

# EFL Teachers' Practice of Adapting Textbook Materials: The Case of Five Selected High Schools in ILU ABA BOR Zone

Melisew Tibebu

Mettu University, Mettu, Ethiopia

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**Abstract:** The principal intent of this study was to assess EFL teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials in the newly revised ninth grade and tenth grade English textbooks with particular reference to English language teachers at Mettu, Gore, Hurumu, Darimu and Yayo high schools.

To conduct the study, qualitative research design was employed and the data were analyzed qualitatively.

The data were collected from twelve grade nine English language teachers and ten grade ten English language teachers through observation and interview. In addition, data were also gathered through document analysis from randomly selected fifty students' exercise books from both grade levels and the teachers' daily lesson plans.

The findings of the study revealed that the subjects of this study are not aware of textbook adaptation though they adapt some textbook materials unconsciously, without considering the principles and theories of textbook adaptation. In addition, the results of the study showed that teachers usually evaluate textbook materials before beginning the actual class for the sake of their own understanding not for the sake of making the textbook materials suitable to the students. In other words, although teachers assume that they are doing their best, they still need more orientation concerning the way they use, evaluate and adapt textbook materials to make the contents suitable to their students' interest, age and level before they begin teaching.

Besides, teachers often use too much deletion on skill based contents and too much addition on grammar oriented topics. What is more, the major factors that restrain teachers from adapting textbook materials were found to be teachers' lack of awareness, expertise and confidence in implementing textbook adaptation properly and purposefully.

On the basis of the major findings and conclusions reached, recommendations were put forward so as to enable teachers to implement textbook adaptation based on the principles that have been established by scholars.

**Keywords:** Textbook: A school book of information for use in studying a subject or a book which is mostly designed by government authorities to be utilized by both students and teachers as a teaching resource to facilitate the teaching learning process.

**Course book:** It is possible to make distinction between course book and textbook, but in this paper course book and textbook will be used interchangeably to refer to books intended by their producers to be used as core teaching materials.

**Textbook adaptation:** is the altering of textbook materials to improve or make them more suitable for a particular type of learner or group of learners.

**Textbook materials:** are any things which are included in the textbook which are designed to facilitate the teaching learning process as a whole such as, tasks, activities, short notes, passages, pictures, graphs, etc.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter mainly discusses the study's theoretical background, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study and definition of key operational terms.

### 1.1. Background of the study:

Textbooks play a fundamental role in language classrooms in all types of educational situations. In some situations they serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. They may also provide the basis for the content of the lessons, the balance of skills taught and the kinds of language practice the students take part in. In other situations, textbooks may serve primarily to supplement the teacher's instruction. For learners, textbooks may provide the major source of contact they have with the language apart from input provided by the teacher. Besides these, in the case of inexperienced teachers textbooks may also serve as a form of teacher training - they provide ideas on how to plan and teach lessons as well as formats that teachers can use. In general, it is believed that much of the language teaching that occurs throughout the world today could not take place without the extensive use of textbooks.

However, Harmer (1998:111) states, "When teachers open a page in their course book, they have to decide whether or not they should use the lesson on that page. Is the language at the right level? Is the topic/content suitable to the students? Is the sequencing of the lesson logical?" This quote reflects that teachers need to ask several questions before the commencement of the actual class with the textbook and this happens when they leaf through the first page of the textbook. This is what teachers need to do as part of their job in the teaching learning scenario.

Gabrielatos (2004) states that there are at least two reasons why teachers need to adapt published materials. First, "course books are not always clear regarding the methodology they use in terms of 'what' and 'how' to teach. Second, course books cannot be suitable to all teaching and learning contexts...." Therefore, it can be concluded that textbook adaptation is inevitable in any educational setting.

Besides this, as many scholars such as Sheldon (1988: 28) and Cunningsworth (1984: 105) state that textbooks are not adequate by themselves, so learning about how to use and adapt textbooks in line with the students' interest, age, background knowledge, cultural knowledge and language proficiency should be an important part of teachers' professional knowledge. Adapting textbooks may involve making changes to the text itself, supplementing the text, or giving students strategies to learn the material in some other way. In other words, teachers should make some changes on the designed tasks in the textbooks. (i.e. they may delete a particular task(s), add additional task(s) or re-phrase the given task(s) based on their students level flexibly to make the teaching learning process more attractive and meaningful). But, very often, adaptation involves supplementation, that is, teachers add materials from other resources to the textbook they are using. It is believed that authentic materials are better than non-authentic materials for supplementation. So teachers who make a point of collecting authentic materials find it much easier to adapt textbooks. This is especially true in ELT contexts where authentic English materials are not always readily to hand.

Likewise, Madsen (1978), as cited in Ingleses (2007) claims that adapting textbooks motivates learners for learning and facilitates the acquisition of the language. He states, enthusiasm for gaining knowledge can be enhanced through modifying textbook materials such as creating real language, appropriate context, and making the descriptions more concrete and attractive.

In addition, he says that every teacher is an adapter of the textbook and materials he/she uses. He also states that no matter how "perfect" is a textbook, teachers will have their own ideas about it and the way they should present it in the classroom. Hence, teachers are always adapting their teaching materials, mainly textbooks whether knowingly or unknowingly about the concept of textbook adaptation. Besides these, he argues that even when a textbook is well written, it may not be totally compatible with the instructional aims, student level or teaching style in a given school or classroom.

Furthermore, the notion of adaptation is all about dealing with tasks in any material. In almost every subject area, in nearly every grade level, students are expected to use a textbook as a resource. Many, however, are unable to access the content in their textbook due to struggles with reading and related skills such as information processing. Therefore, teachers in inclusive classrooms should adapt textbook materials so that students with different reading and comprehension levels can learn classroom contents.

Ur (1992), as cited in Addisu (2012) also stresses that "There is a situation where a course book is used selectively, not necessarily in sequence, and is extensively supplemented by other materials." This explains the fact that teachers can use activities in the textbooks selectively but may not be in sequence. They can skip or modify some activities. In addition to these, teachers can supplement textbooks whenever necessary. It is vitally important to use textbooks that are produced by

experts consisting of contents in language syllabuses. However, they might have some defects, and teachers are there to evaluate their students' interest in relation to the activities and contents in the textbooks. Here, teachers need to develop confidence in evaluating tasks and activities in the textbooks vis-à-vis their students' age, level, culture and level of difficulty of tasks.

Similarly, Cunningsworth (1995:25) suggests, "While the decision to use and evaluate a particular textbook is sometimes left up to the individual teachers ... they bring their materials to supplement the textbook." This states that evaluating the textbook materials and making appropriate decision is left up to teachers who use the textbook in the classroom. But there is a huge question here. How confident are they to evaluate and adapt tasks in the textbooks? What do they do when they find some topics or activities really unfit to their students' level? Here a challenge comes: Can they skip it? Or modify it? If they do some modification, how they do it? Or do they simply continue teaching? This study will answer these questions genuinely.

As the researcher has observed in his teaching experiences, most high school English language teachers do not seem conscious about textbook adaptation. He worked as a department head for three years in different secondary schools. During these years, he had got several opportunities to supervise what was happening in the actual classrooms. Hence, he noticed that although almost all English language teachers did not have awareness about what to do when they got topic(s) which was/were really unfit to their students level, they were simply giving additional short notes especially on grammar contents. As he has asked them why they did this, all of them replied that it was because of the pressure of exam oriented students.

The researcher found only one local study which was conducted in relation to teachers' attitudes to and practice of adapting and supplementing a textbook (peace keeping English project: Addis Ababa and Debreziet in focus) by Addisu in 2012. His major findings indicated that teachers' attitude towards adapting and supplementing a course book is negative and teachers completely avoid adapting and supplementing course books for fear of being called lazy and incompetent. Moreover, they feel that adapting and supplementing is time consuming. However, the previous study was not actually intended to assess high school EFL teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials in the newly revised ninth and tenth grades English textbooks and his major findings oppose the notion of the unavoidability of textbook adaptation either knowingly or unknowingly. Similarly, the current researcher's experience made him raise the question-do teachers really insist on only the textbooks and avoid textbook adaptation? Besides, the absence of local studies in the area also forced the researcher to examine this issue. Therefore, this study is intended to assess high school EFL teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials in the newly revised ninth and tenth grades English textbooks.

### **1.2 Statement of the problem:**

As far as the researcher's experience is concerned, he is uncertain if high school English language teachers are really conscious about textbook adaptation. Thus, the current study attempts to assess high school EFL teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials in the newly revised ninth and tenth grades English textbooks. Tomlinson (1998:92) stresses, "The textbook is not something we read from cover to cover like we do with a holy book." This quote shows that flexibility is the most important thing in using the textbook. Therefore, teachers should not teach the textbook from cover to cover as an obligation. Rather they should use it flexibly and selectively. Here, the researcher strongly believes that the practice of adapting textbooks is vitally important to maximize language learning in any educational setting. But, since the beginning of modern education in Ethiopia, English language has been included in the syllabus and textbooks have been produced by experts for all grade levels so that teachers were/are expected to stick to them. As some scholars wrote most students are not able to acquire the target language at the required level because there might be several factors for this. For example, "Teachers traditional teaching methods, rigid textbooks and lack of exposure to practice it outside the classroom are some of the factors that affect students slow performance in English language in the real world." (Semere, 1996). This quote reflects the idea that students' sluggish performance in the target language is caused by various factors of which one is the textbook. Although a textbook plays a pivotal role in language learning, it does not always play the same role. It would sometimes affect learning in a way that sequence are lockstep and contents may not be up to dated.

