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Negotiating Grade 12 English Textbook Implementation in Nepal: Lived Experiences of Teachers and Students

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Abstract

Background and Aim: The textbook plays an important role in institutional curriculum policies, in providing a systematic sequence of topics and a logical progression from simpler to more complex concepts. Listening activities, speaking tasks, reading passages, and vocabulary development activities correspond to learning objectives and cultural representation in contemporary English language education. This study explored secondary-level English teachers' and students' perceptions of the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook, centred on the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) in Nepal. The research focuses on empirical insights, students' experiences, the textbook's strengths, limitations, and future policy decisions concerning English language education.

Materials and Methods: This study adopted an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design to explore participants' lived experiences of using the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook and their interactions with it to understand challenges, relevance, influence, and usefulness. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five secondary-level English teachers and three Grade 12 graduates. We obtained detailed accounts of participants' experiences, interpretations, and perceptions to acquire meaningful information about the use of the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook.

Results: Researchers identified major themes, including textbook-centered instruction and content relevance, learner engagement and motivation, pedagogical challenges, and examination washback. The results also indicated that positive features were isolated grammar instruction and integration of language skills. Language learning is interpretive and dialogic, and supplemental materials offer variation in presentation; scaffolding and supplemental materials offer variation across learning dimensions. The results leave room for improvement in the consistency of textbook design and teacher preparation, and in the degree of over-examination orientation to promote professional development and to meet the pragmatic needs of the assessment system. Students pointed out some difficulties in using the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook and preparing for the NEB (National Examination Board) due to grammar, comprehension, unfamiliar vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and higher-order thinking questions. It manifests as difficulty in reading and writing and requires substantial examination time.

Conclusion: The study foregrounds the effectiveness of the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook's quality coverage of the contents, and the textbook should provide sufficient learning activities for students to develop their language proficiency, learning pace, creative skills, and critical thinking to produce sustainable outcomes. The board examination passages are like "chewing iron," a metaphor that captures textual complexity and the cognitive burden associated with examination.

Keywords: Grade 12 English Textbook; Textbook Implementation; Teachers' and Students' Experiences; Examination Washback; Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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Introduction

This study has discussed secondary-level English teachers' and students' perceptions of the compulsory English textbook prescribed by the Government of Nepal. The prime goal of teaching English at this level is to use both spoken and written English for general and academic purposes in a variety of personal, social, and academic contexts. The goal of introducing English at this level is to develop students' critical thinking skills. English teachers informally converse with their coworkers that the curriculum and textbooks are inappropriate for this level; even after completing the course, the students still could not write and produce even a single paragraph in English correctly. The Grade 12 English textbook is expected to serve as a guide for educational goals, competencies, and the framework for abilities to apply in social, academic, cultural, and practical contexts. It reflects exploration and collaboration and provides broader educational principles. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2076 includes concrete lessons, activities, comprehension strategies, and adaptation of language skills to contribute to the academic and linguistic context. The curriculum is focused on communicative competence and tries to be in line with intercultural awareness, writing, speaking, reading, listening, and expressing learners' personal perspectives. Pedagogical appropriateness, curriculum alignment, and a textbook should match the learning outcomes and support curricular objectives. The learning activities should include meaningful opportunities and integration of language skills to promote cultural diversity and a multidimensional basis for pedagogical suitability (Cunningsworth, 1995; McDonough et al., 2013; Tomlinson, 2012). These perspectives conceptualize textbooks as important for mediating resources, classroom practices, and influencing the pedagogical choices teachers make. In this sense, a textbook can affect students' motivation, participation, confidence, and the logical sequence of concepts used to construct knowledge. There should be a conceptual lens for examining what a curriculum intends for students to learn and the activities that support deeper learning to meet its objectives. It underscores instructional materials, teaching practices, and communicative competence in relation to curriculum expectations (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Teachers may supplement textbook activities to meet assessment requirements and be more responsive to classroom realities.

Likewise, the material interacts with the learning experiences and assesses the capacity of the Grade 12 students for holistic learning. The negative washback from test requirements leads to teaching practices that focus solely on memorization and limit attention to speaking (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Grade 12 Compulsory English is useful for understanding the differences between classroom instruction, textbook use, examination demands, and a narrower set of practical skills. This study has discussed secondary-level English teachers' and students' perceptions of the compulsory English textbook prescribed by the Government of Nepal. The prime goal of teaching English at this level is to use both spoken and written English for general and academic purposes in a variety of personal, social, and academic contexts. The goal of introducing English at this level is to develop students' critical thinking skills. English teachers informally converse with their coworkers that the curriculum and textbooks are inappropriate for this level; even after completing the course, the students still could not write and produce even a single paragraph in English correctly. The Grade 12 English textbook is expected to serve as a guide for educational goals, competencies, and the framework for abilities to apply in social, academic, cultural, and practical contexts. It reflects exploration and collaboration and provides broader educational principles. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2076 includes concrete lessons, activities, comprehension strategies, and adaptation of language skills to contribute to the academic and linguistic context. The curriculum is focused on communicative competence and tries to be in line with intercultural awareness, writing, speaking, reading, listening, and expressing learners' personal perspectives. Pedagogical appropriateness, curriculum alignment, and a textbook should match the learning outcomes and support curricular objectives. The learning activities should include meaningful opportunities and integration of language skills to promote cultural diversity and a multidimensional basis for pedagogical suitability (Cunningsworth, 1995; McDonough et al., 2013; Tomlinson, 2012). These perspectives conceptualize textbooks as important for mediating resources, classroom practices, and influencing the pedagogical choices teachers make. In this sense, a textbook can affect students' motivation, participation, confidence, and the logical sequence of concepts used to construct knowledge. There should be a conceptual lens for examining what a curriculum intends for

