The following terms are used frequently in this book. Unless they are specially defined by the author(s) of the chapter, they are used with the meanings given below.

**Text**

which is not written or spoken for language teaching purposes. A letter article, a rock song, a novel, a radio interview and a real fairy story are examples of authentic texts. A story written to try the use of reported speech, a dialogue scripted to exemplify inviting and a linguistically simplified version of a novel would be examples of authentic texts.

**Modified texts; text.**

which involves learners in using language in a way that replicates the 'real world' outside the language classroom. Filling in changing verbs from the simple past to the present and using substitution tables are, therefore, not authentic tasks. Authentic tasks would involve learners, for example, making a particular point of view and comparing various brochures in order to decide where to go for a holiday.

**Discursive task.**

which involves learners in using language in a way that replicates the 'real world' of the language classroom. Writing a letter addressed to a character, arguing a particular point of view and comparing various brochures in order to decide where to go for a holiday.

**Communicative approaches to language teaching which aim to help learners to develop communicative competence (i.e. the ability to use the language effectively for communication).**

A weak communicative approach includes overt language forms and functions in order to help learners to the ability to use them for communication. A strong communicative approach relies on providing learners with experience of using language as the main means of learning to use the language. In such an approach, for example, talk to learn rather than learn to talk.

**Gaining communicative competence.**

Gaining the ability to use the language effectively for communication. Gaining such competence involves acquiring both sociolinguistic and linguistic knowledge and skills (or, in other words, developing the ability to use the language accurately, appropriately and effectively).

**Concordances (or concordance lines).**

A list of authentic utterances each containing the same focused word or phrase e.g.:

The bus driver still didn't have any change so he made me wait.
I really don't mind which one. Any newspaper will do. I just know what they are saying. Any teacher will tell you that it's.

See authentic.

**Corpus**

A bank of authentic texts collected in order to find out how language is actually used. Usually a corpus is restricted to a particular type of language use, for example, a corpus of newspaper English, a corpus of legal documents or a corpus of informal spoken English.

See text.

**Coursebook**

A textbook which provides the core materials for a course. It aims to provide as much as possible in one book and is designed so that it could serve as the only book which the learners necessarily use during a course. Such a book usually includes work on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

See supplementary materials.

**Discovery activity**

An activity which involves learners in investigating something about the language for themselves. Getting learners to work out the rules of direct speech from examples, asking learners to investigate when and why a character uses the modal 'must' in a story and getting learners to notice and explain the use of ellipsis in a recorded conversation would be examples of discovery activities.

**Experiential**

Referring to ways of learning language through experiencing it in use rather than through focusing conscious attention on language items. Reading a novel, listening to a song and taking part in a project are experiential ways of learning language.
Foreign language
A language which is not normally used for communication in a
particular society. Thus English is a foreign language in France and
Spanish is a foreign language in Germany.

Global coursebook
A coursebook which is not written for learners from a particular culture
or country but which is intended for use by any class of learners in the
specified level and age group anywhere in the world.

Language awareness
Approaches to teaching language which emphasise the value of helping
learners to focus attention on features of language in use. Most such
approaches emphasise the importance of learners gradually developing
their own awareness of how the language is used through discoveries
which they make themselves.

See discovery activities.

Language data
Instances of language use which are used to provide information about
how the language is used. Thus a corpus can be said to consist of
language data.

See corpus.

Language practice
Activities which involve repetition of the same language point or skill in
an environment which is controlled by the framework of the activity.
The purpose for language production and the language to be produced
are usually predetermined by the task or the teacher. The intention is
not to use the language for communication but to strengthen, through
successful repetition, the ability to manipulate a particular language
form or function. Thus getting all the students in a class who already
know each other repeatedly to ask each other their names would be a
practice activity.

See language use.

Language use
Activities which involve the production of language in order to commu-
nicate. The purpose of the activity might be predetermined but the
language which is used is determined by the learners. Thus getting a
new class of learners to walk around and introduce themselves to each
other would be a language use activity; and so would getting them to
complete a story which they have been given the beginning of.

See language practice.

Learning styles
The way(s) that particular learners prefer to learn a language. Some
have a preference for hearing the language (auditory learners), some for
seeing it written down (visual learners), some for learning it in discrete
bits (analytic learners), some for experiencing it in large chunks (global
or holistic or experiential learners) and many prefer to do something
physical whilst experiencing the language (kinaesthetic learners).

1. A term used to refer to both foreign and second languages.
See foreign language; second language.

Materials
Anything which is used to help to teach language learners. Materials
can be in the form of a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD-ROM, a
video, a photocopied handout, a newspaper, a paragraph written on a
whiteboard: anything which presents or informs about the language
being learned.

Materials adaptation
Making changes to materials in order to improve them or to make them
more suitable for a particular type of learner. Adaptation can include
reducing, adding, omitting, modifying and supplementing. Most te-
achers adapt materials every time they use a textbook in order to
maximise the value of the book for their particular learners.

