

Effects on the Use of Two Textbooks for Four Types of Classes in a South Korean University

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Abstract

This paper determined students' ranks of difficulty on the use of materials in terms of 1) understanding the layout of the learning materials, 2) reading comprehension of the learning materials, and 3) realization on relevance to needs of the learning materials. It also determined students' 4) rank and frequency of attitude on the materials. With the data gathered through 128 survey questionnaires, 7 focused group discussions, and 10 interviews, the results were found out that there was an inappropriate assessment procedure set by this particular university. The researcher concludes that: 1) design of four types of classes by just using the two textbooks with their respective workbooks is grammar-based with limited conversation activities; 2) placement for these students in one big class size was implemented without considering their common interest and motivation and language levels; and, 3) qualification of teachers teaching these EFL students did not support students' real needs and the language program itself. Content professors who were made to teach may have the ability to input learning, but their teaching styles may differ from the ones who are real English teachers.

This paper then recommends that teachers and school administration should have an appropriate placement exam before students attend the class, especially in a big class size. There could only be a few problems among students in one big class size when students' level of competence is proportioned. With this, topics and conversation activities can even be more flexible with the maneuver of art of questioning, various dimensions of thinking, strategic competence, learning attitude or behavior, etc. to ensure sustenance of communicative mode and level of interest and motivation in the classroom. Grammar-based instruction can only be taught when a need arises. Thus, the course description of each class will be able to transact the objectives ready for developing students' communication competence. Moreover, proper measurement can be utilized to validly assess the amount of students' learning and the progress of language curriculum design in terms of materials selection and teaching approach.

Keywords: needs analysis, target needs, learning needs, materials, acceptability, applicability, usability, validity

1. INTRODUCTION

High technology has been very useful to media, business companies, schools, and people in their personal interest. Products of high technology are video, audio, and print materials that provide quick information and easy retention of information. Inevitably, these teaching-learning materials are important tools to achieve desired goals.

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However, these materials cannot be useful when there is a lack of support system. In South Korea, university students are grouped together in one class without considering their language proficiency levels, as manifested by English teachers and the researcher himself. In particular, the students in one of the universities in Jeollabuk-do, Korea experience difficulties in learning the language. Questions may be pondered whether these students are confident in developing their skills by only using two textbooks with their respective workbooks as normally prescribed by the English department. These students who are embedded with different language classroom backgrounds, levels of interest and motivation, and personality could not be blamed when classroom objectives are not met.

The researcher believes that this can be a controversial issue for several reasons. Firstly, students are not only taught by five foreign professional English teachers but also five content professors (foreign teachers from the *Physical Therapy Department, the Nursing Department, the Clinical Laboratory Science Department, Ophthalmic Optics Department, and Public Administration Department*) who are made to teach English. Secondly, limited time (for 1 hour & 50 min per 3 weeks) for conversation activities are only spent, as there are many teaching-learning sections in each unit. Lastly, there are four types of classes designed by using only two textbooks. Only one textbook for first semester is utilized for Practical English 1 (*Unit 1. Nice to meet you!, Unit 2. What do you do?, Unit 3. Do you like spicy food?, and Unit 4. How often do you do yoga?*) and Practical English 2 (*another 4 units from the same textbook: Unit 5. What are you watching?, Unit 6. Where were you yesterday?, Unit 7. Which one is cheaper?, and Unit 8. What's she like?*) for second semester in first year level. In second year level, the last four units of the same book (*Unit 9. What can you do there?, Unit 10. Is there a bank near here?, Unit 11. Did you have a good time?, and Unit 12. I'm going to go by car?*) are considered for Functional English 1 for first semester, and another book with the first four units (*Unit 1. How was your vacation?, Unit 2. I think it's exciting!, Unit 3. Do it before you're 30!, and Unit 4. The best place in the world!*) are taught for Functional English 2 for second semester. Each textbook has sections such as vocabulary, conversation, language practice (grammar), pronunciation and listening, reading and "Enjoying English", the learning extension. Each learning area aims to develop student's communicative skills and confidence. Moreover, a workbook for each textbook includes: grammar, listening, and reading; speaking is not emphasized.

