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EDITED BY BRIAN TOMLINSON

DEVELOPING MATERIALS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

SECOND EDITION

BLOOMSBURY

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Preface

Brian Tomlinson

The first edition of this book published in 2003 developed from a realization that the recent explosion in interest in materials development for language teaching, both as 'a field of study and as a practical undertaking' (Tomlinson, 2001), had not been adequately catered for by the literature on materials development. A number of books had dealt with important aspects of materials development and had raised issues of great significance to the developers and users of language learning materials (e.g. Sheldon, 1987; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Byrd, 1995; Hidalgo et al., 1995; Cunningsworth, 1996; Tomlinson, 1998; Richards, 2001; McGrath, 2002). But no book had provided a comprehensive coverage of the main aspects and issues in materials development for language learning. And no book had attempted to view current practice in materials development through the eyes of developers and users of materials throughout the world. This is what *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* aimed to do. It was designed and written (by native and non-native speakers of English from eleven different countries) so that it could provide both an overview of what is happening in the world of materials development for language teaching and a stimulus for further development and innovation in the field. It included reference to the teaching of languages other than English (e.g. Italian, Spanish, Japanese) and offered both objective and critical overviews of current issues in the field as well as proposals for principled developments for the future. It was written so that it could be used as a coursebook on teachers' courses and on postgraduate courses in applied linguistics, and also to provide stimulus and refreshment for teachers, publishers and applied linguists in the field. Since this book was first published a number of books have focused on different aspects of materials development. For example:

- Johnson (2003) has reported a study of how novice and expert materials developers approached the writing of a task for a unit of materials.
- Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) have provided a practical guide for teachers engaging in materials development.
- Tomlinson (2008) has provided a critical survey of different types of materials and of materials in different parts of the world.

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- Harwood (2010) has focused on the principles and procedures of materials development (especially with reference to English for Academic Purposes).
- Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010) have reported research on materials development from all over the world.
- Gray (2010) has written about cultural and idealogical influences on the development of the global coursebook.
- Tomlinson (2011) has published contributions from eminent materials developers who have made presentations at MATSDA Conferences.
- McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013) have focused on materials adaptation and development for teachers.
- Tomlinson (2013) has investigated the match between applied linguistics theory and materials development.

However no publication has appeared which aims to provide such complete coverage of aspects and issues in materials development as *Developing Materials for Language Teaching*. This updated second edition of the book aims to provide a similar informative coverage for participants of teachers' and post-graduate courses while at the same time providing stimulus and refreshment for teachers, academics and materials developers. Many of the chapters have been retained and updated and a number of new chapters have been added on recent developments in blended learning, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), corpus-informed materials, ESOL, materials for young learners and materials for writing.

Ultimately, 'It is the language teacher who must validate or refute specific proposals' for applying linguistic and psycholinguistic theory to language teaching (Chomsky, 1996, p. 46) and it is the language teacher who must validate or refute the materials which are developed for the language classroom. Widdowson (2000, p. 31) offers the 'applied linguist' as a 'mediating agent' who must make 'insights intelligible in ways in which their usefulness can be demonstrated' but Tomlinson (2013) raises questions about how effective applied linguistics has been in achieving 'intelligibility' and 'usefulness'. In this book, instead of the applied linguist, we offer the informed and reflective practitioner as the ideal agent for mediating between theory and practice. Some of the contributors to this book might be labelled teachers, some materials developers, some applied linguists, some teacher trainers and some publishers. But all of them share four things in common. They have all had experience as teachers of a second or foreign language (L2), they have all contributed to the development of L2 materials, they have all kept in touch with developments in linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic theory and they all have respect for the teacher as the person with the power to decide what actually happens in the language classroom.

This book is dedicated to classroom teachers and teachers in training. It aims to help them to make decisions about materials for themselves and to help them and others

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to contribute to the development of materials which can facilitate the acquisition of an L2. It does so by applying insights gained from applied linguistics, from materials development and from classroom practice.

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Introduction: Are Materials Developing?

Brian Tomlinson

What is materials development?