Materials evaluation
The systematic appraisal of the value of materials in relation to their
objectives and to the objectives of the learners using them. Evaluation
can be pre-use and therefore focused on predictions of potential value.
It can be whilst-use and therefore focused on awareness and description
of what the learners are actually doing whilst the materials are being
used. And it can also be post-use and therefore focused on analysis of
what happened as a result of using the materials.

Multi-media materials
Materials which make use of a number of different media. Often they
are available on a CD-Rom which makes use of print, graphics, video
and sound. Usually such materials are interactive and enable the learner
to receive feedback on the written or spoken language which they
produce.

Pedagogic task
A task which does not replicate a real world task but which is designed
to facilitate the learning of language or skills which would be useful in a
world task. Completing one half of a dialogue, filling in the blanks of a story and working out the meaning of ten nonsense words from a text would be examples of pedagogic tasks.

Task based approach to teaching language items which follows a sequence of presentation of the item, practice of the item and then production (i.e. application) of the item. This is the approach currently followed by most commercially produced coursebooks and has the advantage of apparent simplicity and economy. However, many SLA researchers would argue that it is an inefficient approach which creates the illusion of learning. They would say that learning an item takes much longer than the approach suggests and that far more experience of the item in communication is necessary for any lasting learning to take place.

Language practice; SLA; language use.

Second language

A term is used to refer to a language which is not a mother tongue but is used for certain communicative functions in a society. Thus English is a second language in Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Singapore, and French is a second language in Senegal, Cameroon and Tahiti.

Foreign language.

Access materials

Materials designed for learners to use independently (i.e. on their own) without access to a teacher or a classroom. They are normally used by a learner at home, in a library or in a self-study centre.

Simplified texts

These are texts which have been made simpler so as to make it easier for learners to read them. The usual principles of simplification involve reduction in length of the text, shortening of sentences, omission or replacement of difficult words or structures, omission of qualifying words and omission of non-essential detail. It is arguable, however, that such simplification might make the words easier to understand but make it more difficult for the learners to achieve global understanding of a text which is now dense with important information. It may be more profitable to simplify texts by adding examples, by using translation and paraphrase and by increasing redundant information. In other words, by lengthening rather than shortening the text.

SLA is an abbreviation for Second Language Acquisition and is normally used to refer to research and theory related to the learning of second and foreign languages.

Supplementary materials

Materials designed to be used in addition to the core materials of a course. They are usually related to the development of skills of reading, writing, listening or speaking rather than to the learning of language items.

See coursebook.

Task based

This refers to materials or courses which are designed around a series of authentic tasks which give the learners experience of using the language in ways in which it is used in the 'real world' outside the classroom. They have no pre-determined language syllabus and the aim is for learners to learn from the tasks the language that they need to participate successfully in them. Examples of such tasks would be working out the itinerary of a journey from a timetable, completing a passport application form, ordering a product from a catalogue and giving directions to the post office.

See authentic tasks.

Text

Any scripted or recorded production of a language presented to learners of that language. A text can be written or spoken and could be, for example, a poem, a newspaper article, a passage about pollution, a song, a film, an extract from a novel or play, a passage written to exemplify the use of the past perfect, a recorded telephone conversation, a scripted dialogue or a speech by a politician.

Workbook

A book which contains extra practice activities for learners to work on in their own time. Usually the book is designed so that learners can write in it and often there is an answer key provided in the back of the book to give feedback to the learners.

For definitions of other terms frequently used in EFL and applied linguistics see:


Learning styles
The way(s) that particular learners prefer to learn a language. Some have a preference for hearing the language (auditory learners), some for seeing it written down (visual learners), some for learning it in discrete bits (analytic learners), some for experiencing it in large chunks (global or holistic or experiential learners) and many prefer to do something physical whilst experiencing the language (kinesthetic learners).

L2
A term used to refer to both foreign and second languages.

See foreign language; second language.

Materials
Anything which is used to help to teach language learners. Materials can be in the form of a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD-Rom, a video, a photocopied handout, a newspaper, a paragraph written on a whiteboard: anything which presents or informs about the language being learned.

Materials adaptation
Making changes to materials in order to improve them or to make them more suitable for a particular type of learner. Adaptation can include reducing, adding, omitting, modifying and supplementing. Most teachers adapt materials every time they use a textbook in order to maximise the value of the book for their particular learners.

Materials evaluation
The systematic appraisal of the value of materials in relation to their objectives and to the objectives of the learners using them. Evaluation can be pre-use and therefore focused on predictions of potential value. It can be whilst-use and therefore focused on awareness and description of what the learners are actually doing whilst the materials are being used. And it can also be post-use and therefore focused on analysis of what happened as a result of using the materials.

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Materials which make use of a number of different media. Often they are available on a CD-Rom which makes use of print, graphics, video and sound. Usually such materials are interactive and enable the learner to receive feedback on the written or spoken language which they produce.

