Enhancing English Learning in Thailand: Insights from Thai Teachers on the New Say Hello Textbook Series

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Abstract

Textbooks are crucial in language teaching and learning within an EFL context. Therefore, this study examined language components within English textbooks used for primary language education in Thailand. It also explored Thai primary school English teachers' perspectives of the "New Say Hello Series 1–3" English language textbooks utilized in their teaching. Through semi-structured interviews, insights into their experiences with the textbooks were gathered from six purposively selected Thai EFL teachers aged thirty to fifty-five. The qualitative data were transcribed and coded into themes. The transcribed data were inter-coded by another well-trained English teacher. Participants also cross-checked these data to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. The analysis findings underscored the language components of textbooks in supporting curriculum goals and engaging students in learning English with appealing topics. The "New Say Hello" series effectively enhanced language education quality in Thailand by being age-appropriate, developmentally suitable, and culturally inclusive. The findings also showed that Thai EFL teachers reported positive experiences with the "New Say Hello" series, highlighting its interactive resources, alignment with varied learning styles, and emphasis on communicative language teaching by following the guidelines and well-structured progression of English language skills. Integrating Thai and various cultures into the textbooks was particularly valued for promoting cultural awareness and global citizenship among students. This research offered insights into curriculum development and teaching practices, suggesting that well-designed textbooks were crucial for improving language education outcomes. It also suggested further research into implementing textbooks and their influence on language acquisition in Thailand.

Keywords: English language textbooks, Thai EFL primary school teachers, EFL teachers' perceptions, language components, classroom practice

1. Introduction

English language textbooks play a crucial role in the education system, serving as indispensable tools for both teachers and students. Harmer (2007) emphasizes the textbook's value, noting its appealing presentation, coherent grammar syllabus, adequate vocabulary exposure and exercises, teacher guidance, and opportunities for learners to anticipate upcoming lessons and review past content. According to Harmer, textbooks furnish definitive language instruction, aiding educators in planning and executing practical lessons through organized language input, detailed explanations of grammar and vocabulary, and diverse activities for practical language application in relevant situations. The significance of textbooks extends beyond mere instructional materials; they shape classroom practices and student learning experiences. While the value of textbooks in language education is well-documented, there remains a need to delve deeper into their specific language components and their impact on teaching and learning (Afersa, 2020).

English textbooks are considered a crucial part of all English classrooms in many EFL contexts. They may represent learners' first exposure to the English language, making their role in teaching and learning the subject matter indispensable as a tool to assist learners in building on their language skills and communicative abilities (Mohammadi & Abdi, 2014; Sukying, 2012). The learner's perspective on textbooks is equally important, with studies indicating that students' attitudes toward their textbooks can significantly influence their classroom engagement and overall academic performance. A positive relationship with the textbook materials can lead to more active participation and a deeper connection with the learned language. As such, English language textbooks

and similar EFL environments are more than just educational materials; they are a bridge connecting learners to the broader world, facilitating the acquisition of a global lingua franca and fostering an appreciation of cultural diversity. The strategic use of textbooks can enhance language education, making it a more enriching, effective, and inclusive process.

As a graduate student in education, the researcher has always been intrigued by the dynamics between teaching materials and instructional practices. The study examines the role of the "New Say Hello" textbooks in language teaching, emphasizing the need to balance structured curricula with authentic materials for better student engagement. It highlights the significance of understanding teachers' perceptions due to their influence on classroom dynamics and student outcomes. The research aims to investigate the perceptions of Thai EFL primary school teachers regarding the language components of English textbooks, with a primary focus on the "New Say Hello 1–3" series, to enhance language learning effectiveness in Thai primary schools. According to these objectives, two research questions are established to guide the study:

1) What are the language components of English textbooks in a Thai primary school?

2) What are Thai EFL primary school teachers' perceptions of English language textbooks?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Roles of English Textbooks in Classroom Practice

The role of English textbooks in classroom practice is multifaceted and crucial for language education worldwide (Afersa, 2020). Historically, English textbooks have evolved alongside language teaching methodologies, reflecting shifts from grammar-translation methods to communicative approaches (Allwright, 1978). While textbooks play a pivotal role in education, their effectiveness depends on teachers' methods, emphasizing the need to understand their strengths and weaknesses (Brown, 1994). These textbooks are versatile resources, offering structured learning experiences and practice opportunities across language skills (Cunningsworth, 1995). Despite the availability of alternative materials, printed textbooks remain widely used due to their reliability and accessibility (Richards, 2001). Teachers rely on textbooks to guide lesson planning, provide consistent frameworks, and facilitate meaningful interactions between students and learning materials (Vettorel & Lopriore, 2013). Şimşek (2017) delves into student teachers' preferences in material adaptation, highlighting the importance of addressing cultural aspects in English coursebooks. It emphasizes the significance of adapting materials to align with learners' sociocultural backgrounds, interests, and lifestyles. Despite these considerations, debates persist regarding the effectiveness and limitations of such adaptations, indicating the need for further research and adaptation to meet diverse classroom dynamics and student needs. Hence, textbooks promote language skills and cultural awareness, influencing students' attitudes and behaviors. Overall, this literature review highlights the significant influence of English textbooks on instructional practices and student learning experiences.

