CHAPTER III

MATERIALS PRODUCTION: CASE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

3.0. Introduction

The majority of teaching situations in India depend on the monolithic textbook. And for better or for worse, “the textbook has been a part of educational tradition since the age of mass printing began, and teachers and learners throughout the world have come to rely on it” (Sen 1). The previous chapter illustrated and related the issues involved in materials production to the context of the author-publisher interface. This chapter records, in keeping with the traditions or stipulations of qualitative research, the “search for patterns and meanings in people, their lives and their experiences. The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis and physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting” (Siegle. par.1). What follows is a first-hand record of that investigation.

3.1. Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study for garnering information is “the evaluative case study¹, which is a single case or group of cases studied at such depth as the evaluation of policy or practice will allow (usually condensed fieldwork)” (Stenhouse qtd. in Nunan, 77). Also, “the […] qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic,
descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources” (Merriam qtd. in Nunan, 77).

Keeping these two definitions in mind, and conscious of the “problems of validity and reliability” (Nunan 88) associated with case study research, the research progressed on the belief that “a case study is valid to the reader to whom it gives an accurate and useful representation of the bounded system” (Stake qtd. in Nunan 89).

3.1.1. Why the Case Study Approach was Chosen

“The advantages of using a case study approach are that it is strong in reality, you can generalize from a case, represent a multiplicity of viewpoints, insights can be put to use, reinterpreted by future researchers, and is more accessible and therefore serves multiple audiences” (Adelman et al. qtd. in Nunan 78). And though “problems of validity are associated with case study research, the potential for those interested in action-based research is considerable. Hybrid methodologically, in that it utilizes a range of methods for collecting and analyzing data, the generalizations produced in case study are no less legitimate when about the instance, rather than the class from which the instance is drawn. That is, generalizing about the case rather than from it” (Nunan 74).

This method was chosen (apart from those listed above) also because it brought the researcher in direct contact with the stakeholders and their world.
3.2. Background to the Interviews

3.2.1. Preparation of the Questions

A widely used data collection tool in narrative inquiry is the unstructured interview. Interviews are conducted between researcher and participant, transcripts are made, the meetings are made available for further discussion, and they become part of the ongoing narrative record. The subject being the analysis of the issues that come to the fore in the interfacing of the author and the publisher in the area of materials production, two sets of questions (See Appendices) were prepared. The pilot case study of Dr. Malathy Krishna served as the starting point for questions preparation. The focus of each set of questions was to bring out responses that would firstly, confirm the initial hypothesis that there were areas of dissent in the relationship that needed to be ironed out. Secondly, the questions tried to focus attention on what these 'problem' areas were, how serious the discontentment was and how to overcome or work within such constraints. Thirdly and finally, the questions asked both groups to identify the methods or manner in which they could rework the relationship and move towards resolving the minor breakdowns that surfaced now and again.

As the research progressed, questions were added during the course of the interview which was the spontaneous reaction to some comment or suggestion made by the interviewee. Hence some of the interviews contain extra questions. Also, some interviewees preferred to answer the questions in
general. A separate set of questions (Appendix 3) was prepared to seek answers to the phenomenal success of the textbook series ‘Gulmohar’.

3.2.2. Analysis of the Sample

The sample chosen for the case studies was from the two groups under study, namely authors and publishers. Authors with several years of experience in writing materials were chosen because their knowledge and expertise would elicit not only a wider, but more reliable response to the questions. Wider because of the variety of insights several years, decades in some cases, of writing would endow on its practitioners and reliable in the sense that these writers were stalwarts in their field and their opinions had a credibility, and to use a cliché, one that could be construed as the last word on the subject. The publishing point of view was gathered from two sources — content editors and publishers who headed their respective firms. Content editors reacted to the questions as representatives of their publisher’s in-house policies. The close interaction they had with authors in their line of work gave their insights directness and authenticity. The publishers’ perspectives on the interface and its ramifications on the larger issue of being socially responsible businesspersons, gave the whole debate a broader angle — the big picture, to put it simply.
3.2.3. The Interviews: Modus Operandi

A one-to-one, personal rapport was established with all the interviewees and responses to the questions were recorded, with the consent of the participants, on a tape recorder. Transcripts, mostly verbatim, were made later and sent back to the participants for final alterations or corrections after interpreting the views expressed from the point of their relevance to the study. All interviews were conducted between 2000 and 2002.

The tone of the interviews is candid and informal. The interview transcripts attempt to retain the ‘flavour’ of the interview and try to report the views verbatim. As spoken language is transcripted, at times it may sound incomplete or ungrammatical. Also, some of the respondents preferred to discuss the issues in general without being tied-down to the question-answer format. Hence those interviews are recorded as continuous discourse.

3.3. Case Studies

3.3.1. Pilot Case Study

3.3.1.1. Biographical Information

Name: Dr. Malathy Krishna

Posts Held: Reader, Publishing Coordinator and Senior Editor (ELT)

Publications: Indus Grammar 1-5 (for Primary classes)
Teaching English to Commerce Students
3.3.1.2. Interview Transcript

3.3.1.2.1. On Publishing

1. Publishing is not professionally managed in India.
   a. The plan should be clear — rigid guide lines have to be drawn before launching a textbook. Publishers should be conscious and aware — no groping for knowledge or grappling with the how and the what of publishing. A blue print is imperative.
   b. Teacher orientation is necessary.
   c. Publicity for the new book is crucial; make a big noise about it. Workshops may be a success, but the book may not be a commercial success. This is where the marketing person is important.

2. The publisher is product oriented: a good book is a book that sells, one that is based on reader’s needs.

3. The publisher’s main concerns are public readiness, standardisation and conformity: 25% new, 75 % conventional. New approaches should be subtle, not prominent.

4. The publisher should have social awareness/consciousness not to offend any community; face value is important.
5. The Publisher's dilemma is whether to be an academic or a businessman.

6. The publisher is not the guardian of social awareness — can’t decide what the target audience should read [if so, he is arrogant] — he can’t change society with books — can’t paint a rosy picture of the world.

7. The publisher’s attitude to authors — should not dictate terms; only editorial intervention is allowed.

8. The editor — the onus is mostly on him, who with the publisher, takes up the responsibility from conception to completion. With the manuscript the editor infuses the required format.

9. What is being taught is in the publisher’s hand.

10. Should the publisher be an educated publisher?

3.3.1.2.2. About Authors

1. The author is process oriented — work is not orderly; it is often slipshod. The language of authors has errors/slips; Indian authorship has made great strides but the English is not standard.

2. Authors often want to display scholarship.

3. Author need not be socially aware.
3.3.1.2.3. **General Comments**

1. Teacher education and orientation is necessary because teachers teach only what they have learnt. It is both a *pedagogic need and an economic necessity.*

2. Teachers are only concerned with the textbook — the gospel to most.

3. Textbook is only a pretext — if it is too difficult, it cannot be taught.

4. Materials production is of very great importance — need to train textbook writers on a. format b. gradation c. level d. cohesiveness of the whole learning spectrum

5. Even a successful textbook series will have to be revised from time to time. That is proof that books date. The publisher’s perspective is that change should be thorough as against phasing it out gradually. A successful book is very teachable, structured, an end in itself.

3.3.1.2.4. **Some Pertinent Questions**

1. Who should write books?

2. Practising teachers or theoreticians with expertise in writing?

3. Can all teachers write?
4. Do all experts know what happens in the classroom?

5. Where lies the meeting point?

6. What does the publisher contribute?

7. Can workshops promote particular products?
   Or only principles of teaching?

8. Where (what is the places of) is the author in the online environment?

9. How does a story or a poem become a lesson?

3.3.1.3. Researcher’s Interpretation of the Case Study

1. Publishing per se has to be more professionally managed. Most publishers work blindly, without a viable framework in mind. That situation has to change. A blueprint is the essential first step in textbook production which includes market study, teacher orientation — a dip stick test.

2. The publisher should be attuned to reader readiness; for this he needs to be in constant touch with the market. A book cannot be commissioned without this very basic requirement.
3. The publisher is constantly grappling with two issues: to be an academic or a businessman; the successful publisher is someone who has figured out the perfect ratio, the balance.

4. Socially aware and socially responsible — these are the duties the publisher performs in society. However that does not mean that he is omnipotent.

5. The publisher should not tread on the author's toes — give him space. But he can interfere editorially as authors often work erratically and are not as socially aware as the publisher.

6. Innovation should be subtle.

3.3.2. Case Studies: Author

3.3.2.1. Case Study 1

3.3.2.1.1. Biographical Information

Name: Professor A.E. Subramaniam

Posts Held: Professor of English and Principal, Tamil Nadu Education Services on deputation to the CIEFL, Hyderabad, from 1964-75

Edited S.S.L.C./Matriculation textbooks for the Tamil Nadu Education Department over a period of ten years. Participated as organiser and author in a massive CIEFL project for the formulation of a comprehensive syllabus for the teaching of English and the production of two series of model textbooks, workbooks and teacher's handbooks for classes III to XII (1964-1975).

3.3.2.1.2. Background Information

Stage I

The development and use of textbooks for the teaching of English had three successive phases during the period from the early to the middle decades of the last century.

In the twenties (when I was at school) the books used in Indian schools were mostly those produced and printed abroad, and mainly meant for children in schools there. These books were introduced in our schools for study from Class III. I can still recall the “Nelson Reader” books I to III, that we used at the elementary stage, beautifully produced, gorgeously bound and very attractively illustrated. The books were meant for English children in the first instance, and hence their content was almost altogether unfamiliar to Indian children. So was the English of the lessons in its idiom, it being somewhat different from the more formal kind of English that we heard our teachers use. Of the small number of poems found in the book, we enjoyed the rhythm, with vague realisations of their content. Beyond the reading matter, the books provided little by way of aid to learning. The teacher's effort at teaching such books at the elementary stage consisted in mainly in explaining the meanings
of words (using the mother tongue for the most part) and helping the children to make of the content what little they could by the exercise of their imagination. Even so, the children did not imbibe enough of the language to be able to extend their reading to the supplementary reader, beginning from Class VI or so. What contributed to this growth was mainly the pains taken by teachers, independent of the Reader, to impart elementary grammar and to expand the children’s vocabulary. The abler ones among the teachers achieved a near miracle by their devoted efforts. I remember very distinctly how we got to do “parsing” and “analysis” in Class V, because I moved school for my class VI.

The supplementary Readers, again, were almost entirely imported ones and contained stories with typically foreign background.

During this period there was no Departmental prescription of textbooks or supplementary readers. Each school made its own choice from among the books available.

Stage II

It was about the middle of the twenties that the next phase of development took place, with the beginning of the publishing enterprise in the country. For long years, however, the scene was dominated by the Indian branches of foreign publishing firms such as Macmillan, Longman, OUP, Blackie & Sons etc. They brought out books (both Reader and supplementary material) suitable for Indian schools, but still authored by native speakers of
English especially those among them who were teaching in Indian schools. Their materials had varying degrees of suitability for Indian children, but the books had a few extra features oriented to the task of teaching the language, such as a set of comprehension questions, a few blank filling exercises for the vocabulary, some phonics etc.

It did not take long for local publishing enterprise to sprout in this scene. Books for the teaching of English as well as for several other school subjects were brought out with the native speakers in the field. The Indian firms did not enjoy patronage from schools but their range of influence was still limited. That was also the time when Education Departments started setting up Textbook Committees to supervise and control the prescription of books by schools, so as to ensure quality and standards. Publishers were required to submit to the Committee copies of their books for scrutiny and approval without the names of the author and the publisher being revealed. The Committee had the books read by reviewers and assessed for their suitability with the help of a check-list supplied to them. Their reports formed the basis for the recommendation or rejection of the books.

In the course of the years following the end of the Second World War there was a rapid expansion of educational facilities all over the country and vast numbers of pupils joined the schools. There was consequently a large-scale demand for textbooks and supplementary readers. The situation predictably called forth commercial exploitation. No wonder then that the
number of local publishers (far too many of them small time) invaded the field, with motives that were primarily commercial. They mostly engaged senior practicing teachers or the school and college levels to get the books written. The authors usually had to work under pressure for time to meet the deadline for submission to the Textbook Committee. The material produced was of varying quality and tending to be inferior to imported books or those written by native speakers teaching in the country. But the books had Indian themes and familiar background. A small number of those who wrote the books were indeed persons of experience and talent, and they thus helped their publishers to survive the competition, although the remuneration packet they got was nothing to write home about. Increasingly, supplementary practice material was also produced and came into wide use.

It was in the early fifties that the educational authorities in many states of the country, under the inspiration of ideas that originated in the Education department of London University, compiled and brought into use a new type of syllabus for the teaching of English as a foreign language, in place of the earlier ones which were mostly statements of aims and objectives in general terms. The new syllabus set down a detailed list of language items — sentence patterns and structural words and phrases to be taught. The items were to be presented to the learner in a graded sequence. Certain guidelines were also enunciated, such as that each structure or linguistic item should be well established through drill before proceeding to the next and that the presentation
should be in the sequence laid down. The formal study of Grammar was eschewed. These syllabuses also laid down a list of “essential words” as the minimum vocabulary to be mastered for productive use, and these had to be brought into the textbook in appropriate contexts. Other words that the textbook and supplementary reader contained were to be treated as “recognition” vocabulary. It also recommended that Teachers’ Handbooks with suggestions for classroom procedure be made available with the textbooks.

