

Is the Textbook Enslaving or Empowering Teachers? Insights from an Algerian Perspective

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Abstract: Given that studies on how teachers use teaching materials in second and foreign-language classroom contexts are scarce, this exploratory study seeks to contribute to an under-researched area of material use by exploring teachers' interpretation of their English textbooks and the rationale behind it. More specifically, the paper reports the findings of a small-scale study involving three secondary school teachers in Algeria who use the same textbook materials. Using a qualitative case-study design, classroom observations were undertaken and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participant teachers to explore how they use the textbook materials and why. The findings revealed that although teachers were restricted by a standard-based textbook, their flexible and creative use of the same materials was molded by their own beliefs, knowledge and analysis of learners' profiles which all accumulated to determine how they enacted the textbook in the classroom. The paper also put forward several recommendations for different stakeholders (teachers, teacher trainers, textbook designers, and decision-makers).

Keywords: Enacted textbook, material use, textbook, secondary school.

1. INTRODUCTION

New trends in English language teaching (ELT) have flourished around the world in an attempt to decentralize and modernize education and pedagogy. As such, scholars have called for shifting attention from prepacked methods to situated methodologies and from controlled classroom settings to everyday class contexts and ecologies (Ur, 2013; Hall, 2017). These shifts have called for ways to emphasise classroom interaction and emancipate the role of teachers and learners as not mere executors and recipients but active agents in their learning and teaching processes. As such various countries embraced different policies in view of keeping up with the demands of the 21st century. Algeria, like other countries in North Africa, has embraced a series of reforms to transform and enhance the quality of education, facilitate modernization, and face the challenges of the globalized world. As such, in early 2000, the Algerian Ministry of national education initiated some changes to the school system and adopted the competency-based language teaching (CBLT) approach as the method that will take Algeria towards the 21st century. As such, new syllabuses and textbooks have been prescribed and disseminated to all schools to enable teachers to implement the reform under the CBLT. However, these textbooks represent the stated curriculum, not the enacted one (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2017). In other words, there seems to be a significant gap between the aspirations of teaching and learning as expressed in the Algerian curriculum guidelines and the reality of classroom practices due to many factors (lack of resources, lack of teacher training, large classroom size, and heavy syllabuses and timetables) (Miliani, 2010; Messekher, 2014; Bouhadiba, 2015; Gherzouli, 2019; Boukhentache, 2020).

Teaching materials refer to a collection of resources, like textbooks, that are used for teaching and learning and play a pivotal role in creating optimal environments for such processes (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994; McGrath, 2002, 2006, 2013, 2016; Tomlinson, 2003, 2008, 2011, 2013; Guerrettaz and Johnston, 2013; Garton and Graves, 2014, Mishan and Timmis, 2015; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2017). These resources have attracted the attention of many scholars and researchers who focused primarily on their design, content, and potential use (Dominguez, 2003; Gilmore, 2004, 2007; Lee and Collins, 2008; Yuen, 2011). Nevertheless, such studies, though valuable in many respects, fail to determine the actual value of the materials and their dynamic nature when used in the classroom ((McGrath, 2013, 2016; Garton and Graves, 2014; Harwood, 2014, 2017, 2021). Indeed, there is little classroom-based research focusing on teachers' actual use of textbooks, especially nationally prescribed textbooks, and the rationale behind their use. As such, and in response to Garton and Graves (2014) and Harwood (2017)'s calls for

more research on classroom material use, this study seeks to find out whether the textbook contributed to the enslavement or empowerment of teachers in a context where they are expected to use only the prescribed material. More specifically, it aims to explore to what extent Algerian secondary school English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers rely on the mandated textbook, how they exploit its materials in the classroom and why. This study is deemed vital because it seeks to fill in the gap within the literature by providing a nuanced picture of textbook use in the classroom, an ostensibly multifaceted yet under-researched practice. It also gives voice to teachers who are the primary users of the textbook show-casting their insights and experiences and emancipating their roles. With the above aims in mind, this study raises the following question:

