

## Exploring Nepal and Sri Lanka's Grade Eight English Textbooks: Cross-National Insights

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### Abstract

*A cross-country comparison of textbooks offers valuable insights into educational expectations, pedagogical traditions, and practical approaches in different nations. This study employs document analysis method to compare eighth-grade English textbooks from Nepal and Sri Lanka. The comparison examines composition, content, diversity of genres, and authenticity of the texts to determine the extent of their alignment with national curricula and local contexts. The comparison found that Nepal's textbook, a 191-page single volume with 18 units, has followed a highly structured functional approach where all four language skills include the same sub-units, grammar, and language skills. In contrast, Sri Lanka's two-book system, with a total of 187 pages and 10 units, adopted a richer, diverse activity-based textbook with various exercises. The comparison suggests a focus on uniformity of sub-units in Nepal's textbook and a wealth of variety in genres (poems, dialogues, and somewhat authentic texts) in Sri Lanka's textbook. Both textbooks include content from local cultures as well as from the global English corpora. The comparison highlights Nepal's preferences for structured textbooks against Sri Lanka's flexible ones. It concludes that these state-produced textbooks will determine the policies and practices for teaching English language in both of the countries.*

**Keywords:** CDC, Education Publication Department, content, genre, authenticity, single vs. multiple textbooks

### Introduction

In English teaching, a textbook serves a “universal element” (Hutchinson & Torre, 1994, p. 315), and is also considered the necessary tool for classroom teaching that shapes the perspectives of the teachers, learners, and their families toward the subject matter (Huang et al., 2022; Okeeffe, 2013). As Buckingham et al. (1954) opine, textbooks are important classroom resources because they support instruction and can be adapted by teachers of varying degrees of expertise and experience to meet the diverse needs of their students. With its global expansion, English has become the most commonly spoken language in the world, surpassing Mandarin (Ethnologue, 2021; Holloway, 2021), resulting in the rise of English language teaching as a thriving business across the globe. The rising number of English language learners has not only

resulted in more demand for English language teachers but also has led to a booming English textbook industry, with its publishers ranging from the private sector to government agencies, producing and marketing their materials as indispensable classroom resources (Gray, 2010; Squitieri, 2018). Owing to this, the world English textbook market has become a multi-billion-dollar enterprise (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Sheldon, 1988).

It is a widely accepted notion that English language teaching requires textbooks as necessary materials in the classrooms. It has been accepted as almost a universal element of English language teaching (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994), and there is a fierce competition between global and local publishers of English textbooks all around the world to capture the market (Gray, 2010a, 2010b). In such conditions, the textbooks published by government agencies not only have to face the challenges of international publication giants but also have to bear the responsibility of addressing issues regarding local concerns (Aliakbari, 2005; Gray, 2010a). After the downfall of colonialism, countries of the third world too began their textbook enterprises, putting their local and national interests forward.

Normally, schools can choose textbooks published by diverse sources in the classroom, and the diverse varieties of such textbooks pose a challenge to the authorities regarding the selection of appropriate textbooks (Rodríguez, 2010). In recent times, the availability of textbooks published by government agencies has made it mandatory for schools in many countries to opt for such books as primary reading texts.

### **Textbook as Teaching Material**

Textbooks are universal in formal mass schooling in most countries (Farrell & Tanner, n.d.). As the most used media in the classroom, textbooks determine teaching and learning in classrooms throughout the world (Smart & Jagannathan, 2018). For Tomlinson (2011), a textbook or coursebook refers to "anything which teachers or learners use to facilitate the learning of a language" (p. 2). It provides a clear framework about the curricular goals and proposed learning outcomes with readymade texts and tasks that not only provide pedagogical guidance to novice teachers but also provide an opportunity for learning autonomy to the learners (Ur, 1999). Textbooks are probably the most effective tools for achieving curricular goals and maintaining uniformity in education. They reduce half of the teachers' workload in the classroom by providing students with comprehensive, ready-made, and pre-structured content that is tailored to their cognitive levels. A good textbook always has appropriate content with proper sequencing, which is why teachers often choose to use it in their classrooms (Harmer, 2007). However, as Harmer (2007) argues, teachers can also change, skip, or add content as they see fit for their target class.

