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A CONSIDERATION OF THE MATERIALS FOR TEACHING PAST TENSES IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR COURSE BOOKS

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Abstract

The study examines 30 grammar course books to find out how past tense lessons are organised, and what kind of approaches are adopted by materials' developers to design them for the different targeted learners (Beginners to advanced). Various pedagogical frameworks for the design of teaching materials are reviewed, in the light of SLA research findings related to the acquisition of grammar. To examine the constructs of past tenses in the selected sample of course books, the methodology adopted in this research draws on mix-methods and case study (quantitative and qualitative analyses) for the purpose of ensuring validity. Data was collected using checklists that aim to account for the different components used by material developers to teach past tenses including form, meaning and activities. The findings reveal a strong implication of internal and external factors of L2 acquisition in the process of designing past tenses materials. Finally, the results indicate an interesting trend about the different uses of grammar activities according to learners' language proficiency level. In this way, the findings of the present research seem to contradict the previous studies that claim the unique use of controlling activities by materials developers.

Keywords

Language Awareness, Language Development, Language Acquisition, Language Teaching Materials, Course Book



1. General Introduction

The present study reviews 30 grammar course books that are designed to teach English past tenses, which target multi-levels of English language, both ESL and EFL learners. It aims to provide a comprehensive account of the adopted framework that constructs grammar syllabi since grammar is seen as central to language teaching and learning. So, by generating the various constituents that organize the different investigated grammar syllabi, we strive to understand the patterns used to build the content in the targeted ESL and EFL course books for beginning, intermediate and advanced levels to see whether or not they are arranged similarly. However, the modern doctrine of grammar syllabi does not assume that grammar is restricted to “form” only, but it acknowledges the crucial rule of form-meaning mapping that lies at the heart of grammar. Also, it claims that learners need to be capable to express themselves accurately calling for the wide range of grammatical structures in ways that are appropriate for the social context in which they have been used. In other words, it should comply with the norms of native speakers and help learners use the acquired grammatical competence appropriately.

The current study is divided into two parts. The first is an overview of the relevant theoretical concepts that will be examined. It consists of a definition of grammatical syllabus design; the nature of acquisition of tense-aspect in L2 English context; the approaches adopted to explain grammar rules, and finally types of grammar activities. The Second is a detailed account of the components of the grammar course books which will be considered in the analysis. It is subdivided into four sections. First, we will provide target levels of each course book, then a generated detailed arrangement of past tense lessons followed by the various strategies and techniques used to explain past tenses. And finally, the study accounts for the nature of the various types of exercises varying from one proficiency level to another throughout grammar course books.

2. Theoretical Framework

L2 grammar teaching and research on its effectiveness require a clear picture of not only “what” grammar pedagogy is, but also a clear conception on “How” and “when” L2 grammar acquisition in L2 instruction should be involved (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). Hymes (1972) adds that language knowledge includes not only grammar rules, but also social interaction rules. Thus, before embarking upon the analysis of the various frames, which serve as a basis of grammar course books, this part will be devoted to characterizing the design of pedagogical grammar



materials, implications of the hypothesis on the nature of L2 grammar acquisition, and the evaluation of instructional interventions and their representation in course books (2003).

2.1 Syllabus Design of Grammar

2.1.1 Definition of Syllabus Design

Syllabus design is primarily concerned with the selection and grading of content (Feike, 2011 cited in Faravan & Zeraatpishe & Azarnoosh, 2018). Bodegas (2007) defines syllabus as “essentially a statement of what should be taught, year by year and often contains points about the method of teaching and the time to be taken” (Lee 1980, p. 108). Another definition explains that syllabus consists of a detailed account of the operational stages of teaching and learning components, which translates the curriculum philosophy into a set of predetermined steps leading toward more narrowly defined objectives at each level (Dubin and Olshtain, 1997; 2018).

2.1.2 Grammatical Syllabus

There is a growing consensus that the relevance of grammar syllabi is not just for an inventory of forms, but also for its importance to ensure effective communication. Many reasons justify why grammar has become central to language teaching and learning. Firstly, we can consider teaching grammar as a means to help learners achieve membership in an acceptable community of L2 users. To achieve that goal, learners need to be able to express themselves accurately using the range of grammatical structures in ways that are appropriate and acceptable in social settings. Secondly, a modern grammatical syllabus unlike a conventional one, does not assume that grammar is just an inventory of forms, but views the relevance of form-meaning mapping of grammar. Finally, despite that criticism has been levelled at grammar syllabi, they are still a useful channel through which formal grammar instruction can be imparted. (Casey and YouJin, 2014; Tomlinson, 2013).

