

## CHAPTER FIVE: DEVELOPING SPECIFIC TYPES OF MATERIALS

### 1. MATERIALS FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY

#### 1.1. Conditions for Learning

The psychological conditions to enhance vocabulary learning:

- **Noticing** → paying attention to a word as a language feature:
  - using typographical features such as putting the word in italics or bold type
  - defining the word orally, or in the text, or in a glossary
- **(Spaced) retrieval** → a way of strengthening and establishing the learning receptively/productively through:
  - activities like retelling, role-play or problem-solving
- **Elaborating** → involves retrieval but enriches the memory for an item as well as strengthening it:
  - meeting a known word in listening or reading where it is used in a way that stretches its meaning for the learner (receptive generative use)
  - using a known word in contexts that the learner has not used it in before (productive generative use).

There are two ways to determine activities that are better than others:

**Involvement load hypothesis (ILH)** (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001) conceptualizes depth of processing and elaborative learning in terms of three major task components:

- **Need** (a *motivational* factor depending on who has chosen the words to learn – the teacher or the learners?) → imposed by an external agent OR imposed on the learner by herself
- **Search** (Does the learner need to retrieve information or is it provided?) → to look for or retrieve the meaning of a word OR to find the word form
- **Evaluation** (Does the learner have to make decisions about the adequacy of the word for a context?) → the comparison of a word with other words, a specific meaning of a word with its other meanings, or combining the word with other words

Inspired by the ILH, Nation and Webb (2011) developed the **Technique feature analysis (TFA)**:

- **Motivation** → have a clear goal and encouraging students to achieve that goal, e.g., crossword puzzles
- **Noticing** → *attract* learners' attention to the unknown words or to the features of the words that are unknown + an activity should raise the learners' *awareness* that there is something to learn + *negotiation*
- **Retrieval** → receptive retrieval vs. productive retrieval
- **Generative use** → meet a word in a new way (receptive generative use) or using it in a way that the learner has not met (productive generative use) to strengthen memory

- **Retention** → ensure the learner successfully links form and meaning → seeing a word as it is used in a meaningful situation, avoiding interference, etc.

## 1.2. Designing Activities

### 1.2.1. Deliberate language focused learning

Table below lists aspects of what is involved in knowing a word along with some of the vocabulary exercises that focus on them.

Form	Spoken form	Pronounce the words Read aloud
	Form-meaning connection	Matching words and definitions Discussing the meanings of phrases
Meaning	Concept and reference	Finding common meanings Choosing the right meaning
	Associations	Finding substitutes Classifying words
Use	Collocates	Classifying items in a concordance Finding collocates
	Constraints on use	Identifying constraints Classifying words under style headings

The design features of these activities will directly affect the conditions for learning that occur:

- *Focus on language items*
- *Focus on the language system*
- *Group work*
- *Data gathering or gap filling*

### 1.2.2. Fluency development

Fluency is likely to develop if the following conditions are met:

- *All the language items are within their previous experience*
- *Activity is meaning focused* → real time
- *Learner should perform at a higher than normal level* → faster, less hesitation, larger planned chunks

Three approaches to developing fluency:

- **Well-beaten path approach** → gaining repeated practice on the same material so that it can be performed fluently
- **Richness approach** → using the known word in a wide variety of contexts and situations (making many connections and associations with a known word)

- **Well-ordered system approach** → fluency occurs because the learner is in control of the system of the language and can use a variety of efficient, well-connected, and well-practiced paths to the wanted word

## 2. MATERIALS FOR DEVELOPING READING SKILLS

### 2.1. Introduction

Studies have named different criteria/dimensions for fluency:

Pang, 2008:

- language knowledge and processing ability* → the abilities for automatic and rapid word recognition, automatic syntactic parsing and semantic proposition formation
- cognitive ability* → make use of prior knowledge and strategies to construct meaning
- metacognitive strategic competence* → monitor and control of reading strategies

Grabe, 2009:

- automaticity* → processing operations that are rapid, relatively resource-free, e.g., word recognition
- accuracy* → e.g., word recognition
- reading rate* → a large recognition vocabulary, automaticity with basic syntactic processing, and plenty of practice ;; reading efficiency at the level of extended text
- prosodic structuring* → pausing at appropriate junctures or processing text chunks in ways that match structural units in the continuous prose

### 2.2. An Overview of the Major Approaches to Teaching L2 Reading Materials

#### 2.2.1. The reading comprehension-based approaches

comprehension in the form of the presentation of text followed by post-reading questions on the text.

Techniques:

Q and A ; True or False ; gap-filling ; matching activities

How do these testing techniques nurture learners' reading abilities?

