

## Developing the Materials of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Subject through Lesson Study

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### **Abstract**

*This research aims to develop Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) material through Lesson Study. This research method is qualitative with the subject of this research being TEFL subject lecturers, collaborative lecturers, and UMK English Education Department students who joined TEFL subjects at the Department of English Language Education at Universitas Muria Kudus. Data was collected using observation sheets and documentation during the learning process. Data analysis starts with data reduction, data presentation, and data verification on qualitative data analysis. The results show that through the Lesson Study approach teachers can engage in professional development that leads to activities encouraging learning change. Lesson study can be implemented not only to have a better teaching and learning process but also to develop the subject matter being taught. The procedure for developing this subject matter is in line with the learning stages of the lesson, namely Planning, Conducting, Finding, and Reflecting.*

**Keywords:** *materials of teaching, english as a foreign language, lesson study, learning model*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

It is exceedingly interesting to state that material development on a subject matter is not only the hope and the work of teachers but also the need and the hope of the society to improve the quality of learning and teaching process. Needs, in some instances, are related not only to his teaching objectives but also to other matters and environmental problems. The value of education in Indonesia has been established in the national education system that teachers need to integrate into learning [1]. The development of subject matter material in Indonesia that both teachers and students develop subject matter based on multicultural contexts [2]. They explained that teacher needs were developed based on (a) teacher knowledge, (b) teachers' views on multicultural education, (c) multicultural activities in schools, and (d) realization of the learning process. For them, the concept of guidance for subject matter material development was compiled based on multicultural context. Their finding informed the contribution of multicultural context on the development of subject matter material which is supported by the fact that as a place to transfer knowledge and culture, schools have a strategic role in realizing all activities that contain multicultural essence. This fact happens because students of a school in Indonesia come from several regions with their own social and cultural diversity. Interestingly, students' cultural background influence students' background knowledge which in turn influence their communication and progress in teaching and learning process.

Another perspective on developing teaching material, Lips & Kikkull (2017) found that different work instructions that deal directly with real products are still a favourite of technology teachers even though textbooks are the most widely used learning material among teachers [3]. At the same time, before students begin practical work, students need different basic knowledge and skills. This means that teaching materials can also be developed based on activities carried out or practised by the community. Other efforts on improving teaching quality as well as developing teaching material are also made in the

framework of lesson study, which is a teaching strategy which is proposed by Japanese teachers to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Lesson studies contribute to a better performance of the teaching practice process. Lesson study also promotes teacher competency in social studies students [4]. Also, class teachers and students' social teachers recognize the importance of continuing to improve learning that can be done by implementing a Lesson Study. Cerbin & Kopp (2006) also reported having used lesson study to build pedagogical knowledge and to improve teaching. They discussed the success of implementing a lesson study to create pedagogical knowledge and to better their teaching practice [5].

The discussion above shows that some frameworks can be applied to develop the material of a subject matter and research on material development is critical when it viewed from both the teacher and students' needs. This research tried to approach the idea of developing the material of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) subject through lesson study. The reason is simply that the teaching and learning process of English class as a foreign language has changed rapidly, relating to the rapid development of technology and communication. On the other hand, the theory and practice of lesson study have become a new trend in enhancing collaboration between teachers and students in improving better teaching and learning activity.

## **1.2. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Subject**

TEFL subject is one of the compulsory subjects taught to students of the English Education Department of the University of Muria Kudus (UMK), Central Java, Indonesia. UMK is a private University which is existed in Kudus city, Central Java, Indonesia. English Education is of the department whose students are trained and prepared to be English teachers for Junior or Senior High Schools. As prospective English teachers, they must take several pedagogical subjects to build their pedagogical competencies. One of the pedagogical subjects in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) subject. This subject gives students some material to build them into English teachers who can manage the teaching and learning process of English in non-English speaking countries such as Indonesia. It means that English may be spoken only in the class of English language subject as both students and teachers speak their mother tongue, i.e. Indonesian. Additionally, the mean language for the learning and teaching process of other subjects and textbooks is also in the Indonesian language. That is why it can be stated that students of English class in Indonesia have minimal exposure to either spoken or written English.

In this context of using English, Indonesian teachers of English language subjects have to be able to manage the learning and teaching process which is proposed to provide students with English language competence to learn resources that are written in English. Students are also hoped to be able to communicate both spoken and written with English speaking people. Moreover, they are also hoped to have no language handicapped when they want to join an overseas university. Students of the English Education Department of UMK have to be able to cope with all of that complex and complicated atmosphere of the teaching and learning process of English language subjects as discussed above. That is why when they take the TEFL subject, the class is started by a discussion on how to provide formative feedback to students as it is known as a critical factor in influencing learning [6]. They critically state that the modern interactive learning environment provides various ways to provide feedback and new tools for students to understand the relationship of feedback with learning outcomes. Therefore, the UMK English Education Department students must master TEFL subjects. Students discuss approaches and methods in teaching English, strategies and techniques in teaching English. Students also discuss Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), and Teaching English as

Lingua Franca. This four-credit semester also gives space for the students to discuss how to behave good characters of being a teacher.

