Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Indonesian English Language Teaching

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Abstract –*This paper considers the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)that Indonesian teachers require to implement the 2013 Curriculum and develop their junior high school learner's written English effectively, as mandated by the Regulation Number 16/2007. Based on the commonalities of the PCK components in international and Indonesian teaching of English as a foreign language, the components of PCK comprise knowledge of learners, subject matter, general pedagogy, and curriculum. Following manifest-latent content analysis principles, this study identified that this regulation defines and derives the concept of PCK into what it calls teachers' four competencies, namely pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies.*

Keywords –*PCK, Indonesia, ELT, policy analysis*

INTRODUCTION

The national Indonesian curriculum was updated in 2013 and now requires junior high school teachers to help their learners demonstrate knowledge and skills relating to the generic structures, social functions, and language features of a range functional text types in English, including recounts, procedures, descriptions, and factual reports. Hence, the government requires English teachers not only to hold an educational degree, minimally a bachelor of education, but also to possess educational quality and personal, social, professional, and pedagogical competencies. This is because an English teacher does not simply deliver and transfer the materials to learners but also must be a facilitator assisting them to learn optimally. Having a sufficient and appropriate quality could help Indonesia and its learners achieve the educational objectives mandated by laws and regulations.

Among the many requirements that an English teacher must possess, the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) plays an important role in developing teacher expertise. The concept firstly is defined as "…the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations—in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" [1]. Based on this definition, there are two prominent aspects that

constitute the definition of PCK: the subject matter and the way to transform it for learners.

Researchers from various educational disciplines, such as science and social studies have been interested in exploring, analyzing, and formulating what teachers' PCK is and have come to different views. However, most of them agree that PCK refers to the knowledge that a teacher has to interpret and transform subject matter to facilitate learning process most appropriately[2-5].

To this point, analysis of the PCK required from teachers to implement the 2013 Curriculum[6], especially in teaching writing, has not been explored much in the Indonesian context. One of the reasons is the difficulty to determine the elements or components of PCK has remained unsolved [5]. Moreover, the consensus concerning the definition of PCK and its components has not been reached in the field of teaching of English as foreign or other language [7].

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is intended to probe the notion of PCK in the context of Indonesian policy and regulation on teachers. To do so, after discussing a brief framework and components of PCK used in this work, a key policy text relating to and implying what components of PCK are required to teach writing in the 2013 Curriculum, namely Regulation of The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Number 16/2007 of

Academic Qualification and Teacher Competency, would be identified and analyzed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The identification and analysis of the key policy text, MoNE Regulation Number 16/2007,would be based on the principles of manifest-latent content analysis to gain as much empirical information as possible in addition to having reliability [8]. This content analysis will follow the two-step "summative approach" suggested by Hsieh and Shannon [9]. The first step, the manifest one, focuses on the quantitative and material aspects of the documents, i.e. the use of particular words and their frequency indicating emphasis or discouragement of a specific issue [9, 10], in this case, teachers' PCK to teach writing skill.

The latent content analysis goes "beyond mere word counts…"[9] to capture the meaning behind and the inferred meaning of the text [8]. It includes a deeper understanding of the whole documents particularly what they mean, emphasize, encourage, or conversely discourage teachers to do or not to do. In doing so, the analysis will begin with critically examining why a linguistic construction with its meaning is considered important by the documents, what the relationship of the documents and the general context is, and how it will bring consequences to the teachers' pedagogical practices.

PCK: A BRIEF FRAMEWORK

PCK has been of interest of many scholars from various fields of education since its first introduction in 1986[1]. Further, PCK is considered one of the knowledge bases in addition to knowledge of content, general pedagogy, curriculum knowledge, learners and their characteristics, educational contexts, and educational ends, purposes, and values, and their philosophical and historical background [11].

Of other required knowledge bases, PCK becomes the most special as "…it identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching"[11]. PCK "represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and is presented for instruction" [11]. Further, PCK is not only about the knowledge required to master the content of a subject such as grammar and vocabulary. It is the knowledge to deliver the content to learners in the most appropriate, effective, organized, and tailored way [4].