2.1.3 Pedagogical Grammar

The majority of scholars in the field of applied linguistics express concerns (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Fortune, 1998; 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 1989; 2003; Nassaji and Fotos, 2011; Norris and Ortega, 2000; Odlin, 1994) about the importance of pedagogical grammar as a research domain, especially the extent to which grammar can be taught and learned most effectively in the ESL and EFL classroom context. Furthermore, (Ortega and Wang, 2003) devised a framework for pedagogical grammar, which can be used by language developers and language teachers to organize their existing knowledge. The interaction of the framework’s three constituents can feed into L2 grammar pedagogy in terms of materials, testing hypotheses on L2 acquisition nature, and

the assessment of instructional interventions that have an impact on the acquisition process (Casey and YouJin, 2014).

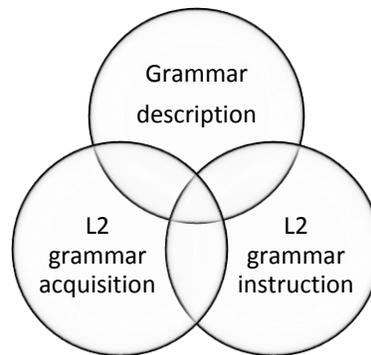


Figure 1: *A Framework for Pedagogical Grammar Research*

In addition, various debates have investigated the nature of grammar instruction in the classroom to answer a very basic question as to what is grammar and it can be described. The very basic definition was provided by Chomsky's language competence description that focused on grammar competence. Generally speaking, description involves individual sentence analysis according to which the sentence is judged in terms of compatibility with a set of underlying rules. Hence, the sentence is grammatical (possible) or ungrammatical (not possible). However, Halliday (1977) came up with a new view of grammar that involves more than the description of morphological and syntactic rules. In fact, he didn't contradict Chomsky's view; rather, he considers his functional theory as complementary to his new perspective on the external and social factors that help shape one's language competence. He paved the way for a new era of communicative language teaching with important tools for describing grammar use. Therefore, knowing the existing sets of possible grammatical combinations of a given language is not enough; rather, knowing appropriate, feasible forms across the various possible settings is also needed (Hymes, 1972).

Furthermore, Diane Larsen-Freeman (2003 cited in Casey and YouJin, 2014) suggests a comprehensive framework for a pedagogical grammar that can be used to develop the learners' grammatical competence. It consists of three main components: form, meaning, and use. She defines form as entailing phonology, graphology, semiology, morphology, and syntax; meaning as entailing the meaning of a given form such as a definition of a word, or a concept of "past tense" associated with the grammatical morpheme "ed;" and use as entailing pragmatics, which refers to a speaker's or writer's intentions in a given communicative context (2014). She adds that L2

grammar instruction must offer information about the three components, because, according to her, learners do not learn isolated forms, rather how forms are used to perceive and receive the wide range of available meaning within a given function and context. To provide language teachers with a useful functional description of grammar use, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983, 1999) developed a pedagogical grammar entitled the Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL teacher's course. The book is a realization of the new approach of grammar description, emphasizing context-based grammar. She adds: "A pedagogical grammar should not simply be a collection of rules, but also "reasons", or explanations for why writers and speakers might choose one grammar structure over another" (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2003, p.49). Thus, as Conrad stated, the function of grammar instruction is not only concerned with accuracy, but also appropriateness (2014).

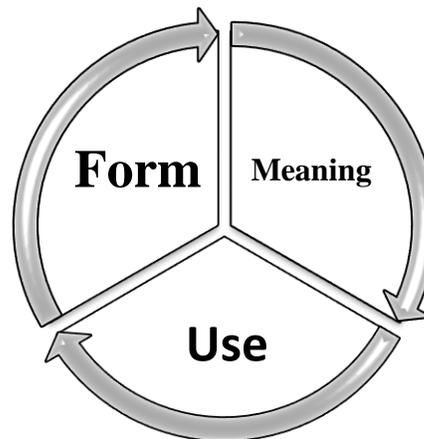


Figure 2: *Larsen-Freeman's Three Dimensions (2003)*

2.2 Tense-Aspect Acquisition in L2 English and Rule Explanation

The second subsection of the theoretical framework of the study attempts to give an overview of the SLA enterprise nature and how it accounts for the internal and external factors considered in the past tense syllabus design.