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The Grade 12 English syllabus aims to develop students' language skills, appreciation of literature, and to inspire them with a love for the language and art of storytelling. The Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook has pedagogical relevance, classroom practicality, and assessment compatibility. The examinations have significant academic consequences, and curricular documents may advocate communicative competence. Thus, high-stakes examinations can influence students' learning strategies and instructional priorities to fill the gap between current competence and ideal competence in everyday teaching practices. The implementation of the ELT (English Language Teaching) program and its effectiveness have been considered unsatisfactory in Nepal due to some problems in curricular implementation, teacher preparation, limited resources, use of textbooks, and teaching methodology (Bista, 2011; Bhandari & Bhandari, 2024; Singh, 2024; Bhatt, 2025). However, recent research studies have emphasized the importance of the reflective approach for enhancing the teaching practices of English teachers (Bohara, 2026). The above-mentioned issues have motivated researchers to study the Grade 12 English course. The quality of teaching and learning is contingent upon the resources available, pedagogical practices, and assessment conditions. The Grade 12 English curriculum/textbook presents a fascinating journey covering language development and literature, fostering students' language skills and their appreciation for literary works. In the language development unit, students will learn reading, vocabulary, grammar, writing, listening, and speaking (Acharya, 2024). The reading part will take students on a fun-filled adventure of reading passages and answering questions based on their understanding in an engaging and straightforward manner. The vocabulary section helps students learn vocabulary and language skills. They learn to grasp the grammar rules by making the necessary adjustments, and the Grammar section provides them with practice. The Writing section exposes students to many different types of writing and encourages them to respond creatively, communicating different ideas in an engaging manner. In the listening part, they will sharpen their listening skills by smartly answering questions about English audio content. The speaking part also helps students to improve their English-speaking skills and to gain confidence in expressing their ideas and opinions. In

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the Literature section, students will read poetry, short stories, essays, and one-act plays. They will be able to appreciate the deeper meaning and emotion behind each work.

The Grade 12 English syllabus aims to develop students' language skills and appreciation of literature and to inspire them with a love for the language and art of storytelling. The Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook has pedagogical relevance, classroom practicality, and assessment compatibility. The examinations have significant academic consequences, and curricular documents may advocate communicative competence. Thus, high-stakes examinations can influence students' learning strategies and instructional priorities to fill the gap between current competence and ideal competence in everyday teaching practices. The implementation of the ELT (English Language Teaching) program and its effectiveness have been considered unsatisfactory in Nepal due to some problems in curricular implementation, teacher preparation, limited resources, use of textbooks, and teaching methodology (Bista, 2011; Bhandari & Bhandari, 2024; Singh, 2024; Bhatt, 2025). However, recent research studies have emphasized the importance of the reflective approach for enhancing the teaching practices of English teachers (Bohara, 2026). The above-mentioned issues have motivated researchers to study the Grade 12 English course.

Objectives

To explore teachers' and students' perceptions of the Grade 12 English textbook

To examine challenges in implementing the textbook in relation to learning, teaching, assessment, and examination

Literature Review

The literature review recognizes the assessment policy, classroom practice, and researchers' criticality in reflexive procedures and interpretation of participants' experiences. Researchers value the professional worth of teachers' textbook effectiveness, classroom practicality, and implementation of prescribed textbooks in practical classroom settings.

English Language Education and Textbook Implementation in Nepal

English is taught and learned as a foreign language in Nepal, which falls under Kachru's "expanding circle" of English use (Kachru, 1997). It is an intentional act to make it more accessible to Nepalese students by offering English courses at school and university levels. India and other Asian countries have influenced the English Language Teaching (ELT) context in Nepal. Choi and Lee (2008, p. 5) have stated that countries like Korea, China, and some cities of Taiwan teach English from the third grade, Israel from the fourth grade, Iran and Vietnam from the sixth grade, and Japan and Indonesia from the seventh grade, where there is no official primary English education. This shows a trend toward English education early in Asia. The emphasis on early English instruction has been recognized in Nepal by introducing English from grade one after the Curriculum Development Center adopted the Primary Education Curriculum in 2009.

English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal was started during the Rana regime when Darbar High School was established in 1910 B.S., where British teachers were appointed to teach English (Kandel, 2014). Kandel (2014, p. 1) says that in that period English was taught as an academic subject rather than a communication tool, with attention given to content rather than language skills or language aspects. Today, English is a compulsory subject from grade one through to a bachelor's degree, and it is offered as an optional subject from the secondary level to postgraduate studies. The English language is closely related to global interaction and social development. It has been regarded as an important means to address the issues of linguistic disparity and language justice (Bohara & Thapa, 2026). Such a paradigm shift in the education of second languages highlights some major changes, such as moving from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction, from focusing on the final product to emphasizing the learning process, and from focusing on the final product to emphasizing global interaction and social development in learning. It stresses the importance of taking into account the diversity among learners and their individual differences, of the whole-to-part approach and not the other way round, and of encouraging holistic learning. Furthermore, the emphasis has changed from rote learning and drill to

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meaningful learning, realizing that learning is a lifelong process and not just for the purpose of preparing for exams (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001).

Curriculum Orientation and the Grade 12 English Textbook

According to NCF, the schools should focus on skill-based, life-skills-oriented, employment-oriented, and value-based education. It aims to create human resources committed to the nation, national identity, integrity, and Nepal. The Grade 12 English textbook has been prepared on the basis of the NCF 2076 and Secondary Level Curriculum 2076 for Grades 11 and 12. The compulsory English course has been split into two parts. The first part is made up of passages, writing activities, vocabulary items, listening and speaking activities, and grammar exercises. Likewise, the second part contains varied excerpts of different literary genres like poems, stories, dramas, and essays. There have been attempts to cater to the evolving needs of students by incorporating content that develops all four language skills. These are integrated with tasks and activities involving contextual grammar and relevant vocabulary.

The book is divided into two sections: literature and language development. The language development section consists of different local and international thematic texts based on current issues. The aim is to develop proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, speech, and writing, as well as intensive reading skills. The literature section comprises literary texts on genres for extensive and intensive reading to help students identify different components of literary texts and practice creative writing. All the texts are accompanied by adequate activities to develop critical thinking and creativity in the students' interactive skills and cultural and traditional consciousness.