Unfortunately the terms in which these syllabuses were set forth led to a miscomprehension of their aims. It was thought that the principle of ‘spaced, controlled repetition’ of the language items set down in the syllabus — the dry-bones, so to say — was a sacred cow. Authors consequently came up with text material which had little to recommend them by way of natural writing. A good number of the books brought out had to be rejected on grounds of extremely artificial writing. The books submitted by the more established publishers, on the other hand, paid scant homage to the ‘cow’ and yet were approved — quite rightly — because they were well-written ones. It took some time for it to be realised that the ‘drill’ of language items was meant to be only a classroom activity and that it would be out of place in the reading passages. The sequence of presentation of language items laid down in the syllabus was also misunderstood as a rigid dispensation, whereas there could be more than one scheme of sequencing, each with its own logic, as was demonstrated in the syllabuses brought out by Allahabad Institute, the Nagpur Conference and by a
British Council Officer who was special officer for English in the State for some time.

**The S.S.L.C. Text**

Right from the beginning of the school system in the country, the final year of the school course has been the year of a public examination — S.S.L.C. or Matriculation. This necessitated prescription of a common textbook for the final year in all schools. The compilation of the textbook has been the responsibility of the Educational Department all along, though in the earlier years the book was issued under the imprimatur of the University. The book usually contained a selection of prose pieces and a small number of poems. It provided a variety of reading matter, not however based on any language scheme. The compiling of the book was a job usually given to a senior college teacher, who, however, had to get the material passed by a small committee. From the early fifties the Department of Education also commissioned 'A Companion to the English Textbook', to be written by the editor of the main textbook. The companion had in it brief notes on the author of each passage or poem, a short introduction to the subject matter, annotation of allusions if any, a glossary of unfamiliar words and phrases, a set of comprehension questions, some grammar work, and two or three model Test papers (I recall with pleasure that both the textbook and companion were my responsibility for about ten years in the course of my service in the Department). Two Supplementary
Readers, usually abridged and simplified versions of classics also form part of the course for the S.S.L.C. level.

Stage III

This stage is marked by the Nationalisation or Departmentalisation of all language textbooks to be used in the entire school course. The responsibility for the preparation of the books has devolved on senior and reputed teachers in Government as well as other schools and on the faculty of RIE, Bangalore or the State Institute of English.

3.3.2.1.3. Interview Transcript

1. What was/were the worst compromise/s you had to make with the publisher?

I had to make no compromise with any of the local publishers in the writing of any of the books they commissioned, their ignorance being my shield. It so happened that I met with no interference from any of the established and better-known publishers either, except that on an occasion or two I was required to excise a detail here or another there, for the sake of being politically correct. Perhaps I should mention that I did have to make a compromise, not with a publisher though, but with the committee with which I worked when editing the S.S.L.C. books. I was asked, against my inclination to include in my selection,
passages with themes such as communal harmony, patriotism, civic responsibilities, even population control etc., purely for their didactic value, without reference to their literary merit.

2. Mention areas where you succeeded in convincing the publisher to your point of view.

Did not arise.

3. What were the reasons for publisher interference?

a. academic
b. economic
c. psychological (ego problems)
d. indifference/thoughtlessness

See response to 1 above.

4. Did your publisher get you feedback?

The feedback we got on the CIEFL books was not direct; we found our approach validated by the fact that our models were copied in the text books that came out in subsequent years. In the field trials we conducted before finalising our materials, the feedback was found useful and led to some modifications of the material.
5. Were your books prescribed/used?

Why/why not; widely/limited audience.

My books for school use were invariably approved by textbook committees and got to be widely used. The S.S.L.C. books, being commissioned ones, were automatically prescribed. The prose selections ‘Current English for Language Skills’ (Macmillan) won prescription in Higher Secondary Schools and in collegiate classes. An abridgement of Edward Thompson’s ‘The Youngest Disciple’ got prescribed for the Intermediate Examination 1957 (Madras University). The grammar books written for Frank Brothers Ltd. and for Orient Longman Ltd. also have won prescription in several universities.

6. What were your major considerations in writing a book?

Prioritise:

a. financial
b. fame
c. love for your subject
d. sense of commitment to a cause
e. zeal for reform
I never began with the financial motive, though money was certainly an incentive. My other incentives were:

a. An involvement in my field of work and a desire to make a contribution to it, if possible,

b. A feeling of having gained sufficient competence for the task and an urge to have it tested,

c. A perception that the books available in the field were not entirely satisfactory and that perhaps I could do things better,

d. The belief that writing might bring more clarity to my ideas and that that would contribute to my professional improvement, a sense of fulfilment that comes from successful authorship, and

e. The start given to my efforts by the first publisher who approached me with a proposal.

7. Textbook as 'gospel' or as a 'pretext' — “tangible manifestation of the curriculum in action.” Comment.

Quite obviously, the textbook is no ‘gospel’. It is just a tool — one of the tools — in the hands of the teacher. Teaching, ultimately, is an individual, a personal responsibility, with an inspirational component in it. The textbook can prove to be a good aid in respect of some part of the teacher’s work, if in addition to the reading passages it also has some readily available teaching material that the teacher would otherwise have to work
out for himself. The advantageous use of the textbook is indeed an important topic in the teacher-training course.

8. Is it necessary to train textbook writers, regarding:
   a. format
   b. gradation
   c. level
   d. cohesiveness

Training in workshops of sufficient duration and conducted by veterans in the field, is necessary for aspirants to textbook authorship. The pre-requisite is that the participants should have a degree of proficiency in the use of the language and at least a few years of experience in teaching it at the level for which they are to write. This is analogous to training teachers to be able to teach.

9. Indian authorship has made great strides. Agree/disagree.

   Refer to the background note at the beginning.

10. What kind of support does the author need from the publisher?

    No ideas to offer on this.

11. Do textbooks restrict/restrain teacher creativity?

    No response.
12. Your advice to novice writers.

Start writing only after you have gained more than adequate experience in the field you work in. An understanding of the interests of the children as well as of their learning problems is necessary. So also is a good acquaintance with the theoretical studies relating to the field. Books written by others can afford guidance for avoiding pitfalls and shortcomings.

3.3.2.1.4. Researcher’s Interpretation of the Case Study

1. Authors are forced to compromise on the literary merit of texts when faced with issues like being politically correct or choosing content that is of didactic value. This is unavoidable. However the publishers’ ‘ignorance’ on purely academic matters can be turned to the author’s advantage and he need not succumb to an unhealthy compromise.

2. Feedback on the effectiveness of a textbook is not always straightforward and forthcoming and comes from plagiarists rather than publishers. When the models the author created are recreated and re-cycled we get an affirmation of the value of the materials.

3. The writing and publishing of textbooks has evolved down the years. With it has developed increased awareness and expectations on the part of learners, teachers and others involved
in the use of the textbook. Both authors and publishers have to be sensitive to this development and a lack of this awareness would spell disaster to their joint enterprise.

4. Authors should be involved in and committed to their work apart from having a sufficient competence to complete the work satisfactorily.

5. Publishers do motivate authors by asking them to write.

6. Textbook writers need to be trained by veterans in the field.

7. A textbook writer needs theoretical know-how as well as experience in the classroom. He should be able to evaluate other textbooks and use books written by experts as guidance.

3.3.2.2. Case Study 2

3.3.2.2.1. Biographical Information

Name: Professor Makhan Lal Tickoo

Posts Held: Formerly Head, Department of Materials Production, CIEFL, Hyderabad
Formerly Head, Curriculum Development, RELC, Singapore
General Editor ‘‘Gulmohar’’ (1972) and ‘New ‘Gulmohar’’ (1999)

Publications: Has authored several ELT textbooks and has written extensively on issues related to language learning and teaching.
3.3.2.2.2. Interview Transcript

One of the major considerations when you are looking at school books or university books is that you are part of the publishing scene, you are part of the publisher personified. If the publisher is a state government bureau the nature of the constraints they put to you will differ. The other is that what a publisher does or what a publisher’s editor does, (that is if he gets what he wants) depends substantially on who they are dealing with. In other words if it is a neophyte writer who has just started writing, then there are a lot of do’s and don’ts, and guidance and models and so on; but if there is a writer who has done the job over a period of time, then they do it differently. So there are a number of variables in this.

If you take the publisher to be a state govt agency or a textbook bureau, then there are other considerations: national values— they need a commitment on a certain stage or a certain time — on environmental issues, separatist language issues, concern for the disadvantaged, rural-urban divide, all these will come into the picture. And depending on how well organised the state government publishers are they will be giving those as guidelines.

Then if you define it on another larger context, on the international scene when the textbook comes from the mother country; in that case the publisher will tell him/her the kind of market he’s writing for: specific markets. The constraint when writing to an international market will be different.
What publishers ask depends on the author; in part the relationship between the author and the publisher in India is partly determined by who holds whom in what esteem; depends on the perception that the publisher has of the author like rank, experience etc.

3.3.2.3. Researcher's Interpretation of the Case Study

1. The author is part of the publishing process.

2. The constraints faced by a government publishing agency will differ from those faced by a private publisher.

3. Guidelines will differ depending on who the publisher is.

4. In India the relationship between author and publisher is determined by who holds whom in what esteem.

5. Experienced authors are treated differently from neophyte authors.


3.3.2.3. Case Study 3

3.3.2.3.1. Biographical Information

Name: Professor K.R. Narayanaswamy

Posts Held: Consultant and specialist adviser, ELT, Guest Faculty, IIM Bangalore, Xavier Institute of Management, Bangalore, School of Communication and Management, Cochin, and Kirloskar Institute of Advanced Management Studies, Harihar.

Consultant/special adviser to World Language English, London since 1981; Visiting Professor, RIE, Bangalore. Reader in English, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria.

Teacher trainer
Research Fellow, CIE, Hyderabad
Attended 4 IATEFL conferences.
3.3.2.3.2. Interview Transcript

1. What was/were the worst compromise/s you had to make with the publisher?

I can’t think of any compromise I made with my publisher that might be called ‘a worst compromise’. I made no compromise whatever with any publisher. One Reader to whom my manuscript* had been referred to had no doubt made a few suggestions which he thought might enhance the value of my monograph but he left it to me to accept or reject any of those suggestions. I accepted some and rejected the rest. The decision was entirely mine. The publisher of my poems published them as I had written them. Another publisher wanted me to write a Reader aimed at the first year university classes and they laid down the length that I had to conform to but these are conditions no author could possibly object to. A book, particularly a textbook, is like a play and just as a playwright has to accommodate the wishes and sensitivities of the director, the producer and the leading actors, not to mention the audience, so has the author to accommodate the legitimate interests and
concerns of the publisher. Compromises on the part of the author are inevitable but these should normally pose no problem if author and publisher agree not to encroach on each other’s territory. The author is the best judge of the book as an academic product, while the publisher is the best judge of what kind of book will sell, the length, the price etc. However, one publisher at times trespassed into my territory, and there were problems. See my answer to Q.3

2. Mention areas where you succeeded in convincing the publisher to your point of view.

Not applicable in my case.

3. What were the reasons for publisher interference?
   a. academic
   b. economic
   c. psychological (ego problems)
   d. indifference/thoughtlessness

   The reasons were primarily three: economic, ego problems and ideological baggage.

   Economic: I had occasion to drop a couple of units of a grammar book I had written for a publisher because the book was getting too bulky to find enough buyers for the company to make profit. I was unhappy about dropping
the units for academic reasons but quickly reconciled myself to what I thought was a reasonable demand from the publisher. As the author, I am just as interested as the publisher in the sale of my book.

Ego problems: The in-house editors by and large are a semi-literate lot unqualified for the job but this doesn’t prevent them from trying to improve on the author’s manuscript. An in-house editor’s job in my view is to copy edit the manuscript and prepare it for the press but the kind of in-house editors I have had to deal with had high aspirations which went beyond doing the pedestrian job of copy-editing but the aspirations were not matched by qualifications in terms of talent, knowledge and experience. Some of them would not even make the grade as copy-editors!

Ideological baggage: Alone of all the publishers I dealt with, only one publisher had their own ideological baggage to carry. They were against sexual stereotyping, against violence and cruelty, against ethnic jokes, against offending anyone or any group of people; they were for caution, which at times bordered on pusillanimity, and for the politically correct. Most of these principles are unexceptionable in theory and I have no quarrel with them. My quarrel, however, was with the manner in which they were interpreted and enforced by the zealous in-house staff. Let me illustrate. This publisher’s concern for women is so obsessive that they suspect a chauvinistic male in every woodpile; in the editorial offices of this publisher woman is a holy cow. They count the number of times the author has used the masculine nouns and
pronouns to check whether there is an equal number of feminine nouns and pronouns. If they feel the woman is under-represented in the text, they will change an ‘Anil’ to an ‘Anees’ but without effecting the necessary changes in the possessive pronouns and adjectives that follow so that a sentence like:

The teacher warned Anil to mend his ways will appear after the editing as:

The teacher asked Anees to mend his ways

You can warn an Anil but you can only ask an Anees. Even where the male author has been positive in his attitude to women, he is not safe from the editorial axe. An example of mine in my latest book, like this one:

There are a number of women in the procession and that, if you ask me, is a good sign was changed to:

There were a number of children in the procession and that, if you ask me, is a good sign.

