REVIEW ARTICLE

2395-2636 (Print): 2321-3108 (online)

Material Development in ELT: Principles and Procedures

Tenzin Lhamo Minto

Research Scholar, Department of English, Rajiv Gandhi University

Abstract

Teaching-learning materials (TLMs) play a pivotal role in language education, serving as tools to facilitate learning and instruction. This paper provides an overview of material development in English Language Teaching (ELT), encompassing various aspects such as types of materials, material development processes, principles of material design, and the role of teachers in material adaptation and creation. Material development processes are then explored, including needs analysis, design and production, evaluation and feedback, and adaptation and revision. Principles of material design, as proposed by Howard and Major (2004), are outlined, emphasizing contextualization, interaction, skill-building, authenticity, and flexibility, among others. The role of teachers in material adaptation and creation is emphasized, highlighting their expertise in selecting, evaluating, and customizing materials to meet learner needs. By following structured frameworks and guidelines, educators can create and implement materials that foster meaningful language learning experiences and support the achievement of learning objectives.

Key-words: Teaching-Learning Materials, ELT, Material Development, Principles, Procedures

Introduction

Teaching-learning materials play a crucial role in facilitating the learning process for both students and teachers. These materials encompass a wide range of resources used to transmit knowledge effectively and motivate learners. It helps to increase the quality of learning by making classroom learning more effective (Fitria, 2022) The objectives of creating teaching-learning materials should align with the needs of students, ultimately aiming to motivate them, develop teachers' skills, aid in information retention, and promote effective communication. In English Language Teaching (ELT), instructional materials are essential tools that help supplement classroom teaching and enhance learning outcomes. ELT textbooks are particularly significant in language achievement, providing learners with essential language skills and communication practice. If the instructional materials are aligned with the learners' need and are used constructively by both the learners and teachers, it results in the successful attainment of the course objectives (Olaitan & Agusiobo, 1994). Nunan (1992) opines that teaching materials are the most substantial and observable part of learning. Without instructional resources, classroom teaching may not be effective.

Types of Teaching-Learning Materials

Teaching-learning materials (TLMs) encompass diverse resources designed to facilitate language learning and instruction. These materials serve various purposes, including providing information, guiding practice, offering experiential learning opportunities, eliciting language use, and encouraging exploration. Here are the main types of teaching-learning materials commonly used in language education:

- **Printed Materials:** Textbooks, maps, worksheets, charts, pictures, photographs, posters, newspapers, and magazines fall under this category. These materials visually represent concepts and information, making them more comprehensible and engaging for learners. Printed materials are essential for illustrating theoretical concepts and enhancing students' understanding of the subject matter.

- **Audio and Audio-visual Materials:** This includes resources such as cassette tapes, CDs, video CDs, and films. Audio materials feature human speech, telephonic conversations, radio broadcasts, and other auditory resources. Audio-visual materials combine visual and auditory elements to reinforce learning and comprehension. These materials provide learners with authentic language use and exposure to real-life contexts.

- **Interactive Teaching Materials:** The dissemination of education digitally through internet enabled resources belong to this category of TLMs. Computers and the internet play a significant role in interactive learning, offering opportunities for both individual and group activities. Interactive materials expand learning possibilities by providing diverse learning situations and methods. They enhance students' understanding of academic subjects and support teachers in lesson preparation and delivery.

- **Textbooks:** Textbooks and instructional tools designed explicitly for learning are considered created materials. Otugen (2016) notes the importance of coursebooks among all other materials. He claims that "textbooks are preferred mostly because they are considered advantageous in terms of accessibility, clearness, consistency, continuity, and time" (p.23). Textbooks are a primary source of knowledge transmission, presenting essential concepts and information to learners. Authors create textbooks to help students acquire new knowledge and understand key concepts in various subjects.

- **Other Reading Materials:** This includes articles, reports, assignments, projects, newspapers, journals, and books that supplement learning and promote concept development. Reading materials raise awareness of various issues and expand students' knowledge base.