2.2.1 Order of Acquisition

The development of tense and aspect in the L2 context has received considerable attention in the SLA body of research. Researchers have discovered that learners go through a predictable path of development. For example, in English, past progressive appears first (He was running), followed by simple past (He left yesterday). Later in the development stages, learners begin to use present perfect (I have already eaten), followed by the tense aspect combinations of present perfect progressive (He has been running since 5:00), past perfect (By the time you got there, he had

already left), and past perfect progressive (Before moving to the US, I had been studying in Japan) (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Binnick, 2016).

Researchers have found that tense aspect emerge as a response to the received frequency of the input and the inherent semantic properties of a particular verb. As Anderson (1991) explained in his Lexical Aspect Hypothesis, a verb lexical aspect influences the order in which a particular tense emerges in learners' languages. Furthermore, many researchers have investigated L2 learners' acquisition of tense aspect morphology in English and a number of other languages, like: Catalan, French, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000, p.206-211). Consequently, the studies suggested that there is a general order of L2 acquisition of tense aspect morphology (Li & Shirai, 2000).

2.2.2 Grammatical Syllabus and L2 Grammar Acquisition

Second language acquisition research can inform developers of language materials of second and foreign language learning. What we know about language learning is a result of thousands of years of reflective teaching and at least a century of experimental and observational research. Still, SLA researchers cannot agree on a single view of the learning process as Cook explained that SLA cannot determine an accurate solution to the existing issues of second language teaching (1996).

2.2.3 Cognitive Account of SLA of Grammar

Many research papers have addressed the contribution of internal factors in the process of second Language acquisition. They have investigated the mental processes that learners use to convert input into knowledge or rather transform the existing L1 knowledge to internalize L2 knowledge. These processes are operating as follows (1) observe features in the input, (2) compare these features with those that are currently part of their mental grammar or interlanguage, (3) integrate the new features into their interlanguages which can be characterized as a conscious attempt on the part of the learners to employ his available linguistic resources to make advancement in the use of his L2 (Selinker, 1972; Ellis, 1997).

Interlanguage is a cognitive theory that attempts to take into account the mental processes allowing learners to develop their L2 grammatical system, which they construct and manifest in output. The term was coined by Selinker (1972) to refer to the interim grammar learners build on to fully target language competence. Ellis (1997) elaborates further that the learner is actually using interlanguage, which stands for the internal attribute of the learner cognition mechanism, to form hypotheses on the target language rules and then test them.



As explained by Ellis (1997), the concept of interlanguage involves the following promises about L2 acquisition:

- The learner constructs a system of abstract linguistic rules which underlies comprehension and production of the L2. This System of rules is viewed as a “mental grammar” and is referred to as an “interlanguage”.
- The learner’s grammar is permeable; That is, the grammar is open to influence from the outside. It is also influenced from the inside. For example, the omission, overgeneralization, and transfer errors.
- The learner’s grammar is transitional. Learners change their grammar from one time to another by adding rules, deleting rules, and restructuring the whole system. This results in an interlanguage continuum. That is, learners construct a series of mental grammars or interlanguages as they gradually increase the complexity of their L2 knowledge.

(Ellis, 1997.33)

2.3 Rule Explanation

We will devote this part to the main ways of implementing a grammatical item in the grammar syllabi. There are specific techniques for teaching grammar by which we can distinguish explicit and implicit instruction (Graaff and Housen, 2009, as cited in Ellis, 2012). Implicit instruction caters to incidental language learning. As far as this type is concerned, learners are not told what the instructional target item is. They are simply engaged in activities that equip them with the target feature and opportunities to use it in output as in task-based language teaching (Casey and YouJin, 2014). However, explicit grammar instructions focus intentionally on a specific grammar structure through the use of activities like free use of the target form. The latter consists of two main components: presentation and practice. Presentation can be presented deductively or inductively. A deductive presentation takes the form of an explicit explanation of a target feature. It includes examples of the feature in sentences or longer texts, whereas an inductive presentation starts with examples and requires the learners to induce the grammatical rules from them (Li & Shirai, 2000).

The usefulness of both types has been investigated by teacher educators (e.g., 1996; Thornbury, 19991; Scrivener, 2005; Borg, 1999). Gower and Walters (1983) explained that a deductive presentation is appropriate when the target structure is exclusively new to learners, while an inductive presentation is more effective if the learners are already familiar with the target forms (Casey and YouJin, 2014). However, grammar practice book tends to implement deductive

presentation instead of inductive presentation. Ellis investigated seven published grammar practice books. He found that only two of them take up inductive rule presentation. (2014)

Furthermore, to provide learners with a clear explanation of the main features of a grammatical structure, researchers suggested that a “good” pedagogical rule should consider a balance between “truthfulness” and usefulness for L2 and EFL learners. For example, rule explanation should take account of the wide different instances that learners are probably to face as well as existing exceptions. (Casey and YouJin, 2014)

Swam (1994) has settled a number of criteria that could be a basis to construct pedagogical rules:

Truth: rules should be true to use in the real world.

