

# Decision Makers in EFL Classroom; Is It A Part of Teachers' Role?

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## ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss how the English teachers play their role as a decisions maker in conducting English subject at school. During the implementation of 2013 curriculum, the teachers are positioned as one of important factors in succeeding the curriculum. Thus, the decisions taken by the English teachers might influence the teaching and learning processes. This research, which is derived and further developed based on previous research conducted in 2014, was conducted at MAN Kota Solok, one of Public Islamic Senior High Schools in Solok City, West Sumatera, Indonesia. Furthermore, this research involved 5 English teachers. The research was conducted under qualitative approach by using phenomenology design. The result of the research shows that the English teachers have not fully decided some components in teaching process. It was caused by lack of understanding about the importance of decision made by the teachers how the decisions they made may influence the whole of the process of teaching English. Besides, it is also influenced by external factor, such as government's rule. Meanwhile, the research also found that the role as a decisions maker can either influence or even is influenced by the other roles of English teacher.

**Keywords:** *Decision maker, EFL, teachers' role*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Implementation of curriculum 2013 at school generally in Indonesia offers some challenges for both teachers and students. The quite different gaps between the previous curricula to this new one lead the teachers and students to adapt to those new differences. In general, curriculum 2013 directs students-centered learning approach (Pajarwati et al, 2021). The students are demanded to be independent in terms of deciding their types of learning, choosing materials, and being more active in teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, the teachers are demanded to facilitate, manage, control and evaluate students' learning process. Thus, those simple statements surely do not have simple reflection of teachers' roles in the classroom.

It cannot be denied that in every kinds of curriculum, teachers, for this case English teacher, must have specific responsibility and tasks. Whatever the curriculum is, it must be not possible for the teachers to not having any specific tasks. Although the students are the center of teaching and learning process, there must

be English teachers who should also available and accessible all the time for guiding, directing and facilitating them in learning process. By considering this fact, it can be argued that English teachers surely have specific roles and responsibility in case of implementing curriculum 2013. Specifically, English teachers who have numerous responsibilities to direct the English as a foreign language class face obvious challenges and problems. As mentioned by Donina & Khachaturova (2020), English teacher is the key factor that may lead students' direction of learning. English teachers are as the core of teaching and learning processes even though the students who study actively (Sartika, Hadijaya & Daulay, 2021).

One of the main concerns which should be done by the English teachers is as a decision maker (Asghari, Alemi, Tajeddin, 2021). A decision maker in English classroom means a role that demands the teachers to decide what things that will work in their classroom well. In order to decide how the class will work, the teachers are demanded to consider students' background. It involves at least students' social

background, students' financial background and for the most students' educational competence background. The teachers have a right to measure and analyze students' background so that they can decide which one is the most appropriate approach, method technique, kinds of materials, media and even the evaluation used for their students. As stated by Kardena (2017), teachers are the ones who should pay attention and know their students better than other people through gathering information related to all aspects of students' life which may influence their learning process. The teachers should have knowledge and have data of students' need analysis. It is not enough to only measure students' ability in the classroom while ignoring other kinds of factors that influence their learning achievement. It is not fear to the students to be judged while the teachers do not have massive comprehensive about students' background.

Furthermore, the teachers should not only stop analyzing students' need and their background. They should move forward to use that information to decide what students' need in their learning process. The teachers should be able to use the information that have previously gathered through need analysis in order to be used as a foundation in decision making process during teaching and learning processes. According to Kojima and Kojima (2005), the English teachers at least have 4 main tasks that related to their role as a decision maker in their classroom.

The decisions that are usually made by the teacher are about goal-setting, choice of materials, activity selection and organization, and evaluation. Related to decision of teaching and learning goal, Xiongyong (2012) says that the students will be easier to improve their ability when there is a clear learning goal that they should achieve. The goal should be based on students' need and interest in order to fulfill the real need of the students (Bakar, Yun, Keow & Li, 2014). Besides, decision of materials and activity in the classroom should also in line with the goal of teaching and learning process (Lepp, Aaviku, Leijen, Pedaste, & Saks, 2021). Any materials and activity in the classroom should fulfill the students' need so that it can give a significant improvement for students' ability (Xiongyong, 2012). In deciding those points, the teacher should involve the students by considering the areas that the students likely to give a great contribution to the decision making. Because of that, the result of need analysis should be used in deciding the course structure.