Similarly, "Textbooks are produced by experts in the Ministry of Education to adhere to curriculum guidelines, but in reality it may not fulfill the objectives they set themselves." (Fuller, 1994). This states that though textbooks are produced by experts using curriculum guidelines and approved by Ministry of Education, learning objectives may not be met to the full. This indicates that sometimes textbooks may fail to meet the objectives set by experts and learners' varied needs. It

implies that producing a textbook may not be always a guarantee to achieve the objectives.

Again, "...the needs of learners go beyond the needs for achievement ...which are central in the minds of most textbook writers. (Fuller, 1994). This articulates the fact that though textbook writers try to set achievable objectives in the teaching learning scenarios, students' needs may go beyond the textbook's objectives and its writers' imaginations. If this really happens, teachers need to adapt the activities in the textbooks in a way that best fits the students' needs to fill the gaps in the textbooks.

Besides these, high school students are supposed to communicate, express their feeling and use the target language as a means of studying other subjects because the medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary levels is English language in Ethiopia. Therefore, the importance of English language is paramount for them. As it is mentioned above, textbooks are likely to be imperfect components in teaching learning scenarios. Hence, adapting textbooks has a tremendous share of benefits for effective language learning to take place. However, the researcher's experience witnessed that high school English language teachers do not seem conscious about textbook adaptation to help their students learn more. In addition, as it is mentioned above, the researcher has read one local study and the findings of the study partially complement his experience. The study revealed that textbook adaptation is a forgotten activity in the teaching learning scenario. It is also concluded that teachers rely on textbooks and they feel that textbook writers know the students' needs much better. Besides these, teachers do not use any of these adapting techniques-adding, replacing, omitting and expanding to make textbooks more appropriate to their students' level. Moreover, they feel that adapting and supplementing is time consuming. On the contrary, the current researcher does not agree with the previous researcher's findings especially on the last two aforementioned conclusions because as it is mentioned above in the background section, although teachers do not seem aware about textbook adaptation, they simply often use one of the techniques called addition. What is more, as it is mentioned above, in the previous research it is concluded that teachers feel adapting and supplementing a textbook is time consuming. This conclusion directly shows that teachers are conscious about textbook adaptation but they ignore it deliberately. However, as the current researcher's experience witnessed, high school English language teachers do not seem conscious about it. As a result, they have the tendency to use the textbooks from cover to cover. Besides this, most of the time high school students tend to blame their teachers because of being textbook dependent.

In reality, to make a textbook fit to the students' needs and levels, teachers may take several remedial actions of which one is textbook adaptation because it is an important activity that teachers are expected to do in the course of their teaching. As McDonough (1992:113) states "The good teacher is constantly adapting and supplementing a textbook." This scholar explains that effective and good teachers spend much of their time adapting textbook materials because it has tremendous benefits. If adapting enhances language learning, why high school English language teachers insist on textbooks all the time? This again instigated him to conduct the research because textbook adaptation can add variety into the lessons and language learning can be enhanced a great deal.

### **1.3. Objectives of the study:**

#### **1.3.1. General objective of the study:**

The main objective of this study is to assess high school EFL teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials in the newly revised ninth and tenth grades English textbooks.

#### **1.3.2. Specific objectives of the study**

More specifically, the research intends to:

- Examine high school English language teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials to suit them to their students' level.
- Identify the types of adaptation techniques EFL teachers often use.
- Point out and examine challenges that restrain EFL teachers from adapting textbook materials.

#### **1.3.3. Research questions:**

The principal intent of this study is to assess high school English language teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials in the newly revised ninth and tenth grades English textbooks. Therefore, to attain this objective, the following questions will be answered:

- To what extent are high school English language teachers familiar with the practice of adapting textbook materials in order to make them suitable to their students' level?
- What kinds of adaptation techniques do EFL teachers often use?
- What challenges do EFL teachers encounter while adapting textbook materials?

#### **1.4. Significance of the study:**

The researcher expects that the results of this study will benefit various stakeholders like, students, teachers, schools, other potential researchers and the community at large. First of all, students can maximize their learning with a wide range of topics and variety of materials so that most of their needs may be met. Secondly, teachers can get some insights about how to adapt textbook materials especially when their students get bored of the activities in the textbooks. Third, the schools can also benefit by satisfying their students needs at large. Last but not least, other potential researchers can grasp some ideas from this research findings for further study.

#### **1.5. Delimitation of the study:**

In order to carry out any research, it is important to delimit the scope of the study to manageable size. Accordingly, since the main aim of this study is to assess teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials in the newly revised English textbooks, the research revolves around English language teachers who are teaching the subject. The likely logistic constraints force the researcher to delimit the study to only ninth and tenth grades English language teachers who teach the subject at Mettu, Gore, Hurumu, Darimu and Yayo high schools in 2016/17 academic year.

#### **1.6. Limitations of the study:**

Although the study was pre-planned and designed carefully, certain limitations were encountered while conducting it. Firstly, the study was conducted only on ninth grade and tenth grade English language teachers at Mettu, Gore, Hurumu, Darimu and Yayo high schools in the academic year of 2016/17. So, it might not be representative of all EFL teachers in a wider context. In other words, the study would have been more comprehensive if it had considered more participants from different government schools and private schools across regions. Secondly, lack of published literatures in the field in the form of books was a great challenge. Lastly, being observed could be a stressful situation. In this regard, the teachers in each grade level are closely observed. Hence, the presence of the observer could cause a certain amount of limitation to the study. Though the study has such limitations, it is believed that it has its own contribution to the betterment of teaching English as a foreign language.

#### **1.7. Definition of key operational terms:**

**Textbook:** A school book of information for use in studying a subject or a book which is mostly designed by government authorities to be utilized by both students and teachers as a teaching resource to facilitate the teaching learning process.

**Course book:** It is possible to make distinction between course book and textbook, but in this paper course book and textbook will be used interchangeably to refer to books intended by their producers to be used as core teaching materials.

**Textbook adaptation:** is the altering of textbook materials to improve or make them more suitable for a particular type of learner or group of learners.

**Textbook materials:** are any things which are included in the textbook which are designed to facilitate the teaching learning process as a whole such as, tasks, activities, short notes, passages, pictures, graphs, etc.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter deals with the reviewing of the related literature, in which the focus is on the theories and principles of textbook adaptation and other related issues. Firstly, it discusses the role of textbooks in ELT context. Secondly, it deals with pedagogical factors to evaluate and adapt language textbooks. Thirdly, it gives an insight about when teachers supplement textbooks. Fourthly, it highlights authentic materials. Fifthly, it treats course books and teacher training. Sixthly, it talks about adapting ELT textbooks broadly. Finally, challenges of textbook adaptation is treated.

### **2.1. The role of textbooks in ELT context:**

The argument over the role that EFL textbooks play on teaching and learning is very controversial. In fact, the discussion amongst the experts in the field is based on whether textbooks are or not useful and flexible tools for whatever procedures



used in specific classrooms. Some authors advocate the fundamental role of textbooks in ELT programs, they say textbooks can be used as tools and guides in the process of teaching and learning, their importance as tools of multiple functions and as flexible tools that appeal to teachers' creativity, while others advocate that textbooks can be harmful to student's performance, textbooks may not meet students' and teachers' needs and interests and they are inflexible tools that control the process of teaching and learning.

Textbooks play a crucial role in English language teaching contexts. According to Sheldon (1988:237) "Textbooks are the visible heart of any ELT program", in which he illustrates the vital importance of textbooks in teaching English. However, through an analysis of the theoretical and practical problems of textbooks, Sheldon (1988:239), as cited in Ingleses (2007) reveals that "textbooks merely grow from and imitate other textbooks and do not admit winds of change from research, methodological experimentation, or classroom feedback." Thus, in spite of the fact that textbooks have an essential function in ELT contexts, it is noticeable that they carry some problems that should be taken into account.

Similarly, textbooks are considered essential tools in the process of teaching and learning. As Matthews (1985:202) says "the textbook plays a crucial role because it is the main teaching and learning aid." He argues that this holds true mainly in primary and secondary schools, "where the textbooks represent the core of the syllabus", since the majority of the tasks and activities set to be done at home and at school are taken from them. Hence, bearing in mind that teachers and students often rely on the textbooks in the development of their process of teaching and learning, textbooks are regarded as imperative teaching and learning supports.

Likewise, the importance of textbooks is highlighted based on the fact that they have multiple functions in ELT programs. According to Cunningsworth (1995), as cited in Litz (2000) textbooks have a great role on serving several purposes in ELT curriculum. He says that textbooks are very useful resources for self-directed learning, a reference source for students, a source of ideas and activities, a syllabus that helps to reflect pre-established objectives and a support for less experienced teachers who need more confidence in exerting their profession. Therefore, due to the fact that textbooks have several functions in ELT contexts, they play a crucial role that cannot be ignored.

