

EFL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON DESIGNING AND EVALUATING LANGUAGE MATERIALS : A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: Designing and evaluating language materials are very important component for providing an effective teaching in educational context. A language teacher is a materials developer and also as well as the material development who have played the significant role towards students' development in language learning, but no empirical research investigates teachers' views on designing and evaluating language materials in teaching English as FL. To fill this gap, this present study tries to explore teachers' views for designing and evaluating language materials for the sake of 2013 curriculum development. It reports that (1) teachers are insufficiently provided with professional development programmes to design and evaluate the language materials appropriately; (2) teachers lack opportunities to work with peer teacher for solving the problems which found in the classroom; (3) based upon these findings, this study creates several suggestions for teacher educators and curriculum policymakers.

Key words: *EFL teacher's perceptions, designing and evaluating language materials, teacher educators and curriculum policy makers*

Introduction

Teacher's jobs are to design and evaluate for improving the learning process. Designing and evaluating are continuous process done by the teachers. In designing language materials, an EFL teachers should consider the learner's for their age, interests, level of proficiency in English, aptitude, mother tongue, academic and educational level, attitudes to learning, motivation, reasons for learning, and preferred learning styles (Mc DoNough, Shawa, Masuhara, 2013: 8). Those considerations are complementary each others for developing an ideal language materials. As a result, a good teacher should be able to develop or adapt the language materials based on students' need and ability.

There are changes of designing and evaluating learning materials. Teachers should change the way of their teaching English and its evaluation for certain purposes. These changes can influence teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge in teaching English as a Foreign Language. Therefore, English teachers need to be trained in order to use the curriculum 2013 correctly.

Teacher's knowledge, belief and perception play a fundamental role in the effective implementation of new curriculum. Brumfit, et al. (1996) and Borg (2001) believe that teachers' self-perceptions of their knowledge about language influence their pedagogical decisions. Put simply, perception can be understood as a process of interpretation by which individuals ascribe meaning to things distinct from the valuation process involved in attitudes. Perceptions both influences attitudes and are influenced by them. How an individual perceives particular people, things or policies will have an important influence on the attitudinal evaluation of these people, things or policies.

Training of curriculum 2013 has been held in some places in Indonesia to make the same perception among EFL teachers about the implementation of this policy. Many problems or misunderstanding happen during this training. These problems can be from internal factor (teacher) and external factor (unprepared trainers and unavailable the clear instruction from policy makers and curriculum developers). Furthermore, it is very important to conduct the research in this field for getting deeper to the problems in classroom. Teacher as curriculum material and curriculum developer should create interesting and innovative language materials, but, unfortunately, in curriculum 2013, they have to follow the "main book" (compulsory book) for their daily teaching. In fact, according to Widy, Saifudin, and Dewanti (2014), this book need supplementary materials in language skills such as listening, speaking, and reading to provide comprehensive language materials for students. Therefore, it is still widely possible to conduct this research for developing language materials for this textbook. Based on those elaborations, it is quite valuable to investigate the teacher's perceptions on designing and evaluating language materials to reveal the exact problems that are faced by EFL teacher in training of curriculum 2013. Teachers are the key agents of curricular change, and without their willingness to participate, there can be no change or improvement in teaching learning process. However, teachers' perceptions vary in designing and evaluating in curriculum 2013.

Teaching learning process in curriculum 2013 has focused on students-centered. The standard process which used to focus on exploration, elaboration, and confirmation is completed with observing, questioning, exploring, associating, and communicating. The learning process is not only conducted at classroom, but also outdoor in the school environment or even society. Teacher is not the only source to learn.

Assessment of the 2013 curriculum is more emphasis on authentic assessment. Authentic assessment is a comprehensive assessment conducted to assess the start of input (input), process, and output (output) learning (No. Permendikbud. 66th in 2013). Assessment is carried out not only based on learning outcomes but also on the process. The concept of authentic assessment is the ability of children assessed by the development of the child's own results, based on the process, not the end of learning, and not only a cognitive assessment, but also the psychomotor and affective. In English learning, the teacher can use a variety of activities to check students' understanding to learn a foreign language requires a variety of ways to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts they have learned (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013: 19).

The research objectives are as follows: (a) To investigate English teachers' perception when they design and evaluate the language materials for the development of curriculum 2013; (b) To know the problems and difficulties encountered by English teachers during training of curriculum 2013.

