EDITED BY BRIAN TOMLINSON

DEVELOPING MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

SECOND EDITION

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Developing Materials for Language Teaching

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BRIAN TOMLINSON

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List of Contributors

Dat Bao, Monash University, Melbourne
Rosa-Maria Cives-Enriquez, Motiva Language and Training Specialists Limited
Vivian Cook, University of Newcastle
Helen Emery, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat
Irma-Kaarina Ghosn, Lebanese American University, Byblos
Naeema Hann, Leeds Metropolitan University
David A. Hill, Freelance, Budapest
Ken Hyland, University of Kong Kong
Thom Kiddle, NILE (Norwich Institute for Language Education)
Alan Maley, Leeds Metropolitan University
Hitomi Masuhara, University of Liverpool
Freda Mishan, University of Limerick
Paul Nation, Victoria University of Wellington
Alan Pulverness, NILE (Norwich Institute of Language Education)
Shelagh Rixon, University of Warwick
Claudia Saraceni, University of Bedfordshire
Jeff Stranks, Freelance
Duriya Aziz Singapore Wala, Scholastic, Singapore
Ivor Timmis, Leeds Metropolitan University
Brian Tomlinson, Leeds Metropolitan University, Anaheim University

Preface

Brian Tomlinson

The first edition of this book published in 2003 developed from a realization that the recent explosion in interest in materials development for language teaching, both as 'a field of study and as a practical undertaking' (Tomlinson, 2001), had not been adequately catered for by the literature on materials development. A number of books had dealt with important aspects of materials development and had raised issues of great significance to the developers and users of language learning materials (e.g. Sheldon, 1987; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Byrd, 1995; Hidalgo et al., 1995; Cunningsworth, 1996; Tomlinson, 1998; Richards, 2001; McGrath, 2002). But no book had provided a comprehensive coverage of the main aspects and issues in materials development for language learning. And no book had attempted to view current practice in materials development through the eyes of developers and users of materials throughout the world. This is what *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* aimed to do. It was designed and written (by native and non-native speakers of English from eleven different countries) so that it could provide both an overview of what is happening in the world of materials development for language teaching and a stimulus for further development and innovation in the field. It included reference to the teaching of languages other than English (e.g. Italian, Spanish, Japanese) and offered both objective and critical overviews of current issues in the field as well as proposals for principled developments for the future. It was written so that it could be used as a coursebook on teachers' courses and on postgraduate courses in applied linguistics, and also to provide stimulus and refreshment for teachers, publishers and applied linguists in the field. Since this book was first published a number of books have focused on different aspects of materials development. For example:

- Johnson (2003) has reported a study of how novice and expert materials developers approached the writing of a task for a unit of materials.
- Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) have provided a practical guide for teachers engaging in materials development.
- Tomlinson (2008) has provided a critical survey of different types of materials and of materials in different parts of the world.

- Harwood (2010) has focused on the principles and procedures of materials development (especially with reference to English for Academic Purposes).
- Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010) have reported research on materials development from all over the world.
- Gray (2010) has written about cultural and idealogical influences on the development of the global coursebook.
- Tomlinson (2011) has published contributions from eminent materials developers who have made presentations at MATSDA Conferences.
- McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013) have focused on materials adaptation and development for teachers.
- Tomlinson (2013) has investigated the match between applied linguistics theory and materials development.

However no publication has appeared which aims to provide such complete coverage of aspects and issues in materials development as *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*. This updated second edition of the book aims to provide a similar informative coverage for participants of teachers' and post-graduate courses while at the same time providing stimulus and refreshment for teachers, academics and materials developers. Many of the chapters have been retained and updated and a number of new chapters have been added on recent developments in blended learning, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), corpus-informed materials, ESOL, materials for young learners and materials for writing.

Ultimately, 'It is the language teacher who must validate or refute specific proposals' for applying linguistic and psycholinguistic theory to language teaching (Chomsky, 1996, p. 46) and it is the language teacher who must validate or refute the materials which are developed for the language classroom. Widdowson (2000, p. 31) offers the 'applied linguist' as a 'mediating agent' who must make 'insights intelligible in ways in which their usefulness can be demonstrated' but Tomlinson (2013) raises questions about how effective applied linguistics has been in achieving 'intelligibility' and 'usefulness'. In this book, instead of the applied linguist, we offer the informed and reflective practitioner as the ideal agent for mediating between theory and practice. Some of the contributors to this book might be labelled teachers, some materials developers, some applied linguists, some teacher trainers and some publishers. But all of them share four things in common. They have all had experience as teachers of a second or foreign language (L2), they have all contributed to the development of L2 materials, they have all kept in touch with developments in linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic theory and they all have respect for the teacher as the person with the power to decide what actually happens in the language classroom.

This book is dedicated to classroom teachers and teachers in training. It aims to help them to make decisions about materials for themselves and to help them and others

to contribute to the development of materials which can facilitate the acquisition of an L2. It does so by applying insights gained from applied linguistics, from materials development and from classroom practice.

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Introduction: Are Materials Developing?

Brian Tomlinson

What is materials development?

Materials development is both a field of study and a practical undertaking. As a field it studies the principles and procedures of the design, implementation and evaluation of language teaching materials. As an undertaking it involves the production, evaluation and adaptation of language teaching materials, by teachers for their own classrooms and by materials writers for sale or distribution. Ideally these two aspects of materials development are interactive in that the theoretical studies inform and are informed by the development and use of classroom materials.

TOMLINSON, 2001, p. 66

This book deals with both the aspects of materials development outlined above. For example, Chapter 4 (Tomlinson) and Chapter 17 (Nation) deal with the principles and procedures of aspects of the development of materials, Chapter 1 (Tomlinson) deals with the principles and procedures of the evaluation of materials and Chapter 2 (Saraceni) deals with the principles and procedures of materials adaptation. On the other hand, for example, Chapters 5 (Singapore Wala) and 26 (Emery) focus on the actual process of the writing of materials. There is also a third aspect of materials development which is dealt with in this book, that is the use of materials development as a means of facilitating and deepening the personal and professional development of teachers (e.g. Chapters 24 (Tomlinson), 25 (Tomlinson and Masuhara) and 26 (Emery)).

There is a growing inclusion of materials development on courses for teachers: for example the International Graduate School of English (IGSE) in Seoul runs an MA in Materials Development for Language Teaching, and MA TESOL/Applied Linguistics courses throughout the world now include modules on materials development. This is mainly because of the realization that, 'Every teacher is a materials developer' (English Language Centre, 1997) who needs to be able to evaluate, adapt and produce materials

so as to ensure a match between their learners and the materials they use. It is also because of the realization that one of the most effective ways of 'helping teachers to understand and apply theories of language learning – and to achieve personal and professional development – is to provide monitored experience of the process of developing materials' (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 67). This concrete experience of developing materials as a basis for reflective observation and conceptualization enables teachers to theorize their practice (Schon, 1987).

A fourth aspect of materials development focused on in this book is the use of materials to actualize new pedagogical or content approaches in ELT. Examples of this are Chapter 26 (Emery) on materials for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Chapter 9 (Kiddle) on materials exploiting the use of digital aids, Chapter 15 (Hann) on materials for ESOL and Chapter 23 (Timmis) on materials for corpus informed approaches.

Although a number of chapters in this book focus primarily on one of the four aspects of materials development described above, many of them deal with two or even three of these aspects. For example, Chapter 10 (Mishan) examines both the theories which drive blended learning and their implementation, Chapter 16 (Stranks) looks at both the theories and the practicalities of developing grammar teaching materials, Chapter 18 (Masuhara) looks at the application of reading research and theory to the development of coursebook materials for teaching reading, and Chapter 25 (Tomlinson and Masuhara) considers the theoretical principles of using simulations for learning, outlines procedures for developing and using simulations and reflects on actual examples of simulations used on materials development courses for teachers. In addition, a number of chapters (e.g. Chapter 26 (Emery) and Chapter 22 (Pulverness and Tomlinson)) focus on issues related to the content of materials, as well as concerning themselves with the application of theory to practice.

What are materials?

In this book 'materials' 'include anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language. They can be linguistic, visual, auditory or kinaesthetic, and they can be presented in print, through live performance or display, or on cassette, CD-ROM, DVD or the internet' (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 66). They can be instructional, experiential, elicitative or exploratory, in that they can inform learners about the language, they can provide experience of the language in use, they can stimulate language use or they can help learners to make discoveries about the language for themselves. See also Richards (2001, p. 251) for a definition of materials.

Despite the recent 'explosion' of electronic materials most language learning materials are still published as books and most of the chapters in this book focus on print materials. However, Chapter 7 (Hill), for example, focuses on visuals and Chapter 21 (Hill and Tomlinson) on auditory materials, Chapter 9 (Kiddle) focuses on the computer and the internet, Chapter 10 (Mishan) focuses on blended learning, Chapter 13

(Cives-Enriquez) focuses on live materials and Chapter 18 (Masuhara) focuses on a multidimensional approach. Most materials are instructional ('instructional materials generally serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom' (Richards, 2001, p. 251)) and many of the chapters in this book focus on materials for instruction. However, many other chapters advocate more attention being paid to experiential materials (e.g. Chapters 2 (Saraceni) and 21 (Hill and Tomlinson)) and to elicitative materials (e.g. Chapters 14 (Cook) and 4 (Tomlinson) focus on materials stimulating learner discovery).

What are the issues in materials development?

What should drive materials?

The obvious answer to this question is that the needs and wants of the learners should drive the materials. But teachers have needs and wants to be satisfied too (Masuhara, 2011) and so do administrators, with their concerns for standardization and conformity with, for example, a syllabus, a theory of language learning, the requirements of examinations and the language policies of a government (see Chapter 5 (Singapore Wala) in this book for discussions of the multiple requirements of a national and of institutional textbooks). These needs and wants are not irreconcilable and, in my experience, they can best be satisfied by localized projects which consult learners, teachers and administrators before, during and after the materials writing process. This is what happened in the process of developing the most satisfactory textbook I have ever been involved in, *On Target* (1996), a coursebook for secondary school students in Namibia. Prior to the writing of the book, students and teachers were consulted all over Namibia about what they wanted and needed from the book. During the writing of the book, Ministry of Education officials were present throughout each day in which 30 teachers wrote the materials, and the syllabus, the curriculum and the examination documents were frequently referred to. After the writing of the book, it was trialled extensively and revised in relation to the feedback which was provided by students, teachers and officials. A similar approach has been followed by Bilkent University in Turkey and by Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat in the production of new textbooks for their English courses. See Tomlinson (1995, 2001, 2012b), Lyons (2003) and Al-Busaidi and Tindle (2010) for descriptions of these projects. Many of the projects referred to above decided to adopt a text-driven approach rather than a syllabus-driven, grammar-driven, functions-driven, skills-driven, topic-driven or theme-driven approach. That is, they decided to start by finding written and spoken texts with a potential for affective and cognitive engagement, and then to use a flexible framework to develop activities connected to these texts. Later on they would cross-check with the syllabus and the examination requirements to ensure satisfactory coverage. For a description and justification of such an approach, see Chapter 4 (Tomlinson) in this book.

The situation is complicated in the case of materials produced by publishers for commercial distribution. 'The author is generally concerned to produce a text that teachers will find innovative, creative, relevant to their learners' needs, and that they will enjoy teaching from.. . . The publisher is primarily motivated by financial success' (Richards, 2001, p. 257). Publishers obviously aim to produce excellent books which will satisfy the wants and needs of their users but their need to maximize profits makes them cautious and conservative and any compromise with the authors tends still to be biased towards perceived market needs rather than towards the actual needs and wants of the learners. For discussions of the compromises necessitated by the commercial production of materials (and especially of global coursebooks) see Ariew (1982), Richards (2001), Gray (2010) and Bell and Gower (2011), as well as 5 (Singapore Wala) and 16 (Stranks) in this volume.

Who should develop the materials?

These days most commercial materials are written by professional materials writers writing to a brief determined by the publishers from an analysis of market needs (see Amrani, 2011). These writers are usually very experienced and competent, they are familiar with the realities of publishing and the potential of the new technologies and they write full-time for a living. The books they write are usually systematic, well designed, teacher-friendly and thorough. But they often lack energy and imagination (how can the writers be imaginative all day and every day?) and are sometimes insufficiently relevant and appealing to the actual learners who use them (see Tomlinson et al., 2001; Masuhara et al., 2008; Tomlinson, 2010; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013). Dudley Evans and St John (1998, p. 173) state that 'only a small proportion of good teachers are also good designers of course materials'. This observation is contrary to my experience, as I have found that teachers throughout the world only need a little training, experience and support to become materials writers who can produce imaginative materials of relevance and appeal to their learners. This has certainly been the case with teachers on materials development courses I have run in Belgium, Brazil, Botswana, Indonesia, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritius, Oman, the Seychelles, Vanuatu and Vietnam, and on textbook projects I have been a consultant for in Ethiopia, Bulgaria, China, Turkey and Namibia (Tomlinson, 2001).

This issue is addressed in a number of chapters in this book, for example Chapters 4 (Tomlinson), 24 (Tomlinson) and 26 (Emery).

How should materials be developed?

Typically, commercial materials are written over a long period of time by a pair or small group of writers (e.g. in the year 2010 *Speakout Intermediate* by Antonia Clare and J. J. Wilson, the *Big Picture Pre-Intermediate* by Beth Bradfield and Carol Lethaby

and *global* by Lindsay Clanfield and Rebecca Robb-Benne with Amanda Jeffries were published). The materials usually take a long time to produce because these days most of the materials published are courses (supplementary books are generally not considered profitable enough), because most courses have multiple components (e.g. Bradfield and Lethaby (2011) has seven components per level) and because the important review process takes time (though many publishers now save time by not trialling their materials (Amrani, 2011)). In my experience the result very often is a drop in creative energy as the process drags on and the eventual publication of competent but rather uninspiring materials.

My own preference is for a large team approach to writing materials, which aims at fast first draft production by many people followed by refinement by a smaller group of experts. This is the procedure that the Namibian and Bilkent projects referred to above decided to follow. In the writing of the Namibian coursebook, *On Target* (1996), 30 teachers were selected to provide a team of varying age, experience and expertise and were then brought from all over the country to Windhoek. On the first day, I demonstrated some innovative approaches to extend the teachers' repertoires of activity types and to stimulate thought and discussion about the principles of language learning. On the second day, we worked out a flexible framework to use in producing the materials and made some decisions together about the use of illustrations, music, cassettes, etc. Then, for four days the teachers wrote and monitored materials in small teams while a small group of facilitators supported them and cross-checked with the syllabus. That way we managed to complete the first draft of the whole book in one week, and then this was trialled, revised, edited and published within the year. In Bilkent University we followed a similar procedure and 20 teachers in small teams produced and monitored 60 units within a week for a group of 4 'writers' to select from, revise and trial.

In both cases described above, the teachers managed to inspire each other with ideas, to maintain creative energy, to relate their materials to the actual learners who were going to use them and to suggest useful improvements to each other's materials. All this was achieved to a far greater degree than I have ever managed when writing a coursebook by myself, with a partner or in a small team working at a distance from each other. And all this was achieved because a large group of enthusiastic teachers were working together for a short time.

How should materials be evaluated?

Materials are often evaluated in an ad hoc, impressionistic way, which tends to favour materials which have face validity (i.e. which conform to people's expectations of what materials should look like) and which are visually appealing. In order to ensure that materials are devised, revised, selected and adapted in reliable and valid ways, we need to ensure that materials evaluation establishes procedures which are thorough, rigorous, systematic and principled. This often takes time and effort but it could prevent

many of the mistakes which are made by writers, publishers, teachers, institutions and ministries and which can have negative effects on learners' potential to benefit from their courses. For ways of achieving this, see Chapters 1 (Tomlinson) and 2 (Saraceni) in this volume, as well as McGrath (2002), Mukundan and Ahour (2010), Tomlinson (2012b) and McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013).

Should texts be authentic?

Materials aiming at explicit learning usually contrive examples of the language which focus on the feature being taught. Usually these examples are presented in short, easy, specially written or simplified texts or dialogues, and it is argued that they help the learners by focusing their attention on the target feature. The counterargument is that such texts overprotect learners, deprive them of the opportunities for acquisition provided by rich texts and do not prepare them for the reality of language use, whereas authentic texts (i.e. texts not written especially for language teaching) can provide exposure to language as it is typically used. A similar debate continues in relation to materials for the teaching of reading and listening skills and materials for extensive reading and listening. One side argues that simplification and contrivance can facilitate learning; the other side argues that they can lead to faulty learning and that they deny the learners opportunities for informal learning and the development of self-esteem.

Most researchers argue for authenticity and stress its motivating effect on learners (e.g. Bacon and Finneman, 1990; Kuo, 1993; Little et al., 1994; Mishan, 2005; Gilmore, 2007; Rilling and Dantas-Whitney, 2009). However, Widdowson (1984, p. 218) says that 'pedagogic presentation of language . . . necessarily involves methodological contrivance which isolates features from their natural surroundings'; Day and Bamford (1998, pp. 54–62) attack the 'cult of authenticity' and advocate simplified reading texts which have the 'natural properties of authenticity', Ellis (1999, p. 68) argues for 'enriched input' which provides learners with input which has been flooded with exemplars of the target structure in the context of meaning focused activities and Day (2003) claims there is no evidence that authenticity facilitates acquisition but that there is evidence that learners find authentic texts more difficult.

Some researchers have challenged the conventional view of authenticity and redefined it, for example, in relation to the learners culture (Prodromou, 1992; Trabelsi, 2010), to the learners' interaction with a text or task (Widdowson, 1978), to the 'authenticity of the learner's own interpretation' (Breen, 1985, p. 61) and to the personal engagement of the learner (van Lier, 1996). For discussion of the issues raised above see Widdowson (2000), Mishan (2005), Trabelsi (2010) and Tomlinson (2012b: 161–2), as well as Chapters 2 (Saraceni), 16 (Stranks) and 18 (Masuhara) in this volume.

For me the most useful definition of an authentic text is 'one which is produced in order to communicate rather than to teach' (Tomlinson, 2012b, p. 162) and the most useful definition of an authentic task is 'one which involves the learners in communicating to achieve an outcome, rather than to practice the language' (ibid.).

I believe that all texts and tasks should be authentic in these ways, otherwise the learners are not being prepared for the realities of language use. I also believe that meaningful engagement with authentic texts is a prerequisite for the development of communicative and strategic competence but that authentic texts can be created by interactive negotiation between learners as well as presented to them (see Breen and Littlejohn, 2000, as well as Chapters 2 (Saraceni), 4 (Tomlinson) and 13 (Cives-Enriquez) in this volume). I also believe, though, that it is useful for learners to sometimes pay discrete attention to linguistic or discoursal features of authentic texts which they have previously been engaged by (Tomlinson, 1994, 2007; Bolitho et al., 2003; Chapter 4 (Tomlinson) in this volume).

Other issues

Other issues which have received attention in the literature and which feature in this book include:

- Do learners need a coursebook? In the eighties Allwright (1981) put forward arguments against ways in which textbooks deliver materials and O'Neil responded with a defence of the coursebook. Since then there has been continual debate about whether learners benefit from coursebooks or not. Opponents have argued that the coursebook benefits administrators and teachers without catering for the needs and wants of learners (Tomlinson, 2010), that it is used mainly to impose control and order (Mukundan, 2009) and that it is 'superficial and reductionist in its coverage of points and in its provision of language experience . . . it imposes uniformity of syllabus and approach, and it removes initiative and power from teachers' (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 67). Proponents (e.g. Torres and Hutchinson, 1994) have countered that the coursebook is a cost-effective way of providing security, system, progress and revision for the learner, that it saves teachers time and provides them with a secure base and that it helps administrators achieve credibility and standardization. For discussion of this issue see Mishan (2005), Tomlinson (2013) and Chapters 2 (Saraceni) and 13 (Cives-Enriquez) in this volume.
- Do learners need published materials at all? In recent years there has been a move away from using published materials with institutions throughout the world developing their own locally relevant materials (e.g. Al Busaidi and Tindle, 2010; Mason, 2010; Park, 2010) and with Meddings and Thornbury (2009) proposing the Dogme ELT movement which advocates, learner-centred, materials-light approaches. And yet surveys by the British Council (2008) and Tomlinson (2010) show that most teachers continue to use commercially published materials (even though many do so with compulsion or reluctance). For discussion of this issue see Tomlinson (2012b).

- Should materials be learning or acquisition focused? Most published materials focus on conscious learning of language points but many researchers argue that the learners should be provided with many more opportunities to acquire language informally from exposure to language in use. For discussion of this issue see Tomlinson, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012a; and Chapters 4 (Tomlinson), 18 (Masuhara), 17 (Nation) and 20 (Dat) in this book.
- Should published materials be censored? It is common practice for publishers to censor materials to make sure that they do not give offence or cause embarrassment. Many authors have complained about the unengaging blandness of the materials which result from what they see as excessive caution (e.g. Wajnryb, 1996; Tomlinson, 2001) and Chapter 2 (Saraceni) in this book and about the 'safe, clean, harmonious, benevolent, undisturbed' (Wajnryb, 1996), successful, materialistic and aspirational EFL world (Gray, 2010). Tomlinson (2001) understands the publishers' caution but stresses the importance of affective engagement in language acquisition and therefore of controversial topics and provocative texts.
- Should materials be driven by theory or practice? Reviews of ELT coursebooks (Tomlinson et al., 2001; Masuhara et al., 2008; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013) reveal that coursebook writers are much more influenced by what is conventional practice than by theories of language practice or even by classroom research. In some ways this is a vicious circle as publishers continue to produce courses with face validity which they know will sell. Tomlinson (2010, 2011, 2012a, 2013) understands the publishers' reluctance to change but argues that learners are being disadvantaged by the failure of coursebook writers to apply even such basic theories of second language acquisition (SLA) as the necessity for exposure to language in use and for opportunities to use language for communication. For discussion of this issue see Bell and Gower, 2001; Harwood, 2010; Prowse, 2011; and Chapters 4 (Tomlinson) and 8 (Maley) in this volume.
- Should materials be driven by syllabus needs, learner needs or market needs? Most published materials are inevitably driven by perceived market needs but many large institutions are beginning to publish their own materials because of the mismatch between the courses available and their local institutional needs (Tomlinson, 2012b). And many researchers are arguing that learners are suffering because courses are designed primarily to appeal to the administrators and teachers who are responsible for buying them. For discussion of this issue see, for example Amrani, 2011; Masuhara, 2011; and Chapters 4 (Tomlinson) 3 and 5 (Singapore Wala) in this book.

- Should materials cater for learner expectations or try to change them? Traditionally it has been argued that it is important to provide learners with what they expect or else risk rejection of the materials. Recently though researchers (e.g. Tomlinson, 2005) have pointed out that it is teachers rather than learners who are resistant to change and that learners often welcome innovative approaches which have the potential to engage them. See Chapters 6 (Tomlinson), 13 (Cives-Enriquez) and 14 (Cook) in this book for discussion of this volume.
- Should materials aim for language development only or should they also aim for personal and educational development? Many language teachers argue that it is their job to help the learners to acquire language and that they are not responsible for their educational development. Others argue that if language learners are situated in an educational establishment then their teacher's main responsibility is to help them to develop. And others argue that not only are personal and educational development main objectives of any language course but that the achievement of these objectives actually facilitates the acquisition of language too. For discussion of this issue see Banegas (2011) and Chapters 2 (Saraceni) and 6 (Tomlinson).
- Should materials aim to contribute to teacher development as well as language learning? All teachers need frequent stimulus and refreshment if they are not to 'fossilize'. Most teachers have very few opportunities for personal and professional development though and many researchers are now arguing that published materials should aim to help teachers to develop by involving them in, for example, making principled decisions about which texts and tasks to use and how to use them to the best advantage of their learners. See Tomlinson (1995) and Chapter 1 (Tomlinson), in this book for discussion of this issue.

What are the current trends in materials development?

In the first edition of this book (Tomlinson, 2003) I claimed that it is arguable that there is nothing much new going on in materials development and that in the area of commercially produced materials there is even a sort of principled going back. This is justified by publishers by reference to their confidential research into what learners and teachers want (e.g. the return to the centrality of grammar highlighted in Tomlinson et al., 2001, p. 84). But in my view it is almost certainly driven by economic constraints and the ever-increasing cost of producing the sort of multicoloured, multicomponent coursebook which seems to attract the biggest sales these days.

As a result, publishers dare not risk losing vast sums of money on a radically different type of textbook, they opt for safe, middle-of-the-road, global coursebooks which clone the features of such best-selling coursebooks as *Headway* and they cut down on non-profit-making supplementary materials. Unfortunately this then has a washback effect on non-commercial materials, as teachers and curriculum developers tend to imitate the approaches of best-selling coursebooks on the assumption that this must be what learners and teachers want (though the reality is more likely that the models are the books which have been promoted most expensively and successfully by their publishers).

Ten years later I think my words above are still true. There have been a few peripheral developments such as materials for Content and Integrated Language Learning (e.g. Coyle et al., 2010), materials for task-based approaches (e.g. Van den Branden, 2006) and materials which are corpus informed (e.g. McCarthy et al., 2006) but nothing much else has changed.

There is still some hope of progress, though, and in my list of current trends below I have listed a number of positive ones:

Positive trends

- There are some materials requiring investment by the learners in order for them to make discoveries for themselves from analysis of samples of language in use (e.g. McCarthy et al., 2006; Bradfield and Letharby, 2011; Clare and Wilson, 2011). Unfortunately though most of the current coursebooks inviting discovery just ask the learners to find predetermined answers rather than to make unexpected discoveries of their own.
- There are more materials making use of corpus data reflecting actual language use (e.g. McCarthy et al., 2006). However, as Timmis (2013) points out, there are still many coursebooks which deliberately do not make any use of corpora at all (e.g. Dellar and Walkley, 2005).
- There are more extensive reader series being produced with fewer linguistic constraints and more provocative content (e.g. Maley, 2008; Maley and Prowse, 2013) but, as Maley and Prowse (2013) point out, there has also been a disturbing trend for publishers to add comprehension questions to their extensive readers, thus ironically promoting intensive reading.
- There has been a very noticeable and welcome increase in attempts to personalize the learning process by getting learners to relate topics and texts to their own lives, views and feelings (e.g. Clanfield and Benn, 2010; Bradfield and Letharby, 2011; Clare and Wilson, 2011).
- There is an increase in attempts to gain the affective engagement of learners (Tomlinson, 2010, 2011) by involving them in tasks which

encourage the expression of feelings but there has also been a decline in the number of texts likely to stimulate affective engagement (see Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013).

- There is an increasing use of the internet as a source of current, relevant and appealing texts. For information about and examples of this trend see Kervin and Derewianka, 2011; Motteram, 2011; Levy, 2012; Reinders, 2012; McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara, 2013; Tomlinson and Whittaker, 2013; and Chapters 4 (Tomlinson), 9 (Kiddle) and 10 (Mishan) in this book.
- There is evidence of a movement away from spoken practice of written grammar and towards experience of spoken grammar in use (e.g. Dellar and Walkley, 2005; McCarthy et al., 2006).
- There is a considerable increase in the number of ministries (e.g. in Belarus, Bulgaria, Columbia; Ethiopia, India, Iran, Morocco, Namibia, Romania, Russia and Uzbekistan) and institutions (e.g. Bilkent University in Ankara; the University of Hue; Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat) which have decided to produce their own locally relevant materials (see Busaidi and Tindle, 2010; Tomlinson, 2012b).

Negative trends

- There is an even more pronounced return to the 'central place of grammar in the language curriculum' (Soars and Soars, 1996), which contradicts what my own confidential research for a British publisher revealed about the needs and wants of learners and teachers and which goes against many of the findings of second language acquisition research (Ellis, 2010; Tomlinson, 2010, 2011, 2013; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013).
- There is still a far greater prominence given in coursebooks to listening and speaking than to reading and writing (Tomlinson et al., 2001; Masuhara et al., 2008).
- There is an assumption that most learners have short attention spans, can only cope with very short reading and writing texts and will only engage in activities for a short time.
- There seems to be an assumption that learners do not want and would not gain from intellectually demanding activities while engaged in language learning.
- There is a neglect (or sometimes an abuse) of literature in coursebooks, despite its potential as a source of stimulating and engaging texts and despite the many claims of methodologists for the potential value and

appeal of literature (e.g. Chapters 2 (Saraceni), 4 (Tomlinson), 6 (Tomlinson) and 8 (Maley)) in this volume.

- There is a continuing predominance of analytical activities and a neglect of activities which could cater for learners with other preferred learning styles (Masuhara et al., 2008; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013).
- There is still an 'absence of controversial issues to stimulate thought, to provide opportunities for exchanges of views, and to make topic content meaningful' (Tomlinson et al., 2001) and there is a resultant trivialization of content (see, for example, Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013; Chapters 2 (Saraceni) and 18 (Masuhara)) in this volume.
- There is a tendency to underestimate learners linguistically, intellectually and emotionally.
- Despite the increase in publications reflecting the predominant use of International English as a lingua franca most coursebooks still focus on English as used by native speakers and prepare the learners for interaction with them (see Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013)

Obviously my evaluation of the trends above is subjective and is related to my principles, hopes and beliefs. Another materials developer might come to very different conclusions as a result of holding different principles, hopes and beliefs.

What is the future of materials development?

The authors of the chapters in this book each give their version of what they would like to see as the future of materials development. The reality is that publishers will probably still play safe and stick to what they know they can sell; but the hope is that a decrease in customer satisfaction and an increase in local materials development projects will help some of the following to develop:

- even greater personalization and localization of materials;
- greater flexibility of materials and creativity in their use;
- more respect for the learners' intelligence, experience and communicative competence;
- more affectively engaging content;
- a greater emphasis on multicultural perspectives and awareness;
- more opportunities for learners with experiential (and especially kinaesthetic) learning style preferences;

- more attempts made to engage the learner in the language learning process as an experienced, intelligent and interesting individual;
- more attempts made to use multidimensional approaches to language learning (Tomlinson, 2010).

MATSDA

MATSDA (the Materials Development Association) is an association founded in 1993 by Brian Tomlinson, which is dedicated to improving the future for materials development. It runs conferences and workshops on materials development and produces a journal, *Folio*, twice a year, which provides a forum for the discussion of materials development issues and a channel for the dissemination of new ideas and materials. Recently, for example, MATSDA held a Conference at the University of Limerick on Applied Linguistics and Materials Development and Conferences at the University of Liverpool on New Ideas for Language Materials and Enjoying to Learn: the Best Way to Acquire a Language? Other Conferences have been held in recent years in Belfast, Dublin, Japan, Singapore, South Africa, the United States and York.

Anybody who is interested in joining MATSDA should contact the secretary, Hitomi Masuhara (hitomi.masuhara@gmail.com) and anybody who would like more information about MATSDA activities should contact the President, Brian Tomlinson (brianjohntomlinson@gmail.com).

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PART A

Evaluation and Adaptation of Materials

1

Materials Evaluation

Brian Tomlinson

What is materials evaluation?

Materials evaluation is a procedure that involves measuring the value (or potential value) of a set of learning materials. It involves making judgements about the effect of the materials on the people using them and it tries to measure some or all of the following:

- the appeal of the materials to the learners;
- the credibility of the materials to learners, teachers and administrators;
- the validity of the materials (i.e. Is what they teach worth teaching?);
- the reliability of the materials (i.e. Would they have the same effect with different groups of target learners?);
- the ability of the materials to interest the learners and the teachers;
- the ability of the materials to motivate the learners;
- the value of the materials in terms of short-term learning (important, for example, for performance on tests and examinations);
- the value of the materials in terms of long-term learning (of both language and of communication skills);
- the learners' perceptions of the value of the materials;
- the teachers' perceptions of the value of the materials;
- the assistance given to the teachers in terms of preparation, delivery and assessment;

- the flexibility of the materials (e.g. the extent to which it is easy for a teacher to adapt the materials to suit a particular context);
- the contribution made by the materials to teacher development;
- the match with administrative requirements (e.g. standardization across classes, coverage of a syllabus, preparation for an examination).

It is obvious from a consideration of the effects above that no two evaluations can be the same, as the needs, objectives, backgrounds and preferred styles of the participants will differ from context to context. This is obviously true of an evaluation of the value of a coursebook for use with 16-year-olds preparing for a Ministry of Education Examination in South Africa compared to an evaluation of the same coursebook for use with teenagers and young adults being prepared for the Cambridge First Certificate at a language school in Oxford. It is also true for the evaluation of a set of materials prepared for Foundation Level learners in a university in January compared with a set of materials for the same type of learners prepared in the same university in July. The main point is that it is not the materials which are being evaluated but their effect on the people who come into contact with them (including, of course, the evaluators).

An evaluation is not the same as an analysis. It can include an analysis or follow from one, but the objectives and procedures are different. An evaluation focuses on the users of the materials and makes judgements about their effects. No matter how structured, criterion referenced and rigorous an evaluation is, it will be essentially subjective. On the other hand, an analysis focuses on the materials and it aims to provide an objective analysis of them. It 'asks questions about what the materials contain, what they aim to achieve and what they ask learners to do' (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 10). So, for example, 'Does it provide a transcript of the listening texts?' is an analysis question which can be answered by either 'Yes' or 'No'. 'What does it ask the learners to do immediately after reading a text?' is also an analysis question and can be answered factually. As a result of answering many such questions, a description of the materials can be made which specifies what the materials do and do not contain. On the other hand, 'Are the listening texts likely to engage the learner?' is an evaluation question and can be answered on a cline between 'Very unlikely' and 'Very likely'. It can also be given a numerical value (e.g. 2 for 'Unlikely') and after many such questions have been asked about the materials, subtotal scores and total scores can be calculated and indications can be derived of the potential value of the materials and of subsections of them. For example, a coursebook which scores a total of 75 per cent or more is likely to be generally effective but, if it scores a subtotal of only 55 per cent for listening, it is unlikely to be effective for a group of learners whose priority is to develop their listening skills. See Littlejohn (2011) for an example and discussion of materials analysis and Tomlinson et al. (2001), Masuhara et al. (2008) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) for examples of materials evaluation.

A detailed analysis of a set of materials can be very useful for deciding, for example, if anything important has been missed out of a draft manuscript, for deciding how closely it matches the requirements of a particular course and as a database for a

subsequent evaluation of the materials. Ideally analysis is objective but analysts are often influenced by their own ideology and their questions are biased accordingly. For example, in the question 'Does it provide a lot of guided practice?', the phrase 'a lot of' implies it should do and this could interfere with an objective analysis of the materials. Analysts also often have a hidden agenda when designing their instruments of analysis. For example, an analyst might ask the question 'Are the dialogues authentic?' in order to provide data to support an argument that intermediate coursebooks do not help to prepare learners for the realities of conversation. This is legitimate if the analysis questions are descriptive and the subsequent data provided is open to evaluative interpretation. For example, I conducted an analysis of ten lower-level coursebooks (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 10) to provide data to support my argument that such books were too restricted in their emphasis on language form, on language practice rather than use and on low-level decoding skills. My data revealed that nine out of the ten books were form and practice focused and that in these books there were five times more activities involving the use of low-level skills (e.g. pronouncing a word) than there were involving the use of high-level skills (e.g. making inferences). I was then able to use my data to argue the need for lower-level coursebooks to be more holistic and meaning focused and to be more help to the learners in their development of high-level skills. But a different analysis could have used the same instruments and the same data to argue that lower-level coursebooks were helping learners to develop from a confident base of low-level skills.

Many publications on materials evaluation mix analysis and evaluation and make it very difficult to use their suggested criteria because, for example, in a numerical evaluation most analysis questions would result in 1 or 5 on a 5-point scale and would thus be weighted disproportionately when combined with evaluation questions, which tend to yield 2, 3 or 4. For example Mariani (1983, pp. 28–9) includes in a section on 'Evaluate your coursebook' such analysis questions as, 'Are there any teacher's notes . . .' and 'Are there any tape recordings?' alongside such evaluation questions as, 'Are the various stages in a teaching unit adequately developed'. And Cunningsworth (1984, pp. 74–9) includes both analysis and evaluation questions in his 'Checklist of Evaluation Criteria'. Cunningsworth does recognize the problem of mixing these different types of questions by saying that, 'Some of the points can be checked off either in polar terms (i.e. yes or no) or where we are talking about more or less of something, on a gradation from 1 to 5' (1984, p. 74). My preference for separating analysis from evaluation is shared by Littlejohn (2011), who presents a general framework for analysing materials (pp. 182–98), which he suggests could be used prior to evaluation and action in a model which is sequenced as follows:

- Analysis of the target situation of use.
- Materials analysis.
- Match and evaluation (determining the appropriacy of the materials to the target situation of use).
- Action.

Principles in materials evaluation

Many evaluations are impressionistic, or at best are aided by an ad hoc and very subjective list of criteria. In my view it is very important that evaluations (even the most informal ones) are driven by a set of principles and that these principles are articulated by the evaluator(s) prior to the evaluation. In this way greater validity and reliability can be achieved and fewer mistakes are likely to be made. In developing a set of principles it is useful to consider the following.

The evaluator's theory of learning and teaching

All teachers develop theories of learning and teaching which they apply in their classrooms (even though they are often unaware of doing so). Many researchers (e.g. Schon, 1983) argue that it is useful for teachers to try to achieve an articulation of their theories by reflecting on their practice. For example Edge and Wharton (1998, p. 297) argue that reflective practice can not only lead to 'perceived improvements in practice but, more importantly, to deeper understandings of the area investigated'. In a similar way I am going to argue that the starting point of any evaluation should be reflection on the evaluator's practice leading to articulation of the evaluator's theories of learning and teaching. In this way evaluators can make overt their predispositions and can then both make use of them in constructing criteria for evaluation and be careful not to let them weight the evaluation too much towards their own bias. At the same time evaluators can learn a lot about themselves and about the learning and teaching process.

Here are some of my theories, which I have articulated as a result of reflection on my own and other teachers' practice:

- Language learners succeed best if learning is a positive, relaxed and enjoyable experience.
- Language teachers tend to teach most successfully if they enjoy their role and if they can gain some enjoyment themselves from the materials they are using.
- Learning materials lose credibility for learners if they suspect that the teacher does not value them.
- Each learner is different from all the others in a class in terms of his or her personality, motivation, attitude, aptitude, prior experience, interests, needs, wants and preferred learning style.
- Each learner varies from day to day in terms of motivation, attitude, mood, perceived needs and wants, enthusiasm and energy.

- There are superficial cultural differences between learners from different countries (and these differences need to be respected and catered for) but there are also strong universal determinants of successful language teaching and learning.
- Successful language learning in a classroom (especially in large classes) depends on the generation and maintenance of high levels of energy.
- The teacher is responsible for the initial generation of energy in a lesson; good materials can then maintain and even increase that energy.
- Learners only learn what they really need or want to learn.
- Learners often say that what they want is focused language practice but they often seem to gain more enjoyment and learning from activities which stimulate them to use the target language to say something they really want to say.
- Learners think, say and learn more if they are given an experience or text to respond to than if they are just asked for their views, opinions and interests.
- The most important thing that learning materials have to do is to help the learner to connect the learning experience in the classroom to their own life outside the course.
- The more novel (or better still bizarre) the learning experience is the more impact it is likely to make and it is more likely to contribute to long- term acquisition.
- The most important result that learning materials can achieve is to engage the emotions of learners. Laughter, joy, excitement, sorrow and anger can promote learning. Neutrality, numbness and nullity cannot.

I could go on for pages more articulating theories which I did not really know I believed in so strongly. These theories are valid for me in that they have come from seven years of classroom language learning and forty-seven years of teaching a language in eight different countries. They will be of considerable help when it comes to me constructing my own criteria for materials evaluation. However, what is valid for me from my own experience will not be valid for other evaluators and users of materials from their experience and I must be careful not to assume that my criteria will be the correct criteria. For example, from a quick glance at the extracts from my theories above it is obvious that I favour a holistic rather than a discrete approach to language learning, that I think flexibility and choice are very important and that I value materials which offer affective engagement to both the learner and the teacher. I must be careful not to insist that all learning materials match my requirements.

Learning theory

Research into learning is controversial as there are so many variables involved and local circumstances often make generalization precarious. However, it is important that the materials evaluator considers the findings of learning research and decides which of its findings are convincing and applicable. The conclusions which convince me are that:

- Deep processing of intake is required if effective and durable learning is to take place (Craik and Lockhart, 1972). Such processing is semantic in that the focus of the learner is on the meaning of the intake and in particular on its relevance to the learner.
- Affective engagement is also essential for effective and durable learning. Having positive attitudes towards the learning experience and developing self-esteem while learning are important determiners of successful learning. And so is emotional involvement. Emotions must be 'considered an essential part of learning' (Williams and Burden, 1997, p. 28) as they 'are the very centre of human mental life . . . [they] link what is important for us to the world of people, things and happenings' (Oatley and Jenkins, 1996, p. 122).
- Making mental connections is a crucial aspect of the learning process. In order for learning to be successful, connections need to be made between the new and the familiar, between what is being learned and the learner's life and between the learning experience and its potential value in the future.
- Experiential learning is essential (though not necessarily sufficient) and, in particular, apprehension should come to the learner before comprehension (Kolb, 1984; Kelly, 1997; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2000; Kolb and Kolb, 2009).
- Learners will only learn if they need and want to learn and if they are willing to invest time and energy in the process. In other words, both instrumental and integrative motivation are vital contributors to learning success (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2009).
- Multidimensional processing of intake is essential for successful learning and involves the learner creating a mental representation of the intake through such mental processes as sensory imaging (especially visualization), affective association and the use of the inner voice (Masuhara, 1998, 2005; Tomlinson, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001c, 2003, 2011b; de Guerro, 2005; Wiley, 2006; Tomlinson and Avila, 2007). As Berman (1999, p. 2) says, 'we learn best when we see things as part of a recognised pattern, when our imaginations are aroused, when we

make natural associations between one idea and another, and when the information appeals to our senses.' One of the best ways of achieving multidimensional representation in learning seems to be a whole person approach which helps the learner to respond to the learning experience with emotions, attitudes, opinions and ideas (Jacobs and Schumann, 1992; Schumann, 1997, 1999; Arnold, 1999).

- Materials which address the learner in an informal, personal voice are more likely to facilitate learning than those which use a distant, formal voice (Beck et al., 1995; Tomlinson, 2001b). Features which seem to contribute to a successful personal voice include such aspects of orality as:
  - Informal discourse features (e.g. contracted forms, ellipsis, informal lexis)
  - The active rather than the passive voice
  - Concreteness (e.g. examples, anecdotes)
  - Inclusiveness (e.g. not signalling intellectual, linguistic or cultural superiority over the learners)
  - Sharing experiences and opinions
  - Sometimes including casual redundancies rather than always being concise. (Tomlinson, 2001b)

As a materials evaluator I would convert the assertions above into criteria for the assessment of learning material. For example, I would construct such criteria as:

- To what extent are the materials related to the wants of the learners?
- To what extent are the materials likely to help the learners to achieve connections with their own lives?
- To what extent are the materials likely to stimulate emotional engagement?
- To what extent are the materials likely to promote visual imaging?

Second language acquisition research (SLA)

SLA research is so far inconclusive and has stimulated many disagreements and debates (e.g. about the value of the explicit teaching of discrete language points). However, there is now a sufficient consensus of opinion on certain facilitating features of language learning for them to be useful in helping to articulate the principles to be used as a basis of materials evaluation. In Tomlinson (2011a, pp. 6–23) I discussed the principles of second language acquisition which I think SLA researchers would agree

are relevant to the development of materials for the teaching of languages. Some of these principles are summarized below:

- Materials should achieve impact (through novelty, variety, surprise, bizarreness, attractive presentation and appealing content).
- Materials should help learners to feel at ease (e.g. through the use of white space to prevent clutter and the use of texts and illustrations which they can relate to their own culture, through a supportive approach which is not always testing them and through the use of a personal voice).
- Materials should help the learners to develop confidence (e.g. through 'pushing' learners slightly beyond their existing proficiency by involving them in tasks which are challenging but achievable).
- What is being taught should be perceived by learners as relevant and useful (Stevick, 1976; Krashen, 1982; Wenden and Rubin, 1987).
- Materials should require and facilitate learner self-investment (e.g. through giving learners responsibility for making decisions and through encouraging them to make discoveries about the language for themselves (Rutherford and Sharwood-Smith, 1988; Tomlinson, 1994, 2007; Bolitho et al., 2003).
- Learners must be ready to acquire the points being taught both in terms of linguistic, developmental readiness and of psychological readiness too (Meisel et al., 1981; Pienemann, 1985, 2005).
- Materials should expose the learners to language in authentic use (ideally to a rich and varied input which includes unplanned, semi-planned and planned discourse and which stimulates mental response). See Mishan (2005), Rilling and Dantas-Whitney (2009) and Tomlinson (2012).
- The learners' attention should be drawn to linguistic features of the input (so that they are alerted to subsequent instances of the same feature in future input (Seliger, 1979; White, 1990; Schmidt, 1992; Ortega, 2009).
- Materials should provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes (in order to automatize existing procedural knowledge, to check the effectiveness of their existing hypotheses (Swain, 1985, 2005) and to develop strategic competence (Canale and Swain, 1980)).
- Materials should take into account that the positive effects of instruction are usually delayed (and therefore should not expect effective production immediately to follow initial presentation but should rather ensure recycling and frequent and ample exposure to the instructed features in communicative use).

- Materials should take into account that learners differ in learning styles (Oxford and Anderson, 1995; Oxford, 2002; Anderson, 2005) (and should therefore ensure that they cater for learners who are predominantly visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, studial, experiential, analytic, global, dependent or independent).
- Materials should take into account that learners differ in affective attitudes (Wenden and Rubin, 1987) (and therefore materials should offer variety and choice).
- Materials should maximize learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement which stimulates both right and left brain activities (through a variety of non-trivial activities requiring a range of different types of processing).
- Materials should provide opportunities for outcome feedback (i.e. feedback on the effectiveness of the learner in achieving communication objectives rather than just feedback on the accuracy of the output).

In addition to the requirements listed in Tomlinson (2011a) I would like to add that materials should:

- help the learner to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity (Tomlinson, 2000b; Byram and Masuhara, 2013);
- reflect the reality of language use;
- help learners to learn in ways similar to the circumstances in which they will have to use the language;
- help to create readiness to learn (e.g. by helping learners to draw their attention to the gap between their use of a feature of communication and the use of that feature by proficient users of the language, or by involving the learners in a task in which they need to learn something new in order to be successful);
- achieve affective engagement (Tomlinson, 2010).

Richards (2001, p. 264) suggests a rather different and briefer list of the 'qualities each unit in the materials should reflect':

- Gives learners something they can take away from the lesson.
- Teaches something learners feel they can use.
- Gives learners a sense of achievement.
- Practises learning items in an interesting and novel way.

- Provides a pleasurable learning experience.
- Provides opportunities for individual practice.
- Provides opportunities for personalization.
- Provides opportunities for self-assessment of learning.

The important thing is for materials evaluators to decide for themselves which findings of SLA research they will use to develop principles for their evaluation. Ultimately what matters is that an evaluation is principled, that the evaluator's principles are made overt and that they are referred to when determining and carrying out the procedures of the evaluation. Otherwise the evaluation is likely to be ad hoc and mistakes will be made. A textbook selected mainly because of its attractive appearance could turn out to be very boring for the learners to use; a review which overemphasizes an irritating aspect of the materials (e.g. a particular character in a video course) can give a distorted impression of the value of the materials; a course selected for national use by a ministry of education because it is the cheapest or because it is written by famous writers and published by a prestigious publisher could turn out to be a very expensive disaster.

Types of materials evaluation

There are many different types of materials evaluation. It is possible to apply the basic principles of materials evaluation to all types of evaluation but it is not possible to make generalizations about procedures which apply to all types. Evaluations differ, for example, in purpose, in personnel, in formality and in timing. You might do an evaluation in order to help a publisher to make decisions about publication, to help yourself in developing materials for publication, to select a textbook, to write a review for a journal or as part of a research project. As an evaluator you might be a learner, a teacher, an editor, a researcher, a Director of Studies or an Inspector of English. You might be doing a mental evaluation in a bookshop, filling in a short questionnaire in class or doing a rigorous, empirical analysis of data elicited from a large sample of users of the materials. You might be doing your evaluation before the materials are used while they are being used or after they have been used. In order to conduct an effective evaluation you need to apply your principles of evaluation to the contextual circumstances of your evaluation in order to determine the most reliable and effective procedures.

Pre-use evaluation

Pre-use evaluation involves making predictions about the potential value of materials for their users. It can be context-free, as in a review of materials for a journal, context-influenced as in a review of draft materials for a publisher with target users in mind or

context-dependent, as when a teacher selects a coursebook for use with her particular class. Often pre-use evaluation is impressionistic and consists of a teacher flicking through a book to gain a quick impression of its potential value (publishers are well aware of this procedure and sometimes place attractive illustrations in the top right-hand corner of the right-hand page in order to influence the flicker in a positive way). Even a review for a publisher or journal, and an evaluation for a ministry of education is often 'fundamentally a subjective, rule of thumb activity' (Sheldon, 1988, p. 245) and often mistakes are made. Making an evaluation criterion-referenced can reduce (but not remove) subjectivity and can certainly help to make an evaluation more principled, rigorous, systematic and reliable. This is especially true if more than two evaluators conduct the evaluation independently and then average their conclusions. For example, in the review of eight adult EFL courses conducted by Tomlinson et al. (2001), the four evaluators devised one-hundred-and-thirty-three criteria together and then used them independently and in isolation to evaluate the eight courses before pooling their data and averaging their scores. Even then, though, the reviewers admitted that, 'the same review, conducted by a different team of reviewers, would almost certainly have produced a different set of results' (p. 82).

Making use of a checklist of criteria has become popular in materials evaluations and certain checklists from the literature have been frequently made use of in evaluations (e.g. Cunningsworth (1984, 1995), Skierso (1991), Brown (1997), Gearing, (1999)). The problem though is that no set of criteria is applicable to all situations and, as Byrd (2001) says, it is important that there is a fit between the materials and the curriculum, students and teachers. Matthews (1985), Cunningsworth (1995) and Tomlinson (2012) have also stressed the importance of relating evaluation criteria to what is known about the context of learning and Makundan and Ahour (2010) in their review of 48 evaluation checklists were critical of most checklists for being too context bound to be generalizable. Makundan and Ahour (2010) proposed that a framework for generating flexible criteria would be more useful than detailed and inflexible checklists (a proposition also made by Ellis (2011) and stressed and demonstrated by Tomlinson (2003b)). Other researchers who have proposed and exemplified frameworks for generating evaluation criteria include:

- McGrath (2002), who suggests a procedure involving materials analysis followed by first glance evaluation, user feedback and evaluation using context-specific checklists.
- Riazi (2003), who suggests, surveying the teaching/learning situation, conducting a neutral analysis and the carrying out of a belief-driven evaluation.
- Rubdy (2003), who suggests a dynamic model of evaluation in which the categories of psychological validity, pedagogical validity and process and content validity interact.

- Mukundan (2006), who describes the use of a composite framework combining checklists, reflective journals and computer software to evaluate ELT textbooks in Malaysia.
- McDonough et al. (2013), who focus on developing criteria evaluating the suitability of materials in relation to usability, generalizability, adaptability and flexibility.

Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004, p. 7) proposed the following criteria for evaluating criteria:

a Is each question an evaluation question?

b Does each question only ask one question?

c Is each question answerable?

d Is each question free of dogma?

e Is each question reliable in the sense that other evaluators would interpret it in the same way?

Tomlinson (2012) reports these criteria and gives examples from the many checklists in the literature of evaluation criteria which their use exposes as inadequate in terms of specificity, clarity, answerability, validity and generalizability.

Whilst-use evaluation

This involves measuring the value of materials while using them or while observing them being used. It can be more objective and reliable than pre-use evaluation as it makes use of measurement rather than prediction. However, it is limited to measuring what is observable (e.g. 'Are the instructions clear to the learners?') and cannot claim to measure what is happening in the learners' brains. It can measure short-term memory through observing learner performance on exercises but it cannot measure durable and effective learning because of the delayed effect of instruction. It is therefore very useful but dangerous too, as teachers and observers can be misled by whether the activities seem to work or not. Exactly what can be measured in a whilst-use evaluation is controversial but I would include the following:

- Clarity of instructions
- Clarity of layout
- Comprehensibility of texts
- Credibility of tasks
- Achievability of tasks

- Achievement of performance objectives
- Potential for localization
- Practicality of the materials
- Teachability of the materials
- Flexibility of the materials
- Appeal of the materials
- Motivating power of the materials
- Impact of the materials
- Effectiveness in facilitating short-term learning

Most of the above can be estimated during an open-ended, impressionistic observation of materials in use but greater reliability can be achieved by focusing on one criterion at a time and by using pre-prepared instruments of measurement. For example, oral participation in an activity can be measured by recording the incidence and duration of each student's oral contribution, potential for localization can be estimated by noting the times the teacher or a student refers to the location of learning while using the materials and even motivation can be estimated by noting such features as student eye focus, proximity to the materials, time on task and facial animation. Whilst-use evaluation receives very little attention in the literature, but Jolly and Bolitho (2011) describe interesting case studies of how student comment and feedback during lessons provided useful evaluation of materials, which led to improvements being made in the materials during and after the lessons. Also Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010) report materials development projects in which whilst-use evaluation was made use of.

Post-use evaluation

Post-use evaluation is probably the most valuable (but least administered) type of evaluation as it can measure the actual effects of the materials on the users. It can measure the short-term effect as regards motivation, impact, achievability, instant learning, etc., and it can measure the long-term effect as regards durable learning and application. It can answer such important questions as:

- What do the learners know which they did not know before starting to use the materials?
- What do the learners still not know despite using the materials?
- What can the learners do which they could not do before starting to use the materials?
- What can the learners still not do despite using the materials?

- To what extent have the materials prepared the learners for their examinations?
- To what extent have the materials prepared the learners for their post-course use of the target language?
- What effect have the materials had on the confidence of the learners?
- What effect have the materials had on the motivation of the learners?
- To what extent have the materials helped the learners to become independent learners?
- Did the teachers find the materials easy to use?
- Did the materials help the teachers to cover the syllabus?
- Did the administrators find the materials helped them to standardize the teaching in their institution?

In other words, it can measure the actual outcomes of the use of the materials and thus provide the data on which reliable decisions about the use, adaptation or replacement of the materials can be made. Ways of measuring the post-use effects of materials include:

- tests of what has been 'taught' by the materials;
- tests of what the students can do;
- examinations;
- interviews;
- questionnaires;
- criterion-referenced evaluations by the users;
- post-course diaries;
- post-course 'shadowing' of the learners;
- post-course reports on the learners by employers, subject tutors, etc.

The main problem, of course, is that it takes time and expertise to measure post-use effects reliably (especially as, to be really revealing, there should be measurement of pre-use attitudes and abilities in order to provide data for post-use comparison). But publishers and ministries do have the time and can engage the expertise, and teachers can be helped to design, administer and analyse post-use instruments of measurement. Then we will have much more useful information, not only about the effects of particular courses of materials but about the relative effectiveness of different types of materials. Even then, though, we will need to be cautious, as it will be very

difficult to separate such variables as teacher effectiveness, parental support, language exposure outside the classroom, intrinsic motivation, etc.

For a description of the process of post-use evaluation of piloted materials see Donovan (1998), for descriptions of how publishers use focus groups for post-use evaluation of materials see Amrani (2011) and for suggestions of how teachers could do post-use micro-evaluations of materials see Ellis (1998, 2011). For reports of projects which conducted post-use evaluation of materials in many different countries see Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010).

Standard approaches to materials evaluation

My experience of materials evaluation in many countries has been rather worrying. I have sat on National Curriculum committees which have decided which books should be used in schools purely on the basis of the collective impressions of their members. I have written reviews of manuscripts for publishers without any criteria being specified or asked for. I have had my own books considered by Ministry of Education officials for adoption without any reference to a coherent set of criteria. I have read countless published reviews (and even written a few myself) which consist of the reviewers' ad hoc responses to the materials as they read them. I have conducted major materials evaluations for publishers and software companies without being given or asked for any criteria. I wonder how many mistakes I have contributed to. On the other hand, I was encouraged by a major British publisher to develop a comprehensive set of principled criteria prior to conducting an evaluation for them and I led a team of evaluators in developing a set of 133 criteria prior to evaluating eight adult EFL courses for ELT Journal (Tomlinson et al., 2001).

Most of the literature on materials development has so far focused on materials evaluation, and useful advice on conducting evaluations can be found in Brown, 1997; Byrd, 1995; Candlin and Breen, 1980; Cunningsworth, 1984, 1995; Donovan, 1998; Daoud and Celce-Murcia, 1979; Ellis, 1995, 1998; Grant, 1987; Hidalgo et al., 1995; Jolly and Bolitho, 1998; Littlejohn, 2011; McDonough, 1998; McDonough et al., 2013; Mariani, 1983; Richards, 2001; Roxburgh, 1997; Sheldon, 1987, 1988; Skierso, 1991; Tomlinson, 1999; Tomlinson et al., 2001; and Williams, 1983. Many of the checklists and lists of criteria suggested in these publications provide a useful starting point for anybody conducting an evaluation but some of them are impressionistic and biased (e.g. Brown (1997) awards points for the inclusion of tests in a coursebook and Daoud and Celce-Murcia (1979, p. 305) include such dogmatic criteria as, 'Are the vocabulary items controlled to ensure systematic gradation from simple to complex items?'). Some of the lists lack coverage, systematicity and/or a principled base, and some give the impression that they could be used in any materials evaluation ('there can be no one model framework for the evaluation of materials; the framework used must be determined by the reasons, objectives and circumstances of the evaluation' (Tomlinson,

1999, p. 11)). Most of the lists in the publications above are to some extent subjective as they are lists for pre-use evaluation and this involves selection and prediction. For example, Tomlinson et al. (2001, p. 81) say,

> We have been very thorough and systematic in our evaluation procedures, and have attempted to be as fair, rigorous, and objective as possible. However, we must start this report on our evaluation by acknowledging that, to some extent, our results are still inevitably subjective. This is because any pre-use evaluation is subjective, both in its selection of criteria and in the judgements made by the evaluators.

A useful exercise for anybody writing or evaluating language teaching materials would be to evaluate the checklists and criteria lists from a sample of the publications above against the following criteria:

- Is the list based on a coherent set of principles of language learning?
- Are all the criteria actually evaluation criteria or are they criteria for analysis?
- Are the criteria sufficient to help the evaluator to reach useful conclusions?
- Are the criteria organized systematically (e.g. into categories and subcategories which facilitate discrete as well as global verdicts and decisions)?
- Are the criteria sufficiently neutral to allow evaluators with different ideologies to make use of them?
- Is the list sufficiently flexible to allow it to be made use of by different evaluators in different circumstances?

More useful to a materials evaluator than models of criteria lists (which might not fit the contextual factors of a particular evaluation) would be a suggested procedure for developing criteria to match the specific circumstances of a particular evaluation. I would like to conclude this chapter by suggesting such a procedure below.

Developing criteria for materials evaluation

My experience, both personally and of students and teachers, is that it is extremely useful to develop a set of formal criteria for use on a particular evaluation and then to use that set as a basis for developing subsequent context-specific sets. Initially this is demanding and time-consuming, but it not only helps the evaluators to clarify their principles of language learning and teaching but it also ensures that future evaluations (both formal and informal) are systematic, rigorous and, above all, principled. One way of developing a set of criteria is as follows.

1 Brainstorm a list of universal criteria

Universal criteria are those which would apply to any language learning materials anywhere for any learners. So, for example, they would apply equally to a video course for 10-year-olds in Argentina and an English for academic purposes textbook for undergraduates in Thailand. They derive from principles of language learning and the results of classroom observation and provide the fundamental basis for any materials evaluation. Brainstorming a random list of such criteria (ideally with other colleagues) is a very useful way of beginning an evaluation, and the most useful way I have found of doing it is to phrase the criteria as specific questions rather than to list them as general headings.

Examples of universal criteria would be:

- Do the materials provide useful opportunities for the learners to think for themselves?
- Are the target learners likely to be able to follow the instructions?
- Are the materials likely to cater for different preferred learning styles?
- Are the materials likely to achieve affective engagement?

Here are the universal criteria used in Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) to evaluate six current global coursebooks.

To what extent is the course likely to:

- provide extensive exposure to English in use?
- engage the learners affectively?
- engage the learners cognitively?
- provide an achievable challenge?
- help learners to personalize their learning?
- help the learners to make discoveries about how English is typically used?
- provide opportunities to use the target language for communication?
- help the learners to develop cultural awareness?
- help the learners to make use of the English environment outside the classroom?
- cater for the needs of all the learners?
- provide the flexibility needed for effective localization?
- help the learners to continue to learn English after the course?

- help learners to use English as a lingua franca?
- help learners to become effective communicators in English?
- achieve its stated objectives?

2 Subdivide some of the criteria

If the evaluation is going to be used as a basis for revision or adaptation of the materials, or if it is going to be a formal evaluation and is going to inform important decisions, it is useful to subdivide some of the criteria into more specific questions.

For example:

Are the instructions:

- succinct?
- sufficient?
- self-standing?
- standardized?
- separated?
- sequenced?
- staged?

Such a subdivision can help to pinpoint specific aspects of the materials which could gain from revision or adaptation.

3 Monitor and revise the list of universal criteria

Monitor the list and rewrite it according to the following criteria:

Is each question an evaluation question?

If a question is an analysis question (e.g. 'Does each unit include a test?') then you can only give the answer a 1 or a 5 on the 5-point scale which is recommended later in this suggested procedure. However, if it is an evaluation question (e.g. 'To what extent are the tests likely to provide useful learning experiences?') then it can be graded at any point on the scale.

Does each question only ask one question?

Many criteria in published lists ask two or more questions and therefore cannot be used in any numerical grading of the materials. For example, Grant (1987) includes the

following question which could be answered 'Yes; No' or 'No; Yes': '1 Is it attractive? Given the average age of your students, would they enjoy using it?' (p. 122). This question could be usefully rewritten as:

1. Is the book likely to be attractive to your students?
2. Is it suitable for the age of your students?
3. Are your students likely to enjoy using it?

Other examples of multiple questions are:

- 'Do illustrations create a favourable atmosphere for practice in reading and spelling by depicting realism and action?' (Daoud and Celce-Murcia, 1979, p. 304)
- 'Does the book provide attractive, interesting (and perhaps exciting) language work, as well as a steady and systematic development of the language system?' (Mariani, 1983, p. 29)

Is each question answerable?

This might seem an obvious question but in many published lists of criteria some questions are so large and so vague that they cannot usefully be answered. Or sometimes they cannot be answered without reference to other criteria, or they require expert knowledge of the evaluator.

For example:

'Is it culturally acceptable?' (Grant, 1987, p. 122)

'Does it achieve an acceptable balance between knowledge about the language and practice in using the language?' (Ibid.)

'Does the writer use current everyday language, and sentence structures that follow normal word order?' (Daoud and Celce-Murcia, 1979, p. 304)

Is each question free of dogma?

The questions should reflect the evaluators' principles of language learning but should not impose a rigid methodology as a requirement of the materials. If they do, the materials could be dismissed without a proper appreciation of their potential value.

For example, the following examples make assumptions about the pedagogical procedures of coursebooks which not all coursebooks actually follow:

- 'Are the various stages in a teaching unit (what you would probably call presentation, practice and production) adequately developed?' (Mariani, 1983, p. 29)
- Do the sentences gradually increase in complexity to suit the growing reading ability of the students? (Daoud and Celce-Murcia, 1979, p. 304)

Is each question reliable in the sense that other evaluators would interpret it in the same way?

Some terms and concepts which are commonly used in applied linguistics are amenable to differing interpretations and are best avoided or glossed when attempting to measure the effects of materials. For example, each of the following questions could be interpreted in a number of ways:

- Are the materials sufficiently authentic?
- Is there an acceptable balance of skills?
- Do the activities work?
- Is each unit coherent?

There are a number of ways in which each question could be rewritten to make it more reliable and useful. For example:

- Do the materials help the learners to use the language in situations they are likely to find themselves in after the course?
- Is the proportion of the materials devoted to the development of reading skills suitable for your learners?
- Are the communicative tasks useful in providing learning opportunities for the learners?
- Are the activities in each unit linked to each other in ways which help the learners?

4 Categorize the list

It is very useful to rearrange the random list of universal criteria into categories which facilitate focus and enable generalizations to be made. An extra advantage of doing this is that you often think of other criteria related to the category as you are doing the categorization exercise.

Possible categories for universal criteria would be:

- Learning Principles
- Cultural Perspective
- Topic Content
- Teaching Points
- Texts
- Activities

- Methodology
- Instructions
- Design and Layout

5 Develop media-specific criteria

These are criteria which ask questions of particular relevance to the medium used by the materials being evaluated (e.g. criteria for books, for audio cassettes, for videos, etc.). Examples of such criteria would be:

- Is it clear which sections the visuals refer to?
- Is the sequence of activities clearly signalled?
- Are the different voices easily distinguished?
- Do the gestures of the actors help to make the language meaningful in realistic ways?

Obviously these criteria can also be usefully categorized (e.g. under Illustrations, Layout, Audibility, Movement).

6 Develop content-specific criteria

These are criteria which relate to the topics and/or teaching points of the materials being evaluated. 'Thus there would be a set of topic related criteria which would be relevant to the evaluation of a business English textbook but not to a general English coursebook; and there would be a set of criteria relevant to a reading skills book which would not be relevant to the evaluation of a grammar practice book and vice versa' (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 11).

Examples of content-specific criteria would be:

- Do the examples of business texts (e.g. letters, invoices, etc.) replicate features of real-life business practice?
- Do the reading texts represent a wide and typical sample of genres?

7 Develop age-specific criteria

These are criteria which relate to the age of the target learners. Thus there would be criteria which are only suitable for 5-year-olds, for 10-year-olds, for teenagers, for young adults and for mature adults. These criteria would relate to cognitive and affective development, to previous experience, to interests and to wants and needs.

Examples of age-specific criteria would be:

- Are there short, varied activities which are likely to match the attention span of the learners?
- Is the content likely to provide an achievable challenge in relation to the maturity level of the learners?

8 Develop local criteria

These are criteria which relate to the actual or potential environment of use. They are questions which are not concerned with establishing the value of the materials per se but rather with measuring the value of the materials for particular learners in particular circumstances. It is this set of criteria which is unique to the specific evaluation being undertaken and which is ultimately responsible for most of the decisions made in relation to the adoption, revision or adaptation of the materials.

Typical features of the environment which would determine this set of materials are:

- the type(s) of institution(s);
- the resources of the institution(s);
- class size;
- the background, needs and wants of the learners;
- the background, needs and wants of the teachers;
- the language policies in operation;
- the syllabus;
- the objectives of the courses;
- the intensity and extent of the teaching time available;
- the target examinations;
- the amount of exposure to the target language outside the classroom.

Examples of local criteria would be:

- To what extent are the stories likely to interest 15-year-old boys in Turkey?
- To what extent are the reading activities likely to prepare the students for the reading questions in the Primary School Leaving Examination in Singapore?
- To what extent are the topics likely to be acceptable to parents of students in Iran?

9 Develop other criteria

Other criteria which it might be appropriate to develop could include teacher-specific, administrator-specific, gender-specific, culture-specific or L1-specific criteria and, especially in the case of a review for a journal, criteria assessing the match between the materials and the claims made by the publishers for them.

10 Trial the criteria

It is important to trial the criteria (even prior to a small, fairly informal evaluation) to ensure that the criteria are sufficient, answerable, reliable and useful. Revisions can then be made before the actual evaluation begins.

11 Conducting the evaluation

From experience I have found the most effective way of conducting an evaluation is to:

- make sure that there is more than one evaluator;
- discuss the criteria to make sure there is equivalence of interpretation;
- answer the criteria independently and in isolation from the other evaluator(s);
- focus in a large evaluation on a typical unit for each level (and then check its typicality by reference to other units);
- give a score for each criterion (with some sets of criteria weighted more heavily than others);
- write comments at the end of each category;
- at the end of the evaluation aggregate each evaluator's scores for each criterion, category of criteria and set of criteria and then average the scores;
- record the comments shared by the evaluators;
- write a joint report.

See Tomlinson et al. (2001) for a report of a large-scale evaluation in which 4 evaluators from different cultures independently evaluated 8 adult EFL courses using the same 133 criteria (weighted 0–20 for Publisher's Claims, 0–10 for Flexibility and 0–5 for the other categories of criteria). See also Masuhara et al. (2008), Tomlinson (2008) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) for other examples of evaluations.

What is recommended above is a very rigorous, systematic but time-consuming approach to materials evaluation which I think is necessary for major evaluations from which important decisions are going to be made. However for more informal

evaluations (or when very little time is available) I would recommend the following procedure:

1. Brainstorm beliefs
2. Decide on shared beliefs
3. Convert the shared beliefs into universal criteria
4. Write a profile of the target learning context for the materials
5. Develop local criteria from the profile
6. Evaluate and revise the universal and the local criteria
7. Conduct the evaluation

Conclusion

Materials evaluation is initially a time-consuming and difficult undertaking. Approaching it in the principled, systematic and rigorous ways suggested above can not only help to make and record vital discoveries about the materials being evaluated but can also help the evaluators to learn a lot about materials, about learning and teaching and about themselves. This is certainly what has happened to my students on MA courses in Ankara, Leeds, Luton, Norwich and Singapore and to the teachers on workshops on materials evaluation I have conducted all over the world.

Doing evaluations formally and rigorously can also eventually contribute to the development of an ability to conduct principled informal evaluations quickly and effectively when the occasion demands (e.g. when asked for an opinion of a new book; when deciding which materials to buy in a bookshop; when editing other people's materials). I have found evaluation demanding but rewarding. Certainly, I have learned a lot every time I have evaluated materials, whether it be the worldwide evaluation of a coursebook I once undertook for a British publisher, the evaluation of computer software I once undertook for an American company, the evaluation of materials I have done for reviews in *ELT Journal* or just looking through new materials in a bookshop every time I visit my daughter in Cambridge. I hope, above all else, that I have learned to be more open-minded and that I have learned what criteria I need to satisfy when I write my own best-selling coursebook.

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2

Adapting Courses: A Personal View

Claudia Saraceni

Introduction

L2 Materials Development has played a significant role as an academic discipline for a number of years. However, there seems to be a gap between theoretical findings in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research and practice in many coursebooks and published materials. 'Many think that there is [. . .] a mismatch between some of the pedagogic procedures of current textbooks and what second language acquisition researchers have discovered about the process of learning a second or foreign language' (Tomlinson, 1998, p. 265).

Moreover, many examples of materials produced for language teaching and learning purposes seem to follow a very similar format: they only differ in shape and visual impact, but are very often based on similar topics and activities, hence similar objectives. Here are a few common characteristics:

The activities are mostly based on language manipulation, such as drills, comprehension tests, substitution tables;

The topics are generally trivial and very often not relevant to the learners' needs and interests;

The objectives are usually based on the main format of the Presentation, Practice, Production Approach (PPP), which seems to be still overwhelmingly present in so many textbooks for language teaching and yet has very little basis in research.

Also, the topics seem to reoccur particularly in many low-level books, where the lower the level, the less controversial and provocative the content seems to be. Particularly for materials published for beginners, for example, the following seem very commonly found:

Introductions

Numbers

Food & Drink

Time Expressions

Expressions of Quantity/Shopping

The Future

Transport

A number of potential limitations can be identified with these types of language teaching materials:

- they tend to undermine and demotivate learners;
- they are rather trivial;
- they are not new or innovative;
- they tend to give a very stereotypical image of the target language;
- they do not take into consideration their main users, more specifically learners and teachers.

It is in this context that adapting courses becomes vital as it can involve changing activities, topics and therefore objectives. In an attempt to make the materials more relevant and useful for their users, the conventional approach to materials adaptation generally relates to a number of changes to the materials, such as, for example, the process of deleting, reordering or adding. This chapter attempts to take such a process further and perhaps propose a more radical view on adapting courses, with the aim of drawing a rationale behind materials adaptation, thus reducing the above-mentioned gap between SLA research principles and classroom practice. This chapter is, therefore, proposing the adaptation of courses as the key to achieving such aim.

Adapting materials

Despite the fact that it seems a relatively under-researched discipline, in many ways adapting materials is an inevitable process as it is always carried out as part

of classroom practice. The simple fact of using a piece of teaching/learning materials inevitably means adapting it to the particular needs of a specific teaching and learning scenario. In the practice of language teaching, this has been accepted for quite a long time now (Madsen and Bowen, 1978).

The following section outlines the process of materials adaptation from different points of view.

A teacher-centred approach to adaptation

Having proposed the importance of materials adaptation as a relevant and useful link between the reality of the language classroom and SLA research findings, there is obviously a great need to develop such a process further and put it into practice in a more systematic manner. However, materials adaptation, in the great majority of cases, is still left to the teachers' hands, and it is largely based simply on their intuition and experience. On the one hand, research has, for decades, stressed the importance of the learner and their role in the language classroom; many areas of research, have extensively explored and described the advantages of learner involvement in programme design, methodology, materials selection and adaptation, since the 1970s and 1980s (Nunan, 1988; Clarke, 1989). On the other hand, particularly as far as adapting courses is concerned, learners are traditionally left with a rather passive role.

A learner-centred approach to adaptation

Clarke (1989) provides a typical example of a learner-centred approach to adaptation: he acknowledges the importance of learner involvement in the adaptation process and he distinguishes what he calls a *Negotiated Syllabus,* from an *Externally Imposed Syllabus*. The former is internally generated and it is a result of the product of negotiation between teacher and students. The latter is a syllabus imposed by an external body such as the teacher, the institution or any other administrative authority. There is, however, a fine line between the Negotiated Syllabus and the Externally Imposed Syllabus in the sense that the former turns out, very often, to also be an imposed syllabus for the reasons given below.

If we write about the learner's more active role in the adaptation process and his/her negotiation with the teacher, we are assuming that the syllabus is the product of cooperation between the teacher and the learners. However, generally in this case, the teacher's input tends to become the dominant one, accepted by the learners as the 'right one' and the one to follow, whereas the learners' ideas on adapting materials are very often perceived to be 'wrong' if different from those of the teacher. This still comes from the traditional, teacher-centred concept of teachers feeding knowledge to the class; hence the learner's role in this process is still rather limited and not truly *learner-centred*.

Adaptation as critical awareness development

This chapter advocates a much more active learner's role in the adaptation process, whereby the learner is given the opportunity of sharing the ownership of the classroom and of the materials used in the classroom, with the teacher. Therefore, learners participate in the adaptation process and also provide classroom input. This is so that, gradually they share control of what happens in the classroom, hence also over their own learning. In this context, adapting courses can be used as an awareness development activity (Tomlinson, 2003a, 2003b) that potentially facilitates learner involvement and, eventually, empowers learners to develop their critical thinking. This approach, therefore, promotes the use of materials adaptation to take awareness development principles further and apply them also to teacher development (Wright and Bolitho, 1993; Bolitho, 2003; Bolitho et al., 2003).

The above-mentioned approach to adapting courses can be considered in relation to at least two teaching and learning scenarios, as a tool for critical awareness development:

1. The language classroom
2. Teacher development courses

Consider the following example of materials designed specifically for a multilingual group of learners at an intermediate level.

The activities

Pre-reading

1 You are going to read a poem called 'The Enemies', by Elizabeth Jennings.

Before you read it, discuss briefly the following, in pairs/small groups of three or four:

Who and what do you think the poem is about?

2 Considering only the title, what kind of information do you expect to find in this poem? Think about and write the following:

A list of questions you are asking yourself before you read the poem.

The possible answers to the above questions, you expect to find in this poem.

Reading

3 While reading the poem, note down the following:

See if you can find the answers to the questions you set before; when you find them, make a note on the text;

Make a note also when you find points you did not expect before;

Stop reading the poem, if you are not interested anymore and note down your reasons for stopping.

The following can be used by the teacher as a stimulus and/or a starting point for the above activity, to be used if necessary. Remember to ask students to also justify their answers:

Who do you think are the enemies in the poem?

Do they remind you of anybody you know?

What do you think the people in the poem are feeling?

What do you think they are thinking/talking about?

4 Read the poem again and, in your pairs/small groups decide the following, and underline the parts that help you answer these questions:

How does the poem make you feel? Why?

Which line, word or verse provoked such reactions?

Which line, word or verse, do you think, best represents the whole poem? Why?

Discuss the above points with your partner(s) and try to explain your answers to the above questions.

Try to find linguistic features from the poem to justify your answers (consider the vocabulary, the tense system, the grammar structures used).

Post-reading

5 You are going to write a short adaptation of this poem to create a different text. You can either choose a text you know, that you associate with the poem, or produce a new one of your own;

Consider the following list as possible examples/suggestions:

a drawing;

a painting;

a piece of music;

a play;

a film;

a dialogue between the town inhabitants and the strangers arriving to the town.

Working with your partner(s), talk about and take a few notes on what you are going to change and how you are going to present your own interpretation of the poem.

Now, describe your text and explain your response to the rest of your class: how does it relate to the original poem?

The poem

The Enemies
Elizabeth Jennings

Last night they came across the river and
Entered the city. Women were awake
With lights and food. They entertained the band,
Not asking what the men had come to take
Or what strange tongue they spoke
Or why they came so suddenly through the land.

Now in the morning all the town is filled
With stories of the swift and dark invasion;
The women say that not one stranger told
A reason for his coming. The intrusion
Was not for devastation:
Peace is apparent still on hearth and field.

Yet all the city is a haunted place.
Man meeting man speaks cautiously. Old friends
Close up the candid looks upon their face.
There is no warmth in hands accepting hands;
Each ponders, 'Better hide myself in case
Those strangers have set up their homes in minds
I used to walk in. Better draw the blinds
Even if the strangers haunt in my own house.'

Suggestions for further developments and possible adaptations:
The above are examples of activities that can provide the stimulus for discussion and are purposely designed to be adapted and developed further by their potential users. Here they are considered in relation to two main groups of learners: language learners and teacher trainees.

Here are possible ideas for adaptation and further developments:

To the language learner

A With your groups, you can now choose one of the following projects:

- **a** Find a different text about people considered 'The Enemies' in your country today (e.g. a newspaper article, a short story, a song, an extract from a film);
- **b** Find other poems with a similar theme;
- **c** Find other poems with similar linguistic features you found in activity n.4 above;

B In the following lesson, you are going to present and discuss your choice of text to the rest of the class. In your groups, take notes and prepare a short presentation on your findings. You can use any audio and/or visual aids you want;

C Prepare and focus on at least three points you want to present to and discuss with your classmates;

To the teacher in training

A Consider the above activities (1 to 5) and the text related to them. You are going to use them in your next teaching practice lesson. In small groups decide what you think should be kept and what you think should be changed: expanded, replaced, added, shortened, supplemented;

B In your groups, discuss and take notes of your reasons behind those adaptations you considered above;

C When planning the above changes, you can consider, more specifically, the following elements in relation to your learners' needs:

the instructions,

the text,

the order of activities,

the presentation,

the potential use of visual/audio aids,

the objectives,

D You are going to teach your next lesson. With your groups first, and with the rest of the class later, decide how to adapt and develop your activities and supplementary materials, using your own choice of texts and tasks;

E Teach the lesson you have prepared to your students;

F Take a few notes on your considerations as post-evaluation reflections, after having used your own materials in your class;

G Prepare a few notes on your post-evaluation to present your findings to the other trainees in your teacher training class.

The above activities represent only a short example of the type of teaching and learning materials described in this chapter, used with the aim of developing critical awareness. In the examples used above, the process of adaptation is left to the learners and to the trainee teachers. In the former case learners are first exposed and stimulated by the poem and then are gradually becoming more autonomous in their learning, to follow their own path and the types of activities they choose. In the latter case with trainee teachers, the aim is related to the improvement and development of existing materials for the purpose of developing classroom practice. In both cases, however, materials adaptation is used as a tool to enhance critical awareness development.

It can be argued that these activities are so open-ended that they may leave the learner confused about what to do and how to carry out the tasks. However, this process of awareness development can only be achieved rather slowly and gradually, getting the learner used to sharing control of the lesson with their teacher, who takes the roles of co-ordinator and facilitator.

The poem itself is quite open to different interpretations; it offers various points of discussion and the language used is rather simple and accessible. Learners are also encouraged to consider their own reading process and their reader response (activities 1, 2, 3). To emphasize their awareness further, the teacher/materials could also choose to ask the learners to compare the tasks they have just used with more traditional activities found in a typical example of published materials of their choice.

A model for adapting courses

As can be seen in the above example, the process of adapting courses is inevitably based on an initial evaluation. Moreover, if, on the one hand, adapting courses becomes also a responsibility of the learners, on the other hand, this chapter takes the view that materials developers should produce materials with the specific aim of facilitating the evaluation and inevitable adaptation process: materials purposely designed to be adapted later by their users.

In the traditional approach to materials writing, where the whole structure is prescriptively designed, learners and teachers have to follow activities in a specifically controlled manner for the unit to achieve its aims and objectives. However, this chapter promotes an approach to adaptation based on two main points. First, the above mentioned controlled approach should be broken and replaced by a set of materials much more flexible and open to different interpretations and adaptations. Second, the element of critical awareness development should generally be preceded by an aesthetic experience of the input provided, as further explained later on in this section. Such an alternative model for adapting courses can be used also as a way to make materials more relevant to a wider group of learners, reducing the risk of becoming superficial and trivial.

List of key features in materials adaptation

The following is a list of basic key points to take into account when evaluating and adapting courses. However, these can be used simply as a proposal to be developed further and adapted to different classroom situations.

Learner-centredness and critical awareness development

There is a large amount of literature on learner-centred approaches and principles (Nunan, 1988). However, there are very few language teaching and learning materials

which, in my opinion, are truly learner-centred, in the sense that their aims are the development of learners' critical awareness, linguistic empowerment and therefore learner autonomy. The materials should put learners at the centre of the learning process and make them input providers (hence part of the materials adaption process), whereas teachers should be facilitators and co-ordinators and should provide a stimulus, a starting point, for language exposure as well as for different approaches to learning. Materials adaptation, therefore, should be shared between materials developers, teachers and learners.

Flexibility and choice

Materials should be flexible, in the sense that they should provide learners with the possibility of choosing different activities, tasks, projects and approaches, thus of adapting the materials to their own learning needs. At the same time, however, given the fact that the majority of learners are not used to this type of approach to learning, they should also be exposed to a variety of different activities and approaches, so that they themselves become more flexible learners, having experienced different ways of learning. Materials, then, should, on the one hand, provide choice but, on the other hand, also enable learners to develop a variety of skills and learning styles by encouraging them to experience a wide range of tasks and approaches, so that they may also become more independent learners. Materials can, for example, include a choice of tasks ranging from analytical ones (such as those based on grammatical awareness) to more creative ones (such as those based on creative writing). Learners can be encouraged to experience them all at one point and then also make choices at a later stage.

Open-endedness and aesthetic experience

If materials allow only one possible right answer, they do not leave space for interpretation and adaptation, whereas if they are open-ended they can become more relevant to learners. In many ways this is related to the concept of Aesthetic Experience, an idea which originated from the theory of Aesthetic Response as put forward by Rosenblatt (1995). Aesthetic Response refers to the process of reacting spontaneously when reading literary texts, hence it involves interaction between readers, language and texts (Iser, 1978; Hirvela, 1996). Some of the major elements of such type of experiential response, such as the voice of the narrator and that of the reader, as well as the role of the receiver and the one of the producer of the literary input, become overlapping and interchangeable. Aesthetic Experience, therefore, typically represents the immediate response to language and literature experienced by the receiver and the producer, as well as their later interpretations and reactions. Literature and Aesthetic Experience are inevitably part of a subjective process which is created every time the text is read or written. Reading and interpretation are always different: we have different reactions every time we aesthetically experience a poem, a novel, etc. (Saraceni, 2010).

A parallel point should be drawn here between aesthetic experience and materials adaptation. Aesthetic Experience (Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995; Saraceni, 2010) promotes the subjectivity of texts and their various interpretations. In a similar way, also materials for teaching and learning purposes should promote an aesthetic experience, in the sense that they should, not only be based on right/wrong testing and practice but, rather, they should also focus on open-ended tasks and texts. For example, in relation to texts, materials should include also those which are open to many different ideas and points of view and encourage a variety of interpretations. Therefore, texts and tasks should be included with the main purpose of promoting a subjective response, whether this be in relation to a reading text or to a listening one. If materials present open spaces or gaps (Eco, 1993, 1995), they can allow learners to form their own interpretations and ideas and, therefore, to take control of the adaptation process. In this context, the aim of materials moves from comprehension testing, which allows only a rather superficial intake of the input, to a deeper understanding and awareness of the language exposure, with the emphasis on individual differences.

Relevance

In an attempt to draw a link between the adaptation process and reading, materials left open-ended, as explained above, have the potential to become relevant to the learners when they fill those gaps with their ideas, interpretations and discussions. It is only at this level that materials acquire significance and become potentially beneficial for the learners. It is, in fact, by virtue of such contributions that materials can be adapted and developed further. Adaptation is, therefore, essential in making materials relevant and potentially more effective for learning development.

Universality

Materials should be based on universally appealing topics, which are culturally provoking in the sense that they are culturally specific but, at the same time, they are present in all cultures. A rich source of this type of topics comes from Literature, which typically involves themes based on *life experiences, feelings, relationships.* These are present in all cultures but they can be looked at from different angles and experienced in different ways. Universality of topics provides a stimulus for discussion and it enables learners to focus on and gain a better understanding of cultural differences as well as cultural commonalities (Jiang, 2000).

Authentic and non-authentic input

Materials should be based on authentic texts, those texts which have been written for any purpose other than language teaching. At the same time, there should also be a combination of authentic and non-authentic tasks, based on realistic scenarios, in

order to expose the learners to realistic input. In my view a significant role is played by the use of non-authentic tasks with authentic texts. For example, tasks which aim at drawing the learners' attention to certain linguistic features of the input with activities based on texts selected from authentic sources, can be beneficial for language awareness development.

Provocative topics and tasks

Materials should include topics and activities that can potentially provoke a reaction, hence an aesthetic experience (whether it be positive or negative) that is personal and subjective. These can make learning more engaging and perhaps also more humanistic.

From my point of view, topics are not to be considered intrinsically *provocative* but the activities associated with them can potentially make the materials more or less provocative, thus more or less engaging. In my experience, however, certain topics related to *Personal Life, Family, Parents, Relationships, Emotions, Inner Self* can achieve this aim more effectively, rather than those topics very often associated with controversy such as *Politics, War, Racism, Drugs, etc.*

However, although students generally feel engaged when exposed to provocative topics, at first a few may show some resistance to such personal depths. Students in general are used to traditional ways of being taught; they are not always ready to be challenged and to step beyond the usual *safer* topics. In some cases, they are so used to teacher-centred teaching, that they find it more reassuring and credible. This, however, further demonstrates their need to be gradually exposed to different types of input, to enable them to express their opinions and to further develop their interpretations and points of view, hence to develop their flexibility as learners.

Conclusions

'As teachers and methodologists become more aware of SLA research, so teaching methods can alter to take them into account and cover a wider range of learning. Much L2 learning is concealed behind such global terms as "communication" or such two-way oppositions as experiential/analytic [. . .]. To improve teaching, we need to appreciate learning in all its complexity' (Cook, 2001, pp. 233–4).

The above statement underlines the multiplicity of views on language teaching and learning and the same is also reflected on L2 materials development thus more specifically also on materials adaptation. Nevertheless, more research is needed for the development of principled, criterion-based materials, as classroom practice and L2 materials are mostly determined by different trends, which tend to swing from one extreme to the other. There are, however, examples of research-driven materials

(Tomlinson, 1994) and of research-driven projects and hypotheses related to materials development (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2010).

The value of certain alternative and innovative approaches and ideas, such as the ones proposed in this chapter, is not based so much on empirical evidence, but on the discussion they can provoke in order to, ultimately, constitute a break from some of the more widely accepted, teacher-centred practices. Rather than provide answers, the final purpose of this chapter is to open up possibilities and discussions, to promote research that would take the process of adaptation beyond a superficial level.

Moreover, L2 materials can be considered as rather static and can intrinsically achieve very little, however their value is to be found in the way they are used, hence in the adaptation process and the potential it can develop in terms of promoting learners' critical awareness in both language and teacher development courses (Tomlinson, 2003a, 2003b; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2010). Thus, the importance of adaptation becomes evident as a key step towards the production of innovative, effective and, most of all, learner-centred/classroom-centred materials.

This chapter also attempts to put forward the need for materials to promote learner empowerment, enable learners to express themselves in a foreign language rather than simply communicate, and ultimately, to enable learners to use the target language in the same way as they would use their native language. This primarily involves critical awareness development at different levels.

If, on the one hand, the ideas raised in this chapter may or may not be considered as the basis for the development of a research-driven model for adapting materials, on the other hand they certainly represent a different approach to adapting courses, and to developing materials for language teaching/learning purposes. With such a model, the adaptation process is considered at two levels:

- adapting materials with the purpose of making them effective and relevant to a specific classroom;
- adapting materials with the purpose of changing their objectives, in order to reduce the distance between research and classroom practice.

The former refers to the more traditional way of looking at the adaptation process, where teachers and learners contribute to adding value to the materials when adapting them to their specific context. The latter represents one of the most significant points of this chapter, for it is probably taking the adaptation process a step further towards raising awareness of materials development and learner empowerment.

This chapter, therefore, advocates a somewhat different role of learners and teachers within the framework of L2 materials development. The teaching and learning context should be considered as a whole, whereby we talk about learner empowerment (Maley, 1998) rather than learner under-involvement (Allwright, 1978,

1981). Developing critical awareness of learning and teaching is the main aim of adapting and evaluating courses; learners can become, gradually, the main input providers, whereas the teacher's role is simply that of facilitator, co-ordinator and monitor. In this context, adapting courses aims at gaining a better insight into the principles of language learning, teacher development and materials design.

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3

Publishing a Coursebook: The Role of Feedback

Duriya Aziz Singapore Wala

Introduction

The materials development process is most often a multi-stage process with various stakeholders located at different points within the curriculum development framework wielding varied levels and extent of influence on the process and the output. In order for an approach to language teaching to be translated into principled methodology, it is necessary to develop a design for an instructional system that takes into account (a) the syllabus, (b) learner roles in the system, (c) teacher roles in the system and (d) instructional materials types and functions (Richards and Rodgers, 1997). Thus, syllabus designers or curriculum specialists, teachers and learners are three important sources of feedback for the materials developer.

Recognizing that the human mind does not work in a linear fashion, Jolly and Bolitho propose that the materials development process, in addition to evaluation as an essential component, must also include a variety of optional pathways and feedback loops which make the whole process dynamic and self-regulating (Jolly and Bolitho, 2011). In theory, the division of roles suggested by Richards and Rodgers above seems perfectly logical and sensible. However, in reality, and particularly in instances where there is the intervention of a central approving body, this may not be the case. For example, when the syllabus issuing body and the one granting approval for the instructional materials to be adopted are one and the same, the central body is in a position to exercise considerable influence on the shape, form and even contents of the instructional materials. The flow of influence, in such instances, is one way – the central body can influence the materials developers but not the other way around.

Nature of pathways and loops in materials development

This chapter takes off from Jolly and Bolitho's proposal of incorporating optional pathways and feedback loops to suggest that these loops and pathways must be carefully built into the materials development process so that it remains dynamic and self-regulating. While Jolly and Bolitho's proposal seeks to incorporate feedback from end-users to gauge the effectiveness of the materials in the classroom, this chapter takes a wider, macro view of materials development for language teaching to consider how feedback loops must be created along the materials development process to facilitate the incorporation of feedback not just from teachers and pupils but also from curriculum developers and other central bodies that may have an interest in the materials. These stakeholders in the materials for language teaching must have a channel to provide feedback at significant milestones in the development process so that their feedback can be considered and incorporated into the materials meaningfully and in time (Ibe, 1976; Yalden, 1987).

Abu Samah (1988) notes, 'There seems to be a persistent problem about open discussions between curriculum planners and textbook writers'. Open dialogue between curriculum developers, materials developers and teachers would yield feedback that might help to address the differing and different ability levels and needs in the classroom.

> For Richards and Rodgers, the role of instructional materials reflects or must reflect . . . decisions concerning the primary goal of materials . . ., the form of materials . . ., the relation materials hold to other sources of input . . ., and the abilities of the teacher . . . A particular design for an instructional system may imply a particular set of roles for instructional materials in support of the syllabus and the teachers and learners. (Richards and Rodgers, 1997, p. 25)

Thus, materials must take into consideration not just the learning outcomes and aims and objectives defined by the syllabus, they must also be informed by teacher needs and abilities, the needs, interests and abilities of the learners themselves and the context of teaching in the classroom.

The stakeholders influencing materials development implicit in Richards and Rodgers' understanding of the curriculum framework and materials design are therefore, the governing or regulating bodies setting the curriculum such as the Ministry of Education, teachers, learners as well as decision-makers who are involved in decisions concerning the specific context of each school. In addition, there are of course the writer(s) of the materials as well as the publishers of the textbooks. However, by no means are all stakeholders equal in terms of the power or control they wield in the materials development process or their ability to influence the scope or nature of the contents being developed.

To a large extent, the design of the materials development process itself dictates which stakeholder has access and influence on the materials as they are being developed. As Masuhara (2011, p. 236) points out, the role division between materials producers and users is becoming even wider. She posits that in most commercially developed materials, crucial stages of the course design have been removed from the hands of the teachers and administrators to those of materials producers. However, as the development of the Secondary One materials in Singapore shows, publishers did not participate in the process of needs analysis, specification of goals and objectives, designing the syllabus – this role was fulfilled by the Ministry of Education.

Recognizing that if coursebooks try to be the medium for forcing top-down change, they are likely to fail both commercially and educationally, Hopkins (1995) asserts that

> It is a basic principle of all writing that writers should take their readers into account. . . . course book authors must: take teacher's current views and skills seriously; recognize the practical opportunities and drawbacks of any innovation, not only on learners but on teachers and educational institutions; anticipate change by a gradual movement towards new ways of looking at language. (Hopkins, 1995, p. 14)

Materials developers need to be in touch with classroom realities in terms of teachers' knowledge, ability, capability, capacity and motivation to accept an innovation.

Proposing general principles to be followed in preparing a framework for instructional materials, Yalden (1987) recommends that first of all, 'Both the design of the framework and its final product, the language course, should be conducted with as much consultation as possible with all those involved' (Yalden, 1987).

The 'hidden curriculum', the unstated and undisclosed part of the materials, 'directly or indirectly communicates sets of social and cultural values which are inherent in their make-up. . . . A curriculum (and teaching materials form part of this) cannot be neutral because it has to reflect a view of social order and express a value system implicitly or explicitly' (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 90). Cunningsworth's view is that on account of this ideological aspect which is not immediately evident, coursebooks need to be evaluated in detail so that reviewers and teachers who are likely to adopt them in future are able to unearth what some of their unstated values are. While this aspect of evaluation of materials takes a different perspective from that of language content or methodology, it is at least as important because the value system encoded in a coursebook can influence the perceptions and attitudes of learners, generally, and towards learning English, in particular.

Materials developers must be aware of the varied and varying perspectives in the materials from and on account of their own vantage points as writers, editors, publishers, reviewers, piloters or users, and this knowledge must inform the process and product of materials development. At the same time, the roles and representation of materials developers, approvers and users must be clear, transparent and equitable, and there has to be a requirement of a certain level of knowledge, experience and competence in the various stakeholders, depending on the roles they are expected to perform and the influence they will wield on the final outcome.

Most materials developers recognize the importance of writing materials that are designed to serve the needs of particular teachers and learners (Hopkins, 1995; Harmer, 1997; Donovan, 1998; Amrani, 2011; Bell and Gower, 2011). In order to do this effectively, they must be aware of classroom realities and also test any assumptions that they make about the teachers and learners. At the same time, the materials developers must be prepared to put the materials constantly to the test in classroom situations (Halim, 1976; Yalden, 1987; Gonzales, 1995) and the materials development process must be designed to allow flexibility to make revisions.

It is inevitable that review, feedback and the uses that they are put to are often a compromise on account of constraints of time, resources and other factors (Ibe, 1976; Bell and Gower, 2011). Donovan (1998) points out that the decisions to pilot, what to pilot and for how long to pilot have repercussions on schedules and costs, as piloting a complete year's material clearly impacts on to the development schedule. Time has to be allowed for writing a whole level and preparing this for the pilot, which together might take a year or more in themselves. Added to this is the piloting year, followed by a period of revision, making a total of at least two and possibly three years (a period of time, as Amrani (2011) points out, considered unafordably long by most publishers today). However, understanding the significance, nature and extent of feedback desirable at each stage from the various stakeholders will perhaps offer some measure of control over what must be compromised and to what extent.

Existence of feedback loops in materials development

The role of teachers in instructional materials development and in the process of curriculum innovation has been expressed often and is well documented. Looking retrospectively at his 31 years of experience of materials production for language teaching in the Philippines, Gonzales (1995) comments that 'paradigm shifts in language pedagogy are mirrored by teaching materials which embody the changes in paradigm' (Gonzales, 1995, p. 4). Gonzales remarks that there is increasing recognition that

> the Filipino teacher and Filipino language specialist know best what is needed for the Philippines. . . . The emerging criterion for good language materials is that they are interesting to the students and useable in class; the ultimate test is then usability for teaching with the end-users (teachers and students) as the best judges. (Ibid., p. 4)

With usability for teaching as the criteria, it is inevitable that teachers are the best judges (apart from the students), hence, it seems to make sense that teacher feedback is sought frequently during the development process – certainly before the proofs are finalized and the books, mass produced. This is most often achieved by focus groups rather than piloting these days (Amrani, 2011).

Recognizing the important role teacher feedback plays in making materials more effective, Gonzales reports that the process and schedule for materials development in the Philippines now involves greater amount of planning as '. . . each book has to be field tested by try-out with a sample of students and teachers who provide feedback before the materials are actually printed and distributed' (Gonzales, 1995, p. 5). In the Philippines, then, as Gonzales reports, the materials development process has been changed to include a role for effective teacher feedback.

Masuhara (2011, p. 236), comparing the ideal course design procedure which follows a coherent linear sequence with the reality in which what she regards as 'crucial stages of the course design' have been moved from the hands of teachers and administrators to those of materials producers, says that 'the reversal phenomenon and role divisions' can still be acceptable provided teachers' needs and wants are reflected in the materials and 'theoretical validity' is pursued by the producers. However, as she herself admits at the beginning of the chapter, there is a lack of body of studies on this, moreover, publishers may not be motivated to invest in this, and besides, in some instances, such as in Singapore, they may not have access to the information any way. It would then fall upon the Ministry of Education to carry out this research and make the information available to publishers.

Describing the provision for trialling and feedback in a materials development project in the Philippines that resulted from a new government policy on education, Pascasio (1995) writes that her team sought to ensure the validity of the scope and sequencing of the lessons, the correctness of illustrations, accuracy of instructions and relevance of the content to the age group by putting the materials through five triallings before the final edition was published.

Villamin (1988) outlined four phases in the preparation of three sets of materials for Philippine learners: design, development, evaluation and dissemination. Feedback and validation of the effort was sought by Villamin's team at every stage of the development process. Villamin reports that the conceptual framework which was developed during the design phase and the experimental materials developed during the development phase were reviewed and validated by experts. The evaluation phase comprised a pilot try-out with the target population and a revision of the sample materials based on the feedback. During the dissemination phase, a final version of the materials was produced for field-testing.

Reflecting on almost four decades of materials production in India, Tickoo (1995) recounts the role of piloting, review, evaluation and feedback in the shaping of the English instructional materials produced. He outlines the following evaluation/feedback measures undertaken by his team while developing materials for a state-level system in Hyderabad, India:

- Critiquing by a group of colleagues.
- Teaching of the materials of the first book in a school by the writer, observation and critique by the class teacher.

- Evaluation of materials by teachers in a school some distance away from the city. The feedback received from teachers at this stage forced a basic rethink of the draft lessons.
- Major revision and retrial of the materials based on feedback.

Tickoo writes that the review, evaluation and incorporating of feedback on drafts resulted in a rethinking of the materials in terms of both structural as well as cultural and ideological representations within the materials. In writing textual materials for a state-level system in a multilingual and multicultural developing society it becomes necessary to satisfy different sets of criteria which, in some cases, do make contradictory demands. Some of them arise from such a society's needs to teach the values it wants to foster. Some arise in the desire to make education a handmaiden of economic progress and social reconstruction (Tickoo, 1995, p. 39).

Evidently, Tickoo recognizes that there are different and differing stakeholders in the materials being developed and they operate with different agendas and priorities and all these must be taken into account. Tickoo adds that the textbook writer must accept the fact that a perfect textbook is an ideal and the best means towards that ideal is to keep the textbook always standing in print, which means that good textbooks have to be revised regularly and at defined intervals, incorporating feedback received from end-users.

In his account of the evolution of a somewhat global textbook series commissioned by a commercial publisher, Richards (1995) outlines the steps taken to determine the suitability of the materials.

- Before embarking on the actual writing, Richards, together with his publishers, did some research on what potential users of the course might be looking for. The project editor interviewed classroom teachers. The publisher's marketing representatives, who are in daily contact with schools and teachers, were also an important source of feedback.
- A group of consultants, who were experienced teachers in the kinds of institutions where the course could be used, were identified to provide input to the project. Through the consultants, information was also sought from students.
- A sample unit of material to be piloted in a private university in Tokyo was developed. Richards and the project editor explained the project to the programme director and observed two teachers teaching the materials.
- Following the piloting of the unit, Richards and the editor met with the teachers to discuss the unit, spoke with students about the materials and also met with a focus group of teachers from the same institution to get their reactions to the unit.
- Richards used the feedback to do a first draft of the first book.

- The first draft was sent to reviewers identified by the publisher.
- The reviewers' and editor's feedback was then considered before a second draft was written.
- Richards said the second draft would also be field-tested and further revisions would be made based on feedback from teachers and students.

Roxburgh (1997), a member of the Bilkent University School of English Language Textbook group, observes that, 'We found piloting essential for improving the materials. Changes were made to the topics, to texts, to activities and to teachers' notes. Piloting gave us a greater awareness of our target users, both students and teachers' (Roxburgh, 1997, p. 17). Reflecting on the role of evaluation in textbook design, Roxburgh comments that evaluation forced her team of writers to consider the age and the cultural and educational background of the students. They had to make compromises in their materials so that the materials were more appropriate for the expectations, existing learning strategies and learning styles of the students and also adaptable to the teaching styles and methods of the teaching body. Given how important Roxburgh and most other writers reported so far consider piloting to be it is interesting that Amrani (2011) considers piloting to be 'expensive and . . . complex and time consuming to set up' (p. 276) and that she says that while piloting 'remains one of the ways in which materials are evaluated, it is no longer the main way that publishers do this' (p. 267).

Reporting on the progress of three textbook projects that he had been involved in, in Namibia, Morocco and Bulgaria, Tomlinson (1995) remarks on the trend in materials development in recent years for the Ministries of Education in several countries to develop their own new English textbooks to meet the changed and distinctive needs of students in their secondary schools. A common element in these three projects, Tomlinson has noted, is that the need for these materials arose out of the Ministries' desire to produce materials customized to their needs and agenda. It has also resulted in the greater involvement of teachers in these projects in writing, reviewing and piloting the materials and providing feedback.

Tomlinson describes a textbook project in Namibia as having the following stages:

1. Consultation of teachers and students during which feedback and wish lists were sought from teachers and students from all over the country via questionnaires.
2. Analysis of feedback during which the responses received to the questionnaires were considered.
3. Thirty teachers came together and then worked together to design and write the book. The first draft was written by the teachers at an eight-day workshop.
4. The first draft was trialled in schools all over Namibia.

5 Based on feedback from the schools, the first drafts were revised by an editorial panel for publication.

6 Finally, there was the copy-editing, final design and publishing by publishers in Namibia.

Presenting a case study of their own experience writing a course intended as a global course book, Gower and Bell (1997) discuss, from the authors' point of view, some of the key issues that arise during the process of writing a 'global' course series. They list reviewing and piloting of the materials as essential stages of the materials development process. Gower and Bell acknowledge the need for 'various meeting points between the two worlds [that of teachers and students and that of textbook writers] if the materials are to be right and we had to build them into the different stages of a project' (Gower and Bell, 1997, p. 10). These 'meeting points' can be realized through different instruments and procedures such as questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and so on, through which the voices arising in one 'world' – that of teachers and students (though teacher needs and learner needs are different and should be treated differently) – can be heard in the other 'world' – that of materials developers.

Recounting his experience of receiving and incorporating feedback on two courses that he was involved in writing, Tomlinson (1999) mulls over the inevitable dilemma that every course must face at some point in its development – meeting the often conflicting needs and aims of publishers, editors, writers, feedbackers.

> As the books develop, feedback tries to change them . . . This feedback comes from inspectors in ministries, from reviewers commissioned by the publishers, from editors who are understandably more conservative than the publisher who commissioned the book in the first place, and from newcomers to the editorial team who were not involved in the original concept development for the book (this always happens). The big questions are: How far can you trust the experience of these feedbackers? How representative are their views? How aware are they of the preferences of the end-users of the book? How far should the writers go in making compromises along the cline towards a profitable but unprincipled book? (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 3)

Tomlinson's concerns bring to the fore a tension that exists in materials development. As materials developer, he feels ownership of the materials and wants them to be developed according to his or his team's beliefs and principles about language teaching. However, his publishers are the ones investing resources and capital in developing and marketing the product. They want to be assured of market share and profitable returns. There is also the fact that the writers are always complicit with their own ideologies and beliefs – albeit unwittingly – and will resist any effort to tamper with them. So, how does the publisher ensure that what the writer proposes is really what the teachers and learners want?

This raises questions such as whose feedback should be sought, by whom, at which stage and through what process. Tomlinson questions the credibility and the ability of the feedbackers to provide meaningful feedback. And the questions he raises spawn further questions – Where are the feedbackers located in the language teaching and education scene? At what stage is the feedback provided? On what aspects of the materials should feedback be sought and provided? How much of the feedback should be heeded? And who decides all these questions? How does this feedback affect the shape and form the materials finally take, the meaning-making systems employed and the meanings made?

Like Tomlinson, Gower and Bell (1997) recognize the need for feedback and the piloting of materials. They list the various resources they drew upon to make crucial decisions such as course components, number and structure of units and so on – their experience and the beliefs they had accumulated over the years, a survey of the competition, discussions with teachers both informally and in focus group format. They also did some classroom teaching 'to remind [themselves] of classroom realities' (Gower and Bell, 1997, p. 10). Questionnaires were also sent out to get the views of teachers. Gower and Bell report that they did much of this 'groundwork' in close collaboration with the publisher.

Gower and Bell also report having to tackle the inevitable issues and questions of approach and methodology as well as 'the basic question' – 'How far do we try and impose our own principles on potential users and hope to change their current practice and how far do we give teachers and students what they say they want?' (ibid., p. 11).

In addition to discussing the need for and extent of compromise in the process of materials development, Gower and Bell (1997) raise many pertinent questions about piloting:

1. What does the process actually show you? That a few individuals in their context like the material and can use the activities or not? And how do you know that it's the material that succeeded/failed and not the teacher, the students or the general context within which they are working?
2. Some students and teachers are put off by the quality of the pilot materials they are piloting, such as the lack of colour and this can affect the feedback.
3. Since most piloting is voluntary, you usually get the keenest teachers agreeing to do it and often in wanting to please the publisher they give over-positive feedback – even if they are not getting paid.
4. Writers often don't get any real feedback on the key issues of pedagogic principles, syllabus and unit structure, regardless of whether you send out questionnaires to provoke responses in these areas. Teachers tend to focus more on whether activities work or not.

5 We so dramatically changed the material after our very first pilot, and only partly on the basis of what the piloters said, that if we were being thorough, the redraft should also have been piloted. How often can that happen?

6 The time it takes to go through the piloting process can increase the length of project time dramatically. (Gower and Bell, 1997, pp. 11–12)

The questions raised by Gower and Bell are very interesting because they not only bring to the fore questions about the usefulness of piloting but also other related questions – how is meaning altered as a result of these interventions? Whose meaning is it? What does it mean? How is the meaning-bearing vessel – the text – changed as a result of these interventions and the objectives underlying them? How is this a reflection of the use of power and dominant ideology?

