TEACHER TRAINING IN MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT: A COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH.

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ABSTRACT
In the developing world, language proficiency is often sought through commercial textbooks, which give little room to the educational contexts and the material needs of these countries. At the same time, it is noted that materials development is overlooked in teacher training programmes of these countries. To make the connection, the article suggests **a competency-based approach for training teachers in materials development**. In operational terms, the framework aims to raise teacher competencies in assessing educational contexts, conceptualising materials, getting the technical skills, developing and using instructional materials. The approach articulates around theoretical inputs and practical applications. In this respect, it can be used as a pre-service and/or in-service training scheme. In both cases the focus will be on making trainees grasp background theories and foster the competencies and the technical skills required by materials development. These objectives will be pursued through awareness raising, elicitation and practical applications. For in-service training, application sessions will take the form of workshops and seminars in the course of which teachers will share experiences and turn theory into practice.
KEY-WORDS
Approach, competencies, contexts, instruction, language, materials, training, teacher.

RESUME
Dans le monde en développement, la compétence langagière est souvent recherchée a travers des manuels commerciaux qui tiennent peu compte des contextes éducationnels et des besoins matériels de ces pays. Au même moment, il est noté que la production de matériels didactiques est presque absente des programmes de formation des enseignants de ces pays. Pour faire la liaison, l'article propose une approche par compétences pour la formation des enseignants en production de matériels didactiques. En termes opérationnels, l'approche vise a relever le niveau de compétences des enseignants dans l'évaluation de contextes éducationnels, la conceptualisation de matériels didactiques, l'acquisition des aptitudes techniques, la production et l'utilisation de matériels didactiques. Ainsi, l'approche s'articule autour d'inputs théoriques et d'applications pratiques. De ce fait, elle peut être une composante de programme de formation initiale et/ou continuée. Dans les deux cas, l'accent sera mis sur la capacité des auditeurs à comprendre les théories de base et à développer les compétences et les aptitudes techniques que requiert la production de matériels didactiques. Ces objectifs seront poursuivis à travers la conscientisation, la déduction et les applications pratiques. Dans le cadre de formation continuée, les sessions d'application seront organisées sous forme d'ateliers et de séminaires au cours desquels les enseignants partageront leurs expériences et transformeront la théorie en pratique.
MOTS-CLES
Approche, compétences, contextes, enseignant, formation, instruction, langue, matériels.

INTRODUCTION

In foreign language teaching, instructional materials are recognised to be a problem area. In order to gauge the nature and the depth of the problem **Henrichsen (1983**) carried out an international survey in Sub-Saharan countries. In this survey the author wanted to know the activity teachers perceived as the most important one in the exercise of their profession. In their answer to the question, these teachers ranked materials development on top of all priorities.

More recently another survey administered on the Senegalese English teachers by **Treffgarne and Mbaye (1993)** came to the same conclusions. In an attempt to know why materials development was in such a state of affairs, respondents to the two surveys advocated **lack of teacher training in materials development and unsuitability of available commercial textbooks.** These shortcomings raise the fundamental question of teacher training in materials development. Despite this crying need, no subsequent training scheme seems available in the literature.

The aim of this article is to suggest **a competency-based approach through which language teachers will be trained in materials development.** The framework firstly used in the making of educational change **(Elson, 1997)** has been adapted in the article for the purpose of enhancing teacher competencies in materials development. In doing so, the proposed training framework will aim to develop **teacher competency in context assessment, teacher conceptual competency, teacher technical competency and teacher pedagogical competency** which are the fundamentals of materials development. They will be scrutinised after definition of the terminology.

1/ TERMINOLOGY

Before analysing the training components, reference terms such as ***teacher training, teacher development, materials development, and materials design*** will be defined for clarification purposes. Classroom language practice has demonstrated that in foreign language contexts, ***training*** and ***education*** are used inter-changeably, as it is the case with ***development*** and ***design*** when applied to instructional materials. Considered more closely yet, one may realise that these pair words convey different meanings.

For example**, Wallace (1988)** has drawn a fundamental distinction between training and development. In his view ***training*** is something someone does for someone else. In this sense the accent is on ***"received knowledge",*** whereas ***development*** builds upon ***"received knowledge"*** and grows up through ***"experiential knowledge".*** Therefore, development is more of a personal challenge the teacher has to face alone or in partnership (**Edge & Richards, 1993**).

As for ***Materials development***, ***"it refers to anything which is done by writers or learners to provide sources of language input and to exploit***

those sources in ways which maximise the likelihood of intake" (**Tomlinson, 1998: 2**). In this definition, the term **anything** suggests that development is a flexible process. Therefore materials can be developed from scratch ('**nothing**') or through the process of bringing changes in existing materials. In this respect, development is both a process of creation and a planned transformation. Contrary to Materials development, ***Materials design*** seems to be more an act of reflective creation than of planned transformation. Here the level of conceptualisation seems much higher. For these different connotations, development is preferred in the sense that it is an umbrella term involving all the processes involved in materials production. This terminological clarification leads directly to the consideration of the first component of the proposed approach.

