

## **Evaluating the suitability of printed materials in the context of online learning**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to evaluate the suitability of printed EFL materials of an intensive foreign language training program of a university in Indonesia in the context of online learning and bring some considerations regarding developing materials suitable for the virtual dimension of online language learning. Twelve lecturers were involved in this study. Their perceptions toward the English materials were collected quantitatively using questionnaires and qualitatively through interviews. By using a mixed method with an explanatory sequential design, this study revealed that the printed materials were unsuitable in some ways during online learning. It also proposed principled suggestions for harnessing education technology to facilitate effective and innovative teaching appropriate in broader technology-assisted language learning contexts.

**Key words:** materials, evaluation, online learning, education technology

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### **Introduction**

In line with McGrath (2002), it is agreeable that no perfect material could exist and flawlessly accommodate every need of students and teachers in particular contexts. Realistically speaking, the developed materials will always have some drawbacks and unsuitability. It is inseparable from the gap and conflicting interests among the material developers' expertise, publishers' marketing targets, school principals' agenda, teachers' beliefs, and learners' learning needs (see Richard, 2001). Sheldon (1988: 237) stated that materials represent significant professional and financial investments and political implications.

While materials have been long regarded as a vital part of English Language Teaching, mistakenly selecting the materials will result in unproductive teaching. Materials represent "the visible heart of any ELT program" (Sheldon, 1988: 237). Massive works have been dedicated to shedding light on the importance of materials and their development (e.g., Cunningsworth, 1995; Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Sheldon, 1988; Mikk, 2000; Dubin & Olshtain, 1986; Byrd, 2001; O'Neill, 1982; Tanner & Green, 1998; Tomlinson, 2012; Andi & Arafah, 2017). To say that materials are vital in ELT is also to say that examining their quality is inevitably essential. At this point, materials evaluation which can be understood as assessing the performance of materials before, while, and after being used in a particular setting for a particular target group of students, becomes central.

This paper aims to evaluate the materials developed for the Intensive Foreign Language Training (PIBA) program at Alauddin State Islamic University in the context of online learning. We used the principles of materials evaluation proposed by McDonough et al. (2013). This study is both necessary and exciting for several reasons. Firstly, with unclear needs analysis nor research and development undergone, ELT printed materials were developed by the responsible body of the language program. Thousands of material copies were published and distributed to all first-year students in the university and lecturers teaching in the program. Developing materials without needs analysis and the systematic procedure of materials development will result in ineffective materials. This act risks several things, from quality to cost issues, not to mention the possible demotivating effect the developed materials may have on the students and lecturers using them. Secondly, with the sudden shift of the language

teaching goals and objectives instructed by the university's rector in 2021, this responsible body developed printed materials without research-based materials development again, resulting in roughly similar risky consequences.

There was an additional variable to consider if we discussed the material quality and the evaluation here. The covid-19 pandemic attack in 2020 resulted in an order for online learning by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Mendikbud, 2020). With this condition, the new task for the language educator and the faculty was to adapt and adjust the components of teaching and learning, including the materials, to be compatible with the online learning context. Technology advancement results in online learning materials through the Internet and digital media (Hasyim & Arafah, 2023). Modernization in the educational field affects specific changes and leads to unaware behavior where students are unfamiliar with the concept and need to adjust first (Yudith et al., 2023). The challenge of teaching in this different dimension, the online venue, demands a rapid adaptation from the traditionally developed materials, the printed materials, into the ones that can be interactively taught in the virtual classes. The sudden difficulties the teachers face need to be overcome by providing materials in the most effective way using academic writing, yet still needs to be more complex to understand virtually (Arnawa & Arafah, 2023).

With these problems at hand, identifying the quality of the massively published printed materials and defining the characteristics of suitable materials for an online language learning context are necessary. Thus, this paper had two purposes. Firstly, to evaluate the printed materials in the program, which resulted in identifying the quality of the materials. It will also shed some light on how a material evaluation practical undertaking is conducted, as it is an essential professional activity for EFL/ESL practitioners. Secondly, to bring some considerations in developing technology-enhanced materials and platforms suitable to the context of online language. The technological choices of lecturers in this study can be insightful for designing innovative technology-assisted language learning supports applicable in broader contexts.

