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## Developing ELT Materials of Study Skills in the Time of Revolution and Change - Students' Perspective

By

**Dr.Ahazeej Abdellateef Abdelkareem Ali**

Department of English Language, Administration of University Requirements (AUR), University of Khartoum,

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### ABSTRACT:

This study aims to investigate the importance of using up-to-date materials about current events to teach study skills, finding out how to use such kind of materials and the attitudes of EFL students towards using them. The study adopts descriptive analytical approach. The questionnaire is used as a mean of data collection. The subjects of the study were 40 students of English language at university of Khartoum, Faculty of education. They were given 15 sessions in which the teacher used different materials about current issues to teach study skills as well as different methods and techniques; the eclectic approach is used to teach the course .The questionnaire shows that students have positive attitudes toward using materials about up to dated issues. They think that these materials improve their study skills, motivate them, make the learning enjoyable and give them purpose for learning. .This revealed the importance of developing and supplementing EFL materials with materials about current issues that related to students environment. In addition to that the eclectic approach of language teaching is the ideal one to adopt .The above mentioned results have achieved the hypotheses of the study.

**Key Words:** Supplement ,EFL, Eclectic Approach

**1. Problem of the Study:**

Study skills is one of the most important courses to students ,more specifically those who study English language. These skills includes, writing paragraph, summary, paraphrasing, essay, book review, reports as well as other research skills. The course is also involve, listening skill, presentation and discussion as well as reading skills in which students learn how to scan, skim, read intensively and extensively. Students of Khartoum University, faculty of education had begun the course before the Sudanese revolution. Topics were all about different issues from books related to the subject. After the revolution students are no longer interested in those topics. Revolution gave them freedom .It has changed the style of their life and the topic they like to discuss. This change requires new materials about current events and breaking news. This study investigated the important of developing EFL materials in the time of revolution and change. It tries to find out how to supplement materials by using topics about up to date events as well as finding the attitudes of students towards using such kind of materials especially for learning study skills.

**2. Aims:**

1. To clarify the importance of using topics from different materials about up to date issues to promote students' study skills.
2. To show how to use topics from different materials about up to date issues to develop students' study skills.
3. To find out the attitudes of the EFL students toward using topics about current events to enhance their study skills.

**3. Questions:**

1. Why using topics from different materials about up to date issues to promote students' study skills is important.
2. How to use topics from different materials about up to date issues to develop students' study skills?

3. What is the attitude of the EFL students toward using topics about current events to enhance their study skills?

#### 4. Hypotheses:

1. Students have positive attitude towards using topics about currents events to enhance their study skills
2. Teaching topics from different materials about up to date issues to develop students' study skills requires the eclectic approach.
3. Using topics about up to date issues from different resources is important to promote students study skills.

#### 5. Literature Review:

##### 5.1 Developing Materials what and how?

Different materials about current events can be used such as videos, news articles, social media posts etc. These can be useful in different ways.

According to farmer (2008), News articles can be a great teaching resource in the EFL classroom if they are structured well and have a purpose. Teachers can choose their own articles from newspapers or magazines but should bear the proposed selection criteria in mind.

Case ( 2019 ) mentioned that : **Authentic texts are quick and easy to find. They are up to date and topical. It's what students will have to cope with eventually. They have to learn how to cope with unknown vocabulary, because they give them sense of achievement. He also added that students also can follow a story and recycle the vocab.** The most useful thing about reading newspapers in a foreign language is that the same vocabulary comes up day and after day – students can follow the developments of a single story and also watch or listen to the news about the same thing. **They can compare several versions of the same story.**

"The internet is a fantastic tool for teachers. It's not the answer to simple teaching or learning, but it is an incredibly motivating resource for both teachers and learners. Robertson .2019"

Robertson (2019) also said that the Internet is particularly well-suited for: communication and collaboration, research , real-time data collection and web publishing.

Materials can be developed in many ways. There are many types of useful materials, methods and techniques that can be used with these materials. Examples of these materials are news articles, news videos, social media posts, online newspapers ...etc. different approaches can also be used with these material .materials are also have a certain criteria of selection. This study used different materials about up to date events as well as the eclectic approach to supplement the materials of the study skills courses. This motivates learners and makes them engaged.