Thus, this paper investigates the effects of the English textbooks with their respective workbooks used by 128 first year and second year students from the 22 departments (*Clinical Laboratory Science, Medical Radiation, Medical Non-commissioned Officers, Social Welfare, Dental Laboratory Technology, Broadcasting Entertainment, Chinese Commerce and Trade, Early Childhood Education, Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Hotel and Tourism, Aviation Service, Physical Therapy, Food and Nutrition, Medical Administration, Ophthalmic Optics, Jewelry Design, Management Information, Cosmetics, Leisure Sports, Image Contents, or Public Official Administration*). With the findings, recommendations as for the use of materials can be sorted out with what types of teaching approach and measurements to validly assess the amount of students' learning by just using two textbooks.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Needs Analysis. Needs analysis (or needs assessment) refers to "the activities involved in gathering information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students" (Brown, 1989, p. 35). Lawson (1979) defines "need" as "something that is recognized but it is not in any sense "discovered", and its "existence" derives from whatever criteria are thought to be relevant in making the diagnoses" (p.37). For Widdowson (1981), there are two definitions of needs: "goal-oriented" referring to what the learner needs to do with the language once he or she has learned it, while "process-oriented" referring to what the learner needs to do to actually acquire the language (p.2). The "goal-oriented" definition has to do with program aims while the "process-oriented" definition relates to pedagogic objectives (Widdowson, 1983, p.20). Brown (1995) explains that needs analysis is "an array of procedures" indicating that a variety of information-gathering data should be used. It validates needs implying that needs are not absolute – that is, once identified, they continually need to be examined for validity to ensure that they remain real needs for the students involved.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) differentiate "target needs" from "learning needs". The target need refers to what the learner needs to do in the target situation and the learning need refers to what the learner needs to do in order to learn (p.54). They further subcategorize target need into 1) necessities - what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation), 2) lacks - the discrepancy between necessity and what the learner already knows, 3) wants - what the learner actually wants to learn or what they feel they need. The learner's "wants" may or may not conform those perceived by the teachers or course designers (pp.55- 57). The learning need is equated to the route of learning. This concerns things such as how learners learn the language, why they learn it, what resources are available to help them learn (pp.62-63).

Altman (1980) emphasizes that students should be placed logically based on their age, level of language proficiency, maturity, time available. This requires the institution to make flexible educational arrangements to allow all learners access learning that is appropriate to the types of needs they have. In this way, the content and mode of learning will be influenced by the options available at their disposal. The types of modifications of learning resources are made accordingly to meet the kinds of individual differences with regard to time, goals, mode, or expectations of learning (p.9). Berwick (1989) makes a distinction between felt needs or expressed needs; needs that learners have, and perceived needs; judgment about the educational gaps in other people's experience (p.5).

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) explains that "needs analysis is the first step carried out before a course so that a course outline, materials, and other resources can be in place before teaching begins" (p. 125). He then contends that needs analysis in ESP encompasses determining the following: "1) professional information – learners' tasks and activities used for the target situation analysis and objective needs; 2) personal information – factors affecting the way learners learn, like attitudes that may be in a form of wants, means, and subjective needs; 3) English language information – learners' current skills and language use for present situation analysis; 4) learners' lack – the gap between (c) and (a); 5) language learning information – effective ways of learning skills and language; and, 6) professional communication information – knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situation (linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis) - what is wanted from the course and information about the environment in which the course will be run (means analysis)."

While "needs analysis is the process of establishing what and how of a course, evaluation is the process of establishing the effectiveness and efficiency of learning" (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). He further explains that "to be an integral part of a course, evaluation has to be built in as part of the course design." However, there is a restriction for evaluation. He says that "to evaluate everything is unrealistic; priorities can be set, the type and timing of data collection can be planned together with the resulting actions" (p. 129). The results of the evaluation either feed into course design (initial needs analysis), course realignment (on-going needs analysis / formative evaluation) or future activities (summative evaluation).

The main data for collection methods for needs analysis is as follows: questionnaires, analysis of authentic spoken and written texts, discussions, structured interviews, observations, and assessments. For the evaluation, the useful methods are checklists and questionnaires, assessment, discussion, and record keeping.