How do Algerian EFL teachers re-interpret the prescribed textbook materials? And why?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching materials, like textbooks, have evolved and varied in type (e.g., instructional, experiential, eliciting, exploratory), focus (global, local, or localised) and form (traditional or technological) and have occupied various roles in different EFL classrooms around the world (Tomlinson, 2011, 2013). Many scholars have taken sides in support of or in opposition to textbooks. Some researchers claimed that it constitutes a *de facto* curriculum as it helps standardize instructions and organise content, supports teachers and learners by providing actual language input and practices, saves teachers time and effort, and limits their work overload (Brown, 1995; Ur, 1996; Richards, 2001, 2006; McGrath, 2006, 2013; Razmjoo, 2007; Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Others maintained that by prescribing the aims of a course, the textbook becomes the overarching framework which dictates and influences how, what, and when teachers teach and learners learn. This might limit teachers' creativity and diminish learners' roles (Allwright, 1981; Freire, 2000; Thornbury, 2001). Garton and graves (2014, p.5) also added that textbooks tend to be "value-laden" as they reflect the designers' pedagogical principles and preferences which might not cater for specific local students' interests and needs. Such a view is shared by the Algerian scholars Bouhadiba (2015) and Boukhentache (2018) who noted that the Algerian EFL textbooks fail to match Algerian students' needs, interests, and contexts.

Considering the above benefits and limitations of textbooks, I find that the issue is not related to identifying the role of textbooks or whether they should be used or not but how they are used and exploited in the classroom to optimise teaching and learning. Materials use refers to "the ways that participants in language learning environments actually employ and interact with materials" (Guerrettaz *et al.*, 2018, p. 38). Indeed, the actual value of materials can only be determined when it is used in the classroom by teachers and with learners (Littlejohn, 2011; Guerrettaz *et al.*, 2018). That is, how they are enacted in the classroom to promote teaching and learning rather than constraining it, empower teachers rather than enslave them, and engage learners rather than dehumanize them. Such a view of the textbook shed-lights on the interpretive relationship between teachers and materials which is largely dependent on how teachers interpret and react to the materials and the students in the classroom (Van Lier, 2004).

The past decade has witnessed more research interest that focuses on the actual use of materials in natural classroom contexts mainly in mainstream education (mathematics, science and history) (See Remillard, 2005; Brown, 2009; Gueudet and Trouche, 2012; Remillard and Heck, 2014; Reisman and Fogo, 2016). These studies aimed to challenge conventional assumptions on materials and teachers and argue that materials have to be flexible enough to allow enough freedom for teachers to judge the appropriateness of the input and decide on its suitability to the learners. Such a view implies that teachers are not mere technicians or executors who implement the designers' ideas and plans. They are active agents who bring and synthesise their beliefs and experiences to their encounters with the textbook materials to transform the stated use of the textbook and construct the enacted textbook. Indeed, the enacted use of textbooks has recently drawn much interest from researchers who sought to explore the active role of teachers (and learners) in the teaching process and uncover the way(s) in which teachers use, adapt, shape, and redesign language materials. This highlights the dynamic nature of materials use advanced by sociocultural theories (Williams and Burden, 2007; Tomlinson, 2008, 2011; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Lantolf *et al.*, 2015) whereby textbooks serve as one possible tool that can be used to facilitate the process of internalization. From a sociocultural perspective, teachers are mediators who mobilise their personal and pedagogical principles and exercise their agency in enacting the textbook in the classroom. Such a theory enables us to portray a full picture of the way materials, as teaching and learning tools are shaped by and have the potential to influence teaching and learning based on how they are exploited by teachers.

Shawer (2010) conducted a study that has been oft-cited in many enquiries on material use. He explored how 10 highly experienced and qualified EFL teachers implemented their curriculum materials through multiple data sources (i.e., classroom observation, pre-and post-observation interviews, group discussions, teachers' lesson plans, and students' input). In his analysis, Shawer identified 3 categories of teachers: (i) curriculum-transmitters: referring to the teachers who are highly textbook-dependent i.e., they view the textbook as the "single source of pedagogical input". (ii) curriculum-developers: referring to the teachers who use the textbook flexibly and as one of the available resources to serve their learners' needs. (iii) curriculum-makers: referring to the teachers who are highly textbook-independent i.e., they consider their learners' needs as the starting point to tailor methods and materials. Shawer claimed that teachers tend to switch between these categories for many factors (teachers' beliefs and training, contextual, and institutional constraints). He further noted that curriculum-makers and curriculum-developers challenged the contextual factors, boosted their students' learning gain, and enhanced their pedagogical and professional knowledge as they detached themselves from the designers' suggestions and draw from their students' needs.

