

EXPLORING EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF NEW TEXTBOOK UTILIZATION IN HIGH SCHOOL SETTINGS

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Abstract. This study investigates the perceptions of 43 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers regarding the benefits and challenges associated with using new textbooks in high school settings. The research employs a combination of questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences. It aims to uncover the anticipated benefits of integrating new textbooks, such as providing updated content, adopting more effective teaching methods, and enhancing student engagement. The study also addresses key challenges, including resistance to change, inadequate teacher training, and difficulties in aligning new materials with curricular goals. Additionally, it examines how these perceptions influence teaching methods and curriculum implementation strategies. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of new textbooks in EFL high school environments, offering valuable insights for developing language education curricula, instructional approaches, and professional development programs.

Keywords: EFL, textbooks, high school, teacher perceptions, instructional practices.

1. Introduction

In EFL education, textbook utilization and implementation are critical factors impacting teaching methods and student learning results. The introduction of new textbooks in high school settings not only promises to improve the quality and relevance of the curriculum but also presents considerable difficulties to teachers. Understanding EFL teachers' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of using new textbooks is crucial for guiding curriculum development, instructional practices, and professional development programs. Existing research emphasizes the relevance of incorporating teachers' perceptions when bringing new instructional resources into the curriculum [1]. Teachers' assessments of the benefits and challenges of using new textbooks provide essential insights into the complexity and subtleties of curriculum implementation and instructional strategies.

This study aims to explore EFL teachers' nuanced perspectives on the benefits and challenges of using new textbooks in high school settings. The research uses a mixed-method approach that includes quantitative surveys and semi-structured interviews to analyze teachers' perceptions and observations extensively. The objective of this study is to explore EFL teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges associated with using new textbooks in high school settings. Specifically, it seeks answers to the following questions:

- What are the perceived advantages of adding new textbooks into the EFL curriculum in high schools?

What are the main challenges EFL teachers face when implementing new textbooks in high school settings?

2. Content

2.1. Literature review

2.1.1. Teachers' perceptions and textbook utilization

Textbooks have long been used in educational contexts as a foundation for instruction. However, the success of textbooks is determined not just by their content, but also by how instructors interpret and use these resources. Teachers' perceptions including their ideas, attitudes, and experiences, have a significant impact on how textbooks are integrated into classroom instruction [2], [3].

2.1.1.1. Impact of teachers' beliefs on textbook use

Teachers' perceptions significantly influence their teaching methods and textbook usage. Pajares [4] highlights that these perceptions are shaped by factors such as prior experiences, educational background, and professional development [5]. Research shows that teachers who value textbooks tend to rely on them heavily for instruction [6], viewing them as comprehensive resources [7]. In contrast, those who find textbooks restrictive may adapt or supplement them to better fit their teaching style and students' needs [8]. Alignment between a teacher's beliefs and a textbook's approach also affects his/her use of the textbook. For example, a teacher favoring a communicative approach may either adapt a grammar-focused textbook or seek alternative materials [9], [10].

2.1.1.2. Factors influencing teachers' acceptance of new materials

Teachers' perceptions play a critical role in the adoption of new educational resources including textbooks. They are more likely to embrace materials they see as relevant to the curriculum and student needs [11]. Rogers [12] notes that alignment with current values and needs is key to adoption. Teachers favor resources that meet educational standards, accommodate various learning styles, and encourage engagement [13].

Professional development also impacts adoption. Guskey [14] found that teachers are more likely to adopt new materials if they receive adequate training and support, boosting their confidence [15]. Additionally, resource availability, time, and administrative support influence teachers' willingness to adopt new textbooks. Without these, teachers may hesitate to invest the effort needed for effective use [16], [17].

In addition, a collaborative school environment encourages teachers' adoption of new materials. Teachers in supportive, cooperative communities are more open to trying and incorporating new instructional materials [18], [19].

2.1.2. Definitions of textbooks

Textbooks serve as authoritative sources, providing standardized content that aligns with curricular standards and educational objectives. This structured organization supports lesson planning and maintains consistency in teaching [20], [21], [22]. They include supplementary resources such as illustrations, diagrams, and multimedia elements, which cater to various learning styles and enhance comprehension and engagement [23], [24].

