of many ELT researchers (Bouacha, 2023; Li & Li, 2021; Rathert & Cabaroğlu, 2021). As there is a demand for the application of research-informed principles, Tomlinson (2020) pointed out, in ELT the use of resources receives more attention focusing on what teachers do with language learning resources and guide students in engaging with them.

In ELT studies that explore teachers' textbook utilization, adaptation is considered one of the vital aspects of textbook use (Li & Li 2021; Miguel, 2015). Rathert and Cabaroğlu's (2022) discussion on the use and adaptation of textbooks and other learning materials in language teaching shows that relatively little research has been conducted on how teachers actually use (i.e., adapt) in the classroom and the growing scholarly attention is emerging only recently. Most studies on ELT textbook adaptation tend to focus on explaining the adaptation approach. For instance, previous researchers studied how adaptation techniques are used by teachers (Luís, 2024; Mede & Yalçın, 2019; Pratiwi et al., 2019; Tibebu, 2017). Mustofa and Damayanti (2024) focused on adaptation strategies in a technology-integrated classroom. Other studies (Neham, 2020; Nurul & Mohad, 2024), combine how textbooks are adapted and teachers' perceptions. From the search only two studies, Hanifa et al. (2024) and Criado (2023), address textbook adaptation from this perspective which are exemplary in providing not only of the how teachers adapt but also of its effects on learning experience. In Ethiopia, the new general education curriculum framework recognizes the crucial role of textbooks in improving the quality of student learning and their significance for students' achievement of the intended competencies (MoE, 2020). However, how this aim is translated into classroom realities has not been sufficiently examined. Most ELT textbook studies are focused on content analysis, which have emphasized on the theoretical and design aspects of materials. (Alemu, 2009, 2010; Gashaye & Girma, 2020; Sewbihon, 2020). With respect to

the ELT textbook adaptation Tibebu (2017) and Tibebu and Gashaye (2020) are among the few studies that investigate the perception and approaches of textbook adaptation process.

The research gap identified both globally and in Ethiopian context is that there is limited research focusing on understanding the way teachers adapt the textbook particularly combining with the learning experiences that the techniques of adaptation influence. The significance of such research that examine textbook use and of its potential effects on students learning has been emphasized in recent studies; for instance, Criado (2023) pointed out that it is valuable where textbooks are the main teaching resource and further stated that the results of similar studies could contribute to teacher education guiding both pre- and in-service teachers toward informed approaches to the use of textbooks.

Building on the findings that highlight the need for further research, and the identified gap, our research attempts to examine the teachers' textbook adaptation practice combining with its influence on what is intended to be achieved from language learning experience as specified in the curriculum. Thus, we investigated the situation guided by the following research questions: (1) What techniques of textbook adaptation are often employed by teachers in the delivered instruction? (2) How is the influence of teachers' textbook adaptation on students' learning experience explained?

Method

This study was guided by the interpretivist paradigm, which, according to Cohen et al. (2000) most suited to case study research. In this study, a qualitative case study design was adopted. The method is considered in studies that sought to answer the 'how' related questions and to cover contextual conditions relevant to the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2003) and to determine how events occur and which ones may influence particular outcomes (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016).

Context and participants

This study is based on data from a larger dissertation project that investigates how curriculum materials are used in the middle school context. In this current study, the authors narrow it to teachers' adaptation strategies to the EFL context and their influence on learning opportunities, taking the case of three public schools. The justification for the selection of the schools for this study, other than pragmatic reasons, was that there is a fairly well-established system in the schools to support the full implementation of the reformed curriculum, which was being implemented when our study was conducted. As per the structure of the level of education, grade seven and eight levels are included in the middle school category with common curricular goals and learning experiences. The participants of the study are middle school teachers teaching English in these grade levels. There are five English teachers in the schools; all hold a first-degree educational level in teaching English. Their teaching experience is between eight years and fifteen years. All have been teaching using the textbooks in the same school and grade level in previous years. This situation helps minimize the possible factors that may interfere with the teachers' use of textbooks that arise due to teachers' uneasiness in using new material. To ensure participants anonymity, each teacher participant was given a code as: T-1, T-2, T-3, T-4, and T-5 in reporting the observation and interview data.

