Developing Materials for the Course of Introduction to Communication: An Experience in Writing an ESP Book of an Integrated Approach

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Abstract

The article aims at giving several considerations in developing materials for Introduction to Communication, a new subject of elective package at English Department of Petra Christian University. Principles of material design used are the one identified by Nunan (1988). In this article a sample lesson is included.

Keywords: *communication, material development, ESP, principle, interaction, student, authentic, integrated approach, gathering, selecting, material.*

The Context

Elective package is given as an option to the students to prepare them to be more ready in facing the working world. One of the new subjects is communication in collaboration with Hogeschool Holland (HH). From February 2001 to May 2001 the writer was teaching Communication I assisted by a student from HH as her assistant. There were thirteen students joining the class; most of them were students of the seventh semester, only two students were from sixth semester for which the module made by a teacher from HH was intended for. They completed the course successfully and the teacher from HH who also came to Indonesia to assess the students also said so. Although the end was very satisfying, the beginning was a little bit confusing for the students, because first, they were not familiar with what communication was, viewed from field itself and not from language point-of-view. Second, the activities in the course were group-based from the very beginning. They have their own roles in the group, such as: the chairperson, the assistant chairperson, the minute secretary, and the archivist; all have the shadow persons to prepare them to take the position in every two weeks, except the assistant chairperson (Commander, 2000, p. 4). When questionnaires were given to them as the evaluation instrument at the end of the course, they were satisfied with all the activities and said that it was useful. However, they said, when they were asked of their opinions about what needs to be improved is the need to have an introduction of communication so that they would know a little bit from the theory what communication is from the communication theory. This point, then, was taken as a start to think about the importance to give a theory of communication before Communication I.

Description of the Class

The class was planned as a combined class of English Department and Faculty of Communication. It was predicted that there would be more students of Faculty of Communication than from the English Department, because in the first it is a compulsory subject, while in the latter it is an optional one. Students will learn about communication from the text and they will learn the language, English, from the assignments they do in class. Discussions among students and between teacher and students are done in English.

The Process

This course is decided to have the name: Introduction to Communication which will serve as a pre-requisite for the other four Communication courses offered in the English Department's Communication Elective Package: Communication I, II, III and IV where neither of them serve as a pre-requisite to one another.

Then the new course, Introduction to Communication (IC), serves also as a course in Faculty of Communication where students of Faculty of Communication can take the course as their English I. Now the emphasis of the content is not only the introduction of the theory of communication, but also has the aim at helping students of Faculty of Communication deal with their English which later will be useful both in their study and their work. Therefore, the writer thinks that this book is an ESP book using an integrated approach. The reading texts should be about communication and the activities and the topics of the texts students must do and have should be relevant to their study and their work later on using the four skills every time they meet because in their work later on, they should also use the language in that way.

The Basic Principles Underlying the Material Development and the Application in the Material

Considering the needs as it is written previously, the writer decided to use the principles of materials design by David Nunan (1988,1-14) that she thinks is appropriate in developing ESP materials aiming at helping students of Faculty of Communication or students of English Department who take communication courses.

Principle 1: Materials should be clearly linked to the curriculum they serve. The reading texts should be about communication, and the topics of the texts students must have should be relevant to their study, such as the types and definition of communication etc.

Principle 2: Materials should be authentic in terms of text and task. Nunan (1988) says that texts and tasks are authentic if they were designed for purposes other than language teaching. An example of an authentic text is one taken from a magazine and an authentic task is one that people do on their jobs. The texts are taken from communication books that students should read in their study. Although they might be used in class, these books are not meant for language teaching. Therefore, they can be considered authentic text. Besides, some assignments require the students to select readings from magazines or newspapers. The authentic task that students should do is also given in the course. The activities students must do should be relevant to their study and their work later on using the four skills every time they meet because in their work later on, they should also use the language in that way. Therefore, the activities

students do are making summaries and paraphrases, writing their comments and opinions and evaluating other works. Because later on students will work by themselves as well as in groups, activities are combined, both individual and group work.

Principle 3: Materials should stimulate interaction. Student-student interaction enhances language learning. For example, when they have to do peer correction, they will have greater opportunity to use language. Being critical to other's work, they will be aware of their own language. Since their works are corrected by their peers, they will have less stressful environment in using English. This will also encourage students to help one another and work in groups. If the result is good, they will have greater motivation to learn. To encourage interaction, some activities in cooperative learning are also used such as: Jigsaw, Write-Pair-Share, Write-Pair-Square etc.

Principle 4: Materials should allow learners to focus on formal aspects of language. When students write their comments, teachers and peers will correct their grammars and students will learn from the teacher's and the peers' input. This also explains the assignments of picking up readings from newspapers and magazines.

