



Teachers' Trajectory of Pedagogical and Practical Experiences Toward Developing an English Textbook

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-06-09 Revised: 2026-06-27 Accepted: 2026-06-29 Keywords: ELT material development; Instructional decision-making; Teacher Cognition; Teacher Identity; Teacher professional development DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10325 Corresponding Author: Nabila Shufaira Muammar nabila.shufairam@gmail.com Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FKIP Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari	<i>This study investigates how the process of developing an English textbook influences teachers' pedagogical and practical experiences, as well as the challenges they encounter during the process. Grounded in Teacher Cognition and Teacher Identity perspectives, the study adopts a qualitative approach to examine how teachers engage in instructional design. The findings reveal that textbook development pushes teachers to move beyond intuitive teaching toward more intentional and structured pedagogical design, where instructional decisions must be explicitly justified and aligned with learning objectives. This process activates and reorganizes teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and prior experiences through continuous decision-making. At the same time, teachers face several challenges, including difficulties in translating pedagogical ideas into practical materials, contextualizing content to learners' needs, and managing constraints such as time, curriculum demands, and workload. Rather than functioning as barriers, these challenges act as catalysts for professional growth, encouraging adaptive and context-sensitive decision-making. The study also highlights a parallel transformation in professional identity, as teachers shift from being material users to active designers and contributors. Overall, the findings suggest that textbook development serves as a critical site for teacher learning, where cognition, practice, and identity are dynamically interconnected, offering important implications for teacher education and professional development</i>

1. Introduction

In recent years, teachers in many educational contexts have become increasingly aware that commercial English textbooks do not always reflect the realities of their classrooms (Vitta, 2023). National or mass-marketed materials are usually designed for broad and diverse audiences, which means they may not fully respond to the linguistic, cultural, or pedagogical needs of specific learner groups (McDonough et al., 2013; Nguyen et al., 2021; Tomlinson, 2012). Due to the limitations of commercially produced English textbooks in addressing local classroom needs, many teachers, particularly in Asian and multilingual educational contexts, have begun developing their own instructional materials (Anggieta et al., 2023). Standardized textbooks are often designed for global markets and may not fully address learners' linguistic backgrounds, cultural values, or classroom realities (Harwood, 2014).

Therefore, teachers develop their own teaching materials to make lessons more suitable for their students and classroom contexts (Kirkpatrick, 2012; Widodo & Savova, 2010). By creating their own ELT materials, teachers can include local culture, adjust the level of difficulty, and meet different student needs. In multilingual settings, this practice becomes particularly important, as teachers must negotiate varied learner identities and language repertoires, positioning teacher-generated materials as both a pedagogical response and a form of professional agency (Rose & Galloway, 2019). This shift indicates that materials development is gradually becoming an essential part of teachers' professional responsibilities.

Developing an English textbook, however, presents significant challenges. Many teachers undertake this work with limited formal preparation in materials design, relying mainly on their personal beliefs, previous teaching experiences, and individual interpretations of curriculum expectations (McGrath, 2016; Tomlinson, 2013). Producing a textbook requires careful decision-making about content selection, task design, sequencing of lessons, and alignment with pedagogical principles (Fadila et al., 2025). These decisions draw heavily on teachers' professional reasoning and their internal knowledge structures what is broadly described as teacher cognition (Borg, 2006). Without sufficient institutional guidance and professional scaffolding, teachers may feel unsure about the pedagogical quality and effectiveness of the materials they design (Brown, 2020; Priestley & Philippou, 2019).

At the same time, research suggests that the development of teaching materials can function as a powerful form of professional learning, enabling teachers to refine their pedagogical knowledge and professional self-understanding (Pennington & Richards, 2016). Teachers who engage in textbook writing often report greater ownership over their instructional decisions and a deeper understanding of their teaching values and priorities (Garton & Graves, 2014). Yet this process is rarely straightforward. Teachers frequently encounter

obstacles such as limited time, insufficient resources, ambiguous curriculum guidelines, and difficulty transforming teaching ideas into well-designed, coherent materials (Harwood, 2014; McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara, 2013). These mixed experiences demonstrate that textbook development is not merely a technical task; it is also a reflective and identity shaping process that influences how teachers view their roles and professional capabilities (Meyer, Doll, & Kaiser, 2023; Ye, Cheng, & Yang, 2025).

This research will focus on English teachers at schools. This context will be selected because several teachers have participated in developing an English textbook writing as part of their academic and professional development, and for most of them, this activity represents their experience in developing textbook-based instructional materials. This setting is particularly significant because the participants occupy dual roles as in-service teachers, allowing them to draw directly on their classroom experiences, pedagogical beliefs, and professional knowledge during the textbook-writing process. Consequently, this study seeks to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding their experience of developing an English Textbook, with particular attention to their pedagogical reasoning, practical challenges, and the ways in which this experience contributes to the development of their professional identity.

