Learners Involvement in Materials Selection for Teaching English in Language Classroom at Aligarh Muslim University

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History
The paper received on: 30/04/2014
Accepted after peer-review on: 30/05/2014
Published on: 01/06/2014

Keywords:
English language learners, Materials selection, Instructional materials, Technology, Aligarh Muslim University

ABSTRACT

The onset of the present paper throws light on materials selection and traditional outlook. Then the paper discusses four types of materials, more specifically, instructional, experiential, exploratory and elicitative materials and their use in language classroom. It discusses the role relationship between teachers, learners and materials in the present scenario at Aligarh Muslim University, keeping in consideration the requirements of the changing times. The paper aims to highlight the positive effects of learner’s involvement in Materials Selection process. The researcher has tried to analyze the findings on the basis of a questionnaire distributed among teachers and students at Undergraduate level. Some suggestions are recommended, on the basis of the findings from the data collected.

Suggested Citation:
1. Introduction

Materials are considered to be the building blocks for learning. Language learning materials can either be in print form, direct objects, visuals, auditory message, signboards, advertisements, posters, webpage, celebrity speech, games, News, discussions on television, songs, movies, matrimonial and classifieds or any sort of sign or symbol. Materials selection and gradation are two important aspects for producing or designing materials. The present paper intends to highlight the positive effects of learner’s involvement in Materials Selection process, which is generally seen as the responsibility of teachers and materials producers till now.

2. Background to the Study

Selection of materials is a cumbersome, challenging and thoughtful task. Selecting appropriate material is one of the crucial factors in the success of a course. Selecting materials requires in-depth knowledge: not just of students' backgrounds and learning experiences, but also of their abilities, interests, and learning styles; not just of educational objectives, but of the best practices and range and quality of materials for meeting them; not just of the particular work being considered, but of its place within the medium, genre, epoch, etc., it represents. In short, responsible selection demands not only the experience and education needed to make sound choices but also the ability to defend the choices made.

Traditionally, it was assumed that materials producers are the one who are responsible for the selection, gradation and publication of materials. Slowly, with the emergence of various approaches, teachers were also given appropriate responsibility for adaptation of materials and sometimes production too, as required. In this respect, this paper aims to showcase the effect of involvement of learners in materials selection process, making an attempt to make teaching and learning truly learner-centered, and drawing out learner’s potential in accordance with their learning styles and aptitude towards learning.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Learners role in materials selection

Tomlinson (2003) criticizes the passive attitude of learners’ in materials selection. He argues that, “To a large extent, the learners are given imposed materials from the teacher, hence their role in the learning process is still rather limited and not truly learner-centered.”(p. 74). Nunan David (1989) also adheres to the same view when he argues that:

We tend to assume that the way we look at a task will be the way learners look at it. However, there is evidence that while we as teachers are focusing on one thing, learners are focusing on something else. How can we be sure, then, that learners will not look for grammatical patterns when taking part in activities which were designed to focus them on meaning, and look for meaning in tasks designed to focus them on grammatical forms? One way of dealing with this tendency is to involve learners in designing or selecting tasks. It should also be possible to allow learners choices in deciding what to do and how to do it. This of course implies a major change in the roles assigned to learners and teachers.(p.20)

3.2 Types of Materials

According to Tomlinson (2003) Materials are generally of 4 types, ‘Instructional, experiential, elicitative or exploratory’ (p. 2). Each type is defined and discussed below.

3.2.1 Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are the materials that help an instructor in teaching-learning process. They are the most
frequently used materials in general classroom setting. These are generally focused activities with predefined instructions, certain objectives, whereby teachers and learners aim to attain the pre-described objective. For e.g. books, worksheets, samples of items we are teaching about, pictures of things we are teaching about, CDs with music from places we are teaching about, audio CDs with samples of a language we are teaching, charts and graphs which give visual information about something we are teaching about. This is the normal practice in schools and textbooks.

These are the teaching materials which teach features of language and language use overtly. They tell the learners about the feature (by, for example, giving them examples of the simple past tense, giving them rules for forming and using the simple past and giving them focused practice of the simple past tense). Both the teaching and the learning are deliberate, conscious and focused. Richard (2001) comments, “instructional material generally serves as the basis of much of the language input that learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom.” (p. 251).