1/ TEACHER COMPETENCY IN CONTEXTS ASSESSMENT

Today language teaching has reached a turning point as far as instructional materials are concerned. Paradoxically, a great shortage of materials is noted everywhere in the developing world, when huge resources remain stocked in both "global textbooks" and the World Wide Web (**WWW**). Unfortunately, most of these materials are not suitable for language instruction in the developing countries, simply because they have been designed upon Western educational contexts and commercial objectives.

To close this ***"context gap",*** (Bax (1997) suggests **"a context-sensitive *approach"***, which appeals to **the affective, the cultural, and the social filters** of both the teacher and the learner (**Krashen, 1985).** However, such an approach is not enough to circumvent all the difficulties, the most serious of which being teacher lack of training in materials development. Closely considered however, training programmes in the developing world only incorporate superficial elements like **materials evaluation and text selection**. Yet, we all know that the process of materials development is much more complex. The fact of the matter is that no comprehensive framework has been suggested to address altogether the issue of teacher training in materials development. After having made teachers grasp these context-bound issues, they will carry out the following application exercise.
Application for context assessment
At this point trainees will be requested to work in small groups in which they will be assigned to assess a few target educational contexts with respect to instructional materials. For examples groups can concentrate on **local contexts (teaching areas), national contexts, African contexts, global context and web-based resources**.

3/ TEACHER CONCEPTUAL COMPETENCY

At this stage of the training programme, the focus will be on developing teacher conceptual competency for developing instructional materials. A fundamental element in materials development is to know the theoretical foundation of the types of materials one wants to develop. For this to be effective, the teacher -

materials developer must be clear about language acquisition theories in a foreign language context **(Ellis, 1990, Schmidt, 1990)** and choose appropriate syllabus guidelines in which his students' needs are fully addressed. In the developing countries, syllabus guidelines are generally oriented to the teaching of language as communication **(Widdowson, 1978, Dramé, 2009a, Deepti, 2004**). In this context, teacher training in materials development will require teacher awareness of the overarching principles of communicative language teaching in a foreign language context. The following ones are adapted from **Richards, 2006: 14):**

* 1. Foreign language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in

   Interaction and meaningful communication;
* 2. Effective classroom activities and tasks provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, expand their language resources, notice how language is used (Schmidt, 1990) and take part in intrapersonal exchange;
* 3. Communication is a holistic process that often calls upon the use of different macro-skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening). These skills can also be tackled as "receptive skills" (Listening & reading) and/or "productive skills" (Speaking & Writing).
* 4. Language learning is facilitated by activities that involve inductive and deductive learning as well as those involving language analysis and reflection.
* 5. Language learning is a gradual process that involves creative use of language and trial and error. Although errors are seen as a normal product of language learning, the ultimate goal of learning a language will be to achieve fluency and accuracy in the target language.
* 6. Learners develop their own routes to language learning and apply different learning styles to achieve objectives with the guidance of the materials and the teacher.
* 6. The language class is now seen as the world in miniature, therefore classroom activities and tasks must be life-styled and community-oriented.
* 7. Within the framework of communicative language teaching, the teacher will play different roles such as a facilitator, moderator, instructor, supervisor, input giver and referee to face the nature of lifestyle activities.
* 8. The teaching/learning process is no longer vertical but it is horizontal to match the nature of normal interaction.

Once the principles are well internalised, another important step is to create **an overall instructional framework** around which instructional activities and tasks will be built. The challenge for the teacher trainer then is to make trainees able to turn these principles into operational lesson plans. These issues will be exemplified in section 4 of the article. In the meantime, trainees will carry out the following practical activity.

Application for teacher conceptual competency

Here trainees will be provided with different language theories to analyse in small groups: *Behaviourism* (**Skinner, 1957),** *Audio-Lingualism* **(Chomsky, 1965**), *Language as Communication* **(Canale & Swain, 1980; Widdowson, 1978)**, *Second/Foreign Language Acquisition* theories **(Krashen ,1982; Ellis, 1990**), *Computer Assisted Language Teaching (CALL)* **(Son, 2006**). At a second stage, they will be initiated in the theories of syllabus design and implementation so that they can perceive theoretical and instructional bearings of syllabuses such as grammatical, structural, topic-based, lexical, notional-functional, communicative, task-based syllabuses, just to name a few examples. Awareness of these conceptual issues will develop understanding of the grounds upon which contemporary materials have been developed.

3.TEACHER TECHNICAL COMPETENCY

At this stage, trainees must be helped to develop all the technical skills materials development requires. These skills include sound awareness of the processes involved, identification of categories and types of materials and the theoretical principles underlining them. However these skills will not be effective if the teacher does not develop them closely with a certain level of conceptual competence along the lines suggested above.

3.1 Materials development: the processes involved

To make trainees perceive the overall process, the framework will be represented in the following diagram and its components analysed from a teacher training point of view.

