

JURNAL

ISSN 1978-8118

Lingua
CULTURA

Vol. 6 No. 2 November 2012

Jurnal Lingua Cultura	Vol. 6	No. 2	Hlm. 117-218	Jakarta November 2012	ISSN 1978-8118
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Lingua CULTURA

JURNAL
ISSN 1978-8118

Vol. 6 No. 2 November 2012

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Kampus Anggrek

Jl. Kebon Jeruk Raya No.27 Kebon Jeruk

Jakarta Barat 11530

Telp. 021-5350660 (ext. 1189) Fax. 021-5300244

Lingua CULTURA

JURNAL
ISSN 1978-8118

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**THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS
IN IMPROVING LEARNERS' UNDERSTANDING
IN USING GRAMMAR:
A CASE STUDY AT PAMULANG UNIVERSITY AND BINUS UNIVERSITY**

Djasminar Anwar¹; Menik Winiharti²

¹Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Pamulang
Jl. Surya Kencana No.1 Pamulang-Tangerang

²English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Binus University
Jl. Kemanggisian Ilir III No. 45, Kemanggisian/Palmerah, Jakarta 11480
menikwiniharti@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the use of authentic materials for non-English Department Students at Pamulang University, Tangerang, and BINUS University, Jakarta. Both universities have classes of English III which uses published materials and TOEFL course books. Authentic materials are provided to support the materials in the compulsory textbook. It is done to encourage students to more understand the grammar. The approach used in this study involves a pre-test, quizzes, and a post test. All these tools are used to measure whether there is a progress of the students' performance. The students' progress is summarized and shown in tables. Additionally, at the end of the semester, after the post test is given, a questionnaire is distributed to the students to know the students' opinion about the provided authentic materials.

Keywords: *authentic materials, grammar, pre-test, quizzes, post test*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas penggunaan bahan otentik untuk Mahasiswa selain dari Program Studi Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Pamulang, Tangerang, dan BINUS University, Jakarta. Kedua universitas ini memiliki kelas bahasa Inggris III yang menggunakan materi-materi yang telah diterbitkan dan buku-buku pelajaran TOEFL. Bahan otentik disediakan untuk mendukung materi dalam buku teks wajib. Hal ini dilakukan untuk mendorong mahasiswa untuk lebih memahami tata bahasa. Pendekatan yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini melibatkan pre-test, kuis, dan post test. Semua alat ini digunakan untuk mengukur apakah ada kemajuan kinerja mahasiswa. Kemajuan mahasiswa dirangkum dan disajikan dalam bentuk tabel. Pada akhir semester setelah post test diberikan, kuesioner dibagikan kepada mahasiswa untuk mengetahui pendapat siswa tentang bahan-bahan otentik yang disediakan.

Kata kunci: *bahan otentik, tata bahasa, pre-test, kuis, post test*

INTRODUCTION

As the idea of teaching English is to use English to communicate both in oral and written way, a learner has to be able to use correct grammar. What is to write and speak must be based on correct grammar, so the messages conveyed can be understood. Harmer (2007) points out that the right sentences are those which contain the right structures.

Grammar used in the real world is applied in four skills of English, i.e. speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These skills are very prominent to be mastered by the language learners, so grammar is a crucial thing to be understood. In teaching and learning process, most textbooks used are published materials. When these materials are used again and again, it can make the learners bored and become uninterested in studying the language. To deal with this problem, a teacher can provide a supplementary material which is a good choice to support the main course books. The supplementary materials are generally known as authentic materials.