2.2 Language Components of the English Textbooks Used

ELT textbooks are integral to language education, shaping learning outcomes significantly (Afersa, 2020). They have evolved alongside pedagogical theories, adapting to changing educational paradigms (Smith, 2022). A critical aspect is vocabulary instruction, which includes lexical frequency considerations and integration with language skills (Nation, 2013). Effective grammar instruction is essential for language proficiency development (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). ELT textbooks also play a crucial role in developing reading skills, focusing on text selection and comprehension strategies. They address listening and speaking skills through various activities and authentic communication opportunities (Rost, 2011). Writing skills are taught through genre exploration and feedback mechanisms (Hyland, 2019). Understanding these components is vital for informed decision-making in the textbook selection and implementation (Tomlinson, 2013). This study delves into the language components of English textbooks used in Thai EFL primary schools, offering detailed insights into grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

2.3 Textbook Selection

Textbook selection is a crucial aspect of language education, as textbooks serve as invaluable resources providing structured guidance and comprehensive content (Cunningsworth, 1995; Afersa, 2020). However, while textbooks offer essential support, they alone may not ensure optimal language learning outcomes, necessitating the integration of real-life language practice and various learning tools (Richards, 2001). Mastery of specific grammatical points and vocabulary acquisition is fundamental to proficiency and requires careful attention, as does phonological competence, including stress patterns and intonation, for effective communication (Nation, 2013). Given the pivotal role of textbooks, teachers are instrumental in their selection, guided by criteria tailored to meet the diverse needs of students (Tomlinson, 2013). However, challenges persist in defining practical textbook

prerequisites, underscoring the need for further research and investigation within specific educational contexts (Smith, 2022). Ultimately, involving teachers in the selection process enhances teaching and learning experiences, contributing significantly to students' overall success.

2.4 The Link Between SLA Theories and Textbooks

The link between Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories and textbook analysis is crucial for understanding the effectiveness of language learning materials (Hummel, 2021). Additionally, the role of textbooks in fostering student engagement and motivation is highlighted, emphasizing the importance of activities, topics, and materials that simulate real-life language use scenarios (Krashen, 1982; Afersa, 2020). Research demonstrates that textbooks aligned with SLA principles significantly enhance language acquisition processes. Inspired by SLA theories, task-based language learning promotes meaningful language use and communicative competence (Ellis, 2018). Moreover, textbooks incorporating cultural content enhance cultural awareness and sensitivity among students, which is essential for language instruction (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Thus, continuous evaluation and adaptation of textbooks, guided by SLA theory and empirical research, are crucial for advancing language education.

2.5 Related Studies on Teachers' Perceptions of Textbooks

Numerous studies have provided valuable insights into EFL teachers' perceptions of English language textbooks in the Thai context. These investigations shed light on the factors influencing English language teaching and learning practices in Thai schools (Sukying, 2012; Sukying, 2018; Srakang & Jansem, 2013; Saemee & Ra, 2021). Specifically, primary school teachers' perspectives on English textbooks highlight crucial aspects such as topic relevance, well-designed materials, alignment of language content with proficiency levels, and methodology tailored to diverse learning styles (Sukying, 2012; Srakang & Jansem, 2013). Additionally, the literature emphasizes the significance of incorporating cultural content to enhance student interest and awareness (Saemee & Ra, 2021).

Despite challenges such as time constraints and differing student abilities, teachers actively adapt and supplement materials to meet their students' needs (Sukying, 2012; Srakang & Jansem, 2013). Qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews complement quantitative data, providing nuanced perspectives and enriching the understanding of teacher perceptions regarding English textbooks and instructional strategies (Saemee & Ra, 2021).

However, it is essential to acknowledge these studies' limitations and identify areas for further research. Recommendations include exploring specific aspects of teacher perceptions and investigating the impact of cultural adaptation in English textbooks on student learning outcomes (Sukying, 2018; Saemee & Ra, 2021). Addressing these gaps can enhance English language education practices in Thai primary schools.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of six EFL teachers from primary schools in Surin, Thailand, regarding the "New Say Hello" English textbooks. The design involved two main data collection methods: textbook analysis and semi-structured interviews. Textbook analysis was used to examine the content and alignment of the textbooks with educational objectives, while semi-structured interviews provided insights into teachers' perspectives and experiences.

3.2 Participants and Setting

The study involved six EFL teachers from primary schools in Surin, Thailand, with four females and two males. Their ages ranged from 35 to 56 years old, and their educational levels varied, with four holding bachelor's degrees and two holding master's degrees. None had doctoral degrees. Professional experience ranged from 7 to 27 years, and CEFR levels ranged from A2 to B2. Participants were conveniently selected based on their role as EFL teachers at the primary level in Surin, Thailand. The demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Educational Levels	Professional Experience	CEFR Levels
Somsak	Male	56	Bachelor's degree	23	A2
Nidnoy	Female	53	Master's degree	24	A2
Anna	Female	52	Bachelor's degree	27	B2
Mali	Female	35	Bachelor's degree	7	A2
Tukky	Female	43	Master's degree	20	B1
Nadeach	Male	55	Bachelor's degree	22	A2

As shown in Table 1, the study aimed to ascertain the demographic information of six teachers, four females and two males. They included both male (n = 2) and female (n = 5) Thai EFL teachers. The participants were selected from the school where the researcher worked to conduct the study and conveniently gather the data. The participants' ages ranged from 35 to 56 years old. Two participating teachers were younger than 50 years old, while four were older than 30. When examining the professional experience of the participants, there was a difference in professional experience. Four participating teachers held a bachelor's degree, while two of them had a master's degree, and no teachers who held doctoral or other degrees participated in the study. Finally, the participants achieved CEFR levels between A2-B2.

