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Teachers' Perception on English Textbook for Grade Ten

Prem Prasad Bhandari

Tikapur Multiple Campus, Far Western University, Nepal

Email: bhandaritmc@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines teachers' perceptions of the academic and physical aspects of the English Textbook of Grade Ten. The researcher selected fifteen teachers from five schools using a judgmental non-random sampling method. The collected data and the teachers' opinions were determined and analyzed by studying the book and evaluated using checklist tools. The main finding of this study shows that the textbook has both strong and weak points. Strong aspects of a textbook are an attractive cover page, biased free language, easily perceptible vocabulary, appropriate exercises, clearly reflected objectives, listening texts, and sufficient speaking and reading texts. The weaknesses are poor binding, poor paper quality, lack of skill focus on exercises, lack of illustrations, lack of references and supplementary materials as well as teacher's guide. The results of this study could be helpful in the development of appropriate English textbooks of grade ten. Based on the finding, the paper also recommends improving the textbook.

Keywords: Physical aspect, academic aspect, binding, supplementary materials

Introduction

A textbook is generally organized, encompassing the instructional vision of the curriculum with relevant objectives – the very objectives for appropriate implementation for classroom purposes and activities. Hence, it should suit the needs of the target groups and evoke practicality as well. Furthermore, “a textbook has to play a vital role in our education system” (Deuri, 2021, p.25). In this sense, the study converges with the physical and qualitative aspects of the textbook for grade ten, comprising an in-depth analysis of teachers' perceptions. The paper adopts a survey research design selecting five schools, one teacher from each school, from Kailali

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district as the area of data collection. The paper also uses secondary information from published research to substantiate the claims. So this paper used mixed methods for the analysis.

Grant (1987) asserts that “The textbook is used to refer to coursebook which typically aims to cover all the aspects of the language and supplementary textbook devoted to particular topics or skill areas” (p. 12). In this sense, a textbook is specific and closer to a coursebook. Likewise, Sharma (1995) describes it as “a textbook is a book used by the students and teachers for a particular course of study in a particular branch of knowledge” (p.2). Furthermore, for Goods (1959), “a textbook is the book dealing with the definite subject of study, systematically arranged intended for use as a principal source of study materials for a given course” (p.367).

A textbook is prepared based on a curriculum with its fixed objectives. It should suit the needs of target groups and be practical as well. Studies focusing on the physical aspects of the textbook often ignore the physical and academic issues employing teachers’ perceptions, particularly in the Nepali context. So, the paper attempts to examine the perception of English teachers on the physical and academic aspects of textbooks.

This study is significant for dealing with the appropriateness of English textbooks for grade ten. Yet, it would be helpful to the successful implementation in all. This research will reasonably make available recommendations to the authors, publishers, distributors, and others for the further improvement of this textbook.

Literature Review

The section critically reviews literature related to the definition of textbooks, the advantages of textbooks in the learning process, the importance of textbooks, and the challenges of selecting and evaluating textbooks. The review establishes the existing gaps in the literature and concentrates on the issues raised in this paper.

A textbook is a common teaching material that fulfills the gap between knowledge and skills. Moreover, textbooks make teaching and learning activities systematic to implement curricula’ objectives. A textbook is a teacher’s and students’ common book that systematically enables them to follow the language course (Ur, 2006). In this sense, a textbook is an essential teaching-learning material for both teachers and students. It reflects the objectives of the curriculum. According to K.C. (2021), a textbook is crucial for materializing the objectives of the curriculum. K.C., thus, affirms that secondary level teachers may not be able to manage proper reading materials which are supposed to be accessed by the students.

Likewise, a textbook is a teaching material for a teacher and learning material for learners. It is pivotal in the teaching and learning process (Awasthi, 2006). Contrary to Ur and Awasthi, Richards (2001, 12) lists the principal advantages of using a textbook as:

- It provides structure and syllabus for a teaching programme.
- It helps to standardize instruction.
- It trains teachers about what to teach.
- It provides effective language models and inputs.
- It provides a variety of learning resources.

For Richards, textbooks are essential resources for learning. Of course, textbooks are the concrete form of the syllabus required in the entire teaching and learning process. Both teachers and learners use textbooks as resource materials in the classroom to achieve curricular objectives.