Moreover, textbooks are considered flexible tools that appeal to teachers' creativity. Indeed, a textbook is seen as "a helpful tool that teachers can use flexibly, and combine with other resources." (Gabrielatos, 2004). As a matter of fact, since course books cannot be suitable to all teaching and learning contexts, there is a necessity for adapting published materials depending on the needs of specific classes, (Gabrielatos, 2004). Thus, taking into consideration that textbooks are regarded as helpful tools that provide to teachers the opportunity to give a personal "touch" to the process of teaching by allowing adaptations, it is noticeable the great importance of textbooks in the process of teachers' professional growth.

On the other hand, textbooks sometimes may be considered harmful tools, mainly concerning students' performance. In Swales' (1980), as cited in Ingleses (2007) point of view, textbooks "represent a problem and in extreme cases are examples of educational failure." In fact, regarding the contradictions and conflicts of interest underlying textbooks creation and all the issues that go from commercialism to their ultimate use in classroom, they are "seen as poor compromises between what is educationally desirable on the one hand and financially viable on the other." (Sheldon, 1988:237, as cited in Ingleses, 2007). Therefore, taking into consideration the fact that there are different interests underlying the stages of textbook designing, commercialism and usage, textbooks may exert a negative impact on student's performance, and because of this they may be characterized as harmful tools.

Equally, due to the conflicts of interests underlying textbooks creation, they may not meet teachers' and students' needs and interests. As said by Brumfit (1980), cited in Sheldon (1988) "to put a book on the open market implies a moral contract that the book has been cleared of basic faults." In fact, the ongoing complaints about textbooks suggest that this 'implicit agreement' is being violated and that there is a gap between what is produced and what teachers would like to have (239). Hence, taking into consideration that sometimes textbooks do not meet teachers' and students' interests, they may not be useful in some particular situations.

In addition, textbooks are seen as inflexible tools that controls the process of teaching and learning. Indeed, Allwright (1990), as cited in Kitao (1997) concludes from an analysis of teaching materials that they can contribute to, but are restricted concerning the establishment of learning goals, content and the whole process of language learning management. In fact, Allwright (1990), as cited in Ingleses (2007) adds that "the whole business of the management of language learning is far too complex to be satisfactorily catered by a pre-packaged set of decisions embodied in teaching

materials.” In other words, Allwright (1990), as cited in Ingleses (2007) advocates the inflexibility of textbooks, regarding them as tools to control teaching and learning. Thus, taking into consideration that there are complaints about the inflexibility of textbooks, it is noticeable that sometimes their role as direct instructional materials may be threatened.

To conclude, on the one hand, the professionals in the field who advocate that textbooks are too inflexible and that there are conflicts of interests underlying their creation, tend to focus on the independent use of textbooks, i.e. using textbooks as the only resource for procedures in the classroom. On the other hand, other researchers, who claim that textbooks are useful guides and resources that help teaching and learning, tend to focus on the using of textbooks as one of several resources available to teachers. Regardless, it is noticeable that textbooks can play a crucial role in the ELT curriculum and they should be regarded as helpful tools, which can be used in combination with other resources or even adapted for the effectiveness of the process of teaching and learning. The next section deals with pedagogical factors to evaluate and adapt language textbooks.

## **2.2. Pedagogical factors to evaluate and adapt language textbooks:**

According to Maley (2003:24) “teachers need to ask the following questions about the book they adapt or supplement it and this can be done by individual teachers and it does not need a rigorous evaluation of textbooks by relying on checklists.” This states the point that teachers can evaluate their course books in the course of their teaching and they may adapt or supplement afterward. However, they take these actions only if the textbook fails to answer the following questions. Maley (2003:13) configured them this way:

- Does the rational of the book fit that of the local curriculum?
- How do the different components tie together? Think about exercises, units and books.
- What language is covered? Does the book give the students adequate practice in the language they are required to master?
- What skills are covered? Does the book give the students adequate practice in the tasks demanded by the curriculum?
- What topics are covered? Does the book cover topics included in the curriculum? Does the book avoid topics which are culturally unacceptable?
- How authentic is the material? Does the material give students realistic exposure to the language?

## **2.3. When do teachers supplement textbooks?**

Teachers may adapt the activities in the textbooks whenever they think it is appropriate to do. They may consider the following tips to supplement textbooks. Andy (2002), as cited in Addisu (2012) states as follows:

- When important topics are missed out, teachers may need to add a whole lesson which is not covered in the textbook.
- When teachers realize that the activities in the book reflect cultural breach or gender discrimination.
- When the contents in the textbook are old and are not up-to-date, teachers can supplement it.
- When there is a repetition of tasks or activities in the textbooks teachers may go beyond the textbooks to supplement and to help learners learn best.

## **2.4. Authentic materials:**

Evidence also reveals that the practice of authentic materials in the classroom facilitates language learning as the learners are exposed to naturally occurring language experiences. Authentic materials are therefore those materials or texts that present language in real life contexts. Harmer (1991), as cited in Matsuta (n.d., para. 1) defines authentic texts as materials which are designed for native speakers; they are real texts; designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language. Such texts when taught to EFL students serve dual purpose: they make learners see language in real life situation. Also, they expose them to the culture and the community of the English speaking world, thus bringing in the global element in language learning. Such kind of language exposure has a positive effect on learner motivation, provides authentic cultural information, answers the learners' needs well and supports a more creative approach to teaching.

It should, however, be noted that authentic materials need to be carefully used in the classrooms. Learners with little

exposure to English language might find them too daunting. Such learners might adopt a fearful approach towards language learning as they might find such materials well beyond their reach. Guariento & Morley (2001) note that at lower levels, the use of authentic materials may cause students to feel demotivated and frustrated since they lack many lexical items and structures used in the target language. However, authentic materials are useful for those learners who already have a fair idea about English language and who can meaningfully interpret the cultural and linguistic nuances of it. For them the use of authentic materials is a pleasant experience in the classroom as they can easily interact with the real language.

Another important factor in the use of such materials is the role of the teacher. The teacher has to constantly provide all the pedagogical support to the learners for the successful interpretation of authentic materials. This may also lessen the gap between the ability levels of learners as learners with low ability levels can also meaningfully interact with such materials given the proper support of the teacher. Kilickaya (2004) is of the view that learners feel better with authentic materials as long as we, as teachers, provide them with pedagogical support.

## **2.5. Course books and teacher training:**

Grant (1987:20) states, "New teachers always feel an obligation to complete all tasks in the textbook." This point explains that novice teachers use the maximum of their potential to cover everything in the textbook and they feel that this is an obligation. For these groups of teachers, success rests on completing all tasks in the textbook. But as the researcher's view, success should not be perceived as covering everything in the textbook. This kind of teachers' perception can be altered through continuous professional development training sessions.

According to Richards (1998:68) "In order for textbooks to be able to serve as sources for creating teaching, teacher education programs need to provide participants with skills in evaluating, supplementing and adapting textbooks and other commercial materials." This quote still reflects the roles that teacher training centers play to produce competent teachers who can go beyond a textbook when it lacks variety and suffers from redundancy and these institutes prepare teachers for appropriate ways of using textbooks. Hence, teacher training institutes are supposed to consider the fact that the nature of textbooks and their role in teaching through the processes of analyzing what textbooks set out to do how they do it, developing criteria for evaluating textbooks, giving experience in adapting textbooks, and monitoring the use of materials in teaching. These are quite crucial tips that teachers need to get trained during their stay in the teacher training institutes. As the above scholar points out, such training sessions play a pivotal role on teachers' professional development and effectiveness in their teaching.

Richards (1998:68) states, "If teachers are required to modify their course books, they would need additional training in the preparation of other materials." This scholar explains that some professional development training sessions would help teachers tremendously to take an appropriate action on the textbook either to modify or supplement.

## **2.6. Adapting ELT textbooks:**

### **2.6.1. Definition of textbook adaption:**

Adaptation is the altering of materials to improve or make them more suitable for a particular type of learner or group of learners. Adaptation entails revisiting students' needs in order to make them ready for the target situation. Therefore, it is very important to consider the learner's role in the process of material adaptation since s/he is the ultimate beneficiary of the language experience. As Masuhara (2004:1), cited in Ingleses (2007) points out that material adaptation "involves changing existing materials in some form so that they become suitable for specific purposes, learners, teachers or situations." This implies that learning objectives, individual learners, teachers and the overall learning contexts should be taken into consideration when adapting the existing materials for pedagogical purposes in an EFL setting. Moreover, adapting textbooks may involve making changes to the text itself, supplementing the text, or giving students strategies to learn the material in some other way.

### **2.6.2. Justification for textbook adaptation:**

Gabrielatos (2004) states that there are at least two reasons why teachers need to adapt published materials. First, "course books are not always clear regarding the methodology they use in terms of 'what' and 'how' to teach. Second, course books cannot be suitable to all teaching and learning contexts. Hence, due to the unclear methodology and appropriateness to the context of some textbooks, it is effective to use textbooks in a flexible way, making adaptations if necessary.