Authentic material according to Richards and Schmidt is defined as:

“In language teaching, the use of materials that were not originally developed for pedagogical purposes, such as the use of magazines, newspapers, advertisements, news reports, or songs. Such materials are often thought to contain more realistic and natural examples of language use than those found in textbooks and other specially developed teaching materials.” (Richards dan Schmidt, 2002, 42)

Authentic texts can be used in language teaching because the text was considered attractive, engaging learners, culturally enlightening, relevant, and motivating; it is the best preparation for reading authentic texts and understanding authentic conversation or speech. (Day, 2002, 2-3) Another reason for the use of authentic materials, according to Day, is because the material in the textbook is simplified (simplified materials) which is usually not real and is not natural and can cause a deadlock in language teaching. This is in accordance with what Wilkins (1976) has proposed in Guariento and Morley (2001) that the authentic materials are used in the classroom with the hope that students are exposed to the language used in the real world and this will help them achieve a certain level of proficiency in the language. Even Guariento and Morley (2001, 347) argue that in teaching there is now a general consensus on the use of authentic materials in the classroom which is beneficial to the learning process. Meanwhile, Melvin and Stout (1987) have concluded that students who work with authentic materials have an interest in the language because they can do something with that material. Students who previously are reluctant to learn later realize that the material could be useful for further achievement.

At Pamulang University and BINUS University, English III classes use the published materials as TOEFL course books. The students who take English III have taken English I and English II. From their academic achievement, most lecturers have similar opinion that the students are still weak both in fluency and accuracy. To cope with this problem, supplementary materials – authentic materials – can be provided.

The study focuses on the use of authentic materials in classes of English III for non-English Department students. The problems that will be investigated are: (1) can the use of authentic materials improve the students' understanding in using English grammar? (2) do the students get motivated and challenged to learn English more? (3) what are the students' opinions toward the use of authentic materials?

METHOD

The research methodology involves data source, data collection, and analysis.

Data Sources

The data of the research are gathered from the students who take English III classes in the even semester from February to June 2011. They are 19 students from Pamulang University and 30 students from BINUS University. The Pamulang University students are majoring in computer science, while the students of BINUS University are majoring in computerized Accounting.

Data Collection

At the first session, a pre-test is given to know the students' ability before the authentic materials are provided for one semester. Then in every two sessions, an authentic material is given to enrich the learning process. After that, quizzes are provided to know whether the students more understand the discussions. At the end of the semester, there is a post-test which is held to measure the students' final performance. In addition, a questionnaire is distributed to know the students' opinion about the authentic materials that are provided for one semester. The results of the pre-test, quizzes, and post-test are analyzed to find whether there is a progress.

Data Analysis

After all the data are collected, the analysis is done based on the results of the pre-test, quizzes, and post test. These results are analyzed to see whether there is a progress related to what the students have learned during the semester regarding the authentic materials that have been given. The students' progress is described in tables. In addition, there is a questionnaire which results in the opinion of the students toward the authentic materials given. The students' opinion is categorized into several items based on the questions in the questionnaire. They are: (1) whether the materials are interesting and challenging; (2) whether the students enjoy the class activities; (3) whether the students understand the materials given; (4) whether they are more motivated to learn; (5) whether they are improving.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-Test Results

At the very first session, before the first lecture began, a pre-test is given to the students to measure their general ability in English, especially grammar. Therefore, the students should not know that they were going to have a test. In other words, they are not prepared at all to do the test.

The following tables show the result of the pre-test of the students of Pamulang University and BINUS University (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1. The result of the Pre-test at Pamulang University

Student	Score
1	81
2	74
3	68
4	66
5	64
6	62
7	60
8	60
9	60
10	56
11	55
12	54
13	52
14	52
15	52
16	50
17	50
18	48
19	48

Table 1 shows that only 1 of 19 students scores 81. In other words, there is 5,26% of the students score above or equal to 80. Also only 1 or 5.26% of the students scores 70 to 79. 7 or 36.84% of the students obtain 60 to 69. 8 or 842.11% students obtain 50 to 59. 2 or 10.53% of the students obtain score below 50. From these numbers it is assumed that more than 50% of the students scored low even very low (below 60) in the pre-test held at Pamulang University.