Pedagogic task
A task which does not replicate a real world task but which is designed to facilitate the learning of language or skills which would be useful in a
People associate the term 'language-learning materials' with textbooks because that has been their main experience of using them. However, in this book the term is used to refer to anything used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of a language. This could obviously be cassettes, videos, CD-Roms, grammar books, readers, workbooks or photocopied handouts. They could also be newspapers, food packages, photographs, audiotapes of native speakers, instructions given by a teacher, pen on cards or discussions between learners. In other words, anything which is deliberately used to increase the learners' practical contact with and/or experience of the language. Keeping this pragmatic view in mind can help materials developers to utilise a wide range of input as possible and, even more importantly, can help learners to realise that they are also materials developers and are ultimately responsible for the materials that their learners come across.

Development

Development refers to anything which is done by writers, teachers and learners to provide sources of language input and to exploit such sources in ways which maximise the likelihood of intake: in other words, supplying of information about and/or experience of the language to learners. Materials developers might write textbooks, tell stories, bring language use into the classroom, express an opinion, provide information on language use or read aloud from a language text. They do so in principled ways related to what they know about how languages can be effectively learned. All the chapters in this book concentrate on the two vital questions of what should be given to learners and what can be done with it to promote language learning.

Many chapters in this book do focus on the development of new materials (e.g. Jan Bell and Roger Gower in Chapter 5, Sue Wharton in Chapter 7, Hitomi Masuhara in Chapter 10 and chapter 12), a number of others focus on the development of materials (e.g. Rod Ellis and Jamie Pearson in Chapter 14 and Rod Ellis in Chapter 9) and some suggest ways in which teachers or materials developers can develop materials for themselves (e.g. Sue Wharton in Chapter 12).

Materials Evaluation

This term refers to attempts to measure the value of materials. In many cases this is done impressionistically and consists of attempts to predict whether or not the materials will work, in the sense that the learners will be able to use them without too much difficulty and will enjoy the experience of doing so. A number of chapters in this book challenge this vague, subjective concept of evaluation and advocate more systematic and potentially revealing approaches. For example, Peter Donovan in Chapter 7 suggests ways in which thorough trialling of materials prior to publication can improve the quality of materials. Andrew Littlejohn in Chapter 8 proposes a more objective, analytical approach to evaluation and Rod Ellis in Chapter 10 argues the need for whilst-use and post-use evaluation of materials in order to find out what the actual effects of the materials are.

All the chapters in this book implicitly accept the view that for materials to be valuable the learning points should be potentially useful to the learners and that the learning procedures should maximise the likelihood of the learners actually learning what they want and need to learn. It is not necessarily enough that the learners enjoy and value the materials.

Language Teaching

Most people think of teaching as the overt presentation of information by teachers to learners. In this book the term 'teaching' is used to refer to anything done by materials developers or teachers to facilitate the learning of the language. This could include the teacher standing at the front of the classroom explaining the conventions of direct speech in English, it could include a textbook providing samples of language use and guiding learners to make discoveries from them, it could include a textbook inviting learners to reflect on the way they have just read a passage or it could include the teacher providing the language a learner needs whilst participating in a challenging task. Teaching can be direct (in that it transmits information overtly to the learners) or it can be indirect (in that it helps the learners to discover things for themselves). Most chapters in this book focus on indirect teaching as the most effective way of facilitating the learning of a language. For example, in Chapters 1 and 2, Gwyneth Fox and Jane Willis suggest ways in which learners can be helped to make discoveries about language use by analysing similar samples of language in use, in Chapter 14 Grethe Hooper-Hansen looks at ways in which learners can be helped to learn from information which is actually peripheral to the task they are
Introduction

Brian Tomlinson

This book concerns itself with what we could do in order to improve the quality of materials which are used for the teaching of second languages. I would like to start the book by considering some of the steps which I think we could take and at the same time introducing issues which are dealt with in the various chapters of the book. I should stress that although the contributors to this book are basically like-minded in their approach to the development of L2 materials many of the issues raised are controversial and some of the stances taken in the book are inevitably contradictory. In such cases we hope you will be informed, stimulated and able to make up your own mind by relating the authors' stances to your own experience.

I am going to argue that what those of us involved in materials development should do is to:

1. Clarify the terms and concepts commonly used in discussing materials development.
2. Carry out systematic evaluations of materials currently in use in order to find out to what degree and why they facilitate the learning of language.
3. Consider the potential applications of current research into second language acquisition.
4. Consider the potential applications of what both teachers and learners believe is valuable in the teaching and learning of a second or foreign language.
5. Pool our resources and bring together researchers, writers, teachers, learners and publishers in joint endeavours to develop quality materials.

Terms and concepts

Let me start by clarifying some of the basic terms and concepts which you will frequently encounter in this book.
of language acquisition to triumph over all the others; the main reason is that it actually use the language). Some researchers argue that the best way to acquire a language is to do so naturally without formal lessons or conscious study of the language. Others argue that conscious attention to distinctive features of the language is necessary for successful language learning. Try skimming through an overview of second language acquisition research (e.g. Ellis 1994a) and you will soon become aware of some of the considerable (and, in my view, stimulating) disagreements amongst SLA researchers. Such disagreements are inevitable, given our limited access to the actual mental processes involved in the learning and use of languages and often the intensity of the arguments provoke additional and illuminating research. However, I believe that there is now a sufficient consensus of opinion for SLA research to be used as an informative base for the formulation of criteria for the teaching of languages. The following is a summary of what I think many SLA researchers would agree to be some of the basic principles of second language acquisition relevant to the development of materials for the teaching of languages.