PCK has been of interest as it shows the different aspects of knowledge of teaching [11] and is acknowledged as "a knowledge base teachers should possess in educational reform documents" [4]. Moreover, PCK "is the category most likely to distinguish the understanding of the content specialist from that of the pedagogue" [11].

To date, a number of scholars have built foundational conceptions of PCK. They generally agree that it integrates the knowledge of content and pedagogy into the most appropriate and understandable instructional practice in order to facilitate learners to achieve the intended learning objectives. This idea necessitates the knowledge of instructional strategies, subject matter, and understanding learners[1]. However, this conception has further been expanded and covers "…knowledge about how to teach the subject, how learners learn the subject…how curricular materials are organized in the subject area, and how particular topics are best included in the curriculum.[12]

Different studies [13]have characterized PCK to comprise four categories: conceptions of teaching purposes, knowledge of students' understanding, curricular knowledge, and knowledge of instructional strategies, and added knowledge of context and knowledge of self in 1995.For example, Fernández-Balboa and Stiehl [14] remark that the components of PCK fall into knowledge of subject-matter, learners, instructional strategies, teaching contexts, and one's teaching process.

In English language teaching (ELT) field, research hasidentified the PCK components which include subject-matter knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and instructional strategies [15]. In Indonesian ELT, the concept of PCK mostly refers to content knowledge, understanding of students' conceptions and preconception, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of educational contexts, knowledge of educational goals, knowledge of assessment and evaluation, and the use of assessment and evaluation results for instructional purposes [5].

Drawing on the differing views and thoughts on PCK, this paper proposes, for its working definition, a conception of PCK as teachers' understanding and application of knowledge of curriculum, subject matter, learners, and pedagogy.

PCK IN INDONESIAN CONTEXT

Based on the working definition, this paper approaches The Regulation of MoNE Number 16/2007.This regulation defines and derives the concept of PCK into four grand teacher's competencies, namely pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies[16].

Table 1. Four grand teachers' competencies

Competency	Remark
Pedagogical	Competency to manage an instructional practice involving learners
Professional	Ability to master learning materials well and in depth
Personal	Ability to possess and maintain her/his nobility, piousness, wisdom, and model to her/his learners in order to achieve the objective of national education
Social	Competency to communicate and interact with learners, colleagues, learners' parents, and surrounding community effectively and assertively

Ministry of National Education [16]

A further detailed review of how the components of PCK are integrated into the competencies will be provided in the following sections.

Knowledge of curriculum

Hasan [17]mentions that curriculum refers to what level of quality learners should achieve and is stated as the aims or goals of the education. It "consists of educational ideas, a written plan where the ideas are documented, the experience the students have as teachers realize the document into reality,…" [17]. Consequently, it is important for teachers to understand what the intended curriculum objectives are so that they can tailor the materials, and plan, execute, and evaluate the instructional practices. In the case of the Indonesian 2013 Curriculum of ELT, this becomes more critical as it demands the teachers to integrate scientific approach into an effective teaching of writing appropriately.

Therefore, teachers need to possess knowledge of curriculum to help learners achieve the learning objectives stated in curriculum documents.Shulman [1]mentions that knowledge of curriculum refers to the knowledge of understanding at specific grade levels and particular subject areas. This knowledge is defined as teachers' "understanding of the programs and materials designed for teaching of particular

topics and subjects at a given level" [12]. It can be inferred that knowledge of curriculum deals with teachers' understanding of what the curriculum states to be taught to learners in different levels including the intended objectives.

In the Indonesian ELT context, the importance of this knowledge is reflected in the MoNE teachers' competency regulation (Table 2).

Table 2. Samples of curriculum knowledge

Pedagogy	
Developing subject-matter curriculum	Understanding principles of curriculum development
	Determining instructional objectives
	Selecting suitable learning experience and instructional objective
	Developing indicators and instruments of assessment
Professional	
Mastering standard competency and basic competency of the subject	Understanding standard and basic competencies, and learning objectives

Ministry of National Education [16]

Table 2 shows the curriculum knowledge that teachers require. Indonesian English teachers need to acquire the knowledge of developing curriculum encompassing theoretical concepts and practical matters. The theoretical concepts that they need to know and understand are the principles of curriculum development. Moreover, they have to understand how to carry out an instructional practice from planning to evaluating which require them to determine instructional objectives along with relevant materials, indicators, competency standards, and basic competencies.

