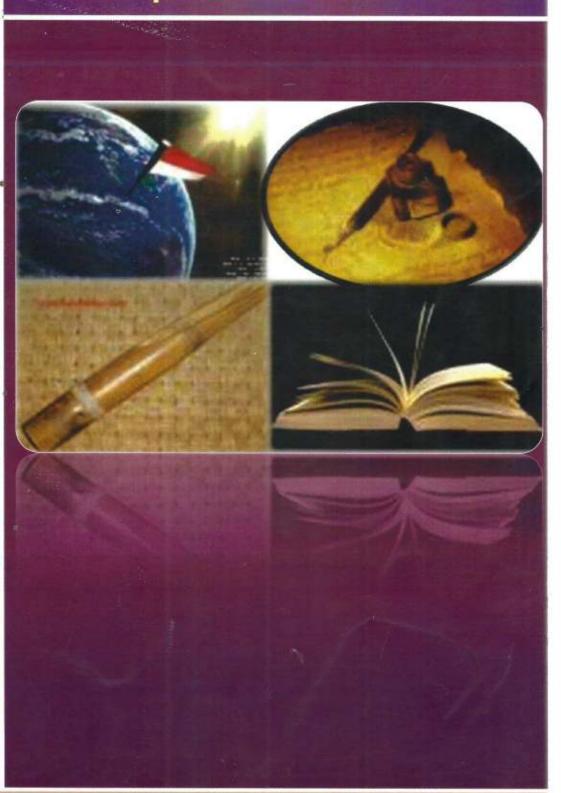


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Sayama Malabar Suprivadi Nonny Basalama

(Universitas Negeri Gorontalo) (Universitas Negeri Gorontalo)

Redaksi Pelaksana

Ketua Sekretaris Bendahara

: Muslimin : Jafar Lantowa Zilfa A. Bagtayan : Yunus Dama

Tata Usaha dan Kearsipan

Arlan Ibrahim : Wiwin Rewini Kunusa

Distribusi dan Sirkulasi

: Mira Mirnawati Aripin Suleman

Isharyanti Ningsih Sulila

Alamat Redaksi

: Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia Fakultas Sastra dan Budaya, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

Jl. Jend. Sudirman No. 6 Kota Gorontalo, 96128

Email: jurnalbdb@gmail.com

Telp. (62-435) 821125, Fax. (62-435) 821752

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Telp. (62-435) 821125, Fax: (62-435) 821752

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#### PASSING GRADE CRITERIA; A STUDY ON TEACHER'S UNDERSTANDING, DECISION, AND STRATEGY IN ENGLISH LEARNING

#### Surahmat Hasjim, Karmila Machmud Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

Abstract: This research focuses on the problems surrounding Passing Grade Criteria; the understanding, decision, and strategy. The objectives of this research are to investigate the teachers' understanding about the concept of Passing Grade Criteria; how do they decide and what strategies used to ensure the students in reaching or passing the Passing Grade Criteria. This research is conducted in SMPs of Boalemo Regency. The subjects of research are 5 English teachers in 3 SMPs of Boalemo. This research is designed by using qualitative method with case study approach. The data of research was collected through interview and study the document. The finding of research shows the following conditions; (1) The teachers' understanding of concept, aspects and procedure of determining Passing Grade Criteria is still lack. All participants recognized the term of Passing Grade Criteria but most of them cannot briefly define it. (2) Teachers also do not have their own right to decide or determine Passing Grade Criteria. Because of this condition, the determination of Passing Grade Criteria is out of analysis and the score become too high to be reached. (3) The participants provide some strategies for enabling the students to pass the Passing Grade Criteria. The strategies are improving the quality of teaching, overcoming the problems occurred in learning process and giving remedial. The remedial form is vary among teachers. Based on the findings, the research formulated some recommendations. It is suggested for the teachers, principal, and all school stakeholders need to have similar perception and understanding of the correct concept in determining Passing Grade Criteria. The determination of Passing Grade Criteria should also be discussed comprehensively by the teacher as his/her right and responsibility. The determination of Passing Grade Criteria should also consider the fulfillment of its aspects. Teachers also need to improve their quality of teaching in order to get better achievement of learning.

