

THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract: The article studies the role, place and content of learning materials used in language learning. The study involves the methods of data collection and data analysis. It is noted that the topic and content of teaching materials should meet the interests of students. In addition, the quality of training materials and who should compile them more professionally were touched upon. The article also explores the types of instructional materials. Important elements such as teacher, student, material, teaching methods and assessment constitute one of the main goals of the article. The article also discusses the important role of motivation in deepening the understanding of learning materials. The article emphasizes that the design of textbooks in accordance with certain criteria and their tasteful design also play an important role in the quality of learning materials. In addition, newspapers, magazines and television materials not intended for instruction are also included in the article.

Key words: training materials, teaching, quality, validity, motivation, design

Introduction

The article studies the role and design of instructional materials which should be in the focus of attention inevitably. Instructional materials, before all, provides efficient learning process. So the teachers should pay a considerable attention to the content and design of instructional materials in order to involve the students who are going to take advantage of them. Some instructional materials are compiled by unskilled authors with a myriad of mistakes. For this reason, all teaching materials should be reviewed before publication. The content covering the themes inside the instructional materials do not satisfy the students, briefly saying, they do not meet their needs. For example, if there are few things that the student learn from that teaching material, the students don't want to read it. Some researchers find instructional materials on the internet. Ten years ago, a collection named "Materials development in language teaching" edited by Tomlinson partially pertained to the contribution of laptops and computers, besides a discussion of basic data and sequences. Alan Maley [1, p.395] observes that human stands at the intersection of a new generation period of computerized materials for language teaching.

The learners usually seek more interesting and concrete facts to learn. If those facts are not found in the instructional material sufficiently, the value of that textbook or any teaching material reduces. If the content is rich in numerous new facts that match the learners' interest, they are keen on purchasing that material and the author of the book takes more profit from the sale. Since the factor of finance is also taken into account while compiling new materials. If the themes of published materials don't overlap with the learners' interest, they don't get interested in buying them. The cost spent for publication of the instructional material goes in vain. Hence, the actuality of this topic has always been in the focus of attention. One of the criteria given to the instructional materials is that they should be the source of motivation and idea. If they have the function to motivate the learners, they are extensively bought and read by the readers and students. In this case, even if they are considered to be published for students, other voluntary learners who don't study at any school or University are also curious about it. For instance, if an interesting book about geography which gives a lot of information about the culture, language, religion and describes different traditions covering historical background is published, even ordinary people may buy and learn something new from them as a source of idea and to extend there

general outlook. From this point of view, the quality of the instructional material play a considerable role in the purchase power.

The source and methods of the study

Language learning has 5 crucial elements: teachers, students, materials, teaching methods and assessment. Nunan stresses that teaching materials are the most essential and noticeable element of pedagogy [4]. Furthermore, Cunnings gave a brief information about the role of materials namely textbooks in language teaching for the following purposes as [5];

- a) resources for presentation materials;
- b) activities for students' practice and communication;
- c) progress for students on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation stimulation and ideas for classroom activities;
- d) a support for less experienced teachers

Authentic materials are very pertinent for native speakers, but not for second language learners. Since authentic materials are usually written with a more difficult language in comparison with the material compiled by a non-native speaker. A teaching material prepared by a non-native speaker is less reliable compared by a native-speaker author. As the native speaker takes all aspects into consideration while compiling the teaching material including cultural, religious aspects. The native author employs set expressions, idiom, phrasal verbs, proverbs and sayings properly and punctually while non-native speaker author do not concentrate on these factors profoundly. Non-native author may make grammatical, lexical and stylistic mistakes because of incompliance of some language aspects. However, the non-native speakers prefer buying and reading the instructional materials created by a non-native speaking author. As these materials are easily understood and comprehensible by non-native speakers.

Subject matter of the article is to investigate the characteristics of instructional materials and to reveal the best design in order to involve students in teaching and learning process. Characteristics of instructional materials include the quality, validity, actuality of the topic while a perfect design raises the external value of the compiled instructional materials.