With respect to the 2013 Curriculum, English teachers are supposed to understand the learning objectives. MoNE regulation states that the objective is to improve learners' language competency to communicate with others in daily life activities. In a classroom activity, this learners' communicative competency is applied through the implementation of a text-based approach for both spoken and written materials. What learners study is to understand type, nature, and context of a text well so they are able to express their ideas using appropriate text types depending on their intended purposes [18].

Effective communication is the core competence that junior high school learners need to acquire.

Consequently, they are required to possess not only discourse competence but also linguistic, socio-cultural, actional, and strategic competencies after they graduate. As they start to learn English officially in grade VII [19], the literacy level is functional: to communicate for daily life activities. Hence, they will be involved in the use of text and context to express their spoken and written ideas by text-based approach employing building knowledge of the field, modeling of text, joint construction of text, and independent construction of text systematically.

In writing skill, the learners from each grade will study different text types depending on the formulation of core and basic competencies mandated by the MoNE Regulation [20]. This regulation stipulates that they would study how to write such functional texts as showing capability to do something, and asking for and responding to instruction, invitation. They will also learn how to create descriptive, procedure, recount, manual, and scientific factual texts as well as short messages. To strengthen their grammatical ability, tenses and other linguistics features would also be provided [20].

To achieve the instructional objectives, the 2013 Curriculum requires teachers to implement scientific approach in the instructional process [18]. This approach reflects eight activities a scientist does, namely observing, questioning, experimenting, data or information processing, presenting, analyzing, associating, summarizing, and creating [18]. By so doing, the learners are expected to experience the procedures of specific and acknowledged experiments particularly of writing which later develop and sharpen their critical thinking as well as generic reasoning strategies.

Having sufficient knowledge of curriculum, English teachers would prevent the replication of the long established tendency to emphasize grammar and vocabulary over writing skill[21]. Albeit reasonable considering that grammar and vocabulary are the most assessed ELT aspects in the national examination, this practice is not suitable with the scientific-oriented curriculum.

Knowledge of subject matter

Knowledge of subject matter is considered as a prerequisite to teaching. Shulman [1]mentions that subject matter knowledge refers to "the amount and organization of knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher". Teachers' subject matter should comprise "the knowledge of substantive structures – the ways in which the fundamental principles of a discipline are organized" and "the knowledge of the syntactic structures of a discipline – the canons of evidence and proof that guide inquiry in the field" [12]. To sum up, this knowledge encompasses teachers' understanding of both theoretical and practical materials of the subject matter they teach.

In relation to the centrality of this knowledge, "teachers need not only to understand that something is so, the teachers must further understand why it is so"[1]. Accordingly, this knowledge requires them to have a deep understanding of the subject they teach. This sufficient comprehension of the taught subject differentiates teachers from novice teachers of the same subject.

Correspondingly, in ELT, this knowledge is "what teachers need to know about what they teach…and constitutes knowledge that would not be shared with teachers of other subject areas" [22]. Further, it also corresponds to the formal aspects of English, for example, syntax, phonology, grammar, written and spoken language use and comprehension, as well as discourse.

In ELT of writing, this knowledge relates closely to the materials that teachers have to deliver to learners. It includes but is not limited to vocabulary, text structure, sentence formulation, and paragraph development including cohesion and coherence. At the policy level, the contents of this knowledge belong to the professional competency (Table 3).

Table 3. Samples of subject matter knowledge

Professional	
Mastering material, structure, concept, and mindset to support the subject	Having adequate language knowledge (linguistics, discourse, sociolinguistics, and strategy) Having sufficient spoken and oral, receptive and productive communicative competence

Ministry of National Education [16]

As the table shows, a teacher is required to possess adequate language knowledge and to perform her/his language competency in both spoken and written forms. These two aspects play an important role in the transfer of materials to learners. The better the acquisition of these aspects by the teachers, the better their instructional performance[22].