Although the number of teachers producing their own English textbooks continues to grow, particularly in developing educational contexts, research that examines their real-life experiences remains limited. Many teachers develop their own materials to respond to learner diversity, local relevance, and the inadequacies of standardized textbooks (Banegas, 2020). However, little is known about how they navigate the demands of textbook writing or how the process affects their pedagogical thinking and day-to-day practices. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of developing English textbook toward teachers' pedagogical and practical experience, and their challenges during developing the textbook.

2. Method

This study adopted a qualitative research design, specifically a narrative inquiry approach, to explore teachers' pedagogical and practical experiences in developing an English textbook. Narrative inquiry was employed because it enabled teachers to recount and interpret their experiences, decision-making processes, and internal reasoning that shaped their textbook development practices. Through this approach, the study examined how teachers constructed meaning from their pedagogical actions, the challenges they encountered, and their evolving identities as English teachers and emerging textbook writers.

This design was aligned with the study's theoretical grounding in Teacher Cognition Theory (Borg, 2003; 2006) and Teacher Identity Theory (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), both of which emphasize teachers' personal interpretations, beliefs, and reflective processes.

The study was carried out in the context of Indonesian education, involving English teachers who were engaged in developing an English textbook titled *Teaching English for Young Learners: Strategies, Method, and Innovations*. The participants were in-service teachers working at different educational levels, including kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school. These teachers balanced their classroom responsibilities with academic and professional development activities, particularly the requirement to produce contextually appropriate instructional materials.

The textbook development process took place alongside the participants' teaching duties and involved several stages, including topic selection, drafting, initial revision, editorial feedback, further revision, and finalization. These activities occurred both in the participants' teaching environments and in their personal workspaces where writing and revision were conducted. Each textbook chapter reflected the participants' pedagogical knowledge and practical teaching experience, covering areas such as instructional design, learner characteristics, motivation, creativity, and policy implications. This context allowed the study to examine how teachers translated classroom experiences and pedagogical ideas into written instructional materials while addressing the challenges encountered during the development process.

The participants in this study comprised seven English teachers who had developed and published their own English textbook or textbook chapters. A convenience sampling strategy was employed, whereby participants were selected based on their accessibility, willingness to participate, and alignment with the objectives of the study. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth, experience-based insights from teachers who had directly engaged in developing an English textbook. Several criteria guided the selection of participants. All participants were actively teaching English at the time of the study across different educational levels.

Their involvement in English textbook development represented their experience of authoring a textbook or textbook chapter during their teaching careers. In addition, the English textbooks or textbook chapters produced by the participants had been formally accepted and published. These criteria ensured that all participants had experienced the complete cycle of developing an English textbook.

The inclusion of seven participants representing diverse educational contexts allowed the study to capture variation in pedagogical reasoning, practical challenges, and professional learning across school levels, while still supporting in-

depth qualitative exploration. The participants varied in teaching experience, ranging from more than two years to sixteen years, and contributed to different textbook chapters addressing various aspects of English language teaching.

Table 1: Profile of Participants and Their Textbook Chapters

Participant (P)	Teaching Level		Teaching Experience	Textbook Chapter Developed	Chapter title
P1	Junior School	High	>3 years	Chapter 3	Advancing English Teaching: Teacher Identity
P2	Kindergarten		16 years	Chapter 12	Creativity and Innovation in Teaching Young Learners
P3	Junior School	High	>3 years	Chapter 5	Instructional Design for Young Learners
P4	Senior School	High	>2 years	Chapter 1 & 2	Introduction to English Language Learning for Children & Characteristics of Young Learners
P5	Senior School	High	>3 years	Chapter 1	Introduction Changing Landscape of ELT
P6	Junior School	High	>3 years	Chapter 2	Fueling Success: The Role of Motivation in English Language Learning
P7	Elementary School		>2 years	Chapter 6	Future Directions and Policy Implications

The data were collected through two complementary qualitative instruments: reflective writing and stimulated recall interviews. Reflective writing was implemented in the form of reflective writing and served as the primary data source. This instrument enabled participants to document their pedagogical reasoning, instructional decisions, and professional experiences as they occurred during textbook development.

Reflective writing was aligned with the Teacher Cognition Framework, which emphasizes teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and decision-making processes, as well as Teacher Identity Theory, which views identity as dynamic and shaped through reflection and practice. Participants were asked to write reflective journal entries regularly throughout the development process, including stages such as planning,

content selection, task design, and revision. Guiding prompts were provided to support focused reflection on pedagogical considerations, teaching beliefs, and professional identity; however, participants were allowed flexibility to express their thoughts freely.

The reflective writing process was conducted over approximately one month, allowing participants to engage in continuous reflection while referring to their developing textbook drafts. Through this process, participants described how pedagogical decisions were made, what beliefs informed those decisions, and how developing an English textbook influenced their understanding of themselves as teachers and textbook writers.

Stimulated recall interviews were conducted as a complementary and follow-up instrument to reflective writing. This method enabled participants to revisit specific moments in their textbook development process and articulate the cognitive processes underlying their decisions. Each participant took part in semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 20 to 30 minutes, conducted either face-to-face or online depending on participants' preferences. Reflective journal entries and selected sections of textbook drafts were used as stimuli to prompt participants' recall of their thoughts, decisions, and experiences.