Keywords: Passing Grade Criteria; Teacher Understanding, Decision and Strategy

#### INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is a set of plans of teaching that containing the goals, contents, learning materials. The function of curriculum is guidance for carrying out teaching learning process in obtaining the goal of education. (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan, 2006). Current applied curriculum, School-based curriculum or Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) is adjusted to the school potential, that so, this curriculum will be variant among other schools. So, the curriculum is built by the school based on internal and external potential variables related to the school themselves under government's coordination and supervision.

It is hard to deny that the progress in the application of Indonesian curriculum is not always followed by the maximum output quality. The teachers sometimes do not understand what factors will improve the students' achievement with the current curriculum used. They sometimes do not understand the concept of curriculum itself. KTSP emphasize on developing students' ability as a competence that can show the specific performance standard. Accordingly, this curriculum is constructed in order to foster the teaching learning process by orienting the mastery of integrated competencies.

One of main KTSP characteristics is evaluation, emphasizing the activities in order to achieve the competences through mastery learning approach. Mastery learning is determined by the ability of each student to master a number of competencies learned (Hermawan, 2008: 31). As an innovation in educational system, mastery learning approach is significant in improving motivation and strengthening the students learning efforts in achieving the mastery level required. By using this approach, all educational stakeholders need to have a briefly understanding of the concept and application of mastery learning.

Mastery learning is measured by Passing Grade Criteria which is also called Minimum Passing Criteria in Indonesian curriculum. The Minimum Passing Criteria is the level score based on criteria that students need to achieve. The determined criteria are requirement to move to the next higher level of education.

The previous fact had become classic problem teachers must face Based on previous preliminary studies, the result shows that many students still have lower score from the minimum standard that has been determined.

The Ministry of National Education Regulation number 2 in 2007 about standard of evaluation stated that in determining Passing Grade Criteria of each subject, the teachers should consider students' characteristics, subject characteristics, and their own school conditions.

Determining the Passing Grade Criteria is the first step on doing evaluation of KTSP development. The Passing Grade Criteria is set by teacher of a certain subject. This will be a guideline in determining the Passing Grade Criteria for the students' input, the complexity of the subject material, and supporting capacity. Supporting capacity intended is the facilities / infrastructure available and the availability of teachers. Teachers should try different efforts for enabling the students to reach the passing criteria predetermined.

However, the determination of Passing Grade Criteria in each school sometimes faced

some problems; such are teachers' understanding on the procedure of determining the Passing Com-Criteria, out of analysis determination. intervention from the principal and bureaucras

Unfortunately, some teachers were me aware of how to determine the students' final based the grade criteria. They use some unprocedural way as their efforts to report a good performance to education policy maker.

Considering these phenomena. researcher is interested in focusing on bear teachers' understanding to the concept of Page 1 Grade Criteria, teachers' decision on the Passes Grade Criteria and what strategies used in enaction student to pass the criteria.

The objective of this research is discover the answer to the research questions applying methodology of research used. objectives are to investigate the teacher understanding about the concept of Passing Comme Criteria; how do they decide and what strategy they used to ensure the students reach Grade Criteria.

This research is beneficial briefly phenomena of both teaching condition specifically and education generally in Boalemo to education policy The research finding also can give feet and the second sec the teachers in order to motivate them their comprehension on Passing Grade Their understanding will be useful in dealers right Passing Grade Criteria related to regulation and procedures.

This research is considered study research, where Stake (1995) Creswell stated that Case Study is a rewhich the researcher explores in deposition an event, an activity, a process, or one individuals. The case(s) are bounded activity, and researchers collect information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of This research will use descriptive method where the problem of research

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understanding, decision and strategy on passing urade crietria will be carried out descriptively.

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8 English teachers of 4 SMPs in Tilamuta, Kabupaten Boalemo is taken as the subject of this research.

The interview is conducted to know the teachers' understanding on the Passing Grade Criteria, how do they decide the passing grade, and their strategy in enabling the students pass the grade criteria. The format of interview will refer to Creswell (2003) which stated that in qualitative review the researcher conduct face to face interviews with participants, The interview involve open-ended questions, which are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (p.181)

In gaining the data the research conduct also study document to see how they apply their understanding of Passing Grade Criteria concept. The document that will be investigated is lesson plan where the Passing Grade Criteria listed.

#### THEORETICAL REVIEW Passing Grade Criteria

Mastery learning in KTSP curriculum is an approach that uses the principle of mastery learning individually, where the school must determine the criteria. School are expected to increase mastery learning criteria continuously to achieve the ideal of completeness criteria.