Materials development is both a field of study and a practical undertaking. As a field it studies the principles and procedures of the design, implementation and evaluation of language teaching materials. As an undertaking it involves the production, evaluation and adaptation of language teaching materials, by teachers for their own classrooms and by materials writers for sale or distribution. Ideally these two aspects of materials development are interactive in that the theoretical studies inform and are informed by the development and use of classroom materials.

TOMLINSON, 2001, p. 66

This book deals with both the aspects of materials development outlined above. For example, Chapter 4 (Tomlinson) and Chapter 17 (Nation) deal with the principles and procedures of aspects of the development of materials, Chapter 1 (Tomlinson) deals with the principles and procedures of the evaluation of materials and Chapter 2 (Saraceni) deals with the principles and procedures of materials adaptation. On the other hand, for example, Chapters 5 (Singapore Wala) and 26 (Emery) focus on the actual process of the writing of materials. There is also a third aspect of materials development which is dealt with in this book, that is the use of materials development as a means of facilitating and deepening the personal and professional development of teachers (e.g. Chapters 24 (Tomlinson), 25 (Tomlinson and Masuhara) and 26 (Emery)).

There is a growing inclusion of materials development on courses for teachers: for example the International Graduate School of English (IGSE) in Seoul runs an MA in Materials Development for Language Teaching, and MA TESOL/Applied Linguistics courses throughout the world now include modules on materials development. This is mainly because of the realization that, 'Every teacher is a materials developer' (English Language Centre, 1997) who needs to be able to evaluate, adapt and produce materials

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so as to ensure a match between their learners and the materials they use. It is also because of the realization that one of the most effective ways of 'helping teachers to understand and apply theories of language learning – and to achieve personal and professional development – is to provide monitored experience of the process of developing materials' (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 67). This concrete experience of developing materials as a basis for reflective observation and conceptualization enables teachers to theorize their practice (Schon, 1987).

A fourth aspect of materials development focused on in this book is the use of materials to actualize new pedagogical or content approaches in ELT. Examples of this are Chapter 26 (Emery) on materials for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Chapter 9 (Kiddle) on materials exploiting the use of digital aids, Chapter 15 (Hann) on materials for ESOL and Chapter 23 (Timmis) on materials for corpus informed approaches.

Although a number of chapters in this book focus primarily on one of the four aspects of materials development described above, many of them deal with two or even three of these aspects. For example, Chapter 10 (Mishan) examines both the theories which drive blended learning and their implementation, Chapter 16 (Stranks) looks at both the theories and the practicalities of developing grammar teaching materials, Chapter 18 (Masuhara) looks at the application of reading research and theory to the development of coursebook materials for teaching reading, and Chapter 25 (Tomlinson and Masuhara) considers the theoretical principles of using simulations for learning, outlines procedures for developing and using simulations and reflects on actual examples of simulations used on materials development courses for teachers. In addition, a number of chapters (e.g. Chapter 26 (Emery) and Chapter 22 (Pulverness and Tomlinson)) focus on issues related to the content of materials, as well as concerning themselves with the application of theory to practice.

What are materials?

In this book 'materials' 'include anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language. They can be linguistic, visual, auditory or kinaesthetic, and they can be presented in print, through live performance or display, or on cassette, CD-ROM, DVD or the internet' (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 66). They can be instructional, experiential, elicitative or exploratory, in that they can inform learners about the language, they can provide experience of the language in use, they can stimulate language use or they can help learners to make discoveries about the language for themselves. See also Richards (2001, p. 251) for a definition of materials.

Despite the recent 'explosion' of electronic materials most language learning materials are still published as books and most of the chapters in this book focus on print materials. However, Chapter 7 (Hill), for example, focuses on visuals and Chapter 21 (Hill and Tomlinson) on auditory materials, Chapter 9 (Kiddle) focuses on the computer and the internet, Chapter 10 (Mishan) focuses on blended learning, Chapter 13

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(Cives-Enriquez) focuses on live materials and Chapter 18 (Masuhara) focuses on a multidimensional approach. Most materials are instructional ('instructional materials generally serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom' (Richards, 2001, p. 251)) and many of the chapters in this book focus on materials for instruction. However, many other chapters advocate more attention being paid to experiential materials (e.g. Chapters 2 (Saraceni) and 21 (Hill and Tomlinson)) and to elicitative materials (e.g. Chapters 14 (Cook) and 4 (Tomlinson) focus on materials stimulating learner discovery).