During the interviews, participants explained the reasoning behind their pedagogical choices, reflected on changes in their teaching perspectives, and elaborated on challenges encountered during textbook development. These interviews provided deeper clarification of the reflective journal data and also served as the primary source for identifying practical challenges, such as time constraints, curriculum alignment, material design difficulties, and contextual or institutional demands, as well as the strategies employed to address these challenges.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six-step framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The analysis began with repeated reading of reflective journals, interview transcripts, and textbook drafts to develop a comprehensive understanding of the data. Initial coding was conducted iteratively, with segments of data labeled according to their relevance to the research questions and theoretical frameworks. Codes captured aspects such as pedagogical reasoning, professional identity, cognitive processes, practical challenges, and contextual influences.

These codes were then organized into broader themes representing recurring patterns across participants. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure coherence, distinctiveness, and alignment with the study's objectives. Throughout the analysis, the researcher examined how participants' reflections and reported experiences corresponded with their actual practices as reflected in their textbook drafts, as well as how these aligned with the frameworks of Teacher

Cognition and Teacher Identity.

In the final stage, themes were clearly defined and presented with supporting evidence from reflective writing, interview excerpts, and document analysis. To enhance the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was employed by comparing information across the three data sources. This process strengthened the trustworthiness of the study by identifying consistencies and discrepancies, ultimately providing a comprehensive understanding of teachers' pedagogical and practical experiences in developing an English textbook.

3. Result

Before engaging in the process of developing an English textbook, the participants generally viewed teaching as a student-centered, contextual, and reflective practice shaped by their classroom experiences. Across the seven participants, there was a shared awareness that many existing English teaching materials did not fully address students' actual learning conditions, linguistic abilities, cultural backgrounds, and emotional needs. The participants frequently encountered classroom realities such as low student confidence, passive participation, limited vocabulary mastery, uneven learning pace, and difficulties engaging with abstract or decontextualized materials.

These experiences shaped their pedagogical beliefs about the importance of meaningful communication, active participation, creativity, scaffolding, and contextualized learning. At the same time, most participants initially perceived themselves primarily as classroom practitioners rather than material developers, despite recognizing the limitations of commercially produced textbooks. They also expressed uncertainty regarding their ability to transform pedagogical ideas into coherent and pedagogically appropriate instructional materials. These initial beliefs, experiences, and concerns reveal the central issue underlying the findings of this study: the tension between teachers' pedagogical ideals and the practical realities of developing English textbooks that are meaningful, context-sensitive, and responsive to diverse learner needs.

This section presents an overview of how the theoretical aspects are manifested across the data, with particular attention to identifying which aspects emerge most consistently and how they relate to one another. Rather than treating all aspects as equally significant, the analysis focuses on their relative prominence based on patterns observed across participants and the roles they play within the process of textbook development. Table 2 summarizes these patterns by indicating the extent to which each aspect appears in the findings and categorizing its strength of presence.

This approach allows for a clearer understanding of which aspects function

as core drivers, which operate as mediating processes or contextual influences, and which emerge as outcomes of the experience. By organizing the data in this way, the analysis moves beyond simple description and highlights the underlying structure of the process, showing how different aspects interact to shape teachers' pedagogical development and professional transformation.

Table 2. *Distribution of Teacher Cognition and Identity Constructs Across Participants*

Aspect	Participants	Status
Decision-Making	7	Clearly universal
Teacher Knowledge	7	Clearly universal
Cognition–Practice	6	Strong
Reflection	6	Strong

1. Table 2 indicates a clear hierarchy of aspects in the data, with teacher knowledge and decision-making emerging as the most consistently present across all participants, marking them as the core drivers of the process. These two aspects appear universally because every participant was required to organize content, structure activities, and make instructional choices, which inevitably exposed both their knowledge resources and their limitations. Closely following this, the cognition–practice relationship and reflection are strongly represented, showing that teachers did not merely plan in isolation but continuously connected their design decisions to imagined or actual classroom implementation, while also evaluating and revising their choices. Overall, the distribution suggests that textbook development is primarily driven by the interaction between teacher knowledge, instructional decision-making, cognition–practice relationships, and reflective processes. These aspects consistently shaped how teachers organized content, evaluated pedagogical choices, and refined instructional practices throughout the material development process.

Influence of Textbook Development on Teachers' Pedagogical and Practical Experiences

From Intuitive Teaching to Intentional Pedagogical Design

The process of developing an English textbook required teachers to move from intuitive instructional decision-making toward more intentional and structured pedagogical design.

P5 highlighted contextual challenges, explaining that existing materials were

"...being overly focused on the central region... led students to perceive it as irrelevant,"

In response, the participant decided to adapt the materials so that they were more relevant to students' contexts. This illustrates how textbook development required teachers to make instructional decisions regarding content selection and contextual appropriateness. However, at this stage, decision-making remained largely intuitive and context-bound, focusing primarily on addressing immediate contextual needs rather than on systematically structured pedagogical planning.

A more systematic form of instructional decision-making emerged when teachers began to draw on their pedagogical and content knowledge to organize materials more deliberately. P6 explained,

"My pedagogical knowledge helped me organize the chapter systematically, starting from basic concepts and moving toward more complex tasks... I also applied teaching strategies such as scaffolding, repetition, and guided practice."

