ELT INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

The knowledge base of teaching involves the ability to select, use, and design teaching materials. This knowledge is fundamental for successful instruction. There is an increasing number of studies investigating instructional materials development for English language teaching (ELT), thus providing an opportunity for a systematic review of how the development of ELT materials can affect English language teaching and learning (ELTL) and how the materials are developed. Therefore, this systematic review focuses on the theories and practices of instructional material development in ELTL. Recent studies published between 2018 and April 2023 on related topics identified in three databases were reviewed, analyzed, and synthesized. The Prisma method was used for the inclusion, exclusion, and extraction of the articles. A total of 16 articles were analyzed based on two criteria, namely the development of ELTL materials and the aspects affecting English language learning (ELL). The results suggest and assist in-service teachers in developing their ELTL materials grounded in theory.

Keywords: Instructional materials, materials development, ELT

Introduction

Teachers' competence in selecting, using, and designing teaching materials reflects their understanding of content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, and knowledge of educational contexts (Shulman, 1986). Carefully-selected or designed instructional materials that provide information to students in the teaching and learning process not only affect the learners' motivation but also their overall understanding of learning (Duman, 2018). One of the many ways to gain knowledge about instructional material development is to draw on language acquisition research (Hadley & Hadley, 2022). Therefore, it is important to gain insight into how studies that focus on material development are conducted.

Material development for language learning involves different processes depending on its status (as a practical activity or as a field). As a practical activity, the materials development process includes production, evaluation, and adaptation of materials, while as a field, it covers the design principles and procedures, writing, implementation, evaluation, and analysis of the materials (Tomlinson, 2012). SLA-based principles for material development focus on how learners learn, which involves internal

factors (affective and cognitive domains) and external factors (language input, the teacher, and the learning environment) (Mishan & Timmis, 2015; Tomlinson, 2011).

Instructional materials have different forms, such as electronic media, paper-based materials, realia, and processes (Mishan & Timmis, 2015), that assist teachers and students in language learning (Tomlinson, 2011). Materials serve five main purposes in ELT, namely, to satisfy a psychological need, to provide exposure to the language, as a means of information, as a stimulus for other activities, and as a means of teacher education (Mishan & Timmis, 2015, p. 5-6).

In this current review, we draw on the work of Tomlinson (2012) in reviewing the most recent research on both electronic and print forms of ELT material development by explaining how the materials were analyzed, adapted, produced, and evaluated. The purpose of this systematic literature review to provide teachers and material developers with the theories and practices of ELTL material development and inform which aspects affecting ELL should be considered when developing instructional materials. The analysis of the articles was carried out on the basis of the following research questions:

How was the development of ELT instructional materials being investigated?

Methods
Article Search
This systematic literature review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analysis (PRISMA) (Page et al., 2021). The literature search was conducted using keywords identified based on references to the development of ELT materials (Derewianka, 2014; Mishan & Timmis, 2015; Tomlinson, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2020, 2022) in the SCOPUS, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science databases. The terms of *English language teaching AND instructional materials AND development* were used to identify peer-reviewed journal articles written in English and published between 2018 and April 2023 for analysis.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria
The inclusion criteria for the selected articles were as follows:
a) written in English
b) published between 2018 and April 2023
c) peer-reviewed articles
d) related to the development of ELT materials

The exclusion criteria for the selected articles were as follows:
a) do not have a focus on the development of ELT materials
b) cannot be retrieved