Figure 1: **Materials development: the processes involved.**
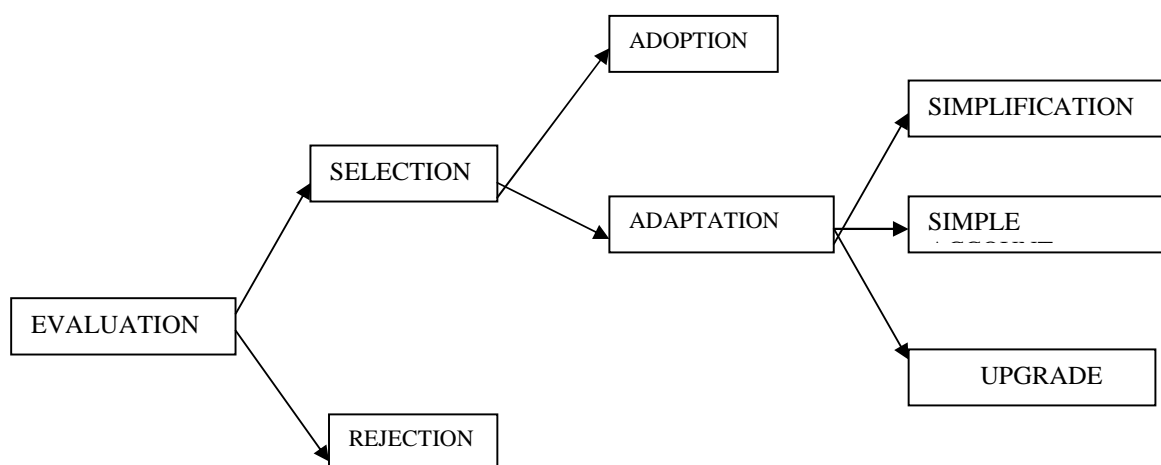
Process 1: evaluation

As the figure shows, Materials development involves many processes the developer must be aware of. Otherwise he may miss his objectives. The first process the teacher must be clear about is the evaluation process. It is one of the most documented processes in the literature. But what does evaluation means?

Evaluation is said to be a systematic gathering of information for the purpose of decision-making. Applied to materials development, evaluation is "...*an attempt to measure the value of materials*" (**Tomlinson, 1998:2).** However, most instructional materials are evaluated before being used. That is called **"pre-use evaluation"**. This form of evaluation is often criticised on the grounds that it is **"impressionistic, vague and subjective".** Conversely **"while-use"** and "**post-use evaluation"** seem more systematic and more objective.

Echoing many practitioners' resentment to "pre-use evaluation**", Ellis (1998:2)** argues that "*...We should stop judging materials by their apparent appeal and start evaluating them by observing what the learners actually do when using the materials and by finding out what they seem to learn as a result of using them".* These comments suggest that materials are evaluated through a subjective or an objective approach. They will be briefly analysed,

Materials evaluation: the subjective approach

The subjective approach includes subjective criteria the teacher or the materials developer applies in order to assess the value of the materials with respect to a certain group of learners working in a particular context. Therefore, both the context and the participants (teacher and learners) come to play in the selection of these criteria. Since the criteria are context bound, and vary from one situation to another, they can only be subjective. For exemplification purposes, the developer may ask questions such as: are the materials **suitable, legible, teachable, exploitable, challenging, authentic, graded**? Note that the list is not exhaustive, so the developer can ask other types of questions to match the requirements of his working conditions.

Application for materials evaluation through subjective criteria

Teachers will work in small teams to adapt these criteria to their situations, evaluate and revise sets of materials.

Materials evaluation: the objective approach

As for the objective approach, it applies statistical principles and criteria this article cannot elaborate on for a reason of space. For further insights however, the reader is advised to read **Tomlison, 1998; Kizilirmak, 1991; William, 1983; Tucker, 1975**. Given its statistical nature the objective approach seems more appropriate for the evaluation of a textbook used at a large scale, for example.

Application for materials evaluation through objective criteria

Take a textbook widely used in your country or your teaching area and together with other teachers, evaluate its effectiveness or not by filling out this table. This can also be done under the form of a national survey.

Each item of the table will be checked against these criteria and then the totals and the percentages will be worked out (**Ur, 1996**).
0 I don't know
1 not important
2 important
3 fairly important
4 very important
5 extremely important

Table 1: materials evaluation through objective criteria (adapted from Ur, 1996)

CRITERIA	Pre-use evaluation	While-use evaluation	Post-use evaluation
Objectives explicitly laid out in an introduction, and implemented in the materials			
Approach educationally and socially acceptable to target community			
Clear attractive layout ; print easy to read			
Appropriate visual materials available			
Interesting topics activities and tasks			
Varied topics, activities and tasks, so as to provide for different learner levels, learning styles, interests, etc.			
Clear instructions			
Systematic coverage of syllabus			
Content clearly organised and graded (sequenced by difficulty)			
Periodic review test sections			
Plenty of authentic language			
Good pronunciation explanation and practice			
Good vocabulary explanation and practice			
Fluency practice in all four skills			
Encourages learners to develop their own learning strategies and to become independent in their learning			
Adequate guidance for the teacher, not too heavy preparation load			
Audio cassettes			
Readily available locally			
Communicative methodology in practice			
Communicative activities and tasks			
TOTAL			
PERCENTAGE			

Process 2: rejection

Rejection puts an end to the overall process. In this regard, it is not very interesting even though practitioners, materials developers and editors will always wish to know the reasons for which, a particular set of materials has been rejected by a particular audience. The reason is very simple they want to learn from their mistakes, if there are any.

