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oral and written discourse of classrooms: interaction analysis, discourse analysis, text analysis, and ways to examine the social and political assumptions underlying the choice and presentation of content in second language teaching materials.

• Chapter 4. Writing Research Reports, provides guidelines for both thesis writing and journal articles.

Researching Second Language Classrooms is an ideal text for TESOL research methods courses and an essential resource for inservice teachers who wish to undertake classroom research.

Teaching
Languages to
Young Learners

LYNNE CAMERON
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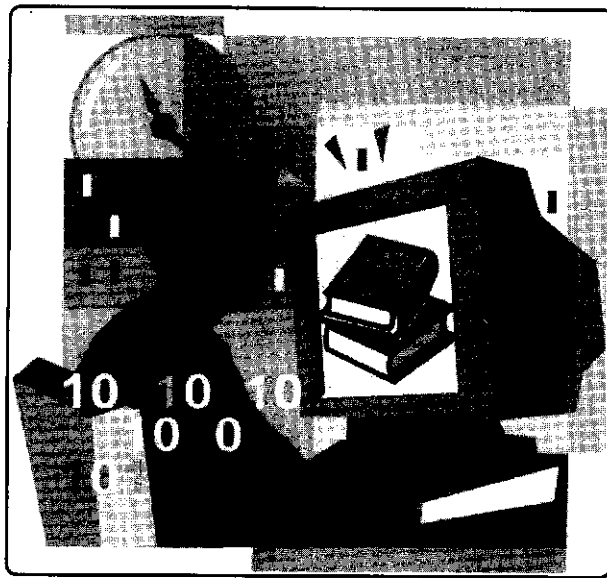Cambridge Language
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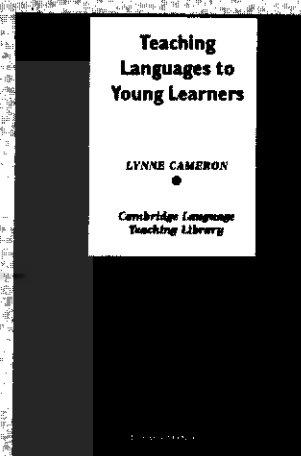
Teaching Languages to Young Learners

Recent years have seen rapid growth in the number of children being taught foreign languages at younger ages.

While course books aimed at young learners are appearing on the market, there is scant theoretical reference in the teacher education literature. This book is one of the few to explore with readers what happens in classrooms where children are being taught a foreign language. It will offer teachers and trainers a theoretical framework to structure thinking about children's language learning. The book gives practical suggestions on how to analyse and evaluate classroom activities.language use and Language development. Examples from classrooms in Europe and Asia will help bring alive the realities of working with young learners of English.

ranging from formal tests to informal assessments. However, another important aspect of evaluation involves the evaluation of the course book. Was the course book effective? In what ways? Where did it fall short? To answer these questions, two different approaches can be taken: formative evaluation and summative evaluation (see, for example, Cunningsworth. 1984).

Formative evaluation takes place during the development and implementation of the course book for purposes of modifying it as it is being developed. Summative evaluation, however, takes place after the course book has been implemented for purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of the course book.

Analyzing the situation is the last step in the developmental process of a course book. The goal of needs identification, as stated before, is to collect data to be used to develop a profile of the language needs of a group of learners in order to be able to make decisions about the goals and content of a course book. Yet other factors are relevant to the design and implementation of a successful course book. Course books are taught and learned in particular contexts and situations.

The context for course books are varied: numerous variables come into play in a specific situation that are often the key determinants of the success of a course book. Some course books are developed for centrally organized educational systems where a great deal of direction and support for teaching is provided. Others are written for settings where there are limited human and physical resources.

In some contexts, proposals for the change of course books are well received by teachers but resisted strongly by others. In some situations, teachers are well trained and have sufficient time available for preparation, while in other situations, teachers have little time for preparation. It is important, therefore, to identify what these factors are and what their potential effect might be on the course book. Situation analysis is, in fact, an analysis of such factors as social, economic, and institutional.