### **5.2 Eclectic Approach and material development**

The eclectic approach is the best approach to be used when using braking news and different up-to-date materials about current events in EFL classrooms. It is label given to a teacher's use of techniques and activities from a range of language teaching approaches and methodologies. The teacher decides what methodology or approach to use depending on the aims of the lesson and the learners in the group. The a mixture of approaches and methodologies lead to better understanding give a chance to every students to be involved .it also saves a lot of time in presenting language activities

Freeman &Mellow (2011) used the term eclectic approach to language teaching. It is mixed process of structural, communicative approaches. If the topic belongs to structures, teacher has to follow structural approach. If the topic belongs to speaking activity, he has to follow communicative approach. When the teacher teaches grammar topic, he can follow inductive or deductive, depends on age and rural background of the students. When he deals the topic phrases or idioms, he can use bilingual if students belong to rural

background. If it is reading topic, he can use reading and audio lingual method. So it is combination of traditional modern approaches. It offers better opportunities to learn language skills. It gives good result without pressure on learner

Afzal 2019 emphasized the following advantages of using eclectic approach

1. Learners become attentive and respond.
2. It offers multiple opportunities to students to develop their own skills.
3. It enhances active participation.
4. It makes learning lively & enjoyable .
5. It breaks monotony.
6. It promotes class control and students have interest in class and it allows class discussion

Rivers (1981), mentioned that ; an eclectic approach allows language teachers "to absorb the best techniques of all the well-known language-teaching methods into their classroom procedures, using them for the purposes for which they are most appropriate".

### **5.3 Pair and group wok**

Pair and group work are useful. According to Baker and Westrup ( 2000:130) they are very useful and important because it gives students lots of practice in using a language, allows the quitter students to speak to a partner, instead of speaking to the whole class and teaches students to help each other with their learning.

### **5.4 Up to date materials and Students engagements**

According to Rahayu(2018) The active participation of students really influenced the direction of teaching and learning activities, which in turn will influence the success of the teaching and learning process. The term of active participation is closely related to the students' engagement during the teaching and learning activities because the students who are engaged will be involved and interested

in the course materials and learning because the students are the central focus in the learning process.

Using materials about up to date issues to teach academic English is important. They increase students' participation . Their participation in the teaching and learning activities is regarded as the essential component to support the learning outcomes, especially in the English as Foreign Language classrooms. It motivates them, makes them feel involved and create environment for practicing the target language.

### **5.5 Criteria of Selecting Materials:**

The first thing to start when teaching an effective lesson with material about current events is with the material itself. Teachers should consider the following when selecting material:

- **Appropriateness:** Is the topic appropriate? Is it suitable for the class level and age group? Is it relevant to course book and learners' needs "suitability of the content, exploitability and readability. "Since not all authentic materials are valid to be used inside classrooms, teachers must select their real materials carefully according to the level of students as well as their culture. McGrath (2002).
- **Culture:** is it culturally acceptable to students? Could it be upsetting to some students ? Cultural fitness is important to avoid offence and classroom conflict.
- **Interest:** Will the students be interested in this topic?
- **Length:** Is it too long? Articles, videos, social media posts that are particularly long should be avoided. Reading news articles or watching videos is demanding and if they are too long, students will be discouraged. It will also take time to process reducing talk time. Long articles should be edited while long videos should be short.
- **Language:** Does the material contain a useful lexical set (e.g., crime, medicine, etc) or useful grammar components? Is there too much unknown vocabulary?

- **Generative Potential:** Is the material generative? That is, can you think of an effective activity to follow the article? Materials that lend themselves to discussions, debates, or help in different writing skills are desirable. You want the students to be able to further practice the language after the reading and listening.

Shepherd (2015) believes that the materials used, should depend on certain factors which are : topic, target language, skills and students' needs and interests.

#### **6. Methodology:**

This study is a descriptive analytical one. It adopts the questionnaire as a mean of data collection. The SPSS is also used to analyze the data. Students study 15 lectures, 45 hours. Six lectures before the revolution, while the rest are after the revolution. The same components of the study skill course were developed with new different types of materials and topics. Most of these topics were selected by the learners. They are related to what is happening in Sudan during and after revolution. They are adapted to fit the skills which are required to be mastered by learners during the course. Some of these skills are reading skills(skimming, scanning, intensive reading, extensive reading) writing( paraphrasing, summarizing, make out line, writing paragraphs, essays and book review and different types of reports) presentation skills, discussion, listening to different materials for details and specific information, research skills as well as translation skills. The Eclectic approach was used to teach the course. In addition to that different types of materials about current events were used such as : new videos, news articles, online magazines, social media posts as well as materials which are collected by students from experts through interviews and questionnaire.

#### **7. Limitations:**

This study is limited to second year students at University of Khartoum. They study English language at the faculty of education. The total number of them is 40. The sample is the whole class.

