

THE INFLUENCE OF CUSTOMIZED LEARNING MATERIALS ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY IN INTERMEDIATE LEARNERS

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Abstract

The present paper discusses the impact of tailored material on the intermediate-level proficiency of students in the English language. Tailor-made material, designed with the primary aim of focusing on specific aspects of language that may be of interest or of most interest to them, aims at maximizing both relevance and retention. The current study focuses on middle learners with the aim to connect the base and higher levels of English proficiency levels that challenge learners with some unique characteristics of idiomatic language, complex grammar, and situational vocabulary. The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, with both pre- and post-assessments being considered as measures of competency along with qualitative feedback about the experience of the learners. Results suggest fluency, comprehension, and confidence in using the language. Participants particularly reported a higher motivation and confidence level, which they directly related to the relevance and clarity of the material. The findings would thus identify significance in the adaptation of resources to learners' needs at developing stages, especially intermediate. This research serves as invaluable contribution to educators looking for the best means to encourage long-term language development. Generally speaking, the results of this study suggest that customized materials are a necessary resource for meaningful and interesting learning of English.

Key words: Customized Learning Materials, English Language Competency, Intermediate Learners, Language Acquisition

Introduction

Customized learning materials are educational resources that are specifically tailored to meet the unique needs, preferences, and learning styles of individual students or specific groups. Unlike standard materials, which often take a one-size-fits-all approach, customized resources consider factors such as learners' proficiency levels, cultural backgrounds, and interests. This personalization is particularly crucial in English language learning, where varying degrees of competency can affect student engagement and success. Customized materials are therefore focused on particular challenges the learners experience, such as in learning vocabulary, grammar master, and pronunciation, therefore helping the learner acquire it effectively.

For an intermediary learner, customized learning becomes crucial. The intermediary learns much of the basic rules governing the language and becomes effective but struggles with concepts more complicated than the beginner does, as well as much subtler communication. This is where tailored resources come in handy, as students can concentrate on those areas where they need improvement, like idiomatic expressions, context-specific vocabulary, and advanced grammatical structures. These

materials can also contain topics and themes that are relevant to the lives of the learners, thereby enhancing motivation and relevance.

It is essential to study the effect of customized learning materials on intermediate learners for the following reasons: It offers insight into the best teaching practices that can improve the acquisition and fluency of language. It also allows knowledge on how tailored materials affect learner outcomes, helping in curriculum development so that resources used in education are responsive to the changing needs of learners. Investigating this impact may also unveil the possible obstacles that intermediate learners experience, and educators can devise strategies to overcome these obstacles. Finally, research on customized learning materials contributes to a better understanding of language education and may lead to more effective instructional strategies that allow students to succeed better in becoming English language competent.

Literature Review

Tailored or customized materials have been a topic of discussion lately in language learning research. The evidence shows that learners are more prone to learn when making use of personalized resources and tend to be more motivated towards achieving better language acquisition. Kuo (2019) did a systematic review of literature and found the customized material to improve retention and comprehension of vocabulary of learners significantly. This is especially the case when materials really resonate with a learner's interest and real world, enabling them to find more significant and relevant learnings. The same is illustrated in the study of Chen and Tzeng where it showed that English learners who use the customized resources acquired more developed speaking and writing skills as compared to others who made use of common materials. The authors revealed that personalized materials enable the learner to use language in real contexts and, as a result, consolidate learning and practice.

Some works focus solely on intermediate students and, thus, state the needs and problems for intermediate students. For example, Johnson and Lentz (2021) worked on the implementation of personalized materials for intermediate English speakers. The results showed the existence of specific linguistic bridges between intermediate learners and proficient speakers. This was in agreement with the results found by other researchers, that is, complex sentences and idioms must be particularly taught and practiced to lead learners to fluency. The other comparative study has concluded that customized material works quite effectively for intermediate level students in terms of confidence and motivation. These results here point out that users obtain better quality participating engagement in the learning task using proficiency level tailored resource conditions.

Rationale for Why Customized Materials Must be Used for Language Learning Activities: The underlying theoretical models include Constructivism and Differentiated Instruction. This constructivist theory actually postulates that users themselves are capable of internal construction for knowledge by making an active process in the conditions of environment where learners exist. This theory is consistent with the fact that tailored materials enable learners to associate with content that resonates with their prior knowledge and experience, hence deepening the understanding. Research by Piaget and Vygotsky supports the idea that learning takes place when learners connect new information to existing knowledge, which makes personalized resources crucial in language education.

Another applicable theory is Differentiated Instruction, which emphasizes the adaptation of teaching methods and materials to cater to different learners' needs in a class. According to Tomlinson (2014), effective differentiation can lead to learning if it focuses on the students' strengths and challenges.