In the context of the 2013 Curriculum, the teachers' knowledge of subject matter is closely related to the teaching of functional texts and short-

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essay writing. The teaching of this writing requires teachers' mastery of grammatical features, vocabulary, and social function of a text. Additionally, teachers need to comprehend sentence patterns and idea generation and structure. Last but not least, they need to know discourse, linguistic, actional, socio-cultural, and strategic knowledge[23] as the learning objective in this context is to develop the learners' communicative competence in writing.

Knowledge of learners

There was a long established practice in the past that learners were considered empty vessels, not least, by English teachers. The birth of MoNE Regulation Number 16/2007 shifted this old practice [24]. The spirit of this regulation mirrors the importance of teachers' knowledge of learners as much research has emphasized [25]. This knowledge furthermore represents the need for teachers to embrace the student-centered approach.It has been found that this approach successfully encouraged the learners to actively engage in the learning process, thereby becoming independent, curious, initiative, cooperative, creative, and critical [26].

In the student-centered learning activities, English teachers are required to acknowledge their learners' individual diversities. In the context of the Indonesian regulation, this aspect of PCK refers to the knowledge of learners.

Table 4. Samples of knowledge of learners

Pedagogy	
Understanding learners' physical, moral, spiritual, social, cultural, and emotional characteristics	Understanding the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, moral, spiritual, and cultural background of learners
	Recognizing learners' potential, existing ability, and difficulty
Facilitating the development of learners' potential	Providing instructional process to actualize learners' potential and creativity
	Communicating with learners effectively, emphatically, and tactfully
Social	
Behaving inclusively, objectively, and fairly	Showing fair treatment to learners and their parents, colleagues, and community regardless gender, religion, ethnic, physical condition, family background, and social and economic condition

Source: Ministry of National Education [16]

This knowledge includes their understanding of learners' personal characteristics, needs, learning styles, motivation, and social and cultural background [11]. To do so, they may try to identify learners' academic difficulties and to provide them with appropriate solution [27]. How the Indonesian government regulates this aspect of PCK is summarized in Table 4.

With regard to the learners, MoNE regulation mentions that an English teacher needs to understand them and facilitate their potential in such an appropriate and suitable manner that they could achieve the learning objectives. Further, the regulation also requires him/her to be able to acknowledge the learners' potential, existing ability, along with the difficulties in the learning process. S/he is expected to provide various learning processes to support and actualize their potential and creativity as well. More than that, s/he should also be able to communicate with the learners' parents and inform them about either progress or difficulty the learners have in any instructional activities.

In accordance with the effective teaching of writing in ELT, positioning the teachers as mediators, facilitators, and managers is of the essence. As a mediator, a teacher is, for example, to assist her/his learners to relate their existing knowledge to new experience they are going to go through. Consequently, it is a must for a teacher to have such an adequate knowledge as educational media to enhance an effective instructional process [18].

A teacher is also a facilitator who positions her/himself as the one not having the most ultimate knowledge, but supporting the instructional process by providing the learners with useful learning activities [28]. As a manager, a teacher is required to govern the instructional process in such a way that learners have more spaces to develop their potentials independently and establish their "self-control and self-activity" [29].

These positions must be taken into account to help teachers maintain an appropriate learning instruction which could suit the instructional context and meet the learners' needs. Obviously, meeting their needs is not as simple as it has been thought due to the learner's multifaceted individual differences [5]. Hence, understanding the learners by providing suitable and effective learning instruction and meaningful writing activities would help them develop, organize, and express their ideas, feeling, and thought [30].

With regard to the implementation of scientific approach in the 2013 Curriculum, the teachers need to consider each learner's characteristics before asking her/him to engage in any steps of the approach. It is problematic, for example, to use the same question wording for all learners as it may seem obvious for one learner, while it might be difficult for another. Similarly, a writing task might seemingly be finished in quite short time for a high progress learner; however, a slower one might take more time to do so. In this case, there is a necessity for teachers to understand that optimizing learners' potential especially in language learning strategy means realizing that every individual is different [31].

