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# Teachers' Materials Use in L2 Classroom Discourse: Interface between Stated and Enacted Beliefs about Textbooks

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## ABSTRACT

Although studying the actual use of L2 materials has gained momentum over the past few years, little is known about its synergy with teachers' beliefs. This study addressed this gap by exploring teachers' stated and enacted beliefs about (effective) materials use in L2 classroom discourse. To this effect, naturally-occurring interactions within 10 Iranian EFL classes were videotaped for three consecutive sessions. Then, the teachers were interviewed where they reflected on their transformations of textbooks. The data were analysed through document analysis of the textbooks, discourse analysis of the classroom interactions, and content analysis of the interviews. The findings showed that sheer convergence between what teachers think about materials (use) and what they actually do in the classrooms cannot guarantee the attainment of the intended and emergent goals of the lessons and/or activities. In-depth analyses indicated that there exist complex interrelationships between teachers' stated and enacted beliefs. Teachers' levels of understanding of their talk were found to mediate this interplay in classroom discourse. The findings can inform teaching process and teacher education programs by raising teachers' awareness about their actual use of materials and students' engagement in L2 classroom discourse.

***Keywords:*** beliefs; classroom discourse; materials use; teacher talk; textbooks



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## Introduction

Being an essential and almost ubiquitous element in almost all second language (L2) classes, materials have been the subject of multitudinous scholarly publications (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018). The major themes of this immense body of literature revolve around materials development and evaluation, as well as their content analyses (e.g., Harwood, 2010; Littlejohn, 2011; McGrath, 2002; Tomlinson, 2008, 2011, 2012; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2018; Wong, 2002). However, scant attention has been paid to the actual use of materials in instructional-learning contexts to the extent that it led to a growing recognition of the need for conducting classroom-based studies on the issue (Brown, 2014; Garton & Graves, 2014; Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2014; Harwood, 2021; Larsen-Freeman, 2014; Tarone, 2014). Recently, the fields of TESOL and applied linguistics are witnessing an increasing interest in examining materials use, which is defined as how teachers and learners engage with and deploy language learning and teaching materials (Guerrettaz, Engman, & Matsumoto, 2021). Empirical studies within this strand have focused on materials and their use with regard to their ecological roles (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013), the formation and ascription of social actions (Jakonen, 2015), the resolution of miscommunications (Matsumoto, 2019), and their built-in participation potentials (Pourhaji, Alavi, & Karimpour, 2016). A yet-to-be examined issue in this enterprise is the associations between teachers' stated and enacted beliefs about materials use in L2 classroom discourse. That is to say, there is a gap as to the relationship between what teachers say about the way they use materials in their classrooms and how they actually do it.

Beliefs, as a constituent of teacher cognition (Li, 2020), not only shape but are also shaped by teaching practices, classroom discourse, and interactions in a symbiotic relationship (Li & Walsh, 2011). On the other hand, structures, processes, and relationships within the classroom are also mediated by materials (Guerrettaz, et al., 2021; Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013), as many teachers are still living in "an era of textbook-defined practice" (Akbari, 2008, p. 647). Thus, what warrants investigation is examining how the use of materials affects and is affected by teachers' beliefs and practices in classroom life – the focus of this study.

## Literature Review

### *Teacher Beliefs*

Teacher cognition has been a major area of enquiry in both educational research and theory in general and language teaching in particular (Borg, 2003; Li, 2020). One constituent of cognition is beliefs (Borg, 2003) which, by definition, refer to "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson, 1996, p. 103). In language teaching, more specifically, they are defined as "ideas and theories that teachers hold about themselves, teaching, language, learning and their students" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 586).

Studying teachers' beliefs has turned into a burgeoning strand since the 1990s suggesting their impacts on teachers' pedagogical decisions (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2006; Farrell & Kun, 2008; Ng & Farrell, 2003), choosing subjects, activities, approaches, and techniques (Borg, 2001), and classroom interactions (Li, 2012, 2017; Li & Walsh, 2011). The claim made by William and Burden (1997, p. 56) that beliefs "affect everything that [teachers] do in the classroom" underscores the importance of the issue in language learning and teaching.

On an empirical level, one way to pursue this strand of research has been examining the relationship between teachers' stated/professed and enacted/attributed beliefs (Li & Walsh, 2011; Speer, 2005). Li and Walsh (2011), for example, interviewed and observed two secondary school EFL teachers in China to compare what teachers say about their pedagogical practices with what they actually do

in their classroom interactions. By so doing, Li and Walsh (2011) portrayed the complexity of the relationships between teachers' reported beliefs and their classroom practices.