4. Did your publisher get you feedback?

Yes.

5. Were your books prescribed/used?

Yes; all of them were prescribed and are still being used.
6. **What were your major considerations in writing a book?**

Prioritize:

a. financial  
b. fame  
c. love for your subject  
d. sense of commitment to a cause  
e. zeal for reform

a. financial  
b. love for subject  
c. sense of commitment to the cause of teaching English  
d. fame  
e. awareness of the importance of the textbook in the scheme of ESL — in that order.

In a country like India, there are limits to what we can do by way of training or re-training teachers, finding the right kind of persons to teach and offering them the right kind of incentives, financial and other. In these circumstances the textbook used in the classroom has a crucial role to play in the teaching of English. Put into the hands of teachers and learners a well-written textbook, and nothing much can go wrong with our teaching of English.
7. Textbook as ‘gospel’ or as a ‘pretext’ — “tangible manifestation of the curriculum in action.” Comment.

In the difficult circumstances in which English is being taught today in India, the textbook will necessarily be ‘gospel’. Nothing wrong with that as long as you have dedicated professionals writing the textbooks.

8. Is it necessary to train textbook writers regarding:
   a. format
   b. gradation
   c. level
   d. cohesiveness

Not necessary.


I agree.

10. What kind of support does the author need from the publisher?

Prompt payment of royalty honestly computed, and non-interference in the author’s domain. The author is the base on which the entire edifice of publishing rests; publishers should realize this, and what’s more, act on that realization while dealing with authors.

11. Do textbooks restrict/restrain teacher creativity?

No textbook, however brilliant, can restrain a teacher’s creativity.
12. Your advice to novice writers.

The writer must bear in mind all the time the kind of readers he/she is writing for, their needs and capabilities, so that he/she is readily understood and if possible, enjoyed. In other words, the author should conform to the ethics of writing.

3.3.2.3.3. Researcher's Interpretation of the Case Study

1. Authors and publishers need to work together. They cannot function independently. The issue here is not who is dependent on whom or who benefits more from the association, or even whose survival is at stake; the issue that is of immediate concern is how do the author and publisher refrain from falling prey to the temptation of overlooking or over-riding their interdependence. One cannot exist, let alone operate, without the other and thus it becomes all the more crucial that they respect each other's sensibilities.

2. The author has his domain — academic; the publisher has his domain — economic. Clear cut guidelines need to be formulated so that they don't trespass into each other's territory: The publisher will have to give the author carte blanche with regard to the academic constituents of the book while the author has to abide by the dictates of the publisher regarding the commercial requirements of the book. However unprofessional the editorial
team is, the author is obliged to adhere to the publisher’s in-house style. Another area of strife is with regard to paying royalty dues; but such problems occur only in the case of totally unscrupulous publishers. It is the author’s responsibility to ensure that a watertight agreement is drawn before embarking on a writing assignment and no assignments should be taken on mere verbal agreements. Once there is awareness of their areas of operation the potential for misunderstanding and dissention is greatly reduced.

3. The author as well as the publisher shouldn’t be too rigid — but be flexible and have an open mind.

4. Constraints and compromises are inevitable in any relationship, and there is no overlooking the fact that the author-publisher relationship is fraught with tensions — tensions that could undermine the ideological framework on which the partnership rests. Compromises are necessary — but they should not affect the ideology of the book — no compromise beyond a limit.

5. Clashes do occur — mainly due to ego problems/ ignorance.

6. Publishers need to support the author — financially and through non-interference.
3.3.2.4. Case Study 4

3.3.2.4.1. Biographical Information

Name: Professor K. Venkatakrishnan

Posts Held:  
Professor, RIE, Bangalore  
Author, CIEFL, Hyderabad  
Professor, University of Aden College of Education  
Language Officer, Madras English Teaching Campaign

Publications:  
Books for the four southern states under the Nationalisation Scheme.  
ELT articles in leading newspapers.  
Books for use in South Yemen.  
Syllabus and Materials for use in Language Laboratory, IIT, New Delhi.  
Programmed Learning materials for Tamil learners of English  
‘Gulmohar’ Workbooks 1 and 3 for Orient Longman Ltd.  
Readers, Workbooks and Vocabulary Practice books for Macmillan Publishers (20 books in all)

3.3.2.4.2. Interview Transcript

1. What was/were the worst compromise/s you had to make with the publisher?

   Deadlines. Publishers don’t give enough time to plan, and write because they have a schedule and have to carry the book to schools before other publishers. One restraint or main constraint was time.

2. Mention areas where you succeeded in convincing the publisher to your point of view.
Complete freedom was given. With one particular series I was first told to write five workbooks. Then because of lack of time it was cut down to two books and work was divided among more authors. I did workbooks one and three so I did not know what went into book two in order to grade my units in book three. Also there was the syllabus to adhere to. No interference at all from publisher, but book would have been well graded if I had written all the books. I can’t convince publishers about this; they decide because it’s a business proposition for them. But before they approach the author they must make up their minds. On content there was little interference. For example, while writing for a government textbook committee a short story by Rajaji on Vinayaka had to be removed because the committee felt it reflected religious bias. It is the author’s privilege to select material. With private publishers the author more or less works alone. But writing for a government agency, there is a committee of five or six people involved with authors and a chairman who has the ultimate word. The government officer doesn’t get involved. The committee works as a team. There are meetings on the themes to be selected. Payment is very poor but authors cannot demand any thing.
Some topics are thrust on you. The Teachers' Guide is just brought out; they are not bothered whether it is used or not. There is an economic reason behind publishing a Teachers' Book or guide. We cannot give copies to all teachers.

3. What were the reasons for publisher interference?
   a. academic
   b. economic
   c. psychological (ego problems)
   d. indifference/thoughtlessness

There was no psychological or ego problems. Everything was openly discussed. No indifference also because they listened to me and this was because competent people were in charge.

4. Did your publisher get you feedback?

With private publishers, sale is the only feedback they want. This is true to some extent. It is not always the headmistress or teacher who chooses a book. It's mostly the publisher who decides. A book gets prescribed depending on who gives more discount. Students buy books from school mostly. Not from the market.

For government textbooks feedback is in the form of letters from teachers asking for clarification. The teacher won't use the book if it is too tough. So the author has to give guidelines.
5. *Were your books published/used?*

Why/why not; widely/limited.

Yes.

6. *What were your major considerations in writing a book?*

Prioritise:

a. financial  
b. fame  
c. love of subject  
d. sense of commitment to a cause  
e. zeal for reform

Under the Nationalisation Scheme one textbook was prepared for thousands of students to use. RIE published the books keeping current trends in ELT in mind. The state government and RIE collaborated on that project then. Not the case any more. There was an excellent team at RIE during 1963-1973. Recognised as the best team in S.E. Asia. Authors went abroad for training. For this project authors were nominated and the team consisted of two authors plus a committee member. Till then the English in textbooks was not natural. That was the complaint. So there was need for a different type of textbook. My priorities in writing were firstly, love for the subject; this included the ability and the experience to write. Financially I had to just accept what they gave. With the private publisher too it was the same.
Commitment yes; no fame. The initiative to write a book must come from the publisher.

7. Textbook as ‘gospel’ or as a ‘pretext’ — “tangible manifestation of the curriculum in action.” Comment.

Teachers shouldn’t be slaves to textbooks. It is only supporting material. Use it for reading practice and exercises. Handy for homework. And ensures that students don’t waste time. Textbook is not the vital base in classroom teaching. If you take away the textbook the teacher must be able to teach. Use it only for language practice. Go beyond textbook even for other subjects. Teacher efficiency also to be considered. Dispense with textbook and ideally the textbook should be used only for language practice. Students’ load will be reduced if textbook dependence is reduced. Just a notebook should do.

8. Is it necessary to train textbook writers regarding:
   a. format
   b. gradation
   c. level
   d. cohesiveness

Apart from these, the writer also needs to be receptive, and with experience in writing textbooks — then build with training. Real
teaching experience is very valuable. At all levels, if possible. Writer should know what children want; what they can and can't do.

Format: Needs to be discussed beforehand with editor.

Gradation: Committee prepares the syllabus. Author writes based on this graded syllabus. Author should do gradation ideally. When seven people write based on one syllabus, gradation will not be as we want it to be with different people writing at the same time. Integrated series cannot be achieved.

Level: Disputable point. Some authors feel it is necessary to give lessons of a higher level; some won’t stick to a strictly structural syllabus: language has to be within the grammar item described; that way it will be easier. Level will not be uniform when five people write.

Cohesiveness: Different themes form a single text — has dialogue, story, travel, science, sports etc. The linguistic level also has to have cohesiveness. The modern trend is not to write our own lessons but to use original texts. To depict real life. This is okay for adult learners. But the author needs the liberty to change texts for little children.

Authors' approach to writing has changed tremendously. Earlier they had to write strictly within the structural approach: Lesson 7 uses language items used up to lesson 6. A foundation in structural approach plus teaching experience was enough to write textbooks.

Now:
  - freedom to go beyond structure; the level is internally decided upon. Not so in structural approach (graded and controlled)
  - New list consists of prose lesson + poem related to theme + extra reading material. 8-9 units now; earlier 10-20 lessons and 15 poems; unit: difference to earlier 'lessons'

10. What kind of support does the author need from the publisher?

a. If the themes selected by the author are not liked by the editor-publisher, the author should know about it well in time. Also with government books the textbook reviewer cannot edit if completed book is given to edit/review. The scheme has to be given in advance because they cannot reject work and ask for it to be redone because of limitations of time.
b. The editor should be an ELT person to understand the rationale behind the materials.

c. The author should get financial assistance to buy, if necessary, source materials which are not readily available in the local libraries.

d. There should not be a rush against time, which will affect the quality of the materials.

e. Approach the right author. No prejudice. Fairness in choosing an author not just by the sale his book generates. Personal likes and dislikes should be done away with in the selection of authors.

f. The author should know the feedback from teachers and pupils which will be useful in producing subsequent editions of the book.

g. Such revision should be undertaken periodically so that teachers as well as the pupils will find something new (not everything) to read or do.

h. Cost of illustrations should not be reduced from the royalty. It should be borne by the publisher.

i. Risk money to bring out new ideas. No publisher does it.
j. Schools should be given freedom to choose between nationalisation/government produced books and privately published books; this will ensure both good competition between the two and better quality textbooks; it will lead to denationalisation.

11. Your advice to novice writers.

Novice writers should first analyse the existing books and see why certain themes/exercises are preferred to others. They should have actual teaching experience in the classes they write books for. They should be aware of current trends and practices in ELT. They should be good in both language and language teaching. Novice writers must sit with experienced ones; on the job training done some times. They don’t write on their own at all. Just knowledge of English is not enough. Teaching experience with the ability to evaluate a textbook is essential; team work; share experiences; compromise; don’t try to wangle a place in textbook committees. The private publisher may select novice writers; but has the responsibility to train them; they want best materials; so don’t need novice writers.
12. The relationship between the author and publisher is one of constraints and compromises. Agree/Disagree.

I partly agree. But the author's opinion should receive more weight in academic matters.

3.3.2.4.3. Researcher's Interpretation of the Case Study

1. For a book to succeed it needs a dedicated group of professionals — both teachers/materials writers and editors/publishers — who are up-to-date with the latest trends in English Language Teaching and are at the same time familiar with ground realities vis-à-vis the classroom. Both authors and editors need a firm grounding in ELT principles.

2. The author works best when he/she is given complete freedom once the writing starts. All issues (themes to be selected/time frame to complete work/ royalty issues etc.) have to be sorted out beforehand and the only type of criticism that is acceptable is 'constructive' criticism. Also, while the initiative to write a book must come from the publisher, it is the authors' prerogative to choose materials.

3. Personal prejudice and bias should not be the yardstick in author selection.
4. Feedback and revision are crucial in the post-textbook publishing phase. This is a time for stock taking and reaffirming the rationale and ideology of the book.

5. Though publishing is a business like any other, publishers have to be willing to risk money once in a while to promote the exposition of new ideas and thought.

6. Competence, ability, experience: these qualities are essential for both textbook writers and editors/publishers in order to produce materials that would serve the purpose for which they are produced.

7. Schools (teachers/ students) should decide what textbook to use in order to ensure better standards in materials produced which is the direct result of competition between government and private publishers. The end user should be the decision maker.

8. Time is the biggest constraint for the author and money for the publisher. Planning, communication and proper market research will ease out these two aspects considerably.
3.3.2.5. Case Study 5

3.3.2.5.1. Biographical Information

Name: Professor V. Sasikumar

Posts Held: Teaching English, training teachers of English, designing syllabuses and producing instructional materials in English Language Teaching for more than forty years. Was trained in teaching English as a Foreign Language at the University of London. Has worked in various capacities in the Kerala State Department of Education, Regional Institute of English, Bangalore, and Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, serving the Institute as Head of the Department of Materials Production, and as Dean of Studies.

Publications: Has authored, co-authored and edited about hundred and forty books some of which are being used in schools and colleges at the national and state levels, and on teacher-development programmes.