Knowledge of pedagogy

Pedagogical knowledge deals with knowledge of teaching acquired through years of process and experience. Consequently, the understanding of pedagogy develops along with the practice a teacher undergoes resulting in various definitions and conceptions. This knowledge is defined as "broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organization that appear to transcend subject matter" [11].

Table 5. Samples of pedagogical knowledge

Pedagogy	
Acquiring learning theories and instructional principles	Applying creative approaches, strategies, methods, and learning techniques
Developing instructional activities	Understanding instructional design Developing instructional design
Assessing and evaluating instructional processes and learning outcomes	Understanding instructional assessment and evaluation Administering continuous assessment of instructional process and learning outcome
Developing learning material creatively	Selecting learning material that suits learners' development Managing the subject creatively
Making use of ICT	Making use of ICT to interact with other teachers and for professional development
Professional	
Communicating effectively, assertively and tactfully	Communicating learning process and learners' progress to learners' parents and society effectively, assertively, and tactfully

Ministry of National Education [16]

In other words, it is the knowledge of strategies and ways that a teacher requires to deliver and more importantly to transform subject matters to learners consistent with their interests and potential.

By referring to that definition and conception, the policy text summarizes the knowledge of pedagogy as shown in Table 5.

The table shows that the Indonesian regulation accommodates the knowledge of pedagogy through the concepts of pedagogical and professional competencies of teachers. These competencies encompass the English teachers' knowledge to prepare, carry out, and evaluate their instructional activities. In this sense, they need to equip themselves with sufficient mastery of learning theories and instructional principles. This mastery helps them design appropriate learning activities which are suitable with their learners and syllabus, and are enriched by appropriate plans, aids, procedures, techniques, and methods.

Executing the plan in the instructional process requires teachers' sufficient communication ability and skill of information technology in order to provide learners with meaningful, purposeful, and interactive learning activities. In addition, it is crucial for teachers to possess knowledge of how to assess and evaluate learners' achievement after they attend the instructional activities.

The English teachers' knowledge of pedagogy is required urgently to implement the 2013 Curriculum. Therefore, there exists an urgency for them to enrich their pedagogical knowledge with the understanding of what scientific approach and genre-based approach are and how they could be implemented in order to conduct an effective instructional activity of writing.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

PCK plays an important role in an instructional practice. PCK defined as the knowledge of to transform subject matter into forms more comprehensible and accessible to learners and previously constituting subject matter, learners, and pedagogy has attracted many scholars from various fields to explore the definition and components of PCK. In this study, the proposed definition is teachers' understanding and enactment of how to assist learners to understand various written texts through thorough preparations, representations, and assessments in the learning environment. The proposed components of PCK in this study are

teachers' knowledge of subject matter, learners, general pedagogy, and curriculum.

The identification and review of the PCK components in this regulation lead to some implications. It is urgent for teachers to provide themselves with sufficient knowledge of curriculum as it provides teachers with the objectives the learners should attain. Knowledge of subject matters and learners including their characteristics and potential must also be taken into account. In addition, acquiring adequate knowledge of pedagogy helps learners achieve the intended instructional objectives through effective and meaningful learning activities.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

A number of limitations in relation to this study should be taken into consideration. The first is that the proposed components of PCK derive from what The Regulation of MoNE Number 16/2007 requires from teachers and from the commonalities of the research in educational context. Thus, this may or may not provide a valid definition of PCK for teaching English as a foreign language in particular.

Thispresent study focuses merely on the PCK required from teachers to implement The 2013 Curriculum particularly in teaching writing skill to secondary school learners. This forms the second limitation.

Therefore, more study would be necessary to appropriately define PCK and its components regarding the teaching of English as a foreign language. The definition, then, could be used as a means to identify and analyze not only the Regulation of MoNE Number 16/2007 but also other key policy documents and previous curricula in Indonesia. Also, the required PCK to teach language skills other than writing needs further investigation and analysis.

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