In general, instructors are prone to apply all instructions suggested in a textbook. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that a textbook is not always valid in different conditions in a language classroom [7]. Sometimes, teachers are obliged to investigate teaching materials outside textbooks additionally and ascertain if they are appropriate to the need and demands of special group of students [5]. Teachers' experiences and their students' comprehension is very essential in materials compiling, so that the students are stimulated in learning the target language. According to Tomlinson materials development pertains to anything which is done by writers, instructors or students to provide sources of language input in ways which accrues the likelihood of comprehension [6]. In this way, materials compilers, including teachers, might bring pictures or posters or adverts into the classroom, write a textbook, design a student worksheet, recite a poem or read an article in a loud voice.

Quality of the teaching materials should be very high in order to provide efficiency. Quality may show itself in the content and in the scale of its coverage of the whole program. If the content is interesting for the readers, the material will be bought abundantly. Some authors sometimes compile the textbooks in a very low level with a number of grammatical, lexical, phonetic and stylistic mistakes. Furthermore, the scientific editors view the material superficially and the reviewers recommend the material for publication directly even without looking through the instructional material in order not to give much trouble to themselves.

Most of the language teaching process that happens around the world today could not occur without the extensive use of commercial materials. These may be composed of:

- a) printed materials such as books, workbooks, worksheets, or readers

b) non-print materials such as cassette or audio materials, videos, or computer-based materials

c) materials that consist of both print and non-print stuffs such as self-access materials and online materials.

Furthermore, materials not designed for instructional use such as magazine, newspaper, TV material may also play a role in teaching a foreign language.

Cunnings Worth emphasizes the role of teaching materials, especially course books in language teaching such as:

- 1) A resource to present materials (spoken and written)
- 2) A source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction
- 3) A reference source for students on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.
- 4) A source of motivation and ideas for classroom activities
- 5) A syllabus
- 6) A support for less experienced teachers

There are some principles in developing materials suggested by Tomlison. Tomlison points out some major principles in carrying out materials development for the teaching of language:

- Material should take hold, assist students to feel at ease and to generate self-confidence
- The material comprehended by students should be appropriate and advantageous
- Materials should facilitate students' self-investment, provide them with opportunities to utilize the target language to obtain communicative goals.
- Materials should consider that positive impacts of instruction are usually lingered, students have various learning styles and vary in affective attitudes.
- Materials should provide a silent period while beginning the process of instruction, should not confide extensively in supervised practice and should provide opportunities for outcome feedback.

Furthermore, Crawford emphasizes that materials explicitly reflect the writer's views of language learning and teachers, as well as students will answer according to how well these are relevant to their own thoughts and anticipations. Some features to be taken into consideration in providing effective materials are as follows:

- Language - is functional and should be contextualized; should be realistic and authentic; requires student engagement in deliberate use of language.
- Classroom materials should be provided with an audio visual component
- Second language learners should boost the ability to cope with written/spoken language
- Materials should be relevant enough to provide individual and contextual distinctions

They can also be live talks by a language bearer, food packages, photographs, newspaper, instructions given by an instructor, assignments written on cards or discussions among students.

In other words, they may be any material which is utilized to increase the students knowledge and experience on purpose. Keeping this pragmatic notion of materials in mind may assist materials developers to use as a great amount of sources of input as possible and, even more necessarily, can assist instructors to understand that they are also material developers and that they are more responsible for the materials that their students employ.

Instructional material supervises the instruction process, since those materials define the elements and method of learning; they supervise the content, the method, and procedures of instruction. In most cases, instructional materials are the center of instruction and one of the most essential impacts on what occurs at the lesson.