Harmer (1998) claims that there are different options for textbook use and that depending on the appropriateness of the topics, contents and activities proposed in the book for the particular learners. Teachers may have to take essential decisions on how to use the textbook. He says,

*‘When teachers open a page in their textbook, they have to decide whether they should use the lesson on that page with their class. Is the language at the right level? Is the topic/content suitable for the students? Are there the right kinds of activities in the book? Is the sequencing of the lesson logical? If the language content and sequencing of the textbook are appropriate, the teacher will want to go ahead and use it. If, however, there is something wrong with the textbook, the teacher has to decide what to do next.’ (111)*

Cunningsworth (1984:105), as cited in Litz (2000) remarks that there is no ‘perfect course book’ that totally suits a specific teaching context, but it is necessary to match what the course book offers with teachers and students’ needs. He claims that “teachers should not be looking for the perfect course book, but rather for the best possible fit between what the course book offers and what we, as teachers and students need.”

In addition, Madsen (1978), as cited in Ingleses (2007) says that every teacher is an adapter of the textbooks and materials s/he uses. He maintains that no matter how “perfect” is the textbook, the teachers will have their own ideas about it and the way they should present it in the classroom. He also adds that “it would be a trivial exercise to write a special book to tell teachers that it is necessary to particularize teaching materials in a classroom” since it “is the heart of teaching and should be a prominent concern in any teacher-training course.” Hence, teachers are always adapting their teaching materials, mainly textbooks, even if they are using the “ideal text”, for the sake of their students’ needs and interests and for their own teaching methodology.

In short, teachers should adapt textbooks because there is not an ultimate and perfect textbook, due to the existence of different teaching contexts with diverse students’ needs and interests. In other words, textbooks are not suitable for all teaching contexts. For this reason, teachers should be able to modify their materials for students benefit and for their own sake that means, teachers should regard a textbook as a reference document that should be used selectively and usually needs supplementation and adaptation. Moreover, the effectiveness of a textbook depends actually on what you do with it rather than what it is. Thus, textbook adaptations reflect teachers’ way of using and evaluating textbooks.

### **2.6.3. Textbook adaptation techniques:**

Teachers are always adapting their teaching materials when they use them in the classroom. According to Madsen (1978), as cited in Ingleses (2007) “The good teacher is constantly adapting.” He also states that the teacher adapts even when s/he refers to an exercise covered earlier, or when s/he introduces a supplementary picture, song, or report. In addition, He says that even when a textbook is well written, it may not be totally compatible with the instructional aims, students’ level or teaching style in a given school or classroom. Thus, once again, there is the idea that even the “ideal textbook” requires some adaptations for the effectiveness of the process of teaching and learning.

Therefore, Madsen (1978), as cited in Ingleses (2007) claims that the process of adaptation takes place on three levels. Firstly, the individualizing of material. Secondly, modifying a text for purposes not intended or anticipated by the author. Thirdly, compensating for textbook defects. He also maintains that in order to reach the above mentioned levels the teacher has to employ a variety of techniques: supplementing, editing, expanding, personalizing, simplifying, modernizing, localizing or modifying cultural/situational contents. Hence, there are several techniques used to overcome the problem of textbooks’ inappropriateness.

Likewise, Grant (1987), as cited in Harmer (1998) proposes four techniques in order to overcome the problem of textbooks’ inappropriateness:

#### **1. Omission:**

“There is nothing wrong with omitting lessons from textbooks. Teachers do it all the time, developing a kind of ‘pick and choose’ approach to what has in front of them.” (Harmer, 1998). However, teachers should be careful and try not to omit too many pages; otherwise, students may begin to wonder why they are using the book if they are not following it. (111)

There are some reasons why teachers may want to omit. Gabrielatos (2004) presents the following: learners are clear about a language point, learners are competent in a skill, there are too many tasks on a particular area/point, the item/task is not well designed, the item/task is not well-suited to its aim(s), the topic is not appropriate for learners. Thus, omission

is required whenever teachers feel that the input presented in the textbook does not meet the aims and learners' needs, interests and levels.

## **2. Replacement:**

This alternative deals with the fact that teachers can replace the textbook lesson with one of their own. Harmer (1998) says that it has the advantage of appealing to teachers' creativity since they use their own material, what makes it more interesting to the teacher and more appropriate for the students. Nevertheless, similar to omission, "too much replacement can lead teachers and students to wonder if it is worth to use the book at all." (Harmer, 1998:111).

Gabrielatos (2004) presents several reasons why teachers should replace lessons: texts are of inappropriate length, materials are inappropriate to the aim, materials are inappropriate to the learner's age/experience, materials are unclear/confusing/misleading, and tasks are badly designed. Thus, whenever teachers feel that a text/task is not suitable for the learners they can substitute it for one of their own or from a supplementary material.

## **3. Addition:**

Teachers may want to add activities and exercises to a lesson whenever they decide it is necessary to engage the students with the content. Harmer (1998) says that "If the lesson is boring, too controlled, or if it gives no chance for students to use what they are learning in a personal kind of way, the teacher may want to add activities and exercises which extend the student's engagement with the language or topic." (111). He adds that addition is a good choice since the textbook's strengths are combined with teacher's own skills and knowledge of his/her own class. Hence, the addition technique engages both learners and teacher in the lesson, what makes the process of teaching and learning easier. There are some reasons why teachers may want to add what is in the book. Gabrielatos (2000-2004) puts forward the following: areas are not covered, texts/pictures/tasks are not provided, texts/pictures/tasks are fewer than needed, and tasks are limited in scope. Therefore, in order to motivate learners for the learning and engage them in the lesson, teachers may need to add an extra item/task.

## **4. Adaptation:**

Adaptation is a good alternative to overcome the problem of textbooks being boring and uncreative. Harmer (1998) says that teachers can use the same material in the book, but doing it in their own way. In this way, teachers can particularize their lessons and make them more interesting and appealing for the learners.

Regarding textbook adaptation, Gabrielatos (2000-2004) states that the following contents can be adapted: aims, topics, texts, visuals, guidelines and explanations, exercises /activities / tasks, games, quizzes, and questionnaires.

Gabrielatos (2000-2004) also says that all the above alternatives, omission, replacement, addition and change, deal with making adaptations to the existing materials. Thus, using the above described alternatives is a matter of taking advantage of what textbooks offer and use them creatively, as well as an easy way of improving a less-than-perfect textbook. In this way, using textbook adaptation techniques reflects the idea of using textbooks as flexible tools that can be used in combination with other materials and that can be improved whenever teachers feel they have flaws. In other words, adapting reveals teachers' use of textbooks as flexible resources rather than as scripts.

### **2.6.4. How to adapt textbook activities in an ESL class?**

Not every textbook appeals to every ESL class. Some contents may be too difficult or challenging. There also might be topics that are not particularly motivating for students. Adapting textbook activities is not just something teachers should do as the need arises but also for appealing to the lower, middle and strong students levels. The following points can be used as step-by-step instructions to design additional textbook activities from the same core task.

i. Decide what contents or which topics need adapting in light of the reading texts and activities. Activities can relate to any one of the four basic skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Can the text be exploited because of its thematic, lexical and structural elements in order to appeal and engage all three levels of students? If not, you will need to adapt your textbook activities to suit the levels. This may appear as a ton of work, but the key is to think better, not to work harder.

ii. Before teachers go ahead and change some of the activities particularly the reading activities, they should consider rewriting parts or all of the texts. The reason for doing this is to simplify some of the vocabulary items and other concepts

that might be difficult for some of their low-performing ESL students to understand. They might also consider glossing the difficult vocabulary items or writing the meanings in another language if they are teaching in a bilingual context.

iii. Take a look at those textbook activities in the textbooks and redesign them in light of the amount of the activity itself. Redesigning the activity in light of "amount" is about the obligatory and optional tasks. ESL students can be required to complete a specific amount of questions. For example, low-performing ESL students can list four answers, while the stronger students can list more than four answers.

iv. Cater to the level of difficulty of the task. The teacher can adapt the task to suit all three levels: lower, middle and stronger. This gives the students a choice of activities. Most ESL students will want to choose first the activity that they feel they can comfortably do before deciding if the topic is motivating enough. Again, adapt the language of the activity and the instructions of the activity itself to suit the level of the student's linguistic ability.

v. Decide how you want to engage your students. If you are working with groups, then maybe you should adapt a few textbook activities to engage students in group or pair work. Once teachers have decided how they want to actively engage their students, they will need to make sure students understand the procedures of group and pair work they intend to use. Leave enough time in the lesson to do both or teachers will find themselves struggling with time.

#### **2.6.5. Steps to adapting textbook materials:**

When textbook materials are inappropriate to students' level, teachers should adapt them. Of course, effective adaptation takes time for teachers to design and implement. In some cases, making and implementing textbook adaptation can be more time consuming and complex than teaching the students the skills needed to meet a particular demand.