One of the few studies exploring material use in ELT is that of Grammatosi and Harwood (2014) who conducted a qualitative classroom-based case study with one experienced teacher to explore his consumption of the assigned textbook in a pre-sessional English for academic purposes programme at a British university. Using repetitive cycles of observation and pre-and-post interviews, the researchers' main focus was to descriptively examine the ways in which John exploited the textbook materials and the factors influencing his decision-making. The findings showed that the teacher frequently adapted the textbook materials for reasons such as his unfavourable evaluation of the content, the discrepancies between the textbook designers' principles and his beliefs, and his analysis and knowledge of the learners' needs and abilities which all shaped his decision-making. Nevertheless, unlike the teachers in this study, John operated under low-level constraints and enjoyed significant autonomy.

As part of her doctoral study, Seferaj (2015) conducted a qualitative study of how and why four Albanian EFL teachers use Western-published textbooks in their classrooms. She aimed to explore the relationship between Western-published textbooks, and the decision-making processes of teachers and their classroom practices. The findings revealed that the participants who had not been well trained to use the communicative language teaching approach, have managed to adapt some communicative teaching practices from the textbook's content to their teaching. The findings also indicated that teachers' cognition, beliefs, and previous learning experiences shape to a great degree their decision-making processes regarding the use of western teaching resources in their classes, which does not seem to radically affect teachers' practices.

Influenced by these seminal works and drawing on the reviewed literature, the current study aims to respond to scholars' calls for more enquiries on material use by exploring the ways in which Algerian EFL teachers use the same prescribed-textbook materials and the motives behind their use.

3. METHODOLOGY

A. Background and Participants

This study seeks to explore secondary school EFL teachers' use of their prescribed English textbooks in Algeria. The textbooks have been compiled by the government-appointed panel of experts under the national curriculum reform of 2000 under the CBLT approach. These textbooks have been disseminated to all schools to support the implementation process without any supporting materials. The participants in this study were 3 female teachers of English (Hannah, Sofia, and Seema - pseudonyms) from 3 different secondary schools located in a city in the west of Algeria. Their teaching experiences ranged from 10 to 30 years and were native Arabic speakers. Two reported holding a degree from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure (ENS) which trains schoolteachers and required four years of study while one was enrolled in a master course at the time of the study. They were all officially recruited by the Algerian ministry of National education and teaching English was their primary job. Following the purposive sampling principle, the teacher participants were chosen to obtain "in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it" (Cohen *et al.*, 2018, p.219). the teachers were "privileged witnesses" (Maxwell, 2012, p.97) due to their experience as textbook users (since its prescription in 2008 and for over 10 years) and their willingness and interest to elaborate on their use of materials. Before data collection, consent was obtained from gatekeepers i.e., school principals and participant teachers.

B. Data Collection

This study aims at obtaining a thorough understanding of the ways in which teachers used textbook materials and their rationales. As such, it is interpretive and qualitative in nature using multiple sources of data (i.e., classroom observation and post-observation semi-structured interviews) to elicit how teachers used the textbook materials and why. First, teachers were observed and audio recorded for 3 consecutive 60-minute sessions to provide insights into how the textbook materials are interpreted in a natural learning context. Using an observation protocol, I collected data on classroom events, the types of materials used in the classroom, and the degree of teacher's dependence on the textbook (given that the teachers were covering the same lesson of the textbook at the time of the data collection).

At the end of the observation stage, post-observation semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participant teachers to uncover the motives of their observed classroom practices and the factors which influenced them. The design of the interview questions was guided by central issues in the literature and informed by the data gathered from classroom observations. The interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 40-45 minutes. They were carried out in English because the teachers felt competent to use the language and took place in the schools at a time and date convenient to the teachers.

Along with the data gathered from the classroom observation and the interviews with teachers, I kept records of the documents that were used by the teachers and given to students. These were further enriched by the informal pre- and post-discussions I had with the teachers which contained specific information about their practices.