Regarding English textbooks, educational institutions typically have two options for their selection: the first is to select books published in Western countries for authentic input, and the second is to select books published by local publishers. In the latter option, there is a trend of implementing books published by the state agency responsible for textbook publication. Ulla (2019) concludes that most of the teachers are positive toward textbooks published in Western countries. They even use such textbooks as syllabi and guides to content selection, material development, and assessment. He found that most of the teachers think that such books are the primary source for language learning; however, they cannot address the local issues and the home culture. Such books serve as a vehicle for promoting Western commercial culture as a form of new capitalism that turns English into a branded commodity (Gray, 2010a, 2010b).

In various cases, the textbooks prepared for a particular target audience are adopted by an institution that is teaching students with quite different levels of requirements. This mainly happens in cases where institutes adopt books designed and produced in Western countries. In

such cases, the textbook may have an adverse effect in the classroom, i.e., there may be mechanistic learning and content may be less localized. In many cases, such readymade textbooks can limit the responsibilities of the teachers in the classroom (Hutchinson & Torre, 1994) and restrict the creative faculty of students as well. Rather, such books differ from the materials produced to meet the national curriculum requirements (Gray, 2010a, 2010b).

### **English in Nepal and Sri Lanka: History and Now**

Nepal and Sri Lanka are countries in South Asia that host multitudes of cultures, languages, and ethnicities inland (Schulenkorf, 2010; Yadava, 2014). However, both countries have many differences regarding their history, geography, and population. Sri Lanka is a tropical island in the Indian Ocean, whereas Nepal is a landlocked country comprised of the Himalayan highlands and to swampy plains of Terai. Sri Lanka was noticed by Westerners in the early decades of the 16th century when Europeans discovered oceanic routes to India (Rogers, 1990) and the first Portuguese mission led by Ameyda arrived there in the year 1505. Nepal, on the other hand, was acquainted with Westerners after more than a century, when John Cabral travelled to Nepal from Shigatse on his Jesuit mission (Whelpton, 2005). Thus, Sri Lanka got earlier Western exposure; it was exposed to the English language before Nepal. In Nepal, which was never colonized, English education was introduced by the Rana regime in 1854 with the establishment of Durbar High School. In contrast, Sri Lanka was first invaded by the Portuguese, then by the Dutch, and ultimately fell under British colonial rule. During these historical developments, many missionaries opened schools there to teach the Western languages (especially Portuguese, Dutch, and English) (Devapriya, 2019). The first English school in Sri Lanka was established in 1800 by Sir Frederick North, one of the earliest British governors (Samarakkody & Braine, 2005), however, it remained as a language 'desired and feared' (Walisundara & Hettiarachchi, 2016) and there had been a 'love-hate relationship' in the country (Goonetilleke, (year...) as cited in Samarakkody & Braine, 2005).

At present, both Nepal and Sri Lanka are on the way to the development of local varieties of English, such as Nepalese English (Dewan & Laksamba, 2020; Sharma, Joshi, & Teijlingen, 2015) and Lankan English (Meyler, 2009; Samarakkody & Braine, 2005) as the English use is expanding day by day. However, in the global expansion of World Englishes, Sri Lanka falls under the inner circle and Nepal under the expanding circle (Mukminatien, 2012). Yet, there was one similarity in both of the countries regarding the state-fostered one-language policy, i.e., Nepali-only language policy (Phyak, 2013) in Nepal and Sinhala-only in Sri Lanka (Coperahewa, 2009), which they adopted in the 1950s, and both of the countries have recently acknowledged their multilingual reality (Aloysius, 2015).

The status of the English language differs in both countries. In Nepal, English has remained a language of social status since the Rana rule. It was mitigated a bit during the Panchayat system's one-language policy, but again after the 1990s, it spread in the form of the popularity of private-run institutional schools, which have made good fortune marketizing English medium education (Phyak, 2016). On the other hand, English enjoyed the status of the official language in the time of British colonialism, i.e., from 1815 to 1956 in Sri Lanka. After the Sinhala Only Act in 1956, English was replaced by the Sinhala language in all domains. In 1976, the Tamil language was also acknowledged as another official language, and since 2009, English has been re-included in the country's language policy as a link language (Coperahewa, 2009; Sittarage, 2018; Walisundara & Hettiarachchi, 2016).

### **School System in Nepal and Sri Lanka**

Nepal and Sri Lanka both have colonial influences on their school systems. In Nepal, School education is divided into two levels; classes one to eight are the basic level, and classes

nine to 12 are the secondary level. The Sri Lankan school structure is slightly different. They also have two levels: primary and secondary levels. The primary level includes classes one to five, and the secondary level has a further three sub-categorizations, i.e., classes six to nine junior secondary level, classes 10 and 11 senior secondary level, and classes 12 and 13 are in the collegiate level. From this, it is clear that class 8 is the senior-most class of basic level education in Nepal, and in Sri Lanka, the same class comes under the junior secondary level.