Negotiating the Practical Challenges of Textbook Implementation

In 2019, the first researcher was appointed as a secondary-level English teacher and soon began teaching grades 11 and 12. The second researcher, who also had experience teaching English at the secondary level, observed similar challenges in language learning and examination performance. The second researcher became familiar with the practical challenges, limited instructional time, and acknowledged that textbook implementation is influenced by teachers' professional preparation. At that time, the board exams were held for Grade 11, and I (first author) noticed that many students struggled, with only four out of 89 passing the final English exam. The students found the subject very challenging. The following year, the English course and textbook underwent significant changes, which initially intimidated me. The use of English textbooks is of significant importance to both teachers and learners. It not only becomes a guide for teachers when delivering the materials, but also provides necessary input through various explanations and activities. On the learners' side, it influences their attitudes and performance toward the materials. It is a fact that when they like their textbook, they will engage actively in the classroom. Harmer (2007) states that the most important aspect of textbook use is what teachers have to deal with. Moreover, it also provides learners with a great opportunity to communicate in English in the classroom. Cunningsworth (1995) identifies a textbook as a resource for presenting the material and a source for learners to practice and do activities such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In short, a textbook is useful for assisting teachers in applying the curriculum because it is based on the necessary content and provides guidance for creating opportunities for learners to learn. The content was entirely new, and the grammar sections had been revised. The government introduced a policy where 25% of the marks were allocated for internal assessments, and 75% for the final exam. Schools were also responsible for administering the final exam for grade 11. The initial years were quite overwhelming, and I spent a lot of time gathering materials and preparing notes for my students. So, teachers play an important role in making pedagogical decisions and implementing prescribed textbooks to promote collaborative learning, a student-centered approach, classroom practices, and prescribing the use of books in such a way that ensures collaboration, communication, student-centeredness, and language skill development, as well as linking class-based practices to assessment contexts (Bohara & Awasthi, 2026). Teachers can shape pedagogical decisions and influence the practical implementation of the prescribed textbooks in order to boost activities such as collaboration, communicative practices, content areas, speaking, writing, listening, reading, and spread into wider assessment contexts. Reflective notes were maintained to remove potential biases in participants and interpretations of their lived experiences. Therefore, we provide additional information on the relationship between learner proficiency, the textbook's

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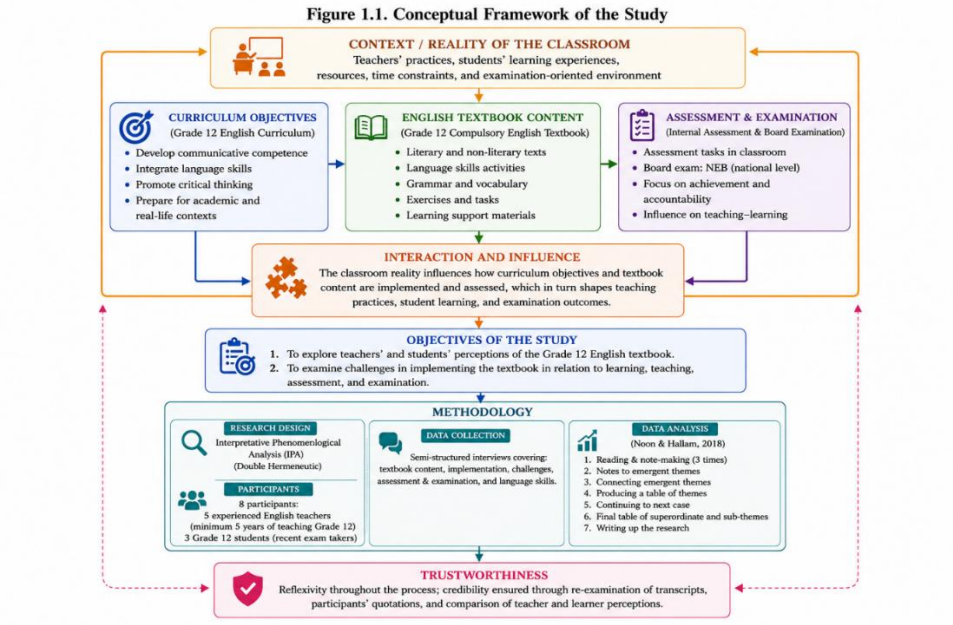
shortcomings, contextual resources cum teachers' perceptions. The problems that have been encountered by both the researchers have been very similar when it comes to the teaching of their respective Grade 12 English classes. It was a very pressurized experience, especially in the initial stage, as it was an extensive course and needed to be completed within a specific period. We had to prepare our students for the board exams. The average level of the students in English was low. They did not know the basic ideas of reading, writing, and vocabulary. We sometimes found the poem like Soft Storm very difficult to teach, and this poem does not match the level of the students. Similarly, most of the literary texts are taken from the Western context and writers. Moreover, grammatical items are designed differently. As English language teachers, we found the course to be too lengthy. We found many interesting texts in Part One, but due to time limitations, we could not deal with them all.

Like other teachers, our main intention is Part Two, from which 20-mark questions are asked, and it is the most important part for students to pass the board exam. In the name of helping students pass the board exam, other important aspects of textbooks, including listening, speaking, and project work, remain untouched. We have not received any training and/or dissemination program to cope with this course. Many teachers, including ourselves, are unfamiliar with how to design questions based on this textbook for evaluation purposes. These factors prompted us to examine how teachers who have taught English at this level perceive and evaluate the textbook. All the selected teachers responded that the overall quality of the Grade 12 compulsory English textbook is satisfactory. They complained that the textbook is not as good as the previous compulsory English textbooks. There is a good linkage between the curriculum and the textbook. The textbook is separated into two parts. The first part focuses on reading and writing along with grammar. Similarly, the second part is all about literature and is followed by different exercises from understanding-level to more thinking-level questions.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1 presents the conceptual framework of the research. shows the interrelation between classroom realities, curriculum objectives, content of textbooks, and examination requirements, all of which affect the process of instruction and learning for Grade 12 English. The conceptual framework is the basis on which the study investigated the perceptions of the participants regarding the textbook and challenges related to its implementation. This will be conducted using IPA, semi-structured interviews, and data analysis while ensuring trustworthiness through reflexivity and comparison of the participants' perceptions. The interaction between curriculum requirements and classroom realities influences textbook implementation, as demonstrated by the overall conceptual framework.

Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



Methodology

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This study was designed to examine the Grade 12 compulsory English textbook in relation to the curriculum and examination. The interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) methodology was applied in this research because the major goal was to explore the construction of meaning by the participants according to their learning experience with the recommended textbook. It is the most appropriate approach to explore the process of constructing meaning by individual participants concerning their educational experience (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology is concerned with the revelation of the essence of a particular individual's experience (Knaack, 1984). In addition, IPA goes further than phenomenology as it includes the interpretation of the meaning constructed by participants by researchers too, which is termed double hermeneutic (Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2018; Smith et al., 2009). Similarly, five experienced English teachers and Grade 12 learners, who had recently finished their final examinations, were selected for this research. The data collection involved semi-structured interviews that addressed topics such as the content of the textbook, its implementation in classroom activities, challenges that learners faced, assessment and examination, and language skills. The data analysis included transcript re-readings, case-by-case coding, identification of themes, and comparison between cases. Reflexivity was sustained during the entire process of data analysis, whereas credibility was ensured by re-examination of transcripts, participants' quotations, and comparison of teachers' and learners' perceptions.

Likewise, this study employs an interpretative phenomenological approach to understand the lived experiences and perceptions of both teachers and students regarding the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook in Nepal. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is chosen to allow an in-depth exploration of participants' subjective experiences and insights related to the curriculum, teaching challenges, and the suitability of literary genres included in the textbook. Basically, phenomenology is a philosophy of lived experience. Phenomenological research attempts to understand and describe the universal essence of phenomena (Knaack, 1984). Moreover, it is the qualitative analysis of the lived experience of phenomena from the participant's first-person point of view (Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2018).

The study includes eight participants: Five teachers who have taught the Compulsory English course for at least five years. These teachers are familiar with the textbook and have insights into its effectiveness, instructional challenges, and student outcomes. Three students have just finished the Grade 12 final exam. Their views are important in understanding the student experience and where textbook content fits into the process of exam preparation and performance. This study will undergo the following steps of the data analysis and interpretation process as suggested by Noon and Hallam (2018):

1. Reading (Three times) and note-making
2. Notes to emergent themes
3. Connecting emergent themes
4. Producing a table of themes
5. Continuing to the next case
6. Final table of superordinate themes and their respective sub-themes
7. Writing up the research

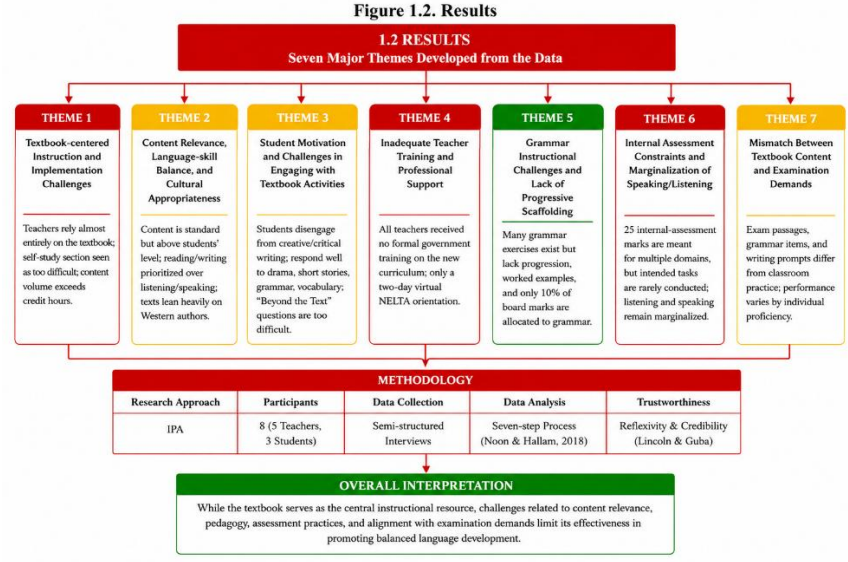
Results

Figure 1.2. Results indicate the seven main themes generated from the data analysis, emphasizing the important findings of the study about Grade 12 English textbooks and the related difficulties in classroom implementation.

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Figure 1.2. Results



Textbook-Centered Instruction and Implementation Challenges

The interview data revealed extensive use of the prescribed textbook and fundamental teaching aids for addressing learning objectives. The textbook provides guidelines to the teachers, as they provide ideas on what to teach, how to teach, and how to evaluate. Most of the teachers rely on textbooks, especially at the school level. "I also observe that these were contexts where teachers simply depended on the textbook for their lifetime" (Karki, 2015). Regarding this, T1, who has the experience of teaching English at this level for 14 years, further said that he has been using textbooks as the main material in the class. The rest of the participants agreed with T1. T2, who is teaching Compulsory English in both private and community schools, argued that, comparatively, it is better to teach private school students rather than community school students. He further said that students from community schools are weak in language. They could not write even a single fine paragraph in English on the given topics. Similarly, T3 has more than 30 years of experience teaching this course to students. He is currently working at a model secondary school. He said that I taught previous courses at this level, but if we compare previous textbooks to this current textbook, the previous one is far better than this one. He further said that the self-study portion of the textbook is beyond the students' level and capacity. In this scenario, the curriculum's objectives are not achieved for sure.