Article Selection Procedure
Relevant studies were initially identified in the three databases (n=436), and twenty-two duplicates were removed (n=414). A total of 380 studies were not relevant based on the title and abstract screening. Thirty-eight studies were assessed for eligibility based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Seventeen studies were excluded because the studies do not have a focus on the development of ELT materials (n=14) and cannot be retrieved (n=4). Finally, sixteen studies were included in the data analysis.
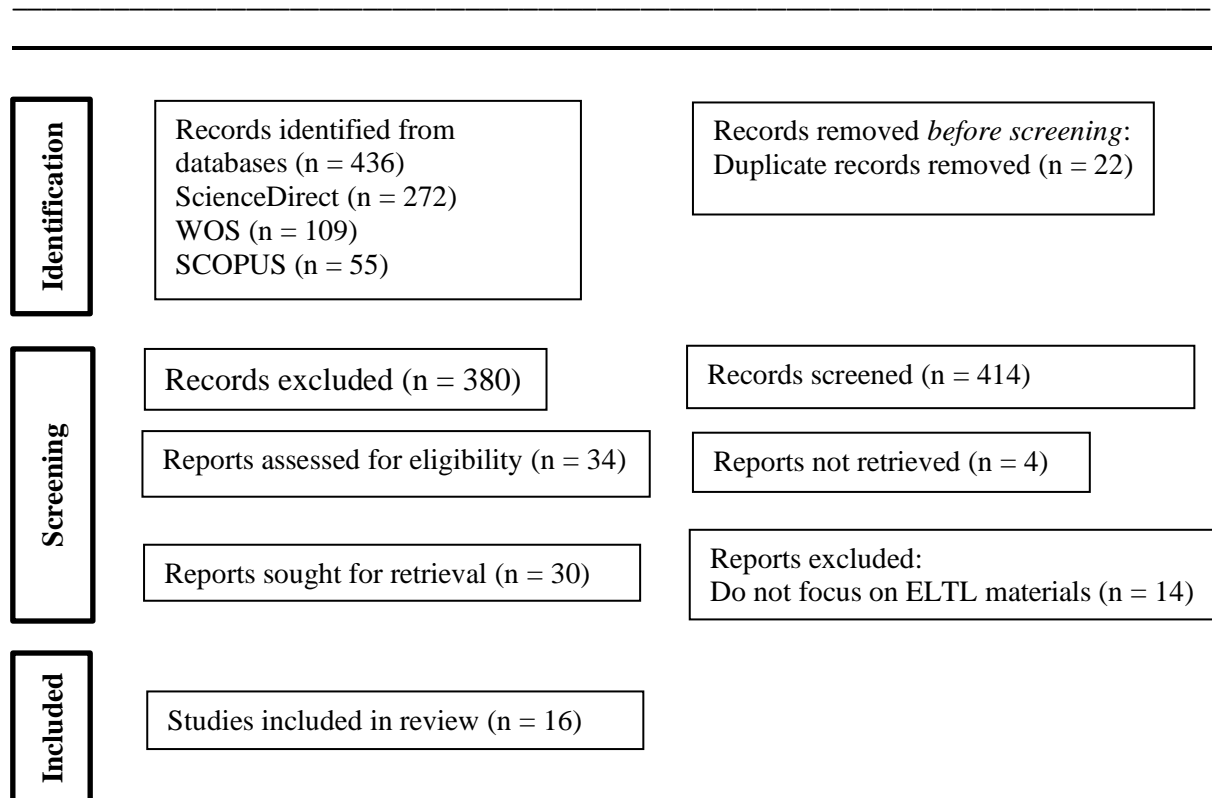
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Figure 1. Identification of studies via databases based on the Prisma method

Data Analyses

The authors coded 16 articles to achieve the aims of the study. The articles were coded on the basis of two criteria, namely the development of ELT materials (analysis, adaptation, production, and evaluation) and the aspects affecting ELL.

Result and Discussion
Analysis

The analysis that is part of the production of the instructional materials, which is useful as a preliminary stage in designing materials that fit the needs of the students and the curriculum. This analysis covers three types of analysis namely, instructional analysis or learning needs analysis, performance analysis or students' needs analysis, and environmental analysis (n=8).

Instructional analysis is useful to determine the topics, course objectives, and approaches for instructional materials, which is conducted by administering a questionnaire and an interview to teachers and students (Azizah et al., 2021; Ebsworth et al., 2019; Maulina et al., 2021; Sofyan et al., 2023). Students' need analysis is conducted to identify students' language proficiency levels, learning difficulties, learning strategies, and learning interest levels through tests, observations, interviews, and surveys (Asgari et al., 2019; Azizah et al., 2021; Suwartini et al., 2022). Analysis as a part of material production is crucial to ensure the effectiveness and suitability of the materials for students, teachers, curriculum, and school contexts, as well as to determine relevant topics and identify students' problems (Kirkgöz, 2022). Among these factors, student's and teacher's needs analyses are the most critical, as they provide direct access to students' and teachers' perspectives on learning materials and their needs (Gok, 2022). In relation to students' proficiency level, they are likely to perceive materials as meaningful for their learning if they match their proficiency level and their interests. Materials that are too difficult are likely too demanding for students, likewise, if the materials are too easy, it is likely to negatively affect students' learning motivation, making the materials ineffective (Mishan & Timmis, 2015). Material topics also affect students' affectively, in that when the topics are familiar to their lives, they consider the materials meaningful, thus improving their learning motivation.