By considering the theory above, it can be argued that the English teachers have a big role in deciding what will conduct in the classroom, at least in these four components; goals of learning, materials, activity and evaluation. In fact, the preliminary data gotten from English teachers at MAN Kota Solok, one of Islamic senior high school at Solok City, showed that the English teachers have not fully applied their role as a decision maker in the classroom. The pre-interviewed conducted to 3 English teacher strengthened the phenomenon that the English teachers are rarely decide

the materials by considering students' background. What really happened at field was the English teachers just followed the materials contained in textbook and did not offer any chance to the learners to choose what they want to learn. It was not known yet whether this phenomenon happened because of the teachers' factor or learners' factor or even the curriculum itself.

Thus, it is categorized urgent to conduct a research related to how the teachers implement their role as a decision maker in EFL classroom at senior high school. Then, this article which is derived and further developed in 2014 explore how the teachers apply their role as a decision maker and explained any causes of problem behind the phenomenon existed in relation to this teacher's role. It is expected that this article may help English teachers, stakeholders and government to use the result of the research as a consideration for implementing and even revising the curriculum applied so far.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach. In addition, the method used in this research was phenomenology. As explained by Creswell (1998), a phenomenology study is "a research that searches for essentials, invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image and meaning." In other word, a phenomenology research is aimed to analyze why a phenomenon happen in a field of study. In this case, this research was aimed to explore how the English teachers conduct their role as a decision maker in English classroom.

The research was taken place at MAN Kota Solok, one of Islamic senior high school at Solok city region. The informants of the research were 5 English teachers who taught at this school. The data were gathered through observation and then validated through interview. The observation was conducted till the data were saturated. In this research, it was 5 times for each teacher. Besides, the interview was also conducted to collect the data while validate the data by asking the English teachers related to the reason for every action taken in their classroom. the observation and interview which were conducted were lied on 4 main indicators of the research; they were teachers' role as a decision maker in goal-setting, choice of materials, activity selection and organization, and evaluation.

Furthermore, the data analyzed by using the analysis qualitative data which proposed by Patton (1990). The procedures applied in analyzing the data was as followed:

1. The researcher transcript the data collected from the interview.

2. The researcher differentiated between participants' opinion and fact on the data gotten from the interview. In other words, the researcher had to be able to clarify any personal bias from the data collected.
3. The researcher tabulated the data from the observation.
4. The researcher gathered the purely data which related to the research. Any other data that was not about the research should be put out. Moreover, the researcher got the real facts of the data.
5. The researcher grouped the data based on the main questions of the research.
6. The researcher interpreted the meaning of the phrases or statements from the interview and participants' activity during the observation.
7. The researcher described the deeper meaning of participants' statements from interview and activity from the observation.

the teachers to decide several points before they started teaching and learning process. The goal of teaching was important to be decided in order to arrange the materials, activity, and evaluation system. In fact, the data on table 6 describe that all the English teachers have decided the goal of teaching and learning process. Besides, the teachers were also demanded to decide teaching materials in order to ensure that the materials were suitable to teaching goal, students' need, and students' interest. Based on table 1, it could be described that all the English teachers have decided the materials. In addition, all those teachers have also decided the activity for teaching and learning process. This decision was important to ensure that the goal of teaching could be achieved by the activity that had been decided.

In contrary, the data also proved that none of the teachers have decided or set their evaluation system. It included the scoring rubric, the system for checking the task, and so on. This decision was important in order to evaluate what have been done during the process of teaching and learning. The final aim of deciding the evaluation system was to evaluate whether the goal of teaching and learning process have been achieved or not.

In a more detail explanation, as a decision maker, the teachers were demanded to do several points, such as deciding the goal-setting, materials, the activity selection and its organization, and the evaluation. In other words,

### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. FINDING

The research was conducted related to teacher's role as a decision maker in their EFL classroom. This

**Table 1.** Teachers' performance as a decision maker

sub - indica tor	Participants' Code																													
	1						2						3						4						5					
	Meeting						Meeting						Meeting						Meeting						Meeting					
	1	2	3	4	5	T	1	2	3	4	5	T	1	2	3	4	5	T	1	2	3	4	5	T	1	2	3	4	5	T
A	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5
B	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5
C	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5	√	√	√	√	√	5
D	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
<b>T</b>	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	0

Note: (A) Deciding goal-setting (C) Deciding activities (T) Total  
 (B) Deciding materials (D) Deciding evaluation system

research investigated 4 kinds of teacher's task as a decision maker which involved their task in deciding goal-setting, choice of materials, activity selection and organization, and evaluation. The data which were gathered through observation and interview was then tabulated in the following explanation. The data from the observation was described in table 1.