### **English Textbooks in Nepal and Sri Lanka**

Recognizing English's global prominence as a vital tool for modernization, education, and influence, Nepal and Sri Lanka have intensified efforts to enhance English language teaching. For this, countries focused on the publication of English language textbooks meeting the requirements of their curricular goals. A textbook has been undoubtedly accepted as an effective material for language teaching, and some serious demerits of imported textbooks from the West have been realized in recent days (Aliakbari, 2005; Harmer, 2007; Gray, 2010a; Tomlinson, 2011; Smart & Jagannathan, 2018). It was in the past, i.e., in the colonial era, most of the countries used to import English language textbooks from Western countries; however, later books began to be published locally, addressing the local contexts and cultures (Aliakbari, 2005; Ulla, 2019). At present, there has been the state-funded publication of textbooks in both countries.

In Nepal, the first textbook policy was quoted in the National Education System Plan (NSEP) 1971. Earlier in the 1950s, available books in the market were selected as textbooks, and most of those books used as English textbooks were published in India or abroad. Only the books in the Nepali language were produced in Nepal. Later, after the Panchayat system was launched in the country, the publication of books in Nepal was prioritized (K.C., 1983). The system set new narratives of nationalism, and reform in education was an integral part of it. For this, it was necessary to produce the textbooks articulating the interest of the regime. In the decree, entitled National Education System Plan 1971, it was declared to commission textbook authors for the first time (Ministry of Education, 1971). Since then, the government of Nepal has had a designated textbook policy, i.e., to produce textbooks fulfilling the requirements of the national goals of education. However, after the political changes of 1991, schools were given a waiver to implement the books published by private sector publishers as extra reading texts.

The Government of Nepal issued the first draft of the National Book Policy in 2016. The government-run enterprise Janak Education Material Centre (JEMC) publishes school textbooks in Nepal. The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) provides camera-ready copies of school textbooks to JEMC six months before the academic session. Then JEMC prints and distributes books from grades six to ten, and books for grades one to five are published by private publishers (Budhathoki, 2016). Those books are distributed to the students of community schools through schools free of cost; however, the central government provides the local bodies with the amount to purchase books, which is later handed over to the schools. Schools buy the books and distribute them to the children (The Act Relating to Compulsory and Free Education, 2018).

Similarly, Sri Lanka also provides free textbooks to all students (Aloysius, 2015). Textbooks are published by the Educational Publication Department. This department produces textbooks in Sinhala, Tamil, and English, and then those books are distributed freely. As Foucault (1972) says, "Every educational system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers it carries with it" (p. 277). The education system works as an instrument to condition the people under the certain limitations set by the system. Education in the colonial era was used as a great tool "to exercise power and hegemony over the people of South Asia" (Nair, 2010, p. 32). As Nair (2010) further says;

Textbooks began to be published to incorporate the colonial ideology and worldview and had a two-pronged objective: to familiarize the British with native customs and traditions and to impress upon the natives the superiority of the colonizer's form of governance as compared to the natives' barbaric and uncouth civilization. These textbooks not only eulogized the political and military achievements of the British but also condemned the nature of the Indian civilization. ... these textbooks highlighted the lack of a national sentiment or a sense of patriotism ... Textbooks were thus used as ideological tools in the colonial state's projection of itself through critical representations of the pre-colonial pasts. (p. 32)

Hence, the colonial interest in the education system and textbooks became outdated after independence, and in the 1950s, textbooks with nationalist narratives began to be published. It was after the independence in 1948, there grew Sinhalese nationalism as a "majority community's attempt to fashion a nation in its image through monopolization of the state and of the consequent emergence of a secessionist ethnonational movement" (Krishna, 1999, p. 31), where a single culture, religion, and language was privileged to other minority ones (Krishna, 1999; Phyak, 2013). Such an ethnocentric identity was reflected in the textbooks, too (Gaul, 2015).

To understand the contemporary implications of these historical and political shifts in textbook production, this environment gave rise to discontent among the minority ethnic communities and led to violent bloodshed from 1983 to 2009, causing the death of approximately 100,000 people (Coperahewa, 2009; D'Souza, 2017; Gaul, 2015; ). During the civil war, the rebel LTTE's educational wing published history books of their own, blaming the Sinhalese-led government for concealing the greatness and twisting the history of the Tamils (Nair, 2010).