Principle 5: Materials should encourage learners to develop learning skills and skills in learning. Materials should make students able to develop further their skill in learning new things and develop their own basic knowledge to make further progress, both in the area of communication and in the language.

Principle 6: Materials should encourage learners to apply their developing language skills to the world beyond the classroom. As students have to write, give oral comments and discuss texts both from magazines and newspapers or other kind of readings, it is expected that they will be accustomed to writing, speaking, reading and listening to comments in English in their study and work.

Choosing Topics and Gathering Texts

Because the topics are taken from communication books, the writer browses some and when interesting topics were found in those books, she picked the texts. Sometimes one topic can be discussed in two chapters. Thus, gathering texts is done at the same time as choosing topics. Topics chosen are communication (for example, oral and written communication), technology (how technology improves communication), interview, privacy and public's right (should public know the private life of public figure), culture (body language and the role of culture in communication), internet (e-mail and website), photography (Code of Ethics of National Press Photographers Association), and live news production (television news). These topics are taken from the following books: *Business Communication*_Today, *ENG Television* News, *News Writing and Reporting for Today's* Media, *Broadcast News Handbook*. Based on those topics, there are 16 titles chosen as follows: (1) Basic Forms of Communication, (2) Communication Barriers, (3) Communicating Across Culture: Actions Speak Louder Than Words All Around the World, (4) Keeping Pace with Technology, (5) The Producer's Challenge, (6) Privacy versus Public's Right to know, (7) The Get, (8) Communicating Across Culture: Good Ways to Send Bad News Around the World, (9) Changes in Technology Used to Gather and Distribute News, (10) Yahoo: The Little Search Engine that Could, (11) Knowing The Power of Silence, (12) Code of Ethics: National Press Photographers Association, (13) Focusing on Ethics: Does Some Direct Mail Contain Deliberately Deceptive Copy?, (14) Reading Between the Lines, (15) ENG-Just What is it?, (16) Producing Live News. It is expected that through discussing these texts, students are familiar with the world of communication.

Developing Materials of Integrated Approach

In integrated approach students read, write, listen and speak in English at the same class. Therefore, in every lesson these four skills are integrated. Students read a text on communication (reading skill), discuss the difficult words or grammatical elements in order to gain more understanding of the text and also discuss the content of the text using English as the introductory language (listening and speaking skill), write comments or take what they think is necessary for them in real life (writing skill). Therefore, after the sixteen chapters were determined, activities of the sixteen chapters were made; the four skills are included. Besides, the integrated approach is strengthened by the reading texts that are taken from the communication books and the tasks that require students to take readings from newspapers and magazines. The following two sections in module are meant to help the teachers to use the book well.

Lesson Plan Format

To make it easy for the teacher, an explanation of lesson plan format or the template and also lesson description matrix is given before the sixteen chapters. The lesson plan format consists of parts of the chapter; it consists of seven parts: 1) Title, which is the title of the text on communication; 2) Preparation for the teacher, which explains to the teachers what they need to do with the text/ students in class; 3) Text, which is the reading text containing information about communication; 4) language skill, which is an exercise done by students concerning skills that will be needed by communication students in their study/work; 5) Procedure, which explains teacher-student/student-student interaction/activities in class; 6)Language focus, which explains about grammar that is used on the text/exercises; 7) Assignment, which explains what students do after discussing a text. Assignment can be given concerning the lesson discussed/ the next lesson.

Lesson Description Matrix

Below is the lesson description matrix which summarizes the module, concerning the activity of students-students/teacher-students, the language skill emphasized in each chapter and the communication focus which is the titles of the reading texts. Below is the lesson description matrix.

Lesson	Activity	Language skill	Communication focus
1.	Jigsaw	Summarizing	Basic Form of Communication
2.	Murder script	Notetaking	Communication Barriers
3.	Brainstorm	Free Writing	Communicating Across Cultures: Actions Speak Louder Than Words All Around the World.
4.	Brainstorm	Free Writing	Keeping Pace with Technology: Gain the Competitive Edge with Online Reporting
5.	Discussion	Getting Main Ideas	The Producer's Challenge
6.	Peer Correction	Summarizing	Privacy versus the Public's Right to know
7.	Think-Pair-Share	Expressing Opinion	The Get