The data on table 1 related to teachers' performance as a decision maker. It was important for

the teachers should be able to design the classroom activity started from the goal of teaching learning process up to the evaluation system. It was important to be decided because it influenced students' achievement. In fact, there was an interesting point in which there were two English teachers for each class. Both of the English teachers had their own part in teaching different skills in English. One English teacher taught listening and speaking while another one taught reading and

writing. It was done in order to optimize teacher's work since they had their own focus in teaching. The way to decide which English teacher who taught listening, speaking, reading and writing was decided based on the compromise done among the teachers. Indeed, all the teachers have been successful as a decision maker in some points; they were deciding the goal, deciding the materials, and deciding the activity.

In observing whether the teacher has decided the goal of teaching learning process, it could be known by observing whether the teacher knew what should be done in the classroom. In this case, the English teachers have been good enough in deciding their teaching-goal. All teachers knew what the students should be able to achieve at the end of the lesson. The goal that has been set usually depended, specifically, on the lesson plans and generally on the curriculum used. The data are supported by the interview done with the teachers as stated in the following transcript.

Data interview 1:

R: *Menurut ibuk, seberapa penting tujuan pembelajaran dan bagaimana ibuk menentukannya, buk?*

T: *Tujuan pembelajaran itu kan sudah diatur ya Rini. Jadi sudah ada dalam kurikulum. Guru tinggal mengembangkannya saja. Dan sudah pasti tujuan pembelajaran itu penting karena itu nanti yang akan jadi indicator kita kan. Itu yang menjadi dasar untuk mengukur seberapa jauh siswa sudah mampu. Kita lihat dari tujuan pembelajaran tersebut.*

Translation of data interview 1:

R: *In your opinion, how important is the goal of teaching and learning? And how you decide it?*

T: *The goal has been set, Rin. It has been stated in curriculum. The teacher only develops it. The goal is important because it will be the indicators to measure students' achievement. We can measure it from the teaching and learning goals.*

Based on the data interview above, it could be concluded that the teacher realized that deciding teaching and learning goals was very crucial. Since it was the basic for measuring students' achievement, the teacher has decided the goal by using curriculum as a general guideline. This decision automatically influenced their decision about the materials, the classroom activity, and the evaluation system. They have argued that the goal of teaching and learning process was the basic point for the development of other aspects in teaching and learning process. In other words, the decision of goal influenced the decision of materials, classroom activity, and the evaluation system.

In addition, the teachers also have always decided the material that was going to be taught in the classroom.

The observation proved that all the teachers have decided the materials before they came to the class. Because of that, they did not confuse to decide what they taught when they have come to the class. It could be seen that the teachers have selected the materials and prepared it before teaching learning process occurred. The materials was usually decided based on the level of difficulty or based on the arrangement of the materials in the curriculum. Besides, 2 of 5 teachers also considered the materials based on students' need and interest. In other word, the information that has been collected from the students about their need and their interest influenced the teacher in deciding the materials that were used in teaching and learning process. Moreover, the teachers also gave a statement during the interview that they decided the materials by considering the time that they have in one semester. They arranged the materials for each meeting so that all the materials for one semester had to be finished on the available time (before final semester test).

Moreover, there was an interesting phenomenon found in the field in relation to the materials. It was found that one teacher did not really understand the materials that she was going to teach. It was found when the teacher was asked by the students because they did not understand about the materials. The fact was the teacher did not answer it satisfactorily. The teacher did not also give a clear explanation of students' questions. In other words, the teacher also did not fully understand the material. Because of that, it could be concluded that when the teacher decided the materials, it did not mean that the teacher have prepared and understood it well.

After the teachers have decided the materials that they would teach, they also selected any activities that could be applied in the classroom. The activity was aimed as a strategy or technique so that the materials were acquired by the students. However, based on the observation, one of the phenomena that appeared was 4 of 5 teachers did not vary the activity although they taught different genre. In order to clarify this phenomenon, the interview was done. The data from the interview was stated below.