Previous studies have provided evidence of both consistencies and inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs and their pedagogical practices (Borg, 2006; Gatbonton, 2008; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004; Speer, 2005). The discrepancies between beliefs and practices have been attributed to several factors including years of teaching experience (Gatbonton, 2008), contextual considerations (Borg, 2006) such as institutional and/or cultural norms and values (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004), and theoretical and methodological conditions of the research (Speer, 2005). To address the theoretical issue, Li (2013, p. 177) highlighted adopting the interactionist, rather than the cognitive approach, whereby "beliefs are viewed as entities that may be transformed by or even emerge as a result of teachers' interactions with students". Regarding the methodological concern, she suggested creating a shared understanding between the researcher and the teacher through incorporating (stimulated-recall) reflection and dialogue into research process.

Within the interactionist approach, a complex synergy exists between teachers' beliefs and pedagogical decisions in classroom interactions (Li, 2020). Given that materials can drive teachers' decisions (Akbari, 2008), and determine the content, the sequence, and the structuring of teaching/learning (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013), considering them as another element of this interrelationship can offer a finer-grained understanding of the complex synergy between teachers' beliefs and practices. Delving into this issue calls for conducting classroom-based studies on materials use in L2 classroom discourse (Brown, 2014; Garton & Graves, 2014; Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013, 2014; Larsen-Freeman, 2014; Tarone, 2014).

### *Materials Use in L2 Classroom Discourse*

Materials use, by definition, refers to "the ways that participants in language learning environments actually employ and interact with materials" (Guerrettaz, et al., 2018, p. 38). Whereas much of the previous work on materials has centred on materials development and evaluation (e.g., Harwood, 2010; Littlejohn, 2011; Manzano, 2018; McGrath, 2002), research on the actual use of materials in classes has been "a neglected area of research" (Garton & Graves, 2014, p. 654). A few studies, however, have been recently conducted to bridge this gap in the literature (e.g., Engman & Hermes, 2021; Guerrettaz, 2021; Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013; Jakonen, 2015; Kim & Canagarajah, 2021; Matsumoto, 2019; Pourhaji et al., 2016; Sert & Amri, 2021).

Guerrettaz and Johnston (2013), for instance, adopted the concept of classroom ecology (van Lier, 2000), explored how a grammar textbook was used in an ESL class, and delineated its ecological relations with other elements including curriculum, classroom discourse, and language learning. They demonstrated how the textbook (1) determines the content and the sequence of learning and teaching, (2) affects the topic, types, and organization of discourse, and (3) offers intended and emergent affordances for learning.

In a study on a content and language integrated learning classroom, Jakonen (2015) examined how students employed classroom materials to form and ascribe the social action of information request in student-student interactions. The sequential analyses indicated that in addition to being an important resource for constructing and interpreting information requests, learning materials can be referred to as a basis for inferring how knowledgeable about certain topics and/or tasks a student is.

Pourhaji et al. (2016) examined how EFL teachers and learners in Iran oriented to locally (i.e., developed inside the country) and globally (i.e., developed and distributed across the globe) designed textbooks in classroom interactions. It was found that the locally- and globally-designed

textbooks engendered different levels of interactional space for learner participation by prompting different interactional contexts. Matsumoto (2019) paired sequential analysis with complexity theory, and zoomed in on how materials are employed to resolve miscommunications, and how they can cause misunderstandings in a multilingual writing classroom. Regarding the former, she demonstrated that teachers and students use materials along with their related speech and embodied actions to clarify meaning and achieve understanding. Concerning the latter, miscommunication was created when students' emergent use of materials diverged from the teachers' intended use.

Sert and Amri (2021) touched on the emergent discussions around a film in a group task and their facilitative role to promote collaborative attention work. The results revealed that students engaged in interactional operations in the form of other-initiated repair and word and content searches. It was further shown in the analyses that the latter form generates better learning potentials. To explore the possible engagement among materials, students and teachers in EFL classroom interactions, Guerrettaz (2021) delved into classroom-based materials use, conceptualized as materials-in-action, through the lens of 'pedagogical ergonomics'. The pedagogical ergonomics framework used in the study captured aspects of materials use, and teachers and students that were disjointed for long in classroom interaction. The findings expounded the macro- and micro-level patterns of materials-in-action where macro-level unveiled four overarching genres or modalities of materials use in the class under investigation, namely, universal, communal, distributed, and responsive. In micro-level patterns of materials-in-action, Guerrettaz (2021) identified three polysemiotic patterns of particular materials in moment-to-moment interaction and activity.

Engman and Hermes (2021) investigated the use of Ojibwe, an indigenous language of North America, within its natural socio-material context. They argued that the natural world, e.g., local, rural, or reservation land, can be a crucial language learning resource; this setting is actually a dynamic material creating a learning environment where knowledge can be co-constructed in diverse tenses. They highlighted that the way of teaching, kindling exploration, and inquiry set the scene for distributing knowledge between human-non-human resources through which students and teachers can create space for practices that build in and with language. Given the socio-ideological value-laden nature of language learning and teaching materials, Kim and Canagarajah (2021) examined the potentials of student-generated materials for promoting job seekers' L2 skills in Korea. The findings indicated that the participants' activities with student-generated materials were distributed across diverse material resources and communication strategies.