8.	Discussion	Speaking	Communicating Across Cultures: Good Ways to Send Bad News Around the World
9.	Pair Discussion	Writing	Changes in Technology Used to Gather and Distribute News
10.	Roundrobin	Giving Comments	A Case for Critical Thinking: Yahoo! The Little Search Engine That Could
11.	Interviews	Speaking	Knowing the Power of Silence
12.	Think-Pair Square	Speaking	Code of Ethics: National Press Photographers Association
13.	Brainstorm	Classifying	Focusing on Ethics: Does Some Direct Mail Contain Deliberately Deceptive Copy?
14.	Brainstorm	Compare and contrast	Reading Between Lines
15.	Reading	summarizing	ENG-Just What is It?
16.	Jigsaw	Drawing Conclusion	Producing Live news

Some of the terms used in the column of activity are the terms of Cooperative Learning that summarize the section of preparation for the teacher, such as: Jigsaw, Write-Pair-Share, Write-Pair-Square but the terms are not written explicitly in the preparation for the teacher. What is written in the preparation for the teacher is the steps of the techniques to make it practical for the teacher and not to confuse the teacher with technical terms.

Sample Lesson

To illustrate the explanation given in developing the materials and to make the explanation clear, the writer thinks that it is necessary to give a sample lesson. The lesson taken is the first chapter from the module.

I. Chapter 1
The Basic Forms of Communication

Preparation for the teacher:
Divide the class into groups of four.
Number each member in the group: 1, 2, 3, 4
All no. 1 should read part 1.
All no. 2 should read part 2.
All no. 3 should read part 3.
All no. 4 should read part 4.
Students with the same number will be in one group (the expert group) to discuss their parts. They will go back to their own group and share the ideas in the reading already discussed in the expert group.

Part I

Communication occurs in many forms. You can pick up the phone and have a conversation with your supervisor or leave her a voice-mail message if she is unavailable. You can choose, instead, to write her a memo and send it by e-mail. In

turn, she can respond to your message in the form of her choice. Your supervisor may decide to forward your message to other employees or managers, and they may communicate it to customers and other outsiders. The process is fluid; the form in which a message is communicated changes constantly. Communication can be formal or informal, spoken or written, and internal or external. In fact, it can even be a simple smile.

Nonverbal Communication

The most basic form of communication is **nonverbal communication**: all the cues, gestures, facial expressions, spatial relationships, and attitudes toward time that enable people to communicate without words. Anthropologists theorize that long before human beings used words to talk things over, our ancestors communicated with one another by using their bodies. They gritted their teeth to show anger; they smiled and touched one another to indicate affection. Although we have come a long way since those primitive times, we still use nonverbal cues to express superiority, dependence, dislike, respect, love, and other feelings.

Nonverbal communication differs from verbal communication in fundamental ways. For one thing, it's less structured, so it's more difficult to study. You can't pick up a book on nonverbal language and master the vocabulary of gestures, expressions, and inflections that are common in our culture. Even experts don't really know how people learn nonverbal behavior. No one teaches a baby to cry or smile, yet these forms of self-expression are almost universal. Other types of nonverbal communication, such as the meaning of colors and certain gestures, vary from culture to culture.

Nonverbal communication also differs from verbal communication in terms of intent and spontaneity. You generally plan your words. When you say, "*Please get back to me on that order by Friday*," you have a conscious purpose; you think about the message, if only for a moment. However, when you communicate nonverbally, you sometimes do so unconsciously. You don't mean to raise an eyebrow or to blush. Those actions come naturally. Without your consent, your emotions are written all over your face. Of course, as chapter 2 discusses in greater detail, good communicators recognize the value of nonverbal communication and use it to enhance the communication process.

Part II

Verbal Communication

Although you can express many things nonverbally, there are limits to what you can communicate without the help of language. If you want to discuss past events, ideas, or abstractions, you need symbols that stand for your thoughts. **Verbal communication** consists of words arranged in meaningful patterns. The ever-growing English language currently contains about 750,000 words, although most people in the United States recognize only about 20,000 of them. To create a thought with these words, you arrange them according to the rules of grammar, putting the various parts of speech in the proper sequence. You then transmit the message in spoken or written form, anticipating that someone will hear or read what you have to say.

Part III

Speaking and Writing

Business people tend to prefer oral communication channels to written ones. The trade-offs between speaking and writing are discussed in more depth in chapter 4, but in general, talking to somebody is quicker and more convenient than writing a memo or a letter. Furthermore, when you're speaking or listening, you can pick up added meaning from nonverbal cues and benefit from immediate feedback.

Even though oral communication is the preferred medium, there are times when written communication is more appropriate and effective: when the information you are conveying is very complex, when a permanent record is needed for future reference, when the audience is large and geographically dispersed, and when immediate interaction with the audience is either unimportant or undesirable. The most common types of written communication are letters, memos, reports, and proposals.