Adaptation

The reviewed studies adapted materials by compiling existing materials, integrating local culture, and modifying the materials (n=6). One type of material adaptation is the compilation of available resources such as reading texts, books, TV series, and videos that are related to the chosen topic of ELT instructional materials and the students' characters (Asgari et al., 2019; Peñarroja, 2020; Shobeiry, 2020; Vargas, 2021). Materials developers also adapt materials by adding supplementary materials, modifying instructions, or changing the intended pedagogical goals based on the intended knowledge and skills (Li & Xu, 2020), integrating available materials with enrichment activities (Ebsworth et al., 2019), embedding local culture in the materials (Azizah et al., 2021), compiling multimodal corpus from TV series (Peñarroja, 2020), selecting materials based on students' interest level (Asgari et al., 2019), and selecting reading texts based on students' level and adapting learning activities based on the local curriculum (Bellés-Calvera, 2018).

Materials adaptation is a prominent process in ELT materials development to achieve the maximum fit between materials, methodology, learners, objectives, the target language, and the teacher's personality and teaching style (Tomlinson, 2012). Furthermore, adaptation makes materials more pedagogically effective by matching them with students' needs, the curriculum, and local contexts. Materials adaptation is conducted by adding, deleting, modifying, and reordering the materials by considering their pedagogical and cultural aspects, difficulty levels, curriculum relevance, and appeal (Harwood, 2022). One of the studies reviewed (see Azizah et al., 2021) claims that incorporating local culture into reading materials improves learners' reading comprehension, learning interest, and cultural awareness. In addition, modifications made in materials adaptation, such as customizing topics, exercises, and activities (see Tarrayo & Anudin, 2021), significantly influence learners' engagement, motivation, and attention to task (Masuhara, 2022) and increase learners' learning interest and values (Ur, 2022). Finally, adapting materials by compiling the available materials based on students' characteristics and the curriculum allows for the emergence of new materials that are likely to be more linguistically and cognitively appropriate for the students (Kirkgöz, 2022).

Production

As a part of a sequential process, an ELT materials production stage includes design and/or development stages. The reviewed studies (n=9) produced the ELT materials following a sequential approach based on the ADDIE model, the Akker model, and a pre-determined framework.

Koçak and Alagözlü (2021) developed a podcast page and tasks using a predetermined framework, which served as a guide for the students to develop their podcasts. The teacher provided the students with technical instructions to produce the podcasts, followed by discussion and commenting tasks. A product prototype of reading materials was developed by Azizah et al. (2021) following the Akker design approach, where the design phase focused on developing the prototype based on the results of the analysis phase that incorporated the local culture. Tarrayo and Anudin (2021) found that teachers develop their online learning materials by following a guideline set by their institutions, using their creativity and resourcefulness, and focusing on collaboration among learners. Rajprasit (2022) and Suwartini et al. (2022) produced ELT instructional materials based on the ADDIE model, which includes design and development phases. In the design phases, they determined the learning objectives, competencies, forms of instructional materials, learning media, time allocation, and assessment instruments for their instructional materials. The results of the design phase were used to develop and refine the product in the development phase.

Based on a sociocultural model of reading comprehension, Stoetzel and Shedrow (2021) developed a framework for digital read-alouds that includes identifying the purpose, text selection, time frame, technologies, and student engagement. In a similar vein, Lee et al. (2019) developed a framework for the Next Generation Science Standards for English language learners based on modalities, which include linguistic and visual; registers which consist of everyday talk and text and specialized talk and text; and interaction which includes one-to-one, one-to-small group, small group-to-many, and one-to-many. Instead of developing a framework, Bardovi-Harlig et al. (2019) developed an instruction for authentic teaching materials in a pragmatics course. The instruction consists of a lesson outline, warm-up activities, noticing activities, aural input, and games for speech act activities. Peñarroja (2020) also developed a pragmatics instruction that includes explicit instruction that covers sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics, explicit instruction in conversational aspects of speech acts by

watching audiovisual fragments, and identification of multiple speech acts, conversational aspects, and assessments.

It is argued that materials should be designed with consideration for learner characteristics and the differences between the first and the target languages (Burton, 2022). The materials production in one reviewed study focuses on designing reading texts that incorporate local culture and producing reading comprehension exercises based on the results of students' needs analysis and instructional analysis (see Azizah et al., 2021) following the ADDIE framework. This study yields valid and practical local culture-based reading materials that effect students' reading comprehension. In other studies reviewed, students were involved in material production as a part of learning activities based on a predetermined framework (see Koçak & Alagözlü, 2021). Involving students in material production engages them actively in the learning process, leads them to a deeper understanding of the knowledge and skills (Ramirez-Velarde et al., 2014) and higher motivation (Harwood, 2022), and promotes critical reflection and autonomy (Choi & Nunan, 2022). Material production in the reviewed studies also focuses on the development of materials as instructions; rather than merely producing the product, the instructions were developed to accompany the materials so that a meaningful learning process can take place.