Furthermore, textbooks provide information and strategies to be followed in the classroom with adequate learning exercises (Rai, 2011). In the light of these definitions, a textbook is a coherently designed teaching material that includes the aspects of the teaching and learning process in a formal educational setting.

Harmer (1991) argues that a textbook has obvious advantages for both teachers and students. A good textbook often contains lively, exciting materials. It provides a sensible progression of language items clearly showing what has to be learned. Consequently, the students can reread exercises related to different language skills for academic achievement. On the other hand, Martin (2017) argued that teachers often face two challenges while selecting appropriate textbooks: access to quality material and adapting the materials to address the learners' needs. On the other hand, Alsulami (2021) pointed out that textbook evaluation equips teachers acquire useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights, beyond impressionistic assessments of general features of textbooks.

Thus, the literature review foregrounds the definition of textbooks, advantages of using textbooks in classrooms. The majority of these studies followed mixed methods, and a few more were qualitative studies. However, the available literature does not adequately address physical and academic aspects referring to teachers' perceptions.

Methods and Procedures

In order to collect data for this study, two sets of questionnaires were

prepared: open-ended and closed-ended. The researcher studied the textbook in detail in the data collection procedure and observed their physical and academic aspects. Then, the researcher prepared a set of questionnaires. After that, the researcher took permission from the administrators and visited all the selected schools in Kailali. After that, the researcher requested teachers to tick the best alternatives on the three-point rating scale that closely reflected the teachers' opinions and wrote strong and weak points of the book and suggestions to improve.

To analyze the data, the researcher described the nature of the data and interpreted correlatively using simple statistical tools such as percentages and tables.

Results and Discussion

Perceptions of Academic and Physical Aspects

This category covers seven headings under which forty-three descriptive statements were presented which are close-ended. Each item had three alternatives as 1, 2, and 3 which denote 1=Agree, 2=Disagree, and 3=Undecided respectively. The total teachers' responses to these statements are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Teachers' Perceptions of Academic Aspects of the Textbook

S.N.	Statements	1	%	2	%	3	%
A.	Objectives						
1	The objectives of the book are suitable to the present society's demands.	15	100				
2	The objectives of the textbook are clear.	15	100				
3	The objective of the textbook is to develop communicative competence in the learners.	15	100				
B.	Content						
1	The contents of this book are simple and easy to understand for the teachers and students.	11	73.34	4	26.66		
2	The listening texts are comprehensible.	11	73.34	2	13.33	2	13.33
3	The speaking texts are sufficient.	9	60	5	33.34	1	6.66

4	There are enough texts to develop reading skills.	14	93.34	1	6.66		
5	There are enough exercises for developing writing skills.	8	53.33	7	46.67		
6	All the literary genres poems, stories, essays, and dramas are relevant to the students' needs.	12	80.00	3	20.00		
7	The book contains enough speaking texts.	9	60.00	5	33.34	1	6.66
8	There is a good connection between the reading texts and exercises.	14	93.34	1	6.66		

9	The contents are graded from simple to complex.	12	80.00	2	13.34	1	6.66
10	The contents of the book give up to data information.	12	80.00	1	6.66	2	13.34
C.	Language						
1	The language used in the textbook is simple and easy to understand.	13	86.66	2	13.34		
2	The vocabulary contained in the book is well selected.	10	66.67	4	26.67	1	6.66
3	The vocabulary is easy to understand.	10	66.67	4	26.67	1	6.66
4	The language used in the textbook is helpful to develop language skills.	15	100				
5	The language used in the textbook is free from biases.	14	93.34			1	6.66
6	The structures used in the textbook are well selected and graded.	14	93.34			1	6.66
7	There is a glossary at the end of each unit.			15	100		