In addition to the piloting, Gower and Bell (1997, p. 12) also comment on the usefulness of the feedback from what they categorized as 'inner sanctum' and 'outer sanctum' readers. Their inner sanctum readers were teachers and trainers they knew, respected and could meet to talk things through with. Outer sanctum readers represented the diversity of potential users. The task of these readers was to 'look closely through the material, imagine it being used in their context, and write a report as to its suitability' (Gower and Bell, 1997, p. 12). While recognizing the important role played by these reviewers, Gower and Bell ask the same questions of them as they do of trialling the materials.

For Jolly and Bolitho (Jolly and Bolitho, 1998, 2011), the success of materials lies in their ability to meet objectives when put to the test in the classroom. They feel that failure to meet the objectives may be linked to any or all of the intervening steps between initial identification of need and eventual use. However, like Tomlinson and Gower and Bell, they recognize that failure of the materials may be attributed to 'poor or inadequate use of perfectly adequate materials but that becomes a matter of classroom management rather than materials evaluation except where poor use is directly related to faulty production' (Jolly and Bolitho, 1998, p. 97).

Rallying the call for materials developers to develop materials that meet the needs of learners rather than subordinating these to other requirements, Tomlinson (1993, p. 3) while recognizing that 'the Controllers understandably take advantage of their position of power to ensure that learning materials conform to their requirements. After all that is their job' also argues that, 'there is no reason why materials developers, teachers and learners should just do as they are told to do.' A 'dynamic tension between the conformist Controller and the radical developer' will protect the interests of the learner as the price to pay for too much conformity will be shallow learning for most learners. At the same time, too much fluidity and flexibility in materials will lead to confusion.

In the materials development process, then, feedback is sought at various points – before the writing begins to establish teachers' needs, after various drafts are written in order to get some initial reactions, when a final draft is written and the materials are piloted to see how they are received in the classroom and after the materials have been used for a while.

The discussion thus far has established that feedback is important and useful and is commonly sought, and it has also raised two other related issues – what is the nature of the changes that feedback has been known to effect on materials, and secondly, is all feedback useful? What assumptions should materials developers make about the knowledge and competence of the piloting or reviewers?

Some light has been shed on the first of these questions – the kind of changes teacher feedback can suggest. Tickoo has reported how teacher feedback led to his team making structural changes to the materials as well as changes in the choice of texts and ideological and cultural representations embedded in the materials. Donovan (1998) affirmed that teacher feedback obtained through piloting is valuable in that it leads to confirmation (or not) of the appropriacy of the materials for the target audience and de-bugging of individual tasks and so on. It also provides a feel of the ground – how teachers are likely to receive a new approach and so on and this information would be useful in planning a marketing strategy for the materials.

However, the second set of questions, which echo the questions raised by Bell and Gower as well as Tomlinson, about the validity of piloting and the credibility of the piloters is yet to be conclusively answered.

Various stakeholders have varying influence and power in the materials development process and this can impact the final output in different ways – from the physical realization of the materials to the actual texts and artwork chosen to the topics that are actually covered. The meaning-making resources and systems available to the materials developers are used and shaped in different ways – choices are made based on the feedback sought and given and the impetus and motivation to incorporate that feedback. Where materials development projects are centrally orchestrated, the learner frequently has the least power, though he bears the maximum impact. Materials are also a reflection of the context of situation and the context of culture in which they are created and in which they operate.

The case of Singapore

The redefinition of the scope and function of education as a result of the changing role of knowledge in a knowledge-based economy has led to a wide-ranging review of education systems, curricula and curriculum materials all over the world. Singapore is no exception. Since the mid-90s the Singapore Ministry of Education has put in place several new initiatives to ensure that the education system remain effective, relevant and contemporary.

In October 1996, the Ministry of Education appointed an External Review Team to conduct a review of the curriculum and assessment system and recommend a curriculum that would be appropriate to meet the needs of the future. On 4 February 1998, the Ministry announced that the publication of textbooks and other instructional packages would be devolved to the private sector from 2000 (Press Release ref no:

EDUN 25–02–008). The rationale behind this move was: to 'harness the expertise and creativity of the educational publishers, leading to a greater variety of interesting and stimulating instructional materials for selection'. The Ministry would continue to develop syllabuses for all the subjects but would no longer be involved in writing and producing instructional materials for most subjects in the curriculum.

In order to ensure the quality of the materials, the Ministry announced that it would put in place a new 'Textbook Authorization Process'. Commercial educational publishers would develop instructional materials based on the new syllabuses to be issued by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry would guide the publishers in the materials development process. The Textbook Authorization Process incorporated a schedule of development and review of the materials in line with the schedule proposed for the implementation of the new syllabus. The materials would be subject to a review commissioned by the Ministry of Education and only upon approval would the materials be sanctioned as suitable for use in schools and included in the Approved Textbook List. The publishers would then promote the materials in schools and teachers would decide which textbooks to adopt for use in their schools.

As reported by Toh et al. (1997), the task of curricular reform is made even more difficult when non-centralized initiatives operate within a centralized framework. In this instance, materials development was decentralized to commercial publishers; however, a centralized framework was imposed on this initiative in terms of the schedule of development, the syllabus document as well as the review process. The following is a brief account of the development of one level of materials under the Textbook Authorization Process.

Planning

Following the announcement by the Ministry of Education of the new textbook initiative, the Textbook Authorization Process in February 1998, the decision was made by the publisher to take up the opportunity to develop an instructional package for Secondary English, as the cohort was large enough to require a sizeable print run if adoptions were healthy.

Given the publisher's past experience as a co-publisher with the Curriculum Planning Development Division, it was decided that the development team should have a somewhat similar structure to that of CPDD teams. This meant that there would be a team of people working on the development, led by a Project Director (the author).

Having considered various options – of having full-time writers, of having contracted writers, of having only one full-time writer, the publisher settled on having one writer who would work on writing the materials during his free time, as he already held a full-time job. An ideal situation would have been of course to have more writers on the team working closely together, but this proved to be difficult to realize – writing styles needed to gel, there needed to be a consistent and principled approach and

methodology, and there needed to be an obvious and evident progression and continuum of development as the units progressed. All this would have been better achieved with a larger team of writers, however, ironically enough, with the very tight time frame and schedule, this was not possible. There simply would not be enough time to cross-reference across units, so it seemed that it would work better with only one writer working simultaneously at different units that were in different stages of development.

The need for consultants was also felt as it was thought that these consultants would add value to the materials by reviewing them and providing feedback from their own perspectives.

In late 1998, a Market Survey Questionnaire was distributed to teachers at a Teacher's Network event to gather feedback from teachers about the existing materials, as well as to gather data about the needs of teachers. The data from the responses to the questionnaire was analysed and discussed informally by the team. The data gathered through the questionnaire backed Nisbet's observation that teachers should be involved in the planning and decision-making as they know the exact problems they face and if they are involved in the innovation, they are able to give 'real' solutions to 'real' problems (Nisbet, 1975, cited in Suvarnis, 1991).

Based on the responses to this questionnaire, the team made decisions about the components of the package, the features of the components, the scope and nature of the activities and tasks in the course.

Developing the conceptual framework and sample units

In November 1998, the first Syllabus Briefing was held in which a brief document, Notes to Publishers, was distributed. The contract documents were also made available to publishers wishing to develop the materials. Shortly afterwards, a draft syllabus was distributed to the publishers. The immediate tasks at hand for publishers were to complete the contract document providing the detailed information sought as well as submitting a conceptual framework to the English Team at CPDD.

The next couple of months involved intense planning and discussion about the methodology of the materials, the physical components of the package, the size of the team it entailed as well as the implications of these on budgetary and manpower resources and their availability. Price restrictions on the textbook materials imposed by the MOE meant that a 'dream team' comprising an ideal number of members with ideal qualifications and experience would be not be possible. It was time for compromises (Ibe, 1986; Gower and Bell, 1998, 2011). Price restrictions also curtailed the kind of materials that could be developed, the elements in the package as well as the specifications of the materials. Yet, the paradox remained that despite price restrictions, the publishers would have to make their packages as attractive as possible in order to compete in an open market situation with nearly seven other publishers in the fray vying for a piece of the same pie. Obviously, priorities would have to be set,

compromises would need to be made if the materials were to be viable for publishers to justify developing them.

The Publisher decided to hold some focus group sessions with teachers, however, getting teachers to agree to attend these sessions was no easy task given their workload. The focus group participants were very vocal and forthcoming with their comments and responses about what they wished to see in the coursebook programme. The feedback from the first Focus Group Session was discussed and taken into consideration when developing the framework of the materials as well as deciding the components of the package.

The feedback from Focus Group Session 1 helped the team confirm the ideas they had been developing since taking into consideration feedback to the questionnaire. More importantly, it helped clarify for the developers, the role instructional materials play in the curriculum as 'a particular design for an instructional system may imply a particular set of roles for instructional materials in support of the syllabus and teachers and learners' (Richards, 1995, p. 25). The feedback from the first focus group, and later feedback exercises as well, showed clearly, that teachers have certain expectations of instructional materials and the role they expect the materials to play in helping them teach.

Teachers expect the materials to occupy a particular place and to function in a particular way within the instructional system. Successful materials therefore, would have to address and satisfy these expectations. Innovative materials, would, by the same token, have to be introduced in such a way that teachers are able to participate alongside them and together with them in the instructional system. Teachers, too, would have to be readied to accept this innovation and to modify their own roles as teachers, as, '. . . it is the teacher who must take on new insights, attitudes, skills and habits to make an innovation work' (Miel, 1971, p. 159). In this instance of materials development, the challenge for materials developers is two-fold – the Ministry of Education, acting as the approving body, is the gatekeeper – its approval is needed to make the materials available for adoption by schools. Yet, the decision-makers are teachers – they decide which coursebook will be used in the school. Often the criteria between the two stakeholders were different. The Ministry of Education wants to put in place materials that will facilitate the implementation of a new syllabus that incorporates new directions and initiatives, the teachers want materials that meet their needs and the needs of their students. The materials developers have to make sure that they meet the needs of both stakeholders in order for approval and adoption. The Ministry of Education would make sure its needs are addressed in the coursebooks through the review and approval process, the publisher decided to hold focus groups to ensure they understood teachers' views and needs as well.

Given a new syllabus, teachers' feedback and involvement in materials development would help teachers ease into a new or modified system or role by having materials developed in such a way that they feel they are customized to them. Following the feedback from the first focus group session, the team made the following decisions:

i One 'O' level style comprehension exercise would be provided for every coursebook unit to address teachers' need for exam practice material.

ii Teaching of grammar would feature prominently in the materials with plenty of opportunities for contextualized learning and practice.

iii Texts by local and regional writers would be used to a greater extent, also texts located in Singapore and the region.

iv More authentic texts would be used.

v Graphic organizers would be customized for the various tasks the students were required to carry out.

vi The units would be organized around text-types and be driven by specific texts.

vii Some activities in the units would be devoted to raising the critical awareness of students about the text.

viii Instead of a single book, the coursebook would be divided into two parts – A and B.

ix The workbook would take the form of tear-out worksheets.

x The coursebook would be in full colour and would have a 'fun' look appealing to teenagers.

xi The publisher would plan on conducting training workshops and seminars for teachers.

The above list shows that the materials were being shaped by input from stakeholders – not just in terms of the contents, but also the format, the instructional design of the unit as well as the design of the tasks themselves. The Ministry had a particular position and teachers expressed particular needs and a position as well – the need for materials to address the exams directly and so on.

The feedback from teachers was taken into consideration in the development of the conceptual framework for the materials and this was submitted to the English Unit in CPDD for review and approval in February 1999. At the same time, the team began to develop a sample unit. The team met with CPDD officers for feedback on the conceptual framework.

Based on this feedback and feedback received from teachers in the questionnaire and the first focus group session, the team continued to develop the sample unit. Once a fairly stable draft of the first unit was ready, the team presented it to the teachers together with the conceptual framework in another focus group session.

The participants in Focus Group Session 2 were the same as those in Session 1. They were presented the conceptual framework first. The principles, approach and methodology underlying the package were explained to them. Next, the participants

were given a copy each of the framework and a sample unit of the coursebook and the corresponding workbook unit. The participants were asked to consider these and provide feedback on them using feedback forms provided. At this point in time, the teachers who attended the focus group sessions had not seen drafts of the new syllabus. Their feedback was based, therefore, on their understanding of the existing syllabus and their beliefs and experiences of what worked and what did not in the context of the classroom environment and the current curricular aims and objectives.

The feedback from Focus Group Session 2 helped the team confirm and further develop the ideas they had been considering since the earlier feedback exercises. It helped them understand what teachers were looking for in coursebooks in a more concrete way, that is, with reference to the conceptual framework and the sample unit. Using the sample unit, the teachers who participated in the focus group session were able to give specific examples and details about what they felt worked and didn't work for their learners.

The feedback received from the participants of Focus Group 2 emphasized the value of evaluation by teachers, a point raised by Nisbet (1975) when he states that vital feedback of information to the innovating team on the strength and weaknesses is necessary as it provides the bases for discussion and improvement. Another significant point to note is that the feedback from teachers could be obtained in time for the material to be rewritten, or else, as Ibe (1976) has written, 'it would be useless'. The feedback from teachers led to focused discussion on and modification of the sample unit. The team reviewed the sample unit in the light of feedback received in the second focus group session and made substantial changes to it before submitting it to the English Unit of the CPDD for review and comment. Some of the more significant changes made following feedback from teachers were:

i A change in the texts used in the unit to include an extract from a novel by a Singaporean writer in which the protagonist was female. This change and the one mentioned in (ii) below were motivated by concerns over the 'hidden curriculum' (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 90) and the ideological, social and cultural representations made in and through texts.

ii To remove some of the texts that the focus group participants deemed to be too British and too dated.

iii To include summary writing activities (again, to address teachers' need for exam focused materials).

iv The original Text B was moved to the Worksheets and an 'O' level type of comprehension exercise as well as summary writing activity were added (once again, to address teachers' need for exam focused materials).

v The activities in the coursebook were contextualized to an even greater extent (changes were made to instructional design based on teacher feedback).

vi The language of the instructions was made simpler and friendlier.

vii A Study Skills section was added (change made to scope of materials based on teacher feedback).

viii The number of worksheets and grammar items and exercises were increased.

A new sample unit was submitted to the English Unit of the CPDD for review and comment. Members of the *Eureka!* development team – the Project Director and Editor met with the Curriculum Specialists from the English Team in early June 1999 to receive their feedback on the sample unit. The writer did not actually receive feedback directly from the Ministry of Education at all – it was always through the editorial team.

Writing the materials

Meanwhile, the writing of the coursebook and workbook was in full swing. The team would meet every fortnight to provide feedback on drafts of units already circulated and suggest modifications or changes and to plan for upcoming units.

As laser proofs of the materials had to be submitted by 30 November 1999, this meant that the team had six months in all to write and rewrite the course book and workbook units, source for materials and photographs, clear permissions, decide on layout and design, get artwork and illustrations done for a whole year's teaching materials. As there was a significant audio and video segment in the materials, recordings and filming had to be arranged, photography sessions had to be arranged. These could not be done at a later date, as being text-driven, the activities and tasks designed would depend on the texts themselves, many of which were to be authentic, undoctored texts.

In addition to this, the writer also had to make copious notes to include in the teacher's edition at the time of writing the units, lest the objectives and outcomes be forgotten as time passed.

Given the enormous amount of work that needed to be completed in such a short time, many of the tasks that normally would have been done consecutively, had to be done simultaneously. Similarly, as several units were in different stages of progress at any one time, it was not possible to say any one unit was really final till all the units were final because changes made to one unit resulted or required changes to be made to later or earlier units. So, the units were in a constant state of flux.

Given this situation of extremely tight deadlines and a huge task to complete, it was not possible to carry out any more teacher feedback exercises on the materials in the way that had been done earlier and the team relied on feedback they had received during the earlier feedback exercises and on informal feedback from teachers. This informal feedback consisted of showing the proofs of the units in their various stages

of development to different teachers and soliciting feedback from them in terms of their immediate reactions etc. These teachers tended to be friends, colleagues or associates of members of the *Eureka!* development team, generally what Bell and Gower (1997) refer to as 'inner sanctum' readers.

The coursebooks and workbooks were submitted to the English Unit of the CPDD in mid-December 1999 along with a recording of the video and audio segments that accompanied each unit. Under the Textbook Authorization Process, 'the textbooks developed by commercial publishers [would] be reviewed by a panel of independent professional reviewers from schools and tertiary institutions, etc' (www1.moe.edu.sg/cpdd/faq.htm).

Developing the support materials

Following submission of the coursebook and workbook materials to CPDD for review and approval, the *Eureka!* development commenced in January to plan the teacher's support materials as well as the IT resources for the package.

As observed by Ibe (1976), planners of a project must take into account the time and resources required to carry out review and evaluation because if it is to be used for decision-making, then its results have to be obtained in the shortest time possible. At the same time, the schedule must allow for changes resulting from feedback to be incorporated into the next draft or proof of the materials.

Piloting

As there was a period of almost four to five months before there would be any word from CPDD regarding the materials, the team decided it would be a good time to pilot the materials in a few schools. However, in addition to the coursebook and worksheets, the teacher's notes for these units would also need to be ready. In order to teach the materials effectively, teachers would need time to make lesson plans for the new materials. In addition, as the teachers were still teaching based on the old syllabus, and these pilot materials were based on the new syllabus, teachers would have to reconcile the objectives and outcomes of the new materials with those that were already specified in their work plans.

Bearing in mind all these contingencies, it was decided that the most practical thing to do would be to pilot just one unit of the coursebook together with the related worksheets.

Five schools piloted the materials. Photocopied units of coursebooks and worksheets were provided to the schools for the students to use. Schools did not allow the publishers to sit in and observe the materials being taught in the class as they felt this would be compromising the security of the school.

While the team recognized that the schedule of the pilot meant that no real changes could be made to the coursebook and worksheets, nonetheless, the exercise would be

valuable as the feedback would be useful for the development of additional materials to support the programme.

Approval and publication

Meanwhile, in May 2000, the publishers were notified by CPDD that the *Eureka!* materials had been given Provisional Approval for use in schools. The *Eureka!* team met with the Curriculum Specialists from the English Unit who explained that provisional approval had been granted and specified the changes that would need to be made before Final Approval would be given to the materials for printing and inclusion in the Approved Textbook List.

The changes to the coursebooks and workbooks recommended by CPDD had to be carried out in order for Final Approval and inclusion in the Approved Textbook List. The changes included addition and deletion of tasks and activities, changes made to the instructional design of the activities as well as changes to the language used to convey the content.

Feedback from the piloting exercise

Meanwhile, the team was in touch with the piloting schools. Of the five schools that piloted the materials, teachers from only three schools filled in and returned the Pilot Feedback Forms by late June-early July. One of the other schools provided verbal feedback while the fifth school provided no feedback at all. Data from the feedback forms was considered carefully by the team and the following decisions were made:

i While a lot of very useful feedback was given pertaining to the course book and worksheets in terms of the texts, tasks, design and layout etc., this feedback could not be incorporated into the level of materials on which it was based but would have to be taken into consideration when developing the other levels of material.

ii Feedback given on the teacher's notes for Unit 6 would be useful in developing the rest of the teacher's editions.

iii Feedback on the CD ROM was that the design and opening screens were not very user-friendly and would have to be redesigned. The size of the text also was too small when projected in the classroom – this would be increased.

Role and effectiveness of feedback in the case study

Many of the questions raised by Bell and Gower (1997) about the effectiveness and validity of piloting apply to this instance as well. There are so many variables involved

in the piloting of the materials – the unit chosen, the extent of the pilot, the abilities, knowledge and motivation of the teacher, the quality of the photocopies, the non-availability of the other components of the piloted unit. Bell and Gower's question – 'What does the process actually show you?' is certainly worth mulling over. There is also the issue about the credibility of the feedbackers, raised by Tomlinson (1999). The teachers piloting the materials were not familiar with the new syllabus as it had not yet been issued.

However, as pointed out by Donovan (1998) the advantages of piloting materials outweigh the inconveniences. But, as he adds, the decision to pilot, what to pilot and for how long to pilot has its repercussions on costs and schedules. This must be carefully considered by policymakers and ministry officials when planning a 'decentralized' development process with certain aspects that are 'centralized' and costs and schedules must also be taken into consideration by materials developers, particularly publishers before embarking on such a project.

The editorial team had to work back and forth with the CPDD team to make all the changes the latter asked for before Final Approval was granted by CPDD. The timeline for making the changes, in order to ensure that Final Approval was granted in time for the coursebooks to be on the Approved Textbook List allowing it to be promoted in schools, meant that in most instances, the editorial team could not wait for the writer to work on the changes listed by CPDD and the editorial team exercised their own judgement in making the changes.

Incorporating feedback loops in the materials development process

The decision to seek feedback, the measures through which this feedback is sought and how long the feedback exercises last have repercussions on schedules and costs as it clearly impacts on to the development schedule. Time has to be allowed for writing and preparing the materials for evaluation and feedback, revision based on the feedback and then feedback on the changes. Planners of any materials development process have to be prepared to accommodate this in the development and implementation plan, with implications for finance, return on investment and the timing of publication being given due consideration.

Piloting and other such feedback exercises obviously require willing institutions, teachers and students to carry out the exercise and, as Donovan (1997) points out, and the development team discovered, they may not be so easy to come by. 'Efforts need to be made to develop goodwill, trust and a constructive relationship between [feedbackers] and publishers' (Donovan, 1997). Involvement of the Ministry of Education in materials development projects (Villamin, 1988; Gonzales, 1995; Pascasio, 1995; Tickoo, 1995; Tomlinson, 1995) greatly facilitates review, feedback, piloting and

evaluation procedures. It makes it easier to procure the participation of schools and teachers. Projects with governmental backing have extensive support and access to information and can assume infrastructural support as well. While government agencies may relinquish their role as developer of materials, they could and should continue to fund the research and development aspects of materials development by offsetting the costs or part of the cost of piloting the materials in the interests of serving learners needs.

Teachers themselves need to recognize the significant role they can play and contributions they can make in the development of useful and effective materials to teach English. Teachers can take a proactive, indeed a creative, stance by suggesting ways and means through which their feedback can be sought with minimum disruption to their teaching routine. The role played by teacher feedback in materials development and the kind of changes it can bring about in the materials will also depend upon the credibility and the ability of the feedbackers to provide valid, considered and worthwhile feedback.

In order to participate meaningfully in materials development, teachers need to be aware of the syllabus, changes in assessment, any new initiatives and changes or developments in language teaching methodology and pedagogy. They must, of course, be well aware of their learners' abilities and disabilities, interests and motivations. Teachers must also be willing to spend time and effort to provide detailed feedback as well as to deal with some disruption to their classes when piloting materials. Ministry officials and publishers need to work together to see how they can motivate teachers to bear with these inconveniences.

Materials developers – both writers and editors – need to understand the role that materials play in the instructional system and they need to take feedback from teachers into account when developing materials. Materials developers must develop materials with the teacher and learner in mind. They must be conscious of the assumptions they make about teachers and learners and constantly question these assumptions and put them to the test by trying out the materials. This can be done if means and opportunities for reviewing and piloting the materials before they are actually published, adopted and used are provided to the developers by allocating sufficient time in the schedule and resources in the budget to research and development, particularly feedback from teachers.

Even prior to this, publishers need to factor into their budgets the cost and resources and implications on schedule that mechanisms and procedures for review and feedback from teachers will have. Commercial publishers need to recognize that profits in publishing educational materials come from credibility. This requires a tradition of research and development and sincerity, which in turn require long-term investment. This, of course, is not an easy task, but as Yaw (1999) points out, 'The challenge and the problem will be the business justification of such a course of action'. This will depend on the business goals and commitments of individual publishers.

Curriculum planners need to consider the time taken for meaningful review and feedback and will need to work these as well as processes of feedback, review and revision and their documentation into any materials development process.

Conclusion

There is a need to recognize and identify the integrated or interdependent sets of processes that comprise materials development in language teaching and a need to identify the interstitial spaces where the different aspects of curriculum development and the participants involved in these processes interact or depend on one another (Singapore Wala, 2001, 2010). Syllabus designers and curriculum planners are located in the future in that their work is to construct a framework to create a future. They work with ideals and abstracts in mind. They work with objectives and outcomes in mind. They will also measure and evaluate materials based on these criteria. Teachers, on the other hand, are mired in the present.

They must teach today's learner, in today's classroom, within today's curriculum, system and school environment. For the teacher, the syllabus is the theory and the textbook is the manual that will enable the practice. Teachers work with a textbook developed a few years ago in hand and the practical realities of the situation staring them in the face. Such is the location from which teachers will evaluate materials. Materials developers occupy a kind of twilight zone and materials must answer present-day teacher needs for tomorrow's class with a view to meeting the goals of education for the future. Given these different and distinct locations, it is important that the materials development process allows for dialogue between these participants through several 'meeting points' (Gower and Bell, 1997) between their 'worlds'.

Moreover, materials development is a process that perhaps comes at the end of a whole change of curricular innovation and reform – syllabus redesign, new methodologies, etc. – and so it is important when planning the process that a cause-and-effect chain of events be visualized, bearing in mind the implications of all these and the extent to which they can be carried out simultaneously and also which of them must be done consecutively and in what sequence. Having developed a policy and a plan for a process, language education policy planners must ask and answer the following questions: What are the assumptions that are being made about the different participants in the process vis-a-vis the objectives of the exercise? Are they reasonable and realistic? Do the procedures put in place make it possible for the process to accomplish the objectives?

Given the complex nature of curriculum development when viewed thus, there needs to be sufficient space, resources, motivation and obligation for careful data gathering and documentation, planning, experimentation, monitoring, consultation, evaluation and incorporation of feedback, otherwise 'simplistic solutions . . . that address only one dimension of the process' (Richards, 1990) will be advocated.

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Comments on Part A

Brian Tomlinson

There are a number of views expressed in Part A which diverge from the norm (e.g. the proposals in Chapter 1 (Tomlinson) for evaluators to develop their own universal and local criteria, the insistence in Chapter 2 that students should contribute to the adaptation of materials (Saraceni) and the reminder in Chapter 3 (Singapore Wala) that it is not only the views of the writers and teachers that count in the development of materials for language teaching but those of the publishers, the ministries, the schools and even the parents too. However, there are a surprising number of commonalities of opinion expressed in Part A, given the very different backgrounds and localities of the contributors. There seems to be quite a strong agreement that:

- Evaluation and adaptation of materials are of vital importance in relation to the learning process and they should not be left to the impromptu intuitions of teachers under pressure of time and institutional constraints. Instead they should be processes which are built into the development of any materials, and time and training should be given to the users of materials to enable them to make principled and effective evaluations and adaptations.
- We should acknowledge that the users of materials include learners, teachers, administrators and publishers, and that their (sometimes conflicting) needs should be reconciled in principled ways in the development, evaluation and adaptation of materials.
- We should recognize that the wants of the potential users of materials should be cared for as well as their needs. This is especially true of learners and teachers, who will not make effective use of the materials if these do not relate to their interests and lives at the time of using them.

But it is also true of administrators and publishers, who are not going to promote materials effectively that they do not believe in or understand.

- We need flexibility not only in the design of learning materials but also in the ways in which materials are evaluated and adapted. Most importantly, this flexibility should be one of the main aims when developing frameworks for evaluation and adaptation and its achievement should ensure principled connections between materials, target learners and specific environments of learning. One way to achieve this is to ensure that frameworks always leave space for local criteria and another is to involve the users of materials in the process of evaluation and adaptation. Whenever I work on a materials development/adaptation project I strongly advise that both universal and local evaluation criteria are developed before the project and are applied during and after it. I also advise that typical users of the materials are involved in the development, evaluation and adaptation of the materials. Both these pieces of advice were followed, for example, on a project at Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat in which teachers developed, trialled, revised and published in-house new materials for the teaching of writing skills. (see Al-Busaidi and Tindle, 2010)

My own view is that the most important point to make about materials evaluation and adaptation is that we need to do a lot more research into the effect of materials on durable learning and on the learners' ability to make use of what they have learned from course materials in their post-course lives. At the moment, there is too much talk about whether materials 'work' or not, without clear definition of what 'work' means. For the publisher, 'work' means sells well; for the administrator, it often means ease of standardization, and examination success for the institution; for the teacher, it often means ease of preparation, and fit with the syllabus and the timetable; for the learner, it can mean interesting and achievable or matching expectations. But surely for all these users it should also mean that the materials achieve their short- and long-term learning objectives. To measure this aspect of materials 'working' is very difficult. It has to be longitudinal, it can be expensive and it is very difficult to control such variables as teaching skill, class rapport, intrinsic motivation and exposure to the language outside the course. It is amazing how rarely such post-use evaluation is attempted by publishers, by writers, by teachers or by researchers. Perhaps now that so many MA courses encourage dissertations on materials development and many students are now actually doing PhDs on materials development (see Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2010), there is more chance of such important research being done. One way of carrying out post-use evaluation of a set of materials (or adaptations of a set of materials) would be:

1. Specify the short-term and long-term learning objectives of a set of materials.
2. Control the use of these materials with comparable classes in perhaps four different institutions, with different teachers teaching two different but

equivalent classes in each institution. The control would include specifications of time to be spent on each component of the materials, which components would be set for homework, which components would be localized, etc.

3 At the beginning of the course administer tests assessing the learners' pre-course ability in relation to both short- and long-term learning objectives.

4 Ask the teachers to keep a diary in which they note any divergence from the agreed procedures and any comments they have on the value of the materials.

5 Administer questionnaires to the learners during the course asking about their attitude towards the materials they are using.

6 Administer whilst-use tests assessing the learners' progress in relation to short-term learning objectives (e.g. such facilitating skills as circumlocution in vocabulary use, deduction of meaning in reading, the use of visualization in extensive listening).

7 Administer end-of-course tests assessing the learners' progress in relation to both short- and long-term learning objectives.

8 Administer end-of-course questionnaires to the learners asking questions about any extra exposure the learners have had to the language and any factors which they think have influenced their progress other than the materials.

9 Administer end-of-course questionnaires to the learners asking them to evaluate the materials they have used.

10 Administer end-of-course questionnaires to the teachers asking them to evaluate the materials they have used.

11 After maybe three months, bring the learners back together in each institution and (a) administer tests assessing the learners' progress in relation to long-term learning objectives and application; and (b)administer questionnaires to the learners asking questions about any extra exposure the learners have had to the language since the course ended and any factors which they think have influenced their progress other than the materials.

12 Collate and analyse the data.

13 Make decisions about the value of components of the materials and of the materials overall.

14 Recommend adaptations to the materials. Obviously such a research project would be demanding in terms of expertise, time and resources but it would certainly not be impossible for a major commercial publisher to carry out such research, and it is the sort of project which the Materials Evaluation and Development Unit in the Centre for Language Study at Leeds Metropolitan

University wanted to carry out. Such research could not claim to prove anything about the effectiveness of materials but it would provide indications which we are not currently gaining from pre-use and whilst-use evaluations.

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PART B

Principles and Procedures of Materials Development

4

Developing Principled Frameworks for Materials Development

Brian Tomlinson

Introduction

Creative intuition in materials development

There have been a number of accounts in the literature by materials developers of the process they follow when developing materials. Rather surprisingly, many of them describe processes which are ad hoc and spontaneous and which rely on an intuitive feel for activities which are likely to 'work'. Prowse (1998) reports the responses of 'ELT materials writers from all over the world' who 'met in Oxford in April 1994 for a British Council Specialist Course with UK-based writers and publishers' (p. 130). When asked to say how they wrote their materials, many of them focused on the creative process of writing (e.g. 'writing is fun, because it's creative'; 'writing can be frustrating, when ideas don't come'; 'writing is absorbing – the best materials are written in "trances"' (p. 136)) and Prowse concludes that 'most of the writers quoted here appear to rely heavily on their own intuitions, viewing textbook writing in the same way as writing fiction, while at the same time emphasizing the constraints of the syllabus. The unstated assumption is that the syllabus precedes the creation' (p. 137). Most of the writers focus on what starts and keeps them writing and they say such things as, 'writing brings joy, when inspiration comes, when your hand cannot keep up with the speed of your thoughts' (p. 136) and 'In materials writing mood – engendered by peace, light, etc. – is particularly important' (p. 137). However, they say very little about any principles of learning and teaching which guide their writing or about any frameworks which they use to facilitate coherence and consistency. This is largely true also of materials writers who Philip Prowse asked about their writing process for

Prowse (2011) and of some of the writers talking about writing in Hidalgo et al. (1995), of some of the writers describing their writing processes in Tomlinson (1998c), of some of the writing processes reported in Richards (2001) and of experienced materials writers who were asked to develop a language learning task in Johnson (2003). For example, in Hidalgo et al. (1995) Cochingo-Ballesteros (1995, p. 54) says, 'some of them (drills) are deeply expressive of my own beliefs and give me aesthetic fulfilment' and Maley (1995, p. 221) says that writing instructional materials 'is best seen as a form of operationalised tacit knowledge' which involves 'trusting our intuitions and beliefs. If a unit of material does not "feel" right, no amount of rational persuasion will usually change my mind about it'. Richards (1995, p. 105), however, while referring to his need to listen to the local classical music station when writing, concludes that the process of materials writing is '10 per cent inspiration and 90 per cent perspiration'. In Johnson (2003, pp. 57–65) an experienced materials writer conducts a concurrent verbalization while designing a task. He creates a 'new' activity for the specified target learners by making use of ideas from his repertoire and while doing so concerns himself mainly with predicting and solving practical problems (e.g. the language content might be too difficult; the task might be too easy). He does develop a framework but it is driven by practical considerations of what the learners are likely to do rather than by any considerations of language acquisition principles.

Frameworks for materials development

There are exceptions to the focus on creativity reported above. A number of writers in the books mentioned above focus on the need to establish and be driven by unit outlines or frameworks. For example, Rozul (1995, p. 213) reports a lesson format (based on Hutchinson and Waters, 1984) which includes the following key components:

- Starter
- Input
- General Information
- Language Focus
- Tasks

Fortez (1995, p. 74) describes a framework (also based on Hutchinson and Waters, 1994) which has eight sequential 'features', Richards (1995, pp. 102–3) describes the process of designing a 'design or frame for a unit in a textbook' which can 'serve as a formulae which the author can use in writing the book' and Flores (1995, pp. 60–2) outlines a lesson format with the following basic stages:

- Listening with Understanding
- Using Grammar in Oral Interaction

- Reading for Understanding
- Writing
- Literature

In Prowse (2011, pp. 159–61) one of the materials writers outlines 'a not untypical writing process which involves researching . . . gaps in the market/weaknesses of other materials' prior to drafting a 'basic rationale' which includes 'book and unit structure and a draft grammar syllabus'.

While I agree with the value of establishing a framework prior to writing, I would prefer my frameworks to be more principled, coherent and flexible than many of the frameworks in the literature on materials development, many of which provide no theoretical justification for their staging or sequencing (one notable exception being Ribe (2000, pp. 66–77) who outlines and justifies a principled task sequence for a negotiated project framework).

Jolly and Bolitho (2011, p. 113) have an interestingly different approach to frameworks and focus not on a unit framework but on a framework for developing materials which involves the following procedures:

- Identification of need for materials
- Exploration of need
- Contextual realization of materials
- Pedagogical realization of materials
- Production of materials
- Student use of materials
- Evaluation of materials against agreed objectives

Principles in materials development

Most writers on the process of materials development focus on needs analysis as their starting point (e.g. Rozul, 1995, p. 210; Luzares, 1995, pp. 26–7; Fortez, 1995, pp. 69–70). However, there are some writers who report starting by articulating their principles. For example Bell and Gower (2011, pp. 142–6) started by articulating the following principles which they wanted to guide their writing:

- Flexibility
- From text to language
- Engaging content
- Natural language

- Analytic approaches
- Emphasis on review
- Personalized practice
- Integrated skills
- Balance of approaches
- Learning to learn
- Professional respect

Flores (1995, pp. 58–9) lists five assumptions and principles which were articulated after initial brainstorm sessions prior to the writing of a textbook in the Philippines, Tomlinson (1998c, pp. 5–22) proposes 15 principles for materials development which derive from SLA research and theory, Tomlinson (1999b) describes a principled and flexible framework designed to help teachers to develop materials efficiently and effectively and Penaflorida (1995, pp. 172–9) reports her use of the six principles of materials design identified by Nunan (1988):

1. Materials should be clearly linked to the curriculum they serve.
2. Materials should be authentic in terms of text and task.
3. Materials should stimulate interaction.
4. Materials should allow learners to focus on formal aspects of the language.
5. Materials should encourage learners to develop learning skills, and skills in learning.
6. Materials should encourage learners to apply their developing skills to the world beyond the classroom.

And, most emphatically, Hall (in Hidalgo et al., 1995, p. 8) insists that:

> Before planning or writing materials for language teaching, there is one crucial question we need to ask ourselves. The question should be the first item on the agenda at the first planning meeting. The question is this: How do we think people learn language?

Hall then goes on to discuss the following theoretical principles which he thinks should 'underpin everything else which we do in planning and writing our materials' (p. 8):

- The need to communicate
- The need for long-term goals

- The need for authenticity
- The need for student-centredness

More recently Ellis (2010) discusses how 'second language acquisition (SLA) research has informed language teaching materials' (p. 33) with particular reference to the design of tasks and Tomlinson (2010) develops thirty principles of materials development from six principles of language acquisition and four principles of language teaching. Tomlinson (2013) argues that second language acquisition is facilitated by:

- A rich and meaningful exposure to language in use.
- Affective and cognitive engagement.
- Making use of those mental resources typically used in communication in the L1.
- Noticing how the L2 is used.
- Being given opportunities for contextualized and purposeful communication in the L2.
- Being encouraged to interact.
- Being allowed to focus on meaning.

He makes use of these principles to develop criteria for the development and evaluation of materials and then makes use of these criteria to evaluate six currently used global coursebooks. Similar principled evaluations are reported in Tomlinson et al. (2001), Masuhara et al. (2008) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) and one conclusion made by all of them is that coursebooks are not typically driven by principled frameworks but by considerations of what is likely to sell.

What I am going to do in this chapter is to outline two frameworks for materials development which aim to be principled, flexible and coherent, and which have developed from my answers to the question about how we think people learn language. One is text-driven and ideal for developing coursebooks and supplementary classroom materials. The other is task-driven and ideal for localizing and personalizing classroom materials, and for autonomous learning.

A text-driven approach to materials development

The framework

This is a framework which I have used on materials writing workshops in Argentina, Botswana, Brazil, Japan, Malaysia, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Singapore and Vietnam

and on textbook projects in China, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Oman, Singapore and Turkey (e.g. Tomlinson, 2001b). In all those countries I found it helped writers (mainly teachers with little previous experience of materials development) not only to write principled and coherent materials quickly, effectively and consistently but also to articulate and develop their own theories of language learning and language teaching at the same time.

The framework follows the stages outlined below.

1 Text collection

You come across and/or create texts (written or spoken) with the potential for engagement. By engagement, I mean a willing investment of energy and attention in experiencing the text in such a way as to achieve interaction between the text and the senses, feelings, views and intuitions of the reader/listener. Such texts can help the reader/listener to achieve a personal multidimensional representation in which inner speech, sensory images and affective stimuli combine to make the text meaningful (Tomlinson, 1998d, 2000c, 2010, 2011, 2013). And sometimes they can help the reader/listener to achieve the sort of aesthetic response described by Rosenblatt (1968, 1978) in which ultimately the reader enters the text and lives in it.

Such a representation can achieve the affective impact and the deep processing which can facilitate language acquisition. It can also help the learners to develop the confidence and skills which can give them access to valuable input outside and after their course (Tomlinson, 1999c, p. 62).

Such texts are those which first of all engage ourselves in the ways described above and they can come, for example, from literature, from songs, from newspapers and magazines, from non-fiction books, from radio and television programmes and from films. Obviously, such texts cannot be easily found and certainly cannot be found quickly in order to illustrate teaching points (as Bell and Gower (2011) found out when they tried to find engaging, authentic texts to illustrate predetermined teaching points in their intermediate-level coursebook). It is much easier and much more useful to build up a library of potentially engaging texts and then to let the texts eventually selected for target levels determine the teaching points. And it is obviously much more effective to teach language features which have first been experienced by the learners in engaging texts than to impose 'unengaging' texts on learners just because they illustrate predetermined teaching points. This library development stage is ongoing and context free. Its purpose is to create a resource with the potential for subsequent matching to particular contexts of learning.

2 Text selection

In this stage you select from your library of potentially engaging texts (either one text for a particular lesson or a number of texts for a set of materials or a textbook). As the materials are going to be driven by the text(s) this stage is very important and should

be criterion-referenced. Initially, it is a good idea to apply the criteria explicitly; but eventually this can be done intuitively.

The criteria which I have found help to achieve effective selection are:

- Does the text engage me cognitively and affectively?
- Is the text likely to engage most of the target learners cognitively and effectively?
- Are the target learners likely to be able to connect the text to their lives?
- Are the target learners likely to be able to connect the text to their knowledge of the world?
- Are most of the target learners likely to be able to achieve multidimensional mental representation of the text?
- Is the text likely to stimulate divergent personal responses from the target learners?
- Is the linguistic level of the text likely to present an achievable challenge to the target learners?
- Is the cognitive level of the text likely to present an achievable challenge to the target learners?
- Is the emotional level of the text suitable for the age and maturity of the target learners?
- Is the text likely to contribute to the personal development of the learners?
- Does the text contribute to the ultimate exposure of the learners to a range of genres (e.g. short stories, poems, novels, songs, newspaper articles, brochures, advertisements, etc.)?
- Does the text contribute to the ultimate exposure of the learners to a range of text types (e.g. narrative, description, persuasion, information, justification, etc.)?

I would rate each text on a 5-point scale and would not select any text which did not achieve at least 4 on each of the criteria above.

Notes

1 Usefulness for teaching a particular language feature is a dangerous criterion as this can tempt writers into the selection of texts which do not engage the learners and which, therefore, do not help them to achieve durable learning of the teaching point.

2 Obviously many of the texts on an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) or EAP (English for Academic Purposes) course should relate to the target learners' purposes for doing the course but if all the texts do this explicitly there is a danger of tedium and, therefore, of lack of engagement. This is a lesson I learned when a group of Saudi Arabian pilots complained that they were bored with reading about aircraft and airports and, almost simultaneously, a group of Iraqi diplomats complained that they were fed up with reading about politics and diplomacy. Both groups then responded very enthusiastically to the inclusion of poetry on their courses. The important point is that affect is vital for learning, even on courses with very specific purposes (Tomlinson, 1999a). Without it there is a danger that language learning 'can reduce the learner from an individual human being with views, attitudes and emotions to a language learner whose brain is focused narrowly on the low level linguistic de-coding which . . . prevents the learner from achieving multidimensional representation of the L2 world' (Tomlinson, 1998a, p. 20). This means that the learners are not using their whole minds, that a multiplicity of neural connections are not being fired and that meaningful and durable learning is not taking place.

3 While it is important to expose learners to a range of genres they are likely to encounter outside and after their course, I have found that the best way to achieve affective engagement is to include literature. By this I do not mean the classics of the literary canon but rather well-written texts which narrate, describe, argue or evoke in ways which encourage the reader to respond in personal and multidimensional ways, and which leave gaps for the reader to fill in (Saraceni in this volume; Tomlinson, 1994a, 1998b, 2000a, 2001a). Ideally these texts (especially for lower levels) are linguistically simple but cognitively and emotionally complex (see the example below).

4 It is very rare that a text engages all the learners in a class. What we are aiming at is engaging most of them in a given class and all of them over a course. The best way I have found of achieving this is to make sure that many (but not all) of the texts relate to the basic universal themes of birth, growing up, going to school, starting a career, falling in love, getting married and dying (though this is a taboo topic in some countries).

3 Text experience

In this stage you experience the selected text again. That is, you read or listen to it again experientially in order to re-engage with the text. You then reflect on your experience and try to work out what was happening in your mind during it. This re-engagement and reflection is essential so that you can design activities which help the target learners to achieve similar engagement. Without this stage there is a danger that you study the text as a sample of language and end up designing activities which focus the learners on linguistic features of the text. Of course, if you fail to re-engage with the text you should reconsider your decision to select it to drive your materials.

4 Readiness activities

As soon as you have re-engaged with the text, you start to devise activities which could help the learners to experience the text in similar multidimensional ways. First of all, you devise readiness activities which get the learners ready for the reading experience. You are aiming at helping the learners to achieve the mental readiness which readers take to L1 texts and to inhibit the word fixation and apprehension which L2 readers typically take to texts (Tomlinson, 2000b). 'The activities aim to stimulate mental activity relevant to the content of the text by activating connections, by arousing attention, by generating relevant visual images and by getting the learner to use inner speech to discuss relevant topics with themselves. What is important is that all the learners open and activate their minds not that they answer questions correctly' (Tomlinson, 1999c, p. 63). These activities are different from 'warmers' in that they are not necessarily getting the learners to talk but are aiming primarily to get the learners to think. They could ask the learners to visualize, to draw, to think of connections, to mime, to articulate their views, to recount episodes from their lives, to share their knowledge, to make predictions: anything which gets them to activate connections in their minds which will help them when they start to experience the text.

For example, if the text is about an embarrassing moment, they can be asked to visualize embarrassing moments in their own lives to help them to empathize with the sufferer in the text. If the text is about tourists, they can be asked to think about and then act out in groups typical tourist scenarios in their region. If the text is about a child's first day at school they can be asked to think about and then share with a partner their first day at school. And, because the activities aim at mental readiness rather than language practice, any activity involving talking to others can be done in the L1 in monolingual lower-level groups.

The important point is that the lesson starts in the learners' minds and not in the text and that the activities help the learners to gain a personal experience of the text which connects it to their lives.

5 Experiential activities

These are activities which are designed to help the learners to represent the text in their minds as they read it or listen to it and to do so in multidimensional ways which facilitate personal engagement. They are things they are encouraged to do while reading or listening and should therefore be mental activities which contribute to the representation of the text and which do not interrupt the processing of it nor add difficulty or complexity to the task. They could include, for example, trying to visualize a politician as they read about him, using inner speech to give their responses to provocative points in a text, trying to follow a description of a journey on a mental map or thinking of examples from their own lives to illustrate or contradict points made in a text. The activities should not involve writing answers to questions nor discussing things in pairs or groups, as this can interrupt the experience and make representation

more difficult. These activities need to be given to the learners just before they start to read or listen to the text and should be given through concise and simple instructions which are easy to remember and apply. For example:

> You're going to listen to a poem about a child's first day at school. Imagine that you are that child and that you are standing alone in the playground at the beginning of your first day at school. As you listen to the poem, try to see in your mind what the child could see in the playground.

Experiential activities can be either related to a given text, as in the example above, or they can be part of a process approach which involves the learners in participating in the creation of the text, as in the examples below:

- The teacher reads aloud a text and pauses at salient points while learners shout out predictions of the next word or phrase.
- The teacher dictates a text and then pauses at salient points while learners compare what they have written with their partners and then write the next line (an approach which can be particularly effective with poetry).
- The teacher reads aloud a text while the learners act it out (an approach which can be particularly effective if each group of learners plays a different character in a story together).
- The teacher reads aloud most of a text and then gets groups of learners to write their own endings.
- The teacher gives the learners draft texts on which an 'editor' has written suggested changes in the wording and then gets them to write out a final version of their own.

6 Intake response activities

These are activities which help the learners to develop and articulate what they have taken in from the text. They focus on the mental representation which the learners have achieved from their initial reading of the text and they invite the learners to reflect on this representation rather than return to the text. Unlike conventional comprehension questions, these activities do not test learners on their comprehension of the text. Instead they give the learners a positive start to their post-reading/listening responses by inviting them to share with others what the text means to them. They cannot be wrong because they are not being asked about the text but about their personal representation of it. However, it is possible that their representation is only partial (or even superficial) and the process of sharing of it with others can help to extend and deepen it. Intake response activities could ask the learners to think about and then articulate their feelings and opinions about what was said or done in the text.

They could ask them to visualize, to draw or to mime what they can remember from the text. Or they could ask them to summarize the text to someone who has not read it or to ask clarification questions of the teacher or of someone else who knows the text well.

These activities should not be graded or criticized but the teacher can help the learners to deepen their initial responses by asking questions, by guiding them to think back to particular sections of the text or by 'feeding' them extracts from the text to stimulate further thought and discussion.

7 Development activities

'These are activities which provide opportunities for meaningful language production based on the learners' representations of the text' (Tomlinson, 1999c, p. 63). They involve the learners (usually in pairs or small groups) going back to the text before going forward to produce something new. So, for example, after experiencing a story called 'Sentence of Death' about a man in Liverpool being told that he has four hours to live, the learners in groups rewrite the story so that it is based in their own town. Or, after experiencing a story called, 'They Came from the Sea: Part 1', they sit in a circle and take it in turns to suggest the next sentence of 'They Came from the Sea: Part 2'. Or, after working out from an advertisement the good and bad points of a vehicle called the C5, they design an improved C6 and then write an advertisement. The point is that they can base their language production both on what they have already understood from the text and on connections with their own lives. While talking or writing they will gain opportunities to learn new language and develop new skills and, if they are affectively engaged in an achievable challenge, they will learn a lot from each other and from the teacher (if she/he moves around the room helping learners when they ask for assistance).

8 Input response activities

These are activities which take the learners back to the text and which involve them in studial reading or listening tasks aimed at helping them to make discoveries about the purposes and language of the text.

Interpretation tasks

These are input response tasks which involve the learners thinking more deeply about the text in order to make discoveries about the author's intentions in creating it. They are aimed at helping learners to develop critical and creative thinking skills in the target language and they make use of such task types as:

- Deep questions (e.g. What points about society do you think the writer is making in his modern version of Little Red Riding Hood?)
- Debates about issues in the text

- Critical reviews of the text for a journal
- Interviews with the characters
- Interviews with the author

Awareness tasks

These are input response activities which provide opportunities for the learners to gain awareness from a focused study of the text (by awareness I mean a gradually developing apprehension which is different from knowledge in that it is internal, personal, dynamic and variable). The awareness could be of language use (Bolitho and Tomlinson, 1995, 2005), of communication strategies (Tomlinson, 1994b), of discourse features, of genre characteristics or of text-type features. The awareness tasks usually involve investigation of a particular feature of a text plus 'research' involving checking the typicality of the investigated feature by analysing the same feature in use in other, equivalent texts. So, for example, you could ask the learners to work out generalizations about the form and function of 'in case of' from the poem by Roger McGough called 'In Case of Fire', and then get the learners to find and compare examples of 'in case of' in notices and instruction manuals. Or you could ask learners to make generalizations about a character's use of the imperative when talking to his father in a scene from a novel; or ask them to work out typical features of the genre of advertisement from examining a number of advertisements in a magazine. The important point is that evidence is provided in a text which the learners have already experienced holistically and then they are helped to make focused discoveries through discrete attention to a specified feature of the text. That way they invest cognitive and affective energy and attention in the learning process and they are likely to increase their readiness for acquisition (Pienemann, 1985; Tomlinson, 1994b, 2013).

When I use this framework I often get learners to revise the product of the development activity making use of the discoveries they have made as a result of the awareness activity. For example, learners could revise the advertisement they have designed for their C6 after making discoveries about the language and strategies of advertisements from an analysis of the authentic advertisement for the C5 (and possibly other vehicle advertisements too).

Using the framework

The above framework is best used flexibly. Obviously some stages must precede others (e.g. readiness activities before experiential activities) and there are strong arguments for some stages preceding others (e.g. intake response before input response so that the learners progress positively from what they already understand to what they need to think more carefully about). However, there is no need to follow all the stages in the framework (it depends on the engagement and the needs and wants of each particular class, as well as the focus of the core text), the sequence of

some of the stages can vary (e.g. the development activities can come before or after the input response activities) and sometimes the teacher might decide to focus on a particular type of activity because of the needs of the learners (e.g. after a brief intake response activity the teacher might spend the rest of the lesson on a genre awareness activity because the particular genre exemplified by the text (e.g. scientific report) is a new and important one for the particular class). It is useful, though, for the materials developer to include all the stages in the actual course materials so that the teachers (and possibly the learners) can make decisions for themselves about which stages to use and what sequence to use them in. The important point is that apprehension should come before comprehension (Kolb, 1984) and that the learners are encouraged to respond holistically, affectively and multidimensionally to a text before being helped to think more deeply about it in order to learn something explicitly from it.

By using the framework as a guide you can very quickly develop principled and engaging materials either for a particular class or for a course of materials. I have used it myself to prepare cover lessons at 5 minutes' notice and I have used it in Belgium, Japan, Luxembourg, Singapore, Turkey and Vietnam to help teachers to produce an effective unit of material in just 15 minutes.

An example of the framework in use

Here is an example of a text-driven framework used to produce the materials for a 90-minute lesson:

'I'm an old, old lady'

1. Tell the learners to think of an old woman they know. Tell them to try to see pictures of their old woman in their minds, to see where she is, to see what she is doing, to see what she is wearing. Tell them to talk to themselves about their feelings towards the old woman.
2. Tell the learners to form pairs and to tell each other about their old woman. Tell them to describe the pictures of their old woman in their mind and to express their feelings about her.
3. Tell the learners you are going to read them a poem about an old woman and that, as they listen, they should change the pictures in their minds from their old woman to the woman in the poem. They should also talk to themselves about their feelings towards the old lady in the poem.
4. Read the poem below to the learners:

   I'm an old, old lady
   And I don't have long to live.
   I am only strong enough to take

Not to give. No time left to give.
I want to drink, I want to eat,
I want my shoes taken off my feet
I want to talk but not to walk
Because if I walk, I have to know
Where it is I want to go.
I want to sleep but not to dream
I want to play and win every game
To live with love but not to love
The world to move but me not move
I want I want for ever and ever
The world to work, the world to be clever.
Leave me be, but don't leave me alone.
That's what I want. I'm a big round stone
Sitting in the middle of a thunderstorm.
There you are: that's true.
That's me. Now: you.

JOHN ARDEN, 'Phineus', from the *The Happy Haven*

5 Tell the learners to think back over the poem, to see pictures of the old lady in their minds and decide what they think about her.

6 Tell the learners to get into groups and discuss their responses to the following statement about the old lady in the poem: I don't like this lady. She's very selfish.

7 Give the learners the poem and three pictures of very different old ladies. Then tell them to decide in their groups which of the old ladies wrote the poem.

8 Get each group to join with another group and discuss their answers to 6 and 7 above.

9 Tell the learners to do one of the following, either individually, in pairs or in small groups:

- Learn to recite the poem in the voice of the old lady.
- Paint a picture of the poem.
- You are the old lady. Write a letter to your son in Australia.
- You are the old lady. Write your diary for today.
- The old lady goes to the park and meets an old man on a park bench. Write the conversation between them.
- You are the old lady's family. Hold a meeting to decide how you can help her.

10 Get the students in groups to discuss the following questions:

- What do you think the old lady means when she says, 'I'm a big round stone/Sitting in the middle of a thunderstorm'?
- How do you think old ladies that you know are similar to or different from the lady in the poem?
- What similarities and differences do you think the poem illustrates between your own culture and British culture?

11 At the end of the poem the old lady says:

There you are: that's true.
That's me. Now: you.

Get the learners to write a short poem about themselves beginning I'm a . . .

12 Get the learners to do the following:

i What tense does the old lady use throughout her poem. Why do you think she uses this tense? Find examples from other texts of this tense being used with this function.

ii The old lady uses a number of imperatives.

- List all the imperatives in the poem.
- Write a generalization about the form of the imperative as illustrated by the examples in the poem.
- Write a generalization about the function of the imperatives which the old lady uses in the poem.
- Find examples from other texts of the imperative being used with the same function as it is in the poem.

13 Invite the learners to improve their poems in 11 by making use of their discoveries in 12.

There are a lot of activities in the example above, Obviously the teacher would not be obliged to use all of them. It would depend on the ability and the engagement of the class and principled choices could be made from the menu of activities by the teacher and/or by the learners themselves. The activities however are designed and sequenced to follow a framework based on principles of language acquisition and this principled coherence should not be disturbed (Table 4.1).

TABLE 4.1 Recommended stages for a text-driven approach

Stages	Learner activities	Principles
1 Readiness activities	Thinking about something personal which will help the learners to connect with the content of the core text.	**1** Personal connection. **2** Visual imaging. **3** Use of inner speech.
2 Experiential activities	Linking the images and thoughts from the readiness activities to the text when first experiencing it.	**1** Personal connection. **2** Visual imaging. **3** Use of inner speech. **4** Affective and cognitive engagement. **5** Use of high-level skills. **6** Focus on meaning.
3 Intake response activities	Developing and then articulating personal responses to the text.	**1** Personal connection. **2** Visual imaging. **3** Affective and cognitive engagement. **4** Use of inner speech. **5** Interaction.
4 Development activity 1	Developing the text by continuing it, relocating it, changing the writer's views, personalizing it, responding to it etc.	**1** Personal connection. **2** Visual imaging. **3** Use of inner speech. **4** Affective and cognitive engagement. **5** Use of high-level skills. **6** Focus on meaning. **7** Interaction. **8** Purposeful communication.
5 Input response activity	Focusing on a specific linguistic, pragmatic, discourse, genre or cultural feature of the text in order to make discoveries about its use.	**1** Personal connection. **2** Visual imaging. **3** Use of inner speech. **4** Affective and cognitive engagement. **5** Use of high-level skills. **6** Interaction. **7** Noticing.
6 Development activity 2	Revising the first draft from 4 above making use of their discoveries in 5 above.	As for 4.

Adapted from Tomlinson, 2013, p. 24.

A web-based adaptation of the framework

Although the framework above is primarily text-driven it can be adapted to become an activity-driven framework with the text to base the activities on being chosen by the learners from a library of texts either provided for them or built up over a period of time by themselves. Or the materials can be based on units of text genres (e.g. advertisements, reports, jokes, announcements, stories, etc.) and the learners can be asked to find an appropriate and engaging text from the internet, as in the following example.

NEWSPAPER REPORTS 1

1 Get Ready

Think about a story which is in the news. Then:

- create pictures in your mind of what has happened;
- see the story in your mind as a series of headlines in English;
- predict in your mind a picture of what will happen next in the story;
- see in your mind a caption in English underneath the picture;
- see in your mind future newspaper headlines in English for the story.

If you are working with other learners, talk about your creations with them.

2 Reading the News

Try to find articles, editorials, letters and photographs relating to your story from any newspaper in English available to you and from some of the following newspaper websites:

_ http://news.excite.com/news
_ http://news.excite.com/news/reuters (Reuters)
_ www.iht.com (The *Internation Herald Tribune*)
_ www.guardian.co.uk (The *Guardian*)
_ www. sunday-times.co.uk (The *Sunday Times*)
_ www.the-times.co.uk (*The Times*)
_ www.telegraph.co.uk (The *Telegraph*)
_ www.ireland.com (*The Irish Times*)
_ www.latimes.com (The *Los Angeles Times*)
_ www.nytimes.com (The *New York Times*)
_ www.news.com.au (The *Australian*)
_ www.smhcom.au (The *Sydney Morning Herald*)
_ www.japantimes.co.jp (The *Japan Times*)
_ www.straitstimes.asial.com.sg (The *Straits Times* – Singapore)
_ http://mg.co.za/mg (The *Daily Mail* and *Guardian* – South Africa)

3 Making Notes

Make notes on what you have found relating to your story under the following headings:

My (Our) Reactions
The Facts
Opinions
The Issues
My(Our) Predictions

If you are working with other people compare notes and then revise your own notes if you wish.

4 Article Writing

Use your notes above to write a summary article on the story for an English language newspaper or magazine in your own country (you can make one up if you like). In your article focus:

on your views about what has happened;

the issues which this story raises.

Try to lay your article out using the conventions of the news genre. For example, use headlines, headings, bold type, photographs, captions, etc. Look at other newspaper articles to help you.

5 Comparing Reports

Go back to the web pages which you read in 2 and focus on 3 of them.

Read each one carefully and then make notes on the differences between them under the following headings:

Prominence Given to the Story

The Facts

Main Emphasis

Attitudes

Style

Compare your notes with those of other people if you can.

6 Language Work

i Direct and Reported Speech

a Using examples from the texts you have used above (and any other newspaper articles available to you), complete the following statements:

Direct speech is used when the actual words . . . (e.g. . . .)

Reported speech is used when it is the content rather than . . . (e.g. . . .) or when the reporter does not want to . . . (e.g. . . .)

b Read again the texts which you analysed above and consider how they report what people said. Then do the following:

- Does the article use mainly reported speech or direct speech? Why do you think this is so?
- Select five instances of reported speech and say why you think the writer used reported speech instead of direct speech.
- Select five instances of direct speech and say why you think the writer used direct speech instead of reported speech.
- Is there anything distinctive you notice about the use of reported speech in news reports/articles?
- Is there anything distinctive you notice about the use of direct speech in news reports/articles?

c If you can, compare your discoveries above with other people's discoveries. Then together look at other news stories on the web to confirm or develop your discoveries.

d Write notes on Direct and Reported Speech in your Use of English file.

ii The Passive

a Find five examples of the passive (e.g. 'The gate was left open.') in your newspaper articles and for each one say what you think its function is.

b Look at the headlines on a newspaper web page and predict one report which is likely to make frequent use of the passive and another report which is unlikely to use the passive.

Read the two reports to check if your predictions are correct. For each passive used in the two reports say what you think its function is.

c Complete the following generalizations about the typical use of the passive in newspaper reports and write them in your Use of English file:

The passive is typically used in newspaper reports to:

- avoid direct . . . (e.g. . . .)
- indicate that the doer of an action is . . . (e.g. . . .)
- indicate that it is the action rather than . . . (e.g. . . .)

7 Writing an Article

Find a news story which interests you by surfing some of the newspaper websites listed above.

Predict what is going to happen tomorrow in the story you have chosen. Imagine that it is now 'tomorrow' and that you are a news reporter. Write the report of what has happened. Try to keep to the genre conventions and style of

the original report but also try to make the report as appealing and interesting as you can.

Wait until the next day and then read the new real report and compare it with your report for:

- content
- style
- use of language

8 Follow-Up

i Read a news story on the web every day for a week. For each story:

Read it first of all for content and then talk to yourself about it after you have read it.

Read it again and think about the use of language (especially direct and indirect speech and the passive).

ii Revise and improve the article you wrote in 7 above.

Other types of principled framework

Since the original version of this chapter was published in 2003 task-based approaches to the development of materials for language learning have gained prominence. In these approaches the learners are set tasks to complete in which their focus is on meaning rather than form and in which their goal is successful task completion rather than explicit learning of language. The theory is that they will acquire language, language strategies, learning strategies and communication skills from their experience of performing the tasks (e.g. from organizing and conducting a meeting to make decisions about a class outing; from ordering books online for the class library; from inventing a device to save water). Strong versions put the main focus on task performance with the teacher as a language resource to make use of; but some of them have a 'post-mortem' reflection stage on the learners' use of language after the task has been completed. Weak versions include a preparation stage which includes 'teaching' of language which is going to be useful during the performance of the task.

The main shared characteristics of task-based approaches are that a task:

- specifies a non-linguistic outcome
- sets an achievable challenge
- requires language use in order to achieve the specified outcome
- replicates real-life use of language
- has both a learner goal and a teacher target

When I develop tasks I use the following principled framework to help me:

1. Readiness activity (making connections between the learners' prior experience and the task they are going to perform)
2. Task-related experience
3. Personal response to the experience
4. Task specification
5. Task performance 1
6. Discovery of language features (from a 'post-mortem' analysis of task performance by the learners and/or by proficient users of the language)
7. Task performance 2 (of a similar task)

For discussion, suggested frameworks and examples of task-based approaches see Van den Branden (2006); Willis and Willis (2007); Ellis (2010, 2011) and Tomlinson (2013, pp. 21–3).

One type of task-based approach which is gaining popularity with teachers and especially with learners is the problem-solving approach. In this approach the learners are set a problem and their task goal is to solve it. When I have used this approach I have made use of the same principled task-based framework outlined above with Task performance 1 and 2 consisting of attempts to come up with solutions to problems. The problems I have posed have included developing a solution to the problem of water shortages, coming up with a proposal for introducing salmon fishing in Oman and deciding where fish keep their money. For a detailed discussion and examples of problem-solving approaches see Mishan (2010).

Another principled approach which is gaining popularity is CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). In this approach the learners are taught a subject (e.g. maths), topic (e.g. football around the world) or skill (e.g. how to play a trumpet) through the medium of a language they are learning.

> CLIL materials apply SLA theory to practice by providing a rich and meaningful exposure to the language in use, by stimulating affective and cognitive engagement (if the content is something which the learners are enthusiastic about) and by providing a need and purpose for learners to interact with each other, as well as to produce lengthy spoken and written texts (e.g. in presentations and projects). Some of these materials also include activities helping learners to notice how the language is used. Tomlinson (2013, p. 22)

When I have developed CLIL materials I have used either the text-driven or the task-based framework outlined above. For discussion of the principles and procedures of differing versions of CLIL see Snow (2005) and for examples of CLIL materials see Coyle et al. (2010) and Tomlinson (2013, pp. 22–3).

Conclusion

The examples of the use of principled frameworks outlined above are intended as illustrations of the value of developing frameworks prior to developing materials. My main argument is that the activities in a course should match with learner needs and wants and with principles of language learning, and that they should be developed in ways which provide flexibility of use to learners and teachers as well as coherence of connection. The best way to achieve this is to consider both the target context of use for the materials and the principles and experience of the writers, and then to develop a flexible framework to guide the development of the units. Later on, compromises might have to be made in relation to the realities of administrative and publisher needs but at least the writing process will start with the learner as the focus and with principles in mind.

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5

The Instructional Design of a Coursebook Is As It Is Because of What It Has To Do – An Application of Systemic Functional Theory

Duriya Aziz Singapore Wala

Introduction

This chapter, revised from the chapter: 'A course book is as it is because of what it has to do: An editor's perspective' (Singapore Wala, pp. 58–71) in the book *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* (Tomlinson, 2003) and part of the presenter's doctoral research and thesis, examines the instructional design of a coursebook as a product of the context – cultural and situational – within which it is produced. It investigates the kinds of meaning created in the language teaching coursebook through its instructional design and the role of the context of materials development in the creation of these meanings. Concepts and principles of systemic functional theory (see Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), are useful to craft a framework to analyse how the instructional design of coursebooks operates, within the context of a particular culture and situation, as a semiotic system to create meaning simultaneously at multiple levels and to achieve the objectives of various stakeholders.

Concepts from systemic functional theory

Systemic functional theory provides us with tools to help us understand the systems and networks of choices engaged in and created (wittingly and unwittingly, voluntarily and involuntarily) in the process of construction of knowledge through the instructional design of a coursebook and this will serve as a framework for understanding the instructional design and ideological underpinnings of coursebooks and explicating the positioning, within the coursebook of the teacher and the learner, of language learning as well as of the coursebook itself. Knowledge thus constructed and presented is not innocent but motivated. It contains a predisposition towards the use of the coursebook as a script or as a resource in the classroom. Ultimately, the decision may be that of the teacher in the classroom, but the coursebook itself provides a basis that will influence the decision as well.

The instructional design of a coursebook is not a monologic discourse but a chorus (or cacophony!) of the multiple voices of its stakeholders. Even in the simplest model, the stakeholders are, at the very least, the publisher and the writer. Both parties will exercise choices that will influence the final outcome in the coursebook. Teachers and users are also stakeholders in coursebooks. Whether or not they influence what gets into the coursebook will depend upon whether the materials have been piloted or focus tested (see Amrani, 2011) and to what extent teachers have been consulted in the materials development and review process. Of course, teachers may have greater influence on whether or not a coursebook is selected for use in the classroom. They also influence the selection of coursebooks and the continuation of their use. Often, when coursebooks are developed as a response to a national directive or change in syllabus, a central reviewing body (often the Ministry of Education) has a crucial role in the approval process. The scope and scale of its influence depends upon the review process itself as well as the extent to which the agency wishes to control the contents of the materials approved.

The main attractiveness of systemic functional theory for coursebook analysis is that it looks at the text as a social-cultural product developed to achieve three main functions (the metafunctions) – the analysis then helps us uncover what is the meaning that actually emanates from the text – this being a result of the complex conscious and unconscious interactions of the multiple stakeholders. In the end, when we compare the result with the original intent of creating the materials we will have some pointers on effectiveness of materials to achieve certain objectives, the materials development process itself and on the coursebook itself as a social-cultural-political artefact. To this extent, systemic functional theory can contribute to the development of a theoretical model and an analytical approach to evaluation of the instructional design of a coursebook which is both 'functional and meaning-based' (Baldry and Thibault, 2006, p. xvi).

There is also a need to evaluate the materials in the context of the design of the materials development process and consider the influence of the various stakeholders

in the materials. Different stakeholders operate from ideologically and functionally motivated perspectives which may be in conflict and this will lead to the dominance of one perspective over the others and will be evident in the materials. The systemic functional framework will be useful in uncovering these meanings as it provides a means of looking at the instructional design of a coursebook as a 'text' – 'language that is functional' (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, cited in Butt et al., 2009, p. 3) that is an 'authentic product of social interaction, considered in relation to the social and cultural context in which they are negotiated' (Eggins, 1994, p. 1).

Extending the concepts first presented in the chapter mentioned earlier (Singapore Wala, 2003, pp. 58–71), this chapter extends Halliday's words, 'Language is as it is because of what it has to do' (1978, p. 19) and their implication that the selection of linguistic resources from among those available is related to the function(s) to which the language is being put, to their application in the analysis of ESL coursebooks. Considering the instructional design of a coursebook from the perspective that it is the way it is because of what it has to do, the chapter seeks to examine the following questions: How 'is' the instructional design? What does the instructional design of the coursebook have to do? And what is the correlation between the two?

There is a need to go beyond a mere listing of the presence or absence of various features and attributes of the instructional design of coursebooks to consider what their presence or absence signifies. The instructional design of the coursebook is thus viewed as a collection of choices made from a variety of options available. The choices made are meaningful. What means does the instructional design employ, wittingly and unwittingly, to convey these meanings?

The coursebook instructional design can be considered a communicative act by itself but it is also a dynamic artefact that contributes to and creates meaning together with other participants in the context of language teaching. Like language, the instructional design of the coursebook does not exist of and by itself. It fulfils a need, a purpose, it performs a function, conveys meaning. It is important for the developers of the materials to be aware of the need, purpose, function and meaning so that appropriate and adequate resources may be employed to address and convey them. Considered as a semiotic system, the instructional design of the coursebook is structured along various levels to create meaning through the selection of resources from various options available to perform specific functions in specific contexts.

The meanings we ascribe to language are socially constructed and negotiated, or, in Halliday's words, 'The particular form taken by the grammatical system of language is closely related to the social and personal needs that language is required to serve' (Halliday, 1970, p. 142). This means that language, and, by extension, coursebooks, do not exist in a vacuum – they exist for a purpose and within a particular context of use, culture and rationale (or ideology) and are also shaped by these, ultimately, all texts are 'functional' (Halliday and Hasan, 1985) and located within a context. The language and form of an invitation to a party, for example, would depend upon whether the party is a formal one (office party) or an informal party (birthday party) and whether the invitee is a business associate or friend. It could take the form of a printed card, an email or

a casual face-to-face conversation or telephone call. These are all choices that will be made. In all cases however, it would contain information such as date, place and so on. Likewise, a coursebook has to teach. It has a set of teaching objectives – as listed in the syllabus document. However, what gets taught, when and how, are choices that have to be made. Who makes these choices? How do these choices get made? Why are these choices made over all possible options? The instructional design of a coursebook is a reflection of all these. Thus, it is located in the culture and situation from which it emerges and is a manifestation of it.

Thus, the three contexts of use within which language operates – that of situation, culture and ideology – identified in functional linguistics, can be applied to the instructional design of coursebooks too. The instructional design forms a response to a complex social need that is constructed by the pedagogical situation in which it is produced. The principal constituent of this pedagogical situation is the students' need, or perceived need, for a simplified compendium of knowledge (whether knowledge of 'facts' or of generalized advice on matters such as writing processes). The social knowledge that constitutes this need is shared by teachers and students, who participate together in the social conditions of its construction: the classroom environment.

Register theory describes the impact of dimensions of the immediate context of situation of a language event on the way language is used. These dimensions exist in the context of situation for the instructional design of coursebooks as well. Three key dimensions of the situation are identified as having significant and identifiable impacts on language use. These three dimensions, the register variables of mode (amount of feedback and role of language/coursebook), tenor (role relations of power and solidarity between speaker/listener and, in our case between coursebook and teacher/learner) and field (topic or focus of activity) can be used to explain why language/ the coursebook is, the way it is.

The concept of genre can be used to describe the context of culture for coursebooks, by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure cultures institutionalize as ways of achieving goals. Genre is more than a set of recognizable formal features. As defined by Pare and Smart (1994, pp. 146–54), it is 'a distinctive profile of regularities across four dimensions: a set of texts, the composing processes involved in creating these texts, the reading practices used to interpret them, and the social roles performed by readers and writers'. It is these roles and composing and reading processes, not the surface features that really tell us what a coursebook is. The genre arises from the situation, not vice versa. If we wish to change the genre of the coursebook, we must do so by changing the elements of the situation that reproduces it. Whether the dominant model of the classroom is that of a knowledge-reception or a knowledge-making model will have implications for the final manifestation of the instructional design of the coursebook. And, looking at a coursebook, one can predict the model on which the language teaching context will operate.

The role and function of materials in a language curriculum system is defined with respect to content (the syllabus) and with respect to learner and teacher roles (Richards and Rodgers, 1997, p. 25). While the syllabus defines the linguistic content in terms of

language elements, specifies the selection and ordering of particular language items to be taught that represent the elements and defines the goals for language learning, 'the instructional materials . . . specify subject matter content . . . define or suggest the intensity of coverage for particular syllabus items . . . and define (or imply) the day-to-day learning objectives that (should) collectively constitute the goals of the syllabus (Richards and Rodgers, 1997, p. 25).

The role of a coursebook reflects or must reflect decisions concerning its primary goal and form, the relation the coursebook holds to other sources of input and the abilities of the teacher. A particular design for an instructional system may imply a particular set of roles for instructional materials in support of the syllabus and the teachers and learners (ibid.). Thus, the instructional design of a coursebook must take into consideration not just the learning outcomes and aims and objectives defined by the syllabus, it must also be informed by teacher needs and abilities and the context of teaching in the classroom. This context will shape its form or genre.

A higher level of context is the level of ideology. Whatever genre we are involved in, and whatever the register of the situation, our use of language will also be influenced by our ideological positions: the values we hold (consciously and unconsciously), the biases and perspectives we adopt. The 'hidden curriculum' (Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 90) that forms part of any educational programme is unstated and undisclosed. Coursebooks will, directly or indirectly, communicate sets of social and cultural values that are inherent in their make-up. A curriculum (and teaching materials form part of this) cannot be neutral because it has to reflect a view of social order and express a value system implicitly or explicitly (ibid.). While this aspect of materials development and evaluation takes a different perspective from that of language content or methodology, it is at least as important because the value system encoded in a coursebook can influence the perceptions and attitudes of learners, generally, and towards learning English, in particular. These concerns about the hidden curriculum and the ideological implications of materials design have significance for materials developers as materials for language teaching must take into account not only content and methodology but equally significantly, cultural and ideological factors and their representations. Ideology is implicit and complicit in the texts chosen as well as the choice of texts, in the tasks prescribed and the positioning of the teacher and learner.

Following the discussion above, in the process of planning and development of a coursebook or course materials, materials developers must ask and answer the following questions:

- How is the instructional design of the coursebook structured for use?
- What dimensions of context are reflected in the coursebook design and structure? How? Why?
- What view of the world, of English, of learning English, of the teacher and of the learner is presented explicitly and implicitly through the instructional design of the coursebook?

	LANGUAGE	COURSEBOOKS
CONTENT	Semantics (meanings)	Syllabus objectives/outcomes
	Lexicogrammar (words and structures)	Scope and sequence and methodology
EXPRESSION	Phonology/graphology Sounds/letters	A multimodal code of instructional design including language and visual elements

FIGURE 5.1 *Application of Eggins (1994:21) to course book analysis by Singapore Wala*
Source: (Adapted from Eggins, 1994, p. 21 in Singapore Wala, 2003).

Just as in language, a functional analysis reveals that meaning is realized through words and structures that are in turn realized through sounds and letters, in coursebooks, syllabus objectives are realized through a scope and sequence and methodology which are in turn realized through a multimodal code including language, visuals and task design.

Just as in language, the three levels of operation presented in Figure 5.1 relate to each other systematically and systemically and yet within each level too they operate on a structured system governed by rules based on their function, so too, each level of the coursebook must relate to the other systematically and systemically and within the level itself, be governed by its own rules for structure and function.

The context of culture: The genre of the coursebook

As mentioned earlier, genres comprise stages or steps which are recognized as conventional – these form the schematic structure of the genre. A narrative text for example, at its simplest can be said to have the following stages or schematic structure: Setting, Problem, Complication, Climax, Resolution, Ending. Knowledge of narratives and their conventions enables us to recognize a narrative when we read or hear one. Similarly, the language coursebook has some typical stages that form a schematic structure.

Units of instruction in books for language teaching show adherence to a basic pattern common to the genre of the language coursebook but at the same time, variations of the schematic structure have been observed. The typical schematic structure is as follows:

TITLE^INTRODUCTION^LEARNING TASK^ LEARNING TASK^(SERIES OF LEARNING TASKS)^CLOSING.

As a semiotic system, both language and the instructional design of the coursebook contain resources for fulfilling three kinds of broad communicative functions (metafunctions in Halliday's terminology) or for making three main kinds of meaning simultaneously – ideational, interpersonal and textual.

The ideational metafunction

The first of these functions, the 'ideational', is based on the informative properties inherent in language by representing the values and knowledge shared by the communicators. This is the realization of the 'field' of discourse circumscribing what the speakers are 'engaged in doing' (Halliday, 1978, p. 222). In the context of the instructional design of the coursebook, the ideational metafunction would be the actual content that the coursebook has to convey – topics, themes, grammar rules and conventions of usage etc. Curriculum developers want that the content covers all the items listed in the syllabus. Teachers want that the content is sufficient to teach language effectively and adequately and prepare the learners for the exams. Publishers want that the range of topics, themes, items and other features covered is one that will meet approval from both, curriculum developers/reviewing authorities, as well as teachers. Writers want that in addition to content prescribed by the syllabus, they are able to include their own favourite topics, themes or items or at least those that they are convinced will be useful to the teacher and learner.

The interpersonal metafunction

The 'interpersonal' metafunction comprises uses of language representative of 'social and personal relations' (Halliday, 1973, p. 40), and is concerned with the 'tenor' of discourse as determined by the roles assumed by, or assigned to, the interlocutors. Thus, statements may be expressed as affirmations in the indicative (mode) or assumptions may be expressed tentatively in the conditional (mode) or by being put as questions, that is the choice of 'mood' and 'of modality' is affected (Halliday, 1978, p. 223).

In the context of the coursebook, we are able to see interpersonal relationships realized through the interaction patterns determined by the instructional design of the activities. The learner is expected to respond to the coursebook by following the instructions and accepting the information given in the unit. If the learner does not respond, the lesson and thereby learning cannot progress. Thus, interactivity in a coursebook is implied and assumed and, unlike most other interactions, is one way only with the student only playing the role of responder. We can assume interpersonal relations and meanings being transmitted in a coursebook and ask the following questions: How do the creators of the coursebook position the teacher and the learner? Who do they address? How do they address them – is the narratorial voice of the coursebook that of an omniscient, all-knowing authority or is it that of a facilitator, encouraging enquiry and the learner's active participation in meaning-making?

These roles and relationships become evident when we analyse the structure and composition of the instructional design. We are interested to explore these patterns of interactivity and the interpersonal relationships they exemplify for several reasons: to find out if they are consistent with or contradictory to the ideational meaning created and thereby if they facilitate or impede effective language learning; to explore how they can be improved.

In the context of the coursebook, the interpersonal meaning can be discussed in the context of the following questions. Does the coursebook 'tell' the teacher and learner what to learn or do or does it allow discovery and exercising of options and making choices? Does the coursebook engage the learner as an equal, allowing him or her to participate in the creation of knowledge or is it a passive knowledge reception model along which the coursebook operates? Do the tasks and activities address the learner directly using the imperative form or is the third person used? What does the use or absence of illustrations say about how the coursebook positions the learner? How does the coursebook design and layout position the learner?

The textual metafunction

The 'textual' function, finally, ensures the effectiveness of a communicative act by providing a texture incorporating the 'remaining strands of meaning potential' 'into the fabric of linguistic structure' (Halliday, 1973, p. 42). On the corresponding level of the 'context as a semiotic construct' (Halliday, 1978, p. 189), the 'mode' of discourse represents 'a particular rhetorical channel', which is chosen in relation to the function a speech act has to fulfil, and is thus responsible for achieving coherence in a text (cf. ibid., p. 223). Without the cohesion thus achieved, Halliday claims that 'the remainder of the semantic system cannot be effectively activated at all' (Halliday, 1976, p. 27).

In relation to the instructional design of a coursebook we can ask how the ideational and interpersonal aspects of meaning come together to form a coherent whole in the materials. The structure and organization of the book as a whole as well as its component units, the relation between the various tasks and texts, the design of the book, the use of icons and other signifiers all help the coursebook to cohere, or come together.

The purpose of a coursebook is to teach something new or to facilitate the learners learning of something new. This is listed in the objectives for each unit. It is a given that there will be new information, it is how it is built and developed that a Systemic Functional analysis seeks to uncover.

Moving from a single task to the coursebook unit as a whole, we can ask: how does the coursebook unit come together as a cohesive whole? How does it move from one task to the next? Within each section, how is the task developed using prior knowledge to build on and develop new knowledge? How does the instructional design of the unit create a particular textual meaning that provides a framework for language learning? We can ask how the ideational and interpersonal aspects of meaning come together to form a cohesive whole in the materials.

The structure and organization of the book as a whole as well as its component units, the relation between the various tasks and texts, the design of the book, the use of icons and other signifiers all help the coursebook to come together. The textual function operates in the form of discourse markers and cohesive devices within the coursebook and within each unit to ensure fluidity between the interpersonal and ideational functions so that the teacher and learner essentially know what to do and when, and how to progress the teaching and learning from one task to the next and the connection between tasks, between the learning.

In looking at the textual meaning created in coursebook unit, we are trying to understand how the coursebook communicates to the teacher and learner about the organization of language learning, how the unit is organized to manage learning, how is each activity organized to manage learning. The semiotic devices used are both within instructional design as well as multimodal.

When we look at the instructional design of the coursebook as a semiotic system, we begin to understand it as a system organized as sets of choices. Each choice in the system acquires its meanings against the backdrop of other choices that could have been made. This semiotic interpretation of the 'system' of the instructional design of a coursebook, allows us to consider the appropriacy or inappropriacy of different choices of resources within the coursebook at various levels, in relation to their contexts of use.

From theory to practice

Let us first identify the contexts of use of ELT coursebooks using examples from *English for Life 1*, *The Odyssey 1*, *Step Ahead 1*, *Eureka! 1* and *English Expressions 1*. These coursebooks were published in 2001 as part of a new initiative by the Ministry of Education.

The analysis of the schematic structure of the units of the five coursebooks shows adherence to a basic pattern common to the genre of the language coursebook but at the same time, variations of the schematic structure have been observed. The typical schematic structure is as follows: TITLE^INTRODUCTION^LEARNING TASK^ LEARNING TASK^(SERIES OF LEARNING TASKS)^CLOSING. The various stages in this genre fulfil the following functions:

TITLE: This stage labels the unit. It can either reflect the thematic focus (*English For Life*: Attractions of Singapore; *English Expressions*: Me and My Friends; *Eureka!*: Links) or it may highlight the text-type focus of the unit (*Step Ahead*: Instructions; *The Odyssey*: This is a True Story).

INTRODUCTION: The introduction is the chapter opening. In the coursebooks analysed, in all cases it includes an introductory activity (or activities) based on the thematic or text-type focus of the unit. In addition, except *English for Life* and *Eureka!,* it also includes a listing of the learning objectives for the unit. The purpose of this stage is to draw attention to the learning objectives for the unit and/or to set the stage for learning in the unit.

LEARNING TASKS: This is a series of successive tasks. The purpose of this stage(s) is to provide the learner with opportunity to do tasks to achieve the learning objectives of the unit in the coursebook. It comprises instructions and statements of knowledge about language learning. The learning tasks may be organized discretely with no thematic link but a text-type focus (*Step Ahead*) or it may be a series of successive learning tasks emerging from an early task and/or text (*English for Life*, *English Expressions, The Odyssey*) or it may be organized in clusters (*Eureka!*). This is the real purpose of the coursebook's existence.

CLOSING: This seems to be an optional stage in the schematic structure. *English for Life* and *The Odyssey* skip this stage altogether. The other three coursebooks have a closing stage. In *English Expressions*, the activities in this stage are for enjoyment. In *Step Ahead* and *Eureka!*, there is some reflection to be done as well. The purpose of this stage seems to be to provide closure to the unit and to encourage students to reflect on their learning.

The analysis of the schematic structure of the five coursebook units shows that they generally conform to the genre conventions of a language coursebook though there are some variations. This suggests that there is a commonly accepted norm among publishers/materials developers about the general structure of the coursebook unit. This in turn seems to suggest a common understanding of the role of the coursebook, the teacher and the learner in the classroom as well as the role of the coursebook in the implementation of the syllabus.

Applying the three levels at which a coursebook operates functionally to migrate meaning from the content plane to that of expression, to a unit in *The Odyssey 1* we find the following levels or strata in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 exemplifies the three levels at which the coursebook unit is structured. The first strata in the content plane, at the theoretical level, correlates to the syllabus objectives and outcomes. For the unit being analysed in Figure 5.2, this translates to:

	COURSEBOOKS	*The Odyssey 1*, Unit 2 'This is the legend of . . .'
CONTENT	Syllabus objectives/outcomes	Predicting the story Describing characters Describing settings
	Scope and sequence ↘	↘ Adjectives Phrases Direct speech Simple present and past tense Punctuation for direct speech Similes and 'said' words
EXPRESSION	Instructional design ↘	Texts, tasks and exercises in the unit ↘

FIGURE 5.2 *The coursebook as a semiotic system: A systemic model of levels or strata of a coursebook unit.*

Predicting the story, describing characters and describing settings. These outcomes get transferred to the next strata, still within the content plane, which is the scope and sequence. In the context of the unit analysed above, this refers to the scope of objectives in order to meet the outcomes listed in the first strata. Finally, after the syllabus outcomes and scope and sequence are determined within the two strata of the content plane, the coursebook unit moves to express these in the plane of expression using instructional design and methodology to select texts and craft activities and exercises and items in order to achieve the outcomes and fulfil the scope and sequence expressed in the content plane. Thus, what is evident to the teacher and learner is the actual expression – the third strata in the tri-strata system of meaning-making. However the first two strata that lie within the content plane underpin the expression. Without the first two strata in the content plane, the third strata, that lies within the plane of expression cannot really exist or be effectively meaningful. What this means is that a materials developer has to think through and identify the syllabus objectives and outcomes he wants to address and then craft a scope and sequence around it before moving on to writing the unit. While in developing materials for language teaching, many writers may begin with text in mind and then develop tasks and activities around it, there is no doubt that they still would have to have a good understanding of the syllabus as well as a general big picture scope and sequence which they will refine as the unit develops.

All five coursebooks have the same starting point at the top strata shown in Figure 5.1 – the 2001 English language syllabus issued by the Ministry of Education, Singapore. However, as we move down through the strata to the plane of expressions the coursebooks diverge.

All the five coursebooks were developed in response to the same syllabus – the English Language Syllabus 2001 issued by the Ministry of Education, Singapore. Therefore the content in them is designed to meet the same syllabus objectives and outcomes as expressed in the syllabus because all of the coursebooks have been reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Education and meeting all the syllabus objectives at an appropriate level is a primary requirement for gaining approved status.

Thus, it must be noted that in the first strata of the content plane, materials developers use predetermined outcomes from the syllabus and cluster them into potential groups that might operate as units. The next step is the move into the second strata of the content plane – crafting a scope and sequence based on clusters from the first strata. It may be argued that in some instances, writing teams may actually select texts first and then determine which of the outcomes and items can be taught through these texts. While it may appear that the sequence of development has been inverted in this case, this is not really true, it is just that the writing teams (as in the case of *Eureka!* and *English for Life*) insert the step of text selection into almost the first strata in the content plane – whereby the selection of texts drives the clustering of syllabus outcomes, followed by the creation of the scope and sequence.

The plane of expression

In the content plane of operation, all the coursebooks are based on the same syllabus and therefore at the first level of operation, have more or less similar outcomes. However, as we move downwards in the model proposed by Singapore Wala in Figure 5.1, towards the second level of operation, that is, the scope and sequence of the individual course books, differences begin to be apparent. Writers and editorial teams exercise judgement and choice with regard to sequencing the outcomes and coverage as well as scoping the content to be covered in each unit. This differentiation is further extended and deepened as meaning creation moves into the third level of operation, that is, the plane of expression. The plane of expression is the level of operation whereby the syllabus outcomes and scope and sequence are finally articulated in the form of the actual unit – the instructional design of the unit, the selection of passages, the tasks and activities created and the representation of all of them within the unit as well as the composition of each page and the contribution of each of these elements in the creation of meaning as it is finally expressed and received.

Thus, at the plane of expression, one is looking at the coursebook unit itself as the final and actual articulation of meaning. How is content expressed in the coursebook unit? What does the coursebook unit mean? What kinds of meanings are created simultaneously and independently?

All the coursebooks have a similar starting point – the explicitly articulated syllabus objectives and outcomes, plus the general understanding of teacher and learner roles and stakeholder agenda. However, as we move down the strata, the differences begin to appear – in strata two of the content plane, the differences express themselves through the choices exercised in clustering the items in the syllabus into a scope and sequence for the coursebooks. Finally, as we move to the third strata, the plane of expression, stakeholder agendas become even more explicit and these are expressed through the differences evidenced in the instructional and page design. These imply the underlying belief systems of language teaching and learning of the writing teams and their understanding of teacher and learner needs and wants as well as the positioning of the coursebooks by the publishers.

Each of the five coursebooks adopts fairly distinctive and different instructional design for the units. *English For Life* has a linear, straight-line progression of activities that lead on one to the next with a coherent thread running through them, principally in the form of the thematic focus of the unit. A graphical representation of the unit design of *English for Life* is presented in Figure 5.3.

Step Ahead, on the other hand, is organized around a single text type at the core of the unit with a range of activities organized around the central text type, but clearly, one activity does not lead on to the next. A graphical representation of the unit design of *Step Ahead* is presented in Figure 5.4.

Each unit of *Eureka!* is organized around a central metaphorical theme (Unit 1: Links). Each unit comprises five clusters of activities, each organized around a single

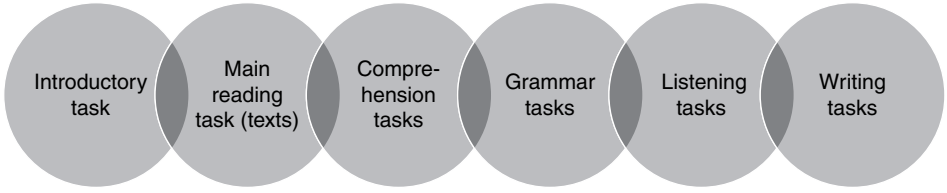


FIGURE 5.3 *Unit design of* English For Life.

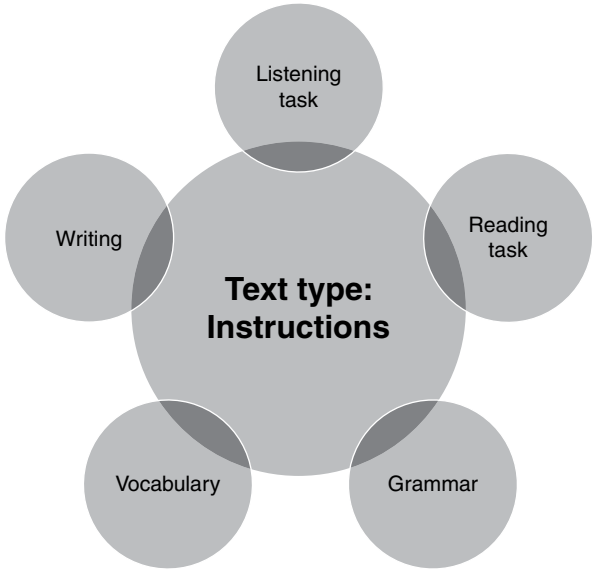


FIGURE 5.4 *Unit design of* Step Ahead.

text or group of text which serves as the launch pad for that cluster – activities within that cluster follow a linear progression leading on from the first text/activity that starts off the cluster. A graphical representation of the unit design of *Eureka!* is presented in Figure 5.5.

The Odyssey starts off with a unit design loosely similar in flow to that of *English for Life* in terms of linearity of activity flow and then diverges with the introduction of a second text. A graphical representation of the unit design of *The Odyssey* is presented in Figure 5.6.

Finally, *English Expressions* does not have a linearity of flow of tasks in its unit design, rather, it has tasks organized around a central theme (Me and My Friends), with some of them leading on to the following task but not necessarily so. A graphical representation of the unit design of *English Expressions* is presented in Figure 5.7.

In addition, the page design and layout for each of the five coursebooks are quite different. These differences in unit design as well as page composition and layout occur on the plane of expression. They result in different meanings being created or rather, it

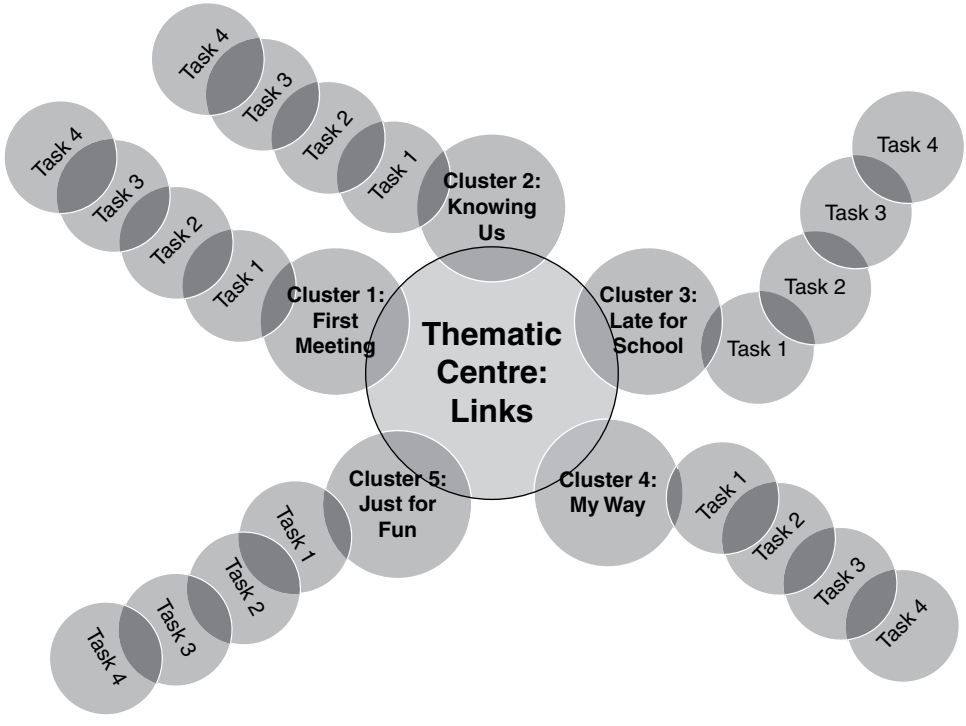


FIGURE 5.5 *Unit design of* Eureka!

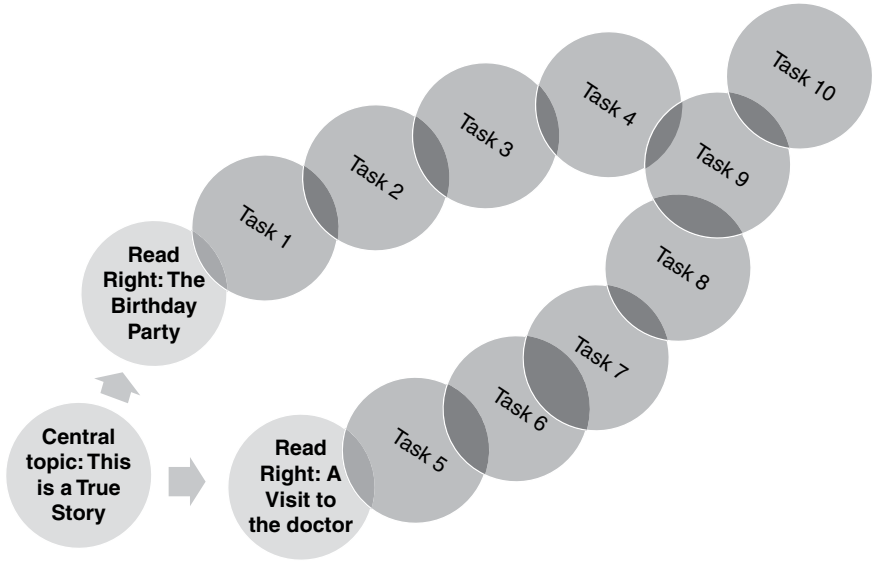


FIGURE 5.6 *Unit design of* The Odyssey.

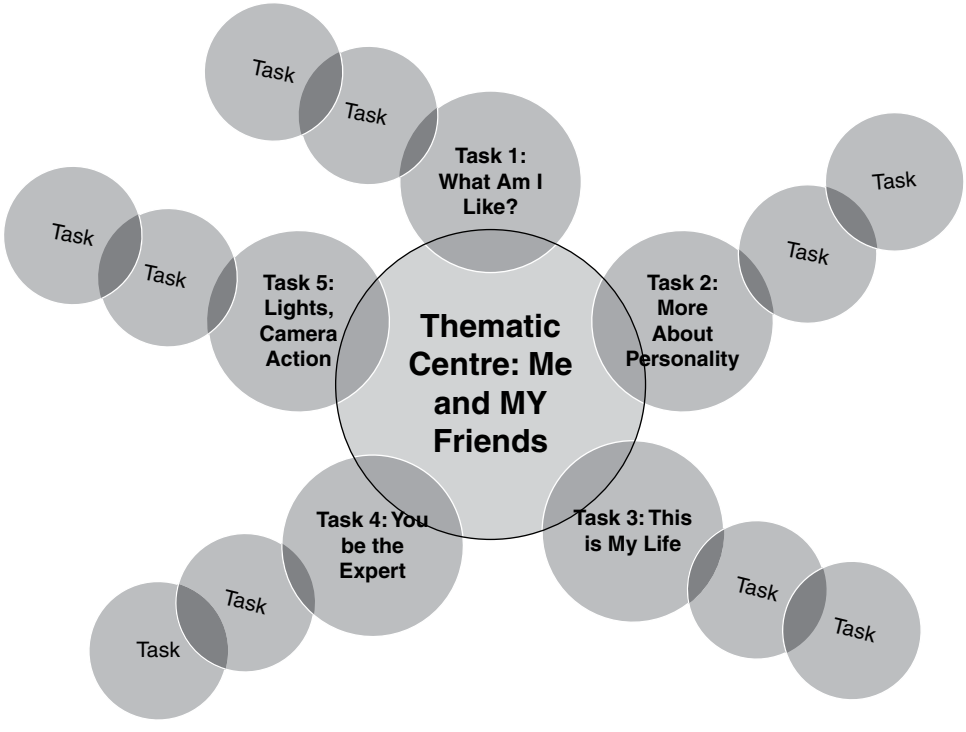


FIGURE 5.7 *Unit design of* English Expressions.

may be that the expression in the form of unit and page design is different because the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings intended to be conveyed are different. Very often the writers have no input into the page design and this could result in a conflict between the intentions of the writers and the intentions of the designers. It becomes evident then, that despite the similarity and congruence at starting point, the syllabus, as content progresses towards the plane of expression, field, mode and tenor with the interplay of context, culture, genre and interlocutor create diverse and complex meanings.

The ideational meaning of each unit in each of the coursebooks is summarized by the title of the unit as well as a chapter map or listing of key objectives. In *English Expressions*, the chapter map is found at the beginning of each unit in the form of a unit map as shown above. In *Step Ahead* and *The Odyssey* it is found in the scope and sequence at the beginning of the book as well as in a listing of objectives at the beginning of each chapter. In *English for Life*, it is found in the scope and sequence at the beginning of the book. Only in *Eureka!* is this summary of ideational meaning totally absent from the coursebook – it is found in the teacher's guide, and also in the form of a checklist in the workbook that the students are expected to complete at the end of each unit. It is interesting that *Eureka!* is the only coursebook that provides this summary at the end rather than the beginning of the unit.

The impact of the dimension of tenor within the context of situation – role relations of power and solidarity between coursebook and teacher/learner and teacher and learner is evident in the coursebooks in different ways and to different extents. An example to illustrate this would be the introduction to the reading texts in different coursebooks. *Step Ahead 1* (p. 37) introduces a reading text thus:

> . . . The following passage is from Penny Pollard's Letters, a fictional collection of letters written by a young girl named Penny Pollard. . . .
>
> Penny uses many casual words in her letter, and she writes as if she were simply recording her thoughts. This style reflects her open and cheerful personality.
>
> In the following passage, Penny tells her friend Mrs Bettany about what happened when she had to take care of baby Lisa for a day. (Jones and Mann, 2001)

English Expressions 1 introduces a reading task thus:

> Have you ever thought that being crazy could benefit the world?
>
> A group of comedians in England had this idea and they started Comic Relief, a charity to help the poor all over the world. . . .
>
> Read their appeal on the Internet in preparation for Red Nose Day 1999. Red Nose Day is a 'crazy' event organized by Comic Relief every two years. Look for ways in which they try to persuade people to take part. (Davis and Tup, 2001)

Comparing the two introductions, it is easy to see that the writers of the first wish to remain in control, they tell the readers exactly what to expect ('. . . In the following passage, Penny tells her friend Mrs Bettany about what happened when she had to take care of baby Lisa for a day . . .') and what to find ('. . . many casual words in her letter, and she writes as if she were simply recording her thoughts . . .'). The teacher and learner are positioned as being relatively powerless. On the other hand, in the second introduction, the learner is invited to interact with the text by seeking their personal response and past experience ('. . . Have you ever thought that being crazy could benefit the world?') and by allowing them to engage with the text to make their own discoveries and learn independently ('Look for ways in which they try to persuade people to take part'). The coursebook engages the learner, and teacher in a more equal relationship, though of course it still identifies the parameters of the reading task ('. . . ways in which they try to persuade people . . .').

Coursebooks use different and varied resources to create and manage interpersonal relations to conduct the learning experience. The primary mode of communication of interpersonal meaning is the narratorial voice of the coursebook. In all the instances analysed, the narratorial voice serves as the formal and most powerful means of structuring the relationship between coursebook and learner. The giving of information is almost always carried out by the coursebook narrator. In addition, the coursebook narrator demands action from the learner by providing instructions and commands

to carry out the learning tasks. The coursebook narrator also asks questions to seek information – the purpose of this seeking of information is to help the learner achieve the learning objectives.

Coursebooks may also use combinations of various multimodal resources such as use of mascots and alternatives to narratorial voice, use of features such as sidebars and insets and typological devices to communicate interpersonal meaning.

Conclusion

Extending and applying principles of systemic functional linguistics in the analysis of coursebook units reveals the systems and networks of choices engaged in and created (wittingly and unwittingly, voluntarily and involuntarily) in the process of construction of knowledge within a coursebook. This can serve as a framework for understanding the ideological underpinnings of coursebooks and explicating the positioning, within the coursebook, of the teacher and the learner, of language learning as well as of the coursebook itself. Knowledge thus constructed and presented is not innocent but motivated. The coursebook thus not only communicates content, it also presents a view on how the content is to be taught and the power relationship between the learner and the teacher, the coursebook as a resource or as a teaching script. It is also a reflection of the extent of influence of teacher feedback as well as the agenda of other powerful stakeholders.

In short, systemic functional theory offers useful tools for examining the kinds of meaning that a coursebook embeds in its discourse. It offers a different vantage point from which to explore the materials development exercise – a coursebook is as it is because of what it has to do. So whether a coursebook is one colour or two colours, whether it adopts a thematic or structural approach, whether it 'is' at all is a reflection of what it has to do. And, just as language becomes dysfunctional and communication breaks down when inadequate or inappropriate resources (linguistic and otherwise) are employed to convey meaning, so too, the instructional design of a coursebook fails to convey its meaning and perform its function when adequate or appropriate resources fail to be employed. Such a perspective provides a more functionally focused way of reviewing or evaluating coursebooks within their location in the context of culture, situation and ideology.

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6

Humanizing the Coursebook

Brian Tomlinson

Introduction

My first and most dramatic attempt to humanize a coursebook took place one wintry night in Liverpool 45 years ago. As a very young teacher of a night school class of underprivileged underachievers I could take the tedium no more. I ordered the class to line up along the window with their middle-class, middle-of-the road coursebooks in their right hands. We opened the windows and, on the command 'throw', they threw their coursebooks away. Now we had no irrelevant materials for the English class and, in fact, now we had no materials at all. So, instead the students brought their own. Soon we had a lot of comics and magazines and even one or two books as well. Then we had a lot of fun devising activities together that involved the students in doing things that connected to their lives.

In my 45 years of teaching English since that dramatic act of defiance in Liverpool I've suffered countless other coursebooks (including some I've written myself) which have needed humanizing because they didn't engage the learners I was using them with and because they didn't manage to connect with the learners' lives. Sometimes it wasn't the coursebook's fault; the books were potentially humanistic (including, I hope, those written by myself) but they didn't match the psychological and sociological realities of my particular groups of learners. Often, though, it was the fault of the coursebooks because they didn't sufficiently take into account the resources of the learner as a human being. Many of these coursebooks concentrated on the linguistic and analytical aspects of language learning and failed to tap the human being's potential for multidimensional processing. That is, they made insufficient use of the learners' ability to learn through doing things physically, to learn through feeling

emotion, to learn through experiencing things in the mind. They didn't acknowledge that, for human beings, the most important factor in learning is affect (Arnold, 1999; Schumann, 1999). In order to achieve effective and durable learning, language learners need to relax, feel at ease, develop self-confidence and self-esteem, develop positive attitudes towards the learning experience and be involved intellectually, aesthetically and emotionally (Tomlinson, 2011). They also need to make use of their experience of life, their interests and enthusiasms, their views, attitudes and feelings and, above all, their capacity to make meaningful connections in their minds. Not many coursebooks encourage them to do this. Instead, many of them use an interrogative approach which continually underestimates and questions the ability of the learners, and which often results in diminishment and loss of self-esteem for the learner and a minimalizing of opportunities for effective learning.

I hope from reading this Introduction it's becoming clear that what I mean by a humanistic coursebook is one which respects its users as human beings and helps them to exploit their capacity for learning through meaningful experience. I hope it's also becoming clear that by humanizing the coursebook I mean adding activities which help to make the language learning process a more affective experience and finding ways of helping the learners to connect what is in the book to what is in their minds. For a detailed listing of the characteristics of humanistic teaching see Grundy (2013).

Humanizing without the coursebook

One way of humanizing a coursebook is for the teacher to replace sections of it with more humanistic materials which involve the learners in gaining and reflecting on experience. Or, as with my Liverpool example above, for the teacher to take the drastic step of replacing the coursebook altogether. This was a step which I also took with a class of domestic science and handicraft teachers at a primary teacher training college in Vanuatu. They were a class of women with at least ten years' experience of apparently failing to learn English formally and with no confidence at all in their ability to use English for communication. No coursebook ever written could have helped them (unless it had been written for that class alone) and I soon decided to replace the book we'd been allocated. Instead I told them that they were each going to write a novel. They were asked to think of an environment they knew well (by visualizing an interesting person from their village) and to develop a story situated in it (by starting to write about what their interesting person did one day). When they'd recovered from their shock, they set about the task and then spent every English lesson for the term writing their novels, while I made myself available as an informant and supporter. In true Melanesian style, they read each other's work in progress and made helpful suggestions. They quickly gained confidence and self-esteem and soon they were illustrating their books with the beautiful drawings which they all seemed capable of and 'publishing' their books in elaborate and attractive ways. I'm not claiming that by

the end of term their English had miraculously improved, but they'd all written, revised and 'published' books which were at least 60 pages long. Even if they hadn't acquired much English (though I'm sure they did), they'd done something in English which they were proud of and they'd gained far more confidence and self-esteem than all their coursebooks had ever given them.