In light of these contexts in both Nepal and Sri Lanka, this paper aims to compare the eighth-grade English textbooks of Nepal, published by the CDC, and Sri Lanka, published by the Educational Publication Department. The comparison is based on the criteria of size, composition, content, and authenticity of the text. The comparison focuses on questions, such as the size and appropriateness based on the time available to teach it, the chapter division, and the distribution of different language skills, as well as the different language items, exercises, and grammar.

### **Comparison of Textbooks**

In recent years, the focus of educationists, curriculum developers, and education policymakers has inclined towards a comparison of curriculum materials, including textbooks (Huang et al., 2022). While textbooks of each country are supposed to be aligned with the national curriculum, some visible differences in context, expectation, and content are common as they are considerably localized as per the educational policies of the nation (Sun & Li, 2021). Nevertheless, examining similarities and differences between the textbooks for the same subject across countries can provide valuable insights into the education system, educational demand, and pedagogical approaches followed by each country (Huang et al., 2022). Hence, cross-country comparison of textbooks offers a deeper understanding of local policies, global trends, and practices in education, unveiling existing disparities.

### **Methodology**

This study used document analysis to compare government-published grade eight English textbooks from Nepal (English Grade 8, CDC) and Sri Lanka (English: Pupil's Book Grade 8 and Workbook Grade 8, Educational Publications Department). Document analysis reviews existing documents to extract meanings (Bowen, 2009; Gardin, 1973). The comparison targeted four criteria: (1) composition (pages, volumes, units); (2) content (themes, skills, exercises); (3) genre diversity (poems, narratives, prose, dialogues); and (4) authenticity (learner-focused vs. authentic

texts, Harmer, 2007). Data were collected from textbook tables of contents, units, lessons, and introductory sections. Unit numbers, page counts, and activity totals were compared to analyze textbook composition and content. Data from the four criteria were systematically compared using a structured framework to highlight differences in design and pedagogy, ensuring a comprehensive comparison of the textbooks' structure, content, genres, and authenticity.

## Results and Discussion

Despite having various geographical, historical, and demographical dissimilarities, Nepal and Sri Lanka both have various similarities. Both of them have multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic social settings (Aloysius, 2015). Both of them had a monolingual policy in the past, and both of the countries experienced armed conflict in the past; in both of the countries, English is taught as a prominent foreign language. Thus, both countries are striving to address their ELT/EFL concerns in their own ways. For that, the English textbook is to be used as one of the important curricular materials in the class (CDC, 2019) and as a means to develop the critical thinking capacity of the students (Educational Publications Department, 2020).

### Composition Comparison

This section examines the structural and physical composition of the grade eight English textbooks from Nepal and Sri Lanka, comparing their textbook models, unit organization, preliminary sections, and printing/illustration quality.

**Comparing Preliminary Sections.** Regarding the preliminary section, English Grade 8 includes only four pages, which include the inner cover page; the page including the information on the publisher, book edition, printing press, and price of the book; Preface; and Table of Contents (CDC, 2019). In the preliminary section, no information about the author(s) of the book has been provided; however, in the preface section, a paragraph has been dedicated acknowledging the contributors in bulk (though some names have been mentioned). The table of contents includes a chart of all the units along with the title, grammar item, and language function dealt with in the particular unit.

### Figure 1

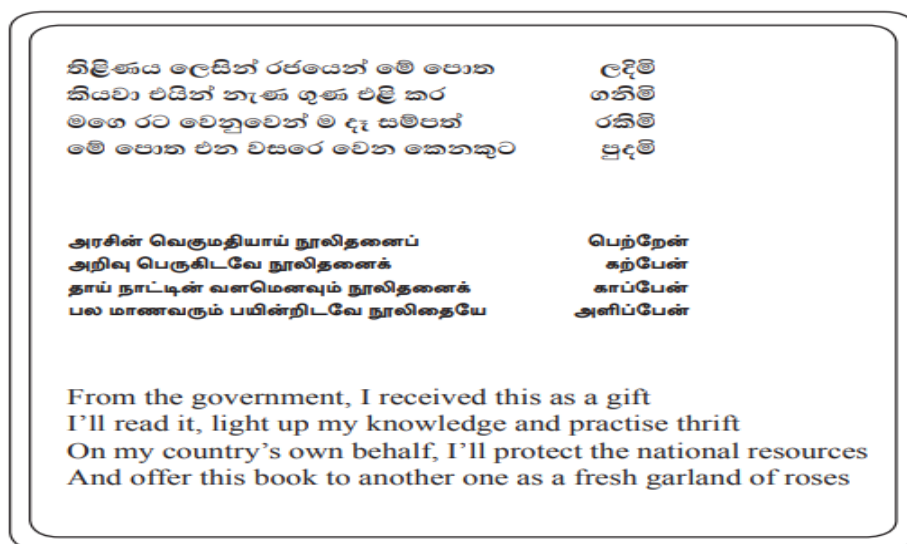
*The Sample of Preliminary Information Provided in English Grade 8: Customary Information*