Based on what has been presented so far, a course book has no choice but to follow the goals delineated for it. If the goal of language instruction is to enhance reading comprehension ability in the learners, the backbone of the course book should probably be structural, along with some functions, situations, and tasks. If the goal of language teaching is to promote oral communication in the learners, then functions and notions come to play, and situations and tasks are used to reinforce the functions presented; in this case, grammatical points are dealt with only marginally and unsystematically as they appear in the functions.

In conclusion it should be stressed once again that writing a course book is a very difficult enterprise. If we agree with the traditional distinction between ESL and EFL, it should be mentioned that most theories of language and learning are designed for the ESL, and not for the EFL, contexts, regardless of the number of people interested in learning English in EFL settings. Therefore, it is my firm belief that no experts in the field of applied linguistics, but only the Iranian textbook writers, who are quite familiar with the Iranian EFL setting, are qualified provide us with educationally-sound teaching materials. It is also my belief that the course books must be sensitive to our cultural heritage and values, with which no internationally well-known writers, but only Iranian course book developers, are familiar.

usually available in language classrooms.

- Task-based learning is not what many learners expect from a language classrooms.
- Task-based learning is not what many learners expect from a language classroom.
- Evaluation of task-based learning can be difficult.
- Task gradation is still a controversial issue.

Selecting and developing materials and activities is the next step in the process of course book development. It means *how and with what* the course book should be taught. What is the role of the teacher? What is the role of the learner?

Choosing teaching materials may mean development of new materials for which there are no suitable materials, collecting a variety of materials, or adapting existing materials (for an excellent collection of papers, see Tomlinson, 2003).

Course book developers consider a variety of factors in developing, choosing, and adapting materials. Two of the most important factors are the effectiveness of materials in achieving the goal of the course, as well as their appropriateness for the learners and the teachers. Appropriateness includes learner comfort and familiarity with the materials, their language proficiency level, interest, and relevance. Developing materials and activities require time and a clear sense of why, how, and by whom the book will be used.

Undoubtedly, part of the course book development is figuring out systems for organizing the course – the organization of each lesson, as well as the overall organization of the course.

There are two general, complementary principles of sequencing:*building and recycling*. In deciding how to sequence materials, the text book developer should consider basing the materials from the simple to the complex, from more concrete to more open-ended. The principle of recycling means that learners encounter previous materials in new ways. For example, materials covered in a listening activity may be recycled in a writing exercise.

To many teachers, evaluation means evaluation within a course: assessing learners' proficiency, progress, or achievement. Course book developers usually design some form of student evaluation,

to demonstrate to be competent in a language, relatively independent of the situation or the setting in which the language can occur.

Skill-based contents group linguistic competencies, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, together into generalized types of behavior, such as listening to spoken language for the main idea, reading a text for main ideas or supporting details, and so on. The primary purpose of skill-based instruction is to teach specific language skill.

Some of the positive characteristics of skill-based contents are:

- Skill-based contents are most useful when learners need to master specific types of language use, for example, when they need to read limited types of materials in a specific area.
- Skill-based contents have relevance to the needs of language learners.

Some of the negative characteristics of skill-based contents are:

- It is questionable whether ability to perform a specific language activity is dependet on or independent of the overall language proficiency.
- Serious philosophical questions have been raised about the social values of skill-based contents. It is possible that skill-based instruction can isolate learners from achievements that skills do not prepare them for.

Still another way to conceptualize content is through task-based contents. In task-based contents, teaching is not organized around linguistic features of the language being learned, but around a series of purposeful tasks that the learner wants or needs to perform to learn the language. Tasks are, in fact, activities with a purpose other than language learning. In other words, language learning is subordinated to task performance, and language teaching occurs only as the need arises during the performance of the given task. Examples of tasks are applying for a job, getting housing information over the telephone, completing different forms, etc. (see Ellis, 2003).