What has remained unresolved is how teachers' conceptualizations of materials are enacted and mutually inform the complex and intertwined elements of classroom ecology. Therefore, the focus needs to be on classroom discourse as not only does it bring materials to life (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013), but it can also provide data to "better capture teachers' cognition in relation to actual practice" (Borg, 2006, p. 280). With this in mind, the present study sets out to explore the interplay between teachers' stated and enacted beliefs about materials and their effective use. In other words, it aims to examine, from an emic perspective, how teachers define effective use of materials, and why things are the way they are regarding the actual use of materials in the unfolding of classroom discourse. To this aim, the focus is on those instances where teachers transform materials in terms of content, objectives, and/or sequence. These instances are critical junctures at which teachers' pedagogical decisions and practices can be examined in the light of their beliefs (Li, 2020), not simple adherence to materials as curriculum. This study thus addresses the following research question:

1. How are teachers' stated beliefs about materials and their effective use enacted in the turn-by-turn unfolding of L2 classroom discourse?

## Method

### *Participants and Context*

The participants were 10 EFL teachers (six males and four females) at three language institutes in Mazandaran, Iran. They were chosen through convenience sampling. They were all non-native speakers of English and were within the age range of 29 to 38 (M=34.6, SD=1.32). In terms of academic degree, the majority (8 out of 10) had already received their Master's in applied linguistics while the rest were bachelor holders of the same major. They were all officially recruited by the institutes and teaching English was their primary job. They were considered to be experienced teachers based on their years of teaching and the promotion policy of the institutes. Regarding their teaching experience, they had been within the profession for an average of nine years, ranging from seven to 13. Concerning the promotion policy, they were teaching intermediate and upper-intermediate classes; for teachers in most Iranian institutes to be qualified for teaching these levels, they are required to teach each previous level for three consecutive semesters in an ascending order. This procedure starts with pre-service trainings followed by classroom observations by and post-observation meetings with institute supervisors.

A total of 103 Iranian EFL learners, 59 females and 44 males, attended 10 intact classes taught by these teachers. The classes ranged in size from eight to 14 learners who fell within the age range of 13 to 18 (M=16.8, SD=0.9), shared Farsi as their native language, and were studying English for general purposes. In terms of language proficiency, they were at B1 (N=61) and B2 (N=42) levels based on the syllabi of their respective language institutes. The classes falling under each level were homogeneous as evidenced by the use of the same materials, namely the *Top Notch* series (Saslow & Ascher, 2011), serving as curriculum (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013). The *Top Notch* series mainly includes student's books, workbooks, and CDs. It also provides teachers with guidebooks and lesson planners. Although a wide range of language learning artefacts, such as textbooks, workbooks, whiteboards, and so on were being used in the classes, printed student's books constituted the core materials prompting the bulk of classroom interaction. Before data collection, consent was obtained from all participants of the study. Pseudonyms are used throughout the excerpts to ensure their anonymity.

### *Procedure*

Multiple sources of data including classroom video-recordings, classroom materials, and teacher interviews were used. First, naturally-occurring interactions within all 10 classes were videotaped for three consecutive 90-minute sessions as the teachers were covering one whole unit of the textbooks. The classes had already been equipped with wall-mounted cameras used for classroom observations, monitoring, and reflective sessions as parts of the institutes' in-service programs. Having watched the videos several times, we zoomed in on the transformation of materials defined as (1) addition or deletion of contents, (2) altering the order of activities, and (3) changing their objectives. To identify, select, and transcribe the episodes in which materials were transformed by the teachers, a checklist was developed and used based on textbooks and teachers' guide.

Afterwards, each teacher was invited to take part in a face-to-face semi-structured oral interview (see Appendix 1 for the interview guide) which was conducted in the institutes less than a week after the third recording of the class. Each interview was divided into two sections: post-observation and video-elicited. In the first section, the teachers' beliefs about materials in terms of their definitions, forms, functions, purposes, and more importantly, what was considered effective use of materials were explored. In the second section, stimulated recall was conducted following the guidelines proposed by Gass and Mackey (2016) to minimise the pitfalls of this technique and augment the credibility of the verbal reports. To prevent the decaying of information in the

participants' memory, the interviews took place after a very a short time interval. The video-recordings of their classroom interactions, where materials were transformed, were also used to help teachers activate their memory structures. In so doing, they were allowed to pause the videos and replay them where needed both before and during verbalizing their thoughts and comments. Additionally, the teachers were minimally trained through five minutes of briefing to carry out the procedure by reflecting on their practices. Each interview lasted about an hour, was conducted in Persian, and was videotaped for further analyses.

