

Language Materials for Skill Integration

English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks are widely employed in most instructional settings in order to teach the SL/FL. In fact, ELT textbooks are the “visible heart of any ELT programme” (Sheldon 1988, 237). ELT textbooks contain different sections whose aim is that of increasing learners' communicative competence as they engage learners in different activities that promote the development of the four language skills, among other aspects (Beltrán-Palanques 2012a). Therefore, these sections are expected to promote the different competencies of the communicative construct (e.g. Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor 2006a; Celce-Murcia 2007). Nonetheless, recent research indicates that in some cases ELT textbooks do not follow appropriately a communicative approach (Beltrán-Palanques 2012a). Apart from ELT textbooks, it is also usual to employ audiovisual and internet sources to present learners with input that contains features of authentic language as well as to elaborate specific communicative and purposeful activities. Using audiovisual and internet sources, however, might not be seen as an easy task as it involves both selecting appropriately the input and designing purposeful activities which need to be relevant for the target group in order to better accommodate learners' learning process.

Specifically, learners should be provided with both rich and contextualised examples of language that reflect an authentic-like representation of language use in different contexts in the case of listening (Helgesen 2003) and reading (Berardo 2006). Moreover, the activities included with the language skills of listening and reading should focus not exclusively on testing whether comprehension is achieved but also on developing these language skills communicatively (see Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor 2006a, 15–18 for a review). With respect to the designing of activities related to the productive skills, it is important to take into account that learners need to be offered with opportunities to use language for authentic purposes in the case of speaking (Richards 2008) and writing (Hedge 2000). Moreover, feedback on performance should be given in order to better assist learners' learning process. In addition to this, it also seems necessary to incorporate cultural features in the instructional setting (Tseng 2002; Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor 2008; Beltrán-Palanques forthcoming) in order to promote intercultural language learning (Byram 1997), which is required to achieve full communicative competence (Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor 2006a; Celce-Murcia 2007)

(Reference: Beltrán-Palanques, V. 2013. “Teaching the four language skills communicatively: The potential of new technologies”. In Chodkiewicz, H. and Trepczyńska, M. (Eds.) *Language Skills: Traditions, Transitions and Ways Forward*. 456-471. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.)

1. According to the text, what is the main aim of ELT textbooks?
 - a) To promote the development of the four language skills.
 - b) To increase learners' communicative competence.
 - c) To provide authentic language examples.
 - d) To test comprehension of language use.

2. Why might using audiovisual and internet sources for language learning be challenging?
 - a) Selecting appropriate input requires careful consideration.
 - b) Designing purposeful activities may not be relevant for the target group.
 - c) Authentic language features may not be adequately represented.
 - d) The input may not accommodate learners' learning process.

3. What should activities related to the productive skills (speaking and writing) focus on?
 - a) Testing comprehension of language use.
 - b) Providing authentic purposes for language use.
 - c) Offering feedback on performance.
 - d) Incorporating cultural features in the instructional setting.

4. According to the text, what is necessary to promote intercultural language learning?
 - a) Incorporating cultural features in the instructional setting.
 - b) Increasing learners' communicative competence.
 - c) Providing rich and contextualized examples of language use.
 - d) Testing comprehension of language skills.

5. What is required to achieve full communicative competence in language learning?
 - a) Incorporating cultural features in the instructional setting.
 - b) Providing authentic language examples.
 - c) Increasing learners' communicative competence.
 - d) Designing purposeful activities for language use.

Answers:

1. To promote the development of the four language skills.
2. Selecting appropriate input requires careful consideration.

3. Providing authentic purposes for language use.
4. Incorporating cultural features in the instructional setting.
5. Increasing learners' communicative competence.