Demarcation: the limitation of the rule should be clearly presented.

Clarity: ambiguity or obscure terminology should be avoided

Simplicity: rules should be simple enough for learners to understand

Conceptual parsimony: rule explanation should involve familiar concepts for learners.

Relevance: a rule should only include the points that learners need to know (Cited in Rod Ellis and Natsuko Shintani, 2014, p.86)

Considering all the recommendations to account for the preceding criteria while forming the pedagogical rules, still a concern of balancing between them to avoid any learning barriers.

2.4 Practice

Practice is defined as “intentional and persistent activity involving production of a specific target feature with awareness with the aim of mastering the use of the feature” (Rod Ellis and Natsuko Shintani, 2014, P.98). Practice is an inevitable element that constitutes grammar lesson. Ellis distinguishes between different types of practice that are found in grammar books. First, there is production practice in which learners are required to produce sentences containing the target structure. Second, reception practice that learners are required to perform some activity to prove their understanding of the target structure. The latter could be in the form of judgement task to verify the grammaticality of the sentence with the target structure. Furthermore, these activities might be shaped in the form of “controlled” or “free”. Free first activities are used to check the command of a given grammatical structure in term of form. It could take the form of filling in blank with the appropriate grammatical morpheme, whereas in free production activities, learners are given the opportunity to construct their own sentences using the target structure (2014).

3. Analysis of English Grammar Course Books

3.1 Introduction

In subsequent phase, we reviewed 30 grammar course books divided into two categories. The first category consists of 23 books target three levels or four levels of language proficiency in English, whereas the second category consists of 7 books approach the advanced level of proficiency.

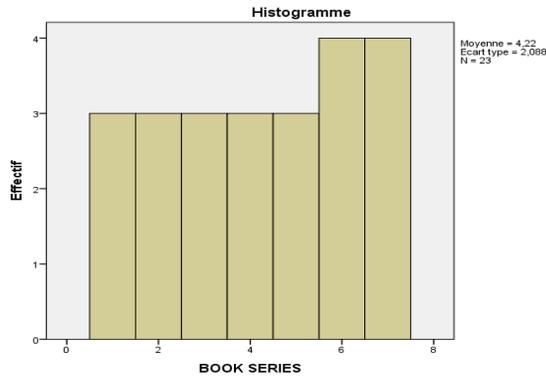
This study adopted the mix-methods research to gain understanding of the complexity of grammatical syllabus design. It implied the multi-levels analysis of qualitative and quantitative approach to review the materials. Therefore, the application of such method gives a solid ground to the final results to be acceptable for a larger audience than those of a monomethod study would be.

The analysis phase of the reviewed course books is approached in two main subsections. Firstly, a basic description was provided of (a) levels of the tackled text books; (b) the total numbers of text books; and finally (c) one book series distinction Vs multiple books series. These components have been detailed to account for the nature of the reviewed materials using checklists to collect data from the course books. Secondly, in the second subsection, in the same way, checklist was designed used to evaluate the course books in terms of (d) the tackled tenses for each level; (e) patterns of presentation of tenses in the target course books; (f) the most frequent adopted methods and technics used to introduce and explain past tenses and finally (g) the different types of activities used in teaching tenses. The items and components that are used to construct the checklist were related to the learning and teaching context of past tenses that were found significant and relevant to the objectives of the study. Lastly, SPSS as a statistical program was used in analysing the generated data from the checklists and descriptive statistics (Frequency, Percentage, mean) was carried out.

3.2 General Description of the Material of the Current Study

3.1.1 Levels of Each Course Book

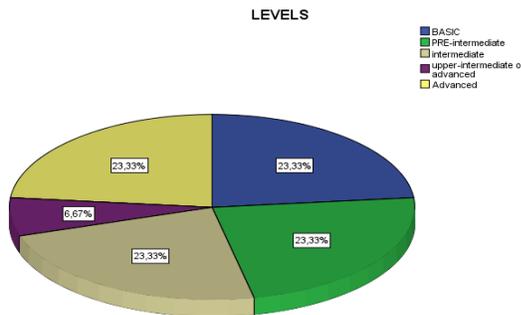
The current study reviewed thirty-grammar textbook. They are divided into two main categories. The first category consists of seven grammar textbook series that grouped into three to four levels, while the second category consists of 7 different books target only advanced learners.