### *Data Analysis*

Document analysis of the textbooks as well as teacher's guide was used to find out the content, sequence, and the objectives of the activities within the whole unit of the textbook. Afterwards, we watched the videos and analysed them from a discourse analytic perspective. In other words, referring to the results of the document analysis as our preconceived category and imposing them on the video data, we identified and transcribed the episodes in which the textbooks were transformed by the teachers (see Appendix 2 for transcription conventions). The interview data were analysed using content analysis. To wit, we transcribed the interviews in their entirety, recurrently reviewed them, and identified the themes emerging from the teachers' verbalized beliefs through coding units by meaning. We crosschecked the codes with a colleague to ensure reliability. Whenever consensus was not achieved, we consulted the teachers for the accuracy of the interpretations. Finally, we analysed the selected episodes once more using discourse analysis to compare the teachers' beliefs as stated in the interview comments with their actual classroom interactions. Therefore, instead of deploying the unmotivated looking of conversation analysis and uncovering every detail of classroom interactions, we approached the data with the prior intention of gaining insights into the relationships between teachers' stated and enacted beliefs about materials and their effective use.

## Results

Inspection of 45 hours of classroom video-recordings vis-a-vis document analyses of the materials yielded a total of 39 instances of episodes in which transformations of textbooks took place. There were other instances, however, which were not prompted by the textbooks and were thus excluded from the analyses as the evidence of their transformations was hard to identify. Therefore, the analyses were restricted to those episodes entailing transformation of textbooks such as addition, deletion, changing the order and/or the objectives of the activities in a lesson. Comparing the teachers' stated beliefs about materials and their effective use with their enactments in those episodes showed 23 instances of convergence between the two. A closer inspection of the data, however, indicated a more complex interrelationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in the sense that even when they were aligned, they engendered different patterns of interactions and different levels of learner participation opportunities. In what follows, we will zero in on the convergence between teachers' stated and enacted beliefs and try to unveil, in details of interactions, the complexity of the interlocking elements at play at the heart of this convergence. To exemplify the issue and present the findings, we provide the excerpts of post-observation interviews, classroom video-recordings, and video-elicited interviews in order.

Examining the 23 instances in which the teachers' stated beliefs corresponded with their enactments, we drew a distinction between the instances based on whether they were in line with the intended goals of the lesson and/or the activity as specified in both the teacher's guide and the small box on the upper-right-hand corner of the first page of each unit in the textbooks. Five instances were pursuing the intended goals while the rest were away from them. In what follows, excerpts of interviews with and observations of two of the teachers are provided to illustrate each of the two categories.

### *Away from the Goal*

The first teacher, Mr. Kia, is defining materials, and elaborating on their types, functions, and effective use in classroom discourse. He states:

Excerpt 1

> *(a) Material is anything that helps me teach in the class. It doesn't have to be something we hold in our hands. It doesn't necessarily have a physical form. Materials can be many things such as blogs, games, educational videos and so many other things.*
>
> *(b) Material contains the content of teaching, for example grammar, vocabulary, reading, and the like. So effective materials use means explaining this content in a way that students can understand [it] and this is my responsibility.*

In his definition of materials, Mr. Kia sees them at the service of teaching and assigns a facilitative role to them. He considers them to be not only physical but also virtual artefacts. He views materials as curriculum in the sense that they determine 'the content of teaching' for him. Along the same lines, he ties the concept of effective materials use to students' understanding. In other words, he believes that materials are sources of input and the responsibility of making it comprehensible lies with him as a teacher.

Excerpts 2 and 3 below portray Mr. Kia's interactions with his students as prompted by a reading comprehension activity on page 32 of *Top Notch* 3. The activity entails four sections: (1) a warm-up to help students generate ideas, name custom-made items, and elicit reasons to have something custom-made (Excerpt 2); (2) the passage which is about custom-made clothes made by tailors of Hong Kong and targets skimming and scanning strategies (Excerpt 3); (3) a follow-up aiming at identifying supporting details; and (4) another follow-up which aims to activate language from the passage.

Excerpt 2

Mr. Kia: please open your books and go to page 32. evaluate the quality
of service. (4.0)I've got a question.
before going to the reading, I'm just gonna say something.
((gazes at the book))
um have you yourself (1.0) ever had something custom-made?
for example, something to wear or something for your home?
[((gazes up at LL))
[CUSTOM-MADE
((closes the book and writes on the board))
custom-made
have you ever had something custom-made? CUSTOM-MADE means it
has been, let's say, MADE especially for you, huh?
Parsa: °you ask for it°.

*Figure 1.* Mr. Kia is exemplifying the word by pointing to his shoes

I ma- actually I just made it um I um went to the shoemaker,
and I said please I need leather shoes. you know leather?
(0.5)leather is a kind of fabrics. leather shoes.
I went there said please and he just got my
si- measure my size, ha? with a kind of frame for that one
okay (.) and just um he just after two or one week let's
say or two weeks let's say I- I just got my shoes. this is
exactly for my feet.
for my let's say own size or something like that, ha?
LL: [((nod))
Mr. Kia: [so these shoes are just MINE not someone else.