3.3.2.5.2. Interview Transcript

1. What was/were the worst compromise/s you had to make with the publisher?

You should put the topic in a more positive fashion — don't approach it talking about constraints and compromises. The relationship between the writer and the publisher is symbiotic — one writes the other publishes. No writing, no publishing and vice versa. They work together towards the same goal, common aim: making teaching-learning materials available to the teacher and learner. Both work towards the fulfilment of that common aim. Therefore there is no constraint or compromise — only working out the goals and the plan of action that will culminate in the
production of the textbook. Like the running of a family where the husband and wife work together there is no constraint or compromise.

I wrote for two types of publishers — a. government agencies b. two-thirds for private publishers. General goals for both are the same, but the constraints under which they work are different. Government agencies had no awareness of the quality of the materials they are supplying to the teacher/learner — not worried about quality. They worried about two things — 1. Book should be priced as low as possible; it could mean compromising on quality. 2. The book should be published as quickly as possible — also compromised on quality. Textbook officers say that you take three months to write the book, because we need nine months to print it. That is the writing-publishing relationship ratio: as quickly as possible: as cheaply as possible. These are severe constraints. I don’t pretend to be a great upholder of quality, but I did not compromise on these, but tried to work within this framework. And produce the best I thought the children and teachers deserved. This is a very unfair, crippling situation. I enjoyed doing it because government textbooks are the best way to influence, best way to get to even the poorest child in the country. The largest number of children
go to government run schools, and if I confined my writing to English medium schools which use privately published books, the outreach would have been much smaller. I hope to have made some difference in the way government books were written, because people writing for government agencies compromise on quality, because they have no instructions and do what they want. They have no responsibility and want to use as little of their time and brain as possible. All in all it was not a very pleasant experience. The private publisher published for the more affluent sections of society and writing for them has been a more pleasurable experience. They want to put in a lot of effort into the making of a book because there is competition which is totally lacking in the government set up, because it is a monopoly of the government. One of the items of competition is the quality. Normally no pressure by way of time and there is the incentive of more money from the private publisher. I got recognition through government books. That helped me gain access and recognition with the private publishers.

2. Mention areas where you succeeded in convincing the publisher to your point of view.

I forged a good relationship with both the textbook officer and the private publisher and delivered manuscript more or less
within the time frame. I told them that I was trying to bring about a few changes and it might provoke teachers and parents into protests. This was important because materials put into the hands of the students and teachers should be useful to them — what are the aims for which it is learnt: learners. What are the ways in which we can help the teacher make best use of the material in the classroom: teacher. I always tried to convince textbook officers [government and private publishers] to start with the formulation of a syllabus. They have always agreed with me, provided of course that I take on the responsibility of formulating the syllabus. That wasn’t their mandate. Their mandate was to get books written and published — what were they based on, how good should they be, that was no concern of theirs. They do worry that the teacher does not properly use the new things that find their place in the textbook. One solution proposed was the Teacher’s Handbook — they either did not publish it because they were happy with the textbook, so it remained in manuscript; if published, it did not reach the teacher; if it reached the teacher, they didn’t bother to use them. So that idea wasn’t very appealing to me. What the teacher should know and should do should form part of the textbook itself. Like the analogy of the pressure cooker — the most important instructions were pasted on the
cooker. Instructions and information should form part of the textbook. And on the whole, the principles, aims and objectives underlying that particular stage, the classroom methodology on how to teach a prose piece or a poem, organize writing, reading activities, encourage the child to develop study skills, are well worth putting as part of the book; include a small section either at the beginning or at the end of the book addressed to the teacher. Additionally as the main textbook cannot carry all the practice materials that the children would need, workbooks were necessary. Traditional practice was to have three books — teacher’s book, learner’s book and a practice book. The tendency for the teacher was to finish the textbook and if time was left, take up the workbook which is a complete negation of the principle of the workbook. The workbook consisted of exercises which consolidated and established what was learnt through the textbook — exercises in workbook had to be used at specified intervals, interrupting the textbook; so that should find a place in the textbook — a 3-in-1 book with materials for the teacher’s guidance, materials for the learner in learning and materials for the learner’s practice. This book was bigger than three different books; but the three separate books would have been two to three times bigger than mine if put together; it made economic sense,
and ensured that all the materials the teacher and learner needed went within the two covers of the textbook. This was a new idea but there were no objections. Most government agency books follow this pattern now. Innovation can be 25% of new concepts — gradually add on in a course of a few years.

3. What were the reasons for publisher interference?
   a. academic
   b. economic
   c. psychological(ego problems)
   d. indifference/thoughtlessness

Because I had a personal rapport with the textbook officer I could introduce these things. Corporate publishers were easier to handle because they were eagerly looking for innovation and had no hesitation in incorporating suggestions. I never had publisher interference — they were cooperative; we have to understand the limitations under which they operate; and both are working towards a common goal. There was no academic interference, because of indifference; they didn’t care; or were wise enough to grant that as a writer I knew better than them what the academic content should be. Economic — yes. With government agencies — ‘make it as small as possible’ was the advice. This is understandable because in village schools books are subsidized.
(In Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu textbooks were sold at Rs. 10 a book.) But with the private publisher, books were economically sized, but not economically priced. The author is happy with this because higher the price, more the royalty. Innovation was brought in by adding a letter to parents at the beginning of the book. Parents have this idea that they can manage the teaching of English if they had the time. Parental interference and hostility towards teachers is quite common. Teachers-parents-learners are working together and there is no point in antagonizing parents — their support and consent is essential to carry out innovation. Parents think the methods of teaching English have changed since their time, hence feel insecure — especially when phonics is introduced. No psychological problems and no ego problems with the publisher. Publisher wants to produce the best book and the author also wants the same — therefore there is no conflict. Indifference — yes. With the government that meant having a free hand.

4. Did your publisher get you feedback?

I was gradually able to add more things, a new idea. Two to three term tests were built into the body of the book to serve as a model for teachers who make unsatisfactory tests. A vocabulary list gave in alphabetical order the new words used in the book and
was attached at the end of the textbook with a reference to which unit it appeared in. The concept of Units as against Lessons gained acceptance. Also a detachable questionnaire — a tear off book, at the end addressed to teachers and learners on how they found the book; but this was not passed on to me. Feedback was mostly from private publishers who had two types of objections: 1. Things (new things) they did not want to do  2. Things that did not work in the classroom — I was clever enough to separate the two.

5. Were your books prescribed/used? Why/why not widely/limited audience.

All books were prescribed. Wide coverage for textbooks written from LKG up to UG levels. Wrote handwriting books, history of handwriting books. Conversational English books, grammar books. I wrote 140 books in all approximately.

6. What were your major considerations in writing a book?

Prioritise:

a. financial
b. fame
c. love for your subject
d. sense of commitment to a cause
e. zeal for reform
Why did I write books? Update your theoretical understanding of the teaching of English and textbook writing. Zeal for reform was the primary reason. A lot could be done through the medium of the textbook; the analogy of good driving: if you have good roads, well maintained vehicles, disciplined drivers and a sense of humour, driving will be very pleasurable. The textbook occupies the position of highest influence because as is the textbook so is the teacher; as is the teaching, so is the learning. The textbooks offer a wonderful chance for influencing things happening in the classroom; reform can be brought in through the textbook; the analogy of the municipal water supply system — if you are convinced that a small amount of fluoride is necessary for the well-being of people’s teeth, the best way is to put that quantity in the water supply. Don’t expect people to buy fluoride toothpaste. This is an unobtrusive, easy, inexpensive way to do it. If you put reforms in the textbook they have a wonderful chance of reaching the end of the conveyer belt — the school-teacher-parents-public in general.

The textbook is an object which is held in high esteem; not only by the learner because it is the sum total of all the things he has to learn; also for the teacher as the sum total of all the things she has to do in the classroom; it is an important tool in the hands of the
supervisor — headmaster, inspecting officer — the textbook gives an idea of how much should be done in a given period of time; progress can be monitored with the help of the textbook: without the textbook there is no way to find out how much the teacher has done or how much more she has to do; it sets the timetable for the teacher, headmaster; parents hold it in high esteem because it represents the learning the children acquire in the classroom; all the textbook puts together is 'education' for the parents. Money was not the aim, but it was a very welcome by product; fame — gratifying — textbook writer gets no fame; when teachers write to me I am flattered by the praise; when they criticize — if they did not understand the exercise I realize that it was not the right type of exercise.

7. What kind of support does the author need from the publisher?

a. A field try out of the materials that are to be published — impossible with the government setup — putting money in a trial edition that will later be changed or thrown out completely—this concept will never be accepted by the government agency.

b. Provision for research and development in the field of textbook production;
c. Produce a prototype of the textbook — feedback collected, analysed, lessons learned; modifications made to the first version.

d. The private publisher is affluent and can put in money into research on several prototype books before one of them is finalized.

e. Author should work closely with the publisher on all fronts: conceiving, planning, working out the details, interim editing of the manuscript, the DTP stage (unlike the days of manual composing, last minute changes can be brought in because of the computer), illustration and launch. Interaction is essential.

8. Your advice to novice writers.

a. Have constant touch with the classroom; keep your feet firmly in the classroom; you should be part of the classroom, but you should also be outside it. Get away from the classroom, look at it from a distance, see it with the right perspective. An objective assessment of what can work/what cannot. Constant touch with the classroom and the teacher — small, big classes, training teachers. As a writer of text books you shouldn’t be there all the time —
the classroom is a dirty place — it stinks — if you are there all the time you are worried about the difficulties, problems, reasons why you cannot do things.

b. The textbook writer should not be a full time teacher; must

i. Have a sense of the classroom — what will/ won’t work; do actual teaching/ observe teaching/ talk to teachers/textbook can be academically perfect, but won’t work in the classroom.

ii. Have a total view of learning in the classroom; in the frame work of which the English textbook will play a part. If you look at the textbook only as the teacher of English you will not help the teacher cope with the other things taking place in the classroom. Don’t exaggerate in your mind the importance of that part of teaching — i.e. teaching English alone, as the sole activity — lots of people fall into that trap. Put it in the right perspective.

iii. Act out in your mind whatever you put into the textbook — the exercises etc. If you have experience, you will be able to recreate whatever happens in the classroom.
iv. Look at other people's work constantly; tell yourself that you are not the best writer in the world. Learn from them; go behind the textbook and ask why has the writer put these things in the book; is it a beautiful/economic way of achieving it; then copy it without any sense of shame; in the business of textbook writing everyone is imitating everyone else; no harm; there is no copyright on any pattern of exercise.

v. Read journals, keep abreast of the latest thinking in ELT.

3.2.5.3. Researcher's Interpretation of Case Study

1. Symbiotic relationship between author and publisher: both want to produce the best book. If there is no writing there is no publishing and vice versa. Both work together towards the same goal, common aim: making teaching–learning materials available to the teacher/learner. In fulfilling that common aim there is no constraint/compromise — only working out the goals, the plan of action that will culminate in the production of the textbook. The author-publisher relationship is analogous to the running of a
family where the husband/wife work together and there is no constraint or compromise.

2. That all publishers are unscrupulous is as much a misnomer as all authors are responsible. But publishers be it government or private/corporate should never compromise on the quality of the materials in relation to pricing of the text and the time given to write it. ‘Quickly and cheaply’ produced materials are not the best materials. Similarly, the author should not give in to the temptation of doing slipshod work on the excuse of paucity of time. An author has to be responsible and has to learn to work within these constraints keeping the interests of learners and teachers paramount.

3. The publisher should be able to balance commercial viability with academic considerations. This is often difficult to achieve given the stiff competition in private publishing but this is often evened out by huge returns financially, catering as they are to the needs of the affluent English-medium schools. Innovation and concern for quality are present, both being by products of the market scenario.

4. The formulation of a syllabus should be the mandatory first step before starting work on any textbook. ‘What the teacher should
know and should do should form part of the textbook itself.
These include the principles, aims and objectives underlying that
particular stage, the classroom methodology on how to teach a
prose piece or a poem, how to organize a writing task or reading
activity, how to encourage the child to develop study skills. It
would greatly help to include a section either at the beginning or
at the end of the book addressed to the teacher. Teachers under-
utilize workbooks and Teacher’s Books because the whole focus
is on completing the textbook. Time and effort spent on
producing these books would be worthwhile if the textbook is a
three-in-one (textbook-workbook-teacher’s book) entity which
guides the teacher throughout the course.

5. Author has to keep his/her feet firmly on the ground, fully aware
of classroom realities and teacher constraints. A feel for the
classroom coupled with teaching expertise, which includes
observing others teach, is indispensable because insight thus
gained will be reflected in the materials. In brief, a holistic view
of the entire classroom reality.

6. Innovation is palatable as long as it is unobtrusive. More
importantly, the author should be aware of the difference between
what teachers do not want to do in the classroom and what does
not work in the classroom.
7. Adapting and imitating existing work is acceptable. But more crucial for the author and publisher is the knowledge that what they put into a textbook has great implications socially — for the teacher (represents the sum total of all that they have to teach), for the learner (represents the sum total of all that they have to learn) and for the parent (textbook means education).

8. Humility is a worthy quality for an author to possess.

1.2.6. Case study 6

1.2.6.1. Biographical Information

Name: Professor T. Sriraman

Posts Held: Professor, Department of Distance Education, CIEFL, Hyderabad

Publications: Several college textbooks and anthologies including (co-author) ‘Current English for Colleges,’ (Macmillan) and ‘Creative English for Communication,’ (Macmillan).

1.2.6.2. Background Information

What made you say that there is interference from the publisher?