Data interview 2:

R: *Menurut ibuk perlu dibedakan tidak buk pilihan activity di kelas ketika teks nya juga berbeda? Maksudnya tehnik yang dipakai untuk mengajar. Misal, dalam mengajar reading, teks narrative dan teks hortatory, itu dibedakan tehnik nya atau tidak buk?*

T: *berarti sama-sama reading ya? Ya sama saja. Tapi kadang kita bedakan, misalnya hari ini kelompok, besok individu. Seperti itu.*

Translation of data interview 2:

R: *Do you think that you have to differentiate classroom activity when you teach different text?*

*For example when you teach narrative and hortatory exposition text, do you have different technique?*

*T: Still reading, right? Yes, it's the same. However, we sometimes differentiate it, for instance we use group discussion for today, and individual task for tomorrow.*

Besides, the data from the observation also proved that 3 of 5 teachers were lack of creativity in choosing the technique in teaching. In listening section, the teacher only played a cassette recorder and asked the students to listen and to fill the blank on the text based on what they listened to. Sometimes the teachers only read the text by themselves and the students listened to them while filling the blank on the text. It became worse since the teacher seldom built students' background knowledge before the whilst-activity started.

Another monotone activity was also occurred in teaching speaking. The teacher modeled to read a text one or two times and asked the students to do in pairs or groups. Sometimes the students were asked to create their own dialogue. The most common phenomenon was the teachers who did not build students' background knowledge. It could be caused by lack of warm-up activity done by the teachers.

This phenomenon showed that those teachers did not vary the activity in teaching and learning process. Based on the interview with the teacher, they argued that they were worried to use the new technique because they were afraid that the students were not going to be interested on the new technique. Their argument proved that they did not collect any information about students' interest so they felt afraid to try some new techniques. Based on this phenomenon, it was clearly proved that the way the teachers decided the materials and classroom activity was really influenced by the information that they had to collect about students' need and interest.

The last point that should be done by the teacher as a decision-maker was deciding the evaluation system. It included deciding the scoring rubric, the scoring system, the decision for peer or self- correction, and so on. Based on the observation, all the teachers never set the way to evaluate students work. In some cases, the teacher asked the students to work in groups, pair, or even individual, but when the students finished the task, the teacher only gave a checklist without a clear score for what they have done. Another case was when the teacher gave score to students writing without having any scoring rubric. Absolutely it can affect the validity and reliability of the task since the degree of bias was so high.

Based on the interview with the teacher, the teacher stated that she did not always use scoring rubric because she considered students' motivation that got low score when the scoring rubric was used. The data of the interview was stated below.

Data interview 3:

*R: Dalam mengevaluasi nilai anak, kapan ibuk menggunakan scoring rubric?selalu digunakan atau bagaimana buk? Misalnya dalam writing. Panduan resmi memberi score.*

*T: Kadang dipakai scoring rubric kadang ndak.*

*R: Kenapa ndak dipakai, buk?*

*T: Ya kalau ndak dipakai itu karena kadang kalau selalu dipakai menurut panduan, menurut kita anak tu kurang dari yang seharusnya tapi untuk membangkitkan semangat anak, dikasih nilai lebih. Makanya kadang dipakai kadang ndak. Terlebih untuk writing.*

Translation of data interview 3:

*R: For evaluating students' work, do you always use scoring rubric?*

*T: Sometimes.*

*R: Why don't you always use it?*

*T: Because we have also to consider students' motivation. Sometimes the students should have low score, but we give higher score to motivate them, especially in writing.*

Based on the interview above, it could be interpreted that the teacher did not use scoring rubric when she scored students' task. Because of that, the students' score contained such bias since there was no clear guideline on how to score the students' work. In other cases, the other teacher also stated that he did not have any scoring rubric. The data from the interview was stated below:

Data interview 4:

*R: Aaa kalau dari evaluasi. Evaluasi nilai anak. Itu menurut bapak harus dilakukan tiap kali pertemuan atau disama ratakan antar skill atau bapak punya cara lain?*