Likewise, P1 stated,

"My pedagogical and content knowledge helped me structure the chapter logically from modelling and guided practice to independent production... I also ensured alignment between objectives, activities, and assessment."

These statements show a transition from isolated activity selection to structured instructional design, where sequencing, scaffolding, and alignment become explicit considerations. A more advanced case is seen in P3, who critically evaluated content by stating,

"I did not treat AI output as a finished product... I constantly positioned myself as the final decision maker... checking task purpose, learning progression, and classroom feasibility."

This reflects a higher level of pedagogical control, where knowledge is not only applied but also critically evaluated.

However, the most significant transformation occurred through reflection, which enabled teachers to critically evaluate their pedagogical decisions and instructional practices. Participant 3 engaged in deep self-questioning, asking,

"Do I actually teach the way I claim to believe? Do my tasks truly support learner meaning making?"

This indicates a shift from assumed competence to critical self-evaluation. Similarly, P2 noted that writing the chapter

“pushed me to reflect more deeply on my own teaching... I became more conscious of how I design tasks, manage the classroom environment, and assess students’ learning.”

Overall, the findings indicate that the transition from intuitive instructional decision-making to intentional pedagogical design is a gradual and layered process. Teachers initially make instructional decisions that are largely intuitive and context-sensitive, but the demands of textbook development increasingly require them to justify and structure those decisions pedagogically. In doing so, they draw upon their pedagogical knowledge and engage in critical reflection on their instructional choices.

As teachers evaluate content, organize learning progression, and align activities with instructional objectives, their decision-making becomes more explicit, structured, and pedagogically grounded. In this sense, textbook development serves as a catalyst for refining and systematizing teachers’ pedagogical decisions and instructional thinking, supporting a gradual shift toward more intentional pedagogical design.

Refinement of Instructional Decision-Making

The process of developing an English textbook not only shifted teachers’ thinking from intuitive to intentional approaches but also refined the way they made instructional decisions. Throughout the development process, teachers were required to make precise decisions regarding task design, sequencing, instructional clarity, and the alignment of learning objectives, activities, and assessment. This refinement was primarily driven by the application of teacher knowledge, engagement in pedagogical problem-solving, and the ongoing interaction between cognition and practice.

A key indicator of this refinement is the increasing use of pedagogical and content knowledge to justify and structure instructional decisions. P1 explicitly stated,

“My pedagogical and content knowledge helped me structure the chapter logically from modelling and guided practice to independent production. I also ensured alignment between objectives, activities, and assessment.”

This statement demonstrates a shift toward organizing learning activities according to pedagogical principles such as sequencing, scaffolding, and instructional alignment. Similarly, P6 explained,

“I organized the materials systematically, starting from basic concepts and moving toward more complex tasks... I also applied strategies such as scaffolding, repetition, and guided practice.”

These accounts suggest that teacher knowledge functioned as a conceptual framework that enabled participants to make more deliberate and systematic instructional decisions during the material development process.

The refinement of instructional decision-making became even more apparent when teachers encountered competing demands and constraints that required them to solve pedagogical problems. P2 highlighted this challenge by stating,

"One of the main challenges was balancing creativity with learning objectives. Sometimes activities were engaging, but I had to reconsider whether they actually supported language learning outcomes."

This account illustrates that instructional decisions were no longer based solely on engagement or intuition but increasingly required careful evaluation of the pedagogical value of each activity. Similarly, P7 described the challenge of translating theoretical concepts into practical materials, explaining that they had to

"simplify complex ideas so that they could be understood by students without losing their educational value."

These examples indicate that instructional decision-making involved continuous negotiation among multiple priorities, including creativity, clarity, accessibility, and instructional effectiveness.

A more advanced form of instructional decision-making is evident in P3's account, where pedagogical knowledge was not only applied but also used to critically evaluate and filter external input. The participant stated,

"I did not treat AI output as a finished product. I constantly positioned myself as the final decision maker... I checked whether each task had a clear purpose, whether the progression made sense, and whether it would work in the classroom."

This statement reflects a higher level of cognitive control in which decisions are made through critical evaluation rather than simple acceptance. In this case, teacher knowledge and decision-making are closely integrated, enabling the participant to maintain pedagogical coherence while responding to external influences.

The refinement of instructional decision-making was further reinforced through the cognition–practice relationship, whereby decisions made during textbook development began to influence classroom practices. P3 reported,

"This process changed how I give instructions in class. I became more aware of clarity and step-by-step guidance."

Similarly, P5 described a shift in instructional emphasis, explaining,

"Previously, I focused more on speaking, but later I realized that reading skills are equally important."

This realization led to the integration of reading activities into both the textbook and classroom instruction. These examples suggest that decision-making during material development was not isolated from teaching practice; rather, it directly informed and reshaped classroom implementation. As a result, pedagogical decisions made during textbook development became embedded in teachers' instructional practices.

