The Process of Developing Instructional Materials

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Abstract

The article scrutinizes the material development procedures and criteria for English language learners and the students who study translation specialty. It has been noted that materials should be compiled according to students' levels and interest. Otherwise, the students will not be keen on learning the topics given in the textbooks. Textbooks should cover all language skills which are very vital in boosting the students' proficiency. Different stages including planning, piloting and monitoring of the instructional materials are very important steps in material development. We must not forget that any instructional material should be compiled within a program.

Keywords: instructional materials, translation, language skills, material development, textbook.

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Introduction. Material development is a noteworthy issue which has always been actual for teachers and students. There are a number of stages that should be followed while compiling the textbooks. Apart from the texts and exercises considered for practice, interior and exterior design of the materials are very crucial. Before all, materials should meet the students' needs and interests. Topics should be chosen carefully so that they can evoke the students' interest. The students' levels and ages should also be taken into account while compiling any instructional material [21]. Different linguists and methodologists, as well as interpreters such as Alan, Maley, Augusto-Navarro, Babayev J, Carton S, Harwood N, Hutchinson, T, Peacock M, Tomlison B and many others discussed about material development in detail. Materials should be compiled within a program.

Materials and discussion. Preparing materials should be relevant to a program which contains appropriate topics for students [4].

There are some advantages of compiling materials relevant to a program. The program should contain the topics that have been reflected inside the program [1]. Advantages of building a materials development component into a program include • Adequacy: Materials may be prepared which are directly appropriate to students' and institutional needs and that reflect local content, issues, and concern.

➢ Developing expertise: Developing materials may contribute promote expertise among staff, giving them a greater understanding of the characteristics of effective materials.

➢ Reputation: Institutionally compiled materials can extend the name of the organization presenting its responsibility to providing materials developed specifically for its students

➢ Flexibility: Materials prepared within the organization can be revised and conformed as required, giving them greater flexibility than a commercial course book.

Compiling materials for a program also has a number of disadvantages that should be noted in this chapter. Disadvantages also need to be taken into account before embarking on material development [3].

➢ Expense: To prepare high quality materials is time-consuming and relevant staff time as well as costs need to be allocated to such a project.

➢ Quality: Teacher-made materials will not normally have the same standard of design and output as commercial materials and hence may not demonstrate the same image as commercial materials.

➢ Training: To prepare teachers for materials writing projects, adequate training should be provided. Materials writing is a specialized skill and potential materials writer.

Materials Development

Materials development belongs to anything which is implemented by writers, instructors or students to provide sources of language input and to utilize those sources in ways which increase the amount of acquisition: in other words, the provision of data about and experience of the language in ways designed to develop the language learning process [13].

Materials developers can compile textbooks, retell stories, show advertisements at the lesson, express an opinion, take examples of language use or recite a poem loudly. Whatever they do to provide input they fulfill so in principled ways linked to what they are aware about how languages can be efficiently acquired [14].

Managing a materials writing project

Materials writing projects are of various scope and scales. Some can be the commitment of an individual teacher while others may be assigned to a team of writers. The management of a team-based writing project involves mentioning the following issues [15]:

Choosing the project team:

How many people will participate in the project and what will their roles and commitments be? In a small in-house project there may be two or three writers sharing responsibilities for all aspects of the project. To a large extent, nevertheless, the following people can be involved [24]:

➢ project director is liable for overall management of the project, for setting aims and ensuring that needs are met, and for liaising with all parties involved.

➢ writers are those who are liable for writing all components of the course material.

➢ media specialist is a person who assists to make use of audiovisual materials and computer software.

➢ editor is a person who reviews the materials that the writers have complied and prepares the final version of the materials for publication.

➢ illustrator is a person who is responsible for preparing and choosing art pictures or photos and illustrations.

➢ designer is a person who is liable for the coverage, type style, graphics, and the total format of the materials.

Planning the number of stages:

A materials project always passes through a number of various steps of development [23].

Typical stages are:

➢ first draft

➢ comments on first draft

➢ second draft

➢ further comments

➢ tryout of the materials

➢ final revisions of materials

Planning the writing schedule:

A writing schedule might be developed with dates assigned for the various stages in the process. Even if the aspects of the writing process are often cyclical, as mentioned, for practical planning aims the various stages in the writing process need to be demonstrated within a temporary time lapse.

Piloting the materials :

Piloting the materials means trying out materials with a representative group of students and instructors before they are made available for wider use in order to determine challenges or faults in them which may be ascertained before they are used more extensively. The questions concerning piloting may be as follows:

➢ Are the materials comprehensible and the instructions clear?

➢ Do they have any editorial or content mistakes?

➢ Is the pacing of the materials relevant?

➢ Do the materials do what they are presumed to do?

➢ Do they meet the students' needs?

➢ Is there enough quantity of practice material?

➢ Are the materials interesting and engaging enough?

Monitoring the use of materials.

That is not an issue what kind of materials instructors utilize, whether they teach from textbooks, institutional materials or teacher-made materials, the materials demonstrate plans for teaching. They do not present the process of teaching itself. It is useful to gather data on how teachers utilize course books and other teaching materials in their teaching process. The data gathered may serve the following aims [20]:

➢ to document effective ways of using materials

➢ to provide feedback on how materials work

➢ to keep a record of additions, deletions, and supplementary materials teachers may have utilized with the materials

➢ to help other teachers in using the materials

Monitoring covers the following forms :

➢ Observation:

Students go to see how instructors make use of materials and to find out how the materials are impact the quality of teaching and communication takes place during a lesson.

➢ Feedback sessions :

Group meetings in which instructors exchange views about their experience with materials.

➢ Written reports :

The use of reflection sheets or other forms of written feedback in which instructors make short notes about what worked properly and what did not work appropriately, or give proposals.

➢ Reviews:

Written reviews by a teacher or group of teachers on their experiences with a set of materials and what they approved or disliked about them.

➢ Students' reviews:

Students' reviews are also essential. Since their opinions should be taken into consideration while compiling the materials. The materials should meet their needs appropriately. Materials should be motivating in order to encourage students to acquire the materials effectively [22] .

While developing a textbook or a manual for English learners, the level of students and all four language skills should be considered. Along with the exercises covering language aspects such as grammar, words and phonetics, the text-book should serve to develop reading, listening, writing and speaking skills which are the indispensable requirements of modern-day English learning [10], [16]. Besides, the most effective teaching methods should be taken into account. CLT should be the most dominant teaching method in the textbooks [19]. For this, the teacher should illustrate speaking questions and possible or expected answers to help make up a dialogue [17]. There are numerous techniques of the CLT which can be used in the effective acquisition of English language [7].

The texts given in the text-books should be translated professionally in simultaneous and consecutive forms in order to provide effective translation course for the students of translation specialty [18]. To provide effective lessons both the target and source languages should be used in instruction process [6]. Cultural and linguistic aspects should also be taken into account while compiling a text-book for translation students [8], [9]. Application of both traditional and Communicative language teaching method would be effective in instruction process [5], [12]. The students should practice translation procedures in order to eliminate different challenges [2]. In addition, the usage of native language in learning process must be a must-be in order to provide efficiency for translation students [11].

Conclusion. It is important to underline that all instructional materials should be compiled according to students' levels and interests within a program. They should be designed in such a way that the students can get interested in. Besides, all language skills and methods should be applied while practicing them with students.

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