A very different sort of total replacement of the coursebook is reported in Ghosn (2010) who reports a very successful experiment in Lebanon in which experimental primary school classes used an anthology of authentic children's literature instead of the global ESL coursebook which continued to be used in the control classes. Another total replacement reported in the literature involved the replacement of the coursebooks used for teaching writing at Levels 2–4 with materials developed in-house to maximize localization, relevance and engagement (see Al-Busaidi and Tindle, 2010).

Partial replacement of the coursebook

Perhaps the best example of partial replacement I've experienced was a teacher in a high school in Jakarta who asked her class if they liked their coursebook. Of course, in typical Indonesian fashion, they told her what they thought she wanted to hear and were unanimous in their praise of the book. However, she persisted and eventually persuaded them to tell her what they really thought of the book. It seems that they found it very boring and, in particular, disliked the dull reading texts which seemed to have no connection with their lives. The teacher's response was to divide the class into 12 groups (the same number as weeks in the semester) and to give Group 1 responsibility for finding something interesting for the class to read in English. Group 1 spent the week searching Jakarta for a text which could engage their peers and on the Friday they delivered it to the teacher. On the Monday she used the text for the reading class and then challenged Group 2 to find an equally interesting text for the following week. This procedure continued for the whole of the semester with the students finding the texts and the teacher supplying a variety of potentially engaging activities. The next semester the teacher asked the class if they wanted to continue to find their own texts and was rewarded with a resounding, 'Yes!' This time, however, she told Group 1 that, not only were they responsible for finding an interesting text but that they were also responsible for developing the activities and for 'teaching' the reading lesson on the Monday. On the Friday, Group 1 showed their text and activities to the teacher and she gave them some advice for their lesson on the Monday. This procedure continued for the whole semester, with the teacher sitting in the back of the students' class while they gained confidence and enjoyment connected to their lives (an experience similar to that of Jensen and Hermer (1998, p. 191) who found that 'the pupils are the best collaborators in a performance-based learning environment. They even find and devise exercises and games themselves, research situations and texts').

Other examples of partial replacement from my experience include:

- Getting a class of Italian university students to script and record a radio soap opera set in the college they were visiting in England (by giving each small group responsibility for producing an episode).
- Helping a multilingual class of intermediate-level learners to video their versions of poems, short stories and extracts from novels.
- Getting classes of high school students in Indonesia to participate in TPR Plus activities (e.g. collective miming of stories, making of sculptures, painting of murals, cooking of meals, etc.) which start off with the students following instructions spoken by the teacher but then develop into activities initiated by the students themselves.
- Encouraging teachers in Indonesia and Japan to get students to develop their own class libraries by staggering into class with a huge cardboard box and inviting the students to come and look at their new class library. Of course, the box was empty and the students were challenged to fill it with reading material which would interest their friends. In many cases, the students quickly filled their box as a result of visits to travel agents, embassies, newspaper offices, publishers and supermarkets. And one enterprising class in Jakarta even looked for English-sounding names in the telephone book and then visited houses asking for unwanted books, magazines and newspapers for their libraries.
- Getting learners in Indonesia to act out scenarios in which a student represented her group by interacting with a student from another group to resolve a dilemma or conflict (e.g. a girl wanted to stay up late to watch a badminton tournament on TV but her mother wanted her to go to bed early in preparation for an important examination). Each group knew the context of the interaction and the role and objectives of their 'character' but knew little about the other group's 'character'. The groups monitored the interaction and at any point could call a time out during which they could coach or substitute their representative. Afterwards the teacher led a post-mortem in which the class evaluated the language and strategies used by each group's representative(s).
- Encouraging teachers in Japan to give each student in their class a blank cassette and then prompting them to record something interesting in English for their class Listening Library (one teacher told me a year later that her class now had over a thousand cassettes in their Listening Library).
- Starting classes in Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat with task-free activities in which I told a joke, read a story or performed a scene from a play (see Chapter 4 in this book) and ending classes with a short problem-solving activity (e.g. 'Where do fish keep their money?')

Ideas for partial replacement of the textbook reported in the recent literature include:

- Using a process drama approach in a South Korean secondary school in which the students and the teacher together developed simultaneous improvisations of a scene from a situation (e.g. a waiter sacked for apparently insulting President Jefferson seeking advice from groups of experts). See Park (2010) for a report of this experiment.
- Using problem-solving activities in which groups of learners are put into a scenario in which they pool their experience, their intelligence and their L2 language ability to solve a problem together (Mishan, 2010).
- Using clowning activities in which the learners perform bizarre improvisations from instructions given by a clown instructor (Lutzker, 2013).
- Getting learners to compare textbook dialogues with corresponding dialogues from naturally occurring data (Cohen and Ishihara, pp. 122–3).
- Using a clay animation series featuring talking animals as the basis for learner discovery of features of spoken English (Timmis, 2013, pp. 90–3).
- Getting students to discover discourse features of academic texts through analysis of authentic articles (Fenton-Smith, 2013).

All the activities referred to above have the common objective of adding relevance and engagement to the learners' classroom experience as well as of treating the learners as intelligent human beings with thoughts, feelings and experience and not just as followers of a prescriptive coursebook.

For other ideas for supplementing the coursebook with student-centred, student-initiated activities providing sensory experience of language learning see Jensen and Hermer (1998), who quote a father in Bateson (1972) telling his daughter, 'All that syntax and grammar, that's rubbish. Everything rests on the notion that there is such a thing as "just" words – but there isn't.' They advocate a performance approach which promotes 'a full sensory, physical and emotional appreciation of the language' (p. 179) and provide many practical examples of how to achieve their humanistic aims.

Humanizing with the coursebook

Often teachers are obliged to use a coursebook in all their lessons. In such cases they can humanize it by reducing the non-humanistic elements of the book and by expanding and adding to those sections which invite the learners to think, feel and do in order to learn.

Here's an example of such an approach:

1. getting the whole class to act out a version of a coursebook reading text from the teacher's spoken instructions,
2. giving them the coursebook text and asking them in groups to find as many differences as they can between the two similar texts within a demanding time limit,
3. organizing a competition in which the groups take it in turns to articulate a difference without referring back to the text,
4. stimulating the groups to develop an extended version of the text in a local context,
5. giving the students some of the coursebook activities for homework.

Other coursebook-based humanistic activities I've used include:

- Getting students in Oman to tell me all about camel racing in Oman before reading about horse racing in Sienna in their coursebook.
- Getting students individually and then in groups to draw a version of a reading or listening text before doing the coursebook comprehension activities (e.g. how they think the boy sees the school in Roger McGough's poem 'First Day at School' (1979); how they think the young whale sees the people on the beach in 'The Great Whale's Mistake' (Bell and Gower, 1991, p. 141); the horse race in Sienna described in Philips (2003a)).
- Getting students in groups to work out what happens in my mime of a text prior to reading the text in the coursebook.
- Getting students to dramatize texts they are going to read in the coursebook from my spoken narrative of the text (e.g. a scene from Macbeth described in Philips, (2003a)).
- Getting one group of students to mime their version of a text from the coursebook which another group are going to read and then inviting that group to tell the story of the text before they read it.
- Giving the students part of a coursebook text and then asking them to complete it themselves before reading the text in the coursebook and doing the associated activities.
- Getting students to rewrite a text from the coursebook so that it is set in the location where they are doing the course.
- Getting students to 'subvert' a tedious coursebook text by rewriting it from a completely different perspective (e.g. changing the *Happiest Man in England* to *the Happiest Woman* in Japan).

- Getting the whole class to write a local version of a coursebook text by inviting them to shout out sentences and later to revise and connect them into a coherent story.
- Giving the students the comprehension questions from the coursebook and getting them to write the text they are based on.
- Getting students to bring photographs to class to represent their local application of a coursebook text or task they've used in a previous lesson.
- Getting students to act out coursebook dialogues in voices appropriate to a given context (e.g. the shop assistant is the customer's ex-boyfriend).
- Getting students to suggest different contexts for a coursebook dialogue which would change its meaning.
- Getting students in pairs to continue and develop a coursebook dialogue into a dramatic event with each student playing one of the characters (e.g. the customer in the shoe shop is the ex-wife of the sales assistant).
- Getting students to write the inner speech monologues of characters in a coursebook dialogue (e.g. the outwardly polite shopkeeper who is getting inwardly incensed by the customer who can't make his mind up).

All the coursebooks I have used in my 45 years of teaching have needed humanizing but those which have needed humanizing most have been those designed to teach English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Such books typically take the position that their students need to learn a lot of language very quickly, that they are intelligent adults and that the most efficient way of helping them is to teach about and exemplify language features and then get the students to practice them (see Skeldon (2008) for a critique of such materials). What these materials often lack is appeal to the personal needs and wants of the human beings who are using them. When I have pointed this out in Conference presentations I have been told by ESP and EAP specialists that my suggested approach is too 'soft' and a luxury they do not have time or need for. What their students need is a 'hard' approach in which they are taught the language they need in the quickest and most direct way (see Tomlinson, 2008, 2010). I was also told this when I designed an MA module in Materials Development for ESP for a British University. However whenever I have taught ESP or EAP myself my students have pleaded for stories, poems and discussions instead of the relentless diet of grammar and vocabulary practice activities provided by their coursebooks. At Sultan Qaboos University in Oman the textbooks which I was given to use with different classes were Phillips (2003a, 2003b, 2003c). They are part of a Skills in English Course intended to prepare students 'for entry into English-medium study' and are no better and no worse than most other EAP textbooks. However, like most of those books they lack engaging content and stimulating activities and they could be considerably improved by following the advice of Mol and Bin (2008), who, in a chapter

on EAP materials, say that, 'the affective aspect of learning needs to be taken into account in the design of activities and materials. Suggestions for teachers should be included with regards to motivating students, maximizing their cognitive and affective engagement in the materials.' I have detailed how I humanized these coursebooks in Tomlinson (2008) but below is a summary of some of the things I did:

- In order to lighten the experience for the students I subverted some of the serious and mechanical activities by reducing them to the absurd. For example, I replaced a minimal pair drill with a very silly local story which used the examples in the drill.
- I replaced the tedious activity of the students recounting a day in their life at university with a creative writing activity in which they imagined they were one of the animals from a minimal pair activity in the same unit and then described their typical day at, for example, Cat College or the Barking Language Centre.
- I performed ridiculous mimes to help the students experience the 'red words' at the beginning of each unit which they were supposed to learn from the dictionary. For example, instead of trying to remember definitions and translations of 'flying' and 'climbing' they could remember images of me flying across the classroom and climbing up the classroom wall.
- I personalized units by, for example, adding a reading text called 'Brian in the Middle East', which told the story of my visits to countries in the Middle East, by adding a text by Shakespeare called the 'Life of Brian' and by adding a text about all the jobs that I've done in my life in order to supplement the rather mundane materials in a unit on jobs.
- I got the students to personalize texts and themes and got them, for example, to write an imaginary story about their travels in Europe, to give me a made-up account of a typical Monday in their life as a university student in England and to teach me a game they liked to play.
- After a unit on the physical world I added an activity in which the students described the landscape of their home region in Oman.
- While doing a unit on games I got the students to play from written instructions a West African board game, which is very similar to a game popular in Oman.
- I got the students to draw parallels with local customs and stories to help the students to understand alien concepts (e.g. relating the witches in Macbeth to the stories of black magic in the Oman town of Bahkta).
- After reading a coursebook text about Bahrain as it is today I got them to use the clues in the text to help them to write a description of Bahrain in 2050.

- I added texts about a personality known to the students to reinforce a structure being practised (e.g. a text about Stevie Gerrard's typical day as Liverpool captain to illustrate one of the uses of the simple present).

Developing humanistic coursebooks

Of course, the ideal scenario for most hard-pressed teachers would be to be able to use a coursebook which is already humanistic. Is it possible to develop coursebooks which are humanistic and which at the same time satisfy the conservative caution of the publishers, as well as the requirements of conventional institutions, curricula and administrators? It is. But it's not easy; and no coursebook can be completely humanistic for all its users because it can't possibly relate directly to each user's life.

There are a number of ways of developing coursebooks which are more humanistic.

Writing in large and varied teams

Writing a coursebook (and especially a series of coursebooks) can be a long and laborious process. Often the writer(s) start(s) out energized with enthusiasm and ideas but, after making the almost inevitable compromises with the understandably conservative editor, and after churning out innumerable units with the same format, they start to lose their creative energy. Long before the end of the book/series, the writers have changed their main objective to completing the book so that it can start to repay them for the tedious time they've devoted to it and so it can give them back their life. One way of stimulating and maintaining creative energy is to write coursebooks quickly in large and varied teams. The team might consist of new and experienced teachers, new and experienced materials writers, a poet, an artist, an applied linguist, a musician, a Chief Examiner and a cartoonist, all pooling their resources and stimulating each other. That's how we wrote a secondary school English coursebook for Namibia (Tomlinson, 1995), a series of coursebooks at Bilkent University in Ankara, materials at the University of Hue in Vietnam and materials for schools in Istanbul. We wrote the Namibian coursebook with a team of 30 writers in 6 days. On the first day, I demonstrated novel humanistic approaches and activities to stimulate thought and ideas. On the second day, we worked out a flexible unit framework and divided into ten writing teams of three. Each team wrote a Unit 1 designed to engage the learners and interest them in the book. The units were displayed on the wall and voted for by everybody in a competition to decide on the unit most likely to appeal to the learners. The winners revised their unit and developed another one while all the other teams wrote a new unit each. Throughout each working day representatives were present from the Ministry of Education and from the publisher (Gamsberg Macmillan) and they were kept busy giving permission and advice. Also, specialist members of teams (e.g.

the artist, the poet, the Chief Examiner) were visited for feedback and suggestions. The units were displayed, monitored and revised, and a small team of advisors checked the units against the syllabus and against lists of student and teacher needs. They also sequenced and connected the units and were eventually responsible for a final editing and revision of the book. The result was the most imaginative and humanistic coursebook I've ever been involved in, mainly because the short intensive writing period helped generate and maintain energy and the varied interaction with other human beings helped put the focus on the people involved in the learning process rather than on the language being learned.

Using a text-driven approach

The teams in the Namibian project described above started not by selecting a language point but by selecting a potentially engaging text from the books, magazines, newspapers and cassettes made available to them. They devised pre-reading or listening activities to help to activate the learners' minds in readiness for connecting the texts to their own lives and they developed post-reading activities aimed at helping the learners to articulate and develop their mental representations of the text. In other words, the initial emphasis was on the people experiencing the texts and not on the language in them. Later, the writers developed activities focusing on the content of the text and helping the learners to connect it to their own lives. Then they developed language activities focusing on language features which were salient in the text. Because we'd checked that the texts chosen constituted a representative sample of the main genres and text types, it was not too surprising that the language features chosen for the activities corresponded very closely with the language features listed in the syllabus.

In my experience as a writer and facilitator of coursebooks, the text-driven approach described above can be a very effective way of ensuring that a coursebook is humanistic. If the initial focus is on a potentially engaging text it's much more likely that the writer will keep the learners in mind than if the initial focus is on a language item or skill. And it's much easier to develop learning activities to match a text than it is to find an engaging text to match teaching points.

Using a multidimensional approach

A multidimensional approach aims to help learners to develop the ability to produce and process an L2 by using their mental resources in ways similar to those they use when communicating in their L1. Doing so not only helps learners to maximize their brain's potential for communicating in an L2 but it also maximizes their brain's potential for learning (Tomlinson, 2000a). A multidimensional approach is based on the principle that using affect, mental imagery and inner speech is what we do during effective language use and what we do during effective and durable learning, too. As Berman (1999, p. 2) says, 'we learn best when we see things as part of a recognised pattern, when our imaginations are aroused, when we make natural associations between one idea and

another, and when the information appeals to our senses.' The procedures which can be used in a coursebook to apply the principles of a multidimensional approach (and thus to create a humanistic coursebook) include making use of:

- activities which engage affect (i.e. emotional involvement, positive attitudes towards the learning experience and self-esteem) by involving learners in recalling and recounting personal experiences, thinking about and articulating their own attitudes and views and creating their own personal mental representations of what they listen to and read;
- imaging activities (Tomlinson, 1998c, 2011; Tomlinson and Avila, 2007) which encourage learners to create mental images while processing or producing language (an 'overwhelming amount of empirical evidence seems to show that imagery is a remarkably effective mediator of cognitive performance, ranging from short-term memory to creativity' (Kaufman, 1996, p. 77));
- inner voice activities which encourage learners to talk to themselves in an L2 inner voice while processing and producing language in the L2 (Tomlinson, 2000a, 2000b; Tomlinson and Avila, 2007);
- kinaesthetic activities which involve learners in momentary mental activity before following instructions in the L2 in order to perform physical activities such as playing games, miming stories, making models and cooking meals (Asher, 1994; Tomlinson, 1994a; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2010);
- process activities which help learners to create a version of a text themselves before reading or listening to the complete text (Tomlinson, 2000a, Chapter 4 in this volume).

Using literature

In my experience, one of the best ways to achieve the objectives mentioned so far in this chapter is to use literature as a means of stimulating multidimensional mental activity during language learning (Tomlinson, 2001). This only works if the learners are helped and encouraged to experience the literature rather than study it, if the texts are accessible without glossaries and introductions and if the literature relates to the learners' lives (Tomlinson, 1998b). I've found that the best way to do this is to build up a library of texts which are linguistically simple but cognitively and emotionally complex, and then to use them as the basis of humanistic activities which encourage personal engagement and response (Tomlinson, 1994a). Unfortunately most coursebooks rarely use literature (Tomlinson et al., 2001; Masuhara et al., 2008; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013) and when they do, they usually ask learners to read the text carefully and then answer comprehension questions on it. They thus ensure that the learners study the text. The text remains a text and the learners fail to create literature from it. As a result, the text has little impact on their minds, their lives or their language acquisition.

Varying the unit focus

One of the reasons why many coursebooks are considered to be superficial and dull is that most of them try in each unit to cover the four skills, plus grammar,vocabulary and pronunciation points. This inevitably leads to a bits-and-pieces approach which often provides only very brief, trivial and disconnected encounters with the language being learned. If most of the units had only one main focus there would be a better chance of providing more sustained and meaningful encounters with the language in use and, therefore, of developing a more humanistic coursebook. For example, Unit 1 could focus on a reading project (involving a number of texts), Unit 2 could focus on an extensive listening task, Unit 3 could focus on an extensive writing task, which included reading, listening and speaking in preparation and follow-up activities, and Unit 4 could provide grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation activities focusing on salient features in Units 1 to 3. That way the emphasis is more likely to be put on communication between people and less on unconnected bits of language. And the language work would be related to what the learners have already experienced.

Talking to the learners

The voice of most coursebooks is semi-formal and distant, and matches the stereotype of the knowledge-transmitting teacher talking at his learners. The writers reveal very little about their personalities, interests, beliefs and experiences and spend most of the time either telling the learners what to learn, do and say or interrogating them about what they know. It's a very unequal and anti-humanistic relationship which does little to encourage or engage the learner. For example, a recent survey of eight adult EFL coursebooks concluded that the 'the voices of the authors are neutral and semi-formal' (Tomlinson et al., 2001, p. 88); though it did find that two of the courses 'managed to be neutral, yet at the same time friendly and supportive' (ibid.). Other surveys have reached similar conclusions (e.g. Masuhara et al., 2008; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013).

What I'd 'like to see materials writers do is to chat to the learners casually in the same way that good teachers do' (in all cultures) 'and to try to achieve personal contact with them by revealing their own preferences, interests and opinions' (Tomlinson, 1998c, pp. 8–9). There is research evidence that using a personal voice in a textbook can foster deeper and more durable learning (Beck et al., 1995) and that the best way to achieve this is to include features of orality. The features I would recommend to the coursebook writer are:

- Informal discourse features (e.g. contracted forms, ellipsis, informal lexis);
- The active rather than the passive voice;
- Concreteness (e.g. examples, anecdotes);

- Inclusiveness (e.g. not signalling intellectual, linguistic or cultural superiority over the learners);
- Sharing personal experiences and opinions;
- Sometimes including casual redundancies rather than always being formally concise.

Connecting to the learners' views and opinions

The easiest way to make a coursebook humanistic is to ensure that in most activities the learners are asked about their own views, attitudes, feelings and opinions, that they are helped to think of their own examples and connections and that they are made to feel as though they are equal interactants with the coursebook writers and with the authors of texts which the coursebook includes.

Not many coursebooks achieve this, but in the Tomlinson et al. (2001) survey of courses mentioned above it was considered that *Language in Use* (Doff and Jones, 1991) and *Landmark* (Haines and Stewart, 2000) 'respect the learners as individuals, and seek to engage them personally in many of their activities' (Tomlinson et al., 2001, p. 87). Masuhara et al. (2008), Tomlinson (2013) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) did also find that some coursebooks did engage the learners in expressing personal views and feelings without patronizing them.

Providing text-free generalizable activities

It's possible to develop a set of generalizable activities (Maley, 1998, Chapter 10 in this volume) which can be used with texts selected by the learner from a resource pack of materials, from a library, from the internet or from his/her own resources. This ensures that the text relates to learners and is likely to engage them. This approach could be used, for example, when developing a coursebook called *English from the Web*. In this book each unit could provide the learners with a set of generalizable pre-reading, whilst-reading and post-reading activities for a particular genre (e.g. sports reports, cartoons, advertisements) and then suggest websites from which the learners can select texts which appeal to them for use with the activities.

Even more humanistic and productive would be an approach which provides generalizable activities in a coursebook in addition to guidance and stimulus to help the learners write their own texts for use with the activities (either for themselves or for a bank for other learners to select from).

Including awareness activities

Once learners have engaged with a text, achieved a multidimensional representation of it and developed and articulated their personal responses to it, I've found it can be very

useful to help them to make discoveries for themselves from a more intensive reading of the text. Language awareness activities (Bolitho et al., 2003; Bolitho and Tomlinson, 2005; Tomlinson, 2007), pragmatic awareness activities (Tomlinson, 1994b) and cultural awareness activities (Tomlinson, 2001), in which learners eventually work things out for themselves, can not only facilitate language acquisition and mental development, but they can also considerably increase self-esteem and independence.

Providing alternatives

Providing a choice of route (e.g. analytical vs experiential), a choice of texts (e.g. on different topics or at different levels) and a choice of tasks (e.g. in relation to different learning styles) is a fairly easy way to personalize coursebooks and, therefore, to make them more humanistic.

Localizing coursebooks

One of the main reasons why global coursebooks are not normally humanistic is that in trying to cater for everybody they end up engaging nobody. They have to make sure that their content and approach is not unsuitable for any type of learner, that their choice of topics and texts doesn't disadvantage any learners and, above all, that they don't offend or disturb any learners. The result, very often, is a book which presents 'a sanitised world which is bland and dull and in which there is very little excitement or disturbance to stimulate the emotions of the learner' (Tomlinson, 1998a, p. 20), a world which is characterized by Wajnryb (1996, p. 291) in her analysis of two best-selling coursebooks as 'safe, clean, harmonious, benevolent, undisturbed and PG-rated. What is absent is significant – jeopardy, face threat, negotiation, implicature . . . and context'. Learning a language in such a world can reduce the learner from an individual human being with views, attitudes and emotions to a language learner whose brain is focused narrowly on low-level linguistic decoding.

One way of connecting a coursebook to the real world which the learner lives in is obviously to localize coursebooks. It's no accident that the three most humanistic coursebooks I know are published for local markets, *On Target* (1995) for Namibia, *English for Life* (Tomlinson, Hill and Masuhara, 2000) for Singapore and *Searching* (2010) for Norway. All these books focus first of all on the world the learners are familiar with before going on to extend their experience of the world through thematically connected texts located in other countries. Unfortunately, local coursebooks don't generate as much profit as global coursebooks and, despite a recent trend of producing localized versions of coursebooks, the global coursebook is going to remain the resource used by the majority of learners of English in the world. However, it wouldn't be too difficult to:

- provide a bank of texts, tasks and illustrations for the teacher to select from in order to replace or supplement sections of a global coursebook not relevant to their learners;

- produce global coursebooks with generalizable activities which are supplemented by local photocopiable packs of texts and illustrations;
- include in the teacher's book suggestions for localizing the texts and activities in a global coursebook;
- include activities in a global coursebook in which the learners localize some of the texts and the tasks by modifying them in relation to the world they know.

I first made these suggestions in 2003 but I haven't seen any global coursebooks since then which have made use of these or of similar approaches. However I have been involved in institutional materials development projects in Ethiopia, Oman, Tunisia, Turkey and Vietnam which have aimed to develop materials which are locally relevant and which engage the learners personally in both local and global topics salient to their lives (e.g. Al-Busaidi and Tindle, 2010). Perhaps such projects are the main hope for learners in the future.

Conclusion

Humanistic approaches to language learning can facilitate both language acquisition and personal development. Unfortunately, most language learners learn from coursebooks and most coursebooks are not humanistic. However, it's not that difficult to make a coursebook more humanistic and it is possible to develop coursebooks which are both humanistic and profitable. We owe it to our learners to try.

Note

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7

The Visual Elements in EFL Coursebooks

David A. Hill

Introduction

Since Pit Corder's (1966) ground-breaking *The Visual Element in Language Teaching*, a number of methodologists wrote books showing the importance of various kinds of pictures in English language teaching (ELT) over a 15-year period from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s: Wright (1976), McAlpin (1980), Bowen (1982), Wright (1989), Hill (1990), and Wright and Haleem (1991). After a gap of 18 years, two new works arrived in the same year – Goldstein (2009) and Keddie (2009) – which emphasized the new accessibility of images through the internet. In 2011 Grundy et al. also published a resource book on using works of art. A scan of copies of two popular practical ELT magazines (*English Teaching Professional* and *Modern English Teacher*) for the period 2011–12 revealed very occasional articles dealing with the use of visuals, Da Silva (2011) and Massi et al. (2012), and two more which had one completely visual-centred idea among several, Thekes (2012) and Artusi/Manin (2012). This suggests that, even in these electronic and virtual days of language teaching, the use of visual material in the classroom continues. And, of course, British and world ELT coursebooks have moved on from the picture-free days of E. Frank Candlin in the 1960s, through the early black-and-white line drawings of Broughton and O'Neill in the 1970s, to the current range of materials which are full of stylish colour drawings and state-of-the-art photographs.

Given this continuing interest in and use of visuals, and the vast quantity of pictures available in British coursebooks aimed at the international market for young adults and adults, this chapter seeks to examine what use is actually being made of pictorial material there, and to suggest what use might be made of it.

Visuals in recent British coursebooks

What do we get?

In order to see what the current situation is with regard to British coursebook visuals, I examined three Student's Books at the Intermediate level spanning the previous decade:

Inside Out (S. Kay and V. Jones (2000), Oxford: Macmillan Heinemann)

face2face (C. Redston and G. Cunningham (2006), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Outcomes (H. Dellar and A. Walkely (2010), Andover: Heinle, Cengage Learning EMEA)

Initially I was interested to find out the balance between black-and-white and colour illustration, and between drawings and photographs within the main text pages of the coursebook units (see Table 7.1). These figures only show the existence of a separate individual illustration, regardless of size. All three books are roughly A4 format (c. 21 cm x 30 cm), and the pictures typically vary in size from 20.5 cm x 16 cm down to 3 cm x 4 cm. Cartoon story sequences in a block are counted as one illustration.

Perhaps the most obvious thing which stands out from the figures in Table 7.1 is the overwhelming dominance of colour pictures (475/529) to black-and-white (54/529), and the overwhelming dominance of photos (392/529) to drawings (137/529). The use of black-and-white photos is generally limited to historical photos that only exist in that

TABLE 7.1 The balance of illustrations, drawings and photos in three intermediate coursebooks

	Inside Out	*face2face*	*Outcomes*	Totals
Pages of text	134	95	96	**325**
Colour drawings	50	30	25	**105**
B&W drawings	23	0	9	**32**
Total drawings	73	30	34	**137**
Colour photos	111	107	152	**370**
B&W photos	11	4	7	**22**
Total photos	122	111	159	**392**
Total pictures	**195**	**141**	**193**	**529**

form; the use of black-and-white illustration is generally limited to the use of single funny cartoons. It is also noticeable that the earliest book – *Inside Out,* which was developed in the 1990s – has a higher number of drawn illustrations – more than twice as many as the later two books; this may indicate a greater and simpler access to different types of photographic images parallel to the increased use of electronic technology in publishing.

I was then interested in analysing what the pictures were actually illustrating. I decided to examine only the colour photos (CP) and colour drawings (CD) for each of the three course books under consideration, as these constitute the largest percentage of the illustrations. I categorized them according to subject (see Table 7.2).

The figures in Table 7.2 indicate that far more pictures show straight portraits, and people doing something (actions) or interacting with each other. It is interesting to note that the vast majority of portraits are photographs (111, against only 5 drawings) while a relatively high number of the interaction pictures are drawings (38 out of 106); this reflects the fact that it is much easier for a picture editor to get an agency portrait of, say 'a woman in her thirties looking happy' than 'a couple of students arguing about shopping in a supermarket' – although many of this last category of photos are clearly staged for the purpose.

Although this analysis of what pictures are to be found in coursebooks is intrinsically interesting, it may be more revealing about the process of textbook production than it is about how the pictures are expected to be used.

How are they used?

Initially, I analysed the books to find out how many of the pictures were specifically used in the text of the Student's Book, and how many were merely there for decoration.

TABLE 7.2 Analysis of colour photos and colour drawings in four coursebooks

	Inside Out		*face2face*		*Outcomes*		Totals
Picture type	CD	CP	CD	CP	CD	CP	
Portrait	3	59	0	28	2	24	**116**
Place	5	6	1	7	4	22	**45**
Object	2	14	10	23	4	29	**82**
Interaction	14	17	12	28	12	23	**106**
Action	26	15	7	21	3	54	**126**
Totals	**50**	**111**	**30**	**107**	**25**	**152**	**475**

TABLE 7.3 Pictures for use versus decoration in the three coursebooks

	Inside Out	*face2face*	*Outcomes*	Totals	%
Photos: Decoration	83	43	90	**216**	40.8
Photos: Use	39	68	69	**176**	33.4
Drawings: Decoration	42	14	11	**67**	12.6
Drawings: Use	31	16	23	**70**	13.2
Totals	**195**	**141**	**193**	**529**	100.0

I am aware, of course, that it is possible that there are instructions in the accompanying Teacher's Book which direct the teacher in getting students to use a particular picture independent of instructions in the Student's Book, but I have chosen to ignore this eventuality as being quite uncommon in most courses. I am considering all pictures, both black-and-white and colour here. These results are presented in Table 7.3.

The striking statistics here show that over half of the images (40.8% + 12.6%) across the three books are still used purely for decoration, for example, if a conversation takes place in a restaurant, there is a photo or drawing of a restaurant beside the dialogue, but students are not asked to refer to the picture. Although *face2face* has fewer pictures than the other two courses, it also has the highest percentage which are used by the students (59.6%). The other two courses have an almost identical number of pictures in them, but while *Inside Out* only uses 35.9 per cent of its pictures, the balance in *Outcomes* is almost equal (52.3% decoration, 47.7% use). While not claiming that figures based on the Intermediate level young adult/adult Student's Books of three coursebooks are in any way representative of all coursebooks, my intuition is that similar statistics could be derived from a larger sample. What do these figures seem to imply? That ELT publishers, editors and authors think that it is more or as important to provide attractive space-filling accompanying illustrations in their coursebooks than it is to provide pictures with related activities.

Of course, these figures highlight what I see as one of the major problems in the production of coursebooks: the authors, unless they specifically provide a brief for a particular picture for use with an activity, leave the rest of the production process up to the editors and designers, and it is at that stage that the decorative images are usually added. And what goes onto a page is dependent upon a number of non-educational factors, such as the space left once the necessary exercises and illustrations have been included, what illustrated straplines are included at the top of pages or start of chapters and how many pictures they can afford from picture agencies without going over budget.

While I would be the first to admit that editors and designers generally do a very good job – most contemporary British coursebooks are attractive products which students

and teachers enjoy using – one cannot help but lament the huge lost opportunities. Harmer (200, p. 135) put forward the view that pictures used for what he terms 'ornamentation' (my 'decoration') are important because:

> If the pictures are interesting they will appeal to at least some members of the class strongly. They have the power (at least for the more visually oriented) to engage students.

It is almost certainly true that students today prefer the colourfully decorated pages of current textbooks as opposed to the picture-free pages of the 1960s and the black-and-white line drawings of the early 1970s, however this is at least partially because of their expectations. They live in a world in which they are endlessly surrounded by visual images, and so it feels 'comfortable' and 'normal' if their coursebook surrounds them in the same way. Some students may also respond to such ornamentation 'strongly', although whether that strong appeal translates directly into any language learning benefits is a moot point. Harmer is equally vague about what kind of engagement these more visually oriented students might display. I suspect it would require a lengthy and subtle longitudinal study to prove that illustration-as-mere-decoration has a direct effect on student attitudes to English or to language learning, or indeed helps the learner to learn English better.

What kind of use?

Given that 46.6 per cent of the illustrations in the three coursebooks analysed do have activities attached to them, it would be instructive to find out exactly what kind of use they are put to. The following activity types were found in the three books:

a Activities dealing with precise elements of the unit language focus (syntax/vocabulary):

Finding objects from a written list in the picture.

Matching written texts with pictures.

Using situations in pictures to work out what people are saying.

Using the pictures as cues for written grammar drills.

Giving physical descriptions of people or places in the pictures.

b Activities working on listening comprehension:

Recognizing and labelling people/objects on the basis of a listening passage.

Spotting differences between details in the picture and information given in the recording.

Deciding what people are saying in the pictures based on the recorded dialogues.

c Finding or giving information:

Illustrations which clarify details in a reading text.

Looking for information in the picture.

d Deduction and creativity:

Making judgements and inventing information about people and situations in the pictures.

Such an analysis might lead one to make a distinction between purely functional illustrations which have the aim of making comprehension of the target language easier (e.g. a photograph of an object or a drawing of an event in a text) and those whose object is to stimulate a mental and linguistic response (e.g. an illustration positioned to allow reader speculation at the end of one and before the beginning of another piece of text). One might also distinguish between those illustrations which aim to facilitate explicit teaching (e.g. defining the meaning of words by having a picture of their referents) and those which facilitate tasks (e.g. by illustrating an interactive situation which students are using the language for).

It can be seen that the illustrations are largely being used for fairly low-level language practice, with few activities aimed at stimulating students to use the language at their disposal creatively starting from the pictures. Such an activity would be *Roads* (Hill, 1990, p. 34), in which students are given pictures of different types of country roads (e.g. lanes through fields, mountain roads, forest tracks) on which there are no people, vehicles or animals. When they have examined their pictures they are asked to imagine they are standing on that road, and to note down their responses to the following:

a something they can see outside their picture to their left, which we can't see;

b something they can hear;

c something they can see outside their picture to their right, which we can't see;

d something they can smell;

e something small they find on the road, pick up and take home with them;

f something they see in front of them which they do not like when they walk down the road and out of the picture.

The students then discuss their responses with partners – I usually ask them to talk to someone with a similar picture to theirs and someone with a very different picture. The result is always a lengthy conversation, initially about their immediate responses to the verbal stimuli, followed by discussion of the reasons for each response and then, frequently, by talk about the places, what they remind them of, etc., etc.

What might we do with visuals in coursebooks?

It seems to me that having over 50 per cent of the pictures in a given coursebook used for purely decorative purposes is a great waste of effort on the part of the publisher and a great waste of opportunity for the language learner and teacher. I do not doubt that many teachers use the decorative pictures accompanying, say, reading passages, for arousing interest in and/or awareness of topic by discussing what the learners can see in the pictures. However, let us see what we find in the coursebook.

Look at the page from Unit 10 of *Outcomes Intermediate*, which is fairly typical of the use of decorative pictures (see Figure 7.1). First, there is a sense in which the use of the picture feels deceitful, in that it is in colour when the rest of the page isn't so that one's eye is automatically attracted to it, that it takes up an area of 189cm² out of the whole 588cm² of the page – one-third, and yet despite the importance that colour and size affords it, it is not used directly.

The page works through a series of nine activities under three headings: Speaking (1), Vocabulary (4), and Pronunciation (4). They all deal with aspects of the topic of talking about going out to different events and entertainment. What is actually happening in the picture is not clear, but it would seem to be young Japanese people at a rock concert. It therefore relates clearly to some of the sentences in Vocabulary exercise A and could relate to Vocabulary exercise D and Pronunciation exercises A and B, too, without being directly referred to. All the exercises aim to help students describe attendance at events using more interesting and colourful language.

So the picture provides a context of a kind, however it is not used for any linguistic purpose. The activities would work just as well without the picture. Students will almost certainly describe events they have attended better because of the written information given and the examples they hear on the recording, not because of the picture.

Supposing the author, editor and designer wanted to keep the picture and texts more or less as they are, it would have been very easy to lead into the language tasks through some picture-related discussion, using rubrics such as:

> What kind of events do young people enjoy going out to in the evenings and at weekends?
>
> How do young people dress when they go to a rock concert?
>
> Look at the picture below. What nationality do you think these people are? Are they dressed and behaving like young people at a concert in your country? Why/why not?
>
> How do you think they are feeling?

In this way, for very little extra effort on the part of the materials writer, editor and designer, there would have been more language production for the learners, perhaps an easier lead-in to the topic than the Speaking A activity presented, in that they would



SPEAKING

A Work in pairs. Discuss these questions:
- Have you been out anywhere recently?
- Where did you go?
- How was it?

VOCABULARY Describing an event

A Match 1–8 with a–h.

1 It was really good, but they were quite weird paintings.
2 It's OK – a bit overrated, though.
3 It was really moving.
4 It was boiling hot.
5 It was completely sold out.
6 It's very trendy – full of young, beautiful people.
7 They were rubbish – just very dull.
8 Amazing. There was such a great atmosphere.

a It wasn't as brilliant as everyone's been saying.
b I can't really describe them or say why I like them!
c I was sweating like crazy.
d It was absolutely packed.
e I was in tears by the end.
f The music, the people, everything.
g I felt a bit out of place.
h We actually left halfway through.

B Decide if the answers could refer to a film, club, play, exhibition or gig. More than one answer may be possible.

C Work in pairs. Try to remember as much of the language in exercise A as you can.
Student A: ask *How was the ...?*
Student B: close your book and give an appropriate answer from exercise A.

D Tell each other about some films / clubs / plays / exhibitions you think are: *great / overrated / moving / trendy / rubbish / weird.*

PRONUNCIATION Intonation and lists

When we give our opinion about things we have seen, we often list what we liked or disliked. As we say a list of words, the intonation goes up on each word until the last one, when it goes down. We often finish these lists by adding *everything*.

A 10.4 Listen to these lists and repeat them.
It was great. The special effects, the soundtrack, everything!
It was awful. The music, the venue, everything!
It was terrific. The acting, the scenery, everything!

B Work in pairs. Take turns saying these sentences.
Student A: ask *What was so good / bad about it?*
Student B: give the answer.

1 The food, the service, everything. It was fantastic.
2 The people, the music, everything. It was just brilliant.
3 The story, the acting, everything. It was one of the worst things I've seen in a long time.
4 The music, the dancing, everything. It was dreadful.
5 The hotel, the countryside, everything. It was great.
6 The weather, the place, everything. We had a great time.
7 The special effects, the soundtrack, everything. It was one of the best things I've seen in ages.
8 The scenery, the direction, everything. It was really bad.

C Work in pairs. What do you think the sentences in exercise B are describing?

D Tell your partner about a great / terrible time you had on holiday / at a cinema / theatre / restaurant / hotel / party, etc. Use the patterns in exercise B. Add some more details with other language you have learned in this unit.

UAGE PATTERNS

Write the sentences in your language. Translate them back into English. Compare your English to the original.
It was one of the worst things I've seen in a long time.
It was one of the best things I've seen in ages.
It's one of the worst clubs I've ever been to.
He's one of nicest people I've ever met.
It's the nicest thing anyone's ever done for me.
It's the best book I've read in ages.

74 OUTCOMES

FIGURE 7.1 *Page 74 from* Outcomes Intermediate.

have had something concrete to refer to. And what is more the picture would become integrated into the new language work of the page.

And it is this issue of dealing only with what is seen, or dealing with what the learner knows, thinks or deduces which I would like to touch on now. Pit Corder was, to my knowledge, the first to make the distinction between 'talking about' a picture and 'talking with' a picture (1966, p. 35). If you talk about a picture you are limited and constrained by what you can see – 'there are some young people, probably Japanese, at a concert. . . . Some of them are dancing and others are. . . .' It is factual and visible. It is also useful to revise some bits of the language system. However, this need not be an end in itself, but the way into talking with the picture: 'The girl with the blonde hair looks as if she's enjoying herself dancing, and this guy in the red hat and white glasses reminds me of someone I saw at the last concert I went to . . . he was. . . .'. Here, with a suitable task, the picture allows learners to bring their own reality to the lesson. Coursebooks seem to offer very few opportunities to use pictures to stimulate their own inner meanings.

In this author's coursebook for the Italian Biennio, Corpus, a series of good colour photographs are used on a large scale in relation to some pages on Art Nouveau (1994, pp. 220–1). First, they are used to consolidate vocabulary encountered in a listening passage about collecting Art Nouveau objects. There is a relatively simple labelling activity ('talking about') first, and then there follows a series of three questions which broaden the topic out to a discussion of the learners' feelings related to the Art Nouveau objects illustrated ('talking with').

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to show the nature of typical illustration used in British ELT coursebooks aimed at young adults and adults. It has shown that a majority of pictures included are used only for decorative purposes, and that those used for language purposes tend to concentrate on low-level language skills related to basic language manipulation. It has suggested how such materials might be improved, and has gone on to exemplify the type of materials which is deemed necessary for a more meaningful and involved kind of language learning experience.

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8

Creative Approaches to Writing Materials

Alan Maley

Introduction

Creativity is widely regarded as a desirable quality in many domains: music, the visual and performing arts, literature, science, technology – and even in finance and business. It is a quality confidently proclaimed as essential for our technological, cultural and economic survival (Robinson, 2001).

There is however a tension, even a paradox, within the educational domain. Creativity is at the heart of learning. But it is not usually at the heart of education. Institutionalized education depends on control, measurement and conformity. Creativity (rather like its cousin, Critical Thinking) is anathema to systems based on control. However much they claim to be promoting creativity, institutions are dependent on a control paradigm, and thus resistant to anything which threatens that control. Creativity will always have a hard time of it.

Like education in general, the foreign language teaching field, on the whole, rates rather low on creativity therefore. Teaching is, by its very nature, a conservative profession. The institutionalization of teaching into regular classroom hours encourages the development of relatively comfortable routines. Examinations further encourage conformity. And, in the present global economy, market forces tend to discourage publishers from taking creative risks. This is not to deny that ELT in particular saw some significant instances of creativity and innovation in the last quarter of the twentieth century, including the paradigm shift from structural-situational to communicative approaches. It is tempting to wonder whether the current lull presages another burst of creative innovation in the near future, and to speculate about what direction this might take (see Conclusion).

In any event, the concept of creativity and its relevance to language teaching continues to warrant exploration. In Part I of this chapter, I shall therefore attempt to clarify *what* creativity is, *why* we should take it seriously, *who* the stakeholders in creativity are and *how* it has been implemented. In the second part, I shall offer a framework for generating creative materials and suggest some avenues for further exploration.

Part I: What is creativity?

Key components

It is the nature of buzzwords such as 'creativity' (cf. 'communicative', 'culture', 'identity', etc.) that they acquire a large number of different meanings through widespread and often indiscriminate use. I have therefore attempted to winnow out some core components of the notion of creativity. A cursory analysis of writings on creativity theory yielded the following semantic clusters, which are suggestive for a clearer definition of this polyvalent term.

a *'Newness': original, innovative, novelty, unusual, surprising.* To be qualified as creative, we have to recognize that something new has been brought into being. Yet all creative ideas owe a debt to what has gone before. It is their ability to use the past to frame the present in a new light which characterizes creativity.

b *'Immediacy': sudden, flash, illumination, spontaneous.* This aspect is best characterized by the 'Eureka' supposedly uttered by Archimedes as he leapt from his bathtub. Many creative geniuses report that their insights came to them in a flash of sudden clarity.

c *'Respect': awe, wonder, admiration, delight, aaah!* The truly creative act gives rise to feelings of pleasurable recognition on the part of others. A typical reaction would be, 'Why didn't I think of that?'

d *'Experiment': exploration, curiosity, preparedness, tacit knowledge, puzzle, problem-solving, play, heuristic.* Most kinds of creativity seem to involve some kind of 'playing around' with things, with asking the question 'What if . . . ?', and the ability to think the unthinkable. But curiosity alone is rarely enough. Being prepared, in the sense of well-informed, about an area is an essential prerequisite. ('Fortune favours only the prepared mind', Louis Pasteur, 1854.) This preparedness is often based on 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi, 1967; Schon, 1983), or 'mastery', which expert practitioners seem able to call upon effortlessly. Often heuristics are used to save time, heuristics being general

procedures or rules of thumb such as 'consider the negative', 'do the opposite', 'make it bigger/smaller'.

'Heuristics are used to prune the search tree. That is, they save the problem-solver from visiting every choice point on the tree, by selectively ignoring parts of it' (Boden, 1990, p. 98). Such playing around is done within a given conceptual space. 'In short, nothing is more natural than "playing around" to gauge the potential – and the limits – of a given way of thinking. This is not a matter of abandoning all rules, but of changing the existing rules to create a new conceptual space' (ibid., p. 46).

e *'Divine': intuition, insight, imagination, inspiration, illumination, divine spark, gift, hunch, mysterious, unconscious.* The idea that creativity is a mysterious, unknowable gift from God is widespread and ancient. Most contemporary writers on creativity do not, however, subscribe to this idea, preferring instead to investigate how creative acts come about. There is, however, agreement that much creative activity is unconscious.

The belief that creativity is a God-given quality encourages the belief that only some, chosen, people are capable of creativity. A more reasonable and humane view is that everyone is capable of creativity in varying degrees. H(istorical)creativity, which involves producing something no one in history has ever created before, is the stuff of genius – Mozart, Hokusai, Picasso, Einstein, Shakespeare. But this does not preclude P(ersonal)-creativity, which involves individuals making creative discoveries which are new to them, if not to history. As Carter claims, '. . . linguistic creativity is not simply a property of exceptional people but an exceptional quality of all people' (Carter, 2004, p. 13).

f *'Seeing relationships'*: *connections, associations, combinations, analogies, metaphors, seeing in a new way, peripheral attention, incubation, reconfiguring.* There is general agreement that an important component of creativity is the ability to make new connections, often between apparently unrelated data. Koestler (1989) called this bisociation, and the surrealists used it as a principle for generating new artistic creations. It has also been used by some writers on teaching, such as Gianni Rodari (1973) and Jacqueline Held (1979). However, in order to see new relationships, it may be necessary to suspend conscious attention, so that material which is on the periphery of our attention may gain access to the unconscious layers of mind. The notion that these ideas are stimulated by a period of incubation, while the conscious mind occupies itself with other things, is a constant theme of writers on creativity.

g *'Unpredictable'*: *randomness, chance, serendipity, coincidence, chaos.* It is a paradox of creativity that it cannot be predicted, nor consciously invoked. It apparently comes about partly through chance happenings. Crick and Watson's double helix, Fleming's discovery of penicillin, Newton's apple and Archimedes'

bath are all instances. Yet chance discoveries are usually only made by those able to recognize what chance has put in their way. An apple falling on the head of a farmer would more likely have triggered an expletive than a theory of gravity. There is a sense in which we can only discover or create when the time is ripe. And perhaps readiness can lead us to a measure of probabilistic predictability (see Conclusion).

h *'Acceptability'*: *recognition, relevance, significance, value.* However innovative a creation may be, it is unlikely to be taken up unless it is recognized as relevant to the field in which it occurs. The idea of using crystals to facilitate language learning mooted in the IATEFL Newsletter, Issues (Power, 2000) had all the hallmarks of novelty and surprise we associate with creativity. But it was not perceived as relevant by fellow professionals (Swan, 2001). Creative ideas must therefore be historically apt and relevant, as well as merely novel. 'Even P-creativity requires that systematic rule-breaking and rule-bending be done in domain-relevant ways' (Boden, 1990, p. 254).

Approaches to creativity

Creativity has long attracted the attention of theorists. Gardner (1993), picking up on Francis Galton's nineteenth-century work on geniuses, has investigated biographical aspects of creativity in a number of H-creative people, hoping to find common factors among them. Significantly, he has chosen geniuses from all seven of his types of intelligence (Gardner, 1985). His concentration on H-creativity may not help us very much, however, when we consider creativity as a widely distributed attribute in the human population.

Csikszentmihaly (1988) takes a multidimensional view of creativity as an interaction between individual talent, operating in a particular domain or discipline, and judged by experts in that field. This helps to explain why some ideas, though creative, do not emerge until the time is ripe. For example, Leonardo da Vinci designed flying machines, but the technological prerequisites for building and flying them had to await the development of the internal combustion engine and the discovery of petroleum in economically large quantities. Csikszentmihaly also has interesting observations about the role of 'flow' in creativity: the state of 'effortless effort' in which everything seems to come together in a flow of seamless creative energy (Csikszentmihaly, 1990). He further explores creativity through analysing interviews with 91 exceptional individuals, and isolates ten characteristics of creative individuals (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Both Koestler (1989) and Boden (1990) have sought a cognitive psychological explanation for creativity. Koestler, in his monumental *The Act of Creation* (Koestler, 1989) takes up Helmholtz' and Wallas' idea of creativity as a four-stage process. Given a 'problem', 'puzzle' or 'conceptual space', the creative mind first prepares itself by soaking up all the information available. Following this first Preparation stage, there is a stage of Incubation, in which the conscious mind stops thinking about the problem,

leaving the unconscious to take over. In the third stage, Illumination, a solution suddenly presents itself (if you're lucky!). In the final Verification stage, the conscious mind needs to check, clarify and elaborate on the insights gained. Koestler cites many examples, especially from science, to support his theory. He goes on to suggest that the process operates through the bisociation of two conceptual matrices, not normally found together. The juxtaposition of hitherto unrelated areas is held to facilitate a sudden new insight.

By contrast, Boden (1990) takes an AI (Artificial Intelligence) approach to investigating creativity. She asks what a computer would need to do to replicate human thought processes. This leads to a consideration of the self-organizing properties of complex, generative systems through processes such as parallel distributed processing. For her, creativity arises from the systematic exploration of a conceptual space or domain (mathematical, musical, linguistic). She draws attention to the importance of constraints in this process. 'Far from being the antithesis of creativity, constraints on thinking are what make it possible' (Boden, 1990, p. 82).

'It is the partial continuity of constraints which enables a new idea to be recognised, by author and audience alike, as a creative contribution. The new conceptual space may provide a fresh way of viewing the task domain and signposting interesting pathways that were invisible – indeed impossible – before' (ibid., p. 83).

Chaos theory (Gleick, 1987) tends to support her ideas. Boden's approach is richly suggestive for language acquisition and materials writing, in that both are rooted in complex, self-organizing systems.

Amabile (1996) approaches creativity from a social and environmental viewpoint, claiming that previous theories have tended to neglect the power of such factors to shape creative effort. Her componential theory rests on three main factors: Domain-relevant skills (i.e. familiarity with a given domain of knowledge), Creativity-relevant skills (e.g. the ability to break free of 'performance scripts' – established routines, to see new connections, etc.) and Task motivation, based on attitudes, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic constraints and rewards, etc. The social and environmental factors discussed include peer influence, teacher's character and behaviour, the classroom climate, family influence, life stress, the physical environment, degree of choice offered, time, the presence of positive role models and the scope for play in the environment. These factors clearly have relevance for learning too.

One of the most recent attempts to offer a comprehensive overview of the whole field of creativity is Kaufman and Sternberg's monumental *Cambridge Handbook of Creativity* (2010). Their final chapter 'Constraints on Creativity' is an admirably concise summary of the factors which come in the way of creativity. They are particularly critical of the way academic education, with its emphasis on conformity, and learning measured through tests has a negative effect on creativity. '. . . academic knowledge and skills as taught . . . will be inadequate to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world . . . creativity is more important than ever . . . (However) the greater the emphasis is on high-stakes assessment, the less is the emphasis on creativity' (Kauffman and Sternberg, 2010, p. 475). Much the same point is made by Ken Robinson in *Out of Our*

Minds (2001), and it is a chilling reminder of the institutional obstacles put in the way of any attempt to introduce creative ideas in the educational domain.

What is clear from the literature on creativity is that it is not a simple, unitary concept. '. . . a clear and sufficiently detailed articulation of the creative process is not yet possible' (Amabile, 1996, p. 33) .While we generally are able to readily identify creativity when we meet it, we are less able to describe it. For this reason, it perhaps makes better sense to adopt Wittgenstein's idea of a family resemblance, where any given instance of a complex phenomenon may share some but not necessarily all of a cluster of characteristics (Wittgenstein, 1958, pp. 31–2).

Why do we need creativity?

1. It is psychologically inevitable, given the nature of the human mind, which, as a complex system, is predisposed to generate new ideas. What distinguishes humankind from other almost genetically identical species is precisely the ability to make creative adaptations and discoveries and to pass them on to succeeding generations.
2. It is necessary for survival. The context in which language teaching and learning takes place is constantly evolving under the pressure of other forces: changing demands, changing technology, changing economic needs, etc. We are obliged to respond to this by changing ourselves, and at an ever-accelerating rate (Gleick, 1999; Robinson, 2001). Creativity tends to accompany change, as we seek adaptive solutions to new opportunities and constraints.
3. It is also inevitable historically. As Kuhn (1970) has shown, any given domain tends to follow a cyclical pattern of development. After a period of dominance by one paradigm, accepted by all, with knowledge and procedures routinized, there comes a period of questioning, the discovery of new insights and ideas which then supplant the old paradigm. The cycle then continues. In language teaching, we can consider the nineteenth-century Reform Movement as one such paradigm shift, and the Communicative Approach perhaps another. Creative adaptation to the new technologies may well prove another.
4. Creativity stimulates and motivates. Teachers who actively explore creative solutions tend to be more alive and vibrant than those content to follow a routine. Students given the opportunity to exercise their own creativity tend to respond positively. The materials writer who approaches the job creatively is likely to produce more interesting materials (Pugliese, 2010).
5. Language use, and language learning, are inherently creative processes. Several recent books (Lecercle, 1990; Crystal, 1998; Cook, 2000; Carter, 2004) have drawn attention to the fact that much natural language use is not merely utilitarian and transactional, nor merely interactional. People indulge in vast amounts of creative language play, through punning, riddles, jokes,

spoonerisms, insults, deliberate ambiguity, metathesis, unusual collocations, mixed metaphors, mimicry, games with names and irreverence (e.g. 'Jane Mansfield's reputation was vastly inflated'). Likewise, children learning their first language play around with it a great deal, constantly testing its limits creatively. '. . . not all play is creative but all creativity contains play' (Gordon, 1961, p. 121). I would argue that these features should at least be given some space in teaching materials. Literature is the supreme example of linguistic playfulness, and along with drama, clearly has a key revitalizing role to play here.

Who are the stakeholders?

Clearly, as this is a book focusing on materials writing, I believe materials writers themselves should exercise creativity. This may be manifested in the content they choose to include (texts, visuals, etc.), or the procedures they offer teachers and learners or through the outcomes they aim to achieve. (For more on Content, Process and Outcomes see below.) They may also show creativity in the ways they manage to work within the constraints imposed by the publisher, the syllabus, the school regulations; the examination or the physical conditions.

Publishers, too, have a key role to play as promoters of creative ideas. Unhappily, the cut-throat competition and high investment costs in current publishing tend to discourage the taking of risks – and creative ideas will always represent a degree of risk. Publishers are also complicit in the assessment-obsessed ethos of most institutionalized education. There are however, still a few niche publishers which buck this trend. They tend to be small, such as Delta, Garnet and Helbling, but they do keep the flame of creativity alive. Self-publishing through programmes such as Lulu and The Round also offer a new outlet for individual creativity.

A major aspect of the materials writer's creativity is the extent to which their materials can stimulate creativity among the teachers and students using them. Materials which offer teachers choice and flexibility to develop in ways they judge to be appropriate are likely to produce more creative behaviours. This view corresponds with Prabhu's (1990) notion of a 'sense of plausibility', whereby teachers function best when they operate within a framework of their own evolving set of beliefs and practices. Likewise, learners given choice and working within a learning community where playfulness is encouraged, tend to respond creatively too.

The question of perceived value and relevance by users of creative materials again arises, however. There is little point in the materials writer exhibiting great personal creativity in the design of materials, if they are rejected as too 'way out' or 'impractical' by those they are intended for. The truly creative materials writer may use quite simple and minimal inputs to stimulate methodological creativity on the part of teachers, or linguistic creativity on the part of learners. Recent examples of this would include Pugliese (see below) and Bilbrough (2011), where well-tried activities are given a creative twist.

How has creativity been applied?

Before moving to the second part, it will be worth reviewing some examples of creative ideas from the recent past.

Heuristics

In his book *Breaking Rules*, John Fanselow (1987) recommends applying the heuristic 'Do the opposite', as a way of generating new possibilities in language teaching. This injunction can be applied at any level: content, process, roles. For instance, regarding content, if you habitually use written texts, try using listening instead. If you use long texts, try short ones. If you use simplified texts, use authentic ones. Or try doing without texts altogether. Regarding processes, if you use a lot of group and pair work, try some individual and whole class work. If you normally expect immediate answers to your questions, try asking students to delay their replies. Regarding roles, if you do all the teaching, let the students do some of it. If you set tests let students write their own tests (Maley, 1999). These are no more than examples of quite radical changes which can be brought about by applying this simple yet powerful heuristic. Other heuristics can yield equally productive results (see Maley, 2006).

Designer methods

The so-called designer methodologies which came to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s (Stevick, 1980) are all interesting applications of the 'do the opposite' heuristic (though I do not suggest that their ideas derive from Fanselow).

The Silent Way (Gattegno, 1976) reverses the idea that the teacher does all the talking, and that it is the teacher's duty to instruct. Instead, learners are thrown back on their own resources to painfully construct their own 'inner criteria' from minimal clues.

In *Community Language Learning* (CLL) (Curran, 1976), there is no pedagogical text: it is the learners who develop their own dialogic text, and take their own preferred learning pathways into the new language as they proceed from an 'infantile' to a 'mature' state in that language. The teacher is essentially a sympathetic informant.

The principles and practice of *Suggestopoedia* (Saferis, 1978; Lozanov, 1979), go directly counter to received wisdom in foreign language pedagogy. Learners are required to make no conscious effort to learn. They are exposed to texts of unprecedented length. The relaxed atmosphere created through Baroque music, comfortable chairs and low lighting is decidedly unlike a 'normal' classroom.

Total Physical Response (TPR) (Asher, 1977) confines the early stages of learning to listening alone. The teacher speaks, but requires only non-verbal responses as confirmation of comprehension.

Although it is nowadays relatively rare to find any of these methodologies being used in their pure form, they were undeniably creative and have had significant effects on current methodologies and materials.

N. S. Prabhu

Prabhu ranks as one of the most original and iconoclastic twentieth-century thinkers on language teaching. Two of his major contributions were the development of procedural, task-based syllabuses (Prabhu, 1987), and of a radically different approach to materials writing (Prabhu, 1989).

Procedural syllabuses have been widely discussed elsewhere (Nunan, 1988; White, 1988), so I shall do no more than draw attention to the fact that they too are an instance of 'doing the opposite'. Rather than designing a tightly controlled, 'a priori' linguistic progression, Prabhu advocates setting a series of tasks with no formal attention to the order of language items. He argues that, while the conscious attention of learners is focused on solving the problem/task, they are unconsciously acquiring language competence.

In his article, 'Materials as Support: Materials as Constraint' (1989), Prabhu criticizes published materials on the grounds that they pre-empt choices which might more properly be made by the teacher. Such materials predetermine the content, the order of presentation and the methodology to be deployed. His radical proposal is to restore to teachers as much control as possible over these areas. He suggests the use of 'semi-materials', where single-type activities such as listening comprehension or collections of raw input would be used, or metamaterials, which would simply offer 'empty' procedures, such as dictation, to be utilized by the teacher according to local need.

Maley (1994) subsequently developed these ideas as 'flexi-materials', by offering an open-ended set of texts, any of which could be chosen by the teacher to use with a limited set of activity types. (For a full description, see Maley in Tomlinson, 2011, pp. 379–402.)

Humanistic contributions

The 1980s, in particular, saw the emergence of ideas revalorizing the individual/personal aspects of learning. Moskovitz' *Caring and Sharing in the Language Class* (1978) was a landmark volume. Such personalized and values-oriented materials tended to draw on fields outside the narrow confines of linguistics, and to explore new ways of doing familiar things. One of the best examples of this creative re-exploration of a time-honoured practice is Davis and Rinvolucri's *Dictation* (1988). In it, the authors submit the 'conceptual space' of dictation to a series of creative variations, reminiscent of the variations explored in music by Bach and other composers.

The field of theatre training was drawn upon by Maley and Duff (1982), and literature was reinterpreted by a number of authors (Maley, 2000, pp. 180–5) as a resource for language learning, rather than as a field of academic study.

Recent applications

Thornbury and Meddings (2001, 2009) have advocated a heuristic strategy which recommends increasing the constraints on teachers. 'Dogme' requires that no artificial aids to teaching be used; instead, total reliance is placed on facilitating learning through the quality of the dialogue between teacher and learners, and among learners. While such a self-denying ordinance has met with a mixed reception (Gill, 2000), it is undeniably creative and commands an increasing following through its website (www.teachingunplugged).

Pugliese has been a strong voice in advocating a creative role for teachers in developing materials. His *Being Creative* (2010) is both a valuable collection of creative activities and an impassioned plea for teachers to become more actively creative in their practice. 'I dream of a school that fosters a spirit of discovery and lifelong learning and is not driven by grades, scores and tests' (Pugliese, 2010, p. 19). His *Manifesto for Creative Teaching* also makes for interesting reading (Pugliese, 2012). Marc Helgesen in Japan has also developed some highly original adaptations of traditional practices, and has also tapped into happiness research, making his materials free online. (see References for Helgesen websites.)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has creatively reversed the earlier model of content-based instruction, which aimed to use subject content to achieve language learning (Deller and Price, 2007; Mehisto, Frigols and Marsh, 2009; Tanner and Dale, 2012). In CLIL, the focus is on learning the subject through the foreign language. Though not all teaching contexts are appropriate for a CLIL approach, it is nonetheless the subject of active experimentation and debate.

A whole new way of approaching language learning aesthetically, through integrating the use of the arts (Goldberg, 2006; Lutzker, 2007; Maley, 2009, 2010), music (Paterson and Willis, 2008; Hill, 2012), art (Keddie, 2009; Grundy et al., 2011), video, drama (Maley and Duff, 2005; Wilson, 2008), literature (Duff and Maley, 2007), storytelling (Wajnryb, 2003; Wright, 2008), creative writing (Maley and Mukundan, 2011a and b) has also been advocated recently.

Part II : Ideas for generating creative materials

Having reviewed ways in which creativity theory may illuminate thinking about materials writing, and having given some practical examples of creativity in language pedagogy from the recent past, it is time to look towards possible future developments.

Chart for organizing language teaching materials

The following chart (see Table 8.1) is one attempt to systematize the writing of materials. It is not comprehensive, though I have tried to include most items I regard as important.

The *Inputs* comprise all the raw material the writer might wish to consider for inclusion. *Processes* are what is done with that Input. *Outcomes* are the objectives the writer hopes to achieve through the Inputs and Processes. Having made choices of Input-type, the writer then selects the processes learners will engage in to achieve the given Outcomes. Of course, it is perfectly possible to use the chart to generate routine, run-of-the-mill materials. But if the full range of options is considered, this is less likely. In thinking about creative uses of the chart, it may be useful to draw upon some of what we have learned from creativity theory (see above). This would include:

- Playing around – both as materials writers, and in fostering the playful element in learners.
- Leaving room for 'chaos' to operate by throwing up new and unexpected regularities in the complex system we are working in.
- Testing the constraints of our conceptual spaces.
- Trying out new ways of adapting old practices.
- Using heuristics and analogy to stimulate new thinking.
- Allowing time and silence for ideas to incubate (both for materials writers and for the users of the materials).
- Making unusual juxtapositions using the random-combination principle.
- Drawing on other domains, outside language pedagogy.
- Remembering that novelty is not enough, and that the system we operate in has to be 'ready' and to perceive the relevance of our ideas.
- Capitalizing on the fact that everyone has the capacity for creativity.
- Ensuring that we give due attention to the Preparation and Verification stages of the creative process. Not everything is fun and games.
- Keeping in mind, however, that delight and pleasure are an integral part of the process.

TABLE 8.1 A chart for organizing language teaching materials

Inputs	Processes	Outcomes
People (experiences, feelings, memories, opinions, appearance, etc.) **Topics/Themes** **Texts** (literary/ Non-literary; published/ student-generated, extensive readers) **Reference materials** (dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopaedias, reference grammars, etc.) **Realia** (objects, texts, pictures, etc.) **Visuals** (photographs, videos, 'art', film, etc.) **Audio** (words, texts, music, sounds) **Internet**, CD-ROMs, You Tube, etc. **Games**, simulations, role-play, language play. **Oral accounts** (stories, jokes, anecdotes, presentations, etc.) **Problems** (puzzles, moral dilemmas, logical problems, etc.) **Projects** **Techniques** (improvization, drama, dictation, translation, creative writing, etc.) **Student-made material**	**Generic** Time (long/short) Intensity (high/low) Type (active/ reflective, interactive) Mode (individual work, pairs, groups, whole class; public/ private) Medium (spoken/ written; processing/ producing) **Management**: routines instructions questions **Techniques**: questioning info. gap, opinion gap, etc. jigsaw reading/ listening process writing reading skills visualizing inner speech/ rehearsing **Task-types:** brainstorming predicting classifying evaluating problem-solving performing constructing objects researching **Generative procedures:** expansion matching media transfer comparison/contrast selection/ranking, etc.	**Material outcomes** (student texts, visual displays, performance, etc.) **Pedagogical outcomes** (evidence of learning, test results, fluency, becoming a reader, learning to learn, handling feedback, metacompetence, etc.) **Educational outcomes** (increased social/ intercultural awareness, critical thinking, creative problem-solving, independence, knowledge management, etc.) **Psycho-social outcomes** (increased self-esteem, self-awareness, confidence, cooperation, group solidarity, responsibility, attitudinal change, tolerance of difference, etc.)

Some applications

Inputs

a People: We are in danger of overlooking the resource nearest to us, namely the human resource in our own class. Every class has within it a fabulous reserve of personalities, physical types, memories, associations, opinions, skills and knowledge (Campbell and Kryszewska, 1992). Materials should draw upon this human bank account. Most activities can be enriched by the personal perspectives of students.

b In choosing themes or topics we can also go well beyond the conventional and familiar. There is nothing wrong with such uncontentious themes as sport, hobbies, shopping, cultural festivals and the like. But if our objectives include increasing social and intercultural awareness, and critical thinking skills, we need to cast the net more widely. Wajnryb (1996) has incisively critiqued the bland irrelevance of many teaching materials. Practical examples of more challenging themes include Jacobs et al. (1998), who offer a wide range of environmental and global themes, as do Sampedro and Hillyard (2004). Day and Yamanaka (1998) also explore themes well beyond the conventional boundaries of traditional textbooks, and *Global* (Clandfield et al., 2010) offers a vastly expanded menu of topics and texts.

c Texts still form the basis of most published materials. We can exercise greater creativity by widening the choice of text types, particularly by including more literary texts, which expose students to more creative uses of the language. Literary texts also often touch upon precisely those social, cultural and human issues which would broaden our objectives from purely instrumental language teaching to more general educational purposes.

Students themselves can provide textual input in the form of poems, wall newspapers, stories. With the development of word-processing facilities, it is now possible to publish texts with high-quality finish. Texts produced by students in one year can become part of the input for the next. Compilations of texts chosen by the students can also be used in a similar way.

Extensive reading is now recognized as the single-most effective way of acquiring a foreign language (Day and Bamford, 1998; Krashen, 2004). There exist many excellent series of graded readers, both adaptations and originals, so that we can now speak of a new genre of English writing, Language Learner Literature – literature written explicitly for foreign learners. Yet there are at least two ways of creatively changing what is on offer. The first would involve abandoning tight linguistic control through word and structure lists. Instead, writers would concentrate on telling a good story, gauging the language level intuitively by writing for a particular audience.

The second would involve abandoning all questions and activity materials, leaving the learner to interact naturally with the text in the manner of a 'real' reader, without these unreaderly distractions.

d It is now possible to exploit the creative possibilities of the new range of reference materials available, in particular learners' dictionaries (Wright, 1998), and production dictionaries such as the *Activator (*1997). We can encourage students to construct their own reference materials: grammars, phrase books, vocabulary references, cultural references. This can also be linked with the use of project work (Fried-Booth, 2001).

e One creative way of approaching realia, visuals and audio input is to pass responsibility for providing input to the learners themselves. They may prepare their own photographic displays, videos, sound collages, perhaps as part of a project. The sense of ownership conferred by personal involvement often gives rise to increased motivation and surprisingly creative outcomes (Stempleski and Tomalin, 2001; Mukundan, 2012).

f The internet is clearly a massively important resource. But only recently has serious thought been given to ways of using it in an integrated manner, and in ways which creatively exploit its potential (Windeatt et al., 2000; Harmer, 2001; Dudeney and Hockly, 2007). A highly useful resource for teachers is Russell Stannard's www.teachertrainingvideos.com which puts the new technologies within the reach of teachers. The danger of the internet, as with all technologies, is that materials writers, along with everyone else, become mesmerized by its technological potential rather than thinking carefully and creatively about how it can best be deployed.

g Inputs from oral accounts offer wide opportunities for creativity in content selection. Brunvand's (1999) collection of Urban Legends is but one example. Oral presentations may also serve as an alternative, more creative, way of teaching pronunciation. The student making an oral presentation is forced to take account of the totality of the communicative event, not just the phonetic accuracy of delivery. The same is true for performance of texts.

Processes

Processes can also enhance the creative quality of the materials. I shall simply give brief suggestions from each of the five categories in the chart.

a Generic: The use of time can be handled creatively, for instance, by setting tight time constraints on some activities. Another example is by giving dictations at normal speed rather than slowly with pauses (Davis and Rinvolucri, 1988). Or by allowing students as much time as they need for tests.

Or by helping students to plan their own time. Similar possibilities emerge from the other generic features.

b Management: One creative way to manage routines and instructions is to replace verbal with non-verbal cues. Students can quickly learn to use a set of gestures to cover most exigencies: a raised hand for silence, a circular motion for group work, index fingers pointing inward for pair work. Alternatively, all instructions can be given in writing on large flashcards which the teacher holds up when necessary. Both ideas would serve to reduce wear and tear on teachers' voices – a major source of problems (Maley, 2000). But, taken to excess, this would reduce the learners' exposure to language in natural use. For further ideas on the use of gesture in pronunciation work, see Underhill (1994).

c The list of techniques given is far from exhaustive but any technique can be applied creatively. Stevick (1986) drew attention to the power of visualization and Tomlinson (2000, 2001) has developed techniques to promote visualization and inner speech in the processing of texts. All too often, we seem to require an explicit verbal or factual 'answer', rather than an internal representation. Underhill (1994) recommends allowing students time to hear and hold utterances in their inner ear before repeating them.

d The set of task types is likewise incomplete, but all those listed can be creatively applied. For example, if the task involves evaluating a something (a text, a film, a piece of peer writing), students can devise their own criteria. They can also learn how to offer and receive negative criticism, which has important educational and social outcomes.

e The generalizable procedures (Maley, 1998) are in fact a set of heuristics which can be applied to any piece of material. Even so simple a type of media transfer as copying out a prose text in the format of a poem compels a different quality of attention from straightforward copying. Likewise, requiring students to rank a set of texts in terms of their suitability for a given purpose invites careful reading and provokes often heated discussion.

Outcomes

Inputs and Processes interact to produce outcomes but in complex ways not reducible to a formula. I believe, however, that we can greatly extend the range and relevance of Outcomes by thinking creatively about them. Traditionally, we have been mainly concerned with Material and Pedagogical outcomes: the direct product of learning. Yet even here we can extend the range. As I have suggested earlier, student-generated texts can be much more varied; the availability of word-processing makes possible a greater variety and higher quality of products; access to video and sound recording

facilities can likewise add to the range of material outcomes. Pedagogical outcomes can also go beyond the traditional reliance on test results and assignments to evaluation based on portfolios and journals. They can also encompass enabling skills such as learning to learn (Ellis and Sinclair, 1989), dealing with feedback to and from peers and meta-competence in talking about language and language learning in informed ways.

More broadly educational outcomes emerging from the creative interaction of inputs and processes might include increased awareness and understanding of others, including other cultures, the ability to question received wisdom or information, the ability to solve problems through brainstorming and lateral thinking, and self-reliance. In the psycho-social domain, the creative dimension can give rise to enhanced confidence, self-esteem, and self-awareness leading to responsibility and cooperation to create a positive learning atmosphere (Hadfield, 1990).

Conclusion

I suggested earlier that major creative breakthroughs or paradigm shifts take place when a number of pieces fall into place to make a new pattern. In the case of the shift to a Communicative Approach, a number of developments and ideas crystallized quite rapidly, though many of them had been around for some time. Austin and Searle's work on speech acts; Chomsky's ideas on the deep structure of language, offset by Hymes' ideas on the importance of context of use; the dawning realization that English had genuinely achieved the status of the global language, with all that entailed in language learning needs; the politics of a new European community of states; the development of the tape recorder, video and the photocopier; the coming to maturity of Applied Linguistics, spawning a generation of trained practitioners; the emergence of a smallish group of charismatic applied linguists promoting the new ideas; the support of an (at the time) flourishing group of professionals within the British Council, dedicated to propagating these ideas: all conspired to produce the heady ambrosia of the new approach.

The communicative paradigm has now commanded near-universal acceptance (if only in the form of lip-service) for over 30 years. Yet it seems to have lost momentum, and voices are increasingly being raised as to its universal suitability. There is also a sense that it has not delivered on the no doubt hyperbolic promise of its earlier years. Are we then on the brink of another creative paradigm shift? Only a fortune-teller would hazard a guess.

No new pattern is yet discernable but any new configuration would need to take account of at least some of the factors to have emerged in the past 10–20 years. These include:

- The developments in IT, giving access to almost unlimited free information and materials, and to virtual, simulated worlds, as well as the blogo-sphere

and the world of Twitter, Facebook, and other modes of social networking, mobile-assisted learning, Moodle and the rest (Dudeney and Hockly, 2007).

- The emergence of small niche publishers, and of self-publishing, exploiting new publishing technologies which enable them to publish fast, at relatively low cost and to control their print runs on a daily basis. Hence a greater potential for risk-taking.
- The influence of critical theory on English as a global language (Phillipson, 1992; Holliday, 1994, 2009; Pennycook, 1994; Canagarajah, 2004), and in particular the challenge to 'native speakerism'. This might herald a more context-sensitive approach to teaching English, after a period of almost unbridled metropolitan triumphalism.
- The increase in awareness of global issues, and the importance of educating a new generation in a greater respect for limited global resources (Jacobs et al., 1998; Sampedro and Hillyard, 2004).
- The confirmation of English as the single-most extensively used global language, and with it, the need for teaching to more advanced levels of proficiency, and issues of standard versus diversity.
- The likelihood that machine translation will soon offer an alternative to language learning (Bellos, 2011).
- Our increased understanding of how natural language functions, through corpora research (Hoey, 2005; Carter and McCarthy, 2006).
- The growing understanding of the role of extensive reading in language acquisition (Krashen, 2004).
- The vastly expanded networks of teachers and teachers' associations worldwide, ensuring a more rapid and efficient interchange of information and ideas, especially through social networking channels, live streaming of conferences, webinars and online journals.
- Developments in the understanding of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1985).
- The emergence of 'play' and 'playfulness' as a major factor in language acquisition and use.
- Advances in cognitive science and in AI, gradually shedding more light on mental processing (Dennett, 1991; Jacobs and Schumann, 1992; Ramachandran, 2003, 2005; Damasio, 2005, 2010; Dehaene, 2009).

The two main factors in any consideration of creative materials are, however:

1 The immoderate growth in power of the testing industry (public and private), and the tightening stranglehold of 'systems' – like the Common European

Framework (CEF) (Morrow, 2004). These pressures work together, with the complicit support of most publishers, to narrow the range of creativity and to box teachers in (Casenave and Sosa, 2007).

2 The current obsession with smart technology, which offers a mesmerizing range of gadgets and tools which tend to confuse novelty with creativity. We need to remind ourselves constantly that technology should be a tool in the service of creativity and not a substitute for it. The potentially negative effects of digitopoly have also been extensively discussed (Carr, 2010). Technology will continue to develop, and at a faster rate, so this is a problem which will not go away. All the more reason, therefore, for materials developers to demonstrate critical judgement rather than unbridled enthusiasm, in an attempt to use the new technological advances in creative ways, rather then being used by them.

I believe that the creative spirit, both among materials writers and among teachers and learners, will nonetheless survive. As Arthur Miller once said of literature, it 'is not going to die because the funders turn their backs on it – it is a weed that can survive in the cracks of a pavement'. Likewise for the creative spirit, but it will never be an easy ride.

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9

Developing Digital Language Learning Materials

Thom Kiddle

NB. This chapter includes QR codes to give instant access to the websites and tools referenced. QR codes can be read on a smartphone or tablet by downloading a free app (e.g. Google Goggles for Android devices; QR Reader for iPhone/iPad).

Introduction

The use of digital technology in language teaching has an extensive and increasingly diverse history, often divided by commentators (Warschauer, 1996; Bax, 2003; Dudeney and Hockley, 2012) into three phases, or approaches – 'restricted', 'open' and 'integrated' in Bax's terms (Bax, 2003, pp. 20–2). The 'restricted' phase is essentially learner interaction with the computer, largely through the keyboard, with predetermined feedback on right and wrong answers. The 'open' phase involves greater interaction with peers and using the computer for simulations, game-play and extended writing; and the 'integrated' approach (just beginning as Bax was writing in 2003), involving computer-mediated communication, early internet and email use, multimedia developments and frequent interaction with other students. Quite understandably, the scope, focus and dividing lines between each stage change with historical perspective. The current age is generally referred to as Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in language teaching, and will perhaps be viewed as at the border-crossing between the ages of Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 in the wider internet world. That is, a progression from websites which allow content creation and sharing by users towards a more 'intelligent' web

which responds to users' geographical, preferential and historic-interactional profiles in its adaptive capabilities. Discussions on ICT in ELT have the power to divide teachers around the world as much as the potential to unite them, with some movements such as Dogme ELT (Thornbury and Meddings, 2009) challenging a perceived increasing (and unthinking) implementation of ICT in the language classroom, while on the other side the web is awash with teachers' technology blogs and websites declaring the daily arrival of the new must-use tool, site or application. Some commentators (e.g. Carr, 2008) have gone as far as to ask whether the predominance of the internet in our daily lives has profoundly affected our educational capabilities, particularly in the way we deal with information, saying 'The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle' (ibid., p. 3). Others (e.g. Jenkins, 2006) with a more constructive approach talk of the 'cultural competencies and social skills' needed to be fully involved in the digital participatory culture. Competencies and skills such as

> Play – the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving; Performance – the ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery; Simulation – the ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes; Appropriation – the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content; Multitasking – the ability to scan one's environment and shift focus as needed to salient details; Collective Intelligence – the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal; Transmedia Navigation – the ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities; Networking – the ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information; Negotiation – the ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms. (ibid., p. 4)

There can be little doubt that digital media, through the computer screen, has become the 'culturally dominant medium' of our age (Twiner et al., 2010) and if Prensky's (2001) claims are to be acknowledged, then an ever-increasing number of students and teachers are the born-post-1980 digital natives with expectations and awareness of technology in all aspects of their lives, the language classroom included. Whether or not in language learning this digital competence can be seen as a form of Common Underlying Proficiency in the Cummins (2000) sense, which provides cross-language intuitive engagement with digital content, is still open to debate, but what is clear is that digital technology is here to stay in the field of language learning and teaching.

The earliest reported sighting of the adage 'technology will not replace teachers, but teachers who use technology will replace those who don't' is over 30 years ago, yet profound misgivings and open resistance to technology are still commonplace among language teachers, their students and the institutions which provide learning opportunities. The reasons for this are complex and go deeper than binary mud-slinging contrasts between 'luddites' and 'early-adopters', or references to the 'digital divide'. A recent national survey in one European country (CARDET, 2009 in Vrasidas, 2010)

reported the following key reasons (in order of prevalence) why teachers don't adopt technology:

- Extent of the curriculum that needs to be covered during the year
- Time constraints
- Time required for preparing ICT-based activities
- Availability of infrastructure
- Amount of quality content
- Lack of in-classroom teacher support
- Lack of participation of teachers in decision-making
- Need for professional development

Further challenges are acknowledged by the Horizon Report into technology in Higher Education which highlights the fact that:

> Appropriate metrics of evaluation lag behind the emergence of new scholarly forms of authoring, publishing, and researching [meaning] electronic books, blogs, multimedia pieces, networked presentations, and other kinds of scholarly work can be difficult to evaluate and classify according to traditional metrics, [and] reconciling new forms of scholarly activity with old standards continues to be difficult, creating tension and raising questions as to where faculty energy is best directed; [that] economic pressures and new models of education are presenting unprecedented competition to traditional models; [and that] keeping pace with the rapid proliferation of information, software tools, and devices is challenging for students and teachers alike. (NMC Horizon Report, 2011)

What is clear is that we are still some way from the state of 'normalization' of technology in language education, where '. . . the technology is so integrated into our lives that it becomes invisible' predicted by Bax (2003, p. 25).

Just a few years ago it may have been logical to look at digital materials in terms of their intended context of use, and we could draw neat compartmentalizing boxes around the three areas of:

– individual self-study outside the classroom (e.g. on a computer at home or in a library) – group study with a near one-to-one ratio of students and computers (e.g. in a school's computer lab) – group study in a classroom with a single computer and a projected image.

However, in the current educational context the increasing availability and implementation of mobile digital devices (such as laptops, tablets and smartphones)

has blurred the boundaries between these compartments sufficiently to make them redundant. The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) movement (originally a corporate IT solution, which has filtered into educational establishments, largely pioneered by US higher education institutions), the One Student, One Laptop schemes (led by US educational districts with mass purchasing of laptop computers), the offers of free iPads or other tablets to enrolling university students from China to Australia and the United States, and the increasingly commonplace use of digital and internet-enabled devices outside the home or institution all mean that digital language learning tools and materials can potentially support individual or collaborative learning in any physical location. Consequently, this chapter is structured not on intended context of use of materials, but rather on the actual or intended creator of the materials discussed, from student-created resources, to teacher-created resources, through to independent or commercial publisher-created resources.

Another feature of the development of digital educational (and non-educational) approaches in recent years, is a shift from the concept of creation of 'materials' (as in content created for learners' use) to harnessing and exploitation of 'tools', both those initially designed for language learning and teaching, and those adopted and adapted from an alternative intended use.

Furthermore, the chapter will focus primarily only on those tools or materials which can be said to truly exploit a digital mode or media in their design or delivery. For example, use of language corpora, although dependent on computer technology for its creation and use, has an equal impact on print materials and will not be of particular focus here. Some examples of things which embrace and exploit the digital delivery mode are:

- Materials which are based on the idea of an infinite canvas – for example the Prezi presentation tool (www.prezi.com) which allows users to add content on an ever-expanding single page.



Prezi

- Materials which capitalize on the scrolling page – for example the ELT comic Grammarman's 'Hole' episode (www.grammarmancomic.com/hole) where the reader follows the story by descending farther and farther down the page.



Grammarman

- Tools which introduce new forms working with text – for example the Swype keyboard (www.swype.com) for touchscreen devices on which users draw unbroken lines across a qwerty keyboard to write words.
- Materials and tools which are designed for interaction via a touchscreen (e.g. an interactive whiteboard, a smartphone, or a tablet device), or via another form of interaction which does not involve a keyboard, mouse or digital pen (e.g. gesture-based computing).

- Materials which are based on the ability for hyperlinking across content or application, with the users creating their own pathways through the material, and in some cases creating their own material – for example interactive textbooks and content curator tools.
- Materials which exploit the potential for layering of content within a page, allowing the user to selectively reveal or hide content – for example interactive whiteboard software.
- Materials and tools which allow embedding of multimedia content within a single area – for example blogs, glogs (www.glogster.com), websites and apps.

Glogster

- Materials and tools which allow the user to incorporate voice, video, audio, image and text within the process or product of interaction.
- Materials and tools which harness the potential for instantaneity of feedback – for example automated assessment of productive skills, synchronous communication, social networking updates, student-response devices.
- Materials and tools which are based on personalized data collection and use – for example those which remember previous interactions (the dictionary www.lingro.com) or take learner analytics or user-profiling as a starting point from which to supply personalized content.

Lingro

- Materials and tools which allow the user choice over type and time of content – for example the use of QR codes in print material to introduce other media, using for example, www.visualead.com

Visualead

However, the above list is absolutely not intended as a statement of the inherent effectiveness of such digital language learning and materials merely because they exploit their digital nature in some way that 'traditional' materials may not be able to. In fact, in terms of materials development, there can be few areas in ELT where the saying 'all that glitters is not gold' is more appropriate as a principled starting point from which to assess the current and potential future uses of digital technology.

Three key principles are outlined by Twiner et al. (2010) in relation to effective use of interactive whiteboards and these principles hold good for all digital language learning and teaching materials. The first is the idea of *multimodality* – 'The facility afforded by the "new media" for the easy production and use of a multiplicity of modes of representation – sound, image, writing, moving image, speech – in the message-entities that populate the screen'. Second, *orchestration* – 'The role of the teacher in encouraging pupil participation involves the teacher's "shaping", or *orchestration*, of the numerous modes and resources used to support learning of planned objectives

and unplanned explorations.' Although this is framed in the context of teacher's use of IWBs in the classroom, the concept of orchestration, and the possibilities afforded to the learner/teacher for control over pathways through the material (a 'banishing of the "Next-button" robot' (Curatr, 2012)) is equally important in all effective digital material design. The third principle, *participation*, can relate to 'direct participation' – the physical interaction with the resource or material through touch, typing, mouse movement or gesture; 'vicarious participation' – watching, reading or listening to peers' engagement with the resource or material; and / or 'conceptual and verbal participation' – processing and reacting to or responding to one of the previous two types of participation.

To these three we should add the consideration of the importance of feedback. In a vast meta-analysis of studies in education (Hattie, 2009), feedback emerged as one of the key variables with a positive impact on student achievement:

> The art of teaching, and its major successes, relate to 'what happens next' – the manner in which the teacher reacts to how the student interprets, accommodates, rejects and/or reinvents the content and skills, how the student relates and applies the content to other tasks, and how the student reacts in light of success and failure apropos the content and methods that the teacher taught.

The principle applies to all education, but perhaps is most apposite for digital language learning materials, as it is the area which is most difficult to effectively replicate in instances of asynchronous communication in which a tutor or peer is involved, or in those instances when feedback must necessarily be pre-programmed for the computer to give.

Teacher-created digital materials

There is an oft-quoted mantra in the creation of digital content for education, which runs along the lines of 'get a technical expert to create it, and it's beautiful but not pedagogically effective; get a teacher to create it and it's educational but ugly, and slow, and awkward to use, etc. etc.' However, the increasing technical competence of many teaching professionals, and the increasing intuitive design and wizard- and/or tutorial-based approach to many digital design products, has seen a new breed of teacher arise in the last decade, one who can effectively challenge the opinion espoused above. What Couros (2006) called 'The Networked Teacher' is an educational facilitator, or activator, who has digital competence and awareness in all areas of their personal and professional life, from podcasting to microblogging, from IWB 'flipchart' design to digital animation, and much more besides. In parallel with this development of the networked teacher have come experiments with the practice of the 'flipped classroom' in mainstream education, championed by initiatives such as the Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org) in mathematics teaching and other content subjects.

Khan Academy

The basic premise is that content knowledge can be watched, interacted with, and processed by learners before a face-to-face class, in the form of engaging video presentations and animations, leaving the class time for hands-on practice and clarification of the principles and procedures. The effectiveness of such an approach for language teaching is open to question, with a doubt as to what the 'content knowledge' of language learning may be, and wishing to avoid the type of 'bite-sized grammar chunks' presentations or decontextualized lexical inputs which have been so derided in certain ELT circles (e.g. Thornbury and Meddings, 2009). The challenge for the 'flipped classroom' approach in ELT then, is the engagement of learners with meaningful content and exposure to language which can feed into effective discussion, practice and extension in the classroom.

The effective engagement of learners for common aims outside the classroom is one of the central educational principles underpinning the interest in hybrid (or blended) learning. Generally accepted terminology defines 'hybrid' or 'blended' learning involving anywhere from 20 per cent to 79 per cent of course time spent online (Sloan Consortium, 2012). The most common vehicle for learner access to this online content in its varying proportions as outlined above is some form of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), with content created or curated by the teacher or teaching institution. A range of options are available in the VLE market, from free web-based environments, to open-source server-based environments (e.g. Moodle), to serviced, contract-based installations (e.g. Blackboard). They offer the teacher the possibility of delivering content in a wide range of formats (e.g. video, audio, presentation, documents, animated content created externally); of creating interactive activities such as quizzes, tasks and projects to be done either individually or collaboratively, with forms of response including voice-recording, uploading of files, text input and option selection; and of engaging with peers and tutors in synchronous and asynchronous communication through video and text chat, discussion forums, journals and file-sharing. There is a need for familiarity among teachers and learners with the structure, forms and norms of interaction, and ways of accessing and adding content, but with careful staging of tasks and instruction, learners can quickly acquire the skills needed to participate fully in teacher-created activities. Of course, for a multilingual group of learners with a low level of proficiency, the challenge of creating suitable and comprehensible content as well as ensuring learners have the technical competence to use such a platform is significant. Equally, there is the time investment needed in training teachers to exploit the potential of a VLE, both in terms of its available resources and activities, and in terms of dealing with students' technical questions, not to mention how to monitor, support, tutor and give feedback through a VLE in a way that is effective, sensitive and supportive.

An alternative to teacher content *creation* comes in the form of content *curation* on platforms such as Curatr, which are designed for teachers and institutions to source their content from the internet and make the engagement with it interactional, social and entertaining.

The idea of social engagement with digital materials leads to a debate over the extent to which learners' use of social networks in their everyday life could and should

be harnessed by educators. Creation of a class Facebook page, for example, can be an easy way into experimenting with a form of VLE and there are many strong advocates of the way this use of social networks can promote the social dimension of language learning outside and inside the classroom, with blogs declaring '100 ways you should be using Facebook in your classroom', and the research reported by Blattner and Fiori (2009).



Facebook in the classroom

However, there is also the question of whether teachers can expect learners (or themselves for that matter) to use their personal social networks (and the content they contain) in this way, or whether users should be encouraged to set up a different account for their educational involvement, which tends to go against the idea of tapping into a space which learners are already using outside the classroom. Other concerns around using social networking sites as a platform for learning and interaction between students and teachers are discussed by Schwarz (2009).

Doubts over issues of privacy and exposure to 'uninvited others' from outside the class are also prevalent in the use of virtual worlds for language learning. The potential for resource creation, exposure to language and content, interaction, and entertainment is vast in virtual worlds such as Second Life, and there is some very interesting teacher practice and experimental research such as the classes run by Nergiz Kern (http://slexperiments.edublogs.org/), as well as the commercial activities of organizations like Languagelab, who have built their own city in Second Life for their teachers and students to work in (www.languagelab.com). The flipside of this is the degree of technical familiarity needed to do more than wander around randomly, the difficulties of maintaining task focus among learners and the annoyance of trolls – other users who are deliberately offensive or destructive – in the public (free) spaces of virtual worlds. Many alternative virtual worlds exist alongside Second Life, as well as open-source projects to create free and open virtual spaces online (e.g. http://opensimulator.org/wiki/Main_Page).



Second Life experiments



Languagelab



Open simulator

Much of the attraction in the use of platforms such as Second Life, is the merging of entertainment and learning, or as Mawer and Stanley (2011) term it, 'digital play'. Their work introduces a wide range of game types and genres which can be exploited by teachers for language learning aims, and interestingly, few of these games were originally intended for language learning. As they say,

> . . . most games specifically designed for language learning are not very good games . . . [they] end up being thinly disguised tests . . . are usually overtly language-based and typically, test knowledge of language through hand-to-eye co-ordinated or timed reflex games. (ibid., p. 14)

Far more compelling, and of interest to real language learning through digital play, are games which invite performance of skills within a system, where participants do 'not

think about the language in use, but only about the action and where it might lead next' (Kossuth, 1987 in Mawer and Stanley, 2011, p. 16).

Another major area of interest for teachers in creation of digital materials for language learning, is the rise of the interactive whiteboard in classrooms, or as is unfortunately the case in some schools, as a 'show pony' in a bookable 'multimedia room'. To say the increasing implementation of IWBs in schools has divided language teaching professionals would be something of an understatement.

Much of the research highlights the 'potential' of the resource (Northcote et al., 2010), with the strong implication that in many classrooms this potential is untapped and underdeveloped. The effective integration of interactive whiteboards in the language classroom is a long-term project for any teacher or institution, which is said to progress through three stages:

- Infusion – the spread of the use of the technology into existing pedagogical practice, with learners as passive observers of the tool.
- Integration – the technology embedded in the curriculum and attention paid to how it can enhance learning goals. Learners are more active participants.
- Transformation – the technology adds value to the learning process. Learners are centrally involved in an enquiry-based construction of knowledge. (Burden, 2002)

While interactive whiteboards are mistakenly seen as *the* tool in the classroom, rather than *a* tool in the classroom, it is likely that the debate will continue and the notes of caution in much of the research in the wider educational context (Smith et al., 2005) regarding the quality of student participation or interaction, the novelty value, and the efficacy of visual, verbal and physical information presented together will continue to be sounded. However, as a resource which can be manipulated to take advantage of layering of information, multiple pages for spontaneous exploration of emergent language, merging of multimedia resources, and kinaesthetic and tactile direct participation, in addition to the benefits of being able to return to co-constructed material across class iterations, the IWB and its related peripheral devices such as student response systems (e.g. www.socrative.com) will continue to have a place as a valuable tool and material-creation resource.


Socrative

One thing the presence of an IWB, or any internet-connected computer with a projector, opens up to the teacher is the possibility of bringing web-based resources into the classroom either as the main focal point of interaction or as a demonstration of focus and procedure for individual or small-group interaction, or of its results. Space is far too limited here for a detailed look at all the web-based material-creation resources there are available to teachers, especially as many do not really conform to the sought-after principles of exploitation of the digital medium to do something which couldn't be done with traditional materials (e.g. puzzle-makers or exercise generators). There

are some very interesting resources and new ones being developed and launched daily, and signing up to a focused group on a social-bookmarking site such as Diigo in Education is very much recommended to keep abreast of these developments.

Some recent examples for teacher-creation of content are such sites as www.thinglink.com which allow easy integration of multimedia and hyperlinks into online presentation spaces; text manipulation tools such as www.lingleonline.com which source (and level-grade) articles from a range of online newspapers and allow the teacher to identify uses of lexical and grammatical structures within the texts and create exercises based around them; website creators such as www.weebly.com which permit the teacher to simply create a website by dragging, dropping and uploading content and making it live and accessible within minutes; and for the more adventurous, sites such as http://snappii.com which guide the teacher through creation of apps for smartphone and tablet use.


Thinglink


Lingleonline


Weebly


Snappii

There are also a huge number of video-sharing websites beyond the mainstream YouTube and Vimeo, which provide a multitude of options for developing materials around video clips. A few of note are Truetube (www.truetube.co.uk) which features talking heads interviews with young people on issues of contemporary importance; Wingclips (www.wingclips.com) which provides short clips from popular movies organized according to the central theme in each clip; and Public Domain Comedy Video (www.pdcomedy.com/AllTheSilents.html) which has a great collection of classic silent comedy clips, all ideal material for prediction, narration, dialogue and story-reconstruction activities, as well as discussions on how cinematic comedy has changed! There are also sites such as www.ESLvideo.com which offer teachers options for creating exercises connected to videos sourced from the web, and the inspiring educational creativity showcased in many TED talks (usefully collated at www.educatorstechnology.com/2012/12/the-best-of-ted-for-teachers.html).


Truetube


Wingclips


All the Silents


ESL video


TED talks

Finally on the theme of digital video, there are the possibilities for creation of screencasts (videos with audio commentary of what is happening on the creator's screen) offered by products such as Jing (www.techsmith.com/jing.html). These offer a radical redefinition of the concept of teacher-student feedback (or peer-peer feedback) on written text or presentations, in which the user can simply and swiftly highlight, change or add to students' work, while simultaneously recording a voice commentary responding, questioning or advising on the work, and send the complete package as a video file via email or a weblink. For an example of recent research in this area, see Harper et al. (2012).


Jing

Student-created digital materials

One of the underlying developments in the much-hyped arena of Web 2.0 is the move from websites with content designed and created by computer programmers, to websites which encourage or are based around content designed and created by users. This has opened up thousands of distinct possibilities for student-created digital materials to be used in language learning and teaching, some explicitly designed for the purpose, and some designed for far higher and far lower purposes which can be adopted and adapted for language materials. Benefits of such an approach to working with digital materials can be found in increased learner autonomy, formation of communities of practice and defining social frameworks, development of self-expression and transferable skills (Illés, 2012).

Areas which are often heralded as a focus point for such development are in the use of individually created, community-shared writing environments such as blogs; through collaborative writing environments (e.g. http://mural.ly) or wikis.


Mural.ly

Central to the effective implementation of such resources in a language teaching programme are the establishment of parameters – of task, content, nature of collaboration, timeframes, etc. – as well as principled provision of feedback, which respects the learners' ownership of content and rights over its creation, while focusing usefully and efficiently on the language learning aims which underlie the inclusion of the approach in the course (if indeed this is an explicit aim).


Newspaper clippings

Additional text manipulation tools include generators such as the newspaper-clipping generator (www.fodey.com/generators/newspaper/snippet.asp) which allows copy-and-paste of students' text to create newspaper clippings; word-cloud generators (www.tagul.com, www.wordle.com) which allow learners to create word pictures and groupings organized by frequency, or to design calligrams; and sites which invite poetical composition from chosen words relating to emotive pictures (www.piclits-com).


Tagul


Piclits

Another area attracting a great deal of contemporary interest in student- and teacher-created digital language learning material is the area of animation, voice tools and digital storytelling. There are a large number of websites, and increasingly, mobile/tablet apps which allow students to create digital animations based on choosing scenes and characters to which they add text or voice content (the latter through text-to-voice generators, recording via microphone, or uploading audio files). The 'published' animations can then be shared on video-sharing websites, by email or uploaded as embedded content on a VLE or website.

Examples of these digital animation websites are www.goanimate.com, www.xtranormal.com and www.makebeliefscomix.com and there are interesting examples of their use in Nakagawa (2004) and MEDEA


Goanimate

(2010). In terms of apps, recent acclaimed innovations are Tom Loves Angela for Apple and Android devices (http://outfit7.com/apps/tom-loves-angela/) in which the students' character initiates conversation, and a second character responds to develop the conversation; and Talking Tom and Ben News (http://outfit7.com/apps/talking-news/) also for Apple and Android, in which students use characters to create a news broadcast. Websites such as Voicethread (www.voicethread.com) allow students or teachers to upload content in the form of text, video, image or presentation, and add a voice commentary. On sharing the link, others are invited to respond to the content and its commentary by adding their own audio, webcam video, or text comments, which form a multimedia discussion forum.


Tom loves Angela


Voicethread

Other areas of interest for creation of student-generated digital material are brainstorming, mind-mapping and collaborative decision-making tools, such as www.popplet.com, https://bubbl.us/ and www.tricider.com; interactive dictionaries which collect words searched from texts (www.lingro.com), real-time dictionaries which sample micro-blogging platforms (e.g. Twitter) to provide contemporary examples of the word in actual use (www.wordnik.com), and visual dictionaries (http://visual.merriam-webster.com/) and thesauruses (www.visualthesaurus.com) which respond to users' interactions with the digital image on screen; and sampling of words in use in visual imagery (http://thevisualdictionary.net/) and real-time photo sampling from around the world (http://now.jit.su).


Popplet

Finally, looking at devices rather than tools or materials, the importance of mobile learning opportunities as an increasingly inclusive form of access to digital materials has been highlighted (e.g. Pachler et al., 2011, p. 4), although there is often a lack of agreement on quite what is meant by 'm-learning' and what types of mobile device it encompasses (e.g. mobile phones and tablet PCs, but also digital cameras, mp3 players and gaming consoles) (Hockly, 2012). However, as tools which offer a range of functionalities from communication to multimedia capture and sharing to personal information management (Livingston, 2004 in Pachler et al., 2011), mobile devices have great potential for the creative language learner and language teacher. See, for example, the project for taxi drivers in Turkey using podcasts to practise dialogues on their mobile phones while waiting for passengers (Kern, 2013).

Publisher- /Professionally created digital materials

There is a sense in which one can feel sympathy for large ELT publishers as we move through the second decade of the twenty-first century, for they face a

perhaps unprecedented challenge in the history of production of language teaching materials. They are faced with the demands of the consumer marketplace for digital content, yet by the time the required investment has been put in place to create professionally written, edited, produced and copyrighted material for one digital platform, the game has changed and the expectations are higher, the demands for application of the available technologies are greater, and the devices they may be used on have changed in size, shape and capabilities. Not only this, but they are faced with the revolutions in Open Educational Resources (OER) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) which can seem to be providing educational content (though not currently certification or accreditation) for free. Publishers must provide versions of their textbooks which not only cater for classrooms with a single interactive interface (e.g. an IWB) in combination with students' printed textbooks, but also cater for classrooms with a 1:1 ratio of laptops/tablets to students on a BYOD or institute-provision model. They must provide interaction in both cases which goes beyond simple embedding of audio or video content, and option-selection/drag-and-drop/rub-and-reveal activities. They must take into account the importance of directed and directive feedback to learners, while still building platforms which do not necessitate tutor involvement. They must compete with the depth of language manipulation provided by apps such as Cool Speech (www.speechinaction.org which offers the possibility to focus on and compare speed of speech, to isolate lines of speech, to identify prominence in sentence stress), but still deliver content on a huge scale across content domains, levels and contexts. They must allow a degree of personalization which permits each learner to create their own interaction with the material, such as making in-text notes; building personal glossaries; hyperlinking to other media; and selecting, prioritizing, combining and reorganizing content as is offered in new generation interactive coursebooks (e.g. www.dynamicbooks.com; www.apple.com/ibooks-author/) while simultaneously providing learner tracking and assessment options to teachers and course providers. They must embrace the technology which allows for creation of adaptive pathways in learning material based on learner demonstration of competence in an area, or diagnosis of learner need or weakness. However, they must square this with the knowledge that even in the most advanced web-based language testing systems, assessment of productive ability is still based on matching learners' production with predicted words, strings of words, or sound patterns via algorithms generated on tightly controlled tasks, and are unable to effectively assess, for example, strategic or pragmatic competence in Bachman's (1990) model. A final challenge (for now!) is the need to balance global approaches to English and its varieties, and content for a global market, with the strength of material designed and developed for local contexts, cultures, needs and plurilingual influences.



Cool Speech



Dynamic books

Looking to the future

Recent research data suggests 73.3 per cent of UK homes have wifi connectivity and predictions are that this will be in 42 per cent of homes globally by 2016 (Strategy Analytics, 2012). Whatever other uses of this connectivity there may be, it seems certain that access to education outside traditional learning institutions across the world will continue to increase, and language education is sure to feature prominently in this. In addition, internet-enabled, portable and handheld digital devices are increasingly owned and brought into the classroom by students, or provided by schools and universities.

The response of the creators, users and critics of digital language teaching and learning materials will doubtless be as varied as are the options available to all of them. Some of the areas which may well see concerted and considerable development in the coming years include:

– The importance of Web 3.0 features in language education. Although as infrequently defined by those who use the term as its 2.0 predecessor, Web 3.0 has two major aspects which will be important for language learning. The first is the concept of the 'semantic web' – the collation of individual user data on a massive scale and its application to personalization of content, often referred to as 'learning analytics'. This may have implications for the development of adaptive learning materials, where content is appropriately selected and tasks are designed on the basis of learner needs, preferences, learning style and previous performance. The second is what is referred to as the 'geospatial web', where location is a determining factor in content selection and material design. This may mean that topic areas, text content and language type are selected according to learner location, and also more immediate relations to the physical environment with language learning content embedded in the physical world and accessed through digital devices. It may also allow for cultural differences in learner attitudes to digital language learning (McCarty, 2005) to be taken into account in material design.

– Increased use of Augmented Reality (AR) in language learning materials. AR is a layering of digital content over real-world content as seen through a digital device such as a smartphone or tablet. This real-world content could be a physical textbook which 'comes to life' when viewed through a digital device (e.g. the Japanese company Tokyo Shoseki's AR textbooks (www.tokyo-shoseki.co.jp/books/miraikei/)). However, it could also be a layering of content onto recognized objects in the physical environment as in the 'Mentira' game for learning Spanish developed in New Mexico (www.mentira.org/the-game) where students collaboratively explore a game-based digital environment, and then take field trips to the actual neighbourhood to use AR on their smart devices and bring the 'game' to life.


AR textbooks


Mentira

– Increased availability to teachers and smaller-scale publishers of software which allows valid and reliable automated processing of student-produced speech and text. Although the design structure, task and assessment parameters and algorithms are currently closely guarded secrets among testing companies, it is likely that open-source versions of this software will become an option for teachers and course providers to work with, to support autonomous learning and objectively quantifiable features of structural competence.
– Natural user interfaces and gesture-based learning. Software and devices which '. . . respond to gestures, motions of the body, facial expressions, voice, sound, and other environmental cues, and are replacing the keyboard and mouse as the standard for computer/human interaction' (New Media Corporation, 2012, p. 6). These offer huge potential for non-linguistic response to input, and for 'intelligent' digital responses to students' verbal and physical output. See, for example, a recent study using gaming devices such as Xbox Kinect to assess language acquisition in a South African primary school (Verbeeks, 2011). TPR for the digital age, anyone?

Against the backdrop of all these digital developments are twin concerns. First, that technological innovation can often outpace pedagogical consolidation – that is the principled implementation of the technology to support existing pedagogical practice, or the development of new pedagogies to take advantage of technological advances. Second, the concern that digital media is having a profound and potentially irreversible effect on learning and attitudes to it, with negative aspects which can be swept under the carpet in the rush to embrace all things digital. Examples include a recent US teachers' survey which reported students '. . . having issues with their attention span, writing, and face-to-face communication, and, in the experience of teachers, children's media use is contributing to the problem' (Common Sense Media, 2012); and the on-going debate in the United Kingdom about whether schools should encourage or ban use of mobile technology in the classroom (e.g. The *Guardian*, 28/11/12). Developers and users of digital materials need to be conscious of these concerns as they strive for technology use which adds something different, and equally or more effective, to the learning process, rather than technology which is there for its own sake or for arbitrary, non-pedagogical reasons.

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10

Demystifying Blended Learning

Freda Mishan

Introduction

Blending – whether it be of families, fruit or learning – appears to be a *leitmotif* of our time, hybridization supplanting homogeny in the endeavour to achieve the optimum result. The term 'blended learning' (BL) gradually seeped into our consciousness from the early 2000s, contemporaneously finding its way into language pedagogy – a field renowned for being early adopters (Crystal, 2001). It seemed, initially, to be a new term, rather than a new concept, referring to the combining of face-to-face and technology-based learning that characterized the integrated way technology was already used in educational contexts. 'The approach of blending learning with face-to-face [. . .] teaching and learning is as old as CALL [Computer Assistant Language Learning] itself' Neumeier notes (2005, p. 63). So is this yet another instance of 'old wine in new bottles'?

A trawl through the literature on blended learning reveals that its hallmark is a more sophisticated attention to the basis on which technology is integrated into learning environments – in contrast perhaps, with the early 'gung ho' CALL period – and arguably, as Stracke claims (2007), developing out of the perceived failure of dedicated e-learning environments which lacked a face-to-face component. The emphasis in blended learning is on the need for a '*principled* mix of online and classroom-based activities' (Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012b, p. 46, my italics).