- **Authentic Materials:** Authentic materials refers to the use of real life examples of language use for the purpose of teaching-learning. Such materials offer an immersive and a realistic context for tasks pertaining to learners' needs (Benavent & Penamaria, 2011, p.89). While commercially produced teaching materials are available, authentic materials offer a more meaningful learning experience aligned with real-world communication.

- **Teacher-created Materials:** Teachers develop their instructional materials to cater to the actual learning demands of their students. Teacher-created materials allow customization and adaptation to suit diverse learning styles and preferences. These materials enable teachers to enhance their understanding of topics and concepts while providing students with effective and engaging learning experiences.

Tenzin Lhamo Minto

Material Development

Material development is a dynamic process aimed at creating effective teaching resources that facilitate meaningful learning experiences for students. It involves creating, adapting, and refining instructional materials to suit diverse learner needs and teaching contexts. Material development encompasses various stages, including needs analysis, design, production, and evaluation, all aimed at ensuring the quality and relevance of the resources. These stages are further explained below:

1. **Needs Analysis:** The first step in material development is conducting a thorough needs analysis to identify the specific requirements of learners and instructors. This involves assessing learners' proficiency levels, learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and educational goals and considering the pedagogical approaches teachers favour. Needs analysis provides valuable insights into the gaps and challenges in existing materials, guiding the development process toward effectively addressing these areas.

2. **Design and Production:** Once the needs are identified, the design and production phase begins, where instructional materials are conceptualized and created. Designers and educators collaborate to develop content that aligns with curriculum objectives and engages learners effectively. This stage involves selecting appropriate language, visuals, activities, and multimedia elements to enhance comprehension and retention. The production process may involve writing, editing, illustrating, and formatting materials for print or digital distribution, ensuring accessibility and usability for all learners.

3. **Evaluation and Feedback:** Evaluation is an ongoing process throughout material development, with feedback loops incorporated at various stages to assess the effectiveness and relevance of the resources. Both formative and summative evaluations are conducted to gather feedback from teachers, students, and other stakeholders, helping identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Formative evaluation allows for continuous refinement and iteration of materials, while summative evaluation provides insights into overall effectiveness and impact.

4. **Adaptation and Revision:** Materials are often revised based on evaluation feedback and changing educational trends. This iterative process allows continuous improvement and ensures that teaching resources remain current, engaging, and effective. Adaptation may involve modifying content, activities, or assessments to suit learners' needs or incorporating new pedagogical approaches and technological advancements. Revision ensures that materials remain relevant and aligned with evolving educational standards and practices.

Principles of Material Development

Material development in language teaching requires careful consideration of various factors to ensure effectiveness and relevance to learners' needs. Howard and Major (2004) provide a set of recommendations for creating teaching and learning materials in English, which encompass the following principles:

- **Contextualization:** Nunan (1988) advocated that while developing teaching materials, material developers should look into learners' existing knowledge based on their experiences, social context, and use of first language. Cultural appropriacy should be considered, with materials reflecting familiar cultural scenes and social situations to engage students effectively.

- **Promotion of Interaction:** Materials should stimulate student interaction, fostering genuine communication through meaningful tasks and activities. The "learning by doing" principle emphasizes the importance of activities that require

learners to engage actively in communication. Hall (1995) identifies three criteria that he feels are required to generate genuine communication: "something we wish to communicate," "someone with whom we can speak," and, perhaps most significantly, "some interest in the communication's outcome" (p.9).

- **Building Learning Abilities:** Materials should help develop learning abilities and techniques, supporting teachers and students in achieving linguistic goals. Providing learners with confidence in their language acquisition journey is crucial, particularly in the face of initial challenges (Hall, 1995).

- **Focus on Form and Function:** Materials should balance attention to language form with opportunities for functional communication. Learners should develop a critical and analytical approach to language use, understanding underlying forms and practical applications.

- **Integrated Language Use:** Ideal materials should facilitate the integrated use of all language skills, avoiding overemphasizing any particular skill. Opportunities for integrating extralinguistic aspects should be provided to enhance language learning comprehensively.