It is true to a large extent. But why is there interference on the part of the publisher? Is authors’ making references to politically incorrect or gender issues a major problem? Why does the publisher interfere? Is it because he is politically very correct or has strong gender bias? Are authors always very neutral/gender sensitive? Do the publishers feel bound by other considerations? Is the publisher a free agent?
You have not referred to a very important issue in all this — that surprises me — what are the market forces? The commercial aspect of the book is most important — even for the author. Ideology comes later. A reputable publisher strikes a balance between the two: commercial success and academic value. The good old question of anything... any form, any product that goes into the market place, be it films or fiction, do they cater to a taste which exists or do they also shape taste? Create the taste...by which you would like to be judged...authors also do that...the author also wants to sell...I wouldn’t like to write something that won’t sell...and why do I go to one publisher and not another publisher? Because that publisher sells and the other doesn’t...one publisher may be agreeable to publishing whatever I write but he may not sell... I want to reach out and while reaching out I give something that they want and also quite a lot more...just like the teacher in the classroom ...you can’t live in an ivory tower... you have to take care of your audience...give them what they want but also what they need...

The publisher himself doesn’t have a free hand. Jawaharlal Nehru said the major consideration in a country’s foreign policy, (he spoke about non-alignment and dharma) is self-interest, everything else comes later, including morality; whatever is good for the country in the long run not in the short run. So the publisher has self-interest. But his self-interest is decided by Boards... the Boards of Studies pull the strings. Let me tell you about my first experience in materials production...it was done along with my professor... Sethuraman...
it was commissioned. I had just moved to CIEFL in 86-87 and I was keen on producing not the conventional kind of anthology... he told me to do that but said the selection should be conventional... we want an anthology, basically classic texts...but you try to do things with that: possibly rewrite the introduction, but if you want to innovate do it with the tasks; but do not innovate with regard to the text because that’s what this Board wants. The Boards of Studies — that’s where education starts. Who are the Boards? They are teachers. They have to fiddle around with existing materials and they also have to call for new materials. This is one reason why autonomous colleges prefer to produce their own materials to those available in the market. Because the materials available in the market do not meet their requirements. They want something the students can work with — not things that can be taught; we want learning materials, teaching materials — that is the main criterion.

In my first book I smuggled in something more after the selection was made: Macmillan College Prose - first essay... ‘Letter to a Teacher,’ was not politically correct, it attacked the establishment. But the other essays were from Radhakrishnan, Gandhi, Chesterton, etc. because certain things are not within our control. Everything pertaining to education be it new courses or course books is market determined.

Teachers also have to be educated. Not just authors. It’s not enough if the right materials are produced, teacher-proof materials...right materials can
be very wrongly used. Sarah Freeman does not lend itself to the lecture method. But our teachers are used to only the lecture method.

Boards of Studies prescribe materials; at each point each agency or individual or group has to take account of existing demand, taste and expectations, also create new taste and new expectations. The teacher has to do that. Learner oriented materials are good for learners but are not well received by learners; they are good for the teacher but are not well received by the teacher; it is good for the Board, for the Board can create taste but they are not in a position to implement it; so at every stage there is a compromise.

My new poetry anthology has pairs of poems from different poets, genres. Proposal accepted by publishers; it’s not that publishers don’t want anything novel; they do. The market is also less uniform now; it used to be fairly homogenous; they have to cater to conventional universities, autonomous colleges.

Publishers are willing to experiment a little more and if the author has a good idea they are willing to listen to him; I have only worked on collaborations; a young author may have problems; I faced no major interference.

In textbook production what governs the thinking of publishers is the thinking of Boards of Studies: a motley crowd having various kinds of considerations, sometimes no considerations except that it should be given to
one publisher and not another publisher. Boards of Studies has to not only try to be objective it has to also seem to be objective. For e.g., if the B.A. course book is given to publisher x, the B.Com course book is not given to him even if he has a good book because they are worried motives might be construed. One of their considerations is to distribute favours; if they care for objectivity, that is. There are of course Boards of Studies that are bought; especially by ‘chotta’ publishers. But big publishers refuse to bite.

Big publishers don’t indulge in this but there are other subtle kinds of incentives. And there are very unscrupulous people among the Boards of Studies. But it's generally thought that Boards are not corrupt; but that’s not enough; the Boards have to be enlightened; and it’s not enough that they are enlightened, they have to have the courage; and that is not entirely in their own hands.

The relationship between publisher and author can be negotiated. If given some kind of enlightenment on the part of both publisher and author, it should not be difficult. There will be more interference with regard to the first venture than with the second because they know this can work.

Why is it that some good books fail in the classroom?

Because teachers are not trained; also the examination system – the examiners have to be trained; that’s not part of the Boards job; give model question paper. Teachers to be encouraged to prepare question banks; a small
bank; ensure that questions are asked only from that; questions have to be skills oriented; tests understanding rather than memory.

The teacher-the student/the teacher-the examiner, the Boards of Study member, the publisher, the author: the author is part of this system. It is quite a simplification to talk about the interference on the part of the publisher in the work of the author; take the entire picture; of course there are other factors that are not so important, like parents, society.

One of the first things a textbook writer needs is a syllabus; each university should ideally design a syllabus and this should be made available to the publishers and the author. So that the materials will conform to the needs of the syllabus; world of difference between author and author; Look at this issue: the textbook is related to the syllabus; the syllabus to the curriculum; curriculum is related to the language policy of the government: what is the role of English in this country; we need clear thinking about that: that is your theory. Ideally speaking, textbooks, and language teaching materials should fit into the overall pattern, system of education of language teaching.

3.3.2.6.3. Interview Transcript

1. What was/were the worst compromise/s you had to make with the publisher?
   In one of the anthologies I edited, the choice of the essays was not left to me, but this was because a university had
commissioned the book. It was not imposed on me by the publisher.

2. **Mention areas where you succeeded in convincing the publisher to your point of view.**

   Not applicable.

3. **What were the reasons for publisher interference?**
   a. academic
   b. economic
   c. psychological (ego problems)
   d. indifference/thoughtlessness

   See 3.3.2.6.2.

4. **Did your publisher get you feedback?**

   Prescription is the feedback. Generally the books have been prescribed in a number of institutions, universities and autonomous colleges.

5. **Were your books published/used? Why/why not/ Widely/limited?**

   The Boards must have thought them suitable for prescription.
   Widely used.
6. **What were your major considerations in writing a book?**
   
   Prioritize.
   
   a. financial
   
   b. fame
   
   c. love of subject
   
   d. sense of commitment to a cause
   
   e. zeal for reform
   
   Sorry, can’t prioritize. All of them are equally important.

7. **Textbook as ‘gospel’ or as a ‘pretext’ — “tangible manifestation of the curriculum in action.” Comment.**
   
   Yes. I have tried to make every text a pretext for learning to use the language.

8. **Is it necessary to train textbook writers regarding:**
   
   a. format
   
   b. gradation
   
   c. level
   
   d. cohesiveness
   
   Yes, in all these.

9. **Indian authorship has made great strides. Agree/Disagree**
   
   I haven’t researched enough to offer an opinion.

10. **What kind of support does the author need from the publisher?**
    
    No response.
11. Do textbooks restrict/restrain teacher creativity?

Depends. Some do. Some actually help the teachers to be more creative.

12. Your advice to novice writers.

Design your materials in such a way as to make a creative, critical, extendable, joyous activity rather than a dead, mechanical, reductive one. Every task should result in the use of English.

3.3.2.6.4. Researcher’s Interpretation of the Case Study

1. The publisher does not have the freedom to do what he wants: his decisions are based on the market he is targeting; the commercial viability of the textbook is his primary concern. That is the reason he interferes in the author’s domain, the latter being far removed from market realities.

2. Both the author and the publisher want the textbook to sell and in that they have a common agenda. Along with this comes the issue of shaping taste and creating taste: giving the learners what they want and also what they need.

3. Self-interest is the operating word in any situation, and it is no different in publishing. The publisher (and author) work on the primary assumption that the proposition is profitable in the long run.
4. The publisher is accountable to the Board of Studies and cannot take autonomous decisions.

5. The publisher and author do not face any insurmountable barriers in their dealings with each other. Misconceptions and misgivings can be overcome through negotiation.

6. The interface has to be looked at in its entirety: starting from the language policy of the government and the role of English in the country.

3.3.2.7. Case Study 7

3.3.2.7.1. Biographical Information

Name: Dr. Geetha Nagaraj

Posts held: Teacher of primary/middle/higher secondary students at Bal Bharathi Air Force School, New Delhi; Valley School, Bangalore; Delhi Public School, New Delhi. Professor at Regional Institute of English, Bangalore.

3.3.2.7.2. Interview Transcript

1. What was/were the worst compromise/s you had to make with the publisher?

2. Mention areas where you succeeded in convincing the publisher to your point of view

The worst compromise I had to make was to do with methodology and the syllabus. You start working on a particular framework and the publisher interrupts and wants to change parts of it. So what started off as communicative syllabus often ended as a structural one. With government publishers I had to compromise on quality of illustrations, time given to write, amount of white space in pages; especially children’s books should not be crammed with text; it needs a child friendly layout; My greatest success was to convince the publisher to reduce the number of lessons: Karnataka government textbooks now have eight lessons for a whole year; I told them that for one to two months don’t give the children textbooks; do a lot of oral activity.

3. What were the reasons for publisher interference?

a. academic

b. economic

c. psychological (ego problems)

d. indifference/thoughtlessness
It was mainly economic — sell the book; psychological — only because they are operating in a known area and use the knowledge they have garnered to have their say.

4. Did your publisher get you feedback?

Feedback is never volunteered by publishers. They are only interested in sales — sold more than x or y.


   Widely? I don’t know, because publishers don’t tell us. They come back with feedback only when the sale is very poor. They don’t bother much otherwise.

6. What were your major considerations in writing a book?

   Prioritize:

   a. financial
   b. fame
   c. love of subject
   d. sense of commitment to a cause
   e. zeal for reform

   Love for subject firstly. Commitment to cause which is a fall out of love for subject. Famous? We surely are not Arundhati Roy.
Big writers are. Most textbook writers are low profile people. Only those who play the big league get famous; money isn’t too much also for small players.

7. Textbook as ‘gospel’ or as a ‘pretext’ — “tangible manifestation of the curriculum in action.” Comment.

Not gospel definitely. Source for teachers. De-brief them if they think of it as gospel but at workshops if you tell teachers how to look at a different methodology it sometimes back fires because the publisher feels that you have told them how not to use the textbook while the publisher is trying to promote it. You have to break this mind set. Use the textbook the way it’s meant to be used. It’s a vicious cycle — have to break it at some point of time. If it was gospel you won’t have variety: you will use the same textbook all over India. We’ll still be using Wren and Martin.

8. Is it necessary to train textbook writers regarding:

a. format
b. gradation
c. level
d. cohesiveness
Yes. Train. Teaching is one thing. Writing is a totally different thing altogether. Certain things you experience in class are not quantifiable but which you learn from. So if you are a good teacher you can channelise these insights which will be reflected in the materials. As a good materials writer you also need to have a feel of the class. How do you incorporate pair work? Only if you have taught you will bring that insight into the materials. So ideally get good teachers and you train them to write materials. Good in the sense that those who love the subject, are open minded, want to improve. If this happens you will get qualitatively superior textbooks. Format? Earlier manuscript had to be prepared to certain specifications; now computer software has changed all that. Gradation etc? A good writer has all these. Will know what holds the book together. Theme? Common thread runs through the book — it is basically how we address the text. Cohesiveness can be taught. Needs thinking. Writing doesn’t take time; thinking about it does. Editors sometimes take up to six months to work out the ideas that go into a new text or series.
9. Indian authorship has made great strides.
Agree/Disagree.
Some of our publications compare favourably with materials produced abroad.

10. What kind of support does the author need from the publisher?
The author needs a whole lot of things: basically an understanding publisher; rare, but it happens. Don’t treat authors as some sort of labour; if take over happens it is dangerous; psychological and moral support makes the difference to the way you work — with more enthusiasm and commitment.

11. Do textbooks restrict/restrain teacher creativity?
Textbooks can restrict and restrain; if teacher can question a textbook, that teacher is a good teacher. There is a fundamental fact about writing textbooks: when you write a textbook you have a mythical audience; you have a mythical average you write to that mythical average; so when a teacher interprets a text in class there might be things that she finds do not work and other that she might want to add on. In that sense textbook does not restrict. But if considered as the be all and end all of all teaching then it restricts. Teachers cover the text without thinking usually. Writing need not be a full fledged textbook; it can be just an
exercise you created for your class. That is the beginning of writing. Intelligent use of materials even before writing materials.

12. Your advice to novice writers

No response.

3.3.2.7.3. General Comments

1. ELT is the biggest export from Britain. But local talent is being tapped to involve teachers in projects abroad. Editors from U.K. interfacing with local writers is the ideal scenario.

2. Publishing houses are very conservative; they don’t want to try new authors; only established authors. Priorities are different for government publishers; for private publisher focus is on economics and turn over; with government publishers coverage and representation is more. Both objectives are equally binding. With government textbooks the reach is in lakhs — frightening and challenging; critics will be there always. Can’t be too diversified.

