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Review on "English Language Teaching Materials: Theory and Practice"

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Abstract: *"English language teaching materials: Theory and Practice", edited by Nigel Harwood, concerns the design and development of teaching materials. The authors of the book interpret, analyze and summarize the theories of second language acquisition, and demonstrate the concrete procedures of language course books for both traditional classroom teaching and data-driven learning. It adopts both bottom-up and top-down approaches, combined with the theory and practice of language materials design, including teacher-developed classroom materials and commercial materials, as well as technology-driven materials to identify problems and their consequences, and identify gaps from linguistics. The experiential learning helps student teachers use language materials more efficiently and critically through task-based teaching and interactive learning and therefore textbook designers may need to consider reader-friendly initiatives for both traditional teaching and blended-learning in the digital age. The findings confirm that the materials not only serve their pedagogic goals but also hopefully provide the basis for memorable and enjoyable classroom experiences for both teacher and students. Unlike previous studies, it focuses on the design principles and methods of academic English teaching material guided by SLA theories, perspective for coursebook design are exemplified, pedagogical and research implications are included.*

Keywords: *"English Language Teaching Materials: Theory and Practice"; A book review; English for specific purpose; Course book corpus; Design and development*

Forey and Polias (2017) have pointed to the importance of using multimodal resources to provide students with multiple access points to content knowledge. Therefore, it is important to understand how multimodal resources, especially data-driven materials and corpus technology, are used in an educational context. Addressing this need, researchers have investigated teaching materials, particularly textbooks, in a growing range of disciplines, such as English (Gu & Feng, 2015; Stengglisn & Iledema, 2001) and other English Medium Instruction (EMI) disciplinary courses. A prerequisite for language acquisition is that the learners are exposed to a rich, meaningful, and comprehensible input of language in use.

As the first textbook dedicated to data-driven material design and development,"English Language Teaching Materials Theory and Practice" presents all-around discussions, a stimulating collection of original papers that describe different approaches to material design in order to achieve communication purposes, and meet the needs and wants of the learners. The whole book is issue-driven and problem-based. It adopts various theoretical frameworks, genre analysis, cognitive theories and multimodal analysis as typical examples. And it follows the trend from the general to the specific: the material design practice such as contextualized

grammar activities, information-gap tasks, input-enrichment tasks, consciousness-raising tasks and structured-input activities as the primary source, and literature reviews as the secondary. The writing style is argumentative, covering research methodology, different domains, context, and data-driven methods, representing the latest research findings on the SLA-guided material research. Analysis of the structure indicates that most chapters in the book are preoccupied with student/reader-centered transmission of knowledge. The majority of the chapters follow a problem-solution pattern: theory as solution, with abundant explanation and exemplification. The objective is training students' communicative skill, analytical skills, using the knowledge to analyze real life language use for ESP and EAP.

With regard to the organization of the content, this book is well structured in 4 parts and 17 chapters, the first part (p.1-27) being an Introduction, providing readers with the research questions and general framework of material study respectively, and deals with the theoretic roots, aiming to answer the question of what are the problems of language material design and why it is necessary to focus on material design issues. Meanwhile, it introduces the theory and principles of material design, its main problems, and addresses the importance of material development research for different target readers and different language genres, analyzing the key literature feature at the level of materials contents, so that the readers will get to know the standard of a good course book, and be familiar with the basic theoretical framework and development practices of relevant researches. For both part 2 and part 3, namely, the main body of this book, there are both materials for the language syllabus and materials for specific and academic purposes which are knowledge-based, analysis-based, or research-based materials to demystify academic citation for postgraduates.

For part 2, with 4 chapters (2-4 chapter, p.28-126), perspectives of material design, it exemplifies the standard of a good course book by integration, ranging from language, pragmatics, genre to cultural content analysis materials used in and outside the classroom environment, and describes the design theory of English materials. Furthermore, the authors distinguish key pedagogical concepts, and give answers to the theoretical and methodological issues concerning commercial material design, the theory and practice of the application of technology, effective material design principles, and course book development for the target readers, as well as relevant teaching models guided by the critical teaching theories. The four chapters presented in this part, combined with illustrative and empirical studies, inform the readers that language material issue is cross-disciplinary and contains different social cultural political and economical factors. Students need to be trained to use various non-linguistic resources.