Related to the role of formative feedback in the learning interactions of UMK English Language Education Department students, the material provides student teachers to utilize technologies to support and enhance student learning and understanding of feedback mechanisms. The materials cover several topics as suggested by Goldin et al. (2017) started from the domain of learning, feedback strategies, and active learning techniques for understanding feedback in an interactive learning environment [6].

This subject also provides student teachers with an understanding that Language is a free bird, but grammar tries to put it in a cage without much success, as suggested by Krishnaswamy (2014). He argues that language like feminine is eternal, and grammar tries to impose its masculine authority. He further said that both language and grammar were not logical, like all humans. There is a constant tension between language and grammar, but grammar is a necessary crime. In language teaching, the current context must be considered, and the only language must be taught and not grammar. Therefore, he believes that teachers must know grammar, but students must be taught languages. Based on Krishnaswamy's opinion and suggestion (2014), TEFL subject also provides the student [7]. The teacher's method of teaching English to students in Indonesia needs to increase creativity in using methods so that the learning process will be more fun and interesting for students [8]. Therefore, they were interested in improving students' performance in English using one of the stands out measurement, which is blended learning. Their reason was apparent that over the years, the performance in English of students has been very unsatisfactory.

For the same reason, the TEFL subject provides students with teaching skill, namely blended learning. This subject is to facilitate students with sufficient background knowledge and to make them aware of the development of thinking on the teaching of English as a foreign language. Additionally, this subject trains the student to be able to draw links between the theory of English teaching and technology as they live in the era of digital technology. The material is organized into several phases of the teaching and learning process to achieve these goals. In the previous meetings, the basic knowledge of Approaches and Method in English teaching and the other sub materials which have been mentioned above are presented and discussed. School and its environment are crucial for student teachers because teaching and learning process is usually developed there. For this reason, the second program is bringing students to realize the real things and facts of English teaching to Schools. What they have to do in this very challenging activity is just joining the English classroom at Senior High Schools to observe the English teaching and learning process.

Why is it called challenging? Because the primary purpose of this activity is to open students' minds about events in English classes in Indonesia. Therefore, observations must include the approaches and methods applied by teachers, interactions between teachers and students, interactions between students and students, development of material and overall class management. In some meetings at the end semester, students have to perform teaching simulation. This activity is developed based on assumptions that all students have good insight and inspiration about classroom management, material development, teaching method, and media and some other things dealing with English teaching during their classroom observation. Everything they got during their classroom observations is good references about practical English teaching in all of the plus and minus. Therefore they are hoped to be able to create a better plan and teaching action than the teachers whom they observed. The activities of teaching simulation are preceded by discussing the teaching plan, material development, the method which will be applied in the teaching-learning process. However, not all students are asked to have teaching practice as it is only a tentative step during the simulation because teaching practice in a small class is a part of the Micro Teaching Subject.

### 1.3. Lesson Study

A lesson study is believed to be able to create a safe environment in which colleagues can collaborate [9]. For them, this has the potential to empower teachers by showing their abilities so that they can improve the practice and learning of their students. Building this efficacy for teachers is one of the great attractions of the learning process. He further said that lesson study had impacted him more as a teacher than he ever could have imagined. It took him a couple of years of doing lesson study before he realized that it is not about designing the “perfect lesson” or learning the right teacher moves. He began doing lesson study because he wanted to become a better teacher. Cerbin & Kopp (2006) proposed in their research to explore how Lesson Study practices create many pathways to improve teaching and how teachers create knowledge can help to advance teaching practices in their fields [5]. They finally found that lesson study is a meaningful and manageable level of analysis for investigating teaching and learning. They also found that the study of higher education was an opportunity to work together on substantive issues and problems related to teaching and learning with colleagues. Although instructors only design one lesson, they learn from the experience for the classroom and other contexts. The potential of lesson study has been explored for the development of teaching science in the form of John Dewey's "laboratory model" for teaching and learning. The finding of his research shows that lesson study provides a strong basis for the development of practitioner-based teaching knowledge when informed by explicit learning theories or variation theories [10]. It is interesting to note here that continuous and high-quality professional development is a great need for teachers to improve teacher teaching and student learning [11]. Education reform must provide teachers with the right support structures that encourage essential work in the ongoing improvement of pedagogical practices [12]–[14].