3. Relationship between the author and publisher is moving in a more positive direction. People who are writing today are doing it with greater confidence. Not too many Indians were writing twenty years ago so you tended to be more diplomatic; today there is greater caution in writing technically sound material.
4. Materials have to be written as a joint venture with inputs from abroad and locally. That way the materials produced would be far superior if resources are pooled in from different sources. New perspective; fresh blood infused; ELT books especially will be good; ask British publisher to work with Indian writers; this has not yet happened.

5. Dilemma for author — sense of guilt — do you write for both government publisher and private publisher? With the private publisher you are empowered to do a better job; what should the author be doing? With the private publisher there are financial benefits only; nothing new to offer; are you being selfish when you write for them? What is the author’s sense of commitment? Shouldn’t writers give something back to society?

3.3.2.7.4. Researcher’s Interpretation of the Case Study

1. The basic framework (methodology/approach/syllabus) of the textbook must be in place before starting to write because alterations and changes will hinder the flow of work. In fact writing a book doesn’t take as much time as thinking about it and planning what goes into it. And it is time well spent.
2. Feedback from the market is very crucial in order to analyse the effectiveness of a set of materials. Publishers need to be more forthcoming in providing authors with this information irrespective of sales figures.

3. An author more than anything else must have a feel for the classroom. Good teachers make good materials writers because they bring the insights they have garnered in the classroom into the material they write. They are open-minded, love the subject and are conscious of what 'holds a book together.'

4. The author is enthusiastic and committed if the publisher is understanding and gives moral support.

5. The author is writing to a 'mythical audience' and so the chances of the materials not always being tailor made to suit every classroom situation is very high. The teacher has to make up for these loopholes.

6. The standard of some of the materials produced today is comparable with those written abroad. This is because authors have more confidence, and are more cautious and conscious about what they are writing.
7. The dilemma for the author is whether to write more for the government agency where the turn over or reach is large but the payment is meagre or for the private publisher where not only are the financial rewards recognizably larger but the job satisfaction is also higher.

3.3.3. Insights from Author Case Studies

The six author case studies along with the pilot case study give a panoramic view of the inside world of textbook writing. These can be divided into five sections:

3.3.3.1. Textbook writing

1. Formulation of a syllabus should be mandatory with principles, aims and objectives spelt out at the beginning.

2. Content should be primarily chosen for its literary merit. Political correctness and other issues are secondary.

3. Adapting and imitating existing work is acceptable.

4. Innovation is palatable as long as it is unobtrusive.

5. Writing a book doesn’t take as much time as thinking and planning for it.

6. The standard of some of the materials produced in India today is comparable with those written abroad.

7. The market determines the product.
3.3.3.2. Publisher-Author Issues

1. Publisher can only interfere editorially.

2. There is increased awareness and expectations on the part of learners, teachers — the author and publisher have to be sensitive to this development.

3. Personal prejudice and bias should not be the yardstick in author selection.

4. It is a relationship built on who holds whom in what esteem.

5. Respect one another’s domain — author: academic; publisher: economic.

6. Both need to work together with flexibility and respect.

7. Clashes occur due to ego and ignorance.

8. Both have a moral obligation to society.

9. Both should possess competence, ability and experience.

10. The relationship is symbiotic.

11. That all publishers are unscrupulous is as much a misnomer as all authors are responsible.

12. The author is enthusiastic and committed if the publisher is understanding and gives moral support.

13. Interests of learners and teachers should be paramount.

14. Complete freedom should be accorded once writing starts.
3.3.3.3. Compromises and Constraints

1. Compromise should not be unhealthy

2. Time for the author and money for the publisher are the biggest constraints. Planning, communication and proper market research will ease it out.

3. Insufficiently trained editors are a detriment.

4. A dilemma for the author is whether to write for the government or the private publisher.

3.3.3.4. Author

1. The author is writing to a mythical audience.

2. Good materials writers are open-minded, love the subject and are conscious of what holds a book together.

3. Humility is a worthy quality for authors.

4. The author has to keep his feet firmly on the ground.

5. An awareness of ELT theories plus classroom realities is essential.

6. Can use books written by experts for guidance.

7. Textbook writers need to be trained by veterans.

8. Authors should be involved, committed and competent.
9. The author is not as socially aware as the publisher.

10. The author's work can be slipshod and erratic.

11. Authors are more cautiously confident today than they were twenty years ago.

3.3.3.5. Publisher

1. Publishers do motivate authors by asking them to write.

2. The publisher should be more forthcoming on feedback.

3. Publishers are often ignorant of academic issues.

4. Publishers have to be socially aware and responsible.

5. The publisher should provide constructive criticism to authors.

3.3.4 Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the author case studies are variegated as well as insightful. The next section presents the second set of case studies, i.e. the version from the opposite camp, or the editor-publisher's point of view.

3.3.5 Case Studies: Editors and Publishers

3.3.5.1 Case Study 1

3.3.5.1.1 Biographical Information

Name: Mr. J Krishnadev Rao  
Designation: Director (Commercial) Orient Longman Ltd.
3.3.5.1.2. Background Information

Orient Longman is perceived in India as a British publishing house. It was when it started operations in the late part of the 19th century — 1895. But in 1949 it became a wholly Indian company and the decision making is Indian even though the Longman name is still there. It was the first British publishing house to assume an Indian identity and the chairman Rameshwar Rao imbued with a nationalistic spirit thought here was a vehicle (publishing) that could explore the potential in India.

Initially Orient Longman was a big distributor of books with a huge distribution network all over India and through the 1960s, 95% of the turnover came from books published abroad (U.K.) and sold here or books for which we had the license to reprint in India.

There were no editorial team or language experts those days. Only the production and the marketing teams. Rameshwar Rao changed that. He set up an editorial team. Also the concept of a textbook written by Indians for Indians was unheard of. And he did this not because he saw any commercial potential or saw a market for it; this was something he did as the chairman of a publishing house. It was a moral responsibility and that baby that was born, that idea was ‘‘Gulmohar’.’
3.3.5.1.3. Interview Transcript

A good book in my opinion is one that carries all the values and morals that we believe in and stand for as a company — anything we believe in very strongly. It might sound a boastful contention but it’s true — many of the books that we bring out are good, wonderful books — full of depth, in the attention we give each book, the authors, in evaluation ... a lot of effort, time, energy, money goes into our books.

A good book too is (for me from the marketing side), one that does not forsake the social responsibilities, doesn’t give up our strong social/moral values but at the same time addresses the aspirations and expectations of both the teacher and the student.

For example by making some books totally learner centred one could make teachers very uncomfortable for here was a text that had shifted the classroom equilibrium away from that of the teacher as the giver of information. So while theoretically sound some of these texts did not work well in the class because the teachers were not ready for it, were uncomfortable because the focus moved from teacher to learner. Those books never sold, though it was a lovely idea. So we had to find another way. The teacher as the decision maker was not comfortable with it even though on one level, the theoretical level, (learner centred) there was nothing wrong. But on the practical side books didn’t get used. How do you arrive at a compromise
between the two? Not in the sense of giving up on one to accommodate the
other but to find another way.

A good book is a combination of the publisher's expertise and the
author's academic standing. Many mediocre books are made more interesting
with the use of colours/illustrations. And while we might make compromises
with respect to the use of colour, design and layout so that prices do not go up,
we never do so with content. But something we have realised in the recent past
is that if a book doesn't catch the eye, it becomes difficult to sell even if the
content is good.

Competition was also limited till that point of time. Till then not too
many publishers published ELT textbooks other than British publishers. Entry
barriers into publishing had also become very low. Any one could become a
publisher. The entire process of book making had simplified with the advent of
newer technologies, computerization, and printing technology had also changed
very much.

Also, new publishers had no baggage to carry unlike older established
publishing houses like ours. They just catered to the context they started
publishing in, catered to the existing market conditions, whereas Orient
Longman had baggage in the sense that it was an old publisher with a
reputation at stake which it has to at all times be careful to nurture and protect.
Newer/smaller publishers have to be good — they find it difficult to compete with older publishers, who dominate the market — both in market share and their bank of knowledge. The new publishers realised that to compete with bigger publishers, they not only have to be good, they need to be better. It is possible that older publishers like Orient Longman were beginning to take their markets for granted. But their comfort levels were greatly reduced in the 1990s when the market moved from being a producer's market to a buyer's market; but while it became easier to convince the (market) buyers to use Orient Longman books, as they were better books, the consumers became more demanding and were more aware of what he/she could rightfully expect. It is this demand that is being catered to.

Also the market potential is so huge now that almost every bookseller or distributor has got into textbook publishing, whether they know the rudiments of ELT or not — a plethora of activity books, workbooks, guides have flooded the market. It is so easy to be a publisher now. So you see a wonderful array and variety of products. However the quality of the product is low, unfortunately. To keep pace with this growing demand, the newer publishers have compromised on quality; the ratio is very difficult to maintain: quality: quantity. The consumer as a result, with the mind boggling variety available, doesn't have the time to understand/choose what he/she really needs. And the publisher doesn't have the time to deal with, communicate with the consumer.
Newer publishers don’t have the time to understand the real needs of the market in their rush to keep pace with newer trends. They do not give themselves the time to think about the many layers that go into the making of a book: nor the value additions that go into the materials especially its layout, design, colour etc., nor communicate the intrinsic, real worth of the materials they produce.

Education too was commercialised in the 1990s; it has become a big business, an enterprise. Until then education wasn’t a money making business. This change has therefore resulted in deteriorating standards as quite often textbooks adopted by schools are done so not based on their educative worth but on commercial considerations. All these are significant factors in textbook publishing.

Editorial

There is a balance of the old with the young in the team — editorial decisions are made by the older group who were there from the very beginning, and who will not allow us to forsake our social responsibility and the younger team which brings in an aggressiveness and look at the marketing perspective. We get both inputs. It’s a very happy marriage which is producing encouraging results which would not be the case if we had only one and not the other.
Authors

If the author’s ideas have singular advantages to what are currently available in the market, they are considered even if the idea is economically not viable. The publisher is often forced to alter these ideas to adopt market trends. An author who has good ideas, who works fast and is a well known and acknowledged expert by the decision makers (those who prescribe the textbooks) is preferred.

Market Feedback

Feedback is crucial but it can also be negative sometimes, and not always the truth. People often say the first thing that comes to their mind when faced with a question. So, the publisher should have the ability to intelligently judge market feedback.

3.3.5.1.4. Researcher’s Interpretation of Case Study

1. If the author’s ideas have singular advantages to what are currently available in the market, they are considered even if the idea is economically not viable. The publisher is often forced to alter these ideas to adopt market trends.

2. An author who has good ideas, who works fast and is a well known and acknowledged expert by the decision makers (those who prescribe the textbooks) is preferred.
3. Publishers have to be morally and socially responsible and produce textbooks that not only reflect this stance but which also cater to the teaching and learning requirements of the class for which it was intended.

4. Books have to be both theoretically sound and practically viable — one without the other will not serve any purpose both pedagogically and economically.

5. Several ingredients go into the making of a good book – the publisher’s expertise and experience, the author’s academic standing and erudition, content that both teachers and learners are comfortable with and which is presented interestingly in addition to excellent marketing strategies.

6. What gets published is determined by the market trend. Books are no different from other commodities even though the product sold here is ideas and all the laws of commerce apply to the production and selling of books.

7. Setting a precedent is no mean task and it’s crucial to sustain a successful publication. For this the publisher must be aware of market realities and revise the books to keep pace with changing social and economic conditions.
8. The quality of books must never be compromised at any cost even in the face of deteriorating standards in education and growing commercialization. Books also have brand value and publishers have the added responsibility of maintaining the standard of publication. They must not give in to the demands of the present but should look at long term goals without jumping on to the bandwagon of publishers who have scant respect for the value of their books as enduring symbols of scholarship.

3.3.5.2 Case Study 2

3.3.5.2.1. Biographical Information

Name: Dr. Vani Vasudevan
Posts held: Editor, Lead Editor and Assistant Publisher, ELT Books

3.3.5.2.2. Interview Transcript

1. Should the editor also be an academic?

Academic not in the sense of qualifications which is just a string of degrees attached to somebody's name. Academic in the sense of a mindset, some thing that is ingrained. The attitude you bring to bear on something can be academic and that is the kind of attitude that should inform an editor's work. Qualifications are relevant but don't subsume everything else. Definitely an editor should be academic. But at the same time he should be market savvy, and a whole lot of other things.
An academic attitude shows in a certain kind of discipline, a purpose, a rigour in your approach to the subject when you are doing your research, a meticulousness, an unsparingness in your effort to get it right, to ferret out details, so that it's in the end a striving for perfection — you may not attain it but that kind of a mindset is necessary. Academic in rigour and in the quest for knowledge; you are constantly looking to know more and more.

2. **Is it necessary** to have an ELT background or to be professionally trained?

It helps. It augments your skills, but if you prioritize or order it in terms of importance, then in my view a lot of things would go above that—your language capability vs. sound language skills [with or without ELT background]; language sensitivity — a sensitive, professional reader is not necessarily a good writer; an eye for detail; a commitment — would go above your bottom line ELT qualification. That is a bonus. It’s not all.

If you have that and none of the above it will create a lacuna.

3. **What according to you is a good book?**

A difficult question. A good coursebook is one which is very responsible and interesting — it is a difficult combination. A book should be technically well put together. It should work. A judicious blend of reading texts, international, contemporary,
Indian; exercises varied, interesting and fruitful. It should not be tedious for the student. Care should be taken to keep the student’s interest in mind. Exercises should be productive, stimulating and well graded. A shoddily designed coursebook is detrimental. We cannot be sure how much learning takes place with a good book. A good book will however ensure that learning is pleasurable and comfortable. It should be value-based and should not be flippant.