3.3 Research Instruments

This study collected data through textbook analysis and semi-structured interviews.

1) Textbook analysis

This study focused on three "New Say Hello" English textbooks, officially approved by the Ministry of Education and widely used in primary schools in Surin Educational Service Area 1 (Cunningsworth, 1995). The analysis revealed that the "New Say Hello" textbooks were designed to enhance the English language proficiency of young students, integrating speaking, listening, reading, and writing activities. Each unit was structured around a theme, with various exercises and multimedia resources. The analysis systematically examined the content across the series, categorizing activities based on their relevance to language skill components (Smith, 2022).

2) Semi-structured interviews

The researcher collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews to understand teachers' perceptions of the textbooks. The transcripts were analyzed through a coding process following Cunningsworth's (1995) criteria. Key concepts were identified, and open coding allowed themes to emerge naturally. The study highlighted how the "New Say Hello" textbooks effectively synthesized SLA theories with pragmatic pedagogical approaches (Afersa, 2020). Additionally, the interviews ensured a rigorous data analysis process, culminating in a comprehensive narrative detailing findings supported by participant quotes. The findings underscored the importance of well-designed textbooks in supporting language education goals and enhancing the teaching and learning experience in EFL contexts.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure consisted of two main phases: textbook analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Table 2. Data collection procedure

Week	Data collection procedure	Participants
1–3	Textbook analysis	
4–6	Semi-structured interview	N=6

Table 2 outlines the data collection procedure employed in the study, along with the corresponding weeks and participants involved. During weeks 1 to 3, the data collection procedure involved conducting a textbook analysis. This likely entailed systematically examining topics, textbook designs and organizations, language content, learning activities, and cultures of the English textbooks used in Thai primary schools, specifically focusing on the "New Say Hello" series. Subsequently, during weeks 4 to 6, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants. These interviews likely involved open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses from the participants regarding their perceptions, experiences, and practices related to English language textbooks. The "N = 6" indicates that six participants were involved in the interview process.

3.5 Data Analysis

In analyzing language components in English textbooks for primary language education in Thailand, the study highlighted the importance of these materials in supporting curriculum goals and engaging students. The qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected Thai EFL teachers were transcribed, coded into themes, and analyzed. This analysis aimed to identify recurring themes related to the effectiveness of the "New Say Hello" series in enhancing language education quality in Thailand (Smith, 2022). The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through the inter-coding of transcribed data by another well-trained English teacher and cross-checking by participants. The study emphasized the significance of well-designed textbooks in improving language education outcomes.

Moreover, the role of English textbooks in language education has been recognized in previous literature (Afersa, 2020). Textbook selection and design play crucial roles in language teaching (Cunningsworth, 1995; Richards, 2001), and they can significantly impact language learning outcomes (Susiati & Mufidati, 2020). Effective language textbooks facilitate communicative language learning (Allwright, 1978; Harmer, 2007) and incorporate principles of language learning and teaching (Brown, 1994). Additionally, they address various aspects of language learning, including grammar (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999), vocabulary (Nation, 2013), and listening (Rost, 2011).

Ethical considerations were also paramount in the study, with ethical approval obtained from the Graduate School of Mahasarakham University. Confidentiality of participant data was maintained, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before conducting the interviews. This ensured the ethical conduct of the research by establishing guidelines and principles (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013).

4. Results

The study findings are noteworthy. The highlights from the findings are as follows:

4.1 Language Components of the "New Say Hello" English Textbooks Used in Primary Schools

The analysis of the language components of the "New Say Hello" English textbooks used in primary schools in Thailand revealed a comprehensive emphasis on English language skills essential for young students' English foundation (Afersa, 2020). The analysis encompassed speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills across the series of textbooks, reflecting a deep alignment with the principles of second language acquisition (SLA), mainly catering to young Thai students' needs and developmental stages.
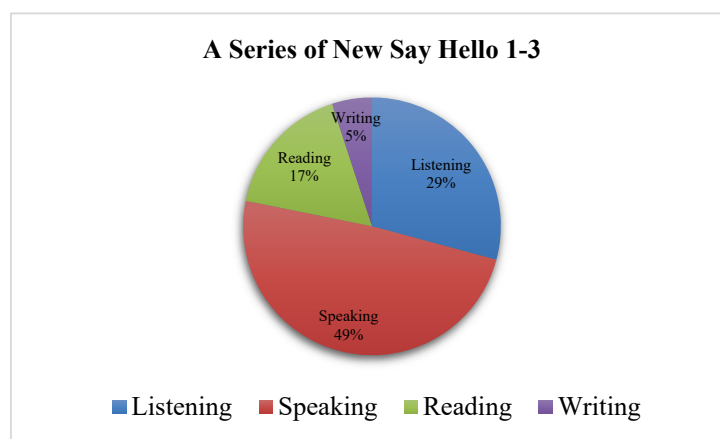