3.2.2 Exploratory Materials

Exploratory materials, as name suggests, help in exploring new things. Materials that help in observation and discovery about self and others can be termed as exploratory by nature. These materials “can help learners to make discoveries about language for themselves” (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 2). These type of learning materials are those in which the students are helped to explore a feature of language or language use and to make discoveries for themselves (by, for example, reading text in which the simple past tense is used and then working out from this and other samples how the simple past tense is formed and when, why and how it is used). These materials are related to studies deriving a conclusion. This approach is sometimes called a discovery approach or language awareness or consciousness raising approach.

These materials according to Rod Bolitho (2003) encourage ‘learners to discover and make sense of language for themselves’, (p. 422) through practical implementation of awareness-raising tasks in language classrooms.

3.2.3 Experiential Materials

Experiential Materials means learning materials which provide the students with a rich, holistic experience of the language in use, then getting them personally to the meaning of the text(s) and maybe then getting them to analyse a language feature of the text (by, for example reciting to them a moving poem written by an ‘old, old woman’, getting them to discuss their attitudes towards the old woman, getting them to write a similar poem about themselves, getting them to focus on why and how the old lady uses the simple present tense and then getting them to revise their own poems. Experiential materials are suitable for the learners who love to learn by doing things themselves. These learners are also called ‘right-brain’ learners. These learners love physical activities rather than being analytical or studial.

3.2.4. Elicitative Materials

Elicitative materials are those materials that are simulative by nature. They are learning materials which try to get the students to use a certain feature of the language without telling them to do so (by, for example, setting a writing task (such as a description of weather patterns in their region) which would normally make considerable use of the simple present tense). In the words of Tomlinson (2003) these materials can ‘stimulate language use” (p. 2). To elicit means ‘to draw out (facts, response
They draw out the learners responses without straight-forwardly telling them through instructions. The basic advantage of elicitative materials is that, even though they don't give surety of immediate impact of learning, but learning through this type engages a learner in critical thinking, and analyzing things, thus useful for real contexts.

3.3. Role relationship between teachers, learners and materials

To examine the role of teaching materials in the English classroom, it is necessary to look at the role relationship between teachers, learners and Teaching Materials. In the present scenario, as teaching is learner-centered, and learners suggestions also matters, the relationship between teachers and learners is a sort of give and take relationship. It can also be called a two way relationship.

The feedback received from these two agents has a lot to return to the actual process of Materials Production and materials Selection as well.

The diagram above displays a kind of relationship between Objectives of the Course, syllabus and materials; as are prevailing in the present University level scenario in India and same in the case of Aligarh Muslim University. The figure shows that the Objectives of the Course are decided at Level-1; Syllabus is framed with the description of syllabus Items at Level- 2; and then at Level- 3, Materials are imposed upon in front of the learners. Now the learners are the one who will be using those materials produced by teachers and College Administration. Right of publication and various other aspects needs an approval of administration before publication. The arrow represents that the policy and decision making aspects are in the hands of the administrators, who controls both teachers and students. Teachers are the ones who guide their students.

I would rather like to invert the diagram as follow:

In the above diagram, administrators as well as teachers decide for the broader objectives of the course at Level: 1. The specific objectives are derived later in actual classroom setting by the teachers. At Level: 2,
teachers involve their learners in selecting of syllabus items through checklist, based on the learners’ approval or disapproval. At Level: 3, teachers involve their learners in the selection of materials. Teachers also bring their own materials in language classrooms besides the text as per requirement of the learners.

The arrow represents that the policy and decision making aspects are in the hands of the administrators, where there is a feedback from the teachers. Teachers are facilitators and guide for their learners and feedback of learner is equally important. Administrators keep a check on both teachers and learners. Technology can be a better interface in the whole process.

If, in the present situation, we call learning learner-centered the question arises why don’t we involve our learners in other aspects? Like:

a) Selection of items in Syllabus
b) Selection of materials

Learner-produced materials could be an efficient source of engagement, because students have full freedom in selection and design of the materials they want to learn and they want to reject. A good teacher always asks his learners about their choices and preferences. Individual personality and individual choices counts a lot in making a learner absorbed and engaged in any task or activity.

4. Methodology

To evaluate the responses of learners and teachers, regarding their views on materials selection and materials production, in Compulsory English Skill based language classrooms at Aligarh Muslim University, two sets of questionnaires were circulated among the students and teachers. The research methodology is quantitative in nature seeking to receive accurate results through questionnaire which are not prepared to obtain open-ended answers.