- to check comprehension
- to facilitate comprehension → higher levels of understanding
- to ensure that the learner reads the text

The underlying assumption of the approach seems to be that a text has only one meaning – one that is intended by the writer ≠

Widdowson (1979): texts have potential for meaning, which will vary from reader to reader, depending upon a multitudes of factors

Urquhart (1987): it is impossible even for L1 proficient readers to agree completely on the meaning of a text due to each individual's experiences → readers can achieve 'interpretation' rather than 'comprehension'

mental representation = meaning of the text in the mind → mental representation depends on connecting the information gained through decoded linguistic data with the knowledge that already exists in the reader's mind

### 2.2.2. The language-based approaches

Vital importance of nurturing learners' automatic language processing ability in order to facilitate successful reading → vocabulary and grammar exercises have a strong presence in reading sections

The language-based approaches to reading became popular through behaviorism (1950s-1960s):

reading being treated as a means of language practice through the use of simplified texts and graded readers

Later on, strong support came from eye movement studies (1980s-1990s):

process each letter of every word → translate print to speech as they go

The description of the reading process hypothesizes parallel occurrence of both bottom-up and top-down operations

Language-based approach → to read fluently the learners need general language ability, especially automatic word recognition

Vocabulary studies also seem to indicate that fluent reading requires:

- fast and automatic word identification;
- extensive knowledge of the lexicon;
- the ability to attribute the most appropriate meanings to lexical items.

In L1, we read to obtain nonlinguistic outcomes ≠ in L2 reading is often taught as a means of learning language

Delaying reading at the initial stage of language learning because the learners do not yet have enough language to read experientially ↔ in L1, there is a fairly clear divide between aural-oral language acquisition and reading acquisition

### 2.2.3. The skill/strategy-based approaches

A **skill** is an acquired ability, which has been automatized and operates largely subconsciously

A **strategy** is a conscious procedure carried out in order to solve a problem

Skills might be grouped into

language-related skills, e.g. guessing the meaning of unknown words

reason-related skills, e.g. inferencing the main idea

The notion of 'strategy' emerged in the mid-1980s:

readers are considered to be active agents who direct their own cognitive resources (e.g., use of a variety of reading strategies) in reading

What the skill/strategy-based reading approaches seem to share in common are:

- a view that in order to read effectively, readers need a range of skills and strategies

- an awareness that different readers may have different reading problems
- a view that guided practice will help learners learn necessary skills and strategies

#### 2.2.4. The schema-based approaches

Schema is knowledge in the mind → it hypothesizes how knowledge is organized in the mind and how it is used in processing new information

Comprehension: when a new experience is understood in comparison with a stereotypical version of a similar experience held in memory, e.g. a schema of a French restaurant → use pre-reading activities to create schema (Williams & Moran, 1989), e.g.,

asking learners to consider statements, text titles, illustrations, etc.

asking learners to discuss their personal experience related to the theme or the topic

 **Note:** Schema theories do not explain well how the mind creates, destroys and reorganizes schemata

#### 2.2.5. An alternative approach to materials for teaching reading

Masuhara (2013) proposed an alternative approach:

- *Engaging affect should be the prime concern of reading materials* → useful, interesting, engaging, involving, important and relevant text to our lives
- *Listening to a text before reading it helps decrease linguistic demands and encourages learners to focus on meaning* → written language must stand on the shoulder of oral language → Masuhara argues that sufficient oral language proficiency is a pre-requisite for L2 fluent reading.

A teacher reading the text to the students can make it accessible to the learners by:

- Taking away the cognitive load of processing scripts and sounds at the same time.
- Chunking a text into meaningful and manageable lengths to help the learners gradually interpret the meaning.
- Adding prosodic features such as prominence that mark situationally informative pragmatic meaning.
- Achieving impact through reading a text with suitable affect (e.g., humor, anger).
- *Reading comprehension means creating multidimensional mental representation in the reader's mind*

Experiment 1: Read the following definition for “sho”: a wind instrument made of groups of slim and void bamboo stems. Used in traditional Japanese music → uni-dimensional processing

Experiment 2: Imagine an apple → multidimensional mental representation

→ Meaning construction in the mind is achieved in a multi-dimensional way

- *Materials should help learners experience the text first before they draw their attention to its language* → reading materials should offer activities that help the learners focus on the content of the text and achieve personal experience of it through multidimensional representation

### 2.3. Conclusion

Learners do have language problems, but what they lack is the fun and experience of connecting the language with multidimensional mental representation