Figure 1. Proportions of English language skills in series of New Say Hello 1–3

The analysis of the "New Say Hello" English textbooks used in Thai primary schools revealed a comprehensive focus on essential English language skills for young learners (Afersa, 2020). The textbooks prioritize speaking skills, constituting 49% of the curriculum, aligning closely with communicative language teaching principles (Allwright, 1978). Listening skills, making up 29% of the content, provide foundational support for language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). While reading and writing receive less emphasis at 17% and 5%, respectively, they still play significant roles in vocabulary expansion and comprehension (Brown, 1994; Nation, 2013).
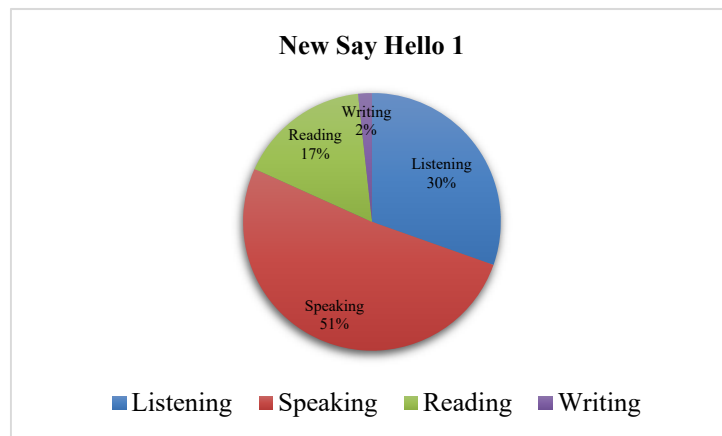
Figure 2. Proportions of English language skills in New Say Hello 1

The findings indicated that the "New Say Hello 1" textbook prioritizes speaking (51%) and listening (30%) skills, recognizing their critical role in early language acquisition. Reading activities (17%) are included to support these skills while writing activities (2%) are introduced gradually. This balanced approach aligns with the needs of young learners and promotes their language development (Afersa, 2020). The research explores how English textbooks, notably the "New Say Hello" series, facilitate language acquisition in Thai primary schools.
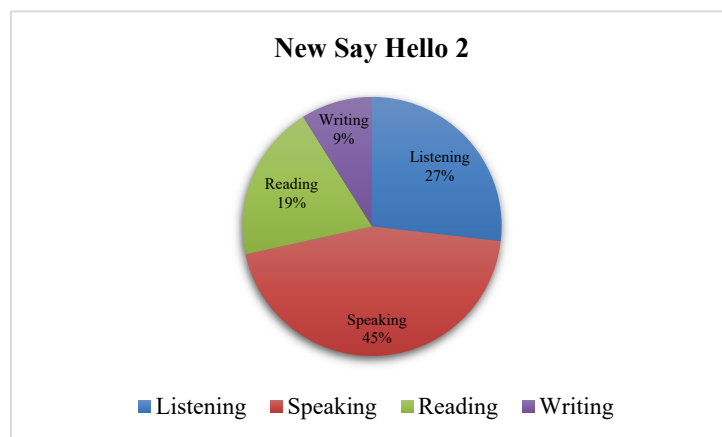

Figure 3. Proportions of English language skills in New Say Hello 2

The findings showed that "New Say Hello 2" is specifically designed to meet the needs of Thai primary school students learning English as a foreign language. It maintains a balance of key language skills, with speaking remaining the most emphasized at 45%, followed by writing at 9%, listening slightly reduced to 27%, and reading increased to 19%. This adjustment aligns with the students' developing competencies and ensures a holistic approach to language development. The analysis identifies "New Say Hello 2" as a pedagogical model that adapts to different stages of language acquisition, progressively integrating more reading and writing activities along with foundational speaking and listening skills.
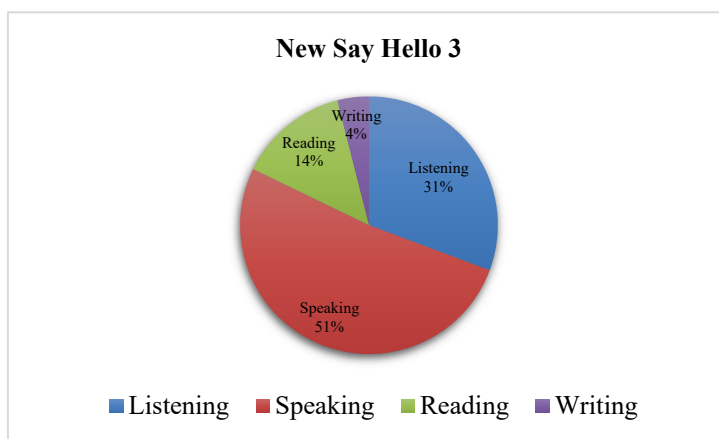
Figure 4. Proportions of English language skills in New Say Hello 3

The findings reveal that "New Say Hello 3" strategically prioritizes verbal proficiency, allocating 51% to speaking and 31% to listening while slightly reducing emphasis on writing (4%) and reading (14%) (Afersa, 2020). This progression from "New Say Hello 1" to "New Say Hello 3" demonstrates a thoughtful approach to language learning stages, ensuring a balanced mix of activities while maintaining oral skills as a primary focus. These findings highlight the adaptability of pedagogical approaches within the series to accommodate the evolving competencies of young language students, offering a comprehensive educational experience in a foreign language learning context.

4.2 Thai EFL Primary School Teachers' Perceptions of English Language Textbooks

Table 3. Thematic criteria for the content analysis

Criteria	Key information
Topic Selection and Relevance	Examining the appropriateness and significance of topics covered in English language textbooks such as greetings, family, classroom, friends, school, toys, pets, festivals, celebrations, travels, clothes, parts of the body, beaches, time, foods, daily routines, health and related people, things around us.
Textbook Structure and Organization	Evaluating the structured development, integration of skills, and interactive activities within textbooks.
Language Content Adequacy	Assessing the adequacy and suitability of language content, particularly regarding integrated skills and daily communication.
Teaching Methodologies	Exploring the recommended methodologies for teaching English, focusing on communicative language teaching (CLT), comprehensibility, and authenticity.
Cultural Integration	Investigating the inclusion of culture-specific information, festivals, traditions, and diverse cultural representations within textbooks and learning activities.