4.1 Participants

The population of this study consisted of around 1,700 boys and girls studying at Undergraduate level. The study was conducted among 1000 girls and 700 boys approximately. These students were from B.A/B.Sc/B.Com 1st year and 2nd year; and the teachers were from Department of English, both male and female, teaching these students. There were around 16 teachers out of those only 14 agreed to participate by returning the questionnaires. Most of the teachers were guest faculties (on adhoc basis) teaching Compulsory English Classes at Aligarh Muslim University. The students’ survey was conducted in the academic year 2012, in November and December. The teachers’ survey was conducted in the month of February and March, 2013. The questionnaires were circulated among 1,700 students out of which 500 were later randomly selected for the purpose of this study. These included- 250 girls and 250 boys of all five streams i.e. Arts, Social Science, Life-Science, Science and Commerce. The return rate of the student's questionnaire was 100%. The return rate of the teachers' questionnaire was 87.50%.

4.2 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

Different instruments for data collection were employed in the aforesaid study by the researcher. The main instruments were two sets of questionnaire, one for the students and other for the teachers. The main aim of student’s questionnaire was to obtain their general background, their learning styles and preferences, their views, ideas and impressions about their English course and their attitude towards materials selection.
process. The second questionnaire was prepared for the teachers. It aimed to know teachers' views and perceptions about their learners and course. The independent variables were class, subject, department, faculty, age, gender, designation etc. The dependent variables consisted of the items of the questionnaire.

For further verification, the researcher consulted a jury of judges from the department of English, as well as one from Colorado.

5. Data Analysis, Results and Discussion
5.1 Data Analysis and Results
The analysis of the questionnaire was through SPSS software and not manual. 5.1.1 Analysis and results obtained from the questionnaires administered to the teachers
The results of the questionnaire reveal the following result:
Table: 1 gives an overview of the teachers who participated in the study. Out of 14 teachers, 12 (85.71%) were guest faculties. Only one teacher (7.14%) was associate professor and one (7.14%) assistant professor.

Table: 1 The Distribution of Teachers' Designation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guest Faculty</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant professor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>92.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the 14 teachers (100%) were Indian Nationals. Table: 2 derive results demarcating teachers teaching compulsory English classes in each Faculty.

Table: 2 Faculty wise Distribution of Teachers

Table: 3 provides information about the teachers' view on students' time-period of English study. 4 (28.6%) teachers out of the 14 replied that they were “Not Sure” and could not select the other options exactly. They gave the reason that due to variety of students and their level in each class, they selected the option ‘Not Sure’. 2 teachers (14.3%) opted “2-5 yrs” only while 6 (42.9%) opted for approximately “6-10 yrs.” The rest 2 (14.3%) replied “11-15 yrs” approximately.

Table: 3 Teachers views on Students' years of English Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category/Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 yrs approx</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 yrs approx</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15 yrs approx</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 4 offers the preference of teachers' views regarding their students' preferred learning style while learning English in class. Only 1 teacher (7.1%) reported that the students preferred to learn “individually”, 2 teachers (14.3%) answered that the students preferred to study “in pairs”, 5 teachers (35.7%) answered that the students wanted to learn “in groups”, while the majority 6 teachers (42.9%) were of view that they wanted “Tutor-assisted” learning. This view of teachers that students are dependent mostly on teachers is later contradicted in students' responses. But, attitude towards learning in groups cannot be neglected.
As shown in Table: 5, for the question about preferred teaching materials, the responses of 9 teachers (64.3%) supported textbook, 5 (35.7%) preferred Learner made material, 6 teachers (42.9%) told that their students preferred Teacher-given Supplementary material and 5 teachers (35.7%) told that they preferred Authentic Materials. In this question, teachers were free to select multiple options. This question derives the results from the point of view of learners' interest and attitude towards use of various types of materials, as perceived by their teachers. The details are shown in the following table.

Table: 5 Distribution of teachers' responses about students' preferences to learn English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category/Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In pairs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In group</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor assisted</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gist of the above responses is also presented in the following figure.

Figure: 1

To another question about the use of only the prescribed Compulsory English sheets for teaching in English in the classes, all the 14 teachers (100%) responded in negative. They all said that they were using some supplementary materials or their own material/tasks in their classes to explain things to their students.