Data collection and analysis

The data for this study were collected through observation, interviews, and document analysis to integrate insights from a variety of data sources. This enabled the triangulation of data sources and data types and makes the phenomena to be viewed and explored from multiple perspectives, which is a basic principle in case study research (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Observation of classroom teaching scenarios was carried out as it is an approach with the potential to explore practices of textbook use (Fuchs & Bock, 2018). Observations of selected lessons of all five teachers were made using a semi-structured observation guide. It was arranged on different days of the lesson week to gain data while they are teaching different sections from the textbook. Each observation period was followed by a discussion with teachers on issues that arose from the events noted in the lesson enactment. When they finish the unit, interview with the teachers were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol, which is appropriate for case study research (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016). The interview protocol contains questions related to their use of the textbook adaptation techniques with different textbook components and possible reasons. Contents from the students' exercise book and assignments, and from teachers' lesson plans, are also examined as data sources.

Content analysis was adopted to analyze the data. As a method of analysis in qualitative research, it involved organizing and categorizing the data to identify meanings and patterns (Schreier, 2012). The data were analyzed in two phases: the first of which is examining the data gained from observed lessons, documents [student work sample and lesson plan], and interviews to assess ways 'if and how' teachers adapted the components of the textbook in their instructional practice. In the second phase, evidence from the findings for the first research question is further analyzed to examine the outcomes of their adaptation techniques on the students' language learning experience related to identified constructs in the theoretical framework the study employs.

Findings and discussion

Based on the constructs from the basic research questions, findings on the adaptation techniques the teachers employ in using the prescribed textbook are first presented; then findings on the promoted or hindered learning experience resulted from their adaptation techniques follows.

Adaptation techniques employed in using the prescribed textbook

In the middle school English textbooks, the content is organized into units, and each unit consists of sections that represent the macro skills and other foundational components such as grammar, vocabulary and punctuation. Evidence from the data source revealed that the participant teachers' planning and lesson design was largely structured based on these components. While, in the instructional practice, adaptation techniques were employed to a varying extent and it is applied more on the activities or asks that students are supposed to engage. Findings of the adaptation techniques used and the components of the textbook approached by each technique are presented here all evidenced from classroom observation, students' work sample and interview.

Addition

As the analysis of the data revealed the teachers' adaptation of the textbook comprises 'adding' to some components of the textbook which are under the grammar and vocabulary section. These are referred as aspects of language-focused learning (Nation & Newton, 2009). Table 1 presents instances of showing the use of this technique by participant teachers.

Table 1

Instances of Sections and Activities Approached by the Technique 'Adding'

Description of activities	Section	Teachers
Explanatory content [More examples &/or note added]	Grammar	T ₁ , T ₂ , T ₃ , T ₄ , T ₅
Worksheet as practice exercise on present perfect and simple past combined	Grammar	T ₁ , T ₂ [the teachers prepared the added content together]
As continuation of Activity 9.16: exercise on conditionals. Multiple choice type questions added. [grade-8]	Grammar	T ₃ , T ₄ [T ₄ shared to T ₃]
Activity 9.14: Write meanings of the words as they are used in the reading passage [the teachers pick more words from the passage and add [grade-8]	Vocabulary	T ₂
Activity 10.16: ...find synonymous in the passage, [the teachers give additional questions [grade-7]	Vocabulary	T ₁ , T ₂ [the teachers prepared the questions together]

From all the data sources in Table 1, it was evidenced that the grammar sections' explanatory notes and activities were supplemented with other resources. It was also observed that the teachers devoted much of the instructional time to this section. For instance, in grade-8, T-5 (classroom observation 7) write notes and examples about 'adjectives' and 'adverbs' on the black board which was not in the textbook and explained their function. In the interview he states:

The textbook lacks basic definitions of these modifiers and the examples provided are inadequate... so I use additional notes that I prepared myself with exercises... for instance, there is completion exercise in using 'good' or "well' without any explanation. Thus, I provide notes that help students see the key differences. (T-5)

Similarly, T-4 added exercises extracted from previous national examination questions in her lesson (data from students' work sample). In the interview, she states "I usually do this in every grammar lesson as I think it is important to show my students how grammatical concepts are appears in the national examination". T-3 in grade-7 (as seen in the students' work sample and observation-4) supplement her lesson on present perfect tense. This is because she felt that the activity in the textbook is not engaging; as it is more of showing the structure of the tense. In the lesson presentation, she added activity as a conversation practice that consists of the tense in focus to show both the structure and the situation that the specific tense is used in a sentence.