4. What percentage of change will you approve of in designing a new book. How does one bring in innovation?

25% to 30% new materials and 70% old materials is the ideal ratio. The publisher has to contend with the winds of change. But, innovation should sit well with what is already there. There should be no sharp new edges; one should bring in innovation cautiously and based on market feedback.

5. Do you have any moral obligations towards society?

Who doesn’t? The textbook in an insidious way has tremendous influence in the classroom because it can create a strong impression on the students. This has far-reaching implications. Casteism, sexism and similar bias creeps in; bad textbooks reinforce them. Good practices, values and thoughts can be reinforced subtly through textbooks. The extensive use of fairy tales as reading texts is a case in point.
6. How do you identify your authors? Do you look for experience or do you pick up new authors?

We are not at all averse to new authors but often one does not have the time to experiment. When time is available one can certainly work with new authors. Hence often it is not a question of preference but convenience.

7. What is your relationship with the author?

Close. This helps to make sure that authors deliver manuscripts on time too! Good public relations is essential. The editor needs to share ideas with authors. A strictly formal approach is often counterproductive. Constant interaction is essential. Newer authors may need more of it. The editor has to ultimately integrate the author’s ideas with market needs. Editors and publishers have different kinds of interface with authors.

8. Are teacher-training programmes useful to the publisher?

In moderation, yes, because it brings you face-to-face with the end-user. This helps in obtaining invaluable feedback on the books. Secondly, it gives you visibility. It is particularly useful when launching new products. It serves as a platform for pilot launches and sometimes helps in unearthing writing talent.
9. What is your priority? Marketing of the book or academic value of the book?

A nasty question. However much one would like academic value to be the main criterion ultimately it has to balance out. Without that balance we would not survive.

1.5.2.3 Researcher's Interpretation of the Case Study

1. The editor has to have a balanced perspective of the field of operation. An academic bent of mind coupled with market savvy is the ideal quality she needs to have, apart from a sense of commitment.

2. The textbook has the potential to create bias and mould thinking processes. The editor needs an acute awareness of the potency of this tool and uses it judiciously.

3. Integrating the author’s ideas with market needs is the biggest challenge facing the editor/publisher. To achieve that balance is tricky, but not impossible.

4. Good public relations is crucial in author-publisher dealings and the onus is on the publisher to set the tempo towards a mutually beneficial partnership.

5. Good sales are paramount for survival; equally valid is the academic worth of the textbook. One cannot be compromised for the other. The same analogy holds good in the author-publisher
interface in textbook writing, where compromise and constraints will have to be smoothed out to ensure a balanced and amicable relationship.

6. Editors and publishers have different roles to play in their interaction with authors.

3.5.3. Case Study 3

3.5.3.1. Biographical Information

Name: Mr. G. Olivannan  
Designation: Proprietor, Emerald Publishers, Chennai

3.5.3.2. Interview Transcript

1. Should the editor/publisher also be an academic?

To be a textbook publisher he has to be an academic because he has to meet and interact with university professors. So he has to be reasonably well qualified to converse with academicians.

2. What according to you is a good book?

One that reaches the people for whom it was intended; it is not a good book if it doesn’t serve the purpose it was published for however good it might be content wise. Lots of planning goes into the production of a book. First we meet university professors and teachers to find out what kind of book is needed; bookshops too give important information; then authors are selected. We provide support to authors: authors need to be given a syllabus;
supplementary materials; question papers; then they come out with a good book. It is not the forum for an author to show his mastery of a subject; it is purely commercial, like cinema; investing huge amounts of money, so the book has to sell. Marketing channels also need to be perfect; once the book is published it has to go to the bookshop; then appraising has to be done if the price is not right, etc. If all the variables are balanced the book will sell well and that is a good book.

3. What is the percentage of change you would approve of while commissioning a new book?

4. How do you bring in innovation?

By communicating with authors what goes into the content of the book. With new authors it’s easier — manuscript is given to experienced authors for editing with the consent of the new authors. Publisher is only a catalyst — he doesn’t put his imprint on the book, only the author does that. But the publisher sees to it that the book reaches the end user.

Market forces sometimes force you to make innovations; like for example, the influence of the Internet. Imported books flooding the market also force you to adapt and change. Cannot
stick to tradition because you will be outdated. Students are willing to pay more for books now if the quality is good.

5. Do you have any moral obligations towards society?

Yes. Anyone can be a publisher. But to be a publisher of repute, an established one who is accepted and recognized by the academic fraternity, you have to have social, moral obligations — avoid publishing bazaar notes, give back to society by conducting seminars for teachers, etc.

6. How do you identify your authors? Do you prefer experienced or new writers?

High quality of work is not easy to find now. The cream of the students go to engineering or medical colleges. Few take up literature. Those who do, take up teaching also by accident. Few have the inclination to write. Experienced professors are welcome, but they are attached to many publishers and are therefore difficult to approach. But they are preferred. New authors come out with new ideas and are open to change. Identifying a good author is a tough job for the publisher — who has to sift through plenty of trashy manuscripts; constant struggle to find authors.
7. What is your relationship with the authors? How do you ensure a personal rapport with the author? Is it necessary?

It is difficult to start an Indian company in publishing. All big publishers were originally British. They have their own culture, tradition. We could establish in the southern states only because of our close relationship with authors — though it was purely monetary at first. Then the personal side builds up. Publishers have to understand the problems of authors. Give royalty on time, send cheque on time, that is the bottom line. Rest are all superficial. Pay regularly.

Yes. For long-term interests. Develop new authors so when there is an urgency they respond. Author is a partner so personal rapport is necessary. Successful publishers keep authors happy. Ensures author loyalty too. They won’t switch. Most students remember the author and not the publisher’s name — so the name of author is important. It is associated with a particular publisher. This is one area of business where there is no waggling or corruption — no one says this publisher has offered me so much percentage of royalty. How much can you offer?
8. Are teacher training programmes useful to the publisher?

Not too many conducted nowadays. With so much competition today it will greatly help publishers to train.

9. Which is your priority? Marketing a book or the academic value of the book?

Both are inseparable. It is like the left eye and right eye. Only if you open both eyes you can see. The first run of the book happens with good marketing. But there won’t be a second reprint if the book is poor academically. For this we need market feedback, find out what works etc; student buys the book; but teacher recommends. So talk to teacher and find out why the book is not used. It might be used by teacher but might be tough for student. Feedback is very important because there are different types of colleges, different student profiles, different standards of education.

3.5.3.3. General Comments

1. Author should be aware of market realities and trust the publisher. If for example an eminent author’s book doesn’t sell well but he hears from his colleagues (who want to please him) that they have recommended the book to all their students, the author will get a wrong notion of the sales figure and will suspect
the publisher if the royalty sum doesn’t match the notion he has of his book selling very well. He can always check out first hand from the market directly if he doesn’t trust the publisher. The teacher might be using the book (one book) but students may not. The author assumes the book is selling. It’s a small community and word of mouth information is passed on about the publishers who are prompt with payments or those who are not. Do you have an ideology or an in-house style? Style yes; so topics that are out of tune are rejected; ego problems with older authors are rare.

2. How much has book publishing changed? My company has been in the business for 23 years and I have been here for two years as proprietor. The quality of printing has changed drastically. With the conventional printing press it will take two to three months to bring out a book. So the publisher cannot accept too many manuscripts because he won’t have the time and control; also a small printing press can’t manage too many jobs; only big ones can. Printing is very easy today. Manuscripts are on floppies now. Proof reading was a big problem those days. Now you correct and send as an email attachment. Technology has helped the publisher or a lot of time would be spent on printing. Earlier five
to six months was required to bring out a book. Now it is over in a matter of weeks, if all things go smoothly.

3. Is there a dilution of standard content wise? No. It has been maintained because the University keeps an eye on materials. Standards have improved actually.

4. Publishers should feel the pulse of the authors. Editors should not directly interact with authors. The publisher has to balance this out. Editors should not play or tamper with the author’s work because unlike other trades here it is the creativity of an individual that is displayed; so the editor should not put his pen on the author’s work rashly. To avoid such confrontations the publisher must intervene. Communication is important.

5. Had you compromised with the author on any front? With experienced authors was there a conflict when they questioned your market savvy?

Your money is in play. But you can’t be harsh with authors too. The publisher has to decide what he will get in return in the long run, money or fame.
3.5.3.4. Researcher’s Interpretation of the Case Study

1. The publisher is only a catalyst — he doesn’t put his imprint on the book, only the author does that. But the author should not use it as a medium to display his scholarship or mastery over the subject. The publisher’s biggest chore is to see to it that the book reaches the end user.

2. Identifying a good author is a tough job and a constant struggle for the publisher.

3. Publishers have to understand the problems of authors. Give royalty on time, send cheque on time, that is the bottom line. Rest are all superficial.

4. For long-term interests, develop new authors so when there is an urgency they respond. The author is a partner so a personal rapport is necessary. Successful publishers keep authors happy. It ensures author loyalty too. They won’t switch.

5. Authors should be aware of market realities and trust the publisher.

6. Editors should not play or tamper with the authors’ work because unlike other trades here it is the creativity of an individual that is displayed; so the editor should not put his pen on the author’s
work rashly. To avoid such confrontations the publisher must intervene. Communication is important.

7. Publisher should decide what he wants in the long run — money or fame.

1.3.5.4. Case Study 4

3.3.5.4.1 Biographical Information

Name: Dr. Devashree (Deepa) Chattopadhyay

Posts Held: Part Time Lecturer: Department of English and The Learning Skills Centre, California State University, Sacramento, USA; Editor, Orient Longman Limited, Hyderabad; Publishing Manager, Cambridge University Press/ Foundation Books, Hyderabad.

Publications: 'Making Revision in ESL Fun' in Practical English Teaching, UK

Editor and Publisher of Teacher Plus, a bi-monthly magazine for school teachers in India. Published by Orient Longman Limited

The unit on Morphology in the teaching material for MA Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies through Distance Education, University of Hyderabad.

1.3.5.4.2. Interview Transcript

1. Should the editor/publisher also be an academic?

Academic background of the right kind could be useful though one need not be a practicing academic. It is often not possible for a publishing house, at least in India, to have editors in every subject area. Hence, an editor from a different subject background could be handling a book on a subject that is not
his/her specialisation. A ‘good’ academic background would help one approach any material with care and maturity.

If one is working on a book for educational use, especially a school book, one needs to have a very good understanding of how classrooms work, how long it will take to complete a lesson and so on. Basically, a sound academic background will help one ensure the material is correct in content, level for which it is meant, socially acceptable, etc.

2. What according to you is a good book?
   a. What interests the child should be as important as ensuring the kind/nature of information that is to be imparted at a given level is included.

   b. Should be a good mix of material. Say, in an ELT coursebook, there ought to be prose (contemporary + classic + Indian writings + writings from other non-native speaker countries).

   c. The approach adapted in presenting the material should keep in mind the target readers and users. For e.g., while doing ELT books for schools in India, our experience has been that an eclectic approach is what works best. Our
classrooms are not yet ready for an out and out communicative approach.

d. Attractively produced — depending on the level, use of illustration, colour, some amount of fun in the exercises, etc.

e. Cost: this is what parents look at and hence the schools look at while deciding on a book for prescription. The publisher thus has to constantly keep an eye on the production costs. Although producing a book has been made easier because of technical know-how, the costs haven’t really come down: quality of paper, printing, binding, transport, royalty, artwork — these costs are permanent.

3. What is the percentage of change you would approve of while commissioning a new book?

A responsible publisher’s effort is always to bring out books with new ideas and methods in a given subject. Thus, the editors have to work very closely with the authors. Especially, for schoolbooks, it is not as if the editors wait for the entire manuscript to be ready before they start work on it. Even before the author starts his/her work, the editors have long meetings with
the authors to plan out the content, approach and presentation of the book. Then, the author produces sample units which are test run at the national or local scale. All these are done to avoid massive changes when the manuscript arrives.

4. Do you have any moral obligations towards society?

Surely, publishers share the responsibility for what goes into a book. Remember the age at which a child starts to read these books, they are at an impressionable age. Hence, along with the author, the publisher’s editor has to be watchful of the moral and social responsibilities the books are intended to inculcate. The editor has to be clear about what perspective to present: For e.g. in a home situation should we show the mother in the kitchen or as going out to work, the father to help around at home, etc. Topics such as religion, caste, economic diversities have to be handled carefully. ‘Onward English’ (1980s) a school level ELT series had introduced some poems based on such realities of life as death, miseries, natural calamities etc. that children are at times faced with. Some schools refused to use the series because not all the poems were ‘happy’ ones. As a commercial enterprise, the publisher can’t ignore such feedback but cannot lose track of the realities either.
5. How do you identify your authors? Do you prefer experienced or new writers?

Combination of new and experienced authors is preferred. Teaching experience helps because the author will have an intuitive idea about what works in the class. New writers bring in fresh ideas. Ideally, it’s best to have them work as a team. The philosophy behind a series is taken care of by the general editor along with the editorial team of the publishing house. Specialists plus young authors who have more contemporary reading could combine with some experienced ones. It is important to ensure that at least the general editor, if not the publisher’s editor, has a clear understanding of the various components of the series, the structure of a unit, the logic behind the inclusion of topics, etc.

