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A Proposal for English Teaching Materials
to Develop Communicative Competence

発話技能を伸ばす英語教材への提言

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Abstract

English teachers usually use some particular textbooks to teach the foreign language in Japan. This paper incorporates recent textbook research theory from the perspective of second language acquisition theory and English teaching method theory. The contents of a British English Learning Textbook (ELT) textbook (interchange 1) are compared based on the material design that aims to develop four English skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). In particular, whether to learn more from an ELT textbook, such as introducing "Experimental aspect" questions in the textbooks we use, is examined, focusing on the use of language (situational features, authentic language), which develops communicative competence in general. The appropriate questions' forms to improve the four English skills are exemplified in this process.

要旨

教員は普段は、教科書を使って語学教育を行っている。本稿では、第二言語習得論と英語教授法論の観点から最近の教科書研究理論を取り入れ、実際スポーツマネジメント学部の英語 I・II の授業で使用した、英語四技能（読み、書く、聞く、話す）の育成を目的とする英国ケンブリッジ出版社の English Learning Textbooks (ELT) (第二言語学習者用教科書) 「interchange 1」の内容を検証する。特に、「実験的側面」の問題を導入するなど、ELT 教科書から何を学ぶべきかを、コミュニケーション能力の育成に不可欠な言語使用（状況的特徴、オーセンティック・ランゲージ）に着目して検討する。その際、発話技能を向上させるための適切な設問を例示して検証する。

キーワード

Second Language Acquisition (第二言語習得)
English Language Teaching (英語教授法)
Materials Evaluation (教材評価)
Communicative Competence (発話技能)

1. Introduction

Evaluating materials is one of the essential instructions for teachers. Littlejohn and Windeatt (1996) state that depending on the individual's prior experience, learning projected by material can be of central importance (p.164). Since it may shape learners' perceptions of their abilities and the steps they need to take to progress further, materials evaluation might be crucial next to teaching methodology.

So far, there are some studies on how to evaluate materials. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) state that evaluation is a matching process based on four significant steps: defining criteria, subjective analysis, objective analysis, and matching. McDonough and Shaw (1993) suggest that evaluation should be carried out in 'external stages' and 'internal stages'. Grant (1987) considers evaluation a three-step process, including initial evaluation, detailed evaluation, and in-use evaluation. Also, Tomlinson (2016) proposed a text-driven, task-based approach even in teaching methodology. This is a menu of potentially engaging written and spoken texts that drive communication tasks, followed by Long's (2015, p.305) idea to facilitate learners affectively and cognitively to be in spoken, written or video texts before involving them in production tasks. On the other hand, the instruction of coursebook-led teaching (McGrath, 2006) historically distinguishes communicative theory from formal or structural theories.

This paper examined to what extent original textbooks should have efficacy to be recommended in the foreign language classroom by one authentic textbook in terms of Littlewood's (2004) criteria of communicative competence using five different definitions outlined in the next section, applying to the four curriculum frameworks of communicativeness (Stern, 1983) incorporating Anderson's Revised Taxonomy (2001) into it.

2. The Concept of Material Design

Littlejohn and Windeatt (1996) have significant concerns about materials as a whole:

As has already been suggested, to a great extent, language teaching materials reflect wider notions of what education is and how it should be carried out. (Omission). The discussion above has shown how language teaching materials are frequently based on a 'bucket theory' of knowledge (Popper,1972) and a view of teaching as 'filling' (Freire,1972) through the emphasis on feeding items of linguistic knowledge to learners for them to absorb and accumulate. At the task level of materials, we can find evidence of this in the preponderance of exercises such as repetition, drills, gap-filling, and comprehension questions. The significance of this is that, in the main, materials tend to develop the reproductive and mechanical abilities of learners, neglecting the wider possibilities-and perhaps desirable aims- of language teaching.

(Littlejohn & Windeatt, 1996, 168-169)

The materials describe the 'bucket theory' of knowledge. That is because learners and teachers need to follow a fixed pattern of language teaching because of the character of the materials that learners should learn and are to be taught. Then, they suggest that the organization of materials may influence the kind of learning strategies that learners adopt (Littlejohn & Windealt, 1996, p.172), quoting other aspects of teaching, such as Bruner's development of problem-solving abilities (1960).