8	The language items are selected according to the needs and interests of the learners.	9	60.00	5	33.34	1	6.66
D.	Function						
1	The book emphasizes the communicative functions of language.	15	100				
2	Functions are applicable to day-to-day life.	14	93.34	1	6.66		
E.	Exercises						
1	The given exercises are sufficient for the students.	7	46.67	8	53.33		
2	The exercises given in the textbooks are appropriate for the level of the students.	15	100				
3	They are helpful for the learners to improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	13	86.68	1	6.66	1	6.66
4	The exercises are graded from simple to complex.	13	86.66	2	13.34		
5	They are interesting for the students and help them to be creative learners.	13	86.66	1	6.67	1	6.67
6	Listening exercises are comprehensible.	11	73.32	2	13.34	2	13.34
7	Speaking exercises are suitable for the learners.	14	93.34			1	6.66
8	Reading exercises are appropriate for the learners.	14	93.34			1	6.66
9	Writing exercises are enough for the learners.	8	53.33	7	46.67		

10	The exercises are encouraging the students to work in pairs or groups.	14	93.34	1	6.66		
F.	Illustration						
1	The illustrations in the book are relevant and adequate in number.	9	60.00	5	33.34	1	6.66
2	The pictures in the book are clear.			15	100		
3	The pictures promote self-learning.	14	93.34	1	6.66		
G.	Ancillary Qualities						
1	1. The supplementary materials selected in the book match the interest and levels of students.	10	66.68	4	26.66	1	6.66
2	The selection and gradation of the materials are appropriate.	12	80.00	3	20.00		
3	The organization and presentation of the subject matter are clear and easy to understand.	12	80.00	3	20.00		
4	The glossary given in the book is enough.	2	13.34	13	86.66		
5	The DVD and CDs are available.			15	100		
6	.The audio-visual materials are easy to operate.			15	100		
7	Instructions and suggestions given to the teachers are appropriate.	3	20.00	12	80.00		

As with Table 1, Item A was related to the textbook's objectives that consisted of three statements. The first statement was that 'The objectives of the book are suitable to the present society's demands.' Upon this statement, 100 percent of teachers agreed. It concludes that the objectives of the textbook are suitable to the

present society's demands. The second statement stated that 'The objectives of the textbook are clear,' and 100 % of teachers agreed with the statement. Likewise, the third statement with the same agreement rate also possesses the objective of developing learners' communicative competence. One hundred percent of teachers agreed with this agreement. It concludes that the textbook's objectives help develop communicative competence in the learners.

Item B was related to the textbook's contents, which consisted of ten statements. The first statement was that 'The contents of this book are simple and easy to understand for the teachers and students.' Based on this statement, 73.34 percent of teachers agreed, whereas 26.66 percent disagreed. It concludes that the contents of this book are simple and easy to understand for the teachers and students. The second statement stated that 'The listening texts are comprehensible.' Based on this statement, 73.34 percent of teachers agreed, whereas 13.33 percent disagreed, and the same percentage of teachers were undecided. It concludes that the listening texts are comprehensible. The third statement was 'The speaking texts are sufficient.' Upon this statement, 60.00 percent of teachers agreed, 33.34 percent disagreed, whereas 6.66 percent were undecided. It concludes that the speaking texts are sufficient. The fourth statement was that 'There are enough texts to develop reading skills. Based on this statement, 93.34 percent of teachers agreed, whereas 6.66 percent disagreed. It concludes that there are enough texts to develop reading skills. The fifth statement was 'There are enough exercises for developing writing skills. Upon this statement, 53.33 percent of teachers agreed, whereas 46.67 percent disagreed. It concludes that there are enough exercises for developing writing skills. The sixth statement was that 'All the literary genres poems, stories, essays, dramas are relevant to the students' need. 80% of teachers agreed with this statement, whereas 20 % disagreed. It concludes that all the literary genres, poems, stories, essays, and dramas are relevant to the students' needs.

60% of teachers agree with the seventh statement, 'the book contains enough speaking texts,' whereas 33.34% disagree and 6.66% remain undecided. It indicates the book has almost adequate speaking texts. The eighth statement was 'There is a good connection between the reading texts and exercises. 93.34 % of teachers agreed, whereas 6.66 % disagreed with this statement. It concludes a good connection between the reading texts and exercises. The ninth statement was 'The contents are graded from simple to complex.' 80% of teachers agreed, 13.34% disagreed, whereas 6.66% remained undecided about this statement. We take that the contents are graded from simple to complex. Finally, the last statement was 'The contents of the book give up to date information.' 80% of teachers agreed with this statement, 6.66% disagreed, whereas 13.34% were undecided. It concludes that the contents of the book give up-to-date information.