Although the textbook was the main source of content and activities, the observation and interview data revealed that 'adding' as technique of adaptation was used. They

incorporated additional activities and content based on what they perceive as a gap in the textbook related to what is needed for their students. According to McDonough et al. (2013), 'adding' is often used to address learners' specific needs or interests. The practice similarly shows that the teachers are making judgement on the contents and alter based on its relevance to the context they are teaching.

Omission

The data from observation and students work sample shows that a number of activities and exercises from the textbooks are omitted. The omitted activities are mainly from speaking and writing. Partial omission from activities in the listening and reading sections are also observed.

Table 2

Instances of Sections and Activities Omitted

Description of activities	Section/ sub section	Teachers
Activities Act- 9.1 grade-8) Act 10.1) grade-7)	Pre-listening	T ₃ , T ₄ & T ₁ , T ₂
Group discussion and report based on open ended questions (Act- 9.5-(grade- 8) & Act-10.5 grade-7)	Post listening	T ₁ , T ₂ , T ₄ , T ₅
Collaborative activity -share views on the contributions and disadvantages of a computer - report (Act-10.6) (grade-7)	Speaking	
Role play/students are given situations, required to take position and argue (practice,) Act-9.6 and Students required to make an Interview and report (& Act-9.7) (grade- 8)	Speaking	T ₄ , T ₅
Pre-reading (Act-10.9) pair discussion picture based open ended questions. (grade-7)	Pre-reading	T ₂ & T ₁ Omit partially)
Post -reading – Require students to engage in critical discussions and also to summarize the reading text (Act- 9.12) (grade-8)	Post-reading	T ₄ , T ₅
Group discussion and report based on open ended questions (Act- 10.15) (grade-7)		T ₁ , T ₂ ,
Act- Activity 9.19: Writing activity involving process of paragraph writing forming outline, draft revise...[grade-8]	Writing	T ₄ , T ₅

Table 2 demonstrates that in almost all observed lessons, part or the whole of the pre-listening and pre-reading activities were left out. It was more of total omission with the post-listening and reading activities which require students to analyze, discuss and report. While all comprehension exercises, like multiple-choice questions or gap-fills which focus on assessing basic understanding of a text were all adhered.

From the speaking section, activities that require students to discuss, report or make oral presentations or role play were skipped. In the sample unit, for instance, T-3 and T-4 leave out the speaking activity that requires students to make oral presentation for the whole class. In the interview they explained the possible reason: "Only four periods per week is allotted to teach English while the textbook is overloaded with lots of discussion activities. So, we do not have enough time to cover all" (T-3). "It is known that most of our students have basic English

background skill problem as a result they lack interest and only few of them are capable of doing and participating in discussion activities...so we skip such task" (T-1). In grade seven textbook, the speaking section includes much pronunciation practice activities on minimal pairs, and tongue twisters. In all lessons the teachers leave out many of the activities. In the interview, for instance one of the teachers said:

... the textbook has many unnecessary exercises like for instance [he opened the textbook and shows the part in unit -7 "Pronunciation of /ə/ or Schwa vowel sound] ...look there are about 5 activities... I don't think the students need to learn all this with such detail. it is not in their interest too so I do not waste time for such activities in the book (T-3).

The other teachers also reported that they did not give much attention to phonetic sounds because their students were not interested in such issues, and the exercises were not attention-grabbing, and also, they felt learning the contents in other sections of the textbook better helps them for exam and language development.