The Function of Instructional Materials

There are five major functions what materials are assumed to do. They should:

1. Act as a stimulus to learning. If the texts are interesting, there will be chances for students to employ their existing knowledge and skills. In this case both instructor and students are able to manage with the content
2. Contribute to carry out the instruction process. For example, there must be a fluent and coherent structure which assists the instructor to conduct lessons easily and students to feel a sense of advancement and success, but the structure should not be so rigid with monotony outcomes.
3. Represent a view of the nature of instruction . For instance, it shows the writer's beliefs.
4. Demonstrate the nature of the learning assignment – in the meanwhile, language learning demonstrates the complicatedness of language learning process but also its control ability
5. Suggest models of right and relevant language use.

Validity is one of the most essential criteria given to the publication of the instructional material. The teaching material should meet the needs of students by all means. They should be compiled according to the program and the topics that the students have at the lesson. Otherwise, the instructional material will be considered to be invalid. If the themes included in contents do not have any relation with the subject that the students have at University or school, in the meanwhile the material is supposed invalid, as well. The content should cover all the topics in order to provide validity. When we say validity, we may mean publication permission, as well. Any teaching material is allowed for publication by concerning bodies. These bodies may be University, Printing House or Ministry of Education. Before publication, the author asks permission for printing the instructional material with some reviews, an extract from faculty, an extract from the chair (if recommended for publication by University editorial staff). Then the editorial board permit to publish the instructional material whether at University Press or in any Publishing House. Teachers and student teachers who are going to develop instructional materials will be aware of the steps, rules of writing high quality topics and designing the material appropriately. After reading this study, the material developers will get acquainted with developing process of teaching materials and they will recommend these methods to their colleagues, as well. Viewing the advantages and disadvantages of teacher created materials, non-native speakers will try to develop material with the assistance of editors in order to avoid many grammatical, lexical, phonetic and stylistic errors. The biggest practical value of this article is that it can be used in further graduation papers, dissertation works and articles of researchers in a large scale. For this reason, this study will be sent to libraries and be placed on the internet with the aim to assist the young material developers to take advantage of the knowledge and practice revealed here. We hope that this material will be relevant and very useful for those who intend to develop instructional or teaching materials.

Instructional material pertains to anything which is utilized by instructors or students to ease the language learning process.

Materials may include;

- a) cassettes
- b) videos
- c) CD-Roms
- d) dictionaries
- e) grammar books
- f) readers
- g) workbooks or photocopied exercises

They can also be live talks by a language bearer, food packages, photographs, newspaper, instructions given by an instructor, assignments written on cards or discussions among students.

Johnson and Arshavskaya [3,p.172] discuss socio-cultural perspectives of compiling instructional materials. As has been noted by Johnson [8], recently, teacher educators have begun to consider learning to teach as situated, socially negotiated, and sensitive to the knowledge that they have of their own, their students, content, curriculum and context. Most people consider English to be an international or universal language.

While comparing instruction materials, we can divide them into two parts. 1) Created materials and 2) authentic materials

Authentic materials have a positive influence on student's motivation since they are intrinsically more interesting and stimulating in comparison with created materials.

They give the students authentic cultural information about the culture that they intend to get acquainted. Materials may be selected to illustrate numerous aspects of the target culture, encompassing traditional experiences and ideas. It may be both linguistic and non-linguistic treatment.

They make the students face with real life situations. The students live the situations in real life and these materials willy-nilly depict native speakers' words and behaviours. They are not worse than the artificial texts given in created materials that have been especially written to exhibit special grammatical rules or relation types.

They are more related to students' needs. It means they establish a link between the classroom and students' needs in the real world.

They second a more creative approach to teaching any subject. In using authentic materials as a source for teaching activities, teachers may develop their full potential as instructors, promoting activities and tasks that match their students' teaching and learning styles respectively.

Conclusion

Finally, monitoring the use of materials should be in the center of attention. That is not a matter what kind of materials teachers use, whether they teach from textbooks, institutional materials or teacher-made materials, the materials present plans for teaching. They do not show the process of teaching itself. It is useful to collect data on how teachers make use of course books and other teaching materials at the lesson. The data collected may seek the following purposes:

- a) to document effective ways of employing materials
- b) to provide feedback on how materials function
- c) to keep a record of additions, deletions, and additional materials instructors may have utilized
- d) to contribute other teachers in using the materials

Overall, it should be inevitable to mention the processes of the monitoring :

1. Observation :

Learners pay visit to witness how instructors utilize materials and to ascertain how the materials impact the quality of teaching and communication taking place during the conduction of a lesson.