**Materials should achieve impact**

Impact is achieved when materials have a noticeable effect on learners, that is when the learners' curiosity, interest and attention are attracted. If this is achieved there is a better chance that some of the language in the materials will be taken in for processing.

Materials can achieve impact through:

a) novelty (e.g. unusual topics, illustrations and activities);

b) variety (e.g. breaking up the monotony of a unit routine with an unexpected activity; using many different text types taken from many different types of sources; using a number of different instructor voices on a cassette);

c) attractive presentation (e.g. use of attractive colours; lots of white space; use of photographs);

d) appealing content (e.g. topics of interest to the target learners; topics which offer the possibility of learning something new; engaging stories; universal themes; local reference).

One obvious point is that there is considerable disagreement amongst researchers about some of the main issues relevant to the learning of languages. Some argue that the main prerequisite is opportunity for output, i.e. situations in which you have to actually use the language. Others argue that conscious attention to distinctive features of the language is necessary for successful language learning. Try skimming through an overview of second language acquisition research (e.g. Ellis 1994a) and you will soon become aware of some of the considerable (and, in my view, stimulating) disagreements amongst SLA researchers. Such disagreements are inevitable, given our limited access to the actual mental processes involved in the learning and use of languages and often the intensity of the arguments provoke additional and illuminating research. However, I believe that there is now a sufficient consensus of opinion for SLA research to be used as an informative base for the formulation of criteria for the teaching of languages. The following is a summary of what I think many SLA researchers would agree to be some of the basic principles of second language acquisition relevant to the development of materials for the teaching of languages.

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specification of objectives, principles and procedures. Obviously these
intuitions are informed by experience of what is valuable to learners of
a language and in many cases they lead to the development of valuable
materials. But how useful it would be if we were able to carry out long-
term, systematic evaluations of materials which are generally considered
to be successful. I know of a number of famous textbook writers who
do sit down and identify the popular and apparently successful features
of their competitors so that they can clone these features and can avoid
those features which appear to be unpopular and unsuccessful. Doing
much more than this sort of ad hoc impressionistic evaluation of
materials would involve considerable time and expenditure and would
create great problems in controlling such variables as learner moti-
vation, out of class experience and learner-teacher rapport. But longi-
tudinal, systematic evaluations of popular materials could be under-
taken by consortia of publishers, universities and associations such as
MATSDA and could certainly provide empirically validated information
about the actual effects of different types of language learning materials.

A number of chapters in this book try to push the profession forward
towards using more systematic evaluation procedures as a means of
informing materials development. In Chapter 7 Peter Donovan proposes
generous and representative trialling and evaluation of materials prior to
publication, in Chapter 8 Andrew Littlejohn exemplifies procedures for
achieving thorough and informative analysis of what materials are
actually doing and in Chapter 9 Rod Ellis insists that we should stop
judging materials by their apparent appeal and start evaluating them by
observing what the learners actually do when using the materials and by
finding out what they seem to learn as a result of using them.

Second language acquisition research
and materials development

It seems clear that researchers cannot at present agree upon a
single view of the learning process which can safely be applied
wholesale to language teaching. (Tarone and Yule 1989)

... no second language acquisition research can provide a
definitive answer to the real problems of second language
teaching at this point ... There is no predetermined correct
theory of language teaching originating from second language
acquisition research. (Cook 1996)

It is true that we should not expect definitive answers from second
language acquisition research (SLA), nor should we expect one research-

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section in the book which provides advice on scanning whereas those learners who decide to use questionnaires could be referred to a section which deals with writing questions.

Obviously providing the learners with a choice of topic and task is important if you are trying to achieve perception of relevance and utility in a general English textbook.

**Materials should require and facilitate learner self-investment**

Many researchers have written about the value of learning activities which require the learners to make discoveries for themselves. For example, Rutherford and Sharwood-Smith (1988) assert that the role of the classroom and of teaching materials is to aid the learner to make efficient use of the resources in order to facilitate self-discovery. Similar views are expressed by Bolitho and Tomlinson (1995); Tomlinson (1994a) and Wright and Bolitho (1993).

It would seem that learners profit most if they invest interest, effort and attention in the learning activity. Materials can help them to achieve this by providing them with choices of focus and activity, by giving them topic control and by engaging them in learner-centred discovery activities. Again this is not as easy as assuming that what is taught should be learned but it is possible and extremely useful for textbooks to facilitate learner self-investment. In my experience, one of the most profitable ways of doing this is to get learners interested in a written or spoken text, to get them to respond to it globally and affectively and then to help them to analyse a particular linguistic feature of it in order to make discoveries for themselves (see Tomlinson 1994a for a specific example of this procedure). Other ways of achieving learner investment are involving the learners in mini-projects, involving them in finding supplementary materials for particular units in a book and giving them responsibility for making decisions about which texts to use and how to use them (an approach I saw used with great success in an Indonesian high school in which each group in a large class was given responsibility for one reading lesson per semester).