Overall, the findings suggest that the process of textbook development refines instructional decision-making by requiring teachers to move from general pedagogical awareness toward more precise and context-sensitive judgment. Through the application of pedagogical knowledge, engagement in problem-solving, and the continuous interaction between cognition and practice, teachers become increasingly selective, analytical, and intentional in their instructional choices. This refinement represents a significant development in teacher cognition, as instructional decision-making evolves from intuitive responses into more structured, justified, and pedagogically grounded processes.

Transformation of Classroom Practices

The process of developing an English textbook extended beyond planning and material design and contributed to noticeable changes in teachers' classroom practices. As teachers engaged in designing, evaluating, and revising instructional materials, decisions made during the development process began to influence how teaching was enacted in classroom settings. This transformation is best understood through the interaction between instructional decision-making and the cognition–practice relationship, whereby pedagogical decisions made during material development were translated into instructional actions.

A central pattern across participants was that decisions made during textbook development were carried over into classroom instruction, particularly in relation to instructional clarity, lesson structure, and task implementation. P3 explicitly described this shift, stating,

"This process changed how I give instructions in class. I became more aware that instructions must be clear, step-by-step, and accessible for students."

This indicates that the process of designing written instructions for a textbook influenced how instructions were subsequently implemented in classroom practice. What had previously been delivered more intuitively became increasingly structured and deliberate. This reflects a strong cognition–practice relationship, whereby pedagogical decisions developed during material writing directly influenced classroom implementation.

Similarly, P2 demonstrated how decisions regarding task design shaped instructional practice. The participant explained that activities such as storytelling, role-playing, music, games, and project-based tasks were not only incorporated into the textbook but also became more systematically integrated into classroom teaching. Importantly, this integration was guided by deliberate consideration of whether these activities supported language learning outcomes. This suggests a shift from using activities primarily as engagement tools toward implementing them as pedagogically justified instructional strategies.

A more substantial transformation is evident in P5's account, where textbook development led to a reconsideration of instructional priorities. The participant stated,

"Initially, I placed greater emphasis on speaking; however, I later realized that reading skills are equally important,"

This realization resulted in the integration of reading activities into both the textbook and classroom instruction. The example demonstrates how decision-making during material development can influence instructional priorities and contribute to the adoption of new teaching practices. In this case, the cognition–practice relationship ensured that pedagogical decisions made during textbook development were enacted in classroom settings.

Across participants, these findings indicate that classroom practices were continuously reshaped through the process of instructional design. The need to make explicit decisions regarding task sequencing, instructional clarity, and the alignment of activities with learning objectives encouraged teachers to reconsider how these elements functioned in classroom teaching. As a result, instructional practices became more structured, purposeful, and aligned with pedagogical goals.

Overall, the findings indicate that the transformation of classroom practices emerged from the interaction between instructional decision-making and the cognition–practice relationship. Decisions made during textbook development extended beyond the design process and became embedded in classroom implementation. This demonstrates that textbook development is not merely a material production activity but also a professional learning process that directly influences teaching practice.

Practical Challenges in Textbook Development

Translating Pedagogical Ideas into Practical Materials

One of the most immediate challenges faced by teachers during English textbook development was the difficulty of translating abstract pedagogical ideas into concrete, usable instructional materials. While participants entered the process with established beliefs and theoretical understanding, they quickly realized that having ideas about good teaching is fundamentally different from operationalizing those ideas into structured tasks, instructions, and learning sequences. This challenge reveals a critical shift in thinking, where teachers move from conceptual understanding to applied pedagogy, driven by the interplay between teacher knowledge and decision-making.

At the level of teacher knowledge, participants demonstrated that they possessed general pedagogical awareness, such as the importance of student-centered learning, creativity, and meaningful engagement. However, difficulties emerged when they attempted to transform these principles into actual materials. P2 clearly articulated this tension, stating,

"One of the main challenges was balancing creativity with learning objectives. Sometimes the activities were fun and engaging, but I had to reconsider whether they really helped students achieve the intended language goals."

This statement shows that knowledge of creative pedagogy alone was insufficient; it needed to be translated into tasks that were not only engaging but also instructionally effective. The challenge, therefore, was not a lack of ideas, but a gap between knowing and doing.

This gap became more evident as teachers engaged in continuous decision-making to refine their materials. P7 highlighted the difficulty of making theoretical concepts accessible, explaining that they had to

"simplify complex ideas so that students could understand them without losing their educational value."

This reflects the need to constantly evaluate how much theoretical depth can be retained while still ensuring clarity and usability. Similarly, P3 emphasized the complexity of this process by stating,

"I had to check whether each task had a clear purpose, whether the progression made sense, and whether it would actually work in the classroom."

This indicates that translating ideas into materials requires multiple layers of decision-making, including evaluating task purpose, sequencing, and practical feasibility.

Another important dimension of this challenge is the tension between theoretical ideals and classroom realities. P4 noted that while theoretical knowledge provided useful guidance,

"it was difficult to make sure that everything I designed could actually be applied in real teaching situations."

This highlights that pedagogical knowledge must be constantly adapted to contextual constraints, such as time limitations, student ability levels, and classroom conditions. In this case, decision-making involves not only selecting appropriate content but also modifying it to ensure practicality.