The blended learning ethos might thus represent in effect the latest 'stage' in the development of CALL – and arguably the culmination of its aspirations all along – a seamless integration of technology into language learning environments achieving the optimum 'balance' and coherence between the various elements and retaining sound language pedagogy. Pedagogy features highly in the (abounding) definitions of blended learning, Oliver and Trigwell's being often cited: 'combining pedagogical approaches and

methodologies irrespective of the technology used, to produce an optimum learning outcome' (Oliver and Trigwell, 2005, p. 17).

This chapter's quest is to examine the implications for language teaching of this latest shift in the educational landscape. This involves, first, looking at the theoretical basis for blended learning, with particular reference to language learning. A framework for blended language learning (BLL) is then proposed and its implementation illustrated using two case studies, following the model of other recent literature on blending technologies for language learning, such as Motteram and Sharma, 2009; Nicolson, Murphy and Southgate, 2011; Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012a. The way in which materials fit into a BLL structure is demonstrated throughout the chapter using samples of blended language learning materials from various points on the face-to-face – technology spectrum.

BL's theoretical roots are seen as being social constructivism and cognitivism (see Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012a and Delialioglu and Yildirim, 2007), socio-constructivist principles informing the collaborative elements in blended learning, and cognitivism relating to activities such as the use of epistemological online tools, for example glossaries and search tools. (Interestingly, presumably to take account of the use of traditional drill and practice software – quizzes and the like – comes reference also to behaviourist principles (Delialioglu and Yildirim, 2007; Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012a).) Blended learning's socio-constructivist roots clearly chime with those of task-based language teaching, TBLT. The intrinsic task-technology fit has been comprehensively described and illustrated elsewhere (e.g. in Thomas and Reinders' (2010) *Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching with Technology*), with the collaborative affordances of Web 2.0 tools completing the synergy between task, tools and collaborative knowledge construction (see Thomas, 2009, *Web 2.0 and Second Language Learning*). Another methodology which sprang from these shared roots, Problem-based learning, is given a blended learning framework in one of the case studies below.

To home in on the principles underlying blended language learning, Motteram and Sharma describe language teachers as being armed with a 'sophisticated toolkit consisting of Web 2.0 technologies, their knowledge of SLA [and] their understanding of methodology and the needs and desires of their learners' (2009, p. 7). As the authors also point out, the tenets underlying blended language learning default, at the basic level, to those for any and all language learning contexts insofar as they draw on what we know about promoting second language acquisition. Crucial for this are language input and purposeful interaction, opportunities for language focus for example awareness-raising tasks or error correction, and, underlying the whole language learning endeavour, motivation for engaging in it. Today's 'digital native' learners come to the blended learning context with formidable skill sets and digital literacies which facilitate the achievement of these principles. These are arguably hardwired, (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b, see also a report on the OLPC (One Laptop Per Child) project with third world youngsters, in Stokes, 2012), and include capacities for multi-tasking, tolerance of non-comprehension and information surfeit, problem-solving, networking/collaborating and register-shifting for different communications media. These are crucially transferable skills with particular resonance for language learning.

The fitness of our learners to engage with it is proof that blended learning is 'a logical and natural evolution of our learning agenda' (Thorne, 2003, p. 16): it is part of the normalization of technology whereby technology is already intrinsic to leisure, work and learning practices, in the West at least. Most teachers are probably 'blending learning' to a greater or lesser extent already; themselves and their students deploying technologies ranging from basic PC desktop tools to Web 2.0 applications and mobile phones in their educational contexts.

Blended learning – in the United States, often termed 'hybrid instruction' – is associated in the main with tertiary education (see, for example, Oliver and Trigwell, 2005; Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012a). In third-level institutions, virtual learning environments (VLEs) incorporating a range of technological applications are a common feature, and BL tends to be seen as a model conceived and implemented at curriculum level. BL has been particularly embraced for distance learning programmes such as the Open University (see Nicolson et al., 2011), which has long used a combination of audio-visual materials and face-to-face sessions.

Staying with third level, blended learning can also be seen as the overarching approach influencing 'the flipped classroom' movement which inverts traditional pedagogical practice by providing the input (lecture) material online for self-access and using classroom time for face-to-face in-depth enquiry and debate. From the language teaching perspective there is a certain irony in the flipped classroom concept in that pedagogical practices in other subjects appear to be 'discovering' what has been the key to successful language teaching practice since the inception of the Communicative approach: 'The flipped or inverted teaching structure presents "instructional content [. . .] delivered outside class, and engagement with the content – skill development and practice – is done in class, under teacher guidance and in collaboration with peers" (Ojalvo and Doyne, 2011). Teachers face the challenge of meaningful interaction with students that leads to learning' (Thoms, 2012, p. 2150). While not novel to language practitioners, by refocusing on the quality of the face-to-face interaction, the flipped classroom concept can be seen as a valuable safeguard to this facet of blended learning (for the language learning as well as other contexts).

A framework for blended language learning

As will have become clear from the above discussions, a truly blended learning curriculum would consist of learning activities ranging across the face-to-face → technology spectrum and integrated in a principled way. In an attempt to provide a blueprint for curriculum and tasks in the language teaching context, a conceptual framework is proposed below (along the lines of ones conceived by Laurillard, 2002; Neumeier, 2005; Bonk and Graham, 2006; and Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012a), in which activities and materials are conceived as adhering to dimensions that cross-match with the face-to-face → technology continuum. The continuum is essential, it should be noted, in representing the 'increasingly blurred' distinction between these two modes

(Neumeier, 2005, p. 165); the continuum is reflective of the varying paradigms of interaction with technological tools (Figure 10.1).

This schema conceives of face-to-face and technology as 'modes' each with corresponding sub-modes; those for face-to-face teaching, for example, range from traditional teacher-learner transmission mode to 'learner to learner' dyad/group work. The technology mode can involve learners working online or offline, interacting synchronously (e.g. on mobile phones or instant messaging) or asynchronously (as with email) as well as individually or in pairs/groups.

The materials dimension represents materials from the point of view of how they are presented to learners, rather than how they are generated or delivered (after Mayer,

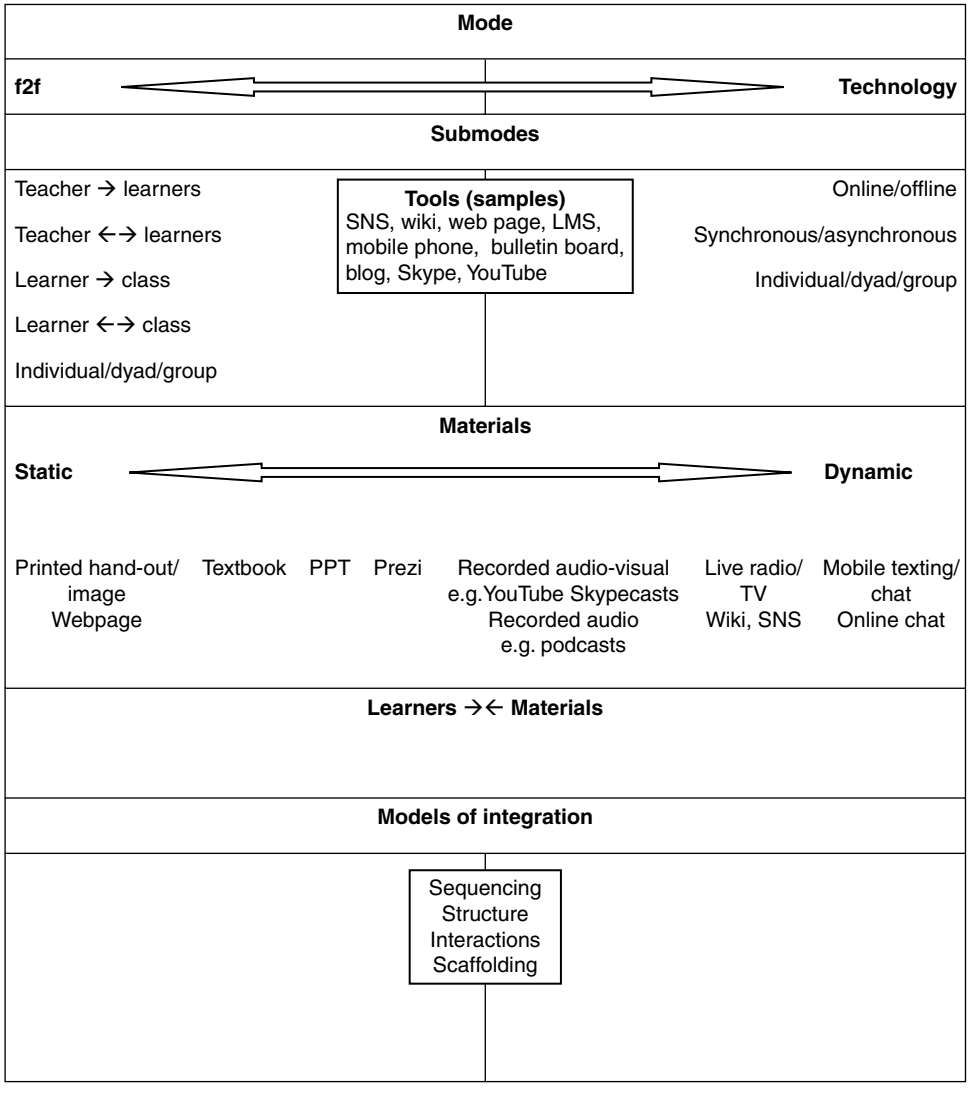


FIGURE 10.1 *A framework for blended language learning.*

2005, cited in Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012a). This puts the focus on the learning impact of the material, while at the same time 'normalizing' (ignoring) the technology used to generate it. Using this perspective, texts range along the continuum from static through to dynamic. A printed handout, therefore, is considered 'static' whatever its source (newspaper, web-generated etc.). Somewhat less so are Powerpoint® presentations, with Prezi® presentations more dynamic, progressing to audio- and audio-visual material and finally to 'live' texts being produced synchronously and interactively; SMS messaging, online chat and so on.

This brings us to the learner-material dimension which appears on the schema as a two-way 'symbiotic' relationship. This is because materials at the 'dynamic' end of the spectrum in particular, are learner-produced and learner-influenced. More fundamentally, this symbiosis corresponds to a 'reader-response' concept (after Iser, 1980 and elsewhere), in which the 'meaning' of a text (it could be added for our context, 'anywhere on the static-dynamic continuum') is not fixed and immutable but is 'interpreted' by the reader/viewer.

The core dimension that gives coherence to the blended learning task, and by extension, the curriculum in general, is the 'model of integration' (drawn on Neumeier, 2005) that is, the framework/s for the sequencing and interleaving of the submodes. Integration is the key to the success of the truly blended learning curriculum. Where one of the 'blended' elements – such as a blog or discussion forum – is perceived as an 'add-on' – perhaps, quite simply, in terms of participating in it not being assessed – students may eschew participation. Instances of this can be cited from experiences at the author's own institution, the University of Limerick, Ireland. In the first example, an undergraduate module in French language and society, weekly blog writing tasks (in French) were included with the intention of promoting critical reflection, collaboration, and target language output, but participation could only be 'enforced' by including a minimum blog word count ('words per posting' or WPP) in the module grade. Similarly, a postgraduate language teaching practice module which piloted a blog for group interaction and reflection, ended up 'dead in the water' until, subsequently, it was factored into the module grade. The model of integration needs, furthermore, to be overt to the learners; complementarity, the interrelationship between the components of BL, needs to be made transparent (Stracke, 2007). Together with the sequencing of the interwoven modes, attention also needs to be paid to appropriate on-going scaffolding throughout; something that was sometimes neglected in the 'because we can' school of CALL (Meskell, 2007). For instance, as pointed out by Towndrow and Cheers (2003) open prompts such as 'discuss this topic' on an online communication channel (bulletin board, SNS, Twitter etc.), imply an assumption that the mere affordance for interaction will inevitably promote it. Provision of scaffolding has also to take account of changing classroom configurations and the shifting hierarchical relationship that has come about due to technical and pedagogical innovation. These shifts can even be manifested physically in the classroom set-up – the 'ideal' blended classroom would consist of moveable desks and chairs, a centrally placed projector/screen and available PCs/laptops (Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012a, p. 107) with a collaborative VLE set up for class work.

Blended learning tools

Any and all technological tools can be integrated with face-to-face tuition in the creation of a blended learning environment. Case studies on blended learning report myriad combinations, combining face-to face with the more traditional technologies such as the telephone (as, for example, described in Brash and Nicolson, 2011); online multimedia software (as reported in Bañados, 2006); online Web 2.0 tools (discussed in Motteram and Sharma, 2009), online corpus tools (these would include *Wordle*, see below, and traditional corpus tools, see Case Study 1 below) and latterly, with mobile phones.

In the now burgeoning practice of m-learning (mobile learning) the innovative range of uses of the mobile falls clearly into a blended learning framework. An overview of mobile language learning by Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008), for instance, revealed that although mobile phones are self-evidently intended for (two-way) communication, they were predominantly used in m-learning contexts for delivering content, thus effectively constituting a distance medium for delivering material; a classic BL mode. Examples of this include a case study by Kennedy and Levy with beginner Italian students, where the teachers supplemented their face-to-face classes with SMS messages to students containing 'bite-sized lessons' triggering vocabulary related to what was being studied in their classes (Kennedy and Levy, 2008), and a research study in the same area, vocabulary learning, conducted with English language learners in Japan (Stockwell, 2010).

A useful addition to the mobile phone repertoire is the collaborative tool *txttools* (other software includes *ConnectTxt* and *polleverywhere*) which allows the user to send and receive texts to and from multiple users, with the responses being collated directly into graphic form. Third-level education has been an early adopter, with text tools being used to gather real-time student response to lectures or other input mode, to garner in-lecture queries or feedback, for instant 'pop quizzes' and so on, generating a natural and integrated learning blend.

The technologies involved in blended learning are not limited to communications tools; presentation tools such as *Powerpoint* and *Prezi* are being harnessed for learning blends. Freely available online, *Prezi* is fast overtaking Microsoft's *Powerpoint* as the default presentation tool (at time of writing) and is far more appealing to student-aged users. It is more dynamic than its predecessor and has an organic, 'living' feel to it which tends to diminish the distance between presenter and audience making it more in tune with the 'fluid' nature of the BL environment. A presentation tool with a similar organic feel is the word cloud generator *Wordle*. *Wordle* offers 'corpus linguistics in its most basic form' (Brindle, 2012, p. 25), being a crude frequency counter that generates output of any inputted text as a word cloud and where the size of the word is proportional to its frequency in the text. *Wordle* (www.wordle.net) is freely available online and simple to use, and *Wordle* tasks can be built into the BL framework as a technology 'submode'. Among its many possible applications, *Wordle* lends itself to a sort of 'quick and dirty' genre analysis; for instance if a comparable newspaper

story from each of two different newspapers types (broadsheet and tabloid) is fed into *Wordle*, a graphic illustration of the contrasts will be shown (as in samples in Figures 10.2 and 10.3), from which learners can extrapolate the lexical conventions of each type of newspaper and make generalizations regarding genre. (For more on the use of *Wordle* for language learning, see Brindle, 2012.)



FIGURE 10.2 Wordle *word cloud generated from tabloid newspaper story 4 December 2012 (headline 'Royal twins? Kate's condition hints at multiple birth' not included). Full text in Appendix 1.*



FIGURE 10.3 Wordle *word cloud generated from broadsheet newspaper story 4 December 2012 (headline 'William returns to bedside of pregnant Kate', not included). Full text in Appendix 1.*

Blended language learning case studies

As has been pointed out above, the blending of learning operates at levels ranging from the task up to the curriculum (Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012a conceive these roughly as micro and macro levels respectively). The two case studies which follow illustrate how blended language learning can operate in language teaching, in the teaching of English as a foreign language, EFL, in the first case, and the second in the learning of Irish. They demonstrate how two different methodologies, data driven learning (DDL) in the first and Problem-based learning (PBL) in the second, are implemented via a BLL framework.

In Case Study one, the focus is mainly on the micro level, the task, or what Gruba and Hinkelman term the 'blended task' (2012a, p. 103), in order to reveal the functioning of the mode-materials blend. As a 'microcosm' of the BLL paradigm itself, a blended task can be situated at any point (or series of points) along the mode continuum, ranging from predominantly face-to-face, to learners having online access throughout the task with little or no teacher mediation.

This case study offers two 'snapshots' of contrasting blended tasks carried out with the same group, an Advanced (CEFR level B2/C1) EFL class following a semester-long programme at the University of Limerick, Ireland, in Autumn 2012. The overarching BL framework used for the module was in one sense a classic case of the expediency that has been seen as frequently underlying the approach (see, for example, Whittaker, 2013). In a drive for cost-effectiveness, module contact hours had been cut from four to three, the fourth hour being non-face-to-face 'self-access'.

In the first task, it is shown how a consciousness-raising task, in this case data-driven as it involved examining 'raw' corpus data (see description of DDL below) was given a blended learning framework. The core course book for the programme, the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) book *Objective Advanced* (O'Dell and Broadhead, 2012) was the starting point. Presented with the verb patterns:

> Do you wish you . . . . . (meet) me earlier?
>
> I wish I . . . . . (have) more time [. . .].
>
> I wish . . . . . (inform) you of our decision. (Ibid., p. 24)

It became clear that the learners needed to clarify patterns and match these to functions and meanings. As a first step, the teacher generated a concordance for the search string 'I wish . . .' from an online corpus (the British National Corpus, BNC), see Figure 10.4.

1 I wish you'd stay, just for once!

2 I wish I had more time for reading; it means a lot to me.

3 I wish you all Long Life –

4 I wish I could see you for myself all the same.

5 I wish to talk to you about your husband's death.

FIGURE 10.4 *Sample of concordance lines for search string* I wish *generated from the BNC online corpus/concordancer (www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk).*

From this concordance, the teacher produced a worksheet (to be made available to students both electronically and in hard copy) consisting of (43) concordance lines containing 'I wish', and with the following rubric (Figure 10.5).

In this concordance from the BNC, look for patterns used with I wish.

Make SETS of examples for each pattern, identify the **structure,** and its **function** and **tense/time reference**.

e.g. examples: I wish he would give up smoking.
I wish you would call me Miguel.

Structure: I wish (s.o) would + verb . . . . . .

Function: a wish regarding someone else

FIGURE 10.5 *Rubric for* I wish *classification task.*

The worksheet was made available on the university learning management system (LMS) as well as in hard copy, and links to the BNC and other free online corpora (such as Lextutor, www.lextutor.ca) were also posted on the LMS for further consolidation work. It was intended that the next part of the task would take place at the opposite end of the BL continuum with learners conducting the task electronically and online (generating further concordances from other corpora or refining the search term/s), studying individually or in pairs. In the event, a number of students adhered to working on the hard copies alone, confirming previous BL case-study findings (Delialioglu and Yildirim, 2007; Stracke, 2007) – and evidence that the preference of some learners for print materials noted by those authors in 2007 still holds true. The next stage of the task consisted of face-to-face work, when students came together in class and compared their findings in peer groups. In the consolidation stage, students presented their 'functional sets' for class discussion, see samples in Figure 10.6. The concluding stage was at the technology pole of the mode continuum, with the full sets placed on the LMS for individual study.

Set 2

Structure: wish (s.o) had + past participle (=past perfect)

Function: a regret (regarding the past)

I wish I'd stayed at home to clean the oven after all.
I wish I'd taken the money now!
I wish I had known her.

Set 3

Structure: wish (s.o) subjunctive/past

Function: a wish/regret (to change the current situation)

I wish I weren't so far away from her.
I wish I had more time for reading.
I wish it was Friday.

FIGURE 10.6 *A sample of extracts from functional sets for* I wish.

This exposition of this first task demonstrates, first, how the concept of blended learning gives a coherent framework to tasks that are multi-modal. It also illustrates the inherent flexibility of the blended learning paradigm – and how BL is intrinsically learner led. Where learners are given more autonomy they will revert to their learning comfort zone, be this working online, onscreen or with traditional print-based materials. Most importantly though, it shows the demarcation between the BL framework and the pedagogical approach – in this case, consciousness-raising, inductive learning of language patterns, using concordance (corpus) data. The term DDL, data driven learning, is used for this approach (originated by Johns, for example 1991) and involves learners examining 'raw corpus data' to infer syntactic rules in what was, at the time of its development, a radical inversion of the PPP (Present, Practice, Produce) model.

For the second 'snapshot' we fast forward to end of semester where part of the module assessment was conducted as an online grammar quiz accessed by students independently. The University LME was used to deliver the test, with students given a time-limit (5 days) in which to access and take the 15-minute quiz. Security was built into the system via this time limit and by the fact that students were precluded from re-taking the test. The question checking the above language patterns with 'I wish', is reproduced in Figure 10.7. As with the first task described, this mechanism, online testing, is intrinsic to blended learning environments (see Gruba and Hinkelman, 2012a) and it was perceived by students as a natural progression of their module blend.

To summarize, the progress and process of the blend in this series of tasks is extrapolated from the above framework for BLL (Figure 10.1) and mapped as Figure 10.8. Task numbers match those of the materials used for each. These are marked along the static-dynamic dimension and also given a presence on the bidirectional learners-materials dimension.

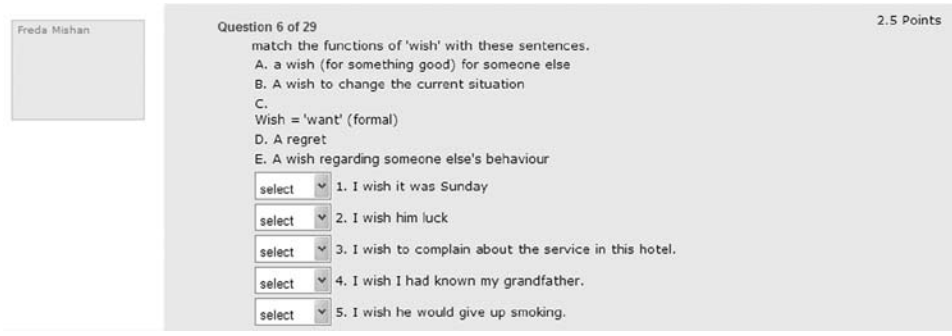


FIGURE 10.7 *Extract from class quiz testing item* I wish.

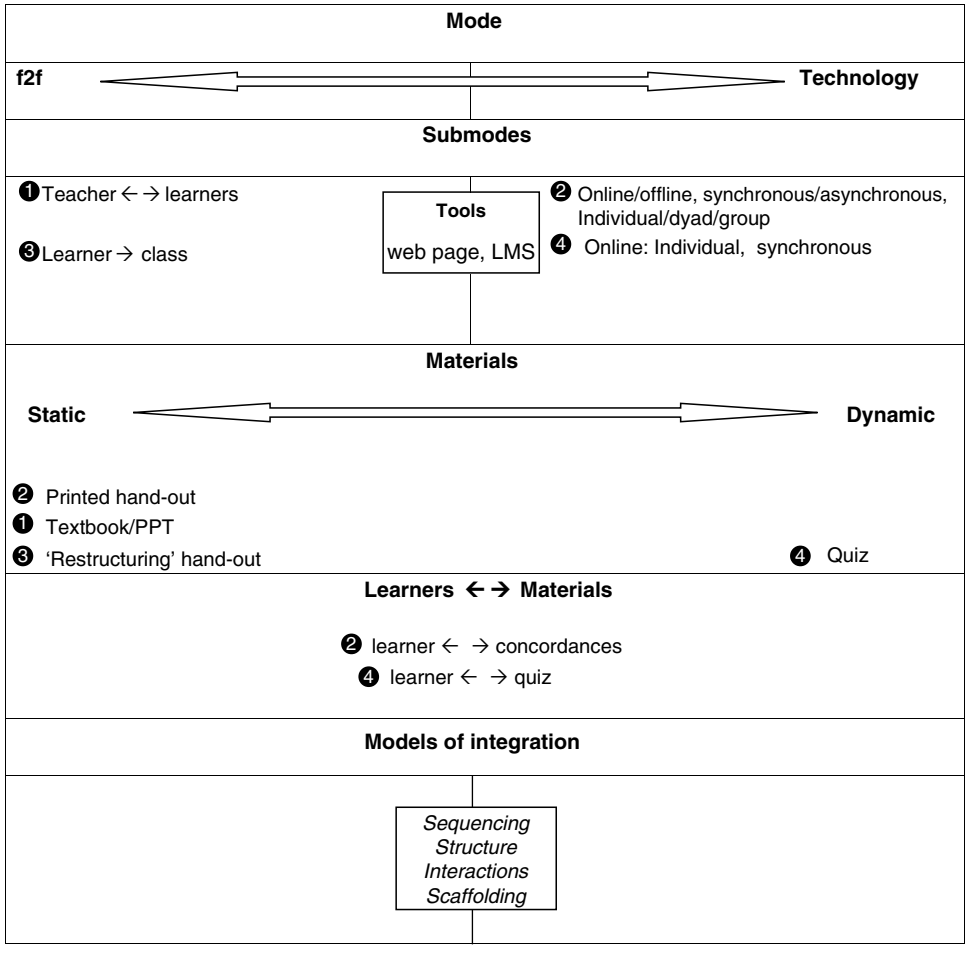


FIGURE 10.8 *Case study one blend procedure mapped on the 'framework for blended language learning' (Figure 10.1).*

The second case study, the teaching of Irish, uses a blended learning framework to implement a Problem-based learning methodology thus illustrating what could be seen as a synergy between the two, deriving from their shared socio-constructivist roots, described above. PBL in a sense 'concretizes' socio-constructivist principles conceiving of learning as a process of constructing knowledge in social environments, and hence learning as a collaborative construction of knowledge. In PBL, the 'trigger' for learning is a problem which learners work on in groups to research (online and offline), reason through, and solve in a staged and structured way, with the crucial aspect of self-reflection on the learning process built into the structure. The 'problem' is (ideally) designed in such a way as to 'encapsulate' some or all of the learning outcomes for the programme of study. PBL originated in the field of medical education (Barrows, 1986) and has been adopted across the disciplines, principally in higher education, in areas as diverse as Business, Engineering, Software design, Teacher Education, English Literature and, as in this case, language learning (see also Mishan, 2010).

The milieu for this case study was a University setting, the University of Limerick, Ireland where the Irish Language Promotion Unit, Aonad na Gaeilge, is tasked with growing the use of the Irish language in line with its status as the official language of the Republic of Ireland.[1] Piloting the teaching of Irish to University personnel through the use of 'mentors', twinning expert speakers with novices, Aonad na Gaeilge decided to give the participants a focus by using a PBL methodology within a BL framework as the mentors were situated at a distance from the University. For the PBL 'trigger', participants were asked to collaborate on the design of a language and cultural holiday for families in the West Kerry Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking region).

The BL framework was appropriate for this project in that contact ranged across the whole mode continuum, 'bracketed', so to speak, with initial and concluding face-to-face sessions. Starting with a two-day face-to-face familiarization and brainstorming event, most of the rest of the collaboration and mentoring was via Skype at the opposite end of the continuum, concluding with two final face-to-face feedback sessions. Two PBL groups were composed, each having its own characteristic and slightly different 'blend'. This illustrates an aspect of blended learning that has been considered so central as to make it a defining feature; its flexibility in terms of catering to different teaching and learning styles (see Heinze and Procter's definition: 'Blended learning is learning that is facilitated by the effective combination of different modes of delivery, modes of teaching and styles of learning', 2004, p. 11). For both groups, Skype sessions were central to the interaction due to geographical distance. One group made Mp3 recordings of these which were made available on the cloud computing software SoundCloud. This was supplemented with an email from the group mentor, in which he noted any language points arising from the Skype interactions. This gave participants an opportunity to go over new language individually and assess their own improvement in confidence, accuracy and so on, from week to week. The second group retained a more traditional approach, with the mentor correcting any errors produced during the Skype interactions. All participants were also asked to complete a language diary. As a BL mode, Skype was seen by the lead researcher[2] as being crucial to the success of the programme. The pilot was considered very successful,

with positive feedback with respect to both the methodology, PBL, and its blended implementation.

In Figure 10.9, the BL stages for Case Study two are mapped on the framework for blended language learning. Stage numbers in the materials dimension match those of the materials used at that stage. These are likewise plotted onto the learners-materials dimension to represent this two-way relationship.

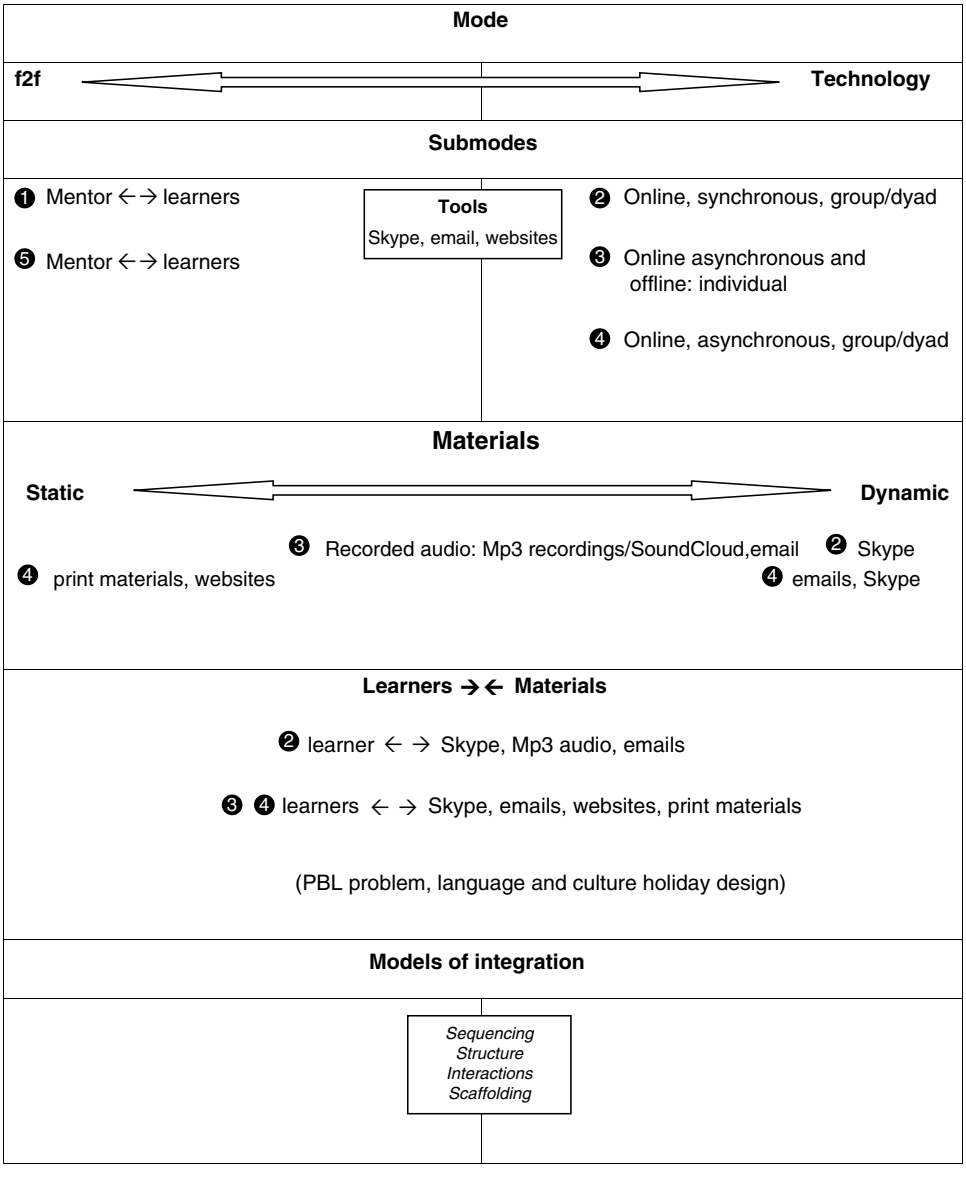


FIGURE 10.9 *Case study two blend procedure plotted on the 'framework for blended language learning' (Figure 10.1).*

Being community-based, this second case study in particular illustrates the use of BLL as a 'bridge' between the community and language learners at a third-level institute. It also demonstrates two often-cited advantages of BL, flexibility (including that of learning and teaching styles, see above) and access, that is, giving access to learning that would otherwise not be available due to distance etc. (e.g. Nicolson et al., 2011; Whittaker, 2013). Both case studies have revealed, it is hoped, the potential of blended learning to enrich and make multidimensional, the tripartite interplay between teachers and learners, materials and technology.

Conclusion

What then of the future of blended language learning? 'Blended learning is likely to remain an important concept in language teaching since its overall focus is concerned with the search for "best practice", i.e. the attempt to identify the optimum mix of course delivery in order to provide the most effective language learning experience' suggests Sharma (2010, pp. 457–58). Gruba and Hinkelman conclude that the ultimate success of blended learning would be that it be normalized out of existence (2012a, p. 159); the degree of comfort with which learners of the digital native generation operate in the BL context would suggest this may well come to pass. Yet niggling reservations about BL linger; the justification for the approach is commonly given on operational rather than pedagogical grounds – cost-effectiveness, flexibility, convenience (this is the case in at least two recent volumes on the subject, see summary in Nicolson et al., 2011, p. 3; Whittaker, 2013; see also Stracke, 2007). Whatever its future, blended learning is doubtless not the last permutation we shall see in language teaching of the ever-changing technology-language learner relationship.

Appendix 1: Word Clouds

Original texts fed into Wordle www.wordle.net

1 ***The Sun***, Sunday 4 December 2012 (online edition)

Headline: **Royal twins? Kate's condition hints at multiple birth**

text fed into Wordle:

KATE and Wills could be expecting TWINS, it emerged today.

The Duchess of Cambridge is spending a second day in hospital being treated for a morning sickness condition – linked to mums who have multiple births.

Mothers-to-be who suffer from the hyperemesis gravidarum condition are THREE times more likely to have a multiple birth than other women.

William returned to Kate's bedside at 11.30am after his pregnant wife began a second day in hospital battling the severe morning sickness.

The Duchess, who is under 12 weeks pregnant, is expected to remain at the private King Edward VII hospital in central London for several days.

Wills and Kate had been hoping to keep the news they were expecting a baby secret until Christmas Day, it was reported.

But they were forced to make the announcement after she was admitted to hospital.

– –

2 ***The Times***, Sunday 4 December 2012 (online edition)

Headline: **William returns to bedside of pregnant Kate**

text fed into Wordle:

Prince William was back by the pregnant Duchess of Cambridge's side again today as he arrived at hospital where she is being treated for acute morning sickness.

The Duke was driven in a green Range Rover to the King Edward VII Hospital at 11.30am to visit his wife, who is expected to be in hospital for several days with hyperemesis gravidarum.

The Duchess was taken to hospital by car from Bucklebury in Berkshire, where her parents, Michael and Carole Middleton live, yesterday afternoon. St James Palace said she would require 'a good period of rest'.

Notes

1 Although the official language of the Irish Republic, Irish, Gaeilge, remains a minority language spoken on a day to day basis by an estimated 2 per cent of the population mainly residing in certain regions (the South and West).

2 Deirdre.Ni Loingsigh, contactable at: Deirdre.NiLoingsigh@ul.ie

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Wordle www.wordle.net/

Comments on Part B

Brian Tomlinson

One of the main points which contributors to Part B seem to be making is that current materials are not fully exploiting the potential for facilitating learning of the resources available to them. They are not fully exploiting:

- the capacity of the brain to learn from experience and, in particular, the role that affect can play in this process;
- the knowledge, awareness and experience which learners bring to the process of language learning;
- the interests, skills and personality of the learners;
- the knowledge, awareness and experience which teachers bring to the process of language learning;
- the interests, skills and personality of the teachers;
- the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic aids available to materials developers;
- the potential of literature and, in particular, of storytelling for engaging the learner.

Another of the points which contributors to Part B seem to be making is that we are not matching what we know about language acquisition to what we are doing in materials development. For example, we know that repeating the same thing over and over again at the same time does little to help the learner, whereas varied repetition over a period of time is extremely valuable for language acquisition. Yet we still organize coursebooks into units, with each unit focusing on a specific language teaching point. And we know that affective engagement is vital for long-term learning but we continue to provide bland, neutral and trivial texts for learners to read and to listen to.

The third main point made frequently in Part B seems to me to be that we need to be more systematic, rigorous and principled in our approach to materials development. It is understandable that publishers push their writers to develop the type of materials they know they can sell and even that they clone the successful parts of best-selling materials. But the danger is that soon there will be a fixed model of what language materials contain and do, and any deviations from it will break the expectations of the users of the materials and will risk scepticism and rejection because of their divergence from an accepted norm. It is up to the writers, teachers, researchers and learners to show the publishers that it is possible to produce materials which fully exploit the resources of the learners, which match what we know about language acquisition, which connect to learners' lives and which can be commercially successful too. For evaluations of materials in relation to the criteria outlined above see Tomlinson et al. (2001), Masuhara et al. (2008), Tomlinson (2013a, 2013b) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013).

My view is that we need funded experiments in which universities and publishers combine their expertise and resources to produce and trial innovative language learning materials. Such cooperation between companies and universities is commonplace in engineering and technology but it seems to be extremely rare in education.

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PART C

Developing Materials for Target Groups

11

Authors' Knowledge, Rationales and Principles – Steady Flow-Through or Stuck in the Publishing Pipeline? The Case of Early Reading with Young Learners

Shelagh Rixon

Introduction

This chapter reports on two linked studies carried out as part of research which investigated current rationales and systems for the teaching of early reading to Young Learners of English (Rixon, 2011). Although English for Young Learners (YL) – defined here as primary school learners of English as a Foreign or Second Language – is now well established in many contexts, the picture is still one of rapidly adopted change leading to teacher supply problems and rather basic training for new teachers of English to children (Rixon, 2013). Training tends to concentrate on language improvement for the teachers rather than technical areas of methodology or language awareness and analysis. As the by now classic article by Hutchinson and Torres (1994) points out, the textbook, although it cannot offer all the answers, has potential for supporting teachers coping with new methods or curricular content. One aim of my study was to identify the types of support that coursebooks offered or failed to offer to teachers of English to Young Learners in the very important area of supporting children's first steps in reading English.

I started by selecting EYL contexts according to two main features; first the status of English in society and therefore in the state school system and second the type of writing system the children were learning to operate within their L1. Table 11.1 shows the way I divided up the field.

The point of focusing on contrasts among writing systems is that learning to cope with the English writing system often takes place for Young Learners while learning to read in the home language, and this offers at least some complexity. Table 11.2 shows the different bases on which alphabetic, syllabic and logographic writing systems operate. Those whose language learning involves dealing with different writing systems have to deal conceptually with the different sizes of language units that characters on the page represent in different systems. Alphabetic systems tell the reader about phonemes, syllabic systems show syllables and logographic systems show whole words or morphemes. Even children whose L1 shares the Roman alphabet with English will need to accommodate to the fact that the 'same' letters may stand for very different-sounding phonemes in the two languages. Well-conceived and professionally informed teaching of English would take such contrasts into consideration.

For a very good account of alphabetic, syllabic and logographic writing systems and their relevance to early reading, see Perfetti and Dunlap (2008).

However, the challenges for young early readers of English as a foreign or second language go beyond possible contrasts with the writing system of their L1s. Teachers

TABLE 11.1 Status of English and writing system used in the contexts investigated

Status of English	E.g. of contexts	L1 writing system
Foreign language, part of the primary school curriculum	Argentina	Alphabetic (Roman)
	Greece, Russia, Syria	Alphabetic (non-Roman, e.g. Greek, Cyrillic, Arabic)
	Taiwan, PR of China	Logographic (e.g. Chinese)
Official language, part of the primary school curriculum but not the main medium of instruction	Malaysia (several ethnic and linguistic groups)	Syllabic (e.g. Tamil)
		Logographic (e.g. Chinese)
		Alphabetic (Roman) for Bhasa Malaysia
	Sri Lanka	Syllabic (Sinhala and Tamil)
Official language, part of the primary school curriculum and the main medium of instruction	Cameroon, English medium and French medium schools	Alphabetic for home languages, but English or French is usually the language in which literacy is first established

TABLE 11.2 The linguistic units represented in different writing systems

Writing system	Linguistic units represented	
Alphabetic	Phonemes	Examples
	Group 1 alphabetic systems which provide graphic representations of all phonemes in words, but with different degrees of correspondence in different languages	Group 1 English, Bahasa Malaysia, French, Italian, Portuguese, using Roman script. Greek, using Greek script. Russian, using Cyrillic script. Korean, using Hangul
	Group 2 alphabetic systems which have variations, according to the function/supposed audience of the text, in the degree to which vowel phonemes are shown. In beginners' Arabic or Hebrew, for example, a 'pointed' version of the script indicating vowels, is used, whereas texts for experienced readers do not show vowels.	Group 2 Arabic, using Arabic script Hebrew, using Hebrew script
Syllabic	Syllables	Sinhala, Japanese Hiragana and Katakana, Tamil
Logographic	Whole words or morphemes	Chinese

and materials creators need to take into account the fact that English is objectively a difficult language in which to learn to read, even for its own native speakers. On a scale of Orthographic Depth (Katz and Frost, 1992) English comes out as an extreme outlier. Orthographic Depth refers to the degree of one-to-one correspondence in a language between the elements on the page (letters in an alphabetically-written language) and the phonemes in the words represented. In a language like Spanish it is high; in English it is much lower – think of words like 'laugh', and 'sword' – although there are words such as 'dog' and 'cat' which are orthographically transparent. Spencer and Hanley (2003) quote research concerning time needed for learning to decode fluently in orthographically transparent languages, claiming that in German, Italian and Turkish, for example, most children attain this stage by the end of Grade One. Reporting on their own research into differences in learning processes and rates between children learning to read in Welsh (an orthographically transparent language using the Roman alphabet) and in English, they say:

> These findings support the claim that children learn to read more quickly in a transparent orthography, and provide further evidence that the consistency of the orthography influences the initial adoption of different strategies for word recognition. (Spencer and Hanley, 2003, p. 1)

It took the English readers far longer than the Welsh to learn to decode their own language from written or printed forms. This greater difficulty of English has engendered a fierce set of debates over the last century or so about the best means of helping young native speakers to become fluent and independent readers in the language. See Chall (1996) on Reading Wars. This chapter is not the place to discuss the rows and constant pendulum swings in the L1 reading world, especially when politicians become involved. I mention them only to draw a contrast with the rather furtive silence that there has been on the subject in the EYL teaching world, where, given the disadvantages that YL are at compared with young native speaker beginner readers, one might expect more of a debate on how to support their early reading. First, YL do not have an extensive databank of already known language items against which to match the possible meanings of the marks on the page. Second, unless they have had extensive oral experience with English before starting to read in it, they will not have a full grasp of the phonology of the language, which is essential for recognizing which sounds these letters and words on the page might be representing.

The motivation behind my interest in the area of early reading for YL is the thought that if it is hard to teach English-speaking children to read in English, how much more carefully we need to think about how this might be done with YL. My research aimed to find out how carefully we are currently thinking, based on the evidence from interviews with teachers but also on analysis of materials which is the subject of this chapter.

How coursebooks might give support

In the case of support for children in early reading, coursebooks have their limitations but also considerable potential. The limitations are, as ever, at the global levels of teacher's attitudes and skills in overall classroom interaction. For example, course materials may endorse but cannot enforce a concern for meaning. They also may recommend but cannot ensure that a teacher carries out the types of whole class interactive activities beyond the coursebook which have been reported as useful for the reading development of learners of English as a Foreign or Second Language as well as for that of native speakers. Al-Hooqani (2006), for example, reports on the use of Big Books for shared reading with the whole class in Oman. Their use in some other contexts is well attested: for example by Yaacob (2006) for Malaysia. Promoting this type of activity is more realistically the province of Teacher Development.

That said, there is still very useful support to be given in terms of framework of content and activities within the coursebook. If well-conceived this can purposefully structure what teachers do concerning first steps in reading. This support could be in two main areas:

1 Principled choice and sequencing of reading focal material

Carefully designed materials will show system in the selection and sequencing of elements for children to learn from. For example, there could be principled thinking behind the choice of vocabulary items that are to be used in reading focal work, that is work which gives children support in to how to 'crack the code' of the English writing system. Instances of systematic structuring of course materials in this way would be the choice of vocabulary for early reading focus which (as well as being child-friendly and easy to illustrate) clearly exemplifies a principle. One possible principle would be to choose words exhibiting frequent and regular /'reliable' letter-sound correspondences, that is, *orthographic transparency*. The word-set <bat cat fat mat pat rat sat> offers children the –at rime element of the words, giving opportunities for early pattern seeking and use of analogy in working out words (Goswami and East, 2000). Another principle might be that of frequency and usefulness regardless of transparency, so that words such as 'laugh, says, does, two, buy' would be focused on at an early stage for sight recognition by the overall shape of each word as a whole because the letter-sound route to decoding is not going to lead to secure success. A third principle might be to do both but to support and overtly introduce children to different strategies for coping with the two categories of word. The same type of thinking could underlie decisions about the order in which letter-sound correspondences should be presented in the materials.

I am not at the moment presupposing that a particular system is best for structuring early reading work in YL coursebooks. I am simply stressing that, in order for materials to qualify as 'principled' when evaluated there needs to be a perceptible system and, better still, that system needs to be clearly articulated in an authors' rationale in Teacher's Notes or elsewhere.

However, there is one way of organizing the language content of early reading work that needs comment here. One thing that has been clear from the nineteenth century onwards in all the to and fro of the L1 Reading Wars is that in L1 teaching very few experts have thought it at all useful to introduce and teach the single elements of the system (letters) in the order that they are conventionally recited, that is alphabetical order. In fact, there are many reasons to avoid this. One major reason is that alphabetical order does not represent the order of frequency or difficulty of the letters encountered. An example of a 'tricky letter that comes early in the alphabet is <c> which, even on its own, word-initially, has two possible phonemic realizations, /k/ or /s/ (as in 'cat' and 'cinema'). In English, it combines with other letters to signal yet other phonemes (as in 'church'). The letters <b> and <d> which are often the source of visual confusion for children come too close together for comfortable teaching if alphabetical order is followed. Another source of problems is that the five 'vowel' letters <aeiou> are most accessibly first taught as the central element of 3-letter words such as 'cat' or 'dog' rather than as the initial letters of words. All English speakers use far more vowel

phonemes than the five that literal-minded attention to the five 'vowel' letters might suggest to children. Apart from such problems, progressing from <a > to <z> teaching one sound-value for each of the individual 26 letters and leaving it at that hardly gives adequate coverage.

2 Principled choice of early reading activities – pattern finding

A second area in which principled choices may be built into material is in the use of activities specially designed to give children the maximum opportunities to come to grips with the systems they need to deal with in order to arrive as soon as possible at a stage when they could become autonomous users of the printed or written word (Share, 1995). Activities which encourage dynamic interaction with the data (pattern-finding within groups of words rather than rote-learning of lists of words, for example) would fit this definition. Rhyme-finding and working out newly seen words by analogy are good examples of dynamic activity types and the <bat cat fat mat pat rat sat> set of words from the section above is an example of material with which this type of activity could be done.

The textbook research

It was on the basis of the two sets of principles above that I undertook the 'on the page' analysis of EYL course materials from the three different types of contexts shown in Table 11.1. In all, books from 22 different textbook series were analysed. There were 40 volumes in all, since the work connected with first steps of reading often extended into the second level of a course series, which usually meant into the second year of learning.

The focus was on materials published locally for use in the country of publication although there were also included some international materials adapted for use in particular contexts and some international materials known to be used in their 'original' versions in some other contexts. Courses for Anglophone and for Francophone Cameroon were investigated as well as material used in the Greek state and private sectors, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, South Korea, India, Malaysia, Russia, Sri Lanka and Syria.

Two main methods of analysis were used. The first was qualitative, attempting to characterize what was 'going on' in each course in terms of selection of language and types of activity to support early reading. The second (not discussed here) was quantitative, involving analysis of word lists and the letter-phoneme correspondences in words chosen for particular courses. For the qualitative study, a template report form

was used to allow consistent comparison across all materials. A completed example for one of the courses analysed is shown in Appendix 1.

The example in Appendix 1 is for one of the most varied and seemingly carefully thought-out sets of materials. Results for many of the other courses were somewhat different. They did not show evidence that reading focal words had been carefully selected on any of the principles described above. Most had no activities to carry out with reading focal words beyond copying or completing them in writing and/or saying them aloud. There was an almost universal following of alphabetical order in the presentation of letters, and the focus was mainly on the initial letters of words. In none of the courses analysed was there any support for teachers to practise pronunciation apart from a focus on a letter-sound correspondence usually, again, concerned with the initial letter/sound of a word. In most cases when the letter 'z' was reached, the attention to letter-sound correspondences ceased.

A very significant element to criticize in these materials is therefore their incompleteness. Whatever side one takes in the debate about how much time Young Learners should spend learning oral English before they start learning to read, it may at least be admitted that they need somehow or other and at some point to gain knowledge of the repertoire of phonemes that make up the English sound system. Trying to focus on some phonemes via early reading practice and then stopping short seems less than adequate. Stopping at <z> and failing to consider combinations of letters in digraphs such as <sh> or <ee> means that learning to cope with the possible graphic representations of phonemes such as / ʃ / or /iː/ is neglected along with the phonemes themselves. Taking the extreme (but frequent) case in which a course focused only on initial letters, that would mean a maximum of only 23 phonemes focused upon through early reading practice, whereas for modern British RP (if we leave out the /ʊə/ of conservatively pronounced 'poor') there are 43 to cope with. The number given for featured phonemes is 23 (not 26 to match all the letters of the alphabet) because there is some duplication of phonemes even within the simplistic approach of initial-letter learning. For example, <x> duplicates the /k/ and /s/ of <k> and <s>.

In no course material that I analysed was there an attempt (e.g. via rhymes, chants or other fun and memorable oral/aural work) to familiarize learners thoroughly with the overall sound-system of English before they started to focus on it in the written or printed form. There is no reason why this should be the case since predominantly orally presented rhymes and chants could very effectively be used to cover the ground. They are enjoyable and popular, and already part of the orthodoxy of YL methods for fun and engagement purposes, but seem to be seldom used in the cause of building phonological awareness of the language, a vital underpinning for early reading (Hempenstall, 1997; Gersten and Geva, 2003).

Often the written word was used from the very beginning as if it were a support in itself rather than something that the learners needed to come to grips with. For example, printed dialogues often appeared from a very early point in a course and very

often appeared in the very same lessons as elementary focus on single letters of the alphabet.

I hope that it will be clear that my critique of these courses has been on the basis of general principles of completeness, inclusion and system, rather than on that of partisan support for a particular approach to early reading. My analysis did also raise a mystery. Textbook authors and editors are knowledgeable people and might be supposed to be aware of the issues raised above. How did it happen that the treatment of early reading in many courses showed so little evidence of systematic choices?

The study with authors and editors

I therefore decided to extend my research to investigate the knowledge and beliefs of some YL authors and to discover more about what influenced what they included in their books. Hearing from them might be a useful and proper counterweight to an account of the materials that might otherwise seem to be over-critical.

In early 2011, I designed an electronic questionnaire, relevant parts of which may be seen in Appendix 2. I approached about 20 people known to me who were involved in creating materials for Young Learners. In all, 16 responded. Some of them had multiple roles as the list below indicates:

Roles of publishing professionals in the study

Member of a writing team	12
Single author	7
Leader of a writing team	5
Adviser to a publisher	3
Adviser to a ministry	3
Commissioning editor	2
Other	3

Six respondents had been part of authorial teams for materials which I had analysed as part of the study described above. Others were former textbook project managers and curriculum advisers associated with materials analysed in the study. I also obtained responses from a UK editor and author and from three well-known authors

of international materials for Young Learners. There was thus scope for considerable resonance with the concerns and issues covered in my materials analysis although I did not try to establish any one-to-one links between the contents of any materials and what one of its authors or editors might say in response to the questionnaire. It is of course acknowledged that this was a small, convenience-based, even though carefully targeted, sample and no generalizable conclusion is claimed. My aim was mostly to give a group of 'producers' a fair say in a way which I thought might shed interesting light on how materials often come to be as they are.

The core of the questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was a series of multiple-response items aimed at eliciting respondents' views on appropriate approaches to teaching early reading and their experiences concerning how feasible it was to accommodate such approaches within course materials. As the rubric to Question 6, shown below, makes clear, my intention was that responding to these items might trigger their own reflections and lead them to write at more length in the follow-up Comments Box which followed each question. The rubric reads:

Q 6. Do you have specific beliefs or principles that you think should be followed with regard to the introduction of Young Learners to their first steps in reading in English? Some general ideas are given in the alternatives . . . Please click on all statements that you agree with but these are intended mainly as triggers or stimuli for you to react to [or against]. I am very interested in your own views which you can type in the box below if you choose.

The responses to this question are summarized in Table 11.3.

TABLE 11.3 Responses to alternatives offered in Question 6 of the questionnaire

The use of rhymes is especially beneficial to learning to read in English	13
It is very important for Young Learners who are starting to learn to read to learn the initial sounds and letters of key words	12
Learning to write letters and words is an important support to the development of reading skills	12
If the children's first language has a different writing system, English Language Teaching should take account of this	11
From their very first lessons in reading English, children need to be made aware of the benefits that this skill could offer them in the future [e.g. enjoying story books, access to webpages]	10
It is necessary to take account of whether the children can already read fluently in their own language or are still working towards this goal	9
The words focused on for learning to read should be drawn from the vocabulary that is taught in the rest of the English Language course	9

Continued

TABLE 11.3 Continued

It is important to have words printed on the page from very early in course materials used for English Language Teaching	9
Reading and writing should be introduced simultaneously in English Language Teaching to children	8
It is a good idea to delay reading in English until some time after listening and speaking have been established	7
Only children above a certain age are ready for reading in English. Before that listening and speaking should be the focus	5
When teaching children English, writing should be delayed for some time after reading has been introduced	4
The words focused on for learning to read need not be the same as the vocabulary that is taught in the rest of the English Language course	3
Children should not see words written or printed in English during their first classroom experiences with English	3
Young Learners of English should focus on just a few letters at any one time when they are learning to read in English and the sequence should follow alphabetical A, B, C order	2
The state of children's first language reading need not be a particular concern when introducing them to reading in English	3
It is important to introduce the whole alphabet, but without letter names, before Young Learners of English start learning to read in English	1
Learners need to have developed a good pronunciation in English before they can tackle the first steps in reading	1
Young Learners of English need to know the whole alphabet with letter names before they start learning to read in English	0
Other	0
No answer from me	0

The most striking overall finding from this study was that some of the views expressed by a majority of the authors and editors group ran counter to what was found in the materials during analysis. It is acknowledged that not all the respondents had direct responsibility for the actual materials analysed, but it remains striking, for example, that even 7/16 should agree with the proposition:

> It is a good idea to delay reading in English until some time after listening and speaking have been established.

TABLE 11.4 EYL Respondents' opinions on how well their published materials represented their views on reading

Generally the materials reflected my ideas, but it was necessary to compromise on some details	11
Some of my ideas required the use of supplementary materials [e.g. story books] outside the course materials	8
Some of my ideas are hard to put 'on the page' and would be more effectively addressed by teacher training than through published teaching materials	6
It would have been possible to incorporate some of my ideas into teaching materials but they were opposed by those in charge of the project	4
No problems. The materials reflected my ideas very well	3
Other	1
No answer from me	0

It is also striking that only two should show enthusiasm for ABC order of focus on letters and none for teaching the letter names at a very early stage. In the materials analysed we see quite the opposite embodied on the page.

The question concerning whether they found it easy to incorporate their ideas about early reading into materials made a distinction between ideas which could have found their way into a book but to which there might have been opposition from an editor or from other members of a team, and those ideas which the respondents felt did not belong in a coursebook. This might either be because they required resources beyond the textbook or because they were better addressed by teacher education. Table 11.4 shows the responses.

Generally the YL publishing professionals seemed content that their ideas had been represented in their coursebooks. However, some of the open-response items were polemical and intriguing and typically came from those answering 'yes' to the item about opposition from those in charge of the project.

> *In reality, those in charge increasingly base their views on detailed and, these days, highly sophisticated market research to find out what teachers in the context want, or say they want. Unfortunately, this may lead to poor pedagogic decisions. The reason for this is often the lack of training and/or experience of many teachers who are frequently under pressure from school directors and parents to deliver reading and writing skills to children too young too quickly . . .*
>
> *Not all publishers are willing to think about changing what might be already happening in the EYL classroom worldwide . . . It also seems to be the case that some individual teacher/s, often those who have been teaching a long time in a particular area, have a 'standing of some sort' locally and have 'always' taught*

English in a particular way, have the ear of the publishers (who might be frightened of bringing in something new to the region) and who constantly persuade them not to try and use anything different, new, challenging in the materials for the learners and teachers. This then makes it a non-developmental cycle. Often materials writers will have spent some many months developing a course or some materials, on the instructions of the publisher, only to then find that when they have showed them to local teachers/teacher trainers, they have been told not to incorporate these new ideas. At this stage the course/materials can then be taken all the way back to square one . . . but more importantly, the young learners do not get access to materials which might make the learning of English easier, more enjoyable and more valuable to them. Sigh!

Conclusion

The overall results of the survey and the free comments to the questionnaire shown above suggest that in some teaching contexts there may be a disjunction between the best research that EYL professionals can bring to the issue of early reading and what actually finds itself on the pages of materials. It could be the case, as the quotations above suggest, that nervousness about attempting change in markets in which traditional localized approaches to reading instruction are strongly represented could play a part in the conservative shaping that seems to be apparent in the coursebooks analysed.

Whatever the underlying causes, it seems a missed opportunity if YL are offered less systematic exposure in their early encounters with the written or printed word in English than native users of the language are normally felt to need. Share's principle (1995) of leading children to a stage when self-teaching can start is very relevant here, if our aim is to launch children as learners who are not merely, and eventually, learning to read but will be capable as soon as possible of learning through their reading and finding themselves able to read easily enough for it to become a pleasure.

Appendix 1

Qualitative commentary form used for analysing and comparing course materials

Beginning English SIL (Section Initiation Langue) level one of series		
1	**Title of series**	Beginning English
2	**Main country/ies of use**	Cameroon (Francophone)
3	**What school years/grades are covered by the material?**	Year 1

Continued

4	**Target starting age**	6
5	**Media used: [book, CD ROM etc.]**	Pupils' Book, Workbook, Teacher's Guide, Charts
6	**Publisher**	Cosmos Educational Press Ltd (CEPL)
7	**Year of publication of this edition**	2007 Third Edition originally published 2002 (reissue of a course originally published in 1999 As 'Mon Livre d'Anglais')
8	**Is the material used in state and/or private sector contexts?**	State and private
9	**Which elements of the materials were available for scrutiny?**	Pupils' Book
10	**No. of pages and lessons and approximate number of intended teaching hours**	68 pages, 12 Units of 4 lessons each
11	**By the end of this level of materials is the reading work operating predominantly at WORD, SENTENCE or TEXT level?**	Short texts. Sentence level reading comprehension starts on p. 38 with True or False sentences about pictures. p. 49 first short descriptive text. Listen and Read aloud. Short poems and chants
12	**Notes on fonts used**	Handwriting-friendly
13	**Is English print prominent in the material? for example as activity headings, words on page for dialogues etc?**	Yes, from page 1, although the pre-Unit lesson is word-free, called 'Picture Talk' and devoted to children talking about pictures with home scenes with their teacher. After that, heading, rubrics and lesson content are all printed on the page.
14	**Notable orthographical points concerning presentation of headings etc.**	Unit headings have initial capitals for content words. Lesson headings and rubrics are in normal sentence format.
15	**Is the alphabet presented as a discrete Alphabet Spread section?**	Yes
16	**Presentation of upper case and lower case letters in the materials**	See note 14 above
17	**Is there any overt instruction on punctuation and other orthographic issues?**	No

Continued

18	**Are reading focal words in the materials grouped/focused on according to ABC or some other order?**	The progression starts with the short vowels in CVC words in <aeiou> order. Then the alphabet is introduced in Unit 7, lesson 1 and focus on initial letters begins
19	**How are reading focal words 'dosed'?**	Lesson 1 of each Unit has a 'Sound and Word Building' activity, but others are interspersed in other lessons
20	**Is a category of frequent but non-transparent words given focus for reading?**	No
21	**Is the full phoneme inventory of the relevant variety of English covered in some way?**	No
22	**Extent to which focal literacy words are integrated into main body of language taught**	37 of the 148 Focal words also appear in the main body of the text = 9% of the overall vehicular words total of 403
23	**What activities are carried out with focal words? Are they static or generative/pattern-seeking?**	Considerable pattern-seeking Some rhymes for example 'Ben's hen' p. 12 Point and say the name of the picture with the 'a' sound (I therefore included the relevant words in the reading focal total) p. 44 Point and say the word that ends with 'at' p. 52 'Magic e' found in i-e and ie words
24	**Are pupils asked to write words or letters? If so, is there guidance on letter-formation?**	Yes, in the Activity Book, filling in letters and writing whole phrases and sentences. Some of this writing is for language-item consolidation
25	**Units of language focused upon in the teaching of early reading**	Letter-sound correspondences, some rhyme/rime work
26	**Is the term 'Phonics' used anywhere [e.g. Pupils' book or Teacher's guide] with regard to the materials?**	Not at this level (though Teacher's Book not available). The term is found in Pupil's book at higher levels in the series. There is a Phonemic Awareness test (named as such) on p. 24 Unit 4 Lesson 4
27	**Is there a recognizable Phonics element in the materials?**	Yes
28	**If yes . . . how is this manifested?**	With some pattern-seeking work

Continued

29	**Is there evidence of a Whole Word Recognition approach in the materials?**	No
30	**If yes . . . . . how is this manifested?**	–
31	**Is there evidence of the influence of other 'big name' approaches to reading?**	No
32	**If yes . . . how is this manifested?**	–
33	**Number of reading focal words appearing at this level**	148
34	**Number of words appearing in the main body of the text at this level**	514
35	**Number of character names appearing at this level**	39
36	**Number of playful or onomatopoeic words appearing at this level**	2
37	**OTHER NOTES?**	Signs of local variety of English mixed in with RP goals – for example 'horse' in Unit 1, Lesson 1 is not a good example of short <o> if RP is the goal

Appendix 2 Extracts from the questionnaire for EYL authors and editors

Q 6. Do you have specific beliefs or principles that you think should be followed with regard to the introduction of Young Learners to their first steps in reading in English? Some general ideas are given in the alternatives . . . Please click on all statements that you agree with but these are intended mainly as triggers or stimuli for you to react to [or against]. I am very interested in your own views which you can type in the box below if you choose.

- It is necessary to take account of whether the children can already read fluently in their own language or are still working towards this goal.
- The state of children's first language reading need not be a particular concern when introducing them to reading in English.

- If the children's first language has a different writing system, English Language Teaching should take account of this.
- It is a good idea to delay reading in English until some time after listening and speaking have been established.
- Reading and writing should be introduced simultaneously in English Language Teaching to children.
- Only children above a certain age are ready for reading in English. Before that listening and speaking should be the focus.
- Children should not see words written or printed in English during their first classroom experiences with English.
- When teaching children English, writing should be delayed for some time after reading has been introduced.
- Learning to write letters and words is an important support to the development of reading skills.
- It is important to have words printed on the page from very early in course materials used for English Language Teaching.
- It is important to introduce the whole alphabet, but without letter names, before Young Learners of English start learning to read in English.
- Young Learners of English need to know the whole alphabet with letter names before they start learning to read in English.
- Young Learners of English should focus on just a few letters at any one time when they are learning to read in English and the sequence should follow alphabetical A, B, C order.
- Learners need to have developed a good pronunciation in English before they can tackle the first steps in reading.
- The use of rhymes is especially beneficial to learning to read in English.
- It is very important for Young Learners who are starting to learn to read to learn the initial sounds and letters of key words.
- The words focused on for learning to read should be drawn from the vocabulary that is taught in the rest of the English Language course.
- The words focused on for learning to read need not be the same as the vocabulary that is taught in the rest of the English Language course.
- From their very first lessons in reading English, children need to be made aware of the benefits that this skill could offer them in the future [e.g. enjoying story books, access to webpages].
- Other.
- No answer from me.

7. How easy have you found it to incorporate your beliefs about early reading into the teaching materials that you have been involved with? Please click on all the statements that you agree with, but as before, it would be very valuable if you treated them as triggers for your own responses to be typed in the box below if you choose.

- No problems. The materials reflected my ideas very well.
- Generally the materials reflected my ideas, but it was necessary to compromise on some details.
- Some of my ideas are hard to put 'on the page' and would be more effectively addressed by teacher training than through published teaching materials.
- It would have been possible to incorporate some of my ideas into teaching materials but they were opposed by those in charge of the project.
- Some of my ideas required the use of supplementary materials [e.g. story books] outside the course materials.
- Other.
- No answer from me.

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12

Developing Motivating Materials for Refugee Children: From Theory to Practice

Irma-Kaarina Ghosn

Introduction

Palestinian refugee children attending United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) schools in Lebanon must learn English beginning in grade one and must also study some school subjects in English from grade five onward. Until recently, children have been taught English with the national textbooks developed with Lebanese children in mind. However, the life situation and learning context of refugee children are quite different from that of average Lebanese children. The majority of Lebanese children also attend preschool programmes, whereas only a very small number of refugee children have access to preschool services. Because of academic difficulties experienced by large numbers of children in UNRWA schools, a decision was made in 2010 to develop alternative materials for lower primary grades. Guiding the process were widely recognized general principles for instructed second language learning, suggested criteria for successful L2 materials, and what is known about the role of motivation and interest on learning. After briefly reviewing these theoretical considerations, the author describes the process of developing the new coursebooks and how she attempted to apply some of the theories in the process. The responses of teachers and children to the materials after one year are highly positive, and the initial results of children's achievement are also promising.

Key words: materials development; young learners; Palestinian refugees

Challenge of the context

The national curriculum

The schools operated by UNRWA in Lebanon follow the Lebanese National Curriculum and have traditionally used the national textbooks. In terms of English language teaching, this has posed a problem, because the national curriculum for English as the first foreign language (EFL1) assumes that children entering grade one will have had a minimum of two years of exposure to English in preschool and thus will have acquired some basic knowledge of English, including some literacy skills. The curriculum is ambitious, with the term *academic competence* used throughout. Emphasis is placed on developing skills that enable students 'To communicate effectively in subject matter areas in general, and mathematics and sciences in particular' (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport [MEYS], 1997, p. 148). The following are part of grade one (age 6–7) objectives for English: 'Tell and/or retell a story; express mood, feelings, likes and dislikes . . . report to class about experiences and TV programs . . . explain characters' feelings and motives . . . organize scrambled words in meaningful sentences' (MEYS, 1997, p. 103). By the end of grade three, children are expected to be able to:

> Paraphrase events in a story; state similarities and differences among characters, feelings, and actions in a story . . . express empathy with others . . . distinguish between different characters, motives, literary genres, plots . . . provide synonyms, antonyms, and simple definitions . . . correct own spelling mistakes; unscramble a text and organize ideas in a logical sequence; write a simple story using own words. (Ibid., p. 154)

At the time of this writing, a new curriculum draft has been produced, but the new learning outcomes are still very ambitious. The draft document specifies two target competencies as a goal for grade one:

> Competency One: Communicate orally in about one minute, using simple coherent, appropriate language to narrate events, describe persons or things, and participate in discussions in reference to a given document read, heard, or viewed related to real life or imaginary situations. (National Center for Educational Research [NCERD], 2010, p. 7)
>
> Competency Two: Produce a short piece of writing of 3–5 simple coherent sentences about people, daily life experiences or observations, in reference to a document [*sic*] read, heard, or viewed, related to real life or imaginary situations, using suitable language, appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures. (Ibid., p. 13)

Clearly these goals are ambitious after only one year of classroom instruction. Stated learning objectives also indicate that children with no prior exposure to English

will face significant difficulties in attaining many of them. For example, oral output objectives for grade one include the use of 'complete sentences with rhyming words and alliteration, punctuation cues to guide meaning and expression, intonation to convey meaning' (ibid., p. 8). Children's reading selections are to comprise of 'realistic fiction, fantasy, fairy tale, fable, poem, song . . . informative article' (ibid., p. 9), while students' written output is expected to include 'friendly letters, short story, journal entry, narrative, descriptive, and informative paragraphs' (ibid., p. 17). Since refugee camp children in the country typically enter grade one with no formal schooling and little, if any, background in English, even the new national curriculum appears by far too demanding, making success likely elusive for many. (It is possible that the language curriculum is a contributor to the alarmingly high early drop-out rate in the country, with 10 percent of children leaving school before the end of year five.)

One can only speculate where these unrealistically ambitious objectives emanate. One reason might be the composition of the curriculum committee, which included primarily senior university faculty without any primary school teaching experience. Their reference point may well have been the language standards in elite private schools affiliated or closely linked with the universities involved. Another contributing factor may have been the rather limited scope and sequence of the available global coursebooks, which have little or no focus on explicit teaching of reading and writing, and thus would not help children develop academic literacy in English. Or, as Brian Tomlinson observes, this may simply be part of 'a universal phenomenon in which curriculum developers massively overestimate learners, global coursebook materials developers massively underestimate learners and local coursebook developers massively overestimate learners' (email communication, October, 2012).

By grade five, children in UNRWA schools must also access some general curriculum subjects in English, with mathematics and sciences being heavily emphasized in the national curriculum, as indicated by MEYS (1997). In other words, children must develop rather sophisticated levels of academic literacy in English with only four years of English instruction. Although they receive 8 weekly hours of English (the new plan calls for 9 weekly hours), they have little or no exposure to English outside the English class.

The internet could provide rich, interesting and fun exposure to English, but it is beyond the reach of average refugee camp children for two main reasons. First, while most UNRWA schools have internet connection, Lebanon suffers from serious power shortages, with electricity supply in many areas available only for a few hours a day. Second, most refugee families cannot afford internet subscription, and even those that can, cannot afford connecting to the available private power suppliers in the absence of government electricity. Another good source of additional English input could be obtained through extensive reading. Yet, financial reasons prevent families from purchasing reading materials, and there are only a couple of public libraries in the country. UNRWA schools have limited budgets, which cannot cover additional reading materials, even with significantly reduced prices offered by a large US-based publishing

house. The production of the new textbooks was possible only with a sizeable grant from the European Union.

Refugee living conditions

An estimated 455,000 non-citizen Palestinians reside in Lebanon, more than half of them in the 12 UNRWA-administered camps (Committee for Employment of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 2011), where living conditions are difficult at best. Camps are overcrowded, have limited supply of clean water and electricity, with open sewers a common sight. Lebanon is the only Arab country that treats Palestinian refugees as foreigners as regards employment and property ownership. According to the Lebanese labour law, Palestinians are barred access to 30 syndicated professions such as medicine, pharmacy, engineering, dentistry, and teaching, among others. These professions are subject to a reciprocity clause; nationals of countries that allow Lebanese to practise these professions can practise in Lebanon. Palestinian refugees are also barred from occupations restricted to Lebanese citizens, including law, journalism, publishing and even hairdressing (Chaaban et al., 2010). Some of these occupations can be exercised within the confines of the camps and UNRWA school system, but the opportunities are limited. Consequently, great many refugees work in menial jobs and often illegally, with joblessness rate of person between 15 and 65 being 56 per cent (ibid., p. 28). This explains why 60–80 per cent of the camp residents live below the poverty line, with over half in extreme poverty, depending on the source consulted.

UNRWA schools in Lebanon

At the time of this writing, UNRWA administers 74 schools in Lebanon, only 6 of them secondary schools, enrolling a student population of 30,000 (Committee for Employment of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 2011). The schools, most of which were built in 1950s and 1960s, are in disrepair with over-crowded classrooms. The norm is some 40 students crammed into small desks seating 3 each, as the author personally observed when visiting schools in the camps. Because of over-crowding, many schools operate in double shifts with teachers who are over-worked and underpaid. Clearly, both the living and learning contexts of the young Palestinian refugee children differ from those of the average Lebanese children for whom the national curriculum and textbooks aim to cater. While internationally marketed ELT textbooks would be more appropriate, their costs are beyond the available budget. Furthermore, most global coursebooks do not reflect the daily reality of children living in refugee camp poverty any more than the national Lebanese textbooks.

In light of the above, it is not surprising that achievement of children in UNRWA schools is less than satisfactory. Malak Soufian, UNRWA Head Education Coordinator reported that less than half of grade four children pass the annual English examinations,

and around 40 per cent fail in other subjects in grade five, with the failure rates increasing in upper grades (personal communication, September 2010).

Principles of instructed second language learning

Rod Ellis (2008) identifies the following principles of instructed second language learning. Instruction should enable learners to develop a rich repertoire of formulaic expressions and rule-based competence. It appears that native speakers demonstrate a much larger repertoire of formulaic chunks of language than second language learners (Foster, 2001). Ellis (2008) suggests that formulaic expressions may serve 'as a basis for the later development of a rule-based competence' (p. 1). Primary focus ought to be on meaning, but without forgetting focus on form, and instruction should focus on learners developing 'implicit knowledge of the second language while not neglecting explicit knowledge' (p. 2). The importance of extensive input has long been recognized as important in second language learning and verbal interaction as central to developing second language proficiency. 'One learns to how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of the interaction syntactic structures are developed' (Hatch, 1978, p. 404). Ellis (2008) suggests that sufficient input can be ensured by maximizing second language use inside the classroom, ideally by making the second language 'the medium as well as the object of instruction' (p. 4). Creating acquisition-rich interaction in the classroom is a challenge for teachers, however, as Ellis (2008) points out. Drawing on Ellis (1999) and Johnson (1995), he recommends the following: contexts of language use that draw learner attention to language; learner initiation and development of topics; opportunities for learners to express 'their own personal meanings' (Ellis, 2008, p. 5); opportunities and support for learners to engage in activities 'beyond their current level of proficiency'; opportunities for learners to engage in 'full performance in the language' (ibid.). Furthermore, instruction needs to take into account the learner's built-in syllabus, which can be achieved by adopting 'a zero grammar approach' (ibid., p. 3) while ensuring the target features are developmentally appropriate (ibid.), which is a significant challenge in a typical classroom, where children may be at different developmental levels. Consideration for individual differences is yet another principle identified by Ellis. Within the tightly controlled curriculum context, which is a reality in many educational settings, it is a significant challenge to cater to individual differences in learning styles, aptitude and motivation. A flexible teaching style and a variety of instructional strategies and activities can go a long way in catering for individual differences. The quality of teaching is a major contributor to learner motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). The tenth principle identified by Ellis calls for assessment of both free and controlled learner production of the second language.

Although some of the above principles are more challenging than others in the context of over-crowded classrooms and limited resources, they were considered when developing the new textbooks. How they were actually realized will be discussed later on in the chapter.

Criteria for successful language learning materials

A number of criteria have been proposed for evaluating language teaching. Richard-Amato proposes materials should reflect topics that are interesting and relevant in learners' lives; present meaningful and logical discourse; focus on meaningful communication as opposed to language itself; integrate the four language skills; provide ample recycling of concepts; and gradually increase in difficulty (Richard-Amato, 1988, p. 209). Watt and Foscolos (1998) also stress the importance of volume and repetition of language input and output for learner success; learners need to be exposed to the target items sufficiently many times within a given activity for learning to happen, and Nelson (1995) reminds materials developers to consider learners' culture to ensure materials are culturally appropriate and meaningful. Tomlinson (2003) further argues that language teaching materials need to be humanizing, taking into account learners' 'experience of life, their interests and enthusiasms, their views, attitudes and feelings and, above all, their capacity to make meaningful connections in their minds' (p. 162). Finally, Ghosn (2012) points out that primary school language teaching materials must take into account the holistic development of the young learner, who is still developing, not only linguistically but also cognitively and psycho-socially.

Motivation and learning

In a position paper of the Association for Childhood Education International, Jalongo (2007) stresses the profound influence motivation and interest have on academic achievement, while Artelt (2005) considers interest as the most important form of intrinsic motivation. It appears that interest is both a variable and a desired outcome of learning (Schiefele, 1991), comprising both situational and individual interest, the latter believed to have a strong effect on engagement in learning. Situational interest plays a particularly important role in motivating children who do not need the target language in their daily lives and who, therefore, may not have pre-existing individual interest in learning it.

While accounting for diverse individual interests of children may be difficult within the context of a textbook intended to serve thousands of children, situational interest, which is based on novelty, curiosity and the saliency of the information can be incorporated into instructional materials. Hidi and Harackiewicz (2000) cite 20 years of research on situational interest, concluding that certain text characteristics can evoke situational interest. According to them, interest-arousing texts are easy to comprehend; present novel, unusual or surprising content; feature characters and/or topics that the reader can identify with; or involve high levels of activity or intensity.

The above criteria are not very far removed from the elements in the motivational ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction) model developed and tested

by John Keller of Florida State University: First, material must get and hold learners' attention. Second, the content of the material must be relevant to learners' life experience. Third, materials must consider learners' confidence in themselves as learners, and, finally, to ensure learner satisfaction (Keller, n.d., para X).

Developing new textbooks

Assessment of the old textbooks

End-user focus groups

At the onset of the project, the author conducted focus group sessions with UNRWA education officers and ELT consultants, programme coordinators, experienced primary school teachers and support staff to assess the national textbooks. The discussions revealed the national English language textbooks were inappropriate for two main reasons. First, the books were too difficult, being heavily reading-focused and assuming two or three years of English instruction in preschool, and thus little attention was allocated for aural/oral language development. Second, the topics and concepts in the books were identified as too far removed from the refugee children's life experience to be meaningful and motivating. Moreover, the new materials would not only need to be more motivating and bridge the gap resulting from the curriculum-assumed preschool education, but would also need to ensure children would be ready for the national curriculum English-medium instruction by grade five, particularly in mathematics and sciences. Focus group participants expressed their desire to see materials that would be meaningful, motivating and 'lovely for our children', as one supervisor expressed it.

Expert focus group

A group composed of two university teachers, an ELT consultant and a primary school teacher familiar with the learning and living conditions of refugee camp children examined the national student books and teachers guides of grades one, two and three. The group analysed the books impressionistically in terms of relevance to intended audience, level of difficulty and methodology suggested.

The overall impression was that the books were cheerful in appearance, with full-colour illustrations and photos. The route to language was through dialogues, songs and poems, stories and informational texts, and some arts and crafts. There were accompanying audio cassettes with model dialogues, songs, chants and poems. However, the three student books were identified as clearly being intended for children who are fairly advanced in their oral language and literacy skills in English, as the following extracts illustrate. The first extract is from the first lesson in the grade one book: 'This is Cater, the caterpillar. Cater is in a tree. Cater eats a leaf. He grows bigger.

He eats another leaf. He grows bigger. He eats another leaf. He becomes a butterfly' (Ghaleb et al., 1998, pp. SB14–15).

When Fry's (1990) readability formula for short passages was applied, it revealed the passage to be at grade 2.5 reading level. While the concept mimics Eric Carle's classic caterpillar story, the accompanying illustrations do not provide sufficient context for the sentences to be immediately understood.

The following extract is from the end of the grade one book:

> Mousie heard cheering and shouting. She peeked out of her hole. She saw some children opening presents. She saw food on the table, too. Mousie thought, 'I wish I could chew some cheese. I wish I could have a present, too.' But, Mousie was afraid to go out. So, she said to herself, 'When everyone is in bed, I'll get what I can.' (Ghaleb et al., 1998, p. SB254)

Beginning from level one, the books were found text-heavy and reading-focused, with extensive vocabulary. The teacher's guides suggested an eclectic selection of methodologies, from total physical response and natural approach to cooperative and discovery learning. Regarding the controversy of mother tongue versus only the target language, the authors stated that the grade one book is 'structured to promote the nonuse of the mother tongue', suggesting its use 'only when all other means have failed' (ibid., p. TG13).

In terms of relevance and potential motivation, the focus group identified a number of lessons with topics and concepts with little or no relevance to young Palestinian children living in a refugee camp. For example, making a Lebanese flag and celebrating the Lebanese Independence Day is unlikely to be meaningful for children with no citizenship rights. Similarly, foreign vacation travel and dinner parties, and the associated language, are not going to be very meaningful for children living in poverty. These are just some of the many examples.

Reading levels of passages were found to be high and vocabulary items included 'invitation cards', 'decorating', 'celebrate' and 'soldiers'. Sentences such as the following in the grade two book occurred frequently: 'When someone is hungry, he eats and when he eats, he stops crying. When he stops crying, the kingdom becomes happy' (Ghannaj Khoury et al., 1999, p. 68), and 'Long time ago, there were no cars, buses, planes or trains to take people from place to place . . . People who lived by the water used logs to carry them to other people' (ibid., p. 78). The group considered this excessively ambitious for second year learners, just beginning to develop proficiency in aural/oral language, especially when no explicit reading instruction was indicated. The dense, text-heavy lessons will not provide sufficient repetition of language input and output considered important for learner success by Watt and Foscolos (1998), for example. The conclusion was that the books were plagued with problems that endangered children's success.

Developing the new textbooks

Enjoy English! (Ghosn, 2011/12) is the new three-level series for grades one, two and three. At the time of this writing, the grade one book has been in use for one full school year, grade two book is being introduced and grade three book is going to print. The author was supported by an UNRWA team composed of education specialists, English language supervisors and teachers and worked closely with the illustrators and designers. The following aspects drawn from the literature review were used as a guideline when drafting the new books:

A *Instructed L2 learning principles*

1) Formulaic chunks of language; 2) focus on meaning and form; 3) L2 input and learner output; 4) meaningful verbal interaction.

B *Learner attention and motivation*

Potential for situational interest: 1) novelty of content; 2) identifiability with content/characters by target population; 3) saliency of information; 4) level of activity.

Potential for relevance: 1) home experience; 2) classroom experience; 3) community experience; 4) cultural experience.

C *Language*

1) meaningfulness of discourse and focus of communication;
2) integration of skills;
3) volume and repetition of input/output; 4) increasing level of difficulty.

D *Learner success and satisfaction*

Type of activities:1) difficulty level of tasks; 2) difficulty level of assessment tasks; 3) reinforcement; 4) developmental appropriateness of content/activities.

While the scope and sequence and learning outcomes for the books are drawn from the National Lebanese Curriculum, key concerns were how to gain and maintain student attention, how to make sure the content will be relevant for learners, how to develop learner confidence, and how to ensure the language is meaningful and appropriately graded in difficulty. Finally, attention was given to develop children's academic literacy in English, particularly in grades two and three.

Instructed L2 learning principles

Formulaic chunks of language are presented within stories, songs, chants and dialogues, and recycled across lessons and lesson units, as well as cyclically across grade levels. A story and content-based approaches will enable children to focus on meaning while acquiring vocabulary and grammatical structures. No explicit grammar instruction is

subscribed, following Ellis' (2008) 'zero grammar approach' (p. 2). Teachers are instructed not to correct mistakes overtly, but rather through focused recasting in order not to interrupt the flow of discourse. Recasts, which are basically paraphrases of learner output, provide learners with 'implicit negative feedback' (Morris, 2002, p. 397) while at the same time affirming their contribution to the discourse. In focused recasting, described by Tomlinson (2007), the teacher's aim is for learners to acquire a specific linguistic feature. Although there are contradictory views as to the effectiveness of teacher recasts (e.g. Lyster, 1998; Byrd, 2005), Tomlinson (2007) reports having used focused recasts successfully.

With recasts instruction becomes individualized, but affording the class opportunities to benefit from the recasts. English serves as the medium of instruction, with teachers advised to use Arabic only in possible emergency situations or when use of English would cause undue stress to a child or the children. Daily calendar and weather chart activities, attendance taking and other routine tasks are carried out in English, modelling and reinforcing language. While controlled practice is achieved primarily through songs, chants and poems, dialogues and collaborative tasks allow for ample meaningful learner output and opportunities for children to express their own personal meanings. While pacing of lessons is expected to be fairly uniform across classrooms in different schools of the UNRWA system, an effort has been made to provide sufficient recycling of vocabulary and structures in a way that will enable slower learners to keep up while maintaining motivational levels of faster learners.

Learner attention and motivation

One of the key considerations in drafting the new materials was how to get learners' attention and engage them in the lessons. Situational interest, novelty and salience of language in the initial stage are achieved with the inclusion of *big book* stories set in familiar contexts and featuring highly contextualized language and repetitive refrains. (Big books are over-sized easel books with large print used for dialogic reading.) For example, the beginning of level one features *Molly's Walk*, a story (inspired by Pat Hutchins' *Rosie's Walk*), where Molly the Mouse goes for a walk across the schoolyard very similar to the one with which children are familiar (Figure 12.1), stalked by a hungry cat.

Choral readings, songs, games, use of puppets, and dramatizations will provide a high level of activity during the lessons. Several familiar public domain rhymes and songs have been adapted to include target vocabulary. See Figure 12.2 for an example of the adaptation of the popular *Five Little Monkeys*.

Relevance is achieved by presenting content that is familiar to the learners; for example classroom situations typical of the UNRWA schools, family traditions, familiar foods and activities, and festivals shared across the community. Lessons about family initially feature homes, furniture and clothing that look more familiar to the children than the middle-class milieus presented in the national textbook (Figures 12.3 and 12.4).

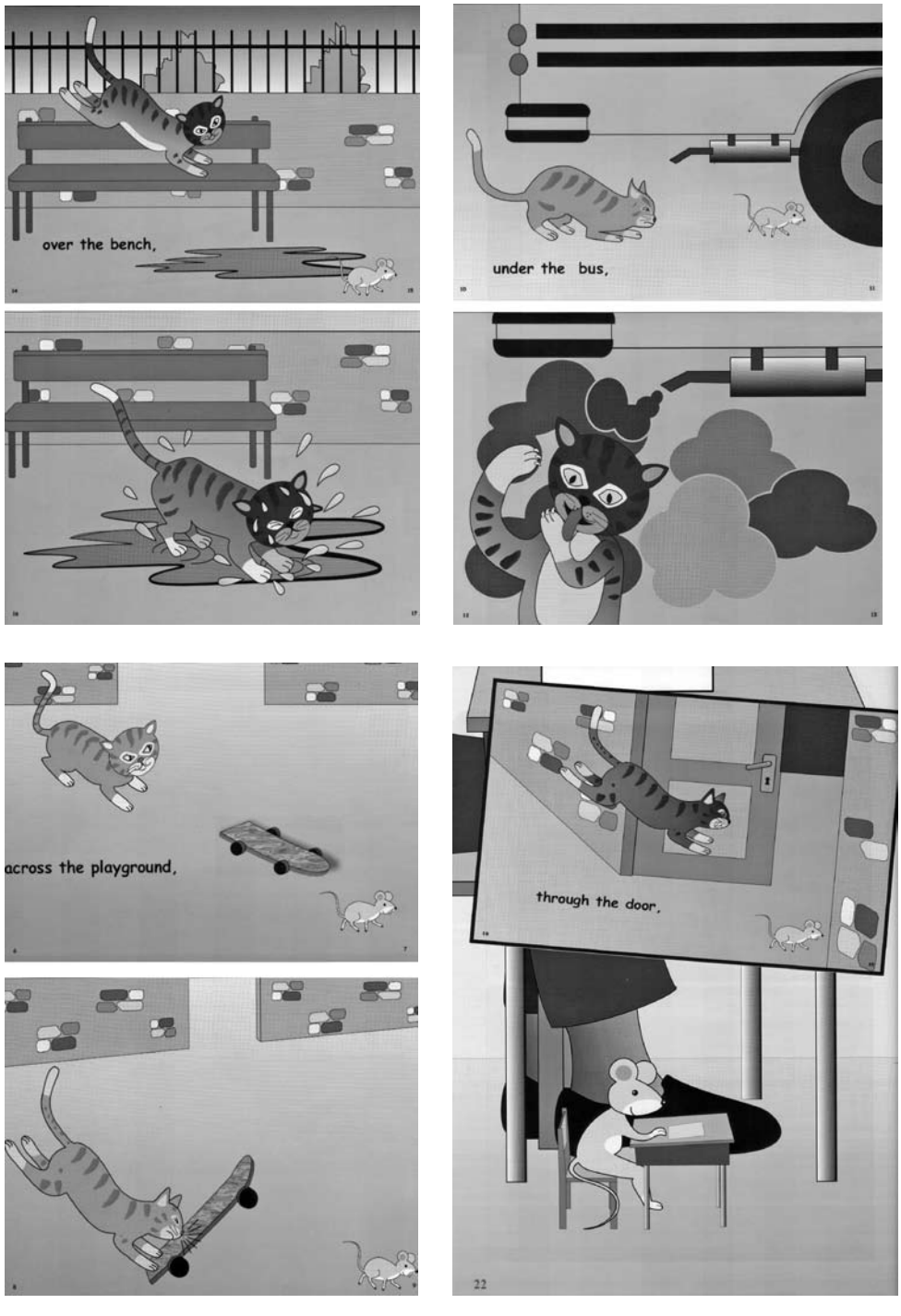


FIGURE 12.1 *Molly's Walk*.

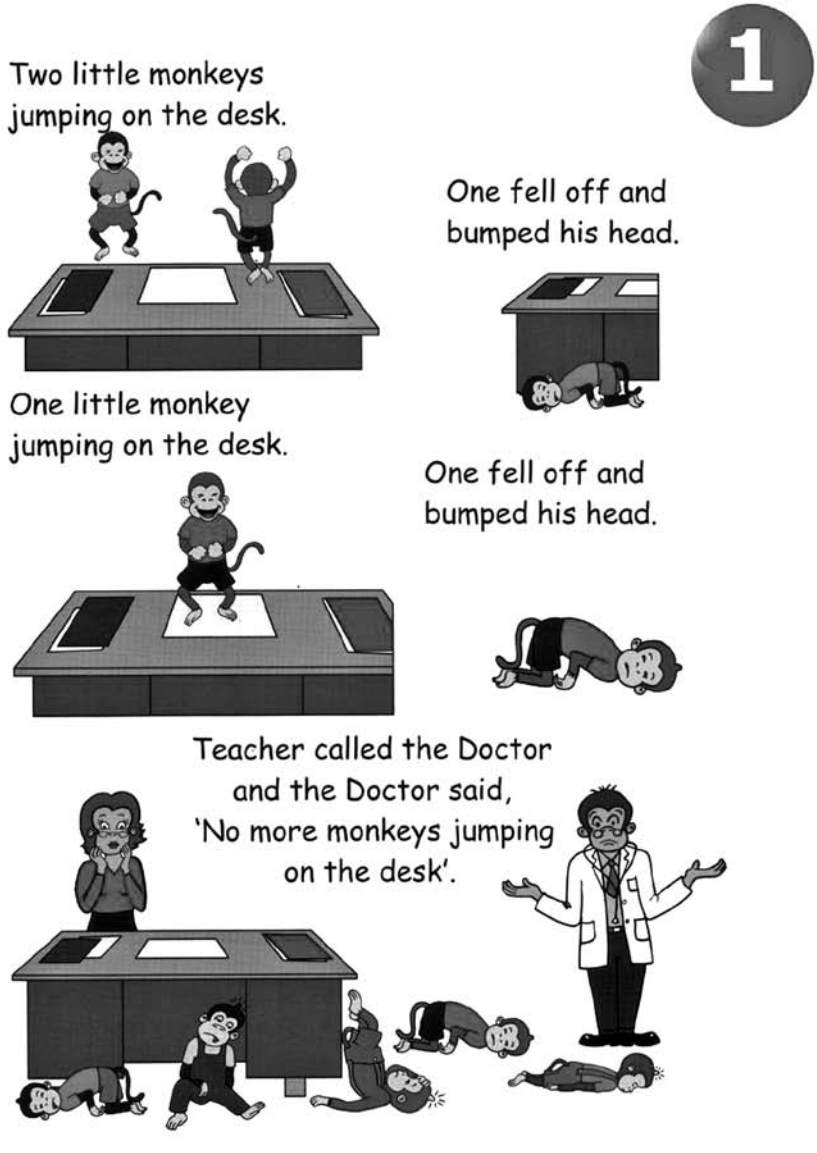


FIGURE 12.2 *Five Little Monkeys.*



FIGURE 12.3 *Familiar dress styles.*

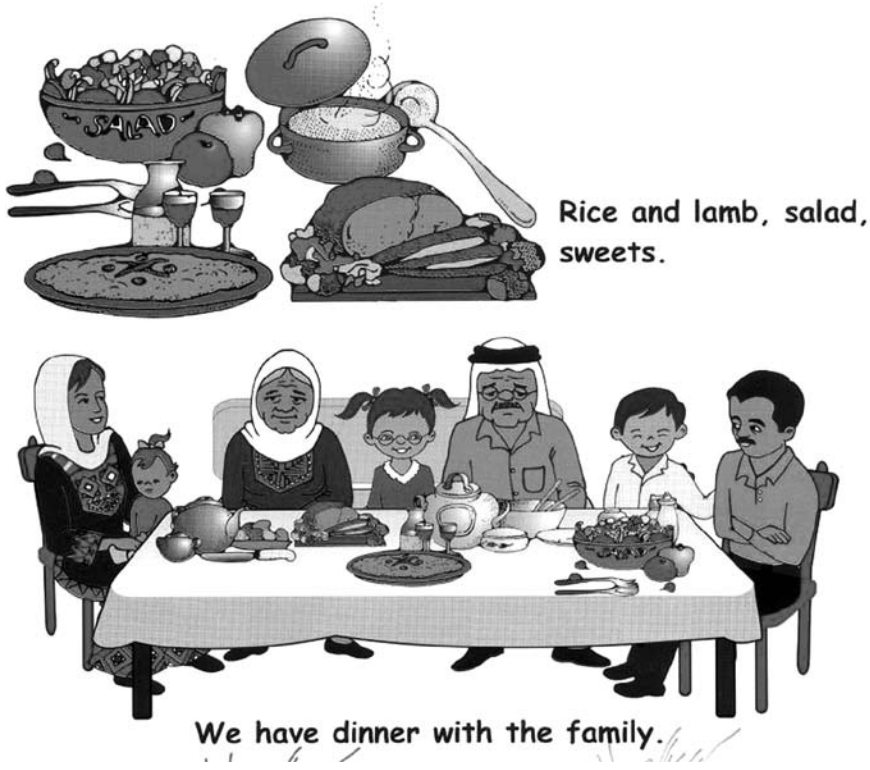


FIGURE 12.4 *Familiar foods.*

Religious celebrations are important events in the children's community, and they are featured in each book (Figure 12.5).

Characters are introduced with whom children can identify; Arabic children's names are included and characters' clothing and activities are typical of those in the children's community. For example, instead of Old McDonald's farm, children will sing about Uncle Hassan's farm, where there are chickens, cows and bees, and where Uncle Hassan grows tomatoes and his wife milks the cow. English children's names and culture-specific content are initially introduced through letters and visitors, and later in stories and informational texts. Learner attention and interest are particularly important in the initial stages, when children will form their first impressions about English lessons.

Learner confidence

To build learner confidence, teachers are encouraged to follow the Natural Approach stages (Krashen and Terrell, 1983) and employ a variety of question types in each lesson in order to accommodate to learners at different proficiency levels (see Figure 12.6).



FIGURE 12.5 *Important religious celebrations.*

Stage	What learners do	Lesson focus	Sample teacher questions
Pre-production	Communicate with gestures and actions	Listening comprehension Receptive vocabulary	*Point to the bus.* *Raise your hand if you see a chair in this picture.* *Yes/No* questions (Can be answered with a nod or a shake of the head.)
Early production	Use one- or two-word utterances or short phrases	Expand receptive vocabulary Motivate learners to produce familiar vocabulary	*Either/Or* questions *Is Rima sitting or standing?* *Is your shirt yellow or green?* *Who is standing by the door?*
Speech emergence	Speak in longer phrases and some complete sentences	Expand receptive vocabulary Promotion of higher levels of production	*What/when/where* questions; moving from single word answers towards phrase answers *What is Rima doing?* *Where is she?*
Intermediate fluency	Engage in conversation and produce connected narrative	Continue expanding receptive vocabulary Develop higher levels of language use Reading and writing develops	*Open complete answer questions* What do you think will happen next? Why did she do that?

FIGURE 12.6 *The four stages of the natural approach in the classroom.*

Source: Ghosn, I.-K. (2011/12). Enjoy English! Grade 1. Beirut: UNRWA Education Programme, TB, p. 11. Adapted from S. Krashen & S. Terrell, 1983.

Learners can respond with gestures and actions, with one- or two-word utterances, or speak in longer phrases or sentences when ready. During dramatization of dialogues and stories, children can refer to cues posted when necessary. Children are allowed to use Arabic when necessary, while teachers will recast children's mother tongue utterances into English. Assessment tasks are primarily open, rather than closed yes/no or multiple-choice types. Care is taken to present activities and assessment tasks that are developmentally appropriate and gradually increasing in difficulty. Extrinsic reinforcement is built in by inclusion of activities celebrating the completion of units.

Language and academic literacy

Effort is made to maintain focus on meaningful communication. Skills are integrated, with ample repetition of input as well as learner output through songs, repeated story listening and reading. Language features increase gradually in level of difficulty. Contrary to the national textbook, the materials assume a total beginner in grade one. Literacy instruction is introduced gradually alongside aural/oral language. In order to prepare children for English-medium instruction commencing in grade five, a number of lessons will focus on development of concepts and vocabulary related to mathematics and science instruction (Figures 12.7 and 12.8).

Children will frequently use graphic organizers, such as K-W-L charts, Venn Diagrams and story mapping charts, and will learn to prepare and read graphs and charts. In grade three, thinking skills – observing, comparing, classifying, problem-solving, summarizing, and data collection are incorporated, as well.

Preliminary response to *Enjoy English!*

At the time of this writing, *Enjoy English!* grade one book and its supplementary materials have been in use for one scholastic year. Dr Zainab Taleb, an English language supervisor, and Mrs Malak Soufian, the Education Coordinator, who visited several schools during the year, report teachers and children having responded enthusiastically to the new books (personal communication, June 2012). Children are eagerly participating in the activities and the *big books* have been particularly well received. The inclusion of familiar context, clothing and special occasions has been welcomed not only by teachers and children, but also parents. Many have expressed their pleasant surprise at the appearance of headscarves, Palestinian-style robes and celebrations of religious festivals. Teachers are reportedly pleased with children's active engagement with the materials and activities in the new books, and Dr Taleb expressed her enthusiasm about children 'actually speaking in English' to her during her visits, rather than 'reciting memorized phrases' (personal communication, June 2012).

Conclusion

In summary, when developing language learning materials for children living in challenging life situations, one must take into account the home, school, and community experience of children in order to ensure interest, motivation and ultimate success. Materials must also foster learner confidence in themselves as learners by presenting age-appropriate language at the right level of difficulty. Finally, consideration is given to the development of children's academic literacy in English, where this is relevant, by

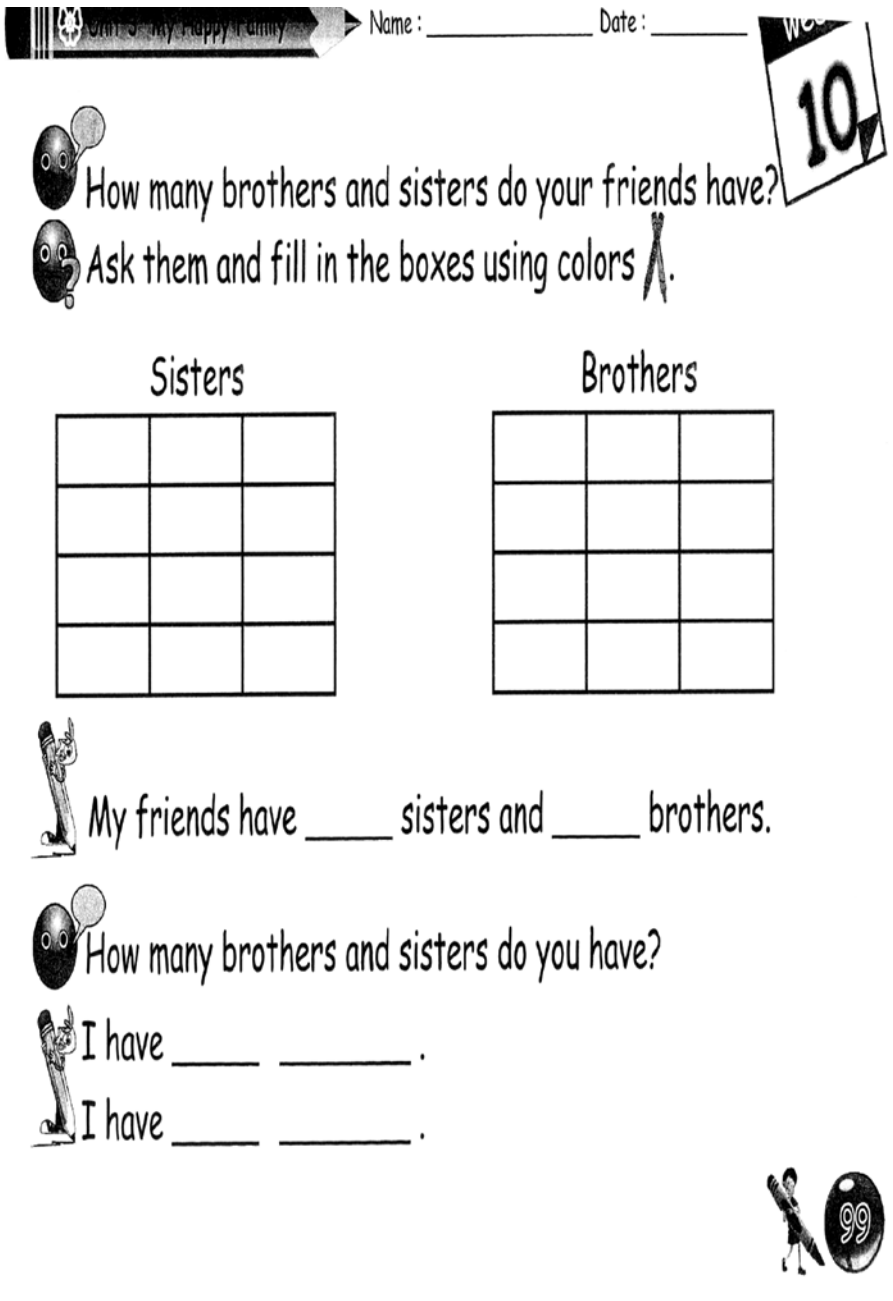


FIGURE 12.7 *Integrating math.*



FIGURE 12.8 *Integrating science.*

including subject matter-related topics. In the project described, an effort was made to ensure these considerations were taken into account when developing the materials. The initial response indicates that this was achieved. As the grade two books are going into classrooms at the time of this writing, it is the author's hope that learner success and satisfaction will continue to be achieved also in the later grades.

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13

Materials for Adults: 'I am No Good at Languages!'– Inspiring and Motivating L2 Adult Learners of Beginner's Spanish

Rosa-Maria Cives-Enriquez

Introduction

Experience has taught me that teaching a language to adult students whose main discipline (and perhaps primary interest/work) lies in a field other than languages can prove to be a difficult task. Examples of this occur widely throughout higher education and occasionally in industry. While studying a required 'service' language module, the adult students' level of motivation/enthusiasm is generally lower than is the case when working with subjects/areas deemed to be central to their programme of study, achievement of the desired award or area of specialism at work (Fallows and Ahmet, 1998).

To add to the problem, the materials available to adults are very often written for them on the assumption that they are linguists or have linguistic knowledge, and the objectives of the students do not necessarily meet with the coursebook's aims and objectives.

In order to produce and/or enhance materials that would arouse motivation in adult L2 learners, I make use of a combination of theories and models. For example, I use Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998b) '10+1 Commandments for Motivating L2 Learners', which proposes ways to integrate *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation in the classroom. Intrinsic motivation is related to internal needs such as self-satisfaction at performing a task, whereas extrinsic motivation is related to obtaining extrinsic rewards such as marks

and prizes. Intrinsic motivation is aimed at arousing natural curiosity and interest by setting optimal challenges in class, providing rich sources of stimulation and developing students autonomy. I also try to create/enhance materials that are thought-provoking, using certain aspects of EBL (Enquiry-Based Learning) (sometimes known as Problem-Based Learning, PBL) which concentrates on the analysis of problem situations as a basis for acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes (Little and Ryan, 1998). In an EBL curriculum, students work in small groups, with the tutor facilitating, while they explore a practice-based scenario. Learning issues are identified and investigated by students using a range of resources. The potential benefits of an EBL curriculum are that students should develop an integrated body of knowledge, which is clearly relevant to their profession/discipline, while also developing a number of transferable skills. These include skills in information retrieval, problem-solving, team-working and negotiating. In addition, I make use of David Freemantle's (2001) 'Seven Steps to Stimulate Your Imagination', which is concerned with investing in a person's fundamental human needs in order to nurture and create productivity. He encourages us to create and concentrate on fantastic images of the future in order to achieve our desired dream.

In this chapter, I examine practices and activities that I employ in the classroom, allowing the adult student to develop a number of transferable skills, and the tutor to develop/enhance materials that suit the student needs and enthuse both the lecturer and the adult L2 learner. This, to my mind, is a crucial area of materials writing that is rarely spoken of or dealt with; but it is of utmost importance, because the facilitator has to be motivated by the materials that they are using in order to create an appropriate learning environment for the student.

My conclusion does not introduce any new theories in the field of *creating motivational materials for L2 students*, but it reinforces a point that has been made time and time again, that is, if students of any discipline enjoy what they are doing, they will at least make the effort to learn (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998a).

Second, and perhaps a rather poignant remark, is that the facilitator also has to be motivated by the materials and activities in question.

The emotional conduit

For any learner of a foreign language, hearing and liking the rhythm of a foreign language, wanting to speak and make themselves understood and wanting to understand the language and culture in question are some of the stimuli that spark the motivational drive to incite or improve their performance in the FL (Spanish in this case). However, if we speak of language/vocabulary/words, it is not only these that create the stimulus but also the way in which they are used; left alone with its words (vocabulary) and structure (grammar), language is merely a string of two-dimensional expressions in the form of phrases, sentences, paragraphs, etc.

I truly believe that, to be effective in eliciting a response from students, the language stimulus has to be right and therefore has to be amplified by the third dimension of emotion:

- Words alone achieve nothing unless they are channelled along the right emotional conduit that connects with another person. In language teaching (or any teaching, for that matter), the learner not only has to feel at ease with the materials and tutor in order to reap the optimum educational benefits, but the language employed by the tutor/facilitator is just as important a motivational factor.
- In addition, from personal experience I feel that 'demotivated' learners feel uncomfortable with materials that are constantly probing them for that 'one' right answer or materials that are not suited to their learning needs and styles (Gardner, 2001).
- What I always try to do in my Spanish classes is *humanize* the classes, so that by the end of the course the students have an overall personal profile of myself, the tutor, and likewise, they, if they so wish, may impart information about themselves and their family, etc. The fact that I take an interest in them adds to their enthusiasm and, of course, almost everybody enjoys talking about themselves. (Alison, 1993)
- I always ask beginners of Spanish to forget trying to express complex ideas and thoughts in the FL because they will get into a real muddle; instead, I often tell them to enjoy Spanish and pretend that they are a 3-year-old acquiring language: I encourage them to explore, ask questions and invent new ones, to be bold and, most importantly, not to be afraid of making mistakes.
- Before we start anything I give them the following Survival Tools so that they are able to conduct the flow of information as and how they want. (After all, it is *their* Spanish Class.)

SURVIVAL TOOLS: BEGINNER'S SPANISH

. No entiendo = (I don't understand)
. ¿Me lo puedes repetir? = (Could you repeat it please?)
. ¿Cómo se dice *book* en español? = (How do you say book in Spanish?)
. ¿Cómo se dice *mesa* en inglés? = (How do you say table in English?)
. ¡Más despacio por favor! = (Slow down please!)

So, ultimately all communications act as stimuli competing to elicit a desired response. By delicately loading our language with feeling and spirit we can open up an emotional conduit, which connects with others and maximizes the likelihood of the desired

response to be obtained; in this case, learning to communicate in Spanish at beginner's level.

How do I approach this?

In order to enthuse and stimulate my students to become motivated I decided to adopt language teaching approaches, and strategies that differed from those employed in their other modules (i.e. their main discipline), and approached the Spanish curriculum topics in a different way.

I wanted to concentrate on the '10+1 Commandments', Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998b) for motivating this particular group of L2 Spanish beginners (see list below):

The 10+1 Commandments for Motivating L2 Learners

1 Set a personal example with your own behaviour.

2 Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

3 Present the tasks properly.

4 Develop a good relationship with the learners.

5 Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.