The bar chart shows the sum numbers and the percentage of the first target grammar category in this study. Overall, this category divided into two groups. The first one constitutes 65.2% with three learners' level (Beginners, intermediate, advanced), while the second constitutes 34.8 % with four learners' levels (Basics, pre-intermediate, intermediate, advanced).

Figure 3: Bar Chart Represents Levels of the Reviewed Course Books

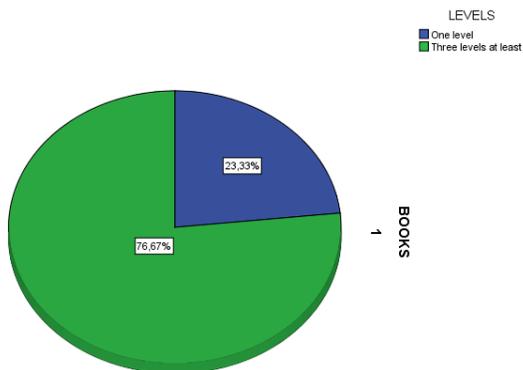
3.1.2 Total Number of Course Books for Each Level



The graph below represents the categorization of books by levels. As we have mentioned earlier, there are two categories of textbooks, the first category of textbooks that has three to four level with 76.67%, while the second category of textbooks takes only 23.33 for one level(advanced).

Figure 4: Graph Represents Percentage of Each Level in the Course Books

3.1.3 Book with One Level VS Multilevel Book Series



This graph represents the percentages of each level among the 30 reviewed grammar textbooks in this study. It displayed the two categories of the grammatical syllabus under study, in which we have the basic, pre-intermediate and intermediate took 23.3 percentage as well as advanced level, while the upper-intermediate level has only 6.7 of the total percentage of the overall textbooks with only 2 books.

Figure 5: Graph Represents One Level Text Book Vs Multiple Book Series

3.1.4 The Tackled Tenses for Each Level

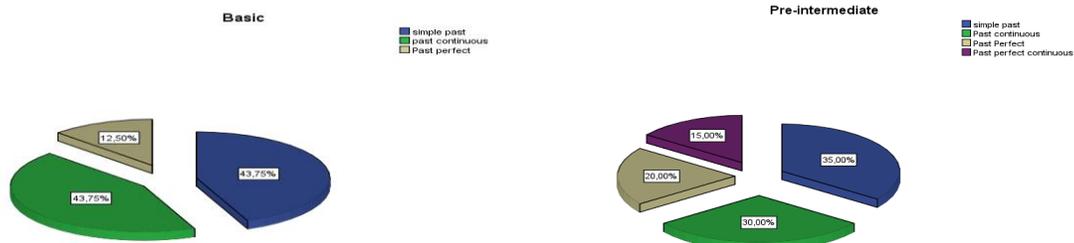


Figure 6 and 7: *Graphs Represent the Use of Past Tenses in Basic and Pre-Intermediate Levels*

Basic level graph reveals the devotes tenses for each level. We can observe that the **Basic textbook level** introduces 3 tenses to learners. The tenses are as follows: Simple past with 43.75 percent, past continuous 43.75 and finally 12.50 for past perfect.

Pre-intermediate level represents the second level in this study. We come up with a different representation of past tenses compared to the first representation of the first level. In fact, there are four omni-present tenses across the same book level out of the sum book series that are as follows: simple past 35 percent, past continuous 30 percent, past perfect 20 percent and finally past perfect continuous 15 percent.

Intermediate level graph represents the frequency of the spread of past tenses across the same book level of the course book series. In this regard, we can observe somehow more or less the same percentage of use of the four past tenses with the same share. We have 25.93% for simple past, Past continuous 25.93%, past perfect 25.93% and finally 22.22 % for past perfect continuous.

Upper-intermediate graph represents the percentages of frequency of past tenses across the fourth-level group of Upper-intermediate of the same category. It seems clearly that the four tenses types receive an equal share of interest with 25% for each tense type.