What are the issues in materials development?

What should drive materials?

The obvious answer to this question is that the needs and wants of the learners should drive the materials. But teachers have needs and wants to be satisfied too (Masuhara, 2011) and so do administrators, with their concerns for standardization and conformity with, for example, a syllabus, a theory of language learning, the requirements of examinations and the language policies of a government (see Chapter 5 (Singapore Wala) in this book for discussions of the multiple requirements of a national and of institutional textbooks). These needs and wants are not irreconcilable and, in my experience, they can best be satisfied by localized projects which consult learners, teachers and administrators before, during and after the materials writing process. This is what happened in the process of developing the most satisfactory textbook I have ever been involved in, *On Target* (1996), a coursebook for secondary school students in Namibia. Prior to the writing of the book, students and teachers were consulted all over Namibia about what they wanted and needed from the book. During the writing of the book, Ministry of Education officials were present throughout each day in which 30 teachers wrote the materials, and the syllabus, the curriculum and the examination documents were frequently referred to. After the writing of the book, it was trialled extensively and revised in relation to the feedback which was provided by students, teachers and officials. A similar approach has been followed by Bilkent University in Turkey and by Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat in the production of new textbooks for their English courses. See Tomlinson (1995, 2001, 2012b), Lyons (2003) and Al-Busaidi and Tindle (2010) for descriptions of these projects. Many of the projects referred to above decided to adopt a text-driven approach rather than a syllabus-driven, grammar-driven, functions-driven, skills-driven, topic-driven or theme-driven approach. That is, they decided to start by finding written and spoken texts with a potential for affective and cognitive engagement, and then to use a flexible framework to develop activities connected to these texts. Later on they would cross-check with the syllabus and the examination requirements to ensure satisfactory coverage. For a description and justification of such an approach, see Chapter 4 (Tomlinson) in this book.

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The situation is complicated in the case of materials produced by publishers for commercial distribution. 'The author is generally concerned to produce a text that teachers will find innovative, creative, relevant to their learners' needs, and that they will enjoy teaching from.. . . The publisher is primarily motivated by financial success' (Richards, 2001, p. 257). Publishers obviously aim to produce excellent books which will satisfy the wants and needs of their users but their need to maximize profits makes them cautious and conservative and any compromise with the authors tends still to be biased towards perceived market needs rather than towards the actual needs and wants of the learners. For discussions of the compromises necessitated by the commercial production of materials (and especially of global coursebooks) see Ariew (1982), Richards (2001), Gray (2010) and Bell and Gower (2011), as well as 5 (Singapore Wala) and 16 (Stranks) in this volume.

Who should develop the materials?

These days most commercial materials are written by professional materials writers writing to a brief determined by the publishers from an analysis of market needs (see Amrani, 2011). These writers are usually very experienced and competent, they are familiar with the realities of publishing and the potential of the new technologies and they write full-time for a living. The books they write are usually systematic, well designed, teacher-friendly and thorough. But they often lack energy and imagination (how can the writers be imaginative all day and every day?) and are sometimes insufficiently relevant and appealing to the actual learners who use them (see Tomlinson et al., 2001; Masuhara et al., 2008; Tomlinson, 2010; Tomlinson and Masuhara, 2013). Dudley Evans and St John (1998, p. 173) state that 'only a small proportion of good teachers are also good designers of course materials'. This observation is contrary to my experience, as I have found that teachers throughout the world only need a little training, experience and support to become materials writers who can produce imaginative materials of relevance and appeal to their learners. This has certainly been the case with teachers on materials development courses I have run in Belgium, Brazil, Botswana, Indonesia, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mauritius, Oman, the Seychelles, Vanuatu and Vietnam, and on textbook projects I have been a consultant for in Ethiopia, Bulgaria, China, Turkey and Namibia (Tomlinson, 2001).

This issue is addressed in a number of chapters in this book, for example Chapters 4 (Tomlinson), 24 (Tomlinson) and 26 (Emery).

How should materials be developed?

