An Overview of the Outcomes of Learning English with or without Materials in DRC: The Case of English and Business Computer Science.

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Abstract
This article has given an overview of the outcomes of learning English with or without materials. It has proved through the findings that the material-bound learners have a greater advantage than the material-free ones. The material-bound outcomes or performance far outweigh the material-free ones, which is why the material qualifies to have a positive effect and influence on the process of English language learning.

Key words: Outcomes, English Learning, Materials, Material-bound, Material-free, ELT, ELL.

Résumé

Cet article a donné une vue d'ensemble des résultats de l'apprentissage de la langue anglaise avec ou sans matériels. Il a été démontré par les conclusions que les apprenants-avec-matériels sont beaucoup plus avantageux que les apprenants-sans-matériels. Les résultats ou les performances des apprenants-avec-matériels sont de loin plus précieux que ceux des apprenants-sans-matériels. C'est pourquoi le matériel se qualifie d'avoir un effet et une influence positive sur le processus de l'apprentissage de la langue anglaise.

Mots clés: résultats, apprentissage de la langue anglaise, matériels, apprenants-avec-matériels, apprenants-sans-matériels, ELT, ELL.

Introduction

English language is gaining ground worldwide by bearing a unique status as compared to other languages. Therefore, in many countries curricula, English has been incorporated and taught as a second or foreign language and ELT has become a dynamic field of study and research.

Nowadays, there is a noticeable emergence of the term 'English as a Lingua Franca' (ELF) as a way of referring to communication in English among speakers with different first languages (Seidlhofer, 2004). Approximately only one out of every four speakers of English is a native speaker of the language (Crystal, 2003). With globalization, the entire world looks like a single community, which better communicates in English even though it has various means of communication at its disposal. So, in some countries, English is taught as a global lingua franca (Thirumalai, 2009).

The outstanding reason why English is regarded as a global language is that the world's knowledge is stored and transmitted in English. It is a progressive, dynamic, and flexible language. Even though some nations which were ruled by the French continue to teach French as their most preferred second language, English is gaining ground even in those countries. Rwanda, for example, was colonized by French but it has now shifted to English as the official or second language.

Currently, there is a new trend in the DRC that tends to give English a different edge that will definitely elevate it to the sociolinguistic status of official language next to French (Buhendwa, 2010; Malekani, 2002; Kasoro, 2002). Given all these facts, a new interdisciplinary program has been designed at the University of Kinshasa in order to meet job opportunities at the job market since today's job profiles require the

knowledge of English, computing and management. This work keeps on questioning whether the material and instructional strategies being used in such programs are conducive to English learning or not. The answer(s) to this question will help find a better stand towards the use of materials in English learning and end the debate on materials, particularly on textbooks, in Higher and University Education in this country.

1. The Problem

Many Congolese decision-makers and academic authorities have looked into the material-related issue in the universities. Some authorities have indirectly or directly forbidden the sale of teacher-made materials, particularly printed ones, by claiming that it has simply become a kind of business for teachers (Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire, 2015). Others think that the price of materials should be cut and strictly follow the price fixed by the ministerial decree (Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire, 2017). Some stakeholders, particularly teachers, are claiming that printed materials remain valuable tools in the teaching of many subjects, particularly the teaching of second or foreign languages. These different positions have brought a real confusion in the mind of the students and their parents. While ignoring the impact of the materials on their own learning, some Congolese students seem to be reluctant to pay for the textbook (commonly labeled syllabus) and decide to study without any material while only a few are prompt to get the materials for themselves. A noteworthy belief or opinion is that the ministerial decree stands for a general and impersonal rule that unfortunately takes into account neither specificity nor exceptions in any area of teaching / learning.

This work aims at investigating on the learning outcomes of English and Business Computer Science students when they learn English with the materials and without the materials. Those who learn with the materials are identified as *material-bound students* and those who learn without the materials are identified as *material-free students*. As a matter of fact, in this research we have attempted to find out how the students score on their English component of their curriculum compares when they learn with the materials and when they do without the materials.

Therefore, five main questions are raised: (1) Is there a difference between the outcomes of the material-bound and the material-free? (2) What are the best outcomes among the material-bound and the material-free? (3) What is the impact of the material while learning English? (4) What if the material is still important for English learners? (5) Why does the material create polemics or challenges among the stakeholders?

2. Objective of the work

The objective of this thesis is to find out the outcomes of the material-bound and the material-free when learning English in the department of English and Business Computer Science. As a matter of fact, the work attempts to answer the five abovementioned questions so as to solve an English language teaching/learning problem for one institution and potentially the whole country's education.

