Exposing English Teachers’ Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Case Of English Language Teaching Practises In Indonesia

Nyimas Triyana Safitri, Melati, Amirul mukminin, Marzul Hidayat

Abstract: English Language teaching ELT in Indonesian high schools experiences significantly declining and needs thoughtful attention to ensure a higher quality of English teaching. This study was attempted to figure out how English teachers demonstrate Pedagogical Content Knowledge PCK as a core skill of an integration of subject matter and pedagogy in English teaching and how they go through with potential tensions, issues and complexities in performing PCK at English classroom practice. A qualitative method with a case study design was employed and multiple perspectives were taken into consideration by deeply interviewing eight English high school teachers in Kota Jambi. Teaching document was also used to support and provide broad description of data. Within and Cross Case analysis were utilized in analysing data by administering three stages of open coding, axial coding and labelling. The finding revealed that English Teachers in Indonesia practically experienced challenges in displaying PCK in ELT and most of them undergo with some practical issues especially in managing a heterogeneous class (mix ability class). Teachers also experienced pressure in treating students with low interest and less motivation in learning English. A part from this concerns, school facilities and parental involvement were also threatened for the effective learning and the way how teachers define curriculum and the knowledge of technology still become unsolved problems. The results are discussed and suggestions are provided for future research.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Pedagogical Content Knowledge PCK

1. INTRODUCTION
Teaching English in Indonesia has attracted serious attention among scholars in education over the past decade and this is due to the fact that teacher teaching quality is still low, (Kambaton; 2013, Faisal; 2015, Wachyunni; 2015, Karea; 2016, Mukminin; 2016, Habibi; 2016, Kultsum; 2017). This problem is also resulted in teachers’ understanding of how to assist students understand specific subject matters and how these subject matters or topics presented in an appropriate way of teaching. This aspect is about the key concept of teaching practise in which Lee Shulman (1986, 1987) called Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). PCK has become a topic of interest and widely useful among scholars from various fields of education since it was first introduced by Lee Shulman in 1986. PCK conceptually 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, Shulman (1987). He has noted that a teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge indicates his/her capacity to transform the content knowledge he or she holds into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to different students’ ability and background. In a field of education, PCK takes part as an influential function for teachers to develop their expertise in teaching. It is because teacher professional knowledge and skill could be measured by their understanding on academic content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and teacher practice, Richard (2011).

In Teaching of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, PCK has been implicitly implemented through what it calls teachers’ four competencies; pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies. As a part of English teaching requirement, it comprises knowledge of learners, subject matter, general pedagogy, and curriculum which are comprehensively conducted in an appropriate instructional practice to facilitate learners to achieve a better learning objectives, Faisal (2015). In line with this viewpoints, PCK in English teaching would help teachers to understand how to explore their content knowledge and how to convey it into a good and appropriate way of instruction (Kalsum, 2017; Faisal, 2015; Setiadi & Mustaha, 2013). A lot of studies of PCK in teaching EFL in Indonesia has long been conducted to find out the important of PCK in boosting English teaching quality and to prove to what extent the PCK of the teachers influence students’ learning outcomes in English. Hence, it is required to pinpoint more specifically on how teacher displays PCK in teaching practice and what sort of a significant issues or tensions associated with the practise of PCK which potentially hampers an effective practice of PCK in ELT.

1.1 Generic Notion of Pedagogical Content Knowledge PCK
Pedagogical Content Knowledge was firstly introduced by Lee Shulman in 1986 and it is one shortcut to provide professional development on teacher learning, classroom practice, or student outcomes (Newsomo, Taylor, Carlson & Stuhlsatz, 2017). PCK is defined by Shulman (1987) as 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. He mentions that 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. Based on what Shulman initiated, there have been many scholars