Table: 6 shows the responses to the question about whether the syllabus and materials are suitable to their students' needs/requirements. To this, 2 teachers (14.3%) replied ‘Always’, 1 teacher (7.1%) replied ‘Never’ and 11 teachers (78.6%) replied ‘Sometimes’.

Table: 6 Distribution of Opinion regarding suitability of present syllabus and materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category/Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 7 presents the results of the responses from the teachers to the question- ‘Have you ever involved the learners in actual material selection process.’ The following results were obtained.

Table: 7 Distribution of teachers' opinion regarding involvement of learners in materials selection process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category/Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 8 below depicts teachers responses for the question- ‘Do your learners take interest and give better response towards learning the language, if allowed for selection of materials?’

Table: 9 Distribution of teachers' opinion regarding interest and attitude of learners in materials selection process
5.1.2 Analysis and results obtained from the questionnaires administered to the students

When asked about the students view regarding the same questions, the responses of students for the first question about learning style and preferences were as follow. Table 9 shows that out of these 500 samples, 221 (44.2%) were native speakers of Urdu, 217 (43.4%) were native speakers of Hindi, 56 (11.2%) were native speakers of Other regional Indian languages like Bengali, Tamil, Marathi etc; and the rest 6 students were the native speakers of foreign languages.

Table 9 Distribution of Students’ based on their mother-tongue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other regional Indian Languages</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>98.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Languages</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 10 provides information about the participants selected for the study.

Table 10 Faculty wise distribution of data samples of students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Of Arts</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Social Science</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Of Science</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Law Science</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Commerce</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the students fall between age group of 16-23.

Table 11 Distribution of students’ responses for years of studying English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 years</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 Distribution of responses on students’ preferences for studying English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content/Option</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individually</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In pairs</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In group</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor-assisted</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 below is about the responses received from the students to the question- ‘How will you prefer to learn English?’. To this, 93 students (18.6%) preferred learning ‘Through Textbook’, 121 students (24.2%) preferred ‘through student-made materials’, 43 students (8.6%) preferred ‘Teacher-made...
materials’ and the rest 243 students (48.7%) preferred ‘Some new Authentic material’. It is well acknowledged that the vast range of authentic materials helps the students as well as teachers to select from the different resources and different varieties of materials.

Table: 13 Distribution of students’ preferences for material to study English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through textbook</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through your own material/sheets</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through teacher made supplementary material</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through some new authentic material</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results obtained are also shown in the following figure.

Figure: 2 Students’ choices for material

In response to the question ‘Are you using only the Compulsory English sheets for learning English?’, 222 out of 500 (44.4%) responded as ‘Yes’ while 278 students (55.6%) answered ‘No’.

Table: 14 Distribution of Students responses about suitability of syllabus and materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category/Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
<td>62.0%</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Discussion

From the above results, we see that as most of the students are interested in selecting their own materials, it could be suggested that students can go for materials selection also, from various sources like books, TV programs, authentic and real-life materials to gain a better output. So, the learning process is not blocked through imposed materials of the teacher. In Tomlinson’s view learners involvement makes the learning learner-centered in true sense. The degree of acceptance for activities and tasks by the learners will be higher if they are active participants in materials selection and these activities will itself reflect learners’ interest and choices. Types of students’
collection could include TV shows, news and discussions, sports news or commentary, jokes or puzzles, art and paintings, cooking recipes, salad recipes, visuals and photographs, music, natural scenery, historical monument or anything of the choice of the learners or the like. Selection of materials will surely differ from one learner to another, and will reflect individual choices and individual differences but it is up to the teacher to decide how to mould it for language teaching classrooms. Experienced and enthusiastic teachers can surely find new and innovative ways to make learning more interesting and the so called learner-centered. This sort of selection will help in understanding their interest areas which could further be moulded and modulated by the teachers, as per the teaching objectives and classroom requirements.

