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## DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING APPROPRIATE EFL LEARNING MATERIALS REFLECTING NEW CONTEXTS AND GOALS

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### **Abstract**

*It is obvious that learning materials/ teaching materials/ instructional materials are one of the most crucial components for a teacher, including an English teacher, no matter where he/she teaches. "TESOL survey finds teachers spend 7 hours per week searching for instructional materials/resources and another 5 hours per week creating their own instructional materials" (Goldberg, 2017). Several similar topics about materials development have been published elsewhere in different seminar events, textbooks, and journals. They have discussed various literature about materials development such as principles and procedure of materials development (Tomlinson, n.d), guidelines for designing effective English language teaching materials and factors to consider when designing materials (Howard and Major, n.d), language learning materials development (BİLOKCUOĞLU, 2015), developing learning materials for specific purposes (Harsono, 2007) and some others. However, none of them discussed specifically about developing appropriate EFL learning materials reflecting new contexts and goals. This paper, therefore, will review related literature around materials development, from theories – principles and procedure - to its practice from evaluating, adapting, supplementing and creating own materials, which can match with the new contexts and goals already set before.*

**Keywords:** Designing, Developing, Materials, Contexts, Goals

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

EFL learning materials have been available elsewhere nowadays including in Indonesia where English is treated as a foreign language. In Indonesia English is taught formally since the first year of junior high schools through the university level. Most teachers in Indonesia usually use the existing learning materials to teach their students: textbooks, cassettes, CDs, VCDs available in the bookstores; only a few, I think, prepare their learning materials based on their instructional objectives. "TESOL survey finds teachers spend 7 hours per week searching for instructional materials/resources and another 5 hours per week creating their own instructional materials" (Goldberg, 2017). This fact tells us that it is not easy for English teachers to prepare EFL learning materials for their students; let alone, designing and developing appropriate EFL learning materials reflecting new contexts and goals. This article will review the literature about EFL materials development both as a field of study and as a practical undertaking: definition, principles and procedure, adopting, adapting, supplementing, and creating own materials. Specific section will be presented about designing and developing appropriate EFL learning materials reflecting new contexts and goals. Concluding remarks will end this article.

### **2. REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES**

#### **Materials Development**

To provide comprehensive understanding of language learning materials I would like to review the literature related to this topic: definition, principles, procedure, and practice of developing (adapting, adopting, supplementing, self-creating) EFL learning materials for new contexts and goals already set before.

#### **Definition**

EFL learning materials are those that can help learners to achieve the learning outcomes. Therefore EFL learning materials can be in the forms of a textbook, a workbook, a cassette, a CD-ROM, a video, a photocopied handout, a newspaper, a paragraph written on a whiteboard or anything which presents or informs about the language being learned (Tomlinson, 1998).

Language learning materials also mean anything that can facilitate the leaning of a language which can be in linguistic, visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. These materials can be presented in different format such as in prints, cassettes, CDs, VCDs, etc. These language learning materials can be instructional, experiential, elicitive, or exploratory. They are instructional when the information given to the learners is about the language. They are experiential when the learners are exposed to the language being used. They are elicitive when with the materials the learners are stimulated to the language use. Language learning materials are exploratory when the learners are directed to language use in natural settings (Tomlinson, 2001).

### **Principles**

Reviewing the literature about the principles of developing language learning materials, I can find several, two of which were proposed by Tomlinson (1998) and Howard and Major (n.d) which they called “Guidelines for Designing Effective English Teaching Materials” instead of principles.

Tomlinson (1998) suggests sixteen principles of materials development for the teaching of English.

1. Materials should achieve impact.
2. Materials should help learners to feel at ease.
3. Materials should help learners to develop confidence.
4. What is being taught should be perceived by learners as relevant and useful.
5. Materials should require and facilitate learner self-investment.
6. Learners must be ready to acquire the points being taught.
7. Materials should expose the learners to language in authentic use.
8. The learners’ attention should be drawn to linguistic features of the input.
9. Materials should provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes.
10. Materials should take into account that the positive effects of instruction are usually delayed.
11. Materials should take into account that learners differ in learning styles.
12. Materials should take into account that learners differ in affective attitudes.
13. Materials should permit a silent period at the beginning of instruction.
14. Materials should maximize learning potential by encouraging intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement which stimulates both right and left brain activities.
15. Materials should not rely too much on controlled practice.
16. Materials should provide opportunities for outcome feedback.

Howard and Major (n.d) offer, as alternatives, ten guidelines for Designing Effective English Teaching Materials as follows:

1. English language teaching materials should be contextualised.
2. Materials should stimulate interaction and be generative in terms of language.
3. English language teaching materials should encourage learners to develop learning skills and strategies.
4. English language teaching materials should allow for a focus on form as well as function.
5. English language teaching materials should offer opportunities for integrated language use.
6. English language teaching materials should be authentic.
7. English language teaching materials should link to each other to develop a progression of skills, understandings, and language items.
8. English language teaching materials should be attractive.
9. English language teaching materials should have appropriate instruction.
10. English language teaching materials should be flexible.

Reading through those principles/guidelines of language learning materials, I don't think that we can follow all those principles in developing language learning materials for our students or target users. Therefore, we can choose one or some principles applicable to our target students when we develop our materials based on the steps or procedure we would like to follow.