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building foundational conceptions or definitions of what PCK is. They generally agree that PCK is the integration of 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. A part from this perspective, Shuman in Fernandez (2014) outlines the categories of teacher knowledge to promote understanding among students. It is considered seven types of basic knowledge that a teacher must have: content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners and their characteristics, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of purposes, educational purposes and educational values. In addition to this concept, Kultsum (2017) regards PCK as two integrated domains: Content Knowledge (CK) and Pedagogical Knowledge (PK). (CK) is the knowledge of the specific topic, which teacher requires teaching it. For example, English teacher should have the ability of understanding on English materials and capable of delivering it to her/his students. While (PK) is seen as the teaching principals and strategies that are applied in the classroom management and organization. From these concepts of PCK, it can be theoretically defined that Pedagogical content knowledge is also recognized as a complex blending of pedagogy and subject content and includes aspects related to an understanding of what is to be taught, learned and assessed, an understanding of how learners learn, an understanding of ways to facilitate effective learning and an understanding of how to blend content and pedagogy to organize particular topics for learners.

1.2 Pedagogical Content Knowledge in ELT in Indonesia

PCK in the area of ELT obtains much attention and become one of popular research concerns among scholars worldwide. Many attempt to look out on how well English teachers in Indonesia applied Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) in teaching English and how they developed their knowledge of teaching (Ibrahim & Faisal, 2017). Another study conducted by Habibi (2016) analysed demotivation factors of teachers in Indonesian Pesantrens (Islamic Boarding School) in implementing PCK in EFL teaching. He found several demotivating factors experience by English teacher such as working condition (financial matter and working overload); curriculum (rapid changing of Indonesian curriculum and lack of teaching and supporting materials); facilities (classroom temperature and over-crowded classroom) and students (lack of basic knowledge and lack of motivation). Further research by Moradkhani (2013) identified eight macro categories PCK in ELT; namely, knowledge of language and related disciplines, knowledge of ELT theories, skills, and techniques, knowledge of context and social relations, knowledge of class, time, and learning management, knowledge of research and professional development, knowledge of practicum, knowledge of teachers and their assessment, and knowledge of reflective and critical teaching. To fill the gap on this issue, this current study was centred on portraying the practise of PCK in the field of English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia and more specifically stressing on figuring out common stressors or tensions undergo by most English teachers in the practise of it. The main research question of this study was: how English teachers display PCK in English teaching and how they go through with issues and problems occurred in its implementation? In addition to this study, Moradkhani, (2015) explored PCK that supports teaching English as a first and second and first language (L1, L2) especially in reading skill. They stated that teacher should have mental cognition including how to think, know, and believe in complex nature of teaching to enhance the effectiveness of teacher education. More importantly, PCK includes teachers’ understanding of subject learners, curriculum, context, and pedagogy Subject content. A part from this, it contains on language knowledge such as linguistics, discourse, sociolinguistics, and strategy (Kiely, 2015; Kultsum, 2017). Referring this aspect, Competency in English language teaching draws on content or subject matter knowledge, teaching skills, and the ability to teach in English – a skill that is usually viewed as influenced by the teacher’s language proficiency. As it is highlighted by Richrd (2011) PCK should prepare teachers to be able to do things such as the following: (a) Understand learners’ needs (b) Diagnose learners’ learning problems (c) Plan suitable instructional goals for lessons (d) Select and design learning tasks (e) Evaluate students’ learning (f) Design and adapt tests (g) Evaluate and choose published materials (h) Make use of authentic materials and (i) Make appropriate use of technology. To conclude, the PCK concept endorses the teaching strategies, methodologies, and techniques and the high teachers’ dedication and commitment in teaching the students tend to increase the quality of teaching.

2. METHOD

A qualitative research design with case study approach was used in this study. It identifies a real-life, contemporary bounded system or case or multiple bounded case over time, through detailed and in-depth data collection involving single or multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2013; Habibi et al., 2018). In this study, the researcher explored how English teachers perform PCK in English teaching, and figured out potential tensions in the implementation.

2.1 Participants

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants with a set of pre-defined characteristics; the teachers should have had at least 7 years of teaching experience as it was predicted that minimum teaching experience would let them develop a more comprehensive picture of their PCK. Eight English teachers were selected and most of them are Faculty Alumni. The rational of choosing them was to accommodate faculty needs in term of academic, services and human resource development by tracing participants’ academic record and achievement. All of them were approached individually to provide information and they were assured of the confidentiality of the information they would provide.

