

SOME IDEAS FOR ADAPTING PRE-SPEAKING ACTIVITIES IN TIENG ANH 11

Thai Thi Cam Trang, M.A.

ELT Division

I. COURSEBOOK ADAPTATION

1. Definition of adaptation

Naturally, adaptation is the action or process of adapting or fitting or the stage of being adapted or fitted. Being considered in the points of view of linguistics and educators, course book adaptation means changing existing course books in order to make them more suitable for specific learners, teachers or situations (Tomlinson, 2000). In addition to this issue, Peacock (1996) states that adaptation is essentially a process of ‘matching’ to maximize the appropriacy of teaching materials in context, by changing some of the internal characteristics of a course book to better suit particular circumstances.

2. Reasons for adapting textbook

The textbook is a stimulus or instrument for teaching and learning. Cunningsworth (1995) makes the statement that:

Textbooks are an effective resource of self-directed learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence.

However, there is no perfect suitable material. Therefore, teachers adapt textbook to match it with their teaching environment, their learners, their own preferences, the course objectives and the text, tasks and activities. For a more in depth discussion of this issue, the disadvantages of textbooks are the most potential cause leading to the textbook adaptation. For instance, many models and dialogues from the textbook are unnatural and inappropriate for communicative or cooperative language teaching. Thus, they need adapting to prepare adequately

students for the language structures, grammar, and vocabulary that students will have to use in real world.

3. Types of textbook adaptation

Tanner, R & C Green (1998) estimate that changes of some sort made by teachers are inevitable in order to fit a book with their aims, their setting and most of their learners. These authors also give various actions teachers can take to tailor a selected textbook to fit their teaching situation.

You can't always get what you want	
Changes of some sort are inevitable if you want take a book to fit your aims, your setting, and most of all your learners. There are various actions you can take to tailor a selected textbook to fit your teaching situation.	
CHANGE Make small changes to the existing materials in the textbook.	REMOVE Remove a textbook activity from the lesson.
REPLACE Replace one activity with another related one which is more suitable.	ADD Add an extra activity in an area not covered sufficiently in the textbook.

(Tanner, R& C Green 1998 Tasks for Teacher Education Harlow: Longman, p. 122)

4. Procedure of textbook adaptation on teaching

The process of textbook adaptation is supposed to include following steps:

1. Analyzing teaching context
2. Identify reasons for adaptation
3. Evaluating
4. Listings of objectives
5. Adapting
6. Teaching
7. Revising

In some actual situation, the adaptation process may not have all these steps or may change the order of the sequence.

5. Principles of effective adaptation

The need and importance to adapt the use of given textbooks as well as others language teaching materials to satisfy the requirements of particular learning situations, and particular is widely recognized. However, adapting textbook effectively is still a questioning. Effective adaptation means guaranteeing following elements:

- ✓ Bridging
- ✓ Making objectives meet requirements
- ✓ Matching purpose
- ✓ Maximizing appropriacy
- ✓ Looking for “congruence”

Among these principles, the maintenance of congruence between a variety of factors is stressed. These factors include:

- ✓ The teaching materials
- ✓ The character of the language being taught
- ✓ The methodology and objectives of the course
- ✓ Students characteristics
- ✓ The personality and style of the teacher

Additionally, McDonough & Shaw (2003) supplement that:

Effective adaptation is a matter of achieving “congruence”...The good is constantly striving for “congruence” among several related variables: Teaching materials, methodologies, students, course objectives, the target language and its context, and the teacher’s own personality and teaching style.