The learning theory underlying task-based contents is that the ability to use a language is gained through exposure to and participation in using the language. The language theory underlying task-based contents is communicative, covering linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

Some of the positive characteristics of task-based contents are:

- They are suitable for learners of all ages and backgrounds.
- Ability to perform a task is equivalent to the ability to use the language.
- They are very useful for learners who are not interested in traditional types of classroom learning.

Some of the negative characteristics of task-based contents are:

- Task-based learning requires a high-level creativity and initiative on the part of the learner.
- Task-based learning requires resources beyond the textbooks and related materials

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Source: White, R. V. (1988, p. 79)

A Less well known and less widely used than structure-based content or function-based content is one in which the content of language teaching is a collection of real or imaginary situations. A situation usually involves several participants who are engaged in some kind of activity in a specific setting. The language occurring in a situation involves a number of functions. The most familiar way of presenting a situation is through a dialog.

Situation-based contents have also positive and negative features. Some of the positive characteristics of situation-based contents are:

- Situations can lead to learners' ability to communicate in specific settings.
- Situations provide contexts of discourse in which form and meaning coincide.
- Situations can break the sentence level barrier and demonstrate to learners, of course, only to some extent, how language operates in larger units of discourse.
- The use of situations in language teaching can help provide some social and cultural information about the language and its users.

Some of the negative characteristics of situation-based contents are:

- They can lead learners to rely on pre learned routines and patterns of language use rather than on the creative and negotiated use of language.
- Here it is extremely difficult to create authentic language for interactional purposes.
- Situation-based contents present grading and sequencing problems.
- The unpredictability of language structures, functions, notions, and lexical items used in a situation makes it less transferable to another similar situation.

Another type of conceptualizing content is skill-based content in which the content of language teaching is a collection of specific abilities that may play a part in using language. Skills are abilities that language users must be able

To show a difference between structure-based contents and function-based contents, one can refer to the idea that *imperative* and *would* may not appear related in the structure-based content, but they can be grouped together in the function-based content under the function of offering, as in

Have another piece of cake.
Would you like another piece of cake?

Function-based contents have also positive and negative characteristics. Some of their positive characteristics are,

- Function-based contents include information about language use.
- Materials are closer to authentic target language use.
- They are related more to current or future language needs of learners; hence, they may have motivational benefits.
- They provide reasonable mastery of communicative competencies in a relatively short time, of course, within a limited domain.

Some of the negative characteristics of function-based contents are:

- Function-based contents are limited to short utterances or exchanges; they do not involve larger stretches of discourse. Therefore, they can become a means of teaching routines and patterns. Routines, such as *No, thank you*, are frozen phrases that are used to convey an understanding of the context rather than to offer specific information. Patterns, such as *Would you like to.....?*, are utterances with open slots in which vocabulary items can be inserted.
- Sequencing, as well as grading, of functions is done arbitrarily.

Some scholars (see, for example. White, 1988) argue that perhaps as a reaction to the shortcomings of function-based contents, structure-function-based contents have become more common in recent years, in which functional and structural elements are interwoven. White proposes six types of structure-function-based contents:

TYPE A: An amount of structural component comes before an equal amount of functional component, with no connection between the two.

TYPE B: TYPE B is the same as TYPE A, but the order is changed. Here structural elements come after functional elements.

TYPE C: In TYPE C, two parallel streams, one structural the other functional, usually with no connection between the two, move together. However, it is possible that the content of one interacts with the content of the other.

TYPE D: TYPE D is an alternative to TYPE A and TYPE B, but here the structural and functional components are arranged in shorter sections. That is, in the same unit, a functional element comes after a structural element or vice-versa.

TYPE E: TYPE E is an integration of structural and functional elements.

TYPE F: TYPE F is identical to TYPE E; however, here there are free elements in which course book developers can also include materials they deem necessary or important.

