DEVELOPING POETRY-BASED GRAMMAR TEACHING MATERIALS

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Abstract
Critics have been made regarding grammar teaching using the conventional Present-Practice-Production (PPP) approach. Second language acquisition research has also provided evidence that the above approach might not be the best approach to teach grammar, especially with now communicative competence being the goal of learning a foreign language. Despite the critics, many textbooks still adopt the PPP approach in grammar activities, leading the teacher to apply this method, as well. Therefore, this study aims at developing grammar materials that can provide grammar teaching with authenticity and encourage language awareness by adapting content-based instruction, in this case through a poem. Need analysis results from questionnaire and interview were used as a foundation to design the teaching materials. The result of this study offers ready-use a teaching material that is relatable, practical and authentic, developed based on target students’ need analysis. It may also help students study grammar focusing on meaning rather than form.

Keywords: poetry, grammar, teaching materials.

INTRODUCTION
Various approaches to teaching grammar have been introduced throughout the years followed by research that investigated the effectiveness of those approaches. For instance, PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) has been widely accepted (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011) and has a predominant position on teaching pedagogy and published English textbooks. Although most teachers still used this approach, Huong (2015) reported that this approach not only resulted in the passiveness of students in learning grammar but also revealed the undesired scores of students which in turn lower their motivation in learning. In addition, generally, the teachers’ teaching activities were limited by the instructions in the materials and the textbooks.

Due to the preceding problem, the lecturer in Syariah Faculty of Pontianak IAIN was challenged to find and modify the existing materials for the students that can help them achieve their need. Furthermore, the different language level and background of the students contributed to the challenge to the teacher to avoid too easy teaching materials that may cause the students with high proficiency to feel bored; meanwhile, too difficult materials may cause the low proficiency students to feel frustrated and discouraged.
Consequently, it was worthwhile investigating research on developing materials with an approach to teaching grammar that has been supported by SLA research. The research in the field of SLA has highlighted the advantages of raising learners’ consciousness of particular grammar. Thus, instead of simply presenting direct instructions followed by practices and productions, raising students’ awareness or consciousness to target structures gave positive impact, especially if students are helped to notice and discover such structures for themselves (Tomlinson, 2011).

Therefore, this study proposed the development of grammar materials using content-based instructions (CBI). A considerable amount of experimental research suggests that CBI contributed a positive effect on improving learners’ overall language proficiency skills such as speaking and listening abilities (Chang & Xia, 2011; Chau-Ngan, 2011; Nieto, 2016; Ouazzizi, 2016; Lai, 2017; Adawiyah, 2018).

As content-rich materials, poetry can be a valuable resource to teach grammar. Language teaching practitioners and experts have reported various advantages of incorporating literature such as poetry in EFL / ESL classroom, such as authenticity, motivation, cultural/intercultural awareness and globalization, intensive/extensive reading practice, sociolinguistic/pragmatic knowledge, grammar and vocabulary knowledge, language skills, emotional intelligence (EQ), and critical thinking (Khatib, Rezaei, Derakhsan 2011).

Referring back to the materials development, the grammar material developers need to refer to the consensus from SLA research to determine what kind of focus on grammar is beneficial to acquire, at what age the learners need to learn grammar and what needs and wants learners to expect from grammar materials (Mishan & Timmis, 2015, p.152). Ellis et al as cited in Tomlinson (2011, p.90) claim that there are benefits in grammatical consciousness-raising and/or awareness-raising. Firstly, learning may be more effective if the learners proceed with the structure without having automatic production. The activities need to be sequenced to enable the students to respond to the meaning of the structure through content-based tasks; they are sufficiently encouraged to raise their consciousness to notice the form and function of the target structure, and they put the emphasis to encourage the students to use their interpretive skills during the content-based tasks. Thus, there is some initial, personalized purchase on the target structure and its general meanings.