3. History of Material Development and Design

Heileman (1991), Richards (2006), and Samuda (2005) point out, "materials development and design are often mistakenly seen as unworthy of serious study, and is essentially atheoretical activity" (Samuda, p.232). As time goes by, for teachers, time is short, and teaching is challenging because of deviating syllabi; the commercial textbooks that teachers may be demanded to stick to should be seen as resources rather than courses (Bell & Gower, 1998; Richards, 1993). Dudley-Evans and St. John also suggest that a good provider of materials will be able to:

1. Select appropriately from what is available
2. Be creative with what is available
3. Modify activities to suit learners' needs.
4. Supplement by providing extra activities (and extra input)

Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998, p.173)

Then, in light of the new teacher's inability to successfully handle the text, some researchers examined materials designs pedagogically. (Tsui 2003; McGrath 2002; Richards 1993; Tomlinson 2003b; Hutchinson and Torres 1994). In the 1900s, the place of the TESOL curriculum was taken into consideration by Brown (1995), Graves (2008), Richards (2001), and Richards and Rodgers (2001). Based on their terminology, designers need to decide (1) approach, the nature of language and language teaching and learning; (2) design, the specification of content and the roles of teachers, learners, and materials; (3) procedure, the variety of pedagogical activities that can be drawn on. Some critical elements associated with the approach, design, and procedure were discussed in detail as follows:

- ① The types of texts: "authentic" texts or modifications of them are produced, producing materials locally rather than globally.
- ② Whose needs are replete with materials.
- ③ Which roles are focused, teachers or learners?
- ④ How materials are evaluated.

Pingel (1999) explains that quantitative content analysis of materials and textbooks and qualitative content analysis has been conducted. Posada (1999) argues that content analysis reveals "cultural patterns" and "the focus of societal attention" (Washburn, 1997, p.473). In addition, materials writers' "pedagogical, psychological, and epistemological positions" (Washburn, 1997, p.425) are also revealed. In *Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)*, the content analysis of materials and textbooks usually focuses on linguistic content analyses (1 Language 2 Pragmatics 3 Genre) and cultural content analyses.

However, quantitative and qualitative content analysis forms have been criticized (e.g., Johnsen, 1993), leading to textbook ethnographies (Zahorik, 1991; Johnsen, 1993; Wade, 1993; Schudson, 1994; Lebrun et al., 2002; Kalmus, 2004). It involves interviews with publishers and authors as a product unfolds to gain insight into factors that shape the final form of the materials in use in the classroom.

4. Recent Approaches to ELT Materials

Tomlinson (2010, p.81) strongly suggests that materials should be driven by learning and teaching principles rather than be developed from best-selling coursebooks. He proposed four principled aspects of materials applications as follows;

- 1) Theories of language acquisition and development.
- 2) Principles of teaching.
- 3) Our current knowledge of how the target knowledge is actually used.
- 4) The results of systematic observation and evaluation of materials in use.

(Tomlinson, 2010, p.82)

Based on 1) and 2) applications, he proposed six language acquisition principles and four language teaching principles. (Tomlinson, 2010, pp.86-97, underlined by Wakayama)

Principles of language acquisition

1. Learners are exposed to rich, meaningful, and comprehensible input of language in use.
2. Learners need to be engaged both affectively and cognitively in the language experience in order for them to maximize their exposure to language in use.
3. Language learners who achieve positive affect are much more likely to achieve communicative competence than those who do not.
4. L2 language learners can benefit from using those material resources that they typically utilize when acquiring and using their L1.
5. Language learners can benefit from noticing salient features of the input.
6. Learners need opportunities to use language to try to achieve communicative purposes.

Principles of language teaching.

1. The content and methodology of the teaching should be consistent with the course's objectives and meet the learners' needs and wants.
2. The teaching should be designed to help learners to achieve language development and not just language acquisition.
3. The teaching should be designed so as to provide the learners with learning opportunities that will help them develop educationally in the sense that they become mature, more critically astute, more creative, more constructive, more collaborative, more capable and more confident as a result of the course.
4. The teachers need to be able to personalize and localize the materials and relate them in different ways to the needs, wants, and learning-style preferences of individual learners.

Based on his ten proposals, the crux is, as in the history of material development and design is suggested, through personalizing and localizing materials to meet the learners' needs to achieve "communicative competence". Communicative competence, derived from Hymes (1971), includes a much broader view of language use, such as the social context in language use (discourse).

5. Research Question

Is the present material (*interchange*) sufficient enough to achieve communicative competence?

6. Material and Method

interchange, used as a textbook at Shobi University, was examined. This material is at the A1 CEFR level and an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) material. It is described on the Cambridge homepage as follows: Interchange is a four-level American English course used by over 50 million students worldwide. This edition has been developed with insights from thousands of experienced teachers. The series delivers a communicative approach, flexible unit structure and easy-to-use digital support, giving teachers the tools they need and empowering students to achieve their goals; primarily, it is based on the solid pedagogy of the Jack C. Richards' communicative methodology, based on decades of research into what works in adult English language classrooms. Therefore, using Littlewood's (2004) criteria of communicative competence using five different definitions outlined in the next section, I examined whether each task of *interchange* is applied to which aspects of the four curriculum frameworks of communicativeness (Stern, 1983) incorporating Anderson's Revised Taxonomy (2001) into it.