Lesson study (Jugyoukenkyu) is a teacher professional development inquiry model that has been used extensively throughout Japan. Jugyoukenkyu began to attract the attention of the American education community as a potential strategy. They also proposed the use of Lesson study (Jugyoukenkyu), to enhance the professional development of teachers in America. It is clear that for Rock & Wilson (2005), lesson study is worth for enhancing teacher professional development [11]. Their research relates to the teacher's perception of subject studies as a process of professional development and how controlled studies influence teacher instruction. This finding proves the effectiveness of lesson study in terms of examining and improving their practice. Most of the learning lessons in teacher education seem to report success stories [15]. This statement contradictory from the implementation of lesson studies in Norwegian teacher education. The result shows that some crucial aspects are missing from lesson study. Student teachers do not formulate research questions for their research lessons and do not focus on observing student learning. Consequently, their lessons are not organized to make student learning visible [15].

However, Lenski et al. (2009) believed that the lesson study approach encourages teachers to engage in professional development. They became active in planning reform. Lesson study also draws the teacher's attention to acting instructional on student learning. Also, lesson study allows the teacher to observe students during the planned teaching process. Lesson Study can be used to develop teaching material [16].

## 2. Methodology

This qualitative research was aimed at developing the material of TEFL subject based on applying lessons in the classes of TEFL subject in the English Education Department on Universitas Muria Kudus (UMK). The subjects of the research were the lecturer of TEFL subject and two collaborative lecturers and students of the English Education Department of UMK who joined the TEFL subject. Data obtained by observation and documentation of lecturers, collaborators and students. Data is collected during the whole learning process.

In the Planning step, all participants' ideas and suggestions for improving teaching and learning and developing subject matter are documented. Student participation is considered as a contribution needed for the development of subject matter and is also recorded and documented. The data were then analyzed by using qualitative data analysis, which was (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation and (3) verification. Data reduction was made because in a specific case, collaborators and student's contributions were sometimes not in line with the syllabus of TEFL subject and the purpose of teaching. Data presentations were important to share with all collaborators to have final comments and recommendations. The final analysis before compiling the contribution for material development was verification. This analysis was done to confirm all material development with the syllabus.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

The process of the material development of TEFL subject through lesson study was the process of managing the teaching and learning process in the model of lesson study. Applying the Lesson Study model is simply known as applying collaborative teaching with some teachers/ lecturers and several steps to gain a successful teaching and learning process, which focuses on the student's activity. The main framework is how to enjoy the teaching and learning process with specific steps to optimize student participation. The keys to the success of this teaching model are then teacher collaboration and student participation [17]. The finding of this research is in line with the findings of Lenski et al. (2009) state that the Lesson Study approach is a way for teachers to engage in professional development that leads to activities that encourage learning change. They also emphasized that when teachers meet in the professional learning community to discuss planning, they become active participants in reform [16]. This research was designed to engage in the lecturers in professional learning communities to discuss how to develop learning material of TEFL, meaning that what the researchers did was on the right track of promoting professional learning.

The process of the material development of TEFL through lesson study can be described as the followings:

#### **3.1. Planning**

This phase was initiated by discussing the learning achievements, the learning material, method and strategy, classroom management and media, moderated by the lecturer of the subject matter. All participants joined the discussion. The reference for deciding the learning achievements is the student's competence as demanded in the curriculum. Students learning achievements which were discussed gave the rank or scale of the material development implicitly. In other words, the process of material development began at the very first step when the participants of the lesson study discussed the learning achievements. The second discussion was on method and strategy, which will be applied to gain students' learning achievements.

Fujii's (2016) research shows that at planning meetings, teachers often refer to the National Study Course when they need to confirm the role of the unit or focus the lesson, in the whole curriculum. The teachers at S school talked about rapid placement in the previous National Study Course [18]. This is more difficult communication in countries that do not have an explicit curriculum. The primary reference for deciding method and strategy were learning achievements and learning material. The next discussion was on the use of media and classroom management. These parts of teaching and learning activity were thought to be very important to promote the successful learning of the students. Therefore, the discussion on these two crucial parts was also done in the framework of achieving the learning goals. The result of this phase was what the so-called Lesson Design, which provides overall teaching and learning program to the lecturer to apply in the next phase. Lesson Design is, as a matter of fact, a kind portrait of material development. It can also be

stated that Lesson design describes how the lecturers will succeed in the material development of a subject.