The following table summarizes the different types of structure-function-based contents mentioned above, in which structural elements are shown by + +, functional elements by # #, and free elements by 0 0.

conceptualizing and categorizing content. The course book developer has to decide which approaches are appropriate, as well as feasible, for the course book and how they can be combined or integrated (see Yalden, 1983, 1987).

At first it should be mentioned that conceptualizing content requires empirical evidence. But the empirical evidence is not, in a lot of cases, compatible with one another (see, for example, Lightbown, & Spada, 1999). Therefore, the course book developer should conceptualize which choices to make among the available options. In other words, his/her decisions should be based upon a theory of language and a theory of language acquisition/learning. For this reason, s/he has to be fully aware of these theories.

Although the present knowledge about second language acquisition/learning is still fragmentary, it is the responsibility of the course book developer to base all his/her choices on experience and empirical findings as to what works and what is most effective in the classroom. However, it should be mentioned that the options chosen – whether they are words, structures, notions, functions– and the way they are to be presented–in isolation, in context, with grammar rules or without grammar rules–will influence the elements of the language that course book developers include in their books, which, in a sense, is clearly indicative of their theory of language and language learning.

The traditional way of conceptualizing content, which many of us have experienced in our own learning of English, is the structure-based content. A structure-based content is one in which the content of language teaching is a collection of forms and grammatical structures, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, statements, questions, etc. The structure-based content may also include such other aspects of language forms as pronunciation and vocabulary items.

Structure-based contents have some merits and demerits. Some positive characteristics of structure-based contents are:

- Structures are one of the components of communicative competence.
- Teachers and learners are familiar with structures.
- Contents, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, are easy to describe.
- Structures are the most measurable component of communicative competence.
- Structures prevent fossilization.
- Structures serve as the basis for monitoring the accuracy of production.
- Structures provide the teacher with a basis for giving feedback on the accuracy of language output.
- Structures are value free and culture free. They can be taught without reference to culture.

However, structure-based contents suffer from serious problems:

- Structures do not lead to language use.
- Knowledge of structures does not seem to transfer to language skill easily.
- Structures mislead learners into that they are learning a language, but, in fact, they are learning about the language.

The most popular alternative to the structure-based content is the function-based content. In the function-based content, the target language is not presented as isolated linguistic forms, but as a group of language functions, that are performed when language is used. Examples of functions include greeting, leave taking, requesting, apologizing (Munby, 1978).

means of obtaining broader input into the content of a course book, language needs identification is a very complicated task to carry out, is a time-consuming activity, is a costly effort, and is not, in some cases, a practically feasible idea. For this reason, Long (1985) remarks that needs analysis is "a notorious bottleneck" (p. 90) in the design of language teaching materials.

2. Determining goals and objectives

Another type of question that a course book developer should answer is what the goals and objectives of the course are and what language learners need to learn to achieve them. Goals refer to general statements of the overall, long-term purposes of the course. Objectives, however, express the specific ways in which the goals will be achieved. In other words, while goals of a course represent the final destination, the objectives specify the different ways leading to that destination. For example, if the goal of an English language teaching program is to improve paragraph writing ability, then some of the objectives of the course book would be helping learners with brainstorming, selecting relevant ideas, paying attention to paragraph organizational patterns, structural patterns most commonly used for such type of a topic, the topic sentence, supporting ideas, etc.

Specification of goals and objectives provide the course book developer with a coherent framework in planning the course book. Through analyzing goals into objectives, the course book developer can conceptualize the course in terms of teachable materials. Clear goals and objectives also give the course book developer a basis on which s/he can decide on the inclusion or exclusion of content and activities in the course book. Finally, goals and objectives, if clearly set, provide a framework for the evaluation of the effectiveness of content and activities included.

Of course, there is no simple answer to the question how one chooses appropriate goals and objectives. If a nationwide course book is to be developed, the goals are usually specified by the authorities of Ministry of Education. Then it is the responsibility of the course book developer to break down the goal into pedagogically sound objectives. But if a local text is to be developed, the content of the book should be compatible with the specific goal of language teaching in Iran.