Part 3 has discussed materials for the language syllabus that includes chapter 6 to chapter 10 (p.127-203). It embodies 4 chapters, ranging from describing the development and design theory of English materials, to introducing the process of the design and development of language-teaching materials for speaking, reading and listening as well as the genre and content, to provide reference for researchers in second language acquisition. It embodies the design principles for reading material, spoken material and genre-based writing material as well as the display of process-oriented teaching activities for listening, web-based reading strategy. A rich variety of textbook discourse from authentic communication needs are included, and the conversations displayed in the designed activities are dynamic and they reflect the social changes and real classroom phenomena. In this part, the explanation, argument and analysis of syllabus design offer us an integrated and overall picture to understand the main concepts of materials design process.

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Part 4, Materials for Specific and Academic Purposes consists of 7 chapters (p.204-297) each of which contains up to 12 communicative activities. The headings of the sections show the variety of academic English and ESP (nursing and business meeting)material offered: It covers the design of academic paper writing materials, the design of corpus-based Phd writing material, the nursing/medical English design, research-based business writing competence strategy, and the design of second language community of adult English learners. In this chapter, corpus has been used to create authentic contexts, facilitate students understanding of abstract concepts, engage their interests, enhance their critical thinking, analytical skills and self-autonomous learning skill in real language use. Through this part of learning, the readers get to know the development and design of ESP materials, the construction of needs-driven corpus and discipline-specific academic word lists, terminologies, in parallel with sample materials, case studies, discipline specific vocabulary and phrase in academic seminar, composition. It introduces the innovation of computer-based language-learning material development.

Most of the articles in each chapter are based on students' needs analysis, embodying three elements of reflection, evaluation and adaptation, which enable the readers to comprehend the main topics of every chapter, follow the standard format of empirical studies (Approach-design-procedure),with responsiveness, cohesion, and stability from their development of reading materials. For the research methods, it advocates empirical data-based studies and the analysis of readers' needs. Each chapter involves a notable element of self-questioning and self-criticism involving a re-evaluation of the materials. Moreover, the authors of each chapter, -such as Nigel Harwood, Rod Ellis, Hanyo Reinders, Cynthia White, Brian Tomlinson and Sarah Benesch, - are world-renowned SLA research scholars. Other people include celebrities and renowned scholars with various role identities, such as a teacher and material designers, serving to exemplify linguistic concepts, integrating with abstracts, introduction, theory description, core principle distinction, sample materials demonstrations, case studies, textbook discourse presentation, activity design and discussions and summary, which provide well-designed situation specific material sources and facilitate language teacher development. The integration of different chapters embodies the summarizing methods, announces principal outcomes, states the value of the relevant material research and indicates future trends for written, video and audio language material design to train our students become morally acceptable and more patriotic in the digital era.

To make methodology and reasoning procedures more objective and convincing, relevant figures, tables and appendixes are presented in the main sections of the book. Specifically, there are 31 figures and 41 tables in 17 chapters, 3 appendixes in chapter 10, 8 appendixes in chapter 15 and 2 appendixes in chapter 16. Visual aids such as figures and tables, exemplifying various linguistic concepts and abstract theories (carriers of abstract concepts), help students/readers encode and repack meaning in various material design contexts, analyze the explicit instruction with communicative tasks, language assignment, interpret triangular relationship between task type, tutor or student role, and reduce the level of abstraction of a verbal concept. Meanwhile, the citations and bibliography listed at the end of each chapter provide a rich and detailed reading resource to further our researches, and the author index and subject index for the last part summarize and outline the whole book.

One weak point of this book is that there is no corpus-based statistical analysis in the last section to further evidence the specific discussions on the genre and disciplinary features of language in ESP context. Analysis

of tables, figures, appendixes show that only 15% of them contain corpus-based results. They don't depict and demonstrate authentic things from corpus-driven contexts, such contents include collocations, concurrence, high/Low-frequency wordlist and other corpus-based typical elements etc.

We try to understand the complexity and multimodality of various ESP /EAP design practices in the digital age, from language material use of different genres and "find theories to explain the design practice", rather than start from SLA theories and find examples to illustrate theories. To this end, lead-in /background information is a key move with rich material design examples and authentic case studies and samples. This is important for the effective understanding of abstract concepts on the one hand, and for the application of the knowledge in practice on the other hand. Very few have contextualized pedagogical principles in different cultural and social context to foster interaction between learners, teachers and authors and analyses problems in the SLA teaching materials dynamically. From this point, the publication of the book enriches and diversifies the research content of teaching, bridges relevant research gaps and helps readers to develop educationally in the sense that they become more mature, more critically astute, more creative, more collaborative and more capable.

To sum up, design and development of teaching material is not just knowledge but also engagement It is innovative to make a boring, abstract, and difficult discipline dynamic, interactive and interesting and to make the language class student-centered.

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