

## **Developing English Materials for Teaching Grammar: A Case of English Major Freshmen at the Faculty of Cultural Studies at the University of Brawijaya**

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### **Abstract**

The study is aimed at composing materials in teaching English grammar to improve and increase students' abilities in learning grammatical structure. To support the research, the suitable design that researchers applied is research and development (R&D). Hence, the background reason for this R&D is the classroom problems related to educational products. To know the problems that exists in the educational field, the researchers carry out need analysis as the first step in developing the materials to obtain the real information. The researchers examined the existing materials, and interview some lecturers. By carrying out the need analysis, the researchers find that the problem in teaching and learning process at English study program is that the students lack of activities or tasks served by the grammatical course book for first semester students with communicative activities. Secondly, a lack of resource book for lecturers on grammar with communication orientation is identified. Therefore, as the following step, the researchers make a decision to the development of a course book for the first semester students which consists of meaningful activities and tasks.

**Keywords:** developing materials, grammar, a course book, R&D design

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many factors influence the students' skills and abilities in learning and mastering grammar. Based on the experiences of lecturers, the students's grammatical competence in English study program Faculty of Cultural Studies UB is inefficient reflected in the process of doing their final project (script writing). It is supported by the TOEFL scores of students in the year 2012/2013. It shows that only 32 students out of 851 students who got TOEFL scores above 500. It can be seen in Table 1.1 in Appendix 1 about the data of TOEFL scores of students in the year 2012/2013.

Based on the interview with lecturers and small survey conducted with the students, information was obtained that the students' motivation to learn is very low. They only spend one up to two hours to study outside classroom. They just study English when they are doing assignments. It shows that the students have lack of motivation to study independently.

The result of the interviews with lecturers shows that the students still have difficulties in understanding linguistic component presented in the process in finishing their scripts. It seems that there is discrepancy between the linguistic level contained in the textbook and the students' background knowledge of linguistic component especially grammatical structure.

Discussion on the existing instructional materials RPKPS and the previous coursebooks of sentence structure and structure analysis reveals that the materials having been used relied heavily on exercises designed on focus or form, being compiled from various coursebooks on teaching structure. Revision is essential to the syllabus and the instructional materials. The existing materials for grammar are still oriented on traditional grammar.

In addition, the researchers believe that the current student coursebook for teaching grammar is more suitable with the latest students in the year 2013/2014 because it is composed based on students competences. In fact, the students who graduated from secondary schools applied the curriculum that refers to the use of reading texts as the basis of studying English. Therefore, the current student book supplied by some reading texts in every unit.

Instructional materials express linguistic content, methodology, and learning outcomes. The linguistic content should reflect how the insights of linguistics to language teaching are utilized. It is suggested that traditional perspective linguistics which is not based on scientific study of language no longer becomes the main reference for the content. Descriptive oriented grammar, and including systemic functional linguistics (SFL), can be the source of the content of teaching materials.

In the last decade, the development of language teaching still focused or concentrated on form, which includes emphasis on grammar. If we understand 'grammar' in its modern sense, however, not as a set of prescriptive rules or a form of behaviour, but as an internalised linguistic system or competence, which enables a speaker to produce as well as understand an indefinite number of sentences in a language, Hung (cited in SEAMEO Regional Language Centre 2003).

The instructional materials should represent student outcomes which consist of student's interest and student's need. In this case, the instructional materials in the current student coursebook include communicative approach. The communicative approach is not a system which replaces older ones, but rather alters and expands the components of existing ones in terms of language content, course products and learning process. Communicative goals have brought about a more comprehensive view of language component. Consequently, content in the curriculum has been expanded to include not only structures, situations and themes or topics, but also concept (notions) and functions Dubin and Olshtain (1996).

Therefore, the researchers want to see the relationship among the grammatical structure with linguistics, socio-cultural context, and teacher's professional development. There are three types of grammar, namely form grammar, forms grammar and meaningful grammar. In fact, the existing materials of grammatical coursebooks still focus on

grammar's form and forms. This study attempts to create the current grammatical coursebook with combining and synthesizing the existing materials which still focus on form and forms grammar with the meaningful grammar.