### **Materials evaluation**

Materials evaluation is a procedure that involves measuring the (potential) value of a set of learning materials (Tomlinson, 2003). It aims to make judgments about the effect of the materials on the teachers and learners using them. There is a distinction between materials analysis and evaluation. Analysis refers to giving an objective judgment about materials, while evaluation deals with subjective judgment (Tomlinson, 2003). Analysis questions assess objective answers, such as "is there any authentic task in the speaking section of the materials?"

In contrast, evaluation questions demand a subjective judgment that, to some extent, is affected by the belief of the materials evaluator. For example, "How likely do the authentic tasks engage learners in the speaking section?" However, they are interrelated since before assessing an object effect in the materials (evaluation), one needs to know the availability of the assessed object within the materials, which is indeed a part of the analysis activity.

Several purposes act as the driving force for evaluating materials. Sheldon (1988) argued that there are three purposes for materials evaluation. First, to guide the decision-making of selecting materials such as textbooks in the market. Second, to familiarize the teachers with the strength and weaknesses of the materials. Third, to serve as action research that develops our understanding of the effect of particular materials developed as a proposed solution to problems of particular target learners. As the primary source of teaching materials, school textbooks have become particularly important and used from elementary until high school (Mokoginta &

Arafah, 2022). Mukundan et al. (2011) added that identifying the strengths and weaknesses of materials can assist teachers in adapting the materials. A good textbook allows flexible use and adaptation. Moreover, it is difficult to imagine the possibility of developing a textbook that can fit every teaching and learning need during an entire course or program with consistent validity, reliability, and practicality (McDonough et al., 2013). Principled adaptation of the materials preceded by evaluating their merits and demerits can be a wise option in presenting engaging teaching and learning practices (Mishan & Timmis, 2015).

Based on the period when the materials evaluation is conducted, Cunningsworth (1995), Ellis (1997), and Tomlinson (2003) differentiate three types of materials evaluation, namely pre-use, in-use, and post-use evaluations (they used differing terms, but in essence they are similar). The pre-use or predictive evaluation examines the materials before using them; its purpose is to help teachers select the most appropriate material that meets the needs of their teaching context by measuring its future performance. In choosing material, the language used as a communication tool is how teachers convey ideas and thoughts based on their experiences (Arafah et al., 2023). In-use evaluation investigates the materials used in a particular teaching context; it explores the textbook's weaknesses or strengths. Finally, post-use or retrospective evaluation is done after using the materials; it helps the teacher reflect on the quality of the material after using it in a particular learning-teaching situation.

Many experts suggest that post-use/retrospective evaluation is the most valuable and informative (Tomlinson, 2003; Mishan & Timmis, 2015; McGrath, 2002). However, the three types of evaluation are essential on their own. Before carrying particular materials on a retrospective evaluation, one needs to do a pre-use evaluation to judge the materials' worth for further and deeper investigation in the post-use evaluation. In this regard, McGrath (2002) and Tomlinson (2003) only suggest analyzing any materials evaluation, including the post-use evaluation. However, more than analysis is required to collect the information as the basis of a post-use evaluation. When analyzing the materials before the post-use evaluation, an analyst will automatically assess their effect on teaching and learning subjectively and prospectively. It is a part of the activity in the pre-use evaluation. Thus, it is a pre-use evaluation before further evaluations, such as the post-use evaluation, not merely an analysis. More importantly, it is essential because not every material is worthy of a post-use evaluation (McDonough et al., 2013). Retrospective evaluation requires time, careful development of evaluation criteria, systematic practice of using the materials, and a well-planned query for investigating the long-term effect of the materials on learners and their learning targets. Before investing time, effort, and even cost in post-use evaluation, assessing the worthiness of materials by judging their effect on teaching and learning predictively and principally is of utmost importance.