Research Method

Data and Source of the Data

a. Respondent

The research term used for qualitative sampling is purposeful sampling. In this research, the researcher took two English teachers in different place who have participated in the training of curriculum 2013 as respondents.

b. Events

The events are teaching and learning process of English during 2013 curriculum training.

c. Documents

The documents analyzed were the 2013 curriculum and the documents related to the historical background of the teachers' achievement in designing and evaluating language materials.

Technique of Collecting the Data

Unlike experimental, survey, or historical research, case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis. Any and all methods of gathering the data, from testing to interviewing, can be used in a case study, although certain techniques are used more than others (Merriam, 1998: 28). In this research, the researcher uses four kind techniques of collecting the data. They are observation, interview, questionnaire, and also documentation.

Research Finding and Discussion

English teachers have positive perception toward the process of designing and evaluating language materials

Designing and evaluating language material let the teacher to be more innovative. Even, it can be a commercial activity for the teacher himself. (teacher D)

Designing is needed to achieve the learning goal. Evaluating is needed to develop the previous design. Bothe of them are valuable activities. (teacher H)

It should be noted that English teachers in this research believe that designing and evaluating materials correctly can improve their professional development and also teaching learning process. These subjects of the researcher have positive perception and attitude toward the designing and evaluating language materials. They think that they need to do it consistently as a part of teacher professional development.

Because it will develop quality of teaching and learning process. Besides, The students need up-to-date information. (teacher D).

To identify the weaknesses and the strength of the design and to improve the design itself (teacher H).

The socialization of implementing curriculum 2013 was done by training which was held by the government. Teachers feel enthusiasm for participating in this training. However, there are some unsatisfied responds from the training participant. They feel the training cannot provide detail information toward new curriculum.

I think that the training given by government is not enough since the training that I have joined only gave theories not practice. Thus, I have to practice more and more dealing with the curriculum to become a professional English teacher. (teacher D and H)

It can be seen that trainings held by the government could not provide the sufficient information practically about new curriculum. The duration of the training is viewed as too short. Most teacher-training was conducted by short term programmes, involving several hours or days of workshops, with limited follow-up activities. Furthermore, teachers are seen as passive listeners during the training. In other words, the workshops on the new curriculum were conducted in the old, traditional ways, as a result, teachers cannot understand optimally about the implementation of new curriculum.

The teachers in this research complained that they got only theoretical about curriculum 2013, but no practical ideas to implement this curriculum in teaching learning process. They were confused about what they

should do with the new curriculum. They were not convinced of its benefits and the areas in which it could make a difference in education quality, especially, the different way of teaching with previous curriculum. As a consequence, teachers in general do not feel well-equipped to implement the new curriculum.

Lacking opportunities to equip themselves with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for successful implementation of the new curriculum, it is difficult to hope how teachers can work optimally with it since the training does not give enough practical ideas to be applied in the teaching learning process.

Teachers are insufficiently provided with professional development programmes to design and evaluate the language materials appropriately

I think the materials of 2013 curriculum are similar to the previous one. But 2013 curriculum is good enough. That curriculum does not only assess the knowledge and skill but also attitude. Unfortunately, I think many schools which has not be ready yet. Many teachers do not understand more about it. (teacher D and H)

The implementation of the new curriculum is subject to a regular process of adaptation and modification, as teachers find a balance between the goals of the new curriculum, their own skill and understanding, and the contexts in which they operate (Fullan, 2007; Huberman, 1992; Spillane, 1999). This is an ongoing process, in which teachers learn, unlearn and relearn the curriculum. As emphasized by Fullan and Miles (1992: 746) state that change is a process of coming to grips with the new personal meaning, and so it is a learning process. This implies that teacher training should be based upon a continual learning process and not short-term unsystematic training sessions. If teachers are asked to change the core of their practice, they should be provided with ongoing in-service training to cope with problems and difficulties encountered in the implementation process. Introducing curricular reform should not be the end of the reform process but as the beginning of a journey.

Lack of peer support for solving problems and resolving difficulties in new curriculum

Getting difficult to understand the implementation of the steps in language classroom. (teacher H).

Many aspects must be evaluated in the curriculum. Thus, the teachers should work hard in evaluating each student (teacher D).