The complexity of translating ideas into materials is most clearly illustrated in P5's experience, where the participant acknowledged ongoing difficulty in structuring coherent learning progression. They admitted that designing materials required more than just identifying relevant content; it involved organizing that content in a way that supports gradual learning development. This suggests that teachers encountered challenges in applying their pedagogical knowledge to the design of coherent instructional sequences. The process revealed that developing complete instructional units requires not only knowledge of content and pedagogy but also the ability to organize learning experiences systematically.

Overall, the findings suggest that translating pedagogical ideas into practical materials is a cognitively demanding process that requires the integration of teacher knowledge and instructional decision-making. As teachers attempt to transform pedagogical principles into concrete learning materials, they must continuously evaluate task purpose, learning progression, clarity, and classroom applicability. Through this process, teachers refine their ability to apply pedagogical knowledge in the design of structured, purposeful, and contextually appropriate instructional materials.

Contextualizing Materials to Learners' Needs

Another major challenge in English textbook development was adapting materials to learners' needs and contextual realities. Throughout the development process, teachers were required to make instructional decisions regarding content selection, task complexity, and the presentation of learning materials to ensure that they remained meaningful, accessible, and pedagogically appropriate. This challenge highlights the role of instructional decision-making in balancing contextual relevance with educational objectives.

A key aspect of this challenge involved making decisions about the contextual appropriateness of learning materials. P5 highlighted this issue by explaining that existing materials were.

“being overly focused on the central region... resulted in students from other regions feeling disconnected from the material.”

In response, the participant decided to adapt the materials so that they were more closely aligned with students’ local contexts. This illustrates how textbook development required teachers to make instructional decisions regarding content selection and contextual relevance. Rather than simply adopting existing materials, teachers had to evaluate whether the content reflected learners’ realities and supported meaningful engagement with the learning process.

The challenge of adaptation also required teachers to make decisions about the level of complexity presented in learning materials. P6 described this process as a balancing act, explaining that materials needed to be

“simple enough for students to understand but still meaningful and not too basic.”

This statement demonstrates that adapting materials to learners’ needs involved more than simplifying content. Teachers had to determine the appropriate level of difficulty that would support comprehension while maintaining instructional value. Such decisions required careful consideration of learners’ abilities and learning goals.

Similarly, P7 highlighted the difficulty of modifying content while preserving its educational value, explaining that they had to

“adjust examples and explanations so they fit students’ realities without oversimplifying the concepts.”

This indicates that contextualization required continuous judgment regarding how content could be adapted without compromising important learning outcomes. Teachers were therefore required to evaluate not only what content should be included, but also how it should be presented so that it remained both relevant and pedagogically meaningful.

P5 further acknowledged that contextualizing materials introduced additional challenges in maintaining instructional coherence. While adapting content to learners’ contexts increased relevance, the participant noted difficulties in organizing localized materials into coherent learning sequences. This suggests that instructional decision-making extended beyond content adaptation and also

involved ensuring that contextualized materials remained systematically structured and aligned with learning objectives.

Overall, the findings indicate that adapting materials to learners' needs is a complex process that relies heavily on instructional decision-making. Teachers must continuously evaluate content relevance, task complexity, clarity of explanation, and instructional coherence when designing materials for specific learner contexts. Through these decisions, teachers attempt to balance contextual appropriateness with pedagogical effectiveness, demonstrating that successful material development requires not only an understanding of learners' needs but also the ability to translate those needs into well-structured instructional materials.

Gaps in Material Development Knowledge

A critical challenge that emerged during English textbook development was the realization that teaching experience alone did not automatically translate into expertise in material development. While participants initially approached the task with confidence in their pedagogical abilities, the process exposed gaps in their understanding of how to design coherent, structured, and pedagogically sound materials. This challenge reflects a significant shift in thinking, where teachers move from assumed competence to a more critical understanding of the knowledge and skills required for material development. This process is primarily shaped by the interaction between teacher knowledge and reflection.

At the level of teacher knowledge, participants demonstrated that they possessed sufficient knowledge for classroom teaching but encountered limitations when required to design complete instructional units. P6 admitted,

"At the beginning, I was not sure how to structure the materials effectively... I did not really understand how to sequence activities from simple to more complex tasks."

This highlights a gap in knowledge related to instructional design, particularly in organizing content progression. Similarly, P5 acknowledged difficulties in constructing coherent materials, indicating that while they could design individual activities, integrating them into a structured learning sequence remained challenging. These examples suggest that material development requires a different type of knowledge from day-to-day classroom teaching, particularly in terms of planning, sequencing, and organizing learning experiences into coherent instructional units.

These knowledge gaps became more visible through reflection, as the process of writing forced teachers to critically evaluate their own understanding and instructional practices. P3 engaged in deep reflection by questioning,

“Do I actually teach the way I claim to believe? Do my tasks truly support learner meaning making?”