In conducting the practical undertaking of materials evaluation, some experts proposed frameworks that can be used as guidelines. Riazi (2003) suggests three phases of conducting materials evaluation, i.e., surveying the teaching/learning situation, conducting a neutral analysis, and carrying out a belief-driven evaluation. McGrath (2002) proposes a procedure involving materials analysis, first-glance evaluation, user feedback, and evaluation using context-specific checklists. Mukundan (2007) suggests using a composite framework combining checklists, reflective journals, and computer software to evaluate ELT textbooks.

The evaluation criteria are the foremost important aspect to be considered in evaluating materials. Rubdy (2003) argued that evaluation criteria could be generated from some fundamental notions. Firstly, psychological validity concerns learners' needs, goals, and pedagogical requirements. Secondly, pedagogical validity relates to teachers' skills, abilities, theories, and beliefs. Thirdly, process validity is associated with the thinking underlying the materials, the writer's content presentation, and the approach to teaching and learning, respectively. Finally, content validity deals with

methodology, content, layout, and graphics. McGrath (2002) notes that some elements should be assessed in materials, including the design, language content, subject matter, and practical considerations (e.g., availability, durability, and price). McDonough et al. (2013) proposed undergoing macro and micro evaluations to assess materials' suitability.

The manifestation of the evaluation criteria can be seen in the form of evaluation checklists. Several experts had devoted themselves to developing an evaluation checklist, mainly to evaluate textbooks. Mukundan & Ahour (2010) review textbook evaluation checklists within four decades (1970-2008). They found that most of the checklists are qualitative (e.g., McDonough et al., 2013; Rubdy, 2003; McGrath, 2002; Richards, 2001; Cunningsworth, 1995; Sheldon, 1988); than quantitative (e.g., Ur, 1996; Skierso, 1991; Sheldon, 1988).

However, it is essential to note that there is no fixed set of criteria or procedures for conducting materials evaluation (McDonough et al., 2013). Due to students in different contexts having different needs, objectives, backgrounds, and styles (Tomlinson, 2003), no fixed evaluation criteria can be adopted for all situations. Mathews (1985), Cunningsworth (1995), and Tomlinson (2012) highlighted that it is vital to relate the evaluation criteria to the context of learning. Avoid using ambiguous words in learning material, such as too much figurative language that cause multiple meanings and interpretation (Baa et al., 2023). It is, therefore, essential to consider the harmony between the materials and the curriculum, students, and teachers (Byrd, 2001). If only one element is inharmonious, feeling disagreement, dissatisfaction, or adverse event, the learning process cannot work, and it is not easy to evaluate the materials (Arafah & Kaharuddin, 2019). The awareness to preserve interconnectedness between teachers and students can be likened to the relationship between humans and nature needing each other to create balance and sustainability (Siwi et al., 2022).

This research applied the materials evaluation framework (McDonough et al., 2013) that consist of two stages, i.e., external evaluation and internal evaluation. The external evaluation examines information about materials organization, including the cover, table of content, and the claim about proficiency level and organization of the materials. The internal evaluation assesses the skill presentations, the grading and sequencing, the authenticity, the appropriacy of the tests, the learning styles, and the motivating power of the materials. Despite the intended qualitative evaluation framework, this study elaborated the framework into an evaluation checklist (quantitative) and interview guidelines (qualitative), allowing the exploration of richer data.

### **The nature of the evaluated teaching materials**

The evaluated teaching material is an in-house printed material developed by Ma'had Al-Jami'ah at Alauddin State Islamic University, Makassar, for a compulsory language program called PIBA (Pelatihan Intensif Bahasa Asing/Intensive Foreign Language Training). It is compiled of materials for two foreign languages, i.e., English and Arabic, and it is comprised of 15 lessons designed for one-semester use. As PIBA (Pelatihan Intensif Bahasa Asing/Intensive Foreign Language Training) is a two-semester compulsory additional program focusing on mastering foreign languages, namely English and Arabic, the intended audience of the material is the first and second-semester students at Alauddin State Islamic University. This study focused on evaluating the ELT printed materials published in 2020.