Textbooks are valued for their accessibility and affordability, being available in both print and digital formats. Their reuse across academic years helps reduce costs for schools and families, making them a cost-effective educational resource [24], [25].

However, textbooks face criticisms related to their adaptability and relevance. Due to lengthy publication processes, they can quickly become outdated, particularly in rapidly evolving fields.

Additionally, textbooks often adopt a static, one-size-fits-all approach that may not effectively address the diverse needs of all learners [25], [23].

In summary, while textbooks play a crucial role in supporting curriculum delivery and enhancing student learning, they also encounter challenges concerning their adaptability and cost.

2.1.2.1. Advantages of textbooks

Textbooks remain critical components of education, providing several benefits that contribute to effective teaching and learning experiences. One significant advantage is the methodical structuring of content in textbooks. Textbooks, written by subject matter experts and educational professionals, include organized information that is consistent with curricular standards and learning objectives. This ordered presentation of content helps teachers arrange lessons more efficiently and ensures that students thoroughly comprehend the subject [21].

Moreover, textbooks offer various supplementary resources and learning aids designed to enhance comprehension and engagement. These resources may include illustrations, diagrams, charts, and multimedia materials, catering to various learning styles and helping students grasp complex concepts more effectively [22].

Textbooks are not only easily accessible but also affordable, making them a practical resource for many learners. They are available in both print and digital versions, making them accessible to students from diverse socioeconomic situations. Furthermore, textbooks are frequently reused across numerous academic years, making them affordable for schools and families [23].

Additionally, textbooks serve as excellent sources of information and valuable reference materials. They go through rigorous review processes to verify accuracy and compliance with educational requirements. As a result, textbooks are reliable sources of content/ subject matter knowledge and academic material for students and teachers [22].

In summary, textbooks continue to offer numerous advantages in education, including their systematic organization of information, provision of supplementary resources, accessibility and affordability, and reliability as sources of information. These advantages underscore the enduring value of textbooks as essential tools for teaching and learning.

2.1.2.2. Disadvantages of textbooks

While textbooks play a vital role in education, they come with significant drawbacks. The slow publication process means they can quickly become outdated, making it difficult for them to reflect the latest research and technological advancements [24]. Additionally, textbooks are often rigid in their content delivery, offering a static, one-size-fits-all approach that lacks the flexibility needed to meet diverse learning needs, which can negatively impact student engagement and understanding [25]. Their high cost can burden students and institutions, further exacerbating educational disparities. Frequent updates can make previous editions become obsolete, adding to the expense [26]. Additionally, textbooks may reflect biases or limited perspectives, influenced by authors' backgrounds, potentially reinforcing stereotypes and restricting exposure to diverse viewpoints [25]. In summary, while textbooks are valuable, they present challenges such as obsolescence, inflexibility, high costs, and inherent biases. Educators need to weigh these issues against the benefits when incorporating textbooks into their teaching.

2.1.2. Previous studies

Park and Kim [27] explored the challenges of integrating technology into new EFL textbooks, suggesting that while these textbooks offer interactive features, issues with technical infrastructure, teacher training, and student access persist. Lee and Lee [28] examined factors that affect EFL teachers' decisions on adopting new textbooks, highlighting the importance of alignment with curricular requirements, relevance to students, and ease of implementation. Zhang and Yuan [29] demonstrated that new textbooks significantly improved high school students'

English skills and academic achievement, emphasizing their potential benefits. Despite global research, gaps remain, especially in Vietnam, where further investigation is needed to understand the benefits and challenges of new textbook adoption in EFL classrooms. This study aims to address these gaps by examining how new textbooks can enhance teaching effectiveness, align with curriculum standards, and support diverse learning styles.