Sometimes yet, good materials can be rejected for covert reasons like inappropriate political opportunities, greedy pressure groups or dishonest educational watchdogs. Therefore, it is important to investigate the very reasons behind rejection before changing or dumping out a textbook.

Process 3: selection

Selection can be done after **pre-use**, **while-use** or **post-use evaluation**. But it is said to be more accurate when operated after post-use evaluation which gives more time to collect and analyse data. In any case, materials selection requires the application of critical thinking (**Lee, 2005**) which leads to this set of critical relevance criteria adapted from **Dimitrescu (2000):**
* **Content relevance** which matches with **Davies' (1984) TAVI** (Text As V**ehicle of Information);**
* **Linguistic relevance** which relates to **TALO** (Text As Linguistic Object), the other side **of Davies' criteria;**
* **Conceptual relevance (**Do the materials match with the philosophy, the principles, and the language learning theories advocated in the syllabus to be implemented?);
* **Cultural relevance** (Do the cultural insights hurt participants' cultural beliefs);
* **Teaching/learning relevance** (Is the approach teacher-centred, learner-centred?). Is the teacher well trained? Is he a resourceful language teacher (**Tomlinson, 2006**)?
***Skills relevance** (How are the skills presented? (separately, in pairs, in integration);
***Activity/task relevance** (Are activities and tasks graded? How do they tie together?
* **Procedural relevance** (Are instructions and procedures clearly stated? What is the working context? How does classroom management match with such a resource-challenged context (**Crandall, 2006?);**
* **Communicative relevance** (How is the notion of communicative competence dealt with in the materials? What is the level of interpersonal interaction, (group work, pair work), horizontal teaching/learning process? In any case, selection opens up two other avenues: adoption and adaptation.

Application for selection

Teachers working in small groups are given a set of texts to select from and develop instructional units for specific target groups: beginners, intermediate or advanced learners. They will use the above criteria to make informed selections.

Process 4: adoption

To adopt materials means to take the decision to use them as they stand or to make slight changes that will have no pedagogical effects on the process of teaching and learning.

Process 5: Adaptation
Contrary to adoption, adaptation implies to make substantial changes, which will influence both the teaching/learning process and the classroom participants (teachers and learners). In this sense adaptation always affects the language class either positively or negatively. As a matter of fact, adaptation can operate at the text level (written or spoken), at the activity/task level or at both. But whatever the level it applies, adaptation leads into other processes known as **simplification, simple account and upgrade**.

Process 6: simplification
Simplification can take place at the text or activity level. In both cases it aims at levelling the materials down to the comprehension reach of a target group of learners. At the text level however, simplification may involve alteration of lexical items, syntactic elements or discourse features. At the activity level the process may enhance changes in the goals and the procedures of the activity or task as well as in the roles to be enacted by classroom participants (**Nunan, 1989**).

Application for simplification
Choose a text, which you believe interesting but too difficult for a target group of learners, and simplify it to match these learners' language level. Note carefully that difficulties can be of different kinds: text level (lexical, grammatical, items, etc.), discourse level, ie writer's use of discourse markers and signals (but, however, nevertheless, etc), character level (mood, feelings, emotions relationships, etc.).

Process 7: simple account
Simple account operates at the text level. It consists in re-writing a written text or re-saying a spoken one in language formulation comprehensible to a target group of learners. Here the message is kept but re-written or re-said in simpler language to match the level of this particular audience. For example Shakespeare' classics have been turned into **'Easy Readers'** to make them accessible to different readers' language competence: beginner, intermediate and advanced. Research findings conducted in a foreign language context (Japan) even claim that simple account is more effective than simplification (**Davies, 1988).**

Application for simple account.
Select a text which is really difficult but of high instructional values and re-write it altogether in a language within the comprehension reach of your target learners.

Process 8: upgrade
In the literature, upgrade is generally overlooked. Yet some practitioners feel the need to upgrade interesting materials ie, to raise their level of difficulty for the purpose of making them meet the instructional needs of an audience whose language proficiency is much higher than the one of the audience for whom the materials were destined. Generally speaking, materials are simplified, upgraded or re-written when they are topical, interesting and/or informative. In practice simplification, upgrade and simple account should not be taken for granted in foreign language contexts where teachers' command of the target language can be easily challenged. For this reason, they will be recommended to carry out simple account, which is very rewarding for both teacher professional growth and effective classroom input.