On the other hand, the English Pupil's Book Grade 8 includes 14 pages in the preliminary section. These pages contain the inner title page (p. i), information about reprints, copyright information, ISBN etc. (p. ii), the national anthem of Sri Lanka in Roman (p. iii), a commitment from the side of students to protect the book as a national resource (figure 1) in three languages, Sinhala, Tamil, and English (p. iv), Foreword (p. v), contributors' name list, including their role and full designation (pp. vi-vii), a message to the teacher (titled, A word to the teacher...) (p. viii), contents (p. ix), competency level to be covered in grade 8 (p. ix), the book at a glance (pp. x-xiii), and an appeal to the students (Figure 3) saying not to write anything in the book (xiv).

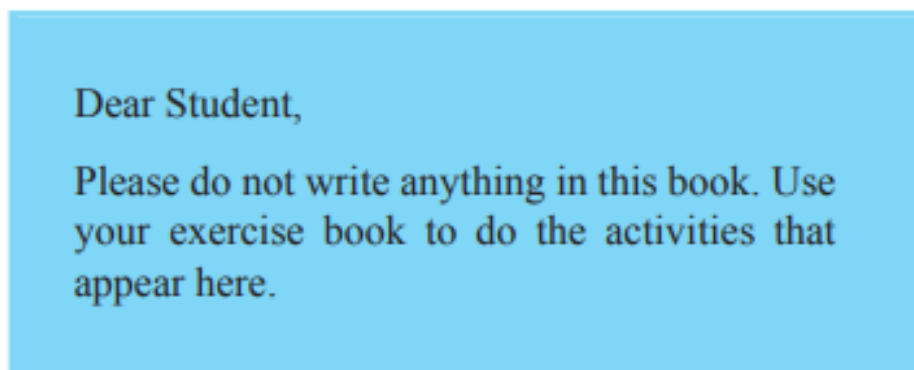
**Figure 2**

*Commitment From the Side of the Students in the Book (Sri Lanka)*



**Figure 3**

*An Appeal to the Students, Printed in the Book*



**Illustrations and Visual Appeal.** Each of these books is multi-colour printed, with abundant illustrations. English Grade 8 primarily uses illustrations to evoke students' thinking and prior knowledge. These visuals appear before and during reading, listening, or speaking activities to get students thinking and to enhance comprehension. In contrast, the English Pupil's Book shows illustrations in a decorative way: just to make simple language activities visually interesting and attractive. Both modes focus on motivation, with the former emphasizing cognitive activation and the latter leaning toward aesthetic support.

**Figure 4**

*Activation vs. Attraction: Illustrations English Grade 8 and English Pupil's Book*

**A. Engage yourself**

Look at the picture below and guess what they are thinking about.



Source: English: Grade 8, p. 53

**B) Use words given in Antonym Jar and complete the antonyms chart.**



maximum	kind	
happy	patient	
urban	local	
beautiful	possible	
absent	true	

Source: English Pupil's Book, Grade 8, p. 21

**Single vs. Dual Textbook Models.** Nepal has a single-textbook system for the eighth graders, with 191 pages that contain all the materials required by students. On the other hand, Sri Lanka uses a two-textbook system, i.e., English Pupil's Book Grade 8 (109 pages) which includes reading texts and exercises, and English Workbook Grade 8 (78 pages), which includes more exercises based on the units of the Pupil's Book, in total 187 pages. Nepal's single-book model is contrasted with Sri Lanka's dual-book model, whereby content is spread over two books, only four pages short of Nepal's one book. This organisational variation impacts the ELT material's structure in the two nations.