6 Make the language classes interesting.

7 Promote learner autonomy.

8 Personalize the learning process (increase learner involvement).

9 Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.

10 Familiarize learners with the target culture.

+1 *Create a cohesive learner group*.

Source: Dörnyei and Csizér (1998b)

This I combined with David Freemantle's (2001, ch. 9) 'Seven Steps to Stimulate your Imagination' (see list below):

1 Create the conditions for imagination
Create a relaxing environment
Refrain from judgement
Use irrelevant stimuli
Ensure irregularity and informality
Be prepared to take risks

Create a stimulating environment

Be free of interruption

Develop skills in imagination and application

Work hard and practise

2 Declare your aspiration

3 Stimulate your imagination

4 Select the image

5 Validate the image

6 Plan the practice

7 Undertake an 'imaginative review'

I also introduced techniques from EBL (Enquiry Based Learning) – sometimes known as problem-based learning (PBL).

Ultimately I wanted to cater for students who very clearly had different learner needs. Despite them all attending, some *needed* to pass the module, some *wanted* to pass, but my aim/objective was for all of them to reap as much benefit and enjoyment as possible out of the sessions, irrespective of their needs.

I chose the above 'Model of Foreign Language Motivation' because it proposes ways to integrate *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation in the classroom. As mentioned before, intrinsic motivation is related to internal needs such as self-satisfaction at performing a task, whereas extrinsic motivation is related to obtaining extrinsic rewards such as marks and prizes.

David Freemantle's 'Seven Steps to Stimulate the Imagination' (2001, ch. 9) is closely linked to Dörnyei and Csizér's 1998 model (in particular, 1.1–1.9) in that they are both concerned with investing in a person's fundamental human needs in order to nurture and create productivity. They differ in that the former refers to stimulating management in industry and the latter to adult students in the learning environment. Nevertheless, despite their apparent differences, the two are concerned with inspiring, stimulating and motivating people and are therefore inextricably linked.

Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) was developed to overcome the drawbacks of a subject-based curriculum. The central focus of the approach is the analysis of problem situations as a basis for acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes (Little and Ryan, 1991). It has been argued that this approach is in fact the natural way in which humans learn, that is by encountering problems which they have to solve in order to survive (Burrows, 1979). Successful implementation of the above does, however, require lecturers with sound facilitation skills, who believe that learning is more than acquiring knowledge, and that students are motivated to learn, and are able to retrieve and interpret information accordingly.

So, in order to apply the above, my first task was to find out how I was going to motivate the students, and the only way of finding out this information was to ask them the questions in Table 13.1 and listen to their response(s). By opening the channels of communication, we could then work as a team.

As well as asking the students the questions in Table 13.1, I made them aware of materials available to them in the language centre. I also introduced the different techniques that I would be using for language learning, be it classroom-based or ICT (Information and Communication Technology) techniques which would be used as reinforcement to classroom-based learning as well as social media tools (which can be viewed as an effective way of tapping easily into Learners' interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences).

I announced at this point that we would not be using a specific textbook from start to finish, but that I would be sourcing materials from different textbooks and authentic databanks. I also stressed the fact that, although they sometimes might not have a hard copy or anything in print to work from, this did not mean that I had not prepared the lesson; in fact I would be using either authentic, adapted or my own materials to maximize their learning experience.

TABLE 13.1 Student questionnaire

Questions	Responses
1. What are your reasons for learning Spanish?	• Love Spanish, beautiful, sexy language • Have a beautiful sister-in-law and would like to be able to speak to her and maybe find myself a nice Cuban lady • Would be useful for my future career • Open lots of opportunities • Feel ignorant when I can't speak any other language other than English • No other module that interested me and I hate French • I was told that it was any easy module • My friend did it last year with you and said that I had to come to your group because you're good • To be able to say that I am bilingual/bicultural and the opportunities that brings.
2. What you would, realistically, like to achieve by the end of the module?	• To be able to make myself understood when I go on holiday • To talk about myself, family, likes, dislikes • To be fluent eventually but, for now, be able to understand the language • To pass the module • To speak to Spanish friends in Spanish • To find a Spanish girlfriend

The above methods would, in fact, add to the range/variety of materials being used with the aim of motivating and stimulating them to learn Spanish and thus maximize their learning experience (Brophy, 1998).

Finally I asked them voluntarily to provide me with feedback about the course (questions posed, exercises covered, problems encountered, what they enjoyed and why), at regular intervals. I was, and continue to be, determined *to listen* to individuals and work with them collaboratively to maximize their learning potential (Cives-Enriquez, R. M., 2007).

'This can now be achieved in so many ways, and in recent years social media tools have become an easy way for people to comment, learn from each other and use each other as resources. The use of LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, for example, has enabled facilitators and students alike to extend learning beyond the class-room, thus creating learning communities where learning takes place remotely.' The beauty of using the above tools is that it is 'an easy way for some people to connect because they are already motivated to use them – they do not have to learn new skills or find extra time and they like the way the information is presented' (Stella Collins, 2012 – www.braininbusiness.com).

These tools could be used to the facilitators' and Learners' advantage in that materials can be posted before or after a classroom-based session to enable Learners to either prepare, reflect or share findings on their learning. Blog entries are also a popular way of sharing thoughts and ideas for facilitators and Learners. The realization is that learning does not just take place in the classroom, so motivating individuals before they come along to the face-to-face session is also an important part of my work.

Many educational establishments/facilitators are now using a classroom wikispace and completely embedding it into their teaching practice. By using a classroom wiki, the classroom becomes paperless and students can create their own wikispace from a classroom wiki. All students have access to each other's wikis to allow for a more 'community' approach to learning and sharing with the group. All classroom materials, outlines, activities, and Learning Objectives, are accessed through the classroom wiki. This approach enables students to have complete access to their classroom, at any time, no matter where they are in the world. The wiki can be accessed on any computer or device including the iPod Touch, iPhone, iPad and other mobile devices.

In addition to the above, there are features that allow us, as facilitators, to really enhance/embed learning and make it authentic (such as the embed feature for You Tube videos and the ability to upload documents and resources for students to download).

Adaptation of models

The following are examples of how I have adapted Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998b) model and D. Freemantle's 'Seven Steps' to create the conditions for imagination

in my classroom and thereby apply the *stimulus factor* to the language learning environment:

Encourage an atmosphere whereby people are relaxed and do not feel intimidated, pressurized or threatened

This allows learners to unleash their creativity. I introduce games at regular intervals in my teaching, making the language classes fun, interesting and seemingly effortless. I also give the students the opportunity to personalize an already existing game if they so wish, so that it can be adapted to their needs, giving them a real sense of achievement, and satisfaction.

So what exactly can a student learn/achieve through playing games? Well, let me take the example of *Scrabble* here, which is one that they, at beginner's level, seem to love. First and foremost, it is a hugely successful game worldwide, with over 100 million sets being sold in 121 countries. Second, it serves the purpose in mind, allowing the tutor to exploit language for entertainment:

- Unlike any other game, Scrabble draws heavily on morphological knowledge; in fact it is purely morphological, making it one of the most, if not the most word-based game in the market.
- Its multiplying premium squares provide an excellent opportunity for students to revise numbers, and I always encourage them to count out loud (though they seem to do it instinctively); when faced with difficulties I found them to be extremely helpful and encouraging towards each other.

For example:

Student A: [38] 'treinta y . . . I've given you the "*thirty*" bit so you do the "*eight*" in Spanish.'
Student B: '¡ocho!'
Student A: 'Sí . . . yes . . . I knew you knew it!'

This encourages team-support/spirit.

Scrabble is a fundamentally graphical affair, and finding words/verbs in the infinitive or conjugated forms in the dictionary allows the student(s) the autonomy to explore new words and their meanings; but from this wordsearch arise the following dilemmas:

- Do we accept abbreviations?
- When do we start accepting Anglicisms that are now so clearly part of the Spanish language/culture; for example 'email', 'weekend', etc.?

One of the students suggested taking the above game to another level, that is, trying to construct a sentence/question with a given word, for an extra team point. If it were a question, it had to be answered by the opposite team. The above was agreed by the Spanish group and it was applied. It was amazing to see their collaborative use of:

¿*Quién?* Who?

¿*Qué?* What/Which?

¿*Cuándo?* When?

¿*Dónde?* Where?

¿*Cómo?* How?

¿*Cuánto?* How (much/many)?

I would agree that:

The pleasure of Scrabble is in part born of a reversal of perceived linguistic constants. Using language for something other than communicating is in itself a joyous escapism. Scrabble simply converts such value into precise scores – made up of values attributed to each letter of the alphabet within a rigorously economic framework of scarcity (Pires, 2001, p. 7).

The beautiful thing here is that the Spanish group in question actually turned the above into a communicative/interactive exercise, encouraging an exchange of ideas and information.

More and more, I feel that games are becoming increasingly popular in the classroom and in recent years, are being marketed as a quick and effortless way to learn a language; however as a practitioner and linguist, while I may acknowledge their many benefits and their 'fun' approach to learning a second language, the reality is that games are only one piece of the language learning jigsaw.

One game I have discovered recently (and which has won numerous awards) is KLOO; it 'has taken the proven five principles of language learning and embedded them in a game system. These principles of language learning are corroborated by language experts'. KLOO encourages Learners to learn through 'Discovery Learning' (the natural way in which we learned our first language); by putting words into 'context' making learning meaningful for the individual thus aiding long-term memory retention; it's 'fun' and relies on human face-to-face interaction (or 'real people') and is 'generative' showing the learner how 'words fit together into a sentence rather than unconnected words'.

It uses a combination of cards and a game board and offers hours of fun. I particularly like the 'easy colour code system' which is an extremely valuable tool for Visual Learners in particular (www.kloogame.com).

Finally, I agree with Guy Cook (2000, p. 204) when he says that language play 'involves simulation, competition, the creation of social networks and creative thinking' and that 'play – albeit with varying degrees of complexity – can take place at all levels of proficiency'.

Never judge students on their initial performance/ contribution however minimal it may appear

Allow students to explore their creativity and linguistic potential and assess them after they have been allowed to 'grow' and flourish. After all, 'Certain structures are acquired when learners are mentally ready for them' (Dulay et al., 1982). The quiet ones have a way of pleasantly surprising me. In fact, in this particular group I had a particular student who had a stutter in English and felt very self-conscious of that fact in Spanish. I was able to work with her on vocalization techniques and eventually her stutter in English and Spanish almost disappeared as her confidence grew.

In the whole of their 13-week course I did not formally assess the students, but provided constant feedback and support and monitored their progress in the exercises that they did in class and individually at home. They compiled a dossier of all this work and eventually they were allowed to choose their six best pieces of work, making sure that at least four were concerning the basic skills (i.e. reading, writing, oral, aural). Finally I told them that they would have to sit an exam testing these four skills (reinforcing what they had been told at the beginning). By doing it this way, they had to produce the work in a non-threatening fashion and they felt that they had some control over their final mark by choosing six best pieces of work.

On the one hand, I sometimes feel that, in their efforts to monitor progress, tutors can sometimes become *obsessional overassessors*, who are in fact interfering with the learners' motivation and adding to their stress levels, and ultimately creating a negative learning environment (Dörnyei, 1994).

On the other, we are faced with institutionalized goals/aims/objectives that we have to comply with. So what do we do?

Be irrational now and again

By doing something that does not comply with the norm, it will stimulate and surprise the group.

I took my brother's *Scalextric* into another class (London Business School) one day and asked a group of young executives to help me make up the kit; by the time we had finished, they had all sat on the floor, taken their jackets and ties off and got into two teams without me having to instruct them.

I then told them to take their respective cars round the track, making as many car noises as possible. At first I got the 'silent treatment', so I just told them to excuse me while I went to the ladies. I took my time and, in fact, observed them from a TV screen outside the classroom (out of sight), which allowed any passerby to tune into the respective training rooms. The executives tentatively began to 'play' and, when I returned 15 minutes later, all I could hear was 'BRRR . . .',

'Phahh', 'ARGHH'; my exercise had served its purpose.

They were all able to vocalize and even roll their Rs in a relaxed, non-threatening environment! In fact, when it came to rolling their Rs in future lessons, many of them inadvertently reverted back to using the imaginary remote control in order to produce the sound.

In addition to the above example, offering a sweet or chocolate as a reward can stimulate learners to produce more, especially if they like the sweets! Or it simply serves the function of adding to the desired informality and fun element.

Be informal and personalize the learner experience

In another session we were discussing likes and dislikes and food was very much on the agenda, so I decided to ask them '*¿Quién tiene hambre/sed?*' ('Who's hungry/thirsty?'). They all said that they wanted tea/coffee/sandwiches/crisps etc. and spontaneously started to order things in Spanish; they appointed a class representative to go and fetch the items in questions and, when the person returned, they all ate and drank, and even shared some of their food.

This was my 'imagination' session, if you like, since I had gauged that the students were having an off day and I thus reacted to their mood. This then led the students to talk about their native cuisine, as the group was a multi-ethnic group. They were from Pakistan, Jamaica, Germany, Ghana, Turkey, Italy and Sheffield! It led to a wealth of information being exchanged and I, too, told them about Spanish food and how each region had its special dish and I compared it to Latin American food. At the next session we all bought one sample of a typical native dish and explained the ingredients and how it was cooked to the group.

Be prepared to take risks

We delude ourselves that repetition will produce the same old successes. Repetition and routine are risky. Similarly, stepping out of routine by introducing imaginative ideas is also risky (Freemantle, 2001, p. 178).

I decided to introduce an authentic (very short) Latin American poem to the beginner's class. The following text(s) was a combination of *adapted* authentic texts: an untouched poem and questions that I invented myself and used with my students to entice them to be creative and add to their repertoire of adjectives (adapted from Jarvis et al., 1999, p. 76).

Ejercicio A: (Exercise A)
Lee el siguiente texto (Read the following text):
Alfonsina Storni (Argentina: 1892–1938)

Alfonsina Storni fue lo que hoy llamamos una feminista, una mujer de ideas liberales que luchó contra los prejuicios y las convenciones sociales de su época por conseguir

una mayor libertad para la mujer. Su poesía es a veces torturada e intelectual. En su poesía se reflejan la inquietud de su vida. Pensaba que la mujer, a pesar de ser igual que el hombre, vive en una especie de esclavitud con respecto a éste. El final de la vida de Alfonsina Storni fue trágico; al saber que tenía cáncer escribió una breve composición poética que tituló 'Voy a morir' y se suicidó tirándose al mar.

Ejercicio B: (Exercise B)

Utiliza 5 adjetivos para describir la personalidad de Alfonsina. Puedes inventar los adjetivos o extirparlos del texto.

(Use five adjectives to describe Alfonsina's personality. You may invent five adjectives or lift them from the text.)

Ejercicio C: Preparación (Exercise C: Preparation)

Lee **Cuadrados y ángulos** en voz alta
(Read Squares and Angles out loud [this was suggested by the students])
¿Que´ te sugiere a ti las palabras **Cuadrados y ángulos**?
(What do the above words *Squares and Angles* suggest to you?)
Casas enfilades*, casas enfiladas, *in a line*
casas enfiladas,
cuadrados*, cuadrados, cuadrados, *squares*
casas enfiladas,
Las gentes ya tienen el alma* cuadrada, *soul*
ideas en fila* *en . . . in a row*
y ángulo en la espalda;
yo misma he vertido* ayer una lágrima*, *he . . . has shed/a tear*
Dios mío, cuadrada.
(De *El dulce daño*)

Ejercicio D: Dime (Exercise D: Tell me)

1. *Según Alfonsina Storni, ¿cómo es el alma de la gente?*
   (According to Alfonsina, 'what are the peoples' souls like?')
2. *¿Cómo ve el mundo Alfonsina Storni?*
   (How does Alfonsina see the world?)
3. *¿Qué crítica hace Alfonsina Storni en su poema?*
   (What criticism does Alfonsina make in her poem?)
4. *¿Qué nos trata decir la autora de su mundo?*
   (What is the author trying to tell us about her world?)

Ejercicio E: Idea Final (Exercise E: Final Thought)

¿Te gustaría producir tu propia poesía en español? Inténtalo sólo/a o en group.
(Would you like to create your own poetry in Spanish? Try individually or in a group.)

Admittedly, two out of the class of nine students decided not to accept the offer and asked whether they could work collaboratively on other exercises.

Create a stimulating environment

An imaginative environment will stimulate the imagination.

FREEMANTLE, 2001, p. 179

One of the German students was a Harry Potter enthusiast and asked whether she could give a brief presentation on the above, using visuals. She wanted to read to the class, so I suggested she distribute the typed script to the class. She had approached me beforehand to make sure that what she was writing made sense. She did not come to see me personally but sent me an email saying,

'Rosa, mando mi historia de Harry Potter en el "attachment". Puedes mirar y comentar y mandar. Gracias, Asita'.

[Translation: 'Rosa, I'm sending my Harry Potter story in the attachment. Could you look and comment and send. Thanks, Asita.']

Although the above message is not one hundred per cent grammatically correct (nouns and pronouns missing and overuse of 'y', i.e., 'and'), she was able to make herself understood. I did not send the message back 'corrected', but she asked me in the session how she could have improved upon her writing and we, as a group, gave her some suggestions.

Another Sports Science student suggested that we all take part in a circuit class that he had to present to his fellow students. He suggested that we go one step further and he would give us instructions in Spanish. So here we were reinforcing the numbers (reflexive) verbs and giving instructions using set phrases in Spanish ('*Tenemos que*' + infinitive = 'we have to' + infinitive) as well as remembering the parts of the body; expressing likes and dislikes ('*me gusta/no me gusta*'+ infinitive) and 'my *** hurts' ('*me duele*' + part of the body), etc. Luckily, all of the group bar one member decided to participate; the one who did not participate watched from afar, but I saw her out of the corner of my eye lifting her arm and counting on her fingers.

Be free of interruption

Allow students to 'take time out' to think about things. Continuous prompting is unnecessary and I feel that it interrupts their thought process. Allow them to ask each other questions and talk among themselves. Give them the freedom to think and the opportunity to ask questions. For example, in listening comprehension, I always encourage and allow them to listen first to the text and to respond to questions once they have familiarized themselves with it (O'Malley et al., 1989).

What I always aim to do in preparing listening comprehension materials is to keep students' interests and experience firmly in mind, so that the language encountered

clearly reinforces the language that has been learned in the past. This also raises their confidence levels at being able to identify language and allows them to do well.

Develop skills in imagination and application

Imagination requires two skills. First, the skill to create the fantasy and drag the pertinent image from it. Second, the skill to bring the image to life (Freemantle, 2001, p. 180).

All the students in the Spanish class had a fantasy in mind when they walked into the classroom: whether it be the thought of hearing themselves speak Spanish fluently; getting a Spanish/Latin American girlfriend; being able to appreciate poetry and literature; or, just to feel empowered and take away the 'ignorant' factor by understanding some Spanish when they are abroad with family and friends, is enough stimulus to get one started.

I therefore think that it is up to the tutor somehow to bring the image to life; for example, at the end of their semester and exams, the whole group suggested we celebrate, so I recommended a tapas bar in London and gave them directions as to how to get there in Spanish:

'*El Sábado 30 de julio, vamos a cenar en londres. Quedaremos a las 7.30 en xxxxxx. La estación de metro mas próxima es "Angel".*

Hasta el Sábado!'

P.D. Si hay algún problema:

Mi Móbil: 07957, Mi número de Casa:, Mi Email:

They all arrived on time at the bar. There were two who arrived at 8.00 p.m. without an apology in sight, but I just put it down to cultural differences, because I knew enough about their respective cultures to know that it had not been rude or intentional.

We all had a great evening. They ordered their drinks and food in Spanish; asked me for assistance in Spanish; and later we went to the salsa bar upstairs, and one of our students even exchanged telephone numbers with a Colombian young lady. So, in a way, all their individual dreams and aspirations were being fulfilled by allowing them to absorb themselves totally in the Spanish language, culture and environment.

On another occasion (in the classroom), the students asked me to watch a Spanish film, which I was a bit nervous and hesitant to introduce at this stage. Instead of denying them the pleasure, I decided to take the risk and allowed them to watch a film that is very beautiful but could also be very fast in parts; the film is entitled '*Como agua para chocolate*' ('Like Water for Chocolate'). Rather than allowing them to listen to the dialogue, I asked them to write the script based on the body language. (I chose a scene that was very emotive, in which a young chap was declaring his undying love to a young lady. In the next scene, you see the mother and daughters in the kitchen

preparing food and finally a tense moment when the mother denies the daughter's hand in marriage, because she is the youngest of them all, and offers her eldest sister as an alternative.)

I asked them to consider the following:

A *Imagínate que eres español/a o latinoamericano/a. ¿como escribirías el guión para esta película, tomando en cuenta lo que hemos estudiado sobre los españoles/lationamericanos y sus costumbres?*

(Imagine that you are Spanish/Latin American. How would you write the script for this film, bearing in mind what you have studied about Spanish /Latin American customs?)

B *¿Cómo reaccionaría una persona(s) de tu cultura?*
(How would someone from your culture react?)

The exercise provided a very fruitful session in which not only did we explore the Spanish language and culture, but it also gave me an insight into how they, being from different cultures, thought and reacted.

The fact that I wanted to learn about them made them feel good.

Finally, as a trainer and tutor I am constantly trying to explore different ways in which to enthuse my students and encourage them to use technology-enhanced language learning programmes. Unfortunately, to date I remain disappointed with what I have encountered and am reluctant to recommend them unless I am happy that they do achieve a learning objective. With the huge advance in memory capabilities and access to the internet and World Wide Web, the language tutor and learner has at his/her disposal a vast array of resources.

> Data mining and extraction, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, realia and other items are so freely available that the problem has actually shifted from how to find the resources available to how to sift through the enormous quantity of sometimes useless information on offer, and how to use it within the confines of the curriculum/course outlines and restrictions of the copyright and intellectual property laws. (Bangs, 2000, p. 38)

We, as a group, found several sites (www.dontgiveup.eu, www.enchantedlearning.com, www.enciclonet.com, www.EspagnoleFacile.com, www.linguanet-europa.org, www.putumayo.com) which have clear and lively layouts (capturing our attention!), with links to a wealth of information and facts for other languages too. I found that both I and my students were absorbed for a considerable time. However, I would only recommend these websites as reinforcement and enhancement to already studied grammar points or vocabulary; this can by no means replace the tutor. Although these sites offered the student the opportunity to take a stroll through a virtual community, for example, they failed to produce the stimulus that we, as a group, were looking for and there was not really an appropriate level of interactivity or feedback. Often when

feedback is provided it is exclusively of the extrinsic variety (Muy Bien (very good), Bien (good), ¡Inténtalo de Nuevo! (Try again!)), rather than the intrinsic form where the feedback is part of the activity and is in the hands of the learner.

My opinion is that feedback must be rich, readily available and useful to the learner; often as a tutor, I have to turn readily available exercises into a structured learning exercise, where I take on the role of guide and praise Learners for doing well and/or explained questions/queries; by doing this, the exercises thereby provide the students with the level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that they were originally seeking.

Thus, from the perspective of the tutor, I have concluded that very few materials produced offer the necessary level of interactivity, feedback and adaptability.

On the plus side, it is often said that using ICT can:

- Improve outreach to student bodies
- Improve productivity in learning
- Offer appropriate levels of feedback
- Offer individual learning experiences
- Save on some costs

On the negative side, it is also suggested that it can:

- Engender remoteness
- Be difficult to control/access/follow
- More often than not offer poor feedback or none at all
- Be difficult to individualize
- Be costly to create and once created, to buy certain packages (Bangs, 2000, pp. 38–41).

While many sites are interesting from a visual/representational point of view, I still feel that all too often what is seen, are learning materials that can allow a learner to get 'lost in cyberspace'. Too many programmes offer language learning courses which make little, if any, attempt at structuring the language to offer a meaningful progression for the learner. *Context* is obviously of vital importance for the language learner and his/her learning process, and perhaps the main challenge is to enable the learner to obtain the appropriate degree of 'authentic' language alongside the opportunity to navigate within and interact in the foreign language environment.

So I believe that, although many programmes are being piloted and some more sophisticated programmes are being developed, this situation is unlikely to improve greatly in the immediate or near future.

Work hard and practise

The above, I guess, applies to both tutors and their students, the saying, '*Achievement is one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration*', applies to any profession. The difference between one tutor and another is not just the power of the imagination, thought and planning process, but the drive with which the above is realized to achieve a standard of teaching which is far superior to any other. The image of perfection that we have in our minds and endeavour to achieve can only be attained by sheer hard work.

Conclusion

As you can see from the chapter, I do not introduce any new theories in the field of '*Creating motivational materials for L2 adults*'. I simply wanted to reinforce the following points that a student, irrespective of age, sex, nationality, etc. (no matter how motivated/demotivated) will depend on the tutor to stimulate him/her to learn.

I believe that this can only be done if:

1. The tutor concerned is enjoying what he/she is doing (and therefore motivated at potentially creating a group of linguists, be it beginners or advanced), and employing techniques and stimuli that will enhance and inspire a motivational learning environment.
2. I believe that, in the classroom situation, we are all vulnerable, and if we relay that message to students they will respect us and feel more at ease in our company. I truly believe that the classroom situation is and should be an explorational forum for the tutor and students alike. (After all, no two sessions are alike and it is a constant learning process for all of us involved, whether we are instructing or being instructed.) We should be ourselves and feel free to inspire and feel inspired by our students. If you feel passionately about what you do, and I do about the Spanish language, it will show, and that energy is almost contagious; I constantly gain my motivation, inspiration and spontaneity from my students as it really is a team effort. Having said this, examining the motivational process is a complex issue/subject. A point that I hope has been reinforced in this chapter is that language learning does not occur as a result of the transmission of facts about a language or from a succession of rote memorization drills. It is the result of opportunities for meaningful interactions with others in the target language; due to our ever changing global economies, needs, expectations and access to social media, these 'meaningful interactions' may vary according to the individual's need and style and the other variables discussed within the chapter (Lamb, 2012). I therefore feel that our roles as tutors are becoming ever more complex and we have a duty to

> be as responsive as we possibly can to our Learners' needs while at the same time encouraging self-efficacy.

One of my clients recently described us 'language trainers' as 'social chameleons' (due to our ability to change, adapt and respond to our given environments, situations and individuals) and I guess that is an apt description for what we do!

All I can say is that I am in complete agreement with Graham's concluding words:

> If there is a message I wish to convey with what has been presented in this chapter, that message is that classroom motivational life is complex. No single word or principle such as reinforcement or intrinsic motivation can possibly capture this complexity. (Graham, 1994, pp. 31–48)

I feel that, ultimately, the stimulus of language (i.e. mother tongue and/or Foreign Language) is a very powerful one and it should be used to motivate and be motivated, and aid us in producing our desired end result.

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14

Materials for Adult Beginners from an L2 User Perspective

Vivian Cook

Introduction

This chapter questions some of the underlying ideas represented in a selection of contemporary adult beginners' coursebooks for teaching several modern foreign languages and suggests some alternatives. Much of the thinking here was shaped in the discussions of the Essex Beginners' Materials Group – a group that met occasionally at Essex University made up of modern language teachers, EFL teachers and materials writers.[1]

The starting-point is three apparently innocuous assumptions about language teaching materials for adults:

1) adult students have adult minds and interests

The adult coursebook is catering for people who do not think, speak, learn or behave in the same ways as children. Sometimes it may be possible for them to pretend to be children for the purposes of a particular exercise or activity. But this suspension of belief can never be more than temporary; the adult sooner or later reverts to being an adult and will inevitably be treated as an adult second language (L2) user as soon as they use the second language outside the classroom for the everyday purposes of their job, their holiday or indeed their academic studies.

2) second language users are people in their own right

L2 users are not just monolingual native speakers with an additional language but people with new strengths and abilities. They not only speak their second language differently from monolinguals but also their first language; they think in different ways from monolinguals; they use the second language for their own purposes – for business, for travelling, for reading poetry, for negotiation, for studying or for many other reasons – negotiating through a second language, translating from one language

to another, code-switching from one language to another. Few students need to pass for natives, apart from professional spies; they are instead mediators between two cultures and two languages. The implications of the L2 user concept for language teaching have been spelled out at greater length in Cook (2007).

3) language teaching has been held back by unquestioning acceptance of traditional nineteenth-century principles

Twentieth-century language teaching was largely heir to the New Reform method of the 1880s (Howatt, 1984). The principles of the priority of speech and the avoidance of the first language have been handed down virtually unquestioned through the mainstream teaching tradition from situational to audiolingual to communicative to task-based methods, an argument spelled out at greater length in Cook (2010a). Yet these principles are not particularly justified by current ideas about how people learn second languages; for instance avoiding the first language assumes the 'coordinate' view of bilingualism that the languages are in separate compartments rather than the 'interconnected' view that sees them as continually linked in many ways, which underlies much modern research (Cook, 2002a). Course-writers should consciously evaluate these principles rather than incorporate them unquestioningly in their coursebooks.

To make the discussions more concrete, we will rely on six representative adult beginner coursebooks of the 1990s, produced by publishers in four different countries: for *Italian Ci Siamo* (Guarnaccio and Guarnaccio, 1997) and *Teach Yourself Italian* (Vellaccio and Elston, 1998), for French *Libre Echange* (Courtillon and de Salins, 1995) and *Panorama* (Girardet and Cridlig, 1996), and for English *Atlas 1* (Nunan, 1995) and *Changes* (Richards, 1998). These are taken as sound examples of modern coursebooks; the criticisms apply just as much to the beginners coursebook *People and Places* I wrote myself (Cook, 1980), as well as to *most* modern coursebooks. For the purposes of this second edition, two English courses from the 2010s have also been looked at, *English Unlimited* (Doff, 2010) and *speakout* (Clare and Wilson, 2011). An epilogue will consider whether any relevant changes have occurred.

At first sight the sample of six books look rather similar – bright covers, glossy pages full of colour photos or cartoons, forms and sentences with blanks to fill in, all attractively laid out in the manner of a magazine or a colour supplement. Do these apparent similarities extend to their assumptions about the ways in which language should be taught and about the students themselves and their goals in learning a language? If so, are these assumptions in fact appropriate for the adult language students of the twenty-first century?

Adult students have adult minds and interests

The adultness of the students has consequences for the coursebook which has to maintain the interest of people who, unlike children, often have particular reasons for

studying a new language and who have adult interests, social relationships and level of intelligence.

The types of students aimed at

To visualize the types of students the coursebooks are intended for, one needs to look at the characters they feature and the topics they are about. *Ci Siamo* 'is based on the adventures and travels of a small group of young adults living in a small Italian town', as is *Teach Yourself Italian*. *Atlas* and *Changes* feature classes of students of English from different countries, *Libre Echange* and *Panorama* young professionals. The Italian and English courses concentrate on the world of the prospective multilingual student; the message is that, to appeal to students of languages, you write about students of language, not about either native speakers or L2 users. The French coursebooks rely more on young adults in their own social world, most of them native speakers. Out of the 180 odd characters in these books, those with identifiable jobs are students (20), teachers (4), waiters, sailors, doctors, receptionists, civil servants (all with 3), and a cast of one-off lacemakers, entertainers, accountants, ticket-sellers, tramps and others.

The overall impression is lively young people without cares in the world or plans for the future, except tomorrow's party. They are not people with any particular purpose either in life or in their relationships but out to have a respectable good time – the population of summer schools in Cambridge or Perugia. Testing the 'Smile Factor' (i.e. the number of smiling faces; Cook, 2008) the highest concentration is in the first 20 pages of *Atlas* with 54, the minimum in the first 20 of *Libre Echange* with a mere 14 – a concentration otherwise only found in mail-order catalogues and travel brochures. Learning another language is apparently a way of joining this happy band, not of taking an adult L2 user role in the world. The coursebooks are selling an image, rather like the young people in Coca Cola advertisements or the happy global backpackers in those for banks.

Adopting student or young people's life as the model affects the aspects of language the students learn. Take for example the question of introductions. The first time that characters introduce themselves in the coursebooks they say:

Changes	Hello. My name is Maria.
Atlas	Hi. I'm Bob.
Ci Siamo	Mi chiamo Lucy, cioè Lucia . . . Lucia Burns.
Teach Yourself	Mi chiamo Marco Russo.
Libre Echange	Je suis François Roux.
Panorama	Je m'appelle Renaud.

The English coursebooks are perfectly appropriate to the language classroom where teachers and young students are on informal terms, removed from the pecking order in the world outside the classroom. Hence first names are the most important terms for immediate use.

But, as we can appreciate from the coursebooks in other languages, introductions are a form of social ceremony, not just a teaching act of identifying people by name. As such, they involve complex assessment of the relationships between the people involved – age, gender, social status, etc – and a particular formal exchange, with the introducer inter alia deciding who to introduce first and whether to provide an appropriate piece of background information about them.

Michel: Entrez Jacky! Je vous presente Pierre.
Jacky: Bonsoir Pierre.
Pierre: Bonsoir Jacky.
Michel: Jacky est une amie de Cecile. . . . (*Libre Echange*, p. 26)

In particular English first names are still perceived in many places as something to be used only when you know the person well. According to newspaper reports and personal experience, British hospitals for example have discovered that many older people feel humiliated by the use of their first names by younger medical staff.

This raises the issue of appropriate titles for people – a big concern outside the classroom wherever different age-groups and status relationships are involved. The choice of title is skimped in the English coursebooks. *Changes* demonstrates the use of titles *Mr, Mrs, Miss* (and the rather dated *Ms*). *Atlas* avoids the issue, apart from one-off incidental examples of *Dr. Nancy Walters* (p. 18), *Ms. Jenny Jordan* (p. 69) and *Mr. Michalik* (p. 71); even its enrolment forms do not require 'title' (though the teacher's book compensates by introducing *Mr.* and *Ms.,* p. 19). The student-in-class centred approach does not prepare the students for the variety of roles they may have to undertake in the world outside the classroom. Outside the classroom there is a need to be aware of the social roles that people have and to use the correct name and form of address.

The topics discussed

The topics that students have to talk about during the course are presumably aimed both at interesting students during the lesson and at enabling them to use the second language for their ultimate goals. A sample of the first ten and last ten pages in each coursebook should represent the range of topics reasonably fairly, in total 156. The most popular are basic functional topics, such as making arrangements or introducing people (48), after which come tourism (20), general information (17) (including statistics and information about the country), identifying and describing yourself and other people (16), making plans and arrangements for activities such as parties (12), discussion (9), tourist attractions (8) and dealing with hotels (4). Culture contributes 6 topics, the Italian and French courses dealing with real films, poems and plays. Finally

a category with 16 examples is topics with no rationale other than teaching, such as identifying countries and nationalities, describing occupations, naming body parts, and so on, activities that no-one would do outside a classroom. During these coursebooks the students mostly learn to talk about functional tourist/visitor topics such as buying things and tourist attractions or to discuss each other in general terms ('Are you good at sports?') or to arrange details of their happy everyday student/tourist lives such as parties and holidays.

The subject matter is seldom adult, with the exception perhaps of *Libre Echange* or of Carlo admiring Lucia in *Ci Siamo* 'Ha un sorroso carino' – by the last page of the book they have twins. It's a sanitized world of clean-living teenagers untouched by 'sex and drugs and rock "n" roll'. There is little overlap between what students talk about in language teaching and what adults choose to encounter in magazines, television programmes, newspapers, pop songs, computer games, movies or indeed conversations that go past the preliminary personal information. One simple omission is money; most adults worry about their lack of income and their high level of expenditure, about the price of CDs or the exchange rate against the euro. Other than the prices in shops, money is never a topic in coursebooks, presumably because students and tourists are not part of the labour force. On a Dublin bus I overheard a group of multilingual EFL students talking. Their topics were either pop or sexual innuendoes, culminating in the memorable remark 'I don't kill women; I only kill mens' (to which the perfectly sensible reply was 'What is mens?').

The blandness of these coursebooks is partly dictated by fears of giving offence for religious or political grounds and of going out of date. But a world in which nobody talks about television, sport, pop music, food, films, gardening, work, current news, and so on, is a strange place. At the end of these courses the students will be able to discuss a limited range of topics at a general level – 'I think Keiko is interesting. She likes music and art' (*Atlas*, p. 89) – unable to deal with most political, cultural or sporting topics (though the French coursebooks at least mention the Tour de France and dangerous sports and *Changes* has short biographies of Gloria Estafan and Ronaldo). The students are left unprepared for almost any adult topic of conversation in their L2 use. All they can say is 'I can play the piano' (*Changes*, p. 78), 'Do you like swimming? Yes I do' (*Atlas*, p. 44), 'Giochi a tennis? No, mai. Non mi piace' (*Ci Siamo,* p. 80), 'Les jeunes aiment danser sur la musique «techno»' (*Panorama,* p. 27).

Suggestion I: Materials aimed at adults should be adult in theme, teaching method and language

Adultness has then a number of consequences for coursebooks, such as:

– talking about adult topics, not just functional exchanges ('Ha un camera singola?') or introductory remarks ('Moi, j'aime le sport'). At least the teacher could be

given guidance how this could be developed into more adult-like conversation. Previous discussion of topics in language teaching suggested a range including personal information, books and information about language itself (Cook, 1983). Lists of frequent topics for teenagers were compiled in the 1970s (Rutherford et al., 1970) and indeed I based a course *English Topics* on them (Cook, 1975); equivalent lists for adults could be devised by checking the topics that adults actually watch on television say – soap operas (gossip was top of the teenagers' list), sport (commentaries and gossip), quiz shows, detective 'dramas', news programmes, pop music, films, niche programmes on cookery, gardening and house design, etc. The danger would be choosing the 'high culture' of opera etc. rather than people's everyday interests such as football. But the topics would have to be explorable to an adult level of conversation, not just 'What is your favourite Olympic sport?'

– using adult roles. At one level students aiming to talk like students is a snake swallowing its own tail; the L2 target needs to escape this vicious circle. At another level the target is bound to the functional exchanges of short-term visitors to a country, such as tourists or indeed students; the target needs to incorporate at least people who are living and working in the L2 culture. There needs to be an extension of roles away from the vague world of the current coursebooks, which may perhaps reflect the equally vague aspirations of some teenagers, towards roles in the workplace and social life of adults, as doctors, as travel agents, as social workers etc. or tennis-players, theatre-goers, animal rights protesters or whatever. This effect operates on the two levels of the roles intended to attract the students within the actual coursebook and the ways in which the second language will be useful to them in their future lives.
– engaging in adult activities. Perhaps in a second language adults can only handle tasks used by 7-year-olds. Perhaps, however, the main virtue of explicit grammar is that it provides a task where the students have to engage their adult level of formal operational thinking in Piagetan terms, that is the level of cognitive development at which children can stand outside their own cognitive processes 'to think about thinking'. Course-writers need to think of activities that function at an adult level. The fact that the language and the content have to be readily usable by the beginner does not mean that the tasks have to be puerile.

The communicative teaching method grew in part from the approaches used in English primary schools in the 1970s to rectify language deficiencies in English children; *Talk Reform* (Gahagan and Gahagan, 1970) and *Concept 7–9* (Wight et al., 1972) introduced the role-plays and information gap exercises that have become a staple of modern teaching. Task-based learning has in a sense continued this primary-school tradition. Willis (1996) describes six main types of task: listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem-solving, sharing personal experience and creative. *Atlas* (teacher's book) lists ten types of task including classifying ('putting things that are similar in groups'), conversational patterns ('using expressions to start conversations and keep them

going') and co-operating ('sharing ideas and learning with other students'). None of these would be out of place in the primary school, comparing and classifying being classic primary school activities. The popular matching/mapping exercise 'Listen again and draw lines to match the words' (*Atlas*, p. 13), the typical tick-the-boxes questionnaire on personal habits (*Ci Siamo*, p. 80), the archetypal giving-directions-from-a-map exercise (*Changes*, pp. 32–3), the universal naming of body parts exercise (*Panorama*, p. 66), comparing individual's answers in a small group 'Vérifiez en petit groupes si vous avez trouvé les mêmes résultats' (*Libre Echange*, p. 126), none of these activities intrinsically involve adult-level intelligence and skills.

A justification for the use of child-like activities, strongly advocated for example by several members of the Essex Beginner's Materials group, is that second language learning infantilizes people; they *need* to be reduced to the dependent state of little children if they are to succeed, thus justifying, say, extreme forms of audiovisualism. While this may indeed be one basis for successful coursebooks, there is no reason why it should be the only one. To justify infantilization would require a new approach to second language acquisition, say building on the Vygotskyan theories (Anton and DiCamilla, 1998) that emphasize the learner's need for appropriate 'scaffolding' from other people. To implement infantilization properly in teaching might require it to incorporate other aspects of infantilization (Students asking permission to go to the toilet? A letter from their parents when they're late? Confiscation of objects that the teacher disapproves of such as mobile phones?). In particular it would go against the communicative tradition of the teacher as *primus inter pares* and re-establish the teacher as all-powerful controller, as Swan (2009) pointed out cogently.

Second language users are people in their own right

Adoption of the native speaker goal

In language teaching both language teachers and students have often had a native speaker goal in mind; success is measured by how close the students get to a native speaker norm. Though it is seldom stated explicitly, this probably reflects the everyday feelings of most students and teachers, as Timmis (2002) shows; student progress means getting closer to the native speaker standard. Yet the only language that one speaks as a native is the one you learned first in early childhood – by definition. The belief in this unattainable goal frustrates teachers and students alike. The alternative is to emulate successful L2 users, not native speakers. With an achievable goal in mind, the atmosphere in teaching can be more positive, always looking to how successful the students are in building up their second language rather than how unsuccessful they are in closing the unbridgeable gap.

The native speaker target implicit in much language teaching reflects on the one hand a goal students can never meet, on the other limits their achievements to what native speakers can do. An L2 user lacks all sorts of abilities and knowledge possessed by a native speaker. But an L2 user can do many things that a monolingual cannot. Oranges are not imitation apples but fruit in their own right.

The native speaker orientation is clearly reflected in the people who are portrayed in the coursebooks. Only 14 out of the 180 characters are marked as L2 users, that is say 8 per cent; of these 4 are students, 1 a teacher, 1 an entertainer, the rest a chorus of unspecified friends, shoppers and tourists. Clearly L2 users do not concern the course-writers. It is not of course safe to assume from names like Carlos, Maria, Halil or Tomoko scattered through the English coursebooks that the speakers are non-native speakers, as anti-discrimination decisions in the Scottish educational system showed.

The only proper users of the target language are then overwhelmingly seen as its native speakers; L2 users are shown either as involved in language teaching as students or teachers or as unskilled tourists or visitors. Rarely do the coursebooks present people using the second language as part of their normal social or professional lives; it is a surprise when *Libre Echange* introduces Pierre, the interpreter for the Council of Europe. This cast of characters does not begin to represent the many people successfully using second languages in the world today, probably outnumbering those who use only one language. The celebrities who are introduced in the coursebooks are either native speakers, such as Jacques Cousteau or Whitney Houston, or their bilingualism is not mentioned, such as Martina Hingis and Ronaldo.

Native speaker language

The forms and pronunciation that the students are aiming at in these coursebooks are therefore those of native speakers. But native speakers speak differently when a non-native is around, sometimes descending into foreigner talk; for example thanking a perceived L2 user is more likely to consist of 'Thank you very much indeed' than the informal 'Thanks' (Cook, 1985). The language of native-to-native situations portrayed in coursebooks is unlikely to be encountered by the students simply because it changes as soon as they become part of the situation. The language of students-to-students might be a different matter since so much of the coursebooks is about students; however the L2 user students in the books speak the same native speaker speech as everyone else. Jenkins (2000) has argued in favour of teaching a form of English as an International Language based on the speech of L2 students. This type of syllabus does not, however, encompass the full complexity of L2 use in the world outside the classroom, particularly in the case of international languages such as French and English where the reality is indeed often L2 user speaking to L2 user. The frequency of forms, the grammatical rules and the types of interaction in native speech are at best a rough guide to what L2 users need.

Suggestion II. Materials based on the L2 user perspective aimed at adults should reflect the situations, roles and language of L2 users, not just native speakers

If we accept that the students' manifest destiny is to be L2 users, this needs to be built in to courses both as the realistic target to aim at and as a motivation for students. The potential for L2 users is to become successful people with two languages, both in the ability to use another language for their own L2 purposes and in the cognitive, cultural and social advantages that knowing another language confers upon them. Cook (2002b) looks at these in more detail.

L2 user roles

Existing coursebooks hardly ever mention L2 users, as we have seen. Those that are encountered are students or tourists, who are effectively powerless in the L2 situation. Coursebooks need to present favourable images of L2 users, both the invented characters in their dialogues and the famous characters that are paraded from time to time. Invented characters should be people who are clearly employing second languages in their everyday lives, whether doctors, diplomats, business people, housewives, or minority ethnic children, rather than casual users. Famous bilinguals range from Gandhi to Sophia Loren, Einstein to Nabokov, Chopin to Greta Garbo, as seen in the list in Grosjean (1982). Today's international sports-people for example are as multilingual as they come, whether Nadal or Dettori, Vettel or Arsène Wenger. Again the use of famous personalities who have got something out of L2 learning might be a good motivational factor.

L2 user situations

Similarly the situations to be presented need to cover the range of L2 users, not just those of native speakers. What matters is what happens in the doctor's surgery when a native speaker doctor encounters an L2 user patient or an L2 user doctor treats a monolingual native speaker (increasingly the case in the United Kingdom) or an L2 doctor sees an L2 patient, not what happens when native doctor meets native patient. While some simple service encounters between tourists and customers and various organizations are found in the coursebooks, few of them depart from the protocols of native speaking to native. The tourist/visitor situations that are taught need then to incorporate the vital L2 user element; changing foreign money, going through US immigration as an alien, getting medical help through your insurance cover or reciprocal health arrangements, buying goods for unfamiliar money in unfamiliar quantities with

curious taxes added to the price or redeemable on exit from the country. Beyond this we need to see everyday situations in which L2 users are successfully dealing with each other or with native speakers, say two businessmen with different first languages talking on the phone in English, an Italian estate agent selling a house in Tuscany to a French buyer in French, or simply members of multi-ethnic communities in Tower Hamlets talking to each other.

L2 user target language

The consequence of rejecting the native speaker standard is that the appropriate language to model to the students is that of successful L2 users not native speakers. International Students English (Jenkins, 2000) is one step in the right direction but is limited by being only about pronunciation and only about students. But certainly such a student variety is what the student-oriented English and Italian coursebooks require. On the one hand we need to know the characteristics of L2 users; Klein and Perdue (1997) have indeed established a basic variety of grammar that learners of several L2s go through which shows what the grammatical target of an L2-user-based beginners' course might look like. But virtually all vocabulary research has looked at frequencies etc. in native speaker speech, and has seen L2 learners as acquiring these native speaker elements. Perhaps indeed the vocabulary of successful L2 users mirrors native speakers; perhaps it does not. Corpora and descriptions of native speech are secondary information for a L2 user-based approach. The primary information for the coursebook is the language of L2 users, even if for the moment impressionistically. Soon perhaps we will have a proper description of L2 user language from the VOICE project (VOICE, 2009).

The types of situation portrayed

Coursebooks inevitably have to present situations in which the second language is used. In the English and Italian student-based courses, the situations are primarily the language school, the students' digs and the tourist situations of travelling and shopping: people find their way around town, go to parties, shop in supermarkets and meet each other around college. In the French courses the situations are more street-life, entertainment and sport: people drink in cafés, go to cinemas and discos and date each other. Overall the situations are student life, visitor/tourist encounters in a country or polite public encounters between people with no specific social roles other than as fellow-students, friends or service roles such as waiter. These are situations where low-level L2 users encounter native speaker shop assistants etc., low-level L2 users speak to their fellows, or native speakers speak to each other. What is missing are the situations in which high-level L2 users are functioning fully as equals, whether to fellow L2 users or to native speakers.

Language teaching has been held back by not questioning traditional nineteenth-century principles

Some of the actual teaching methods follow from the decisions made in the last section. Others rely on deeper, if unacknowledged, principles of language teaching. '. . . language teaching taboos, such as the mother tongue, grammar, the printed and written word, which have affected our teachers with over-sized guilt complexes, are nothing but superstitions handed down from one innocent victim to the next' (Dodson, 1967, p. 65).

Reliance on the first language

The teaching in these coursebooks is almost exclusively through the second language (the exception is *Teach Yourself Italian*). *Ci Siamo* uses English for grammatical explanation and for some instructions for teaching exercises; the other books never mention the first language. As they are produced for use in a variety of countries, this might be seen as a necessity; yet no hints are provided how the teacher can make use of the students' first language productively in the classroom. The writers have adopted the nineteenth-century injunction to avoid the first language as much as possible in the classroom rather than seeing it as a resource for teaching (Cook, 2001). As Howatt (2004, p. 289) put it, 'the monolingual principle, the unique contribution of the twentieth century to classroom language teaching, remains the bedrock notion from which the others ultimately derive'.

Cook (2001) found the classic arguments for avoiding the second language based on L1 acquisition and mental compartmentalization of languages were groundless and counterproductive; the argument for maximizing communicative L2 in the classroom was sensible but not the same as L1 avoidance. A recent review by Cook (2010b) concluded 'teachers at least should be wary of accepting advice about language teaching goals and methods based on the comparison of L1 and L2 learning rather than on the independent study of second language acquisition'. The point about L2 users is that the two languages are always present in the same mind; one language cannot be totally switched off when the other is being used, whether in terms of vocabulary (Thierry and Wu, 2007), syntax (Cook et al., 2003), phonology (Hermans et al., 2011) or pragmatics (Pavlenko, 2003). The absence from most of these textbooks of a systematic role for the first language is throwing away one of the most valuable assets that the L2 learner has.

Emphasis on the spoken language

Changes and *Atlas* emphasize 'the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing', with the order showing the usual precedence of spoken skills before

written; *Ci Siamo* presents dialogues with speech balloons in photo-story style; *Panorama* uses scripts alongside cartoon strips; *Teach Yourself Italian* and *Libre Echange* start each unit with a taped dialogue. Since these courses are primarily books, the spoken basis is less evident than in the audiovisual courses such as *All's Well that Starts Well* (Dickinson, Leveque and Sagot, 1975). The spoken language is often portrayed through written language. In *Atlas* written language is mostly used to represent spoken dialogues or to provide cues, lists etc. for spoken exercises, with rare use of texts longer than a single sentence; in *Libre Echange* it is used for film scripts. *Libre Echange* and *Ci Siamo* provide more use of informative texts, poems etc. Many of the exercises involve reading aloud, whether of sentences into which the student has inserted words, 'Elise is Martha's . . . . . .', or of substitution tables 'Sono Carlo/ Lucia. Cia, come va/stai?', or turning written into spoken language 'Domande perché i ragazzi sono andati a Roma di domenica?', or using written information in conjunction with spoken materials 'Lisez les informations ci-contre et écoutez'.

The overall emphasis on speech again follows the nineteenth- century insistence on the priority of the spoken language (Cook, 2008). Language syllabuses around the world have unquestioningly taken this as axiomatic; the English curriculum in Cuba insists on 'The principle of the primacy of spoken language' (Cuban Ministry of Education, 1999). Howatt claims 'The spoken language for example is promoted with more determination now than at any time since the Reform Movement' (Howatt, 1984). The arguments for the primacy of speech have not been rehearsed for many years; they include the development of the L1 child, which is beside the point for language teaching that takes on no other feature of first language acquisition, and the historical development of language, which has nothing to do with L2 teaching. Speech and writing have not been looked at in their own right and a rational decision made which aspects of each are relevant for the students. The adult literate student thinks and learns in different ways from a non-literate; indeed modern neurolinguistics research shows that literate people store language in different areas of the brain (Petersson et al., 2000). For the adult literate student, speech is not automatically the primary form of language. 'One could nearly say that in a "literate culture" speech is the spelling of writing' (Kress, 2000, p. 18).

The written language is systematically distorted in these books in the service of the spoken language. Where but in a language teaching book would you find Michelangelo's David with its body parts labelled (*Ci Siamo*, p. 136), a chart to fill in with what you are doing today (*Changes*, p. 72), sentences with fill-in blanks (*Atlas* and *Libre Echange,* almost every page), photos with jumbled poetic captions (*Panorama,* 76–7), lists of words in two columns to be matched (*Atlas*, p. 13)? Spoken language is presented reasonably faithfully through conversations and dialogues; written language is treated as a tool for teaching in any way that suits the course-writer: the message is that only spoken language is real, even if conveyed through writing.

Though one should not understate the value of the spoken language, this attitude does lead to a remarkable neglect of the written language in beginners' language courses. A hurdle for many learners of English is transferring from a writing system

that uses meaning-based characters to one that uses sound-based letters; this extends down to the different ways in which the pen is held and to the ways in which letters are formed in writing – English <o>s are made anticlockwise, Japanese clockwise. Within European languages there are different uses of capital letters; many find the English egocentric for capitalizing the first person pronoun 'I' rather than the second person 'you', as in German 'Sie' and Italian 'Lei'.

This is before one starts looking at the detailed correspondences between sounds and letters. For example the different spoken correspondences of <c> and <g> are briefly mentioned in *Teach Yourself Italian* and *Ci Siamo,* perhaps all that is needed for a language with a comparatively 'shallow' orthography (Katz and Frost, 1992). Learning the letter-names is the extent of the coverage in *Atlas* (p. 25), which calls it 'pronunciation'. *Changes* introduces letter-names in order to spell words aloud (p. 10) and at least explains the different sound correspondences for <s>. Otherwise there is barely a mention of spelling or any other properties of the writing system in the English courses, a strange gap given the well-known problems created by its 'deeper' orthography, which has many aspects other than sound/letter correspondences. Some of the words that L2 students get wrong most often are 'because', 'accommodate', 'beginning', 'their/there/they're', 'different' and 'business' (Cook, 2008). But these coursebooks provide no help with this whatsoever. Nor do the French courses provide much help either, say with the features of the French writing system that differ from other European languages, such as the accents and cedilla, unless concealed in pronunciation practice such as 'Le «e» tombe parfois' (*Libre Echange*, p. 85) (incidentally this example shows a feature of French punctuation, the goose feet « », that is also not explained anywhere). Many L2 users vitally need to learn about the properties of the L2 writing system and the idiosyncratic properties of particular words, just as much as they need an adequate pronunciation.

Suggestion III: Teaching methods can go beyond the principles of language teaching familiar since the nineteenth century

Use of the first language in the classroom

Some systematic uses for the first language in language teaching have been described in Cook (2001); once the use of the first language is countenanced in the classroom, it can be used to give instructions and explanations to increase L2 practice, to firmly link L1 and L2 knowledge together in the students' minds, to help collaborative dialogue with fellow-students, and to encourage L2 activities such as code-switching for later real-life use. This could necessarily only be provided in coursebooks for speakers of a particular first language, say French coursebooks for English speakers or English coursebooks for Italian learners.

Applied to coursebooks the first language can be used for:

(a) conveying meaning

A key issue in language teaching, relatively undiscussed since the days of audiolingualism and audiovisualism, is how the teacher presents the meanings of the language to the students, whether of words, functions, grammatical structures or whatever. Most coursebooks provide little help or advice with presentation and acquisition of meaning, which is acquired as if by osmosis from the language input; at most, pictures of concrete objects are provided and some explanation of grammatical meaning. Yet 39 per cent of teachers use the first language for explaining meanings (Franklin, 1990). Conveying meaning through the first language may be as effective as any other means, provided it does not imply that the meanings of the second language are translation equivalents of the first language.

(b) explaining grammar

Again 88 per cent of teachers use the first language for explaining grammar (ibid.). While the technique of FonF – focus on form – has brought grammatical explanation back into the classroom as a follow-on from other activities, the discussion in say Doughty and Williams (1998) does not seem to mention which language should be used for the explanation. If the students' conscious understanding of grammatical rules is a crucial element in learning, one needs to ask *which* language acts best as a vehicle for conveying the actual rules. There is no virtue in making the grammatical explanation deliberately difficult by using the students' weakest language. Indeed explanations may be unwittingly based on the concepts of the second language; it is an interesting question whether, say, a Japanese coursebook for English should use the English categories, say syllables, or the Japanese categories, moras, in its explanations.

A counterargument is that grammar explanation in the classroom is simply another form of comprehensible input; the students are learning the language by trying to understand some complex topic in the second language; the subject matter is immaterial and might as well be nuclear physics or knitting. If grammar is just another topic to be communicative about, then other topics might well prove more stimulating to students, at least the form of grammar taught in classrooms rather than the more exciting version in say Pinker (1995). Grammatical explanation that is intended to create useful understanding of the target language is, however, something else; it is the message that is important, not the form. If it is understood better through the first language, as seems little doubt, then it should obviously be conveyed through the first language. While it may be 'educational' to have pre-take-off safety instructions on aircraft in another language, most passengers would probably prefer them to be in a language they have fully mastered.

(c) giving instructions and tests

Rather than having cumbersome simplified instructions for what the students have to do in the second language, these could sometimes be written in the first language. The loss would be a certain amount of genuine communication with the student through

the second language, though in fact the classroom lends itself intrinsically to only a small range of language function; the gain would be not only the students being able follow the instructions more swiftly but also a greater complexity of activities and tests since the language for setting activities up would no longer get in the way.

(d) using within teaching activities
Without going back to undesirable forms of translation activities, the coursebooks could include activities where the students deliberately have to use both languages, say through code-switching as in the New Concurrent Method (Jacobson and Faltis, 1990). The activity may get students to explain the task to each other, to negotiate their roles in it, and to check their understanding or production of language, all in the first language.

Use of the written language in the coursebook

The general suggestions in Cook (2005) can be applied to the design of coursebooks. In addition to the existing provision of written language in the coursebooks for supporting spoken exercises, as scripts of spoken dialogues, as fill-in sentences and forms or as short informative texts, coursebooks need to teach the distinctive features of the written language. The basic elements of the English writing system in terms of spelling, orthography, direction of writing, etc. need to be built-in to the beginners' course in one way or another. On the one hand this may prevent the types of persistent problems one still sees in advanced learners; after many years of French I still did not have any systematic reason for using an acute or grave accent, because no-one taught it to me to the best of my recollection. Written language can be authentic notices, signs, real advertisements etc.; it can demonstrate proper discourse roles and functions. It can take its place alongside spoken language as a crucial aspect of L2 use, particularly in these days of emails, text messages and the web.

Obviously this analysis has taken an unconventional perspective. There is no intention to imply that these are the only ways of approaching these issues or that they necessarily come as a package. A beginners' course that incorporated any of these ideas would be radically different from materials currently available across languages and across countries. According to the three initial assumptions, the apparent variety of coursebooks on sale is an illusion: none of them bases itself on L2 users, incorporates the first language systematically, uses a range of adult topics and situations or adequately covers writing. The much-discussed choices between tasks, functions, lexical syllabuses etc. are superficial compared to these underlying assumptions, which affect every page of the coursebook. These assumptions may be wrong; the traditional principles may be unchallengable. But, if they are never brought out into the open, lauded changes in language teaching such as communicative tasks, FonF, lexical syllabuses or whatever, are nothing but the tip of the iceberg, liable to melt in the first rays of the sun, rather than the solid mass hidden beneath the waves.

Epilogue

From a vantage point ten years on from writing the first version of this chapter, has anything much changed in adult EFL materials? The two more recent comparison courses, *speakout* (Clare and Wilson, 2011) and *English Unlimited* (Doff, 2010), are now defined in Common European Framework terms (CEFR, 2013) as levels A2 and A1 respectively. They are even glossier than their predecessors; *speakout* for example has a photobank for food, stacking some 47 advertising-style photos of food on one page (p. 156), *English Unlimited* a page of 15 highly coloured drawings of food and 20 national flags (p. 111). The books resemble not so much modern magazines as the dense information and lurid colouring of fliers for takeaway food, particularly in the use of coloured backgrounds and reversed-out letters in white or pale colours; even most web pages are now less broken up and colourful; *speakout* has a Smile Factor of 38 smiling faces in the first 20 pages, *English Unlimited* 58, beating the previous record – the English-speaking world is such a happy friendly place. *English Unlimited* features students called Phuong from Hanoi, Karen from Berlin, and Wendy from Ghana (p. 12), but also Olga an officeworker and Ben a doctor, as before known only by their first names. The people are aged between 18 and 30, with the occasional exception; none are described as using a second language. Famous people abound include Frida Kahlo, Louis Armstrong, Pablo Picasso, Lewis Hamilton etc., but nobody appears who is said to know more than one language, even when self-evident as with Picasso. L2 users are still not considered appropriate role models for students.

The distinctive features of the written language such as spelling, punctuation, choice of italics and so on receive attention in *English Unlimited,* which has a series of small boxes showing sound/letter correspondence, but none in *speakout*. There is then progress, by *English Unlimited* at least, towards the realization that the written forms of English are crucial to the actual needs of present-day students; the ability to send an email for business, a tweet for protest or keep a blog are closer to the core of students' activities than having spoken conversations with strangers.

The two courses employ a startling range of typographical devices, such as the almost total use of sans serif typefaces in both books rather than the usual book serif typefaces. Clearly coursebook publishers have absorbed the 90-year-old advice by Tschichold (1928/98) that sans serif letters are the sign of modernity, which Tschichold himself later abandoned. Capital letters are lacking in the title *speakout* and in many of the headings in it such as '1.1. question forms . . . 1.2 past simple . . .' (p. 128); it introduces a number of constructed compound words 'writeback', 'LanguageBank' and 'LOOKBACK'. But none of these clever layouts prepare the students for reading English texts whether books, newspapers or the signs of the street. The forms and layout are quite inauthentic of most written English genres today, other than takeaway fliers.

So have the two main suggestions above been adopted? Suggestion 1 was inter alia that there should be adult themes. *speakout* has topics such as sports, the Sims, Google,

etc. often linked to BBC programmes –that is the content of light entertainment, rather more adult than before. *English Unlimited* talks about the life of Picasso, journeys, office clothes etc., certainly more adult in tone. Both cover essentially brief social conversations between casual acquaintances. While the tourist-type situations of the plane journey, the shop etc. are around, their role seems more marginal. The situation of being a student is still at the core in a constantly light-hearted fashion; *English Unlimited* tells of students from Vietnam, Ghana and Germany in terms of where they live but nothing of what they are studying, why they are studying and how they are managing to pay for it – students all appear to be attending language schools rather than universities. Students go to Milan (*speakout*, p. 109) and who do they meet? Other students.

Suggestion 2 was that courses should encourage students to be second language users rather than native speakers. Both books seem not to mention L2 situations, L2 language or the important role that L2 users play in the world. They make no use at all of the L1 in teaching, seeming to assume a totally L2 English classroom. Superficially these books are very international – they feature people and places from around the globe – but these are never presented as L2 users. The illustrations and photos are either diverse countries or might be anywhere, the familiar limbo land of coursebooks. English-speaking countries are included but in no way singled out; you hear as much about 'Istanbul, Turkey' as about 'London, England', as *English Unlimited* styles them. London is a tourist destination in *speakout* (p. 28), like Copenhagen, Tokyo and Munich (p. 98). The solution adopted in my old beginners' series (Cook, 1980) was to situate book 1 in English-speaking limbo-land, Book 2 in Hong-Kong, New York and London, and Book 3 in Oxford (England!) using the actual restaurants, hospitals, cooks and radio DJs of the city, my argument then being that by Book 3 students would be thinking of visiting an actual English-speaking country for an extended period. Now I would doubtless substitute for Book 3 a book on L2 user situations around the world.

In both coursebooks this lack of focus on England and on L2 users gives the curious impression that people everywhere in the world speak English, never meeting speakers of other languages. The issue of the native speaker has been solved apparently by making everybody native speakers. It is a step forward to have put England in the same position as any other country. (An odd reminder of the old days comes in the *speakout* references to such British cultural icons as Joanna Lumley, Michael Palin, the Two Ronnies and Gerald Durrell, a traditional BBC England-oriented view of the world.) But the goal, as in the CEFR's concept of polylingualism (CEFR, 2013), appears to be people who speak English *within* particular countries, not people who speak English to people *from* other countries, elaborated in Cook (2011), except of course for mixed classes in language schools, nor English for the everyday multilingualism of most cities today.

Judging from this sample then, some small change has come in the provision of spelling materials in *speakout*, which has to be applauded. There is a change in both courses in the de-emphasis of native speakers and native-speaking countries, which is

also a step forward. But this has not led to the emergence of the L2 user as a justifiable target for the student, a multilingual citizen of an increasingly multilingual world.

Note

1 I am very grateful to the members of the Essex Beginners' Materials Group for their stimulating discussions; the membership included Suzuku Anai, Liz Austin, Gladis Garcia, Shigeo Kato, Lou Lessios, Ignazia Posadinu, Peter Treacher and Emi Uchida, all associated with the University of Essex, who were doubtless startled by the direction in which some of their comments led me.

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15

Mining the L2 Environment: ESOL Learners and Strategies Outside the Classroom

Naeema Hann

By strategies, I mean the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge

RUBIN, 1975, p. 43

Introduction

The role of language learning strategies (LLS) in progress with English language learning is well established. Interaction, especially with native speakers, has also been shown to be a factor in improving second language skills. However, little has been reported on strategy use by learners outside the classroom. This chapter reports findings from a longitudinal study which evidenced strategy use by successful learners to invite interaction with native speakers outside their classrooms.

The chapter will begin by briefly sharing the theoretical background to learner strategies. The focus will then narrow down to social strategies particularly those involving interaction for example the role of interaction, especially with native speakers, has been shown to be a contributory factor in improving second language skills and performance. The lack of opportunities to interact with native/proficient speakers and the reasons for this lack will then be established. Next, findings from the research project will be shared. The findings – show even beginner learners are using strategies successfully to invite interaction with native speakers outside their

classrooms – describe strategies reported by learners who made progress with their language skills over the course of the study. Finally, suggestions for materials for learner training in strategy use by learners outside the classroom will be presented.

It is widely agreed that, in order to be effective, second language (L2) learning materials need to reflect the linguistic and cultural realities learners will encounter outside the classroom. Alongside this, second language acquisition (SLA) literature tells us that practice and exposure to the target language (TL) is key to proficiency in that language. Given these two tenants of second language learning, one could be forgiven for assuming that learners in a target language (TL) environment make use of this environment by interacting with native or proficient speakers outside the classroom. However, literature suggests that L2 learners in TL environments do not necessarily interact with native speakers.

Theoretical background

Tamada (1996) suggests research in language learning strategies (LLS) can be summarized in three waves of activity: the first wave was studies of good language learners (Rubin, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978) which almost introduced this area of SLA to us, followed by studies which listed and described LLS as well as developed taxonomies of learner strategies (O'Malley et al., 1985; Oxford, 1990). Alongside this second stage of research in learner strategies, there was work on learner training which continues to date (O'Malley et al., 1985, 1990; Wenden, 1998; Chamot, 2004). The third wave, which continues to the time of writing this chapter, is research and publications looking into influences on choice of learners strategies (Oxford, 1996; Dörnyei, 2005; Hann, 2012) with a growing emphasis on social and affective strategies as well as relationships between strategies and other factors in SLA such as motivation (Wenden, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001, 2005; Ushioda, 2008). Work on LLS in some ways has come full-circle with a reopening of investigation into the good language learner (Griffiths, 2008) but with new insights and a growing understanding of relationships between LLS and other variables in SLA.

Communicating with native speakers

The 1975 paper 'What the "good language learner" can teach us' by Joanne Rubin was seminal in starting discussions which approached the strategies used by second language learners as a variable on its own rather than as part of a broader discussion on motivation or attitudes. In this first major treatment of what successful language learners do to improve their skills in the target language, Rubin drew on published research on motivation and learner behaviour to describe strategies good language learners use. She described seven strategies employed by good language learners, of

which two are of particular relevance for ESOL learners who live in a target language environment:

- 'The good language learner has a strong drive to communicate, or to learn from a communication.'
- 'The good language learner practices.' (Rubin, 1975, pp. 46–7)

These two strategies highlight the role of interaction in successful language learning. Researchers in Canada, (Naiman et al., 1978, p. 32) also described five strategies used by successful language learners including two strategies directly related to the social and affective nature of language learning:

- 'GLLS exploit the target language to convey and receive messages, [. . . .] seeking out situations to communicate with members of the target language group.'
- 'GLLs successfully *manage affective demands* made on them by language learning.'

The attention on learner strategies as a distinct set of variables influencing second language learning continued with Skehan (1989, p. 73) describing language learning strategies as being in 'contrast' to motivation and aptitude as 'here we have the possibility of the learner exerting control over the learning process'. A large study in the United Kingdom and Europe also highlighted the importance of interactional strategies used by learners and described a successful learner as an 'active and willing partner . . . her contribution to the construction of understanding is strategic' (Bremer et al., 1996, p. 123). Pitt (2005) in Britain observed that less successful learners are not 'active' partners in conversation, leaving the target language interlocutor to 'do the work of checking, diagnosing and repairing misunderstanding' (p. 156).

Classification of language learning strategies

While Rubin (1975) had classified learner strategies into direct and indirect strategies, O'Malley et al. (1985) listed 26 strategies which they categorized as metacognitive (planning learning), cognitive (direct strategies for learning, e.g. practicing) and social (e.g. creating opportunities for interaction). As Griffiths (2008) suggests, this separation of social strategies into a distinct category showed the importance of interaction in second language learning at a time when the balance was still in favour of language rather than learning in ELT materials and research.

Classification of learner strategies continued with Oxford (1990) retaining Rubin's two overall categories and further dividing these into six categories. She suggested that direct strategies could be further divided into cognitive, memory and compensation strategies and indirect strategies could be divided into metacognitive, social and affective strategies. She felt that this organized learner strategies into a system rather

than simply lists which meant that relationships between different sets of strategies could be shown.

Within the categories of social and affective strategies, social strategies, particularly those involving interaction with native speakers, have been shown to be a major contributory factor in improving second language skills (Naiman, Frohlich et al., 1978; Spolsky, 1989; Griffiths and Parr, 2001; Derwing et al., 2007). However, teachers and students do not necessarily agree on the importance of social strategies. Earlier studies by O'Malley et al. (1985) and Nunan (1988) report a high level of mismatch between learners' and teachers' perceptions of which language learning strategies are important. For instance, while learners reported social strategies involving learning by interaction with others such as 'I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk' as the ones they used most frequently, teachers ranked the social strategy group as the fourth most frequently used. Teachers believed that the most frequently used group of LLS, by students, was memory, for example 'I use flashcards to remember new English words' or 'I review English lessons often', memory was reported by students as being the *least* frequently used strategy. An important finding was that higher-level students used more strategies more often compared to lower-level students (Griffiths and Parr, 2001). However, although there was a mismatch in the importance given to particular strategies by learners and teachers, both groups ranked one set of learning strategies similarly. These were affective strategies (Griffiths and Parr, 2001; Griffiths, 2007). Teacher and student beliefs in the importance of strategies have implications for teacher training, LLS training in second language learning programmes, and how opportunities for second language learning are presented.

Influences on strategy use

Culture and ethnicity have been shown to play a role in the use and choice of learner strategies (Politzer and McGroarty, 1985; Oxford, 1996). In teacher centred, hierarchical cultures learners are expected to be passive and so are less likely to employ learner strategies. Cultural background also affects which strategies learners choose to use. For instance, Hispanic ESL/EFL students chose to use 'predicting, inferring . . . avoiding details, working with others rather than alone and basing judgements on personal relationships rather than logic' (Oxford, 1996, p. xi). On the other hand, Japanese learners 'reflectively use analytic strategies aimed at precision and accuracy, search for small details, work alone and base judgements more on logic than personal interactions' (ibid.). Oxford suggested that cultures which support the learning of definite items in a linear fashion, for example Korea and Arabic-speaking countries, resulted in learners mostly using rote learning strategies whereas North Americans tended to use more flexible strategies and thought of teachers as facilitators. Here it may be useful to note that a study related to strategy use according to nationalities reported that compared to Hispanic students, Asian students showed fewer strategies associated with successful language learners (Politzer and McGroarty, 1985).

Chamot (2001) also acknowledges the role played by learners' culture of origin in the use of strategies by learners and raises the question of whether learning strategies aimed at developing learner autonomy are valued across all cultures or only by some cultures.

Research also points to the role of learner beliefs in the use and choice of strategies (Wenden, 1986). Later work in SLA (re)linked motivation and the use and choice of learner strategies (Dörnyei, 2001; Ushioda, 2008).

Communicating with native speakers

As said earlier, the 1978 study on good language learners by Naiman et al., showed that having contact with native speakers was the strategy most reported by successful learners. Later work in SLA has also established exposure and practice to be the two essential conditions for learning a second language (Spolsky, 1989; DeKeyser, 2007b). Lantolf and Pavlenko (1995, p. 110) emphasize the importance of interaction in the target language:

> the language acquisition device is not located in the head of the individual but is situated in the dialogic interaction that arises between individuals engaged in goal-directed activities.

For learners in TL countries, exposure and opportunities to practise can happen inside – formal – or outside the classroom – informal but cannot be guaranteed. Studies by Norton (1995, 2010), Bremner et al. (1996) and DeKeyser (2007) show that being in a target language environment does not guarantee opportunities 'to communicate with members of the target language group', one of five strategies employed by good language learners (Naiman et al., 1978, p. 32). There is a growing body of publications which report on the growing use of English as a Lingua France – the use of English as a means of communication between non-native speakers of English (Firth, 1996; Graddol, 2000, 2006). However, so far the research reports on communication strategies used by non-native speakers (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Cogo, 2012; Iles, 2012) rather than strategies used to improve their English. The possibility of individuals participating or not in informal interactions is also illustrated in a study from Canada. In a longitudinal study Derwing et al. (2007) studied the influence of exposure to English outside the classroom in Canada. The participants came from Slavic and Mandarin-speaking communities. They suggested that the lack of improvement in Mandarin speakers' performance was related to how much exposure to English they had outside their ESL class as more Slavic language speakers reported having interactions in English outside class (Derwing et al., 2007). So what could be these barriers to interaction with native speakers outside the classroom?

Norton (1995) suggests unequal power relationships between learner-speakers and native speakers of a language as a defining factor in learners not benefiting from

a target language environment. Norton explains these unequal relationships in terms of the constructs of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) and individual agency which have a role to play in the strategy use (or not) by learners of seeking opportunities for interaction. Bourdieu (1973) argues that an individual's agency in a situation depends on, among other things, the cultural capital he/she is perceived to have, cultural capital being the attributes which identify individuals as belonging to a particular (social) class or group. Norton (1995) found that the social structures which were the context of these women, prevented the women being seen as having the cultural capital which would have allowed them equal access to a milieu which in turn would allow them to develop their English. So it could be said that cultural capital and individual agency had a role to play in strategy use by learners seeking opportunities for interaction. This has echoes of work done in Europe and the United Kingdom which showed that in L2 interactions L2 speakers were positioned as inferior and helpless (Bremer et al., 1996). So it cannot be assumed that just because second language learners are in a target language environment they are able to practise and improve their target language.

ESOL learners and LLS outside the classroom

The Adult ESOL Core Curriculum for England is designed to develop learners' *communication* strategies systematically, however, *learner* strategies are not paid direct attention in this key document which serves as the basis of a syllabus for many ESOL programmes across England and Wales and certainly as the basis of assessment in ESOL. Similarly, accredited ESOL teacher training lacks explicit attention to developing learner strategies among ESOL learners despite findings by Baynham et al. (2007, p. 8) that '[strategies which] promoted [. . . .] a collaborative learning environment, connecting the classroom with learners' outside lives were less in evidence' and ESOL teaching was 'more focused on teacher-oriented activities than on learner ones'. A quick look at the handbook for the Additional Diploma in Teaching English (ESOL) in the Lifelong Learning Sector (City & Guilds, 2007) shows us that the emphasis, particularly in the assessment frameworks for this qualification, is on language and *teaching*, with one or two items in the module content referring explicitly and directly to language *learning*. More importantly, the focus of the modules seems to be on promoting learning in a classroom context, without any attempt to equip learners to exploit the target language environment outside the classroom for learning opportunities. At the moment, ESOL teacher training does not address the role of strategy use sufficiently nor directly (Cambridge ESOL, 2008; ESSU, 2008).

Autobiographical literature provides abundant evidence of the use of LLS outside the classroom. For instance, in her book Guo (Xiaolu, 2008) describes coming to the United Kingdom to learn English, falling in love with an Englishman and moving in with him. She writes about paying attention to the form of English but also her emotional engagement with the language as well as her emotions in response to pressures from

having to use English, especially outside a classroom environment. Shappi Khorasani (2009) writes about coming to England as a child from Iran and her experiences of English at school but mostly outside school. Using social and affective strategies is not limited to learning English. Katherine Rich writes movingly about her engagement with learning Hindi, in India, at an affective level and describes her efforts to use it in social situations (Rich, 2009).

However, research on adult ESOL learners in Britain as well as the recent flurry of books about ESOL for adult learners in Britain, have not explicitly addressed the topic of learner strategies. While these publications remain rich sources of information on the cultural and pedagogic context and needs of adult ESOL learners in Britain, more information about what *learners* have done to fulfil those needs would be useful. The studies reported above, especially those predating work by Griffiths and Parr (2001) tend not to make a distinction between strategy use inside or outside the English classroom. However, ESOL/ESL learners live and work in English-speaking environments, therefore it would be useful to see to what extent strategies can be used to exploit this environment for language learning.

In view of ongoing cuts to funding for ESOL provision in England, developing strategies for learning becomes paramount with research evidence showing the contribution of learner strategies to increased learning of the target language. Development of LLS by ESOL learners will allow them to maximize the L2 environment as a source of learning and consolidating their L2 skills.

ESOL learners and language learning strategies: Some recent findings

'No room! No room! They cried out when they saw Alice coming.' 'There is plenty of room!' said Alice indignantly and she sat down in the large armchair at one end of the table.

A Mad Tea-party, *Alice in Wonderland*, CARROLL, 1865

The next section in this chapter reports findings from a longitudinal study in Yorkshire which investigated factors supporting progress of ESOL learners (Hann, 2012). The study did not set out to investigate language learning strategies as such, however, in response to the research question 'What supports progress of ESOL learners, in their speaking skills?' the data provided overwhelming evidence of strategy use by respondents. This was a mixed methods, longitudinal study where data was collected from the same respondents over two years. Three research tools were used, a Brainstorm and Ranking activity (Barton and Hodge, 2007), a brief questionnaire and interviews. Thirty-three learners participated in the Brainstorm and Ranking activity (BS&R) and 28 of these continued with the interviews.

The findings highlight the resourcefulness and enterprise of ESOL learners using social strategies to mine the L2 environment outside the classroom to create opportunities for interaction and improve their English. The data also showed evidence of affective strategies used by learners to improve their English.

Social strategy 1: Strategies to invite input and to extend practice

The first set of findings come from a brainstorm and ranking tool (BS&R) where respondents were asked to brainstorm and note what helped them improve their English. Thirty-three respondents participated in this activity and reported a total of 101 factors in response to the question, 'What helps you make your speaking better?' Figure 15.1 gives overall results for all respondents.

On analysis, a majority of these factors were found to be strategies employed by respondents. It was interesting to note that of the 101 factors they wrote, strategies outside the classroom were cited 81 times. Further analysis, using Oxford's 1990 taxonomy, showed that the strategies reported by respondents fell into the following categories:

Social strategies

- used outside the classroom, for example 'Speak English at home with children and family' and 'A British workplace where other employees speak English';
- asking for help at word level, for example 'Ask husband and children for spellings';
- reading outside the classroom, for example 'Reading with children';
- used in the classroom, for example 'Talking English in the classroom'.

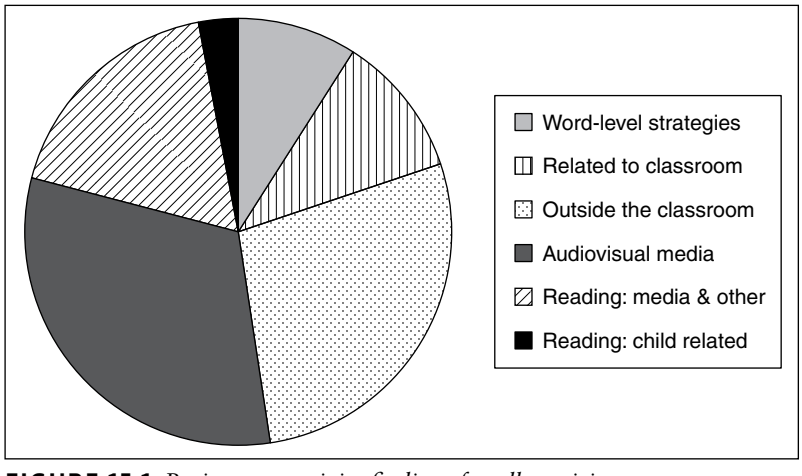


FIGURE 15.1 *Brainstorm activity findings for all participants.*

Cognitive strategies

- using audiovisual media outside the classroom, for example 'Listen to news on TV/radio';
- reading: media and other.

The respondents were then asked to choose their top five strategies and rank these in order of effectiveness. All three groups gave a higher rank to strategies which involved actively mining their environment for input as well as interaction. This included immersing themselves in an English-speaking environment at home and watching television in English.

As Figure 15.1 shows, the most frequently reported factors in the brainstorm and ranking activity were **oral interaction outside the classroom** and using **audiovisual media**. The choice of oral interaction outside the classroom by the respondents is borne out in interview data. In the interviews respondents expanded on how they looked for and conducted oral interactions outside their classrooms and how they used television in particular to improve their skills in English. They also described how reading with their children and reading books meant they and their children worked together on improving their English.

So it could be said that respondents considered interaction and, to a lesser degree, input to be major contributory factors in their progress in speaking skills. Of the thirteen top-ranking strategies reported by respondents, only three were related to input alone, the rest were all related to interaction. Only one strategy was related to the classroom. It is interesting to note that practice and structured opportunities to gain procedural knowledge, an understanding of language as a system, considered important for second language acquisition (DeKeyser, 2007), are missing from these top-ranking factors reported by respondents.

Findings from interview data

'No! No! The adventures first', said the Gryphon in an impatient tone, 'explanations take such a dreadful time'.

The Lobster-Quadrille, *Alice in Wonderland*, CARROLL, 1865

Echoing findings from the brainstorm and ranking activity, interview data also revealed social strategies used by learners to improve their English. Data from interviews showed respondents' use of strategies to invite input and to extend practice. For instance, one of the respondents, Feroz, a beginner-level learner, invited input in L2 when his wife was in hospital giving birth to their first child:

> . . . three days my wife in hospital and me [. . . .] is over there . . . to help and only me alone over there, everybody is English people yeah. I'm looking one old woman er sit down on the corner yeah and I go to, I go to . . . pass this lady and say hello,

> hi and I'm talking, she told me why are you talking to me. Then I told her I'm learn, I try to learning English that's why I'm talking to you er then . . . she said alright when you free . . . this is my room, you come along and you're talking to me.

Feroz created an opportunity for interaction and practice at a time of stress and in a possibly 'socially constrained' environment (Ushioda, 2008, p. 25) – socially constrained because Feroz and his interlocutor were in a medical environment with potentially high stress levels. It would have been quite possible to stop at transactional talk, 'Where can I find the nurse/toilet?' or 'My wife is in pain, can you help?' Also, the woman said, 'Why are you talking to me?' so she was probably worried about a stranger coming up to her and starting a conversation. However, Feroz creates an opportunity in this constrained environment and the woman is persuaded to invite Feroz to come and have conversations with her.

In another instance, one of the respondents went to her neighbour to check if she was using an appropriate register:

> you know once I went to bank and . . . I asked my next door neighbour . . . when I'm going to speak to the lady at . . . the receptionist, what should I say to her? Should I say to her 'Can you please submit my cheque into my bank account?' She said, 'No, you don't need to, you can also say, can you please put this into my bank account'. (Madeeha, Int1)

So Madeeha made an opportunity to check if the formal, often written, English she would have learned in Pakistan was appropriate to use in a Yorkshire town.

In addition to providing opportunities for practice, social strategies also play a role in self-regulation and in maintaining motivation to continue learning (Wolters, 2003; Dörnyei, 2005; Griffiths, 2008) through the use of affective strategies. Interview data also revealed affective strategies used by respondents. In a taxonomy described by Dörnyei (ibid.) the strategy of self-efficacy is included within the group of affective strategies. Two micro-strategies which fall under the broader category of **self-efficacy** were described by respondents in the interview data. Wolters (2003, p. 199) calls these 'defensive pessimism' and 'efficacy self-talk'. Interview data showed both these strategies were used by respondents.

An example of **Defensive pessimism** is respondent Semyon talking about being afraid of failed interactions in L2 and working on improving his skills: 'I was afraid you know that somebody was laughing or something like that but it's work, you know step by step and . . .' (Semyon, Int1). Respondents referred to this type of behaviour 41 times across all waves of interviews compared to 78 references to being successful in their L2 interactions. Defensive pessimism is a term used to express behaviour when learners talk or think about factors such as their unreadiness, inability or low ability to scare themselves into thinking that they will not be able to complete a task or perform effectively in L2. This worry then fuels their motivation to prepare so that

they do not face failure or unsuccessful communication. The anxiety associated with these lowered performance expectations is used strategically to increase students' willingness to prepare and thus avoid the outcomes associated with the anticipated failure.

Efficacy self-talk is a term used to describe a mixture of a pep-talk and pretend self-belief where learners tell themselves they can complete a task, achieve a linguistic goal, etc. Efficacy self-talk was referred to 39 times by respondents. One of the respondents, Naima, for example, talks about her future plans:

> If you try to . . . like achieve something, you can . . . firstly, you have to prove yourself you can . . . if you can do . . . especially don' give up. Because everybody go' problems, house problems . . . so many problems [but] try to never give up.

Respondents also talked about adjusting their goals upwards and raising the bar, suggesting an extension to the concept of efficacy self-talk as described above:

> 'Before I was . . . and . . . some words understand, only some not understand and . . . now I can. [I]was afraid [. . .] and it's er barrier, you know, [. . . .] I just step up, this barrier and just little bit, little bit, and after this it's, you know, no problem, just it's words level [. . .] that's it and you can improve . . .', Semyon (Int4), talking about how it would be easier for him to talk in English if he went to the USA again after almost two years in the UK.

So, it could be said respondents felt that strategies worth reporting were those which fell into the categories of social and affective strategies. The social strategies reported were those aimed at inviting input and extending practice even in socially constrained situations. In terms of the location of social strategies, data collected for this study shows that in addition to native speakers and peers, learners chose to interact in L2 with family members including their children even though using L1 would have been easier and possibly more efficient.

Interview data was also analysed quantitatively to see if there was a difference in strategy use reported by respondents with a higher proficiency in English compared to those with a lower proficiency. Figures 15.2 and 15.3 show the findings. The following showed up in respondents' reports of:

Social strategies:

- interlocutor access: those with a lower proficiency reported accessing interlocutors far less often – three to four times – than those with a higher proficiency – four to ten times – during the interviews.
- interlocutor behaviour: those with a lower proficiency talked about interlocutor behaviour far less often – one to three times – than those with a higher proficiency – three to eight times – during the interviews.

Affective strategies:

– Efficacy self-talk: Those with a lower proficiency talked about moving on from feeling held back far less often – one to three times – than those with a higher proficiency – three to ten times – during the interviews.

The figures below confirm the data extracts above which illustrate how respondents invited input from interlocutors and also the discussion on interlocutors in the previous section. When talking about moving on from feeling held back, respondents talked about their affective state and how difficulties in communication motivated them to use strategies like inviting input and creating opportunities for practice as well as self-efficacy.

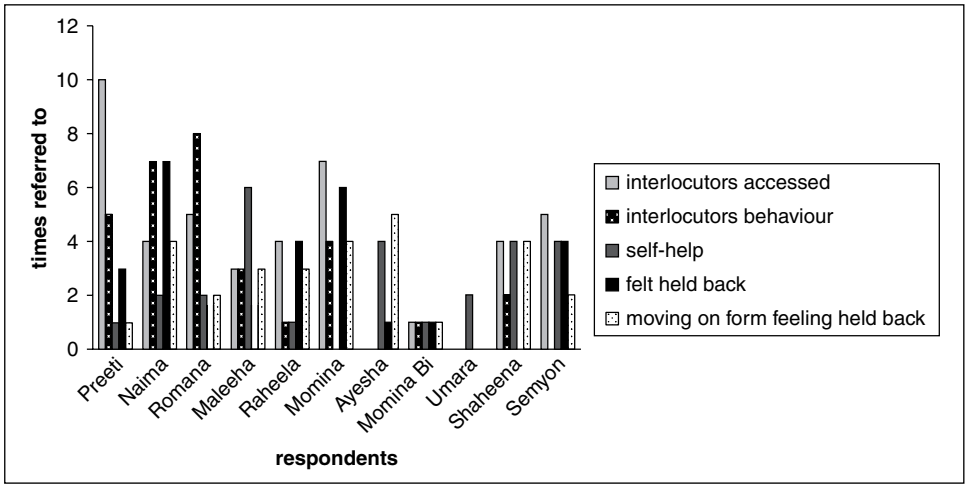


FIGURE 15.2 *Strategy use reported by high proficiency respondents.*

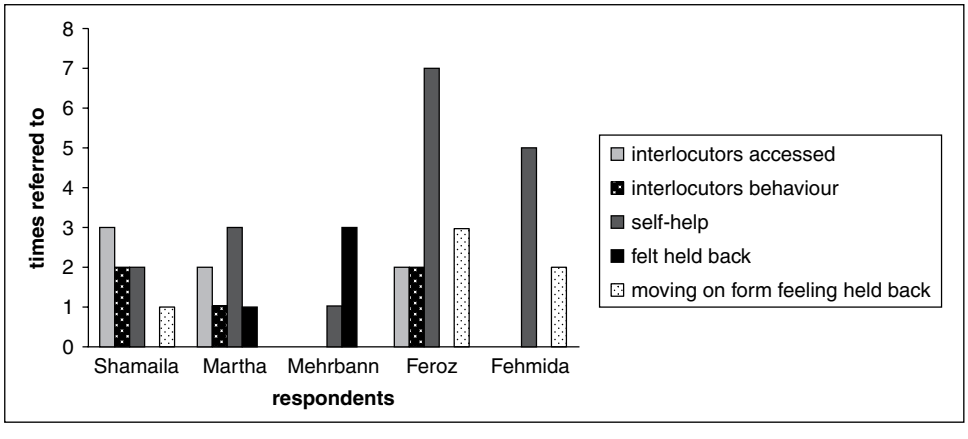


FIGURE 15.3 *Strategy use reported by low proficiency respondents.*

Further social strategies reported by respondents were working with peers to either complete their homework or practice English in their break by having a language policy, as well as inviting clarification from their family interlocutors. Some also talked about having a language policy at home, put in place by them. The strategy-behaviour of working with peers for various purposes relates to how Chamot (1987) describes the social strategies of cooperation as well as questioning for clarification. The second strategy, of having a TL language policy, relates to self-regulation and seems to be a combination of the cognitive strategy of 'practice' and the metacognitive strategy of 'arranging and planning learning' (Oxford, 1990, p. 17) by creating a linguistic environment which gives opportunities for practice. The more proficient respondents also talked about what interlocutors did to support their learning which relates to some extent to the cognitive strategy of 'analysing' and metacognitive strategies of 'paying attention' and 'self-evaluating' (ibid., pp. 19–20) where they noticed the gap between what they were saying and what the interlocutor was saying.

Brainstorm data and interview data from more proficient respondents in this study provided evidence of strategy use playing an active role in their language learning which was comparable to the taxonomies of language learning strategies presented by Stern (1975), Rubin (1975) as well as Naiman et al. (1978) and later studies of strategy use by different groups of learners. Respondents showed evidence of frequent use of strategies involving interaction with people as reported by Griffiths (2003), and metacognitive strategies of planning their learning similar to those reported by O'Malley et al. (1985). They also showed evidence of management of feelings and use of the resources available to them, similar to what was reported by Griffiths (2003).

Missing strategies

O Mouse [. . .] Alice thought this must be the right way of speaking to a mouse, she had never done such a thing before but she remembered having seen, in her brother's Latin Grammar: a mouse – of a mouse – to a mouse – O Mouse.

The Lobster-Quadrille, *Alice in Wonderland*, CARROLL, 1865

Apart from two respondents from Eastern Europe, none reported any strategies which would have led to them developing an awareness of the TL as a system, reported as being strongly related to success in learning a second language by a number of authors (Stern, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978; Griffiths, 2003). These include, for example, grammatical awareness or what DeKeyser (2007) calls declarative knowledge. DeKeyser (2007) argues that for practice in a target language environment, opportunities for proceduralization of declarative knowledge (rules for the target language system) are needed but so is the declarative knowledge in the first place. If declarative knowledge is not present, it cannot be activated through proceduralization.

Influences on strategy choice

My respondents reported their belief in the importance of vocabulary (BS) and attention to vocabulary (interviews). However, the Indian, Pakistani and Gujarati-speaking respondents did not report much in the way of academic strategies to do with vocabulary, such as dictionary use, whereas the two Eastern European respondents did. Research has also looked at what influences strategy choice and of all the factors studied, two stand out in terms of relevance to the data presented in this chapter. The first is the relationship between motivation and strategy choice (Ehrman and Oxford, 1989; Oxford and Nyikos, 1989). Ehrman and Oxford (1989) found that choice of career was strongly related to use of learning strategies. The other factor is nationality. A study investigating the relationship between language learning strategies, nationality of learners and proficiency (Griffiths and Parr, 2000) found that Eastern European learners reported language learning strategy use more often than learners from other countries.

Implications of findings

The chief difficulty Alice found at first was in managing her flamingo.

The Queen's Croquet Ground, *Alice in Wonderland*, CARROLL, 1865

Learner training

Studies have shown the role of individual differences in strategy use and have also associated the use of particular strategies with success in TL learning, and therefore the question of training learners in strategy awareness and use arises. An early attempt at training learners in strategy use was by O'Malley and Chamot. Their book presented their approach to using learner strategies as part of an instructional programme for English. They adopted an integrated approach based on cognitive theories of learning and combined language development with academic goals, teaching content and training in strategy use (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). A study of adult ESL learners by Tang and Moore (1992) found that gains in comprehension as a result of cognitive strategy training such as discussing the title and pre-teaching vocabulary did not last once strategy training was withdrawn. On the other hand, metacognitive strategy training, which involved self-monitoring, resulted in gains in comprehension which lasted after the training ended. However, for learner training to be effective, it is important to be aware of any 'mismatches between learner and teacher agendas' (Jing, 2006, p. 98) as in the case of mismatch, learner training is likely to be less effective and is also more work to deliver!

An action research study in Hong Kong involving 58 sixth-form learners showed that while strategy training was useful – learners tried to ask for clarification and to clarify themselves more often post-training – ineffective use of these strategies was more likely than effective use (Lam and Wong, 2000). Research with teachers of these students was used to develop teaching materials which included strategy training. Results also showed that it was important to 'support strategy training with linguistic scaffolding' and showed the important role of 'peer-help and cooperation in facilitating strategy use' (ibid., p. 245).

Closer to home, the largest study of ESOL learners in the United Kingdom found that 'there is a range of good practice [in teaching], most of it more focused on teacher-oriented activities than on learner ones' (Baynham et al., 2007, p. 8). So, it could be deduced that learner strategies were not actively promoted in the classrooms observed in the study by Baynham et al. The researchers suggest that the Strategies for Learner Involvement (SLI) identified in their study could be included in the professional development of teachers. I would agree with this and would propose extending the use of these strategies (Appendix A) for raising learner awareness as well.

As we have seen, learning strategy use is related to learner beliefs as well as attributes and motivation and plays a role in the repertoire of successful language learners. Chamot's (2004) framework of a five-step model is useful for classroom learning in elementary schools. However, Wenden's (1998, p. 31) four-step approach is more learner focused and appropriate for adult learners. She suggests that teachers use four stages to raise learner's awareness of language learning strategies:

1. Elicit learners' beliefs and also their metacognitive knowledge that is the knowledge learners have about their cognitive processes;
2. Ask learners to express what they are aware of in terms of their metacognitive knowledge and beliefs;
3. Make learners explicitly aware of alternative views;
4. Get learners to reflect on how appropriate it is to for example revise or use other strategies to extend their knowledge.

Wenden suggests that such tasks and materials to support the tasks will provide learners with new concepts about language learning especially if they are encouraged to explore their own strategies for learning. As they get more comfortable with this approach, they could try out strategies they haven't tried before but have been shown to be successful for other learners. They will also develop a critical approach to strategy use, evaluating the strategies they have used and continuing with the effective ones. This puts responsibility for learning and a degree of control with the learner.

Teacher training

Awareness and use of learning strategies need to be embedded into ESOL teacher training. One way of ensuring that teachers take these concepts on board is to include an assignment on training courses where teachers do a case study observing a learner's strategy awareness and use. This could be extended to an action research project where, using findings from observation, teachers suggest learning strategies which would be useful for that particular learner, include these in materials and teaching, measure the effects and comment on the process and product at the end of the course.

Once responsible for a class, teachers could gather information about students' awareness and use of strategies as part of the needs analysis carried out in the first few sessions of a course.

Research

I would like to suggest that it would be useful to investigate:

- strategy choice and use in natural settings compared to strategy use and choice in instructional settings
- strategy choice and use as related to different language learning settings such as ESL and EFL in different contexts, for example where target language is the native or majority language of that country and where it is not.

I would agree with Tomlinson (2012) who suggests the need for longitudinal studies which report on the 'communicative effectiveness' (ibid., p. 146) of materials for learners. Earlier, Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010) had suggested that until recently, hardly any research has been reported on the effects of materials on language learning as it has been difficult to isolate materials as a variable. A longitudinal study which isolates strategy training materials as a variable and reports the effect of these would make a welcome addition to the literature on strategy training.

Materials for language learning strategy training

Despite the rise of EIL and ELF, which suggests access to English outside the classroom, to date, English language learning materials do not seem to give much weight to developing learners' LLS outside the classroom, especially in EFL. Compared to EFL coursebooks, ESOL materials produced by the Dfes (2003) in the United Kingdom provide some support in the use of LLS outside the classroom.

A more recent set of resources to train befrienders of new arrivals in a country have good potential to develop LLS outside the classroom. These come from Welcome to

the UK toolkit which is aimed at training volunteers to befriend newcomers to the country (LLU+ 2011a), the volunteers could be ESOL students at higher levels. The toolkit provides materials for trainers and trainees to build on volunteers' existing skills, knowledge and experiences to mentor women newly arrived in the United Kingdom. Particularly useful to support the development and use of learner strategies outside the classroom are role-plays to raise awareness of what it feels like to be a non-fluent speaker of English (ibid., pp. 36–8; Appendix B, this chapter). In the role-plays trainees take the roles of new arrivals with little English and officials in the areas of education, health and transport. The role-plays raise awareness of the communicative demands placed on new learners of English, in the safe environment of a classroom. The role-play prompts are followed by a framework for reflection after the role-play (ibid., pp. 39–40, Appendix C, this chapter). The reflection framework asks participants to reflect on how they felt as someone who found it difficult to communicate with an official, how did they communicate with the official, how effective was this communication, how helpful was the official and would they do anything differently next time. The activities suggested in these materials would be good preparation for learners to interact outside the classroom. To give some responsibility to interlocutors, the 'Tips for Effective Communication' could be shared with the interlocutors (ibid., p. 47).

In addition to the Befriender Training Toolkit, the Welcome to the UK toolkit includes a set of materials for use with the new arrivals themselves (LLU+ 2011b). It covers a number of topics ranging from dealing with money to transport and schools in the United Kingdom. The teacher's notes for each topic feature sections on *Suggested action* for learners in the United Kingdom and *Independence in and out of the classroom*. The learners are encouraged to keep action notebooks where they note down tasks to perform outside the classroom for example asking neighbours about different GPs in the area. Teachers are also asked to encourage 'self-checking' that is self-evaluation and monitoring by learners 'individually and in groups, [. . .] valuable for learners in developing effective and independent learning skills, learner autonomy, confidence and communication skills' (ibid., p. 43). Teachers are encouraged to give learners copies of answers to prompt reflection. These twin strands of *action for learners* and *independence in and out of the classroom* actively support the use of interaction outside the classroom as learning opportunities by providing frameworks for training in the use LLS.

Although ESOL learners are likely to reflect on what happened during an interaction, in order to effectively exploit an interaction outside the classroom as a learning opportunity, it would be useful for learners to reflect on the interaction consciously. This could be done using the framework mentioned above (LLU+ 2011a, pp. 39–40; Appendix C, this chapter). Copies of the framework could be included in the action notebook and learners could go over previous reflections before they step out in the L2 environment again.

Conclusions and a way forward

Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance.'

The Lobster-Quadrille, *Alice in Wonderland*, CARROLL, 1865

While literature suggests that learners seldom interact with native speakers in a TL environment and when they do, the balance of power during the interaction is not in their favour in terms of communicative skills as well as outcomes of communication, the data shared in this chapter shows that for the respondents, not only was interaction a possibility and a choice but it gained the results they were looking for. Moreover, they used interaction in TL not just to communicate but also to use the episode as a learning opportunity, often a direct one as illustrated by Feroz and Madeeha, two of the respondents who reported mining their L2 environment for opportunities for interaction.

There is a gap in EFL materials when it comes to training learners in strategies to promote interaction outside the classroom. While recent ESOL materials show potential for raising teacher and learner awareness in this area and provide frameworks for strategy use outside the classroom, research in the United Kingdom shows that ESOL classrooms could pay more attention to the development of LLS to extend language work outside the classroom. One reason for this could be a mismatch between teachers' and learners' beliefs about which strategies are effective for languages learning. The way forward is to include LLS as a module or at least a topic within a module in teacher training programmes. In addition, learners need to be made aware of and be supported to use strategies which develop their knowledge of the target language as a system.

Drawing on Tomlinson's (2003) classic work, I would like to suggest that materials developers keep the following principles in mind when developing materials for strategy training:

- consider 'learners' need for a rich and meaningful exposure to language in use
- consider 'the importance of providing opportunities for genuine communication' (Tomlinson, 2013, pp. 3–4)
- embed strategy training in language learning materials
- make sure that strategies come from learners as research shows they are more likely to use strategies they believe are going to help them improve their language proficiency
- weave training for strategies to develop learners' awareness of the target language as a system into strategies they believe are going to help them succeed

So materials for contextualized strategy training, drawing on and acknowledging learner beliefs, tying in with their motivation and developing their awareness of the target

language as a system, are likely to give learners a bank of strategies to draw on which they could continue using outside the classroom.

Appendix A: Strategies for Learner Involvement from Baynham et al. (2007) and Corresponding Strategies from the Strategy System (Oxford, 1990)

Strategies for Learner Involvement from Baynham et al. (2007, p. 44)	**Corresponding Strategies from the Strategy System (Oxford, 1990, pp.16–17)**
To what extent did learners	
Spend sufficient time on a task and sustain concentration and focus while carrying it out?	*Metacognitive strategy:* Centring your learning
Learn with and from each other either using English and/or their L1?	*Social strategy:* Cooperating with others
Elaborate and extend output beyond single utterances?	*Cognitive strategy:* Creating structure for input and output
Contribute ideas based on their experience and knowledge?	*Cognitive strategy:* Creating structure for input and output
Initiate exchanges during the lesson, either by asking questions, making statements or introducing topic shifts?	*Cognitive strategy:* Creating structure for input and output
Talk with each other and/or the teacher about carrying out a task?	*Metacognitive strategy:* Arranging and planning your learning
Make the connection between classroom-type tasks and the challenges they face outside the classroom?	*Metacognitive strategy:* Evaluating your learning Cognitive strategy: Analysing and reasoning
Make choices regarding content and the ways they want to learn?	*Metacognitive strategy:* Arranging and planning your learning Cognitive strategy: Analysing and reasoning
Provide comment on their own learning processes?	*Metacognitive strategy:* evaluating your learning
Offer evaluative or critical responses to text and topics?	Cognitive strategy: Analysing and reasoning

Appendix B: ESOL awareness 2: Role-play

Notes on the activity

The aim of this activity is to simulate what it feels like for people who are not fluent in English to have to deal with formal situations in which a certain level of English is required.

Trainees work in groups of two or three for this activity.

Preparation

- Photocopy both sets of ESOL role-play scenarios and cut the cards out; laminate the cards if possible.
- Make one photocopy of Reflections on ESOL role-play and one photocopy of Reflections on ESOL role-play – possible responses for each person.

Using the materials

- Tell the group that they are going to do a role-play to explore what it feels like for people who are not fluent English speakers. They will have to fall in with, and respond to, the language demands made on them by the official they meet in their role-play group.
- Find out what languages, other than English, trainees are familiar with. Take those who have some knowledge of a foreign language (however little) aside and ask them if they would play the officials and be willing to speak to a degree in this language – even if this is very limited.
- Take those who are willing to speak another language to one side and explain that they have to pretend not to understand or speak English. Give them each a role-play card which explains what they have to do.
- Place the other trainees in groups of 2 or 3. These will be playing the role of family groups or friends who have some kind of problem. Hand out one role-play scenario to each group and ask them to read through the information, and decide which role each person will take.
- Invite the officials, that is those who will be speaking another language, to join their respective 'clients', taking paper and pens with them. Remind the officials not to speak English at all during the role-play but do not give this information to the groups. People undertake the role-play for about 5–8 minutes.

At the end of this activity, you can ask each group to perform part of their role-play to the whole class. Other people take notes on any points they notice. After each role-

play, ask the people who acted out the scenario how it felt for them, focusing on the following points:

a what issues arose?

b what they found helpful.

c what they found unhelpful.

Ask the others to comment on their observations.

- Option: As an alternative to acting out the role-plays, ask each group at the end what happened in their role-play. for example What was the problem? Was the official friendly? What strategies did they use to overcome the language barrier? Discuss the points above and any other issues that were raised.
- Ask trainees to reflect on the experience with others in the group and to complete Reflections on ESOL role-play task sheet.
- Give out Reflections on ESOL role-play – possible responses handout and ask trainees to compare their answers with the points made on the sheet, in pairs or in groups.
- Trainees discuss further possible ways to support their friends in similar situations.

Appendix C: Reflections on ESOL Role-play

From LLU+ (2011a), *Welcome to the UK Befriender Training Toolkit*. Language and Literacy Unit, London Southbank University. www.learningunlimited.co.

1 How did you feel in the position of someone unable to communicate to an official?

2 How did you react in this situation?

3 How did you communicate your problem to the official?

4 How effective was this communication? (why/why not?)

5 How helpful was the official?

6 What could have been done differently?

7 How will this experience impact on the way you interact with people who are not fluent in English?

Glossary

BS: Brainstorm and ranking, a data gathering tool similar to a focus group
ESOL: English as a Second or Other Language
LLS: language learning strategies

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Comments on Part C

Brian Tomlinson

The most frequent point made in Part C is the obvious but important one that different types of learners need different types of materials. There are some universal principles and criteria for language learning materials, but for materials to be successful in terms of achieving learning objectives materials have to follow principles, criteria and procedures which match the distinctive features of the target learners and the environments they are learning in. An obvious example is the false beginner whose apparent lack of competence belies the time he/she has spent trying to learn the language. Such a learner needs a fresh start with a different approach rather than being asked to do the same thing all over again. Yet most false beginners are asked to work with materials which have been designed mainly for complete beginners (and yet probably sold as catering for the needs of beginners and false beginners – a viable target group in marketing terms). Another example is the university student with many intellectual interests and attributes who is asked to use bland, trivial materials designed for the modern teenager with a short attention span. The problem, of course, is that many distinctive types of learners do not constitute large enough markets to warrant distinctive types of materials. The answer could be global coursebooks with generalizable activities to be used with materials selected by the learners from a diverse bank of texts or from the internet. Or it could be many more institutions and regions developing their own learner type specific materials. I have personally worked on such materials recently for primary school teachers in Ethiopia, for 'leaders' in Sub-Saharan Africa, for teenagers at private schools in Istanbul and for refugee children in Dublin.

Another common point in this section is the need for the teacher to help the learners to interact with the materials. No predetermined materials can cater for all their target learners. The learners have to make an effort to interact with the materials so as to connect them to their lives and requirements and the teachers can help them

to do this by modifying and supplementing the materials. This is what is happening, for example, in the Istanbul Fatih Anadolu Lisesi where teachers are busy localizing and personalizing the global coursebooks available to them. Of course, this would be easier for the teachers if the materials were designed with this facilitated interaction in mind.