Application for upgrade
Choose another interesting text, which is yet too easy for your target group of learners. Raise its level of difficulties by making things a little bit more difficult and challenging opposite the simplification guidelines. For example you can upgrade beginner materials for intermediate learners, and intermediate materials for advanced learners.

3.2 Authenticity in materials development
This section cannot be concluded without mentioning that processes such as simplification, simple account and upgrade raise the important issue of authenticity. Some language purists simply reject these processes on the ground that the outcome is not authentic. For **Richards (2006: 21**) paraphrasing **Widdowson (1987**) *"it is not important for classroom materials to be derived from authentic texts and sources as long as the learning processes they activate are authentic. In other words, authenticity of process is more important than authenticity of product"*. This view is supported by **Davies (1984)** for whom anything the learner understands is authentic. He adamantly states *"...it is the teacher who simplifies and the learner who authenticates"*.

As discussed above, authenticity is a controversial area in materials development. This is why many specialists believe that it should be demystified at a time when *"one million pages of materials are added every day on the Internet"* (**Dumitrescu, 2000**).

3.3 Materials development: background contexts, categories and types
In this section, background contexts, categories and types of materials will be used for instructed foreign language acquisition. This section aims to provide potential developers with a wide range of instructional materials to get inspiration from.

3.3.1 Background context
Education and materials development have been influenced by three paradigms known as the propositional, the process and the proportional models. They can be considered as a springboard to contemporary materials.
The propositional model

It takes **the proposition** (grammar, linguistics, structures) as the foundation of teaching and learning language. Within this framework, to know a language means to know its grammar **(Chomsky, 1965).**

The process model
With the process model on the contrary, language competence implies being able to function in the target language, ie to be able to carry out life-style activities in complete autonomy **(Breen, 1987; Prabhu, 1987).**

The proportional model
As the name suggests, the proportional model takes language teaching and learning as a set of **proportions** (complementary features) to acquire. In this respect, the proportional model integrates both propositional and process features. Consequently it is thought to be more appropriate in a foreign language context where linguistic, grammatical and communication skills are needed altogether (**Yalden, 1987).**

3.3.2 Categories and types of materials
The three models reviewed above have engendered different categories and types of materials. The propositional model has brought about **product categories** of materials, the process model has given rise to **communicative categories** and the proportional model has borne **proportional categories**. The following figure is an attempt to represent the hierarchy and the connections between these materials.

Figure 2: Materials development: design models, categories and types.
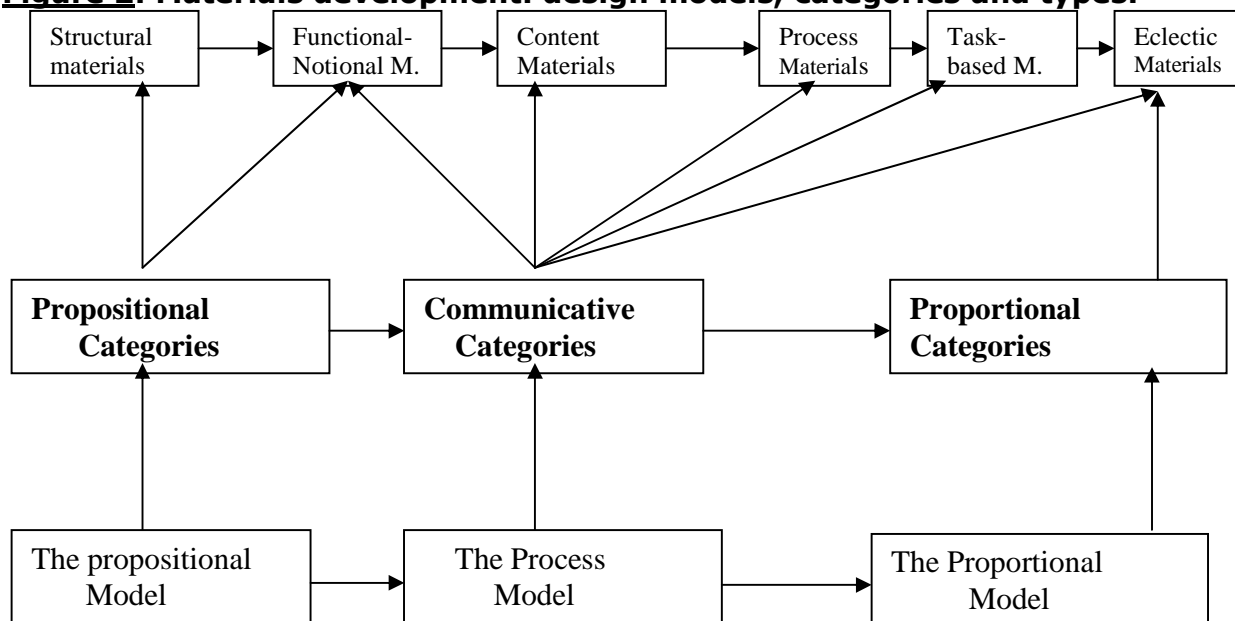
Product materials

With this category, the materials developer assumes that teaching is a simple matter of transmitting knowledge or information directly into the learner, who is seen as an "empty vessel".