Mr. Kia starts the activity by orienting the learners to the right page and reading out its heading. Afterwards, he focuses on the first section which is warm-up and reads its prompt. Not implementing any wait-time for encouraging learner participation, he immediately draws the learners' attention to a new lexical item, 'custom-made', in the prompt. He goes on to put more emphasis on the word by echoing it (lines 08 and 10), writing it on the board, defining it (lines 11-12), and also exemplifying it (Lines 28-29; Figure 1). Mr. Kia's definition of the word in line 12 ends with a high-pitch back-channel functioning as a confirmation request. Parsa orients to this request, self-selects himself, and makes a contribution in a soft voice (line 13). He repeats his contribution in line 15 in response to Mr. Kia's clarification request in line 14. The sequence ends with Mr. Kia confirming Parsa's contribution. An inserted sequence, however, gets initiated in the next turn with Javad's phrasal utterance, 'like shirt' in line 17. Mr. Kia's high-pitch back-channel in the next turn functions as a continuer and invites Javad to expand on his contribution. Rather than asking other learners to orient to the topic and build the ensuing interaction on it in line with the intended goal of the warm-up section, Mr. Kia latches onto Javad's contribution and in a series of extended turns elaborates on and develops the topic himself. Neither Javad nor other learners can find a word in edgewise other than nonverbally confirming the teacher's explanations and exemplifications.

Excerpt 3

Mr. Kia: look at the title of the reading. the title goes, let's say,
tailors of Hong Kong. you know tailors?
Payam: °someone who makes things° custom-made?
Mr. Kia: you know tailors? tailor is someone who actually
sews(.)actually cuts and sews something for you. huh?
LL: XXX
Omid: ((translates the word into Farsi))khayat
tailor
Mr. Kia: mm hm. cuts a cloth and sews. sew it to you. S, E, W.
sew it for you.
((writes on the board))
a sewer. S, E, W. sew. a person who does it, we call it
sewer, or tailor.
((gazes at Omid)) yeah?
Omid: yes.
Mr. Kia: great.
((starts reading the passage out loud))
the tailors of Hong Kong. The famous Honk Kong 24-hour suit
is a thing of the past.
you know 24-hour means round the clock. day and night.
okay, every time.
Honk Kong 24-hour suit is a thing of the past,
but tailors are still reliable. it means you can
TRUST them. they are reliable. you can BANK on them.
[((writes on the board))
[bank on somebody or something], rely on somebody, trust
somebody. trust somebody. trust is a verb. trust somebody.
((resumes reading))
you can trust them if they say they'll have your clothes
custom-made in just a few days. for example, if you go to a
shoe-maker or a shoe shop, they're gonna just offer for a
kind of custom-made, let's say, shoes. if they promise you,
they're gonna to keep their promise. if they make a promise,
they are supposed to, I mean, they are supposed to KEEP it.
it means you can trust them. (1.0) you can rely on them. huh?
LL: ((nod))
Mr. Kia: ((continues reading))

Mr. Kia gets to the second section of the activity which is focusing on the passage. Instead of giving learners time to skim and/or scan the text by themselves as the intended goal specified in the teacher's guide, he starts reading the whole text out loud. Akin to his pedagogical practices shown and described in the previous excerpt, Mr. Kia is again having a concern for defining, explaining, and exemplifying the content of the passage so that the learners understand it. A manifestation of this concern can be seen by looking at how the teacher's turns end. In line 02, Mr. Kia asks the learners a display question to check whether they know what 'tailor' means. The rest of the teacher turns all ends with high-pitch back-channels (lines 05, 14, and 35) which function as comprehension checks. This culminates in an extended turn for the teacher (lines 16-35) and very minimal interactional space for the learners.

In the following excerpt, Mr. Kia's comments on his pedagogical decisions and practices, as obtained through the video-elicited interview, are provided.

Excerpt 4

> (a) The goal [of the warm-up] here is to help students understand what custom-made clothes are and why we need to have or buy something custom-made. So, I gave them the definition of custom-made, and I also gave some tangible examples.
>
> (b) I read the text out to the students. I read it myself. I can adjust the speed and pause whenever it is necessary. I often speak loudly so that all learners can follow the text and understand it. I also provided synonyms for new words and explained the paragraphs sentence by sentence so that they clearly understand it.

Mr. Kia states that his perceived goal of the warm-up section is for the learners to 'understand' the definition of the term 'custom-made' and the reasons for having such a thing. He points out that he took a series of actions in the forms of defining, explaining, and exemplifying the issue to reach this goal. He further mentions that his pedagogical decisions and practices in the next section, i.e. the passage, are also informed by the same goal. In other words, provision of synonyms, examples, and explanation of the sentences were all done to make the content of the passage comprehensible to the learners. Moreover, he focuses on his voice features, including speed, pause, and volume, in order to justify reading the passage out loud by himself.