Evaluation

The evaluation stage in material development is twofold (n=11). Evaluation occurs prior to the design or development of the materials (usually as a part of the analysis process) or after the development stage (to check the effectiveness, reliability, and/or validity of the materials). In the case of the evaluation stage done after the development stage, revision usually follows.

Azizah et al. (2021) evaluated the developed local-culture-based product prototype in terms of its validity, practicality, and potential effect. The researchers evaluated the teaching materials by using self-evaluation, expert reviews, one-to-one evaluation, small group evaluation, and a field test. Similarly, Suwartini et al. (2022) conducted a formative evaluation and summative evaluation of a writing instructional material to examine the effect of the materials on students' writing performance. Li and Xu (2020) evaluated the draft version of English-mediated science learning materials through field testing. Teachers in Li and Xu's (2020) study evaluated the appropriateness of the teaching materials by assessing students' performances, responses, and reactions. The results of the evaluation were used as a means of revision. In a similar vein, Rajprasit (2022) examined the quality of a massive open online course by administering a questionnaire.

Asgari et al. (2019) evaluated the fit of the learner-interest-based materials with learners' learning interests and their performance in L2 reading. The evaluation was conducted by administering the Learner Empowerment Scale (LES) questionnaire (Weber et al., 2005) and a reading test. In a similar way, Koçak and Alagözlü (2021) evaluated the effect of learner-produced podcasts on the development of learners' speaking skills. The researchers administered a pre-test and a post-test (the British Test Centre for English exam) to both the control and experimental groups. Ebsworth et al. (2019) used questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews to measure the effect of the selected teaching materials on the English language learners' academic English development. Likewise, the effect of an intensive authentic reading task on the students' reading comprehension development was investigated by Shobeiry (2020). Instead of using tests to determine the significant effect of a teaching material, Irby et al. (2020) used a teacher survey with seven open-ended questions to evaluate the speaking materials impact on students' confidence and academic language. Bellés-Calvera (2018) used a survey to assess students' attitudes towards music learning through CLIL. Bardovi-Harlig et al. (2019) evaluated students' speaking performance by using a computer-based oral task, and students' activities in finding expressions related to the topics they have learned by using a questionnaire, and the clarity of the materials by using interrater evaluation.

Materials evaluation provides information about the effectiveness of the materials, which can support and develop theory (Norton & Buchanan, 2022). Materials evaluation also serves to determine the suitability of the materials for the intended context, such as the variety of English used, local culture representation, linguistic diversity, and variety of speakers, which are significant for providing both teachers' and students' awareness of the materials that they will use or adapt (Cogo, 2022). In addition, Cogo (2022) explains that evaluating materials could help teachers identify additional resources, adapt, and create new materials. Material evaluation is conducted in a number of ways, for

example, by administering questionnaires and conducting interviews and observations (Hadley & Hadley, 2022). Researchers usually use questionnaires to collect information from teachers and students about the materials that they have used (see Asgari et al., 2019; Irby et al., 2020). The materials' effectiveness is also evaluated through various types of tests (see for example Anggrawan & Satria, 2020; Azizah, et al., 2021). Other evaluation methods such as observation, guided written reflection, in-depth interview, and document analysis (e.g., checklist) are useful to identify certain factors and features of the materials that are relevant to the learners' context, for example, to determine the appropriateness of the readability level of the reading materials and grammatical structure to the learners' proficiency level.

Conclusion

Material development in ELT encompasses the adaptation, production, exploitation, and evaluation that inform teachers and material writers about factors that affect language learning. Material analysis and evaluation assist teachers in identifying learners' characteristics and features of the material that influence their decision to use, adapt, or produce new materials that are appropriate for their students. Evaluating materials informs teachers about the effectiveness of the materials in facilitating language learning so that the results of material evaluation can serve as a means of revision that can enhance the quality of the materials. Material adaptation and exploitation may enhance the effectiveness of the materials by promoting learning motivation, engagement, and language acquisition. Finally, teacher-produced materials are more likely to be suitable for students since teachers have direct access to analyze their students' needs and evaluate the materials, allowing them to gradually monitor and improve the effectiveness of the materials.

The positive roles of material development in the ELT need the inclusion of material development practice in teacher education so that pre-service teachers can gain firsthand experience analyzing, adapting, exploiting, producing, and evaluating instructional materials. It is also substantial to provide professional development programs for in-service teachers in terms of producing instructional materials that can enhance language learning. The materials production needs to be theoretically grounded, with reference to the findings of SLA studies that can inform teachers on essential language learning factors to take into account during the material production process.

Acknowledgments

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