6. What is your relationship with the authors?

The author is an important player in the publishing business and thus publishers value a useful author. It is important that the publisher and the author work more-or-less at the same wavelength. It thus helps to select authors whose principles, attitude, expertise one appreciates. Very often, schoolbooks and educational series have multiple authors. One has to select these authors carefully so that team can work well. Differences can
arise in the course of working, but in most cases these can be worked out. Perceptions could be different at the outset. The publisher knows the market well and has probably identified the gap the new book will fill. It is the responsibility of the publisher to write in detail the objective of the book — what kind of market, the competing books, the gap in the market, etc. There may need to be several rounds of discussions to arrive at an objective that the two agree upon. The timeframe, the amount of editing, the number of illustrations, etc. can be roughly discussed ahead of time to avoid complications later.

7. How do you get feedback from the market regarding price, volumes?

If I have to compete with other publishers' books, I need to ensure there will be distinct reasons for schools to settle for my books over an already existing one in the market. The sales and marketing team plays a very important role here. While the editorial team would need to study the features of the existing books/series in the market, the marketing team would help to bring back feedback from the users. At times, a questionnaire or a set of guidelines is worked out to receive such feedback.
8. Are teacher training programmes useful to the publisher?

A publisher invests a lot of time in developing a series and producing it for the market. The editorial team along with the general editors, authors of the series have worked hard to publish a series which in their opinion incorporates all the relevant points for teaching a specific subject. At times, the teachers in schools are not familiar with the new approaches and methods, and hence cannot make 'good' use of the material in the books. In such cases, teacher training programmes can prove to be very helpful.

This immediately creates a lot of awareness about the material in the book. Teachers start using the books effectively and the success of the material create further market by word of mouth. Additionally, such training programmes, if organised carefully, creates a lot of goodwill in the market.

9. Which is your priority? Marketing a book or the academic value of the book?

Ideally, both are as important. The academic value cannot be undermined — the objectives one sets out, the profile of the book, the methodology and approach, the percentage of innovation planned, etc. A publisher has the responsibility to balance all these out and present them with the specific market in
view. However, a good book is also a successful book. Thus the right kind of marketing effort has to be put in if the book/series is to be popular in the market. The marketing team has to be involved in the promotion process right from the beginning when the book is under planning.

10. Who is an ideal author? Is it a myth?

Well, it is often said, ‘an ideal author’ is an ever elusive term. However, in reality, authors exist at various points of the continuum — some closer to the ‘ideal’ than others.

a. In an English teaching series, the literature part plays an important role. So, the author has to have a very good understanding of literature, its gradation, and the competence to decide which genres to be included at each level and in what proportion.

b. Similarly, the knowledge and the expertise to give to the book what the target students need as well as what they ought to be reading. In an English book, the right proportions of the four skills, grammar, literature, the methodology, etc.
c. Keep the learners’ age group in mind while selecting material. Textbooks need to be made lively and learning made fun.

3.3.5.4.3. Researcher’s Interpretation of the Case Study

1. Editors and publishers need to have, as much as authors, a very good understanding of how classrooms work in India. Academic qualifications are a big plus – however a ‘good’ academic background would help one approach any material with care and maturity. The general editor, if not the publisher’s editor, has to have a clear understanding of the various components of the series, the structure of a unit, the logic behind the inclusion of topics, etc.

2. It is important that the publisher and the author work more-or-less at the same wavelength. It thus helps to select authors whose principles, attitude, expertise one appreciates. Very often, schoolbooks and educational series have multiple authors. One has to select these authors carefully so that the team can work well.

3. Differences can arise in the course of working, but in most cases these can be worked out
4. Authors exist at various points of the continuum – some closer to the ‘ideal’ than others. Intuition, experience, co-operation, willingness to learn, awareness of market conditions – these are ideal qualities an author should possess. Also a strong foundation in English literature along with awareness of how and how much grammar should be taught are essential attributes. Making the textbook lively should be the aim and the focus should be on generating classroom activity to the optimum. Authors, especially teachers, have to keep abreast of latest trends in ELT and the publisher has to ensure this happens by conducting workshops and refresher courses which is also seen as part of his responsibility to society at large – something to give back to society.

5. A responsible publisher’s effort is always to bring out books with new ideas and methods in a given subject. Innovation is necessary but the editor/publisher should have a balanced idea of how much change to introduce. It should not put-off teachers and learners by being too drastic and ahead of its time. Innovation should be tempered with discretion.
6. It is the publisher’s responsibility to brief the author beforehand in the following areas

a. The market the new series is intended for: whether it is filling a niche or a gap, etc.

b. The time frame in which the work has to be completed. This is a common area of strife because the author’s perception of time varies from the publisher’s. Most authors are not aware of what happens once the manuscript is handed over and wonder why the book comes out into the market nearly 3-12 months after they have completed their work.

c. The stages the manuscript goes through before it is finally printed, bound and published as a book.

d. The ideology or philosophy of the series

e. The content of the book, both text and illustrations. Types of stories to be selected and amount of illustrations to be included have to be discussed and decided upon.

f. Authors are rarely unreasonable and will understand the publisher’s problems and limitations if he is aware of them. Differences persist and are largely based on different perceptions. But these can be worked out amicably.
7. Publishers are pushy when it comes to textbooks because they also have a deadline or schedule to adhere to. Authors have to be sensitive to this reality.

8. The publisher survives on market feedback and the sales and marketing executives play a crucial role in assessing market conditions. This is even more difficult than is assumed because the market is not static or stable but is varied. The author is far removed from market realities and the effectiveness of the materials he’s writing will be enhanced if he plays a proactive role and takes a keen interest in the market he is writing for.

9. Competition is two fold for the publisher: from within and outside. While launching a new series he might be pitching his book against other books he has published which are already in the market. And his new series also has to compete with books by other publishers. So the rationale for investing in a new series has to be clearly analysed before commissioning it.

10. Authors have a different idea of what should go into a book. The publisher has one too. Both should mutually agree and arrive at a consensus.
11. A good book is one that:
   a. interests the child
   b. has a good mix of material
   c. has an approach that should keep in mind the target readers
   d. is attractively produced
   e. maintains production costs
   f. commercially successful

5.5. Case Study 5

5.5.1. Biographical Information

Name: Mr. J. Lakshmi Narayanan

Posts held: Head, Department of Publicity and Trade, Oxford University Press

5.5.2. Interview Transcript

1. Should the editor also be an academic? Is it necessary to have an ELT background or to be professionally trained?

   Certainly there should be training. One gets a broader perspective because one has been trained in one particular field and the experience in that field gives him an idea of the subject.

2. What according to you is a good [course] book?

   A good book should be one which is easily understandable by the reader, leaving him to contemplate and improve his
capabilities. It should induce him to read again and again. A good book should rank as one of humanity’s greatest inventions.

3. Good books have failed and mediocre books have succeeded. Why?
Yes, sometimes mediocre books have succeeded because they’d been funded by moneyed people – nothing to do with individual merit. Undue publicity, different ways of presenting the matter are also responsible for the success of mediocre books. The type of market also decides the types of books preferred.

4. What is the percentage of change you will approve of in designing a new book? How does one bring in innovation?
40% to 60% Originality is required, good thought process, sensing priorities before they become common.

5. Do you have any moral obligations towards society?
Yes. We have a moral obligation towards society because we are accountable to the society as what we bring out might harm or benefit it.

6. How do you identify your authors? Do you prefer experienced or new writers?
By their past record, their published material already to their credit, their popularity and marketability. To a great extent,
experienced authors are preferred. However, new authors can also be tried, for unless given a chance, their worth will never be identified.

7. What is your relationship with the authors?

Cordial relationship is necessary. Cordiality always pays its dividends. An author well taken care of by the publisher and fulfils his anticipations, will bring out his best or his creations, to their mutual benefit. (The publisher should remember that the author is the actual creator of his publication).

8. Are teacher training programmes useful to the publisher?

Not much. (Maybe in marketing textbooks).

9. Which is your priority? Marketing a book or the academic value of the book?

Any book having its own inherent academic value would easily find its own market. The publisher on his part should create an awareness of such a book among the readers. Therefore in the absence of intelligent marketing, any book with high academic value seldom reaches its targeted audience. So marketing for the publisher and value of contents for the author.
3.3.5.5.3. **Researcher’s Interpretation of the Case Study**

1. Training and experience are as important as academic qualification.
2. A good book will whet the reader’s knowledge as well as inspire him to think.
3. Good and bad are very relative terms. Extraneous factors help a book sell, and good sales don’t mean that the book is a good one.
4. An instinct for the market and inducting new ideas so that the book has a fresh appeal will enhance sales.
5. Publishing revolves around the twin aspects of accountability and responsibility.
6. Experience and marketability are the factors that govern author choice. New authors bring in new ideas. Cordial relations with authors will mutually benefit both the writing and publishing process.
7. Intelligent marketing and inspiring content should synergise to make a book succeed.

3.3.6. **Insights from Publisher Case Studies**

The opinions and insights of the five stakeholders who formed part of the second sample can be listed under four headings:
3.3.6.1. A Good (Text) Book

1. Exhibits publisher's expertise and experience and author's academic standing and erudition.

2. Has content that both teachers and learners are comfortable with and is interesting.

3. Benefited from excellent marketing strategies.

4. Is attractively produced.

5. Is technically well put together.

6. Has a good mix of materials.

7. Whets the reader's knowledge as well as inspires him to think.

8. Is one which is very responsible and interesting.

9. Ensures that learning is pleasurable and comfortable.

10. Is value-based and not flippant.

3.3.6.2. Publishing

1. Publishing revolves around the twin aspects of accountability and responsibility.

2. Entry barriers are low today.

3. New technology hasn't reduced cost but has simplified the process of publishing.

4. Good sales are paramount for survival; equally valid is the academic worth of the textbook.
5. The publisher is only a catalyst.

6. The publisher should decide what he wants in the long run—money or fame.

7. The publisher's editor has to be watchful of the moral and social responsibilities the books are intended to inculcate.

8. Training programs immediately create a lot of awareness about the material in the book, gives valuable feedback and helps unearth new talent.

9. Good sales don't necessarily imply that the book is a good one.

3.3.6.3. Publisher and Author

1. Experience and marketability are the factors that govern author choice.

2. Authors with ideas that have singular advantages even if economically not viable are preferred. The publisher is often forced to alter these ideas to adapt to market trends.

3. An author who has good ideas, who works fast and is a well known and acknowledged expert according to the decision makers (those who prescribe the textbooks) is preferred.

4. Good public relations is crucial in author-publisher dealings.
Editors and publishers have different roles to play in their interaction with authors.

An author should not use the textbook as a medium to display his scholarship.

Identifying a good author is a tough job.

The author should be aware of market realities and trust the publisher.

Editors should not play or tamper with authors' work. To avoid confrontations the publisher must intervene.

### 3.3.6.4. The Market

1. Education has become commercialised in the 1990s and the quality of textbooks has been compromised.

2. Liberalisation of market in the 90s has changed the face of publishing – shift from a producer's to a buyer's market.

3. Market determines the product, even with books.

4. Setting a precedent and sustaining it is very difficult.

5. Competition and revision are the twin banes of publishing.

6. Feedback is crucial, but the publisher must intelligently judge market feedback; not take it at face value.
7. Integrating the author's ideas with market needs is the biggest challenge.

8. Intelligent marketing and inspiring content make successful books.

3.3.7. Conclusion

At the end of this chapter the question I am "forced to confront is: Has my study ceased to be a case?" (Nunan 76) However some consolation can be drawn from the fact that the study would retain some kind of validity because of the stature of its respondents. And in the same way as "insights into language classrooms in general can be derived from the intensive analysis of a single classroom" (Nunan 89), a study of a sampling of authors and editor-publishers would, it is hoped, provide some insight into the workings of the author-publisher interface in materials production.

The next chapter proposes to examine the pedagogical implications of the case studies.
Notes

1 Case studies examine a facet or particular aspect of the culture or subculture under investigation. Despite this more limited reach of case studies, many case studies share certain characteristics with ethnographies. Both attempt to provide a portrait of what is going on in a particular setting. Additionally, they must be more than objective accounts of the culture being portrayed – they must encapsulate a point of view (in other words they must go beyond description). Finally they must present sufficient data for the reader to draw conclusions other than those presented directly by the writer. (Denny qtd. in Nunan 77)

2 When we speak of ‘lack of professionalism’ in Indian publishing, are we not really using a rather lame euphemism for ‘lack of competence’? It is my view that Indian publishing does not, as yet, have at its disposal all the competence it requires […] Let us consider selection and development of titles — the core activity in book publishing. Examining some of the most successful of university-level textbooks, one is struck by the number of (a) blatantly incompetent books, (b) apparently competent books that would have improved substantially with a little ‘professional’ attention, and (c) seemingly outstanding books that suffer because of the company they keep […] and one is struck by the same unevenness of performance, even among the products of a single house.

By and large […] I think it must be admitted that Indian publishers either lack or fail to exercise critical ability and discrimination, and tend to take the bad with the good and the indifferent. Either they just don’t have the knowledge and judgement to do better; or they don’t think it is important to do so. (Israel 137-139)