

DEVELOPING RICH LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT SIXTH GRADE STUDENT'S ENGLISH LITERACY SKILLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BALI PROVINCE

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Abstract

This study was a research and development (R&D) which aimed at finding out the literacy coverage of English teaching; investigating what materials need to be developed to help students progress with their literacy skills in English; investigating the quality of the developed material; and finding the effect of material developed upon students' English literacy skills. The instruments used to collect the data in this study were checklist, scoring rubric, observation sheet, questionnaire and test. The material developed in this study was based on criteria of good material proposed by Tomlinson. The result of the study shown that the limited time in studying English at school resulted in limited chance to experience with literacy activities. There are three topics need to be inserted in this study, those are: transportation, occupation and parts of house. The new materials were created by using Multiple Literacy Experiences proposed by Winch (2006) and the criteria of good material proposed by Tomlinson. The RLLE material had high validity and practically where the value of validity was **4.37** (*Good*) and for practically could be categorized into *Excellent*. It can be concluded that RLLE material was proven to be effective to support the sixth grade students' literacy skills.

Key Words: English literacy, rich language learning environment, material development.

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the foreign languages that must be learnt by the students in Indonesian start from the elementary school level. In studying English the student will learn four basic language skills; they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides, there are also four aspects that support those four language skills such as: grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation. The aim of teaching a language is making the students able to use a target language communicatively. From those four skills, reading and writing play an important role in communication

as literacy skills for the learners (Winch, et.al: 2006; 377).

Based on the importance of reading in teaching English, Indonesia government provides sets of standard competency and basic competency as the requirements that should be achieved by the students both in reading and writing. According to BSNP (2006) reading in elementary school includes; reading written sentences with good pronunciation, pitch, and intonation; and understanding the meaning of written sentences with accurate, fluent and understood way. From those

requirements, teaching English in Elementary School especially in reading and writing skill should be created in the effective way. Teaching young learners is different from adult. According to Harmer (p.82) :“They often learn indirectly rather than directly – that is they take in information from all sides, learning from everything around them rather than only focusing on the precise topic they are taught”. It means young learners learn from everything they do, touch, hear, and see. They also want to explore and discover something by themselves. In teaching young learners, the teachers have to design a strategy of teaching by creating fun and enjoyable activity in the teaching-learning process. There are many strategies and techniques that can be used by the teachers to improve the students’ reading skill.

Meanwhile, in teaching writing the teacher can use such kind of media to help the students in understanding the material. The use of media can help the teacher in teaching and also it can encourage student’s motivation in learning the language. Using picture is one of teaching media that can be used by teachers in the teaching-learning activity. The use of picture itself is related to the characteristics of elementary school students which is really interesting with the something attractive.

Based on the interview done by interviewing some elementary school teachers show that teaching strategy that they used is still conventional. For instance in reading, the teacher explains or introduces some new vocabularies and asks students to read a paragraph in the textbook. After that, the students will be delivered some questions based on the text. In short, the activity done in the classroom is still teacher-centered.

Besides the teaching reading method still uses conventional technique, the students also seem feel unmotivated in learning English. It is caused the material which is used by the teacher does not make them interesting in studying English. Another primary reason

is the limited time that they have in studying English in the classroom. Generally, students of elementary school only meet English once in a week and it only given 35 minutes for a meeting. Of course, it is not enough time for the young learners in mastering a language. As we know the characteristics of the young learners are they are commonly easier to learn new vocabulary or something but they will easy to forget it too. So, creating material for learning is really needed.

Creating a new activity outside the classroom which is enjoyable is the key to solve those problems above. The limited time that they have can be solved by designing them a meaningful activity or material that can be used outside the classroom so that the students can still study English even they are not in the classroom. This material is called Rich Language Learning Environment where the three basic aspects in language are shown to support students’ literacy skills, they are study about words (vocabulary), sentence and short text. The material of learning is place on the board, and then the students must read it to do the exercise and write their answer on the student’s worksheet. By doing this activity the students will get the knowledge through reading and writing.

Nowadays, the newest curriculum used in Indonesia is School Based Curriculum (SBC) or KTSP in Indonesia which stands for *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*. This curriculum is starting from 2006, which aims at enabling students to master the knowledge and also enabling them to have skills to be applied into their real life. The underlying idea of SBC is to give a chance to the schools throughout Indonesia to develop curriculum which is really appropriate for their students. According to Yelland (2006) in Artini (2012), language learning should be framed in a rich language learning environment so that young learners could learn from the real context. What is meant by a rich language learning environment here is the availability of learning resources according to the needs of learning language where the media or

material of learning can be accessed easily by the learners. The material would be displayed on the board outside the classroom. In addition learning process especially learning a language should not only take place in the classroom (Watanabe, 2009 in Artini 2012). According to Maria (2012; 17) creating a rich language learning environment is about using opportunity to use language, to communicate, interact and share the information. Teachers can help students in developing their language by providing an environment that is full of language development opportunities. In fact, the learning process held by the teachers in Bali only focused on giving material in the classroom and used one textbook as guideline in teaching (transferring the knowledge, doing exercise, and assessing the students). To solve those problems, an appropriate material to support English literacy skills need to be developed.

Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that rich language learning environment is a representation of contextual-learning approach. In rich learning environment, teaching methods and curriculum content should be matched with the age, social and environment of the learners. Then, in relation with this present study, constructivism will underlie the considerations in developing the prototype where the design of the material will help the learners to construct their own understanding about a topic given to them.