*T: Evaluasi itu kan nati kan kita berpatok pada indicator kita dulu nanti kan. Kemudian tujuan kita kan. Kemudian dalam evaluasi ini kan kita ambil setiap masuk, itu fatal akibatnya. Itu yang dikatakan guru kurang jam, materi banyak katanya kan. Kita kan bisa ambil rata-rata nya saja nanti. Umpamanya waktu apa kan ada itu, waktu kita menyimpulkan, kan anak yang dilibatkan itu. Waktu itu kan bisa kita baca itu oh ini ini ini yang bisa menyimpulkan. Kan kita kadang melakukan yang classical, kadang ada yang random kan. Kalau klasikal kan udah terbayang ini ini ini. Habis itu nantik kita kode aja, kita masukkan aja nilai apanya, penambahan nilainya. Kemudian kalau evaluasi, kalau saya*

*kan sering melakukannya itu kan setiap selesai 1 KD baru selesai 1 evaluasi.*

Translation of data interview 4:

*R: In evaluating students' work, do you do it in every meeting, for every skill or you have another way?*

*T: The evaluation should be based on the indicators and the goals. When we evaluate students' work for every meeting, it will be dangerous. That's why teachers say that they did not have enough time, a lot of materials and so on. In fact, we can take the average, for example when we conclude the lesson, we can see who can conclude it well. And then, we can give additional score for them. I usually do an evaluation when I have finished teaching one basic competence.*

The data from the interview 4 clearly describe that the teacher did not have a clear scoring rubric. He decided students' score based on how the students conclude the materials at the end of the lesson. Besides, there was also no clear consideration of giving appropriate score for the students' performance. In other word, the teacher did not avoid any bias in giving score to the students.

The data above show that none of the teachers decided an organized and clear evaluation system. This situation affected the other role of the teacher, especially their role as a reflective practitioner. The teacher should always reflect and evaluate what they have done in the classroom. One of the reflections of their successful was students' score. When the teachers did not decide an organized and clear evaluation system, there was a high degree of bias on students' achievement. It automatically did not give a truth and correct reflection on teachers' performance. The teachers did not know whether they have well enough in teaching because the students' score did not really reflect their achievement.

Based on the explanation above, it could be concluded that the teachers have succeeded to run their roles as a decision-maker in some parts. It included deciding the goal of teaching learning process, deciding the materials and deciding the classroom activity. Although the teachers were lack of variety in deciding the activity, at least they have decided what they were going to do in the classroom. Moreover, none of the teachers decided any evaluation system in teaching and learning process. In this case, lack of scoring rubric and scoring system caused any bias in scoring students tasks.

### **3.2 DISCUSSION**

However, there was a problem related to the activity used by the teachers since some of the teachers

did not vary the activities. Based on the data gotten from the field, it could be concluded that the teachers did not vary their activities because they were not aware of the importance of varying classroom activities. It could be argued that this problem is caused by teacher's motivation to find out any other classroom activities. In fact, teachers' motivation would give a significant impact to their teaching competence and performance (Kubanyiova, 2006: 9-11). As a result, the teachers cannot perform optimally when their motivation is low. In addition, it could be happened because of lack of reflective teaching culture. When the teacher did not get any reflection and evaluation of their performance in the classroom, they would not realize the weaknesses of their performance. In other words, they cannot develop their professionalism, such as knowledge and practice of variation of teaching activities, if they did not do any reflection and evaluation of their teaching technique.

Another point on being a decision maker was to decide the evaluation system used. The fact proved that most of the teachers did not have any clear evaluation system for evaluating students' performance. They did not decide any evaluation system, such as scoring rubric, for evaluating students' work. It affected the reliability of students' score. When the teacher did not have any evaluation system, there would be a bias score that are given on students' performance. As explained by Kojima and Kojima (2005: 67-69), the teachers should be able to decide any evaluation system. It is important since it would be used to reflect what the students' have achieved so far by avoiding any bias. Theoretically, Meece (2009: 114) also argues that one of the teachers' roles is to decide any assessment for evaluating students' progress. They have to decide the assessments that can be used to measure students' competence and achievement in using the language. However, the teachers in MAN kota Solok argue that they did not decide the evaluation system because they needed to consider students' motivation so they usually give additional score for the students in order to increase their motivation.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

As a decision maker in EFL class, English teachers for sure having some rights to decide components of teaching and learning processes.

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