Materials selection. Teaching-learning material is defined as "any systematic description of the techniques and exercises to be used in classroom teaching. The key in developing sound materials is to ensure that "they are described and organized well enough so that teacher could use them with no confusion and with a minimum preparation of time" (Brown, 1995). Brown suggests that "materials should be evaluated in terms of qualities (strength, lightness, and transparency), dimensions (linguistic, social, and topical), and components (occasions for use, sample of language use, lexical exploration, and exploration of structural relationships)." In designing material, a teacher could adopt, develop, and/or adapt materials, depending on the purpose the people who make such decision.

In an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context, materials play various significant roles. They could be used as a source of language, as a learning support, for motivation and stimulation, and for reference (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998, p. 171). Where classroom is the primary source of language, materials need to maximize exposure to language, like giving additional materials for learners' own learning practice.

Another source of language is the rubrics (instructions). The second reason of material selection is learning support. Materials should be reliable, that is, to work, to be consistent, and to have some recognizable patterns. The third is stimulation and motivation. Materials need to be challenging yet achievable; to offer new ideas and information whilst being grounded in the learners' experience and knowledge; and, to encourage fun and creativity. And the last reason is reference. Materials need to be complete, well laid out, and self-explanatory.

A good provider of materials will be able to select appropriately from what is available; be creative with what is available; modify activities to suit learners' needs; and supplement by providing extra activities (and extra input) (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998, pp. 172 - 176). Teacher-generated material includes matching carrier content to real content, providing variety (micro skills, activity types, and interaction), grading exercises, and presenting material well. Learner-generated material includes framework materials and activities that are devised by the learners (text comprehension, note-taking/information transfer, and vocabulary development).

In Facturan's study (2013) titled "Effectiveness of the Interactive Learning Materials in English 1 in a South Korean University", she gathered the end results of the evaluative ratings of the language experts of the interactive learning activity materials that were analyzed and interpreted in the aspects of acceptability (referring to the relevance of the interactive learning activities appropriate for the course content of Practical English 1 students), applicability (referring to the appropriateness of using the interactive learning activities in relevance to the type of students in Practical English 1), usability (referring to the functionality of the interactive learning activities in a context of well-designed lessons), and validity (referring to the weight and authenticity of the interactive learning activities used in teaching the English language to Korean students). The process was done to validate the effectiveness of the interactive learning activity materials from the actual use of the class. The activities involved in the materials include: 1) structure sharing, 2) dialog, 3) reporter's desk, 4) interactive discussion, 5) sharing circle, 6) culture assimilator, 7) advertisement, and 8) role play.

As for the evaluative ratings of the language experts in the aspect of *acceptability*, there came out a grand mean score of 4.65 which indicates that all the interactive learning activity materials were excellently acceptable. However, the lowest among the eight interactive learning activities with the mean score of 4 was the culture assimilator because 1) the activity situation given that was not advanced, 2) further research about the traditional culture of the Koreans should be conducted substantially, and 3) there was no enough time for research. The language experts commented that the materials were significant because the specific activity, relevant to the lesson, and task were appropriate.

As for the evaluative ratings of the language experts in the aspect of *applicability*, the interactive learning activities grand mean score of 4.62 were rated excellent. Again, the culture assimilator among the eight learning activities obtained the lowest mean score of 4 which was still excellent. According to the language experts, the materials used in the culture assimilator was not that outstanding due to limited time spent for research. However, the material is still very significant due to students' enjoyment and excitement using the material. With the time constraint, good presentation of their output more than just an expectation was determined. It was concluded that culture assimilator activity that should be given time or attention for research is very essential to come up with an excellent actual performance.

As for the evaluative ratings of the language experts in the aspect of *usability*, an excellent result with the grand mean of 4.56 was determined. As always, the culture assimilator was the lowest with a mean of 4, although the results were still excellent. It is clear that time for research and internalization on the use of interactive learning activity materials should taken into consideration due to the concept of the materials related to culture impact that need to be understood and absorbed by students. Comments from the language experts gave realization that the materials were highly functional within the context of well-designed activities and materials to facilitate the teaching of the English language. They suggested that the teacher should give the research topic a day ahead.