Similarly, T4 has been teaching this subject to Grade 12 students since 2013. He is also in line with other teachers in that the textbook is unnecessarily lengthy. The first part of the textbook is standard, having different useful texts like QR codes, Hyperloop, and family. But we don't have enough time to teach such great texts because questions are not asked from these passages. If we let them read on their own, they don't do it. They don't have a reading culture. T5 also has some dissatisfaction with the textbook; if teachers teach the course according to credit hours, then they never complete the course on time. Content coverage is very high, so teachers cannot complete the course in the given time. He further claimed that 'we are not social studies teachers to teach content; we are language teachers. Credit hours are fewer, but the content is more. All the participants are experienced enough to deal with the course and are not fully satisfied with the course. All of them agreed that this course has lots of limitations rather than strengths.

The finding occupied a central position in curriculum delivery and was identified as a primary source for preparing lessons. It is a central pedagogical resource and integral to teachers' instructional decision-making. The narratives highlighted a consistent pattern of textbook-oriented instruction and guided the progression of the Grade 12 curriculum. Textbooks provide a source of activities, language exercises, and teaching materials with chances for learners to practice language skills (Cunningsworth, 1995; Harmer, 2007). The textbook helped with the structure of classroom instruction, with printed materials understood as a core teaching resource. The study indicates that the challenge of its practical

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application lies in exam preparation and the large amount of content. The teacher has to balance curriculum goals and course demands and promote skill-based learning.

Content Relevance, Language-Skill Balance, and Cultural Appropriateness

Content refers to any form of information or material that is created, shared, or consumed through various media, such as text, images, audio, video, or interactive elements. As the textbook is divided into two parts, the first part contains different texts followed by different exercises. Similarly, grammar, listening, speaking, and writing parts are also included in this part. T1 and T4 believed that listening and speaking skills are primary concerns for language students. T3 claimed that the students who will pass the Grade 12 board exam expect to be able to communicate their subject matter in their domains effectively. T2 proclaimed that the compulsory English course prioritizes only critical reading and writing essays, but other skills and aspects of language, like listening, speaking, and grammar, are left out. T4 declared that the students, after the course is over, may not communicate effectively in their professions.

T4 expressed that cultural issues and subject matter should be appropriate for the Nepali context; some of the cultural issues and subject matter are adjustable for Nepali students. T1, T3, and T4 asserted that compulsory English class is a language class, so the textbooks should contain language skills and aspects to communicate well in life after passing this level. All the teachers agreed that the content is standard, but they are beyond the students' level. T3, who is also the principal of the school, said that reading texts like 'Knowledge and Wisdom' and 'Soft Storm' is too hard for the students. He further said that the book is standard, no doubt. But, from the students' perspective, they feel the course burden and difficulty. Students are puzzled. Even students can pass the final exam without reading the course. This sort of practice makes this course weaker. He further claimed that there are a handful of texts written by Nepali or South Asian writers. The textbook relies heavily on European and American writing, as usual. Useless texts are kept in the books, making them unnecessarily lengthy. What is the moral of the story 'Matter of Husband'? What kinds of lessons will be learned after reading the text 'Respectable Woman'? The rest of the participants have similar opinions on this. They further claimed that texts should be appropriate to the local contexts. The texts should be practical. The findings indicate that the Grade 12 English textbook is very useful and considers cultural relevance an important part of the textbook. Teachers questioned its relevance to the learners' competence level, culture, and examination requirements. It facilitates language competence, meaning generation, participant experience, and literature with maintenance of global perspectives (Motta & Larkin, 2023).

Student Motivation and Challenges in Engaging with Textbook Activities

Motivation is the key to success in the learning process. There are various definitions of motivation among experts. As mentioned by Hayikaleng et al. (2016), motivation is regarded as an important component in making students successful in their English learning. Motivation can also be defined as one's direction or trait, or what causes a person to want to repeat a behaviour and vice versa (Alizadeh, 2016). Besides, Tambunan & Siregar (2016) also state that motivation and educational achievements, as reflected in grade point average, are positively correlated at all levels of schooling, from elementary through college. Regarding this, T1 said that,

> *Students are not motivated towards the writing activities; the writing activities are creative and based on critical thinking. They don't want to write. It is very difficult for them to participate in writing activities. They are interested in literary texts. Among those texts, they love dramas and short stories. They have an interest in grammatical exercises as well. Similarly, they are interested in vocabulary and pronunciation activities.*

T2 has different opinions:

> *He said that students didn't understand English well in class. That is, one reason for not loving this subject. Students take this course as a burden. He questions whether there are questions in every chapter related to critical thinking (Beyond Text). These questions are quite difficult for the teachers to solve. In this scenario, how can we expect students to interact in the class?*

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Questions are tough, so it seems that they are prepared to penalise, so it seems that they are prepared to penalise the students.

T5 is in line with T2,

As he said, those students are not motivated to learn, but it is the teachers' duty to engage them in the given exercises. He further said that we don't have any other options. Our administration judges us by students' results and grades. Because of these sorts of practices, understanding the actual objectives of the text cannot be measured.

Motivation is an important factor that affects the learning and, ultimately, the achievement of the students. So, it is necessary to motivate the students by having teachers apply their unique motivational techniques in the classes.

The findings demonstrate the issue of student motivation as a dynamic and static trait of the individual. Students seemed to be motivated to participate in activities to support linguistic and pedagogical perspectives. The interest shown by the students in the activities was also associated with familiarity: the students were more interested in activities such as dramas, short stories, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. It appears that the "Beyond the Text" activities were especially difficult for students when there was limited support from the linguistic and pedagogical perspectives. This claim is reinforced by research that shows that scaffolding, collaboration, and teacher interventions help to increase motivation among EFL students (Ahmed Abdel-Al Ibrahim et al., 2023; Alfares, 2025). Thus, the findings indicate that challenging activities may become motivating due to appropriate scaffolding such as preparation of vocabulary, step-by-step instructions, group work, and the teacher's help. On the other hand, examination pressure influenced the classroom practices and encouraged teachers to concentrate on examination topics rather than communicative and creative activities.