This type of reflection goes beyond surface-level evaluation and reveals potential inconsistencies between pedagogical intentions and instructional practices. Similarly, P2 noted that the process

“pushed me to reflect more deeply on my own teaching and how I design learning activities,”

This suggests that textbook development acted as a catalyst for critical examination of existing practices. Through reflection, teachers were able to identify areas in which their knowledge of instructional design and material development was insufficient or incomplete.

The interaction between teacher knowledge and reflection was particularly important because it enabled participants to move beyond merely identifying difficulties toward understanding the underlying causes of those difficulties. As teachers reflected on their experiences during textbook development, they became more aware of the specific knowledge required to design coherent instructional sequences, align activities with learning objectives, and organize content in ways that support progressive learning. Reflection therefore functioned as a mechanism for uncovering limitations in existing knowledge and directing attention toward areas requiring further development. Rather than simply exposing weaknesses, the reflective process supported teachers in critically examining and refining their understanding of material design.

Furthermore, reflection enabled participants to evaluate the effectiveness of their pedagogical decisions throughout the development process. By repeatedly reviewing and revising instructional materials, teachers were required to justify why particular activities were included, how tasks were sequenced, and whether the materials effectively supported learning objectives. This iterative process encouraged a more deliberate application of pedagogical knowledge and contributed to a deeper understanding of the principles underlying effective material development. As a result, textbook development became not only a process of producing instructional materials but also a process of professional learning through which teachers expanded and refined their pedagogical knowledge.

Overall, the findings suggest that identifying gaps in material development knowledge is not merely a limitation but an important stage in professional learning. Through the interaction of teacher knowledge and reflection, teachers critically examine their existing understanding of instructional design and

recognize areas that require further development. This process highlights that textbook development serves as a powerful learning experience, revealing both the strengths and limitations of teachers' pedagogical knowledge while encouraging more deliberate and informed approaches to material design.

4. Discussion

This study explored the trajectory of teachers' pedagogical and practical experiences during the process of developing an English textbook. The findings suggest that textbook development is not merely a material production activity but a professional learning process through which teachers' pedagogical thinking becomes increasingly explicit, structured, and reflective. While previous research on Teacher Cognition has emphasized the influence of teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and experiences on instructional practices, the present findings demonstrate that the process of textbook development creates conditions that require teachers to actively mobilize and refine these cognitive resources through instructional design decisions (Borg, 2003, 2006, 2015).

As teachers engaged in organizing content, designing tasks, and evaluating learning progression, they moved beyond intuitive teaching practices and developed more deliberate forms of pedagogical reasoning. This finding supports the view that professional learning often emerges through engagement in complex professional activities that require teachers to make their tacit knowledge explicit (Freeman, 2016; Johnson, 2009).

The findings further indicate that teachers' experiences followed a developmental trajectory from intuitive instructional thinking toward more intentional pedagogical design. At the beginning of the process, many instructional decisions were largely informed by practical classroom experience and immediate contextual considerations.

However, as participants were required to develop coherent textbook chapters, they increasingly relied on pedagogical knowledge to justify content selection, task sequencing, instructional progression, and alignment with learning objectives. This progression reflects Borg's (2006) argument that teacher cognition is not limited to what teachers know but is also manifested through how they interpret and respond to instructional challenges. The findings also resonate with studies suggesting that professional growth occurs when teachers are required to articulate and operationalize pedagogical principles that often remain implicit during routine classroom practice (Avalos, 2011; Johnson, 2009).

A central finding of this study is the prominent role of instructional decision-making throughout the textbook development process. Participants consistently described making decisions regarding content selection, activity design, instructional clarity, sequencing, and feasibility. These decisions required teachers to evaluate multiple pedagogical considerations simultaneously, including learner

needs, curriculum expectations, and classroom applicability. This finding supports earlier work suggesting that decision-making represents one of the most visible manifestations of teacher cognition because it reveals how teachers transform knowledge into action (Borg, 2006; Shavelson & Stern, 1981).

However, the present study extends previous understandings by showing that textbook development creates a sustained context in which teachers must repeatedly justify and refine their instructional choices. Rather than functioning as isolated decisions, these judgments became part of an ongoing process of pedagogical reasoning that shaped the overall design of instructional materials.

The findings also highlight the significant role of teacher knowledge in supporting material development. Participants drew upon pedagogical and content knowledge to structure learning sequences, design activities, and ensure coherence between objectives and instructional tasks. However, the process simultaneously exposed limitations in their existing knowledge, particularly regarding instructional design, task progression, and material organization.

This finding aligns with Borg's (2006) conceptualization of teacher knowledge as dynamic and context-dependent rather than fixed or static. It also supports arguments that professional learning often occurs when teachers encounter situations that reveal gaps between existing knowledge and new professional demands (Freeman, 2016; Johnson, 2009). In this study, textbook development functioned as a context in which teachers not only applied knowledge but also became aware of areas requiring further development.

Reflection emerged as another critical mechanism shaping teachers' pedagogical development throughout the textbook writing process. Participants frequently engaged in critical examination of their instructional choices, teaching practices, and underlying assumptions about learning. Reflection enabled teachers to identify inconsistencies between their intended pedagogical principles and the materials they produced, prompting revisions and reconsideration of instructional decisions.