## 3. MATERIALS FOR DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS

### 3.1. The Roles of Writing Materials

- **Models** → present good examples of a genre and illustrate its particular features → samples be analyzed to find out the way about organization and language → increase awareness → guide learners to construct their own samples
- **Scaffolding** → develop students' understanding of a genre/salient structures/vocabulary and their ability to construct texts of their own ; Materials offer students guided, teacher-supported practice on the features of the genre
  - 📖 **Note:** The grammar taught in writing classes should be selected in a top-down way → materials which develop an understanding of grammar concern how meanings can be codified in distinct and recognizable ways
- **Reference materials** → concern knowledge rather than practice: this category includes grammars, reference manuals, etc.
- **Stimulus materials** → used to involve learners in thinking by provoking ideas and developing topics in ways that allow them to articulate their thoughts → provide content schemata

### 3.2. Selecting Writing Materials

Selecting relevant texts is a key consideration → materials need to assist learners towards the ability to write in the genres that have been identified

One way is to determine the broad family of text-types that students should work with → this enables us to establish the kinds of language and skills that students require

Text types	Main feature	Sample written genre
Exchanges	Joint construction	emails, internet chat, letters
Forms	Printed, with respondent spaces	simple and complex formatted texts
Procedures	Steps to achieve a goal	instructions, procedures, protocols
Information texts	Provide news or data	descriptions, explanations, reports
Story texts	Retell events and respond to them	recounts, narratives
Persuasive texts	Argue for/against a thesis	expositions, discussions, opinion texts

### 3.3. The Internet and Writing Materials

Advantages of Internet for teachers:

- offers access to a massive supply of authentic materials
- provides opportunities for student written communication (with classmates and beyond)

- encourages collaborative research and writing projects
- is a source of a growing number of online corpora which can be used for exploring actual uses of language
  - a. corpora used to raise students' awareness of their key features through various noticing activities
  - b. corpora used as **reference tools**  
corpora used as **research tools**

#### 4. DEVELOPING MATERIALS FOR SPEAKING SKILLS

Aspects of speaking skills:

**Motor-receptive skills** → mastering of sounds and structures not necessarily in any particular context

**Interaction skills** → making decisions about what and how to say things in specific communicative situations to convey the right intentions

##### 4.1. A Proposed Framework for Developing Materials for Spoken Language

- *Conceptualizing learner needs*
- *Translating needs to subject matters and communication situations*
- *Identifying verbal communication strategies* → essential tools to serve the communication of meanings, e.g. dealing with interaction pressures such as stealing and sustaining turns, controlling their level of courtesy, etc.

Practical devices to facilitate oral production:

- (1) using less complex syntax,
  - (2) making do with short phrases and incomplete sentences,
  - (3) employing fixed conversational phrases,
  - (4) adding filler words to gain time to speak and
  - (5) correcting or improving what one has already said.
- *Utilizing verbal sources from real life:*
    - Taping learners' peer group interaction in the target language and analyzing it
    - Finding opportunities to compare naturally occurring conversations with the designer's versions which deal with the same topic
    - Keeping a diary might also be a realistic way to collect resources for designing speaking activities with
  - *Designing skill-acquiring tasks* → tasks should help learners in three essential aspects:
    - **To acquire new language** → learners should be helped to internalize new language before making it become available to discuss topics  
For internalization → language must be pushed further into an experiential process, by guiding learners towards readiness in both content and language, e.g., ranking exercises, brainstorming for key words and expressions
    - **To learn rules of interaction** → learners can be provided with conditions to help them become aware of fundamental skills and develop verbal strategies in the target topic

- **To experience communication of meanings** → learners need purposes for using language, e.g. role-play

#### 4.3. A Proposed Framework for Effective Speaking Materials

- *Focus on both sharing and processing information* → the former means discovering missing information from one's knowledge gap by learning about it from one or more partners ; the latter means communicating by exchanging what belongs in learners' individuality by allowing learners to use their own backgrounds and personalities
- *Respect for learner control of meanings* → communication skills are best developed when learners learn to take control of their own performance from their own perspective rather than wait to be directed by the teacher, provide topics of their own interest
- *Potential for a range of learner choices* → the range of decisions may involve learners choosing their role in a project that involves many partners, choosing a sub-task in an activity or choosing a topic from a set of suggested topics → significance is to train learners in developing active participation, responsibility, autonomy, etc.
- *Concern for learner affectivity* → learners tend to find it easier to articulate their ideas when they feel emotionally involved and enjoy what is going on, e.g., controversy
- *Utilization of individual knowledge* → content of speaking tasks should not be so unfamiliar to learners that they do not fully understand and thus do not know how to discuss it
- *Rehearsing features of spoken discourse* → content should encourage and enable learners to process speech by experiencing use, e.g., by making quick decisions under the pressure of time
- *Moving beyond the Initiation-Respond-Feedback model* → effective materials should be designed in a way that push classroom talk beyond the feedback stage for example, by turning that feedback into a question