A third point which the chapters in Part C seem to have in common is that it is very important that the coursebook does not become the syllabus. A syllabus should be developed to meet the needs and wants of specific groups of learners and then a coursebook should be selected or developed to achieve a satisfactory match with this syllabus and with the characteristics of specific cohorts of learners. Of course, a perfect match will never be achieved and the coursebook will need to be modified in the direction of the syllabus and the learners. If the coursebook has actually been designed to cater for this flexibility so much the better. My view on developing materials to match the requirements of specific types of learners is that more use should be made of generalizable activities supported by locally appropriate texts selected from the internet or from banks of texts developed by the teachers and the learners in relation to their interests, perceived levels and requirements.

I also think that it is time that we accepted the reality that the vast majority of learners of a foreign language (especially learners of English) learn the language in order to communicate with other L2 speakers of that language rather than with native speakers and that this should be reflected in the choice of texts, topics, voices and styles. It also means that the materials should be multicultural rather than being centred on the culture perceived to be the host culture of the language being learned.

Another of my views in relation to specific materials for specific learners is that, although it is important to meet their specific needs and wants, it is also important to remember that they are human beings with broad experience of life, with wide interests and with views, feelings and expertise unrelated to their defining characteristics as learners. In other words, we should meet the requirements of human beings in our materials as well as meet the needs and wants of specific learners. We should narrow the focus but at the same time enrich the experience.

PART D

Developing Specific Types of Materials

16

Materials for the Teaching of Grammar

Jeff Stranks

Preamble

It is self-evident that the development of grammatical competence has an important role in second or foreign language learning. However, despite the advent of the so-called Communicative Approach over recent years, and despite the daily evidence offered by learners that the difficulties they encounter in using another language to encode their own meanings are largely to do with lexis and (in the spoken mode) with phonology, the dominance of grammar in teaching materials remains high, to the point of obsession. Furthermore, examination of materials for grammar in coursebooks and supplementary materials reveals that concern with grammatical form continues to take precedence over meaning considerations. As long ago as 1990, Widdowson argued that restricting attention to grammatical form is insufficient:

> Learners need to realize the functions of the device [i.e. grammar] as a way of mediating between words and contexts, as a powerful resource for the purposeful achievement of meaning. A communicative approach, properly conceived, does not involve the rejection of grammar. On the contrary, it involves a recognition of its central mediating role in the use and learning of language. (Widdowson, 1990, p. 98)

If one looks at the majority of practice material offered to learners – single sentence practice, random lexicalization, transformation exercises, wordy and inaccurate 'rules', etc. – it is hard not to conclude that the realizations and recognitions to which Widdowson refers, as to when and where the grammar practised might actually

be employed, are mostly left to the learners themselves to come to. Examples of this would be the common practice of teaching and practising 'short forms' such as *Yes I am / No I'm not* as responses to open-ended questions – to be discussed in more detail later in this chapter – and that of asking learners to transform sentences in active voice into passive voice (or *vice versa*). Of the latter, an example is the approach taken by Acevedo and Gower (1996, p. 23),[1] where learners are told that the Passive is used when 'The agent is the new, important information. In English, new information often comes at or towards the end of the sentence' (a laudable if somewhat limited attempt to refer to the Given-New Principle), information which is then ignored when learners are subsequently asked to identify the subjects and objects in eight sentences, and then to 'rewrite the sentences in the passive voice [including] the agent only where necessary'. When it comes down to it, it is form that matters.

Much of the present position of grammar today with EFL is due to the inherent conservatism of ministries of education and the major publishing houses, but also to the fact that the 'buyer' of materials is not the learners, rather the people who make decisions concerning syllabus and/or book adoptions, where the attitude is essentially one of 'better the devil you know than the devil you don't' – the grammar of many publications is comfortingly familiar and allows teacher training in particular to prepare teachers for its implementation. The current situation with regard to grammar in the profession is subject, of course, to much criticism, and in particular there is criticism of the way in which the grammar of the language is taught through focusing on a sequence of individual and discrete grammatical items, which Thornbury (2000) refers to as the delivery of 'grammar Mcnuggets'. Long and Robinson (1998) and others argue that there is too much focus on individual language forms (FonF*s*) and propose a focus on form (FonF) – in other words, an approach which asks learners to notice language forms as they occur in the data learners are exposed to, and to consider how the form(s) are used to establish particular meanings. This broad approach is also part of Task-Based Learning (TBL) – a book notable for an innovative approach to using texts for examination of language data and focusing on form is Willis (1996). (See also Ellis (2003) for a discussion of TBL and Willis and Willis (2007) for practical TBL activities.)

The endeavour to break up the grammar of a language into discrete chunks for pedagogic purposes brings many difficulties with it, not least among which are decontextualized practice, examples given to and elicited from learners which are randomly lexicalized (as both Widdowson (1990) and Lewis (1993) have pointed out) and the endeavour to involve learners in production activities which are as controlled as possible to avoid learners attempting to use language which they haven't 'learned' yet. Nonetheless, the reality for most writers of grammar materials is exactly that. Classroom teachers producing their own materials for use with their own students perhaps have the greatest chance of innovating, and certainly have the best opportunity to take into account the learners themselves (in particular, the extent to which an aspect of English

grammar does or does not pose problems for them given their L1); but once material is for publication (into whatever market), pressures to conform to current norms will frequently require the writer to work within the 'grammar Mcnugget' framework. This chapter, then, while not condoning this reality, will try to establish some criteria for the creation of grammar materials and suggest some guidelines and thoughts for grammar materials which work within the traditional grammar areas.

Some criteria

The writer of materials for the teaching and learning of grammar has a number of considerations to take into account. These include:

- **a** the age and level of the learners who will be using the materials;
- **b** the extent to which any adopted methodology meets the expectations of a) learners, b) teachers, c) the educational culture within which the learners and teachers work;
- **c** the extent to which any contexts and co-texts which are employed in order to present the grammar area(s) will be of interest to learners;
- **d** the nature of the grammatical areas to be dealt with, in terms of their form, their inherent meaning implications (if any), and how they are used in normally occurring spoken and / or written discourse;
- **e** the extent to which any language offered to the learners for them to examine the grammar used represents realistic use of the language, and the extent to which activities for learners to produce language containing the target grammar will result in meaningful utterances, and ones which bear at least some resemblance to utterances which the learners would be likely to want to produce in their own, non-classroom discourse;
- **f** any difficulties that learners can be expected to encounter when learning these areas of grammar, especially with regard to any similarities or differences in form, function, and form / function relationship, between the target language and their mother tongue.

The first three listed here are of course of great importance for anyone working with or designing materials for classroom use. This chapter restricts itself to considering the last three, since the extent to which grammar materials accurately reflect the language and the learners' linguistic needs, and to which they encourage and allow learners to produce language which is of relevance to them, are factors whose absence may result in material which is interesting but of low pedagogic value.

Grammar practice as language practice

With regard to criteria 'd' and 'e', one might immediately consider the continuing tendency of materials to avoid normal ellipsis in practice activities which are intended (presumably) to teach language that can be used conversationally, for example in Ur and Ribé (2000, p. 4) learners are presented with exchanges such as: 'What's your name?' / 'My name's Debora', 'How old are you?' / 'I'm fourteen', 'When's your birthday?' / 'My birthday's in September' (etc.). What is clear in such writing is that writers (and/or editors) retain the view that the exemplification of grammatical form(s) is more important than the presentation of naturally occurring language. A further example is an area included in virtually all grammar materials and which is referred to as 'short answers': *Yes I am / No he isn't / No they haven't* etc. This is normally treated as a stand-alone area – Yes/No questions can simply be answered in this way, and learners are given practice exercises which involve simply question and response. Invariably, no reference is made, or indication given to learners, as to when such responses may or may not be appropriate – the function or pragmatic effect of utterances such as *Yes I do* is ignored. Whitney (1998, p. 136) includes the following practice of past simple: learners are asked to ask and answer with a partner, are given the prompt 'play – football – yesterday' and the example 'Did you play football yesterday?' 'Yes, I did / No I didn't', and then asked to produce further exchanges with prompts such as 'study – a lot – at the weekend' and 'watch – TV – yesterday'. (It is not hard to find similar exercises in more recent publications: see for example Garton-Sprenger and Prowse (2005, p. 35).) Getting learners to produce only these 'short answers' is presumably based on the belief that they do not have the linguistic armoury to say more; however, their use as encouraged in such exercises could often, in conversational settings, result in learners coming across as brusque, if not downright rude. Such utterances tend not to be used as responses to questions at all, but rather with some emphasis to correct or disagree with another speaker's statement or claim, and would normally be followed up with a correction or further comment. Therefore these misnamed 'short answers' need to be taught and practised (a) in contexts such as disagreeing or correcting, and (b) with appropriate follow-up to the 'short answer', giving exchanges such as: A: 'You're late!' B: 'No I'm not. It's only eight-thirty.' or A: 'Neil Young's American.' B: 'No he isn't, he's Canadian.' (etc.). The materials writer wishing to get learners to produce 'short answers' would need to develop possible conversational exchanges which begin with statements that learners can either disagree with (because they know them to be untrue), or else to which they can give a contrary opinion. Exercises might be developed along the following lines:

A: Nicole Kidman's a really good actress. I think she's American.
B: _____. She's Australian.
(Learners would be expected to produce 'No she isn't' in the gap).

Practice exercises which develop a theme such as this will, of course, be more complex for the materials writer to produce and for the learner to engage with – however, not to do so easily results in grammar practice which is not *language* practice.

Reported speech – an examination

There are many traditional areas of grammar which appear in virtually any grammar syllabus or list of contents and which do not need to be dealt with as separate areas, and certainly not dealt with discretely. One example, to be looked at in some detail here, is 'reported speech'. Willis (1990), among others, has argued that it is unnecessary to treat this as an area of language with its own separate existence and set of rules. (One might also argue that for conversational language use, it is a relatively unimportant feature of language to teach, since 'Direct speech reporting (where the speaker gives an apparently verbatim report of what someone said) is an important and recurrent feature of conversation' (Biber et al., 1999, p. 118), a position which in fact acts as the starting point for a section on direct and indirect speech in Carter et al. (2000, p. 40)). If we look at what a speaker needs to do in order to produce an utterance in 'reported speech', we will find things such as:

a the ability to select a verb which reflects how the 'reporter' views the original speech act (e.g. *say, tell, explain, suggest, admit, ask,* etc.);

b knowledge of the implications of the verb selection for the following structure (e.g. *he asked me if . . .* or *he asked me to . . .*);

c the ability to refer to periods of time at a deictic distance (e.g. *the day before / the following day / three weeks later* as opposed to *yesterday / tomorrow / in three weeks' time* etc.), and also to make other deictic references at a remove (e.g. *the house* as opposed to *this house* etc.);

d when the verb selected for reporting is followed by a 'that . . .' verb phrase, the ability to select an appropriate tense form for the verb in the 'that' clause.

The first three of these need not – and, arguably, should not – be left until the area of reported speech crops up in the syllabus. Learners need to know what the verbs used to refer to different speech acts mean and how to employ them.[2] The verbs have differing grammatical implications: some (*inform / tell / persuade* etc.) require an indirect personal object; others (*suggest / admit / say*) take either a noun object or a 'that' clause (etc. etc.). But these features are of the verbs themselves, not of reported speech, and need to be taught as the verbs occur during a course. Equally, the time phrases, demonstrative pronouns etc. have no exclusive linkage with 'reported speech', and can be taught and practised with narratives and so forth.

Many of the so-called features of 'reported speech' can, then, be seen as quite separate and taught as such. And so an approach can be developed which provides learners with a great deal of the linguistic armoury they need in order to report speech, without teaching them 'reported speech' as such at all.

The fourth point, however – that of selecting the appropriate verb tense form – is perhaps more complex. The verb 'select' is used here consciously – speakers select the tense rather than transform from one to another, and although such selection is not at a very conscious level, native speakers of English will be aware of the effects of differing choices in for example *He said he's coming* or *He said he was coming*. In a way very similar to the selection of time phrases (e.g. a reporter of a speech act which referred to 'tomorrow' may employ either the phrase 'the following day', or similar, or else maintain the word 'tomorrow', depending on the circumstances of the time of reporting), the selection of a verb tense form will reflect either the speaker's knowledge of the prevailing time references, or else his/her interpretation of the situation. To illustrate: if someone approaches me as I am writing this and says 'John's arriving tomorrow', and I report this later today, I may report it as 'X said John's arriving tomorrow'. Naturally, if I report this tomorrow, I will no longer refer to 'tomorrow', but to 'today'. However, no matter when the reporting takes place, up to the point of John's arrival or my receipt of other information, I *may* select to use the form 'was arriving' if I so wish. To do so would indicate either (a) 'but I now know that this is no longer the case', or (b) 'it may or may not be the case – I am not willing to vouch for the truthfulness of what I am reporting'. It may be necessary for learners of English to become aware (if they are not already) that these options are open to them.

At this point, what has been said about 'reported speech' is liable to incur objections from grammarians such as Swan (2001, p. 182), who inveighs against what he terms the 'I have seen the light' approach to areas of grammar, and which he describes as follows:

> We normally teach such-and-such a grammatical topic (the present perfect, articles, prepositions, or whatever) by giving a large number of superficial 'rules of thumb'. These don't really get to the heart of the matter, and they give the impression that the relevant grammatical area is bitty and arbitrary. In fact, however, there are deeper underlying patterns which guide native speakers' instinctive choices. If we can tease out these patterns and convey them to our students, everything will fall into place, and the relevant structures will cease to be problematic.

The preceding argument about 'reported speech' certainly claims that traditional approaches do not get to the heart of the matter, and treat it as 'bitty and arbitrary'. However, this does not necessarily mean, as Swan implies, that no problems will remain. Teaching is required, as suggested above. What is debatable is what the teaching should work on. Speakers of Brazilian Portuguese, for example, if allowed to follow their instincts in tense selection, will rarely make errors other than of form. (As

Swan himself suggests elsewhere (1994, p. 53), quoting an old American proverb: 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'.) Speakers of other languages, however, may need practice to help them with certain aspects of tense selection. But of what kind?

Receptive grammar activities

Much grammar practice in the area of reported speech is of the kind which requires learners to take a given utterance in direct speech and 'transform' it into reported speech, and to do so by 'shifting' the verb tense. It is hard to imagine that this bears any resemblance to what happens in actual language production – and real-time, online language production is what learners want and need to be able to work with. Brazil (1996, p. 239) points out that:

> Sentence grammars, deriving as they do from an abstraction away from potential use, pose questions about the organization of language that seem to have little to do with those engaging the attention of people who are involved in communicating with others.

And one might add that transformation grammar exercises (whether for 'reported speech', 'the passive' or whatever other grammar area) require language learners to make decisions and produce language in a way which is quite divorced from the decisions and production that online communication will require.

What alternatives are there to transformation exercises? Lewis (1993, p. 154) points a possible way forward with a call for an emphasis on grammar as a *receptive* skill:

> Awareness raising' is a term which has recently acquired currency in language teaching terminology. The unifying feature behind all these commentators is the assertion that it is the students' ability to **observe accurately**, and **perceive similarity and difference** within target language data which is most likely to aid the acquisition of the grammatical system. Within this theoretical framework, **grammar as a receptive skill** has an important role to play.

This is echoed in many ways by Ellis, who argues for what he terms 'interpretative grammar tasks' which '. . . focus learners' attention on a targeted structure in the input and [. . .] enable them to identify and comprehend the meaning(s) of this structure. This approach emphasizes input processing for comprehension rather than output processing for production . . .' (Ellis, 1995, p. 88).

The notion of 'grammar as a receptive skill' is not a new one – exercises have been produced and published over the years which require learners to work with aspects of grammar without actually producing utterances which employ the grammar under consideration. Arguments can and have, however, been made for a conscious adoption

of receptive grammar on a theoretical basis, as for example by Batstone (1996, p. 273) who argues:

> Learners may need time to make sense of new language before they are asked to make sense with it. [This is an argument] for receptive tasks to be clearly distinct from productive tasks, and for the former to precede the latter.

Following this train of thought, and with the goal of helping learners see what choices are available (or not) with regard to tense selection in reported speech, one might design a receptive grammar activity which encourages learners to look at examples of utterances containing reported speech and to find criteria for categorizing them. Such an exercise could take the following form:

Read the following utterances. They all contain 'reported speech'. Put them into two categories.

Group 1:	**Sentences 1, ...**
Group 2:	**Sentences 3, ...**
1	'I talked to James last week – he said he wasn't going to São Paulo after all. So we went for a beer on Saturday.'
2	'Alan called – he said he couldn't ring you last week because he had to go to Paris unexpectedly. Can you get in touch with him?'
3	'I talked to Paul yesterday – he said he isn't working for the bank any more. Did you know?'
4	'Sara called me this morning – she said she isn't coming to the meeting tomorrow, but she'll e-mail you the information, OK?'
5	'When I talked to Sara yesterday, she said she was sending the information by e-mail. I don't know why it hasn't arrived yet.'
6	'There's a Mr Johnson outside who wants to see you. He said it's urgent.'
7	'I saw Joan this morning – she doesn't look well, she said she hasn't eaten for a week.'
8	'I phoned the electrician, but he said he couldn't come until the following week. So I fixed it myself. Seems to be working OK!'

Sentences 1, 2, 5 and 8 all illustrate a speaker's use of past forms in reporting speech, while 3, 4, 6 and 7 illustrate the use of present tense forms (including, in the case of 7, present perfect). However, unless learners are particularly astute, and/or their first language operates in very similar ways, such an exercise will only alert them to the

fact that some reported speech operates with past tense, and others with present. For them to begin to perceive *why* this is so, a further exercise will most likely be required – again, on a receptive level, and possibly along the following lines:

Look at the italicized parts of these conversations. Which things do the speakers think are still true? And which things do they think aren't true (any more)?

1	A:	'I asked the new guy, Rolf, where he's from – he said *he's* German.'
	B:	'German? Alan told me *he was* Swiss.'
2	A:	'John's just phoned – he said *he's coming* at 11.00.'
	B:	'That's strange – when I rang him yesterday he said *he was coming* at 10.00.'
3	A:	'Joan said *she's going* to France for her holidays.'
	B:	'Oh really? She's always changing her mind. Two weeks ago she said *she was going* to Italy.'
4	A:	'I can't believe you're ordering sushi! You told me *you didn't like* Japanese food!'
	B:	'No I didn't – I said *I don't mind* it now and again.'

An exercise such as this, of course, engages learners in a cognitive activity which will not suit all of them. It is certainly not easy. It requires the teacher, as well, to be aware of such things as the use of past tense not only as a device for temporal distancing, but also for psychological distancing (Lewis, 1986) and the use of present tenses for temporal and psychological proximity, in order to help learners perceive this. This may well be unmanageable for many teachers, who perhaps prefer the security of 'rules'; however, 'rules' such as 'put the verb in the direct speech one step back in time' are inaccurate, and the welter of information with which learners are usually bombarded and expected to deal with are arguably more demanding and no less suitable than what the above exercise expects them to do. (Learning the distinctions between aspects of the grammatical system is fundamental to extended grammar learning and control – distinctions between active and passive voice, or the use of 'will' or 'going to', are other examples of this.) Quoting Willis (1990, p. 115), talking about noun phrases but making a comment which is applicable to many other grammar areas:

> . . . most of these exercises are consciousness raising activities. The complexity and unpredictability of [this language] are such that we can offer no prescriptions. All we can do is outline the elements, and encourage learners to examine their experience of the language. It is, however, most important that we do this.

But what about practice which requires learners to produce language? A major difficulty with eliciting reported speech from learners is that of establishing deictic references for the learners, a problem which most transformation exercises solve by ignoring. Rather than asking learners to produce utterances involving reported speech, however, one might well ask them first to make selections, as for example in the following exercise (Stranks, 2001, p. 28):

Choose the most appropriate verb forms.

1 I invited Jim to the party tonight. He said he _____ (*wants / wanted*) to come.

2 John's going to live in New York next year. It's odd, because last year he told me he _____ (*is going / was going)* to stay in London.

3 Don't worry, Mum. Dad said he _____ (*'ll / 'd*) pick me up from school this afternoon.

4 I don't know why Jim didn't come to the party. Yesterday he said he _____ (*wants / wanted*) to come (etc.).

This exercise poses problems since several examples allow more than one possible choice. Many people involved in ELT – and that includes learners – have considerable difficulty accepting exercises which do not have clearly demarcated right and wrong answers. Unfortunately, however, language – and that includes grammar – is frequently not a matter of correct or incorrect, possible or not possible. The exercise above moves away from the 'right/wrong' syndrome and thus will be unacceptable to many users (especially teachers); however, asking learners to consider which is *more likely* or *appropriate* allows them to perceive that choices are available, and that there are subtle meaning differences between the choices.

Productive exercises, as mentioned before, are often highly controlled. But where choice is possible, such control is very difficult to achieve, and arguably counterproductive anyway. Alternatives in the area of 'reported speech' would include asking learners to think of memorable things that were *actually* said to them at some point in the recent or distant past; asking them to report those speech acts; and doing whatever correction or modification proves necessary. (Doughty and Varela (1998) report on a piece of research which suggests that the correction of grammatical errors performed *during* communication can prove more effective in the acquisition of language forms than controlled practice, although their research did not use the kind of language practice task outlined here.)

Grammar and meaning

One might (also) argue that grammar materials should try to illuminate for learners some of the meaning implications of areas of grammar, where they exist. With regard again to reported speech, one might look at activities such as one in Gerngross et al.

(2006, p. 245) where three drawings are to be matched with reported utterances. The drawings show: (1) a woman on a stretcher arriving at a hospital and the person accompanying her talking to a nurse; (2) the same woman visible in bed behind a hospital curtain while the companion speaks to a doctor; and (3) the same woman (now sadly deceased) in a casket while two people talk about her. The utterances are: a) 'She said she hasn't been feeling well'; b) 'She said she hadn't been feeling well'; c) She says she hasn't been feeling well (Answer: 1c / 2a / 3b). This encourages learners to pay attention to the tense of both the 'reporting verb' and the verb in the reported clause. One or two questions, though, seem to arise:

1 While the similarity of lexical content is nigh 100 per cent – intentionally, in order to allow exclusive focus on verb forms – does it result in confusion for learners?

2 The activity is taken from a teachers' resource book. Would it work in a coursebook? And would publishing editors include it in a coursebook for learners? (The writer's experience suggests they might not, with arguments about space and teacher capabilities being put forward.)

3 Where to go next? The material cited suggests getting learners to see 'if they can explain the choice of tense'. And suddenly the illustrative becomes the analytical, and arguably the academic/intellectual.

Where the material goes a bit later is into learners remembering and telling moments when someone misled them or lied to them or tricked them – which would suggest a high probability of the occurrence of a reported speech act in the telling, but of course not of grammatical accuracy in such reporting.

Grammar materials sometimes fail learners when they give highly contrived examples of the language point in question. To exemplify aspects of 'reported speech', Jones (1998, p. 122) has a solitary man reading a book and saying to nobody: 'I don't like this book I'm reading now'. This is followed by a woman reporting to another: 'He told me he didn't like that book he was reading then'. It is unclear why the phrases *I'm reading now, that book* and *then* would be used by the 'speakers' in these examples, and they do not ring true in the least. However, grammar materials can let learners down in other ways as well. When practice activities or exercises are given to learners to practise a particular aspect of grammar, it would appear to be desirable that the utterances produced in doing the exercise be ones that a) are feasible language, and b) bear some resemblance to language that the learners themselves might wish to utter. One does not need to look very far to find grammar practice activities in which the learners doing the exercise will produce language which is at best unlikely. A random selection from various published coursebooks follows:

- *Scientists make a lot of clever inventions.* (practising 'a lot of')
- *Athletes must train very hard to be champions.* (practising 'must' as modal for obligation)

- *Has John heard her latest record?* (practising present perfect simple)
- *James and Emma can speak French.* (practising 'can' as modal of ability)

There are also very often instances of utterances which simply state the obvious, sentences of the 'An elephant is bigger than an ant' variety. The last of the sentences listed above, in particular, illustrates the common tendency not only to lexicalize randomly, but also to encourage learners to use collocations which are in fact rare ('can' is much more frequent for *possibility* than for *ability*, and, inconvenient though this may be for materials writers, tends not to be used when talking about things like *speaking a language, driving a car* or *riding horses*). The first of the above actually includes a collocation ('make inventions') which to this native speaker seems to be one which would simply not occur.

It is, admittedly, not necessarily easy to write exercises where the language produced is consistently relevant to the learners (especially when so many learners around the world in fact have little or no desire to use English at all, certainly not in the short term), is within their linguistic capabilities and is faithful to actual language use. However, the professional materials writer in particular is surely bound to attempt to do so, at the very least by maintaining normal features of collocation and lexical aspect. To this end, there is less and less need for the materials writer to rely on intuition (or what has simply been encountered in materials previously published). The existence and availability of language corpora, together with concordancing programmes, make it possible to check out what language users actually *do*, rather than what we think or hope they do. A reference work such as the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written Language* (Biber et al., 1999), based on a corpus of over 40 million words, also provides illuminating statistical evidence as to how language is used (showing, for example, that *will* is, somewhat surprisingly, more frequently used than *going to*, and that the modals *will, would, can* and *could* are far more common than other members of that group). There are also commentaries on such things as register, style and collocation, making this kind of work a virtually indispensable tool for writers who wish their grammar materials to reflect actual language use.

Grammar and technology

Since the original publication of this chapter in 2003, we have seen the growth of technology-based ELT and a surge in materials that are online, or on CD-ROM / DVD-ROM. And no doubt further technological developments are on their way. Has this resulted in any radical development in the way grammar materials are designed? While by no means being able to claim knowledge of everything that is out there, this writer would suggest that the technology has not brought much change. Online materials, in particular, appear simply to move what was/is on the page of grammar books into html, with the 'advantage' of immediate answer checking and the accompaniment

of colourful visuals and/or gamelike effects (e.g. a basketball gets dunked for three points if you answer a question correctly). A search for example for 'passive online exercises' yields results which are stunningly disappointing in terms of content. And yet the existence of such technology surely brings the possibility of materials which do things that printed materials cannot – for instance, show movement rather than draw it or describe it in words, and have the materials creator 'talk' to the learner. Attempts have certainly been made: in Puchta et al. (2012), the CD-ROM activities show teenage learners how present continuous and present simple differ conceptually, specifically using animation to indicate that something 'is happening at the moment of speaking'. The activity also takes the approach of trying to lead learners up the garden path – in other words, 'deliberately to induce an error and then show its effect' (Thornbury, 2011, unnumbered), since learners are offered occasional choices where both are wrong, and a cartoon commentator lets learners know that a trick has been played on them (learners can also show that they have seen it's a trick by clicking an appropriate button). The overall intention is to generate (or at least allow the possibility of) an 'ah ha' moment for learners as they see what a grammatical choice actually entails. For better or worse, some technology-based materials attempt to help learners notice grammar and understand the importance of grammatical choices – as indeed paper-based materials ideally do.

In sum, it is this writer's view that materials for the teaching of grammar seem to be somewhat resilient to change, even when technology brings some possibilities, and grammar is still treated mainly as a system virtually isolated from other aspects of language and language use. Grammar may be necessary – perhaps a necessary evil to some – but materials ideally should see it as *part* of language, not a separate feature to be learned for its own sake. The grammar materials writer needs to try to put into the hands of both teachers and learners materials which reflect what Widdowson (1990, p. 98) called grammar's 'central mediating role in the use and learning of language'.

Notes

1 References are made in this chapter to various published materials, in order to offer concrete exemplification of points being made. Similar exemplification could have been made choosing examples from other materials. Although certain activities/exercises are criticized, it is not my intention to suggest that the materials cited do not *in toto* have pedagogical value.

2 These verbs are often referred to as 'reporting verbs' and of course are often used to report speech acts. However, they are also used to refer to speech acts in the present and future, in which case they are not 'reporting' anything, and so the label is misleading. There is also the issue of verbs such as 'say', 'tell' and 'ask' being used with continuous aspect on occasions (e.g. *John was saying that the show's been cancelled*) – grammar materials basically ignore this, along with the increasingly frequent use of 'go' as a reporting verb in conversational settings.

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17

Materials for Teaching Vocabulary

Paul Nation

Introduction

Vocabulary teaching has the goal of supporting language use across the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and there has been considerable debate especially in first language teaching how this can be done. The core of the debate involves the role played by deliberate, decontextualized vocabulary learning. The arguments against such learning usually include the following points.

1. Deliberate learning can only account for a small proportion of the vocabulary knowledge of learners.
2. Deliberate learning not in a communicative context does not result in much learning.
3. Deliberate learning not in a communicative context does not help later vocabulary use in communicative contexts.

These points are largely wrong and go against the findings of second language vocabulary research. For second or foreign language learners the deliberate study of vocabulary can account for a large proportion of vocabulary learning. In addition, there is now plenty of evidence to show that deliberate learning can result in large amounts of learning that is retained over substantial periods of time. There may be a small amount of truth in the idea that deliberate learning does not readily transfer to communicative use. Studies of the effect of pre-teaching vocabulary on reading comprehension indicate that such teaching needs to be rich and reasonably intensive if it is to have a positive effect on comprehension. However deliberate vocabulary learning results directly in implicit knowledge which is needed for normal language use (Elgort, 2011). Deliberate learning activities tend to focus on associating a meaning with a foreign language form

and although there is much more to learning a word than making this association, it is a very substantial first step on the way to learning a word.

This chapter describes three ideas that are very important in vocabulary materials development. First, a planned approach to vocabulary development will be much more effective than dealing with vocabulary in ad hoc or opportunistic ways. Second, there are learning conditions that enhance the learning of vocabulary and a major goal of materials development should be to design materials that are likely to create these conditions. Third, these conditions need to occur in activities that go across the four roughly equal strands of learning from meaning focused input, learning from meaning focused output, deliberate language focused learning and fluency development. A major aim of this chapter is to provide guidelines for vocabulary materials development across the four strands.

Planning vocabulary learning

Studies of the statistical distribution of vocabulary confirm what designers of graded readers have put into practice for many years. Namely, there is a relatively small group of words (around 3,000) that are much more frequent and useful in a very wide range of language uses than other words in the language. These high frequency words are the essential basis of all language use and deserve a great deal of attention in language teaching materials. Unless learners have very special needs, it makes little sense to focus on other vocabulary before most of these high frequency words have been well learned.

Various lists of these words are available and materials developers need to be familiar with them. Table 17.1 shows four types of vocabulary and their typical coverage of texts.

Learners who have control of the high frequency words and who are studying for academic purposes next need to quickly become familiar with general academic

TABLE 17.1 Vocabulary levels and text coverage

Vocabulary level	% coverage
High frequency (3,000 word families)	90
Mid-frequency (6,000 word families)	5
Low frequency (10th 1,000 word family level on)	1–2
Other (proper nouns, exclamations, transparent compounds, abbreviations)	3–4
Total	100

vocabulary. This includes words like *derive, definition, estimate, function*. The best list of these words, the Academic Word List, contains 570 word families and can be found in Coxhead (2000). These words cover between 8.5–10 per cent of academic text and thus make a very important addition to a learner's vocabulary. If a similar number of the most common low frequency words were learned, they would only provide around 2.8 per cent coverage of academic text. Academic vocabulary is made up of words from the high frequency and mid-frequency levels, depending on what are selected as high frequency words. The number of low frequency words is a very rough estimate.

High frequency words, mid-frequency words and proper nouns make up over 98 per cent of the running words in most texts. Learning the high frequency and mid-frequency words is an important goal for learners who want to read and listen without the need for external support.

When designing vocabulary materials, it is thus very important to take a cost\benefit approach to learning. High frequency words give a much greater return in opportunities for use than low frequency words do. However, mid-frequency and low frequency words tend to carry a lot of the meaning of the text and so learners must eventually learn them (Nation, 2006).

Conditions for learning

A substantial and growing amount of research on learning and vocabulary learning in particular provides useful guidelines for the psychological conditions that need to occur to enhance vocabulary learning. These conditions include noticing, retrieving and elaborating. Noticing involves paying attention to a word as a language feature. In materials design noticing is encouraged by using typographical features such as putting the word in italics or bold type, by defining the word orally, or in the text, or in a glossary, by noting the word on the board or in a list at the beginning of the text, by pre-teaching, by getting the learners to note it down, or by getting the learners to look it up in a dictionary. Generally, as Barcroft's (2006) research shows, we learn what we focus on, and typographical enhancements tend to bring about small improvements in knowledge of word form. The further one moves from noticing to retrieval, to varied use, and to elaboration, the better learning is likely to be (Laufer and Hulstijn, 2001).

Once a word has been noticed and some memory trace of it remains, it is then possible to use retrieval as a way of strengthening and establishing the learning. Retrieval can be receptive or productive and involves recalling the meaning or part of the meaning of a form when the spoken or written form is met (receptive retrieval), or recalling the spoken or written form in order to express a meaning (productive retrieval). Retrieval does not occur if the form and the meaning are both visible to the learner.

In materials design, retrieval is encouraged through meaning focused use of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, through allowing learners time to retrieve, and through activities like retelling, role-play or problem-solving where input

(often in a written form) is the basis of the production of the output (Joe, Nation and Newton, 1996).

Elaborating is a more effective process than retrieval because it involves retrieval but enriches the memory for an item as well as strengthening it. Examples of elaboration include meeting a known word in listening or reading where it is used in a way that stretches its meaning for the learner (receptive generative use), using a known word in contexts that the learner has not used it in before (productive generative use), using mnemonic tricks like the *keyword technique*, or having rich instruction on the word which involves giving attention to several aspects of what is involved in knowing a word. The keyword technique (Pressley, 1977) involves finding an L1 word (the keyword) that sounds like the beginning or all of the L2 word and then making an interactive image that combines the meanings of the L1 keyword with the meaning of the L2 word that is being learned. To learn the English word *funds*, a Thai learner might use the Thai keyword *fun* which means teeth and then create an image of someone sinking their teeth into a bundle of money.

Good vocabulary materials design involves designing activities where the conditions for learning just described above have the best chance of occurring with vocabulary at the appropriate level for the learner. Nation and Webb (2011, Chapter 1) describe a system of technique feature analysis which can be used to predict the likely effectiveness of a wide range of vocabulary learning activities. This system has the major headings of motivation, noticing, retrieval, generation and retention. Each heading has three or four sub-features which are checked as being present or not in a particular technique.

Let us now look at a range of ways in which vocabulary materials design can be done across the four strands of meaning focused input, meaning focused output, language focused learning and fluency development.

Designing input activities to encourage vocabulary learning

Research on the occurrence of vocabulary in graded readers (Nation and Wang, 1999) indicates that as long as there is a reasonably high amount of input (about one graded reader per week), there will be plenty of opportunities for spaced receptive retrieval of appropriate vocabulary. That is, because of the vocabulary control used when producing such readers, the new vocabulary gets plenty of repetitions. There is now a growing collection of free mid-frequency graded readers for learners with vocabulary sizes of 4,000, 6,000 and 8,000 words (see Paul Nation's website).

Vocabulary learning is greatly helped when listening if the teacher quickly defines unfamiliar words (Elley, 1989) and notes them on the board. In all kinds of activities where input becomes a source of output, such as listening to a text and then having to answer questions, the relationship between the input and the output can have a major effect on vocabulary learning. If the questions following a listening text pick up target

vocabulary or the use of target vocabulary from a text and require the learner to adapt it or extend its application in some way, then the condition of elaboration is likely to occur. Here is a brief example from a text about the heavy weight of students' school bags. The text states 'A study has found that school children are carrying very heavy weights every day, and these might be hurting them. These weights are up to twice the level which is allowed for **adults**. Their school bags are filled with heavy books, sports equipment, drinking water, musical equipment, and sometimes a computer.' The question after the text is 'How old are you when you are an adult?'. Note how this question a) requires use of the target word *adult*, b) requires the learner to extend the meaning of the word and c) requires the word to be used in a linguistic context different from that in the text. Retrieval and generative use are thus likely to make a strong contribution to the learning of the word. Such questions can also be used where the input occurs through reading.

A reading equivalent of a teacher defining words while the learners listen is the use of a glossary while reading. While glossaries have not always been found to make significant contributions to comprehension, they generally have a positive effect on vocabulary learning. The reading materials designer has the choice of glossing words in the text, at the side of the text, at the bottom of the page or at the end of the text. Glosses within the text require changes to the text and are not always recognized as definitions by readers. Glosses at the bottom of the page or the end of the text make a significant disruption to the reading process. Research suggests that glosses at the side of the text, directly in line with where the glossed word occurs, are the most effective. Long (in Watanabe, 1997) suggests that looking at such a gloss gets considerable attention to a word. The learner sees the word in the text, looks at the gloss and thus sees the word again and then looks back at the text thus attending to the word for the third time.

Intensive reading often has a deliberate and sustained focus on language features including vocabulary and can thus lead to faster vocabulary gains.

Extensive reading programmes involving graded readers can provide ideal conditions for vocabulary learning, but these programmes need to be designed in ways that set up the most favourable conditions for learning. Extensive reading can have the goals of helping learners gain skill and fluency in reading, establish previously learned vocabulary and grammar, learn new vocabulary and grammar, gain pleasure from reading and be encouraged to learn more through success in language use. Learning through extensive reading is largely incidental learning, that is, the learners' attention is focused on the story not on items to learn. As a result, learning gains tend to be small and thus quantity of input is important.

Graded readers typically cover a range of levels beginning at around 300–500 words and going to around 2,000–2,500 words. *For vocabulary learning, learners should be familiar with 98* per cent *of the running words. For fluency development they need to be familiar with almost 100* per cent *of the running words in the texts* (Hu and Nation, 2000; Schmitt, Jiang and Grabe, 2011). Suitable techniques for encouraging extensive reading include explanation of the purpose of extensive reading, book reports, book

reviews on a slip in the book, book displays and voracious reader awards. Extensive reading needs to be supported and supplemented with language focused learning and fluency development. Vocabulary learning from reading can be helped in the following ways. Before each reading, the learners skim to select five or six words to focus on. After reading they reflect on vocabulary that they met in the text. They collect words while reading for later deliberate word study. The teacher makes activities to see before and do after reading, such as second-hand cloze, information transfer, reporting to the class on words found in the text, and answering questions that extend the meaning and use of the words in the text, and the teacher provides the learners with speed reading training. Learners need to move systematically through the graded reader levels choosing enjoyable books, reading at least one graded reader every week and at least five books at a level before moving to the next level. They need to read more books at the later levels and total at least 15–20 readers a year. Both teachers and learners need to make sure that between 95–98 per cent of the running words in a chosen reader are already known.

Material designed for vocabulary learning from input thus needs to provide quantity of input, needs to encourage deliberate attention to vocabulary, and needs to have low numbers and densities of unknown vocabulary.

Designing output activities to help vocabulary learning

Recent work on spoken communicative activities has shown that careful design of the written input for such activities can have a major effect on vocabulary learning. There are some reasonably straightforward design requirements to ensure that the vocabulary will be used in the activities and that it will be used in ways that set up the most favourable conditions for learning. Let us look at an example of a speaking activity called *For and against* to see what the design requirements are and how they can be applied.

The written input: Group A

> Around the age of 18, children should be **encouraged** to leave home and take care of themselves.

Your group has to **present** the ideas which **support** this. You do not have to argue in favour of these ideas but you must make sure that the ideas which support it are well understood by everybody before a **decision** is made.

1st step: Look at the following ideas, explain them to each other in your group so that everyone understands them. Then put the ideas in order according to their importance with the strongest idea first. Think of one example for each idea to help you explain it to others during the 2nd step.

Children will learn to be **responsible** for their own **decisions**.

Children will learn how to **handle** their **finances**.

Children and parents will have a better **relationship** with each other.

The parents can save for their **retirement**.

2nd step: Your group will now split up and you will join with some people from the other group. You must all work together to decide if you all support or do not support the idea about children leaving home.

Group B has similar input except the they have to understand the arguments attacking the idea of children leaving home. They have the following list at the first step.

Children at 18 years old are not **mature** enough to be **responsible** for their own **decisions**.

Children should **support** their parents and help them with the **household** work.

While at home, children can save money to help themselves make a good **financial** start in life.

Let us now look at some design requirements and the features of this activity which make it likely to support vocabulary learning.

1 The written input to the task contains about 12 target words.

In the example these are in the instructions and in the statements. The vocabulary in the statements is most likely to be used in the discussion, but there may be use of some of the vocabulary in the instructions as learners consider what to do next in each part of the task. Having about 12 words in the task means that around 5–6 may be learned.

2 The vocabulary is highlighted and repeated in the written input where possible to increase its chances of being noticed and used.

In the example, the target words are in bold and several of them are in the input for both A and B.

3 The communicative task has a clear outcome which encourages the use of the written input.

The outcome for the *For and against* task is a consensus decision on the proposition. To reach this consensus the arguments in the written input have to be considered and hopefully the vocabulary in them used.

4 Split information, jobs or roles are used to make sure that all learners are actively involved.

In fact, research shows (Nation, 2001) that learners do not need to actively participate to learn vocabulary from an activity. Involved observers seem

to learn just as well as active participators. Nevertheless, it seems wise to increase involvement if that can be done. In the *For and against* activity, the information is split between two groups, A and B, and both sets of information are needed to complete the task.

5 The task should be broken into a series of steps to give a chance for the words in the written input to be re-used at each step.

In the example, the steps are 1) work in co-operative groups to understand the statements, 2) work in split information groups to reach a consensus, 3) report on the decision and reasons for it to the rest of the class. If all goes well, much of the target vocabulary will be used in each of these three steps.

6 The communication task supports the understanding of the target vocabulary.

This can be done through the use of dictionaries, glossaries, pre-teaching or negotiation. In the *For and against* task, the work in co-operative groups in the 1st step provides a good opportunity for unknown vocabulary to be negotiated.

These same design features can be applied in a very wide variety of tasks (Joe, Nation and Newton, 1996).

There is another type of speaking activity where vocabulary learning is given an even stronger focus. In this type of activity, the learners read a short text and then do two or three short speaking tasks each built around a particular word. Here is an example.

A study has found that school children are carrying very heavy weights every day, and these might be hurting them. These weights are up to twice the level which is allowed for **adults**. Their school bags are filled with heavy books, **sports equipment**, drinking water, musical equipment and sometimes a computer.

1 Which of the following things are sports equipment?

a sports field	knee guards	a football
The players	sports uniform	goal
a bat	score book	sports boots

2 At what age does a child become an adult? How important is age in deciding when someone is an adult?

Typical task outcomes include choosing, ranking, classifying, analysing and listing causes. Note how each task explores the meaning and use of a particular word.

There has not been much research on using writing activities as a way of encouraging vocabulary learning from output, but the design requirements described above for speaking may be adapted to writing.

Deliberate language focused learning

There is a wide range of vocabulary learning activities which cover the various aspects of what is involved in knowing a word. Table 17.2 (Nation, 2001) lists these aspects along with some of the vocabulary exercises that focus on them.

TABLE 17.2 A range of activities for vocabulary learning

	spoken form	Pronounce the words Read aloud
Form	written form	Word and sentence dictation Finding spelling rules
	word parts	Filling word part tables Cutting up complex words and labelling their parts Building complex words Choosing a correct form
	form-meaning connection	Matching words and definitions Discussing the meanings of phrases Drawing and labelling pictures Peer teaching Solving riddles Recalling forms or meanings using word cards
Meaning	concept and reference	Finding common meanings Choosing the right meaning Semantic feature analysis Answering questions Word detectives (reporting on words found in reading)
	Associations	Finding substitutes Explaining connections Making word maps Classifying words Finding opposites Suggesting causes or effects Suggesting associations Finding examples Completing sets
	Grammar	Matching sentence halves Putting words in order to make sentences
Use	Collocates	Matching collocates Classifying items in a concordance Finding collocates
	constraints on use	Identifying constraints Classifying words under style headings

The design features of these activities will directly affect the conditions for learning that occur. Let us look at some of the most important features.

1. Focus on language items. Language focused learning activities are directed towards language features not to the communication of messages. The deliberate attention given to the words speeds up the learning.
2. Focus on the language system. Some activities, like filling word part tables, finding spelling rules, and reading aloud, draw learners' attention to systematic features of the language. This helps learning by relating new items to particular patterns and encourages thoughtful processing of vocabulary.
3. Group work. If the activities are done as group work, there is the opportunity for learners to be sources of new input for each other and there is the opportunity for negotiation, and thus elaborating to occur. For example, if finding collocates is done as a group task, there will be many chances for learners to learn from each other.
4. Data gathering or gap filling. If the activities require learners to suggest answers from their previous experience, there is the opportunity for retrieval to occur. When this feature is combined with group work this could result in elaborating for some learners. For example, if the learners have to suggest collocates for given words, some of those suggested may be from the previous experience of some learners, but some will be new to some of the learners and thus expand the range of associates that they know for a particular word.

Teachers need to be cautious in the use of vocabulary activities. First, some activities are better than others and analytical schemes like technique feature analysis (Nation and Webb, 2011) and *involvement load* (Laufer and Hulstijn, 2001) are ways of predicting this. Involvement load requires making a decision on the amount of need (a motivational factor depending on who has chosen the words to learn – the teacher or the learners?), search (Does the learner need to retrieve information or is it provided?) and evaluation (Does the learner have to make decisions about the adequacy of the word for a context?) in a particular activity. Each of these 3 factors can be given a 0, 1 or 2 score. Second, the immediate learning return for most vocabulary activities is rather low with about three to four out of ten words studied being remembered soon after. Individualized deliberate learning from word cards is much more efficient and effective.

Fluency development

Fluency development activities have the goal of making language items like vocabulary readily available for fluent use. If vocabulary cannot be fluently accessed, then the

vocabulary learning has been for little purpose. Activities for developing fluency in vocabulary use do not differ from fluency activities with other fluency goals. This is because fluency development requires meaning focused language use and thus needs to be done without any particular focus on language features. Fluency development requires different learning conditions from learning from meaning focused input and output, and language focused learning.

Fluency is likely to develop if the following conditions are met.

1. *The learners take part in activities where all the language items are within their previous experience.* This means that the learners work with largely familiar topics and types of discourse making use of known vocabulary and structures.
2. *The activity is meaning focused.* The learners' interest is on the communication of a message and is subject to the 'real time' pressures and demands of normal meaning focused communication (Brumfit, 1984, pp. 56–7).
3. *There is support and encouragement for the learner to perform at a higher than normal level.* This means that in an activity with a fluency development goal, learners should be speaking and comprehending faster, hesitating less and using larger planned chunks than they do in their normal use of language.

There needs to be substantial opportunities for both receptive and productive language use where the goal is fluency. There must be plenty of sustained opportunity either inside or outside the classroom to take part in familiar meaning focused tasks.

How can we design fluency activities that make use of the three conditions mentioned above? Fluency activities depend on several design requirements and features to achieve their goal. These can appear in a variety of techniques over the whole range of language skills. By looking at these requirements and features we can judge whether an activity will develop fluency in an efficient way and we can devise other activities that will. Let us look first at a well-researched activity. The **4/3/2** technique was devised by Maurice (1983). In this technique, learners work in pairs with one acting as the speaker and the other as listener. The speaker talks for 4 minutes on a topic while her partner listens. Then the pairs change with each speaker giving the same information to a new partner in 3 minutes, followed by a further change and a 2-minute talk.

From the point of view of fluency, this activity has these important features. First, the user is encouraged to process a large quantity of language. In 4/3/2 this is done by allowing the speaker to perform without interruption and by having the speaker make three deliveries of the talk. Second, the demands of the activity are limited to a much smaller set than would occur in most uncontrolled learning activities. This can be done by control by the teacher as is the case in most receptive fluency activities such as reading graded readers or listening to stories, or can be done by choice, planning or repetition by the learner. In the 4/3/2 activity the speaker chooses the ideas and language items, and plans the way of organizing the talk. The 4- and 3-minute deliveries

allow the speaker to bring these aspects well under control, so that fluency can become the learning goal of the activity. Note that the repetition of the talk is still with the learner's attention focused on the message because of the changing audience. Third, the learner is helped to reach a high level of performance by having the opportunity to repeat and by having the challenge of decreasing time to convey the same message. Other ways of providing help to reach a high level of performance include the chance for planning and preparation before the activity.

We can distinguish three approaches to developing fluency which can all be usefully part of a language course. The first approach relies primarily on repetition and could be called 'the well-beaten path approach' to fluency. This involves gaining repeated practice on the same material so that it can be performed fluently. The second approach to fluency relies on making many connections and associations with a known word. Rather than following one well-beaten path, the learner can choose from many paths. This could be called 'the richness approach' to fluency. This involves using the known word in a wide variety of contexts and situations. The third approach to fluency is the aim and result of the previous two approaches. This could be called 'the well-ordered system approach'. Fluency occurs because the learner is in control of the system of the language and can use a variety of efficient, well-connected, and well-practised paths to the wanted word.

Let us now look at a range of activities that put into practice the three conditions of easy demands, meaning focus and opportunity to perform at a higher than normal level. We will look in detail at two activities and briefly suggest others.

Blown-up books are a useful way of using listening to introduce learners to reading and getting them excited about reading. These very large books have pages which are about eight times the size of ordinary pages and they contain plenty of pictures. Because they are so large they can be shown to the whole class while the teacher reads them aloud and all the learners can see the words and pictures. These books can be bought or they can be made by using a photocopier that enlarges what it copies.

The teacher reads the story to the learners while they look at the words and pictures. The same story will be read several times over several weeks and the learners will soon be very familiar with the story and be able to say parts of the sentences that they recall from previous readings. To develop fluency, the teacher reads the story a little faster each time.

Listening to stories is particularly suitable for learners who read well but whose listening skills are poor. The teacher chooses an interesting story possibly a graded reader and reads aloud a chapter each day to the learners. The learners just listen to the story and enjoy it. While reading the story the teacher sits next to the blackboard and writes any words that the learners might not recognize in their spoken form. Any words the learners have not met before may also be written, but the story should be chosen so that there are very few of these. During the reading of the first chapters the teacher may go fairly slowly and repeat some sentences. As the learners become more familiar with the story the speed increases and the repetitions decrease. Learner interest in this activity is very high and the daily story is usually looked forward to

with the same excitement people have in television serials. If the pauses are a little bit longer than usual in telling the story, this allows learners to consider what has just been heard and to anticipate what may come next. It allows learners to listen to language at normal speed without becoming lost.

Other fluency activities include a listening corner where learners listen to tape-recorded stories that they and others have written, speed reading training and extensive reading with texts with no unknown vocabulary at all, repeated reading where the same text is re-read several times and continuous writing where the focus is on writing a lot on familiar topics.

Becoming fluent requires lots of practice. About 25 per cent of the time in a language course should be given to fluency development activities. The vocabulary requirement of such activities is that there should be no unfamiliar vocabulary in the activities.

This chapter has looked at vocabulary materials development across the four strands of learning from meaning focused input, learning from meaning focused output, deliberate language focused learning and fluency development (Nation, 2007). It has taken the stance that certain learning conditions need to occur in order to reach learning goals and these conditions can be encouraged by careful materials design. The next step in designing materials is monitoring and evaluating them and this can be done by looking for signs that the learning conditions are occurring. The careful observation of materials in use is an essential component of good design.

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18

Materials for Developing Reading Skills

Hitomi Masuhara

The reading behaviour of L2 learners

When you read the following quotation from Auerbach and Paxton (1997), would you be able to guess the ages, levels and nationalities of the L2 learners mentioned?

> many . . . learners . . . feel they have to know all the words in a text in order to understand it, rely heavily on the dictionary, are unable to transfer positive L1 reading strategies or positive feelings about translation, and attribute their difficulties to a lack of English proficiency. (ibid., pp. 238–9)

Masuhara (2003) reviewed the literature on the L2 reading difficulties from the 1980s up to 2002 and noted the striking similarities in the descriptions of unsuccessful reading behaviours across wide varieties of readers (e.g. Cooper, 1984; Hosenfeld, 1984; Kim and Krashen, 1997; Masuhara, 2000; Tomlinson, 2011b). All these studies reveal that reading in the L2 seems to mean almost invariably a slow and laborious decoding process, which often results in poor comprehension and in low self-esteem.

What is remarkable is the fact that the learners in Kim and Krashen (1997), Masuhara (2000) and Tomlinson (2011b) are proficient L1 readers and yet, even at intermediate and advanced level in an L2, they seem to retain many of the typical reading behaviours of unsuccessful readers. As far as language competence is concerned they are classified as far above the threshold level of language competence (Alderson, 1984; Clarke, 1988; Cummins and Swain, 1986; Bernhardt and Kamil, 1995) and thus the transfer of L1 reading skills is expected to occur.

Pang (2008) investigates the studies on L2 fluent and less fluent reader characteristics in the past 20 years, focusing on 3 dimensions: language knowledge and processing ability, cognitive ability and metacognitive strategic competence. According to his literature survey, what separates the two groups seem to be the abilities for automatic and rapid word recognition, automatic syntactic parsing and semantic proposition formation. Fluent readers have a vocabulary size of 10,000 to 100,000 and awareness of text type and discourse organization. Fluent readers also make use of prior knowledge and L1 skills and are good at monitoring the comprehension process and at making conscious use of a variety of strategies effectively if they encounter problems during the reading process.

Grabe (2009) identified four components of L2 reading fluency: automaticity, accuracy, reading rate and prosodic structuring. The importance of automaticity in various aspects of language processing seems to echo Pang's survey (2008). Grabe explains that fluent reading should not only mean rapid and automatic processing but also accurate and appropriate assignment of meaning performed at an optimal reading rate. What is interesting is that Grabe (2009, p. 292) notes recent recognition among the literature of the importance of 'prosodic phrasing and contours of the text while reading'. According to Grabe (2009), good readers process text chunks in ways that match structural units in continuous prose.

The stark contrast between what fluent readers are capable of and what less fluent readers can manage makes us wonder what may be causing these persistent L2 reading problems and how reading pedagogy and materials may address these problems.

An overview of the major approaches to teaching L2 reading materials

The reading comprehension-based approaches

Anderson (2012, p. 220) notes that 'One concern with reading instruction materials is that ESL/EFL reading instructional books consist of short reading passages followed by vocabulary and comprehension tests'. Wallace (2001, p. 26) describes traditional reading pedagogy as an approach which emphasizes 'comprehension in the form of the presentation of text followed by post-reading questions on the text'. The review by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) of six global coursebooks for adult learners published from 2010–12 confirms that comprehension questions still feature prominently in most published materials.

Headway (Soars and Soars, 2012) which has been an extremely popular series, so much so that the current one is the fourth edition, provides classic examples of the Reading Comprehension-Based Approach. If we consider True or False, gap-filling or matching exercises as varieties of activities that are meant to test reading

comprehension, all the latest coursebooks reviewed in Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) share features of the Reading Comprehension-Based Approaches to a varied degree.

What could the objectives of the Comprehension-Based Approaches be? Q and A, True or False, gap-filling or matching activities are all techniques used in assessing comprehension. How do these testing techniques nurture learners' reading abilities? Coursebooks do not explicitly state the objectives or value of these techniques in terms of second language acquisition.

Williams and Moran (1989) identified three possible aims:

a to check comprehension

b to facilitate comprehension

c simply to ensure that the learner reads the text

Note that (a) and (c) above seem to contribute mainly to teachers' class management.

Teachers may say that they would like (a) 'to check comprehension' so that if there are any misunderstandings, they can help the learners. In this sense, checking comprehension may be said (b) 'to facilitate comprehension', whose focus appears to be on helping learners achieve a higher level of understanding of the texts.

We might like to ask ourselves, however, in what way comprehension questions help the learners understand the texts better. The failure to respond appropriately to comprehension questions may tell the teacher and the learner that there might have been some problems during the reading process but the comprehension questions do not give information about the nature of the problems. Furthermore, comprehension questions come after learners have read the text. If there are problems during the comprehension process, then it is before and/or during reading that learners need help, not afterwards. What is worse, expecting comprehension questions after reading often nurtures an inflexible studial reading style regardless of the texts or purpose.

The underlying assumption of the Comprehension-Based Approaches seems to be that a text has only one meaning – one that is intended by the writer. Grabe (2009), however, argues how readers change their reading processes according to the purpose of reading, based on a significant number of studies in L2 reading studies and in educational psychology. In this sense, Widdowson's observation (1979) still seems pertinent in that texts have potential for meaning, 'which will vary from reader to reader, depending upon a multitudes of factors'. Urquhart (1987) maintains that it is impossible even for L1 proficient readers to agree completely on the meaning of a text due to each individual's experiences and he casts a strong doubt on the validity of setting up the writer's intended meaning as the readers' target. According to his view, what readers can achieve is 'interpretation' rather than 'comprehension'. His claim seems to accord with the research findings investigating 'mental representation' in cognitive psychology and neuroscience in recent years (Masuhara, 2000; Gazzaniga et al., 2009). Mental representation roughly corresponds to the 'meaning of the text' constructed in the reader's mind. The mental representation of a reader depends on

connecting the information gained through decoded linguistic data with the knowledge that already exists in the reader's mind. Since each individual's knowledge is the result of constant conceptual reformulation through various experiences, even simple word knowledge like 'a dog' would not mean the same thing to different individuals. For example, when reading about 'a dog' in a text, you might be visualizing a dog that resembles your pet whereas another person may be thinking of a fierce dog next door. In the Reading Comprehension-Based Approaches, comprehension questions immediately follow a text as if to signal to the learners that they should be able to achieve accurate comprehension of all the details straight away. Reading research, however, indicates that the reading process is gradual and that it requires constant renegotiation between the reader and text (Grabe, 2009; Bernhardt, 2011).

The real issue, it seems to me, is not whether achieving an ideal comprehension of the writer's intended meaning is possible or not but when and why we might need to approximate our meaning closely to that intended by the writer. In L1, we vary the degree of our interpretation according to our reading purpose.

Approximating to the reader's intended meaning would be of vital importance when reading legal documents or job specifications because of the potential effect on our lives. However, we might be much more relaxed when reading novels or magazines which allow us to enjoy idiosyncratic interpretations. The problems arise if L2 reading materials are to demand certain reading styles and the attainment of accurate reproduction of the writer's meaning regardless of the genre and the reading purposes.

The language-based approaches

Verbal protocol studies of L2 learners' reading problems give numerous examples of how language processing, especially of vocabulary, gets in the way of achieving comprehension. Recent literature on Reading in a second language seems to acknowledge the vital importance of nurturing learners' automatic language processing ability in order to facilitate successful reading (Pang, 2008; Grabe, 2009; Barnhardt, 2011; Maley and Prowse, 2013). Reviewing current coursebooks (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013) reveals how vocabulary and grammar exercises have a strong presence not only in the general language sections but in the reading sections, too. Many coursebooks have a two-page reading section with a text and activities. Pre-reading vocabulary activities seem popular, reading sections often start with vocabulary activities related to the texts and many reading units feature short texts used mainly for teaching grammar.

The Language-Based Approaches to reading seems to have gained support at least twice in ELT: first in the 1950s–60s, then in the 1980s–present. The dominant view around the 1950s and 1960s was that once learners acquired the habit of language use through learning grammar and lexis, they would become able to read fluently (e.g. Fries, 1963). Such behaviourist views led to reading being treated as a means of language practice through the use of simplified texts and graded readers. Readability studies in

the 1960s showed that word difficulty and sentence length seem to provide plausible indices for predicting text accessibility (Klare, 1974; Alderson and Urquhart, 1984, pp. xxi–xxv). As Alderson and Urquhart (1984, p. xxii) point out, readability studies in effect confirmed the layman's view, 'simple English is written in short easy sentences with not too many long words'. It is interesting to note that a recent evaluation of coursebooks (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013) detected texts with linguistic simplification in many contemporary courses sometimes even at upper-intermediate level.

The language-based teaching of reading was questioned when it became evident in the 1970s that understanding the linguistic meaning of a text does not equal understanding of the textual meaning (Goodman, 1976; Schank and Abelson, 1977; Smith, 1978; Hymes, 1979) and we became more aware of the active role that the reader plays in the reading process, for example, in making use of prior knowledge and metacognitive strategies in the 1980s onwards.

Later on, strong support for the Language-Based Approaches to reading came from eye movement studies. Adams (1994, p. 845) maintains that a text in English seems to be read by fluent readers in 'what is essentially a left-to-right, line-by-line, word-by-word process'. She explains that:

> In general, skilful readers visually process virtually each letter of every word they read, translating print to speech as they go. They do so whether they are reading isolated words or meaningful connected text. They do so regardless of the ease or difficulty of the text, regardless of its semantic, syntactic, or orthographic predictability. There may be no more broadly or diversely replicated set of findings in modern cognitive psychology than those that show that skilful readers visually process nearly every letter and word of text as they read.

Research also negates the claim that skilful readers use contextual guidance to pre-select the meanings of the words they are going to read. Although it appears as if contexts pre-select the appropriate meanings, research demonstrates that in reality meaning is selected while the language is being processed. The speed of solving the ambiguity of the text gives the impression of the context pre-selecting the meaning. Note, however, the difference between this current understanding and the bottom-up processing view in the 1970s: proponents of bottom-up processing in the 1970s (e.g. Gough, 1972) thought the process was linear and serial from the bottom to the top. The description of the reading process in the late 1980s–1990s, however, hypothesizes parallel occurrence of both bottom-up and top-down operations at the same time (e.g. Rumelhart et al., 1986; Adams, 1994). The interactive view of reading is still widely accepted with new insights revealing the complex and dynamic nature of the reading process (Dehaene, 2009; Grabe, 2009; Bernhardt, 2011).

The Language-Based Approach to reading appears to have regained support in claiming that in order to read fluently the learners need general language ability and, especially, automatic word recognition. In L2 reading research, there are verbal protocol studies which seem to suggest that vocabulary knowledge is of primary importance

in reading and that learners are unable to pay due attention to other linguistic aspects of texts until they have coped with vocabulary (Davis and Bistodeau, 1993; Laufer and Goldstein, 2004). Vocabulary studies (e.g. Nation, 2006; McCarthy et al., 2009; Schmitt, 2010) also seem to indicate that fluent reading requires:

- fast and automatic word identification;
- extensive knowledge of the lexicon;
- the ability to attribute the most appropriate meanings to lexical items in relation to their context and co-text.

Many current coursebooks still seem to use the Presentation, Practice, Production Approach (PPP) to teaching grammar and vocabulary and to make use of reading texts for language teaching (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013). The current PPP Approach seems to combine the teaching of formal grammar with communication activities. Grammar structures or rules are first presented. Then they are practised in a mechanical or controlled manner. Finally, freer communicative activities (sometimes involving reading) follow.

The reasons why we learn to read in L1 may mainly be attributed to obtaining non-linguistic outcomes: we read for getting information to suit our different purposes at the time of reading, for gaining pleasure and stimuli, for attaining social advancement, etc. We read for purposes and vary the degree of how carefully we read. L1 adults do not read a text so as to acquire extensive knowledge of, say, hyponyms or synonyms, to practise some syntactical structure such as reduced relative clauses or to analyse the discourse structure of a text. We might start to dread reading if it meant being tested immediately afterwards for instant and perfect comprehension or for displaying newly acquired linguistic knowledge. In L2, however, reading is often taught as a means of learning language.

If L2 reading pedagogy is intended to nurture reading ability, I would argue that there should be a clear separation between teaching reading and teaching language using texts. Most of the reading materials try to kill two birds (language and reading) with one stone and seem to fail to hit both targets.

Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) summarize studies which investigate the 'threshold level' in reading below which the reader cannot engage meaningfully with a text.

Tomlinson (2000) recommends delaying reading at the initial stage of language learning because the learners do not yet have enough language to read experientially.

This is interesting in that, in L1, there is a fairly clear divide between aural–oral language acquisition and reading acquisition. When formal reading instruction begins at school, L1 children have more or less established:

- Flexible and extensive aural/oral vocabularies
- Intuitive knowledge of English syntax

Furthermore, preschoolers may have had considerable opportunities for relaxed, secure proto-reading experiences, such as listening to bedtime stories in which most of the vocabulary in the text is likely to be known and the unknown can be inferred, explained either visually or verbally in interaction with a parent or just ignored until the preschoolers' needs and wants arise. Such an environment resembles what Krashen (1982) advocates as an ideal condition for language acquisition.

Compare this with how L2 learners may learn to read. In L2 reading, instruction begins simultaneously with L2 language learning. Or more accurately, no reading instruction per se is given but the learners are expected to read texts on the assumption that once we learn a language system we should be able to read well.

Obviously the important question to ask is, 'Does pre-teaching of linguistic knowledge help the learners to read better?' Grabe (2009, p. 265), in summarizing studies investigating the relationship between vocabulary and reading in both L1 and L2, states, 'most publications addressing vocabulary learning make strong connections between reading and the learning of written forms of words. There are, of course, good reasons for this connection between vocabulary and reading'. Hedgecock and Ferris (2009) also confirm the 'extraordinary strong statistical relationships between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge' (ibid., p. 291). Note here, though, that the details of the causal link are unclear. A literature search on the nature and directionality of the vocabulary and reading connection left Hedgecock and Ferris (2009, p. 292) to state, 'Although the questions about the effects of vocabulary instruction on reading development have been raised among L1 literacy researchers. . . ., the relationships have been "difficult to demonstrate," and scant L2 research is currently available' (Grabe, 2004, p. 49).

There are correlational studies on the learners' knowledge of words and sufficient reading proficiency (Hu and Nation, 2000; Nation, 2001). Nation (2013) advocates:

> For second or foreign language learners the deliberate study of vocabulary can account for a large proportion of vocabulary learning. In addition, there is now plenty of evidence to show that deliberate learning can result in large amounts of learning that is retained over substantial periods of time. There may be a small amount of truth in the idea that deliberate learning does not readily transfer to communicative use. Studies of the effect of pre-teaching vocabulary on reading comprehension indicate that such teaching needs to be rich and reasonably intensive if it is to have a positive effect on comprehension.

Do note, however, Nation (2013) is primarily focused on vocabulary learning and what exactly 'rich and reasonably intensive' pre-teaching of vocabulary may look like in a reading programme would require careful deliberation, considering all the factors involving the reading process. After all, we are not sure as yet how the learners acquire automaticity in word recognition, how they build up a large vocabulary and how they cultivate their ability to access flexibly appropriate knowledge of word meanings in relation to context and co-text.

It seems the awareness of the importance of automatic accessing of vocabulary has led many coursebooks reviewed in Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) to present pre-reading vocabulary exercises so that:

- explicit pre-teaching of vocabulary can help learners acquire or recall language knowledge;
- doing vocabulary work before reading can help learners to comprehend the text better.

But we might like to ask the following questions:

- Can we assume that explicit teaching of vocabulary results in vocabulary being learned?
- Are the pre-selected vocabulary items necessarily the ones that learners will have problems recognizing during the reading of the text?
- Does language work focus the learner's mind on language when reading, thus reinforcing the text-bound L2 learner's typical reading style?
- By being asked to display vocabulary knowledge before reading, are learners with limited knowledge of vocabulary made aware of their weaknesses rather than their strengths?
- Does pre-teaching of vocabulary deprive learners of opportunities to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context?

With regard to syntax, Alderson and Urquhart (1984, p. 157) state that 'the experimental findings suggest that, at least for L1 readers, syntax only becomes a problem when it interacts with other factors'. Such factors could be related, for instance, to vocabulary overload or lack of background knowledge. Davidson and Green (1988) confirm in their reappraisal of readability studies that sentence structures do not seem to cause major problems in L1 reading comprehension. In L2 reading research, however, the results are more mixed as to the significance of syntax to reading. Alderson and Richards (1977) conducted multicomponential studies investigating the relationship between reading ability and various factors such as vocabulary and syntax. Syntax gave the lowest correlation with reading ability.

What seems to be lacking in these studies, however, is understanding of what kinds of syntax the reading process requires. Many of the multicomponential studies investigating the effect of learners' syntactic ability on reading tend to measure general syntactic ability in grammar tests and then correlate the scores with comprehension tests.

Can we assume that if a person can successfully transform, for instance, the active to the passive then he/she has the ability to comprehend a passage in which the passive is used? Or that a person, for example, who cannot transform the active to

the passive cannot understand the passive when they are reading. I would agree with Adams (1980, p. 18) in that, in reading, 'Syntax is the primary means by which we can specify the intended relation among words . . . not only by disambiguating the referents of words, but also by new relationships among them.' Likewise, when Grabe (2009) argues for the often overlooked role that syntactic parsing plays during the reading process, he is referring to the syntax that is crucial in forming semantic propositions in meaning comprehension.

The Language-Based Approaches to reading pedagogy seems to hypothesize an equation between the ability to manipulate syntactic operations outside a discourse context (i.e. what grammar tests tend to measure) and the ability to disambiguate syntactical patterns during the reading process. If this often unchallenged equation proves to be invalid, then we might like to reconsider the value of explicit grammar teaching in the reading sections of coursebooks.

The skill/strategy-based approaches

Alderson (2000, p. 110) states, 'the notion of skills and subskills in reading is enormously pervasive and influential, despite the lack of clear empirical justification.' When the term 'skill learning' was used by the proponents of the Communicative Approach in the 1970s, the word was often contrasted with knowledge or conceptual learning. In knowledge learning, for example, learners learn words in the target language consciously and verbally. In skills learning, on the other hand, learners acquire the sensor, motor and cognitive abilities necessary for using a language in an accurate, fluent and appropriate manner. Williams and Moran (1989, p. 223) note that 'With respect to the terms "skill" and "strategy" . . . both research literature and teaching materials display considerable terminological inconsistency.' After listing some varieties and confusions between 'skill' and 'strategy', they summarize that 'In principle, one may distinguish the terms by defining a skill as an acquired ability, which has been automatised and operates largely subconsciously whereas a strategy is a conscious procedure carried out in order to solve a problem' (cf. Olshavsky, 1977). Researchers have tried to identify the numbers, kinds and nature of 'skills' (e.g. Williams and Moran, 1989; Alderson, 2000) but there are considerable unresolved differences between their views. The kinds of skills which seem to attract agreement among materials writers include: 'guessing the meaning of unknown words', 'inferring what is not explicitly stated in the text' and 'identifying the main idea'. Williams and Moran (1989, p. 224) point out a tendency that 'Although no two lists of reading skills are identical, casual inspection suggests that the skills might be grouped roughly into "language-related" skills, and "reason-related" skills'. 'Guessing the meaning of unknown words' seems to be a typical example of language-related skill (lower-order skills), whereas 'inferencing' or 'identifying the main idea' may be called a more reason-related skill (higher-order skills).

The value of teaching discrete reading skills is controversial but coursebooks continue to provide activities designed to nurture these skills. Nuttall (1985, p. 199), in

her review of reading materials, says 'That it is possible to promote reading skills and strategies . . . is still largely a matter of faith, but the number of materials produced show that it is a faith widely held.'

The notion of 'strategy' started to emerge in the materials of the mid-1980s. In these materials readers are considered to be active agents who direct their own cognitive resources in reading. Readers' cognitive resources include knowledge of the reading process and use of a variety of reading strategies (e.g. scanning for specific information).

What the Skill/Strategy-Based Reading Approaches seem to share in common are:

- a view that in order to read effectively, readers need a range of skills and strategies;
- an awareness that different readers may have different reading problems;
- a view that guided practice will help learners learn necessary skills and strategies.

The procedures for teaching skills/strategies invariably seems to include a phase in which explicit teaching of a specific skill/strategy takes place followed by some more practice (e.g. Greenall and Swan, 1986; Tomlinson and Ellis, 1987).

Studies analysing successful and unsuccessful readers through verbal protocols added insights to the reading process and the readers' use of effective and ineffective strategies. Just like psychoanalysts trying to gain access to the subconscious level, researchers used introspection of varied immediacy to tap the readers' minds in operation. The research suggests that successful readers are those who are aware of the kinds of texts and the kinds of suitable strategies, and who are able to monitor and control their own strategy use according to the particular purpose of reading (Hosenfeld, 1984). Anderson (2012, p. 220) comments:

> We have learned much over the past 30 years about how effective comprehension strategies can be taught to improve reading comprehension. The challenge is that the research that has been carried out on the effectiveness of reading comprehension instruction is not making its way into the instructional materials that are used in classrooms.

A lot of studies have been carried out to explore the usefulness of strategy instruction. The experiments typically involve providing direct explicit instruction of a reading strategy for a certain period of time and its effect is then measured. In L1, consistent positive results have been reported (for recent summaries of studies see Grabe, 2009 and Hedgcock and Ferris, 2009). In L2 reading, however, studies have revealed conflicting results. Some studies reported strategy instruction to have been effective (e.g. Carrell et al., 1989; Kern, 1989). Others reported strategy instruction to have fallen short of the expected results (e.g. Barnett, 1988; Kimura et al., 1993).

Reading is a complex operation which could involve many potential skills/strategies. Each skill or strategy may involve a number of subskills and sub-strategies. Take an example of the commonly recognized strategy of 'guessing the meaning of an unknown word'. According to Nation and Coady (1988), possible strategic options include: identifying parts of speech of the word, analysing morphological components of the word, making use of any related phrases or relative clauses in the nearby context, analysing the relationships between the surrounding clauses and sentences, etc. The list is far from complete and those listed are strategies related only to vocabulary. In addition, learners might need grammar-related strategies, discourse-related strategies, strategies solving ambiguity by inferencing, etc. The difficulty a learner might face in reading could be any combinations of various skills/strategies. Materials writers have to predict and choose the major ones but there is no guarantee that their selections are the ones each individual needs.

Skills/strategies training seems to be based on an assumption that conscious, explicit and direct teaching of strategies will eventually nurture automatic execution of reading strategies through practice. However, Barnett (1988) points out that being aware of the strategies does not guarantee the readers' ability to use effective skills/strategies at appropriate times.

Masuhara et al. (1994) argue that the constant positive results in L1 strategy teaching may be due to the fact that these unsuccessful L1 readers are able to shift their attention to efficient reading strategies because bottom-up processing is automatized. High scorers on the pre-test in their studies tended to welcome the strategy training whereas the low scorers found the extra metacognitive attention taxing to their language processing load during the reading process. They suspect that strategy training may cause cognitive overload and interfere with the reading process in the case of L2 learners who still require conscious attention to bottom-up processing. They observe that the majority of L2 learners are tackling two things at a time: processing language and constructing meaning of the content. Strategy training imposes a third cognitive load: monitoring the use and control of strategies. The verbal protocol data of L2 learners revealed that they were paying more attention to metacognitive processing than to the meaning construction which is the whole point of reading. The low scorers' reaction seems understandable if we take the limited capacity of working memory into account (Grabe, 2009).

The efficacy of the Skills/Strategies Approaches solely depends on the premise that the conscious training will eventually transfer to become subconscious skills. If a person learns consciously how to play tennis well, will (s)he become a good tennis player? Perhaps, if only (s)he has enough experience of playing tennis. The majority of procedural skills are learned subconsciously just as the majority of cognitive skills are.

The schema-based approaches

From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, researchers of Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Psychology devoted a large proportion of their attention to the nature and

organization of a reader's knowledge (e.g. Minsky, 1975; Rumelhart, 1980; Schank, 1982; see also Bartlett, 1932). Their interest came from their discovery that a computer cannot understand natural language without equipping it with extensive knowledge of the world. There are some varieties in the terms, definitions and functions in the relevant literature but, in sum, schema theory is a theory about knowledge in the mind: it hypothesizes how knowledge is organized in the mind and how it is used in processing new information. Comprehension, according to schematists, happens when a new experience (be it sensory or linguistic) is understood in comparison with a stereotypical version of a similar experience held in memory. Whether we subscribe to schema theory or not (summaries of criticisms of schema theories can be found in Alba and Hasher, 1983; Alderson, 2000), the reading process cannot be explained without acknowledging the vital importance of the knowledge systems in readers' minds.

Williams and Moran (1989) point out the influence of schema theory on the ubiquitous pre-reading activity in EFL materials in the 1980s. Typical pre-reading activities include:

- asking learners to discuss, in pairs or in groups, their personal experience related to the theme or the topic of the lesson;
- asking learners to consider statements, text titles, illustrations, etc.

Some materials tried to provide learners with a series of texts designed to achieve a critical mass (Grabe, 1986) (i.e. sufficient background knowledge about a certain theme to enable readers to achieve successful comprehension). Thus, combined with the emphasis on situations and contexts in the Communicative Approach, teaching materials which group texts by topics seem to have become popular and this practice still continues to this day (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013).

Some researchers have investigated the significance of schemata in the L2 reading process (Carrell, 1987; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1988). Constant results have confirmed that activating content information plays a major role in learners' comprehension and recall of information of a text. Carrell and Eisterhold (1988), for example, emphasize that the lack of schemata activation is one major source of processing difficulty with L2 learners. Hudson (1982) argues that a high degree of background knowledge can overcome linguistic deficiencies. Carrell et al. (1989) showed significant improvement in L2 reading comprehension after schema instruction. Even though there are some studies which alert us to the potentially negative effects of premature commitment to schemata (Steffenson and Joag-Dev, 1984), L2 researchers seem to agree that, if students do not have sufficient prior knowledge, they should be given at least minimal background knowledge from which to interpret a text (Carrell et al., 1989; Dubin and Bycina, 1991).

Comprehension, according to the schematists, happens when a new experience (be it sensory or linguistic) is understood in comparison with a stereotypical version

of a similar experience held in memory. For example, a schema of a French restaurant may involve subschemata of a menu, waiter, wines, starters, main course, etc. If a particular group of students is not familiar with a French restaurant schema, should materials writers offer pre-reading activities for all the lacking subschemata? If we take the schematist hypothesis literally, no texts will be comprehended unless the reader has the right and sufficient schemata. The reality is, however, that readers do manage to understand texts even without having corresponding schematic knowledge (Alba and Hasher, 1983).

Cook (1994) argues that authentic texts are too complex to allow readers easily to select and apply appropriate schemata. A schema is a pre-packaged system of stereotypical knowledge and such a fixed structure may not meet the demands imposed by the ever-changing context we find in authentic texts. And Alderson (2000, p. 17) notes that 'many psychologists and psycholinguists now question the usefulness of schema theory to account for, rather than provide a metaphor of, the comprehension process'. Schema theories do not explain well how the mind creates, destroys and reorganizes schemata or how schemata are retrieved from the memory during the comprehension process. The question remains how can we help the learners to activate the relevant memories to achieve comprehension.

An alternative approach to materials for teaching reading

The overview of the approaches used in reading materials in the last two decades seems to leave us with some unanswered questions regarding the universal reading problems of L2 learners which were identified at the beginning of this chapter:

1. How can materials developers help L2 learners to tackle language problems in reading materials?
2. How can materials developers help L2 learners to have higher self-esteem and start enjoying reading fluently?

I would now like to propose an alternative approach to teaching reading which embodies the following principles:

Principle 1: Engaging affect should be the prime concern of reading materials

'In the absence of interesting texts, very little is possible', noted Williams (1986, p. 42). I would support this view very strongly in that the quality of texts should be given far more weight in reading pedagogy and materials production. In L1 we read because the text is worth reading. We read on because the texts are useful, interesting, engaging, involving, important and relevant to our lives. In materials for teaching L2 reading, however, texts often seem to be selected because they yield to teaching points:

vocabulary, syntax, discourse structures, skills/strategies, etc. Sometimes, certain texts are selected because they are easy or they fit the theme of the unit.

A much stronger argument comes from the fact that good texts work on learners' affect, which is vital for deep processing and creates reasons and motivation to read on. Affect is occasionally mentioned in the literature as an additional or peripheral factor, but I would argue that the engagement of affect (e.g. interest, attitude, emotions) should be given prime importance in reading materials production. Mathewson (1994) makes an interesting observation on the sharp contrast between the teachers' positive interests in affect and the seeming lack of interest among researchers. He compared the contents and titles in teachers' journals against those in research publications. Articles that deal with affect proved to be most predominant, for example, in The Reading Teacher from 1948 to 1991 (survey results can be found in Dillon et al., 1992). Yet, affective influences on reading do not appear to have stimulated similar interest among researchers.

Neuroscience (i.e. the study of the central nervous systems – the study of the brain) provides evidence, however, that emotion has a longer evolutional history than human cognition and casts a fundamental and powerful influence on cognition, learning and memory (Gazzaniga et al., 2009). We learn to repeat behaviours that are accompanied by positive emotional qualities, and we try to avoid discomfort. Emotionally charged memory makes an instant and strong impression and it stays in our memory for a long time. In reading, the same proficient L1 reader may process the same text differently on separate occasions depending on his/her emotional state and the interest and significance he/she gives to the text at the time.

Principle 2: Listening to a text before reading it helps decrease linguistic demands and encourages learners to focus on meaning

Masuhara (2007, 2009) points out that the established view of reading in cognitive psychology and neuroscience that '. . . writing systems are in fact coded spoken language' (Masuhara, 2009, p. 73) seems to have been somewhat overlooked in the literature of Applied Linguistics and reading research. Tallal (2003) emphasizes that, 'Written language must stand on the shoulder of oral language'. During the same interview she says, '. . . the brain is programmed to process the sensory world, turn that into phonological representations and turn those into syllables, words, phrases, and ultimately allow us to develop a written code which is the orthography or letters that go with those sounds'.

Masuhara (2009, p. 73) argues that '. . . sufficient oral language proficiency is a pre-requisite for L2 fluent reading. In L1, the initial 5 years of life is spent on aural/oral language acquisition. Even then L1 children can only learn to read gradually with a lot of difficulty'.

Earlier in this chapter I made a comparison between how L1 preschoolers and L2 learners get initiated to reading. In L1 reading, preschoolers experience a language

acquisition period first through years of aural–oral interaction and then a proto-reading period (e.g. caretakers reading for the children) before they start to read on their own. In L2 reading, language learning and learning how to read start at the same time. One implication might be to apply the L1 sequence to L2 situations (Tomlinson, 2000). The other implication is for the materials to provide proto-reading activities (Masuhara, 2007; Walter, 2008; Masuhara, 2009). One simple but uncommon activity is for the teacher to read the text aloud before giving it to the learners. This has the immediate advantage of stopping L2 readers from becoming text-bound. Furthermore, it provides the learners with aural–oral experience that they often lack in a foreign language situation. But there are more fundamental and theoretical reasons.

A major difficulty for L2 learners beginning to read is the fact that reading requires learners to decode visual stimuli, chunk syntactic and semantic units, extract meaning from the text and integrate it with their relevant memories in order to create the overall meaning of the text. A teacher reading the text to the students can make it accessible to the learners by:

- taking away the cognitive load of processing scripts and sounds at the same time;
- chunking a text into meaningful and manageable lengths to help the learners gradually interpret the meaning;
- adding prosodic features such as prominence that mark situationally informative pragmatic meaning;
- achieving impact through reading a text with suitable affect (e.g. humour, anger).

Principle 3: Reading comprehension means creating multidimensional Mental Representation in the Reader's Mind

I would like the readers of this chapter to do three brief experiments:

Experiment 1. Read the following definition of the Japanese word 'sho': 'a wind instrument made of groups of slim and void bamboo stems. Used in traditional Japanese music'. Reflect upon what effect the definition of the word had on you.

Experiment 2. Read the following definition of a Japanese fruit: 'a round fruit which grows on a tree and which has a smooth red, yellow or green skin and firm white flesh inside it'.

What can this fruit be?

Experiment 3. Imagine an apple.

What has happened in your minds?

The first and second experiments are what I call uni-dimensional processing: you extract the meaning from linguistic code. For the first experiment using the word 'sho', not many readers would have previous direct or even indirect experience of the instrument. Lack of relevant knowledge might have left a very unsettling feeling regarding what the instrument may look like or what kind of sounds it may produce.

The second experiment is slightly more tangible if the association is made between the definition and the memory of an apple. Still, linguistic definition might have left some feeling that you may be wrong.

I would predict that the third experiment with a word 'apple' sparked off all sorts of reactions in your minds. Visions of its colour, size and appearance. Texture. Smell. Associated personal memories. Cognitive memory such as 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away'. This experience that the word 'apple' induced in your minds is what I call multidimensional mental representation.

Note that your multidimensional experience was non-verbal once you processed the linguistic label 'apple'. Let us now see what happens when we read a text. Please relax and read the following poem.

Refugee Mother and Child

No Madonna and Child could touch
that picture of a mother's tenderness
for a son she soon will have to forget.

The air was heavy with odours
of diarrhoea of unwashed children
with washed-out ribs and dried-up
bottoms struggling in laboured
steps behind blown empty bellies. Most
mothers there had long ceased
to care but not this one; she held
a ghost smile between her teeth
and in her eyes the ghost of a mother's
pride as she combed the rust-coloured
hair left on his skull and then –
singing in her eyes – began carefully
to part it . . . in another life this
would have been a little daily
act of no consequence before his
breakfast and school; now she
did it like putting flowers
on a tiny grave.

CHINUA ACHEBE (1994), 'Refugee Mother and Child'

Reading this poem, what kind of experience did you have?
You might have:

- Experienced images (e.g. the mother, her smile, rust-coloured hair of the child)
- Imagined the environment and had vague sensations (e.g. smell, dust, sound)
- Felt some sort of emotion
- Remembered some personal experience from your past
- Thought about what you have read, heard, seen about refugees in Africa
- Evaluated the skills of the poet

As a whole, readers of this poem might have experienced a series of snapshots or movie-like dynamic images with possibly sounds and smells as well. What you have created in your minds is a 'mental representation' of the poem. What is interesting about this mental representation is that each reader's representation is dynamic and unique, depending on the individual's mental state, mood, experience, etc.

I would argue that meaning construction in a reader's/listener's mind is achieved in a multidimensional way, deriving from the integrated neural interactions of the various parts of the brain (i.e. the sensory, motor, cognitive and emotional systems). Schema theory was criticized as it is only a plausible metaphor and does not represent the actual construct. I would argue that multidimensional mental representation has a physical substance made up of neuronal networks, waiting to be fully explained as theories and technology develop in the future.

Principle 4: Materials should help learners experience the text first before they draw their attention to its language

In L1 reading we focus on meaning. I believe that reading materials should offer activities that help the learners focus on the content of the text and achieve personal experience of it through multidimensional representation. By experiencing the text, learners are able to:

- activate the sensory, motor, emotional, cognitive areas of their brain;
- self-project and self-invest in the activities which lead to deeper processing and to fuller engagement;
- have time to make errors and adjustments in connecting verbal codes with non-verbal mental representations;

- have time to talk to themselves in their L1;
- have time to develop inner speech in the L2 before publicly speaking out or writing.

The readers of this chapter might have noticed that many of the conditions listed above accord with what has been suggested as the characteristics of the optimal learning environment in Second Acquisition Theories (Ellis, 2008; Ortega, 2009; Tomlinson, 2011a).

The most important principle in providing the experience of the text is to sequence the activities so that the learners can experience the text first before analysing it. Regardless of our developmental stage, we never stop processing the L1 in multidimensional ways, but somehow L2 learners tend to be fed on a diet of unidimensional, linguistic, analytical approaches to language from beginners' level to advanced. No wonder L2 learners are not so successful in achieving multidimensional mental representation when they use the L2.

Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter, it was noted that L2 learners share a very similar text-bound inefficient way of reading. These L2 learners regardless of age, levels or nationality share one common factor: they were taught using the coursebooks that were produced using the four major approaches evaluated in this chapter. The learners have received language lessons, skills/strategies lessons, learned the importance of activating the schema and have been tested with comprehension questions. Learners do have language problems, but it is not so much extensive knowledge of the vocabulary or syntax that they need, what they lack is the fun and involving experience of connecting the language with multidimensional mental representation. Below is an example of an approach which can help learners to create multidimensional mental representation in the L2 and thus develop reading confidence and competence.

Little Johnny's Final Letter – An alternative approach

LEVEL: Intermediate onwards
AGE: 12 onwards
TIME: 60 minutes
LANGUAGE: Four skills
PREPARATION: A poem, 'Little Johnny's Final Letter', by Brian Patten
PROCEDURE

1 Tell your students that they are going to listen to a poem.

Ask them what they think the poem is about by writing parts of the title on the board. Start with 'letter' then add 'final letter' and finally 'Little Johnny's final letter'.

2. Tell your students to write answers in groups to the following questions:

i How old do you think Johnny is?

ii Where do you think Johnny is?

iii Who do you think Johnny addressed this letter to?

iv Why do you think Johnny wrote the letter?

3 Read these extracts from the poem:

I won't be home this evening, so Don't worry
Simply gone to get myself classified
I have taken off my short-trousers and put on long ones
Heard your plea on the radio this morning, you sounded sad
and strangely old . . .

4 Tell your students to go back to their answers in 2 above if they want to.

5 Tell your students to listen to the whole poem. Tell them to see pictures in their mind of what the poem describes.

Little Johnny's Final Letter
Mother,
I won't be home this evening, so
Don't worry; don't hurry to report me missing
Don't drain the canals to find me,
I've decided to stay alive, don't
search the wood, I'm not hiding,
Simply gone to get myself classified.
Don't leave my Shreddies out,
I've done with security;
Don't circulate my photograph to society
I have disguised myself as a man
and am giving priority to obscurity,
It suits me fine;
I have taken off my short-trousers
and put on long ones, and
now am going out into the city, so
Don't worry; don't hurry to report me missing.

I've rented a room without any curtains
And sit behind the windows growing cold
Heard your plea on the radio this morning
You sounded sad and strangely old . . . (Brian Patten)

6 Tell your students to go back to their answers in 2 above if they want to.

7 Tell your students to draw in groups one of the following scenes:

- **i** Johnny on the day before he wrote the letter to his mother;
- **ii** Johnny in his rented room;
- **iii** Johnny's mother in the radio studio appealing to Johnny.

8 Read the poem aloud again.

9 Tell your students to add some details to the group picture they produced in 7 above.

10 Distribute the poem and tell your students to read the poem and in groups to add some more details to the picture they produced in 7 above.

11 Tell your students to answer the following questions in groups:

- **i** Why do you think Johnny has left home?
- **ii** What do you think Shreddies are?
- **iii** Why do you think Johnny's mother usually leaves the Shreddies out?
- **iv** What does Johnny mean when he talks about taking off his short-trousers and putting on long ones?

12 Explain to your students that, in his letter home, Johnny asks his mother not to do things and gives reasons why she shouldn't. Tell your students to list, in groups, things Johnny doesn't want his mother to do and the reasons he gives under the headings below.

Things Johnny discourages
The reasons Johnny gives

13 Explain to your students that this poem is written by one of the Liverpool poets, Brian Patten. Tell your groups to answer the following questions concerning the poet's intentions.

- **i** Johnny uses big words and strange expressions. Try to rephrase the following expressions in the poem in a simpler, more straightforward way.
  - **a** Simply gone to get myself classified.
  - **b** I've done with security;
  - **c** Don't circulate my photograph to society
  - **d** And am giving priority to obscurity,
- **ii** Note down possible reasons why the poet used such expressions in Johnny's letter.

14 Tell your students to do one of the activities below. It is important that the students know that they can do the task by themselves, with a partner or in small groups.

a Learn to recite the poem as if you are Johnny.

b Paint a picture to illustrate the poem.

c Write down what you think Johnny's mother said on the radio. When you have finished, practise reading it in the voice of a mother who sounds, 'sad and strangely old'.

d Write a dialogue in which Johnny and his mother are talking on the day before he left home.

e Imagine that Johnny's mother found him sitting in his rented room. Write a dialogue between Johnny and his mother in his room.

f Write either a poem or a short story about a teenager leaving home for the first time.

COMMENTS Note that:

- The initial activities all try to stimulate guessing and create mental representation gradually based on their own past experience.
- Students are given repeated opportunities to adjust their answers and drawings. Individual mental representations are gradually modified to get closer to the poet's mental representation reflected in his words. This is also a good chance for learners to connect language with non-verbal mental representation. It is also reassuring to students that they are not being tested.
- Activities and questions up till Activity 10 are meaning-focused. Then gradually students' attention is guided to focus on some cultural words (e.g. Shreddies, the significance of long trousers) in relation to the overall meaning. Interesting cultural awareness activities may be employed here.
- Activities 12–13 focus on language but they are there to help deepen the interpretation of the poem.
- Activity 13 also explores the poet's intentions in writing a poem. It provides a good opportunity for students to learn about techniques and effect in literature.
- Activity 14 can be homework but there should be some provision for your students to have an exhibition or display of their hard work.

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19

Materials for Developing Writing Skills

Ken Hyland

Introduction

It is difficult to imagine how we might teach students to develop their writing skills without using materials of some kind. Defining materials broadly as anything that can help facilitate the learning of language, we can see that they not only include paper and electronic resources, but also audio and visual aids, real objects and performance. Together with teaching methodologies, materials represent the interface between teaching and learning, the point at which needs, objectives and syllabuses are made tangible for both teachers and students. They provide most of the input and language exposure that learners receive in the classroom and are indispensable to how teachers stimulate, model and support writing. The choice of materials available to teachers is almost infinite, ranging from *YouTube* clips to research articles, but their effectiveness ultimately depends on the role that they are required to play in the instructional process and on the extent they relate to the learning needs of students. This chapter will consider both these issues and then go on to discuss using textbook and internet materials and ways to develop materials.

The roles of writing materials

Materials are used to provide a stimulus to writing, to assist students towards understanding the language they need to write effectively and to help teachers with ideas for organizing lesson activities. In many contexts, moreover, language materials may be the only opportunities students have to study target texts. Table 19.1 lists the main roles of materials.

TABLE 19.1 The roles of materials in writing instruction (Hyland, 2003)

1. **Models**: Sample text exemplars of rhetorical forms and structures of target genres.
2. **Language scaffolding**: Sources of language examples for discussion, analysis, exercises, etc.
3. **Reference**: Online or paper-based information, explanations and examples of relevant grammatical, rhetorical or stylistic forms.
4. **Stimulus:** Sources which stimulate writing. Usually paper or internet texts, but can include video, graphic or audio material or items of realia.

Models are used to present good examples of a genre and illustrate its particular features. Representative samples of the target text can be analysed, compared and manipulated in order to sensitize students to the way they are organized and the kind of language that we typically find in them. Becoming familiar with good models can encourage and guide learners to explore the key lexical, grammatical and rhetorical features of a text and to use this knowledge to construct their own examples of the genre. The key idea of using models, then, is that writing instruction will be more successful if students are aware of what target texts look like, providing sufficient numbers of exemplars to demonstrate possible variation and avoid mindless imitation.

Typically students examine several examples of a particular genre to identify its structure and the ways meanings are expressed, and to explore the variations which are possible. Materials used as models thus help teachers to increase students' awareness of how texts are organized and how purposes are realized as they work towards their independent creation of the genre. As far as possible the texts selected should be both *relevant* to the students, representing the genres they will have to write in their target contexts, and *authentic*, created to be used in real-world contexts rather than in classrooms. So chemistry students, for example, would need to study reports of actual lab experiments rather than articles in the *New Scientist* if they want to eventually produce this genre successfully. Even fairly elementary learners can study authentic texts and identify recurring features, then be taught to manipulate and then reproduce these features themselves. An effective way of making models relevant to learners is to distribute and analyse exemplary samples of student writing, collected from previous courses.

Materials which **scaffold** learners' understandings of language provide opportunities for discussion, guided writing, analysis and manipulation of salient structures and vocabulary. Ideally these materials should provide a variety of texts and sources to involve students in thinking about and using the language while supporting their evolving control of a particular genre. Materials which assist learners towards producing accurate sentences and cohesive texts include familiar staples of the grammar class such as sentence completion, text reorganization, parallel writing, gap-filling, jigsaw texts and so on. This does not mean that writing materials are simply grammar materials in

disguise. Writing instruction necessarily means attending to grammar, but this is not the traditional autonomous grammar – a system of rules independent of contexts and users. The grammar taught in writing classes should be selected in a top-down way, derived from the genre that students are learning to write.

Materials which develop an understanding of grammar thus concern how meanings can be codified in distinct and recognizable ways, shifting writing from the implicit and hidden to the conscious and explicit. It is an approach which:

> first considers how a text is structured and organised at the level of the whole text in relation to its purpose, audience and message. It then considers how all parts of the text, such as paragraphs and sentences, are structured, organised and coded so as to make the text effective as written communication. (Knapp and Watkins, 1994, p. 8)

Scaffolding materials therefore recognize that grammar is a resource for producing texts and are based on the principle that an awareness of texts facilitates writing development. It is important to note then, that the most effective language exercises focus on the features of the genre under consideration to help students create meanings for particular readers and contexts. Thus a narrative would require students to have some control of nouns and pronouns to identify people, animals or things and of action verbs, past tense and conjunctions to sequence events. Explanations, on the other hand, are usually written in the simple present tense using chronological and/or casual conjunctions and 'action' verbs.

Reference materials, unlike those used for modelling and scaffolding, concern knowledge rather than practice. This category includes grammars, dictionaries, reference manuals and style guides, but they all function to support the learner's understanding of writing through explanations, examples and advice. This type of support is particularly useful to learners engaged in self-study with little class contact. A great deal of well-organized and self-explanatory information, particularly on the conventions of academic writing can be found on the Online Writing Labs (OWLs) of universities. Dictionaries such as the corpus-informed *Cobuild Advanced* (www.mycobuild.com/free-search.aspx) and encyclopaedia like the ubiquitous *Wikipedia* with over 4 million articles in English (e.g. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page) are also useful resources. The advice in many reference books tends, however, to be idiosyncratic, intuitive and prescriptive and should be treated with caution (Hyland, 1998). Many students rely heavily on bilingual dictionaries or electronic translators and on the thesaurus, grammar checker and dictionary components of their word processor. These may well provide what the student is looking for, but fail to give sufficient information about grammatical context, appropriacy and connotation. Advice and practice in how to use these tools can have enormous benefits for learners.

Finally, **stimulus materials** are commonly used to involve learners in thinking about and using language by provoking ideas, encouraging connections and developing topics in ways that allow them to articulate their thoughts. Such materials provide

content schemata and a reason to communicate, stimulating creativity, planning and engagement with others. They include the full range of media and the internet is a rich source, but generally, the more detailed and explicit the material, the greater support it offers learners. So, a lecture recording or a flowchart can provide relatively unambiguous and structured ways of stimulating language use. In contrast, material which is open to numerous interpretations, such as a collection of divergent views on a topic, poems or Lego bricks used to symbolize real objects, allows room for students to exercise their creativity and imagination in their responses. The main sources of stimulus for writing are texts themselves and teachers often select short stories, poems, magazine articles, agony letters and so on as a way of introducing a topic for discussion and brainstorming ideas for an essay on a similar theme.

Selecting writing materials

Any ELT course starts with two questions: 'what is the proficiency of these students and why are they learning English?' and it is these questions which help focus the course and make it relevant for learners. The first question ensures that we start where the students are now and the second guides the direction we go in by taking the world outside the language classroom into account. So while materials need to be at an appropriate level, it is equally important that they look beyond instruction in general aspects of grammar and vocabulary to prepare students for the texts they need to write in their social, academic or workplace contexts. This means conducting a needs analysis of both the present situation and the target situation (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998), gathering information about learners' current proficiencies and ambitions and the linguistic skills and knowledge they need to perform competently in the real world.

It is this second aspect of needs that teachers may be less familiar with. Because it relates to communication needs rather than learning needs it compels the language teacher to understand not only their students but the texts they need to write. This may not always be easy to identify for younger learners, but where it is possible, it is important to ensure that the writing materials we provide students with help them towards an understanding of those they will find in target contexts. This principally means becoming familiar with the key features of those texts and the skills needed to create them, and then translating these into appropriate materials.

Selecting relevant texts is a key consideration as materials need to assist learners towards the ability to write in the genres that have been identified. Where students' writing needs are related to particular genres used in specific target contexts, then teachers need to find such texts as authentic models. Students typically do not have to write newspaper articles, magazine features or textbook chapters and, while these genres may offer excellent sources of stimulus and content, they provide poor target models. We also need to consider how texts are related to other texts in order to plan

a learning sequence of text types which scaffold learner progress, ensuring that novice writers will move from what is easy to what is difficult and from what is known to what is unknown. One way to proceed here is to determine the broad family of text-types that students should work with, as this enables us to establish the kinds of language and skills that students require to complete different assignments. Knowledge of these kinds of differences allows teachers to see what students are able to do and what they need to learn.

The six broad families of text-types in Table 19.2, adapted from the Australian 'Certificate in Spoken and Written English' ESL curriculum, can help to identify the kinds of texts needed as input.

Examples of these text-types can be found in various genres. Appliance manuals and documents accompanying self-assembly furniture provide good examples of instructions and procedures, for example, while recounts and narratives may be found in short stories, biographies, newspaper and magazines articles and literary sources. Journalistic materials are also good sources for exposition and argument texts.

Another consideration is the *authenticity* of materials: how far teachers should use unedited real-world language materials or texts which are simplified, modified or otherwise created to exemplify particular features for teaching purposes. Clearly there are important reasons for selecting authentic texts as genre models. The kinds of texts that students will need to create in their target contexts cannot be easily imitated for pedagogic purposes as simplifying a text. Altering its syntax and lexis is also likely to distort features such as cohesion, coherence and rhetorical organization. Students may then fail to see how the elements of a text work together to form text structure and also miss the considerable information texts carry about those who write them, their relationship to readers and the community in which they are written. It is also true,

TABLE 19.2 Families of text-types

Text types	Main feature	Sample written genre
Exchanges:	Joint construction	emails, internet chat, letters
Forms:	Printed, with respondent spaces	simple and complex formatted texts
Procedures:	Steps to achieve a goal	instructions, procedures, protocols
Information texts	Provide news or data	descriptions, explanations, reports
Story texts	Retell events and respond to them	recounts, narratives
Persuasive texts	Argue for/against a thesis	expositions, discussions, opinion texts

however, that many authentic texts make poor models, may be difficult to obtain or may require considerable effort by the teacher before they can be exploited effectively in the classroom. The problem is to ensure that students get good writing models with material that is not so far beyond them that they become disheartened.

The issue of what students are asked to do with these authentic materials raises the problem of authentic use, as selecting real texts does not guarantee that they are used in ways that reflect their original communicative purpose. Once we begin to study them for writing tasks, then poems, letters, memos, reports, editorials and so on become artefacts of the classroom rather than communicative resources. As a result, many teachers feel there is nothing intrinsically wrong with using created materials, especially at lower levels of language proficiency where students need the guidance and support of controlled input. In fact, many writing courses employ both authentic and created materials and the choice largely depends on the pedagogic purpose we want the materials to serve. What will students do with the materials? What do we want them to learn? The need for authenticity is less pressing when we move away from models to materials which will stimulate writing, practice language items, introduce content, and highlight features of target texts, all of which may actually be more effective than real texts. The bottom line is that our materials should not mislead students about the nature of writing.

Textbooks as writing materials

A common source of materials for writing classes is from commercial textbooks. Many teachers rely heavily on them as a source of ideas for course structure, practice activities and language models – dipping into them even when they are not used as set texts. They can also provide support for novice teachers, reassuring them that they are at least covering what someone else thinks are the important aspects of writing in a logical sequence and following tried and trusted principles of teaching. These are considerable advantages, but textbooks also need to be treated with caution: teaching writing is primarily a local and complex endeavour which defies being packaged into a single textbook.

It would, of course, be unreasonable to expect textbook writers, constrained by their publishers and the fact they are writing for a broad and amorphous market, to produce materials exactly suited to our local requirements. Their authors have no idea of who our students are, their difficulties and target needs, nor the peculiarities of our local teaching context. But scrutiny of a dozen widely used writing textbooks on my shelf reveals a number of common deficiencies. We find cultural and social biases in the readings, ad hoc grammar explanations poorly related to particular genres, vagueness about target users' proficiencies or backgrounds, lack of specificity about target needs, an over-reliance on writing themes addressing personal experience, obsession with a single composing process, and invented and misleading text models. Most disturbingly, there is often little recognition given to the teaching implications of current writing and

genre research and so textbooks often fail to reflect the ways writers actually use language to communicate in real situations (Hyland, 2006).

If teachers choose (or are compelled) to use a textbook, it is important they are clear about what they want it to do and to be realistic in what they expect it to offer. The fact that publishers must target a mass audience to make a profit considerably undermines the value of even the best books, but a textbook should not be rejected simply because it does not meet all our specific instructional needs. Preparing new materials from scratch for every course is an impractical ideal and it is far more time- and cost-effective to be creative with what is available. Often a book may be useful if we supplement omissions or adapt activities to suit our particular circumstances and the process of reflecting on what gaps exist between what students need and what the textbook offers can be productive in course design and materials development. We can, in fact, identify five ways of adapting materials, although in practice they shade into each other:

- **Adding**: supplementing what the textbook offers with extra readings, tasks or exercises.
- **Deleting**: omitting repetitive, irrelevant, potentially unhelpful or difficult items.
- **Modifying**: rewriting rubrics, examples, activities or explanations to improve relevance, impact or clarity.
- **Simplifying**: rewriting to reduce the difficulty of tasks, explanations or instructions.
- **Reordering**: changing the sequence of units or activities to fit more coherently with course goals.

Clearly, modifying textbooks to make them more useful materials in our classes is an important skill for all writing teachers as it not only improves the resources available to students but also acts as a form of professional development. Teaching is largely a process of transforming content knowledge into pedagogically effective forms, and this is most in evidence when teachers are considering both their learners and their profession in modifying and creating materials.

The internet and writing materials

The internet has been credited with offering teachers a number of advantages (e.g. Zhao, 2005), but perhaps among the most relevant for writing teachers are that it:

1. offers access to a massive supply of authentic print, image and video materials
2. provides opportunities for student written communication (with classmates and beyond)

3 offers practice in new genres and writing processes

4 encourages collaborative research and writing projects

5 generates immediate automated feedback and evaluative comments

6 offers students as-you-write computer-based grammar and spell checkers

7 provides student with access to dictionaries, corpora and reference aids as they write

8 enables teachers to manage learning websites and to collect activities and readings together with blogs, assignments, etc. and to track and analyse student errors and behaviours

9 Facilitates opportunities for students to publish their work to a wider audience.

The internet is obviously an excellent source of materials to develop writing skills and is probably now used more by teachers than textbooks. Sites such as Dave's Internet Café (www.eslcafe.com) and BBC English (www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/) have discussion groups and writing exercises for L2 students. While these sites offer ideas for exercises, assignments and discussions and are places students can be directed for out-of-class activities, materials for writing are more scarce online. The internet, however, does extend the teacher's source of advice beyond his or her immediate colleagues through discussion lists and bulletin boards where teachers (or students) can exchange ideas, get information, discuss problems with others by simply registering and posting a message. Two active ones are *Writing Centers' Online Discussion Community* (lists.uwosh.edu/mailman/listinfo/wcenter) and *WPA-L: Writing Program Administration* (www.wpacouncil.org/wpa-l).

There are also many sites specifically dedicated to writing. There are, for example, several thousand On-Line writing Labs (OWLs) which offer exercises on grammar and mechanics, teaching tips and advice on style, genre and writing processes. The OWL at Purdue (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/) is one of the best and *Angelfire* offers teachers useful resources for steps in the process of writing (www.angelfire.com/wi/writingprocess/). The *Online Resources for Writers* site (http://webster.commnet.edu/writing/writing.htm) provides a list of useful sites. Other sites support writing in various ways, such as the Using English website (www.usingenglish.com/) which allows students or teachers to upload a text and receive statistics about it, including a count of the unique words, the average number of words per sentence, the lexical density and the Gunning Fog readability index. ESL Gold (www.eslgold.com/writing.html) provides lessons and ideas for ***teaching*** composing, organizing, revising and editing essays from a process perspective.

The internet also provides a means for teachers to manage their materials and present them together as a coherent sequence of linked readings and activities to support students' writing development. Many teachers use commercial course management systems such as *Blackboard* or *Moodle* to create tasks and wikis, to display their course

materials, readings and messages in one place, to receive course assignments and to encourage students to engage with each other through the site. Increasingly, however, teachers are recognizing the value of supporting students to develop and publish their own websites or manage their own blogs so they can develop online literacy skills (Bloch, 2008). Here the internet furnishes its own learning materials in the form of the specialized genres of the web and the particular writing skills they demand.

Much of the social online writing done by students is in chat rooms, emails and blogs, some of which resemble written conversations, with different conventions and constraints to more traditional kinds of academic writing. But online composing not only involves working in new genres, but requires new process skills and new ways of collaborating in writing. Writing is often no longer a matter of a single individual creating a linear, print text and even when writing alone students are able to seek help through the internet from their teacher, from their classmates and from unknown others in far locations. The availability of aids such as online spell-checkers, grammar checkers and thesauruses together with programmes that give rich feedback on the nature of writing errors such as *Correct Grammar*, *Grammatik* and *Right Writer,* require training and practice. This is also true of the ability to search effectively, select reliable sources and use the graphics, sound and video clips of multimedia dictionaries. Being able to recognize these affordances, handle these tools and craft these genres effectively requires considerable practice, as does the ability to identify the pros and cons of different semiotic modes and the skill to combine these in effective ways. Teachers can use the internet as a material to develop these competencies.