### **Method**

This survey study used a mixed method with an explanatory sequential design. To evaluate the materials, 12 lecturers who taught in the language program were involved

in this study. Their quantitative responses about the materials were obtained using a set of evaluation checklists, while the qualitative data were elicited from interviews. The instruments were designed based on the materials evaluation framework proposed by McDonough et al. (2013), with some adaptations based on the context of PIBA materials. Both instruments gauge for two parts of the evaluation: the external and the internal. The external evaluation examines the availability of some essential features of the materials.

In contrast, the internal evaluation closely investigates the match and appropriacy of external features of the material with the contexts of the students and the teaching. Cunningsworth (1995: 5) noted that the selection procedure of conducting materials evaluation is a "framework, not a straitjacket," meaning that any evaluation procedure can be modified to fit the particular situations and contexts where evaluation occurs. Furthermore, Sheldon highlighted that the materials evaluation is "a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and no neat formula, grid or system will ever provide a definite yardstick" (Sheldon, 1988: 245).

The frequency and average of the responses were calculated to analyze and summarize the statistical data gathered from the evaluation checklist. Responses were rated on a four-point-continuum Likert scale (1= strongly disagree/poor, 2= disagree/fair, 3= agree/good, 4= strongly agree/excellent). The data on the materials evaluation were displayed in frequency and average (mean score) tables. The frequency was calculated by multiplying the respondents' number with their scores and dividing it by the total number of respondents in all categories. Meanwhile, the mean score was calculated by multiplying the score category by its frequency, totaling all the scores, and dividing the total score by the total number of respondents. The following scale can describe the four-continuum-scale of the mean score:

- 1 refers to 0 – 1.50
- 2 refers to 1.15 – 2.50
- 3 refers to 2.51 – 3.50
- 4 refers to 3.51 – 4.00

Meanwhile, the qualitative evaluation was gathered from interviews and presented in quotation to strengthen and provide a deeper understanding of responses from each question in the materials evaluation checklist.

## **Research results**

In this part, the findings are presented and elaborated in three sub-sections, i.e., external evaluation, internal evaluation, and needs in online learning.

### ***External evaluation***

The students' and lecturers' responses concerning the external features of the materials cover the details about the proficiency level, the language items, the function of the materials (core or supplementary), the provision of vocabulary aids, the table of content, layout, and visuals, the cultural issue of the materials, the availability of the multimedia materials, and tests. The data is summarized in the table below, followed by further elucidation.

**Table 1. External Evaluation Questions**

No.	External Evaluation Questions	Frequency				Average
		1	2	3	4	
1	Are the materials used as the primary 'core' materials?		11		1	2.16
2	Is a vocabulary list/index included?		3	9		2.75
3	Do the materials clearly state what proficiency level they provide?		12			2.00
4	Do the materials contain photographs, charts, or diagrams integrated into the text?	12				1.00
5	Are the layout and presentation clear?		10	2		2.16
6	Is the material proper and acceptable to the background culture of the students?			9	3	3.25
7	Do the materials include tests (diagnostic, progress, achievement) that you consider helpful for your learners?		9	3		2.25
0 - 1.50 = strongly disagree		2.51 - 3.50 = agree				
1.50 - 2.50 = disagree		3.51 - 4.00 = strongly agree				

*Adapted from McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara (2013)*

**- Are the materials used as the main 'core' materials?**

They evaluate whether materials used as the core or supplementary are closely related to cost-effectiveness. McDonough, Shaw, and Masuhara (2013) note that the economic consideration may cause an evaluator not to choose materials that will not perform as the core materials. Instead, it is better to invest in the materials that will be the core materials. As the "visible heart" (Sheldon, 1988) of a language classroom, the materials are essential, for it determines how the learners learn, how the teachers teach, and how the targets are achieved. Therefore, carefully analyzing the learners' and lecturers' needs and the teaching and learning contexts should be done before developing the materials. It is to know to what and whose needs the materials are developed. More importantly, it is to avoid developing counterproductive materials that may cause cost risks.