Typically, commercial materials are written over a long period of time by a pair or small group of writers (e.g. in the year 2010 *Speakout Intermediate* by Antonia Clare and J. J. Wilson, the *Big Picture Pre-Intermediate* by Beth Bradfield and Carol Lethaby

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and *global* by Lindsay Clanfield and Rebecca Robb-Benne with Amanda Jeffries were published). The materials usually take a long time to produce because these days most of the materials published are courses (supplementary books are generally not considered profitable enough), because most courses have multiple components (e.g. Bradfield and Lethaby (2011) has seven components per level) and because the important review process takes time (though many publishers now save time by not trialling their materials (Amrani, 2011)). In my experience the result very often is a drop in creative energy as the process drags on and the eventual publication of competent but rather uninspiring materials.

My own preference is for a large team approach to writing materials, which aims at fast first draft production by many people followed by refinement by a smaller group of experts. This is the procedure that the Namibian and Bilkent projects referred to above decided to follow. In the writing of the Namibian coursebook, *On Target* (1996), 30 teachers were selected to provide a team of varying age, experience and expertise and were then brought from all over the country to Windhoek. On the first day, I demonstrated some innovative approaches to extend the teachers' repertoires of activity types and to stimulate thought and discussion about the principles of language learning. On the second day, we worked out a flexible framework to use in producing the materials and made some decisions together about the use of illustrations, music, cassettes, etc. Then, for four days the teachers wrote and monitored materials in small teams while a small group of facilitators supported them and cross-checked with the syllabus. That way we managed to complete the first draft of the whole book in one week, and then this was trialled, revised, edited and published within the year. In Bilkent University we followed a similar procedure and 20 teachers in small teams produced and monitored 60 units within a week for a group of 4 'writers' to select from, revise and trial.

In both cases described above, the teachers managed to inspire each other with ideas, to maintain creative energy, to relate their materials to the actual learners who were going to use them and to suggest useful improvements to each other's materials. All this was achieved to a far greater degree than I have ever managed when writing a coursebook by myself, with a partner or in a small team working at a distance from each other. And all this was achieved because a large group of enthusiastic teachers were working together for a short time.

How should materials be evaluated?

Materials are often evaluated in an ad hoc, impressionistic way, which tends to favour materials which have face validity (i.e. which conform to people's expectations of what materials should look like) and which are visually appealing. In order to ensure that materials are devised, revised, selected and adapted in reliable and valid ways, we need to ensure that materials evaluation establishes procedures which are thorough, rigorous, systematic and principled. This often takes time and effort but it could prevent

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many of the mistakes which are made by writers, publishers, teachers, institutions and ministries and which can have negative effects on learners' potential to benefit from their courses. For ways of achieving this, see Chapters 1 (Tomlinson) and 2 (Saraceni) in this volume, as well as McGrath (2002), Mukundan and Ahour (2010), Tomlinson (2012b) and McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013).

Should texts be authentic?

Materials aiming at explicit learning usually contrive examples of the language which focus on the feature being taught. Usually these examples are presented in short, easy, specially written or simplified texts or dialogues, and it is argued that they help the learners by focusing their attention on the target feature. The counterargument is that such texts overprotect learners, deprive them of the opportunities for acquisition provided by rich texts and do not prepare them for the reality of language use, whereas authentic texts (i.e. texts not written especially for language teaching) can provide exposure to language as it is typically used. A similar debate continues in relation to materials for the teaching of reading and listening skills and materials for extensive reading and listening. One side argues that simplification and contrivance can facilitate learning; the other side argues that they can lead to faulty learning and that they deny the learners opportunities for informal learning and the development of self-esteem.

Most researchers argue for authenticity and stress its motivating effect on learners (e.g. Bacon and Finneman, 1990; Kuo, 1993; Little et al., 1994; Mishan, 2005; Gilmore, 2007; Rilling and Dantas-Whitney, 2009). However, Widdowson (1984, p. 218) says that 'pedagogic presentation of language . . . necessarily involves methodological contrivance which isolates features from their natural surroundings'; Day and Bamford (1998, pp. 54–62) attack the 'cult of authenticity' and advocate simplified reading texts which have the 'natural properties of authenticity', Ellis (1999, p. 68) argues for 'enriched input' which provides learners with input which has been flooded with exemplars of the target structure in the context of meaning focused activities and Day (2003) claims there is no evidence that authenticity facilitates acquisition but that there is evidence that learners find authentic texts more difficult.