2. Feedback sessions :

Group meetings in which teachers express their attitudes about their experience with materials

3. Written reports :

The use of reflection paper or other forms of written feedback in which teachers make brief notes about what was done properly and what was not done well, or give suggestions

4. Reviews :

Written reviews by an instructor or a group of teachers on their experiences with a set of materials and what they liked or disliked about them

5. Students' reviews :

Students' reviews are also important. As their thoughts and interests should be taken into account while preparing the materials. The materials should meet their needs and interests completely.

Subsequently, English is widely utilized as a means of communication in the world both in oral and written form, for common and private purposes. English teachers usually use relevant textbooks while teaching their students. Nonetheless, such learning materials which are appropriate for students' needs are not always available. This case should not demotivate instructors since they have the objectives of the teaching. By having objectives of the instruction process or being familiar with the students' needs, the teachers can compile their own materials for the students to obtain the objectives or to meet the student's need.

Generalizing all above-mentioned data, it is possible to come to some consecutive conclusions. Generally saying, the dissertation paper describes the process of material developing, design of instructional materials and some experiments carried out on material development.

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DİL ÖYRƏNİLMƏSİNDƏ TƏLİM MATERİALLARININ ROLU

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Məqalədə dil öyrənilməsində istifadə olunan təlim materiallarının rolu, yeri və məzmunu araşdırılır. İş məlumat toplama və məlumat təhlili metodlarını özündə cəmləşdirir. Burada qeyd olunur ki, tədris materiallarının mövzusu və məzmunu tələbələrin maraqlarını ödəməlidir. Bundan başqa təlim materiallarının keyfiyyəti və onların kimlər tərəfindən daha peşəkar tərtib olunma məsələlərinə də toxunulmuşdur. Məqalədə təlim materiallarının növləri də tədqiqata cəlb olunmuşdur. Müəllim, tələbə, material, tədris üsulları və qiymətləndirmə kimi önəmli elementlər məqalənin əsas qayələrindən birini təşkil edir. Motivasiyanın təlim materiallarının dərinə qavranılmasında əhəmiyyətli rolu da

məqalədə müzakirə olunur. Məqalədə vurğulanır ki, dərslərlərin müəyyən meyarlara uyğun tərtibatı və onların zövqəoxşayıcı dizaynı da təlim materiallarının keyfiyyətli mənimsənilməsində mühüm rol oynayır. Bütün bunlardan başqa təlim üçün nəzərdə tutulmayan qəzet, jurnal və televiziya materialları da məqalədə öz əksini tapır.

Açar sözlər: təlim materialları, tədris, keyfiyyət, keçərlilik, motivasiya, dizayn

РОЛЬ УЧЕБНЫХ МАТЕРИАЛОВ В ИЗУЧЕНИИ ЯЗЫКА

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В статье исследуются роль, место и содержание учебных материалов, используемых в изучении языка. В исследовании задействованы методы сбора и анализа данных. Отмечается, что тематика и содержание учебных материалов должны соответствовать интересам студентов. Кроме того, были затронуты вопросы качества учебных материалов и того, кто должен их составлять более профессионально. В статье также рассматриваются типы учебных материалов. Важные элементы, такие как учитель, ученик, материал, методы обучения и оценивание, составляют одну из основных целей статьи. В статье также обсуждается важная роль мотивации в глубоком понимании учебных материалов. В статье подчеркивается, что оформление учебников в соответствии с определенными критериями и их изысканный дизайн также играют важную роль в качестве учебных материалов. Кроме того, в статью включены газеты, журналы и телевизионные материалы, не предназначенные для обучения.

Ключевые слова: учебные материалы, обучение, качество, обоснованность, мотивация, дизайн

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