

Materials Used to Teach English Language: A Select Study

Dr. V. M Saranya

Assistant Professor, Department of English PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, India
saranyavmpsg[at]gmail.com

Abstract: *The paper entitled “Materials for language teaching and their improvisation: A Select Study” takes the readers through a journey to introspect on the “materials used in language learning”. The learners are the main part of teaching learning process though there are many elements in language teaching. However, teachers and learners are liable to rely heavily on the teaching materials as they often control the teaching. The teaching aids create environment of interest for students in learning. The paper emphasizes, on the different phases of materials used in teaching and learning of English language, which is of paramount importance in the field of linguistics. The paper speaks about different types of teaching tools and materials, to teach English language in classrooms, throwing light upon the availability, accessibility, and reasons for the improvisations in them, with a serious consideration of the authentic materials deployed in this domain. It also highlights the reasons for choice of materials with a differentiation of materials available from the ancient to the present and also their merits and de-merits. It aims to have a vision upon the globally accepted local materials, discussing their potency in the language teaching. It also evaluates the entry of politics in selection of teaching materials, as well as talks about the emergence and influence of multimedia in the discipline of language pedagogy and learning process. The paper also goes through the possibilities of learning through students, using themselves as the materials for the learning process rather than the age old monologue teaching style.*

Keywords: Material development, Authentic materials, Globalization, Digitalization, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

1. Introduction

English, being a global language has now become a ladder for social promotion and a window to the world. English has now become an essential part for survival in this world. But, teaching English has always been a challenge to the teachers and also to the students, especially in the nations which do not have English as their mother tongue. Students, teachers, material aids, teaching method and evaluation, frame the five major elements of English Language Teaching. Among these, the materials used to teach English language is considered as the most indispensable. It is because of the reason that the teachers and students heavily depend on them, they are considered indispensable. The material aids promote the creativity of students and awakes the curiosity and interest in their minds. It helps in keeping the things learned as “learned” in their minds. The main motive behind the implementation of teaching materials in English language teaching is to create impact in the learners by which they tend to perceive the things taught in a relevant way. According to the medium used, the materials can be classified into four: Printed materials, audio - visual material, and visual materials. Other classifications for teaching aids are: authentic material, created material and interactive materials. We will be going through all the above mentioned topics in detail in the paper.

Created and Authentic Teaching Materials

Any field of study requires the learners to take the help of various study materials, especially during the study of language. In language learning, these materials directly or indirectly control one’s learning and thereby ones command over the language. In language pedagogy, the teaching materials are basically classified into two: the created materials and the authentic materials. The created materials include all those materials that are prescribed in the

curriculum. These materials are prepared by experts and are the results of great research and continuous evaluation and studies done on them. They provide the learners with standard information and quite useful as materials for classroom teaching. These materials can only be used to kick-start any language studies as they prove themselves to be more prosaic and mechanical. They fail to create an environment of inquisitiveness among the learners, thereby making them less motivated. These study materials also lack the ability to lend the real use of language, to its learners. Merely adhering to these materials can equip the learners with a skeletal view of the language, with the knowledge of its basics, but cannot contribute to a much more holistic study. Thus the created materials can be understood as primitive materials for language study. The authentic materials are all those materials such as newspapers, notices, brochures, magazines, journals, menus, greeting cards, images, postcards, tickets, product labels, songs, television programs etc. These materials are highly useful in the study of language. They not only contribute to add upon ones vocabulary, but also they help the learners to know the jargons associated with any field. For instance, by going through a newspaper or a magazine, one is exposed to the “language of journalism.” Thus these materials help the learners to distinguish from the “bookish knowledge” and the “real knowledge.”

Division of Materials Based on Medium

On the basis of the medium used the teaching materials can also be divided into four; printed materials, visual materials, audio materials and audio-visual materials. The printed materials include all hard copies used for Language learning that is books, text books, newspapers magazine etc. The visual material encompasses a wide range of forms that includes paintings drawings, cartoons, prints, videotapes and three dimensional structures. The audio aids are radio, tape

recorder, language laboratory, audio cassette player etc. The audio-visual material is a combination of the audio and visual aids and is the most effective of all other aids as they are able to draw the learners attention with its visual and auditory appeal. This is one of the core reasons that allow the fast flourishing of computer or mobile aided language learning. The wave of modernization has hit man in every phases of life so is in the case of education. The modern education involves the use of electronic gadgets like computers, mobile phones etc., thus transforming the ordinary classrooms into smart class rooms. This transformation enabled the pupils to undertake their studies with more interest and also making the learning fun. In ELT this is referred to as computer assisted language learning[CALL] or mobile assisted language learning[MALL].The CALL materials takes into consideration principles of language pedagogy that are driven by various learning theories such as behaviourist, cognitive, constructivist and monitor hypothesis. These materials are normally found as supporting materials for classroom teaching and this design is what is known as blended learning. Mobile phones do the role of a language teaching-learning material; by the increase in the number applications aimed at customised learning .The customisation help the learners to adjust their language learning process according to their needs by allowing them their own space, freedom and pace of learning, which is alien to the regular classroom teaching.

Glocal materials – Education demands the learners and the society to deal with the challenges of the future that are both of local and global character. Globalisation, is a concept put forward by Robertson, that speaks about blending the local with the global or vice-versa. In language learning glocalisation is defined as the use of locally available material as support materials for language learning. For example, a global language such as English can be understood on the basis of locally available materials that are the adaptations of the materials in the international markets. This adaptation allows the learners to have a better understanding of the subject.an example for these material is the adaptation of Gogo Loves English that is used in many parts of China. In some cases teachers as well as the learners make use of the regional language for language learning .for instance, for an Indian learner English is a foreign language, so he can make use of the regional language for a comparative study of the languages. This method helps in transferring the linguistic skills from the regional language to English and this is termed as cognitive retroactive transfer.