Based on the problem that has already been discussed in the previous paragraph, the researchers propose to develop English materials for teaching grammar to the first students of English study program in the first semester in the year 2012/2013. Selection in structure course book is commercially produced will be conducted.

On the basis of the background of the study that is inappropriate English grammar course book for students which is based on communicative grammar. The study is intended to make a selection on the existing materials. Then, the study is expected to contribute the improvement of quality in teaching grammar through the availability of coursebook pertinent to communicative exercises on learning grammar for the students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This part reviews some literature related to the role of materials, materials development and previous study.

### **The Role of Materials**

Material plays an influential role in teaching and learning programs. Therefore, language teachers should determine materials that suit their students. This fact is supported by some researchers. Cunningsworth, as quoted in Richards (2001:251), summarizes the role of materials (particularly course books) in language teaching as follows:

First, a textbook is as a resource for presentation materials. Second, it is as a source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction. Third, it is a reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation. Fourth, it is a source of stimulation and ideas for classroom activities, and a syllabus (that reflects the learning objectives determined). Fifth, it is a support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain confidence. [Richards, 2001, p. 251]

Materials are important for both teachers and students. "Some teachers use materials as their primary teaching resources," (Richards, 2001:251). The materials determine the content of the lessons, the skills taught, and the kinds of language practice that students are to participate in. Similarly, Allwright (in Kitao, 1997:1) states that, "materials should teach students to learn, that they should be the resources for ideas, and activities for instruction or learning and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do." In addition, Dubin and Olshtain (1996: 31) states that "materials draw on the content of a syllabus, reducing broader objective to more manageable ones." Thus, according to Richards (2001:252), "for learners, materials provide the major source of contact they have with the language apart from the teacher." That is why materials and the other elements, such as curriculum, teaching methods, and evaluation should be designed for learners and their needs in the real life.

## Materials Development

Materials development is both a field of study and practical undertaking. As a field, it studies the principles and procedure of the design, implementation, and evaluation of language teaching materials. As an undertaking, it involves the production, evaluation and adaptation of language teaching materials by teachers for their own classroom and by materials writer for sale and distribution. "Ideally these two aspects of materials development are interactive in that the theoretical studies inform and are informed by the development and the use of classroom materials" (Tomlinson, 2004).

Materials include anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language. They can be linguistics, visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. They can be presented in print, through life performance or display, on cassette, CD Room, DVD or the internet. It can be inferred that materials are crucial in language teaching and the form of materials are varied depending on the needs of the people involved in the process of language teaching and learning.

## Previous Studies

Many students think that learning English grammar is difficult. As we know, however, that many teachers have attempted to create grammar teaching a non-threatening, imaginative and useful activity in the English curriculum. It is supported by study done by Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011). In their journal about difficulties in teaching and learning grammar in EFL context, they reported a study undertaken to find the difficulties teachers face in teaching grammar to EFL students as well as those faced by students in learning it, in teacher's perception. The study is limited to EFL teachers teaching English in Omani Basic Education schools and the use of questionnaire as the research instruments. This study was mainly quantitative in design. It is aimed at investigating whether there are significant differences in teacher's perception of difficulties in relation to their gender, qualification, teaching experiences and the level they teach in school, thus providing insights into their own and their students's difficulties. Mean scores and t-test were used to interpret the data.

They conclude that both teacher's and students face serious difficulties with regard to EFL grammar instruction, students facing them to a greater extent than teachers. It is, therefore necessary to plan mediating or supplementary tasks to help learners tide over the difficulties in studying English grammar. The main findings are reported with implications. One of them is provide sufficient the curriculum document and teacher's book showing how the potential difficulties could be addressed in planning their classroom activities.