2.2. Research methodology

2.2.1. Participants

The selection of 43 EFL high school teachers was based on specific criteria designed to ensure a diverse and representative sample. These criteria included factors such as years of teaching experience, geographic location of the schools, and familiarity with the English Global Success textbook series. A stratified sampling method was employed to capture a wide range of perceptions, ensuring that the sample reflects different levels of experience, regional educational contexts, and exposure to various teaching materials. Additionally, six EFL teachers were selected for semi-structured interviews, providing deeper qualitative insights into their textbook usage and teaching practices. This smaller, focused group allows for a more detailed exploration of individual experiences and perspectives, offering a richer understanding of the nuanced ways in which teachers engage with textbooks. By limiting the number of interviewees, the study can explore the complexities of individual teachers' approaches, uncovering specific challenges, strategies, and attitudes that might not be fully captured through quantitative methods alone.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Selected EFL High School Teachers

Demographic Category	Subcategory	Number of Teachers
Years of Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	12
	5-10 years	10
	More than 10 years	21
Geographic Location of Schools	Urban	18
	Rural	25
Familiarity with Tieng Anh Global Success Textbooks	Extensively familiar	11
	Moderately familiar	22
	Unfamiliar	10

2.2.2. Instruments

To collect quantitative data on EFL teachers' perceptions about the utilization of the new textbook, a questionnaire is used. The questionnaire covers demographic information, perceptions of the benefits of new textbooks, and the identification of challenges associated with the use of the new textbook. The design of this questionnaire is adapted from established research on educational materials and textbook effectiveness. Specifically, it draws upon methodologies and item formulations from works such as Brown [30] on textbook efficacy and Dunn and Dunn [31] on educational resources. This adaptation ensures that the instrument effectively captures both the positive and negative aspects of the implementation of the new textbook.

Six EFL teachers chosen from the questionnaire respondents have participated in semi-structured interviews to better understand their perceptions about new textbook use. These interview questions delve into their detailed experiences with the implementation of the new textbook, the specific benefits and challenges they face in their teaching practices, their perceptions of the adequacy of professional development and support, and their insights into the impact of new textbooks on student engagement and learning outcomes.

2.3. Results and discussion

2.3.2. Results from the questionnaire

2.3.2.1 EFL high school teachers' perceptions of benefits of new textbook utilization

The survey results from 43 EFL high school teachers highlighted several key benefits associated with the utilization of new textbooks in their classrooms. The findings highlight significant areas where teachers believe the new textbooks contribute positively to the teaching and learning process.

Table 2. Teachers' perceptions of particular benefits of new textbook utilization

Statements	N	M	SD
7. I believe that including various cultural information in new textbooks enhances cultural understanding among students.	43	3.98	.88
9. I believe that the usage of new textbooks improves teacher-student engagement and communication in the classroom.	43	3.98	.88
3. I believe that new textbooks provide updated and relevant information that represents contemporary language usage.	43	3.93	.85
5. I believe that using new textbooks promotes a more student-centered approach to learning.	43	3.91	1.06
10. I think that using new textbooks offers opportunities for differentiated instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners.	43	3.86	.91

The incorporation of diverse cultural content in new textbooks significantly enhances students' understanding of culture, with a mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.88). This high score reflects teachers' emphasis on integrating cultural education into language instruction, promoting global awareness and intercultural competence. The low standard deviation indicates widespread agreement on the value of cultural content.

The new textbook also fosters better teacher-student interaction, scoring a mean of 3.98 (SD = 0.88). Teachers noted that the interactive and communicative exercises in these textbooks improved classroom dynamics. The high mean and low standard deviation suggest that enhanced engagement and communication are widely recognized benefits.

A mean score of 3.93 (SD = 0.85) indicates that teachers find the new textbook contains current, relevant content that reflects modern language usage. This score highlights the textbooks' effectiveness in incorporating contemporary language trends, with a stable assessment across classes.

Teachers rated new textbooks as promoting a student-centered approach with a mean score of 3.91 (SD = 1.06). This score reflects a shift from traditional, teacher-led instruction to a more interactive, student-led learning environment. The higher standard deviation suggests variability in how teachers implement these strategies, pointing to the need for ongoing training and support.