As for the evaluative ratings of the language experts in the aspect of *validity*, the result was excellent with a grand mean of 4.19. This implies that the interactive learning activity was excellent but the Interactive Discussion got the lowest score of 3.5 (very good). According to the language experts, some of the students

during the interactive discussion were very shy in sharing their opinions that made the active members tend to manipulate the whole discussion. With this observation, teachers motivated the shy students to participate by giving discussion patterns and allowing them to read their part of the presentation rather than memorize it. This technique encouraged the students to heighten active participation and confidence.

Oftentimes, students are dependent on teacher's plan and the whole curriculum framework. Students come to classes to learn not because they want, but also they have a personal goal to achieve in the future. In response, teachers should take this as a constructive element by way of being obligated to support their needs in any way possible. It should be noted that need analysis on materials selection is not only a necessity but also a responsibility and commitment on teacher's end. Priorities on students' needs should be listed as basis for designing materials or choosing materials for various types of classes. Choice of materials should be aligned with the types of classes in accordance to objectives, teaching methodology or approach, assessment or evaluation set to develop effective communicative competence. Furthermore, proper assessment should be continuously observed before, during, and after the completion of class term for quality control.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the data gathered with their corresponding analysis and interpretation. The researcher gathered the data through students' survey questionnaire (answered by 128 first year and second year students), focused group discussion (participated by 7 groups (7 to 10 members in each group), interview with five professional English teachers and five content professors who were made to teach English. In particular, this section analyses and interprets students' difficulties in terms of learning materials and their attitude towards the materials used in a multi-level class. Moreover, the skills and learning activities respondents believed to be prioritized in English classes are also presented.

Table 1 presents the difficulties in understanding its lesson layout.

Table 1. Rank of difficulty in understanding the layout of the learning materials

	Easy	%	Moderate	%	Difficult	%	Difficulty rank
1. Simplifying the materials by my own	16	13	71	55	41	32	1
2. Evaluating usefulness of the materials for a conversation	25	20	77	60	26	20	2
3. Understanding the layout of materials and enable to anticipate comfortable usage throughout an activity	25	20	85	66	18	14	3

Among the three skills shown in the table, *simplifying the materials by my own* ranks first (32%); followed by *evaluating usefulness of the materials for a conversation* (20%); and, *understanding the layout of materials and enable to anticipate comfortable usage throughout an activity* (14%).

With the data shown in Table 1, it is understood that the students could not simplify the materials by their own because the content is complicated for the majority of classes. Porter and Roberts (1981) and Nunan (1989) cited in Crawford (2012, p. 81) point out that "some materials ... fail to present appropriate and realistic language models," while "others propose to subordinate learner roles (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985, cited in Crawford, 2012, p. 81) and fail to contextualize language activities" (Walz, 1989, cited Crawford, 2012, p. 81). Only bright and interested students could simplify or use some expressions in different conversation settings.

Furthermore, only very few could evaluate usefulness of the materials (only carefully selected ones though) for a conversation as manifested in their interaction on how much vocabulary, grammar, and

language expressions were practically applied. In other words, the students experienced such difficulties to the extent of being given examples and being guided by answering and going over the activities, due to their low language proficiency level that made them not able to simply and evaluate the materials as a whole. Still, they were made to study lengthy grammar lessons and given exams that made them tired; while for good students, it creates boredom. With this situation, Allwright (1981) cited in Crawford (2012, p. 82) points out that "materials may contribute to both goals and content but they cannot determine either." Crawford (2012, p. 82) explains that "what is learnt, and indeed, learnable, is a product of the interaction between learners, teachers, and the materials at their disposal."

However, some students understood the layout of the materials and enabled to anticipate comfortable usage throughout the activities because headings and subheadings together with their respective instructions are explicitly presented for manageable use. In fact, by just looking at the activities without reading the instructions was not that difficult. Crawford (2012, p. 80) believes on materials as a tool "to foster autonomous learning strategies for students."

Table 2 presents the difficulties in understanding the reading texts of the materials.