The statistical data presented in the table shows that most lecturers used PIBA materials, not core materials, with an average of 2.16. In the interview, two lecturers revealed that the materials are mainly used as a secondary resource and revealed the reasons for doing so:

*"I use it as the secondary material since its organization is difficult to understand. Besides, it provides insufficient speaking materials. I weigh a language learning*

*process more on communicative purposes, so I need more relevant speaking materials to stimulate the students' oral production. To boost my students' motivation, engaging and relatable topics and authentic tasks are very important. However, these important features are not covered enough in the materials.”* (Interview Lecturer 1)

*“I use it as secondary material. Somehow it is less compatible with the challenge of online learning. My students have problems with maintaining concentration when they only read text. Besides, it is inaccessible for some students living in different regions.”* (Interview Lecturer 2)

#### **- Is a vocabulary list/index included?**

With an average of 2.75, most lecturers agree that the developed materials include vocabulary lists. Types of vocabulary included in the list include basic units of vocabulary, such as pronouns and some expressions. In the interview, a lecturer revealed her perception of the vocabulary list provided in the materials:

*Some vocabulary lists are relevant to the student's needs. They cover basic vocabulary for beginners. However, as the student progress toward a higher level of difficulty every day, we need vocabulary supports that are escalating in terms of difficulty and variety.”* (Interview Lecturer 1)

*“The vocabularies are merely listed. It should be integrated with other skills, such as reading and speaking. More importantly, the vocabulary lists also need to be in harmony with particular topics in the units of the materials.”* (Interview Lecturer 1)

#### **- Do the materials clearly state what proficiency level they provide?**

The detail regarding the proficiency level of the materials is essential, for it helps teachers and learners to identify the level of difficulties of the materials. In the data above, with the average of 2.00 meaning 'disagree,' it is seen that all instructors indicated that no details of proficiency level are attached to the materials.

*“The detail about the level of proficiency is important to help the lecturers and students identify what proficiency levels are presented, what skills are covered, and what goals each presented skill is targeting. This information will be helpful guidance for the learners who want to study the materials autonomously.”* (Interview Lecturer 1)

#### **- Do the materials contain photographs, charts, or diagrams integrated into the text?**

All respondents opted for 'very disagree' with an average of 1.00 for this question, indicating that no photograph, chart, or diagrams were used in the materials. In the interview, a lecturer evaluated the following:

*“Unfortunately, no photograph, chart, or diagram is presented in the PIBA printed materials. Visual aids are important in evoking students' interest, curiosity, and critical thinking, and are the potential to stimulate students' ideas for productive skills outputs.”* (Interview Lecturer 2)

#### **- Are the layout and presentation clear?**

With an average of 2.16 (disagree), the layout of the materials could be more precise. In the interview, a lecturer stated:

*“As a table of contents serves as the material map for any reader opening it, it should clearly state the title and topic of each lesson, not merely listing them as “lesson 1, and lesson 2” without any title of the lesson. Within every unit of the lesson, a clearly stated topic, goals of learning, approximate time needed to complete one unit, and a neat organization of skills-learning and skill-using activities are vital. Effectively, PIBA materials must consider those factors and provide them consistently.”* (Interview Lecturer 1)

**- Is the material proper and acceptable to the background culture of the students?**

With an average of 3.25, the materials are considered acceptable and not too culturally biased or specific. A lecturer commented in the interview section:

*“I barely find any too culturally biased part of the materials. The material seems general enough and contains no sensitive issues such as discrimination, gender, or racial issues.”* (Interview Lecturer 2)

**- Do the materials include tests (diagnostic, progress, achievement) that you consider helpful for your learners?**

The data in the table show the lecturers discerned the tests and practices provided in the material as less beneficial for the learners, with an average of 2.22 (disagree). A lecturer evaluated in the interview:

*“There should be an equal proportion and appropriate types of tests provided for each skill. Besides, the tests should be stipulated at the right period, i.e., at the end of a class, every two weeks, or in the final semester, to record the continuity of students’ progress. However, such tests are rarely found in PIBA materials. We can find fill-in-the-blank grammar questions and reading comprehension questions in the material. Besides, to test reading, testing can be done in various ways such as giving ‘interpretation questions’ from the passage that can stimulate students’ critical thinking.”* (Interview Lecturer 1)

***Internal evaluation***

The internal evaluations revealed information regarding student and teacher perceptions of skill presentation in the materials, the grading and sequencing of the materials, and the nature and proportion of the four primary skills presented in the materials. They revealed the relationship between tasks and students’ needs and the taught materials, the appropriacy of the materials to the student’s learning styles, and the motivating power of the materials.



**Table 2. Internal Evaluation Questions**

No.	Internal Evaluation Questions	Frequency				Average
		1	2	3	4	
1.	Are the speaking skills covered appropriately based on the student's proficiency level?		7	5		2.41
2.	Are the reading skills covered appropriately based on the student's proficiency level?	2	10			1.83
3.	Are the listening skills covered appropriately based on the student's proficiency level?	12				1.00
4.	Are the writing skills covered appropriately based on the student's proficiency level?	4	8			1.66
5.	Is the grammar skill covered appropriately based on the student's proficiency level?			9	3	3.25
6.	Is the vocabulary skill covered appropriately based on the student's proficiency level?		9	3		2.25
7.	Where reading/'discourse' skills are involved, is there much in the way of appropriate text beyond the sentence that gives enough opportunity for students to practice the skills?	2	10			1.83
8.	Where listening skills are involved, are recordings 'authentic' or artificial?	12				1.00
9.	Do speaking materials incorporate what we know about the nature of real interaction?		10	2		2.16
10.	Where writing skills are involved, do the writing activities reflect the principles of process writing?	2	10			1.83
11.	Are the materials sequenced and graded appropriately? (e.g., from simple to complex)	2	9	1		1.91
12.	Are the materials appropriate and able to facilitate the learner's 'learning style'?	3	8	1		1.83
13.	Do tests and exercises in the materials suit the learners' needs, and what is taught by the course material?	1	6	5		2.33
14.	Do you feel the materials engaging and motivating for the lecturers?	2	9	1		1.91
15.	Do you feel the materials engaging and motivating for the students?	2	7	3		2.33
0 - 1.50 = Poor		2.51 - 3.50 = Good				
1.50 - 2.50 = Fair		3.51 - 4.00 = Excellent				

*Adapted from McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara (2013)*

In the internal evaluation, a closer look at the materials is investigated. The first important thing to examine is the presentation of the macro and micro-skills of English within the materials. The data above shows that the four macro skills of English, speaking, reading, and writing, are presented in 'fair' proportion and appropriacy with an average of 2.41, 1.83, and 1.66, respectively. In contrast, listening skills are not provided in the materials. In order to assess the micro-skills presence, grammar was the material priority, with an average of 3.25 (good), while the vocabulary presentation was deemed 'fair' with an average of 1.25.

In the interview, the lecturers' perception toward the proportion and the suitability of the presented skills within the materials with students' proficiency level and the teaching principles they believe were elicited. Concerning speaking skills, a lecturer evaluated the following:

*"The speaking skills are helpful to some extent, but they must be refined. The proportion given to speaking skills must be added to give students more opportunities to practice their production skills."* (Interview Lecturer 1)

*"The topics need to be varied and interesting to the university students; even though they are beginner and intermediate learners, it does not mean we should teach them like kids. We can give them relevant topics to their age but with relatively easier vocabulary."* (Interview Lecturer 1)

*"The materials need to consider the types of speaking skills such as 'performance,' 'transactional,' and 'conversational' speaking. It would be a holistic learning experience for the students if the speaking activities in PIBA materials reflected the three types of speaking skills. They can make oral presentations, speeches, discussions, and conversations. Clear assessment criteria must also be provided to ease the lecturers' evaluation of students' progress."* (Interview Lecturer 2)