## 5. COURSEBOOK LISTENING ACTIVITIES

### 5.1. What Could Textbooks Be Providing?

Rost (1991, 2011) has used a division of listening activities into four broad types:

Name	Definition
Attentive listening	the learners have to give short verbal and non-verbal responses to the speaker in a real-time interaction
Intensive listening	listening closely for precise sounds, words, phrases, grammatical units and pragmatic units
Selective listening	listening with a planned purpose in mind, often to gather specific information to perform a task
Interactive listening	a type of conversational interaction in which the listener takes a leading role in understanding, through providing feedback, asking questions and supporting the speaker
Extensive listening	listening for several minutes at a time, staying in the target language

Responsive listening	a type of listening practice in which the listener’s response is the goal of the activity. The listener’s response in this type of activity is ‘affective’ – expressing an opinion or point of view – rather than ‘informational’
Autonomous listening	The key is that the learner is in control of input selection, task completion, and assessment.

The prototypical intensive listening activity is *pure dictation*:

- **Fast-speed dictation:** The teacher reads a passage at natural speed. The students can ask for multiple repetitions of any part of the passage, but the teacher will not slow.
- **Pause and paraphrase:** The teacher reads a passage and pauses periodically for the students to write paraphrases, not the exact words used.
- **Listening close**
- **Error identification:** The teacher provides a fully transcribed passage, but with several errors. The students listen and identify (and correct) the errors.
- **Jigsaw dictation:** Students work in pairs. Each person in the pair has part of the full dictation. The students read their parts to the other in order to complete the passage.
- **Group dictation:** Learners hear an extended passage, usually a monologue. A key element is that the learners do not take notes. Following the hearing of the passage the learners are asked to collaborate to reconstruct the passage.
- **Communicative dictation:** Focus on student-to-student exchanges. In a jigsaw listening variation, students hear different parts or versions of a text. They then pair up to share their information.
- **Listening games:** There are a variety of listening games that involve partial dictation, passing along messages verbatim, etc.

The prototypical selective listening activity is **note-taking**, which enjoys face validity and psychological validity:

Note-taking functions	Note-taking methods	Note-taking techniques
Retrieval	<i>Outlining:</i> showing macro-micro relationships	Indentation, spacing, charting, review (e.g., Cornell method)
Storage	<i>Linear:</i> showing sequencing of presentation	Key words, sequencing, abbreviations (key word method)
Application	<i>Matrix:</i> showing connectivity and relevance	Graphic imagery, connectives, personalization (e.g., Mind Maps scheme)
Language learning	<i>Task:</i> completing explicit activity	Group collaboration, reconstruction, question answering (e.g., Contemporary topics system)

In extensive listening, it is necessary for the learner to have access to listening input that can be understood reasonably well on the first listening.

An important aspect of teaching extensive listening is the need to provide comprehension strategy instruction so that learners can avoid becoming overwhelmed by the quantity of input.

Method	Description
Experience–text–relationship method	Emphasizes tying learners’ own experiences with text cues to arrive at meaning
K–W–L sequence (‘What you know’, ‘What you want to know’, ‘What you learned’ from listening or reading)	Focuses listeners and readers on the process of learning from text
Reciprocal teaching approach	Prompts teacher and students to query each other around the four specific strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing
QAR method (Question–Answer Relationships)	Teaches learners to look for specific links concerning how the information is presented

White (1998) categorizes listening skills into five broad areas:

Perception skills	Language skills	Using knowledge of the world	Dealing with information	Interacting with a speaker
recognizing individual sounds,	identifying individual words and groups and building up possible meanings for them,	connecting groups of words to non-linguistic features in order to get clues to meaning,	understanding gist meaning,	coping with speaker variation such as speed and action
discriminating between sounds,	identifying discourse markers,	using knowledge of a topic to guess what the speaker might be saying about it,	understanding the main points,	recognizing speaker intention
identifying reduced forms in fast speech,			understanding details,	identifying speaker mood

## 5.2. Suggestions for Additional Approaches to Developing Materials for Listening Skills

### 5.2.1. Intake-rich activities

Learners need to listen to ‘texts’ which are affectively and cognitively engaging. Some such listening activities include:

- listening to a group of teachers acting a scene from a play;
- listening to the teacher telling jokes and anecdotes;
- listening to other learners reading poems, telling jokes and anecdotes, etc.;

### 5.2.2. Ways of facilitating intake

The issue of multidimensional representations: use sensory imaging, use inner speech to repeat some of the utterances we hear, connect what we hear to our lives, etc. → ways of helping learners to achieve this include:

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- building up listening confidence by not testing learners at lower levels on what they have not understood but giving instead opportunities to make use of what they have understood
  - encouraging the teacher and the learners to tell anecdotes about their own experiences in relation to the topic of a lesson;
  - etc.

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