6. Conclusion

Generally materials selection is considered as the task of teachers. But due to large classrooms in Indian settings, it is really difficult to cope up with finding each learner’s interest and abilities. So, for this purpose the shifting of role to learners in selecting, googling and finding their own materials as per choice might be an idea that can work. Teachers can then modify and use these learners selected materials as per their classroom requirement and language learning objectives. From the investigation of the learners’ and teachers’ perceptions in this study on the role of learners’ in material selection, it was found that both the teachers and learners in Aligarh Muslim University support the constructive involvement of the learners in the process of material selection. This can also help in making the teaching and learning learner-centered in real sense which is always argued and desired in the context like India. To sum up, If learners participate in the two processes (i.e. selection of syllabus items and materials), it will not only reduce the workload of teachers and make both the parties active and enthusiastic towards learning but also will help in increasing motivation among learners. This is because; students will select items according to their interests, likes and dislikes which is expected to give better output in learning.

About the Author:

Sheema Fatima is presently a research scholar with the Department of English of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India. She holds Masters Degree in ELT (English Language Teaching) from AMU and has also worked as a Lecturer in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Her areas of interest include material production, teaching skills especially writing and listening, phonetics etc. The present paper is based on the research paper which was presented in an International Conference held at Amity University, Lucknow in December 2013.

Works Cited


Tomlinson, Brian. (Personal Communication, November 11, 2013)
Appendix


Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to know your ideas and impressions about your learners and study materials used in your classes. You are requested to fill out the questionnaire and give your views. The information, thus obtained, will be kept confidential and the researcher will abide by the established research ethics. I shall be grateful to you for your responses to this questionnaire.

Name of the Faculty (Optional) _____________________
Designation ____________________________
Nationality ____________________________

Part I: Tick the group(s) of students that you teach for Compulsory English classes. (May tick more than one option)
a) Arts [ ]
b) Social Science [ ]
c) Science [ ]
d) Life-science [ ]
e) Commerce [ ]

1. Do you think that majority of your students have been studying English for?
a) 0-2 years [ ]
b) 2-5 years [ ]
c) 6-10 years [ ]
d) 10-15 years [ ]

2. How do your students prefer to learn English in class?
a) Individually [ ]
b) In pairs [ ]
c) In group [ ]
d) Tutor-assisted [ ]

Part II: 3. How do your students prefer to learn English? Tick(✓) the options keeping in consideration your classroom experiences.

a) Through textbook [ ]
b) Through students made materials/activity sheets [ ]
c) Through teacher made supplementary material [ ]
d) Through some new/real-life materials other than book [ ]

4. Do you use only the prescribed Compulsory English sheets for teaching English in your classes?
Yes [ ]
No [ ]

5. Is the syllabus and materials suitable to your students’ needs/requirements?
Yes [ ]
No [ ]

6. Have you ever involved your learners in actual materials selection process?
Yes [ ]
No [ ]

7. Do your learners take interest if allowed for selection of materials?
Yes [ ]
No [ ]

QUESTIONNAIRE [STUDENTS]  B.A./B.S.C./B.Com

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to know your ideas and impressions about your English course and materials. Your task is to fill out the questionnaire as directed. The information, thus obtained, will be kept confidential and the researcher will abide by the established research ethics. I shall be grateful to you for your responses to this questionnaire.

Name (Optional) ____________________________
Class/Stream ____________________________ Subject (Main) ____________________________
Age (Optional) ____________________________ Mother-Tongue ____________________________
Department ____________________________ Faculty ____________________________ Gender ____________________________

Part I: 1. For how many years have you studied English?

1) 0-2 years [ ]
2) 2-5 years [ ]
3) 6-10 years [ ]
4) 10-15 years [ ]

2. How do you prefer to learn?
a) Individually [ ]
b) In pairs [ ]
c) In group [ ]
d) Tutor-assisted [ ]

Part II: 3. How will you prefer to learn English?

a) Through textbook [ ]
b) Through your own materials/activity sheets [ ]
c) Through teacher made supplementary material [ ]
d) Through some new/real-life materials other than book [ ]

4. Are you using only the Compulsory English sheets for learning English?
Yes [ ]
No [ ]

5. Is the syllabus and materials suitable to your needs/requirements?
Always [ ]
Never [ ]
Sometimes [ ]

6. Had your teacher ever asked you to bring your own activities in language classroom?
Yes [ ]
No [ ]

7. Do you want to select your own materials for learning English language?
Yes [ ]
No [ ]
Can’t Say [ ]

Cite this article as: Sheema Fatima (2014) Learners Involvement in Materials Selection for Teaching English in Language Classroom at Aligarh Muslim University. International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies, 2(2), 79-89 Retrieved from http://www.eltsjournal.org