Alignment of stated and enacted beliefs about materials and their effective use are evident in Excerpts 1-4. Mr. Kia demonstrates in both his words and practices that materials are sources of input and their effective use, in his view, means making that input comprehensible. This alignment, however, is not in harmony with the intended goals of the lesson. In the warm-up section, for example, the main goal, as specified in the teacher's guide and also stated in the written instructions of the textbook, is to encourage learners to generate and express ideas, yet the teacher transformed this objective to pursue his perceived goal, i.e. provision of comprehensible input. Another deviation from the intended goal surfaced in his teaching of and comments on the passage. In other words, whereas the teacher was supposed to equip the learners with skimming and scanning strategies, he channelled the discourse away from it.

***Towards the Goal***

The excerpt below comes from the post-observation interview with the second teacher, Mr. Zal. In his words:

Excerpt 5

> (a) Material is everything that helps and boosts learning. Materials are books, worksheets, media, [and] social networks; whatever that helps learners … they should encourage participation and develop the four language skills.
>
> (b) All of them [materials] should serve the goals of learning. I feel that the contexts in the book are often not tangible. They are artificial and abstract. I am supposed to localize them and make them personal to encourage participation.

Materials, in Mr. Zal's view, are at the service of learning. His instantiation of materials includes a wide range of artefacts supporting learners and facilitating learning. Fostering learner participation and developing language skills are the main functions of materials in Mr. Zal's words. In response

to what effective use of materials is, in a similar vein, he adopts a goal-oriented approach to the actual use of materials in classes. According to Mr. Zal, what hampers the attainment of the goals of learner participation and the development of language skills is the artificiality and abstractness of the contents of textbooks. He goes on to put forward a solution to the problem: localization of materials to tailor them to the goals of learning.

Mr. Zal's classroom interactions with his students are presented below in Excerpts 6 and 7. The interactions are prompted by the first page of unit five from the fifth level of *Top Notch* series, *Summit 1*. The lesson is about communities and entails three activities of (1) frame your ideas, requiring completion of a questionnaire about an ideal community, (2) vocabulary, listing types of locations, and (3) pair work, comparing and discussing answers in the questionnaire. The following two excerpts are taken from halfway through the lesson. After doing the first activity, the teacher transforms the material by introducing a new activity into the lesson, i.e. whole-class discussion.

Excerpt 6

Mr. Zal: alright. thank you very much indeed. now, now we are going to go to the ring and have some let's say (.) real fight between two groups. two angry groups that are standing um against each other. they are actually just giving and throwing their dirty looks at each other, and then
[((shows frowning gesture))
[like this.
well, today we are going to discuss what place you prefer to live in. [((points to LL sitting on his left))]
[this group, of course I didn't consult] and talk to them outside before the class starts (1.0) they prefer to live in the countryside.
(2.0)
[((gazes and points to LL sitting on his right))
[and this group prefers to live in the city.]

((lines omitted))

Mr. Zal: ((sits on his chair and gazes at the two groups sitting on the two sides)) ready? steady? let's go. Who is going to get the first sentence? now, Fatima start up.
Fatima: you are crazy girls.
LL: ((laughter))
Mr. Zal: ((speaks Farsi)) oh my God.
LL: ((laughter))
Mr. Zal: please respect them.
[((gazes at Susan))
[alright.
Susan: you are so sleepy. just in your bed.
(2.0)
Mr. Zal: ((gazes at LL on his right and encourages them to participate by hand gesture and head movement))
Mona: we are just relaxing.
Mr. Zal: ((moves his hand and encourages LL to participate))
(3.0)
alright, now Sepide is going to tell you something. take the

sentence then you can just attack.
((Rima seems bored))

*Figure 2.* Mr. Zal is gazing at learners and inviting them to talk. Many Learners are silent, and Rima seems bored.

Sepideh: you never um
(2.0)
Mr. Zal: °I don't think you just enjoy your life°.
Sepideh: and you never lift a finger.
Mr. Zal: ((gazes at the group sitting on his right))
you never lift a finger lazy bones.
Zahra: we are not always sleeping.
LL: ((laughter))
Mr. Zal: ((moves his hand to encourage LL to talk))
(3.0)
say, who said that? where did you read it?
(4.0)
[((gazes at and points to Sara))
[yes, please. go ahead.
Sara: what should I say?
Mr. Zal: just talk about the city problems.
((gazes at LL))
talk about the city problems.
Sara: °you are just sleeping°.
Mr. Zal: say that again. sorry.
Sara: you just waste your time with sleeping.
Mona: not all we do is sleeping. we do other=
Mr. Zal: =okay, wait, wait.