### Procedure

In developing language learning materials, in addition to referring to the principles chosen, language learning materials developers have to follow logical steps or procedure to produce useful and logical language learning materials. The general procedure of development includes design/development, implementation, and evaluation. Dick and Carey (1990) suggest ten components of the systems approach model, that is, identify an instructional goal, conduct an instructional analysis, identify entry behaviors and characteristics, write performance objectives, develop criterion-referenced test items, develop an instructional strategy, **develop and/or select instructional materials**, design and conduct the formative evaluation, revise instruction, and conduct summative evaluation.

With this system approach model every teacher/language learning materials developer is capable of designing suitable materials for his/her students/target users based on the level of target users, performance objective of the target users, and the principle(s) of the language learning materials. The product of this design can be implemented in the real teaching of English in the level of students as planned. This English language learning materials implementation is used as a formative evaluation of the materials being developed. If it turns out that in the implementation of the materials the materials users find it inaccurate, the developer can revise for better product.

### Practice

In this particular practice I would like to review the literature as the basis to develop (adopt, adapt, supplement, self-create) EFL Learning Materials for new contexts and goals already set before.

Language learning materials, in practice, can be developed/produced by evaluating then adopting, adapting, supplementing existing language learning materials and creating own materials (Pinter, 2006). The following description is my explanation about materials development as in Harsono (2007):

Teachers usually use any textbook available to teach their students. What they can do is usually trying to evaluate the textbook they have to use to teach their students. In evaluating the textbook, teachers observe what works and what does not work and they add their own style/ preference and interpretation to the textbook. If they think that the textbook is in line with the curriculum/ syllabus, the textbook can be used to teach their students. Teachers will evaluate and select textbooks according to how appropriate they seem for the given context. Well designed textbooks can support inexperienced teachers a lot because they act as training materials. Textbooks can also be evaluated by exploring teachers' and learners' experiences and opinions about the textbooks as used in the classroom. This evaluation can result in the most effective textbooks which can be used in the classroom. This result, however, cannot be valid for different students and teachers and in different time.

After evaluating the textbook, each teacher has his/her own decision, that is, using the textbooks without having any change at all, adapting it according to the needs, supplementing it if necessary, or if the textbook does not fulfill the teachers' criteria, they can create their own materials based on their students' needs or other criteria of developing materials. Adapting a text can be based on different criteria. One possible adaptation is associated with the linguistic demands. A difficult text can be adapted by teachers to suit the competence level of the class. Pinter (2006:120) describes an adaptation of a well known fable "The grasshopper and the ants" from the original one to teach her class of eight-year-olds with very little English. Although this adaptation shows quite different form from the original one, this adapted fable still works for a number of reasons. First of all, the story is still a good source for learning new vocabulary, structures, and functions. From the vocabulary point of view, children can learn the names of animals, grasshopper and ants. From the structure, they can learn past tense used in the story, questions and answers in the conversation between the grasshopper

and the ants. From the functions, the fable still can be enjoyed by the children when they read it or listen to it and the fable still can teach the traditional moral lesson about the need to work for food.

Another thing to remember is that adapting teaching materials especially from the authentic text does not always work well. In adapting the authentic text to become learning materials, a teacher has to remember the English that the students have to learn from the adapted texts. Still, we have to allow the students to have an effort to cope with more challenges from the adapted texts. A teacher has to be conscious that gradually the students will have to struggle themselves to face the authentic texts without having any adaptation.

Supplementing the existing textbooks used to teach is another effort to cover the weakness of the available textbooks that does not match with the syllabus/ curriculum or objectives of the teaching/ learning. The supplementary teaching/ learning materials can vary according to the availability of the materials or the creativity of the teachers.

Creating own materials is the teachers' last effort to develop learning materials instead of adapting or supplementing the existing textbooks or authentic texts. There should be fundamental bases in order to create own materials, among others, teaching objectives or instructional goals (Dick and Carey, 1990), students' needs, and topic-based planning (Pinter, 2006:124).

Dick and Carey (1990) suggest a long procedure to develop instructional materials after identifying instructional goals. There are five steps between identifying instructional goal up to the instructional materials development: conducting instructional analysis, identifying entry behaviors and characteristics, writing performance objectives, developing criterion-referenced test items, and developing instructional strategy. The next step is developing and selecting instructional materials. With these steps Dick and Carey want to emphasize on the accuracy of all the components in the system approach of instructional design, including the accuracy of developing and selecting instructional materials.

A teacher can also develop learning materials on the basis of the students' needs. This situation would happen when a teacher is facing new students. In order to meet the students' needs of English, an English teacher has to find out what English competence the students want to achieve. After knowing the English competence that the students want to achieve, the teacher develops the learning materials to help the learners achieve the English competence they want.

Creating own materials based on "Topic-based planning" means that the materials developed for the learning materials should be based on the topic already chosen and, therefore, all the activities in all areas of the curriculum should be related to that one broad topic.

Designing and developing appropriate EFL learning materials reflecting new contexts and goals can be fulfilled by **reviewing or developing instructional strategy**. If we can identify or develop our instructional strategy, we can be sure to develop appropriate EFL learning materials for new contexts and goals (Dick and Carey, 1990).

### 3. CONCLUSION

English language learning materials are available everywhere, in bookstores, libraries, schools, internet, etc. They can be in the forms of prints, cassettes, CDs, VCDs, etc. and they can be instructional, experiential, elicitive, or exploratory. The problems are that we have to select the suitable and appropriate materials for our new contexts and goals. Be sure that our learning materials should meet the needs and wants of the learners. That is why we have to know the contexts and objectives or goals of our teaching or the goals of the learners learning the language.

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