The mean score of 3.86 (SD = 0.91) shows that teachers view new textbooks as adaptable to various learning styles and needs. The higher standard deviation indicates some variability in effectively using differentiated instruction, suggesting a need for additional resources and support.

Overall, these findings align with previous research, highlighting the benefits of the new textbooks in EFL education, including up-to-date content, improved classroom interaction, and support for diverse learning needs. The study confirms that new textbooks play a crucial role in advancing contemporary language education and meeting pedagogical demands [27], [28], [29].

2.3.2.2. EFL high school teachers' perceptions of challenges of new textbook utilization

The survey findings from 43 EFL high school teachers highlighted numerous important issues and concerns regarding the use of new textbooks in their everyday teaching. These findings indicate areas where teachers believe extra help and resources are required to successfully integrate the new teaching materials.

Table 3. Teachers' perceptions of particular challenges of new textbook utilization

Statements	N	M	SD
16. I believe that teachers need more training and assistance to properly use new textbooks in their classrooms.	43	4.02	.91
18. I believe that restricted access to technology and resources may impede the successful deployment of new textbooks.	43	3.86	.77
19. I think that assessments aligned with new textbooks may not accurately measure student learning outcomes.	43	3.84	.84
14. I think the process of adapting to new textbooks may increase teacher workload and stress levels.	43	3.81	.98
17. I think that new textbooks may not adequately cover all language proficiency levels of students in the classroom.	43	3.79	.96

Teachers have expressed a strong need for additional training and support to effectively use new textbooks, with a mean score of 4.02 (SD = 0.91). This high score indicates a broad consensus on the importance of professional development for maximizing the benefits of new textbooks.

Limited access to technology and resources also poses a challenge, with a mean score of 3.86 (SD = 0.77). Teachers are concerned that inadequate technical infrastructure will hinder the use of technology-integrated textbooks. The low standard deviation highlights widespread agreement on this issue, pointing to a systemic problem.

Concerns about the alignment of assessments with new textbooks are also evident, with a mean score of 3.84 (SD = 0.84). Teachers worry that current assessments may not accurately reflect student learning based on the new materials, suggesting a need for careful alignment of evaluation methods.

The transition to the new textbook has increased teacher workload and stress, with a mean score of 3.81 (SD = 0.98). This indicates that adapting to new materials is not just a logistical issue but also a source of significant stress, with varying levels of impact among teachers.

Finally, teachers express concerns that the new textbooks may not adequately cater to the varying language skill levels of all students, as reflected by a mean score of 3.79 (SD = 0.96). This highlights the need for textbooks that are more effectively differentiated to meet diverse learner needs.

The study highlights several challenges EFL high school teachers face with the new textbook. Teachers emphasize the need for additional training and support (mean = 4.02, SD = 0.91), with limited access to technology and resources is a major barrier (mean = 3.86, SD = 0.77), aligning with Park and Kim's [27] findings. Concerns also exist about the alignment of assessments with the new materials (mean = 3.84, SD = 0.84), potentially impacting the accurate measurement of student learning, echoing Lee and Lee's [28] observations. The increased workload and stress from adapting to new textbooks (mean = 3.81, SD = 0.98), along with issues covering diverse language proficiency levels (mean = 3.79, SD = 0.96), further complicate their implementation. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address these challenges.

2.3.2. Results from interviews

Data from the interviews give significant insights into the benefits and challenges associated with the implementation of the new textbooks into the EFL curriculum in high schools as evaluated by the teachers.

Benefits

The inclusion of new textbooks has improved student engagement and learning results. The new content is well-suited to students' interests, resulting in enhanced involvement and understanding. The updated materials offer practical language skills and real-life contexts, making learning English more enjoyable and meaningful. Three of six teachers said:

The primary advantages of using new textbooks are updated material and in line with current language standards. They provide fresh points of view and [...]

(Teacher 1)

[...] These resources promote active learning and facilitate the development of essential language skills [...]

(Teacher 2)

One of the most significant advantages of utilizing new textbooks is their ability to capture students' interest and motivation [...]