C. Data Analysis

In order to answer the research question, I employed different qualitative analysis tools. Following Merriam's (2009) and Duff's (2008) suggestions, I combined the data from the classroom observation, the pre- and post-discussions, and the teachers' interviews to analyse individual teachers' practices and teaching episodes against the textbook proposal. This was done using a spreadsheet in order to provide a comprehensive account of each case and identify the match between the textbook materials and the teacher's practices and justifications. Then, I conducted a comparative cross-case analysis whereby I compared and contrasted the 3 teachers' cases, identified the degree of their dependence on the textbook, the nature of the modification they made, and the factors influencing their use. The analysis resulted in a list of codes that were grouped under themes. I chose not to transcribe the data from the classroom observation as my aim was not to uncover every detail of classroom interaction but rather to obtain insights into the teachers' actual use of materials.

4. FINDINGS

A. Teachers' Enactment of the Textbook Materials

The participant teachers were combined in such a way that they taught almost the same sections of the textbook in the classrooms observed given that they were following the same syllabus and yearly planning. The tables below represent 3 examples of teachers' use of the same materials along with the teachers' supportive comments. These were respectively the case for classes of Hannah and Sofia; Hannah and Seema; and Sofia and Seema.

Table I: Hannah and Sofia's enactment of the textbook [Year 1-p. 92-93]

Suggested Procedure in the textbook	Hannah	Sofia
<i>Stop and consider (Reminder I: Uses of the reporting Verbs 'Ask' and 'Tell')</i>	X (Omitted)	X (Omitted)
<i>Stop and consider (Task: complete the dialogues 1-4 by reporting Rashid's words)</i>	√ (Adapted)	X (replaced with an interview from the internet and activities devised by the teacher)
<i>Stop and consider (Reminder II: Reported Speech)</i>	X (Omitted)	X (Omitted)
<i>Stop and consider (task 1: Use the verbs to report the exact words in dialogues a-f)</i>	√ (Adapted)	X (Omitted)
<i>Stop and consider (Task 2: Use indirect speech to report what the speakers in dialogue a-f above say)</i>	√ (Adapted)	X (Replaced with a self-created game and activities)

Table I above shows how Hannah and Sofia modified the textbook materials to teach the reported speech. Hannah slightly followed the suggested activities though she adapted them in certain ways. For instance, she asked students to work in pairs in doing task 1 (p. 92), although it was not a pair-work activity in the textbook. She also combined tasks 1 and 2 (p.93) by asking students to work in pairs in taking out the exact words said by the speakers and then reporting them. Hannah justified her decision by stating:

Hannah: 'I combined tasks 1 and 2 because it is a repetition and I do not want to lose time. Both tasks have the same objective and same aim.'

On the other hand, Sofia completely disregarded the textbook's suggestions and supplemented the activities with other materials. For instance, she started with a warm-up activity of her own, initiating a dialogue with a female student about the price, brand and design of her handbag in order to give an example of an interview to students and attract their attention. She then used a short interview between a journalist and a secondary school student about bilingualism in Algeria and asked students to work in pairs in reporting the exact words said by the speakers and transforming them into reported speech. She explained:

Sofia: 'I needed more interaction and I cannot have that from the textbook. I needed something more interesting and engaging...It always has to do with learners' interests.'

It is clear from Sofia's practice that she not only demonstrated a high level of understanding of her learners' needs and capacities but also managed to personalise and contextualise the lesson by linking it to their lives. Teacher-student and student-student interactions were much freer and not scripted by the textbook while covering what I find a very difficult language point.

As a replacement for task 2 (p. 93), Sofia brought a group-work game to practice reporting questions and statements. The game contained a set of questions written in very small font size. Students were first asked to zoom in on the questions and then report them. In order to further motivate students, Sofia set a prize for the first group to decode the writing and report the questions, which the students clearly enjoyed as many were practising and using English without the teacher being above their heads. When asked about her practice, Sofia stated:

Sofia: 'I tried to get them to practice the reported speech in a fun way. Because, if I have a whole unit about reported speech and I do not make them practice real-life use of reported speech. What is the point then?'

Interestingly, both Hannah and Sofia added other classroom activities and homework for practising the reported speech. However, unlike Hannah, Sofia spent more time on grammar practices and explanations as she devoted two extra sessions to it. She maintained:

Sofia: 'The textbook does not give any extra support or follow-up activities when dealing with the reported speech. I added other practice situations and tasks because I want them to act naturally. So that next time when I ask about reported speech, they will directly answer.'