In the writing section, the activities are of mixed types: some are controlled writing activities like punctuation exercises, sentence joining and others are guided and extended writing like tasks related to paragraph development. As evidenced in the students' work sample the teachers adhere to the mechanics and writing conventions and leave out the writing production activities be it controlled or free. In the observation too it was noted, for instance T-4 and T-5 deleted a task that asked students to write an expository paragraph on the advantages and disadvantages of doing things using computers. The other instance which is omitted by both teachers is 'Activity 9.19'. The activity is both guided and free in which students are expected to engage in creating and categorizing when they list conditions, required to involve in synthesizing when they write a coherent paragraph explaining the conditions. The activity holistically promotes productive skill as well as aspects of critical thinking. With regard to such actions of omission, T-3 stated that he usually left out such writing activities as they were difficult for the students and they also lacked interest. T-5 mentioned that, "as more focus is given to prepare students for national examination, we teach exercises on mechanics and joining sentences but other writing activities are not given attention". In the post observation interview, it was disclosed by the teachers that they leave out the activities for reasons including; students' level of understanding and ability to do the tasks and time issue, and their belief what should students priorly learn especially as it relates to examination.

Evidence from the finding indicates that the teachers omitted activities and exercises which falls on both aspects of omission referred by Mc Donough et al. (2013) as 'subtracted' and 'abridged'. There are instances presented in the finding where the amount reduced is not significant. Yet, in most where activities presented in the textbook with specific learning goals set to be achieved were left out from the delivered instruction. Reflected in this evidence is what Katrina (2019) remarks on the problem with omitting material from the textbook- missing significant aspect of language to be thought.

Modifying and simplifying

From the lessons observed, it was only in one instance that the teachers use the technique 'Modifying'. The instance is that, while teaching grammar in grade -8 both teachers modified the mode of presentation suggested in the textbook. In the textbook, 'Lesson twelve on

'Conditionals I and II', It starts with presenting dialogue containing the target, then follows how it is used. Yet, both teachers start the lesson by writing their own notes on conditionals starting with the grammar rules [verb forms and tenses used in the if clause and main clause] and sentences containing the structure and explain the difference by giving more examples.

As the data from classroom observation shows, the technique of 'Simplifying' was used by the teachers while teaching reading sections. The teachers were observed, selecting words from the reading text and telling their meaning and translating into their first language, and giving clues for the students to answer the comprehension questions. In the interview, the teachers mentioned that this practice is to reduce the language difficulty. T-4 mentioned "I want to make sure that my students understand the reading passage before they do the follow up questions, so we read it together in class and I explain them and I check if they know the meaning of some words and tell them the meaning". Similarly, Tr-1 said "I tell my students the main idea even before I gave them the exercise from the reading passage" 'Simplifying' as a technique was used when the teachers introduced the reading passage. With an intention of making it, [as the teachers put] 'more comprehensible'. This is similar to McDonough et al.'s (2013) observation: "the main application of this technique is often to reading passages" (p.75) and used for clarity and to suit for students' skill level (Yen, 2022).

Regarding the teachers' use of adaptation approach, the finding leads to a conclusion that the techniques predominantly used are 'adding and deleting'; while modifying and simplifying are used with some contents and few times. This finding is similar to what Pratiwi et al. (2019) reported in their findings. The teachers added activities and content which are further explanations of the same topic content and exercises provided in the textbooks. This goes in line with the adding technique of 'extension' as described in McDonough et al.'s framework description as 'adding by extension is to supply more of the same' (p.86).

The study found that textbook adaptations were mainly driven by teachers' focus on examination preparation and by their perception that certain textbook tasks did not match students' proficiency. Similar results were reported by Song (2024) in research on teacher-textbook interaction, and by Abdel Latifa (2017), and Seferaj (2014), who also identified "teaching to the examination" accounted as a reason. In Bosompem's (2014) study in Ghana context, the students' level of understanding was identified as a reason. In some EFL countries where Ministries controlled English language teaching, pressure was placed on teachers to successfully prepare for examinations (Sprat, 2005). It was also revealed in our study that omission is partly due to time-related reasons. Rathert and Cabaroğlu (2021), also reported that 'not to fall behind the institutional schedule' as a reason. Teachers' perception of the relevance of the content/ activity also was a factor. The omission of pronunciation related contents and the exercises were instances. This notion has been also reflected in McDonough et al.'s (2013) discussion on content alignment with learners' interest and needs a factor for adaptation. While revealed in the findings is that the teachers use of a variety of adaptation techniques, in many situations across the units, there has also been adherence to activities and contents of the textbooks which is consistent with the findings of Criado (2023).