The Passing Grade Criteria is a set of criteria to be reached by the student as the requirements to move to the next higher level of education (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, 2006, p.26).

Determination of learning passing criteria is a beginning step of learning achievement evaluation as a part of curriculum development. Competency-based curriculum that uses a reference of criteria in its assessment model requires teachers and school to determine the minimum criteria as the measurement of competence achievement. Therefore, it needs a determination

guidance provided by the information of Passing Grade Criteria in a school.

One of principles of the assessment in KTSP curriculum uses the reference of criteria to determine the graduation of students. The minimum grade that students have to be mastered called as minimum passing criteria (KKM)

Passing Grade Criteria should be set on the beginning of the school year. No matter how many students exceed the limits of minimum grade, it will not change the decision in determining the criteria. Reference criteria will never changed along the period time of academic year. Reference criteria requires the teacher to take appropriate response towards the results of the assessment, which provides additional services (remedial) to those who have not passed the required grade.

Passing Grade Criteria is a reference of teachers, students, and parents. Therefore, all stakeholders of school has the right to know. A school needs to disseminate that information in order to be accessed easily by students or parents. Passing Grade Criteria should be listed in student's Learning Report Book as a reference in addressing the students learning achievement.

#### Function of Passing Grade Criteria

The determination of Passing Grade Criteria is significant in developing the quality of learning output. According to Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional (2008: 3), the functions of Passing Grade Criteria are:

- As a reference for teachers in assessing the competence of students referred to the basic competency of the subject. The achievement of each basic competence can be seen based on passing grade determined. Teachers must provide an appropriate response toward achievement of basic competence in remedial or enrichment services form.
- As a reference for students in preparing themselves to follow the assessment. Each basic competences and indicators have their required passing grade. It must be achieved

and controlled by students. Students are expected to prepare themselves to pass the pre-required passing grade. If it unachievable, students should know which competence is unfinished and need to be improved.

- 3. Can be used as components of evaluating the implemented learning program. Evaluation of the implemented curriculum program can be seen from passing grade achievement. Therefore, the achievement of competences needs to be analyzed to obtain information about the easy or difficulty unit of competences, and also how to improve the learning process to fulfill the requirements.
- 4. A pedagogical contract between learners, educators and stakeholder of education. The successful achievement of Passing Grade Criteria is an effort of Teachers, learners, principal, and parents. Teachers try to maximize all strategy to enable the student pass the grade criteria. Learners proactively follow learning activities in order to achieve the grade target. Parents can help by providing motivation and full support for their children in following the study. While the principal should maximize the fulfillment of the school's need to support the implementation of the learning and assessment process in schools.
- As the target of school in achieving competency in each subject. School must be maximally exceeding the passing grade determined. The successful achievement of passing grade is reflection of school programs performance.

By determining the Passing Grade Criteria the teacher can control and evaluate the progress of achieving the goal of teaching. The teacher, students and all school stake holders can find the better strategies to improve it.

#### Principles of Determining Passing Grade Criteria

According to Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional (2008,p.5), there are principles in determining Passing Grade Criteria. They are as follows:

- Determination of passing grade is a decisionmaking activity that can be done through qualitative and or quantitative methods. Qualitative methods can be carried out through teacher professional judgment by considering academic ability and experience of teachers. While the quantitative method showed by an agreed range of value related to the criteria determined
- The determination of the Passing Grade
  Criteria is done through the analysis of the
  minimum passing grade on each indicator
  by considering the complexity, supporting
  capacity, and students' intake to achieve the
  passing grade of basic competencies and
  competency standards.
- The Passing Grade Criteria in each Basic Competency is the average of the indicators in Basic Competence. Students otherwise achieved the passing grade for certain basic competence if he has reached the minimum passing grade has been established for all indicators in the basic competence
- Passing Grade Criteria in each Competency
   Standard is the average of passing grade of Basic Competency listed in that competency standard
- Passing Grade Criteria of a subject is the average of all passing grade of competency standard in an academic year.
- The indicator is a reference for teachers to make test, both quiz, mid-semester test and final semester test. Test questions are the reflection indicators learned.
- The passing grade of each indicators will be possibility different each other.
   In determining the Passing Grade Criteria, teacher needs to know it principles. The principles will guide teacher with a right consideration in determining the grade criteria.