As shown in Table 3, this research comprehensively explores participants' perspectives on English language textbooks, focusing primarily on the "New Say Hello" series. It delves into themes such as topic selection, textbook structure, language content adequacy, recommended teaching methodologies, and cultural integration. Through qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with six participants, the study uncovers insights into the challenges and advantages of using these textbooks in Thai primary schools.

Table 4. Participants' responses to statements regarding topic selection and relevance, supported by the following excerpts:

Participant	Statement/excerpts
Somsak	[1] – I think "New Say Hello" textbooks truly understand our students' lives and interests. Topics like "Myself" and "Family" provide a platform to express themselves in English, crucial for their confidence and language development. It is incredible to see how these topics bridge the gap between classroom learning and their real-world experiences.
Nidnoy	[2] – I have found that topics such as "Health and Beverages" and "Travels" are incredibly effective in expanding our students' vocabulary and practical communication skills. These topics are vital for honing useful language abilities that students can use outside class.
Anna	[3] – The "Health" and "Celebrations and Festivals" topics in the curriculum. It provides students with an understanding of cultural diversity and fosters respect for different traditions. These topics go beyond language learning; they instill a sense of global citizenship.
Mali	[4] – I appreciate how the "New Say Hello" textbooks offer various topics that resonate with our students' everyday experiences. From discussing their families to exploring different celebrations, these themes engage our students and enhance their communicative competence in real-life scenarios. It is a holistic approach to language learning that truly prepares them for the global stage.
Tukky	[5] – I find topics in the "New Say Hello" textbooks attractive for engaging and challenging students appropriately. They are sophisticated enough to enrich their awareness yet tailored to their language proficiency levels. These topics are carefully chosen to stimulate interest and promote cultural understanding.
Nadeach	[6] – In topics like "School" and "Travels," students not only learn language skills but also gain a deeper understanding of the world around them.

From Table 4, participants' responses to the "New Say Hello" textbooks highlight their relevance and effectiveness in connecting students' daily lives to learning [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]. Topics such as "Myself" and "Family" enhance student confidence and language development, while themes such as "Health" and "Travels" expand vocabulary and practical communication skills [1, 2, 4, 5]. Additionally, topics like "Celebrations and Festivals" promote cultural understanding and global citizenship [3]. Overall, textbooks are viewed as valuable tools for developing proficient, culturally aware English speakers.

Table 5. Participants' responses to statements regarding textbook structure and organization supporting the following claims:

Participant	Statement/excerpts
Somsak	[7] – I think the design of the textbooks truly enhances the learning experience for students. The apparent font size and easy-to-follow layout make it easier for them to engage with the material. The colorful illustrations and relevant images bring the content to life, sparking their curiosity and imagination.
Nidnoy	[8] – I have found that the organization of the textbooks is incredibly user-friendly. The logical sequencing of lessons and clear instructions help students easily navigate the material. It is like taking them on a structured learning journey, where each step builds upon the last.
Anna	[9] – I state that textbooks are like the treasure of knowledge for students. The thoughtful design and organization ensure that they don't just passively consume information but actively engage with it. This fosters a deeper understanding and retention of the concepts being taught.
Mali	[10] – One thing that stands out to me is the relevance of the topics covered in the textbooks. They are not abstract concepts but rather things that students encounter in their daily lives.
Tukky	[11] – I think textbooks are not just educational tools but windows into the world for students. The colorful illustrations and vivid imagery transport them to different places and scenarios, making learning a truly immersive experience.
Nadeach	[12] – I have seen relevant topics and captivating visuals, creating an environment where they feel excited to explore and discover. The structure and presentation of the textbook are also attractive and age-appropriate.

From Table 5, Thai primary school teachers appreciate the well-designed structure of textbooks, including the precise font size and easy-to-follow layout, which enhance readability and engagement [7, 8]. The logical sequencing of lessons and clear instructions facilitate student navigation through the material [8], fostering active engagement and deeper understanding [9]. Teachers highlight the relevance of topics to students' daily lives, making learning more relatable [10], while colorful illustrations and vivid imagery create an immersive learning experience [11, 12]. Furthermore, the thoughtful design and organization of textbooks significantly enrich the educational journey and spark students' curiosity and love for learning.

Table 6. Participants' responses to statements regarding listening skills support the following arguments:

Participant	Statement/excerpts
Somsak	[13] – I think listening activities in English language textbooks are invaluable. They capture my students' attention and provide authentic language experiences that mimic real-world interactions.
Nidnoy	[14] – I have noticed that the listening activities in the textbooks are appropriate for the age of the students.
Anna	[15] – English language textbooks provide authentic language experiences that mimic real-world interactions.
Mali	[16] – I think English language textbooks aim to enhance listening comprehension and vocabulary.
Tukky	[17] – English language textbooks incorporate diverse listening activities. These include audio recordings of dialogues and passages covering various topics.
Nadeach	[18] – I have found that listening in textbooks is helping students develop their listening skills meaningfully.

Regarding Table 6, participants' responses on listening skills in English textbooks, emphasizing the importance of well-designed activities praised for engagement, authenticity, and alignment with students' proficiency levels [13, 14, 15]. These activities enhance language learning effectiveness by catering to diverse listening skills and developing proficiency [16, 17, 18].

