

ESP materials

Materials selection, adaptation, or writing is an important area in ESP teaching, representing a practical result of effective course development and providing students with materials that will equip them with the knowledge they will need in their future business life.

What are Materials?

Materials are “anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language, including coursebooks, videos, graded readers, flash cards, games, websites and mobile phone interactions” (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 143). They can be “informative (informing the learner about the target language), instructional (guiding the learner in practising the language), experiential (providing the learner with experience of the language in use), eliciting (encouraging the learner to use the language) and exploratory (helping the learner to make discoveries about the language)” (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 143). Ideally materials should be developed for learning rather than for teaching and they should perform all the functions specified above.

What is Materials Development?

Materials development is a practical undertaking involving the production, evaluation, adaptation and exploitation of materials intended to facilitate language acquisition and development. It is also a field of academic study investigating the principles and procedures of the design, writing, implementation, evaluation and analysis of learning materials. Ideally materials development practitioners and materials development researchers interact and inform each other through conferences, publications and shared endeavours.

Why is Materials Development Important?

There have been a number of movements which have attempted to develop materials free approaches to the teaching of languages (e.g., the Dogme movement of Thornbury and Meddings (2001)) but it is commonly accepted that in most language classrooms throughout the world most lessons are still based on materials. Richards

(2001, p. 251), for example, observes that “instructional materials generally serve as the basis of much of the language input that learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom”. It is also commonly accepted that most language teachers use coursebooks and that no coursebook can meet the needs and wants of every (or even any) class (Tomlinson, 2010). This means that “Every teacher is a materials developer” (English Language Centre, 1997) who is constantly evaluating the available materials, adapting them, replacing them, supplementing them and finding effective ways to implement the materials chosen for classroom use.

Materials development must therefore be central to any course designed to train, educate or develop new or practising teachers and it must be accorded significance by the applied linguists and teacher trainers who run such courses and/or publish articles, chapters and books for use on them. In addition to the obvious pragmatic function of preparing teachers for the realities of classroom teaching materials development can also be extremely useful as a “way of helping teachers to understand and apply theories of language learning – and to achieve personal and professional development” (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 67).

ESP Material Adaptation

Adaptation denotes that languages teachers while in the ESP situation should look for the best of their classes. To do so, the following forms will be of great deal when opting for the process of materials adaptation. First Modifying the content by adding or deleting some parts to the material be it a textbook, a manuscript, or a recording. Second, reorganizing the content in terms of tasks; either by modifying or extending them according to the needs.

Now, the governing condition of all what has been said above is- as stated by Marand (2011:552 citing Graves 1996) -that abundant factors need to be taken into account while adapting materials. The most pivotal are: effectiveness in achieving the course objectives and appropriateness which encapsulates “student comfort and familiarity with the material, language level, interest and relevance”.

The last point to speak here is a frequent question asked by many ESP teachers or practitioners i.e. what are the ways of materials adaptation? But before, it should be stressed here that any material adaptation is based on an important previous process i.e. material evaluation. This last aims at investigating the deficiencies as well as the lacuna of ELT as to ESP materials. Coming back to the answer of the above question, it is summarised in the following table.

Table1.1 Ways for Material Adaptation adopted from (Maley, 1998:281. Cited in Tomlinson, 1998)

Way	Description
Omission	The teacher leaves out things deemed inappropriate, offensive, unproductive, etc., for the particular group.
Addition	Where there seems to be inadequate coverage, teachers may decide to add to textbooks, either in the form of texts or exercise material.
Reduction	Where the teacher shortens an activity to give it less weight or emphasis.
Extension	Where an activity is lengthened in order to give it an additional dimension. (For example, a vocabulary activity is extended to draw attention to some syntactic patterning.)
Rewriting/ Modification	Teacher may occasionally decide to rewrite material, especially exercise material, to make it more appropriate, more “communicative”, more demanding, more accessible to their students, etc.

Replacement

Text or exercise material which is considered inadequate, for whatever reason, may be replaced by more suitable material.

Re-ordering

Teachers may decide that the order in which the textbooks are presented is not suitable for their students. They can then decide to plot a different course through the textbooks from the one the writer has laid down

Branching

Teachers may decide to add options to the existing

Conclusion

In sum, one can say that ESP materials adaptation is seen as a result of materials development and evaluation. All of which, is to meet the students needs in their area of specialism. Besides, different materials have different potential areas for adaptation. The whole process of material adaptation is seen where the existing ELT materials: fail or are unable to fulfil the goals and objectives put forward by those engaged in syllabuses or curricula development. Furthermore, the material in hand cannot be finished in the time available, require facilities or equipment or other supporting materials that are not available. The rationale behind all what has been said throughout this paper is to engage the learners' personality, beneficial to the learners' culture, and cater for the learners' interests.

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