- **Authenticity:** Materials should aim for authenticity, exposing learners to natural language use through authentic spoken and visual texts. Nunan points out that "texts written specifically for the classroom generally distort the language in some way" (1988, p. 6). Therefore, classroom materials and tasks should reflect real-world language and behaviour to enhance learners' understanding and proficiency.

- **Progression and Cohesion:** Materials should be linked to develop a progression of skills, understandings, and language items. Clear learning objectives should guide the design process, ensuring coherence and providing scope for repetition and reinforcement.

- **Attractiveness:** Learning materials must be appealing and eye-catching to attract users. The 'look' and the 'feel' of the product are one of the USPs of any product that comes to the market. Therefore, materials should be visually appealing and user-friendly to engage learners effectively. Considerations for physical appearance, usability, and durability should be integrated into material design to enhance effectiveness.

- **Clear Instructions:** Materials should provide appropriate instructions to guide learners effectively through activities and tasks. Clear and concise instructions are essential for facilitating learning and maximizing the effectiveness of materials (Jolly & Bolitho, 1998).

- **Flexibility:** Materials should offer flexibility to accommodate diverse learning needs and preferences. Providing options and alternatives allows teachers and students to adapt materials to suit individual learning styles and requirements. By adhering to these principles, material developers can create resources that are engaging, effective, and aligned with language teaching and learning goals.

Tomlinson (2005) highlighted a few points that can be crucial in determining the standard of teaching materials. An ideal learning material should:

- Provide the learners situations for language use to attain the intended outcome.

- Ensure that the activities are created in a way that requires the learners to use the target language rather than merely practising its forms or characteristics.

- Design activities to help students become more proficient communicators by enhancing their accuracy, fluency, appropriateness, and effective target language use.

Tenzin Lhamo Minto

- Ensure all these activities are contextualized in such a way that learners are able to respond to authentic stimuli.

- Ensure that the feedback process is integrated with the activities and learners receive them immediately.

By following these guidelines, materials developers can create engaging and valuable materials that align with language teaching and learning objectives.

Materials Implementation and Evaluation

Implementing and evaluating teaching materials are integral to ensuring their effectiveness in the classroom. Evaluation involves systematically assessing materials' usability, generalizability, adaptability, and attractiveness to determine their compatibility and quality. Both external and internal evaluations contribute to ongoing improvement and adaptation of materials to meet the evolving needs of learners. The significance of teaching materials in the teaching-learning process cannot be overstated. However, it is equally essential for teachers and educational institutions to maintain and regularly assess the quality of these materials. Evaluation ensures that materials meet instructional objectives and provide meaningful learning experiences for students. It is a continuous process that allows material designers to refine and enhance resources for the benefit of users. Tomlinson and Manuhara (2004) refer to "materials evaluation" as assessing the impact of learning materials on individuals and making judgments about their worth and effectiveness. While evaluation helps judge the worth of teaching materials, assessment increases their effectiveness by refining our understanding and application of the materials. Ongoing evaluation and assessment processes ensure that teaching materials remain relevant, engaging, and aligned with instructional objectives, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education.

Textbook Evaluation

Textbook evaluation plays a crucial role in English Language Teaching (ELT), as it helps determine the suitability of instructional materials for learners. Various evaluation methods, including predictive and retrospective assessments, are employed to assess different aspects of textbooks. Checklists and frameworks are valuable tools in this process, providing structured guidelines for evaluation. According to Sheldon (1988), textbook evaluation involves asking several crucial questions about each material aspect. These questions are based on the objectives the textbook aims to achieve and the gaps it intends to fill. An essential consideration is whether a need analysis has been conducted to define the objectives clearly.

Ellis (1997) outlines two main types of textbook evaluations: macro-evaluation and micro-evaluation. Macro-evaluation involves assessing the material, while micro-evaluation focuses on specific teaching assignments for detailed examination. Furthermore, Ellis distinguishes between predictive evaluation, which helps decide on materials to use, and retrospective evaluation, which assesses their effectiveness after use. Acar (2019) came up with a comprehensive checklist for the teachers to use to evaluate the materials they have been using or which they intend to use in their language classrooms. The checklist has "six components, namely, practical considerations, language content, design and organization, language skills, exercises and activities, cultural considerations" (2019, p. 10). This checklist is a valuable tool for both predictive and retrospective evaluation by teachers and researchers, enabling them to thoroughly assess the textbook's effectiveness.