Table 2. The result of the Pre-test at BINUS University

Student	Score
1	85
2	82
3	80
4	72
5	68
6	62
7	62
8	62
9	58
10	58
11	56
12	56
13	52

14	52
15	52
16	50
17	50
18	50
19	50
20	48
21	48
22	46
23	46
24	44
25	44
26	36
27	36
28	34
29	32
30	30

Table 2 shows that only 3 or 10% of 30 students score above or equal to 80. Meanwhile, only 1 or 0,03% of the students scores in the range of 70 to 79; 4 or 13.33% of the students score in the range of 60 to 69; 11 or 36.67% students score in the range of 50 to 59. In addition, 11 or 36.67% of the students score below 50. These figures show that more than 50% of students score low or very low (below 60) in the pre-test held at BINUS University.

Quiz Results

Starting from session 2, after the pre-test, the students are provided with authentic materials taken from several sources. They are texts or articles in newspapers, magazines, novels, comics, as well as scripts of movies. The discussion using these materials is based on the topics in the course outline.

In every two or three sessions, the students have a quiz dealing with a certain topic. Overall, there were 5 quizzes held during the whole semester in addition to the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 3 and 4 describe the result of the quizzes held at Pamulang University and BINUS University respectively.

Table 3. The result of the Quizzes at Pamulang University

Student	Quiz 1	Quiz 2	Quiz 3	Quiz 4	Quiz 5	Average
1	78	74	74	78	80	76,5
2	74	76	78	76	78	76,4
3	68	70	65	65	70	67,6
4	64	66	70	70	72	68,4
5	68	70	72	76	78	72,8
6	64	68	70	76	72	70
7	70	72	70	74	74	72
8	64	66	64	66	72	66,4
9	64	68	66	68	78	68,8

10	60	66	70	75	75	69,2
11	62	64	64	66	66	64,4
12	66	62	64	66	66	64,8
13	68	76	78	75	80	75,4
14	58	64	62	66	68	63,8
15	60	62	65	70	78	67
16	58	63	65	70	75	66,2
17	66	73	76	78	80	74,6
18	55	65	70	73	78	68,2
19	52	64	68	70	77	66,2

Table 3 shows that there is no single student scores above 80. 7 or 36.84% of the students obtain a score in the range of 70 to 79. 12 or 63.16% of the students obtain a score in the range of 60 to 69, and no student scores below 60. These figures indicate that in doing the quizzes the students demonstrate their ability at an average level, because no one scores very good or very low.

Table 4. The result of the Quizzes at BINUS University

Student	Quiz 1	Quiz 2	Quiz 3	Quiz 4	Quiz 5	Average
1	86	85	85	92	92	88
2	78	85	85	90	88	85
3	81	82	75	76	78	78
4	66	78	77	85	83	78
5	73	85	83	82	85	82
6	69	76	82	83	83	79
7	75	80	80	80	85	80
8	81	80	84	84	83	82
9	50	63	63	65	60	60
10	61	75	75	84	82	75
11	67	79	84	79	84	79
12	62	73	73	69	74	70
13	75	86	86	83	88	84
14	80	90	86	86	89	86
15	65	75	79	84	85	78
16	73	70	79	82	84	78
17	79	81	82	81	85	82
18	69	81	83	83	85	80
19	65	77	85	86	86	80
20	59	63	63	60	63	62
21	79	83	83	82	80	81
22	78	85	85	86	90	85
23	50	64	60	64	67	61
24	79	79	79	81	80	80
25	70	84	80	80	84	80
26	76	82	80	85	85	82
27	85	88	88	88	90	88
28	78	78	83	85	84	82
29	60	68	70	71	75	69
30	70	70	79	75	79	75

In average, 17 or 57% of 30 students score above or equal to 80. 9 or 30% of the students score in the range of 70 to 79, while 4 or 13% of the students score in the range of 60 to 69. No scores under 60. These figures describe that in working on the questions in the quizzes, the students have

demonstrated their skills well enough because 4 students score in the range of 60-69 and no one score lower than 60.

Post-test Results

For the whole semester, the students deal with some sorts of authentic materials. In the last session a post-test is held to measure the improvement of the students' ability for one semester.

Here are the results of the post-test held at BINUS University and Pamulang University (Tabel 5 and 6).