Item 'C' was related to the language consisting of eight statements. The first statement was 'The language used in the textbook is simple and easy to understand.' 86.66% of teachers agreed with this statement, whereas 13.34% disagreed. It concludes that the language used in the textbook is simple and easy to understand. The second statement was, 'The vocabularies in the book are well selected.' Upon this statement, 66.67% of teachers agreed, 26.67% disagreed, whereas 6.66% remained undecided. It concludes that the vocabulary in the book is well selected. The third statement was 'The vocabularies are easy to understand.' Upon this statement, 66.67% of teachers agreed, 26.67% disagreed, and 6.66% remained undecided. It concludes that the vocabulary is easy to understand. The fourth statement was 'The language used in the textbook is helpful to develop language skills.' A hundred percent of teachers agreed with this statement. It concludes that the language used in the textbook helps develop language skills. The fifth statement was 'Language used in the textbook is free from biases.' 93.34% of teachers agreed with this statement, whereas only 6.66% were undecided. It concludes that the language used in the textbook is free from biases. The sixth statement was, 'The structures used in the textbook are well selected and graded.' Upon this statement, 93.34% of teachers agreed, whereas only 6.66% were undecided. It concludes that the structures used in the textbook are well selected and graded. The seventh statement was 'There is a glossary at the end of each unit.' A hundred percent of teachers disagreed with the statement, and we concluded each unit does not have a glossary at the end. The last statement was 'The language items are selected according to the needs and interests of the learners.' Sixty percent of teachers agreed with this statement; 34.34 percent disagreed, and 6.66 percent were undecided. We conclude the textbooks selected the language items according to the needs and interests of the learners.

Item D was related to the function, and it consisted of two statements. The first statement was 'The book emphasizes the communicative functions of language.' A hundred percent of teachers agreed with the statement. It concludes that the textbook emphasizes the communicative functions of language. The other statement was, 'Functions apply to day to day life.' 93.34 percent of teachers agreed with this statement, whereas 6.66 percent disagreed. It concludes that functions apply to day-to-day life.

Item E was related to the exercises that consisted of ten statements. The first statement was 'The given exercises are sufficient.' Upon this statement, 46.67 percent of teachers agreed, whereas 53.33 percent disagreed. According to the teachers, it concludes that the given exercises are not sufficient. The second statement stated

'The exercises given in the textbook are appropriate for the level of the students.' A hundred percent of teachers agreed with this statement. It concludes that

the exercises given in the textbook are appropriate for the level of the students. The third statement was ‘They are helpful for the learners to improve listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.’ 86.68 of teachers agreed with this statement, 6.66 percent disagreed, whereas 6.66 percent were undecided. It concludes that they are helpful for the learners to improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The fourth statement was, ‘The exercises are graded from simple to complex.’ 86.66 percent of teachers agreed with this statement, whereas 13.34 percent disagreed. We conclude that the exercises are graded from simple to complex. The fifth statement was, ‘They are interesting for the students and help them be creative learners.’ 86.66 percent of teachers agreed with this statement, 6.67 percent disagreed, whereas 6.67 percent were undecided. It concludes that they are interesting for the students and help them to be creative.

The sixth statement was ‘Listening texts are comprehensible.’ 73.32 percent of teachers agreed with the statement, 13.34 percent disagreed, whereas 13.34 percent were undecided. According to teachers, listening texts were comprehensible. The seventh statement was ‘Speaking texts are suitable for the learners.’ 93.34 percent of teachers agreed with the statement, whereas 6.66 percent were undecided. It concludes that speaking texts are suitable for learners. The eighth statement was ‘Reading exercises are suitable for the learners.’ 93.34 percent of teachers agreed with the statement, whereas 6.66 percent were undecided. It concludes that reading exercises are suitable for learners. The ninth statement was ‘Writing exercises are enough for the learners.’ 53.33 percent of teachers agreed with this statement, whereas 46.67 percent were undecided. It concludes that writing exercises are enough for the learners. The last statement was, ‘The exercises encourage the students to work in pairs or groups.’ 93.34 percent of teachers agreed with this agreement, whereas 6.66 percent disagreed. The conclusion is that the exercises encourage the students to work in pairs or groups.