To sum up, although the textbook's suggestions were abandoned, Hannah and Sofia covered the units' grammar focus and satisfied the general theme proposed. This can be explained despite their critical evaluation of the textbook's content, the fact that they had no permission to replace the grammar introduced with alternatives of their choice, had limited their autonomy. Nevertheless, they proved their potential to use the material flexibly and exercise some aspects of their agency.

Table II: Hannah and Seema's enactment of the textbook [year 1-p. 144-145-146-147]

Suggested Procedure in the textbook	Hannah	Seema
<i>Reading and Writing</i> (Warm-up: Circle the item that best completes the following)	X (Replaced with another warm-up devised by the teacher)	√ (Adapted)
<i>Reading and Writing</i> (Read and Check: 1. Read the text And check your answers to exercise 2 on the previous page)	√ (Adapted)	√ (Adapted)

<i>Reading and Writing (Read and Check:2. Read the text again, and answer questions)</i>	√ (Adapted)	X (Replaced with an activity devised by the teacher)
<i>Reading and Writing (Read and Check: 3. Guess the meaning of the underlined words in the text)</i>	X (Omitted)	X (Omitted)
<i>Reading and Writing (Discover the language: 1&2. Expressing Cause /effect)</i>	X (Replaced with a self-created worksheet)	X (Replaced with a Self-created worksheet)
<i>Reading and Writing (Discover the language: 3. Match each cause of with its corresponding effect)</i>	√ (Adapted)	√ (Adapted)
<i>Reading and Writing (Discover the language: 4. Read the information in the box below then write 4 sentences about the cause and effects of pollution)</i>	√ (Adapted)	√ (Adapted)
<i>Reading and Writing (Write it right: paragraph completion)</i>	√ (Adapted)	√ (Adapted)

Table II above reveals that both Hannah and Seema did not strictly follow the suggested sections of the textbook. Replacing the warm-up activity, Hannah, wrote the title of the reading text on the whiteboard and engaged in a discussion with students about it before reading the text. Seema used the suggested warm-up activities orally with students because she found it complicated and time-consuming. She also supplemented the post-reading activities suggested in the textbook using her own guided activities about the text. She maintained:

Seema: 'Most of the time I prepare my own materials because the ones suggested are inappropriate and outdated. I take ideas from different resources and I make my own lesson and activities according to my learners' needs and interests.'

Apparently, Seema preferred not to adhere closely to the textbook procedure because she took her students' levels into account. She seemed also aware of the need to continuously supplement the textbook materials and compensate for its weaknesses. Moreover, both Hannah and Seema skipped 'task 3: Guess the meaning of the underlined words' because they combined it unintentionally with the first task when explaining the new vocabulary of the text. Both teachers gave students synonyms, opposites and L1 equivalents of the new vocabulary suggested in the textbook. This highlights that teachers tend to deviate from their lesson plans and make spontaneous decisions based on the flow of the lesson in the classroom.

In addition, both Hannah and Seema supplemented and revised grammar differently from the procedure suggested in the textbook. They both used their own worksheet with example sentences and practice activities. They also manipulated the textbook content by using it as secondary material based on their knowledge of their students' levels and capacities. Hannah, for instance, used the tasks suggested in the textbook for extra practice. She explained:

Hannah: 'I gave them my own graded practice activities then I used the task suggested in the textbook because it is complicated and by then learners would have understood and reached a certain level of knowledge and would be able to do such a complex task.'

Seema also modified the task suggested in the textbook. She asked students to use not only the discourse connectors of consequence as suggested in the textbook but also of cause. She elaborated on her reasons for this modification as follows:

Seema: 'I asked them to use the discourse connectors of both cause and consequence in order to practice more and to challenge them to notice the changes that occur when going from cause to consequence.'

This indicates that the participating teachers used the textbook as an ancillary material as they did not follow to the latter; instead, they departed from it and adapt and supplement it. This can be an indicator of their willingness and ability to deviate from the designers' suggestions and adapt their teaching in response to the needs of the learners in their classrooms.