### **3.2. Doing**

In this phase, the Lesson Design had to be applied by the lecturer in the teaching-learning process, which was managed in the following steps:

**Introduction:** Lecturer shared the learning objectives, plans, and materials to provide relevant information to the students on the whole learning materials. In this step, the lecturer also motivates the students to join and learn the material actively. Additionally, the importance of Teaching English as a Foreign Language Subject was also discussed to engage in students to the subject.

**Presentation:** The lecturer discussed the topic and subtopic of the material as listed in Lesson Design. Some important points were elicited to trigger students to think more and more on the topic of the discussion. In turn, students tried to open their minds by confirming the lecturer's talk with some references they have had.

**Students Activity:** That is the session where the class was ready to move on to the next activity, such as small group discussion or classroom discussion. The interesting thing which was found during small group discussion or classroom discussion was the students' idea to develop and elaborate on the material. Almost all of the groups proposed the idea of having English classroom observation in Senior High Schools.

### **3.3. Seeing and Reflecting**

The collaborative lecturers observed teaching and learning activity with the main task, which was to get the data about what and how students learned during the whole process. Those collaborative lecturers were not permitted to interrupted during the observation. What they did were taking notes on what they saw and felt, taking pictures or short film. However, everything they did must be about the student's activities during the teaching and learning process. Data collected during observation includes several questions such as: (1) whether all students studied the topic and joined the discussion, (2) how they learned, and (3) how many of them were involved in learning. These data are discussed in the reflection step. The aim is to have a better understanding of the management of teaching and learning activities, the role of students and their contribution during the teaching and learning process, as well as how to engage students and how to develop material. The implementation of Lesson Study, which is used to develop TEFL subject matter, also has problems and flaws at almost all stages. The first problem and handicap appeared in the step of planning. This was the step where the lecturer and the collaborative lecturer worked and discussed to plan teaching and learning program. The discussion covered not only the topic and subtopic of the material and its development but also the method, strategy and teaching technique, the role and participation of the students.

During the step of planning, the role of the lecturer who teaches the subject and the collaborative lecturers were the same, meaning that their contribution would be much appreciated as they will be very beneficial to the next step of the study. Unfortunately, this was the context where the collaborative lecturers felt that they were in the wrong place because their core was not the subject matter being discussed. This was only a kind of psychological problem which then could be overcome by enriching the references during the discussion, clarifying some terms and definition and building background knowledge and assumption on the subject matter.

The second handicap arouses during the step of doing where all potentials were applied and focused. Students tried hard to position themselves in order to be able to participate actively in whatever condition they had at that time. Additionally, the presence of some

collaborative lecturers as observers indirectly influenced the interpersonal communication between students and between students and the lecturers. This made an unfriendly teaching and learning atmosphere where both students and the lecturer arrived in the situation of being “wait and see” the next program.

The third handicap appeared in the third step, reflection. This is a general "difficult" step where almost all participants are reluctant to present their observations. The common problem was triggered by the culture of being “not easy” to tell the truth. Unfortunately, when they were ready to talk, the focus of the observation reports was on the lecturer’s activity. This is not the core of the reflection step, as this step should be used to discuss students' activity during the teaching and learning process. The use of authentic materials in language teaching is a useful tool to motivate students, arouse their interests and expose them to the real language that they will encounter in the real world [19].

Overall, Lesson study can be implemented not only to have better teaching and learning process but also to develop the material of the subject matter being taught. The procedure for developing the material of the subject matter was in line with the stages of Lesson study, i.e. Planning, Doing, Seeing and Reflecting. Several ideas concerning material development proposed by the participants almost in all stages. The "plan-do-see" cycle process is supported by professional development research and any learning from experience, and co-workers' practices must contribute to the general improvement in teaching [20]. Lesson Study is a collaborative process where teachers observe, analyze, and evaluate each class's actual learning, especially to improve their learning [21]. Lesson study helped encourage teachers to be more introspective in their instructional planning and decisions [22].

Several problems or handicaps, of course, appeared during the implementation of lesson study to develop the material of the subject matter. The psychological condition caused the handicaps among participants as they were used to talk about the teacher than students. Unfortunately, the handicaps appeared in all stages of Lesson Study with their characters depended on what they did and how they participate in each stage.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Lesson study can be implemented not only to have a better teaching and learning process but also to develop the subject matter being taught. The procedure for developing this subject matter is in line with the learning stages of the lesson, namely Planning, Conducting, Finding, and Reflecting. The procedure for developing this subject matter is in line with the stages of learning, namely Planning, Doing, Looking and Reflecting. Some ideas about the development of material submitted by participants in almost all stages. Some problems, of course, arise during the implementation of Lesson Study in developing subject matter. The problem was caused by psychological conditions the participants because they were accustomed to talking about teachers rather than students. Problems arise at all stages of Lesson Study with their character depending on they do and how they participate in each stage.

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