Inadequate Teacher Training and Professional Support for Curriculum Implementation

All five participants agreed that they didn't receive any kind of training and dissemination-related programs for the effective implementation of the course and curriculum. They also agreed that they took two days' training related to this course, organised by NELTA, virtually. They have not received any training related to the course from the government side to date.

Regarding this, T4 blamed the government for introducing a new curriculum and textbook; a dissemination program is necessary for introducing a new curriculum and textbook; a dissemination program is a must. Otherwise, teachers like me will be in trouble. The course designers gave all kinds of responsibilities to the teachers. It's not fair. First, they have to conduct seminars and training related to the course. We are not superhuman beings to understand the real essence of the course by ourselves.

Based on the views of all five respondents, it has become clear that none of the five respondents has ever received any formal training from the government on the Grade 12 Compulsory English curriculum and books. It is important to remember that the only professional support they have received was through a two-day online orientation program conducted by NELTA, which they found useful, but not enough to meet their needs in the new curriculum. T4 expressed his concern:

"The government introduced a new curriculum and textbook, so dissemination programs are necessary. Otherwise, teachers like me face difficulties". The course designers have placed many responsibilities on teachers without providing adequate preparation. We need seminars and training to understand the real essence of the course.

Grammar Instructional Challenges and Lack of Progressive Scaffolding

There are more than 45 grammar-related exercises in this textbook. These exercises are kept in Part One, i.e., the Language development sections. The grammar exercises vary from question tags to reported speech. The vocabulary portion is also included before the grammar section. For grammar, 10% of the marks are allocated for the board exam. Similarly, 5 marks are allocated for the vocabulary portion. Five teachers have different opinions on these exercises. Regarding this, T1 reported that

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There are lots of grammatical exercises in the textbooks, but the questions are asked outside the textbook. Similarly, the marks allocated for the grammatical portion are very few. It would be better if it were up to 20 marks. He further added that the grammar items are not as standard as in previous textbooks. It takes a very long time to teach these items to the students, as they are very weak in grammar.

T2 reported that

> *Grammatical items are designed in such a way that students read all these items and gain knowledge of them. These grammatical items have a vertical relationship with the 10th- and 11th-grade exercises related to grammar. There is no time allocation for grammar teaching. The sequencing of the grammatical items is not from simple to complex. Those students who have a base in grammar can easily handle these exercises, but average students are always puzzled in class.*

T3, T4 and T5 have similar views on grammatical exercises. They noted that grammatical exercises are given on the PPP model without having supportive examples, as in previous textbooks. Grammatical exercises are not sufficient in the textbook. T3 further added that I couldn't develop students' vocabulary power by teaching them different texts. He further added that I teach sounds to my students not for practice, but because I really wanted to teach these exercises for exam preparation. T5 has different opinions on this. *He reported that grammatical items are not as standard as the meaning in the words of the book, no doubt. There are lots of grammatical exercises. Its teacher teaches these exercises properly; it will take more than 2 months to complete the course.* Based on the findings above, it is evident that there are many types of grammatical exercises in the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook. Such findings are consistent with language-materials development principles that consider the significance of appropriate guidance, sequencing, context, and progressive learning tasks for effective language learning (McDonough et al., 2013; Tomlinson, 2012). However, what was not a challenge for the teachers was the number of exercises in the textbook. What made the teachers have challenges was the way the exercises were taught. Some of the challenges the teachers had were the absence of examples, the absence of progression from easy to difficult exercises, the absence of instructions, and challenges faced by students who did not have any knowledge of grammar.

Internal Assessment Constraints and the Marginalization of Speaking and Listening

The international evaluation covers 25 marks. Listening and speaking skills, though primary skills, were evaluated under the internal assessment part. Students' attendance and participation have been emphasized and allocated three marks. Similarly, the scores from two terminal tests are recorded for the final evaluation. The main problem of internal evaluation is that it is not effectively done by the majority of the teachers. Five teachers agreed that they do not do any internal evaluation tasks formally. They provided numbers/grades themselves. But they claimed that they provided the grades that the students deserved. Regarding this, T3 said that I don't teach listening and speaking in the class. This is because this portion is not asked in the board exam. Materials are not available for conducting these tasks. If materials were available, we teachers would not have enough time to teach activities. As per the results of the study, it is clear that the 25 marks assigned to the internal assessment should be used for assessing the criteria of listening, speaking, participation, attendance, project work, and terminal examination. However, from the responses given, it can be observed that these criteria were not considered at all in assigning the grades by the teacher due to the subjectivity involved in awarding grades. Moreover, there is insufficient time and resource allocation for the assessment of listening and speaking skills. As there is great importance of writing in the NEB examination system, there is not much time left for listening and speaking skills.

Mismatch Between Textbook Content and Examination Demands

Evaluation, in a broad sense, is the process of judging, analysing, and deciding about teaching and learning activities based on the objectives of the curriculum. Generally, the process used to appraise whether the learners achieve their objectives or not is called evaluation (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, as cited in Karki, 2015, p. 91)

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Textbooks are mainly designed for students. Two students were involved in this research to explore their ideas on how they perceive the textbook in line with their board exam. The students had already passed the subjects last year with excellent grades. Student 1, who was the first student of the class, said that 'I did really hard labour in my study but didn't get the grade as I expected.' He further said that we studied one thing in the textbook, and the questions were different. The person whose writing skills are good can pass the exam easily without taking the class. Both of them agreed that:

> *The passage was very difficult to understand. There was a lot of difficult vocabulary, so we couldn't understand the text properly. Without understanding the text, how could we solve the questions? We didn't know what to do exactly. In class, we didn't practice such difficult texts. Teachers gave very easy passages in the terminal exam, but we found the passages very difficult in the board exam.*