Material Adaptation

Material adaptation is a process that occurs after the adoption of materials, allowing for customization to meet specific learner needs and teaching contexts. While adoption focuses on the entire course book, adaptation is concerned with individual components, ensuring they align with the requirements of learners and instructors. Teachers play a crucial role in material adaptation, leveraging their experience and expertise to tailor materials to suit the needs of their students. Teachers may adapt by reducing, adding, omitting, modifying, and supplementing the materials to maximize the book's value (Tomlinson, 2011). While not all teachers create learning materials from scratch, they can act

as facilitators of effective materials by adapting existing resources to meet the unique requirements of their classroom settings.

Adaptation involves assessing the flexibility of materials to integrate into various syllabuses and adjusting them accordingly. As Madsen and Bowen (1978) highlighted, effective teachers continuously evolve to meet their classes' learning outcomes, often supplementing existing materials with additional examples or modifications to enhance relevance and effectiveness. The primary goal of adaptation is to improve the context of materials by modifying internal qualities to suit the needs of learners better. This process may involve content localization, personalization, and individualization to fill gaps and address specific learning objectives. However, it is essential to note that the success or failure of adapted resources can only be determined through real-world testing in the classroom with students.

Role of Teachers in the Selection and Evaluation of Materials

Teachers play a vital role in selecting, evaluating, and adapting teaching materials to meet the diverse needs of learners. Their experience and expertise guide the creation and implementation of materials that align with learning objectives and promote student engagement and achievement. The role of the teacher is essential in the selection of study materials. The students rely heavily on the experience and expertise of the teacher. The teacher, therefore, becomes responsible for providing the teaching-learning materials best suited to their learners' needs and capabilities. Often, teachers might find that the materials available do not fulfil the learning needs of their learners, which might prompt them to create one that will benefit them. Teachers are familiar with the learners' needs and create materials with the required learning objectives. The teachers spend a lot of their time trying to find, select, evaluate, and adapt the suitable material that would benefit their students in the class (Rahman & Khan, 2015).

Teachers as Material Designers

Material design is critical to effective teaching, requiring teachers to utilize their expertise to create resources that enhance student learning experiences. As Howard and Major (2004) highlight, when designing teaching materials, teachers must take into account several factors to ensure their effectiveness:

- **Learners:** Teachers should consider their students' diverse needs, abilities, and preferences. Understanding learners' proficiency levels, learning styles, and cultural backgrounds is essential for creating materials that resonate with them.

- **Curriculum and Context:** Materials should align with curriculum objectives and the broader educational context. Teachers need to ensure that their materials cover relevant content and support the attainment of learning goals within the given curriculum framework.

- **Resources and Facilities:** Practical considerations such as access to technology, classroom resources, and teaching aids must be considered during material design. Teachers should create feasible and practical materials to implement in their teaching environment.

- **Personal Confidence and Competence:** Teachers' confidence and competence in their subject matter and pedagogical approaches play a crucial role in material design. Confidence enables teachers to make informed decisions and adapt materials effectively to meet their students' needs.

Several frameworks provide practical guidelines for teachers in creating effective teaching materials. Walsh and Cullen (2020) find Jolly and Bolitho's framework for material development to be an ideal framework which could help guide both experienced and novice writers to develop effective teaching materials. Jolly and Bolitho (1998) proposed the following key points in their framework :

- **Identification:** Teachers begin by identifying the specific need or problem their materials aim to address. Understanding the learning objectives and challenges helps teachers develop focused and relevant materials.

- **Exploration:** This stage involves exploring the language or skills required to meet learners' needs effectively. Teachers assess the suitability of different approaches and resources to ensure alignment with learning objectives.

- **Contextual Realization:** Teachers consider the context in which their materials will be used, selecting suitable ideas, contexts, or texts to work with. Materials should reflect learners' interests and experiences to enhance engagement and relevance.