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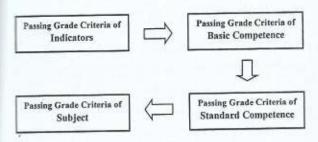
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#### Procedures of determining Passing Grade Criteria

The Passing Grade Criteria is determined by teacher. The determining should follow its procedures. According to Kemdiknas (2008), The procedures are as follow:

 Teacher decides the Passing Grade by considering three aspects namely; complexity, supporting sources, and students' intake by scheme below:



- The Passing Grade Criteria decide by teachers will be legalized by principal.
- The Passing Grade Criteria will be disseminate to the students, parents, teachers and school, and education stake holder
- Passing Grade Criteria is written or listed in learning Studen's Report Book.

Moreover, there are some aspects need to be considered in determining Passing Grade Criteria, they are complexity, supporting resources of school, and the average of students ability (student's intake)

#### Complexity

Complexity means the difficult level of indicator, competency standard and basic competence that should be achieved by the students. An indicator considered has high complexity if in achieving it supported by at least one the following conditions:

- The teacher is briefly understand the competence that is taught.
- Teacher is creative and innovative with various teaching method.

- Teacher is capable with the knowledge and skill on the material taught.
- 4. The students have high intelligence.
- The students are able and skillfully in applying the concept.
- The students are creative, innovative in doing the task.
- Long time available to understand the difficult material.
- High level of students' instinct and accuracy.
   By taking deep analysis of the above conditions, the teacher will have right decision of complexity level which is high, middle or low.

#### Supporting Resources Of School.

Supporting resources are the facilities and infrastructure can fulfill the demands that must be achieved by the students such as libraries, laboratories, and equipment / materials for the learning process. The availability of personnel, school management, and school stakeholders is also needed.

#### The Average Of Student's Ability (Intake)

Determination of intake can be based from the new academic year selection, the result of national exam, psycho test or students mark on their previous grade. Example of procedure in determining the Passing Grade Decision:

Before deciding the Passing Grade Criteria a teacher need to make a reference scale of indicators. There are 2 models below;

Table 1. First Model of references scale of indicator

Aspect	Criteria and scale		
Complexity	High	Middle	Low
	< 65	65-79	80-100
Supporting Source	High	Middle	Low
	80-100	65-79	<65
Students' Intake	High	Middle	Low
	80-100	65-79	< 65

In the table shown we can see the score category of each aspect of criteria in score range 65 to 100, while in the next table below, the score presented in score 1 to 3 (see table

Table 2. Second Model of references scale of indicator

Aspect	Criteria and scale		
Complexity	High	Middle	Low
	1	2	3
Supporting Source	High	Middle	Low
	3	2	1
Students Intake	High	Middle	Low
	3	2	1

As the illustration, if an indicator of competence is considered has high complexity, high supporting source and middle student's intake, the formulation will be:

$$3+2+1$$
  
  $\times$  100 = 66,7 thus the Passing grade of that indicator is 66,7

Below is an example of determination grade of indicator and basic competence:

Table 3. Example of determination grade of indicator and in one basic competence

Basi	c Competence	Complexity	Resource	Intake	PGC
1.1	To respond the meaning of simple short transactional and interpersonal using spoken language accurately, fluently and acceptable to interact with the surrounding environment involving the speech act of:  a. Greeting				7
	known/unknown people b. Self	3	3	1	77
	introduction/Introdu cing other people	3	3	1	77
	c. Commanding	2	3	1	67
	d. Prohibiting	2	3	1	67
	Average of Indicators				72

The table above shows the example of determination grade of indicators in one basic criterion. Passing grade of a Basic Competence is average of indicator passing grade. Passing grade of Standard Competence is average of Basic Competence passing grade while Passing Grade of Subject is average of Standard and Competence Passing Grade in a semester or academic years.

Material complexity means the difficult level of each indicator, competency standard basic competence of a learning material that she achieved by the students, more difficult complexity of a material, the target level target its aspect should be less. For example, in the above, when the material complexity is high scored 3, when it is middle it is score 2, and so 1 is for the low complexity. By taking deep and and right consideration of the conditions teacher will have right decision of complexity less which is high, middle or low.

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Supporting resources refer to the facilities and infrastructure which can fulfill the demand that must be achieved by the students in learning for examples; libraries, laboratories, equipment/materials for the learning process. The availability of personnel, school management, as school stakeholders is also needed. When the supporting resource is more complete the level target of its aspect should be higher. In the contrast when the supporting resource is less complete the level target of its aspect should be lower. The scoring also use 1 to 3 from the lowest fulfillment to the higher fulfillment.