Item F was related to an illustration consisting of three statements. The first statement was ‘The illustrations in the book are relevant and adequate in number.’ Sixty percent of teachers agreed with the statement; 33.34 percent disagreed, whereas 6.66 percent were undecided. It concludes that the illustrations in the book are relevant and adequate in number. The second statement was, ‘The pictures in the book are clear.’ A 100 percent of teachers disagreed with the statement. It proves the pictures were not clear. The third statement was ‘The pictures promote self-learning.’ 93.34 percent of teachers agreed with the statement, whereas 6.66 percent disagreed, concluding that pictures promote self-learning.

Item G relates to ancillary qualities, consisting of seven statements. The first statement was ‘The supplementary materials selected in the book match the

interest and level of students.’ with this statement, 66.68 percent of teachers agreed, 26.66 percent disagreed, whereas 6.66 percent were undecided, concluding that the supplementary materials selected in the book match the interest and level of students. The second statement was, ‘The selection and gradation of the materials are appropriate.’ With this statement, 80.00 percent of teachers agreed, whereas 20.00 percent disagreed. It concludes that the selection and gradation of the materials are appropriate.

The third statement was, ‘The organization and presentation of the subject matter are clear and easy to understand.’ With this statement, 80.00 percent of teachers agreed, whereas 20.00 percent disagreed. It concludes that the organization and presentation of the subject matter are easy to understand. The fourth statement was ‘The glossary given in the book is enough.’ With this statement, 13.34 percent of teachers agreed, whereas 86.34 percent disagreed. It concludes that the glossary given in the book is not enough. The fifth statement was ‘The DVD and CDs are available.’ A hundred percent of teachers disagreed with the statement. It concludes that the DVD and CDs are not available. The sixth statement was ‘The audio-visual materials are easy to operate.’ A hundred 100 percent of teachers disagreed with this statement. It concludes that the audio-visual materials are not easy to use. The last statement was, ‘Instructions and suggestions given to the teachers are appropriate.’ Twenty percent of teachers agreed with the statement, whereas 80.00 percent disagreed. It concludes that the instructions and suggestions given to the teachers are not appropriate.

Perceptions of Physical Aspects

This category consists of five headings under which I present eleven descriptive statements; they are close-ended in nature. Each item had three alternatives as 1, 2 and 3, which denote 1=Agree, 2=Disagree, and 3=Undecided, respectively. Table 2 presents the total teachers’ responses to these statements.

Table 2

Teachers’ Perceptions of Physical Aspects

S.N.	Statements	1	%	2	%	3	%
A.	Cover page design						
1	The cover of the book is attractive.	5	33.33	10	66.67		
2	The cover page is durable.	1	6.66	14	93.34		

B.	Size of the textbook						
1	The size of the book is appropriate for the learners.	15	100				
2	The book is light and portable.	15	100				
3	The book opens flat easily.	12	80.00	3	20.00		
C.	Binding and paper quality						
1	The binding of the book is durable.	7	46.67	8	53.33		
2	The quality of the paper is good.	4	26.67	11	73.33		
3	The printing is neat and clear.	3	20.00	12	80.00		
D	Letter and spacing						
1	1. The letters are of the appropriate font.	13	86.67	2	13.33		
2	The spacing between the words, sentences, and paragraphs is satisfactory.	14	93.34	1	6.66		
E.	Margin						
1	1. The margin of the book is satisfactory.	15	100				

Table 2 shows the teachers' perceptions regarding the physical features of the textbook 'English for Grade Ten'. Each item is analyzed the following paragraphs:

Item A, which consisted of two statements, relates to the book's cover page. The first statement was 'The cover of the book is attractive.' 33.33 percent of teachers agreed that it was, whereas 66.67 percent disagreed. The second statement

was ‘ The cover page is durable.’ 93.34 percent of teachers disagreed with the statement, whereas 6.66 percent agreed. It concludes that the cover page is not durable.