Conceptualizing content

Conceptualizing content means what to teach. In other words, it refers to what should be included in the course book. When a course book developer conceptualizes content, s/he is, in fact, thinking about which aspects of language to include, to emphasize, and to integrate in the book. This is a very difficult task to carry out.

Almost four decades ago, language teaching was heavily influenced by a structural view of language. This impact resulted in one approach to content and method. This means that, for example, the same course book and the same language activities could be used for all those who wanted to learn English. However, this is not the case today. It suffices to mention that a lot of changes have taken place in the last four decades in the fields of applied linguistics and language acquisition/learning, as well as in approaches to language teaching methodology. Today the choices a course book developer makes are much more context dependent; therefore, a number of factors, such as who language learners are, what their language needs and expectations are, what the course book developer's belief of the nature of language is, how the learners' language needs are best met, what the institutional curriculum is, etc.

Let's now take a look at some approaches of

developed to address a specific set of educational needs and to cover a given set of unique objectives, this issue is even more crucial in our case for a variety of educational and pedagogical reasons. Hence, decisions about the content of an English course book to be acceptable by the authorities of the Ministry of Education, by Iranian teachers of the English language, and by language learners is not in all likelihood an easy task. Furthermore, another significant consideration in the decisions regarding the content of a course book is that the contents should reflect the planner's assumptions about what the most essential units of language are and how these units are to be organized in an optimal and effective way. The purpose of this paper is to help English language teachers, interested in designing teaching materials, what to observe in developing books or to modify an existing ones to produce textbooks that are educationally sound, culturally appropriate, and pedagogically compatible with the objectives of teaching English in Iran.

Key Words: course book development, language needs identification, goal and objectives, content specification, structural content, functional content, situational content, task-based content

Developing a course book is not an easy task. Writing an English course book or modifying an existing one to be used locally or nationally is not in all likelihood an easy endeavor at all. There are a lot of factors to consider in developing an English course book. English language teachers are interested in, or are being called upon, designing course book materials for a variety of educational settings, as well as for promotional incentives. The purpose of this paper is to make the interested reader familiar with the developmental processes involved in the preparation of a general English course book and determining whether writers are constructing a solid framework for their course books in our Iranian EFL context.

Graves (1996) groups the factors concerning the preparation of a course book in seven broad categories, namely

1. Identifying language needs
2. Determining goals and objectives
3. Conceptualizing content
4. Selecting and developing materials and activities
5. Organizing content and activities
6. Evaluating learners as well as the course
7. Analyzing the situation

Each of these categories will be dealt with briefly in this paper.

The first question that a course book developer has to answer is what the learners' language needs are. Needs identification involves determining *what the learners know* and *what they need to know*.

Concerning needs identification, two different types of language needs become apparent: objective needs and subjective needs. Objective needs are those factual information *about* learners, for example, their current mastery of the English language, their current lacks and deficiencies of language, and their possible use of language in the target situation. As a matter of fact, the content of a course book should bridge the gap between the learners' current mastery of the language and a step forward towards their immediate or future use of language in the target situation. Subjective needs, however, refer to cognitive and affective needs of the learners. Here, the question of personality type, attitude, learners' wants and expectations concerning the learning of English, as well as their individual cognitive style and learning strategies are to be considered. (see, for example, Nunan, 1999, and, particularly, West, 1994).