II. ADAPTATION ON PRE-SPEAKING ACITIVITIES

1. Effective of adaptation on teaching pre-speaking

The importance of ELT materials or textbooks cannot be denied because it is an almost universal element of English language teaching (Hutchinson and Torres,

1994). According to Richards, textbook is a key component in most language programs and it provides a useful resource for both teachers and learners. It is these beliefs of textbook that lead most teachers to stereotypically follow the national textbook without making any modification. Meanwhile, there is a fact that “No textbook will be totally suited to a particular teaching situation” as CunningsWorth (1984:6) states and the best course book requires adaptation (CunningsWorth, 1995). Besides, Madsen & Bowen (1978) states that:

The good teacher is constantly adapting. He adapts when he adds an example not found in the book or when he telescopes an assignment by having students prepare “only the even numbered items”. He adapts when he refers to an exercise covered earlier, or when he introduces a supplementary picture...

It can be seen clearly that adapting textbook allows teachers’ creativity and innovation. Teachers can develop their critical thinking in evaluating strong points and weak points in textbooks, modifying activities, especially for pre-speaking activities, then making them more interesting and reasonable. As a result, students will be more engaged in speaking lesson.

In addition, adapting textbook as well as pre-speaking activities allows teachers to achieve more congruence between the textbook and the teaching environment, and particular student, and maximize the value of the book. Apple and Jungle (1990) estimate that textbook adaptation would consequently lead to the improvement of the textbook in the sense of being able to suit the particular situation and empowering and reskilling the teacher.

Another benefit of adaptation is that student will be motivated and involve in the classroom activities more actively. Besides, the learning environment in speaking lesson becomes more relaxing and supportive. O’Neill adds that “The students was freed from the boring process of going through the exercises item by item, and engaged in spontaneous and creative interactions and meaningful tasks.” (1981: 156).

2. The key principles of teaching pre-speaking

When using the pre-speaking activities, teacherS should:

- ✓ Motivate students by warm-up activities
- ✓ Help students to become familiar with the topic
- ✓ Try to introduce the topic orally and arouse interest
- ✓ Make rules for using language in class and get students to speak about meaningful and relevant topics.
- ✓ design activities in group work
- ✓ make speaking activities communicative to motivate and to offer students a challenge which brings about real-life interaction
- ✓ Focus on the new vocabulary by brainstorming the related words, expressions and structure by using more pictures or blackboard drawings.
- ✓ Provide some language materials
- ✓ Set the scene by introducing the characters and describing the setting
- ✓ encourage students' interaction by creating a comfortable atmosphere so that students are not afraid of speaking

3. Some suggested activities that can be used in teaching pre-speaking – Tieng Anh 11 (Unit 1, 2, 4, 11, 12, 13)

It can be said that these pre-speaking techniques tend to reach to the purpose of making speaking more authentic, communicative and meaningful.

Games

Thanks to games, the students are aroused in the topic at the beginning of the speaking lesson; there is no longer depressed and boring feeling from students. Moreover, games help students not only reminisce some of useful languages and structures but also provide background knowledge relating to the topic of the new lesson.

Below are some types of games that the teachers can apply:

Cross-word

Word search

Word puzzle

Hang man

Lucky number

Guessing games

Slap the board

Mine your past

Besides, teachers can use following activities that strongly make use of the visual effects (pictures and images). Actually, students are extremely interested in these activities because they are motivated by appealing images, and they also feel easier to do the task, to remember vocabulary.

-  Pictures describing
-  Matching the pictures with the corresponding names
-  Watching a video, related movie or cartoon
-  Reporting

REFERENCE

1. Bo Giao Duc va Dao Tao. 2007. *Tieng Anh 11*. Nha Xuat Ban Giao Duc.
2. Carrier, M. 1990. *Games & Activities for the Language Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Madsen, K.1978. *Adaptation in Language Learning*. Carlifornia: Mayfield Publishing Company.
4. Grant, N.1987. *Making the most of your textbook*. London and New York: Longman.
5. Harris, J. and Spack, R. 1978. *Speaking and Writing*. New York: Longman.
6. Harmer, J. 2001. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
7. Penny, U. 1996. *A Course in Teaching English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
8. Tomlinson, B.1998. *Materials Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