Table 5. The Result of the Post-test at Pamulang University

Student	Score
1	88
2	86
3	83
4	82
5	80
6	78
7	75
8	76
9	78
10	78
11	73
12	74
13	80
14	70
15	72
16	67
17	80
18	76
19	80

Table 5 shows that out of 19 students, 8 students or 42.11% of the students scored above or equal to 80. 10 students or 52.63% of the students scored in range of 70-79. Only one student or 5.26% scored 67. These results suggest that in the post-test 94.74% of the Pamulang University students scored quite well.

Table 6. The Result of the Post-test at BINUS University

Student	Post-Test
1	87
2	90
3	70
4	69
5	69
6	69
7	63
8	57

9	87
10	80
11	79
12	76
13	88
14	69
15	65
16	89
17	83
18	65
19	61
20	77
21	58
22	85
23	71
24	78
25	75
26	79
27	74
28	82
29	76
30	76

Table 6 above shows that out of 30 students, 9 or 30% of the students scored above or equal to 80. 11 or 36.67% of the students scored 70 to 79, while the number of students scoring 60-69 were 8 or 26.67% of the students. There are only 2 students or 6.66% of the students scored 50-59. These results indicate that the students performed better in the post-test, as evidenced by the lack of students who scored below 55.

Summary of All Test Results

After the post-test given, the whole results of the pre-test, the average of the quizzes, and the post-test are observed to see whether the students improved after they obtain authentic materials during the semester.

Table 7 and Table 8 show the whole result of the pre-test, the quizzes and the post-test.

Table 7. The Whole Result at Pamulang University

Student	Pre-test	Average of Quizzes	Post-test	Result Analysis
1	81	76,5	88	improved
2	74	76,4	86	improved
3	68	67.6	83	improved
4	66	68,4	82	improved
5	64	72.8	80	improved

6	62	70	78	improved
7	60	72	75	improved
8	60	66,4	76	improved
9	60	68,8	78	improved
10	56	69,2	78	improved
11	55	64,4	73	improved
12	54	64.8	74	improved
13	52	75,4	80	improved
14	52	63,8	70	improved
15	52	67	72	improved
16	50	66,2	67	improved
17	50	74,6	80	improved
18	48	68,2	76	improved
19	48	66,2	80	improved

Table 7 illustrates that 19 students or 100% students from the Pamulang University show improvement and better ability both in the quizzes and post test, compared to pre-test. Nevertheless, 2 students (10.53%) show a decrease in their average result of the quizzes compared to pre-test results. However, in the post-test these students show improvement.

The table also shows that 8 students score above or equal to 80 in the post test. Thus, there is a 36.84% increase compared to the pre-test. 10 students score in the range of 70-79, which means that there is a 47.37% increase. As a result, there is a decrease of 42.11% within the score of 60-69, which means only one student scores in this range. The good fact is that there is no single student who scores below 60.

Table 8. The Whole Result at BINUS University

Student	Pre-test	Average of Quizzes	Post-Test	Analysis
1	85	88	87	improved
2	82	85	90	improved
3	80	78	70	worse
4	72	78	69	worse
5	68	82	69	improved
6	62	79	69	Improved
7	62	80	63	Improved
8	62	82	57	worse
9	58	60	87	improved
10	58	75	80	improved
11	56	79	79	Improved
12	56	70	76	Improved
13	52	84	88	improved
14	52	86	69	Worse
15	52	78	65	Improved
16	50	78	89	improved

17	50	82	83	improved
18	50	80	65	improved
19	50	80	61	improved
20	48	62	77	improved
21	48	81	58	improved
22	46	85	85	improved
23	46	61	71	improved
24	44	80	78	improved
25	44	80	75	Improved
26	36	82	79	improved
27	36	88	74	improved
28	34	82	82	improved
29	32	69	76	Improved
30	30	75	76	improved

Table 8 above illustrates that 27 or 90% of 30 students show improvement and better ability both in the post-test and quizzes compared to the pre-test. Meanwhile, 3 or 10% of the students show a decline. 16 students (53.33%) show a decrease in the post-test results compared to the average results of their quizzes. However, the post-test results show an increase compared to the pre-test results.