A careful process can help to ensure that the decision to adapt materials appropriately is crucial. Therefore, Lenz and Schumaker (1999) propose nine steps for planning and implementing materials adaptations. These are:

##### **Step 1: Create a plan for adapting materials**

Effective adaptations require sustained development and support. They must be made within the framework of a larger plan that includes consideration of (a) basic and strategic skills instruction and (b) the roles of people involved in the adaptation process. In some cases, it is important to involve your administrator and curriculum or program coordinator from the beginning, and identify exactly who will be responsible for making, implementing, supporting and evaluating the adaptation over the course of the year. As much as possible, involve students, parents, professionals, and others. Adaptations that can benefit an entire class or several classes are more likely to be supported and maintained. However, involving the students' parents in Ethiopian context could be difficult because most parents are likely to be illiterate especially in rural areas of our country.

##### **Step 2: Identify and evaluate the demands that students are not meeting**

The purpose of this step is to define the problem to be addressed by the adaptation. Observe students' performance when they practice the activities in the textbook. They may have difficulty in acquiring or getting the important information from written materials, the textbook may not contain ample clarifications, examples, or it may contain more redundant materials and so on. If students have difficulty with a given task and if the textbook does not fit to the students' level, different solutions may be required depending on the level of difficulty and the student's individual needs.

##### **Step 3: Develop goals for teaching strategies and making adaptations**

Some problems can be solved by adaptations; other problems may signal the need for intensive instruction in skills or strategies. Often, teachers may need to provide adaptations while simultaneously teaching the students the learning strategies they need in order to perform the work. All adaptations lead students to become dependent on the person who makes them. Before an adaptation is made for individuals, educators must carefully consider the best approach to addressing the students' difficulty and promoting success. Therefore, teachers should be rational while developing goals for adaptation to overcome the problem of dependency and they should carefully examine the contents vis-à-vis the students' needs and level so as to promote language learning.

##### **Step 4: Determine whether content or format adaptations are needed**

Content adaptations may be made only when the students' Individualized Educational Program (IEP) notes that the

general curriculum is inappropriate for these students. Content adaptations must also meet local and state education standards. In some cases, the IEP may address the degree to which the requirements associated with meeting state standards and taking assessments may be modified. The teacher must decide which parts of the curriculum the students will be required to learn and will constitute mastery of the course content.

When the curriculum is considered appropriate for the students, adaptations may focus on format rather than content. Again, the teacher must identify the critical elements of course content that students must learn: First, identify the critical course ideas or concepts. Then identify the information that must be mastered in each unit. Finally, determine how students will demonstrate their mastery at the end of each unit and at the end of the course. Format adaptations are made to compensate for mismatches between the presentation or design of the materials and the skills and knowledge of the students. In format adaptations the content is not altered.

#### **Step 5: Identify the features of the materials that need to be adapted**

The design of materials can present many different types of problems for students who struggle. Teachers should examine each curricular unit for features that might cause a learning problem. For example, the content may be very abstract, complex, or poorly organized, or it might present too much information. It may not be relevant to students or it may be boring. Further, it may call for skills or strategies or background information that the students do not possess. It may present activities that do not lead to mastery, or it may fail to give students cues about how to think about or study the information. Materials also may not provide a variety of flexible options through which students can demonstrate competence. Therefore, teachers should first evaluate every material in the textbooks so as to identify defects in it. Then, they can proceed to the next action to overcome the problems identified.

#### **Step 6: Determine the type of adaptation that will enable the students to meet the demand**

Once the materials have been evaluated and possible problem areas have been identified, the type of format adaptation must be selected. Format adaptations can be made by:

##### ➤ **Altering existing materials:**

Rewrite, reorganize, add to, or recast the information so that the students can access the regular curriculum materials independently.

##### ➤ **Mediating existing materials:**

Provide additional instructional support, guidance, and direction to the students in the use of the materials. Alter teachers' instruction to mediate the barriers presented by the materials so that teachers directly lead the students to interact with the materials in different ways. For example, have students survey the reading material, collaboratively preview the text, and create an outline of the material to use as a study guide.

##### ➤ **Selecting alternate materials:**

Select new materials that are more sensitive to the needs of students. For example, use an interactive computer program that cues critical ideas, reads texts, inserts graphic organizers, defines and illustrates words, presents and reinforces learning in smaller increments, and provides more opportunities for practice and cumulative review.

#### **Step 7: Inform students and parents about the adaptation**

Adaptations are more successful when they are offered and introduced to students at the beginning of the year. Parents should also be informed about them at the beginning of the year. Students should be taught explicit strategies to use any adaptation effectively and how to process the information received through the adaptation. As students' progress, they should be taught how to recognize the need for and request materials adaptations. Basically, informing the issue to the students' parents might be valueless in our context because 85% of the country's citizen live in rural areas and most of them can be considered as illiterate. Therefore, it could be concluded that informing parents about textbook adaptation is a waste of time in Ethiopian context.

#### **Step 8: Implement, evaluate, and adjust the adaptation**

As the adaptation is implemented, the teachers should evaluate its effects to determine whether the desired outcomes are being achieved. If not, adjustments will need to be made either in the adaptation or the instructions to the students in its

use. Adaptations should significantly reduce failure and learning difficulties. Besides, it can highly reduce defects in the textbooks.

#### **Step 9: Fade the adaptation when possible**

Adaptations usually are short-term solutions to allow classroom learning and participation until the needed skills and knowledge can be achieved. Once the adaptation is in place, the teacher should begin to plan with other teachers how to teach the needed skills and knowledge. Once the students have learned the necessary skills and knowledge, the adaptation should be faded. The adaptation should not be removed until the students possess the needed skills and knowledge to complete tasks properly. For some students, an adaptation may be required for several months, while for others; it may be maintained for years. Therefore, English language teachers should adapt textbook materials to fill the materials' gap and to make them suitable to their students' interest and level and till the required goals and objectives are achieved.

#### **2.6.6. Teachers role in adapting textbook materials:**

Teachers should do several activities before adapting textbook materials such as they must read related topics more and more, evaluate the textbooks they are using and gather several authentic materials to supplement the textbooks. In other words, to be effective in the teaching learning process, teachers need to have some level of creativity. Supplementing materials needs teachers to be creative because they should need judicious blend between the existed textbook and other materials. Prodromourts (1992:22) asserts, "...a creative teacher is the one who is able to use new and unusual approaches, methods and materials to reach the aims and motivate learners." As this scholar points out creativity in the sense of adaptation is a key element to achieve the desired goal in the teaching learning scenario. Moreover, Teachers who adapt textbooks may use strange approaches to make their teaching process varied and effective.

#### **2.6.7. Level of materials adaptation:**

Textbook adaptation can be done at three different levels:

##### **2.6.7.1. Macro adaptation:**

This is ideally done before the language program begins. After comparing what is covered in a textbook and what is required by the syllabus or examination, the teacher may find that certain areas or even whole units of the book can be omitted, and certain contents need to be supplemented. Macro adaptation is very important because it helps to avoid waste of time and energy of the teacher and the students as well. It also helps the teacher to see in advance what he or she needs to supplement so that he or she can keep an eye on materials that could be used.

##### **2.6.7.2. Adapting a unit:**

This could be reordering the activities, combining activities, omitting activities, rewriting or supplementing exercise, etc. Unit adaptation helps to make the classroom teaching more smooth and cohesive. It also helps the teacher to better fulfill the aims of a unit.

##### **2.6.7.3. Adaptation of specific activities:**

Occasionally an activity is regarded as valuable, but it may not be well-designed or it may not be feasible in a particular class. If the teacher does not want to give up the activity, he or she needs to adapt it using the principles and theories of textbook adaptation.

##### **2.6.7.4. Specific adaptation:**

Maley (1998:281), as cited in Tomlinson (1998) suggested the following options for materials adaptation:

- **Omission:** the teacher leaves out things deemed inappropriate, offensive, unproductive, etc. for the particular groups of learners.
- **Addition:** where there seems to be inadequate coverage, teachers may decide to add to textbooks, either in the form of texts or exercise materials. Of course, most of the time inadequacy might not be a problem of most English textbooks in Ethiopian secondary schools. Because many teachers often complain that the textbook materials are too dense to cover within the academic year.
- **Reduction:** where the teacher shortens an activity to give it less weight or emphasis. In other words, teachers



sometimes try to reduce some materials from the textbooks when they think that they are more than enough.

- **Extension:** where an activity is lengthened in order to give it an additional dimension for example, a vocabulary activity is extended to draw attention to some syntactic patterning. Here, teachers may extend activities to create additional opportunities to practice language skills.
- **Rewriting/modification:** teachers may occasionally decide to rewrite materials, especially exercise materials, to make them more appropriate, more “communicative”, more demanding, more accessible to their students, etc.
- **Replacement:** text or exercise material which is considered inadequate, for whatever reason, may be replaced by more suitable material. This is often culled from other resource materials.
- **Re-ordering:** teachers may decide that the order in which the textbooks are presented is not suitable for their students. They can then decide to plot a different course through the textbooks from the one the writer has laid down.
- **Branching:** teachers may decide to add options to the existing activity or to suggest alternative pathways through the activities.

#### **2.6.8. Challenges of textbook adaptation:**

According to Littlejohn (1998:15) there are various factors that affect teachers not to go beyond the textbooks. He reviewed teachers’ challenges of textbook adaptation as follows:

- Lack of preparation time.
- The demands from examination (i.e. achievement type)
- Excessive institutional power and
- Lack of professional development training.