Learning experience resulted from teachers' adaptation techniques

As the finding above reveals, of the textbook adaptation techniques, it was adding and omitting that were predominantly employed. It is through the analysis of what these

techniques resulted that findings on promoted or hindered learning experiences are drawn. It is viewed with reference to the 'strands' or learning opportunities identified in the theoretical framework by (Nation & Newton, 2009) in the students' learning experiences.

Table 3

Description of Learning Experience Promoted and Hindered

Learning opportunities /strands	Status – promoted/ hindered	Description and instances of promoted or hindered learning experience
Language-focused learning	Learning experience promoted – from addition of explanatory content, activity and exercise in grammar & voc. sections	Grammar retention improved through varied practice & formats – like worksheet Communicative use of grammar promoted [when conversation practice using target grammar structures added] Students' needs addressed – national examination preparation
Meaning-focused output	Learning experience hindered – from omission of activities in speaking and writing sections	<i>Limits communicative competence</i> – as the activities missed out such as, debates, presentations and discussions promote discourse, Sociolinguistic aspect <i>Limits interaction skills and critical thinking</i> – as the activities missing involve opinion-based discussion, evaluating evidence <i>Limits productive language skill development</i> – as it reduces the practice to applying language features in meaningful context. <i>Limits critical thinking and organization skills</i> – as the writing tasks promote logical thinking, organizing ideas, and planning
Meaning-focused input	Learning experience hindered – from omission in post listening & post reading activities	<i>Limit skill integration</i> – as the activities often link listening & writing to speaking or writing like reporting, discussions <i>Limit critical thinking development</i> – as the activities involves analyzing, evaluating, and responding through group or pair work & discussion involvement

From the analysis of what is embedded in the learning experiences promoted or hindered from the data presented in Table 3, two aspects that a language learning program emanates as an issue of concern- 'Balance of language skill development and opportunity for higher order thinking skills development'.

Balance of language skill development

As depicted in Table 3, the finding evidenced that the teachers' adaptation approach promotes certain aspects while hindering others to a considerable extent. From the strands or learning opportunities identified in the theoretical framework this study considers, the

teachers' adaptation technique promoted aspects of 'language-focused learning' fail to provide proper opportunity the development of skills in other 'strands. Engaging in explicit learning to such strand including vocabulary and grammar practices foster learning (Newton & Nation (2009). However, they also argue that in language learning, there has to be a balance between the three meaning-focused strands. In relation to the receptive skills, what resulted from the adaptation was a less holistic learning opportunity.

The finding evidenced that it is part of the reading section and some activities from the listening sections that the teachers adhered to and supplement in some instances. Tomlinson (2008) description implies, during listening and reading activities, the focus could be on teaching language features for literal comprehension and, on opportunity for engagement and language skill development. In our study, the textbooks consist of activities of both types. Nevertheless, in the specific way the teachers adapt the materials in their instruction, activities that require students in the explicit, surface- level meaning of a text were favored and integrated while those activities beyond the literal which provides opportunity for students engaging in analysis, synthesis and critical thinking were missing. The omission of activities that promote such skills were prevalent in the delivered instruction from the speaking and writing sections too. As Fogarty (2009) in Aziz et al. (2017), pointed structuring activities that encourage students' thinking through discussions and dialogues' is a role of teachers in the development of students' higher order thinking skills. From the writing sections activities which involve analysis and synthesis skills embedded in free and guided writing exercises were omitted. Mayer (2002) noted learning from such types of writing exercises is helpful to develop creativity and critical thinking.

In the productive skills [speaking and writing], many of the activities were missed out from the instruction delivered. This finding reveals that the balance of opportunities could not be maintained because of the way teachers adapted the textbook while using in the classroom to deliver instruction. The reason as stated by teachers in the interview, [see the findings in the first subsection], was mainly because their priority was on addressing an aspect of class needs i.e. providing exam-oriented practice activities that mainly consist of aspects of language structure.