Table 7. Participants' responses to statements regarding reading skills support the following claims:

Participant	Statement/excerpts
Somsak	[19] – I think the reading was a simplified and relatively short passage. It is suitable for student's level.
Nidnoy	[20] – The reading exercises allow students to apply their reading skills in practical contexts. It makes the learning experience more relevant and engaging for our students.
Anna	[21] – I have found that the reading activities in English language textbooks go beyond simple comprehension exercises. They are designed to challenge students while providing support through dialogue.
Mali	[22] – The simple language structures in reading activities are instrumental in making them accessible to students of all proficiency levels
Tukky	[23] – I appreciate how the reading activities in English textbooks mirror their real-life context.
Nadeach	[24] – I think appropriate factors are the relevance of the content, its alignment with curriculum standards, and its ability to engage students.

Concerning Table 7, participants' responses regarding reading skills in English textbooks. The analysis reveals a meticulous approach, focusing on simple language structures, practical strategies, and real-life tasks to engage students [19, 20, 22, 23, 24]. These efforts aim to ensure accessibility, enhance comprehension, and promote the practical application of reading skills [20, 22, 23]. By prioritizing relevance and engagement, English textbooks create a comprehensive and immersive learning experience [24].

Table 8. Participants' responses to statements regarding speaking skills, supported by the following interview excerpts:

Participant	Statement/excerpts
Somsak	[25] – I try to practice English speaking with students without worrying about each accent, which may differ. This helps students boost their confidence in speaking. The textbooks make learning interactive and enjoyable, creating a dynamic classroom environment.
Nidnoy	[26] – Speaking activities not only help students practice pronunciation and fluency but also encourage them to engage in real-life interactions.
Anna	[27] – I think speaking in English language textbooks suits students' language development. They offer practical tasks that simulate daily communication situations, helping students apply learned language in real-life situations. Despite challenges like limited class time, these activities play a crucial role in fostering a constructive attitude towards English learning.
Mali	[28] – I think the speaking activities in textbooks cater to students of all proficiency levels, making them inclusive and accessible to everyone. Even with diverse proficiency levels in my class, I have found these activities to effectively enhance students' confidence and facilitate interactive language use.
Tukky	[29] – The textbook emphasizes listening and speaking activities a lot, but sometimes there are issues with sound material, leading to limited time for students to practice speaking.
Nadeach	[30] – I think speaking activities in English language textbooks are a cornerstone of our language curriculum. They allow students to practice speaking in a supportive and engaging environment. Despite our challenges, these activities significantly enhance students' confidence and proficiency in English, setting them up for success in their language learning.

From Table 8, participants' responses regarding speaking skills in English textbooks highlight their appreciation for the speaking activities, noting their effectiveness in enhancing communication skills and boosting confidence [25, 28, 30]. These activities emphasize real-life interactions and pronunciation practice, fostering a positive attitude toward English learning [26, 27, 30]. Although challenges such as limited class time exist, teachers acknowledge the beneficial impact of speaking activities on language acquisition, making learning both interactive and enjoyable [27, 30].

Table 9. Participants' responses to statements regarding writing skills, supported by the following assertions:

Participant	Statement/excerpts
Somsak	[31] – I am concerned about the lack of emphasis on writing skills in primary education, noting that it may hinder students' ability to effectively communicate and express themselves in written form.
Nidnoy	[32] – I attribute this scarcity to the tailored design textbooks for young students, prioritizing simplicity and accessibility.
Anna	[33] – I think writing activity is limited. However, writing is essential to balance offering accessible content and fostering skill development to meet the diverse needs of students.
Mali	[34] –I find that the balance between being easy to use and helping students learn.
Tukky	[35] – I agree that English textbooks provide a good foundation for curriculum structure and can offer a familiar routine to students in lessons.
Nadeach	[36] – I think writing activities suit the needs of young students, emphasizing simplicity and accessibility.

Regarding Table 9, participants' responses regarding writing skills in English textbooks. Teachers expressed concerns about the limited writing activities, attributing it to the emphasis on simplicity [32, 36]. However, they find the textbooks suitable for students' learning levels, acknowledging the balance between accessibility and learning support [33, 34]. Despite the scarcity of writing exercises, teachers appreciate the textbooks' tailored design and role in providing a familiar routine for students [35]. This study explores language components of English textbooks used in Thai primary schools, focusing on the "New Say Hello" series to understand their effectiveness and areas for improvement according to teacher perceptions.

Table 10. Participants' responses to statements regarding teaching methodologies, supported by the following claims:

Participant	Statement/excerpts
Somsak	[37] – Textbooks focus on communicative activities and authentic materials for students to engage in language use rather than just rote memorization of vocabulary.
Nidnoy	[38] – I agree that English textbooks provide a good foundation for curriculum structure and offer a familiar routine to students in lessons.
Anna	[39] – Textbooks help students develop functional language skills while fostering confidence and motivation to communicate in English. They provide students with a supportive yet challenging environment for language acquisition.
Mali	[40] – I provide students with opportunities to practice using English in various simulated situations, such as everyday conversation scenarios and allow them to practice language use in contexts relevant to real-life situations.
Tukky	[41] – The textbook includes material for pronunciation work, such as listening or dialogue practice, suitable to students' needs. Textbooks provide students with input, such as listening and reading materials, that is comprehensible and engaging.
Nadeach	[42] – Textbooks may contain enjoyable activities that engage students, such as listening activities requiring the use of English. After listening, students have to practice speaking.