Perhaps most importantly, the internet is a source of authentic text material and of a growing number of free, searchable online corpora which can be used for exploring actual uses of language and written genres. Authentic materials include audio materials, such as podcasts of anything from short stories to political commentary, radio broadcasts and plays; visual materials such as video clips, photographs, paintings, etc.; and textual materials such as newspaper articles, movie reviews, sports reports, obituary columns, tourist information brochures, etc.

There is a massive array of excellent free-to-view online newspapers (e.g. www.guardian.co.uk/ and www.nytimes.com/), and magazines (e.g. www.economist.com.hk/, www.newscientist.com/ and www.filmjournal.com/) which are a great source of textual and visual stimulus material and genre examples. A reasonably comprehensive list can be found at www.world-newspapers.com/. There is also an abundance of reports of various kinds from coastal erosion (www.eurosion.org/reports-online/reports.html) to police incidents (www.cityofmadison.com/incidentReports/) and good examples of reviews (www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews and www.consumerreports.org/cro/index.htm). These sources not only provide material for models and analysis, but enable teachers to raise students awareness of their key features through various noticing and consciousness-raising activities, a 'top-down' approach to understanding language which encourages students to see grammatical features as 'the on-line processing component of discourse' (Rutherford, 1987, p. 104).

Finally, corpora can be used as materials for developing students' writing, particularly at more advanced levels, by providing evidence of use and how a particular vocabulary item regularly co-occurs with other items. Corpora can be treated as *reference tools* to be consulted for examples when problems arise while writing. An example of this is *WordPilot,* which allows students to call up a concordance of a word while they are writing in their word-processor (Hyland, 2009). Alternatively, they can be used by students as *research tools* to be systematically investigated as a means of gaining greater awareness of a particular genre, searching for personal pronouns, hedges or particular verb forms, for example. Research approaches presuppose considerable motivation and a curiosity about language which is often lacking, so there is a danger that some students will be bored by an over-exposure to concordance lines. Teachers have therefore tended to guide student searches to features which are typical in target genres using search tasks, gap fill and other methods (e.g. Flowerdew, 2012; Hyland, 2013). Examples of free, online searchable corpora are the *VLC Webconcordancer* (http://vlc.polyu.edu.hk/concordance/) and *Word Neighbours* (http://wordneighbors.ust.hk/). An excellent source of academic essays is the *British Academic Written English* corpus (www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/research/collect/bawe/).

It is clear that the internet is able to contribute a great deal to the writing teacher's efforts to provide a range of materials to model, scaffold and stimulate writing as well as offer advice and examples of language use and opportunities for students to develop new skills.

Creating writing materials

Designing new writing materials can be an extremely satisfying activity. It not only offers students a more tailored learning experience but also demonstrates a professional competence and perhaps fulfils a creative need in teachers. But materials development is also typically an intensive and time-consuming process as producing just 1 hour of good learning materials from authentic texts can consume at least 15 hours of a teacher's time (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). This is a good reason to lean heavily on existing materials as a source of ideas.

It is also a good reason to consider forming and participating in materials writing teams, with two or three teachers sharing responsibilities for all aspects of the project. As many others have noted (e.g. Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2010; Tomlinson, 2011), this kind of team-work can help teachers inspire each other with ideas, better relate their materials to learners and suggest useful improvements to each other's materials. Team writing can involve individuals in creating separate units of work or in collaborating on finding texts, developing language and content exercises and writing tasks. This is particularly important if there is an absence of literature on which to base genre descriptions and some text analyses needs to be done. The advantages of working in teams can be considerable, not only because combining expertise

creates a greater potential for a more diverse and higher-quality final product, but also because collaboration can reduce the amount of effort, time and frustration invested in the process. This is particularly the case if teachers are creating online materials as this can be extremely time-consuming and requires some expertise in the selection, combination, organization, cross-referencing and hyper-linking of a number of textual, visual and audio elements. Like many other internet documents, the collaboration needed in materials design means there is no longer a clear sense of individual authorship and ownership of texts.

The processes of creating new materials and modifying existing ones are very similar, and here Hutchison and Waters (1987) framework for materials design is a useful guide for teachers. This comprises four key components: input, content, language and a task, and Table 19.3 shows what this looks like when considering writing materials.

This model reflects the instructional roles of materials for writing discussed in section 1 and emphasizes the integration of key elements in materials design. It also reflects the distinction originally made by Breen, Candlin, and Waters (1979) between *content* materials as sources of information and data and *process* materials that act as frameworks within which learners can use their communicative abilities. Materials lead to a task, and the resources of language and content that students need to successfully complete this task are supplied by the input. Input is crucial as students cannot learn to communicate effectively in writing if they are simply given a topic and asked to write. While they need to have something to write about, they also need to know how to generate and draft ideas, and to have sufficient language and genre knowledge to perform the task. The materials students are given must guide them towards this,

TABLE 19.3 A model of materials design

- **Input**: Typically this is a paper or electronic text in the writing class, although it may be a dialogue, video, picture or any communication data. This provides at least one of the following:
  - A stimulus for thought, discussion and writing
  - New language items or the re-presentation of earlier items
  - A context and a purpose for writing
  - Genre models and exemplars of target texts
  - Spur to the use of writing process skills such as pre-writing, drafting, editing, etc.
  - Opportunities to process information
  - Opportunities for learners to use and build on prior knowledge
- **Content Focus**: topics, situations and information to generate meaningful communication
- **Language Focus**: Should involve opportunities for analyses of texts and for students to integrate new knowledge into the writing task.
- **Task**: Materials should lead towards a communicative task, in which learners use the content and language of the unit, and ultimately to a writing assignment.

Source: Adapted from Hutchison and Waters (1987, pp. 108–9).

and as a result materials development, whether this means creating new materials or adapting existing resources, is likely to begin by noticing the absence of one or more of these elements.

Jolly and Bolitho (2011, p. 112) suggest that materials design begins by identifying a gap, a need for materials because the existing coursebook fails to meet a learning outcome of the course or because the students need further practice in a particular aspect of writing. They then state that the teacher needs to explore this area to gain a better understanding of the particular skill or feature involved, perhaps consulting reference materials, corpora, colleagues, specialist informants, text models or other sources. A suitable input source, such as a text or video clip, is then needed and tasks developed to exploit this input in a meaningful way, ensuring that the activities are realistic, that they work well with the text, that they relate to target needs and learner interests, and that tasks are clearly explained. The materials then need to be produced for student use and we should not underestimate the importance of their physical appearance. Attractively presented materials demonstrate to students the interest the teacher has invested in them and are likely to possess greater face validity, encouraging students to engage with the activities. Following production, materials are then used in class and finally evaluated for their success in meeting the identified need.

Having chosen a suitable input text, the teacher needs to decide how to best use it. A naturally occurring text, for instance, might be presented as a model to highlight the lexico-grammatical features and typical structure of a particular genre, beginning with questions which encourage students to notice what they may have previously ignored. For example:

- How is the text laid out? Are there headings, diagrams, etc.?
- How does the text open or close?
- What tense is it mainly written in?
- Does the writer refer to him or herself? How?
- What are the typical thematic patterns?

Alternatively the teacher might want students to explore the context of the text:

- Who is the text written for?
- Why was it written?
- What is the tone? (Formal or informal? Personal or impersonal? Etc.)
- What is the relationship between the writer and the intended reader?
- What other texts does it assume you have a knowledge of?

On the other hand, the input material might be better suited to building content schemata and initiating writing through extensive reading and group discussion. Here

the teacher is more likely to develop questions to aid comprehension of the passage and reflection on its personal meaning to the students. The objective is to encourage reflection and engagement so that students might see the texts as relevant to their own lives and to unlock the desire to express this relevance. Some initial questions might focus on the following aspects of the text:

- What is the text about?
- Who can write such a text? To whom?
- What knowledge does it assume?
- Have you had a personal experience similar to this?
- Have you seen a text like this before? Where? Have you written such a text?
- What shared understandings are implied in the text?

While exploiting texts is important, materials are likely to be needed for language exercises, to give students more information about a language point or to furnish data for a research project.

Following the discussion and deconstruction of a representative model, scaffolding materials are needed to develop students' understanding of a genre and their ability to construct texts of their own. Materials here offer students guided, teacher-supported practice in the genre through tasks which focus on particular stages or features of the text. One popular method is to provide students with a set of jumbled paragraphs which they have to reconstruct into a text by identifying the salient move structures. The Problem-Solution pattern is an excellent candidate for this kind of activity, or helping students construct a literature review by ordering material from general to specific (Flowerdew, 2000). Materials which encourage students to compare different texts are also often helpful for raising awareness of language features (e.g. Hyland, 2008), looking at how events are discussed in recounts and reports, for example, or using students' own writings as materials in mixed genre portfolios where students collect together the texts they have written in different genres over a course with a commentary on each one which addresses their differences and similarities (Johns, 1997).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a practical introduction to the role and sources of materials in the writing class and some steps in designing them. I have emphasized the importance of matching materials to the proficiency and target needs of learners and the value of providing students with varied material from a range of sources. Essentially, materials

should contribute towards students' understanding of a target genre (its purpose, context, structure and main features) or provide opportunities to practice one or more aspects of the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing). In other words, the activities that are devised from a selected text should be carefully planned to lead to the syllabus goals.

The main points of this chapter can be summarized as follows:

- Teachers need to be aware of the different roles that materials play in writing instruction in order to make the best choice and use of them.
- Authentic materials are important when used as models of target texts, but teachers should not be tyrannized by the 'authenticity imperative' when selecting materials to scaffold writing.
- Learners must have adequate prior knowledge of a genre to allow them to write it effectively and materials can be used to model and scaffold this learning, particularly in the early stages of learning a new genre.
- The choice of input texts requires consideration of both the language demands it will make on learners and the opportunities it provides for developing content and rhetorical schemata.
- General principles of context, learning, orientation and student characteristics can help us assess and modify textbooks for local use.
- The internet provides a rich source of materials for developing process, genre and structure knowledge as well as opportunities to practise their skills in a range of new electronic contexts.

Perhaps the central idea in this chapter is that teaching writing skills can never simply involve giving students a topic and asking them to write about it. Materials are a key element of what it means to teach writing and their choice and design must always be sensitive to local conditions and to the professional expertise of teachers. I hope the principles and suggestions I have discussed here will be useful guides to teachers in this process.

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20

Developing Materials for Speaking Skills

Dat Bao

This chapter first highlights some prevalent methodological trends that have influenced and shaped many essential components in the development of material design for spoken language. Second, a practical framework is proposed for designing materials for speaking skills. Then, the chapter presents a rational for effective instructional materials for the discussed skills, proposes a set of criteria for evaluating materials for speaking, and finally throws light on some methodological aspects that deserve further scholarly attention.

Overview

Setting the scene: Speaking skills and the need for relevant materials

One way to understand the notion of speaking skills, as suggested by Bygate (1987, pp. 5–6), is by viewing them in two basic aspects: motor-receptive skills and interaction skills. The former involves a mastering of sounds and structures not necessarily in any particular context. The latter involves making decisions about what and how to say things in specific communicative situations to convey the right intentions or maintain relationships. This perception can be further understood by observing that these two sets of skills must not represent 'clear-cut distinctions' (Littlewood, 1981, p. 16) or 'two-stage operations', but from the start structure must be taught in relation to use (Johnson, 1982, p. 22). Moreover, much research on language awareness also suggests that the teaching sequence does not have to be structures before communication of

meanings, but content-based activities can organize for learners to experience and respond to meanings first. Arguably, speaking skills are best developed when learners learn to eventually take control of their own performance from an insider perspective (e.g. from the learner), rather than being constantly dictated by external manipulation (e.g. by the teacher).

Second language materials, as viewed by Tomlinson (2010, 2011), should be created not only by writers but also by teachers and learners, in a creative process which stretches to the real classroom. Tomlinson's perception coincides nicely with Nunan's (1989) view that teaching communication should be seen as a process rather than a set of products. It is also closely related to what Breen (1984, p. 47) calls the 'process syllabus'. According to this syllabus, when materials are scripted by a writer, they appear in the form of a predesigned plan rather than the final production and are open to reinterpretation by the users of that plan, for example teachers and learners. Both the designer's original construction and the users' reinterpretation of this plan have the right to join each other in a creative process shaped by participant experiences, attitudes and knowledge. It is through such interaction that predesigned sketches can be best processed and earn conditions to develop into appropriate materials that promote language learning. In other words, task implementation in the classroom serves as a practical tool for relevant materials to be jointly created.

This understanding helps explain why many coursebook activities composed from the writer's own assumptions while disregarding the users of the books often have problems working in the real classroom. It also explains why adaptation of coursebooks is constantly called into play, especially when the writer's vision of classroom process fails to harmonize with the teacher's vision, the learner's needs and the local contexts. Ideally, if materials are constructed for speaking skills, the interactive process by the designer and the users should take place through speaking, since it would be unrealistic for participants to simply sit there and silently imagine how talk might work from a written script. Section 4 of this chapter will return to this issue with proposals for assessing the quality of materials for speaking.

Trends in materials for speaking skills

Arguably, trends in material design progress in parallel with trends in methodology. This should not surprise us since activities in coursebooks are precisely where principle and practice are brought together. In fact, materials published over the past five decades have been clear indicators of how the key principles of communicative approaches are incorporated into speaking activities. Although this chapter limits itself to spoken language, it does not seem possible at the moment to separate general trends in materials for speaking from those for other basic skills, since these materials are all subject to similar debates.

If in the mid-1960s, the learning of linguistic systems was emphasized as the main method to master a second language (Johnson, 1982), the 1970s witnessed a

'communicative revolution' (McDonough, 1993, p. 20) in which 'meaningful activities' (Mockridge-Fong, 1979, p. 91) replaced mechanical language exercises. This change, however, was not perceived by many teachers and learners as a beneficial revolution at all since it took away all the confidence learners used to have thanks to what they perceived as systematic and sufficient grammatical input. In view of this, the 1980s saw attempts to make the communicative approach less extreme, so as not to put too much emphasis on use and ignore the learners' need for linguistic knowledge (Morrow, 1983; Scott, 1983; Swan, 1983, 1985; Dubin and Olshtain, 1986). Examples of the reaction against the strong version of the communicative approach were the criticism that the new methodology was attempting to replace the structural approach (Dubin and Olshtain, 1986); the criticism that in fact the new method had not made the learning of grammatical knowledge any easier than before (Swan, 1985); and the appeal not to deny the value of a structural framework in supporting rules for use (Scott, 1983). Alongside these debates, scholarly efforts were invested in how to harmonize the opposing tendencies, by considering the fact that form and use in second language teaching should not be mutually exclusive.

By virtue of this compromise view, the early 1990s saw the idea of a multidimensional syllabus becoming more explicitly and systematically addressed, which opened up new possibilities for encompassing a more comprehensive series of teaching dimensions such as functions and notions, roles and skills, themes and situations. The main purpose of this type of syllabus, as pointed out by (McDonough and Shaw, 1993, p. 50), is 'to build on a range of communicative criteria at the same time as acknowledging the need to provide systematic practice in the formal proprieties of the language'.

The recognition of learner differences and the importance of divergent responses in learning have been reflected in materials developments over the decades. Educators and materials writers alike demonstrated a tendency to resist activities in which discussions invite right and wrong answers because that would reduce learning complexity (see, for example, Turner and Patrick, 2004; Meyer and Turner, 2006; Patrick et al., 2007; Graff, 2009). Learning complexity has also been demonstrated in today's English language teaching materials when they are no longer represented in a single textbook but come as a multidimensional package (Littlejohn, 1998; McKay and Tom, 1999; Lyons, 2003) and this expanded view is a response to the evolving of pedagogical beliefs (Murray, 2003) as well as a reaction to the implementation of all the technological advances in the industry to the extent that it seems like a stand-alone textbook could become a thing of the past. The concept 'textbook' might imply that teachers are somehow 'deficient' in their ability and knowledge and thus have to solely rely on the textbook as their primary source of knowledge. A textbook can become a 'tyrant' within the classroom (Williams, 1983), demanding there be no room for deviation from it or for personalized learning.

Since the classroom environment is often not heterogeneous but mixed to some degree in linguistic proficiency, interpersonal skill, age, academic background, gender, personality, language aptitude, learning style and other factors (see, for example, Woodward, 2001), one of the major concerns of language materials is the capability of

'catering for the diversity of needs which exists in most language classrooms' (Nunan, 1991, p. 209). Language teaching is full of choices and alternatives (Dougill, 1987; Graves, 2001), and no one is totally sure of which way is right. For an example of this trend, let us examine three activity samples that deal with a similar theme, namely describing objects, taken from three English coursebooks published in 1978, 1991 and 1999.

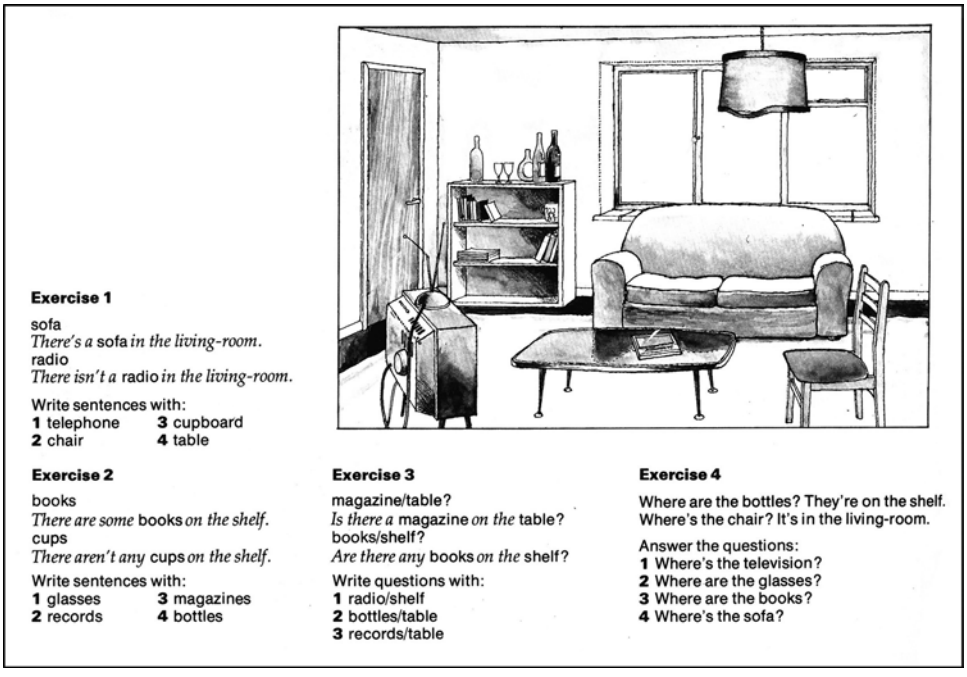
In *Streamline English* (Hartley and Viney, 1978, 1996), Lesson 6: A Nice Flat (see Figure 20.1) students are asked to describe a room from a given picture. There is no freedom of choice and hardly any peer interaction involved in this task since all information comes directly from the same visual. Every learner performs the same role.

In *Interchange – English for International Communication.* Book 3, Activity 'Same or Different?' in Unit 12 (Richards, Hull and Proctor, 1991) students are provided with several sets of pictures depicting different object items and invited to discover how these items differ by asking each other questions. This activity utilizes the decoding and encoding of information gaps, which encourages students to exchange factual data. There is still no freedom of choice but at least learners are given the opportunity to interact for a purpose. There are two different roles to perform: information seeker and information provider.

In *Language in Use Pre-Intermediate* (Doff and Jones, 2002), Activity 1 of Unit 3: Talking about Places (see Figure 20.2) invites learners to look at a picture of five different doors and imagine the rooms behind them. Since there are no right or wrong answers, students are encouraged to process meanings from their own experiences and perspectives. Besides providing freedom of choice, this material takes learners beyond the level of information gap into two new areas: reasoning gap, which involves deriving data by inference and perception, and opinion gap, which encourages personal feelings and attitudes.

Many examples like this one can be found across coursebooks over the years. They demonstrate a shift from mechanical rehearsal of language structure to more interactive exchange of factual information, and another shift from interactive exchange of factual information to more dynamic processing of personal opinions. It has to be admitted, however, that changes in course materials do not always represent a move from the out-of-date to the latest, but may happen in reverse. For example, it is observed by Tomlinson (1998) that sometimes a coursebook sells successfully not because it has something new to offer, but because it goes back to what is old.

By and large, many conscious efforts for improvement made by course-writers over the decades have enabled materials design to evolve towards increasingly sophisticated levels. Sometimes such evolution causes practitioners to feel worried about how to handle all this sophistication effectively in teaching. For example, in the 1980s, some theorists believed that the more sophisticated the syllabus, the more difficult to implement it in the classroom (Eskey, 1984). However, materials development in recent years tends to prove the opposite: as course design becomes more thoughtful,



Exercise 1

sofa
There's a sofa *in the living-room.*
radio
There isn't a radio *in the living-room.*

Write sentences with:
1 telephone **3** cupboard
2 chair **4** table

Exercise 2

books
There are some books *on the shelf.*
cups
There aren't any cups *on the shelf.*

Write sentences with:
1 glasses **3** magazines
2 records **4** bottles

Exercise 3

magazine/table?
Is there a magazine *on the* table?
books/shelf?
Are there any books *on the* shelf?

Write questions with:
1 radio/shelf
2 bottles/table
3 records/table

Exercise 4

Where are the bottles? They're on the shelf.
Where's the chair? It's in the living-room.

Answer the questions:
1 Where's the television?
2 Where are the glasses?
3 Where are the books?
4 Where's the sofa?

FIGURE 20.1 *A nice flat.*

Source: Hartlet, B. and Viney, P. (1996), Streamline English – Departure (38th edn). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

it also tries to make language teaching easier in the classroom by aiming for less teacher preparation (e.g. by improving teachers' manuals).

Examining publishers' claims over several decades is another way to recognize change in materials development. It shows us a gradual transfer from a strictly communicative focus towards a more balanced view in teaching both grammar and communication, justified on the grounds that form and use are not necessarily two opposing areas. For example, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, such expressions as 'real-life contexts', 'functionally based', 'meaningful and effective communication' are seen to fulfill publishers' claims; then since the early 1990s, the key concepts have included 'systematic development in combination with other three skills practice', 'core grammar structures' and 'different learning styles and teaching situations' (McDonough and Shaw, 1993, pp. 22, 25, 46). Textbooks in today's context, apart from being communicative, have a tendency to focus on themes of global significance and harmless topics to suit as many contexts as possible. They take care not to touch on cross-culturally sensitive and controversial topics that may cause damage to any set of cultural values (see, for example, Sampedro and Hillyard, 2004). However, in trying to be culturally harmless and free from provocation, materials often remove excitement (Leather, 2003), romanticize the world (Banegas, 2010) and introduce

3 Talking about places

1 Behind the door

There is/are • has got

1 Look at these two doors. What rooms do you think are behind them?

Read the sentences in the box. Which room do they describe? Could any sentences describe both rooms?

a There's a map on the wall.
b There's an ashtray.
c There's a video in the corner.
d There are two phones.
e There are flowers by the window.
f The room has got a blackboard.
g The room has got a thick carpet.

What else do you think there is in each room?





2 Now look at these doors. Where do you think they are?







3 Choose one of the other doors, and imagine what's behind it. Write a few sentences about it. You can use these ideas, and add ideas of your own.

bed menu table chair television
picture sofa clock lift phone
fax machine magazine shower computer reception desk

4 Show your sentences to another student. Did you imagine the same things?

FIGURE 20.2 *Talking about places.*

aspirational language rather than truthfully reflect a variety of real-life spoken styles (Gray, 2002, 2010).

A proposed framework for developing materials for spoken language

This section proposes an approach comprising five recommendations to guide how materials can be developed for speaking skills, namely: (1) conceptualizing learner needs, (2) identifying subject matter and communication situations, (3) identifying verbal communication strategies, (4) utilizing verbal sources from real life and (5) designing skill-acquiring activities.

Conceptualizing learner needs

Materials design should begin from who learners are in order to link language study not only to learners' future use but also to their present receptivity. As Brindley (1989, p. 70) indicates, it is important to look at both subjective needs and objective needs in the learner. The former comprises such areas as learners' speaking proficiency and difficulties plus real-life conversational situations outside of the classroom, all of which will help the teacher decide what to teach. The latter includes such aspects as personality, learning styles, cultural preferences and expectations of the course, all of which will help the teacher decide how to teach. As an example of needs, research on English materials in Korea and Japan has shown that many Korean learners enjoy learning English in order to express themselves while many Japanese learners prefer to learn it to understand and discuss foreign cultures (Yuasa, 2010). Needs assessment, as suggested by Graves (1996), should be viewed as an ongoing process which takes place before, during and after the course. Seeking to know learner needs, after all, does not mean describing learners but more importantly, it means actually involving learners in the process of developing materials and giving them a voice in their materials.

Translating needs to subject matters and communication situations

Knowledge about learner needs will serve as the foundation on which experiential content is selected for instructional materials. As learners reveal what they want to do with the target language, they also directly or indirectly imply the type of environment where the language is to be used. It is now important to also explore the context of such environments and form some idea of what skills their society requires of an effective speaker. The more specifically learners state their needs, the more appropriately the

subject matter can be established towards appropriate sets of topics, situations, functions, strategies, registers, and key structures; as well as the sources to build all these components with.

In general, this step is a preliminary effort to outline the instructional content of the target material. Among the more difficult components to search for are perhaps communication strategies, and authentic sources for composing features of natural speech. To support these endeavours, the sections below will discuss some helpful techniques to make these tasks possible.

Identifying verbal communication strategies

An interesting experiment on spoken English is reported by Tay (1988). In this study, samples of real, spontaneous speech by ten Singaporean university students were played for 100 British listeners (who were from London and had never been to Singapore before) to listen to and rate their intelligibility. Five speakers scored more than 80 per cent, two more than 70 per cent; the highest was 89.1 per cent and the lowest 56.4 per cent. As factors that impair intelligibility were sought and analysed, it turned out that the main obstacle was not predominantly pronunciation. Instead, some of the more striking problematic features were identified as interaction strategies, styles and registers, whose implications should be considered for transferring to materials design for oral communication.

Conversational strategies must be incorporated in teaching materials because they are essential tools to serve the communication of meanings. One way of doing so is by designing tasks for learners to act upon their interlocutor's speech rather than merely concentrating on their own. For example, learners can be helped to practice building talk upon talk, dealing with interaction pressures such as stealing and sustaining turns, handling unrehearsed discourse, controlling their level of diplomacy and courtesy, choosing when to move on to a new topic, winding down a conversation, recognizing signals when their partner wants to leave the conversation and so forth. Research has demonstrated that when learners are helped to be aware of the use of speaking strategies they will go a long way in improving speaking skills (Huang, 2006).

It is therefore essential to build into materials many practical devices that can help facilitate oral production and overcome those communication difficulties arising under time pressure. Bygate (1987, p. 14) suggests five of them: (1) using less complex syntax, (2) making do with short phrases and incomplete sentences, (3) employing fixed conversational phrases, (4) adding filler words to gain time to speak and (5) correcting or improving what one has already said. These techniques have meaningful implications for instructional materials since they help materials designers become more aware of what is the normal process of speech production. They also help learners realize how temporary and flexible spoken language can be and how therefore imperfection can be tolerated as part of the interactive process.

Utilizing verbal sources from real life

In many cases, preparing materials might just be one-third of the job, that is providing opportunities for learning. Implementing and modifying them are what helps bridge the gap between plans and effects. To modify materials, besides printed sources such as magazine articles or pictures as a springboard for communication, course developers can also utilize many verbal interactions taken from real life and in the classroom.

One method to seek for practical teaching ideas, as suggested by Tay (1988) is by taping learners' peer group interaction in the target language and analysing it. It is through this type of exercise that typical conversational difficulties or obstacles can be identified and translated into problem-based strategies for the teaching of verbal communication. Arguably, this is a realistic way of allowing learners to take part in the material-design process.

Another method is by finding opportunities to compare naturally occurring conversations with the designer's versions which deal with the same topic. Researchers have provided evidence that many conversations composed from the writer's own assumptions of spoken language do not always reflect actual contexts of use, especially when they skip over many essential strategies required by real-life communication situations. (See dialogue scripts discussed by Cunningsworth, 1995, p. 26; Carter, Hughes and McCarthy, 1998, pp. 68–9 for examples.)

Keeping a diary might also be a realistic way to collect resources for designing speaking activities with. Such resources can come from overhearing conversations in public places, from radio or television interviews, from watching drama or movies, or even from our interaction with native speakers in the target language. Any such data, provided that it is relevant to teaching themes, can always be recycled and developed into instructional materials for the classroom.

Designing skill-acquiring tasks

Once communication content is outlined and its components are selected, the decisive step is to create relevant tasks that help learners in three essential aspects: to acquire new language, to learn rules of interaction and to experience communication of meanings – though not necessarily in this sequence.

(a) To acquire new language, learners should be helped to internalize new language before making it become available to discuss topics. Teaching new language includes not only presenting linguistic structures but also helping learners to self-discover form and function. For internalization to happen, such language must be pushed further into an experiential process, by introducing a series of small orientation tasks that guide learners towards readiness in both content and language for the communicative topic that will come later. Examples of such tasks can be ranking exercises, brainstorming for key words and expressions, generating ideas around the topic and so on.

(b) To learn rules of interaction, learners can be provided with conditions to help them become aware of fundamental skills and develop verbal strategies in the target topic. This is made possible by having learners read several dialogues within the topic, by getting them to listen to conversations read by the teacher or from the tape and by drawing learner attention to and encouraging them to discuss characteristics of verbal communication.

(c) To experience communication of meanings, learners need conditions for coping with meanings and need purposes for using language. More specifically, they need content-based activities to get them to interact with peers. This is made possible by giving learners roles to play, assigning social tasks to be achieved, giving them motivating and attractive reasons to communicate, utilizing gaps in learner knowledge, experiences or attitudes to facilitate sincere exchange, inventing conflicts that lead to personal debates, making up misunderstanding situations to be fixed, creating sticky situations to get out of and so forth.

It is through this classroom process that materials users earn conditions to be active contributors in tasks design. It helps the designer see where materials work and fail to work, which will hint at gaps for modification. This process also helps teachers to exploit practical contexts to develop a repertoire of activities that can be adapted every time a course is taught. Such a set of flexible activities might also give individual teachers opportunities to gradually discover their own strength in using certain types of materials.

A proposed framework for effective speaking materials

Drawing from relevant academic discourse and personal experiences in the second language classroom, this section recommends a rationale for materials design for speaking. The rationale lays emphasis on a set of dimensions in learner abilities which, if fully facilitated, will help promote and maximize verbal performance. Effective materials for oral communication should enable learners to actively (1) share and process information, (2) control meanings, (3) choose how to participate, (4) utilize affectivity, (5) utilize individual knowledge, (6) become aware of ellipsis in spoken language, and (7) move beyond the Initiation-Respond-Feedback model.

Focus on both sharing and processing information

Speaking tasks should not merely organize for learners, during interaction, to share information but should also enable them to process it. Sharing information means discovering missing information from one's knowledge gap by learning about it from one or more partners. Processing information means communicating by exchanging

what belongs in learners' individuality by allowing learners to use their own backgrounds and personalities.

The latter involves such skills as expressing reactions and preferences, justifying opinions, suggesting solutions, making personal judgement and decisions – as well as extracting personal responses from conversation partners. Only when a task manages to bring out what belongs in learners' individuality will it be able to elicit the most authentic and genuine response from them and thereby make the interaction most meaningful. Besides, performing new language functions that one has not performed before will bridge the gap between learners' existing ability and more advanced ability. Both discourse and research in SLA have acknowledged that it is through such active involvement in negotiated interaction that leads to greater second language development (Long, 1996; MacKay, 1999; Fluente, 2002).

Respect for learner control of meanings

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, communication skills are best developed when learners learn to eventually take control of their own performance from their own perspective rather than wait to be directed by the teacher. If a task can create this condition, it will succeed in reflecting much real-life communication where verbal utterances come voluntarily from the speaker's personal decisions.

For this reason, materials should facilitate 'self-directed learning' (Tomlinson, 2010, p. 90) and respect learners' personal decisions. This can be done by inviting learners to provide topics of their own interest, raise a question, talk about their own experiences, bring into the classroom stories that they wish to share with others. This can also be done by tasks that leave room for learner's independent thinking and creativity, stimulate individual attitudes and beliefs, and encourage learners to try their own interactive tactics to achieve communicative purposes. The significance of creating these opportunities for learners means allowing them to be involved in the materials developing process.

Potential for a range of learner choices

In my view good materials allow for learner choices, which can be provided in a number of different ways. The range of decisions may involve learners choosing their role in a project that involves many partners, choosing a sub-task in an activity or choosing a topic from a set of suggested topics.

Where possible, materials should give learners a chance to adapt certain aspects of the subject matter. In other words, they should allow learners to assess and decide what they need and do not need from what is provided (Breen and Candlin, 1987). Besides, good materials do not organize interaction by always putting learners together, thus denying their choice, but, to reflect real-life communication, should also

encourage learners to sometimes seek their own partners and to decide on the people they want and need to communicate with.

The significance of allowing all of these decisions is to train learners in developing active participation, responsibility, autonomy and wider personal involvement – all of which represent important features of real-life communication. It is not only what to teach (content) that moves interaction towards the real world, but how to teach (strategies) also helps learners to develop active learning attitudes that authentic communication often requires.

Despite all this, it should be noted that giving too much freedom away might risk causing misunderstanding. Learners may start to feel that the teacher is not capable of making decisions and thus may begin to lose confidence in the teacher's leading role. For a solution, Littlewood (1992) suggests organizing for learners to have low-level choices within a structured environment or framework still in teacher control in order to maintain in learners some level of adequacy and security. Over time, the level of learner choices may be increased when learners have become confident enough to survive and support their own framework.

Concern for learner affectivity

Learners tend to find it easier to articulate their ideas when they feel emotionally involved and enjoy what is going on. Good materials therefore must be inspiring enough to stir and enhance individual learners' interests, needs and abilities (Brumfit and Robert, 1993) as well as affective involvement (Breen and Candlin, 1987). 'There is, after all, no better motivation for learning a language than a burning desire to express an opinion in that language or on a subject that one really cares about' (Eskey, 1984, p. 67). In addition, good materials should be user-friendly by allowing for the learning process to be fun (Tomlinson, 1991; Fontana, 1994) – so long as the kind of humour being employed is not offensive in the learner's culture.

Besides, affectivity can be involved by building into tasks some degree of controversy that provokes learners to exchange different thoughts, share their diverse values, and express contrastive attitudes, rather than activities that are likely to indulge similarity and agreement. Good materials should also suggest ways for the teacher to make the process adaptable to a broad spectrum of learners (Hunter and Hofbauer, 1989) to avoid the pitfall of catering to one learner group while frustrating another.

Utilization of individual knowledge

If students are given an unfamiliar topic to write about, they can take some time to read or research for that purpose. But if they given an unfamiliar topic to discuss verbally, they are most likely to give up, due to the pressure of time inherent in oral communication. For this reason, the content of speaking tasks should not be so unfamiliar to learners that they do not fully understand (Hutchison and Waters, 1980;

Hunter and Hofbauer, 1989) and thus do not know how to discuss it. One example of an unusable activity would be for Thai students to talk about a skiing experience on the mountain when there is in fact no snow in their country. Conversely, oral topics should not be so familiar to learners that there is nothing for learners to think about, and should not be so new in information value that learners have little knowledge to connect (Hutchison and Waters, 1980). Examples of this would be for two people of the same country to describe a cultural festival they both know too well about; or to describe a picture they both see equally clearly.

Rehearsing features of spoken discourse

Being knowledgeable about colours does not make one a good artist. This is because knowledge has to go through action to be transferred to skills. Materials for speaking skills therefore must encourage and enable learners to process speech by experiencing use, by making quick decisions under the pressure of time and by making do with limited vocabulary. When learners are taking these challenges, they may not be able to compose perfect sentences, but if we look at naturally occurring conversations by native speakers of any language we can see that they do not produce perfection either.

Verbal discourse, according to Brown and Yule (1983), Carter et al., (1998), Luoma (2004), Richard (2008), Burns and Hill (2013) and Timmis (2013) includes features such as verbal ellipsis, conjoined short expressions, planned and unplanned speech, fillers and hesitations, vague and reformulated speech, repetitions, co-constructed information, and register variations denoting roles and relationships. Besides, good materials for speaking not only incorporate the above characteristics in texts but also manage to provide activities that allow those features to be operated when learners work together. Such tasks should help learners, for example, to make small talk, discuss personal experiences, take turns through active role-play, give feedback on ideas, justify positions, make comparisons, persuade a friend, approach an authority for help, explain difficult situations, raise questions and maintain a topic. They should involve exchange of opinions, viewpoints, and attitudes; as well as sharing of knowledge and problem-solving. To facilitate the above, teachers' manuals might suggest how the teacher can provide language support and model activities for students who need help. Effective materials should also identify the types of resources to be used as well as guide teachers in providing assessment and feedback on students' performance to discover what kind of learning has really taken place rather than have students merely 'talk a lot' and 'have fun'.

Moving beyond the Initiation-Respond-Feedback model

The Initiation-Response-Feedback model (IRF), which is the most common pattern of interaction in most classrooms, is useful in the sense that it allows teachers to

invite student output and evaluate it. However, this structure is insufficient to maximize both amount and quality of learner output. Effective materials should be designed in a way that push classroom talk beyond the feedback stage for example, by turning that feedback into a question or an inspiring statement that will invite further talk from the learner so that output is stretched to the maximum degree possible. In other words, instead of providing an evaluative comment, the teacher will provide further opportunities for more interaction. If materials manage to suggest ideas for learners to produce multiple degrees of responses, classroom interaction will be unrestrained, more chunks of speech will take place and learners will rehearse more language skills. In fact, the restrictive nature of the IRF pattern has been criticized in much of today's SLA discourse (see, for example, Ohta, 2001; Hall and Walsh, 2002; Walsh, 2002). Besides, meaningful interaction is not just about the amount of output being produced. The push towards increased talk based on the continuous topic content will also play the role of reducing communication breakdown (Tuan and Nhu, 2010), engaging learners in deeper thought processes (Myhill and Dunkin, 2005) and helping learners modify their speech (Lightbrown and Spada, 2006). This should promote more negotiation of meaning and enhance language acquisition.

Evaluating materials for speaking skills

The questions below are recommended to help educators weigh the impact of materials for speaking skills and ensure that materials provide not only linguistic support but also opportunities for meaning to be engaged, as well as space for learners' cultural and affective values to operate in the learning process. Such impact, however, cannot be judged predictively by mere reliance on a checklist but needs to be evaluated empirically by micro-evaluation of specific tasks through actual teaching practice and materials modification (Nunan, 1988; Richard and Lockhart, 1994; Ellis, 1997).

Linguistic support – Do the materials provide appropriate and sufficient linguistic input? Do the materials help students get familiar with many characteristics of spoken language? Is sufficient vocabulary provided in the materials or do teachers and students have to generate vocabulary? If so, is there a suggested process for this to happen?

Content-based and affective support – Do the materials satisfy learners with moments of inspiration, imagination, creativity and cultural sensibilities? Do the materials contain visuals that inspire and support verbal learning? If so, how does that happen? Do the speaking activities enable students to utilize their cultural and individual knowledge? Do the materials provide conditions for unrestrained improvisation? Is the cultural content relevant to the learners' cultural sensitivities? Are topics controversial enough to stimulate debate but not too culturally inappropriate that they upset learners' feelings?

Skills support – Do speaking activities give students opportunities to both share and process information? Is the language presented and organized to effectively facilitate

verbal discussion in chunks of speech? Do the activities enable learners to employ a wide range of communicative functions and strategies? Do speaking activities encourage various forms of interpersonal communication, such as monologues, dialogues and group discussion? Are speaking skills promoted in isolation or integrated with other skills? If so, is the integration natural enough to reflect real world communication?

Diversity and flexibility – Are the materials flexible enough to serve more than one type of learning style, proficiency, maturity and interest? For example, are there supplementary materials to both support less able learners and satisfy more ambitious learners? Do activities cover a variety of different proficiency levels? Do the materials provide a variety of speaking activities (such as process-oriented tasks vs product-oriented tasks, meaning focused tasks versus consciousness-raising exercises, involving vs engaging tasks)?

Utilizing research trends – What view on methodology is implied in the materials and how does it reflect recent SLA theories on speaking skills development? (see Burns and Hill, 2013; Timmis, 2013). Are there conditions for meaningful input, language rehearsal activities for L2 data processing, opportunities for output production and formative assessment for learning?

Aspects that deserve more scholarly attention

This discussion spotlights two significant areas that seem to be left out of focus in many current materials for speaking skills, namely the issues of catering for learner identity and for cultural localization. These characteristics of course materials are important considering the reality that many course activities tend to rest too much on the writers' own assumptions while ignoring the learners' actual contexts.

The need for reflection of learner identity

One important ingredient of high-quality materials as highlighted by Bassano and Christison (1987) is the opportunity for learners to remain themselves in the new language because being allowed to be who you are, as Johnson (2011) suggests, gives learners comfort in learning. Being oneself may include aspects such as learners demonstrating their level of sophistication in the new language rather than remaining childish due to less advanced L2 proficiency (Tay, 1988; Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Masuhara et al., 2008) having the freedom to use private speech as a way to engage with language individually (Anton et al., 2003), being inspired to initiate ways to learn rather than the teacher making decisions all the time (Block, 2007; van Lier, 2008), being given conditions for flexibility and choice (Tomlinson, 2012), being encouraged to use different resources from those of other learners (Bolitho et al., 2003), having the freedom to develop their own view of the world (Johnson, 2011) and making use of individual experiences to interpret society (Murphy, 2008).

In view of these needs, materials designers need to make a conscious effort in providing individual learners with the tools to possibly reflect, to a certain extent, the type of people they are and what they enjoy verbalizing in the target language. Much of this has less to do with linguistic levels than the type of language required to serve the subject matters of individual learners' interests as well as the kinds of strategies that help train them in discussing those matters.

The need for cultural localization of materials

Despite all the acknowledged values of communicative language teaching seemingly on a global basis, in many countries such debates are still surprisingly current (Xiao, 2000; McDonough et al., 2013) and research on the compatibility and incompatibility of the approach is still ongoing in many parts of the world. In many cases, it is not the approach itself that gets problematized, but rather the tasks accompanying it that bear responsibility for learner resistance. For example, when subject matter is not culturally appropriate in the local learning situations, learners and teachers switch off not only from the content but also from the method. We bring in a stove to help with the cooking, but suppose the food we offer is not accepted, then no matter how effective the stove is, people might refuse to eat. Likewise, we bring in an approach to help with the teaching, but suppose the content we offer is not accepted, then no matter how effective the approach is, students might refuse to learn.

From a constructivist viewpoint, the communicative approach experiences the challenge of contextual constraints in many local educational systems, many local teachers' and students' traditional learning habits. However, from the curriculum perspective, course materials with little flexibility have ignored the importance of localizing language tasks and have denied learners of their contextual use. An evaluation project conducted by Tomlinson et al. (2001) of eight English language courses demonstrates that very few materials actually provide help in adapting their global course to specific situations. Even when cross-cultural awareness activities are provided, they happen to adopt the views of native speakers of English and portray holiday places outside of non-Western cultures as exotic and somewhat bizarre.

Now and again complaints can be heard from teachers and learners from many parts of the world about alienating content in global coursebooks. Such content includes reference to, for example, parking meters, vending machines, snow, ice, cold mornings, water cisterns and wineries that do not exist in the learner's countries (see, for example, Jolly and Bolitho, 1998). Since many courses are written before they actually travel to the real classroom thousands of miles from the authors, local users sometimes realize that their cultures have become marginalized and have little or no room in the materials. In many global course materials, conditions for localization are often added to many speaking activities as an afterthought rather than being well blended throughout the course as a major component. One way to check whether the materials are culturally appropriate and effective is to ask oneself such questions as:

Will the learners be able to relate the content of the materials to their own situations and experiences in ways that are meaningful and interesting to them? What are the most significant issues in the society where our learners live? What are the most important values and beliefs embedded within their everyday life?

Scholarly insights have been proposed for addressing the above problems. Lin and Warden (1998) advise research to look into local environments which influence students' learning. Maley (2011) suggests not treating many uniquely different teaching situations as if they were the same. Sridhar (1994) calls for a rethinking of a more culturally authentic theory. Breen and Candlin (1987) recommend that materials should have room for learners to express the values important to them. Langley and Maingay (1984) emphasize the need to establish more cross-cultural comparisons in course content. Tomlinson (2005) and Lin and Warden (1998), who discuss ELT in Asia, suggest that cultural differences should contribute tremendously to the thrust of the discussion on any issues about language teaching and learning. Tomlinson (2005) also suggests having learners exposed to a variety of Englishes being spoken around them as a way to build practical communication skills rather than blindly follow native speaker varieties.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to touch on several major trends in how methodology has been affecting materials design for speaking, as well as where practice in such design has led us. It has suggested and discussed in some detail a framework and a rationale to serve materials development in the discussed skills; and has also recommended further areas that deserve a better place in activities for oral communication, which perhaps should have implications for other skills as well.

Among the main obstacles encountered by material developers in attempting to replicate genuine communication are its intrinsic unpredictability and relative complexity, both of which must be regarded as inherent characteristics of spoken language and must be transferred to instructional materials (Cunningsworth, 1995). The nature of communication reproduced in many current course materials is often far less complex than life, perhaps because simplified language is easy to design – into activities that are easy to teach. However, it should be a never-ending responsibility of material writers to form a habit of reconsidering what has been written. Developing materials in a second language is an ongoing, long-term process which involves strategizing in the writer's office, applying to classroom action, and modifying on the grounds of real experiences and real contexts of use. No matter how thoughtfully the material may be planned, it should be always open to some degree of writer-user interaction for further revision. This can be done by constantly observing real-life situations and comparing them with our scripted materials to highlight new features and new skills required for learners to operate more effectively in unpredictable communication.

No coursebooks will fit all circumstances (Canniveng and Martinez, 2003) but teachers should be helped to develop the reflecting, analysing and evaluating powers to create successful lessons for all the students, needs and personalities in any given situation. Creativity in the classroom can arise through unplanned accidents (O'Neill, 1982) in the classroom, or through the teacher's creative dialogue (Islam and Mares, 2003) with the textbook and with students, both of which tap into the teacher's personalization and adaptation of the materials. Second language materials therefore should be seen as an idea bank which stimulates teachers' and learners' creative potential (Cunningsworth, 1984). No two audiences are alike: students vary in ability, age and interests, and may have different cultural and learning backgrounds; classes vary in size, physical layout and formality; teachers have different teaching styles; and learners may have widely differing ideas about what and how they need to learn. Verbal communication in the real world is so dynamic and unpredictable that course materials for speakers' performance should cater for such variations by providing open-ended activities, so that classes can find their own level, and so that both weaker and stronger students have something to contribute. Materials should encourage students to contribute their own ideas and draw on their own knowledge, experience, learning styles, class cultures and individual interests.

As the availability of commercial teaching materials increases, the need for homemade materials become more urgent than ever before, when more teachers become aware that 'increased variety is not the solution for their particular situation' (Alderson, 1980, p. 134). After all, there should be more projects in which teachers are given tools and opportunities to design their own courses. This will enable teachers to produce appropriate materials that harmonize with their students' wants and needs, as well as to concentrate on their local contexts of use without having to be distracted by attempts to please particular publishers or anonymous markets.

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21

Coursebook Listening Activities

David A. Hill and Brian Tomlinson

Introduction

Despite a variety of publications in the past 25 years describing and exemplifying systematic approaches to developing listening skills for foreign language learners (e.g. Anderson and Lynch, 1988; Rost, 1990, 1991, 2001, 2002, 2005; Field, 1998, 2008; White, 1998; Buck, 2001; Flowerdew and Miller, 2005; Vandergrift, 2007; Wilson, 2008; Ableeva and Stranks, 2013; McDonough et al., 2013), little has changed in that period in the type of listening activity provided in the majority of widely used coursebooks.

According to Field (1998), the typical textbook provided the following stages in a listening task:

- pre-listening (for context and motivation);
- extensive listening;
- questions to establish the situation;
- pre-set questions or pre-set task;
- intensive listening;
- review of questions or task;
- inferring new vocabulary/examination of functional language (Field, 1998, p. 110).

Field laments that the model used by textbooks is a product model in which 'success in listening is measured by correct responses to questions or tasks', as opposed to a process model in which teachers would 'follow up incorrect responses in order to determine where understanding broke down and to put things right'. Fourteen years

later Field (2012) is still characterizing typical listening lessons in a very similar way (p. 208) and is still criticizing the approach for being product focused rather than process oriented. He advocates a subskills approach in which the learners are 'taught' 'difficult phonological features' (p. 210) such as lexical segmentation, recognition of recurrent chunks and turn-taking signals, as well as a task-based strategy approach in which learners are 'encouraged to operate strategically in the course of a normal comprehension lesson' (p. 211).

Buck (2001) comments that most classwork done on listening skills is 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down'. By this he means that there is a concentration on knowledge of the smallest elements of the incoming sound-stream, such as phonemes or individual words, at the expense of wider issues such as general knowledge or experience of the world. Buck concludes that:

> both research and daily experience indicate that the processing of the different types of knowledge (involved in understanding language) does not occur in a fixed sequence, but rather, that different types of processing may occur simultaneously, or in any convenient order. Thus, syntactic knowledge might be used to help identify a word, ideas about the topic of conversation might influence processing of the syntax, or knowledge of the context will help interpret the meaning. (Buck, 2001, p. 2)

What Field and Buck suggest, and what Rost (1991) and White (1998) demonstrate in their 'recipe' books of listening activities, is that it is possible to be systematic about teaching listening skills, to develop lists of listening subskills which need to be practised and to find appropriate pedagogic vehicles for such practice.

As well as needing to develop listening strategies and skills learners also need exposure to language in use in order to facilitate its acquisition (Tomlinson, 2013) and one of the best ways to gain such exposure is through extensive listening, an activity much neglected by coursebooks and teachers. Both Rost (2005) and McDonough et al. (2013) stress the important role of listening as a 'primary means of acquiring a second language' (Rost, 2005, p. 503) and Renandya and Farrell (2011) point out the potential acquisition value of enjoyable extensive listening even at lower levels. McDonough et al. also support Field's (2008, 2012) call for more attention in courses to helping learners to both process sound (i.e. by teaching 'subskills') and to process meaning (i.e. by 'teaching' strategies). We would endorse these calls for change and ask materials developers to move away from activities which test listening comprehension towards activities which facilitate the development of listening subskills and of effective strategy use.

What are textbooks providing?

In order to understand more clearly what textbooks have been providing in the way of listening activities, five Intermediate level students' books were examined:

L. Soars and J. Soars (1996), *New Headway English Course* (Oxford University Press); S. Cunningham and P. Moor (1998), *Cutting Edge* (Longman); S. Kay and V. Jones (2000), *Inside Out* (Macmillan Heinemann); H. Dellar and A. Walkley (2010), *Outcomes* (Heinle); and B. Goldstein (2012), *The Big Picture* (Richmond). The first 50 pages of each book were studied to discover what kind of activities were being offered related to the recorded material. In the 5 books, there were 155 such activities, which can be broken down as follows:

- Listening for specific information 71/155
- Listen and check 35/155
- Pronunciation practice 24/155
- Cloze 8/155
- Answer questions from the recording 21/155
- Read text and listen to it 3/155
- Other 8/155

It can be seen from this that the majority of activities involved the students in the traditional listening comprehension activity of extracting factual information from a spoken text. There is a sense in which the second highest activity type – listen and check – is related to the first, in that the students complete a written task, and then listen for the correct answers on the recording – thereby also listening for specific information, in relation to their answers. The pronunciation activities were varied, working on a range of discrete pronunciation areas such as weak forms, sentence stress and word stress. Cloze activities were largely confined to *Cutting Edge* (6/7), as were the listen and answer activities (4/6) where students wrote a written response to a question asked or statement made on the recording. On a few occasions, the students were merely asked to listen to a text being read on cassette while they followed it in their books. Probably the most interesting activity types occurred in the 'other' category. *Headway* asked the students to gauge the effect of bald 'Yes/No' answers written in their books, with the question tag 'Yes, I do/No, I don't' answers on tape, working in the area of politeness. The same book also asked students to listen and decide whether the ''s' ending (e.g. 'it's') was 'it is' or 'it has', which required understanding of the context. *Inside Out* asked students to listen to different pieces of music and relate them to genres of film, thus working on the students' knowledge of the world. The same book also asked the students to write out a nursery rhyme from the words given in jumbled order and then mark the stressed syllables. *Outcomes* is significantly different from the others in that in addition to standard seeking information exercises it does sometimes ask learners for their opinions or feelings about what was said. In one case, in *Headway*, the spoken text appeared to be presenting new language. In almost all cases, the longer recorded texts used for listening for specific information were monologues or dialogues, often appearing in the form of an interview. Nearly all the activities focus on the product of the listening rather than on the process.

It is plain that the listening activities in any given coursebook only represent a part of the potential listening opportunities in a textbook-based lesson. Other opportunities are provided by simple classroom language such as following the teacher's instructions, or by what are often referred to as 'speaking activities', where the students are involved in an information exchange (which is plainly as much about listening as about speaking, which is either prescribed in the textbook itself, available in supplementary materials or added by the teacher). However, the fact that textbook authors provide such a limited range of listening activities points to a lack of a systematic approach to listening skill work.

What could textbooks be providing?

Rost (1991) has used a division of listening activities into four broad types:

Name	Examples of activities
Attentive Listening:	the learners have to give short verbal and non-verbal responses to the speaker in a real-time interaction.
Intensive Listening:	the learners are focused on particular aspects of the language system to raise awareness of how they affect meaning.
Selective Listening:	the learners concentrate on specific pieces of information, learning to attend selectively to what they hear.
Interactive Listening:	learners are helped to become active listeners by working in pairs or small groups with information gap, problem-solving-type activities.

White (1998) categorizes listening skills into five broad areas:

Name	Examples of activities
Perception Skills:	skills such as recognizing individual sounds, identifying reduced forms, recognizing intonation patterns.
Language Skills:	skills such as identifying individual words and groups and building up meanings for them.
Using Knowledge of the World:	connecting words to non-linguistic features to get clues to meaning, using knowledge of topic.
Dealing with Information:	understanding gist meaning, inferring information which is not specifically stated.
Interacting with a Speaker:	coping with speaker variations such as speed and accent, recognizing speaker intention, identifying speaker mood.

Both authors then go on to offer a broad range of recipes for activities which can be adapted to all levels by grading the texts and/or the tasks. Buck (2001) cites a number of taxonomies of listening skills which can also be used, or amalgamated, to provide a principled listening skills syllabus. Were coursebooks to be written using such systematic approaches to listening, they would be doing the language learning and teaching community a great service!

Suggestions for additional approaches to developing materials for listening skills

Sources of input

In most coursebooks the main source of spoken input is a cassette or a CD-ROM on which fluent native speakers perform scripted dialogues or monologues. Yet in real life the main source of spoken input for most speakers of a foreign language is face-to-face contact with other non-native speakers of the language. Obviously in class learners spend a lot of time interacting face to face with their teacher (although nearly always with the teacher initiating and controlling the exchange) and in some classes the learners spend time interacting face to face with each other. However this face-to-face contact is often incidental to (or even despite) the coursebook and usually takes place during activities in which the main pedagogic goals involve the development of speaking skills. It is rare for coursebooks to include listening activities which feature interaction with the teacher and/or other learners. It is also rare for coursebooks to include listening activities in which the speakers are from outside the cassette/CD-ROM and the classroom. And yet it is easy enough in most learning situations for speakers/interactants to be invited into the classroom or for arrangements to be made for learners to participate in listening activities outside the classroom. For example, in one language school in Cambridge teachers from three different classes used to interact live in front of all three classes at the start of a listening lesson and then the learners would go back to their own classroom for the follow-up activities. In a school in Jakarta the students found English-sounding names in the phone book and then rang to invite English speakers to visit their class to give a talk on something they were enthusiastic experts on. And in a school in Japan the students were taken for their listening lessons to the cinema, to the airport, to the theatre and on trains which had announcements in English. Also in Japan a university teacher of English invited his students to form a social club in which all the members agreed to talk English to each other whenever and wherever they met (Barker, 2011), as did a large group of agriculture students at a university in Addis Ababa.

It would not be too difficult for coursebooks to supplement their listening activities with activities which make use of the following as sources of input:

- the teacher,
- other teachers,
- other learners in the class,
- learners from other classes (one language school in Cambridge used to encourage learners to give prepared presentations to classes at the level below them),
- invited outside speakers,
- people the learners have phoned,
- official speakers in public places,
- people interviewed by the learners,
- discussion groups outside the school,
- videos from courses and from the web (see Field, 2012; Suarez and Pujola, 2012).

Some well-resourced institutions have self-access centres which make many of the above available to their students. The most effective one we know is at Kanda University in Japan, where the students not only have access to all the above sources in their own time but are directed to make use of them in class time in activities which are designed to supplement their coursebook listening activities.

Types of input

In 'real life' it is rare that we have to listen to other people's conversations or to strangers on cassettes telling us about their hobbies, plans or ambitions; and we cannot remember ever needing or wanting to do this in a foreign language. Yet, listening to other people's dialogues and listening to short monologues from strangers are the most frequent sources of spoken input in most coursebooks. We would like to see more consideration given in materials development to the sorts of listening events that speakers of a foreign language are likely to need or want to participate in, and much more thought given to the roles that the foreign language speaker might have to play in these events. Only then will we be able to help learners to develop useful listening skills. We would also like to see much more time given in materials to sources of input which have the potential to facilitate language acquisition. This means, for example, making a greater effort to find or develop listening texts which have relevance to the learner, which have affective appeal and which have the potential to engage the learner both cognitively and emotively (see Chapter 1 in this volume). It also means involving

the learner actively in the listening event either as an interactant or as a listener with a need and purpose.

Additional types of relevant input

Here are some listening events which speakers of a foreign language are likely to need or want to participate in, and which do not often feature in coursebooks (e.g. none of the listening events below are included in *Inside Out Upper Intermediate* (2001), in *Outcomes* (2010) or in *The Big Picture* (2012)):

- being taught to do something which they need or want to do;
- being taught about something which is useful or interesting;
- teaching somebody else to do something and listening to their questions and requests for clarification;
- teaching somebody else about something and listening to their questions and requests for clarification;
- taking part in discussions with friends about topics of interest and concern;
- taking part in phatic communion (i.e. small-talk situations where the main point is to establish social contact rather than communicate information or ideas);
- listening to questions about what they need or want (e.g. in a bank, at a ticket office, in a travel agent);
- listening to announcements (e.g. at airports, at stations, at sports events) listening to information (e.g. to train information on the phone, to weather forecasts, to recorded road travel information);
- listening to advertisements (and separating information from persuasion);
- listening to radio programmes for enjoyment and/or information;
- listening to music for enjoyment;
- watching TV and films for enjoyment;
- listening to lectures and speeches;
- listening to stories and jokes.

As most learners of English will spend most of their 'English-speaking lives' listening to and interacting with other non-native speakers of English it would help if they spent time listening to and interacting with non-native speakers in such events as those listed above.

Intake-rich activities

Ideally what learners need to listen to is the target language being used in 'texts' which are affectively and cognitively engaging in ways which facilitate intake (Tomlinson, 2013). Listening activities which have potential for achieving rich intake of language could include:

- listening to the teacher reading poems, short stories, extracts from novels, etc. (an activity which could be used for 5 minutes at the beginning of every lesson);
- listening to a group of teachers acting a scene from a play;
- listening to the teacher telling jokes and anecdotes;
- listening to other learners reading poems, telling jokes and anecdotes, etc. (but only if they have prepared and practised);
- listening to other learners reading aloud 'texts' which they have enjoyed studying;
- listening to other learners doing a prepared presentation on something which really interests them (especially if the listeners have a choice of presenters to listen to);
- watching sports events, news events, documentaries, etc., with commentaries in the target language;
- listening to presentations/discussions/debates on controversial topics relevant to the learners;
- engaging in discussion with their peers on controversial topics.

Ways of facilitating intake

Just as when we read in our L1, we listen to our L1 in multidimensional ways (Masuhara, this volume; Tomlinson, 2001, 2013). That is, we do not only decode the words; we use sensory imaging (especially visual imaging) to represent utterances, we use inner speech to repeat some of the utterances we hear and to talk to ourselves about what we hear, we connect what we hear to our lives and to our knowledge of the world and we respond affectively to what we hear (Tomlinson and Avila, 2007; Tomlinson, 2011). In other words, we create our own multidimensional mental representation of what we hear, which converges with the representations of other L1 listeners in relation to the literal meaning of the spoken text but diverges in relation to our own needs, wants, experience and attitudes. In this way we maximize the possibilities of rich and relevant intake and of the retention of features of the input which are salient to us. Obviously, it

is impossible to achieve equally effective representations in an L2 but helping learners to try to do so can increase their chances both of becoming effective listeners and of maximizing the potential of listening situations for language acquisition.

Ways of helping learners to achieve multidimensional representation of what they listen to include:

- not using listening texts to test understanding of micro-features of the texts (this encourages unidimensional processing of listening texts);
- not concentrating on short, simple listening texts at lower levels (this encourages the habit of micro-processing);
- building up listening confidence by using a Total Physical Response (TPR) approach with beginners (Asher, 1977; Tomlinson, 1994) in which the learners respond physically to instructions spoken by the teacher;
- building up listening confidence by not testing learners at lower levels on what they have not understood but giving instead opportunities to make use of what they have understood (e.g. retelling a story to someone who has not heard it);
- getting learners to analyse what they do when listening experientially in the L1 and then encouraging them to try listening in the same ways when experiential listening is appropriate in the L2;
- including extensive listening of potentially engaging texts from the earliest levels and resisting the urge to set questions to check comprehension;
- facilitating experiential listening by providing whilst-reading tasks which encourage sensory imaging, the use of inner speech, personal connections and affective response (e.g. asking the learners to visualize the main character as they listen to a story, to talk to themselves about how an announcement relates to them, to think of similar situations in their own lives while they listen to an account of the problems of a teenager, to focus on how they feel about a provocative statement, etc.);
- giving instruction on how to listen experientially prior to a listening task (e.g. 'When listening to the description of Betu make sure you try to see pictures and that you think of places that it reminds you of');
- encouraging the teacher and the learners to tell anecdotes about their own experiences in relation to the topic of a lesson;
- setting homework tasks which involve learners listening experientially (live or to recordings) to texts which appeal to them (one class in Japan were encouraged to record potentially interesting texts for the class and soon had a thousand cassettes for students to select from for homework listening);

Ways of developing listening skills

The best way of helping learners to develop listening skills is to ensure that the learners are exposed to a wide variety of listening text genres and text-types and to provide whilst-listening tasks similar to those suggested above for facilitating intake. In addition, it is useful to make use of a combination of the following approaches:

- Teaching learners about a particular listening subskill (e.g. listening for gist; listening for specific information; listening in order to infer a speaker's attitude) and then providing activities in which they can use those subskills.
- Getting learners to do a listening task in which they listen for a specific purpose and then focusing on the strategies which could have helped them before providing another, similar listening task.
- Getting learners to do a listening task in which they listen for a specific purpose and then asking them to think and talk about the skills they used before providing further similar activities.
- Giving learners a listening task in which they listen for a specific purpose and getting them to think and talk about what skills and strategies they will use before they begin the activity.
- Giving learners a listening task in which they listen for a specific purpose and getting them to think and talk about what problems they had with the activity before providing guidance and setting them another similar activity.

An example of multidimensional listening skills lessons

Lesson 1

1 The teacher tells the class an anecdote about her first day at school.

2 The teacher invites the learners to think about and visualize their own first day at school.

3 The teacher reads aloud the poem 'First Day at School' by Roger McGough.

4 An invited speaker (either a teacher from another class or a guest) tells the class about his/her first experience of a particular activity (e.g. mountain climbing, appearing on stage, driving a car).

5 The learners ask the speaker questions about the experience.

6 The teacher tells the class that they are going to visit a country in Africa called Betu. As this will be the first time that any of them have visited Betu, the teacher is going to play them a recording which gives information about the country. They should listen to the recording and note down anything which they think is useful or interesting. They are told that they will all travel to Betu together but that after the first day there they will split up into smaller groups who will go off to different parts of the country.

7 The teacher tells the learners to look at the photographs of different parts of Betu in their coursebook (some are of the beaches, some of the mountains and some of the game parks).

8 The teacher plays the recording.

9 Each learner decides where they want to go in Betu and what they want to do.

10 The learners walk around the classroom telling each other their decisions in 9 above.

11 The learners form groups who want to go to the same place and to do similar things.

12 The groups plan their trip to Betu using the headings provided in the coursebook (e.g. Clothes to Take, Other Things to Take, Health Precautions, Other Things to Do Before the Trip, Things to Do in Betu, Things to Be Careful of in Betu, The Itinerary in Betu).

13 The teacher plays the recording again.

14 The groups make revisions to their plans in 12.

15 The teacher tells the class that for homework each one of them should imagine their trip to Betu. She warns them that some of the information on the recording is not completely reliable.

16 The teacher reads the poem 'First Day at School' again and tells the class where they can find it in their coursebook so that they can read it for homework.

Lesson 2

1 The learners sit in their groups from Lesson 1 and tell each other about their imagined trip.

2 Each group decides on a group version of the trip (ideally with lots of interesting and unanticipated events) and prepares a presentation on their trip.

3 Each group gives a presentation on their trip to the rest of the class (or in a very large class to groups who have been to different places).

4 New groups are formed and each group is given the task of writing the script for a more reliable and useful 'Introduction to Betu'.

5 The teacher plays the recording on Betu once more so that the groups can spot all its deficiencies.

6 The groups write their scripts (and, if possible, record them).

7 Each group reads (or plays) its 'Introduction to Betu' and the other groups are told to listen to it carefully so that they can evaluate it afterwards.

8 After each presentation one group is invited to give a constructive criticism of it and all the groups give it a grade out of 20.

9 After all the presentations, the scores are added up and a winner is declared.

10 Each group is asked to go through the activities in Lessons 1 and 2 above in their minds and to list all the listening skills they needed to use in these activities.

11 The teacher lists listening skills on the board (from plenary feedback from the groups on 10 above).

12 Each group is allocated a different listening skill from the list and is asked to prepare a presentation on that skill for the following week in which they:

- describe the skill;
- give examples of when it is useful;
- give advice on how to develop and use the skill;
- give the other learners a listening task which involves using the skill.

(The teacher could provide the class with a preparation period in which she is available to help the groups in the preparation of their presentations.)

Note:

1 The main point of these lessons is that the learners gain a lot of experience of different types of listening from different input sources.

2 The main role of the coursebook in these lessons is to provide:

- relevant and stimulating illustrations;
- recorded input;
- supporting materials (e.g. suggested headings, print versions of texts);
- a lesson plan and advice in the Teacher's Book.

Conclusion

The main point about materials for developing listening skills is that learners can only develop these skills if they do a lot of listening. Therefore, they should spend considerable time in listening lessons actually listening. Teaching and discovery activities can facilitate the development of listening skills too, but spending most of the listening lesson answering comprehension questions after listening to a text (still the norm in many coursebooks) has very little beneficial effect on the development of listening confidence and skills.

We need to spend much less time testing our learners on their recall and comprehension of discrete features of a listening text (a task beyond many native speakers) and we need to spend much more time helping our learners to enjoy listening.

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22

Materials for Cultural Awareness

Alan Pulverness and Brian Tomlinson

Introduction

One consequence of the 'communicative turn' taken by ELT since the late 1970s has been the marginalization, and at times the complete exclusion, of culturally specific content in published teaching materials. The shift towards a functional approach to EFL teaching, driven by needs analysis and predictable performance objectives, has coincided with a developing awareness of the growing role of English as an international language. In this climate, it is hardly surprising that cultural specificity is seen at best as a luxury and at worst as an irrelevance.

Cunningsworth (1984) stated the case against 'the culture-specific coursebook' in terms which clearly continue to resonate with major ELT publishers:

> A limitation of the culture-specific coursebook is that it will only be of relevance to students who understand the cultural background in which it is set . . .
>
> Indeed . . . a strong portrayal of British life might well prove to be an impediment rather than a help to the learner . . . The [learner's] time would be better spent learning the language rather than the structuring of the social world in which the learner is never likely to find himself. (1984, pp. 61–2)

The marketing imperatives of a publishing industry that attempts increasingly to satisfy the perceived needs of a global clientele have been echoed by similar tendencies in an ELT teaching industry reluctant to be stigmatized as neo-imperialist (see Phillipson, 1992; Holliday, 1994, 2005, 2011; Pennycook, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999; Gray, 2010). The problematic relationship of culture to language teaching and learning is further complicated by the way in which the concept of culture in language teaching has been freighted with connotations of an outmoded approach to transmitting unmediated

facts and information about an implicitly superior 'target' culture. Consequently, the notion of an integrated language-and-culture pedagogy (Byram et al., 1994; Byram, 1997) that evolved through the 1990s has thus far had relatively little impact on ELT materials development. See Byram and Masuhara (2013) for an evaluation of the opportunities for the development of intercultural awareness in two recently published global coursebooks and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) for an evaluation of current global coursebooks in which the likelihood of facilitating the development of intercultural awareness is used as one of the criteria. There have, however, been academic publications urging a greater inclusion of the cultural dimension in foreign language teaching (e.g. Corbett, 2003; Risager, 2007; Kramsch and Whiteside, 2008; Kramsch, 2009), there has been the publication of a book encouraging learners to reflect on their own language and culture and to compare them to those of other countries (Corbett, 2010) and Byram and Masuhara (2013) have argued eloquently for a greater emphasis on intercultural language education in language learning materials and in EFL coursebooks in particular.

This chapter proceeds from a strong assumption that language teaching and learning invariably involve issues of sociocultural meaning, and that approaches which disregard the cultural dimension of language are fundamentally flawed. It will question the assumption that in circumstances where English is seen as a lingua franca (Jenkins et al., 2011) or as a family of World Englishes (Kirkpatrick, 2010), it must necessarily be inappropriate to situate the language in a particular cultural context. The argument is based on a model of intercultural foreign language education, in which the process of foreign language learning engages the learner in the role of a comparative ethnographer (Byram, 1989; Snow and Byram, 1998; Roberts et al., 2001; Corbett, 2003; Byram and Feng, 2005).

Entering into a foreign language implies a cognitive modification that has implications for the learner's identity as a social and cultural being, and suggests the need for materials which privilege the identity of the learner as an integral factor in developing the ability to function fully in cultural 'third places' (Kramsch, 1993, pp. 233–59). To develop cultural awareness alongside language awareness, materials need to provide more than a token acknowledgement of cultural identity ('Now write about your country') and address more thoroughly the kind of cultural adjustment that underlies the experience of learning a foreign language. One powerful means of raising this kind of awareness in learners is through literary texts which mimic, or more directly represent, experiences of cultural estrangement. See Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) for suggestions and examples of how to use a text-driven approach to help language learners to develop intercultural language awareness.

However, the pedagogical implications extend beyond issues of content: if culture is seen as the expression of beliefs and values, and if language is seen as the embodiment of cultural identity, then the methodology required to teach a language needs to take account of ways in which the language expresses cultural meanings. An integrated approach to teaching language-and-culture, as well as attending to language as system and to cultural information, will focus additionally on culturally significant

areas of language and on the skills required by the learner to make sense of cultural difference. An enhanced language syllabus that takes account of cultural specificity would be concerned with aspects of language that are generally neglected, or that at best tend to remain peripheral in course materials: connotation, idiom, the construction of style and tone, rhetorical structure, critical language awareness and translation. The familiar set of language skills would be augmented by ethnographic and research skills designed to develop intercultural awareness (Corbett, 2003, 2010).

Objections to a cultural agenda for ELT tend to come from the ethnocentric perspective of the private sector (whether situated in an L2 or an L1 environment), where language teaching is largely constructed as a training enterprise. It is significant that the most innovative materials for teaching language-and-culture have emerged from state sector educational contexts in countries with established and unbroken traditions of teaching culture. The move from Landeskunde to 'New Cultural Studies' (Delanoy, 1994) is less problematic for non-native practitioners than what their native counterparts may simply see as an updated version of 'British Life and Institutions'. See Mason (2010b) for an account of his attempt to transform a traditional 'British Life and Institutions' course into a course which facilitates intercultural pragmatic competence at a university in Tunisia.

There are encouraging signs in some recently published coursebooks of greater cultural relativism and more pluralistic representations of English-speaking cultures (e.g. Global (Clandfield and Robb-Benne, 2011); English Unlimited (Tilbury, A. and Hendra, 2011). But as long as courses continue to be produced for a global market and construed exclusively in terms of language training, such developments will remain largely cosmetic. This chapter will refer to several recent projects which suggest that the way ahead for integrated language-and-culture materials lies in various kinds of country-specific joint publishing ventures as well as in-institution specific materials development projects.

The fifth skill?

There have been numerous nominations for the coveted title of 'fifth skill', ranging from ICT literacy to self-directed learning, but it may be argued that these are all 'add-ons' to the four basic language skills. Kramsch (1993) claims an altogether higher status for culture:

> Culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard-won communicative competence, challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. (1993, p. 1)

The underlying implication is that language and culture are inextricably intertwined. To treat language, in the manner of most mainstream language courses, as a value-free code is likely to deprive learners of key dimensions of meaning and to fail to equip them with necessary resources to recognize and respond appropriately to the cultural subtext of language in use. Even when neither partner in a spoken or written interaction is a native speaker, the language they are using is the result of social and historical circumstances which give it resonance and meaning. To teach language that is imbued with cultural nuance as though it were purely a means of instrumental transaction is to ignore the shared frame of reference that makes language fully meaningful. In this sense, cultural awareness becomes not the fifth, but the first skill, informing every step of the language learning process, 'right from day one'. Communicative language teaching, in its emphasis on authentic text and genuine interaction, privileges meaning over form, but in often excluding cultural meaning, it can promote a model of language that is restricted to transactional functions and referential uses of language. Yet, from moment to moment in any language classroom, whether or not they are aware of the fact, teachers – and teaching materials – are constantly exemplifying the cultural underpinnings of the language.

Culture, as Raymond Williams points out, is 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (1983, p. 87). Derived from the concept of cultivation in agriculture, it became synonymous in the eighteenth century with 'civilization'. To be 'cultured' – or, metaphorically, 'cultivated' – was to be civilized, and this notion of culture as 'high culture' survives in the title of Ministry of Culture, in the 'culture' supplements of broadsheet newspapers and in collocations such as 'culture vulture'. Since the late nineteenth century, social anthropology (see Geertz, 1973) has been responsible for a much broader definition of culture as a 'whole way of life', embracing all the behaviours, symbols, beliefs and value systems of a society, and it is this expanded definition that informs much current thinking about the role of culture in ELT (see, for example, Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2004). However, resistance to the dominant, monolithic European version of culture suggested by association with 'civilization' can be traced back as far as the late eighteenth century in Germany, when Johann Gottfried Herder (1791) insisted on the need to consider 'cultures' rather than 'culture' in the singular. This alternative, pluralistic strain of thinking about culture has been developed latterly by sociologists identifying subcultures and by social psychologists investigating the behaviour of people functioning in small groups, so-called small cultures.

The 'life and institutions' approach to transmitting cultural knowledge as an adjunct to language teaching draws on the tradition of culture as 'civilization'. A more egalitarian view of culture as a 'whole way of life' has trickled down into some ELT coursebooks, where iconic, tourist brochure images of Britishness have been replaced by material that is more representative of the multicultural diversity of contemporary British life. But, since language training remains the primary agenda, the effect is often unproductive in terms of cultural understanding, with texts and visuals serving primarily as contextual backdrops to language tasks. Moreover, since the majority of coursebooks are designed

to function in as diverse a market as possible, materials design is rarely capable of encompassing the learner's cultural identity as part of the learning process. At most, learners may be called upon to comment on superficial differences at the level of observable behaviours. There is a great deal of incidental cultural information available in course materials, but it is on the whole an arbitrary selection, and, crucially, it remains just information – learners are not required to respond to it in terms of their own experience or integrate it into new structures of thought and feeling. The subculture of the language learner and the 'small culture' of the classroom tend not to be addressed. However, see Gottheim (2010), Mason (2010b) and Troncoso (2010) for descriptions of institutional projects in Brazil, Tunisia and Columbia whose main objective was to help university students to respond personally to target language cultural experiences and to integrate them into new structures of thought and feeling.

Another country – they do things differently there

The experience of learning another language is more than simply the acquisition of an alternative means of expression. It involves a process of acculturation, akin to the effort required of the traveller, striving to come to terms with different social structures, different assumptions and different expectations. To pursue the metaphor, when the traveller returns home, his/her view of familiar surroundings is characteristically modified. The language learner is similarly displaced and 'returns' with a modified sense of what had previously been taken for granted – the language and how it makes meaning.

This sensation of seeing one's own language and culture refracted through the medium of a foreign language and culture reflects what was described by the Russian Formalist critic, Viktor Shklovsky (1917), writing about Tolstoy's literary technique, as 'defamiliarization', or 'making the familiar seem strange':

> After we see an object several times, we begin to recognise it. The object is in front of us and we know about it, but we do not see it – hence we cannot say anything significant about it . . . Tolstoy makes the familiar seem strange . . . He describes an object as if he were seeing it for the first time, an event as if it were happening for the first time. (Shklovsky, 1917, in Lodge, 1988, p. 21)

For the majority of learners encountering a foreign language for the first time, their own culture is so familiar, so much a given, that they 'do not see it'. Their culture provides them with one way of looking at the world and their language with one way of articulating that perception. The experience of defamiliarization involved in foreign language learning, described by Byram (1990, p. 19) as the 'modification of monocultural awareness', suggests that there is largely untapped potential in teaching materials for focusing as much on the source culture as the stimulus culture, and on the effect upon

the learner of this modification. We have deliberately avoided using the term 'target culture', which suggests an objective body of knowledge to be assimilated – and probably tested. The term 'stimulus culture' is taken from Lavery (1993) and reinforces the fact that the awareness to be raised is intercultural rather than simply cultural.

One way of sensitizing learners to this process is through a whole range of stimulating literary texts that employ deliberate strategies of defamiliarization, taking readers on voyages of discovery or simply making them look afresh at their everyday surroundings. Genres which typically displace the reader in this way include historical fiction, science fiction and Utopian – or dystopian – fantasies.

By electing for a satiric or fantastic mode, writers commit themselves almost inevitably to some kind of defamiliarization. Imagined worlds – Lilliput, Wonderland, Middle Earth – always draw on the existing world; futuristic fictions or texts that construct alternative realities always extrapolate from the present; satire, however wild or grotesque, always arises out of current concerns. Fantasists, science fiction writers and satirists may take us 'out of this world', but they do so only in order to bring us back into it. The value of such writing for learners of language-and-culture is the way in which it may encourage them not simply to observe the difference in the Other culture, but to become less ethnocentric and more culturally relativist – to look at their own cultural environment through fresh eyes. Craig Raine's poem 'A Martian sends a postcard home', in which the eponymous visitor from outer space misreads the functions of books, cars, telephones and toilets, is an outstanding example of a writer making use of what Doris Lessing has called 'that other-worldly visitor so useful for enlivening our organs of perception' (in Phillips, 1997, p. 123). In Peter Ackroyd's novel The Plato Papers (Chatto and Windus, 1999), a twenty-third-century historian similarly misinterprets the ancient history of twentieth-century civilization. Once students have got the idea of 'making strange', they can try their hands at writing their own Martian anthropology or futuristic archaeological notes. This is an approach taken by Searching 10 (Fenner and Nordal-Pedersen, 2010), a coursebook for teenage learners of English in Norway. A very long unit on Fantasy (pp. 98–123) provides the learners with experience of fantasy fiction through extracts from such authors as Isaac Asimov, C. S. Lewis and James Thurber before guiding them to write their own science fiction stories. Many of today's students are used to 'making strange' by doing this when watching film versions of Harry Potter novels or of Tolkien's Hobbit books and it is disappointing that global coursebooks do not take more advantage of this.

Another literary genre that disturbs unquestioned cultural assumptions is the growing body of writing in English that deals directly or indirectly with the immigrant or second generation bicultural experience and the diversity of increasingly multicultural societies. Novels, such as those by the Korean-American Chang-Rae Lee, the Chinese-American Gish Jen, the Polish American Karolina Waclawiak, the British Asians Monica Ali, Hari Kunzru and Hanif Kureishi, or the British African Diran Adebayo, all reflect what Canadians call the cultural mosaic, and can be read not simply as accounts of culture clash or culture shock, but as documents of a quest for new kinds of cultural identity located in Kramsch's 'third places'. Such intracultural texts can be used in the language classroom to prepare learners for the encounter with the cultural Other and

to promote greater intercultural awareness. To build a bridge in the classroom from the literature of cultural third places to the learner's own intercultural experience, students could be asked to experiment with various kinds of textual intervention (Pope, 1995) and imitation. They could be invited to 'recentre' an immigrant narrative from the host community's point of view (Pulverness, 2001), to imagine dialogues, not included in the original text, between representatives of the two cultures, to imagine themselves as immigrants in their own society and so on.

The culture of language and the language of culture

Course materials are largely governed by a tacit consensus about what should constitute a language syllabus. Apart from a brief pendulum swing in the late 1970s, when the elaborated phrase book of an exclusively functional approach almost entirely displaced grammar, and despite the development of multi-strand syllabuses, the structured, incremental grammatical syllabus remains the principal axis around which the overwhelming majority of coursebooks are organized (Tomlinson et al., 2001; Masuhara et al., 2008; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013). The overarching aim of the language syllabus is to develop a command of the language as a systematic set of resources. However, the focus of most teaching materials remains fixed on the content of these resources rather than on the choices that speakers (and writers) make in the course of social interaction. The cultural dimension of language consists of elements that are normally classed as 'native speaker intuition' and which may be achieved by only the most advanced students. As native speakers, we function effectively in our own speech communities not simply by drawing mechanically on an inventory of language items, but by employing the pragmatic awareness which enables us to make appropriate and relevant selections from that inventory. This awareness may not be wholly determined by cultural factors, but it is culturally conditioned. It includes elements such as forms of address, the expression of politeness, discourse conventions and situational constraints on conversational behaviour. Grice's 'cooperative principle' (1975) and Lakoff's 'politeness principle' (1973) have up to now made remarkably little impression on EFL materials. It is lack of awareness of such contextual and pragmatic constraints that is often responsible for pragmatic failure (see Nguyen, 2011; Cohen and Ishihara, 2013). Although teachers may incidentally address some of these features, there have been few attempts in published materials to deal systematically with the ways in which linguistic choices are constrained by setting, situation, status and purpose. Like many coursebook texts, tasks requiring oral interaction tend to be situated in neutral, culture-free zones, where the learner is only called upon to 'get the message across'. However, see Cohen and Ishihara (2013) for suggestions for pragmatic awareness activities and for reference to such activities in Felix-Brasdefer (2006), Huth and Taleghani-Nikazm (2006), Barraja-Rohan (2011) and Houck and Tatsuki (2011).

One recent challenge to the centrality of grammar as an organizing principle for the syllabus is to be found in the 'Lexical Approach' (Lewis, 1993, 1997), with its insistence on language as 'grammaticalized lexis' instead of the customary view of 'lexicalized grammar'. Coursebooks inspired by Lewis' work (e.g. Dellar and Hocking, *Innovations*, 2000; Dellar and Walkley, *Outcomes*, 2011), emphasize the significance of collocation and lexical phrases, partly subsumed under the category of 'spoken grammar', while key elements of a traditional structure are retained under the less dominant rubric of 'traditional grammar'. This focus on how lexical items cluster together through use and constitute larger units of meaning provides an important design principle for materials that intend to combine cultural learning and language learning.

Porto (2001) makes a strong case for taking lexical phrases as a foundation for developing sociocultural awareness from the earliest stages of language learning:

> Given that lexical phrases are context-bound, and granted that contexts are culture-specific, the recurrent association of lexical phrases with certain contexts of use will ensure that the sociolinguistic ability to use the phrases in the appropriate contexts is fostered. (Porto, 2001, pp. 52–3)

Another lexical area that might profitably be explored by materials writers is suggested by research into cognition and cross-cultural semantics (Wierzbicka, 1991, 1992, 1997, 2007). Wierzbicka's research methodology, at word or phrase level, as well as when dealing with broad semantic categories and longer stretches of text and interaction, is one that lends itself to adaptation by EFL materials writers. Her analyses are based on extensive collections of data, exemplifying the use of particular items in multiple contexts, from which she then begins to draw conclusions about the cultural specificity and the semantic limitations of key concepts.

On a smaller scale, this rigorously inductive approach might have a particular appeal to learners who are in any case constantly engaged in just this kind of exploration of meaning, albeit in a relatively unstructured fashion. The increasing availability of affordable concordancing software should also make it possible before long for the coursebook treatment of this kind of activity to be open-ended and supplemented by providing learners with the tools to pursue their own further exploration.

One of the most challenging aspects of moving into the culture of another language is the adjustment to different rhetorical structures. Learners have to cope receptively and productively, not just with word-level and sentence-level difference, but with different modes of textual organization. While contrastive studies in rhetoric and text linguistics (e.g. Kaplan, 1966, 1987) have explored the problematic nature of text and discourse across cultures, a great deal of language teaching continues to operate at sentence level. It is generally only on EAP courses in academic writing that text structure receives any substantial attention. Yet sometimes radically different assumptions about the structuring of spoken and written discourse can produce a sense of cultural and linguistic estrangement that all learners have to struggle to come to terms with, often without much help from course materials. A number of recent coursebooks have tentatively included small translation tasks, usually at word or sentence level.

More extensive translation activities could raise learners' awareness of how differently ideas may be organized at text level, for example, translating a source text and then comparing its structure with a parallel L1 text on the same topic and in the same genre, or using a 'double translation' procedure, that is, translation into L1 and then back into L2, comparing the second version with the L2 original (see Dellar and Walkley (2011) for examples of this procedure). Limitations of space will normally prohibit extensive treatment of longer texts within the coursebook, but here again the book can serve as a manual, equipping the learner with strategic competence and procedural guidelines as a basis for further work outside the book. The construction of cultural 'third places' is essentially a critical activity, as it forces learners to become aware of ways in which language is socially and culturally determined. Language awareness has become a rather hollow label, often (e.g. on many pre-service training courses) more or less synonymous with declarative knowledge about how the language works. Van Lier's (1995) definition is more comprehensive and should alert us to the fact that language is always ideologically loaded and texts are always to be 'mistrusted':

> Language awareness can be defined as an understanding of the human faculty of language and its role in thinking, learning and social life. It includes an awareness of power and control through language, and of the intricate relationships between language and culture. (Van Lier, 1995, p. xi)

Critical Language Awareness (CLA) proceeds from the belief that language is always value-laden and that texts are never neutral. Language in the world beyond the coursebook is commonly used to exercise 'power and control', to reinforce dominant ideologies, to evade responsibility, to manufacture consensus.

As readers, we should always be 'suspicious' of texts and prepared to challenge or interrogate them. However, in the foreign language classroom, texts are customarily treated as unproblematic, as if their authority need never be questioned. Learners, who may be quite critical readers in their mother tongues, are textually infantilized by the vast majority of course materials and classroom approaches.

A CLA approach implies 'a methodology for interpreting texts which addresses ideological assumptions as well as propositional meaning' (Wallace, 1992), which would require students to develop sociolinguistic and ethnographic research skills in order to become proficient at observing, analysing and evaluating language use in the world around them. It would lead them to ask and answer crucial questions about a text: Who produced it? Who was it produced for? In what context was it published? It would encourage them to notice features such as lexical choice, passivization or foregrounding that reveal both the position of the writer and the way in which the reader is 'positioned' by the text. It would offer them opportunities to intervene creatively in texts, to modify them or to produce their own 'counter-texts' (see Kramsch, 1993; Pope, 1995). It would empower students to become active participants in the negotiation of meaning rather than passive recipients of 'authoritative' texts. In short, it would transform language training into language education.

For further reading about language awareness as an approach which helps learners to investigate how language use is influenced by contextual and cultural factors see Tomlinson (1994) and Bolitho et al. (2003). See Gray (2010) for a CLA approach to materials analysis and evaluation.

Small is beautiful

Up to this point we have been mostly concerned with ways in which the 'international' coursebook might be modified to take in elements of cultural learning in a more integral fashion. The inherent constraints of global publishing will clearly not allow for this to be carried very far. However, in recent years, there have been a number of country- or region-specific joint publishing enterprises, whose point of departure has been the teaching of intercultural awareness in tandem with the foreign language. The British Council has joined forces with local publishers in a number of countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to produce textbooks (in Romania *Crossing Cultures*, 1998; in the Czech Republic *Lifestyles*, 2000; in Hungary *Zoom In*, 2001), a cultural studies syllabus (in Bulgaria *Branching Out*, 1998), and teachers' resource materials (*British Studies Materials for English Teachers in Poland*, 2000). What has distinguished all of these publications is the fact that they were all initiated through projects responding to teachers' needs and were written collaboratively either by teachers themselves with support and guidance from consultants, or in one case by a consultant with guidance from teachers. Another way of resolving the tension between the economics of large-scale publishing and the real needs of small-scale markets has come from an independent British publisher who commissioned a multilevel language and culture coursebook series (Criss Cross, 1998–2001) designed specifically for CEE.

The series responds both to the practical exigencies of publishing and to the pedagogic needs of teachers and learners through a unique formula: the same core student's books across the market supplemented by locally produced practice books. In this way, markets that are too small to bear the cost of high-quality country-specific materials benefit from a centrally published course, which at the same time is made relevant to particular local needs through targeted practice materials.

Recently there has been movement away from a concern with cultural awareness (i.e. with such mental characteristics as knowledge, responses, attitudes, empathy etc.) to a focus on intercultural competence (i.e. on being able to achieve socio-pragmatic competence across cultures or as Deardoff (2006, pp. 247–8) says, 'the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes'). This is focused on in Byram and Feng (2005), Kotthoff and Spencer-Oatey (2007), Deardoff (2009), Mason (2010a) and Byram and Masuhara (2013), and it is the objective of the materials reported in Gottheim (2010), Mason (2010b) and Troncoso (2010). Gottheim (2010) reports how she developed a university course in Brazilian Portuguese which was designed to help immigrants and

visitors to Brazil to become aware of the complex history and culture of Brazil and to communicate successfully. To achieve this she used a 'topic-text-driven approach' (p. 234) which focused on providing an authentic experience of Brazilian culture and on stimulating the learners to respond to and make use of this experience. Mason (2010b) reports a materials development project at the University of Sousse in Tunisia in which he replaced formal lectures on a course on 'Contemporary British Identity' with a coherent combination of text-driven activities, DVD-driven activities, research tasks and debates. At the same time he replaced the imparting of knowledge as the main objective with helping to develop intercultural competence, and in particular with developing inquisitiveness, open-mindedness and diplomatic skills. Troncoso (2010) also reports on a materials development project designed to help students to achieve Intercultural Communicative Competence. He used a text-driven approach to develop materials for students learning Spanish at Leeds Metropolitan University and made use of context-specific texts to help students to develop awareness of the similarities and differences between Spanish culture and their own, as well as to acquire the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in relation to the context of use and the intended outcomes of the communication. It is noticeable that all three projects mentioned above were developed for university students, as were nearly all the other intercultural and pragmatic competence materials referred to in this chapter. A rather different project is reported in McCullagh (2010). The author describes how she developed, trialled and evaluated the manuscript for a coursebook aiming to help medical practitioners to develop appropriate and effective communication skills for use in English-speaking hospitals (McCullagh and Wright, 2008). She used a combined text-driven and task-based approach and focused on facilitating the acquisition of language appropriate to its context of use. This is also the focus of the materials development for ESOL learners reported by Hann in Chapter 15 in this book.

Given the major publishers' abiding concentration on marketing 'one size fits all' global coursebooks, local and regional initiatives such as those referred to above seem to offer the most promising ways of developing and producing materials that fulfil the ideal of teaching language-and-culture. The fact that so many of these materials are the result of cross-cultural writing partnerships also helps to ensure that the process of production is based on a cross-cultural exchange of language and experience of national and classroom cultures, which feeds directly into the materials. It is easier, of course, to do this for country- or institution-specific materials but it would be possible to attempt it for a global coursebook, too.

Conclusion

It has to be acknowledged that the innovative projects described in the previous section remain the exception. ELT at large continues to be dominated by the mass market, 'international' coursebook. But here the teacher has a vital role to play in acting as an

intercultural mediator and providing some of the cultural coordinates missing from the coursebook.

We were involved as consultant or writer in several of the projects mentioned above, and in Hungary one of us was fortunate to observe a wide range of classes in various parts of the country. All the classes seen were working with coursebooks: *Headway* Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced; *Access to English: Getting On*; *Blueprint 2*; *New Blueprint Intermediate*; *Meanings into Words 2*. The teachers were all sufficiently experienced and confident to take subject matter present in coursebook units as a vehicle for the presentation of language items or the development of language skills and to use it as the basis for exploring cultural dimensions of the topic or theme. Coursebooks provide invaluable resources (topics, texts, visuals, language) and enable teachers and students to structure learning, but they also impose constraints which can be difficult to resist. Teachers who are conscious of this can easily become discouraged by the difficulty of obtaining suitable supplementary resources, but it was impressive how all the teachers observed made use of appropriate extra materials which enabled them to go beyond the coursebook – to use the currently fashionable commercial metaphor, to 'add value' to the coursebook. Examples included: a teacher's own photographs of Hungarian and British houses; text and video extracts from Irvine Welsh's novel, *Trainspotting*; a poem ('Neighbours' by Kit Wright); National Readership Surveys table of socio-economic categories (from Edgington and Montgomery, 1996); students' own family photographs and Christmas cards; jumbled extracts from two contrasting 'background' books; students' posters based on material collected during a study trip to Britain. These materials either compensated for cultural dimensions that were totally absent from the coursebook or took students well beyond the usual end-of-unit gesture of 'Now compare this with houses/festivals/occupations, etc., in your country'.

Some of the teachers took topics from coursebook units as springboards for lessons which focused on content rather than concentrating exclusively on language points. This is not to say that language learning was absent, or even incidental, but the primary objectives were clearly to develop critical thinking about cultural issues, resisting the tendency of the materials to use content only to contextualize the presentation and practice of language items. For example, one lesson sprang from a coursebook unit where the topic was homelessness, but the unit was about expressions of quantity. The lesson, however, was about homelessness, with practice of expressions of quantity arising meaningfully through the use of the material.

There is a crucial distinction between classes that are driven by a language training agenda and those that are informed by cultural learning objectives.

There is still a need, of course, for classes where the primary focus is language learning, but here, too, it is important that cultural learning is seen as an integral part of language education and not restricted to the 'cultural studies lesson'. One lesson on writing was an excellent example of this kind of integration. The teacher's primary aim was to raise students' awareness of the conventions and structural norms of writing

postcards and informal letters in English, but this was done by getting the learners to carry out a detailed contrastive analysis of a range of authentic texts (received by the teacher) in English and in Hungarian. Thus what could easily have been an exclusively English language lesson achieved its objectives through exposure to and reflection on representative samples of equivalent language behaviour in different cultural contexts.

What is reported above for schools in Hungary is similar to what one of us observed very recently in schools in Istanbul. Many of the teachers observed supplemented the coursebook materials with authentic photos and texts (mainly narrative texts) which provided rich exposure to language and culture and also with tasks which invited 'deep' discussion and comparison of behaviour in other cultures and in their own. One of us is currently advising these teachers in a project aiming to help them to develop text-driven materials themselves for use in classes in their institutions. Similar projects have been run recently in Cambridge, Dublin, Leuven, Lisbon and Luxembourg.

In any discussion of cultural behaviour, especially in classrooms, where teachers feel the pressure of time and other constraints, it is all too easy to resort to generalizations and to accept particular instances as being 'typical'. One way to avoid this trap is to make use of materials (e.g. first-person narratives) which are self-evidently individual, or even idiosyncratic. Other, more difficult strategies are to remind students at appropriate moments that they should not overgeneralize from particular examples, or to challenge their natural tendency to do so. This happened very interestingly in a lesson in Hungary on homelessness, when the teacher prompted students to question the generalizations contained in the text, giving rise to the conclusion that 'English people are various'! This also happened in classes reported by Mason (2010b) and in a class taught by one of us in Japan in which students watching the film *My Beautiful Laundrette* expressed amazement that some people in London seemed to be poor. Another good example in a writing class in Hungary was the teacher's reminder to her students that they were reading individual examples of informal writing, which they should not necessarily regard as 'typical'. Such sensible approaches to cultural experience are rare in global coursebooks but are evidenced in some locally published coursebooks, for example *On Target* (1995) in Namibia and *Searching 10* (Fenner and Nordal-Pedersen, 2010), in Norway, both of which make use of narratives from other cultures to expand horizons and invite comparison without reinforcing stereotypes.

The lessons we saw in Hungary and Turkey were neither language lessons illustrating a few bits of cultural information nor lessons on culture with language learning as a kind of by-product. They all succeeded in different ways in combining language learning and cultural learning, so that although at some moments the emphasis may have been in one direction or the other, the overall effect was of lessons in which students were developing both kinds of knowledge as interrelated parts of the same enterprise.

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23

Corpora and Materials: Towards a Working Relationship

Ivor Timmis

Introduction

It might be supposed that a database and software which allowed researchers to get a very good idea of the most frequent words, phrases and structures of a language would be a source of unmitigated joy to those involved in materials development for language teaching. However, such databases and software (i.e. corpora) have existed for some time now, their advent has not been universally welcomed or even recognized by those involved in language teaching. There have indeed been enthusiastic advocates of a closer relationship between corpora and language teaching: Sinclair (1991), for example, likened the effect of corpora on linguistics to that of the telescope on astronomy, while, in similar vein, Owen (1993, p. 164) described corpus linguistics as 'a new approach to grammatical description which penetrates the parts of the language other grammars cannot reach'. On the other hand, the feasibility and desirability of applying findings from corpus linguistics to language teaching have been seriously questioned by a number of influential commentators (e.g. Prodromou, 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Cook, 1998; Widdowson, 1998). In terms of the practical effects of corpus research on ELT materials, the very title of Burton's (2012) article, 'Corpora and coursebooks: destined to be strangers forever?' suggests an uncomfortable and distant relationship between corpus research and materials development. This rather distant relationship appears to be confirmed by Burton's (2012, p. 91) survey of corpus use by materials writers in which he observes that 'while some coursebook authors already do make use of corpora in their writing, many do not'. It is interesting in this respect that Römer (2006, p. 124) goes so far as to speak of 'resistance' by learners and practitioners towards corpora:

> Despite the obvious and recognised strengths of corpus use in a pedagogical context, e.g. that corpora highlight what lexical items and collocations are typical in the language, and that they provide us with large amounts of natural language examples . . . it seems that there is still a strong resistance towards corpora from the side of students, teachers, and materials writers.

We should note that Römer (2006, p. 124) refers above to the 'obvious and recognised strengths of corpus use in a pedagogical context', while at the same time speaking of resistance towards corpora from those most closely involved in the pedagogic context: it would appear that the strengths are not obvious to many of the people who matter in the practical business of language teaching. In practice, despite the proclaimed potential of corpora for language teacher and materials development, it seems to be 'authors' intuition, anecdotal evidence, and traditions about what should be in a grammar book' which remain the major determinants of the language syllabus in coursebooks (Biber and Conrad, 2010).

This chapter begins with a general review of corpus findings of potential value to materials writers. It then deals, in turn, with corpus findings in specific domains: lexis, grammar, the relationship between lexis and grammar, and discourse. This is followed by a brief discussion of the implications of corpus insights for ELT methodology. The chapter then discusses reservations which have been expressed about the role of corpora in materials development. Finally, the chapter reviews how the uneasy relationship between corpora and materials development might become more amicable if we take a measured view of what corpora have to offer the materials developer.

Corpus research and materials: An overview

Many of the questions which linguists ask of corpora are related to frequency. It is straightforward to obtain word frequency lists from general corpora such as the British National Corpus (BNC). As the BNC has both spoken and written components, separate spoken and written frequency lists can be generated and compared. Domain-specific corpora can, of course, generate domain-specific frequency lists: Coxhead (2000), for example, has produced an Academic Word List. Frequency information, as Harwood (2002, p. 141) notes, is not limited to simple word counts: 'corpora can instantly provide us with the relative frequencies, collocations, and prevalent grammatical patterns of the lexis in question across a range of genres'. We should note in this respect that frequency lists have been produced for collocations (Shin and Nation, 2008) and for lexical phrases (Martinez and Schmitt, 2012). The criteria for defining collocations and for defining lexical phrases respectively are complex, but both lists were compiled with pedagogic concerns in mind.

A useful summary of corpus findings which may be relevant to language teaching materials is also provided by Keck (2004, p. 89) who notes that 'insights into the frequency of linguistic features, the relationship between pattern and meaning, and the variation of language use across registers are now available to language teaching researchers'. What is available to language teaching researchers is also, of course, potentially available to materials developers: corpus-based reference works such as the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English, for example, provide frequency information on grammatical structures. We should note, however, the limitations of automatically generated corpus frequency data. Automatic corpus analysis will *not* tell us, for example, which of the various meanings of the word 'tip' is most frequent, which of the various uses of the present perfect is most frequent, or how often the word 'marvellous' is used sarcastically. We need manual, qualitative reading of corpus data to supply us with this kind of information.

Corpus insights and language teaching materials

Corpora, lexis and language teaching materials

In terms of lexis, Koprowski (2005) notes that corpus research has made some impact on coursebooks in that many now focus more on multi-word items than was previously the case. However, he questions whether this focus is systematic and optimally useful for learners: 'Contemporary British coursebooks now routinely offer a generous and diverse mix of multi-word items . . . But while designers have been enthusiastic about adding chunks to the syllabus, the process of selecting items has been highly subjective and conducted without reference to corpus data' (Koprowski, 2005, p. 322). The result of this subjective and introspective approach to the selection of multi-word items, he argues is that 'nearly a quarter of the multi-word lexical items specified may be of limited pedagogic value to learners'. While Koprowski (2005) appears to acknowledge a role for intuition and experience in the selection of multi-word items, he points to two specific weaknesses in the three coursebooks he studied in depth:

1. There is too much focus on multi-word items of one type. He points out that in the three coursebooks he surveyed the emphasis was far more heavily on simple collocations rather than, for example, on phrasal verbs, binomials or longer fixed expressions.
2. Multi-word items seem to be fitted around structural items in the syllabus. He notes, for example, that in one of the coursebooks he surveyed phrasal verbs were grouped according to the particle, for example 'out' or 'up'.

Corpus findings seem also to have had a very limited influence on vocabulary selection. McCarten and McCarthy (2010) point to the following examples of coursebooks in which vocabulary selection has been influenced by corpus insights:

- The COBUILD English Course (Willis and Willis, 1988)
- face2face (Redston and Cunningham, 2005)

We could also add Touchstone (McCarthy, McCarten and Sandiford, 2005), but the fact that so few can be named tends to underline the limited influence of corpus research on vocabulary selection in materials.

Corpora, grammar and language teaching materials

A number of commentators have referred to the differences between grammatical descriptions (or prescriptions) presented in coursebooks and grammatical descriptions based on corpus evidence. Mindt (1996, p. 232, cited in McEnery and Xiao, 2011), for example, speaks of 'a kind of school English which does not seem to exist outside the foreign language classroom'. Similarly, Römer (2006, pp. 125–6) speaks of 'considerable mismatches between naturally-occurring English and the English that is put forward as a model in pedagogical descriptions'. More specifically, Römer (2005), in a survey of ELT textbooks found that progressive verb forms were presented more prominently than their corpus-attested frequency would appear to warrant. Römer (2006) also cites research which shows that corpus-attested use of modal verbs, if-clauses and the present perfect differs significantly from the use of these structures presented in coursebooks. Cullen and Kuo (2007, p. 361) focused specifically on spoken grammar in a survey of 24 popular ELT coursebooks and concluded that:

> . . . coverage of features of spoken grammar is at best patchy. Where it is dealt with at all, there tends to be an emphasis on lexicogrammatical features, and common syntactic structures peculiar to conversation are either ignored or confined to advanced levels as interesting extras.

Corpora and the integration of lexis and grammar

Thus far we have followed convention in treating grammar and lexis as separate domains. We need to note, however, that a consistent theme of corpus research has been that grammar and lexis are far more closely linked than previously supposed (e.g. Sinclair, 1991). Sinclair and Renouf (1988), for example argued that a focus on the most frequent words in a language would automatically bring into play the most frequent structures. As an example of this relationship between grammar and lexis, Biber and Conrad (2010, p. 4) consider the case of verbs followed by the 'to-infinitive',

arguing that 'most common verb + infinitive pairs can be grouped into general meaning categories':

- want/need verbs: hope, like, need, want, want NP, wish
- effort verbs: attempt, fail, manage, try
- begin/continue verbs: begin, continue, start
- 'seem' verbs: appear, seem, tend

It is interesting in this respect that Stranks (2003) bemoans the 'random lexicalization' of structures in coursebooks that is there seems to be little effort to present and practise structure with the lexis most commonly used in that structure. In similar vein, Tan (2003, p. 2) complains of 'the persistence of coursebook designers and even teachers in viewing grammar and vocabulary as separate areas of language teaching'.

Corpora, discourse and language teaching materials

Two criticisms have been made of coursebooks in terms of discourse: they fail to account for the way words and structures are used in discourse and they misrepresent the nature of real-life discourse. As an example of how coursebooks can fail to capture the way words are used in discourse, Conrad (2004, p. 73) cites the treatment of *though* in coursebooks:

> Only one of the four [ESL textbooks] covers the use of though as linking adverbial at all, and that book lists it only as showing contrast, not concession. None of these books have an example of *though* to soften disagreement.

Timmis (2012) also suggests that *though* is used far more often in conversation interactively between speakers than it is to link two clauses by a single speaker. The example below from the British National Corpus illustrates this interactive use:

S1: It's not nice
S2: It's funny though

It is interesting to note that *though* is in the top 300 words in the conversation component of the British National Corpus. Similar evidence pointing to the importance of discourse concerns in conversation is provided by McCarten and McCarthy (2010):

- *Absolutely* and *basically* are in the top 1,000 words in conversation
- *Anyway* is 15 times more frequent in conversation than in newspaper texts
- *I mean* and *I guess* are more frequent than numbers up to 10, colours, *house* and *car*

In terms of discourse sequences, Scotton and Bernsten (1988, p. 373) made a detailed comparison of real-life direction-giving and direction-giving dialogues in coursebooks and found that:

> Most textbook direction-giving dialogues contain only three parts: a request for directions, a set of directions as the response, and a statement of thanks from the direction-seeker. Real direction-giving contains more parts and certain distinctive discourse features, at least if the directions are more than a few words.

Such dialogues, they argue, are inadequate for the real-life cognitive and interactional demands of direction-giving (Scotton and Bernsten, 1988).

Coursebooks have also been analysed from a broader discourse perspective: Gray (2000, 2010), for example, has argued that textbooks are 'cultural artefacts' and 'sources not only of grammar, lexis, and activities for language practice, but, like Levi's jeans and Coca Cola, commodities which are imbued with cultural Promise' (Gray, 2000, p. 274). A focus on the sociocultural aspect of coursebooks does not, perhaps, arise directly from research in corpus linguistics, but, I would argue, there is a shared interest between corpus linguistics and ELT sociocultural research in the relationship between coursebook portrayal and reality. General criticisms of coursebook reality have been made by Carter (1998), Tan (2003) and Mukundan (2007), who all point to the can-do society portrayed in coursebooks where agreement and cooperation prevail to an unnatural extent. More specifically, Cook (2003) has noted that in sequences such as giving directions where help is being solicited, it is most often the non-native speaker who is placed in the deficit position.