Item B, which consisted of three statements, relates to the size of the book. The first statement was ‘The size of the book is appropriate for the learners. ‘A hundred percent of teachers agreed with the statement. It concludes that the size of the book is appropriate for the learners. The second statement was, ‘The book is light and portable.’ A hundred percent of teachers agreed with the statement. It concludes that the book is light and portable. The third statement was, ‘the book opens flat easily.’ With this statement, 100 percent of teachers agreed. It concludes that the book opens flat easily.

Item C consisted of three statements related to the book’s binding and paper quality. The first statement was, ‘ The binding of the book is durable. ‘With this statement, 46.67 percent of teachers agreed whereas 53.33 percent disagreed. . It concludes that the book’s binding is not durable. The second statement was, ‘The quality of the paper is good.’ Only 26.67 percent of teachers agreed with this statement, whereas 73.33 percent disagreed. It concludes that the quality of the paper is not good. The third statement was, ‘The printing is neat and clear.’ Only 20.00 percent of teachers agreed with the statement, whereas 80.00 percent disagreed. It concludes that the book has not neat and clear printing.

Item D, which consisted of two statements, relates to the letter and font of the book. The first statement was, ‘ The letters are of the appropriate font.’ 86.67 percent of teachers agreed with the statement, whereas 13.33 percent disagreed. It concludes that the letters are of the appropriate font. The second statement was ‘The spacing between the words, sentences, and paragraphs are satisfactory.’ 93.34 percent of teachers agreed with the statement, whereas 6.66 percent disagreed. It concludes that the spacing between the words, sentences, and paragraphs is satisfactory.

Item E consisted of a statement ‘The margin of the book is satisfactory.’ A hundred percent of teachers agreed with this statement. It strongly concludes that the margin of the book is satisfactory.

Perceptions on Open-Ended Questions

The researcher provided three questions to the teachers to write their perceptions. They were as follows:

- i) What are the strong points of this book?
- ii) What are the weak points of this book?
- iii) What are your suggestions to improve this book?

According to the teachers, the book's strong points are: The book focuses on communicative functions with four language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The book has good binding; has clear objectives; has sufficient reading texts; exercises follow all the lessons. The size of the book is appropriate. Similarly, the weak points of the book so far the teachers have found are: The book's cover page is not durable. The book has poor paper quality. The printed pictures are not clear. The exercises for grammatical purposes are not enough. Some lessons are not relevant to the students' level. The last question covers the suggestions:

- It should contain proper teaching instructions to the teachers, more grammatical exercises, clear and colorful pictures, strong and durable binding of the book, enough activities for reading skills, and an adequate glossary.
- An improved paper quality
- An attractive cover page
- More pictures to attract students' attention and exciting stories etc.

The findings from the teachers' perception of the textbook's academic and physical aspects comprise both strengths and weaknesses of the textbook (English for Grade Ten).

The objectives of the textbook are suitable for the present society's demands. The four language skills are emphasized in the textbook, arranging a good selection and gradation of grammar exercises in simple to complex ways stressing more on language functions used for day-to-day communication. Similarly, speaking texts are sufficient in the book with good binding, portable size, and reasonable price. In this sense, the book fulfills the need and interests of the learners.

On contrary, I have found some weaknesses in the textbook. The book does not have a durable cover page, paper, unclear printed pictures, and an insufficient glossary. In addition to it, writing exercises are not enough, some texts are not relevant for the students, and there is lack of listening materials.

Conclusion

A textbook contains the pedagogical vision of the curriculum with pertinent objectives to be addressed in classroom activities. The present study explored teachers' perception of a textbook's academic and physical aspects (English for Grade ten). The textbook has weaknesses and strengths when implementing the activities to enhance linguistic skills. The study also confirmed that textbook analysis provides a wider knowledge about the academic and physical aspects to the teachers. This knowledge enables teachers to support instruction programs in school or college.

Further, this study has analyzed teachers' perceptions regarding the academic and physical aspects of the textbook. It confirmed that textbook plays a vital role in reforming the educational system. A regular examination of textbooks enables the teachers to understand the relationship between the learners' needs and the content in the textbook. A language textbook needs adequate information on all the language skills. However, the study assumes to be a reliable source for further research in the future. In this sense, the study recommends that for the effective and quality implementation of the textbook (An English Textbook for Grade Ten), both policy and practical levels should be improved and strengthened.

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