These findings support Schön's (1983) notion of reflective practice as a process through which professionals critically examine their actions in order to improve future practice. Similarly, research in language teacher education has consistently emphasized reflection as a key mechanism for developing professional awareness and pedagogical expertise (Farrell, 2015, 2018; Mann & Walsh, 2017). The findings of the present study suggest that textbook development provides a particularly powerful context for reflection because it requires teachers to externalize and scrutinize their pedagogical thinking in ways that everyday teaching may not always demand.

Another important finding concerns the relationship between cognition and practice. The study found that decisions made during textbook development frequently extended beyond material design and began to influence classroom instruction. Participants reported changes in how they formulated instructions,

sequenced activities, and prioritized learning objectives in their teaching. These findings support the view that cognition and practice are dynamically interconnected rather than operating as separate domains (Borg, 2006; Johnson, 2009).

Consistent with the cognition–practice perspective, teachers' pedagogical thinking both informed and was reshaped by their practical experiences during material development. The findings further suggest that textbook writing may function as a mediating space where cognition and practice interact more intensively, allowing teachers to test, evaluate, and refine their pedagogical reasoning before implementing it in classroom settings (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015).

The findings also demonstrate that the trajectory of teacher development was shaped by practical constraints and contextual demands. Participants encountered challenges related to balancing creativity with learning objectives, adapting materials to learner needs, ensuring instructional coherence, and designing tasks that were both meaningful and feasible. These challenges required teachers to make context-sensitive decisions and to continuously negotiate between pedagogical ideals and practical realities.

This observation supports previous research suggesting that teacher cognition is always situated within specific contextual conditions that influence instructional thinking and decision-making (Borg, 2006; Song, 2016). Rather than constraining professional development, these challenges appeared to stimulate deeper pedagogical reasoning by requiring teachers to justify and adapt their instructional choices.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the trajectory of teachers' pedagogical and practical experiences during textbook development is characterized by the interaction of teacher knowledge, decision-making, reflection, and the cognition–practice relationship. Teacher knowledge provided the foundation for instructional design, decision-making operationalized that knowledge in concrete pedagogical choices, reflection enabled critical evaluation and refinement, and the cognition–practice relationship connected these developments to actual teaching practices.

These aspects did not function independently; instead, they interacted continuously throughout the textbook development process, creating a cycle of professional learning and pedagogical growth. This finding reinforces sociocognitive perspectives on teacher development that view professional learning as an ongoing and situated process emerging from engagement in authentic professional activities (Avalos, 2011; Freeman, 2016; Johnson, 2009).

This study contributes to the Teacher Cognition literature in several ways. First, it demonstrates that textbook development serves as a productive context for examining how teachers mobilize and refine pedagogical knowledge through sustained instructional decision-making. Second, it highlights the central role of reflection in transforming practical experiences into professional learning. Third, it provides empirical evidence that material development can strengthen the relationship between cognition and practice by encouraging teachers to systematically evaluate the pedagogical implications of their instructional choices.

Finally, the study suggests that the development of an English textbook should not be viewed solely as a technical process of material production but as a professional learning experience that supports the ongoing development of teachers' pedagogical expertise. These findings extend previous understandings of teacher cognition by showing how professional growth can emerge through the complex interaction of knowledge, decision-making, reflection, and practice within the specific context of textbook development.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the process of developing an English textbook is not merely a technical exercise but a transformative professional experience that reshapes how teachers think, act, and perceive themselves. Addressing the first research question, the findings show that textbook development pushes teachers to move beyond intuitive and experience-based teaching toward intentional pedagogical design, where every instructional choice must be justified, structured, and aligned with learning objectives. In doing so, teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and prior experiences—central elements in Teacher Cognition—are not simply applied but activated and reorganized through decision-making, indicating that cognition becomes fully functional only when teachers are required to operationalize it under real design demands.

Addressing the second research question, the study reveals that this process is shaped by significant challenges, including difficulties in translating abstract pedagogical ideas into practical materials, contextualizing content to learners' needs, managing limited time and workload, and making decisions under constraint. However, these challenges do not merely hinder progress; rather, they function as catalysts for professional growth, compelling teachers to refine their judgment, prioritize effectively, and develop more adaptive and context-sensitive approaches to instruction.

At the same time, the findings highlight a parallel transformation in professional identity, where teachers shift from being passive users of materials to active designers and contributors, aligning with perspectives in Teacher Identity that view identity as dynamic and continuously evolving, yet extending this view by demonstrating that identity development is driven not only by reflection but by responsibility and role enactment in practice. Importantly, this transformation is neither linear nor comfortable, as it is accompanied by uncertainty, pressure, and

heightened self-awareness, suggesting that professional development is inherently destabilizing before it becomes developmental.

Overall, the study contributes to the field by establishing textbook development as a critical site where cognition, decision-making, and identity intersect, and by arguing that meaningful teacher development occurs when teachers are placed in situations that require them to engage in structured, high-stakes decision-making under real constraints. These findings imply that teacher education and professional development programs should move beyond passive training models and instead incorporate design-based tasks that position teachers as active decision-makers, thereby fostering deeper, more sustainable professional learning.

6. References

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