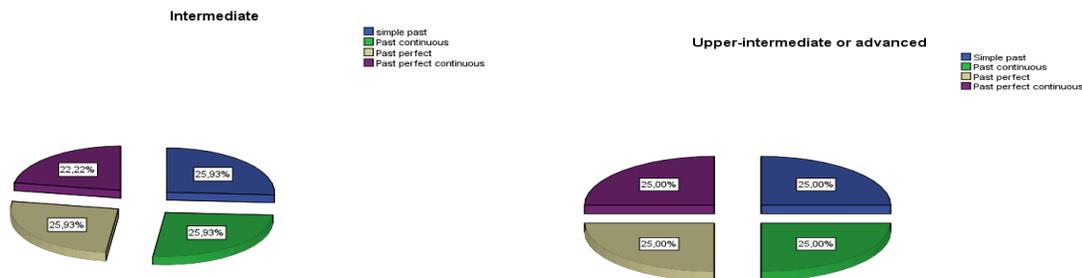


Figure 8 and 9: Graphs Represent the Use of Past Tenses in Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate levels

The spread of past tenses in the four levels of proficiency respects the developmental stages of the tense aspect morphology of learners in the L2 context. As have been mentioned in the existing body of research, learners pass through a predictable route of development that starts with acquiring past progressive, simple past in early stage then followed with past perfect and past perfect progressive at advanced stage in accordance with the Aspect Hypothesis promises (Anderson). Furthermore; Krashen and Dulay (1982) explain that Certain structures are acquired only when learners are mentally ready for them, and any premature instruction can be harmful because it can lead to the production of erroneous forms.

3.3 Patterns of Presentation of Tenses in Course Books

Materials developers provide input in principled ways related to what they know about how language can be effectively learned. In this subsection, a set of related comprehensive patterns of presentation of the reviewed lessons of past tenses has been provided. They actually stand for the

highly frequent components that constitutes the past tenses materials in the grammar course books. In fact, the patterns reflect the systematic rich, meaningful input of the language in use that is prerequisite for language acquisition. Also, the patterns can be considered as an opportunity for learners to notice the salient features of the input and to discover how they are used in the different course books.

Considering the different possible patterns of representation of past tenses across the target grammar textbooks. We have generated a model of presentation that consists of the following ingredients:

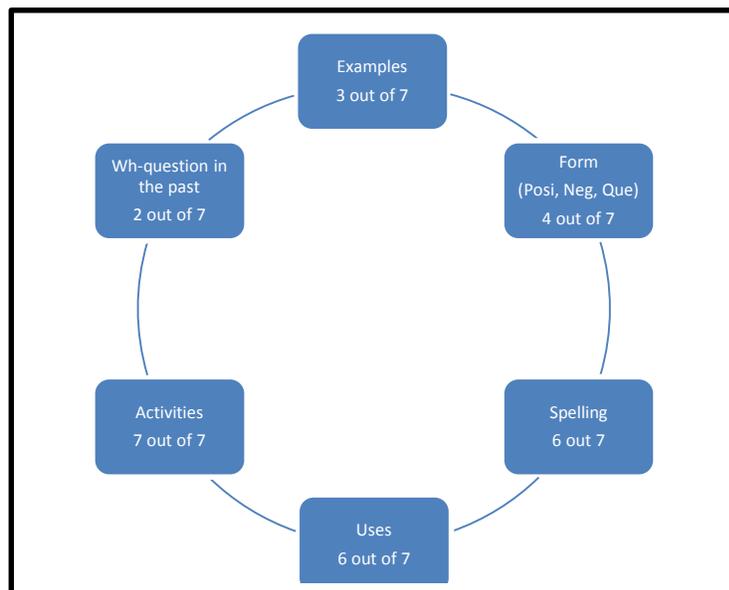


Figure 10: Model of the Patterns of Presentation of the Past Tenses Input in the Reviewed Course Books

The preceding ingredients have been generated from 7 textbooks series to figure out the nature of what has been used to teach the past tenses but mainly the simple past and past progressive. The analysis reveals seven highly frequent elements that are used frequently build up past tenses materials. However, this pattern and its order of presentation varied from one course book to another.

Course books in the first place provide examples of language use, and they are guiding learners to make discoveries through explicit or implicit learning. The former implies the declarative knowledge (how learners learn about the language system), whereas the latter stands for the procedural knowledge (how language is used). Both components are of value in acting as pre-emptive that aims to prevent problems in the course of learning the new grammatical features.

Also, it functions as responsive when it responds to a need for language when it occurs, and finally as a remedial in that it aims to remedy problems.

Constructs like spelling, form and uses foster the conscious and subconscious development of linguistic skills and strategies. They tend to increase the learners' knowledge and experience to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes. The subsequent section will provide a detailed account of the methods and technics that are used to achieve the main goals of grammatical syllabus ends.