Over the past few decades, technological advances have led to the development of electronic communication. Voice mail, teleconferencing, e-mail, and computer networks have revolutionized both oral and written communication and have become vital elements in achieving organizational goals. However, as Chapter 10 and numerous examples throughout this book will point out, each form of communication also has its limitations. Protocols must be followed, and individuals must learn when it is appropriate to use each form.

Part IV

Listening and Reading

In addition to underscoring the importance of oral communication, it illustrate another interesting fact: People spend more time receiving information than transmitting it. Listening and reading are every bit as important as speaking and writing.

As chapter 2 will point out, most of us aren't very good listeners. Immediately after hearing a ten-minute speech, we typically remember only half of what was said. A few days later, we've forgotten three-quarters of the message. Worse, we often miss the subtle, underlying meaning entirely. To some extent, our listening problems stem from our education, or lack of it. We spend years learning to express our ideas, but few of us ever take a course in listening. Nevertheless, developing better listening abilities is crucial for anyone who wants to foster the understanding and cooperation necessary in today's workplace.

Employees who don't listen pose obvious problems for companies. Some of the most sophisticated training in communication occurs in the airline industry, where failure to process information correctly can be fatal. To learn from others' mistakes, new pilots at most major airlines analyze cockpit tapes recorded on flights that have crashed. After hearing the tape from a plane that went down near Portland, Oregon, trainees at one airline identified the following communication problems: (1) The captain ignored the second officer's warning that fuel was running short; (2) the first officer never spoke up; and (3) no one corrected the captain when he made the wrong assumption about the amount of fuel remaining in each tank. By studying these and other communication problems, pilot trainees learn to listen for what should have been said but wasn't.

Employee's reading skills can also leave a good deal to be desired. Look at Baldor Electric, a maker of industrial motors. When the company began having a serious problem on its assembly line, the company's chairman was puzzled. When he went to the plant to investigate, he found that many of Baldor's veteran employees couldn't read. In the days when assembly lines churned out the same product over and over, illiteracy

wasn't an issue; a worker could learn by watching someone else. But in the new era of high-tech manufacturing, a single production line can produce a dozen items, each item has its own set of directions, and these directions have to be read-Whether from manuals or computer monitors. Baldor's employees who could not read were becoming the company's biggest source of error.

Language Skills: Summarizing and Speaking

Procedure:

1.a. Read the guidelines to make a summary (taken from The Reader's Journal):

1. Use your own words as much as possible, and if you quote from the story, use quotation marks.
2. Accurately reflect the author's emphasis while refraining from including your own opinion.
3. Preserve the order and emphasis of the original work.
4. Refer to the author throughout your summary response. For example:
   "Dr. Thompson believes that…."
   "Thompson recognizes the importance of…."
   "He suggests that the solution to the problem is…."
5. a) **Be comprehensive**. Your summary should include everything essential To an accurate understanding of the article for the person who reads your summary.
   b) **Be selective.** Don't include unimportant details. Choose only those basic parts of the story that are necessary to a proper understanding of the story.
   c) **Be brief.** A summary should present the general idea in less than one-third of the story's original length. It is possible, although difficult, to summarize a story in only one or two sentences.
6. **Review your summary.** After you write your summary, ask yourself these questions:
   a. Did I use my own words to summarize the story, unless I quoted from the story?
   b. Does the summary accurately reflect the story? (Remember: My opinion should not be stated.)
   c. Did I mention the name of the author and the title of the story?
   d. Did I refer to the author and what the author said?
   e. Did I forget any important points?
   f. Did I include any unimportant, unnecessary points?
   g. Is my summary short? (*Remember*: No longer than one-third the original size of the story.)

b. Make a summary.

2.a. Check one summary by the teacher.
b. Peer correction guidelines no 6.

Review the summary of your friends according to these criteria:

a. Does s/he use her/his own words to summarize the story, unless s/he quoted from the story?
b. Does the summary accurately reflect the story? (Remember: The writer's opinion should not be stated.)

c. Does s/he mention the name of the author and the title of the story?
d. Does s/he refer to the author and what the author said?
e. Does s/he forget any important points?
f. Does s/he include any unimportant, unnecessary points?
g. Is her/his summary short? (*Remember*: No longer than one-third the original size of the story.)

Language Focus: Simple Present Tense

Assignments:

Speaking: a. Talk about the use of verbal and non-verbal communication.
b. Give example for each of them.

Conclusion

When the study and the job require people to use language as they do in daily life where there is no division of listening, reading, speaking and writing, the writer thinks that the appropriate way to learn the language is through integrated approach. Therefore, the material for the students of Faculty of Communication uses the integrated approach. In this way the class is like the miniature of the world they have to face later on. It is expected that through learning the language and the content in this way, students are accustomed to present their ideas orally and written.

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