Some researchers have challenged the conventional view of authenticity and redefined it, for example, in relation to the learners culture (Prodromou, 1992; Trabelsi, 2010), to the learners' interaction with a text or task (Widdowson, 1978), to the 'authenticity of the learner's own interpretation' (Breen, 1985, p. 61) and to the personal engagement of the learner (van Lier, 1996). For discussion of the issues raised above see Widdowson (2000), Mishan (2005), Trabelsi (2010) and Tomlinson (2012b: 161–2), as well as Chapters 2 (Saraceni), 16 (Stranks) and 18 (Masuhara) in this volume.

For me the most useful definition of an authentic text is 'one which is produced in order to communicate rather than to teach' (Tomlinson, 2012b, p. 162) and the most useful definition of an authentic task is 'one which involves the learners in communicating to achieve an outcome, rather than to practice the language' (ibid.).

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I believe that all texts and tasks should be authentic in these ways, otherwise the learners are not being prepared for the realities of language use. I also believe that meaningful engagement with authentic texts is a prerequisite for the development of communicative and strategic competence but that authentic texts can be created by interactive negotiation between learners as well as presented to them (see Breen and Littlejohn, 2000, as well as Chapters 2 (Saraceni), 4 (Tomlinson) and 13 (Cives-Enriquez) in this volume). I also believe, though, that it is useful for learners to sometimes pay discrete attention to linguistic or discoursal features of authentic texts which they have previously been engaged by (Tomlinson, 1994, 2007; Bolitho et al., 2003; Chapter 4 (Tomlinson) in this volume).

Other issues

Other issues which have received attention in the literature and which feature in this book include:

- Do learners need a coursebook? In the eighties Allwright (1981) put forward arguments against ways in which textbooks deliver materials and O'Neil responded with a defence of the coursebook. Since then there has been continual debate about whether learners benefit from coursebooks or not. Opponents have argued that the coursebook benefits administrators and teachers without catering for the needs and wants of learners (Tomlinson, 2010), that it is used mainly to impose control and order (Mukundan, 2009) and that it is 'superficial and reductionist in its coverage of points and in its provision of language experience . . . it imposes uniformity of syllabus and approach, and it removes initiative and power from teachers' (Tomlinson, 2001, p. 67). Proponents (e.g. Torres and Hutchinson, 1994) have countered that the coursebook is a cost-effective way of providing security, system, progress and revision for the learner, that it saves teachers time and provides them with a secure base and that it helps administrators achieve credibility and standardization. For discussion of this issue see Mishan (2005), Tomlinson (2013) and Chapters 2 (Saraceni) and 13 (Cives-Enriquez) in this volume.
- Do learners need published materials at all? In recent years there has been a move away from using published materials with institutions throughout the world developing their own locally relevant materials (e.g. Al Busaidi and Tindle, 2010; Mason, 2010; Park, 2010) and with Meddings and Thornbury (2009) proposing the Dogme ELT movement which advocates, learner-centred, materials-light approaches. And yet surveys by the British Council (2008) and Tomlinson (2010) show that most teachers continue to use commercially published materials (even though many do so with compulsion or reluctance). For discussion of this issue see Tomlinson (2012b).

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There have been a number of books published on various aspects of materials development for language teaching but *Developing Materials for Language Teaching* is the only one which provides a comprehensive coverage of the main aspects and issues in the field. This second edition brings it completely up to date and expands on the original book. It deals with advances in IT and an increasingly globalized world.

It is the only publication which views current developments in materials development through the eyes of developers and users of materials from all over the world. In doing so it applies principles to practice in ways demonstrated to facilitate the effectiveness of language learning materials.

The chapters are written so that the book provides critical overviews of recent developments in materials development and at the same time acts as a stimulus for development and innovation in the field. It is intended both for use as a course book on postgraduate and teacher training courses and as a resource for the stimulus and refreshment of teachers, publishers and applied linguists in the field.

The book contains updated versions of many of the chapters in the 2003 edition plus new chapters on corpus-informed materials development, materials development for blended learning, materials development for EAP, materials development for ESOL and materials development for young learners.

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