3. Hypotheses

With regard to this work, we have attempted to verify two hypotheses quantitatively. The first hypothesis states that there is no difference between the outcomes of the material-bound and the material-free while learning English. Another hypothesis states that the outcomes of both the material-bound and the material-free depend on their regular class attendance.

On the qualitative part, the hypotheses are: first, the material is not very important while learning English, so it does not impact more on English learners' performance. Second, English learners are not interested in the materials when they learn English, which is why challenges arise around the materials among the stakeholders.

4. Methodology

As far as this research is concerned, the mixed method research design was used for data collection. Quantitative data were found in databases; i.e. the grades forms of English-related courses that were taught by two different professors, namely Reading English Texts, Introduction to Research and Paper Writing, Anglo-American Literature, English III, Advanced Conversation I, and English V for the academic year 2016-2017. The qualitative data were from an open-ended questionnaire that was submitted to the students

comprising a sample of those participants in the same cohort the following year; i.e. the academic year 2017-2018.

Here a population consisting of all the students of the department of English and Business Computer Science of the University of Kinshasa is used. A sample had been selected in two sets. First, all the students currently participating in the six English-related courses involved in the study for the sake of quantitative data (N = 1745). Second, a sample of two hundred students (N = 200) was taken randomly from different classes for the sake of qualitative data.

5. Date Processing and Analysis

As for data processing and analysis, Microsoft Excel and SPSS software stood for our choice software programs for the sake of statistics and chart and graphic representation (Powell and Renner, 2003; Muijs, 2004; Rose, et al., 2015; Gibbs, et al., 2002). As the research included two categories of data, namely quantitative and qualitative, in-depth statistics were carried out to generate quantitative data results (mean scores for groups) as usually expected and shallow statistics (frequencies and percentages) for quantitized qualitative data results (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). .
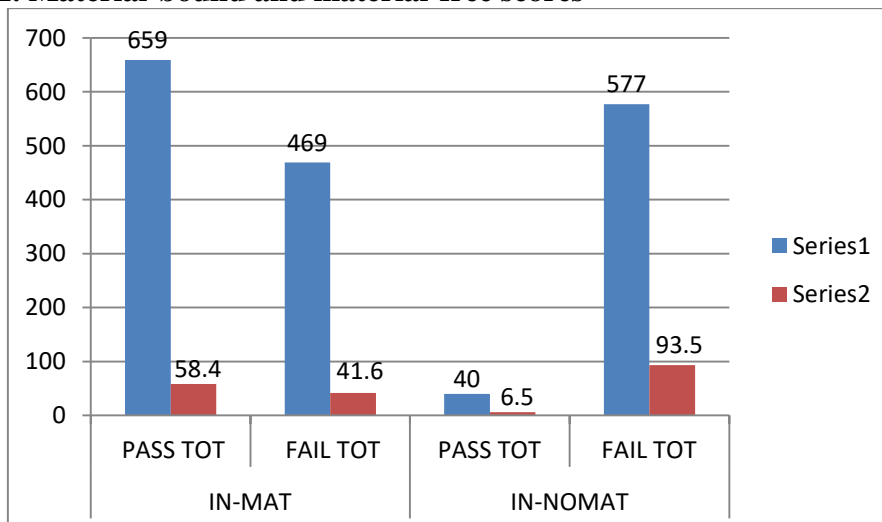
6. The findings

This work's findings revolve around the five main research questions raised earlier. Remember? That is, the research has attempted to answer those questions so as to solve the material-related problem in the learning of English language in the A.I.A. department, in particular and potentially in the whole country's education, in general.

As a matter of fact, the findings show that the material-bound students' outcomes (i.e. performance, proficiency and achievement) far outweigh the material-free students' ones. The material-free who come up with good performance have less maximum of grades than the material-bound.

**Table 1. Mean scores among material-bound and material-free groups**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
v1 * ID.MATER	Between Groups (Combined)	1397,573	1	1397,573	201,392	,000
	Within Groups	12095,673	1743	6,940		
	Total	13493,246	1744			
v2 * ID.MATER	Between Groups (Combined)	9466,620	1	9466,620	1,294E3	,000
	Within Groups	12753,853	1743	7,317		
	Total	22220,472	1744			

Figure 1. Material-bound and material-free scores

Not only both quantitative and qualitative findings show that the materials are greatly effective and influential but also valuable and meaningful. The material-bound are able to keep on track, understand fast and better, learn how to write correctly, practice the language with a good English level, assimilate the language for real life, get a reference tool for further research, read and learn reading easily. With them, they see what they learn, handle it, and are exposed to the language, to a large extent. The findings have testified to a great impact of the materials while learning English.