Here language is seen as a sum of atomised linguistic and/or grammatical features. Product materials include different types of **materials: grammar-translation, structural and audio-lingual.**

Communicative materials

In contrast, **communicative materials** are designed on the principle that language is whole communication (W**iddowson, 1978**). In this context, the classroom is taken as the world in miniature where the community practises life-styled activities and tasks in preparation for real world activities.

Hence the importance of activities like pair/group work, role-playing, problem-solving, negotiation, information processing, sharing and transfer (**Nunan, 1989**). Among communicative materials, there are types such as: **functional-notional, content, process, task-based** and **eclectic materials**.

With **the functional-notional** type, the developer takes the view that to know a language is to be able to function in this language, ie, to be able to use appropriate functions and notions in appropriate situations. Yet, language theorists do not agree on the place of functional-notional materials on the hierarchy. For some, they belong to the product category, for others their place is under the communicative umbrella. In this paper, it is believed that functional-notional materials make a good transition between product and communicative materials.

As for **content materials**, they are often selected on the basis of the type of information they withhold rather than the linguistic features upon which they are structured. This is why **Johns & Davies (1983)** have drawn the **TAVI/TALO** distinction outlined earlier in this paper. In **Process materials** teaching and learning are seen as a matter of co-operative negotiations and actions, which involves horizontal interaction and interpersonal communication (pair work, group work, reflective practice). In **Task-based materials,** the task is taken as an organisational pattern.

Within such a framework classroom activities prepare for task completion and transfer of skills and knowledge into the real world.

Proportional materials

In the framework she designed for developing proportional materials, **Yalden (1987)** structures language proficiency around two proportional features: **linguistic competence (lexical and grammatical competence**) and c**ommunicative competence** (**receptive and productive competence**), At *beginner level*, foreign language learners will need more linguistic competence (vocabulary and grammar). At the *intermediate level* linguistic and communicative competence will strike a balance. Finally at *the advanced level* communication competence (receptive and productive skills) will be given more importance.

Therefore proportional materials integrate features of both product and communicative materials.
 This is why the type of materials this category has produced will be called **eclectic materials**.
 They incorporate features of materials types reviewed in this paper. In the figure connections are made with horizontal and vertical arrows.

4/ TEACHER PEDAGOGIC COMPETENCY
In this section will be suggested **(1) an instructional context, (2) an activity design framework,**
(3) an organisational framework of a unit of materials (4) and an exemplar lesson scheme.
All these issues are oriented to improving teacher instructional competency.

4.1 Awareness of the instructional context
Foreign language teachers must stop believing that the classroom can be sealed off from the rest of the world at a time when the world is seen as a global village. Therefore, they must be open to other contexts and cultures to be able to provide the classroom with appropriate input. (**Krashen, 1985).** However, this can only be achieved if these teachers can adjust input and instruction to **the philosophical, social, cultural a**nd **economic contexts** in which they and their students function. The example I often give my trainees is that American people would never accept their children to be instructed with a textbook putting on stage veiled women and long-bearded men. Similarly, Iranian parents would reject a textbook in which girls in mini skirts hold cans of hot drinks and walk in the streets with boyfriends.

When designing instructional materials, teachers must know that between these extremes lies a common ground on which he must operate to prepare young minds and avoid frustration and cultural shocks. This is what I call **the instructional context,** which allows the teacher, as a materials developer to insist on differences and make positive comparisons every classroom participant will benefit from.

4.2 Activity/task design: a conceptual framework

4.2.1 Definitions
In the classroom context, activities and tasks are often used invariably even though they convey different meanings. Here are their real meanings:
An activity is "a classroom action undertaken by teacher and/or learners in pairs, small groups, whole class or individually with a view to preparing for real life actions" (**Dramé, 1995: 180**).
 **A task** is "…the hundred and one things people do in every day life at work, at play and in between" (**Long, 1981**).
The key words being defined, a conceptual framework is suggested below.

4.1.2 Conceptual framework

When designing activities and tasks, the teacher-material developer is suggested to refer to **Rivers & Temperly's (1976**) framework, which addresses, in a graded way, the issues of linguistic competence and communicative competence earlier analysed through **Yalden's (1987)** eyes. Before considering the instructional process, the activity design scheme is outlined below.