**Systematic Functions vs. Flexible Tasks: Unit and Activity Organization.** English Grade 8 is Nepal's English book for eighth-graders. As per the information given, the first edition of this book was published in 1995 and was revised in 2019 (CDC, 2019). There are 18 units in the book with individual unit titles (Table 1), which are further divided into seven identical subunits. These subunits are: *Reading, Time for Grammar, Speaking, Listening, Writing, Project Work, and Enjoying Yourself*. Each of the units deals with one language function. These subunits cover the reading text with comprehension exercises, grammar exercises, and exercises related to language skills. Each of the sub-units is further arranged into smaller activities, i.e., *Engage Yourself, Study, Activate Yourself*, using the Engage, Study, Activate (ESA) model (Harmer, 2007).

**Table 1.** Units With Titles, Related Language Functions, and Related Grammar Items in English Grade 8

Unit	Title	Language Functions	Grammar
1	Travelogue	Asking for information/ Asking for the repetition	Article
2	An Expedition	Asking for directions/ Giving directions	Modals
3	Business and Commerce	Requesting	Present tense
4	Biography	Describing a person	Relative clause 'who'
5	Festivals	Suggesting and advising	Preposition
6	Technology	Getting things done	Causative verbs
7	Journalism	Reporting	Reported speech



8	Dangers of Junk Food	Expressing condition	Conditional sentences
9	Moral Stories	Comparison	Past tense
10	Habits and Behaviour	Expressing degree of probability	Probability modals
11	Games and Sports	Expressing likes and dislikes	Subject-verb agreement
12	District Profile	Giving reasons	Connectives
13	Childhood Memories	Past habits	Expressing degree of probability
14	Graphs and Charts	Expressing abilities	Expressing likes and dislikes
15	Lincoln's Letter	Persuading/ reminding	Voice
16	Fairy Tales	Stating intention/ predicting	Reflective pronouns
17	Forms and Cheques	Answering in brief	Relative clause: things place
18	Dictionary Use	Giving and following instructions	Imperatives

In contrast, English Pupil's Book Grade 8 and English Workbook Grade 8 are the books prescribed in Sri Lankan schools. According to the information, the first print of the book appeared in 2016. Its second print was brought to publication in 2017, third in 2018, fourth in 2019, and fifth in 2020 (Educational Publications Department, 2020). The book is divided into 10 units, and each of the units is also divided into sub-units, as activities. These activities are various tasks to be accomplished by the students. The workbook contains additional activities. Reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary exercises, listening, speaking, and writing exercises are entwined in the activities.

**Table 2.** *Number of Activities in Both Books of Sri Lanka*

Units	Unit Title	No. of activities in Pupil's Book	No. of activities in the Workbook
I	Plan the Work: Work the Plan	9	5
II	Winged Friends	9	8
III	Let's be Considerate	9	11
IV	Mother Nature	8	14
V	Between the Miles	10	8
VI	When We are Together	9	6
VII	The World of Children	12	12
VIII	It's a Small World	12	8
IX	On the Top of the World	7	4
X	Beyond the Class	6	4
Total		91	80

In conclusion, Nepal's single textbook system employs the systematic function-based approach with 126 exercises spread over 18 units, each further divided into an identical set of seven exercises across interwoven language skills in a single volume of 191 pages. On the contrary, the Sri Lankan two-book system consists of 187 pages and adopts a more flexible, activity-based system with 171 activities distributed over 10 units, with a concern for variation instead of

consistency. These discrepant organizing patterns stem from diverse pedagogical emphases and signal that Nepal supports predictability while Sri Lanka values flexibility in ELT.

### **Comparing Activities and Genres**

The textbook of Nepal appears to be rich in content when the 18 units of this book are compared with the 10 of the Sri Lankan one (see Tables 1 & 2). But just counting the number of units may not be sufficient to judge the content of the books. Both of the books contain various exercises and activities for all four language skills and grammar, literary input, etc.

**Activities in English Grade 8.** Each unit of the book is divided into seven sub-units: *Reading, Time for Grammar, Speaking, Listening, Writing, Project work, and Enjoy Yourself*. The reading section contains a reading text and exercises related to that, such as comprehension questions, vocabulary exercises, reordering, matching, filling in the gaps, etc. Time for grammar contains exercises like *read and list, making sentences from given word/exponents, synthesizing sentences, identifying correct form, transformation, completing/rewriting sentences, studying and completing tables*, etc. In the listening section, there are activities like *completing a table, filling the gaps, true/false, matching, listen and answer, reordering, listen and do the activities*, etc. The speaking section has exercises like *responding to the given situations, describing the given picture, acting out a dialogue, role play, asking and giving directions, debate, storytelling, phone conversation*, etc. In the same way, the writing section includes activities like *letter writing, leaflet writing, diary writing, writing a description, writing a CV, writing condolence messages, writing news articles, writing a story*, etc. The project work section includes project works related to the title or language function entailed in the unit, and the *Enjoy Yourself* section contains some creative writing, such as poems.