Although an extremely crucial factor as a

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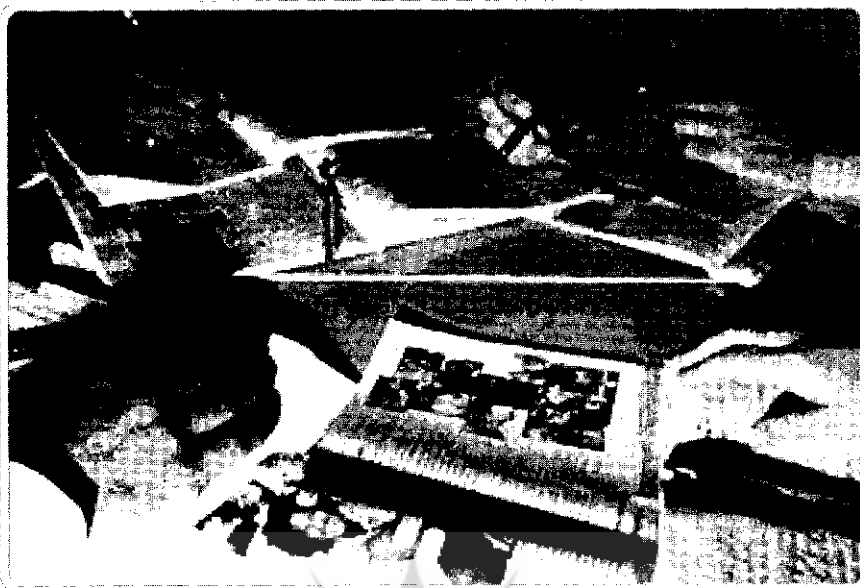
Developing a General English Course Book for Iranian Learners: Some Practical Guidelines

چکیده

پیشنهادات عملی در تهیه و تدوین کتب زبان انگلیسی عمومی علیرغم این واقعیت که تهیه و تدوین کتب درسی فعالیتی وقت گیر است،
مشاهده می‌شود که بعضی از دبیران زبان انگلیسی به دلایل متفاوت به این مهم همت می‌گمارند. این گونه تلاش‌ها قابل تقدیر است. به
اعتقاد نویسنده این مقاله، صرفاً مؤلفان ایرانی واجد شرایط لازم برای تهیه و تألیف مطالب درسی برای زبان‌آموزان ایرانی هستند زیرا با فرهنگ
ایرانی، با اهداف آموزشی کشور، با محیط آموزشی و نیز با نیازهای زبانی زبان‌آموزان ایرانی آشنایی کافی دارند. همان‌گونه که تلویحاً اشاره
شد، تهیه و تدوین مطالب درسی زبان انگلیسی یکی از موضوعات جدی است که دانش کافی، وقت بسیار و انرژی فراوانی را می‌طلبد.
اتخاذ تصمیم در مورد محتوای کتب درسی باید به گونه‌ای باشد که از یک سو مطالب درسی بر مبنای تئوری‌های شناخته شده زبانشناختی و
روانشناختی استوار باشد و از سوی دیگر مقبول سایر دبیران زبان و زبان‌آموزان قرار گیرد. در غیر این صورت، کتاب درسی با عدم موفقیت
روبرو خواهد شد.

هدف از نگارش مقاله حاضر روشن کردن برخی مفاهیم است که در تهیه و تدوین کتب درسی زبان انگلیسی مدنظر قرار می‌گیرد. چارچوب
این مقاله بر اساس الگوی پیشنهاد گریوز (۱۹۹۶) بنا نهاده شده است. گریوز عوامل مؤثر در تهیه و تدوین کتب درسی زبان را به هفت مقوله
تقسیم می‌کند، هریک از این مقوله‌ها به طور جداگانه مورد بحث قرار می‌گیرد و در هر مورد پیشنهادات عملی ارائه می‌شود. امید
است همکاران علاقمند به تألیف، با درنظر گرفتن این پیشنهادات مطالبی تهیه کنند که با اهداف آموزشی زبان انگلیسی در ایران همخوانی داشته
باشد و نیز در صورتی که علاقمند به ارزشیابی سایر کتاب‌های موجود باشند، این مقاله چارچوب مناسبی در اختیارشان قرار دهد.

کلید واژه ها: تهیه مطالب درسی - شناخت نیازهای زبان - اهداف، تعیین محتوا - محتوای ساختاری

Abstract

Course book preparation is one of the most basic issues dealt with in teaching English programs,
Course book development is a very crucial question. Considering the fact that a course book has to be