**Learners must be ready to acquire the points being taught**

Certain structures are acquired only when learners are mentally ready for them. (Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982)

Meisel, Clahsen and Pienemann (1981) have put forward the Multi-dimensional Model in which learners must have achieved readiness in order to learn developmental features (i.e. those constrained by
should help learners to feel at ease

Research has shown . . . the effects of various forms of anxiety on learning: the less anxious the learner, the better language acquisition proceeds. Similarly, relaxed and comfortable students apparently can learn more in shorter periods of time. (Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982)

It is known that pressure can stimulate some types of language learning, but many researchers would agree that most language learning takes place when learners feel at ease and that they lose opportunities for learning when they feel anxious, uncomfortable or tense. Teachers developers argue that it is the responsibility of the teacher to help the learners to feel at ease and that the materials can do very little to help. I disagree. Materials can help learners to feel at ease in a number of ways. For instance:

- Be comfortable with materials with lots of white space than with materials in which lots of different activities are packed together on the same page;
- Be at ease with texts and illustrations that they can relate to in a culture than they are with those which are culturally exotic (before potentially alien);
- Be relaxed with materials which are obviously trying to help learners to learn than they are with materials which are always testing reading at ease can also be achieved through a ‘voice’ which is friendly and supportive, through content and activities which encourage the personal participation of the learners, through materials which relate the world of the book to the world of the learner and the absence of activities which could threaten self-esteem and humiliation. To me the most important (and possibly least noticed) factor is that of the ‘voice’ of the materials. Conventionally written in a semi-formal style and reveal very little about personality, interests and experiences of the writer. What I would like materials writers to do is to chat to the learners casually in the same way that good teachers do and to try to achieve personal contact with them by revealing their own preferences, interests and opinions. I would also like to see them try to achieve a personal voice (Beck, McKeown and Worthy 1995) by ensuring that what they say to the learners contains such features of orality as:
  - informal discourse features (e.g. contracted forms, 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).

Materials should help learners to develop confidence

Relaxed and self-confident learners learn faster. (Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982)

Most materials developers recognises the need to help learners to develop confidence but many of them attempt to do so through a process of simplification. They try to help the learners to feel successful by asking them to use simple language to accomplish easy tasks. This approach is welcomed by many teachers and learners. But in my experience it often only succeeds in diminishing the learners. They become aware that the process is being simplified for them and that what they are doing bears little resemblance to actual language use. They also become aware that they are not really using their brains and that their apparent success is an illusion. And this awareness can even lead to a reduction in confidence. I prefer to attempt to build confidence through activities which try to ‘push’ learners slightly beyond their existing proficiencies by engaging them in tasks which are stimulating, which are problematic but which are achievable too. It can also help if the activities encourage learners to use and to develop their existing extra-linguistic skills, such as those which involve being imaginative, being creative or being analytical. An elementary level learner can often gain greater confidence from making up a story, writing a short poem or making a grammatical discovery than she can from getting right a simple drill.

The value of engaging the learners’ minds and utilising their existing skills seems to be becoming increasingly realised in countries which have decided to produce their own materials rather than to rely on global textbooks which seem to underestimate the abilities of their learners. See Tomlinson (1995b) for a report on such projects in Bulgaria, Morocco and Namibia.
situation in which the content, strategies and expression of the interaction are determined by the learners. Such attempts can enable the learners to 'check' the effectiveness of their internal hypotheses, especially if the activities stimulate them into 'pushed output' (Swain 1985) which is slightly above their current proficiency. They also help the learners to automatise their existing procedural knowledge (i.e. their knowledge of how the language is used) and to develop strategic competence (Canale and Swain 1980). This is especially so if the opportunities for use are interactive and encourage negotiation of meaning (Allwright 1984:157). In addition, communicative interaction can provide opportunities for picking up language from the new input generated, as well as opportunities for learner output to become an informative source of input (Sharwood-Smith 1987). Ideally teaching materials should provide opportunities for such interaction in a variety of discourse modes ranging from planned to unplanned (Ellis 1990:193).

Interaction can be achieved through, for example:

- information or opinion gap activities which require learners to communicate with each other and/or the teacher in order to close the gap (e.g. finding out what food and drink people would like at the class party);
- post-listening and post-reading activities which require the learners to use information from the text to achieve a communicative purpose (e.g. deciding what television programmes to watch, discussing who to vote for, writing a review of a book or film);
- creative writing and creative speaking activities such as writing a story or improvising a drama;
- formal instruction given in the target language either on the language itself or on another subject:

  We need to recognise that teaching intended as formal instruction also serves as interaction. Formal instruction does more than teach a specific item: it also exposes learners to features which are not the focus of the lesson. (Ellis 1990)

The value of materials facilitating learner interaction is stressed in this book by Alan Maley in Chapter 12, by Julian Edge and Sue Wharton in Chapter 15 and by Brian Tomlinson in Chapter 15.