Opportunity for higher order thinking skills development

These findings of the study provide evidence on how the teachers' adaptation approach resulted in the denial of opportunities for higher order skills (HOTS) development. On the integration of such skills, Astrid et al. (2022) noted that, in language teaching and learning, tasks that engage students in problem- solving activities, open- ended questions can help to promote students' skill. The Ethiopian National curriculum framework (MoE, 2020) also posits related skills to be developed across subjects. As observed across the omitted activities in different sections of the textbook depicted in Table 3, opportunities for the development of critical thinking and creativity are hindered. In speaking sections for instance, discussions which require students to be involved in critical thinking and analysis activities were missing. The skills are fostered when students are asked open-ended questions that extend their thinking. In the post listening and reading tasks the activities consist of questions of such type. Similarly, as seen in Table 2 above these activities are mostly omitted. From the writing section for instance, one of activities that the teachers leave out asks students to identify sentence relevance with the given topic sentence. Such activity engages students in a

cognitive process to analyze sentence relevance, organizing supporting ideas logically, which are of among higher order thinking.

Revealed in the literature is that teachers' perception about the students' need and of performance level could lead them to leave out activities that promote HOTS related skills. According to Tomlinson (2008) the assumption that learners do not want and would not gain from intellectually demanding activities while engaged in language learning influences teachers' action. Aziz et al. (2017) also pointed when teachers felt that there are constraints, it adversely affects the instruction delivered that may foster HOTS skills. Our study also demonstrates this, while the skills are of significant and in demand in the curriculum, because of the teachers' perception the way the teachers adapt the textbook were not found promoting the skills as students' learning experience.

In relation to the language learning experience the adaptation technique the teachers use influences, the study in sum reveals, resulted from 'adding', 'form-focused language learning promoted and exam related needs of the students are addressed: yet, the outcome of 'omission' is that: i) learning experience to foster higher order thinking skills through language teaching is denied, as the 'omission' is more on activities in which analysis, synthesis and create skills are embedded, ii) learning experiences to promote the productive language competence is underemphasized. Hence, the appropriate balance of language skill development could not be realized. Leshota and Adler (2018) noted that in a situation where textbooks are approved and mandated, the minimum requirement expected on content is prescribed. With this view, our study finding implies learning content intended to be covered by the official curriculum is missing from the enacted lessons in the classroom.

Conclusion

A realization of the immense interest in language teaching materials, as Tomlinson (2013) noted, leads researchers and writers to raise issues of great significance to the developers and users of language learning materials. Aligned with this purpose, our study was designed to explain the adaptation technique teachers use and its influence on students' language learning experience. The major findings of the study include: i.) The teachers use a variety of adaptation techniques in many situations across the units combined with adherence to particular textbooks' contents ii.) This approach promotes aspects of 'language-focused learning' and addressed students' national examination preparation needs. Yet the appropriate balance of language skill development could not be realized and learning experience to foster higher order thinking skills through language teaching were denied. The evidence of the study demonstrates that the way teachers adapt the textbooks in delivering instruction determines the potential learning opportunities. This confirms the theoretical perspectives of textbook adaptation that students' learning experience depends as much on how teachers adapted the textbook.

Our study is conducted in a context where textbooks are designed to mediate the national curricular standards and the enacted curriculum. But the way the teachers adapt the textbook partly denies the intended learning opportunities the curriculum was designed to provide. Regarding textbook use in classroom context, Harwood (2017) argue that there is much to learn, from the well-developed textbook research in non-ELT fields. Taking this as a premise, it can be noted that the findings of our research which partly evidence the reduction

of learning opportunities, relate to Leshota's (2015) categorization [developed based on mathematics textbook research] of 'critical omission' - conceptualized as 'content omitted from lessons that is critical to opportunities for mediation'. This suggests that textbook adaptation by teachers might not necessarily result in better learning experience: and hence future studies need to examine the influence of the adaptation approach not only of the way how teachers adapt.

The evidence from the study finding point to the importance of enhancing teachers' capacity to integrate the pedagogical affordances of the textbook into the delivered instruction. This in effect necessitates considering better teacher preparation with respect to developing their competence in curriculum materials use - a need echoed in the literature. This research, though has limitations on generalizing as it is drawn from small sample, also suggests adaptation if driven only by context-related reasons the impact might not be productive to promote proper learning experience. Thus, by implication, it supports the theoretical position that textbook adaptation should be informed by principles that stems from pedagogical theory rather than based on immediate and contextual determinants.

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