Grammar-related exercises were also difficult for the students. They didn't match the students' actual ability. Regarding this, *S1 said that not all grammatical questions were difficult. I practised exercises from the first units, but most of the questions were from the last units*. S2 reported that *I practised the grammatical exercises from the textbooks, but all the questions were asked outside the textbook. I couldn't solve all the exercises properly. My participant, Student 2, shared:*

> *"Sir, reported speech is very difficult for us; we never make it correct in the exam. Neither does Sir teach it well nor is it in the textbook". This aspect of grammar has not been thoroughly treated; only a few simple examples are provided in the texts, but multi-level operations are needed for its transformation.*

The writing part is one of the important parts of the textbook from the examination point of view. It carries 25 marks in the board exam. This portion covers lots of genres, including press releases, which are new to the students. Almost all writing exercises they practised were in Grade 10. Regarding this S1, stated that,

> *Two writing-related questions were straightforward. I wrote the first two questions well, but the third writing-related question was very difficult. I couldn't understand the question. I asked the invigilator to translate the question into Nepali, but she didn't. If I understood the text, I would definitely solve it. I wrote the answer, but I didn't know what I wrote. My teacher always told me not to leave the question, so I did that.*

S2 has different opinions. I enjoyed the writing and literature-related questions in the board exam. My sister also passed the board exam. She threatened me that the exam questions would be difficult, focusing on reading and writing. But I faced quite a different situation in the exam. The questions related to writing were not so difficult. I answered them properly. All the questions related to literature were easy, but among them, one question related to 'fractured dialogue' was difficult. Overall, the questions were neither easy nor difficult. The findings show that students' assessment of the Grade 12 English textbook was mainly informed by their learning methods in class and by what was expected of them during the NEB examination. While the textbook was indeed a good starting point, there were differences between the procedures in the textbook and what the examination required due to variations in difficulty levels. In this case, we can view such an inequality as a factor related to the "exam washback effect" (Alderson & Wall, 1993). The reading passages, grammar items, as well as some writing items, were noted to be difficult to complete due to the presence of challenging vocabulary, complexity of the procedures, and little guidance provided. Nevertheless, the performance of the students varied from one individual to another depending on their language proficiency.

Conclusion

This research paper reveals that the English textbook for Grade 12 is very relevant and complete; however, there are many limitations associated with its use in the classroom due to the large

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amount of material contained in it, difficult content, teachers' lack of preparation, and tests. Thus, there are very limited possibilities for students to develop their communicative competence. The most important resource for teaching and learning English effectively is a textbook. This book can be used as excellent reading material because it appears to be current, more methodical, qualitative, and successful in addressing fresh viewpoints on ELT (English Language Teaching). This book serves as an illustration of how traditional literary and grammar textbooks have given way to ones that are more useful and communicative. Parallel to foreign civilisations, a variety of reading materials have also been drawn from indigenous and local ethnic traditions. The book appears to be written with multicultural understanding in mind because its contents are not limited to any one culture.

The English textbook in Nepal aims to include all language skills but lacks sufficient exposure to help students develop them as intended by the curriculum. Many teachers in Nepal rely on textbooks, which may not adequately support their teaching. The consistency between the curriculum and the examination is questionable, and there is a gap with the textbook that could play a connective role. Further research is needed to understand how textbooks are designed, evaluated from multiple perspectives, and how they relate to effective English teaching and learning.

To create a quality English textbook for the secondary level, this research aims to motivate the textbook authors to gather more reading resources. Teachers and school administrations can choose and implement the specific textbook that satisfies the current needs of the students as well as the expectations of a given society and country because it focuses on upholding recent ELT trends to meet the global needs of the learners in an ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL context. Along with the customs and values of the learners' local cultures, we hope it raises awareness among English language teachers about effective teaching methods. Adopting a current book of this kind will benefit classroom implementation because students can learn and practice reflective skills.

This research has investigated the perception of the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook in Nepal in regard to content, relevance, utilisation in the classroom, and assessment. The results of this research indicate that the textbook aligns with the national curriculum in terms of language skills and communicative activities and includes multicultural content. Nevertheless, the utilization of the textbook is affected by such challenges as difficult content, lack of time for teaching, examination pressure, poor readiness of the teacher, and ineffective assessment. In addition, students face difficulties with reading, grammar, writing, and higher-order tasks in the exams.

Hence, it becomes evident that the effective application of the textbook depends not only on the content of the textbook, but also on the language proficiency of learners, the readiness of the teacher, and other factors as well. In this regard, when revising the textbook in the future, there are two aspects that should be considered besides the content, namely the language proficiency of the learners and the local context. Besides, in future assessments, the communicative aspect must be emphasized rather than the examination.

Discussion

The book employed for English language studies in Grade 12 helps in the application of the communicative approach to language teaching despite the challenges posed by it, such as complex content, limited time, examination pressure, and poor preparedness on the part of the teachers. Challenges related to grammar, writing, reading, and thinking have been identified by both teachers and learners. The findings reveal that the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook has proper elements for language learning, which cannot be implemented efficiently because of certain classroom limitations. The amount of material, lack of time, difficult texts, readiness of learners, exam pressures, and poor preparation of teachers impact the efficiency of the implementation of these mechanisms. The reduced focus on speaking, listening, and project activities is due to examination washback (Alderson & Wall, 1993), whereas the necessity for scaffolding is related to the requirement of adjusting materials to learners' abilities. The results also underscore the significance of culturally relevant materials that bridge global perspectives with the experiences of learners. Textbook effectiveness depends not only on its content but also on teacher competence, learners' needs, examinations, instruction, and culture (Cunningsworth, 1995; McDonough et al., 2013). Thus, teacher effectiveness will determine the

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effectiveness with which the teacher uses the textbook to teach. The needs of the learners will determine whether the contents of the textbook will suit them or not. The examination may influence the activities of the textbook that will be taken care of. Time, instruction, and materials in the classroom will determine how the textbook will be used. Overall, the findings suggest that the primary concern is desirable language-learning, potentially effective elements, integration, and utilization for meaningful language learning for the Grade 12 Compulsory English textbook. It indicates that teacher agency is crucial in language development in terms of context-sensitive textbook evaluation, while policymakers should ensure compatible pedagogical principles that promote innovative textbook features. The materials designers may produce the needs of curriculum policies, classroom realities, and consistency between assessment and learner needs. The critical point is to direct attention from textual content toward textbook evaluation that reinforces opportunities for classroom implementation.