Materials should take into account that the positive effects of instruction are usually delayed

Research into the acquisition of language shows that it is a gradual rather than an instantaneous process and that this is equally true for
developing speech-processing mechanisms – e.g. word order) but can make themselves ready at any time to learn variational features (i.e. those which are free – e.g. the copula ‘be’). Pienemann (1985) claims that instruction can facilitate natural language acquisition processes if it coincides with learner readiness and can lead to increased speed and frequency of rule application and to application of rules in a wider range of linguistic contexts. He also claims that premature instruction can be harmful because it can lead to the production of erroneous forms, to substitution by less complex forms and to avoidance. Pienemann’s theories have been criticised for the narrowness of their research and application (restricted mainly to syntax, according to Fox 1996) but I am sure most teachers would recognise the negative effects of premature instruction reported by Pienemann.

Krashen 1985 argues the need for roughly-tuned input which is comprehensible because it features what the learners are already familiar with; but which also contains the potential for acquiring other elements of the input which each learner might or might not be ready to learn (what Krashen refers to as i × j in which i represents what has already been learned and j represents what is available for learning). According to Krashen, each learner will only learn from the new input what he or she is ready to learn. Other discussions of the need for learner readiness can be found in Ellis 1990 (see especially pp. 152-8 for a discussion of variational and developmental features of readiness).

Readiness can be achieved by materials which create situations requiring the use of variational features not previously taught, by materials which ensure that the learners have gained sufficient mastery over the developmental features of the previous stage before teaching a new one and by materials which roughly tune the input so that it contains some features which are slightly above each learner’s current rate of proficiency. It can also be achieved by materials which get learners to focus attention on features of the target language which they have not yet acquired so that they might be more attentive to these features in future input.

But perhaps the most important lesson for materials developers from readiness research is that we cannot expect to select a particular point of teaching and assume that all the learners are ready and willing to learn it. It is important to remember that the learner is always in charge and that “in the final analysis we can never completely control what the learner does, for HE (sic) selects and organises, whatever the input”. (Kennedy 1973: 76)

Materials should expose the learners to language in authentic use

Krashen (1985) makes the strong claim that comprehensible input in the target language is both necessary and sufficient for the acquisition of that language provided that learners are ‘affectively disposed to “let in” the input they comprehend’ (Ellis 1990: 273). Few researchers would agree with such a strong claim but most would agree with a weaker claim that exposure to authentic use of the target language is necessary but not sufficient for the acquisition of that language.

Materials can provide exposure to authentic input through the advice they give, the instructions for their activities and the spoken and written texts they include. They can also stimulate exposure to authentic input through the activities they suggest (e.g. interviewing the teacher, doing a project in the local community, listening to the radio etc.). In order to facilitate acquisition the input must be comprehensible (i.e. understandable enough to achieve the purpose for responding to it). This means that there is no point in using long extracts from newspapers with beginners but it does not mean that beginners cannot be exposed to authentic input. They can follow instructions intended to elicit physical responses, they can listen to stories, they can listen to songs, they can fill in forms.

Ideally materials at all levels should provide frequent exposure to authentic input which is rich and varied. In other words the input should vary in style, mode, medium and purpose and should be rich in features which are characteristic of authentic discourse in the target language. And, if the learners want to be able to use the language for general communication, it is important that they are exposed to planned, semi-planned and unplanned discourse (e.g. a formal lecture, an informal radio interview and a spontaneous conversation).The materials should also stimulate learner interaction with the input rather than just passive reception of it. This does not necessarily mean that the learners should always produce language in response to the input; but it does mean that they should always do something mentally or physically in response to it.

See in particular, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 11, 12 and 15 of this book for arguments in favour of exposing learners to authentic materials.

The learners’ attention should be drawn to linguistic features of the input

There seems to be an agreement amongst many researchers that helping learners to pay attention to linguistic features of authentic input can help them to eventually acquire some of those features. However it is
and with a teacher who does not keep correcting me. But I am
tend to be analytic and visual when learning French for examina-
tions in a class of competitive students and with a teacher who
is correcting me. And, of course, learners can be helped to gain
strong and consistent motivation. The ideal learner is one who
does not need correction, who is not competitive and who
wants to be a communicator. Most of all, the ideal learner
has a strong positive attitude to the language. This positive
attitude is likely to find a typical class of learners. Obviously
no materials developer can cater for all
attitudes likely to be found among a typical class of learners.

- including units in which the value of learning English is a topic for
discussion;
- including activities which involve the learners in discussing their
attitudes and feelings about the course and the materials;
- researching and catering for the diverse interests of the identified
target learners;
- being aware of the cultural sensitivities of the target learners;
- giving general and specific advice in the teacher's book on how to
respond to negative learners (e.g. not forcing reluctant individuals to
take part in groupwork).

