Materials development and syllabus design

Curriculum Development: An overview
By: Dr. Farnaz Latif
Main Focus of Curriculum Development

What and How?

- What knowledge, skills, and values students learn in schools.
- What experience should be provided to bring about intended learning outcomes.
- How teaching and learning in schools or educational systems can be planned, measure, and evaluated.
The processes

- Designing language programs.
- Revising language programs.
- Implementing language programs.
- Evaluating language programs.
9 major questions to pose

1. What procedures can be used to determine the content of a language program?
2. What are learners’ need?
3. How can learners’ needs be determined?
4. What contextual factor need to be considered in planning a language program?
5. What is the nature of aim and objectives in teaching and how can these be developed?
6. What factors are involved in planning the syllabus and the units of organization in a course?

7. How can good teaching be provided in a program?

8. What issues are involved in selecting, adapting, and designing instructional materials?

9. How can on measure the effectiveness of a language program?
Historical Overview

- Language curriculum development
  - Starts with the notion of syllabus design.
  - A major factor in language teaching
  - Content of a course
  - Really begin in 1960s.
  - The key of stimulus is teaching methods’ change—for better methods.
Language Curriculum Development entails issues as below:

- The learners’ needs
- Objectives for a program
- Applying appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods, and materials
- Carrying out program evaluation
Reviewing the emergence teaching methods in 19th century

- Grammar Translation Method (1800-1900)
- Direct Method (1890-1930)
- Structural Method (1930-1960)
- Reading Method (1920-1950)
- Situational Method (1950-1970)
- Communicative Approach (1970-present)
• Questions of how and what needs be taught— the content of instruction
  ➢ The appropriate syllabus for different teaching methods—a particular type of syllabus.

• Structural Method (Palmer, 1922)
  ➢ The content and syllabus underlying.
  ➢ Determining the vocabulary and grammatical content of a language course—selection and gradation.
• Structural Method (Palmer, 1922)
  ➢ Initial preparation
  ➢ Habit-forming
  ➢ Accuracy
  ➢ Gradation
  ➢ Proportion
  ➢ Concreteness
  ➢ Interest
  ➢ Order of progression
  ➢ Multiple line of approach
Selection—what should be selected from corpus and textbooks?

- Is it impossible to teach the whole language at the same time?
- To choose the appropriate unit of the language for teaching purpose.
- To choose the most useful procedures for learners. (Mackey, 1965)

Two aspects of Selection:
- Vocabulary selection
- Grammar selection

The foundations for syllabus design in language teaching in early 20th century.
Vocabulary Selection

• One of the most obvious components of language—vocabulary

• What words should be taught in a second language?
  ➢ Objective of the course
  ➢ The amount of time available
  ➢ Are they different between native speaker and ESL learner about the issue of vocabulary selection?
Vocabulary Selection

• Who should do the job of vocabulary selection?
  ➤ Textbook author?—Unreliable result

Ex1: Teaching Cantonese (Li and Richards 1995)

✓ Words occurring in one book  1,141 words  63.4%
✓ Words occurring in two books  313  words  17.4%
✓ Words occurring in three books  155  words  8.6%
✓ Words occurring in four books  114  words  6.3%
✓ Words occurring in five books  77  words  4.3%
Vocabulary Selection

• How should be done the job of vocabulary selection?
  ➢ Random selection—Is it a wasteful approach?
  ➢ Various criteria—the minimum number of words that can operate together into the greatest other contexts to simplify English for learners. (Jeffery, 1953)
  ➢ Counting the frequency of word occurred—what kind of material should be used?
How should be done the job of vocabulary selection?

**Ex2: Vocabulary usage of Time Magazine**

- Words occurring in everyday text: 3000 words, 85%
- Words occurring in everyday text: extra 6000 words, 1%
- Words occurring in everyday text: half of words, only one time
- Recognizing 85% words is not the same as understanding 85% of the text.
- Text comprehension is not just a function of the proportion of familiar words, but depends on subject of the text which reader is already familiar with the subject. (Van Els, 1984)
Vocabulary Selection

• How should be done the job of vocabulary selection?
  ➢ The frequency of words is not the same as the usefulness of words—depends on the types of language samples.
  ➢ The need of target learner, the highest frequency and the widest range—the most useful words for language teaching.
**Vocabulary Selection**

Ex3: Different between frequency and range in a 1 million-word corpus (McCarthy 1990, 84-85)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>1st Column</th>
<th>2nd Column</th>
<th>3rd Column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huge</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscious</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protest</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exciting</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **1st Column:** frequency of the word in the corpus
- **2nd Column:** the number of the text types the word occurred in out of a total of 15
- **3rd Column:** the number of individual text samples a word occurred in: maximum 500 samples, 200 words)
Vocabulary Selection

• Other criteria of vocabulary selection
  ➢ Teachability—they can easily be illustrated through material.
  ➢ Similarity—they are similar to words in the native language. Ex: sofa, tofu, papa, mommy.
  ➢ Availability—group of words. Ex: colors, tools of classroom, fruit, food.
  ➢ Coverage—words that cover or include the meaning of other words. Ex: emotion( happy, sad, angry, depress)
  ➢ Defining power—they useful in defining other words.
Vocabulary Selection

The compilation of a basic vocabulary—Lexical Syllabus

- Grouped into levels
- A General Service List of English Words by Michael West (1953)
  - 2000 basic words for EFL
  - The frequency of meaning of words base on semantic frequency count
  - The Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection (1936)
- Entries from Cambridge English Lexicon—4500 words grouped into 7 levels (Hindmarsh, 1980)
Grammar Selection and Gradation

• A priority for applied linguistic from the 1920s.
• For the speech act of “asking permission.” (Wilkins, 1976)
  ✓ Can/May I…?
  ✓ Please let…
  ✓ If it…, I’ll…
  ✓ Am I I allow…?
  ✓ Do/Would you mind…?
  ✓ You don’t mind if I…?
  ✓ I wonder if you…
  ✓ Do you think…?
Grammar Selection and Gradation

What kinds of sentences structures would be useful to teach?