Knowledge Contribution

The research in **Figure 1.3** (Knowledge Contribution) has also helped in the area of evaluating textbooks in the sense that it has pointed out that the success of a textbook is relative to many different things. The impact of the Grade 12 English textbook depends on the interaction among curriculum expectations, students' proficiency, teachers' preparation, classroom environment, students' motivation, and assessment.

The research has introduced the concept of "coherence of implementation" into our knowledge. It implies that the possibility of successful learning through language is high when there is coherence between the curriculum, textbook, teaching methods, teacher education, and assessment. In this way, the research has widened the scope of textbook evaluation from being just the content of the textbook and its alignment with the curriculum to its actual implementation in Nepal's secondary schools.

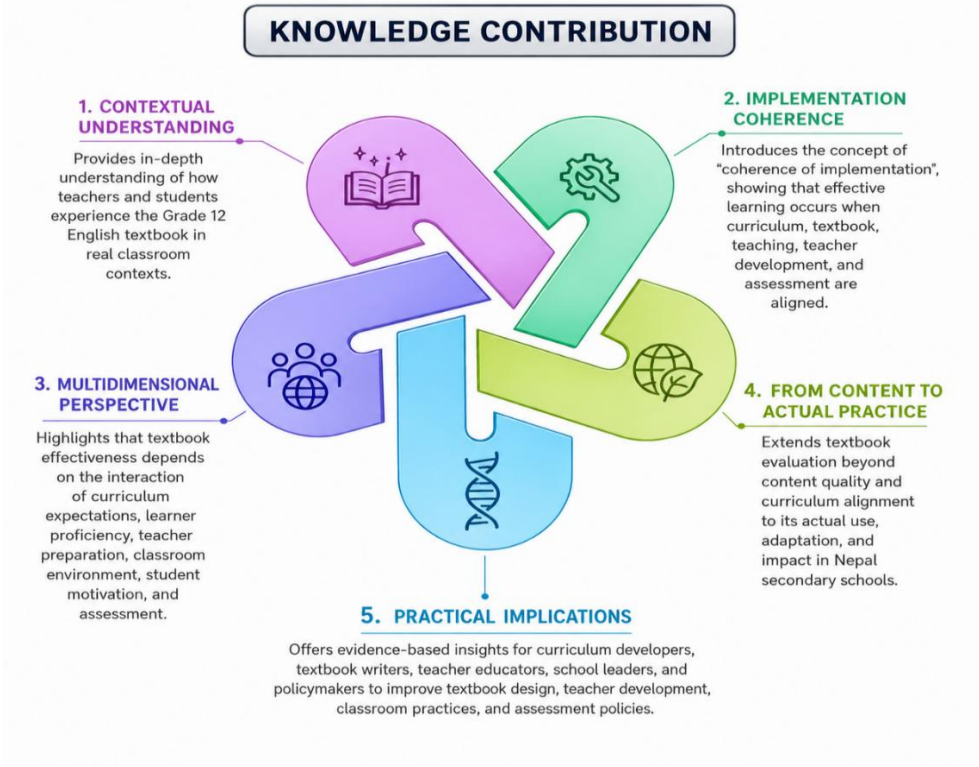


Figure 1.3.: Knowledge Contribution

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Recommendations

The implications of the study can be applied to different areas of policy-making and educational practice. First of all, the results of this study can be seen as significant for the revision of curricula, textbooks, and other teaching materials by the Curriculum Development Centre and textbook writers; the last mentioned have to consider such aspects as avoidance of overburdening students, improvement of sequencing of language tasks, better assistance in writing, more worked examples in teaching grammar, and use of authentic texts that reflect the local and foreign cultures. Similarly, teachers are the ones who actually implement the course. Here are a couple of suggestions from the five teacher participants.

- Reading tasks should be connected to the real world.
- Teachers are providing the internal marks themselves. This should be taken into consideration. An effective monitoring mechanism is needed for its effective implementation.
- 10 marks are allocated for the grammatical portion. It should be up to 25 marks.
- In the writing tasks, there are only questions. The " how to write and prepare part is missing. All the responsibility has been given to the students.
- Passages that are asked in the board exams are beyond the level of the students.
- Course items should be reduced. It is very difficult for the teachers to complete the course in time.
- It is necessary to match the sequence of the curriculum and the textbook.
- The texts should be life-oriented. Not all of the texts are boring. Students feel sleepy in class.
- Students' competency level is very low after the Covid-19 pandemic. They could not even write a single paragraph properly. So, in this scenario, writing tasks are very difficult as they demand lots of creativity from the students. It is necessary to cover this portion.
- In the first part, there are 20 texts for language development. The texts are also lengthy. If the teachers teach them properly, it will take a whole year.
- There are fewer supporting examples for the grammar section.
- Proper guidelines have not been given for writing activities.
- Project work is useless.
- The pronunciation part is limited. It needs to be increased.
- The credit hours allocated for Compulsory English should be increased.
- The grammatical exercises are not very creative. Most of them have been taken from Meaning into Words.
- Its teachers teach properly; it will take two years.

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Authors' Contributions

Ganga Gautam (First Author): Investigation, Resources, Data Analysis, and Original Draft.

Nirajan Bohara (Second Author/Corresponding Author): Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. Both authors contributed equally to the study and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

Generative AI Tools

Grammarly Premium was used for grammar checking, proofreading, and improving the clarity and readability of the manuscript. The authors reviewed all suggested changes and take full responsibility for the final content.

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