Regarding the availability of reading materials that allow the students to practice reading skills extensively, the lecturers evaluated it as 'fair' with an average of 1.83. Since no material was provided for listening skills, listening practice only happens during the speaking sections when listening to the lecturers or peers; listening support's authenticity was rated 'poor' with an average of 1.00. In the speaking materials, which were mostly presented in the form of dialogue, the nature of these materials only 'fairly' reflects natural interactions with an average of 2.16. Meanwhile, where writing skills are involved, the writing activities 'fairly' reflect the 'process writing' (a writing approach that dissects the writing process into smaller manageable chunks of steps, e.g., brainstorming, drafting, and revising, re-writing) with an average of 1.83.

Regarding materials organization, the sequence and gradation were rated 'fair' with an average of 1.91. Emerging critical studies on learners' learning styles (e.g., Pashler et al., 2009; Rogowsky et al., 2015) found no empirical evidence supporting the truth of 'meshing theory'. The meshing theory sees that learning should be done based on learners' particular learning styles, e.g., visual learners should be given visual aids, and kinaesthetic learners should involve in physical movements in their learning. However, McDonough et al. (2013) still propose assessing the materials' congruity with the learners' preferred learning styles. The data in the table above explained that the lecturers considered it 'fair' with an average of 1.83. Concerning the suitability of tests and exercises with the learners' needs and learning contexts, the lecturers deemed it 'fair' with an average of 2.33. Finally, in terms of material motivating power both to lecturers and students based on the lecturers' perspective after using the materials in teaching, it is found that the materials were perceived as 'fairly' motivating with an average of 1.91 and 2.33, respectively. Psychology, as it determines human behaviour (Floriani et al., 2020; Purwaningsih et al., 2020; Asriyanti et al., 2022), is vital to consider in education (Hasanah et al., 2021), particularly in learning a language. It determines the learners' absorption of the language. On the other hand, uninteresting materials cause an unpleasant psychological conditions to the students (Afiah et al., 2022).

### ***Needs in online learning***

Online learning has various interactions (e.g., synchronous and asynchronous) and rich configurations from various applications and features. Thus, several adaptations in the materials are needed for this context. However, any adaptation must consider

the needs of the people involved in the program, including the teacher/lecturer. In the interview section, the lecturers' opinions about their needs related to the materials in online learning are recorded as follows:

*"The availability of accessible material anytime and anywhere, without any repetition by the lecturer, is more important now." Problems such as signal and data quota can be overcome with materials that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. Meanwhile, synchronous classes such as video conferencing via zoom are needed for live discussions, questions and answers, quizzes, and games."* (Interview Lecturer 2)

*"We need a single source of materials developed specifically for PIBA online learning as a reference. Then, the lecturer can adapt the material based on the needs of their students."* (Interview Lecturer 2)

*"We need a special application set or developed by the institution to fully support the online classes in this program."* (Interview Lecturer 3)

*"We need the application of learning media that is broad in scope, which enables interactions between educators and those who are educated through texts, audio images, and audiovisuals."* (Interview Lecturer 4)

*"In online learning, the materials should be engaging and appropriate to students' needs and proficiency level. In terms of organization, it should be clear and soundly graded. I think using multimedia will be a good idea. Besides, providing interesting topics to students is also important to stimulate their motivation."* (Interview Lecturer 5)

*"Hopefully, there will be findings of new effective learning methods or strategies for online learning which at least can minimize the problems such as less interactive learning, data and signal problems, and motivation issues."* (Interview Lecturer 6)

In short, the lecturers of PIBA need a particular learning platform where technology-assisted materials are presented. Several preferred characteristics of the technology-assisted materials were articulated in the interview. For example, it is accessible anytime and anywhere, based on the students' needs, integrating multimedia, engaging, appropriate to students' proficiency level, well-organized, exciting in topics, and technology-enhanced. This information is essential for making decisions with materials development for online learning or other methods of technology-assisted learning in this program.