As stated above, time is one factor that restrains teachers from adapting textbook materials because most of the time secondary school teachers as a whole in our country are expected to teach up to 30 credit hours per week. Thus, lack of time could be a challenge for teachers to go beyond the textbooks. The other challenge could be the demands from examination. Here, some teachers and students might have thought that exams especially, national exams might have been prepared based on the textbooks. Therefore, these people may complain while the teachers tried to adapt and supplement textbook materials. Besides, excessive institutional power and lack of professional development training are also other factors that can restrain teachers in our context from adapting textbook materials.

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This chapter discusses the research design employed, the participants of the study, the instruments used to collect data, procedures of data gathering and the methods of data analysis applied.

#### **3.1. Research design:**

In order to achieve the intended objectives of the study, qualitative research design was used because this method is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning. It also seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Therefore, it could enable the researcher to assess high school English language teachers’ practice of textbook adaptation in the actual classrooms and to identify the challenges that restrain teachers from adapting textbook materials. The researcher also employed qualitative methods in the study and the data were analyzed qualitatively.

#### **3.2 Participants of the study:**

The subjects of this study were high school English language teachers who have been teaching English at Mettu, Hurumu, Darimu, Gore and Yayo high schools in 2016/17 academic year. There were twelve ninth grade and ten tenth grade English language teachers in the schools. Therefore, the researcher used all of them as sources of data.

#### **3.3 Instruments of data collection:**

The researcher employed three techniques to gather the necessary information for the study. These were observation, interview and document analysis.

### **3.3.1. Observation:**

The researcher employed non-participant observation technique to collect relevant data from the respondents. Here, he observed teachers' common practice of adapting textbook materials by preparing his own observation checklists. Besides this, the researcher has tried to observe the kinds of adaptation techniques teachers often used when they thought that the original materials did not contain sufficient practice or when there could be too many exercises, or when they wanted to cover the portion and might skip some materials, or when they faced a topic which was totally unfit to their students level. He has also tried to check if these adaptation techniques were exhibited in their daily lesson plans. Here, by asking the teachers' consensus first, the researcher checked their lesson plans vis-à-vis the textbooks and the teachers' guides during the observation sessions. The researcher had a plan to observe each teacher five times and he did it in line with the plan.

### **3.3.2. Interview:**

The researcher employed a semi-structured interview because it enabled him to investigate relevant information from the respondents by raising different questions flexibly. The interview contained open ended questions which were related to the knowledge and practice of adapting textbook materials and it was conducted using the target language since the interviewees were high school English language teachers who have had bachelor degree in English language. The interviews were recorded in note form and each interviewee took twenty minutes averagely.

### **3.3.3. Document analysis:**

As the researcher has observed in his ten years teaching experience, most high school students have a trend of copying in their own exercise books everything that classroom teachers write on the blackboard and even present it orally while teaching a topic in their own exercise books. Thus, the researcher believed that taking and examining twenty five randomly selected students' exercise books from each grade level helps him to identify the kinds of textbook adaptation techniques teachers often used. Besides, it helps him to identify what additional notes or exercises they have added. It also gives him a highlight about how they have simplified textbook materials. Therefore, document analysis has been employed on randomly selected fifty students' exercise books from both grade levels using pre-designed checklists. Besides this, the teachers' daily lesson plans have also been examined vis-à-vis the textbooks and the teachers' guides to point out the types of adaptation techniques teachers often used and to identify the kind of additional notes or exercises they have added as well. Here, the researcher used his own checklists.

### **3.4 Procedures of data gathering:**

The researcher first requested the consent of grade nine and grade ten English language teachers at Mettu, Hurumu, Darimu, Gore and Yayo high schools to work with him while conducting the research. After getting their consent, the objectives of the study were explained to them. Next, the subjects promised to co-operate with the researcher in any ways. Hence, the researcher designed his own observation checklist and interview questions. Then, he arranged his time to observe what has been doing in the actual classroom using the pre-designed checklist. After the necessary data were gathered through observation, the researcher conducted the interviews, and finally document analysis was employed.

### **3.5. Methods of data analysis:**

Soon after the data collection has been completed, the researcher organized the data and proceeded to the analysis and interpretation phase. Firstly, the data that have been gathered through interviews were transcribed and thematically organized. Secondly, the data from observation and document analysis have been qualitatively analyzed. Then, the researcher has tried to triangulate the data obtained through these methods and compared the findings of the study with the findings of previous studies and with view points of various scholars in order to reach reasonable conclusions and propose valuable recommendations.

## **4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION**

This chapter deals with the discussion, analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from observations, interviews and document analysis. The data gathered through interviews were first transcribed and thematically organized, and then qualitatively interpreted. Based on the interpretation, the researcher generalized the results. Besides, the data collected through observation and document analysis were also analyzed qualitatively. Finally, the researcher tried to relate the data which were gathered through the instruments used for this study.

#### 4.1. Observation results:

It was noticed in their lesson plans were covered partially with rule-oriented topics which were either part of or outside the textbooks and the teachers' guides though some items which were designed to teach the four language skills in the textbooks and teachers' guides were not seen in their lesson plans. This directly showed that teachers often tried to bring authentic materials to supplement the grammar and usage portions both in the textbooks and the teachers' guides. In addition, some grammar oriented topics which were not part of the textbooks and the teachers' guides were also seen in their lesson plans. Besides, these teachers jumped some language skill-focused contents from the textbooks and the teachers' guides. What is more, while the teachers were teaching grammatical contents from the textbooks, the researcher noticed that all of them tried to explain and elaborate those portions by providing additional notes and several examples. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers used the textbooks to some extent flexibly.

However, the lesson plans did not contain language skill-oriented topics and activities which were not included in the textbooks and the teachers' guides. In addition, the subjects' effort to make some changes on the contents related to the four language skills were not seen clearly. Thus, this witnessed that teachers simply tried to teach skill-oriented contents which are/were part of the textbooks as they are/were without making any modifications.

Moreover, as the observation sessions showed, all teachers who were observed often used too much addition and deletion. For instance, in the first and third observation sessions one of the teachers who teaches English language in grade 10 brought detailed notes on prefixes and suffixes and conditional sentences to the class respectively. (See Appendix five). On the other days, this teacher skipped the following activities: A.7.8 Writing: Expanding notes into a summary (p.125), and A8.3 Speaking: Discussing statistics and education topics (p.141) in the second and fifth observation sessions. (See Appendix seven).

In some observation sessions, the researcher also viewed that one of the subjects had tried to re-arrange some grammatical contents to some logical patterns. For instance, in grade 10 English textbook, reported speech is presented before kinds of tenses, but the teacher taught different kinds of tenses first and then reported speech second. On the other hand, other teachers used the textbooks' materials as they were presented by textbook writers. However the researcher never saw any of the subjects exercising their professional judgment either prioritizing or modifying language skill contents and activities in the textbooks. Of course, all these results were also seen in the interviews and document analysis sessions and substantiated the observation results. Therefore, it can be concluded that textbook adaptation was not implemented properly in line with its principles and theories though it was employed partly by all subjects.

#### 4.2. Interviews results:

This section discussed the data that were gathered through interviews. Twelve ninth grade and ten tenth grade English language teachers participated in the interviews. The subjects reacted to different set of questions differently. Then, the researcher transcribed the data and organized thematically to generalize the results.

Firstly, the informants were interviewed about their practical experience in evaluating English textbooks. As their responses revealed, all of them agreed that although they did not evaluate the textbooks formally, they had a habit of checking/evaluating the textbooks' materials roughly before beginning the actual classes. Here, the researcher asked why they did that. Their response showed that they did so to check whether or not the contents were complex to the teachers themselves and to present them properly to their students. Thus, they usually read every content before they meet their students. Besides, they often try to refer different materials for detailed information and they usually give extra short notes to their students when they get complex and inadequate grammar topics. They also endeavor to teach those topics by shifting their teaching methodologies and presenting simple examples repeatedly till the students understood them.

Secondly, the subjects were asked about actions they take before starting teaching each lesson in the textbooks in order to make the textbooks' materials suitable to their students level. All of them responded that they simply read and examine each activity before presenting each lesson to their students so as to understand what to teach. They also added that they tried to refer other reference materials to give extra short notes for grammar and usage portions. Besides these, as sixty of them asserted that examining each activity before beginning teaching helps them to discard some contents which are not suitable to the teachers themselves. For instance, teacher 1 replied, "To be frank with you, when I get unsuitable topic to me, I sometimes discard it." In addition, teacher 2 also responded, "I sometimes omit some ambiguous topics which really challenge myself such as, pronunciation topics." (See Appendix Four). From these one can conclude that the subjects tried

to examine the contents in the textbooks for the sake of their own understanding and to be confident on the topic they teach and also to prepare extra short notes for grammatical contents. What is more, half of the respondents stated that examining helps them to make decision on what topics should be taught and what should not be taught based on their perspective and interest. Hence, it can be concluded that the purpose of pre-examinig each activity is for the sake of the teachers themselves not for the sake of making the textbooks' materials suitable to the students level.

