

MATSDA/QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, BELFAST CONFERENCE INNOVATION IN MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE BOOK SELECTION IN A NEWLY LIBERALIZED MARKET

In this paper, I explore how secondary schools and secondary school teachers of English in Kenya selected course books in times of change as reflected by the following:

- (i) A newly liberalized textbook market. There was a transition from a system that largely relied on textbooks published by parastatal companies to one that offered multiple choices from a variety of publishers.
- (ii) A new syllabus for schools. The period 2003-2006 saw the gradual phasing in of the new curriculum, accompanied by a raft of textbooks in a newly liberalized market.

This is part of a wider study on the process of textbook development in which I engage with syllabus designers, editors, authors, teachers and learners. As consumers (and sometimes producers) of textbooks, teacher-input is significant in gaining understanding of what this product is and what it can become.

I will discuss how factors such as awareness of change, opinion leadership, opportunities to try the material and external agents influenced course book selection. I will also discuss how some of these factors, and others, such as national examinations have led to changes in initial course book selection over time. I hope that these insights will be useful to ELT practitioners and materials developers who are interested in diffusion of innovation, in particular, and the process of textbook development in general.