Table 2. Rank of difficulty in reading comprehension of learning materials

	Easy	%	Moderate	%	Difficult	%	Difficulty rank
1. Identifying transition markers to help me understand the flow of thought	17	13	71	55	40	32	1
2. Identifying supporting details of a text	24	19	72	56	32	25	2
3. Identifying main points of a text	29	23	84	66	15	11	3

Among the three skills shown in the table, *identifying transition markers to help me understand the flow of thought* is the most difficult; followed by *identifying supporting details of a text*; and, *identifying main points of a text* -- which rank first (32%), second (25%), and third (11%), respectively.

The data in Table 2 explain that in identifying transition markers to help understand the flow of thought, the students found it the most difficult. This implies that such difficulty involves coherence and unity of texts that also require understanding of grammar found in the workbook and homework activities, and this hesitated them from reading long texts; while others could by marking transition words that helps understand the whole texts. Furthermore, the students also hesitated to identify main points and supporting details due to many words involved, while others could by dividing or marking sentences by chunks and/or having enough time provided for the class. For some students, they evaluated these skills as too easy, they knew how grammar works with the use of words. For others, when the lessons were found difficult, they just studied at home. Oxford (2012) believes that "when allowed to learn in their favorite way, unpressured by learning environment or other factors, students often use strategies that directly reflect their preferred learning" (p. 127).

Identifying transition markers, main ideas, and supporting details are very basic in reading activities and grammar lessons. However, the data suggest that these students had not been taught with useful reading techniques before they attended university classes. Grabe (2012) points out that "fluency in reading rate is established by having students read extensively and by practicing with a combination of timed readings, paced reading, rapid recognition exercises, and rereading techniques" (p. 277).

Table 3 presents the difficulties in realizing relevance to needs of the materials.

Table 3. Rank of difficulty in realizing relevance to needs of the learning materials

	Easy	%	Moderate	%	Difficult	%	Difficulty rank
1. Always remembering the lessons and apply them when needed in a practical situation	10	8	65	51	53	41	1
2. Using the materials for review to develop my knowledge and skills	13	10	75	59	40	31	2
3. Relating to the topics or themes used in the materials because they are useful for motivating myself during conversation	16	13	76	59	36	28	3

The above table showed that among the three skills, *always remembering the lessons and apply them when needed in a practical situation* ranks first (41%); followed by *using the materials for review to develop my knowledge and skills* (31%); and *relating to the topics or themes used in the materials because they are useful for motivating myself during conversation* (28%).

The data shown in Table 3 expound that many students could not always remember the lessons and could not apply them when needed in a practical situation; only very few could though, when a teacher started to converse with them, because the topics suit their age range. Moreover, it is believed that most students could not make use of the lessons learned from the materials for a practical situation due to lack of conversation practice. Only few students could consider the use of the materials for review and skills development. Still few could relate to the topics or themes therein for motivation, as this is in preparation for successful conversation and future job. In fact, they even expressed their good feeling when being understood by their teachers, and insisted their desire to speak English more with foreigners by chance. Furthermore, external factors like points may also help in carrying out their learning to practical conversation.

The researcher believes that meaningful interaction that involves which topics are talked about, who talks with who, and language experience are contributing factors to the huge impact on student's language learning and practical use of the language. Practical use entails that students' capacity on 1) remembering the lessons and applying them when needed in a practical situation, 2) using the materials for review to develop my knowledge and skills, and 3) relating to the topics or themes used in the materials are well accommodated by the learners for real meaningful interaction. Crawford (2012) emphasizes that "without a knowledge of what is going on, who the participants are and their social and psychological distance in time and space from the events referred to, it is impossible to understand the real meaning of an interaction" (p. 84).

Table 4 presents the attitudes shown in using the materials.

Table 4. Rank and frequency of attitude on materials

	always	%	usually	%	sometimes	%	seldom	%	never	%	Rank
1. Motivated to learn when the learning materials are challenging	10	8	31	24	57	45	24	19	6	4	1
2. Just not complaining when the learning materials are not well discussed or taught	5	4	40	31	54	42	17	13	13	10	2

3. Participative when the learning materials seem to be easy to understand.	23	18	50	39	45	35	8	6	2	2	3
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The above table shows that among the situations, *motivated to learn when the learning materials are challenging* ranks first (45% indicating sometimes); followed by *just not complaining when the learning materials are not well discussed or taught* ranks second (42% indicating sometimes), and *participative when the learning materials seem to be easy to understand* ranks third (39% indicating usually).