From Table 10, participants' responses on teaching methodologies in English textbooks highlight the "New Say Hello" series for its interactive learning approach and emphasis on communicative skills [39]. Teachers commend its effectiveness in boosting students' confidence and motivation [42], creating a supportive yet challenging environment for language development [37]. Overall, they consider the series crucial for developing proficient English speakers among Thai primary school students.

Table 11. Participants' responses to statements regarding cultural integration, supported by the following statements:

Participant	Statement/excerpts
Somsak	[43] – Textbooks integrate Thai cultural elements with those from around the world. Through stories, lessons, and activities, students learn about their cultural heritage and gain a deeper understanding and respect for the diverse cultures that make up our global community. They enjoy learning more.
Nidnoy	[44] – I express concerns about potential cultural biases or inaccuracies in portraying certain traditions or festivals, suggesting a need for careful review and cultural sensitivity in textbook content.
Anna	[45] – I like some topics for their inclusive representation of cultures, traditions, and festivals, which enhance students' appreciation of their cultural heritage and foster a sense of global citizenship.
Mali	[46] – I note that the textbook introduces students to diverse cultures. Still, it may not provide sufficient context for them to comprehensively understand the cultural nuances and complexities involved.
Tukky	[47] – Some lessons integrate diverse cultural elements such as festivals and daily customs. This serves as a gateway to global understanding and cultural recognition. However, I have to prepare the content and gain more knowledge about that content before teaching.
Nadeach	[48] – I am concerned about explaining the differences between Thai and international cultures to students by simply reading a short passage and doing the worksheet. 'Nadeach'

However, participants commend the "New Say Hello" series for its inclusive portrayal of diverse cultures [43]. Through stories and activities, students better understand cultural diversity and global citizenship [45]. Teachers appreciate how the series fosters connections with cultures worldwide, preparing students for multicultural environments [47].

5. Discussion

Based on the current study's findings, the analysis of the "New Say Hello" series utilized in Thai primary schools showcases a tailored and comprehensive approach to English language education specifically designed to meet the developmental needs of young learners (Afersa, 2020). The curriculum's structured focus distribution across key language competencies—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—strategically aligns with the foundational second-language acquisition theories. It integrates behaviorist and communicative teaching methods, emphasizing enhancing speaking skills (Allwright, 1978; Han, 2021). This focus reflects a commitment to communicative practices crucial for effective daily interactions and academic settings (Harmer, 2007).

Additionally, the curriculum supports a balanced development of listening, reading, and writing skills, providing a holistic approach to language education essential for comprehensive communication skills and academic proficiency (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The design of the textbooks prioritizes oral proficiency while offering substantial resources for developing listening, reading, and writing skills (Nation, 2013). This suggests a deep understanding of the language learning process and fosters an educational environment that encourages students to engage with English in meaningful and appropriate contexts for their age and stage of development (Nunan, 2004). Such an approach not only boosts their confidence and linguistic competence but also adheres to core principles of language acquisition, preparing students for practical applications in real-world scenarios (Long, 1996).

The "New Say Hello 1–3" textbooks are exemplary models of effective language education, demonstrating a pragmatic and thorough strategy for teaching English. They equip Thai primary school students with essential skills necessary for both academic achievement and everyday communication, reflecting the curriculum designers' expertise in creating educational experiences that address the dynamics of language learning. This prepares young learners adequately for the global communication demands of the 21st century.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of key language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—with a particular focus on oral proficiency as critical during the initial stages of language acquisition, as noted by Richards & Rodgers (2014). While reading and writing are emphasized less, their inclusion recognizes the need for a balanced approach to developing a full set of language skills (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

The implications of these findings are significant for curriculum development and pedagogical practices in Thai primary schools. By emphasizing essential language skills and progressively introducing more complex tasks, the "New Say Hello" series outlines a structured pathway for language acquisition that resonates with the needs of young students (Saemee & Ra, 2021). This approach facilitates effective real-world communication and promotes academic success and cognitive development, enhancing Thai primary students' overall educational experience (Ellis, 2018).

Thai EFL primary school teachers' perceptions of English language textbooks are illuminated through qualitative analysis, particularly exploring how various themes influence their viewpoints (Srakang & Jansem, 2013; Sukying, 2012). This analysis draws from data collected through semi-structured interviews with six participants, organized according to thematic criteria inspired by Cunningsworth's (1995) textbook evaluation framework. These criteria cover various aspects, including topics, textbook structure and organization, language content adequacy, teaching methodologies, and cultural integration, offering a systematic approach to the analysis (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Regarding topics, the teachers strongly prefer the "New Say Hello" textbook series, appreciating its inclusion of topics relatable to students' daily lives and cultural contexts (Saemee & Ra, 2021; Sukying, 2012). Themes such as "Myself," "Family," "School," "Health," and "Celebrations and Festivals" are noted for their relevance and effectiveness in engaging students and fostering cultural understanding (Smith, 2022). These topics are crucial for enhancing language proficiency and broadening students' cultural awareness, aligning with educational objectives beyond mere linguistic skills (Ellis, 2018).

Concerning the structure and organization of the textbooks, the teachers commend the "New Say Hello" series for its well-thought-out design, which enhances readability and accessibility for young learners (Tomlinson, 2013). Features such as clear instructions, logical content sequencing, and engaging illustrations are highlighted as elements that contribute to an inviting and supportive learning environment (Brown, 1994). The textbooks are valued as educational tools and gateways that spark curiosity, interest, and a passion for learning (Harmer, 2007).