## 8. Result

### 8.1 Reliability and validity of the questionnaire

#### Cranach's alpha method: -

Where reliability was calculated using Cranach's alpha equation shown below:

$$\text{Reliability coefficient} = \frac{n}{n-1} * \frac{1 - \text{Total variations questions}}{\text{variation total grades}}$$

$$\text{Validity} = \sqrt{\frac{n}{n-1} * \frac{1 - \text{Total variations questions}}{\text{variation total grades}}}$$

Cranach alpha coefficient = (0.94), a reliability coefficient is high and it indicates the stability of the scale and the validity of the study

Validity coefficient is the square of the islands so reliability coefficient is (0.97), and this shows that there is a high sincerity of the scale and that the benefit of the study

### 8.2 Result of the Questionnaire

#### 1. Reading topics about current events from different websites give me confidence about my reading skills.

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Reading topics about current events from different websites give me confidence about my reading skills.	21	17	1	1	0
	52.5	42.5	2.5	2.5	0.0
	Chi-square value	Df	Sig.	Median	Interpretation
	33.20	3	0.000	5.0	strongly agree



The above table shows that (%52.5) of students are strongly agree while (%42.5) agree that reading topics about current events from different websites give them confidence about their reading skills. Some of students are neutral (%2.5) while (%2.5) of them disagree . No one strongly disagree .

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (33.20) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

**2.Group discussion about up-to-date events helps me in Academic writing.**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. Group discussion about up-to-date events helps me in Academic writing.	20	17	2	1	0
	50.0	42.5	5.0	2.5	0.0
	Chi-square value	Df	Sig.	Median	Interpretation
	29.40	3	0.000	4..5	strongly agree

The above table shows that (%50.0) of students are strongly agree and (%42.5) are agree that group discussion about up-to-date events help them tin their Academic writing.(%5.0) of students are neutral . Those who disagree and strongly disagree are (%2.5) and(%0.0) respectively.

**The results of table (2) Interpreted as follows:**

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (29.40) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

**4. Collecting information about today’s issues from my professors raises my confidence of communication skills.**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. Collecting information about today's issues from my professors raises my confidence of communication skills.	24	13	2	1	0
	60.0	32.5	5.0	2.5	0.0
	Chi-square value	Df	Sig.	Median	Interpretation
	35.00	3	0.000	5.0	strongly agree

The above table shows that (%60.0) students are strongly agree and (%32.5) agree that collecting information about today's issues from my professors raises their confidence of communication skills. (%5.0) of students are neutral while(%2.5) of them disagree. No one of them are strongly disagree.

#### **The results of table (3) Interpreted as follows:**

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (35.00) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

#### **4.Videos bout Sudanese issues help me in developing listening.**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4.Videos bout Sudanese issues help me in developing listening.	15	21	2	2	0
	37.5	52.5	5.0	5.0	0.0
	Chi-square value	Df	Sig.	Median	Interpretation
	27.40	3	0.000	4.0	Agree

The above table shows that (%37.5) of students are strongly agree and(%52.5)of them agree that videos bout Sudanese issues help them in developing listening while (%5.0) of students are neutral and (%5.0) disagree .

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (27.40) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

**5.I prefer selecting topics of presentation to those which are given by the teacher.**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5.I prefer selecting topics of presentation to those which are given by the teacher.	16	11	7	5	1
	40.0	27.5	17.5	12.5	2.5
	Chi-square value	Df	Sig.	Median	Interpretation
	16.50	4	0.000	4.0	Agree

The above table shows that (%40.0) of students are strongly agree and(%27.5) of them agree that selecting topics of presentation is better than those which are given by the teacher ,while others are neutral by (%17.5) , disagree by (%12.5) and strongly disagree by (%2.5).

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (16.50) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

**6.My knowledge about topics in Arabic supports me a lot in practicing English language skills.**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6.My knowledge about topics in Arabic supports me a lot in practicing English language skills.	32	6	1	1	0
	80.0	15.0	2.5	2.5	0.0
	Chi-square value	Df	Sig.	Median	Interpretation
	66.20	3	0.000	5.0	strongly agree

The above table shows that (%80.0) of students are strongly agree and(%15.0) of them agree that their knowledge about topics in Arabic language supports them a lot in practicing English language skills. Those who are neutral are (%2.5) while (%2.5) disagree with this idea.