2.2 Data collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, which is the most commonly used technique in qualitative research (Habibi et al., 2018; Maimunah et al., 2018; Marzulina et al., 2018; Mukminin et al., 2018; Sofwan et al. 2018; Syaiful et al., 2018; Wahyuddin, 2018, Young, 2018). To construct interview questions, a comprehensive review of the literature
was conducted, focusing on the categories of teachers’ PCK in general as well as emphasized on PCK in English Language Teaching context. Since the interviewees worked in various institutions, the interviewer set an appointment with the individual participants in order to meet them in their schools or working place. The interview was conducted in Bahasa Indonesia or English and it lasts 20 to 30 minutes. The information was recorded by using audio-tape recording before transcribing them descriptively.

2.3 Data Analysis
Within and cross-case analyses were applied for the data analysis. To run this, the researcher analysed the data for specific theme, divided information into large cluster of ideas and provide details that support the themes. Before going to this step, the researcher employed coding system in which the data were grouped into small categories of information to seek evidence for the code before assigning them into a label.

3. FINDING
Finding of this study indicated some key issues or problem for the application of PCK in ELT in Indonesian school contexts. It was found heterogeneous class, teaching time allocation, students’ Interest and motivation, parental involvement and school facilities hampered the implementation of PCK in ELT. English teachers mostly undergo with complexities, tensions and stressor during the practice of PCK in English class. Although these factors were directly impacted on displaying PCK, it was inappropriate to draw a conclusion which factors have dominant impact leading to teachers’ practice of PCK in ELT. To get the detail of findings, five implicated themes presented in the following figure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Heterogeneous Class</td>
<td>Level of skill and competence</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Different background in Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Socio economic Status</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Time Allocation</td>
<td>Insufficient time allocation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Overloading skill competences</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Interest and Motivation</td>
<td>Less interest and low motivation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Lack of enthusiasm</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Parental Involvement</td>
<td>Less care on children’s needs in ELT</td>
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<td>Low education requirement status</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assuming English is unimportant</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>School Facilities</td>
<td>Limited of sources : books and library</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Insufficient of school infrastructure</td>
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<td>Overcrowded class community</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Technology Advancement</td>
<td>On-line Record of Students’ achievement</td>
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<td>(Electronic Report /E-Report)</td>
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3.1 Heterogeneous Class
The common problem in PCK practice in ELT was derived from the condition of Heterogeneous class (Mixed ability class) which has become a typical classroom condition or environment in Indonesian schools and it brought into ineffectively English teaching and learning. During the interview session, teachers claimed:

“Teaching Heterogeneous class is greatly challenging and tiring because we have various students with different levels of learning ability, interest, competence and skills. It probably caused by the different background of education, socio economic condition, and family background. As a result, teaching and learning often runs ineffective and became bored sometimes especially in managing class and choosing materials.”

3.2 Time Allocation
English teachers also experienced with a problem in locating the time in classroom teaching practise. They need extra time to reach the target of learning objectives or other aspect of English skill. In English language teaching, teachers are required to integrate four basic skill of English and other component of English skill. To verify this statement, teachers claimed that:

“We have limited time to teach English and the allocation of time 2x45 minutes a week is insufficient. We have to teach many aspect of English skill and reach the target of learning goals and competences but time allocation is not suitable.”

3.3 Interest and Motivation
Another issue was about students’ less interest and low motivation in learning English. This condition commonly happened to those whose English is not really their self-interest. It was resulted in the feeling of frustrated and boring. The teachers argued that:

“I think the most difficult aspect in teaching English in my class is to motivate students with low interest in learning English. I have to explain couple of times when teaching certain subject for example, even they still do not understand. When I ask them to speak, they prefer to keep silent.”