Thirdly, the subjects were asked about the benefits of English textbooks for both teachers and students. As all subjects claimed textbooks are essential for both teachers and students. They said that textbooks are used as guides to implement one's country curriculum uniformly all over the country. Besides, students in different contexts can use them to practice language skills similarly. What is more, as all of them asserted that textbooks are used as a frame for both teachers and students. In addition, they also said that textbooks are used as teaching aids and resources. From this it can be concluded that teachers have positive idea towards the benefits of English textbooks.

Fourthly, the respondents were asked about how they see the suitability of contents in the textbooks to enhance language learning. Regarding this, except three respondents all the others explained that some contents in the textbooks are not suitable. For instance, they mentioned that the textbooks lack detailed explanations on grammar and usage parts and in speaking lessons some pictures are not clearly seen as a result they lack reinforcing students to be engaged in the activities. They also added that the situation become worse when they used black and white printed textbooks. Besides these, some materials which are part of the textbooks are redundant and the contents as a whole are bulky. Thus, they usually face obstacles to cover all the contents based on the annual time schedule. In relation to this question, they were also asked about remedial actions they take to compensate if contents are not suitable to their students level. Surprisingly, their reaction indicated that all the respondents do not try to make the textbook materials suitable to their students interest and level though they did it for grammar and usage portions partially. In addition, all the respondents have developed the habit of giving detailed and explained short notes for grammar and usage contents which are and are not part of the textbooks' materials. As the researcher asked them why they did this, they said that the grammar parts did not contain adequate notes and many students pushed them to do so. Further more, as they asserted almost all the subjects jumped most of the listening, writing and to some extent speaking activities while they were teaching. Here, again the researcher asked them why they did this. Their responses indicated that the textbooks' materials are too bulky to cover with in a year. From these, it can be concluded that some materials in the textbooks are not suitable, but teachers' actions to make them suitable to their students level and interest is insignificant. Besides, the subjects often used the techniques called addition to grammar lessons and deletion to some redundant and skill based activities. Of course, this was also clearly seen in the observation and document analysis sessions and substantiated the interviews' results.

The other point that the informants interviewed was about remedial actions they take when the textbooks lack a balance inclusion of the four language skills and some contents. As all of them witnessed that the newly revised grade nine and grade ten English textbooks do not have problems related to the balance inclusion of the four skills. However, some contents lack detailed explanations and some are redundant to some extent. In addition, the contents as a whole are too dense. Therefore, in the one hand, the informants often forced to give extra notes to their students from different sources to componsate the inadequacy. On the other hand, they tried to avoid some redundant topics and language skills based contents so as to cover the course based on the annual time schedule. From these, it can be concluded that teachers believe as the textbooks gave equal emphasis for all language skills. Thus, it could be difficult to think that teachers take measures on the balance inclusions of the contents related to the four language skills since they believe that the textbooks do not have probems related to the balance inclusions of the basic language skills.

Informants were also asked about the benefits students can get from adaptating and supplementing textbooks. Here, almost all the respondents asked the researcher to clarify the term textbook adaptation means. In the mean while, the researcher was forced to define the term. After defining the term, the researcher again asked them about the benefits students can get from textbook adaptation and supplementing course books. All of them replied that if the concept of textbook adaptation is like this, it might have several advantagies for students. For instance, students may learn varieties of contents based on their interest and level and it could be important to suit textbook materials to different students who are learning in diferent contexts based on their interest and level. From this it can be concluded that before the researcher clarified the term to the respondents, all the subjects did not have awareness about textbook adaptation though they did it unconsciously, without considering the principles of textbook adaptation.

They were also interviewed about the techniques they use to adapt textbook materials but surprisingly no one can tell even a single technique. As Madsen & Bowen (1978:9) stated that adaptation is the action of employing “one or more of a number of techniques: supplementing, expanding, personalizing, simplifying, modernizing, localizing or modifying cultural or situational context. In addition, Tomlinson (1998b:11) stated that sometimes, adaptation is referred to “reducing, adding, omitting, modifying and supplementing.” What is more, Ellis (1986:47) defined that it is the process of “retaining, rejecting, reordering and modifying.” These are some of the techniques that professionals in the field use to adapt textbooks but the informants fail to articulate these techniques clearly. Thus, on the basis of the subjects’ responses, one can conclude that all the respondents were not aware of textbook adaptation techniques though they often used certain techniques unintentionally and frequently.

Moreover, the informants were also asked about the challenges that teachers face to adapt textbook materials. All of them underlined that lack of awareness, skill and confidence are basic challenges that restrain teachers from adapting textbook materials.

Finally, the respondents were asked if they agree with some teachers argument about not going beyond the textbooks. All the respondents strongly opposed this argument. As they forwarded their reason, most of the grammar portions do not contain deep explanations and examples. Therefore, using other supplementary materials is inevitable to supplement the inadequacy. From this it can be concluded that teachers often used supplementary materials to supplement the textbooks’ materials though it was limited to only grammar portions.

#### 4.3. Results of document analysis:

The researcher has tried to examine twenty five randomly selected students’ exercise books from each grade level vis-à-vis the textbooks and the teachers’ guides. When the researcher examined every content in the students’ exercise books, he noticed that additional short notes were given on only grammar portions. In other words, all the teachers in both grade levels gave very detailed and explained notes on these portions which were part of the textbooks. For instance, one of the respondents who teaches English in grade 10 tried to elaborate and simplify the content found on page 37 as follows:

##### Original text:

A3.8 Language focus: Reported speech

Reported speech is a report of someone’s actual words (direct speech).

For example: Direct speech: “I enjoy reading novels”, Berihun said.

Reported statements: Berihun said that he enjoyed reading novels.

<b>Note</b> the changes: <i>direct speech</i>	<i>indirect speech</i>
enjoy	enjoyed
I	he

Reported questions have the same kinds of changes, but there are a few others as well.

*Yes/No questions*

Direct question: “Are you going to read the novel?”

Reported question: I asked if he was going to read the novel.

Note: i) Reported *yes/no* questions begin with *if* (or *whether*).

ii) The word order changes so that it looks like a statement.

Wh-questions: “Where are you going to see the play?”

I asked where he was going to see the play.

**Note:** The word order changes so that it looks like a statement.

Instead of *ask* we can use other words to report questions, such as *want to know*, *wonder*, *enquire*. (See Appendix eight).

##### Adapted text:

Direct and indirect speech



- When we use direct speech, we are quoting the actual word of the spoken by the person concerned.
- Indirect/reported speech is used when we are not quoting the actual words spoken by the person concerned. We use indirect speech when we convey the speakers, word to....

### I. Rule regarding change of tense:

<i>Direct speech</i>		<i>indirect speech</i>
1. Present tense e.g. I teach English every evening	→	Past tense He said that he taught English....
2. Present continuous e.g. I'm teaching English.	→	Past continuous He said that he was teaching English.
3. Present perfect e.g. I have taught English.	→	Past perfect He said that he had taught English.
4. Present perfect continuous e.g. I have been teaching English.	→	Past perfect continuous He said that he had been teaching....
5. Simple past e.g. I taught English last year.	→	Past perfect He said that he had taught English....
6. Past continuous e.g. I was teaching English.	→	Present perfect continuous He said that he had been teaching....
7. Simple future e.g. I will teach English.	→	Conditional tense He said that he would teach English.
8. Future perfect to e.g. I shall have taught English.	→	Conditional perfect He said that he would have taught....

N.B. 1. If the reporting verb is in the present, simple future or present perfect, there will not be any tense change. For example: DS: He says, "I have done my duty."

IDS: He says that he has done his duty.

N.B. 2. If a sentence expresses general truth, no tense change will be made.

e.g. DS: The teacher said, "The earth revolves around the sun."

IDS: The teacher said that the earth revolves around the sun.

### II. Rules regarding change of pronouns and possessive adjectives:

I	→	he/she
We	→	they
You	→	we/they/I
Me	→	him/her
Us	→	them
Ours	→	theirs
Mine	→	his/hers

e.g. DS: Alemu said, "I am all right."

IDS: Alemu said that he was all right.

### III. Rules regarding change of adverbs and demonstrative adjectives:

This	→	that
These	→	those
Here	→	there
Now	→	then
Today	→	that day
Yesterday	→	that day/before the previous day
Yesterday morning	→	the previous morning

Note: the reported speech should always be written in the statement form.

Examples: DS: She said to me, "Is your wife sick?"

IDS: She asked me if/whether my wife was sick.

DS: The teacher said to the boy, "Who gave you this pen?"

IDS: The teacher asked the boy who had given him that pen.

DS: Abebe said, "I have visited the zoo."

IDS: Abebe said that he had visited the zoo.

DS: Girum said, "I saw a lion in the park."

IDS: Girum said that he had seen a lion in the park.

DS: "Meskerem said, "I was playing football."

IDS: Meskerem said that she had been playing football. (See Appendix six).

Here again, the researcher also noticed that new grammar and usage contents which were not included in the textbooks and teachers' guides were also seen in their exercise books. This shows that the teachers' practice in adapting textbook materials is often limited to only rule oriented contents. From this it can be concluded that the subjects often used one of the adaptation techniques called addition on grammar and usage contents extremely. Of course, this was also seen in the observation and interviews sessions and substantiated the document analysis results.