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (66.20) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

### **7.Using different resources about current events promote my research skills.**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7.Using different resources about current events promote my research skills.	23	15	2	0	0
	57.5	37.5	5.0	0.0	0.0
	Chi-square value	Df	Sig.	Median	Interpretation
	16.85	2	0.000	5.0	strongly agree

The above table shows that (%57.5) of students are strongly agree and (%37.5) agree that using different resources about current events promote their research skills, while other (%5.0) of students are neutral

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (16.85) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

### **8. I like up-to-date topics from social media because they are interesting and promote my vocabulary.**

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.I like up-to-date topics from social media because	27	10	1	2	0
	67.5	25.0	2.5	5.0	0.0
	Chi-	Df	Sig.	Median	Interpretation

they are interesting and promote my vocabulary.	<b>square value</b>				
	16.85	2	0.000	5.0	strongly agree

The above table shows that (%67.5) of students are strongly agree and (%25.0) agree they like up-to-date topics from social media because they think that they are interesting and promote their vocabulary.(%2.5) of students are neutral while (%5.0) don't support the idea and disagree.

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (16.85) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

### 9.Pictures help me to follow up interesting topics.

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.Pictures help me to follow up interesting topics.	21	15	4	0	0
	52.5	37.5	10.0	0.0	0.0
	<b>Chi-square value</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
	43.40	3	0.000	5.0	strongly agree

The above table shows that (%52.5) of students are strongly agree and (%37.5) of them are agree that pictures help them to follow up interesting topics some students are neutral they are(%10.0)

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (43.40) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

### 10.What's App groups is a good portfolio for me

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.What's App groups is	17	19	4	0	0
	42.5	47.5	10.0	0.0	0.0
	<b>Chi-</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>

a good portfolio for me	square value				
	9.95	2.0	0.000	4.0	Agree

The above table shows that (%42.5) of students are strongly agree and(%47.5) agree that what's App groups are a good portfolio for them ,while(%10.0) of students are neutral

The value of chi – square calculated to signify the differences between them which was (9.95) with P-value (0.000) which is lower than the level of significant value (5%) These refer to the existence of differences statistically.

## 9. Discussion

The result of this study shows that there is positive attitude towards using up to date materials to learn English language study skills .The use of these materials and their tasks motivate students' to learn different study skills .This can clearly be noticed from results for the questionnaire. They prefer materials like videos, magazines, online newspapers and social media posts. Students also according to the result of the questionnaire like the tasks and techniques used with those materials as well as the topics which are about current events in Sudan. The result revealed the importance of using such kind of materials incorporated with eclectic approach of language teaching .These materials motivate students, improve their skills and create sense of purpose. The above mentioned results have achieved the hypotheses of the study.

## 10. Findings:

1. Using different materials about current events give chance to adopt different methods, techniques and tasks .This is very useful for classes with different learning styles, abilities and interests.
2. Up to date topics about local events are helpful because students use their schemata and it helps them to practice English language academic and study skills.
3. Materials about current events incorporated with certain tasks and techniques such as group discussion and online communication,

engage learners and connect them to real world of language use . Students also believe that these materials improve their vocabulary about every day issues.

4. Students have positive attitudes towards such kind of materials and tasks. They think these materials , techniques and tasks give them confidence to speak and purpose for learning. Students also think that reading topics about current events from different websites develop their reading skills. Videos about Sudanese issues help them to develop their listening too.

5. Students have positive attitude towards the use of different resources about breaking news. they believe that such kind of resources promote their research skills, more specifically about selecting the most convenient source and using the correct citation as well as paraphrasing and summarizing skills.

6. Collecting information for writing reports as well as presentation about today's issues from their professors raises their confidence of communication skills. It increases their interest and enhance their satisfaction with their learning experience.

7. The group discussion about the latest news helps students to develop skills in oral communication and scaffolds them in their academic writing.

8. What's app groups in which students discuss all their assignments and share materials are good portfolio for them. They add enjoyment towards learning and promote students' social skills.

9. Using eclectic approach of language teaching gives a chance for individualized learning .It gives learners more control over what they learn, how they learn it and make the learning useful.

10. Different materials and different techniques such as: you tube videos, social media, websites, newspapers and magazines, emails, what's app group, collecting data from experts ,group discussion ,pair work& individual work, peer correction, classwork ,presentations and online practice are all motivating and connect learners to real

world of language use .Moreover they make the teaching process enjoyable.

### 11. Recommendation

This study recommends the use of up to date materials in classroom to develop materials of teaching study skills.It also recommends teachers to adopt the eclectic approach of language teaching when using materials about current issues to teach EFL learners study skills. Both the materials and the approach are very motivating and beneficial.

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