Table III: Sofia and Seema's enactment of the textbook [year 1-p.152-154]

Suggested Procedure in the Textbook	Sofia	Seema
<i>Stop and Consider</i> (Reminder I: Conditional type 0)	X (Replaced with a self-created worksheet)	X (Replaced with a self-created worksheet)
<i>Stop and Consider</i> (Task1: Match the conditions in column A with their results in column B, then join them to form complex sentences, using IF with the correct tense)	√ (Adapted)	X (Replaced with other activities devised by the teacher)
<i>Stop and Consider</i> (Reminder II: Conditional Type 1 and 2)	X (Replaced with a self-created worksheet)	X (Replaced with a self-created worksheet)
<i>Stop and Consider</i> (Task 1: Put the verbs between brackets into the correct form)	√ (Adapted)	X (Replaced with other activities devised by the teacher)
<i>Stop and Consider</i> (Task 2: Tell the class what you would do if you were Prime Minister/if you had power. Use the cues below)	√ (Adapted)	X (Assigned as a homework)

Table III represents how Sofia and Seema interpreted the suggested procedures in the textbook to teach The Conditional types (0-1-2). Both teachers created their own worksheets and lessons with examples and activities yet kept the same language focus of the textbook. Although no warm-up was proposed in the textbook, Sofia began her lesson by dividing the class into groups and asking them to provide an answer to questions such as (What will happen if: you put water in a low temperature- if we continue killing scarce animals- if we protected our environment) in order to get students to generate sentences using the conditional. She then initiated a discussion about the functions and tenses of the sentences they formed and explained the different types of if conditional. I observed little participation on the students' part perhaps because this was their first time learning about the conditional. In the practice phase, Seema did not depend on the textbook's activities and created her own tasks to help learners in comprehending and exploiting the new input. She justified her behaviour as follows:

Sofia: 'I never teach grammar from the textbook because it is complicated. I always bring my own examples and graded activities. The teacher should be a facilitator so, I shall facilitate and simplify things for learners so that they can easily grasp them.... I know the level of my students better than anyone else. This is why I implement what suits them.'

It appears that Sofia had made her own material because she was not satisfied with the way grammar is handled in the textbook and found the activities inadequate and monotonous. She clearly recognised the appropriate strategy for planning her lesson based on her learners' levels.

Seema, on the other hand, did not use a warm-up to introduce the lesson, but devised her own worksheet and practices and then used the textbook's activities. She wrote sentences on the board and engaged in explaining their functions, the number of clauses, and the tenses used. She then gave the rules summary to students, wrote on the board two activities and then asked them to open their textbook (pages 152-153) and do the tasks for extra practice. She argued:

Seema: 'Most of the time the activities are useless, decontextualised, and do not allow students to adequately practice the language point. So, I do it my way. I adapt and supplement and bring materials to help students learn.'

The above quote highlights that teachers had their views about teaching and learning which affected how they use the textbook in the classroom. Seema adhered closely to the textbook's suggestions, although she adapted them in different ways. For example, she modified task 2 (page 153) by changing its structure and localizing it. She asked students to imagine being the current national minister of the environment in giving suggestions to protect the environment. She explained:

Seema: 'I do not want my students to memorise. I want them to bring and put their own touch in their own learning process and own learning experience. They have ideas but they are not given the chance to express those ideas. When they are given such a chance, they are motivated, and they learn'.

Sofia also replaced the prime minister with the mayor of the city, however, decided to set it up as homework. She affirmed:

Sofia: 'I set it as homework because there is no homework in this part of the unit. So, I gave them a writing practice and I will provide individual feedback to help them structure their sentences. They seem to have issues with writing and the textbook does not show students how to write.'

It can be said that what triggered Sofia and Seema's decisions to utilise the textbook much more sparingly can be explained by their unfavourable views about the content of the textbook as they found it rather unsuitable, challenging, and lacking coherence, life, and relevance.