In managerial turns (Walsh, 2006), Mr. Zal introduces and orients the learners to a new activity. He sets the scene by assigning learners into two opposing groups, one favouring living in the countryside and the other in the city, and asks them to discuss the issue. What is evident throughout the excerpt is Mr. Zal's consistent verbal and nonverbal attempts at encouraging learner participation. He uses post-solicitation and post-response wait-time (lines 47, 52, 57, 65, and 67), learner nomination (line 38, 44, 53, and 68), and several nonverbal invitations to reply (lines 48, 49,

51, and 64). He even fuels the discussion by giving hints and directions to the learners (lines 58, 66, 71, and 73). Despite all these attempts, what happens on the learners' side are minimal contributions, signs of boredom (line 55; Figure 2), and not knowing how to develop the topic (line 70). Therefore, the teacher puts a halt to the ongoing activity (line 78).

Excerpt 7

Mr. Zal: =okay, wait, wait. now that we are in the atmosphere,
I'd like you to [((gazes at LL on the left))
[face your friends
(1.0)
[[((gazes at LL on the right))]
[face your friends] and create ideas and again, attack. let's
go, put your minds together. hurry up please.
((members of each group work together to brainstorm ideas))

*Figure 3.* Mr. Zal is asking the learners to work in two groups and brainstorm ideas.

((lines omitted))

Mr. Zal: okay, let's go. move back to your chairs please.
((LL moving chairs))
(19.0)
okay, which group is going to start? which group likes to
start?
Ziba: [we
Bahar: [we
Mr. Zal: okay, go ahead.
Rima: round one.
Mr. Zal: yeah, it's round one.
((gazes at Ziba))
go ahead.
Ziba: if you get sick, you will die before you get to the
hospital, so=
Nazanin: [we don't
Susan: [we aren't

Nazanin: we don't. we don't live in the mountains. we are living in the village.
((the two opposing groups talk simultaneously))
Mona: you don't have a hospital.
Mr. Zal: ((gazes at the group sitting on the right))
there is no hospital. what can you do? if you get sick, you will die in the same spot (.) on the spot.
Mahdia: we never get sick, because we eat healthy food.
((members of the group sitting on the teacher's right talk enthusiastically and simultaneously)
Mr. Zal: yeah.
LL: XXX
Rima: it doesn't matter. it doesn't matter.
[((stands up and points to Ziba))
[sickness doesn't come from food.

*Figure 4.* Classroom takes on a lively atmosphere where learners participate actively in the discourse. Rima is no longer bored.

LL: XXX
((members of the group sitting on the teacher's left talk simultaneously and disagree with Rima))
Rima: even if we get sick because of food, we can get to the hospital by ONE minute or two.
Mona: yes
((Rima's teammates talk to support her and the members of the opposite group talk to disagree with her)

Upon halting the activity in the previous excerpt, the teacher here restructures it by asking the members of each side to get together and brainstorm ideas (lines 01-08; Figure 3). Having given the learners time to work in their groups, Mr. Zal brings the setting of the class to its prior arrangement and asks the two opposing groups to do the same activity anew (Figure 4). Unlike what happened in the previous excerpt, evidence of learners' willingness to actively participate in and contribute to the group discussion can be observed here. They move out the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) sequences and take initiatives by self-selecting themselves (e.g. lines 40 and 55). Moreover, the liveliness of the classroom atmosphere and the heat of the discussion can be seen not only in the

learners' overlapping talk (lines 39, 45-46, 53-54, and 58-59) but also in Rima's change of mood across the two excerpts (Figure 5).

Watching the video of the lesson, Mr. Zal comments on what happened in his class by saying:

Excerpt 8

> (a) The aim of the lesson is to enable students to discuss their communities and living environment. After completing the questionnaire, I noticed that it couldn't turn my students on. So I decided to introduce a new activity; something more localized and personal.
>
> (b) I did my best to encourage them to talk and express their ideas, but it didn't work. So I changed it. I asked them to work together and prepare for the discussion. I was satisfied with the result and enjoyed watching them all participating.

Mr. Zal states his perceived goal of the lesson. It is noteworthy that this perception is exactly aligned with its intended goal. Then, he justifies his purposeful transformation of the activity by referring to the point that the questionnaire could not prepare the learners to move towards the goal of discussing communities. He mentions his spontaneous addition of a new activity and thus developing a new material, which is 'more localized and personal', as his solution to the problem. Mr. Zal goes on to express his conscious and whilst-use evaluation of his newly-developed material in the class which led to its further transformations.

Making a comparison between what Mr. Zal stated about materials and their effective use in Excerpts 5 and 8 and what he did in his actual classroom interactions as depicted in Excerpts 6 and 7 shows a clear convergence between the two. This convergence, moreover, is in line with the intended goal of the lesson as stated in both the teacher's guide and the textbook. In other words, both the lesson and Mr. Zal's transformations and developments of new materials aimed at enabling learners to discuss communities and living conditions.