Corpora and language teaching methodology

While the main focus of this chapter is on the relevance of corpus findings for the content of language teaching materials, it is important to note in passing that there are also implications for methodology. Although McCarten and McCarthy (2010) argue that precisely because a different picture of language may discomfort teachers, the methodology should remain familiar, others have argued that a different picture of language requires a change in methodological mindset. The general tenor of such arguments has been that an awareness-raising approach is preferable to a production-oriented approach. Such an awareness approach was advocated by McCarthy and Carter (1995) who proposed an I-I-I framework (Illustration-Induction-Interaction). This framework was further developed by Timmis (2005) who proposed, for example, the use of tasks where learners compare their expectations of language use with the reality of language use. The emphasis of both these frameworks was strongly in favour of awareness-raising with little or no emphasis on production. Jones (2007), however, has made the case for productive practice on the grounds that experimenting with the

language can itself generate insights. Cullen and Kuo (2007, p. 379) note that when spoken language is dealt with in coursebooks, the methodology appears to have been influenced by the McCarthy and Carter (1995) I-I-I frameworks and perhaps also by Timmis' (2005) framework:

> After a task to check global comprehension of the text, the learners' attention is drawn to the target feature of spoken grammar . . . and its communicative purpose and use in the listening text is either explained or explored through some – usually rather brief – questions for discussion. There is then typically a short practice activity, where the learners are required to use the feature in a fairly controlled setting.

In effect, it is only the consistent use of a text-based approach to language work that distinguishes this kind of framework from more traditional grammar teaching paradigms.

There have also been advocates of data-driven learning (DDL) that is the use of 'raw' corpus-generated data in the classroom (e.g. Johns, 1991). While this direct use of corpus data is not the main focus of this chapter, it is useful to outline the approach briefly as it can play a 'walk-on' part in materials which are not fundamentally based on this approach. In DDL, learners may, for example, be given a concordance printout containing numerous instances of a particular word or phrase presented with brief co-text; they are then asked to make observations on its meaning, use and grammatical properties based on the evidence before them. DDL, thus, places a great emphasis on learners discovering language to the extent that it may challenge the beliefs of both learners and teachers.

Reservations about corpora and language teaching materials

We need now, then, to consider the reservations about the potential influence of corpora which have been expressed in both ideological and practical pedagogic terms (though it is sometimes difficult to separate the two). Ideological objections to the influence of corpora on language teaching have tended to centre on the argument that corpora, if they can be said to represent reality at all, represent native speaker reality. Given the ever-growing international use of English, the relevance of native speaker models of English has been questioned (e.g. Prodromou, 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Jenkins, 1998) on the grounds that such models perpetuate the hegemony of the native speaker in ELT. This line of argument was perhaps most memorably captured by Prodromou (1998, p. 266): 'What is real for the native speaker may also be real, say, for the learner studying in Britain, but it may be unreal for the EFL learner in Greece and surreal for the ESL learner in Calcutta'. It is not possible to capture the scale and intensity of the debate here, but arguments relating to the sociocultural relevance

of corpus findings are reviewed by Timmis (2003, 2005). We should also note that Gavioli and Aston (2001) and Timmis (2003, 2005) argue that a compromise position is possible where native speaker 'authenticity' can be an important point of reference for learners without requiring them to defer to the norms of the native speaker.

An important practical reservation about the potential influence of corpus research on materials is that even the largest corpora only represent a fraction of actual language use which, despite the efforts of the corpus-compilers to achieve generic and demographic balance, can never be truly representative of the language use of a particular community (Cook, 1998). A further specific reservation is that word frequency can be a misleading criterion. As Hunston (2002, p. 194) argues:

> The opposing argument (to frequency) is that certain aspects of English are important even though they are not frequent, either because they carry a lot of information or because they have a resonance for a cultural group or even for an individual.

McCarten and McCarthy (2010) also point to a number of instances where it would be absurd to prioritize frequency over pedagogic convenience and psychological reality. Among the examples they cite of potential clashes between frequency information and pedagogic commonsense are the following:

- Only 4 of the days of the week are in the top 1,000 words in conversation
- Red is 6 times more frequent than orange in North American English

Presumably nobody would advocate that the days of the week should be taught separately according to the frequency band in which they occur.

A further reservation about the direct application of corpus frequency data to materials is that frequency does not reflect prototypicality. It is argued that prototypical examples are most useful to learners:

> . . . words and structures might be identified as 'pedagogically' core or nuclear, and preferred as a prototype at a particular learning stage because of their coverage or their generative value, because they are catalysts which activate the learning process, whatever their status might be in respect to their actual occurrence in contexts of use. (Widdowson, 1991, cited in Kaltenböck and Mehlmauer-Larcher, 2006)

Dellar (2004) makes a similar point but in relation to conversations, arguing that any single conversation taken from a corpus is not likely to reflect protypicality and, in addition, may be culturally opaque to students. A number of potential objections to the use of raw corpus conversations on both linguistic and editorial grounds are summarized by McCarten and McCarthy (2010). Among the linguistic issues they note are the use of puns and jokes and the use of dialect, colloquial and non-standard forms. As examples of editorial issues, they cite, for example, the potential difficulty of

identifying the boundary of corpus conversations, word length restrictions imposed by publishers and uneven turn lengths. A very useful summary of the challenges facing a materials developer trying to make use of corpus data is provided by McCarten and McCarthy (2010, p. 29):

> Not least [of the challenges] are the questions of the size and type of corpus needed, and the relationship between the types of data collected in the corpus and the needs and aspirations of the end-users of the course.

A further challenge is discussed by McCarten (2010, p. 417):

> There is a strong expectation in some parts of the English-speaking world of the order in which grammatical structures should be taught. For example, many teachers believe the present continuous forms should be taught before the simple past form, even though the present continuous is far less frequent in a general spoken corpus.

Corpus research and materials: Into the future

Before outlining a position on the relationship between corpora and language teaching materials, it is important to consider suggestions as to how corpus research might better serve language teaching in the future. Given that much language teaching is geared towards developing communicative competence, it is not surprising to hear calls for more spoken corpora (Römer, 2006), though they are considerably more difficult to compile than written corpora. It has also been suggested that more research is required based on corpora of learner English rather than an exclusive focus on corpora of native speaker English (Meunier, 2002):

> . . . it is important to strike a balance between frequency, difficulty and pedagogical relevance. That is exactly where learner corpus research comes into play to help weigh the importance of each of these. (Meunier, 2002, p. 123, cited in McEnery and Xiao, 2011)

In addition, there have been calls for learner corpus informed grammars of English (e.g. Granger, 2012) which take into account the typical grammatical difficulties faced by specific groups of learners. Coursebooks themselves can be made into corpora so that 'coursebook English' can be compared with 'real English' (Römer, 2006). An interesting suggestion for 'pedagogic corpora' has been made by Willis (2003): a pedagogic corpus is made up of the texts already used by the learners in class which is then exploited for the study of particular language features. The advantage of such corpora, Willis (2003) argues, is that learners will already be familiar with the co-text surrounding the feature selected for study. In addition to the types of corpora available to materials writers and

learners, we need to consider the user-friendliness of the accompanying software. As Römer (2006, pp. 126–7) notes:

> . . . it would be very useful if, with just one or two mouse clicks, some kind of advanced structuring of concordances (more than just an alphabetical sorting of the context) could be provided, for instance to ensure quick access to relevant examples that show typical collocations, or to extract common patterns and highlight the different senses of a polysemous item.

Towards a corpus-referred approach

McCarten and McCarthy (2010, p. 13) refer to the distinction between corpus-driven, corpus-based and corpus-informed materials: in a corpus-driven approach, corpus evidence forms the basis of the language descriptions used in the materials; in a corpus-based approach, examples from a corpus are used to support largely pre-existing descriptions of language; in a corpus-informed approach, corpus evidence will inform language descriptions and the illustrative examples to support those descriptions, but allow for manipulation of the data. While I have no wish to add to the competing terms which abound in applied linguistics, I would suggest that corpus-*referred* materials might be a useful term, though in practical terms it will differ little from a corpus-informed approach. This reflects the suggestion made by a number of commentators (e.g. Gavioli and Aston, 2001; O'Keeffe et al., 2007) that corpora could be used for what Dushku and Thompson (2012) refer to as the 'verification and corroboration' of teacher intuitions and the 'validation' of lexico-grammatical syllabus choices. However, it seems to me that terms such as 'verification' and 'validation' and perhaps even 'informed' still set up the corpus as a kind of arbiter of syllabus content rather than a contributor to it. A corpus-referred approach, I would argue, explicitly allows an honourable place for intuition, experience, local need, cultural appropriacy and pedagogic convenience in determining syllabus content and the order in which items are taught.

However, whichever term we use (though I hope mine catches on), it is clear that a number of commentators have proposed compromise solutions to the problematic relationship between corpora and language teaching materials. It is just such a compromise solution that Gavioli and Aston (2001) propose, arguing that an important role for corpora is to test our intuitions and to oblige us to justify our syllabus decisions. This allows us to over-ride corpus frequency information, for example, but we must have a clear rationale for doing so. The need to over-ride corpus frequency information is also noted by Biber and Conrad (2010) who observe that the order in which grammatical structures are taught cannot be determined by frequency alone as some grammatical structures act as 'building blocks' for others, and some are more difficult than others.

Compromise solutions have also been proposed for coursebooks dialogues. Gavioli and Aston (2001, p. 240), for example argue that corpus dialogues need not be taken

directly from corpora as no single dialogue is representative of a genre, though corpus dialogues might provide an interesting point of reference:

> The chances of finding a complete corpus text which consistently shows 'typical' usage is minimal, so if we want to propose a model of conversation at the hairdresser's, we will almost certainly do better to use an invented dialogue than a corpus extract – though we may want to compare it with corpus extracts before proposing it to the students. (Gavioli and Aston, 2001, p. 240)

McCarten and McCarthy (2010, p. 20) provide specific guidelines for the construction of what we might call 'corpus-informed dialogues'. Among these guidelines are the following suggestions:

- Keep turns generally short, except for narratives. Where one speaker 'holds the floor' build in listener back-channelling and non-minimal responses . . .
- Allow speakers to react to the previous speaker . . .
- Don't overload speech with densely packed information; ensure a balance of transactional and relational language and an appropriate lexical density . . .
- Include some repetition, rephrasing, fragmented sentences and other features of speech, but maintain transparency.
- Keep speakers 'polite' and not confrontational or face-threatening.

I am not sure about the last bullet point (and I know the editor of this volume won't be), but they do seem in general to be useful guidelines for the materials writer aiming to replicate authenticity to some degree.

It is important to note, however, that even a modest proposal for corpus-informed or corpus-referred materials will make little impact unless materials writers can be convinced of the value of such an approach. Given that most materials writers start out (or should start out) as teachers, there is a clear role here for teacher training. Indeed, Conrad (2000, p. 556) is emphatic about this:

> . . . the strongest force for change could be a new generation of ESL teachers who were introduced to corpus-based research in their training programs, who appreciate the scope of the work, and who have practiced conducting their own corpus investigations and designing materials based on corpus research.

If Conrad (2000) is emphatic about the need for teacher training, Römer (2006, p. 126) is positively zealous in calling for 'missionary work' through compulsory corpus components on ELT teacher training courses. It is also interesting that Römer (2006) points to the need to convince learners of the need for corpus-informed materials. As Carter (1998) has observed, corpus evidence often leads to probabilistic grammar rules rather than the hard and fast certainties which are comforting to some learners (and teachers).

Conclusion

Finally, I would like to argue that there are both negotiable and non-negotiable aspects to a corpus-referred approach to materials writing. The negotiable aspect relates to specific descriptive insights derived from corpora. Such insights can make us reflect on and justify our syllabus choices (Gavioli and Aston, 2001), and may even lead to the inclusion in the syllabus of previously neglected items and the exclusion of items previously thought important. These insights, however, will not dictate our decisions. There are other factors to take into account such as usefulness and difficulty for a specific group of learners. The non-negotiable aspect relates to what corpora tell us about the nature of language and language production: if the evidence is that lexis is primary and grammar subservient in language production, and that lexis and grammar are more closely intertwined than previously supposed, it would be folly to ignore it. A corpus does not tell us what to teach, still less how to teach it, but it does tell us something about the nature of the thing we are teaching, and anything that can do that has to be a welcome development.

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Comments on Part D

Brian Tomlinson

Explicit and experiential learning

It seems to be agreed by most of the authors in Part D that both explicit and experiential learning are necessary for learners of a foreign language but that neither is sufficient. Explicit learning encourages noticing and highlighting, and facilitates conscious learning and retrieval. Experiential learning facilitates elaborating, relating and valuing, and facilitates subconscious learning and automatic retrieval. The big question is which should come first, explicit or experiential learning. My own view is that it facilitates durable learning if apprehension comes before comprehension, especially if meaning focused experience of a language feature in context is followed fairly closely by activities requiring the learner to pay attention to characteristics exhibited by that feature in the experienced context and in other contexts of use (Kolb et al., 2000; Moon, 2004). This discovery approach to language awareness is equally applicable to grammar learning, to vocabulary learning and to the learning of conventional, stylistic and pragmatic features of discourse (Tomlinson, 1994, 2007). It is also applicable to the development of communication skills. The implication for materials development is that learners need motivated and meaningful exposure to language in use both prior to and subsequent to activities inviting the learners to pay conscious attention to features of the language used.

Extensive listening and reading

One important point implied by nearly all the chapters in this section is that excellent opportunities for experiential learning can be provided through extensive listening and extensive reading. Language can be acquired and skills developed by listening to or

reading at length and at leisure texts which are relevant, motivating and engaging (Tomlinson, 2001; Maley, 2008). To help learners to do this involves providing potentially appealing texts for learners to select from (or helping learners to provide them for themselves). It also means motivating learners to want to listen and read extensively, helping them to develop listening and reading confidence and ensuring that time is made available for them to listen and to read.

Realism

Most of the authors in this section also seem to agree that learning materials should be realistic in the sense that they reflect the reality of language use which learners will encounter outside and after their course. This means exposing learners to authentic materials (i.e. materials written not to teach language but to inform, amuse, provoke, excite, stimulate, entertain, etc.); and it certainly means that a course is inadequate at any level if it consists only of materials in which the language has been so simplified, reduced and focused that it does not resemble 'real' use of language at all. It could also mean that the learners are exposed to some materials which have been written to simulate authenticity and to some materials which resemble 'real' language use except that they have been enriched by an unusual number of examples of a particular language feature or they have had certain language features highlighted (e.g. through the use of bold type, distinctive fonts or underlining). And it could also mean that the learners are asked to participate in some pedagogic tasks which superficially bear no resemblance to 'real-world' tasks but which in fact provide useful opportunities to develop skills which will be important to the learners outside and after their courses. An example of such a task would be a game in which groups compete to assemble a Lego model which replicates a teacher-prepared model hidden to everybody except a 'runner' from each group who is permitted to look at the teacher's model and to describe it to his/her group. This is not a task which learners are ever likely to be engaged in in the 'real world' but it can engage them affectively and can help to develop such 'real-world' skills as visualization, giving precise descriptions and seeking clarification. The main point is that materials should provide learners with preparation for real-world language use but that they should do so in ways which recognize the limitations of the learners and the constraints of the classroom and in ways which exploit the resources of the teacher, of the learners themselves and of learning aids.

Affect

Another common theme in Part D, and indeed in the other parts of the book, is the need for materials, regardless of what they are teaching, to engage learners affectively. Learners are not going to develop listening or reading skills if they are exposed only to

bland, neutral or trivial texts which do not stimulate cognitive or emotive responses. They are not going to develop speaking and writing skills if they are not encouraged and stimulated to say what they think is worth saying.

And they are not going to learn grammar or vocabulary if they are bored while learning it. Ideally, materials should facilitate learning by helping learners to gain self-esteem, to develop positive attitudes towards the learning experience and to engage themselves both cognitively and emotionally in the learning activities. In other words, learners need to enjoy learning a language if they are ever going to be able to use it successfully.

Multidimensional learning

In my view, probably the most important point made in Part D is that materials should ensure that language learning is a multidimensional experience. This is a point made explicitly and forcibly by Hitomi Masuhara in Chapter 18 and made implicitly by most of the other authors in Part D. Learners are much more likely to achieve long-term learning if they learn linguistically and non-linguistically, if they learn visually, aurally, tactilely and kinaesthetically, if they learn consciously and subconsciously, if they learn cognitively and affectively and if they facilitate multidimensional mental representation of the language they present rather than just linguistic processing. More and more research shows the value of rich, varied and multifaceted experiences of language in use.

And yet more and more coursebook materials are focusing more and more narrowly on the encoding and decoding of language rather than opening up rich opportunities for experience, engagement and effect.

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PART E

Materials Development and Teacher Training

24

Materials Development Courses

Brian Tomlinson

Introduction

Before the 1990s, materials development was given little prominence on teacher training or teacher education courses and there were very few specialist courses training people to develop materials. On initial teacher training courses it was assumed that the trainees did not have enough experience or expertise to write materials for themselves, on in-service courses materials were often a given which teachers were trained to exploit and on teacher education courses materials development was often considered insufficiently theoretical to deserve its own place on what were often linguistics courses left to the participants to apply. For example, neither my PGCE in ESL course at the Institute of Education, University of London, nor my MA in ESL course at the University of Bangor included components on materials development. Materials development was a practical procedure which was left to specialists to pursue.

Materials development 'was treated as a sub-section of methodology, in which materials were usually introduced as examples of methods in action rather than as a means to explore the principles and procedures of their development' (Tomlinson, 2001a, p. 66). There were some postgraduate courses which included components called 'Methods and Materials' and some methodology books which included examples of materials in each section or separately at the end of the book (e.g. Dubin and Olshtain, 1986; Richards and Rodgers, 1986; Stevick, 1986, 1989; Nunan, 1988; Richards, 1990). There were also some books and articles which focused on materials evaluation (e.g. Candlin and Breen, 1979; Williams, 1983; Cunningsworth, 1984; Sheldon, 1987, 1988). However, there were very few books or articles published on the principles or the process of materials development and even fewer on its procedures. And without books and articles how could you have courses?

In the 1990s, attitudes began to change. It was realized that not only is materials development an important skill needed by all teachers but also that by engaging in materials development teachers can help themselves both 'to understand and apply theories of language learning' and 'to achieve personal and professional development' (Tomlinson, 2001a, p. 67). In order to cater for the wants and needs of their particular learners, teachers need to be able to evaluate, select, adapt and supplement materials, and to do this effectively they need to be helped to develop the awareness and skills required for successful materials development. In the process of developing awareness and skills, teachers can also develop the ability to theorize their practice (Schon, 1987), to question their procedures, to check their hypotheses and to find answers to their questions about the processes of language learning and teaching. In response to this realization of the value and power of materials development, a number of books and articles began to appear which focused on the principles and procedures of materials development (e.g. McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Hidalgo et al., 1995; Byrd, 1995; Tomlinson, 1998; Richards, 2001), a number of associations began publishing materials development newsletters (e.g. TESOL; JALT) and in 1993 I founded an association (MATSDA) which organizes materials development conferences and workshops and publishes a journal called *Folio*. At the same time, teacher training, teacher education and teacher development courses began to include materials development components, teacher training institutions began to offer short courses in materials development for teachers and institutions and ministries began to organize materials development workshops for their teachers. For example, in the last 20 years I have developed MA Materials Development modules at the University of Essex, at Temple University, Tokyo, at the National University of Singapore, at Bilkent University in Ankara and at the New School in New York, I have run an MA in L2 Materials Development at the University of Luton, I have developed an MA in Materials Development for Language Teaching at Leeds Metropolitan University and I have developed an EdD module in materials development at Anaheim University in Los Angeles. I have also taught a materials development component on an RSA/UCLES CELTA course at Language Resources in Kobe, I have run materials development workshops for ministries of education and universities in Belgium, Botswana, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritius, Oman, the Seychelles, Turkey and Vietnam, I have run materials development short courses for teachers at NILE (the Norwich Institute for Language Education) and I have developed a materials development course for teachers at Leeds Metropolitan University. Yet before the 1990s I had rarely worked on a materials development course at all.

The objectives of materials development courses

In this section I will give my own views as to what the potential objectives of materials development courses should be. Some of my objectives are global and would be aimed at in any course I was involved in. Others are context dependent and would be selected only when they match the local circumstances of the course. In addition,

there are obviously other local objectives not included in my lists which would be context unique (e.g. preparing teachers for a new communicative examination for primary school leavers in Vanuatu).

Theoretical

I have found that materials development courses can help teachers and teachers in training (even those on pre-service courses) to develop their theoretical awareness of the process of language acquisition and of the optimum ways of facilitating it. They can help:

- to provide a concrete experience as a basis for reflective observation and conceptualization (Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2000);
- to raise, investigate and answer questions related to language use;
- to raise, investigate and answer questions related to language acquisition;
- to raise, investigate and answer questions related to language teaching pedagogy;
- to provide opportunities for action research related to language learning and teaching;
- to help the participants to become more aware of the needs and wants of the users of language learning materials;
- to help the participants to articulate and develop their own tacit theory of language learning and teaching.

These are all important objectives of any applied linguistics course and I have found that they are more effectively achieved on a coherent, hands-on materials development course than on a conventional applied linguistics course with its separate components unconnected to any specific practical goal. Wanting to produce effective materials is a powerful incentive to develop knowledge and awareness of language and learning theories which could help the materials developer to produce quality materials. Ways in which I have helped participants to develop theoretical awareness through materials development include:

- Starting a course with a series of materials development tasks during which the participants write questions they would like to raise about the learning and teaching of languages (e.g. 'Does providing exposure to authentic language in use facilitate language acquisition?').
- Getting participants to articulate their beliefs about what facilitates language acquisition prior to turning their statements into criteria for developing and evaluating materials (e.g. 'Learners can gain from opportunities to interact with proficient speakers of the target language').

- Asking participants to find evidence in the research literature to support or question typical coursebook exercises (e.g. repetition drills, sentence transformation, filling in the blanks, dialogue repetition).

Developmental

My materials development courses (whether of a day or a year in duration) usually aim to help the participants to develop greater:

- awareness of the objectives, principles and procedures of language teaching;
- awareness of the objectives, principles and procedures of materials development;
- awareness of the principled options available to teachers;
- awareness of the principled options available to materials developers;
- skills as evaluators, adapters, editors and producers of language materials;
- sensitivity to the needs and wants of learners and teachers;
- ability as language teachers;
- confidence and independence as materials developers and teachers;
- ability to work in teams and to take initiative;
- self-esteem.

Obviously the degree of development will depend on such variables as motivation, course duration, course intensity, course follow-up and trainer expertise, but I have found that all the objectives above are achievable on both short courses and one-year MAs, and even on one-day workshops. Perhaps the most effective courses in my experience in achieving these objectives were the in–on service courses which were run in all 27 provinces of Indonesia as part of the PKG English Programme (Tomlinson, 1990). These courses introduced communicative methodology to secondary school teachers by helping them to develop materials during the two in-service phases of the courses, which were then trialled during the two on-service phases of the course. And the trainers were teachers who had developed their own awareness, expertise, confidence and self-esteem at workshops which focused on materials development.

Other shorter courses which the participants report personal and professional development from have included three–five days courses for teachers at universities and schools in Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg, Oman (see Al-Busaidi and Tindle, 2010), Turkey and Vietnam. These institutions were dissatisfied with the effects achieved by using global coursebooks and wanted their teachers to be able to develop locally relevant institutional materials. Not only did their teachers manage to develop principled and engaging materials, they developed their own awareness, confidence and competence

too. For further discussion of the personal and professional developmental potential of materials development see Tomlinson (2003b).

Practical

The following are some of the practical objectives I have aimed at in materials development courses:

- To help the participants to develop principled frameworks which will help them to evaluate, adapt and produce materials outside and after the course.
- To help the participants to develop a set of principled and localized materials which they can use with their classes.
- To help the participants to develop a set of principled and localized materials which can act as models to stimulate and inform subsequent materials development by themselves and their colleagues.
- To produce a coherent collection of principled materials which can be used as the basis of a course in a particular institution or region.

Although these practical objectives are very important, it is vital that they are not viewed as more important than the theoretical and developmental objectives above. It is too easy to say that a course has failed if the quality of the materials produced during a course is not very high. It is possible that the participants have been stimulated and encouraged and that they will go on to produce high-quality materials after the course. It is also possible that, although the quality of the materials produced is not yet very high, the participants have developed knowledge, awareness, skills and confidence which will help them to become better teachers and teacher trainers. This is what happened on a course I ran once in Indonesia which was monitored by academic experts from teacher training institutions. The participants thought that the course had been very successful because they had developed a lot of awareness, skills and confidence in a very short time. The academic experts thought the course had been a failure because not all the materials were of a high enough quality for immediate use in the classroom. Guess what I thought.

The procedures of materials development courses

Study

It is important to read what has been written about materials development, but materials development, either as a practical undertaking or as an academic field, cannot just be read about. There is no received store of wisdom about materials development and

certainly no magic procedure which you can read about and then immediately apply in order to produce effective materials. In my experience, the real benefits on materials development courses come not from the greater knowledge gained from study but from the greater awareness and skill which comes from monitored experience of the process of developing materials.

However, study does have its place. And that place, in my view, is after experience and reflection and not before it. In that sequence, the study can help to develop the awareness already gained and can contribute to a process of broadening and extending. If the study comes first it can impose an approach which subsequent experience can frustrate and it can determine a process of narrowing and restriction. That is why on my materials development courses I give post-course reading lists but no pre-course reading. Often, though, I also recommend whilst-course reading which might help participants to answer questions they have raised during experiential phases of the course. This was the intention of Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004), a handbook written to support inexperienced and unqualified teachers on in-service courses in South East Asia. Unfortunately this book has been translated into Chinese, Korean and Portuguese and I suspect it is often given to teachers as a manual for them to follow rather than as advice to consider, to evaluate and to apply in their own way.

Books which I have recommended to recent courses include McGrath (2002), McDonough et al. (2003, 2013), Tomlinson (2003a, 2008, 2011, 2013), Harwood (2010) and Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010). I would also recommend articles from the MATSDA journal *Folio* (which is dedicated to materials development) as well as articles on materials development in such journals as *ELT Journal*, *English Teaching Professional*, *JALT Journal*, *Modern English Teacher* and *the RELC Journal*.

Demonstration

I have found that the most valuable way to start any materials development course is to demonstrate materials which are innovative, radical, different and potentially engaging in principled ways. The main objective is not to provide models for emulation but to stimulate curiosity, provide the participants with potentially engaging experience as 'learners' and to provide concrete illustrations of novel principles and procedures for the participants to reflect on and discuss. I have found that this is a non-threatening way to begin a course (the 'trainer' is being evaluated rather than the participants) and that it can be a very effective way of opening up discussion of theories of language learning and of principles of language teaching. It only succeeds if the trainer believes in the approaches demonstrated and if he/she is prepared and able to justify them without imposing them on others.

I have found the following to be the most effective way of starting a course with demonstrations:

1. Outline and explain the process to the participants.
2. Ask the participants to play the role of learners.
3. Teach an extensive part of a unit of materials to the 'learners'.
4. Ask the 'learners' to become course participants again and to recreate the lesson in their heads.
5. Ask the participants in groups to list the main stages of the lesson.
6. Ask the groups to specify the objectives of each stage and to talk about the learning principles which they think underlie it.
7. Hold a plenary discussion in which the groups share their views of the objectives and principles of each stage.
8. Ask each group to profile a group of learners at the language level catered for in the demonstration lesson.
9. Ask each group to evaluate the materials by predicting the effectiveness of each stage for their profiled group of learners.
10. Hold a plenary discussion in which the groups share their evaluations and the trainer draws attention to any intention or principle which has not been noticed by the groups.

This procedure is repeated with a number of other materials demonstrations (depending on the length of the course) in which the innovative materials demonstrated are different from each other but nevertheless share certain objectives, principles and procedures. The first demonstration usually takes a long time, but subsequent demonstrations usually get shorter as the participants get used to the analysis and evaluation procedures.

Later in the course such demonstrations can be developed and delivered by participants who are confident enough to develop principled materials and to share them with their peers.

Discussion of statements

The informal and, to some extent, ad hoc reflection and discussion involved in the demonstration phase of the course can be formalized by asking the participants in groups to respond to a list of provocative statements organized into categories. For each statement they are asked to say why they agree or disagree with it, and for any statement they disagree with they are asked to rewrite it so that they agree with it. This is done initially as a group activity and then as a plenary discussion, with the main objective not being to reach agreement but to explore the issues. Each participant is then asked to respond individually in writing to each statement and to keep the

responses until the end of the course when the participants in groups will discuss any changes of opinion which have occurred.

An example of a statement under the heading 'Teaching Points' would be, 'Learners should never be asked to understand structures which have not yet been taught.' An example of a statement under the heading 'Texts' would be, 'Low-level learners should only be given short texts to read and to listen to.' And an example of a statement under the heading 'Activities' would be, 'Low-level learners should be invited to attempt tasks which are challenging but achievable, and which help them to develop high-level skills.' As can be seen from the examples the statements should be provocative and stated in absolute terms so as to stimulate responses and revisions from the participants.

Here is an example of statements used on a recent three-day materials course for teachers at private schools in Istanbul:

Issues in materials development for language learning

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? If you disagree with a statement rewrite it so that you do agree with it.

1. Fluency in an L2 is far more important than accuracy.
2. The most important objectives for teaching L2 learners are to help them develop confidence and self-esteem.
3. Exposure to language in use is essential but not sufficient.
4. Grammar should be taught using a Presentation Practice Production (PPP) approach as this frees the learners from distractions and helps them to focus on the teaching point.
5. Texts and tasks should always be authentic, in that they represent how the target language is typically used.
6. Direct teaching can prevent language acquisition. Responsive teaching is much more effective in facilitating language acquisition.
7. Learners should be helped to make discoveries about the language for themselves rather than always being informed by teachers and textbooks.
8. It doesn't matter what language young learners acquire as long as they have a positive experience acquiring it.
9. Materials should encourage learners to find opportunities to experience and use English outside the classroom.
10. We need to take into consideration that most of our learners need English to communicate with other non-native speakers.

Evaluation

I have found it is important to help participants to develop an ability to evaluate other people's published materials in a systematic and principled way before asking them to produce materials of their own. This can not only help them to develop criteria for evaluation which can eventually serve as criteria for developing their own materials; it can also help them to develop confidence as they realize that published materials are not perfect and they become more aware of the qualities required for materials to be effective facilitators of learning.

In this phase of the course, I get the participants to work out the objectives and procedures of pre, whilst and post-use evaluation and to develop, trial and refine banks of evaluation criteria. These sets then form the basis for the development of context-specific sets of criteria which are used in Problem-Based Learning activities to evaluate materials in relation to user profiles (Wilkerson and Gijselaers, 1996; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2000, 2004; McDonough et al., 2013; Chapter 1 in this volume). In my experience, teachers who are used to making quick, impressionistic judgements about materials, find the rigorous process of developing banks and sets of tight evaluation criteria very demanding. But ultimately they find it very rewarding, in that it helps them to evaluate materials more systematically, it empowers them with a greater awareness of the prerequisites for effective materials and it helps them to develop their theories of language learning.

For a full discussion of the objectives and procedures of evaluation see Chapter 1 in this volume.

Adaptation

In almost every lesson teachers adapt the materials they are using in order to achieve a closer match with the needs and wants of their learners. Often their adaptations are spontaneous and intuitive and, although they often improve the materials being used, they can create unanticipated problems for the teacher and the learners. On materials development courses I usually spend time helping the participants to develop procedures for systematic adaptation of materials. This initially involves a formal process of:

- profiling a class,
- analysing a set of materials,
- evaluating the materials,
- subtracting sections of the materials which are likely to be unsuitable/ineffective for the target learners,

- reducing sections of the materials which are unlikely to engage the target learners,
- replacing sections of the materials with new materials which are more likely to be suitable/effective,
- expanding those sections of the materials which are likely to be suitable/effective,
- modifying sections of the materials to increase their likelihood of being suitable/effective,
- adding new sections of materials which are likely to increase the effectiveness of the 'unit'.

After following this process rigorously and formally a couple of times, I find the participants are usually able to make use of that experience to carry out fast adaptations informally and intuitively. I also find that it helps them to develop their own skills in producing effective materials as a preparation for phases of the course when they will be asked to produce complete sets of original materials. For a full discussion of the principles and procedures of adaptation, see Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004); McDonough et al. (2013); Chapters 2 and 3 in this volume.

Critical modelling

One of the most common procedures on materials development courses (especially those for pre-service teacher trainees) is modelling of exemplar materials. The participants are provided with a model unit of materials, for example, which they then use as a template for producing a similar unit themselves with a different teaching point. My experience of observing this procedure on courses is that it can provide useful practice in materials writing (especially of some of the basic skills, such as writing instructions and questions) but it often leads to unthinking acceptance of a right way of presenting instructional materials. Later on, when the participants are in their classrooms, the restrictive nature of this approach can become evident to frustrated teachers who now realize the limitations of the model but do not have the confidence to change it. This is particularly true of such conventional approaches as PPP (presentation–practice–production) and of such common techniques as dialogue practice, listen and repeat, substitution drills and role-plays.

Instead of asking participants to imitate a model uncritically, I prefer to present to them a variety of exemplars of material types and frameworks and to help them to evaluate and modify the exemplars before making use of them to develop their own materials. This way the participants develop a critical understanding of the objectives and principles of a variety of approaches and they are able to develop their own flexible models and repertoires before going into (or back to) the classroom. It also means

that they become sensitive to the need for variability and can modify their models in response to the requirements of different contexts of learning.

For a full discussion of flexible frameworks for materials development, see Chapter 4 in this volume.

Experience

Ultimately what really counts on a materials development course is the quality of the experience it provides in developing materials. The skills required of an effective materials developer cannot be gained from instruction; they can only be developed gradually as a result of quality, hands-on, monitored experience. In my opinion that means that the skills can only be developed if the experience provided:

- is monitored sensitively and supportively by tutors who have earned credibility as materials developers themselves;
- provides opportunities for reflection and modification;
- is shared with other participants who can pool resources so as to gain from each other;
- encourages experimentation and risk taking while providing safety and security too (see Chapter 25 in this volume for a discussion of how simulations can achieve this effect);
- is staged and sequenced so that awareness and skills gained are immediately made use of to facilitate the gaining of further awareness and skills;
- respects the participants as individuals who bring a lot of relevant knowledge, awareness and skills to the process;
- is stimulating and enjoyable for the participants.

I have found that the most effective way of providing experience in materials development is to move the participants forward gradually through a series of tasks which focus attention and monitoring on discrete skills of materials development while involving them in the production of sections of materials.

An example of such a progression would be:

1. Deciding on a voice (i.e. deciding, for example, whether to talk to the learners in a formal, authoritative voice or an informal, chatty voice)
2. Writing instructions
3. Writing questions

4 Giving explanations
5 Giving examples
6 Selecting texts
7 Writing texts
8 Exploiting tests
9 Using illustrations
10 Layout and design
11 Writing teachers' notes
12 Writing units of materials

Ideally, if time allows, the participants would also be provided with quality experience in producing different types of learning materials, such as:

- integrated skills materials,
- listening skills materials,
- reading skills materials,
- writing skills materials,
- speaking skills materials,
- extensive reading and listening materials,
- grammar materials,
- vocabulary materials,
- pronunciation materials,
- communication materials,
- coursebook materials self-access learning materials,
- video materials,
- computer-assisted learning materials,
- multimedia materials.

I have found that it is very important to encourage the participants to work from sets of principled criteria and to progress through a series of drafts which are self-monitored, peer-monitored and tutor-monitored before a 'final' version is produced. It is equally important that this 'final' version is then valued by being, for example, demonstrated to the other participants, made available to the other participants and kept by the producers and the course leader in a quality production.

Reflection

Reflection is the key to development, and participants on my courses/workshops are encouraged to reflect on their views, theories and materials during all phases of the course, outside the course and after the course. For example, they are asked to think about and to articulate their beliefs about language learning and the role that materials should play in it at the beginning of the course when responding to demonstrations or statements given to them, at various stages of the course when they are evaluating, adapting or producing materials, and at the end of the course when they are evaluating their own and other participants' materials. They are also asked each night to reflect on what they have 'learned' during the day about themselves and about materials development (either informally or through keeping journals or diaries). And at the end of the course they are encouraged to keep the reflection process active and informed through reading, through conference attendance, through establishing informal discussion groups and through continuing the process of daily or weekly reflection on their development and use of materials.

Good materials developers are thinking developers who have confidence in their ability and in their materials but who are prepared to rethink and revise their principles and beliefs in response to further stimulus or information.

Ideally, the course tutors should fit this definition and it should be the main aim of the course to help the participants to become such materials developers themselves.

Presentation

I have found that four types of participant presentation can be extremely useful in helping the participants to reflect critically on their materials, to elicit useful suggestions for further improvement and to develop confidence. The first type is informal presentation to another group during the drafting stage of materials production. This can be very useful if the monitoring group is encouraged to ask the presenting group to justify its procedures by reference to its objectives and principles and if the monitoring group can then come up with suggestions for further development of the materials. This procedure works best if it is reciprocal and both groups know they can learn from each other. Another useful type is the oral presentation to fellow course/workshop participants of the final piece of materials produced on the course/workshop. I now do this on every course/workshop, regardless of its length, and find that it can provide a very positive conclusion as the participants realize how much development has taken place during the course and look forward to making further development after the course (often with the help of informal coffee groups or email groups set up by the participants).

A third type of presentation is conference presentation. This I include on longer courses as part of the programme, but I also encourage and facilitate it for participants on shorter courses. On the MA in L2 Materials Development at Leeds Metropolitan

University, for example, the participants were required to do a joint presentation at an internal conference for teachers and post-graduate students, and an individual presentation at a British Universities Research Student Conference which we organized at Leeds Metropolitan University. Hitomi Masuhara and I ran a mini-course in Making Oral Presentations for the participants and we held tutorials to discuss the materials and the participants' plans for presenting them. Many of the participants were apprehensive; but the quality of the materials and the presentations was high, and in the post-course feedback many participants said it was the most useful part of the course. Participants on short courses and workshops I have run throughout the world have also gained expertise and confidence from being encouraged to give presentations at MATSDA (the Materials Development Association) conferences which I organize and at conferences in their local areas.

A fourth type of presentation is article writing. Many of the tasks and assignments on my courses involve writing an article or review for a specific refereed journal. The participants have to find out what the requirements of the journal are and to write their article in such a way that it has a good chance of selection for publication. Detailed feedback is given when the tasks/assignments are returned and participants are encouraged actually to submit revised versions of their articles to the journal. Obviously not every participant does submit and not every submitter is accepted. But those who do submit usually get useful feedback from reviewers, and imagine the boost in self-esteem, which, for example, an Indonesian participant on a course at the National University of Singapore received when he had articles accepted by *ELT Journal* and the *RELC Journal*. And imagine my professional satisfaction when I reflect that seven of the contributors to this book have been students on materials development courses which I have run.

Research

The conventional image of materials development courses is of very practical courses on which the participants are taught to produce materials. In my experience, you cannot develop the ability to become an effective materials developer without thinking about what you are doing. And you cannot think effectively without finding experience, theories and information to stimulate and inform your thinking. One way of doing this is to do applied and action research projects before, during and after a course. Obviously, on a very short course these projects will be mini-projects with very small samples and very limited objectives. But on a long course, such as a Postgraduate Certificate of Education or an MA, extensive research projects can be undertaken which can be of great value to both the participant and their peers. For example, on the MA in L2 Materials Development at Leeds Metropolitan University, the participants had to conduct three-month research projects which they reported on at a conference, wrote an article on for a journal and applied to their production of a complete course of materials

plus a theoretical rationale. And recently I have supervised six materials-related PhDs conducted by people who have been participants on materials development courses I have run.

Possible areas for materials development research projects include:

- the materials needs and wants of learners;
- the materials needs and wants of teachers (Masuhara, 2011);
- the relative effects of different types of author voice (Beck et al., 1995);
- the effects on durable learning of adding affect to coursebook materials;
- the relative effects of different ways of attempting to achieve the same learning objectives;
- ways of producing principled coursebooks which are able to both create a market demand and satisfy the requirements of learners, teachers and administrators;
- ways of catering for different preferred learning styles in the same unit of materials;
- the effects of discovery approaches versus the effects of direct teaching;
- the relative effect of different ways of producing materials (e.g. individual author vs pair of authors vs small group of authors vs large group of authors);
- ways of ensuring systematic and rigorous evaluation of materials;
- finding out what teachers actually do with materials in the classroom and why they do it;
- finding out what the particular value is of different types of materials (print vs audio vs video vs multimedia);
- ways of facilitating teacher development through using a textbook;
- ways of facilitating teacher development through materials development.

Examples of materials development courses

There are many different types of materials development courses, each with its own objectives and constraints. For example, there are:

- short stimulus courses for teachers aiming to develop the awareness, skills and motivation of the participants;

- short courses for institutions aiming to develop the materials development skills of some of their teachers;
- courses for institutions and ministries training teachers to become materials developers for a particular project;
- professional training courses aiming to develop the awareness and skills of curriculum developers;
- pre-service teacher training courses with a component on materials development;
- in-service teacher development courses with a component on materials development;
- teacher education/development courses focused on (or with a component on) materials development.

I have been involved in developing all of the above types of courses all over the world in the last 20 years. What I do for each course is to consider the participant profile, consider the sponsor/participant requirements, consider the constraints (of time, resources, etc.), specify objectives and then apply the appropriate stages of the flexible framework outlined in Table 24.1.

I have used this framework to help me to develop an eight-day workshop for teachers involved in producing new textbooks at Bilkent University in Turkey, a two-week Materials Development Course for Teachers at Leeds Metropolitan University, a two-week MA module in Materials Development at NILE (Norwich Institute for Language Education) and a one-year MA in Materials Development for Language Teaching at Leeds Metropolitan University. The workshop included 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 11 and concentrated very much on actually producing draft materials for the textbook. The short course for teachers and the MA module included 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 11, and focused on providing monitored practice of producing different types of materials. The MA in Materials Development for Language Teaching included all the stages in the framework as well as modules on Language Acquisition, Language Systems and Language Awareness, and Language Teaching Methodology. The MA was designed to be a coherent preparation for production of a complete course of materials (plus a theoretical rationale) which is presented for examination in lieu of a dissertation and which the participants are encouraged to submit to publishers as a publishing proposal. This MA is no longer delivered at Leeds Metropolitan University but a version of it is delivered at IGSE (the International Graduate School of English) in Seoul.

TABLE 24.1 A flexible framework for materials development courses

Stage	Substages	Objectives
1. Demonstrations	**i.** Demonstration of innovative materials **ii.** Analysis of material stages **iii.** Analysis of objectives and principles **iv.** Evaluation of procedures	**i.** Impact **ii.** Exposure to novel approaches **iii.** Stimulus to think about and discuss issues **iv.** Articulation and development of individual theories of language learning
2. Discussion of Provocative Statements	**i.** Individual reflection **ii.** Group discussion **iii.** Plenary discussion **iv.** Individual decisions	**i.** Stimulus to think about and discuss issues **ii.** Articulation and development of individual theories of language learning **iii.** Formalization of discussions in 1 and 2
3. Evaluation of Materials	**i.** Development of evaluation criteria **ii.** Presentation and monitoring of evaluation criteria **iii.** Application of criteria to the evaluation of sets of materials **iv.** Revision of criteria	**i.** Refinement of individual theories of language learning **ii.** Develop awareness of the objectives, principles and procedures of materials development **iii.** Develop banks of criteria for future use and development
4. Adaptation of Materials	**i.** Profile of target learners **ii.** Evaluation of materials in relation to learner profile **iii.** Adaptation of materials to match wants and needs of learners	**i.** Develop awareness of the objectives, principles and procedures of materials development **ii.** Develop awareness of the principles and procedures of matching materials to needs and wants **iii.** Develop materials development skills
5. Editing of Materials	**i.** Commissioning materials **ii.** Evaluating commissioned materials **iii.** Giving written feedback **iv.** Giving face-to-face feedback	**i.** Develop awareness and skills of making principled compromise **ii.** Develop ability to give sensitive and constructive feedback
6. Materials Writing Practice A	**i.** Evaluation of examples of a particular aspect of materials development (e.g. writing instructions) **ii.** Practice in the particular aspect	**i.** Develop materials development awareness and skills **ii.** Develop confidence **iii.** Develop criteria for use as production criteria
7. Materials Writing Practice B	**i.** Evaluation of examples of a particular type of materials development (e.g. listening materials) **ii.** Practice in producing the particular type of materials	**i.** Develop materials development awareness and skills **ii.** Develop confidence **iii.** Develop criteria for use as production criteria
8. Materials Production A	**i.** Production of a unit of materials for a specified context of learning **ii.** Self, peer and tutor-monitoring **iii.** Revision of materials	**i.** Develop materials development awareness and skills **ii.** Develop confidence

Stage	Substages	Objectives
9. Reading and Discussion*	**i.** Critical reading of articles and books of relevance to materials development **ii.** Discussion and evaluation of the reading	**i.** Develop awareness of the objectives, principles and procedures of materials development **ii.** Articulation and development of individual theories of language learning **iii.** Find answers to some of the problems encountered during materials development simulations in 8 above
10. Research**	**i.** Development of a materials development research project **ii.** Conducting the research **iii.** Presenting the findings from ii. **iv.** Applying the findings in iii.	**i.** Articulation and development of individual theories of language learning **ii.** Find answers to some of the problems encountered during materials development simulations in 8 above **iii.** Develop research and presentation skills
11. Presentations	Presentations relating to the materials produced and/or the research conducted: **i.** To other groups of participants **ii.** To internal conferences **iii.** To external conferences **iv.** As articles to journals **v.** As chapters to publishers **vi.** As book proposals to publishers	**i.** Clarify thinking **ii.** Refine materials **iii.** Develop presentation skills **iv.** Develop confidence
12. Discussion of Statements	Group discussion of the same statements as in 2 above **ii.** Group discussion of further provocative statements **iii.** Individual decisions	**i.** Stimulus to think about and discuss issues **ii.** Articulation and development of individual theories of language learning **iii.** Revision of the course
13. Materials Production B	**i.** Development of a theoretical rationale for the production of a context-specific course of materials **ii.** Production of a context-specific course of materials	**i.** Further develop materials development awareness and skills **ii.** Further develop confidence **iii.** Provide evidence of the validity of individual theories and beliefs and the ability to apply them to the production of principled learning materials.

* Of course, there will also be reading assignments given at the end of each stage to reinforce and develop theories and beliefs.

** Ideally the research project is ongoing and overlaps with other stages rather than being a separate stage in a linear sequence of stages.

Conclusion

After a very busy 20 years conducting materials development courses, I am convinced that focusing on materials development is the most effective way of running a course in applied linguistics, as theory can be made relevant and meaningful by reference to practical procedures which are at the heart of the language teaching and learning process. It is also the most effective way of helping language education professionals to articulate and develop their own theories of language learning and to help them to develop the skills which they need in order to apply these theories to practice. I am also convinced that the most effective way to run a materials development course (regardless of its specific objectives) is to provide the participants with concrete experience as a basis for reflective observation and conceptualization. The more that such materials development courses are delivered the more likely it is that the teaching of languages will improve and so will the development of materials too.

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25

Simulations in Materials Development

Brian Tomlinson and Hitomi Masuhara

Introduction

In the last 15 years, we have been invited to run short materials development courses for teachers of English in Belgium, Botswana, Hong Kong, Luxembourg, Turkey and Vietnam and at the Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE), as well as for curriculum developers on national textbook projects in Mauritius and the Seychelles. We also worked together on the MA in L2 Materials Development course at the University of Luton and at Leeds Metropolitan University and on MA modules on materials development at Bilkent University, Ankara and at NILE. On these courses we aimed to help the participants to develop both an understanding of the principles of evaluating, adapting and developing teaching materials and also the skills required to apply these principles to the development of effective materials. We did so by using an experiential approach in which learning involves transactions between the person and the environment (Kolb, 1984, p. 34) and a process 'whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (ibid., p. 38).

> Immediate or *concrete experiences* are the basis for observations and reflections. These reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn. These implications can be actively tested and serve as guides in creating new experiences . . . Kolb and Kolb (2009, p. 299)

Some of our experiential tasks were real-life tasks relating to the participants' working environment (e.g. revising a book they had written; writing supplementary materials for their institution) but many of them were simulations, such as adapting a unit of a

book for a specified class of learners or selecting and adapting a textbook for use in a particular country.

Advantages of simulations over real-life tasks

We found that simulations had many advantages over real-life tasks. We found like Raser (1969, pp. 15–19) that they were more economical, that they aided 'visibility by making certain kinds of phenomena more accessible for observation and measurement' and that they allowed numerous aspects of a system to be varied 'in ways that yield profitable insights into how the system operates'. They also allowed us to free the participants from the constraints which inhibited their thinking in their usual working environment and to put them in situations which they had never previously encountered. Thus we found that, with a group of curriculum developers in Mauritius, the English specialists were restricted by their normal procedures when asked to develop innovative materials for teaching English but that the other subject specialists (e.g. in biology, home economics and physical education) were far more open-minded and experimental when asked to develop such materials. They were doing what they had never done before and this meant that they had to connect previous experience to new information to help them to solve the novel problems which they were encountering. We also found this to be true when asking participants on an MA module at NILE in 2012 to evaluate coursebooks with a view to selecting one for use in an institution which they had invented.

Placing the participants of our workshops in novel environments also meant that:

- they were stimulated to use their imagination to visualize the situations they were being asked to put themselves in (e.g. an EFL class in Tokyo for adult Japanese learners of English; a meeting of Advisers in an African Ministry of Education);
- they needed to work out the right questions to ask the informants they were provided with (e.g. about the exposure to English typically available to Japanese learners of English);
- they were in a safe environment in which the 'relatively low cost of an error' (Crookall et al., 1987) encouraged risk-taking and creativity;
- they were encouraged to be open-minded and to consider all potentially relevant suggestions (e.g. using methods such as TPR or Suggestopedia that are not typically used (and would probably not be accepted) in their own teaching environments);
- they were able to develop repertoires of skills that were potentially transferable to a variety of situations that they might subsequently

encounter in 'real-life' (e.g. storywriting skills, editing and advising skills, persuasive skills);

- they developed an understanding of the potential value and the design principles of simulations which allowed them to enrich their own language teaching materials with simulations designed by themselves (Crookall, 1991).

Above all we were able to make abstractions 'from a larger system' in such a way that we were able to select 'elements to emphasise and elements to eliminate' (Greenblat, 1981, p. 22). We were able to build in factors which we knew would be problematic and which would raise questions and issues for discussion later. We were also able to simplify, reduce and control some of the problematic environments so as to facilitate focus. This control over the environment enabled us to inhibit the tendency of previous experience to bias and affect adversely the process of learning (e.g. Rogers, 1969; Laing, 1995) and the tendency for new experiences to reinforce previous beliefs rather than to bring them into question (e.g. Skinner, 1971). As a result, many participants were able to develop original ideas and materials to match the novel environments, which they would later be able to adapt and develop in relation to their own working environments. Many of them also reported developing confidence and self-esteem and being better equipped and prepared to meet unexpected eventualities in their own jobs than they had been at the beginning of the course. This was true, for example, of two curriculum developers on the MA in L2 Materials Development at the University of Luton who reported not only an increase in confidence, self-esteem, awareness and expertise but also a determination to aid the development of their colleagues by introducing similar experiential approaches to materials development training when they returned home to Ethiopia.

Developing simulations

As a result of our experience in developing simulations for materials development courses we would recommend the set of procedures below. Obviously this is an interactive rather than a strictly sequential process and, in our experience, for example, we often found ourselves going back to revise our objectives in relation to a potentially useful procedure we were developing.

Suggested procedures for developing simulations

1. Setting objectives
2. Considering learning principles
3. Drafting simulation

4 Evaluating simulation against objectives

5 Revising simulation

6 Conducting simulation

7 Evaluating simulation

8 Revision of simulation

The example (Example 1) below is of a draft simulation which was developed for a group of participants on the MA in L2 Materials Development at the University of Luton. The simulation came very early in their course and was designed to put them in a situation which they had never encountered before in such a way that would help them to develop and use criteria for evaluating materials. The main learning principles behind the simulation were that new awareness and skills can be effectively developed through challenging the learners to collaborate in solving a lifelike and novel problem. The main gaming principles were that the simulation should achieve ecological, psychological and process validity while at the same time achieving the abstraction, reduction and simplification which would enable the learners to benefit from focus and clarity.

Example 1

To Publish or Not to Publish?

Imagine that you are a reader for a leading publisher and that you have been sent a proposal for a textbook with a request for you to evaluate it with a view to possible publication.

a In small groups read the proposal.

b Establish criteria for evaluating the proposal.

c Evaluate the proposal against your criteria.

d Write your reader's report to the commissioning editor who has sent you the proposal.

e Compare your report with that of another group.

f Compare your report with the actual report on the materials by a publisher.

After drafting the simulation it became obvious that, if the participants read the proposal before developing their criteria, they would probably allow their initial impressions to dictate the criteria. So a revision was made to the draft which involved the participants reading only the first page of the proposal before starting to develop their criteria. This first page gave them information about the objectives, target audience and content of the textbook but it did not give them any examples of the material.

After doing the simulation with a group of participants we realized that:

- we should have built in a stage in which groups compare and then revise their criteria, a stage in which they revise their criteria after their first experience of applying them and a stage in which they revise their reports after comparing them with another group;
- we should have mentioned that the writer of the proposal would be shown the report so that the 'reader' would provide justifications for his/her comments;
- we had omitted a debriefing stage which would have allowed the participants to articulate their thoughts about doing simulations and about what they had learned from doing this particular one;
- we had not indicated that they should make use of the facilitator for feedback and suggestions.

As a result of our post-use evaluation of the simulation we produced a revised version as follows:

To Publish or Not to Publish?

Imagine that you are a reader for a leading publisher and that you have been sent a proposal for a textbook with a request for you to evaluate it with a view to possible publication.

- In small groups read the first page of the proposal.
- Establish criteria for evaluating the proposal.
- Read the full proposal and evaluate the proposal against your criteria.
- Revise your criteria.
- Write a draft of your reader's report to the commissioning editor who has sent you the proposal.
- Compare your report with that of another group.
- Revise your report.
- Compare your report with the actual report on the materials by a reader.
- You have just taken part in a simulation. Discuss your views about the value of learning from simulations.
- List what you think you have learned from this simulation.

NB: At any time you can make use of the facilitator for feedback or suggestions.

We developed the suggested procedures above dynamically from our actual experience of developing simulations. Other suggestions for procedures for developing

simulations can be found, for example, in Greenblat and Duke (1981), in Herz and Merz (1998), in Jones (1985, 1995), in Halleck (2000), in Fischer and Barnabe (2009) and in Lainema (2009).

Setting of objectives

Our universal objectives in designing simulations for our materials development courses included:

- To provide experience of selected elements of materials development situations in such a way that the participants could develop new awareness and knowledge, could refine existing skills and could develop new skills.
- To provide opportunities to apply theory to practice and to develop theory from practice, too.
- To help the participants to develop principles, criteria and skills for the evaluation, adaptation and development of teaching materials.
- To help the participants to develop original ideas for new approaches to the development of teaching materials.
- To enhance the self-esteem and confidence of the participants.
- To motivate the participants to become enthusiastic and creative materials developers.

Obviously we also set course-specific objectives which took into consideration the interests, needs, abilities and previous experience of the participants and the requirements of the sponsors. Such objectives included 'Improving the ability to write clear instructions', 'Being able to make and to justify decisions for locally appropriate adaptations' and 'Developing language awareness activities for trainee teachers of English'. Examples of very localized, specific objectives would be 'Being able to adapt the ministry textbook so as to cater for learners with kinaesthetic learning style preferences' and 'Being able to develop materials to help local English teachers to make use of other subject textbooks'.

Considering learning principles

On our courses we have based our simulations on the following learning principles:

- Learners gain from being mentally active during the learning process and from investing energy and attention in making discoveries for

themselves (Tomlinson, 1994, 2007; Bolitho et al., 2003). This happened, for example, when a group discovered that a coursebook they had chosen impressionistically for a particular environment was not as suitable as they had thought once they began to apply locally specific evaluation criteria (Tomlinson, 1999).

- Learning from experience is how much of human development occurs (Dewey, 1938; Lewin, 1951; Piaget, 1971; Kolb, 1984; Kolb and Kolb, 2009). An example of this would be the teachers in Botswana who learned from peer teaching of their materials how complex texts can be made comprehensible through TPR activities.
- Learners need to grasp experience both 'via direct apprehension of immediate concrete experience' and 'through indirect comprehension of symbolic representations of experience' (Kolb, 1984). This was achieved by groups of teachers completing a simulated materials development task in its entirety and then analysing the experience and its products.
- Effective and durable learning involves creating and constantly revising multidimensional mental representation of the learning experience (Masuhara, 1998; Tomlinson, 2000a, 2001a, 2013). This can be achieved through visualization and other sensory imaging (Sadoski and Paivio, 1994; Tomlinson, 1996, 1997, 1998d, 2011b; Arnold, 1998; Masuhara, 1998; Tomlinson and Avila, 2007), through affective involvement (Masuhara, 1998; Schumann, 1998; Tomlinson, 1998d, 2011b), through the use of inner speech (Sokolov, 1972; Tomlinson, 2000b, 2001b; Tomlinson and Avila, 2007) and through analytical discussions of problems and issues with fellow participants. It can also be achieved by using such methodologies as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (see, for example, Molden, 1996) and Suggestopedia (see, for example, Lozanov, 1978). To achieve multidimensional representation in the workshops we designed the simulations so that, for example, the participants would be given time initially to visualize and to talk to themselves in their minds about the situation and the task, so that they would be challenged and involved by the tasks in a relaxed and enjoyable environment, so that they would work part of the time individually and so that they would spend a lot of the time in group discussion, planning and reflection.
- Collaborative learning (Nunan, 1992) not only facilitates the pooling of resources but also stimulates creative and critical thinking and prepares learners for the real-life experience of working and learning together in a team. This was frequently evidenced by participants (such as a young Japanese woman on the MA course at the University of Luton who had been quietly passive in plenary sessions but who suddenly came to life during group simulation tasks).

- Task-based learning not only facilitates learning by doing but it also provides diagnostic evidence of what the participants need to learn and creates for them a readiness to learn it (Tomlinson, 1994, 1998c; Willis, 1997; Van den Branden, 2006; Willis and Willis, 2007; Ellis, 2011). For example, asking participants to evaluate coursebooks in order to choose one for a specified course often revealed to the participants that they were using impressionistic judgements rather than principled criteria and they were then ready to learn how to develop criteria for evaluation (Tomlinson, 1999, Chapter 1 in this volume).
- Different participants have different preferred learning styles (Kolb, 1984; Kolb et al., 1986; Oxford, 1990; Reid, 1997; Kolb and Kolb, 2009). In any learning experience both analytical and experiential activities need to be provided and visual, auditory and kinaesthetic styles have to be catered for so as to help learners not only to benefit from their preferred style but also to develop their ability to learn through other styles. Thus we designed our simulations so that they involved listening, reading, analysing, acting, problem-solving, creating, visualizing, using inner speech, unplanned and planned speaking, drawing, cutting and pasting and writing.
- It is important not only to help participants to gain new knowledge and develop particular skills but also to help them to develop their multiple intelligences so that they will able to combine them successfully when undertaking future 'real-world' tasks (Gardner, 1993; Christison, 1998). Materials development simulations should therefore help to develop bodily-kinaesthetic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, linguistic, logical-mathematic and spatial intelligences. This we tried to achieve by making sure the participants had to think for themselves, had to interact with others in their group, had to visit other groups, had to do physical things such as making aids and had to design, lay out and illustrate their materials as well as write them.
- Autonomous learning is the main goal of teaching but autonomous learning does not mean learning in isolation. Rather it involves the ability to make independent decisions about what and how to learn and then to make use of all available resources (including peers and teachers). Thus we made sure that self-monitoring, peer monitoring and tutor monitoring were built into the design but that final decisions were made by the participants themselves.
- Most learners learn best when they are stimulated but relaxed, challenged but not threatened and confident but not complacent (Tomlinson, 1998b, pp. 5–22, 2011a, pp. 6–23). Such a state plus curiosity and intrinsic motivation can create a positive 'tension-to-learn' (Burns and Gentry, 1998). We tried to achieve such an environment by making sure that a positive,

supportive atmosphere was established through pre-simulation activities, by making sure that the 'workrooms' we used were as attractive and comfortable as possible (e.g. by getting the participants to arrange the furniture themselves), by setting achievable challenges and by building in off-task relaxation activities. In Botswana we were helped by the teachers bursting into song for 5 minutes whenever they were beginning to feel a negative tension.

Considering gaming principles

A good simulation has psychological reality, structural validity, process validity and predictive validity (Raser, 1969). In other words, in a good simulation the participants view the simulation as realistic because the structure, the processes and the results match those in real-life equivalents. In order to design such a valid simulation we need to achieve consistency and coherence in our specification of the environment. We also need to provide enough descriptive detail and to leave enough inferential gaps to help the participants to achieve constructive visualization of the environment. Above all, we need to inject sufficient vitality into the environment to encourage the participants to suspend disbelief and to achieve engagement with it. It is then important that the reality of the simulation is not broken by the facilitator interrupting the activities or by the participants coming out of role. One way of achieving this is for the facilitator to play and stay within a role throughout the simulation.

As well as simulating reality, we need to help the participants to focus in ways not always possible in real-life situations. To do this we should base the process on the principles of reduction, abstraction and symbolization (Peters et al., 1998, p. 27).

In other words, we should select salient elements from the reference system to focus on, we should simplify these elements and we should mould these elements into 'a new symbolic structure'.

An effective learning simulation contains, in a simplified environment, the learning elements needed to acquire the knowledge and skills required to gain insights into a complex reference system (Peters et al., 1998). In designing learning simulations we need to bear in mind that such simulations should 'provide dynamic problem situations for learners' in such a way that they 'reinforce their theoretical understanding of the interactions in the simulated environment through direct feedback from their actions' (Yeo and Tan, 1999). This can be achieved by building into the design encouragement for the participants to develop and articulate principles in order to guide and evaluate their actions during the simulation. In addition, ongoing and post-simulation feedback opportunities need to be built into the design of simulations. This feedback should include self-feedback, feedback from other participants and feedback from the facilitator(s). In addition to feedback on the performance of the participants, there can be a debriefing stage in which the participants report their reactions to the simulation

and discuss what they have learned as a result of doing it. The 'purpose is to examine and analyse the subjective knowledge that has been created during the experience' (Lederman, 1992, p. 154) and it is in the debriefing stage that 'the meaning of the enactment is clarified; the lessons to be learnt are underlined; and the connections are made to what the students already know and what they need for the future' (Van Ments, 1983, p. 127). This debriefing stage needs to be separated from the simulation because, 'Role-playing and analysis are incompatible behaviours. One requires total immersion in the problem, the other a deliberate stepping back' (ibid., p. 130).

Drafting simulation procedures

In order to draft simulation procedures, we would recommend the following flexible frameworks which have been found from a process of principled trial and error to facilitate the achievement of the main objectives. On our courses we followed the most situationally appropriate of the types of framework outlined below.

Flexible Framework 1 – simple simulations

This type of simulation is simple in the sense that there is a single main task which is a simplification of similar tasks typically undertaken in the reference system.

For simulations which only lasted for one session the following Framework 1 procedure was usually followed or modified:

1. Setting of the environment (concisely on paper and in detail orally by the facilitator).
2. Specification of the problem or task (concisely on paper and in detail orally by the facilitator).
3. Discussion of the task by the participants in groups (and with the participation of the facilitator(s) when invited).
4. Carrying out of the task(s) by the groups (and sometimes by the facilitator(s) too).
5. Comparison of the products with those of other groups and with equivalent products from 'real life'.
6. Group and plenary feedback on the process and the products led by the facilitator(s).
7. Debriefing in which the participants discuss their reactions to the simulation and try to articulate what they have learned from it.

Example 2 below is an example of a Type 1 simulation which was completed during a 4-hour workshop session.

Example 2

You are going to teach a multilingual, mixed ability class of young adults in a language school in London. The class is labelled 'Intermediate' but you have been warned by the Principal that the actual level ranges from lower intermediate to upper intermediate. You have been employed because the Intermediate class teacher has suddenly left to take up a post in Taiwan. You have not yet met the class but you will be teaching them three nights a week from next Monday. The Principal has given you a copy of the book that the students in the class have been asked to buy and has told you to start from Unit 4.

You have not been given a class list but you have managed to find out from the Principal that:

- There are usually about 15 students in the class.
- Most of them work during the day in restaurants, pubs and hotels or as au pair girls.
- You will be teaching the class on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- Students often arrive late, tired and hungry.
- The youngest student is 16 and the oldest is 25.
- Most of the students are from Italy and Spain but there are two students from Thailand, three from Korea and one from Taiwan. Most of the students want to improve their ability to use English so that they can get good jobs back home.

1 Look at 'Unit 4 Travel' and write an evaluation of it in relation to the class you are going to teach.

2 Describe and justify how you plan to adapt the unit in order to make it maximally useful to your students.

3 Produce an adapted version of the unit.

Flexible Framework 2 – complex simulations

Framework 2 simulations are complex in that they involve two or more related tasks and they are located in an environment which, although simplified in relation to its equivalent in the reference system, is specified in more detail than in Framework 1 simulations (the steps in italics indicate additional specifications). For such lengthy

simulations aiming to integrate and develop many skills we have based our procedures on the following flexible framework:

1. Setting of the environment (concisely on paper and in detail orally by the facilitator).
2. Specification of the problem or task (concisely on paper and in detail orally by the facilitator).
3. Discussion of the task by the participants in groups (and with the participation of the facilitator(s) when invited).
4. Research tasks aiming to find out more information about the environment and to discover resources to help in carrying out the tasks.
5. Carrying out of the task(s) (by the groups and sometimes by the facilitator(s) too). This usually involves making choices of existing resources, making decisions about developing resources and determining solutions to 'problems'.
6. Monitoring of the products of the task(s) by the producing group, by a monitoring group and by the facilitator(s).
7. Revision of the task products.
8. Presentation of the products.
9. Comparison of the products with those of other groups and with equivalent products from 'real life'.
10. Group and plenary feedback on the process and the products led by the facilitator(s).
11. Debriefing session in which the participants discuss their reactions to the simulation and articulate what they have learned.

Example 3 is a typical Framework 2 simulation which was carried out over two 2-hour workshops on the same day.

Example 3

What Book Shall I Use?

You have just joined the staff of Soho College of Higher Education in London as a part-time teacher of EFL and you have been told that you must decide what textbook(s) to use with the class that has been allocated to you. You have been told that you can use any of the textbooks that are in the Staff Library in Room 201.

a Go to the pre-term meeting for new EFL staff and talk to the Head of EFL at Soho College (Mr Tomlinson). Try to find out from him all that you need to know about your teaching situation in order to make your decision.

b Write a profile of your teaching situation.

c Establish criteria to help you to evaluate the books from which you can choose.

d From the books available in Room 201 select a short list of books which might meet your criteria.

e Evaluate your shortlisted books against your criteria and decide which one(s) to use.

f At a staff meeting tell your Head of Department and the other teachers what book(s) you have chosen and give reasons for your choice(s).

In our experience the simulations which seemed to be most successful in stimulating thought and developing awareness and skills were extended Framework 2 simulations which provided a choice of related tasks and which were designed to continue for up to a week. An example of such a simulation is Example 4, which kept the participants on the MA in L2 Materials Development thinking, questioning and developing for up to 8 hours of workshop time. We called this activity a scenario rather than a simulation because it involved the stages of planning, presenting, advising and monitoring which are characteristic of Di Pietro's scenario approach (Di Pietro, 1987).

Example 4

SCENARIO 1 – A BOOK FOR BETU

You have just been appointed as English Language Advisor in the Ministry of Education in Betu, a small country in Central Africa. A few months before your arrival in Betu, the government decided to change from French medium to English medium in senior secondary schools and at the same time to move to a more communicative approach to the teaching of English as a subject. Last month, the Ministry of Education decided that rather than wait until they can produce a new Betu-specific English course they will sign a contract with a British publisher to adapt a successful EFL course to suit the situation in Betu. Last week they signed a contract with Oxford University Press for them to adapt *Headway* for use as the basic course in Betu from the new academic year (in ten months' time).

Your first task as Advisor is to advise a Ministry English Textbook Subcommittee which has been set up to liaise with OUP. The Chair of the Subcommittee has asked you to present the following to a meeting of the Subcommittee next week:

1 A recommendation as to which level of Headway to start with.

2 General recommendations about adaptations that should be made to the book before it is introduced in Betu schools next year.

3 A sample unit to show what you think the Betu version of Headway should look like.

In your group prepare 1, 2 and 3 above and then choose one member of your group to be the Advisor at the meeting of the Subcommittee.

You have been given the following information to help you:

The Students
Age: 15–16
Size of class: 40–50
Sex: 60% male; 40% female
Hours per week: 5
Previous learning of English: 4 hours a week for 3 years from a grammar/translation book written in French

Motivation: high instrumental motivation in the towns, and in the villages for those who want to get jobs in the towns

First language: one of fifteen local vernaculars

Second language: French
The Teachers

Level of English: generally good knowledge of English but little experience of using it for communication

Training: theoretical training in education departments at local and French universities plus 'scripted' teaching practice using the 'old' books
Teaching Load: 35 hours a week

Betu

Population: 1.75 million
Independence: 1962 from Belgium
Exports: copra, palm oil, bananas
Industry: light industry; assembly of Toyota cars
Government: democratic but with a Life President

If you feel you need any other information about the situation in Betu ask your predecessor, Brian Tomlinson, who is staying on for a week to help you to settle in.

NB: During the simulation of the meeting you can call a 'time out' at any time to advise your Advisor and/or you can replace your Advisor with a substitute at any time.

4 Prepare for the role assigned to your group in one of the other scenarios. Scenario 2 involved being an EFL Textbook Consultant to the Ministry of Education in Tannesia, a large country in South-East Asia, and having to recommend a series of British EFL textbooks which could be adapted for use in Tannesian junior and senior high schools. Scenario 3 involved being a Publishing Editor working for Longman and taking charge of a project

which aimed to produce a version of Intermediate Matters for first-year university students in Japan. In all three scenarios the participants were given problem-solving, development and presentation roles in one scenario and responding and monitoring roles in another scenario (each group became the receiving group in the simulated meeting in which another group made their presentations). In all three scenarios the facilitators were given roles in which they acted as informants on the simulated environment (e.g. in Scenario 2 there was an English Language Advisor called Brian Tomlinson and in Scenario 3 there was a Professor Masuhara from Waseda University, who was visiting Longman for the day to discuss her new book on Teaching Reading Strategies). Giving the facilitator roles solves the problem of the facilitator who feels bored and guilty keeping out of the way and prevents the facilitator from breaking the 'reality' of a simulation by frequent intervention.

The initial feedback from this type of extended simulation often included annoyance at having to do a task that was so demanding and yet apparently so unrelated to previous experience and expertise. However, the final feedback was nearly always very positive and stressed the gradual gaining of both awareness and self-esteem as well as the development of transferable skills.

Evaluating the draft procedures

Draft procedures should obviously be evaluated against criteria established by reference to the objectives of the simulation and to the learning and gaming principles which were considered prior to the drafting of the procedures. We find that the best way to do this is first of all to answer the question, 'To what extent are these procedures likely to achieve the specified objectives?' When any adjustments have been made to the specified procedures, the next step is to convert the principles into specific and answerable questions and then answer each one with reference to the second draft of the procedures. So, for example, our Learning Principle 1 could be turned into the questions, 'Are the participants required to think for themselves?' and 'Are the participants required to make discoveries for themselves?' And our Learning Principle 3 could be turned into the questions, 'Does the simulation invite the participants to pool their resources?' and 'Does the simulation require the participants to work in a team?' A similar procedure is followed in relation to the specified gaming principles so that, for example, when evaluating the second draft we might ask the questions,

'Have we extracted the salient elements from the reference system?' and 'Is the simulation likely to achieve psychological validity?'

Using and evaluating simulations

We believe that the facilitators should be intuitively evaluating a simulation while using it but that they should not intervene too much to modify it as doing so breaks the reality and often causes more problems than it solves. The intuitive whilst-use evaluation should then inform a criterion-referenced post-use evaluation which could include feedback from the participants, evaluation of the observed effectiveness of the established environment and the procedures operating on it and evaluation of any resultant products of the simulation.

Conclusion

In a report on controlled experiments that assessed the value of simulations in teaching economics, Herz and Merz (1998) provide empirical results that support Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning and which indicate that 'the simulation/game seminar outperforms a conventional seminar with respect to all aspects of the learning cycle' (p. 248). We do not yet have the empirical evidence to support our claims, but our conclusion from our considerable experience of using simulations on materials development courses is that, as with most other types of learning situation, the most effective approach for training materials developers seems to be an experiential approach and one of the most effective experiential activities seems to be the simulation. It can be a rich yet economical source of input and it can create the optimum conditions for facilitating the sort of intake which can lead to useful and durable learning. But, of course, this is only true if the simulations are designed in principled and systematic ways and if they are revised after feedback (Peters et al., 1998, pp. 27–9). This is what we have been doing on materials development courses with very positive feedback for many years, what we have described in Tomlinson and Masuhara (2000) and what we hope other facilitators on materials development courses are doing too.

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26

Working with Student-Teachers to Design Materials for Language Support within the School Curriculum

Helen Emery

Teaching language in the context of a content-based subject

Content and Language Integrated Learning has become a hot topic in language learning and teaching circles around the world, and particularly in Europe where it has been recognized by the European Union, and promoted in a range of policy documents since 1995 (Ioannou Georgiou, 2012). However, not all proponents can agree on a definition of what exactly CLIL consists of. For the purposes of this study, I have adopted the notion put forward by Coyle, Marsh and Hood (2010, p. 1) that CLIL is 'not a new form of language education. It is not a new form of subject education. It is an innovative fusion of both'. This idea is further elaborated on by Iaonnou Georgiou (2012, p. 495) who states that CLIL refers to 'a dual-focussed, learning and teaching approach in which a non-language subject is taught through a foreign language, with the dual focus being on acquiring subject knowledge and competences as well as skills and competences in the foreign language'. As such, it would seem that CLIL has much in common with Language Across the Curriculum (LAC): long viewed as an important aspect of ESL development in bilingual communities (Straight, 1998), where language teachers seek to support the teaching of other subjects through the medium of a unifying language.

Some teachers might question whether it is possible for a language teacher to integrate elements of a content-based subject such as science into their language

lessons, and some might experience anxiety if faced with the prospect. However, Davies (2011, p. 6) believes that:

> Science has become such a dominant part of our culture that regardless of whether or not we go onto study science at a higher level or go into a science-related career, we all need to have some awareness of 'how science works' . . . to be able to participate as citizens in our society. We need to be able to interpret scientific information coming at us from the media in order to make everyday decisions that affect our lives – whether to vaccinate our children, which toothpaste to buy etc.

It can be seen almost as an obligation that language teachers assist subject teachers in areas such as science in order that their learners are able to maximize their understanding, and as Davies says, fully participate as citizens in their community. The study reported in this chapter – a project aimed at developing materials to integrate the teaching and learning of English and environmental science in Brunei, outlines the necessity for active involvement of English teachers in combining subjects such as language and science, as a positive step towards the immediate goals of LAC (or CLIL), and the wider goals of citizenship.

Context of the project

Learning subjects such as science in a second language is often viewed as a daunting task by pupils and teachers alike. In many cases the curriculum dictates that certain subjects must be taught in the second language, usually English. Brunei is a small country (population 330,000) situated between two large Malaysian states, Sabah and Sarawak, on the island of Borneo. There are many cultural, ethnic and linguistic similarities between Brunei and Malaysia, and both countries have adopted Bahasa Malayu as their lingua franca. On independence in 1984, Brunei Darussalam developed a policy of *Dwi Bahasa*: both Malay and English are used as mediums of instruction in schools, with key subjects such as maths, geography and science being taught in English from primary 4 upwards. This policy replaced the previous system of having students enrolled in either an English stream or a Malay stream within a school (Martin, 1996). The rationale behind the policy was based on 'the realisation that effective use of English was essential if students were to succeed in study at tertiary level overseas, and if the country was to have a voice in international business, economic and political arenas' (Burns and Charleston, 1997, p. 290). The aims of the English-medium subject curricula are to prepare students to sit the Cambridge GCE 'O' and 'A' level exams in Forms 5 and 6 respectively. These are internationally recognized examinations, and a pass at 'A' level is generally accepted as the criteria for university entrance. However, these examinations were designed for native speakers of English, not L2 users, and students in Brunei often feel under great pressure to learn the subjects to be examined, and to grapple with the English necessary to express themselves.

The teaching of science subjects in Brunei schools

The shift from Malay to English at primary 4 has been criticized as being 'abrupt rather than gradual' (Romaizah, 2005, p. 122) and as such, can pose a problem for pupils' understanding. The assumption, says Romaizah, is that primary 4 pupils have sufficient proficiency to start learning a discipline-based subject in English – which in fact may be their second or even third language. However, if pupils do not possess the necessary language skills, they will start to lag behind academically, the situation becoming more severe as each school year passes. This is obviously a worrying situation for teachers.

Many of the words used in science books, including primary school textbooks, are of very low frequency and will probably be unknown to pupils. How does a teacher cope with this situation? Romaizah conducted a series of unstructured classroom observations of primary 4 science lessons in two Bruneian primary schools, and found that teachers were often under pressure from pupils to translate into Malay. She provides the following examples of requests:

- 'Boleh ku cakap melayu cikgu?' (may I speak in Malay?)
- 'Apakan kita cakap ani?' (What are you talking about?)
- 'Inda saya faham cikgu!' (I don't understand what you're talking about)
- 'Boleh cikgu terangkan dalam bahasa melayu?' (Can you explain that in Malay?)

Romaizah identified two methods by which Bruneian primary teachers attempted to overcome their pupils' problems in understanding science lessons: code-switching and translation of unknown words. Code-switching is the process whereby a speaker utilizes more than one language while speaking. It usually results in a sentence being started in one language and finished in another. Martin (1996) collected data from primary 4 and 5 science lessons in Brunei, and found instances of three different codes being used: English, Bahasa Melayu and colloquial Brunei Malay. It would seem that learners are being exposed to a variety of linguistic systems in their efforts to learn subjects like science in Brunei, which may well complicate their understanding of the subjects.

By translating unknown words from English into Malay, teachers are depriving their pupils of a valuable learning situation. Pupils will become dependent on the translation as they will not recognize the words the next time they see them, not having learned them the first time round. According to Romaizah (p. 127), the problem is exacerbated by the fact that 'Malay is not very rich in scientific terminology . . . [and] translation may thus alter the meaning of scientific concepts'. It becomes clear then, that by succumbing to their pupils' demands to speak in Malay, the teachers are actually doing them a disservice and affecting their learning.

Addressing the issue of difficult language in science textbooks

How can teachers help pupils to learn the often complex scientific vocabulary presented in their textbooks? If pupils understood the language, their ability to comprehend the topic would undoubtedly be much better, thus increasing exam pass rates. Language across the curriculum (LAC) has long been viewed as a means of increasing pupils' language abilities in subject areas which are not taught in their L1. One of the aims of LAC is to bridge existing curricular and disciplinary boundaries, to create an integrated learning environment and to 'energise the disciplines in new ways' (Language at Brown University). LAC plays a particularly important role in the education system of bilingual countries, as it helps to achieve the dual aims of teaching subjects such as science, geography and maths, and at the same time, improving pupils' skills in the L2. The implementation of LAC means that language teachers are able to help subject teachers, by using their expertise to help students learn the often complex language which surrounds many subjects. In doing so, English language courses often gain more credibility from students, who now see them as having a solid purpose: to help with their understanding of other core subjects. Thus it can be seen that LAC (or CLIL) serves dual purposes within an educational establishment.

Teacher training and materials design

In the past, initial teacher preparation courses often paid little attention to the issue of materials development, perhaps as Tomlinson (2003) states, because it was assumed the teachers lacked the necessary experience or expertise to design materials for themselves. More recently though, there has been a shift in focus from 'knowledge about teaching and related topics' (Mann, 2005, p. 106) towards a view of teacher education as an 'ongoing engagement between received knowledge and experiential knowledge' and Mann believes that knowledge of materials forms an integral part of this new focus. Today, many undergraduate and masters level programmes actively encourage student-teachers to get to grips with materials development, but it is often unclear how teachers are prepared for the task, or what (if any) evaluation of the materials takes place post-teaching practice.

Canniveng and Martinez (2003) believe that not enough emphasis is put onto teachers' previous experiences and cognitions when asking them to design materials for teaching practice. Most INSETT courses they say, require teachers to first reflect on theory of materials design, followed by a simple practice task. Tomlinson (2003, p. 448) believes this to be the wrong way round: 'the real benefits . . . come not from the greater knowledge gained from study but from the greater awareness and skill which comes from monitored experience of the process of developing materials.' In

other words, the most important aspect of materials design, from a trainee-teacher's perspective, is the reflection that comes after designing and using the materials, as well as the design process itself.

Many EFL teacher training handbooks pay scant attention to the issue of materials development, focusing instead on issues such as methodology and the teacher's knowledge of the English grammar system. (An exception is McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara, 2013, which focuses very much on teacher evaluation, adaptation, development and use of materials.) For the most part, books which do offer advice on materials development (usually in order to supplement an area of the coursebook where insufficient practice is provided) tend to highlight mechanical aspects of design, such as layout and visual appearance. Ur (1991) gives a checklist of aspects of materials design that a trainee-teacher should take into account before designing 'worksheets' which includes advice such as 'be neat, clean, with level lines of neat writing, clear margins, different components, well-spaced' (p. 193). While this advice is helpful, it does not address other issues involved in materials design, such as creativity and the language learning and cognitive demands of a task (Emery, 2010). One of the aims of the Borneo project was to foster in student-teachers an understanding of the far-reaching demands of various task types, as well as highlighting aesthetic features of good materials development. Johnson (2008) lists two characteristics associated with good presentation of new language: clarity and memorability. He emphasizes the need for clarity when teaching the new language point, and memorability in that learners do not forget it. Memorability can be achieved through innovative design and use of materials.

The Borneo materials development project

The materials development project was split into 2 sections: 40 primary student-teachers made up 1 section, and 32 lower secondary teachers majoring in English and science took part in the secondary section. The primary teachers were asked to read through chapter 5 of *Go With Science* Book 6, the science textbook used in government primary schools in Brunei. This unit focuses on environmental conservation. Although they liked the content of the chapter very much, several student-teachers raised concerns about the number of new words presented. In groups, they analysed the text and listed vocabulary items they thought primary 6 pupils might have trouble understanding (see Table 26.1). It is immediately noticeable that some of these words lend themselves to translation as a means of explanation, for example: *recreation* is so similar in structure to the Malay word *recreasi,* that the best method of teaching it would seem to be through the L1. However, how would we set about teaching the phrases: *conserving the environment*, *conditions of the environment* and *non-renewable energy resources*? Translation is one option, but as outlined above, would this necessarily guarantee that pupils would remember the phrases for future use?

TABLE 26.1 Vocabulary items from *Go With Science* book 6 (chapter 5) which student-teachers considered would be unknown to primary 6 pupils

Ash	Property	Muddy (water)	Conserving the environment
Deforestation	Dumping	exist	Conserve
Drought	Donate	Breeding grounds	The earth's surface
Earthquake	Pests	endangered	Non-renewable energy resources
Environment	Habitat	Becoming extinct	Natural processes
Extinction	Littering	Soil erosion/eroded soil	Limited
Floods	Recycle	Polluted rivers	Human activities
Industries	Cause	tonnes	Solar energy
Lightning	Protect	agriculture	Natural resources
Material	Destroyed	estate	(to) pile up
Organism	Micro-organisms	surrounds	Conditions of the environment
substances	Expel	heaps	Disposal
Sewage treatment	Recreation	Air pollution	Water pollution

N.B. The words have been listed in random order, as they were by the student-teachers.

Chitravelu, Sithamparam and Teh (1995) in their training manual for teachers in Malaysia, state that words learned through active use are more likely to be remembered than words which have merely been heard or read. They advocate regular repetition and practice in the use of words, to help the memorization process. Learning the many words presented in unit 5 is therefore going to be a long and difficult task for children, unless we can come up with some fun, stimulating and interesting activities. This was the task that I set to the group of primary student-teachers.

The secondary teachers' project was based around the Form 3 textbook, *Lower Secondary Science for Brunei Darussalam*, Unit 13: Living things and their ecosystems. This unit deals with the plants and animals which inhabit the mangroves, mudflats, marine environment and rainforests of Borneo. It introduces students to the environment of an ecosystem, the names of different species which live there, water, oxygen, food chains, the composition of the soils, and finally to the study of destruction: deforestation, extinction and climatic change.

For the secondary project, I decided it would be best to use supplementary materials as the basis for vocabulary development activities. The reason for this was dual purpose: I felt that some of the topics could be further developed through the use of supplementary materials – their coverage in the science textbook was rather superficial and at Form 3, students should be able to learn about topics in greater depth. Second, if supplementary materials were chosen which used similar vocabulary, teaching the words through the new materials would reinforce their use and meanings in the textbook. As supplementary materials, it was decided to use pages from the *Mangrove* unit from the WWF (Malaysia) *Marine Education Kit.* This kit, which is widely used by Malaysian environmental organizations in their education programmes, contains worksheets, posters, games and information to help teach children about their environment. As Brunei and Malaysia share many environmental issues, the materials should not have presented any foreign concepts to learners – only new language.

The secondary teachers were also asked to identify words which they thought were important to the topic, and which they considered students might not know. They were then asked to design some fun and thought-provoking activities to help students learn this vocabulary.

Designing tasks for vocabulary development

When designing tasks for language teaching, a teacher should be aware of the cognitive as well as the language demands he/she is placing on the child, according to Cameron (2001). She defines *cognitive demands* as 'those related to concepts and to understanding of the world and other people' and *language demands* as 'those related to using the foreign language, and to uses of mother tongue in connection with learning the foreign language'. When dealing with young learners, it is of paramount importance that the task is within their cognitive capacity, that is it is one they can not only understand how to do, but one which is designed in such a way as to be fun and stimulating.

As a starting point, the teachers were asked to come up with a list of features they believed to be important in designing materials for young learners. This is the list they produced:

- Colour graphics incorporating a variety of styles (eg: cartoons, line drawings, photographs)
- Simple instructions
- No more than ten new words in a task
- Tasks that involve some kind of motor coordination, such as drawing, cutting out or colouring

- Tasks that involved cognitive demands such as searching for something which might be hidden
- Tasks which involved a competitive element
- Tasks which involved a joke or something funny
- Not all the features listed above could be included in any one task, but some – such as using simple instructions or giving no more than ten new words in a vocabulary task, should be treated as universal and therefore always be adhered to. With regard to the tasks that included aspects of motor coordination, the task should not require a learner to spend an inordinate amount of time in carrying out tasks which were not directly linked to language learning, that is *make and do* type tasks. This type of task was judged to be important though as it would appeal to Bodily Kinaesthetic learners (Gardner, 1983).

The results

A total of 214 separate paper-based tasks were designed for the teaching of vocabulary linked to the topic of environmental science. The materials were categorized according to the type of task they represented:

1 Jumbled letters

2 Word classification

3 Crosswords

4 Missing letters

5 Word search square

6 Labelling tasks

7 Spidergrams

8 True/false tasks

9 Matching tasks

10 Word definitions

11 Multiple choice tasks

12 Cloze tasks

13 Other types of task

Some of these task types were more popular than others, and some seemed to attract more problems in the design than others. A summary of the problems encountered is given in the next section. Teachers were encouraged to develop materials which included more than one type of task – particularly if this could involve both language development and a cognitive element. I will briefly mention here some of the more popular materials developed by teachers; it will be noted that some of them involve up to three different tasks.

Jumbled letters and missing letters

This task involves learners in several cognitive and language related tasks: first, the learner has to identify the animal in the picture, then recall the spelling of its name. The fact that all letters are given means that a learner gets the chance to 'check his spelling' so to speak: if the spelling he gives does not use all the given letters, or if he uses additional letters which are not given in the materials, then he will know his version of the spelling is not correct. Figure 26.1 shows a jumbled letter task which involves the additional task of classifying animals into extinct, endangered or animals that are still considered to be safe. The second part of the task involves pupils in intensive reading of their science textbook to find out which category each of the animals falls into.

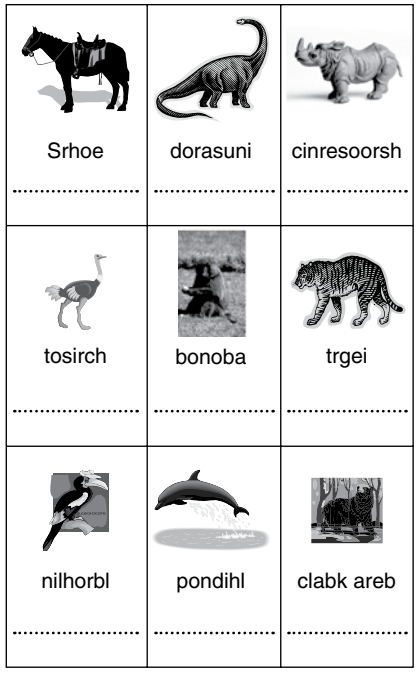
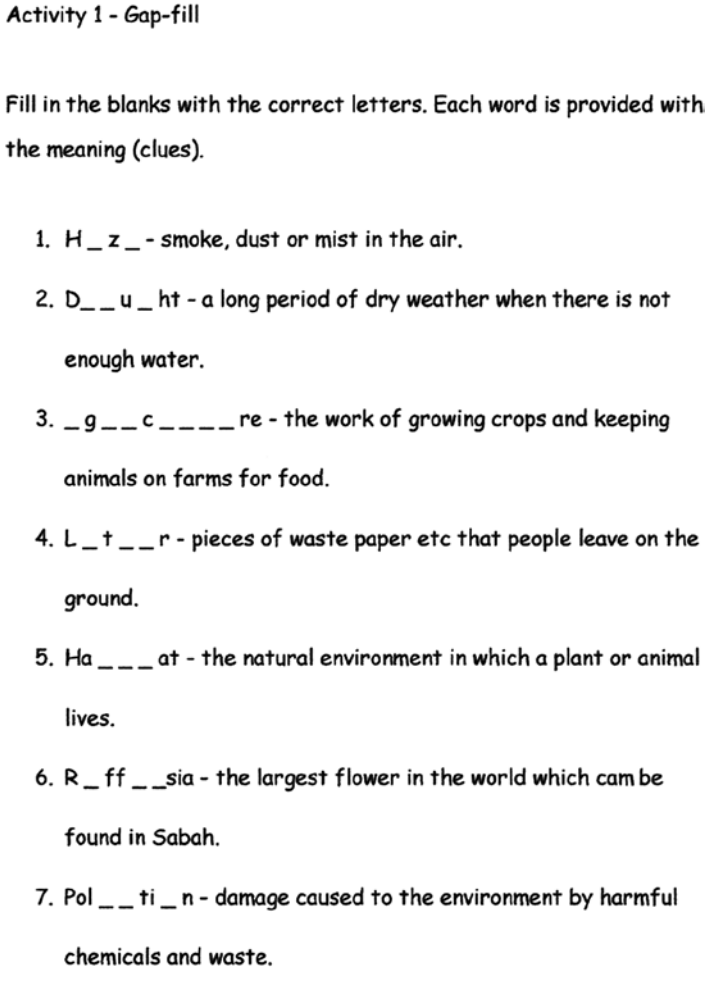


FIGURE 26.1 *Jumbled letters and classification table.*

Figure 26.2 shows a classic spelling-development activity, which focuses learners attention on writing all the letters in a word in the right sequence, thereby helping to foster good sight-spelling abilities. The definitions given in this task are relatively simple which makes it more suitable as material for learners in the upper primary school.

In a previous publication (Emery, 2008) I gave some tips for teachers when designing materials with jumbled or missing letters:

- The task is made easier if the first letter is given. For example: CCOLIRODE (crocodile) or C_ _ c _ d _ le. This is because words are stored in the mental lexicon by the initial phoneme (or representative grapheme). Omitting this will make it harder for a learner to recognize the word.
- Recognizing a word with missing vowels is easier that one with missing consonants, so try to avoid deleting too many of the vowels.



Activity 1 - Gap-fill

Fill in the blanks with the correct letters. Each word is provided with the meaning (clues).

1. H _ z _ - smoke, dust or mist in the air.
2. D_ _ u _ ht - a long period of dry weather when there is not enough water.
3. _ g _ _ c _ _ _ _ re - the work of growing crops and keeping animals on farms for food.
4. L _ t _ _ r - pieces of waste paper etc that people leave on the ground.
5. Ha _ _ _ at - the natural environment in which a plant or animal lives.
6. R _ ff _ _sia - the largest flower in the world which cam be found in Sabah.
7. Pol _ _ ti _ n - damage caused to the environment by harmful chemicals and waste.

FIGURE 26.2 *Missing letters.*

- Don't omit more than two consecutive letters.
- Always give a clue to a word's identity. This might be a picture, a simple definition or by presenting the word in the context of a sentence.
- A task to avoid is one where a correct spelling is given alongside several wrong spellings and learners are asked to circle the correct one. This type of activity can easily reinforce wrong spellings in the lexicon. Best to stick with tasks where all letters are given but in a jumbled order, or where a blank line indicates there is a missing letter.

Spidergrams

Spidergrams or mind maps seemed to be popular with the student-teachers at secondary level, and the project generated several of these. Figure 26.3 shows a spidergram vocabulary development activity which reinforces meanings of terms by requiring pupils to link related ideas together. In this example, a wide range of answers would be acceptable – the task is not targetting specific words.

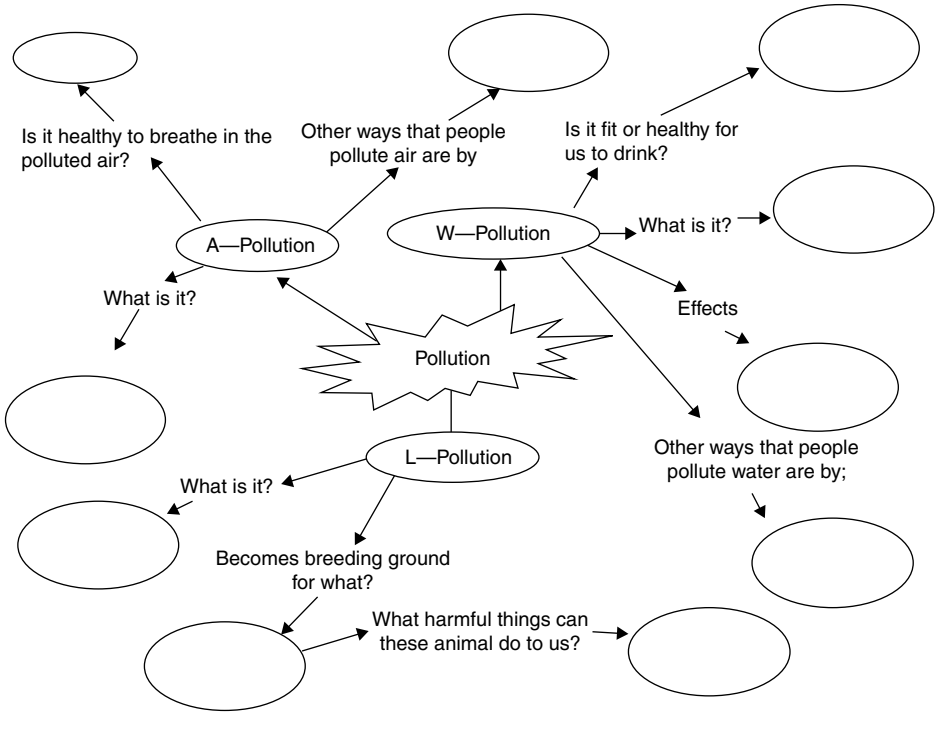


FIGURE 26.3 *Spidergram.*

Word search squares

A word search is usually represented by a large box containing many letters, where learners are asked to find specific words; sometimes the box is replaced by a shape such as the outline of an animal. A learner has to consciously recall all the letters in a word in sequence, in order to find it in the square. This type of activity exploits learners' knowledge of vocabulary and spellings and helps to strengthen knowledge of a word's form.

In the word search square shown in Figure 26.4, the learners have to complete three tasks: first they have to identify the animal in the picture and write the name under it, then they have to find the word hidden in the square (and check whether their spelling was correct), finally they are asked if they can find the names of four other animals which do not belong in the jungle. The task involves cognitive skills to a certain degree as learners will have to restrict the search for the last four animals to those not found in the Borneo jungle. Word searches and missing or jumbled letter tasks are what Bourke (2006) termed *enabling tasks* as they provide learners with the necessary

w	q	m	h	j	e	e	i	k	m
l	i	z	a	r	d	d	s	l	a
k	e	l	d	z	v	n	f	y	c
n	s	h	d	o	n	k	e	y	a
f	h	c	k	b	e	a	r	l	q
o	e	f	o	d	o	g	u	c	u
x	e	w	n	o	e	a	g	l	e
a	p	d	e	i	v	u	r	a	f
c	r	o	c	o	d	i	l	e	k
k	i	n	g	f	i	s	h	e	r









There are four other animals which DO NOT belong in the Borneo jungle. Can you find them?

1..... 2..... 3..... 4. .....

FIGURE 26.4 *Word search square.*

linguistic tools to carry out a communication task. The examples given in this chapter also contain a cognitively demanding element. The materials that teachers designed served another important function: to highlight the plight of the Borneo rainforest today. To date, the primary and secondary coursebooks for English language used in state schools in Brunei do not contain any units which focus on conservation of the rainforest – a topic with immediate relevance to students.

Other types of material

Some teachers were very creative in their efforts, producing materials which are hard to classify yet could easily be used for teaching vocabulary. One of these used a 'Call my bluff' format where a word was presented with three possible definitions and learners would have to choose the correct one, for example:
Different species of mangrove plants have *adapted* in different ways to the changes in the environment.

Choice of definition:

a To adapt means to change behaviour and attitudes in order to get used to a new situation

b To adapt means to find an appropriate living place which you like

c To adapt means to choose something from a wide range of choices

Sometimes it could be argued though that the definition was more difficult than the word itself. This was an issue that occcurred in several of the tasks which used word definitions – see the list in the next section for a fuller account of the problems encountered in designing materials.

Most frequently encountered problems of student-teachers when designing vocabulary activities

Although some very good materials were produced, not all were of high enough standard to be used in teaching practice for the following reasons:

- Poorly worded instructions. This was often caused by a student-teacher's own poor English. The result is that activities become ambiguous, and learners will not know what to do. In this project, student-teachers were not explicitly taught how to write instructions prior to designing their tasks – an issue which must be addressed in future teacher preparation courses.
- Poor choice of vocabulary to be tested. Sometimes beautiful materials and activities were designed but they focused on everyday grammar, for

example: prepositions or verbs, not the teaching of environmental science vocabulary.

- Too few vocabulary items used in an activity. The instructions student-teachers received stated they should use eight–ten words per activity.
- In 'word squares' too many additional letters were included, making it very difficult to *spot an actual word.*
- Activities which did not promote learning of vocabulary, but focused instead on areas such as grammar or reading comprehension.
- In 'word definition' tasks, the definition itself was sometimes more difficult to understand than the word being tested.
- Uninteresting layout. This point affected only the primary school materials. At this level it is crucial that an enticing layout is used. Lists of difficult words and boring definitions to be matched will not appeal to learners. The end result is that the learning objective will not be met.

Conclusion: Why this project was important

This project has shown that trainee English teachers at primary and secondary level, with a little preparation, can design materials to help teach the complex language of science. I felt that the activities they designed were cognitively stimulating, sought to develop more than one discrete skill in each task and were interesting for learners to complete. This is the type of task that teachers should be aiming for, rather than resorting to L1 translations or code-switching to teach difficult words or concepts. The project has highlighted a number of important issues for teacher training – some of which are specific to the region but others with a more global applicability:

- The project highlighted the need to raise awareness of environmental and conservation issues, especially in countries where there is currently no Environmental Education programme on the syllabus.
- The project was useful for helping student-teachers learn how to design vocabulary development activities, and the types of activity which are most beneficial in developing certain skill areas.
- The project helped in providing feedback for trainers and course tutors to see where students' strengths and weaknesses lie: what trainee-teachers do well, what they don't do well and as a result, the areas that need to be focused on more in our training programmes.

Several researchers have mentioned the role of teacher reflection in materials design (e.g. Canniveng and Martinez, 2003; Tomlinson, 2003). Unfortunately it wasn't possible to gather formal feedback from the student-teachers in this project after they had completed teaching practice and trialled the materials on their classes. An interesting follow-up project might ask teachers for feedback on the materials they had designed: whether they were useful in helping to teach cross-curricular vocabulary, what modifications they might make after trialling them, and which types of task they found most beneficial – and at what levels. Conversational feedback I received from the students I supervised on teaching practice was that the syllabus for both English and science was so demanding, particularly at secondary level, it was often hard to find the time to fit in supplementary materials. The coursebooks in themselves were pretty demanding and schools required that all the material in them be taught. This postscript raises another issue that trainers seeking to develop materials with student-teachers must take into account: will there actually be room in the syllabus to present teacher-developed materials? If not, is supplementation possible at all? A solution to this problem might involve further dialogue between the teaching establishment and the colleges which prepare teachers. Materials development is an integral part of a teacher's education, and as such the syllabus must allow for teachers who wish to supplement what is provided with their own materials.

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Comments on Part E

Brian Tomlinson

Gaining from the process

The main point that seems to be made by all the chapters in this section is that the process of materials development can be just as valuable as the product. This is not particularly true of a single author mechanically churning out materials to a formula predetermined by somebody else. But it can be very true of a group of people working together to pool their experience and expertise, whether it be to produce a global coursebook, an institutional or national course, an assignment on a course or just some supplementary materials for next week. If the group is given the freedom and resources to determine its own approach and framework (ideally with expert guidance and feedback), the members can gain tremendous awareness of all aspects of the learning and teaching of languages, they can gain skills which will be extremely useful to them afterwards and, above all, they can gain the confidence and self-esteem which all professionals need. In my view, this personal and professional development is best gained if the group is involved in all of the following procedures:

- Needs analysis of the target users
- Determination of pedagogical approach
- Determination of frameworks for developing the materials
- Determination of syllabus
- Drafting sample units
- Trialling the sample units
- Revising the syllabus, approach and frameworks

- Finding and/or developing texts
- Producing the materials
- Monitoring the materials
- Trialling the materials
- Revising the materials
- Editing the materials

And the bonus is that the more the group achieves personal and professional development from the process the greater will be the quality of the product. This important point seems to be recognized by many institutions and projects producing their own dedicated materials but it is a point worth considering by commercial publishers, who could improve the quality of their products by bringing together groups of materials developers and profiting from their combined energy, enthusiasm, confidence and awareness.

Positive affect benefits personal, professional and materials development

From the points made in the chapters in this section and in my comments above, it is apparent that positive affect is not only a prerequisite for successful language learning but it is a prerequisite for successful materials development too. To be successful, a materials development project needs not only to produce a quality product but to provide a quality learning experience for the developers too. In my experience this can only be achieved if the developers are convinced of the value of the project, are stakeholders in the project themselves, are enthusiastic about developing materials, are energetic, creative and imaginative, get on well together, view the project as an achievable challenge, are confident about their ability to contribute to the project and are professional in their approach to the project. Careful selection of the participants can help to achieve this positive affect but the key to success is the credibility, expertise, personality and attitude of the facilitators. If the facilitators are respected, trusted and enthusiastic, and if they provide stimulus, support and feedback in a positive way, there is a good chance that the developers will enjoy the experience and the project will be successful.

Humanistic materials can only be developed by a humanistic process of development.

Materials development is an interactive process

All the chapters in this section emphasize that effective materials cannot be developed in isolation. For the process and the product to be effective there must be interaction between the materials developers and:

- Their experience of language learning and teaching
- Their experience of prototypical groups of target learners
- Their previous experience of materials and of materials development
- Their theories of language and language learning
- Expert' theories of language and language learning
- Other materials developers
- Learners, teachers and administrators

And there must be dynamic interaction too between the materials and:

- The syllabus
- The target examinations
- The discovered needs and wants of the users of the materials
- Corpora of language use
- The real world

Developing materials is one of the best ways to gain theoretical and practical awareness

Even if the members of the group are never going to become materials developers and even if their products are never going to be used, helping teachers and teacher trainees to cooperate in developing learning materials is one of the most effective ways of getting them to clarify and develop their theoretical knowledge and awareness, and to apply it to the practicalities of helping learners to acquire a language. Even if they are only devising activities to go with a reading text they have to:

- Articulate, develop and apply their theories of the L1 and L2 reading process.
- Articulate, develop and apply their theories of learning.

- Articulate, develop and apply their theories of language learning.
- Consider such learner variables as age, level, motivation, learning styles, needs, wants and objectives.
- Consider such teacher variables as age, training, confidence, personality, teaching styles and preparation.
- Consider such administrator variables as syllabus requirements, examination requirements, time available, standardization, accountability and costs.

And, of course, if they have to develop units for a coursebook they can cover an entire applied linguistics course while doing it.

Expertise in materials development can only be gained through developing materials

'It is a cliche', but a very important one, that you cannot be instructed to become a good materials developer. You can only be given the experience and helped to gain from it. This is a point which seems to be made emphatically by all the chapters in this section.

In my experience and opinion, this means setting up real (or at least realistic) materials development situations, making clear the objectives and the constraints, being available to provide information, stimulus and support as needed and providing formative and summative feedback designed not to evaluate but to provide opportunities for learning and development. It also involves providing stimulation too.

Conclusion

Brian Tomlinson

Nearly all the chapters in this book express some dissatisfaction with the current state of materials development. There is an awareness of the constraints under which materials developers are operating (especially those working for commercial publishers) but there is also a disappointment that the materials currently being developed do not often match what is needed and wanted by the learners who are going to use them. There is also a disappointment that current materials do not match what we know facilitates language acquisition and development from research in second language acquisition and classroom observation. This disappointment was expressed in Tomlinson et al. (2001), in Masuhara et al. (2008) and more recently in Tomlinson (2013a, 2013b, 2013c) and in Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013). All these publications understand the economic imperative (and the many other factors) which have led publishers to clone previously best-selling coursebooks rather than risk investment in more principled innovations. All these publications have also drawn attention though to the persistent predominance of activity types for which there is no research (or even anecdotal) attestation of their effectiveness in promoting effective and durable acquisition.

Particular reservations are expressed by the authors of this book about:

- The dominant focus on conscious learning of language items (especially grammar items) in most current materials.
- The unidimensional nature of many of the processes learners are asked to engage in.
- The tendency to underestimate the learner both in terms of topic content and of task.
- The triviality and blandness of the topic content in many commercial materials.
- The lack of potential for affective engagement of many of the materials.

- The lack of flexibility of many of the materials, both in terms of potential for adaptation, localization and personalization and of the provision of choice for the learner and the teacher.
- The mismatch between many of the materials and what second language acquisition research and classroom observation has revealed about the processes of language learning and teaching.
- The mismatch between many of the materials and what teachers know can promote language acquisition in the classroom.

However, most of the contributors to this volume are still fairly optimistic about the future of materials development for language learning and they feel that we can help language learners more by developing materials which:

- have the potential for affective engagement;
- engage the learners in multidimensional processes which match what we are finding out about mental representation and durable learning;
- relate to the interests and enthusiasms of the learners;
- have been designed to facilitate adaptation, localization and personalization;
- cater for different preferred learning and teaching styles;
- both learners and teachers can enjoy using.

I personally also think (as Kirkpatrick (2010) and Jenkins (2007, 2012) do) that materials should prepare the learners for the type of interactions they are likely to need to engage in (i.e. with other users of their local variety of English and with other L2 users from different regions rather than only with native speakers of a standard variety of English). I also think that classroom materials should be designed to encourage learners to experience and use English outside the classroom so that the increased time spent engaging with English will give them a better chance of effective acquisition (see also suggestions for encouraging out of class learner interaction in Barker (2011) and out of class 'study time' in Fukuda and Yoshida (2013)). I have recently started to write a coursebook called *Looking Out for English* in which each section of every unit contains activities which require the learners to engage with English outside the classroom. This coursebook is also innovative in that it is driven by three basic principles of language acquisition and seeks to help learners to achieve **edu**cation in English through **e**xperience of English in use, **d**iscovery of how English is used and opportunities to **u**se English for communication. Whether a commercial publisher is prepared to risk breaking away from the norm of PPP (presentation, practice and production) of language items remains to be seen.

Let us hope that not only will a commercial publisher agree to publish *Looking Out for English* but that more applied and action research will soon be carried out to

find out much more about what can make language learning materials effective (see Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2010 and Tomlinson, 2013a). And let us hope that publishers and curriculum developers will have the courage and the resources to apply what we find out to what they develop.

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