Customized learning materials are a real application of this theory since it allows teachers to produce materials that cater to the various levels of proficiency and learning style of their students. Such studies support the notion that differentiated materials will lead to improved learner engagement and performance, with greater benefits often occurring at intermediate levels where the gap is greatest in terms of proficiency.

Based on existing research, customized learning materials are clearly effective at improving language learning outcomes. In intermediate learners, research has emphasized the importance of differentiated materials when overcoming specific linguistic problems and motivating learners. Such theoretical models, for instance, as Constructivism and Differentiated Instruction help reveal why differentiated materials are useful in language learning. As the landscape unfolds on teaching and learning the language, areas to search for customized material toward making effective instructional strategies for attending to the diversified needs of the learners are bound to emerge.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in the study were 60 intermediate learners of English who enrolled for the language program at a local polytechnic institute. All the learners, between the ages of 18 to 24, had cultural backgrounds that represented diverse parts of the State . They have been selected because they knew some basic English. They could read and write and listen and speak but were not equipped with the advanced use of the language and a richer vocabulary. To make it holistic, the subjects were divided into two groups: the experimental group, who followed the customized learning materials, and the control group, who followed the textbook-based curriculum. All participants have provided consent, and all the time ethical considerations were in place.

Customized Learning Materials

This learning package was actually created for the needs and challenges of these participants, and the developed materials were interactive worksheets and multimedia presentations, and actual task-based activities in contexts and applications. For example, the worksheets targeted the wrong usage of grammar structures that intermediate learners tend to abuse, such as perfect tenses and conditionals, providing contextual examples which the students would be familiar with or experience in their everyday life.

The customized materials were more interested in direct, active interaction and practical use instead of the traditional resource only providing the information linearly and abstractly. Such include role-playing in real situations, such as visiting a restaurant to place an order, to make a travel plan, among others. In addition, videos and audio recordings of native speakers used to expose learners to the authentic use of language and multiple varieties of accent, which is a multimodal approach toward making learning experience more engaging and effective due to catering to different learning styles and preferences and thereby facilitating better retention and understanding of language concepts.

Data Collection Methodology

The assessment of the efficacy of the customized learning material in the enhancement of the proficiency of participants in the English language had adopted a mixed-method. Both the quantitative and the qualitative data collection methods used the combination. The prime quantitative tools were pretests and post-tests that measure improvements in proficiency in major areas, such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing. The intervention had been preceded by pre-tests taken to obtain some baseline measures of participants' competencies. Six weeks after the instructional period, a post-test was used in any event of meaningful change in language proficiency, administered on post-test on customized materials.

In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative data were collected through surveys and semi-

structured interviews. For example, Likert-scale items have been used in assessing participants' perceptions of the learning material, the extent to which they became engaged, and how confident they are in using the target language. These interviews were semi-structured. This involved the interviewing of a subgroup of 15 participants, selected from both groups of experimental and control group members. These interviews enabled one to know their experience with the materials. They included questions regarding their preference, problems during the learning process, and general feeling regarding the custom-made resource in comparison with the other conventional materials.

Analysis Techniques

It had approached this analysis of quantitative data by taking a comparison on the test scores before and after the implementation of the new program of both experimental and control groups. The paper took the calculating of descriptive statistics and thereafter, the performing of some inferential statistics with a paired t-tests and ANOVA just to ascertain these differences noted in language competency.

Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of thematic data. Responses from the questionnaire and interview transcripts were analyzed, and the interview data coded and categorized for extracting participant perception of their customized materials as well as general learning experience. The validity of findings was ensured through triangulation of data from both the sources of quantitative and qualitative data so that an overall understanding of the impact that such customized learning materials make in the lives of intermediate learners of English could be assured.

This research methodology was thus set up in order to strictly test whether learner-centered learning materials work to raise the competency of the learners' skills in English at the intermediate level. Utilizing a heterogeneous sample population, learner-centered resources, and a rigorous process for data collection and analysis, this study was perfectly poised to make some much-needed critical contributions in the field of customizing language education.

Results

The research has clearly indicated that this study results in meaningful improvements of language competencies among intermediate English learners using tailored learning materials than the control groups who have been following traditional curricula. Pre-post analysis demonstrates the improvement average 25% of the vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing competencies in the experimental group. The scores in vocabulary improved from an average of 65 percent pre-test to 85 percent post-test. Also, grammar skills stayed on the same pattern since their scores improved from the 60 percent to the 80 percent range. Scores in reading and writing increased by 18 percent to 88 percent and 82 percent, respectively, from the 70 percent and 68 percent achieved in the pretest.

Qualitative data coming from the surveys and the interviews supported the findings shown above. The experimental group participants felt more confident about using English, and 90% of the participants stated that the specially prepared materials made learning enjoyable and relevant. Many appreciated the contextualized nature of the resources—such as real-life scenarios and multimedia components—for better understanding and retention of complex language structures. One participant commented, "The use of materials that related to my daily life really helped me remember vocabulary much better."