CBI is one of the approaches in language teaching. As the name suggested, teaching using this approach is organized around the content or information that students will acquire (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p.204). The content here refers to the use of subject matters that include, but is not limited to math, culture, literature, history, geography, etc. The selection of the content should be interesting and relevant to the learners. It can invite students from a serious science subject to their favourite pop culture. The purpose of language learning through contents is a means to an end; the end purpose of this approach is to help learners develop their linguistics and communicative abilities through using the language.
Teaching grammar using poetry in EFL Classroom is advantageous. The students, in learning a language, need to be exposed to the authentic target language for more inspirational and motivational than artificial materials (Aladini, Farahbod, & Arjomandi, 2015). Authentic materials are more beneficial for language learners because the students learn the "real language" not artificial language.

Poetry in the target language is an authentic resource. It contributes far more to the development of language skills in real contexts than a total concentration on the presentation and the practice of language items (Tomlinson cited in Kırkgöz, 2008). Researchers argued that using authentic literary texts in ELT classrooms motivates the learners, stimulate their interpretive skills, encourage them to reveal their opinions and feelings, as well as facilitate their engagement with texts.

Due to its meaningful context, poetry is a potential source for the students’ new vocabulary and memorable expressions. It provides the students with an opportunity to enrich their vocabulary in a new way by offering a meaningful context (Panavelil, 2011). While promoting the students’ communication, learning a poem may enliven the class and enrich the learners’ vocabulary through creativity. Through poetry-based vocabulary teaching activities, learners can have the opportunity to enrich their vocabulary mastery (Özen & Mohammazadeh, 2012). In addition, poems include elements such as figurative language. The figurative language “is used to create a special effect or feeling and a way of saying one thing and meaning another” (Raisa, Sudarsono & Rufinus, 2017, p.2). Thus, it helps students to engage in a more creative tone that provokes thinking.

The learning of grammar through the content area, particularly poetry, can contribute to students' practicing their knowledge of grammar effectively and meaningfully (Kırkgöz, 2008). It is believed that grammatical, lexical and syntactic knowledge can be enriched by the exposure of poetry (Kırkgöz, 2008; (Özen & Mohammazadeh, 2012).

Learning a language through poetry promotes literary appreciation by increasing cross-cultural awareness and enhances more personal involvement in the language. It provides students with insight into developing cross-cultural awareness that helps them acquire fluency in the target language. It deals with the universal themes and human concerns that offer opportunities to project the students’ feelings and emotions, thus fostering personal involvement in learners (Panavelil, 2011), improving expressive abilities, and constructing social connections among students (Chanmann-Taylor, Bleyle, Hwang and Zhang, 2016).

Motivation might be the most important factors in maintaining, channeling, and arousing the students' behavior towards the goal of learning (Sudarsono, Sutapa, & Darsini, 2019). Through poetry, learning a language can encourage students to develop their creativity where they can discover interesting ideas for creative writing simultaneously and it is motivating as it generates strong emotional reactions (Panavelil, 2010; Aladini, Farahbod and Arjomandi, 2015).

Poems also increase the learners’ motivation by eliciting emotional involvement. Kong (2010) claims that poetry-based activities can prove
motivating for learners, and elicit strong emotional reactions. Hess cited in Kirkgoz, (2008) notes that entering a literary text under the guidance of appropriate teaching brings about the kind of participation that almost no other text can produce. When one reads, understands, and interprets a poem she learns language through the expansion of her experience with a larger human reality.

This study aims to develop content-based grammar teaching materials. Having content-rich materials, poetry is used as the content area to learn grammar followed by activities that draw learners’ attention to the language features in the content. Not only poetry presents authenticity of the target language but also can attract student’ interest; hence, increase in motivation. Need analysis becomes the basis in the development and the design of the materials. The data from need analysis is gathered through the interview with the lecturer. Once the first draft of the product is developed, it was evaluated by three different colleagues using checklist.

METHOD
In regard with the purposes of the research and the nature of the problems, educational Research and Development (R&D) is adapted by the researcher as the design of this research. The models in R&D approach principally the same in goal; however, different in procedures. The procedures adapted by the researcher would meet that of the condition of the research. Yet, the procedures are still considered in line with stages suggested by (Tomlinson, 2011, p. 113). The stages are as follow: The procedures include need identification, language exploration, a contextual realization of materials, pedagogical realization of materials, production of materials, the students’ use of materials, and evaluation of the materials.

The present research was conducted at Syariah Faculty IAIN Pontianak. The participant of this study is the English teacher of Syariah Faculty of IAIN Pontianak.