<u>**Figure 3**</u>: **A framework for designing communicative activities and tasks (adapted from Rivers & Temperly, 1976**).
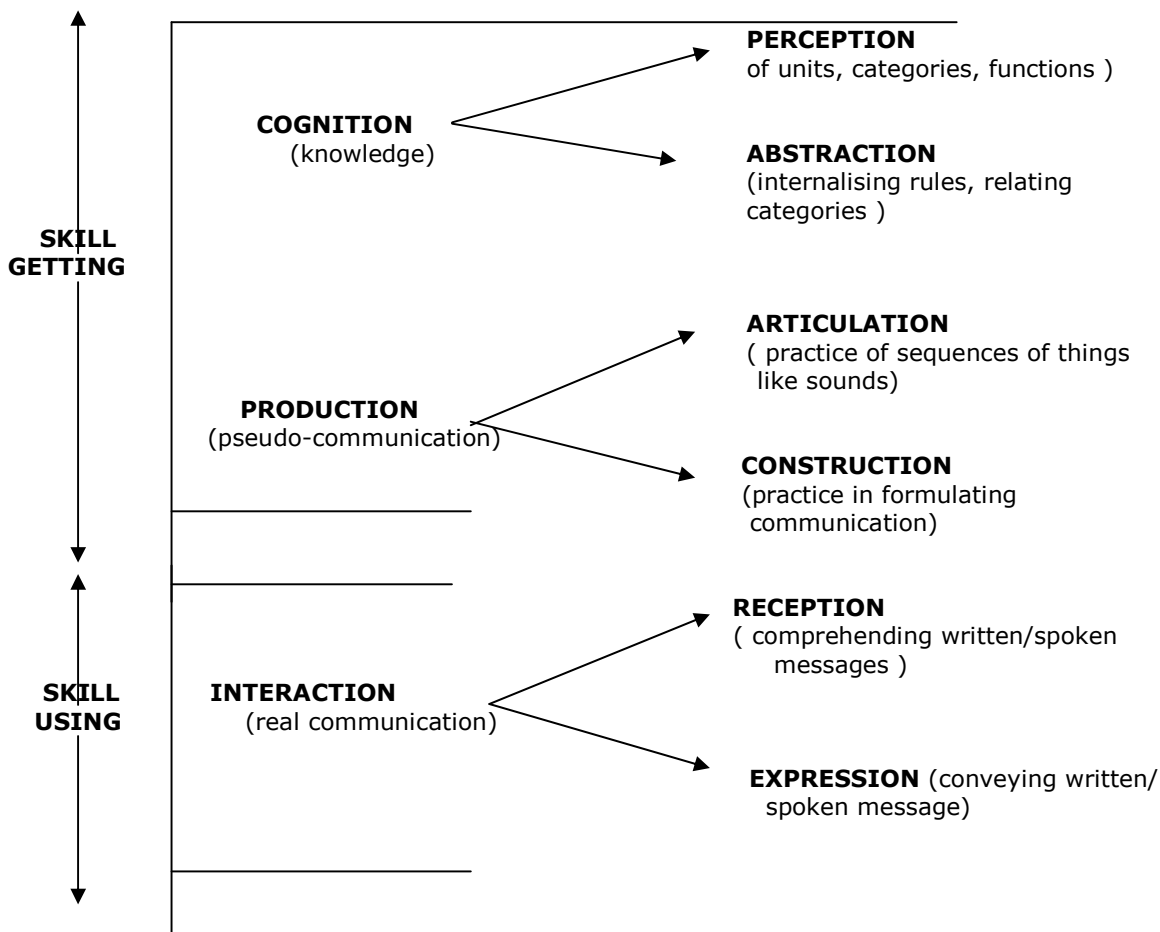
Learning a language is learning to communicate in that target language. It involves two main phases: <u>**the skill getting**</u> and <u>**the skill using (Rivers & Temperly, 1976).**</u> Each of these phases can be top-down and /or bottom up. In the course of the skill getting phase, the teacher/materials developer must make sure students master the target skill (**cognition** or **knowledge**) and they can practise it somewhat mechanically **(pseudo- communication**). This means that at this stage, students must have a good **perception** of things in order **to internalise the rules,** make connections and **formulate pseudo messages**.

Most foreign language teachers/materials developers just stop there unfortunately, not knowing that the skill getting phase simply prepares for the skill using one. After the skill getting phase, students must be provided with appropriate **contexts** and **situations** leading to real or authentic use of language.

In such a way, **real communication** will take place both **receptively** (listening, reading) or **productively** (speaking, writing). Is not this what language learning is all about? One must realise however that the skill getting phase is more suitable in lower and intermediate classes while the skill using applies more successfully to advanced language learners.

4.3 Unit organisation in instructional materials

In language teaching and learning, a unit of instructional materials can be organised differently as exemplified in the **Teens series (Dramé et al, 2000, 2003),** the **Connect series (Richards & Barbesan, 2004**), etc. For the sake of efficiency however, foreign language materials developers are suggested to follow the **Pre-reading/listening, the while-reading/listening and the post-reading/listening phases** as suggested by **Grellet, 1981, Nuttall, 1982, Rixon, 1986, Nunan, 1989**.

In **the pre-reading/listening phase**, materials developers must make provision for learners to activate their background knowledge and schemata in order to make the most of previous linguistic experiences. Here clues such as audio-visual aids, text titles, specific lines, phrases, words, paragraphs can help to make predictions and anticipate on both text contents (gist, topics) and forms (lexical items**).**

The while-reading/listening phase aims to help learners to grasp the main linguistic features of the text so as to work meanings out of contexts. The latter can include lexical, grammatical, syntactic, structural and organisational features the acquisition of which prepares for the next phase. Therefore while-reading/listening activities will structure around word-based, sentence-based, paragraph-based and text-based activities.