7. Criteria for evaluation

In light of the emphasis on communicative competence in Tomlinson's proposal above (2010, p.81), the factor of communicative competence should be included in the criteria of text evaluation. Communicative competence is the ability to use language in various settings, considering relationships between speakers and differences in situations regardless of a lack of grammatical accuracy. It also includes a much broader view of language use, such as the social context in language use (discourse). Thus, the criteria by which each exercise was categorized were based on Allen's modified continuum set out by Stern (1983, p.262, see Table 1). It divides curriculum into four types: "Structural aspect," "Functional aspect," "Sociocultural aspect," and "Experimental aspect." This curriculum provides a clear guide to how communicatively different learning activities are, reaching beyond the limits of a particular method. Figure 1 gives short descriptions.

Furthermore, Anderson's Revised Taxonomy (2001) is worth setting. That is because a group of researchers investigated the questions and tasks of six primary junior high school textbooks with the framework of Bloom's revised taxonomy, or Anderson's taxonomy (2001), finding that a low-order thinking skill was categorized (by 40 to 80 per cent) in the textbooks (Hirai, 2014). The method used in this study was efficient in clearly characterizing questions and tasks in terms of cognitive demand (see Table 2).

Finally, Littlewood's continuum of textbook activity communicativeness (2011) serves as a clear guide to a range of communicative activities (see Table 3). Littlewood (2011) introduced his model of

communicative competence using five separate definitions, providing valuable insights into language proficiency. These strategies can establish connections between familiar activities and new ones, serving context-specific needs and inspiring teachers to explore their current practice and generate further possibilities (Littlewood, 2011, p. 550). Littlewood (2011) expanded on Canale's (1983) proposed four competencies—Linguistic, Discourse, Pragmatic, and Sociolinguistic competence—by adding sociocultural competence. This involves the ability to 'use linguistic resources to convey and interpret meanings in real situations, including those where they encounter problems due to gaps in their knowledge' (Canale, 1983, p. 546). Sociocultural competence also includes 'cultural knowledge and assumptions that affect the exchange of meanings' (Canale, 1983, p. 546).

Table 1

Sketch of a Fourfold Curriculum Framework for Second Language Teaching

Structural aspect	Functional aspect	Sociocultural aspect	Experimental aspect
mainly analytical (involving language study and practice)			mainly non-analytical (involving language use in authentic contexts)

(Stern, 1983, p.262)

Table 2

The Six Categories of The Cognitive Process Dimension and Related Cognitive Processes

1 Remember	Retrieve relevant knowledge from long term memory: Recognizing, Recalling
2 Understand	Construct meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication: Interpreting, Exemplifying, Classifying, Summarizing, Inferring, Comparing, Explaining
3 Apply	Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation: Executing, Implementing
4 Analyze	Break material into constituent parts and determine how parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose: Differentiating, Organizing, Attributing
5 Evaluate	Make judgement based on criteria and standards: Checking, Critiquing
6 Create	Put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; recognize elements into a new pattern: Generating, Planning, Producing

(Anderson, 2001, p.31)

Table 3

The "communication continuum" as a Basis for CLT

Focus on forms ←		→ Focus on the meaning		
Non-communicative learning	Pre-communicative language learning	Communicative language practice	Structured communication	Authentic communication
Focusing on the structure of language, how they are formed and what they mean, e.g., substitution exercises, 'discovery' and awareness-raising activities	Practising language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new messages to others, e.g., 'question-and-answer' practice	Practising pre-taught language in a context where it communicates new information, e.g., information-gap activities or 'personalized' questions	Using language to communication in situations which elicit pre-learned language, but with some unpredictability, e.g., structured role-play and simple problem-solving	Uses language to communication in situations where the meanings are unpredictable, e.g., creative role-play, more complex problem-solving and discussion

(Littlewood, 2011, p.550)

8. Results

The criteria were based on a continuum by Littlewood (2011), which divides language learning activities into five types: 'non-communicative learning' and 'pre-communicative language learning', 'communicative language practice', 'structured communication' and 'Authentic communication'. This continuum provides a clear guide to how communicatively different learning activities are. The results of evaluating *interchange 1* are examined below. The crucial point is that each aspect is well-balanced in *interchange 1*. Among each aspect, the question forms are divided as follows; in Non-communicative learning, 'Pronunciation' (16), 'Grammar focus' (31) and Listening (19) are included; at Pre-communicative language learning 'Word power' (16) is included; at Communicative language practice 'Writing' (15), 'Reading' (16) and 'Snapshot' (each chapter's theme-related questions) (16) are included; at Structured communication 'Conversation' (32), 'Role play' (5) and 'Speaking' (9), are included; at Authentic communication 'Interchange' (creative role play) (16) and 'Discussion' (5) are included (see Table 4).