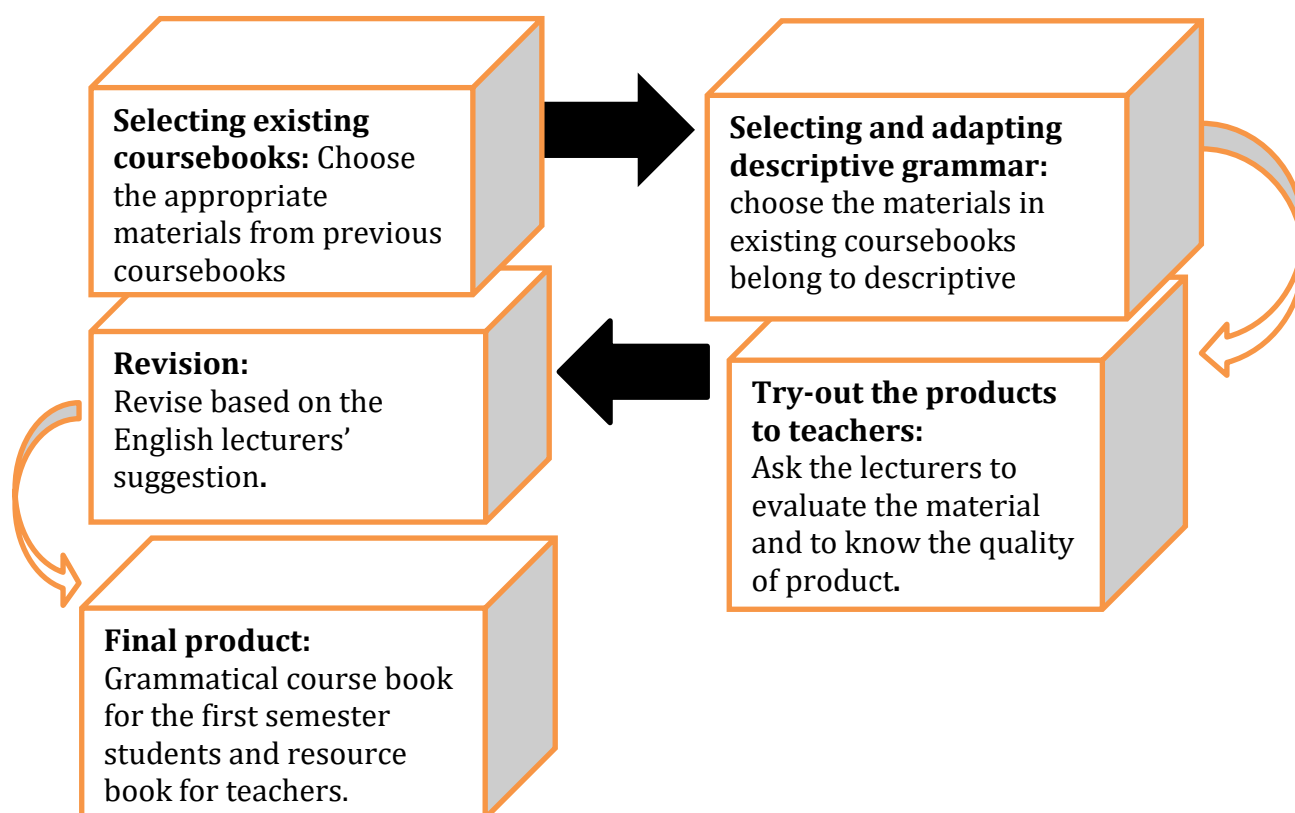
## METHOD

This part reviews research design that consists some steps namely, selecting existing coursebooks, selecting and adapting descriptive grammar, revision try-out and final product revision.

## Research Design

Based on Borg and Gall (1983), they state that a research activity that can be included in research and development if the aim of the research to produce a complete product that can be facilitated the design for this research is a developmental research since the end of the product of the study is on materials design for English grammatical course book and resource book for teachers. The process of research and development (R&D) consists of studying research finding pertinent to the product to be developed, developing the product based on the findings, field-testing the product in the setting where it would be used eventually, and revising it the correct deficiencies found in the field-test stage (Borg and Gall, 1983). Hence, the background reason of this R&D is the classroom problems related to educational products.

In line with the purpose of the study, the researchers adapt the model proposed by Borg and Gall (1983), namely: 1) selecting existing coursebooks, 2) selecting and adapting descriptive grammar, 3) try-out the product to the teachers, 4) revision, and 7) final product (see Figure 6.1). The adaptation is done with the consideration that each stage can collect data needed for developing a grammatical coursebook for the first semester students of English study program as well as the resource book for teachers.