At **the post-reading/listening** stage learners will be given the opportunity to re-use the language of the passage through life-styled activities such as role-playing, improvising, problem-solving, information sharing, information processing, information transfer, working in pairs/ groups, debating, asking/answering questions, etc. The place and the momentum of each activity type are exemplified in the following lesson scheme.

4.4 Exemplar lesson scheme

This lesson scheme is an attempt to exemplify different types of activities as they feature in a language lesson. They are built around the three phrases outlined above.

Table 1: a reading/listening comprehension lesson scheme

	Sample activit	Procedures	Learning mo	Outcomes
PRE -R/L PHASE	• Sensitising • Brainstormin • Predicting • Checking predictions	Greeting, warming up, jok socialising, etc. reactivating students' bac knowledge through pictur drawings, realia, text titl question/answer, etc. Anticipating the content i lexical, grammatical form Students read/listen to th Silently to check their gue	**Whole class** **Pair work** **Pair work** **Pair work**	Class ready to work Focus on text issues (example: gist) Students guess issue and text forms to facilitate learning Making connections, developing skimming scanning skills
WHILE R/L PHASE	• Word-based Activities • Sentence-ba activ • Paragraph- based activitie • Text-based activ • Grammar-ba work	Matching words with defir Pictures, captions, etc. Inferring meanings from Grasping meanings from cal appearances of the wo prefixes, suffixes Word use in different cont False cognates, elicitation Etc. Sentence meanings in co Sentence relationship in t Sentence structure Sentence syntax. Paragraph structure Paragraph meanings Paragraph connections Text interpretation Text analysis Grasping the meanings ar of connectors Grasping the value of dis markers in understanding writers' opinions, etc Communicative grammar of the main grammar poir	**Pair work/ Group work** **Pair work/ Group work** **Pair work/ Group work** **Pair work/ Group work** **Pair work/ Group work**	Students /teacher Exchange of information and lexical knowledge to develop lexical knowledge and skills. Good awareness of sentence structure ar meaning in context Awareness of paragraph structure and meaning Capacity to grasp the Gist and the issues raised by a text Drawing parallels Mastering the langua as a system Accuracy

POST R/L PHASE	• Information sharing	Exchanging information i to carry actions out	**Group work**	Getting the right info. to carry out activities
	• Information reordering	Putting pieces of informat given order	**Group work**	Developing Analytical skills
	• Information transfer	Transferring information f Verbal to non-verbal displ Vice versa.	**Group work**	Learning through Spatial modes Capacity to synthesis
	.Problem solving	Solving problems raised i or a given input. Solving local problems in connection with text issue	**Group work**	Capacity to resolve difficult issues throug reflection, interaction
	• Debating	Discussing controversial i	**Group work**	Making a point Communicating, etc.
	• Closing activities	Games, songs, puzzles, e	**whole class**	Relaxation

5/ EVALUATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Evaluation
At the end of the training time, the lecturer will have to gauge trainees' perceptions of the
programme through an evaluation phase. The latter can take different forms: questionnaire, wrap
up session, interview scheme or combination of questionnaire and one of the other two strategies
so that qualitative data can illuminate quantitative ones **(Kutnick, 1992)**. Whatever the lecturer's
option however, adopted evaluation scheme must address fundamental issues such as: **overall
structure of suggested competency-based approach, its conceptualisation, components,
articulation of constituent elements, integration of theory and practice, balance,
adaptability, practicability, etc**. The list is not exhaustive therefore the lecturer will adapt it to
the training contexts and objectives. In any case, the data collected from this phase must be analysed
and its implications addressed.

5.2 Implications
As a matter of fact it is not enough to evaluate and collect data. If we remember that evaluation
 involves decision-making, the lecturer will be advised to be open-minded enough to accept

sound suggestions and justified criticism for good decision-making. By doing so, he will
be able to improve his presentational strategies as well as efficiency of the suggested framework.
This may lead to informed revision of the approach and/or selective remedial work for trainees
to develop more acute competencies in materials development.

CONCLUSION

An assessment of the present educational contexts of the developing world has revealed that language teachers are not well trained in materials development. This situation has resulted into an appalling shortage of instructional materials exacerbated by the fact that commercial textbooks are generally unsuitable to the contexts of the target countries. Bearing this situation in mind, a proposal has been made to train teachers in materials development through **a competency-based approach**. In practice, the suggested framework aims to upgrade **teacher competency in context assessment, teacher conceptual, technical and pedagogic competencies in materials development**. The training programme will be modular-based and it will integrate theory and practice through specific application sessions for pre-service training and workshops and seminars for in-service teachers. At the end of this training scheme, it is hoped that both pre- and in-service teachers will be more competent and successful in developing and using their own instructional materials.

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