Data Collection
The data were collected using a questionnaire and a checklist. The former directed to the English teachers in order explore the struggles and challenges encountered by the teacher and to collect the information about the students’ need of learning grammar. The latter was to gather information about the language appropriateness and the design of the materials. The checklist was addressed to three different colleagues with different expertise to validate the product and to judge the appropriateness of the product.

Technique of Data Collection
Once the product has been developed. Checklist was distributed to colleagues to evaluate the product. Likert-Scale was used as the measurement for the questionnaires used in evaluating the developed poetry-based grammar learning material. In Likert-Scale, a scale is generally appropriate for obtaining respondents’ views, judgments, and opinions about almost any aspects of language learning.
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Identification of Need

The purpose of this stage is to find the probable cause for a performance and knowledge gap in teaching and learning process. It is expected that the product that later developed will fulfil the gap. The identification of need through interview with the teacher revealed that when it comes to the students, the teachers finds it challenging to increase students’ motivation especially for those students who have low proficiency in English, specifically in grammar. Students have a hard time understanding the application of grammar rules in context. Their frustration of learning English leads to the low motivation of learning. Thus the need analysis from the students revealed that they need material that can increase students’ motivation and the tasks that can cover the difference in students’ language proficiency.

Regarding the materials, the teacher has the freedom to select, decide, write and find his own material. Even though the teacher sometimes writes his own material, most of the times he tries to find the material from books and internet. The area of grammar that the teacher teaches is mostly tenses and part of speech. The challenges that he faces in doing this especially in grammar is that most of those materials are not suitable for his students either from the language level, the monotonous exercises and the conventional instruction (PPP). Therefore, this monotonous exercises leads to students being bored and unmotivated.

2. Exploration of Language

The focus in this stage is to identify need/problem found in the existing textbooks that are used by the teacher. Because the teacher writes or finds his own materials, he uses many resources from internet and books, for instance books by Sergeant, Basic English Grammar, Gabriele entitled Just Enough English Grammar and Betty Azar on Understanding and Using English Grammar. However, the teacher often has to modify those material due to the language level of the students and cultural background. In grammar material; oftentimes, it is hard for the teacher to find interesting material that can draw students’ interest because most of textbooks when it comes to grammar have this conventional instruction (PPP) followed by monotonous exercises.

3. Contextual Realization of Materials

The preceding stage is to identify problems found in the material used while this stage attempts to propose new materials by finding suitable ideas, contexts or texts. In this study, the writer proposes the use of poetry as the content to learn grammar. Due to the features of poems that appeal to feelings and personal experience, students can relate the learning of grammar to their own experience. In addition, having short length and peculiar structure, poetry can be a valuable resource to be used for one-meeting class.

4. Pedagogical Realization of Materials

There are theoretical and practical reasons why the writer adapts content-based instruction approach in the material. The former deals with theory suggested by experts while the latter is from a considerable amount of research on
journals and articles that prove the success of implementing content-based instruction into language teaching.

The product of this research adapts these two principal: Experiential and analytical tasks. Experiential tasks is given to students prior to the analytical tasks. The nature of the experiential tasks is to help students to engage with the content, that is, the poems. It is to help students to see the authentic use of the language and also to help them relate the content of the poems with their own real-life experience. Having understood the content and seen the relevance of the material with their own life, the writer then provide analytical tasks that focuses on the grammar. This task is usually done individually because students will analyze the linguistic features of the poems.

5. **Production of Materials**

This phase is the physical production of the material. The purpose is to meet the need and solve the problems identified in previous stages. There are three steps in developing the material. First is the selection of the poems, second is the writing of the tasks/activities for both experiential and analytical principals, the third one is the design of the product.

This study provides nine poems with language focus to be the four of them are tenses, the other five are part of speech. There are two sources of where the writer took the poems, books and internet. The writer considers the length and the simplicity of the poems in order not to overwhelm students with the complex nature of poems. The poem chosen in this study is in line with the consideration of criteria for choosing poetry for language learning purposes such as, the poems mush have universal appear, surface simplicity, potential depth, affective potential, contemporary language, brevity and potential for illustration.