Table 8 also shows that as many as 9 students score above or equal to 80, meaning that there is a 20% increase compared to the pre-test results. A total of 11 students score in the range of 70-79, which means that there is a 37% increase in the score range. The improvement also happens in score range of 60-69, although it is only 0.13%. Still, there is a decrease of 30% in the range of score 50-59, which means that 2 students score low. The good news is the lack of students that earns score below 50.

Questionnaire Results

At the last session of the semester, the students are given a questionnaire about their opinion toward the materials given during the whole semester. They are asked whether the materials were interesting and challenging, whether they enjoy the class activities, whether they understand the materials given, whether they obtain more motivation to learn, and whether they are improved.

The following two tables (Table 9 and 10) describe the results of the questionnaire at Pamulang University and BINUS University.

Table 9. The Result of the Questionnaire at Pamulang University

No	Question	Students' Options		
		Yes	No	Not Sure
1	Do you think the authentic materials given in the class are interesting to study?	17		2
2	Using the authentic materials, do you think the English class becomes more interesting?	19		
3	Do you enjoy the class activities when the authentic materials are used and discussed?	15		4
4	Do you think learning English is more challenging using the authentic materials?	14	2	3

5	Does the teacher explain the grammar items in the materials?	16		3
6	From authentic materials given, do you find enough examples of the grammar items related to the course book?	18	1	
7	Do the grammar items found in the authentic materials help you understand the materials in the course book?	16		3
8	Do you find difficulties in studying the grammar items in the authentic materials given?		19	
9	Do you think you get improved on the grammar after learning English using the authentic materials?	18		1
10	Do you think you become more motivated to learn English using the materials given?	6		3
Total		139	22	19

From the column of *Students' Options*, *yes* answers illustrate that 73.16% of the students think that the material presented are interesting, challenging and motivating. In addition, they think that they are improving their grammar. On the contrary, the *no* answers indicate that there are only 3 students (1.58%) who argue that the materials presented are not exciting, challenging and motivating. Meanwhile, the *not sure* answers show that 10% of the students think that they are not certain toward their achievements and the materials provided.

Table 10. The Result of the Questionnaire at BINUS University

No	Question	Students' Options		
		Yes	No	Not Sure
1	Do you think the authentic materials given in the class are interesting to study?	22	4	4
2	Using the authentic materials, do you think the English class becomes more interesting?	16	7	7
3	Do you enjoy the class activities when the authentic materials are used and discussed?	15	6	9
4	Do you think learning English is more challenging using the authentic materials?	18	6	6
5	Does the teacher explain the grammar items in the materials?	28	1	1
6	From authentic materials given, do you find enough examples of the grammar items related to the course book?	18	6	6
7	Do the grammar items found in the authentic materials help you understand the materials in the course book?	17	2	11
8	Do you find difficulties in studying the grammar items in the authentic materials given?	19	5	6
9	Do you think you get improved on the grammar after learning English using the authentic materials?	19	1	10
10	Do you think you become more motivated to learn English using the materials given?	16	2	12
Total		188	40	72

In the table above, the preferred answer *yes* (except for no.8 question, the answer in line is *no*) show that 58% of the students think that the materials provided are exciting, challenging and motivating. In addition, the materials bring improvement in terms of grammar ability. Conversely, the *no* answers (except for the question no.8, the answer in line is *yes*) indicate that 18% of the students have the opinion that the materials presented were not interesting, challenging, and motivating. Meanwhile, the *not sure* answers illustrate that 24% of students feel unsure toward their achievements and the benefits of the materials.

CONCLUSION

The authentic materials provided to both English III classes at Pamulang University and BINUS University are proven to be beneficial for the students because they gain more knowledge about the use of grammar in different kinds of authentic texts. Moreover, it can be more motivating to students to study harder because the topics are not only interesting but also challenging them to further understand.

Due to the limited time, both English teachers of the two universities have to work more in explaining the aspects of English grammar since there are only several aspects covered in one semester. Generally it can be concluded that the students have shown significant improvement in their understanding of grammar.

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