## Discussion

In this article, we drew upon multiple sources of data to capture the interplay between what teachers say about (effective) materials use and how they actually use them in the moment-by-moment unfolding of classroom discourse. The findings showed that mere convergence of teachers' stated and enacted beliefs about materials and their effective use cannot guarantee the attainment of the intended goals of the lesson set by the teacher's guide and/or the textbook. In other words, as Li and Walsh (2011) also pinpointed, the relationships between teachers' beliefs and practices are not linear and straightforward; instead, they are non-linear and complex due to personal and/or contextual factors (Li, 2020). This view well complies with Guerrettaz's (2021) pedagogical ergonomic consideration of classroom-based materials and supports the socioideological potential of language learning and teaching materials put forward by Kim and Canagarajah (2021).

One factor, as found in the present study, adding to and mediating the complexity of this interplay is teachers' understanding of their talk in classroom discourse. A liminal understanding, i.e. "teacher talk as input" (Skinner, 2017, p. 156), was both articulated and implemented in Mr. Kia's beliefs and practices in Excerpts 1-4 where he was preoccupied with conveying comprehensible input through defining, explaining, and exemplifying the content. Even a smattering of pre-liminal understanding, i.e. "teacher talk as features of voice" (Skinner, 2017, p. 155) surfaced as he read out the passage in

the class and justified it in the interview by focusing on his voice features. It could be this (pre-)liminal understanding of his talk that kept him away from the intended goals of the lesson in spite of the convergence between his stated and enacted beliefs. In Excerpts 5-8, however, a post-liminal understanding, i.e. "teacher talk as appropriate for the pedagogical purpose" (Skinner, 2017, p. 157), manifested itself in Mr. Zal's articulation and enactment of his beliefs about materials and their effective use. Materials, in his view, should serve the purpose of learning through encouraging learner participation and developing language skills. When he found these objectives not being met in classroom discourse, he intentionally transformed the materials and created and deployed new ones in the forms of group work and whole-class discussions through his teacher talk. Having done so, not only did he match his stated and enacted beliefs, but he also moved towards the intended goal of the lesson while at the same time offered emergent affordances for learning (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013; van Lier, 2004). In all of the observed classes, materials shaped and were shaped by processes (classroom discourse and learning), structures (discourse patterns), and relationships among the various elements of classroom ecology (Guerrettaz & Johnston, 2013) in symbiotic interrelationships (Foss & Kleinsasser, 1996). What lies at the heart of these interlocking relationships and mediates them was found to be teachers' understanding of their talk.

Mr. Zal's materials use in classroom discourse (Excerpts 6 and 7) can also be discussed in the light of Waring's (2016, p. 122) theory of pedagogical interaction, more specifically the principle of contingency; that is, "teaching requires being responsive to the moment". When he realized that materials could not serve the purpose of learning in his class, instead of insisting on and persisting in following the sequence and content of the materials at hand, he "adjusted to the shifting demands of the moment" (Waring 2016, p. 134) by intentionally transforming them. This flexibility enabled him to re-transform his own-crafted material by restructuring it while keeping its essence intact for the greater good, i.e., fostering learner participation. This is in line with Engman and Hermes's study (2021) whose findings underscored the contingent use of materials with reference to considering the dynamic and complex interrelationships within an educational setting. Mr. Zal's materials use in actual classroom interaction depicted roughly similar concerns with regard to transformations and developments of new materials to attain classroom goals.

## Conclusion

This study was an attempt to examine the interrelationships between teachers' stated and enacted beliefs about materials and their effective use in L2 classroom discourse. Regarding pedagogical implications, the findings can shape and inform teaching and teacher education programs through raising teachers' interactional awareness and increasing learners' interactional space. This is in line with Gurrettaz and Johnston's contention (2013, p. 793) that "the important thing is for teachers to consciously choose the ways they use the textbook or other materials, rather than employing them unreflectively". In other words, as materials mediate discourse and interaction, teachers are supposed to use them consciously and, more importantly, aligned with the pedagogic goals of the moment. Moreover, maximizing learners' interactional space, as a prerequisite for learner participation (Donato, 2000; Waring, 2008), often requires teachers to exercise flexibility in their use of materials. This said, insisting on following materials blindfold and rigidly can sometimes minimize learners' interactional space at the expense of maintaining fidelity to materials (Graves, 2019).

This study was constrained by certain limitations. From among the wide variety of materials such as websites, videos, flashcards and so on, this study only focused on printed textbooks. Besides, only a certain series of textbooks (the *Top Notch* series) was represented. Furthermore, this study zoomed in on stated and enacted beliefs about materials use from teachers' point of view, leaving learners' beliefs to be examined in future empirical attempts.

In closing, this study has by no means captured the complexity of the interplay between teachers' stated and enacted beliefs about materials and their effective use in its entirety. Further research is warranted to examine what leads teachers to conceptualize materials and their effective use in the way they do. Moreover, future studies need to explore in what ways, other than intentional transformation of materials aligned with the pedagogic goal of the moment, effective materials use can be manifested and accomplished in the turn-by-turn unfolding of classroom discourse. Last but not least, as classroom discourse is constructed by both teachers and learners, it is worth examining what and how learner variables affect enactments of teachers' beliefs about materials (use).

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