3.4 The Adopted Methods and Techniques to Teach the Past Tenses. (Beginners Vs Advanced)

Teaching is used to refer to anything done by materials developers or teachers to facilitate the learning of the language, and it includes a course book that provide samples of language use to guide learners to make discoveries (Tomlinson, 2011).

Material developers opt for a wide range of methods and technics to construct the past tenses lessons across the different existing grammatical syllabus. The reference books of grammar are used as guidance in the instructed of second language acquisition context by learners and teachers as well. The guided acquisition of second language, which took place in classroom as distinguished from the naturalistic one in various ways, is basically focuses on language system, and it considered to be conscious, unlike the naturalistic learning which is spontaneous and emphasizes on communication.

Table 2: *Techniques and Strategies Used in Teaching Past Tenses in Grammar Course Books*

Tenses		Technics and Strategies of Explanation
Simple past	1)	2) Simple past with examples 3) Simple past with time expressions (adverb of time) 4) Simple past in time clause (Syntax) (Until, as soon as, once, by the time) 5) Tips about the misuses of simple past. 6) Contrast of tenses. a. Past simple and present perfect (Finished time or just, ever and Never finished time or up to now) b. Past simple and past continuous. (interrupted past, when and while). c. Past perfect and simple past (the order of past actions Past perfect, then simple past)

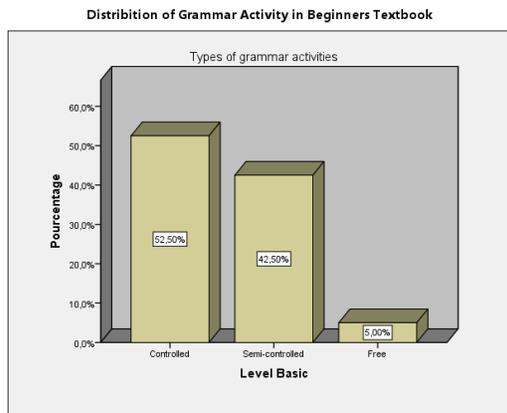
Past continuous	1)	2) Examples of tense use 3) Tense in context. 4) Tips about tense possibility. 5) Non-progressive verbs. 6) Tense contrast Past continuous and simple past (When, While)
Past perfect	1)	2) Examples of tense uses. 3) Tense and time conjunctions. 4) The order of the past actions. 5) Tense contrast a. Past perfect and past perfect continuous (completed actions Vs ongoing actions) b. Past perfect and simple past.
	c.	
Past perfect continuous	1)	2) Examples of tense uses. 3) Orders of past actions 4) Completed and ongoing actions 5) Emphasizing time and giving reasons. 6) Tense contrast. a. Past perfect continuous and Past perfect.
	b.	

The table above summarizes the different technics and methods used to teach the past tenses. Actually, the provided materials reflect the implications of pedagogical grammar that are taught and learned in the ESL and EFL context (Celce and Larsen-Freeman, 1999). It approaches learner by drawing his attention to the target linguistic features using authentic input. Basically, the materials are made to facilitate the learning of the past tenses and to increase learner knowledge of the target linguistic item, for example when language developers imply the concept of non-progressive verbs in the part of tenses uses to help learners to avoid the overgeneralization of the –ing markers over the mental and sense verbs .This type of learning can be exploratory ,in which it facilitate discoveries about language use and help learner develop his/her interlanguage that , to enable learner to internalize the differences between his/her L1 and L2 in terms of language use and usage (Selinker, 1972).

In fact, there is a reconsideration of the role of grammar in the L2 classroom that places the grammatical competence at the core of communication endeavour. Overall, a close eye on the construction of the different reviewed materials can reveal the adopted approach of Larsen-Freeman that based on form, meaning and use in representing the grammatical forms, which is not focused only on accuracy, but also extend it to appropriateness.

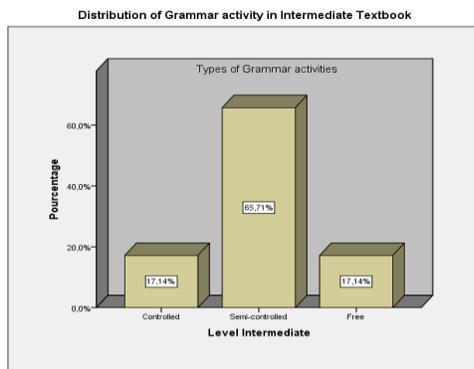
3.5 Types of Activities in Teaching Tenses

As Tomlinson explains that any use of the materials by the learners must be principled in which the learners should not find it too difficult to work it out, but he/she should enjoy the experience of doing it. The following graphs represents the distribution of type activities across the reviewed course books.