## **Suggestion**

Seeing the growth of technology (Arafah & Hasyim, 2019; Anggrawan et al., 2019; Arafah & Hasyim, 2022; Arafah et al., 2021a; Arafah et al., 2021b; Hasyim et al., 2020; Sunyoto et al., 2022) in education worldwide, it is now time to put more serious attention on developing professionally-served technology-assisted language learning. It can be done by developing appropriate materials. In order to develop quality online language learning, careful research and development need to be conducted specifically for this purpose. Russel & Murphy-Judy (2021) comprehensively shed light on the design and development of online language learning. Context, technology and media, learner, content, and instructional staffing analysis are needed prior to the design and development of online learning (Russel & Murphy-Judy, 2021). Context analysis concerns the program's goals, structure, infrastructure, support units, and budgetary and financial issues. The technology and media deal with learning platform availability of the technology and media to the designers, instructors, and learners. The learner's analysis is related to analyzing learners' language learning and technological needs (Rofikah et al., 2022). The content material analysis deals with the learners' curriculum, methodology, resources, and proficiency level. Finally, instructional staffing analysis examines the selection, training, and evaluation of educators and the professional team. These analyses will provide a solid basis for designing and developing the sound online, blended, or other methods of technology-assisted language learning (Russel & Murphy-Judy, 2021).

Concerning the learning platform, the PIBA program can consider using LMS (such as Moodle) and CMS (such as WordPress) to upload the content, provide quizzes, and systematically record students' progress. Krouska et al. (2017) provide a comprehensive comparative analysis of using LMS and CMS in higher education. Concerning the nature of tasks, the PIBA program may consider giving more authentic tasks, such as harnessing the potential of the Internet to reach and interact with native speakers regardless of geographical boundaries. In line with Johnson (2009), Reeves (2006), Davies et al. (2013), Arafah et al. (2020), Takwa et al. (2022), and Arifin et al. (2022), authentic tasks principally keep up with the shift of trend in online language learning from cognitivist to the sociocultural turn. The cognitivist view adheres to the principles of Second Language Acquisition in which language learning is seen as a process occurring within an individual mind. 'Sociocultural turn' emphasizes the learners' interaction and social presence in online language learning. The latter is seen as a significant factor in developing language proficiency.

Further, a special teacher professional development program is needed to improve teachers' competence in technology-assisted language teaching. Developing quality technology-assisted language learning is worthy of investing funds. Managing this requires highly specialized expertise and professional skills (Russel & Murphy-Judy, 2021). Investing in a professional team to develop an impactful language learning program is more worthy than spending budgets on publishing materials unsuitable for the nature of the online venue.

Teachers must provide simple yet informative materials to ensure the students are clear (Fadillah et al., 2022; Sunardi et al., 2018). Misunderstanding often happens when the students need help to convey the meaning of the given materials because students tend to interpret meaning based on the meaning they already understand (Hasjim et al., 2020). To create effective communication, teachers and students must produce and infer utterances using logical principles (Yulianti et al., 2022). Stand for this situation, giving material should accompany an explanation. It aligns with the purpose of literature as a social product as a form of effective communication in language education (Mutmainnah et al., 2022; Suhadi et al., 2022). Therefore, in providing materials, the text or discourse should fulfil the need to be meaningful and informative (Arafah et al., 2020; Iksora et al., 2022). As the function of language is to express the writer's thoughts, the learning materials express the quality of the teachers (Takwa et al., 2022).

## **Conclusion**

This study evaluated the suitability of PIBA printed materials in the context of online learning. Twelve lecturers were involved in evaluating the materials. The findings show that the materials need to be revised and developed based on systematic research and development for the context of online language learning. This study provides some suggestions for developing technology-enhanced language program materials and brings insights into materials evaluation and education technology. The procedure of materials evaluation described in this study can be helpful guidance for teachers, lecturers, or anyone interested in evaluating materials. The insight on some analyses before the development of technology-assisted language learning can guide in designing robust technology-assisted language learning, not only online but also blended, flipped, and even fully face-to-face classes.

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