When comparing the present study to prior studies, the results resemble those found in studies promoting tailored material to be used when learning languages. For instance, a study by Kuo (2019) has revealed that tailored resources improved vocabulary retention by a lot, an increase similar to the present study, being 20 points. Another impact that personalized learning has on the motivation of learners, according to Alshahrani (2022), is that interesting topics create a more positive and favorable environment for learning. This aspect was reflected on the comments of the respondents.

However, the study conducted here differs from other past studies in some ways since most studies are on vocabulary mastery and grammar mastery. Uniquely, this one considers a holistic approach about language competencies: reading comprehension and writing. The large increases in these areas suggest that tailored materials are likely to lead to integrated language development rather than a few isolated skills improvements. More importantly, the sizeable increase in participants' confidence means that emotional and psychological dimensions of language learning should not be overlooked in evaluations of learning materials.

From the data above, benefits on customization of learning material concerning the improvement of the performance of language competencies can be drawn in considerable amounts, especially for the intermediates learning English. Supporting and continuing research findings would not stop there because what was gleaned in terms of how customized instructional resource impacts can further be deepened about the value placed on better instructional materials by enhancing and maintaining a more functional and conducive learning environment. This research, therefore, points out that teachers should consider the special needs of their students and how tailored materials can help in filling the gap between intermediate proficiency and advanced language use.

Conclusion

This study has shown that tailored learning materials can be beneficial for the English language competencies of intermediate learners. The main findings were that participants who used tailored resources showed a significant improvement in vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing skills. The average increase of 25% across these areas shows the effectiveness of personalized instruction in addressing the specific needs of learners at this proficiency level. In addition, qualitative feedback indicates that learners become more motivated and confident when using customized materials, suggesting that customized materials make the learning experience more engaging and relevant.

The implications of these findings for teaching practices are profound. Educators should consider incorporating customized learning materials into their curricula to better meet the diverse needs of their students. With appropriate designs of resources based on the interests and real life contexts of learners, students' engagement and deeper learning will be enhanced. Thus, training teachers in such developments and implementations will have added value because they can equip teachers with skills required for developing adaptive learning environments with different proficiency levels.

There are some limitations within this study. The sample size was small, with only one institution in the study. This gives cause for concern regarding the wider application of the results in other contexts or educational environments. Additionally, the study focused only on short-term language gains; it remains to be seen whether any observed changes would endure beyond the short term. Future research may be able to exploit the above disadvantages through studies focused on long-term customized learning material effects across different educational institutions and varied demographic groups.

Therefore, other studies can focus on the process and application of specially tailored materials in other language skills such as listening and pronunciation. Other research may also be done towards the promotion of technology to help more in the personalization of learning resources, especially in online or hybrid classes. In examining the integration of digital tools, educators can uncover new ways to tailor their teaching experiences, which could result in better language performance.

All things considered, this study solidifies the need for specific learning materials in language classes, especially for intermediate students of English. The optimistic outcome indicates that personalized instruction has the potential to not only improve language skills but also increase the motivation and sense of self-efficacy of the students. Continued research into tailored instructional tools will be

necessary as language education continues to grow.

Recommendations

According to results, educators are recommended actively, customised, in manner of boosting students engagement, intermediate proficiency, while it would be appropriate training to offer the teachers; teach development and application by making a tailor-made of these in proper interests among the learners and their living day. In addition, schools and educational institutions should invest in collaborative efforts to create a repository of customized materials that can be shared and adapted across different classrooms. Additionally, technology such as interactive apps or online platforms can be used to customize learning experiences on an ongoing basis. Future studies should continue to focus on the long-term effects these materials have on maintaining language proficiency and in learning other aspects of a foreign language, like listening or pronunciation.

Directions for Future Research:

Future studies should concentrate on the further development of knowledge regarding customized learning materials by conducting research into their long-term effects on the retention of language and general proficiency among learners of the English language. Longitudinal studies can be used to establish whether the gains realized in vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and writing are sustained in the long term, especially as learners progress from the intermediate to the advanced levels. Research in the effectiveness of personalized materials in diverse educational settings should be carried out. This will include different age groups, levels of proficiency, and cultural backgrounds to determine the generalizability of the results and guide best practices in tailoring resources across different classroom environments.

Further research might be carried on in the area of technology integration into customizing learning materials. In line with these developments and evolving technologies, the idea to look at how Internet and application services and related multimedias can foster improvement in personalization forms of customization promises a prospective course for investigation. Assessments into real-time and automatic responsiveness to individual need adaptation on learning may help shape much more customized learning. Investigating instructor training and how this training may affect the successful delivery of customized materials will also be important to ensure educators are prepared to best capitalize on the use of customized resources. In sum, these lines of future inquiry will help move the field forward toward better understanding how customized learning materials can help enhance language education and ultimately improve the performance of English language learners.

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