5. DISCUSSION

In this article, I drew upon multiple sources of data to capture how teachers interpret the same textbook materials and the rationale behind their unique use. The findings revealed that teachers teach the same pages of the textbook in completely different ways despite the nature of their teaching in standardised courses (lack of autonomy, lack of resources, and heavy workloads and timetables). This concurs with Harmer's argument that textbook remains in the hand of teachers as a "proposal for action, not instructions to use" (2001, p.8). Undeniably, the textbook materials were found to be the least relevant materials diligently followed by the teachers. The lesson of each teacher turned out differently because of their unique and flexible ways of interpreting the designers' ideas and enacting the classroom materials. Indeed, and based on Shaver's (2010) classification, the teachers' showed mostly aspects of curriculum-developers and curriculum-makers as they bridged the gap between the materials and the students and exhibited their own rationale for material use in spite of the top-down centralised restrictions. This is consistent with Hiver and Dörnyei's (2017) arguments that teachers tend to "function productively" (Hiver, 2015, p.215) and develop resistance mechanisms to transcend the weakening conditions and regulations imposed on them. Indeed, the findings show that variations in the participant teachers' use of the same materials were triggered by several reasons. The teachers adapted, supplemented, and mediated the materials in order to provide opportunities for students' engagement, enhance their thinking and language skills, and localize their learning, aspects that the designers failed to translate into the materials. Such student-led reasons seem to be the driving force behind teachers' adaptations which resonates with findings from Shaver *et al.*, (2009), Borg (2003, 2006, 2010, 2011), Wette (2009, 2010), and Menkabu and Harwood (2014).

Moreover, the participant teachers seemed eager to make their language lessons motivating and interesting and leverage all resources available to fine-tune the materials and craft classroom instruction. Larsen-Freeman (2014) argues that "it takes the teacher as a mediator along with all the other participants in the learning context to forge an active and meaningful relationship with the material, which are otherwise inert" (p.665). Indeed, it is the teacher's mediation of the textbook that determines its role in the classroom and transforms it from the intended state to the enacted one. Such practices seem to be the results of the mismatch between the teachers' and designers' beliefs,

their knowledge of learners' needs and levels, and their teaching styles and long teaching experience, aspects that designers cannot predict. This accords with several findings identifying teachers' factors (beliefs, experiences, knowledge and analysis of learners' profile, and classroom factors) as influences on their material use (e.g., Borg, 2003, 2006, 2010, 2011; Grammatosi and Harwood, 2014; Bosompen, 2014; Bolster, 2014, 2015). Bell and Gower (2011) argue that textbooks "are tools which only have life and meaning when there is a teacher present" (p.138). Indeed, each time the material was in the teachers' hand it was enacted into novel materials which illustrate the dynamic and interactive nature of materials illustrated by Lantolf and Thorne (2006).

It can be said that the teachers' enactment of the materials allowed them to offset the textbook deficiencies and expand on the available resources to create nature learning opportunities. This indicates the teacher's vigorous creativity and ability to mobilise their personal and professional resources (i.e., knowledge of content, knowledge of students, knowledge of instructional strategies) to cope with the challenges they encounter and exercise their agency and creativity despite the centralised regulations. This is in line with aspects from critical pedagogy and teacher-research movements promoting teachers' empowerment and learners' inclusivity (e.g., Britton, 1987; Prabhu, 1989; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Allwright and Hanks, 2009).

6. CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore how teachers from different secondary schools use the same textbook materials and what motivates such use. It is limited by the size and scope of the sample (Having female participants) and by its focus on one of the prescribed textbooks. Furthermore, this study has by no means portrayed vividly the complex and dynamic nature of the material used. In fact, it raises more questions than it answers and points to much-needed research to capture the multi-layered relationship between materials and their users. Besides, it merely zoomed in on teachers' varied use of the textbook materials and their justification, leaving behind learners' perceptions and reactions to teachers' adaptation to be examined in future empirical research. Regarding pedagogical implications, the findings can inform teacher training programs by raising pre- and in-service teachers' awareness of how to evaluate and adapt materials and increase learners' interaction. Such training courses can raise teachers' consciousness to decide openly and actively "the ways they use the textbook or other materials, rather than employing them unreflectively" (Guerrettaz and Johnston, 2013, p. 793). Teachers should be empowered to research their own classrooms in order to make well-considered decisions and become agents of change within their community (Gieve and Miller, 2006; Allwright, 2013, 2015). As such the designers and decision-makers should consider how they address the teacher through the materials, acknowledge their role in mediating the textbook content, and refrain from insisting on following materials blindfolded and rigidly (Graves, 2019).

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