**Activities in English Pupil's Book/ Workbook Grade 8.** There are 10 units in the book, and the workbook contains additional activities related to the same units. The units are further divided into activities. Everything a student has to accomplish has been kept under separate activities, e.g., the reading text is one activity, and the exercises that follow are separate activities. The subunits are not identical to those in the English book grade 8, however, every unit begins with an activity with a similar title, *act out*, in which a dialogue is given. The dialogue introduces the grammar item to be dealt with in the unit and is furthered by other related activities. Then the grammar item is introduced under the section *learning point*, with a descriptive note, followed by different types of exercises, such as rearranging the jumbled words, filling the gaps, identifying the correct use, and rewriting the sentences. There are other reading activities, which are mostly used to introduce unfamiliar vocabulary items and some general knowledge, too, for making reading fun. Each reading activity is followed by exercises like comprehension questions, matching, rearranging, filling the gaps, true/false, etc.

**Table 3. Activities Across Units**

Activity Type	Description	Frequency / Occurrence Units
Reading Comprehension	Reading passages, stories, or poems and answering questions	10/10 units Most Common
Grammar Practice	Activities on tense, prepositions, modals, plural forms, etc.	10/10 units Most Common
Writing Tasks	Letters, paragraphs, stories, summaries, essays	9/10 units Most Common

Speaking/Dialogue/Act Out	Roleplay or dialogue-based tasks	8/10 units	Most Common
Vocabulary Exercises	Synonyms, antonyms, compound words, word forms, etc.	7/10 units	Most Common
Listening Activities	Audio-based instructions, announcements, etc.	5/10 units	Moderately Common
Picture-based Tasks	Sequencing, describing, matching to context	4/10 units	Moderately Common
Poetry	Reading, reciting, analyzing poetic structure	3/10 units	Moderately Common
Reading/Analysis Group			Moderately Common
Work/Discussion	Group-based speaking or writing tasks	3/10 units	Common
Shadowgraphy/Visual Word Play	Match pictures to word meanings via hand shadow figures	Unit 6	Occasional
Scientific/Tech Reading	News on ICT, inventions, passive voice structure	Unit 8	Occasional
Tourism-focused Writing	Travel diary completion, tourist attraction descriptions	Unit 8	Occasional
Moral/Inspirational Messages	Interviews with achievers or bravery narratives	Units 7, 9	Occasional
Tongue Twisters / Rhymes	Rhyming, articulation, sound matching	Units 7, 8	Occasional

The activities entail language skills other than reading. In most cases, grammar is not separately given but is introduced with a language skill activity. The listening activity is followed by other activities that contain exercises based on listening. Such exercises include listening and rearranging, listening and following the instructions, listening and drawing, answering the questions, matching, etc. Speaking activity is not separately given in every unit. *Time to talk* is an activity where students can practice speaking. Apart from this, there is one activity where students can practice speaking along with the grammar activity. Rewriting sentences and rearranging jumbled words, like guided writing activities, are also included in the book. Apart from this, there are activities like *essay writing*, *letter writing*, and *giving heading to the given information*. Vocabulary is introduced in the reading text and boldfaced in many cases. The meanings are provided. There are activities like a crossword puzzle, matching, etc. Another activity related to vocabulary teaching is an activity based on pronunciation. There are some exercises related to the pronunciation of some consonant clusters. Similarly, the workbook contains several further exercises (Table 2). There are also some reading activities, but most of the activities in this book are based on grammar use, description of the pictures, free/guided writing, pronunciation, etc.

Regarding the content of the books, both books are sufficient. However, the Book of Sri Lanka offers more diverse and situated reading texts. Regarding grammar and vocabulary, these are more situationally presented in this book as they are presented practically in the reading or listening text. There are more activities in the workbook for further exercises. On the other hand, the book prescribed in Nepal offers well-organized subunits on other language skills. It is well structured as there are identical subunits.

**Genre-Wise Content.** Both volumes contain different genres for reading. Some texts are given especially for reading comprehension, while others are for other purposes, i.e., introducing grammar or vocabulary items, reading for enjoyment, input for writing or speaking activities, etc.