The data in Table 4 explain that only bright and interested students were sometimes motivated to learn when the learning materials are found challenging, while others were not, because challenging work implies tiresome; still others worked on it though for the sake of scores. Sometimes, the students did not mind complaining when the learning materials were not well discussed or taught, while only few cared to ask for further discussion. A teacher could only tell by their looks if they were satisfied or not, while others did not care as long as they could feel the possibility of passing the subject. Usually, the students became more participative when the learning materials seemed to be easy to understand, less stressful, and more fun. In other words, such frequencies of attitudes were drawn from the potential of the materials on how much effective they could motivate the students to learn and react or interact. By examining the textbooks with their respective workbooks could help both teachers and students strategize the amount of learning.

All these data provide information about the effect on the use of limited resources. The students' learning and their right attitude were sacrificed because the support system which involves some students, teachers, and administration was not in one to support the real needs.

4. CONCLUSION

Students' ranks of difficulty on materials in terms of 1) understanding the layout of the learning materials, 2) reading comprehension of learning materials, and 3) realization on relevance to needs on the learning materials were caused by an inappropriate assessment procedure set by this particular university. The English Department of this university designed four types of classes by just using the two textbooks with their respective workbooks that are grammar-based with limited conversation activities. To implement these classes, the department just placed these students in one big class size without considering their common interest, motivation, and language levels. Although students were in block sectioning (i.e. students are grouped according to majors or departments), still students were of diverse levels of language proficiencies that surely caused problems on their learning attitude and behavior, conversation drills and phase of conversation time, lecture discussion, and other activities set for each lesson. Furthermore, part of inappropriate assessment is the qualification of teachers teaching these English as a Second Language (EFL) students. Content professors who were made to teach English classes may have the ability to input learning, but their teaching styles may differ from the ones who are real English teachers. Richards (2012) argues that "activities which seek to develop a reflective approach to teaching aims to develop the skills considering the teaching process thoughtfully, analytically, and objectively as a way to improve classroom practices." This is also manifested in Ramos' study (2013) whose students in focused group discussions (FGDs) believed that English professors are the sources of effective learning, and they should learn from them. When a professor exerted effort to make them feel more comfortable, they felt energetic to learn more. This includes any types of reinforcement or measurement. Thus, rank and frequency of students' attitude on materials and teaching styles as well as ranks of difficulty on the use of materials surely occurred.

The researcher strongly believes that there was a discrepancy between the nature of these materials and the amount of learning to be transacted during and after classroom activities. It is implied that the teachers were confident to teach these lessons because these are common topics in which all students may be

interested and motivated. They were not able to fully realize that there are factors contributing to the failure of learning success for individual student. "... Textbooks should be used only as a resource, and that following a textbook is an undesirable way to teach" (Loewenberg-Ball & Feiman-Nemser, 1988, cited in Crawford, 2012, p. 82). Moreover, "teachers do not necessarily teach what materials writers write just as learners do not necessarily learn what teachers teach" (Luxon, 1994, cited in Crawford, 2012, p. 82), "perhaps because of differences in perceptions of proposed tasks" (Block, 1994, cited in Crawford, 2012, p. 82).

Teachers and school administration should have an appropriate placement exam before students attend the class, especially in a big class size. There could only be a few problems among students in one big class size when students' level of competence is proportioned. With this, topics and conversation activities can even be more flexible with the maneuver of art of questioning, various dimensions of thinking, strategic competence, learning attitude or behavior, etc. to ensure sustenance of communicative mode and level of interest and motivation in the classroom. Grammar-based instruction can only be taught when a need arises. Thus, the course description of each class will be able to transact the objectives ready for developing students' communicative competence. Moreover, proper measurement can be utilized to validly assess the amount of students' learning and the progress of language curriculum design in terms of materials selection and teaching approach.

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