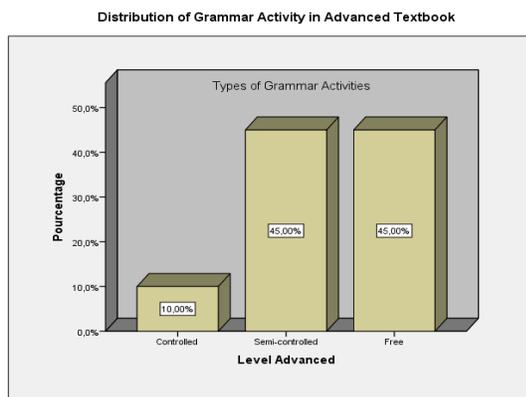
The bar chart illustrates the percentages of activities types across the basic level course books. It represents three types of activities, controlled, semi-controlled and free. Overall, we notice a dominance of controlled activities with 52,50 %, followed with semi-controlled 42,50%, then 5% goes to free activities. Thus, there is a tendency to opt for the controlled activities and semi-controlled activities in which the student choice of language during practice is restricted.

Figure 11: *Distribution of Grammar Activities in Beginners Grammar Course Books*



The second bar chart shows the percentages of activities type across the intermediate level. Overall, there is an increase use of semi-controlled (65,71%) at the expense of controlled activities (17,14%), also a remarkable increase of free activities but with limited portion (17,14%).

Figure 12: *Distribution of Grammar Activities in Intermediate Grammar Course Books*



The third bar chart represents the percentages of grammar type activities in the advanced grammar course books. Overall, there is an equal use of semi-controlled (45%) and free activities (45%).

Figure 13: *Distribution of Grammar Activities in Advanced Grammar Course Books*

Actually, the different types of activities help learner gradually gaining the needed confidence that aims to “push” them slightly beyond their existing proficiency by experiencing varied level of complexity. In fact, they are implemented to help learner to automatize their existing procedural knowledge and to develop learners’ strategic competence. (Canal and Swain, 1980). In addition, they permit the learner to overcome the deceptively apparent similarities with his L1 features, and rather focus on features of one’s own target language.

Ellis explains that “controlled practice appears to have little long-term effect on the accuracy with which new structures performed” (1990, p.192). Thus, they have a little impact on fluency (Ellis and Rathbone, 1987). However, they are still popular in grammar course books and considered to be useful by many teachers and learners (Tomlinson, 2001; Masuhara et all 2008). Furthermore, our results confirm Tomlinson findings when it comes to the course books of basic level, but contradict his findings when it comes to intermediate and advanced books categories (Category 1 and 2).

The multiuse of activities permits the learners to rehearse the target grammatical items in different occasions for the sake of retrieving it from short memory and produce it when it prompted by the teacher or the materials. Course books permit learner to recycle the target item through the frequent and ample exposure of the instructed language features which play a prominent role in changing and building his internalized grammar (Rod Ellis, 2014).

4. Conclusion/ Implications

The study analysed a wide range of grammar syllabi that have been used to teach the past tenses across different levels. The validity of the research paper was guaranteed by mixing the quantitative and qualitative methods in a balanced way. Consequently, many significant findings have been drawn in terms of the adopted approaches that have taken place in the process of past tenses materials development. In other words, we can assure that the field of language acquisition is gaining ground in the field of materials development. As have been shown, the construction of past tense materials accounts for learners’ internal and external factors that are responsible for the acquisition of the target grammar items. But still there is a need for future research in the field of acquisition to investigate learners’ errors like overgeneralization and overregularization in the EFL context that might help material developers to understand better how to improve the past tense materials.



To sum up, designing grammar materials should be conceptualized within the three-dimensional model of Larsen –freeman which has been proven to be useful for learners with its authenticity to drive learners to achieve their communicative goals.

5. Limitations of the Study

The nature of the complexity of the research dictates some limitations that should be considered in this field of research. I have listed the major relevant issues that might cause problem when materials developers consider designing grammatical syllabus:

- There is not a sufficient consideration of learner- external and internal factors, which play role in the learner development of tense-aspect development, in the process in the process of grammatical syllabus design.
- The difficulty of research about the nature of the learners' processes responsible for converting input to intake and restructuring the existing his L2 knowledge system.
- There is not enough care of the characteristics of the learner's language that could provide materials developers with the necessary information to design the past tenses materials.
- There is not enough implementation of the pragmatic features related to the way language is used in context for communicative purposes.

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