- **Pedagogical Realization:** Teachers focus on developing meaningful activities and clear instructions that address language learning needs. Effective pedagogical strategies and the use of metalanguage contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of instructional materials.

- **Physical Production:** The outward appearance and presentation of teaching-learning materials plays a significant role in providing the learners with the initial level of excitement and motivation. Teachers consider layout, visuals, and other design elements to create visually appealing and user-friendly materials.

Conclusion

Material development is a multifaceted process that requires collaboration, creativity, and continuous evaluation. Educators can create teaching materials that optimize learning outcomes and promote student success by systematically analyzing needs, designing effective resources, and incorporating feedback. Through ongoing adaptation and revision, teaching resources can evolve to meet the changing needs of learners and instructors, ultimately enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education. In conclusion, material development in ELT involves a systematic approach to creating, evaluating, and adapting resources that enhance language learning and teaching effectiveness. By following principles and procedures outlined in frameworks and guidelines, teachers can create and implement materials that cater to the needs of their learners and promote successful language acquisition.

References

Acar, A. (2019). Selecting and evaluating ELT textbooks. *Turkish Studies*, 14 (2), 1-14.

Ajoke, A.R. (2017). The Importance of instructional materials in teaching of English as a second language. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 36-44

Alkhaldi, A. A. (2010). Developing a principled framework for materials evaluation: Some considerations. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *1*(2), 281-298.

Benavent, G.T., & Peñamaría, S.S. (2011). Use of authentic materials in the ESP classroom.

Ellis, R. (1997). The empirical evaluation of language teaching materials. *ELT Journal*, 51(1). 37-41.

Fitria, T. N. (2022). Using authentic material and created material (teacher-made) for English Language Teaching (ELT): Benefits and limitations. *JADEs Journal of Academia in English Education*, 3(2), 117-140

Hall, D. (1995). Materials production: Theory & practice. In A. C. Hidalgo, D. Hall, & G. M. Jacobs (Eds.), *Getting started: Material writers on material writing* (pp. 8-14). Singapore: SEAMO Regional Language Centre.

Howard, J., & Major, J. (2004). Guidelines for designing effective English language teaching materials. *The TESOLANZ Journal*, *12*(10), 50-58

Jolly, D., & Bolitho, R. (1998). *A framework for materials writing*. na.

Kochhar, S. K. (2012). *The Teaching of Social Studies*. New Delhi, India. Sterling Publishers Private Limited

Madsen, H. S., & Bowen, J. D. (1978). *Adaptation in Language Teaching*. Newbury House Publishers, Inc., 54 Warehouse Lane, Rowley, Massachusetts

Maley, A. (2011). Squaring the circle–reconciling materials as constraint with materials as empowerment. In Tomlinson, B. (Ed.), *Materials Development in Language Teaching* (pp. 379-402). Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Nunan, D. (1988). Principles for designing language teaching materials. *Guidelines: A periodical for classroom language teachers*, *10*(2), 1-24.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Olaitan S.O. & Aguisiobo, O.N. (1994). *Teaching of clothing and Textile*. New York John Wiley and Sons Publishers.

Ötügen, R. (2016). Teacher-made materials in ELT classes: Teachers' and students' views. *Atatürk Üniversitesi Kazım Karabekir Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, (33), 23-34

Rahman, M.T. & Khan, A.A. (2015). Essentials for effective material development in ELT. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities, 3(4),* 128-134.

Sheldon, L.E. (1988). Evaluating ELT textbooks and materials. *ELT Journal*, *42*(4), 237-246.

Tomlinson, B. & Masuhara, H. (2004) Developing Language Course Material. RELC Publisher, Singapore.

Tomlinson, B. (2022). The discipline of material development. In Norton, J., & Buchanan, H. *The Routledge Handbook of Materials Development for Language Teaching*. (pp. 3-16.) Taylor & Francis Group.

Tomlinson, B. (Ed.). (2011). *Materials development in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Walsh, N., & Cullen, B. (2020). Materials Development Frameworks and the Challenges of Developing Learning Materials. *JALT Post-conference Publication*, *1*, 300.

Tenzin Lhamo Minto