An Introduction to English Language Teaching
Second Year 2020-2021
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First Semester
Week 6:
Lecture 11:
EFL/ESL Materials and Media:
- **Commercial Materials**
- **Authentic Materials**

Commercial Materials: Advantages

There are certain advantages associated with the commercially made EFL teaching materials. These advantages can be summarized as follows:

1. **They provide structure and a syllabus for a program:** Without textbooks a program may have no central core and learners may not receive a syllabus that has been systematically planned and developed.

2. **They help standardize instruction:** The use of a textbook in a program can ensure that the students in different classes receive similar content and therefore can be tested in the same way.

3. **They maintain quality:** If a well developed textbook is used students are exposed to materials that have been tried and tested, that are based on sound learning principles, and that are paced appropriately.

4. **They provide a variety of learning resources:** Textbooks are often accompanied by workbooks, CDs and cassettes, videos, CD ROMs, and comprehensive teaching guides, providing a rich and varied resource for teachers and learners.

Commercial Materials: Advantages

5. **They are efficient: They save teachers'time, enabling teachers to devote time to teaching rather than material's production.**

6. **They can provide effective language models and input: Textbooks can provide support for teachers whose first language is not English and who may not be able to generate accurate language input on their own.**

7. **They can train teachers: If teachers have limited teaching experience, a textbook together with the teacher's manual can serve as a medium of initial teacher training.**

8. **They are visually appealing: Commercial textbooks usually have high standards of design and production and hence are appealing to learners and teachers.**

Commercial Materials: Disadvantages

There are also certain disadvantages associated with the commercially made EFL teaching materials. These disadvantages can be summarized as follows:

1. **They may contain inauthentic language:** Textbooks sometimes present inauthentic language since texts, dialogs and other aspects of content tend to be specially written to incorporate teaching points and are often not representative of real language use.

2. **They may distort content:** Textbooks often present an idealized view of the world or fail to represent real issues. In order to make textbooks acceptable in many different contexts controversial topics are avoided and instead an idealized white middle-class view of the world is portrayed as the norm.

3. **They may not reflect students'needs:** Since textbooks are often written for global markets they often do not reflect the interests and needs of students and hence may require adaptation.

4. **They are expensive:** Commercial textbooks may represent a financial burden for students in many parts of the world.

Commercial Materials: Disadvantages

5. **They can deskill teachers: If teachers use textbooks as the primary source of their teaching leaving the textbook and teacher's manual to make the major instructional decisions for them the teacher's role can become reduced to that of a technician whose primarily function is to present materials prepared by others.**

6. **There is possible ideological conflict: The materials are usually based on the author's or publisher's ideas and perspectives about teaching. For example some text writers believe that the students must master vocabularies before they learn to speak, write, or read, but some others prefer lots of exposure as the best way to develop the communicative skill. This conflict can have negative consequences on what goes in the class**

7. **Commercially made textbooks are prepared for a wide audience, one that is culturally diverse and geographically dissimilar. As such, the qualities which give teacher-made and audience-specific materials their authenticity and relevance are removed.**

Authentic Materials

Authentic Materials are items not created or edited expressly for language learners. They involve resources, both written and oral, created by native speakers of the target language for native speakers of the target language.

Authentic materials refer to any items created for the general community and not specifically for the ESL community. They offer real language that is contextually rich and culturally pertinent. They also provide insights into the adult learners' new community and the services and opportunities it offers.

Authentic materials are materials used in the target culture for actual communicative needs. They should enable the learner to hear, read, and produce language as it is used in the target culture.

Authentic Materials: Types

Authentic materials are of different types. Below is a list of some materials that an EFL/ESL teacher might adopt:

1. Authentic Listening/Viewing Materials: movie segments, commercials, cartoons, news, TV shows, songs, documentaries……etc.
2. Authentic Visual Materials: photographs, paintings, sketches, banners, drawings, magazines………etc.
3. Authentic Printed Materials: newspapers, advertisements, sports reports, obituary columns, catalogs…..etc.
4. Realia: dolls, puppets, currency, scissors, balloons, masks, …..etc.

pages (100-101)

Authentic Materials: Advantages

1. Authentic materials can reinforce for students the direct relation between the language classroom and the outside world.
2. Authentic materials offer students a valuable source of language input.
3. Offer a way to contextualized language learning.

Authentic Materials: Disadvantages

1. It takes time and effort to locate authentic materials.
2. It might be difficult to make authentic materials comprehensible for students. Teachers will need some steps of evaluating and selecting materials or need analysis in order to make sure the students will easily comprehend the material.
3. Some students will not accept authentic materials as a valuable learning source. For example, some students may not consider movies and songs as a learning source but entertainment.