Regarding language content, the study reveals that the activities aimed at developing listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills are integral to students' linguistic growth (Nation, 2013). Listening activities are appreciated for their realistic scenarios and alignment with various proficiency levels while reading activities are noted for their practicality and real-life applications (Richards, 2001). Speaking exercises are praised for boosting students' communicative abilities and confidence, although the limited classroom time for such activities is seen as challenging (Nunan, 2004). However, a noted deficiency in writing activities suggests a need for a more balanced approach to developing all four essential language skills (Hyland, 2019).

As for teaching methodologies, the "New Say Hello" series is lauded for its emphasis on interactive, communicative approaches that encourage active participation and practical language use (Nunan, 2004). This method is recognized for enhancing students' confidence and motivation to use English effectively, supporting a balanced educational experience that blends structured lessons with opportunities for creative expression (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013).

Cultural integration within the textbooks is also a significant point of discussion (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). The teachers appreciate the respectful and engaging representation of Thai and international cultures, which helps students appreciate cultural diversity and fosters global citizenship (Schmidt, 1990). Despite this, some teachers indicate that additional contextual information and greater cultural sensitivity could improve the textbooks (Şimşek, 2017).

Thai primary school teachers view the "New Say Hello" series as a robust tool for English language education, effectively integrating relevant topics, thoughtful design, authentic language activities, and interactive teaching methods (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). However, the call for more writing activities and increased cultural sensitivity highlights areas for potential enhancement (Mohammadi & Abdi, 2014; Sukying, 2012). This feedback opens avenues for future research and development in designing and implementing English language textbooks for Thai primary education, aiming to create even more comprehensive and culturally attuned learning resources (Long, 1996).

6. Conclusion

The current study explored valuable insights into the language components of English textbooks used in Thai primary schools and Thai EFL primary school teachers' perceptions of these textbooks. Through a comprehensive analysis of the "New Say Hello" English textbooks and qualitative interviews with six teachers, the study sheds light on various aspects of language learning and teaching in the Thai primary school context. The analysis of language components in the "New Say Hello" series reveals a structured approach to language acquisition, emphasizing speaking and listening skills while incorporating reading and writing activities. This balanced methodology caters to the diverse needs of young learners, promoting both linguistic proficiency and cognitive development.

Furthermore, the study highlighted Thai EFL primary school teachers' positive yet mixed perceptions of the "New Say Hello" textbooks. They appreciate the relevance of topics to students' daily lives, the structured organization, and the integration of interactive, intercommunicative teaching methods. Additionally, teachers value the cultural

integration of Thai and international elements, enhancing students' cultural awareness and global citizenship.

Together, these findings highlight the effectiveness of the "New Say Hello" series in supporting language development and underscore the importance of considering teachers' perspectives in curriculum design.

7. Implications

The current study sheds light on key aspects of English language textbooks used in Thai primary schools and the perspectives of Thai EFL teachers on these resources. The textbooks, particularly the "New Say Hello 1-3" series, focus on developing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills—reflecting second language acquisition principles tailored to the developmental needs of Thai students. These textbooks combine behaviorist and communicative teaching methods, evolving to support the advancing language skills of students.

Thai EFL teachers value the emphasis on speaking skills, recognizing its role in enhancing student confidence and proficiency. They appreciate the variety of activities to improve their language skills, contributing to a well-rounded learning environment. Teachers also respond positively to adjustments in language skill emphasis across different textbook editions, highlighting the need for adaptive teaching strategies to accommodate students' changing abilities.

In practice, teachers follow the textbook structure to shape their teaching strategies, integrating behaviorist and communicative approaches into classroom activities. This structured approach aids in lesson planning and balanced curriculum execution, supporting foundational oral skills and introducing more complex tasks over time. However, gaps in effectively incorporating oral activities point to a broader issue with the comprehensive approach to English instruction in Thai classrooms. This deficiency underscores the need for more robust resources and methods to fully address the developmental needs of young learners and provide teachers with the tools necessary for effective language teaching.

8. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

The study has several limitations that should be noted. Its focus on the "New Say Hello" series in Thailand may limit the generalizability of its findings to other English language textbooks or educational contexts. Additionally, the potential for researcher bias in analyzing textbooks and curriculum design could affect the objectivity of the results. The scope of the research questions is also somewhat restricted, primarily targeting key components and teacher perceptions of the textbooks while possibly overlooking broader contextual factors that influence language learning in Thai primary schools. The exclusion of student perspectives and the potential lack of consideration for curriculum updates over time further limit the study's comprehensive understanding and current relevance.

To enhance future research, it is recommended to expand the sample to include various textbook series and schools across different Thai regions, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. Utilizing multiple data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, and classroom observations can provide a more rounded understanding of teacher perceptions and classroom dynamics. Including longitudinal studies that track students' language development and gathering student feedback through surveys or focus groups can enrich insights into the textbook's effectiveness and inform improvements in curriculum design and teaching practices. Additionally, considering sociocultural factors that may influence language teaching and learning in Thailand will offer a more holistic view of the educational landscape.

Authors contributions

Worakamon Noppiboon and Dr. Apisak Sukying were equally involved in designing the study and analyzing the data. Worakamon Noppiboon was responsible for the literature review and data collection, while Dr. Apisak Sukying offered ongoing guidance and consultation throughout the research. Together, they analyzed the data, interpreted, and discussed the findings. Worakamon Noppiboon wrote the initial manuscript draft, and Dr. Apisak Sukying revised it. Both authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript, contributing equally to the study.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known financial conflicts of interests or personal relationships that could

have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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Obtained.

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