It can be inferred that teachers got problems in designing language materials and evaluating the students' work. They need more explanations about the changes in curriculum 2013. Based on the interviews with the English teachers, it found that in curriculum 2013, teachers have more time to do teaching learning and process since they have been helped to the book provided by the government. The main source of learning is not only the teacher but also the book. As the effect, in arranging lesson plan, teacher is not free anymore like as the previous curriculum, but it should develop from the main book.

The difficulties are when the teachers tend to be individualized in the new curriculum. The advanced technology may also lead teachers to be more individualized in solving the problems.

I usually consult to my smartphone (using internet) rather than discussing with peer-teachers to solve the problems together in classroom. (teacher H)

I have many things to do since I can do it by myself, If I find the problems, I will look for the solution from the books, journals or internets. It is more practical than discussing for the solution which is not really solvable. (teacher D)

From the answers, the researcher may draw a conclusion that the role of social interaction among English teachers has been replaced with the advanced technology. It can be the serious problem by the educators since they believed that the discussions among peer-teachers are not important anymore.

Based on the questionnaire and interview, teacher D and teacher H have been usual to prepare all learning material that consist of lesson plan, syllabus, and teaching approach so that their time will be spent more in doing preparation before teaching. In curriculum 2013, teachers' freedoms are limited. They need to stick the materials prepared by the government. Government has designed the syllabus, textbook, and teaching approach (scientific approach). Therefore, teachers feel that their authorities have been reduced so that they can focus on teaching-learning process in classroom. But, even though, government have prepared the syllabus, textbook, and teaching approach, then, based on the interview, the teacher still have opportunities to create the materials based on students' level, objective of learning, method of teaching and teacher's creativity. These changes need more cooperation among peer teachers to solve the problems together and share the difficulties encountered during the classroom.

Non-technical constraints

Each student has different level of intelligences, creativity, motivation and other psychological variables. These factors can influence the implementation of new curriculum. Teachers' work is to design learning materials that is suitable to the students' conditions and schools. Then, the different schools will have different cultures and facilities toward the curriculum change. From the questionnaire and interview, it reveals

that some contextual constraints were neglected, such as lack of adequate resource necessary for implementation and trained humans' resources for the implementation of 2013 curriculum. For example, using ICT in daily teaching will be a big problem for the school with inadequate ICT facilities. Then, from teaching approach, unprepared-well teachers found serious problems in teaching English using scientific approach since they have been usually teaching by using GBA (Genre-Based approach). In evaluating of learning materials, since in new curriculum, the emphasis of scoring is more concerned on authentic assessment. Authentic assessment is a comprehensive assessment conducted to assess the start of input (input), process, and output (output) learning (No. Permendikbud. 66th in 2013). Unexpectedly, there is no standard of authentic assessment provided by government to evaluate students' process from day to day, as a consequence, different teachers will vary in making authentic assessment and scoring.

Conclusion

This research has shown that English teachers are not ready to implement curriculum 2013 since training of curriculum 2013 is not comprehensive yet to equip the teachers well. However, they have positive perception to participate in training of curriculum 2013. Based on the discussion previously, this research has come into some findings as follows: (1) English teachers have positive perception toward the process of designing and evaluating language materials; (2) Teachers are insufficiently professional development to design and evaluate the language materials appropriately; (3) Teachers lack opportunities to work with peer teacher for solving the problems which found in the classroom; (4) the non-technical constraints influencing have a big impact whether or not the implementation is successfully.

This research recommends that policymakers make more effort to get an agreement from teachers on the importance of curricular changes. Changes are best achieved when teachers voluntarily participate in the curricular reforms that they perceive as being meaningful and important for students. Policymakers should consider teachers' suggestion for curricular development. If teachers feel they are the targets of reform, consequently, policymakers will make specific development programs to improve their ability. Governmental or local educational authorities, policymakers and professional development facilitators need to maintain a close working relationship with teachers, so that they can learn more about teachers' difficulties relating to the curricular change.

Another recommendation is to implement the collaborative school-based in service teacher training. It is a program to develop teachers' ability in teaching, designing and evaluating learning materials. This program is in cooperation with local university for providing the facilitators to give training for the teachers. Therefore, the collaboration among university, school, government/Direktorat General Higher Education (DGHE), and local educational authorities will improve the quality of teachers' professional development significantly.

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Biodata

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