For reports on research into affective differences see Ellis 1984; 472-83
and Wenden and Rubin 1987.

For specific suggestions on how materials can cater for learner
differences see Tomlinson 1996 and Chapter 12 by Alan Meale and
Chapter 13 by Julian Edge and Sue Wharton in this book.

Materials should permit a silent period at the
beginning of instruction

It has been shown that it can be extremely valuable to delay L2 speaking
at the beginning of a course until learners have gained sufficient
exposure to the target language and sufficient confidence in under-
standing it. This silent period can facilitate the development of an
effective internalised grammar which can help learners to achieve
proficiency when they eventually start to speak in the L2. There is some
controversy about the actual value of the silent period and some learners
seem to use the silence to avoid learning the language. However I think
most researchers would agree that forcing immediate production in the
new language can damage the reluctant speaker affectively and
linguistically and many would agree with Dulay, Burt and Krashen that:

- communication situations in which students are permitted
to remain silent or respond in their first language may be the
most effective approach for the early phases of language
instruction. This approach approximates what language learn-
ers of all ages have been observed to do naturally, and it appears
to be more effective than forcing full two-way communication
from the very beginning of L2 acquisition. (1982: 25-6)

The important point is that the materials should not force premature
speaking in the target language and they should not force silence either.
Ways of giving learners the possibility of not speaking until they are
ready include:

- choosing different types of text;
- choosing different types of activities;
- using optional extras for the more positive and moti-
   vated learners;
- using variety;
Materials should take into account that learners differ in learning styles

Different learners have different preferred learning styles. So, for example, those learners with a preference for studial learning are much more likely to gain from explicit grammar teaching than those who prefer experiential learning. And those who prefer experiential learning are more likely to gain from reading a story with a predominant grammatical feature (e.g. reported speech) than they are from being taught that feature explicitly. This means that activities should be variable and should cater for all learning styles. An analysis of most current coursebooks will reveal a tendency to favour learners with a preference for studial learning and an apparent assumption that all learners are equally capable of benefiting from this style of learning. Likewise an analysis of the teaching and testing of foreign languages in formal education systems throughout the world will reveal that studial learners (who are actually in the minority) are at an advantage.

Styles of learning which need to be catered for in language learning materials include:

- visual (e.g. the learner prefers to see the language written down);
- auditory (e.g. the learner prefers to hear the language);
- kinaesthetic (e.g. the learner prefers to do something physical, such as following instructions);
- studial (e.g. the learner likes to pay conscious attention to the linguistic features of the language and wants to be correct);
- experiential (e.g. the learner likes to use the language and is more concerned with communication than with correctness);
- analytic (e.g. the learner prefers to focus on discrete bits of the language and to learn them one by one);
- global (e.g. the learner is happy to respond to whole chunks of language at a time and to pick up from them whatever language he can);
- dependent (e.g. the learner prefers to learn from a teacher and from a book);
- independent (e.g. the learner is happy to learn from their own experience of the language and to use autonomous learning strategies).

I think a learner's preference for a particular learning style is variable and depends, for example, on what is being learned, where it is being learned, who is being learned with and what it is being learned for. For example, I am happy to be experiential, global and kinaesthetic when learning Japanese out of interest with a group of relaxed adult
There have been attempts to involve learners in the evaluation of courses and materials (see Alderson 1989a for an interesting account of post-course evaluations which involved contacting the learners after their courses had finished) and a number of researchers have kept diaries recording their own experiences as learners of a foreign language (e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986) but little systematic research has been published on what learners actually want their learning materials to do (see Johnson 1995 for an account of what one adult learner wants from her learning materials).

One exceptional example of trying to make use of both learner and teacher beliefs and wants was the Namibia Textbook Project. Prior to the writing of the Grade xo English textbook, On Target (1995), teachers and students all over the country were consulted via questionnaires. Their responses were then made use of when 20 teachers met together to design and write the book. The first draft of the book was completed by these teachers at an eight day workshop and it was then trialled all over the country before being revised for publication by an editorial panel. Such consultation and collaboration is rare in materials development and could act as a model for textbook writing. See Tomlinson (1995b) for a description of this and other similar projects.

Collaboration

The Namibian Textbook Project mentioned above is a classic example of the value of pooling resources. On page iv of On Target (1995) 40 contributors are acknowledged. Some of these were teachers, some were curriculum developers, some were publishers, some were administrators, some were university lecturers and researchers, some were examiners, one was a published novelist and all of them made a significant contribution to the development of the book. This bringing together of expertise in a collaborative endeavour is extremely rare and, as one of the contributors to the Project, I can definitely say it was productive. Too often in my experience researchers have made theoretical claims without developing applications of them, writers have ignored theory and have followed procedural rather than principled instincts, teachers have complained without making efforts to exert an influence, learners have been ignored and publishers have been driven by considerations of what they know they can sell. We all have constraints on our time and our actions but it must be possible and potentially valuable for us to get together to pool our resources and share our expertise in a joint endeavour to develop materials which offer language learners maximum opportunities for successful learning. This bringing together
starting the course with a Total Physical Response (TPR) approach in which the learners respond physically to oral instructions from a teacher or cassette (see Asher 1977; Tomlinson 1994b);

- starting with a listening comprehension approach in which the learners listen to stories in the target language which are made accessible through the use of sound effects, visual aids and dramatic movement by the teacher;

- permitting the learners to respond to target language questions by using their first language or through drawings and gestures.