Determining the Passing Grade Criteria should also consider the student's intake (average of student's ability). Student's intake can be based from the new academic year selection, the result of national exam, psycho test or student's achievement on their previous grade. When the student's ability is low the level target will also be low. The scoring also use 1 to 3 from the lowest intake to the higher intake.

#### Teachers' Understanding on Passing Grade Criteria

Chaitin (2006) define term understanding as a psychological process related to an abstract or physical object, such as person, situation or message whereby one is able to think about it and Grade
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nding stract on or it and use concept to deal adequately with that object. Understanding is a relation between the knower and an object understanding. He also argues that understanding sometimes means being able to figure out a simple set of rules that explain it. Moreover Chaitin stated that understanding implies abilities and dispositions with respect to an object of knowledge sufficient to support intelligence behavior.

This research limit the reference meaning of teacher understanding as the understanding of Passing Grade Criteria concept, the principle and rule of determining of Passing Grade Criteria

#### Teachers' Decision on Passing Grade Criteria

Teaching is now defined as making and implementation decision, before during, and after instruction, to increase the probability of learning. Teachers make many decisions throughout all phases of teaching and evaluation process. Teachers design the learning process and evaluation for further decide how can the student can be considered mastering the material or not.

This research refers decision as teacher's ways on determining the criteria, weather it is related to the condition, rule, or principles of determining a passing grade crriteria or not.

#### **Definition of Strategy**

Henry Mintzberg from McGill University defined term Startegy as 'a pattern in a stream of decisions" to contrast with a view of strategy as planning, while McKeown (2011) argues that "strategy is about shaping the future" and is the human attempt to get to "desirable ends with available means".

Kvint (2009) defines strategy as a system of finding; formulating and developing a doctrine that will ensure long success if followed faithfully.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on findings of research, some conditions can be concluded regarding the investigated problems. This research found that teachers' understanding of concept, aspects and procedure of determining Passing Grade Criteria is still lack. All participants recognized the term of Passing Grade Criteria but most of them can not briefly define at the time interview be conducted. The teachers do not understand the concept about Passing Grade Criteria comprehensively. The concept is related to the definition, aspects, and procedure of determination.

Teachers do not have their own right to determine Passing Grade Criteria. Because of this condition, the determination of Passing Grade Criteria is out of analysis and not suitable with the condition. The school condition is correlated to the fulfillment of supporting resources aspect in determining the Passing Grade Criteria. Out of analysis determination also made the Passing Grade Criteria too high to be reached by the students. There is a score standardized or required by school to be determined as the Passing Grade Criteria that should be achieved by students. Most of the participants researched (4 teachers) stated that the Passing Grade Criteria required is not suitable with the condition of school.

The participants provide some strategies for enabling the students can pass the Passing Grade Criteria. The strategies are improving the quality of teaching and overcoming the problems occurred in learning process. When the students can not pass required Passing Grade Criteria, Teacher responded it by giving remedial. The remedial form is vary among teachers. It can be seen that most of participant do remedial unprocedurally. Most of participants only give tasks then adding the student's score when they have done the task.

Based on conclusions, there are some available efforts to respond this condition. It is suggested for the teachers, principal, and all school stakeholders need to have same perception and understanding of the right concept of determining Passing Grade Criteria which is related to the regulation of Ministry of National Education.

To overcome this problem teachers and principal need to be trained with the curriculum training, workshop or seminar as the effort to improve their understanding about Passing Grade Criteria. It is also suggested for University to prepare the students or graduation with the concept of determining Passing Grade Criteria. Thus the graduation may have pre-knowledge of the concept when they become a teacher.

The determination of Passing Grade Criteria should be discussed comprehensively by teacher as his/her right and responsibility. Teacher also need to voice their desire about the right to determine Passing Grade Criteria. The determination of Passing Grade Criteria should considers the fulfillment of aspects as base of Passing Grade Criteria score calculation. Teacher group discussion is better to be conducted among English teacher to get a comprehensive analysis of the aspects fulfillment. It prevent the score will be too high to be reached. The remedial teaching should be provided procedurally where it can help students to improve their lack competence.

Teachers also need to improve their quality of teaching in order to get better achievement of learning. The quality improvement can be better method of teaching, strategy, and using appropriate media in learning.

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