(Teacher 5)

The varied choice of resources adapts to various learning styles and interests, ensuring that all students may engage and achieve. Moreover, the extensive teacher guides and additional resources were really helpful in presenting engaging and well-structured lessons. For example:

[...] New textbooks are great because they have lots of different things to help everyone learn. They have pictures and videos [...]

(Teacher 3)

New textbooks assist students as well as teachers. They provide us with books to read so that we may improve our teaching skills. It makes it easy to plan what we will teach [...]

(Teacher 4)

Using new textbooks is good because they are updated with new things. It helps us learn English the way people use it today [...]

(Teacher 6)

Overall, the teacher interviews highlight the complexities of incorporating new textbooks into the EFL curriculum. While the benefits include increased student engagement, better learning outcomes, and support for teacher effectiveness, difficulties include the transition time and meeting varied learning requirements necessitating careful analysis and strategic preparation. Effective implementation techniques that leverage the new textbooks' benefits while resolving teacher-identified challenges will be critical for maximizing their influence on EFL instruction in high school settings.

Challenges

Teachers expressed concerns about comprehending the new materials, indicating a typical difficulty in adapting to them. They uttered:

One of the biggest challenges in implementing new textbooks into the curriculum is the time and effort necessary to adapt. Understanding the structure and content of new resources while [...]

(Teacher 1)

[...] It might be difficult to find the right balance between textbook content and extra resources to address different competence levels and learning styles [...]

(Teacher 2)

Three teachers emphasize the importance of student involvement, demonstrating a similar desire to keep students interested and motivated.

[...] maintaining student involvement and motivation is an important difficulty when introducing new textbooks. To keep students interested in studying, content must be relevant and entertaining to them.

(Teacher 3)

[...] is the need for professional development and support. Teachers require training and guidance to effectively utilize [...]

(Teacher 4)

[...] It is critical to assess how effectively the new materials address the course's learning goals and objectives.

(Teacher 5)

Both teachers emphasize the necessity of matching new resources to curricular objectives, indicating a common concern for coherence and effectiveness.

[...] a significant challenge of introducing new textbooks is ensuring alignment with the curriculum objectives and standards [...]

(Teacher 5)

It is critical to ensure that there are sufficient extra materials and support resources accessible to accompany the new textbooks and improve the learning environment [...]

(Teacher 6)

Overall, the findings from the interviews highlight the numerous hurdles connected with incorporating new textbooks into the curriculum, such as adaptation issues, concerns about student involvement, the need for professional development, and alignment with curricular objectives. These common viewpoints emphasize the significance of strategic planning, support, and alignment in successfully integrating new resources into EFL high school settings.

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, this study used a mixed-methods approach, including a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews, to thoroughly investigate the issues associated with bringing new textbooks into the EFL high school curriculum. The findings provide a more sophisticated view of the varied nature of these difficulties.

Quantitative results from the questionnaire survey offered a wide picture of educators' perspectives, revealing common themes and patterns. The findings revealed similar problems, including adaptation challenges, student involvement, professional development requirements, and alignment with curricular objectives.

In addition to the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews allowed for a more in-depth study of these challenges, as well as eliciting valuable qualitative insights and opinions from six EFL high school teachers. The interviews revealed the complexities of adaptation issues, with teachers stating a need for time and effort to become acquainted with the new materials. Concerns about student involvement were notably expressed, highlighting the significance of choosing relevant and exciting resources to maintain motivation. In addition, teachers emphasized the need for professional development and assistance in properly incorporating new textbooks into their teaching methods. Alignment with curriculum objectives was also stressed, indicating a common desire for coherence and effectiveness in instructional design.

The triangulation of data from both instruments improved the findings' validity and reliability, allowing for a more thorough understanding of the issues involved in curriculum building and instructional design in EFL teaching. This study provides significant insights for

educational practitioners and policymakers looking to improve curriculum creation processes and instructional methods in EFL high schools.

Finally, the combination of questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews has improved our understanding of the challenges associated with the implementation of new textbooks in EFL high school settings, providing valuable insights for educational stakeholders working to improve language education practices.

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