2. Research Methodology

This is a qualitative study and is based on the interviews with a random set of language teachers and students of an undergraduate course. This study uses percentages to draw conclusions.

Here are some questions we asked as part of our survey to the English teachers and their answers

- 1) To what extent does the text books preferred in the curriculum act as a support material for language learning?

Many opined that teaching English language based on a prescribed curriculum, written and molded by someone else will surely reduce the creativity and the enthusiasm among the children it does not give the children to use their hidden potential.

- 2) How much do you think the students can use the “authentic materials”?

The teachers are of the opinion that the authentic materials are more beneficial, for the fact that it teaches language with the understanding of its uses and restrictions, thus bringing out the true form of a language. The authentic materials are easily available and also proved to be useful for harnessing the creative power of the students. These reasons make them a better option than the created materials.

- 3) Does the institution provide you with audio-visual room or E- learning techniques, as far as language learning is concerned?

The teachers mentioned that every classroom is equipped with multimedia facilities and interaction boards. The school also provides a live-in-language lab for the secondary and higher secondary students.

- 4) Are you aware of CALL and MALL? If so how?

More than 70 %of teachers were aware of Media Assisted Language Learning and Computer Assisted Language Learning and they claimed to be the active users of these designs of language teaching.

- 5) What are the scopes of authentic materials other than the prescribed textbooks: like the cartoons, advertisements and other programs in television to develop your student’s language?

For children, watching English cartoons are highly recommended, because they lays an impact that is irreversible. Such programs sketch a proper picture of language and thoughts in the minds of children. Coming to the case of adults, we recommend them to watch English channels to enhance their English armory, because to master something, we have to attain all the basic practical knowledge regarding the language.

- 6) Which among these can influence the younger generation the more?

The kids will be more influenced by cartoons and adults will be influenced by English movies and entertainment programs.

- 7) How do you rate the printed materials over the audio and visual materials?

A considerable number of faculties were of the opinion that audio and visual materials can reach more students than the printed materials, because the audio and visual materials can reach the differently abled children along with other students. This creates a sense of equality an makes the quote “education for everyone” true.

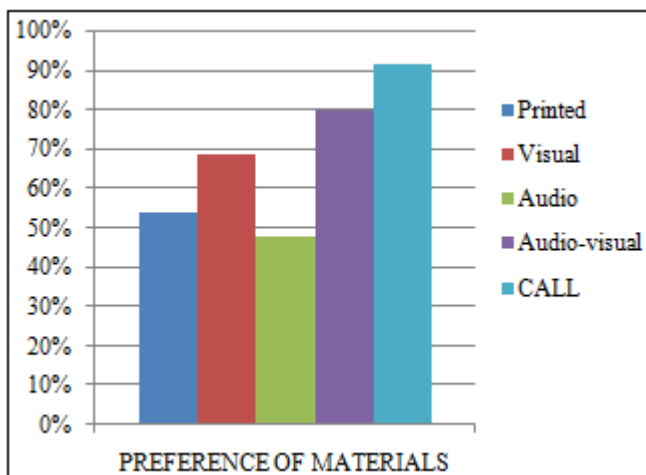
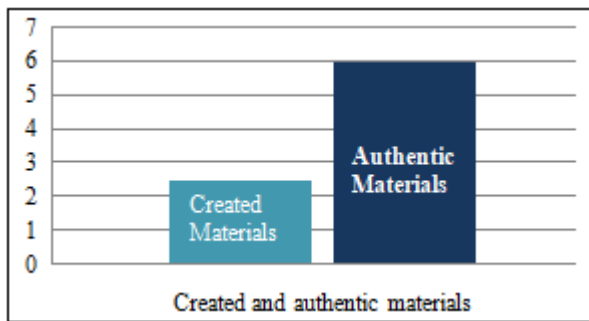
A survey was also conducted among the students to know their views on language learning. The questions and results were as follows:

- 1) What is your opinion on the present system of English language teaching?
- 2) What type of teaching would be more comfortable for you?
- 3) What is your opinion about CALL and MALL?
- 4) So from this can we assume that you are in support of visual aids for teaching?

5) What do you think can be the demerits of these visual aids in teaching?

creates a self - esteem in the mind of our students. This helps in framing a bold generation of students.

Our findings based on the conclusions drawn out of the interview sections with both, the teachers as well as the students. The percentages drawn are approximated values.



3. Conclusion

From the above mentioned facts and studies and experimental analysis, we come to a conclusion that the knowledge given through textbooks are just factual knowledge based on the intelligence of the person who created the syllabus or the curriculum of that text. It does not provide any opportunity for the students to use their potential it only offers the lectures by teachers, which is a boring thing for students and often they fall asleep in these classes. In our opinion, the teachers should give the students more opportunities to sharpen their creativity. Teachers should tell the students to make a class library, prepare charts on the topics taught and to create their own newspaper by compiling the news cuttings they collect from their home, preparing a class magazine by the students and students themselves as the editors of the class magazine. Some students will be very good at drawing so a teacher should find out what a student is good at and accordingly assign them different tasks. And moreover, use of multimedia has a big influence on the students in the present world of technology; multimedia plays an important role in making education fun and relieving the minds of the students. They are exposed to the world of technology, assisted by their imagination and creativity. This is the best way to frame an enthusiastic and energetic youth with ample knowledge. This makes our children self- dependent also. It

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