Besides these, when the researcher examined the teachers' daily lesson plans and the students' exercise books vis-à-vis the textbooks and the teachers' guides, he noticed that all the teachers jumped almost half of the listening, speaking and writing activities which were part of the textbooks and the teachers' guides. From this it can be concluded that the subjects also often used too much deletion on listening, speaking and writing activities in the textbooks. For instance, one of the subjects who teaches English in grade 9 jumped A8.2 Listening: The importance of money (p. 136), A8.12 Writing: Essay conclusions (p. 144), B8.4 Speaking: Winning the lottery (p.148), and B8.6 Writing: Making a summary (p. 149) activities from unit 8 only. Here, the researcher also tried to cross-check whether or not these activities existed in his lesson plans which were documented at his department office. Thus, these activities were not existed there.

## 5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the major findings of the study, draws some conclusions from these findings, and proposes recommendations based on the conclusions reached.

### 5.1. SUMMARY:

The intention of this study was to assess English teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials in the newly revised ninth and tenth grades English textbooks at Mettu, Gore, Hurumu, Darimu and Yayo high Schools.

Do we see how the data from the various sources are integrated and support each other? For instance, the analysis of the data obtained from the observations indicate that the subjects of the study often used authentic materials to supplement the textbooks though it was limited to only grammar oriented contents. Besides, they often gave supplementary notes and further examples so as to explain the contents further. On the contrary, in the one hand, the subjects of the study brought some rule oriented contents which are/were not part of the textbooks and the teachers' guides to the classroom. On the other hand, they often skipped some skill-oriented activities both in the textbooks and the teachers' guides.

It was also noticed that although the teachers are not aware of the principles and practices as well as the techniques of textbook adaptation, they tried to use the textbooks to somewhat flexibly and they often used certain techniques inadvertently and frequently. Indeed, this finding agrees with Gabrielatos (2004) who found out that textbook is seen as "a helpful tool that teachers can use flexibly, and combine with other resources."

Moreover, among the different kinds of textbook adaptation techniques, the teachers often used too much addition to grammar lessons and too much deletion to some redundant and skill based activities. Of course, all these findings were clearly seen in the interviews and document analysis sessions. Thus, the data obtained through the observation sessions

are compatible with that of the data obtained through interviews and document analysis.

Besides, although the subjects of the study did not evaluate the textbooks formally, they had a habit of checking/evaluating the textbooks' materials roughly before beginning the actual classes so as to understand what to teach as well as to discard some contents which are not suitable to the teachers themselves. In other words, the data obtained through the interviews revealed that teachers examined each activity before meeting their students for the sake of themselves not for the sake of making the textbooks' materials suitable to their students level.

Further more, the subjects of the study asserted that some materials in the textbooks are not suitable. Ofcourse, this finding is consistent with Cunningsworth (1984:105), as cited in Litz (2000) remarks that there is no 'perfect course book' that totally suits a specific teaching context.... However, the teachers' action to make these incompatible materials more suitable to their students level, age and interest is insignificant though they tried to do some on rule oriented contents partially.

What is more, the data from the interviews showed that lack of awareness, skill and confidence are basic challenges that restrain teachers from adapting textbook materials. This finding is also consistent in one way or the other with what Littlejohn (1998:15) found out that "lack of professional development training" could restrain teachers from adapting and supplementing textbook materials.

## **5.2. CONCLUSIONS:**

In this research attempts have been made to assess English language teachers' practice of adapting textbook materials with particular reference to teachers at Mettu, Gore, Hurumu, Darimu and Yayo high schools. Therefore, based on the data obtained through the instruments the following major conclusions could be drawn:

The findings of this study indicated that on the one hand, teachers usually tried to expand grammar oriented contents in the textbooks and they also gave further rule oriented contents to their students since the grammar parts lacked adequate notes and some rule oriented students urged teachers to do so. Of course, Gabrielatos (2000-2004) states the following reasons why teachers may want to add what is in the book: areas are not covered, texts/pictures/tasks are not provided, texts/pictures/tasks are fewer than needed, and tasks are limited in scope. On the other hand, as the results of interviews and document analysis showed, because of the bulkiness of the contents in the textbooks teachers often omitted a lot of skill focused materials though Grant (1987) puts teachers should be careful and try not to omit too many pages; otherwise, students may begin to wonder why they are using the book if they are not following it. Thus, these might imply that teachers often used two of the techniques called addition for grammar portions and omission for skill based activities extremely. Again, these may also show that both teachers and students seem to be grammar enthusiastic. Besides, teachers seem to emphasize on teaching grammar than teaching language for communication.

Though scholars advised teachers to evaluate and adapt each material in the textbooks in line with the students' interest, age and level so as to enhance language learning, but the subjects of the study do not seem aware of the purposes of textbook adaptation, its principles and theories as well as its way of implementation properly since the teachers effort in adapting textbook materials are limited only in adding and omitting contents highly.

As Madsen (1978) states that no matter how "perfect" is a textbook, teachers will have their own ideas about it and the way they should present it in the classroom. But the subjects of this study often used the textbook materials as they are/were presented by textbook writers without any rearrangements and modifications especially on skill-oriented contents. This may also imply that teachers do not seem familiar with the purposes of textbook evaluation and adaptation.

As scholars also claimed that there are certain procedures that teachers as a whole should follow in the course of their teaching. These are adopting and evaluating textbook materials in line with the students' interest, age and level. Then, they can exercise their professional judgment either to adapt or supplement so as to make the textbook materials suitable to the learners' interest, age and level. However, the study revealed that teachers who participated in the study did not evaluate textbooks formally. Moreover, they did not adapt and supplement skill focused activities. This implies that teachers did not exercise their professional judgment either prioritizing or modifying contents related to the four language skills for the sake of making the materials suitable to their learners.

The study also revealed that although teachers were seen while they were trying to adapt some textbook materials, they

were not seem conscious about the principles and practices of textbook adaptation properly and even they did not know what textbook adaptation means. Moreover, this finding opposes the findings of Addisu Yilhal (2012) because in his study, he concluded that teachers completely avoided textbook adaptation because of fear of being called lazy and incompetent and they had negative attitude towards it. Therefore, from his conclusion one can easily understand that teachers were conscious about textbook adaptation but they deliberately avoided it because of the stated factors. So, this shows that the findings of the previous study contradict with the findings of the current study.

The study also disclosed that teachers believe as some contents in grade nine and grade ten English textbooks are not suitable and the contents as a whole are bulky. As a result, they tried to do their best to overcome the problem. For instance, they often omit some redundant contents and some skill focused activities though omission is required whenever teachers feel that the input presented in the textbook does not meet the aims and learners' needs, interests and levels as Gabrielatos (2004) states it. Besides, the teachers' effort either in substituting or modifying these contents is remaining unsatisfactory. This may imply that teachers lack know how about how they compromise defects in the textbooks in line with the principles and practices of textbook adaptation instead of applying similar techniques-omission and addition repetitively.

There are also techniques that teachers should use while adapting textbook materials as mentioned in the literature review (pp. 26-28). These include, adding, replacing, omitting, expanding, supplementing, personalizing, simplifying, modernizing, localizing, etc. However, the subjects of this study did not know them properly. This directly shows that teachers seem to lack knowledge about textbook adaptation techniques.

To put it in a nutshell, although the subjects of this study tried to adapt textbook materials based on their intent, they did not seem alert in adapting textbook materials by considering the students interest, age and level. In other words, even though the nature and the scope of the study do not seem to allow drawing any far-reaching conclusions or generalizing the results, it seems to be clear that the subjects of this study lacked familiarity, know-how and confidence to evaluate and adapt textbook materials properly and purposefully so as to make the materials more suitable to the learners' needs, background knowledge and levels of language proficiency.

### **5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Bearing in mind the revelations of the study, the researcher would like to suggest the following proposition for the proper implementation of textbook adaptation so as to improve the English language teaching learning process in high schools.

1. Since textbooks are not perfect in any ways and Mettu, Gore, Hurumu, Darimu and Yayo high schools English language teachers are not aware of the principles and practices of textbook adaptation, the researcher suggests that in-service teachers should get training on the principles and practices of textbook adaptation either through CPD/Continuous Professional Development/ or other programs whereas students who study teaching as a field in different universities should get the training by including textbook adaptation as a course of study in the universities curriculum all over the country.
2. While adapting textbook materials, teachers should use varieties of techniques flexibly so as to overcome complaints from students. In other words, teachers should be familiar with textbook adaptation techniques and apply them in line with the principles and theories that various scholars proposed.
3. Teachers should also apply their professional judgment for both rule oriented and language skills oriented materials which are part of the textbooks and the teachers' guides. In other words, they should evaluate and adapt every content in the textbooks and the teachers' guides vis-à-vis the students' interest, age and level consciously. What is more, teachers should evaluate and adapt textbook materials not only for the teachers benefit but also for the students benefit so as to provide suitable contents that enhance language learning.
4. Additionally, although teachers assume that they are doing their best, they still need more orientation concerning the way they use, evaluate and adapt textbook materials to make the contents suitable to their students' interest, age and level before they begin teaching.
5. Finally, further inclusive research should be conducted in the field so as to know how teachers as a whole in Ethiopia apply textbook adaptation.

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