**Figure 1.** Model in developing a coursebook (adapted from Borg and Gall, 1983)

### Selecting existing coursebooks

There are some steps that should be done in selecting existing coursebooks. First, identifying the general instructional materials objectives. Second, identifying the specific instructional objectives. Next, gathering, selecting and grading the previous or existing

grammatical coursebooks used by the first semester students. Finally, writing the materials with all the attendant requirements accomplished, form, selecting and grading materials, writing activities and task is not a problem.

### ***Selecting and Adapting Descriptive Grammar***

The next procedure is selecting descriptive grammar, the researchers choose and adapt grammatical materials in the existing coursebooks that belong to descriptive grammar. A descriptive grammar looks at the way a language used by its speakers and then try to analyze it and formulate rules about the structure. It is a grammar based on the way a language actually is and not how some think it should be. In conclusion, the English grammar teachers examine the principal and patterns that underlie the use of words, phrases, clauses and sentences. In contrast, prescriptive grammarians attempt to enforce rules concerning "correct" or "incorrect" usage.

### ***Revision***

At the revision, the researchers revise the developed material based on the feedback from the English lecturers. All data are compiled and analyzed. These activities help the researchers to determine the choices of questions of lay-out, font type, instructions, cover, content of the textbook, language, and development of tasks matched to the first semester students English study program of Cultural Studies Faculty of Universitas Brawijaya Malang, East Java Indonesia.

### ***Try-out***

The try-out is conducted at Faculty of Cultural Studies of Universitas Brawijaya. The participants are the English lecturers of Cultural Studies Faculty of Universitas Brawijaya Malang, East Java Indonesia.

During the try-out, the researchers explain how to use the English grammatical coursebook. The questionnaires are distributed to the English lecturers to get information about the materials (See Appendix 2). The questions asked to the lecturers deal with language, tasks or activity of the student coursebook and the teacher book. The data from the questionnaires given from the lecturers during try out is analyzed in quantitatively by using percentage. If at least 75% of lecturers judge the student coursebook and teacher book are appropriate for them, the products do not need to be revised.

### ***Final Product Revision***

On the basis of the questionnaires, the draft of the product is revised for the better final product. The researchers do the try-out for the English lecturers to obtain a better final product for the materials of English grammatical coursebook for are the first semester students English study program of Cultural Studies Faculty of Universitas Brawijaya. That is way the weaknesses found in the developed materials after doing try-out and distributing questionnaires become the basis for better revision.

The final product is the student coursebook which is the compilation from many grammatical coursebooks based on contextual approach which has a relationship with

functional approach adapted from Downing and Locke written in 2004 as the resource book. Then, the current student coursebook consists of four chapters that discuss about subject, predicator, object, complement and adjunct (SPO(C)A). The composition of the student coursebook is arranged from phrase level to simple sentence.

## **FINDINGS**

The previous book consists of student book and workbook entitled "Sentence Structure". The student book and workbook were compiled by some lecturers in 2010. The student book and workbook consisted of seven units, namely present and present continuous tenses, simple past, past perfect, future tense, asking questions, nouns and pronouns. The student book and the workbook do not represent the subject description of sentence structure as stated in Faculty Of Cultural Studies Guidance Book (Buku Pedoman Pendidikan FIB). It is stated that the sentence structure has objective to give students with grammatical ability related to five part of sentence namely part of speech, simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound complex sentences.

The previous student book and workbook were still used traditional grammar methods by giving explanation first instead of giving exercise. So, the previous grammar book still used deductive strategy rather than inductive strategy which belongs to communicative approach. The use of deductive strategy usually makes the students feel bored and think that learning grammar is not interesting because the students taught by giving explanation about the form of certain tenses without giving them opportunity to find the formula of the tense by themselves. Therefore, there are some general techniques in using materials that is based on the inductive strategy usually used in functional grammar. First, the teacher uses brainstorming by asking some questions related to the topic or gives some authentic texts to be analyzed. In addition, the teacher can bring some pictures or tell story related to topics given. Therefore, the students are expected to activate their background knowledge and equip them with analytical skills to create and make them become independent learners.