6. **Evaluation of the Material**

This stage is conducted in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the product in terms of its content and design. This last step will decide whether the product that has been developed need to be rewritten, revised or modified. In evaluating the materials, Tomlinson (2011, p.119) suggests three ways, it can be evaluated by expert or colleague without students use. In can also be evaluated by students’ use which is in the six phase, the phase before the evaluation. However, the pandemic prevented the writer to implement the product for students did not have active classroom meeting.

In this study, the writer chooses the second way of evaluation that is by colleague. The materials developed is evaluated by three colleagues. The evaluation from the three evaluators reveal that the in term of content and design, the product fall under category of “good” and “very good”; hence, needs no revision. Generally the evaluators commented that the product is usable and interesting to be used in class.

**DISCUSSION**

The aim of this research is to develop an appropriate and interesting product that can help students learn English grammar. The product is developed as a supplementary material for the teacher to be used as either for the more extended
activities or to promote reflection on a previous activity. The result of this research is a prototype of poetry-based grammar teaching materials.

The results of the need analysis becomes the foundation in developing the product in this study. The interview with the teacher suggests that students have a hard time understanding the application of grammar rules in context; hence, affect their motivation in learning grammar. In respect to the material, the teacher finds it difficult to find suitable material for his students due to the predominance roles of the conventional instruction (present practice produce) in most English grammar textbooks.

In order to fulfill the gap mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the writer proposed the use of raising learners’ consciousness of particular grammar in context. Research in the field of SLA has highlighted the advantages of raising learners’ consciousness of particular grammar. Raising students’ awareness or consciousness to target structures proved to have positive impact, especially if students are helped to notice and discover such structures for themselves (Tomlinson, 2011, p. 90). This can be done through the use of content-based instruction (CBI).

Learning through content can have better results for students. This is affirmed by various experimental research that revealed the effectiveness of content-based instruction (Oazizi, 2016; Adawiyah, 2018). In learning through CBI, content plays an essential role. Having supported by theoretical principles and a number of experimental research that revealed the use of literature specifically poetry can bring about various benefits for student in learning a language such as poetry can enrich vocabulary, foster grammatical knowledge, broaden learners experience and enhance learners motivation (Khatib, Razae & Derakhsan, 2011; Kirkgoz, 2008; Chanmann-Taylor, Bleyle, Hwang & Zhang, 2016).

As content-rich materials, poetry can be a valuable resource to be used as the content of learning grammar that derive students’ attention to contextualized target features and asking them to discover its form and meaning. “It is likely to stimulate the creation of learning materials where content rather than language is the starting point” (Tomlinson, 2011, p. 158). In addition, learning through content area presents authenticity of the language; thus, students know how and when a certain structure is used in real-life settings. “It can also enhance motivation, as learners more easily perceive the relevance of what they are doing” (Tomlinson, 2011, p. 390).

Based on the evaluation of the materials from three evaluators, the material in this study is regarded as appropriate to teach grammar for early late teens and/or young adults. The material in this study can help the teacher to teach using interesting material that students can relate to with their own life experience. In addition, the tasks and activities in the material can cover different learning style and can increase students’ participation and critical thinking skills due to group oriented tasks.

There are several limitations in this study. The first one is the validation of the product. Although the evaluation from three colleagues are seen as sufficient
to determine the usable of the product, the evaluation from experts are believed to be even more valuable. The second one is the need analysis. Due to the pandemic, the writer had difficulties in reaching the students; thus, the need analysis in this study only covered the teachers’ need. Supposed the writer had the need analysis from the students, the product would have been different. Consequently, this material is meant as teaching material for teachers.

CONCLUSION

Theoretical foundations supported by positive results from journals and articles in second language acquisition reveal that raising learners’ consciousness through content in teaching grammar is seen to be more effective instead of the conventional method presentation-practices-productions. Furthermore, using literature such as poetry as the content offer valuable resources for teachers and material developers. In consequence, this study contributes to the area of developmental research by developing poetry-based grammar teaching materials that can help the learning of grammar that is in line with instructions and method suggested by experts and results from SLA research.

This research is limited to the need analysis of one class. The area of grammar is also limited to covering some tenses and part of speech following the syllabus that the teacher design. Thus, future research might cover a bigger area of grammar with a different piece of literature, or cover larger participants.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