Table 4

Numbers, Means and Standard Deviations for Each Aspect

Stern (1983)	Structural aspect		Functional aspect	Sociocultural aspect	Experimental aspect	n	M (SD)
Anderson (2001)	Remember/ Understand		Apply	Analyze/ Evaluate	Create		
Littlewood (2004)	Non-communicative learning	Pre-communicative language learning	Communicative language practice	Structured communication	Authentic communication		
<i>interchange 1</i>	66	16	47	46	21	196	39.2 (18.4)

The results show that Functional, Sociocultural and Experimental aspects apply for 58% and Structural element applies for 42%, which means more communicative functions are focused on.

Extracts (Fig.1,2,3,4,) from Unit 6's "How often do you run" section might be compared to ensure explicit content.

Figure 1

Structural Aspect (Grammar Focus)

(Adapted from interchange 1, 2017, p.37)

Interchange 1 shows the range of adverbs by simultaneously showing eight adverbs. Also, at least five sentences are illustrated to make 'ever' and 'how often' explicit.

Figure 2

Functional Aspect (Snapshot)

(Adapted from interchange 1, 2017, p.36)

Personalized questions and information-gap activities (between Japan and the United States) are included in a context that communicates new information by showing the different resources.

Figure 3

Sociocultural Aspect (Speaking)

(Adapted from interchange 1, 2017, p.38)

In sociocultural aspects, *interchange 1* deals with the speaking section as a role play. There are activities to cultivate communication skills and related vocabularies.

Figure 4

Experimental Aspect (Discussion)

8 DISCUSSION Olympic sports and athletes

GROUP WORK Take turns asking and answering these questions.

Can you remember the names of five Olympic sports?
What are they?

Do you ever watch Olympic sports on TV? Which ones?

Would you like to see Olympic sports live? Why? Why not?

Do you prefer the summer or winter Olympics? Why?

What's your favorite Olympic sport? Why?

What's an Olympic sport that you really don't like? Why not?

Who's a famous male athlete in your country? What sport does he play?

Who's a famous female athlete? What sport does she play?



(Adapted from *interchange 1*, 2017, p.39)

To improve both unpredictable authentic situations to communicate in a foreign language, the discussion sections above are good exercises to facilitate communicative competence.

9. Discussion

In order to improve student's four skills (five areas), English education in Japan has recently been emphasized in general. To implement it, the two essential prerequisites that should be included in materials are as follows, as we examined in recent approaches to ELT materials section.

1. Teaching materials that can be expected to improve overall English proficiency if used.
2. Teaching materials based on second language acquisition.

As of 1, in Japan, in secondary education, textbooks are divided into 'Logic and Expression' and 'English communication' at secondary levels, then integrated into higher education (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), 2020). Especially in the secondary level, Sakui (2004, p.158) points out, "Several teachers reported that these two types of English instruction- grammar-teaching and CLT - posed a dilemma. While believing in the importance of CLT, they felt the need to conduct teacher-fronted non-communicative activities primarily. It has led to a dichotomous curriculum realization consisting of two English methodologies", quoting one teacher's comments that English teachers are forced to wear two pairs of shoes, one for entrance exams, the other for a means of communication.

As of 2, as discussed above extract sections, we can learn more from ELT textbooks, such as introducing "Experimental aspect" questions in our textbooks. Focus on the use of language (situational features, authentic language) is essential to developing communicative competence. Paulston (1971, p.207) describes the main difference between a meaningful drill and a communicative drill as the speaker adds new information about the natural world in the latter. In a communicative drill, in other words, the teacher and the class do not know what answer to expect since the response involves the expression of students' personal opinions and experiences (Allen, 1983, p.28). Therefore, Tomlinson (2010) suggests we adopt ELT Materials driven by learning and teaching principles rather than developed best-selling coursebooks.

10. Conclusion

This research has certain limitations that should be taken into consideration. Firstly, only the ELT textbook was examined. Littlewood (2004) describes the divisions as representing a continuum, where distinctions are also arbitrary, thus suggesting five is a convenient number that teachers could distinguish fewer or more, according to our purpose (2004, p.323). Secondly, there was difficulty recording the number of every exercise. In addition, some exercises were made up of more than one part or stage, thus raising the issue of whether they were one or each stage represented a different exercise. Finally, the evaluation was conducted by a single researcher. Due to these limitations, this paper is intended as a tentative starting point, illustrating opening up areas for further research.

It would be high time ELT materials be reevaluated from the perspective of language teaching and second language acquisition principles, such as *interchange*.

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