- Traditional grammar items
  - Teaching method
  - Items of purposes and Materials
  - Available time of teaching

- The majority of courses start with
  - “finites of be”—am, is, are.
  - Statement of identification—S + be verb
  - Simple tense for narrative

- Direct-Oral Method presented
  - the Progressive Tense first—S + be verb + Ving
  - The simple tense secondly—S + present verb
Grammar Selection and Gradation

Who should do the job of Grammatical selection?

Ex4: Teaching Cantonese (Li and Richards 1995)

1st column—numbers of different grammatical items
2nd column—numbers of items occurring in 1-5 books.

- Total grammatical items in the five texts: 221
- Items occurring in one book: 100 = 95 (41.6%)
- Items occurring in two books: 148 = 54 (24.4%)
- Items occurring in three books: 74 = 36 (16.3%)
- Items occurring in four books: 91 = 17 (7.7%)
- Items occurring in five books: 84 = 22 (10%)

Influence learner’s learning of ease or difficulty of each book.
Grammar Selection and Gradation

- Grammatical selection + Gradation
  - Grouping—grammatical structures
  - Sequencing—the orders of teaching items
    - The useful ones first.
    - Essentials first.
    - Certain foundational laws of grammar and syntax.
    - Conscious learning of the mechanism + principle of gradation.
Grammar Selection and Gradation

• Designing of grammatical syllabus base on
  - Simplicity & Centrality—basic simple and central structure of language.
    ✓ S + V—She Runs.
    ✓ S + V + Complement—He is a teacher.
    ✓ S + V + Adverb—The boy plays at park.
    ✓ S + V + Object + Adverb—I put the book in the bag.
  - Conversational language (McCarthy & Carter, 1995)
    ✓ Subject and verb ellipsis—Let’s go.
    ✓ Tails—And you?
    ✓ Reporting verbs—I was telling…
Grammar Selection and Gradation

- Designing of grammatical syllabus base on

  Learnability—the orders of grammatical items.

Ex5: Interview of ESL (Dulay & Burt, 1973 & 1974)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Nouns</th>
<th>11. Wh-Qs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Verbs</td>
<td>12. Present continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adjectives</td>
<td>13. Directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Verb be</td>
<td>14. Possessive adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Possessive pronouns</td>
<td>15. Comparatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personal pronouns</td>
<td>16. Offers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Adverse of time</td>
<td>17. Simple future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Requests</td>
<td>18. Simple past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Futures</td>
<td>20. First conditional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grammar Selection and Gradation

• Approaches of gradations
  ✓ Linguistic distance (Lado, 1957)
    ✓ L1 first and then L2
    ✓ Contrastive analysis
  ✓ Intrinsic difficulty
    ✓ Simple structure first and then complex structure
  ✓ Communicative need
  ✓ Frequency
  ✓ Linear gradation—orders
  ✓ Cyclical gradation—Repetition
  ✓ Spiral gradation—old to new
Grammar Selection and Gradation

• Learning of structure

➤ Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language (Fries, 1946) & The Structure of English (Fries, 1952)—Focus on the core grammatical component and structure.

➤ Guide to Patterns and usage in English (Hornby, 1954) & The Teaching of Structural Words and Sentence patterns (Hornby, 1954)—formed basic grammatical structure.
Assumption to Syllabus Design

- Grammar and vocabulary are basic.
- Learners have the same needs.
- Language learners’ needs are unique.
- Learning a language is largely determined by the textbook.
Theory-based models of curriculum development
Brown describes *curriculum development* as “a series of activities that contribute to the growth of consensus among staff, faculty, administration and students.”

He further explains that this “series of *curriculum activities* will provide a framework that helps teachers to accomplish whatever combination of teaching activities is most suitable … that is, a framework that helps students learn as efficiently and effectively as possible in a given situation” (Brown, 1995, p. 19).
Richard’s view of curriculum development (2001)

Richards describes curriculum development as “the range of planning and implementation processes involved in developing or renewing a curriculum” (Richards, 2001, p. 41).

He defines the processes as focusing on “needs analysis, situational analysis, planning learning outcomes, course organization, selecting and preparing teaching materials, providing for effective teaching and evaluation” (Richards, 2001, p. 41).
Brown’s view of curriculum development (Brown, 1995, p. 20)

- Needs analysis
- Objectives
- Testing
- Materials
- Teaching

Evaluation
Richards’ view of curriculum development (Richards, 2001)

- Needs analysis
- Interaction between elements
- Situation analysis
- Planning learning outcomes
- Course organization
- Selecting and preparing teaching materials
- Providing for effective teaching
- Evaluation
Summary of theory-based view of curriculum development processes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Development Category</th>
<th>Scope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Needs and situation analysis</td>
<td>Primarily based on the learning needs of students, but also any factors in the environment that should be considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Setting of objectives</td>
<td>Selection and development of suitable means of assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Assessment and testing</td>
<td>Selection and development of suitable means of assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Planning and organization of the course/syllabus design</td>
<td>Decisions about how best to deliver the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Selection and/or development of materials</td>
<td>Decisions about the most appropriate materials and/or creation of materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Planning for effective teaching</td>
<td>Ensuring that appropriate conditions and support systems that promote effective teaching are in place.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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