A possible extension of the principle of permitting silence is to introduce most new language points (regardless of the learners' level) through activities which initially require comprehension but not production. This was an approach which we called TPR Plus and which we used on the PKG Project in Indonesian secondary schools. It usually involved introducing new vocabulary or structures through stories which the learners responded to by drawing and/or using their first language and through activities in which the whole class mimed stories by following oral instructions from the teacher (see Tomlinson 1990, 1994b).

For discussion of research into the silent period see Ellis 1994a: 82-84; Krashen 1982; Saville-Troike 1988.

**Materials should maximise learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement which stimulates both right and left brain activities**

A narrowly focused series of activities which require very little cognitive processing (e.g. mechanical drills; rule learning; simple transformation activities) usually leads to shallow and ephemeral learning unless linked to other activities which stimulate mental and affective processing. However a varied series of activities making, for example, analytic, creative, evaluative and rehearsal demands on processing capacity can lead to deeper and more durable learning. In order for this deeper learning to be facilitated it is very important that the content of the materials is not trivial or banal and that it stimulates thoughts and feelings in the learners. It is also important that the activities are not too simple and that they cannot be too easily achieved without the learners making use of their previous experience and their brains.

The maximisation of the brain's learning potential is a fundamental principle of Lozanov's Suggestopedia in which, 'he enables the learner to receive the information through different cerebral processes and in different states of consciousness so that it is stored in many different parts of the brain, maximising recall' (Hooper Hansen 1992). Suggesto-

**Materials should not rely too much on controlled practice**

It is interesting that there seems to be very little research which indicates that controlled practice activities are valuable. Sharwood-Smith (1982) does say that, 'it is clear and uncontroversial to say that most spontaneous performance is attained by dint of practice', but he provides no evidence to support this very strong claim. Also Bialystok (1988) says that automaticity is achieved through practice but provides no evidence to support her claim. In the absence of any compelling evidence most researchers seem to agree with Ellis who says that 'controlled practice appears to have little long term effect on the accuracy with which new structures are performed' (Ellis 1990: 192) and 'has little effect on fluency' (Ellis and Rathbone 1987).

Yet controlled grammar practice activities still feature significantly in popular coursebooks and are considered to be useful by many teachers and by many learners. This is especially true of dialogue practice which has become popular in many methodologies for the last 30 years without there being any substantial research evidence to support it (see Tomlinson 1995a). In a recent analysis of new low level coursebooks I found that nine out of ten of them contained more opportunities for controlled practice than they did for language use. It is possible that right now all over the world learners are wasting their time doing drills and listening to and repeating dialogues.

**Materials should provide opportunities for outcome feedback**

Feedback which is focused first on the effectiveness of the outcome rather than just on the accuracy of the output can lead to output becoming a profitable source of input. Or in other words; if the language that the learner produces is evaluated in relation to the purpose for which it is used that language can become a powerful and informative source of information about language use. Thus a learner...
Part A Data collection and materials development

1 Using corpus data in the classroom

Gwyneth Fox

Introduction

During the past 20 years there has been a revolution in the way in which language can be studied. Because of the rapid development in the ability of computers to handle large amounts of language data, it is now possible to build language corpora which allow researchers to analyse how the language is being used at the present time, or indeed how it was used at particular times in the past. Before now researchers had basically to extrapolate trends, usages and so on from a small sample of language – their own use, that of people around them, the language they heard and read. The statements made were idiolectal and intuitive. Often they were right – or nearly right – as far as they went; but there was frequently more that could, and should, be said. Dictionaries, grammars, and other reference books compiled before the advent of corpora tended to rely heavily on books that were already published: a new grammar was likely to be based on previously published grammars, a new dictionary likewise. But with the advent of corpora researchers can – indeed should – start afresh, where possible laying aside their intuitions and looking at what the data tells them. The first corpora – which included the Survey of English Usage, established in the early 1960s (Svartvik and Quirk, 1980), the Brown Corpus, completed in 1964 (Kucera and Francis 1967), and the Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen (LOB) Corpus, completed in 1976 (Hulland and Johansson 1982) were, in today’s terms, small – but it must be remembered that never before had researchers been able to look at so many examples of the way in which a particular word was used, or the way in which words of a particular grammatical class typically behaved.

Nowadays, computers have developed in such a way that there is no longer any restriction on the size a corpus can be. A corpus is nothing more nor less than a collection of texts input into a computer, and the number of texts will depend upon the uses that will be made of the corpus. For example, if teachers want to know what type of English is