## **DISCUSSION**

The researchers developed English instructional materials as supplementary materials for teaching grammar to the first semester students of English study program Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya. The current student book is based on grammar communicative approach by selecting, adapting from some current grammar textbooks which is on the basis of communicative approach composition such as Macmillan English Grammar in Context written by Vince and A Communicative Grammar of English written by Leech.

Besides, the researchers also conducted some group discussions that invited lecturers to learn and give insight about Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Besides, the researchers also continued the group discussion about how to teach grammar based on lecturer's reflection. Then, the present researchers composed the student book by using both functional and traditional grammar integrated. The student book can be used as the supplementary materials for sentence structure and structure analysis to avoid

overlapping materials, consists of five units. Every unit is started with some texts that represent the title of the unit which is still based on the type of English tenses namely; simple present, present continuous, past simple, past continuous and past perfect tenses. Then, the researchers tried to stimulate students in analyzing sentences in some authentic texts which are suitable with the topic of each unit. The researchers attempt to elaborate Unit 1 until Unit 5 as follows:

#### *Unit 1: Simple Present*

In this unit, there are five texts that include simple present sentences. Students are asked to read those texts to identify and categorize the sentences into Subject, Predicator and Complement (SPC). Then, students assigned to do some exercises related to the use of simple present tense and extension activity that can be done outside the classroom. The complete materials of Unit 1 can be seen in Appendix 1.

#### *Unit 2: Present Continuous*

There are two texts related to the use of present continuous tense in this unit. Students are intended to read those texts, answer some questions related to the texts and categorize the sentences into Subject, Predicator and Complement (SPC). Then, students assigned to do some exercises related to the use of simple present tense and extension activity that can be done outside the classroom.

#### *Unit 3: Past Simple*

There are two texts related to the use of past simple in this unit. Students are expected to read those texts, answer some questions related to the texts and categorize the sentences into Subject, Predicator and Complement (SPC). Then, students assigned to do some exercises related to the use of simple present tense and extension activity that can be done outside the classroom.

#### *Unit 4: Past Continuous*

There are two texts related to the use of past continuous tense in this unit. Students are intended to read those texts, answer some questions related to the texts and categorize the sentences into Subject, Predicator and Complement (SPC). Then, students assigned to do some exercises related to the use of simple present tense and extension activity that can be done outside the classroom.

#### *Unit 5: Present Perfect*

There are two texts related to the use of past perfect in this unit. Students are intended to read those texts, answer some questions related to the texts and categorize the sentences into Subject, Predicator and Complement (SPC). Then, students assigned to do some exercises related to the use of simple present tense and extension activity that can be done outside the classroom.

After composing the current student book, the researchers conducted try out as one of steps in R&D (Research and Development) to make the data is valid or convinced. Therefore, we invite five English grammar lecturers to fill the validator checklist that



contain questionnaire and give some comments related to the aspects of creating and developing the textbook. It can be seen in Appendix 3.

Based on the result of try out that was conducted toward five English grammar lecturers, it concluded that the current students coursebook still need to be revised in terms of the topic of unit and the content of the book. There are some suggestion from the English grammar lecturers such as; it would be better to take the text from other sources instead of from Wikipedia and the instructions for part D on page 7 are considered unclear. Therefore, the researchers need to make follow up research related to the additional topics that is pertinent with the content of the book.

## CONCLUSION

Nowadays, we cannot teach grammar by using prescriptive grammar and separating from other language skills. As stated previously, we use communicative approach that is not a system which replaces older ones, but modifies and develops the components of the existing ones in terms of language content, course product and learning process. Therefore, the researchers revise the previous coursebook by developing instructional materials based on communicative approach.

## SUGGESTIONS

Hopefully, this research can improve the quality of teaching grammar by providing instructional materials that integrated with other language skills. Then, the research can contribute in giving insight to the lecturers to know Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and teach their students by using communicative approach. Next, this research can improve the students' understanding in using grammar.

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