Figure 2. Impact and Importance of Materials while Learning English
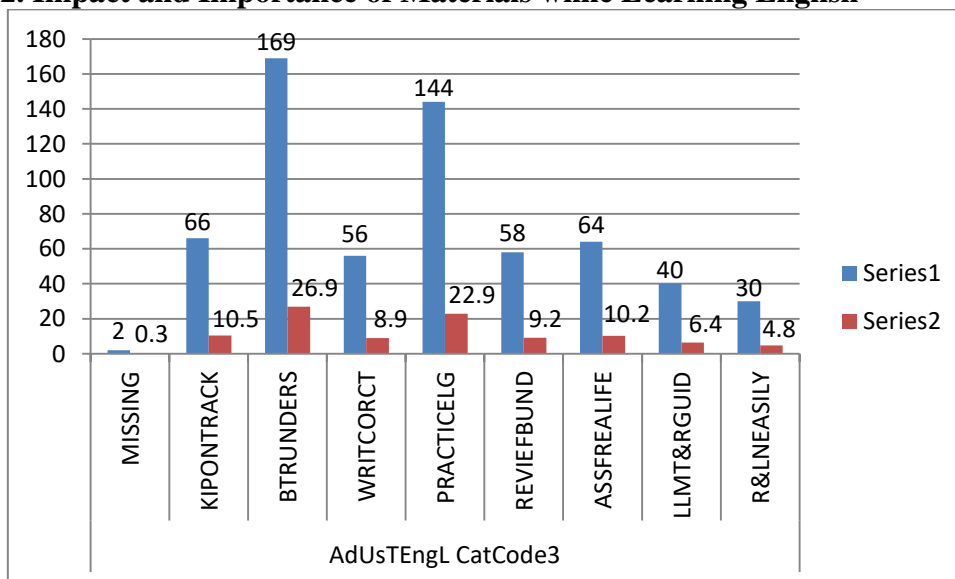
To come to the five main research questions, the findings have provided these answers:

(1) There is a difference between the outcomes of the material-bound and the material-free.

(2) The best outcomes among the material-bound and the material-free are the material-bound ones.

(3) The material has a tremendous impact on English language teaching/learning in the EFL context since it helps the speakers of other languages to be exposed to the English language.

(4) The importance of the materials is justified by the fact that those who own them can review the course alone at home because they have well organized notes, follow the teacher's teaching policy, gain knowledge, and so on.

(5) These findings are positive of the tremendous impact and importance of the materials in English language learning as they favor the students' good performance. The reasons for polemics are cast out for that evidence.

In conclusion, this piece of research has provided a straightforward stand toward the materials in English learning to be taken into account by any stakeholder, given the growing importance of English language in our country, in particular, and in the world, in general.

As for testing the hypotheses, on the quantitative side, the first hypothesis (the null hypothesis) is rejected in that the material-bound outcomes or performance far outweigh the material-free ones, which is why the material qualifies to have a positive effect and influence on the process of English language learning. When referring to our in-depth statistics ranging from descriptive results to correlation ones via mean differences, the material-bound always obtain the best outcomes provided they use and exploit them properly. The second hypothesis (the declarative hypothesis), is partly accepted in that some material-bound come up with poor performance due to the fact that they do not attend class regularly though they own the materials, and some material-free come up with good performance due to their regular class attendance. On the other side, it is partly rejected in that the overall rate of the material-free outcomes or performance is far less than that of the material-bound. The regular material-free can pass but not in a great number or high maximum score like the material-bound. It is unquestionable that the material plays an important part in English language

learning process, and for that reason, it could not be overlooked by the stakeholders or separated from language teaching and learning.

On the qualitative side, the first hypothesis is rejected in that when the student owns the material, he enjoys more privileges, among others, he can review the course alone at home because he has well organized notes. The second hypothesis is partly confirmed and partly rejected. It is confirmed in that very few students are not really interested in the materials as they overlook the importance of the materials in connection with English language learning. It is partly rejected since the vast majority of the students are interested but they are faced with economic crisis. Regardless of this constraint being government-and parents-oriented, English as a foreign language cannot be successfully learned without the materials. These expose the students to the language which is not spoken in their living environment.

Recommendations and suggestions
Nine recommendations and suggestions are made, among which two can be mentioned here:

(1) The decision-makers should invest in the materials in order to promote English language teaching and learning in the country to allow students communicate in English worldwide. They ought to create a well equipped corporation of skilled and trained brains in education and TESOL in charge of designing materials in connection with students' needs and current realities.

(2) The materials should be made an academic requirement for students before they learn English, regardless of their cost and different stakeholders' positions. This material-based academic requirement should be sensitized to help students get prepared in advance.

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