3.4 Parents Involvement
In finding, parent’s role or involvement was not obviously function as parents thought that English was not really an obligation and it was unimportant. This was just because most parents had low education requirement status and mostly just finished high school. During interview, teachers claimed that:

“I find a bit hard to invite parents to help support students to learn English, they have shown a little care on that and they perceive teaching English is teachers’ task. They never think that English is important skill to achieve and it is a needs.”
3.5 School Facilities
The issue of inadequate school facilities and resources are serious problem in Indonesia. In findings, teachers experience stress for insufficient facilities for both school and learning. Form the result of interview, teachers argued that:

“I do feel regret with insufficient facilities in my school. We lack of facilities that can support ELT. No much English book available and internet connection is always error”. My class is so crowded so we cannot learn seriously. The temperature is not good to encourage good learning atmosphere, it is hot in class”.

3.6 Technology Advancement
Technology advancement has become needs to fulfil the demand of educational challenges nowadays. To respond this, the newest system to sum up or record students' achievement at school in Indonesia currently conducted through on-line system called electronic report (E-Report). The result of interview indicated that teachers do not have enough knowledge in technology and it brings drawback somehow.

“I do not know technology very much but I have to apply that in my teaching profession. I do feel stress when I am working with some report because I have low technology competences and it exhausted me”.

4. DISCUSSION
This study discovered that English school teachers in Indonesia mostly undergo with several complexities or challenges in demonstrating PCK in ELT. These problems potentially affected on English language teaching and learning and hampers students’ understanding in English. The existence of heterogeneous class or mixed ability class, teaching time allocation, students’ interest and motivation, parental involvement and school facilities have become obstructed factors that harms to producing a better result in English language teaching. Firstly, heterogeneous class (mixed ability class) has long arisen in learning environments in Indonesian school level that affected on essential issues such as teaching and learning activities, materials, motivation and class management practices. This situation was commonly caused by different level of skill and competence, background in Education and Socio economic Status of family. So it is suggested that teachers should be aware of the varied needs of students so that they can provide a number of teaching approaches that will fulfill these needs in a way that activities are suitably challenged, Fernandesz (2014). Secondly, the duration of teaching English in classroom is not yet sufficiently allocated. One week meeting for 2x45 minutes is less enough to deliver subject matters or content of English skill. To respond this, teachers need more time to teach in order to cover all skill of English integratedly. Third problem is about students’ interest and motivation to learn English. Students have less enthusiasm and seem lazy to learn English. It is because the perceived that English is a difficult subject to learn. More Importantly, Motivation and interest are two inseparable factors to gain a success in English. They are mostly dominant aspect to determine students’ success in all aspects of learning. To obtain this, students should make a big effort to reach their own target otherwise they will experience fail to learn English. Importantly, English should be regarded as a needs and fun to learn. Another challenges is about parent’s involvement. The result shows that parents do not take part a lot to help students to reach successful in learning English. Meanwhile parents should necessarily involve to assist teachers actively to encourage students to be more active in learning English. Finally, school facilities and technology advancement are also influence ELT in Indonesian school. But in fact that the teachers still has lower understanding on ICT and its stuff and they often experienced bad in responding this system and feel burden as they should work hard with online system.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
Studies about PCK have informed number of key concepts on how PCK is effectively presented and improved to facilitate students’ understanding. It relates to know how teachers master their subject matter or knowledge of what they teach and pedagogical knowledge or what they know about teaching and how their students learn. To achieve this notion, PCK in English Language Teaching for Indonesian school system necessarily requires teachers possess the educational quality and personal, social, professional, and pedagogical competencies. These competences are seen as core element of an integration of subject matter and pedagogy as what Shulman (1987) says special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding. To end, the findings of this study actually brings much reflection on English teacher especially the way they demonstrate PCK in ELT. The problems and challenge should be regarded as a valuable teaching experience to facilitate them to improve their teaching profession which leads into a good education quality of Indonesia especially in ELT. So it is suggested to all Educational practitioners, stake holder and Indonesian government to consider and take quick action and rapid changing to facilitate ELT in Indonesia by providing and completing vital needs for both teachers and students for provision and maintenance the professional development of English Language Teaching in Indonesia.

6 REFERENCES