Here, genre refers to four macro-level categorizations of the texts. The texts are categorized under Poems, narratives (short stories and anecdotes), Prose ( descriptions/ essays/ letters/ news/ speech/ biography), and drama (dialogues too). Table 3 contains the details of the genre in both volumes.

**Table 4.** *Genre-Wise Reading Texts*

Genre Type	Nepal's Book	Sri Lanka's Books	Remarks
Drama/ Dialogues	6	12	
Narratives (Short Stories/ Anecdotes)	6	7	
Prose (Descriptions/ Essays/ Letters/ Speeches/ News/ Bios)	16	18	
Poems	4	9	

Table 4 shows that Sri Lankan students are offered more reading texts and a greater variety of genres. In Nepal's English book, there are only six dramas/ dialogues, six narratives, 16 prose, and four poems, whereas Sri Lanka's English book contains 12 dramas dialogues, seven narratives, 18 prose, and nine poems. In Nepal's book, there is one drama/ dialogue and one narrative every three units, almost one prose every unit, and almost one poem after every four units. On the other hand, Sri Lanka's book contains more than one drama/ dialogue every unit, seven narratives per 10 units, almost two prose per unit, and almost one poem per unit. Regarding poems, the Nepali book offers poems by Edward de Bono, Joy Galal, and James Reeves. In one of the poems, the writer is anonymous. Similarly, Sri Lanka's book offers poems by Robert Frost, R. L. Stevenson, William Blake, P. J. Grand Band, and five poems by anonymous writers are there.

#### ***Authenticity of the Content***

Authentic texts are texts "which are not written especially for language learners, but which are intended for any competent user of the language (Harmer, 2007, p. 100)." Most of the reading texts included in the *English Grade 8* (the book prescribed in Nepal) do not give any information about the source from which they are taken. This indicates that those texts are prepared by the authors for this very book. There is a screenshot of some dictionary entries in the last unit, but there is no information given about the source. On the other hand, the *English Pupil's Book Grade 8* (the Book of Sri Lanka), includes some of the texts where their original sources are mentioned. For example, both of the yet most of the reading activities there are compositions of the authors. This shows that the Sri Lankan book contains more authentic reading material. However, as Harmer (2007) further suggests, to maintain a balance between real English and students' capabilities and interests at lower levels, the inadequacy of the authentic texts is acceptable.

#### **Conclusion**

This comparative analysis of the eighth-grade English textbooks of Nepal and Sri Lanka found that the English textbooks of Nepal and Sri Lanka are grounded on their respective educational policies, cultural contexts, and pedagogical priorities. Nepal has adopted a one-textbook policy with 18 units and 191 pages, thereby setting in place an orderly syllabus. The book adopts a functional approach with a uniform subunit structure for all units to cover the four language skills, grammar, and project work (CDC, 2019). This type of syllabus ensures standardization and hence predictability of content, meeting the mandate of the national curriculum. On the other hand, Sri Lanka adopts two textbooks, the Pupil's Book, having 109 pages, and the Workbook comprising 78 pages with 10 units that follow an activity-oriented approach to teaching and learning. Here, one could expect a rich variety of genres: poems, dialogues, and prose, emphasizing situational texts that are somewhat authentic (Educational

Publications Department, 2020; Harmer, 2007). It stimulates creativity and active involvement through several kinds of exercises.

Both textbooks have incorporated local cultural contents that reflect the pluralistic and multicultural realities of Nepal and Sri Lanka (Coperahewa, 2009; Phyak, 2013); however, both fail to strike a balance between English from local contexts and the international standard of English (Gray, 2010b). Nepal's textbook prioritizes structural consistency and thus might limit genre diversity. The Sri Lankan way is rather flexible and might be engaging enough, but may not be consistent enough to bring about a more standardized outcome (Sun & Li, 2021). These differences reflect different pedagogical philosophies wherein one stresses predictability and systematic progress on pupils' part, and the other focuses on adaptability and exploration (Harmer, 2007).

It was also found that government-sponsored textbooks shaped the policy and practices of ELT, which highlight national educational goals but also concern themselves with local and global linguistic requirements (Foucault, 1972; Nair, 2010). Such a cross-country comparison may be a useful tool for curriculum designers, policymakers, and educators to refine textbook development, so as to tackle inequalities in education and support teachers working in diverse linguistic situations (Huang et al., 2022). Future research may investigate the classroom implementation of these textbooks to reflect the tangible implications of these textbooks on the process of teaching and learning to further improve ELT in various global settings.

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