According to Scoot and Ytreberg (1990), study about vocabulary which involve the learning about pronunciation and spelling of words in target language should be taught to young learners. Language used in the classroom should match and be appropriate with the students' proficiency of the target language. Variety in the classroom should be considered by the teachers before constructing their learning plan. Teachers should consider about grammar use and the structure that they want to teach to their students and appropriate assessment are important to be

considered by teachers in teaching young learners.

Literacy skills are fundamental to all areas of learning. (www.curriculumforexcellencesscotland.gov.uk). Being literate increases learners opportunities in all aspect of life. These include the ability to apply knowledge about language. Winch, et.al (2006: xxxii) said that "*literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately in a range of contexts*". It means, English literacy skills consist of reading and writing. The learners can gain knowledge or information through reading and show the idea through writing. In this present study, the English literacy skills that will be used are reading and writing.

The development model proposed by Sugiyono (2009) could be used in this study. But, that model should be deleted since some of the steps are too hard to be developed for this present study. The rich language learning environment materials would be in the form of printed texts inserted by Indonesian real life which would be adjusted with the topic given to sixth grade of elementary schools where the material would be provided with some colourful pictures which made the students became interested in reading and then start doing the whole activities in the material by writing it in the student's worksheet. The materials then would be placed on the display board. According to Yelland in Artini (2012) stated that teaching-learning process is not only conducted in the classroom but it is also can be conducted outside the classroom. This material then is needed to develop to support students' literacy skills.

This material would be developed by using R&D model proposed by Sugiyono (2011) where there are ten steps in this model, those are identifying potency and problem, collecting data, designing product, validating design, administering product usability test, revising product, administering product try-out, revising design, revising product and mass production. From those tens steps, revising design, revising product

and mass production would not been used since the limitation of time in this study. The developing of material used the criteria of good material proposed by Tomlinson. The quality of Rich Language Learning Material would be measured by using criteria of validity, practicality, and effectiveness as proposed by Nieveen (1999). According to Winch et.al (2006) there were five activities that must be inserted in this material (multiple literacy skills). Those are, topical vocabulary (checking student's vocabulary about the topic given), grammar focus (checking student's grammar in constructing a sentence), everyday expression (providing short conversation that might be occurred in learner's daily communication), language game (providing a game that related to the topic) and time for story (providing a story related to the topic).

This study is aimed at finding out the literacy coverage of English lesson based on the curriculum of the sixth grade students in primary school in Bali; discovering what materials need to be developed for rich language learning environment to support students' literacy skills of the sixth grade students in primary schools in Bali; and developing rich language learning environment material to support literacy skills of the sixth grade students in primary schools in Bali; investigating the quality of the developed material of rich language learning environment to support literacy skills of the sixth grade students in primary schools in Bali; and finding out the effect of rich language learning environment upon students' literacy skills of the sixth grade students in primary schools in Bali.

RESEARCH METHODS

This present study was conducted in the six elementary schools in Bali Province. Those schools are there in three districts in Bali province such as Bangli (*SDN 2 Cempaga*, and *SDN 1 Sulahan*), Denpasar (*SDN 7 Pedungan* and *SD Muhamadiyah 2 Denpasar*) and Gianyar (*SDN 5 Manukaya* and *SDN 5 Sukawati*). Those schools are chosen because of

some reasons: (1) the English teacher of those schools had been followed at *PBS (Pemandu Bidang Studi)* program in the years 2008 and 2009. They had been trained in the Pilot Project Learning in primary school by *Ditjen TK* and *SD*; (2).those schools have already expressed willingness to be involved in this study; (3) English lesson at school is given in grade six. Thus, those schools were used in order to do the field tests of the material being developed to support the sixth grade students English literacy skills.

In short, the subject of this study was the sixth grade students at six elementary schools in Bali Province. This level is chosen with the assumption that the students in this level are good in their ability of reading and writing in Bahasa. However, the object of this study was the material in the form of concrete material for the outside classroom activity in order to support the English literacy skills of the sixth grade students.

The present study is research and development (R&D). R&D is chosen because this research developed a media for learning, in this case rich language learning material to support the sixth grade student's English literacy skills. According to Sugiyono (2009) research and Development (R&D) is a research method which is used to develop a product and then do try-out to check the effectiveness of the product developed. There are seven steps from ten that could be used in this study. Those are identifying potency and problem, collecting data, designing product, validating design, administering product usability test, revising product and administering product try-out.

In order to answer the first research question of this study, preliminary observation is needed as the first procedure. In this first procedure, the researcher used syllabus analysis and observation. The aim of those data collection was to find out information about the literacy skills coverage of English language based on the curriculum and syllabus of the sixth grade students of elementary school such as the competency standard and basic

competency found in the syllabus, the teaching English material and the process of teaching English were also checked by doing observation.

The next procedure was conducted in order to know about kinds of material that need to be inserted in Rich Language Learning Environment material to support the sixth grade student's literacy skill. The method in collecting data was document study. While studying the document of reading and writing syllabus in grade six, check list was used as the instrument. In addition, when conducting library research, observation sheet is used as the basis. After conducting that procedure, there is found some criteria of developing a good material for students' literacy skills

In this study, the data had been analyzed descriptively. The data taken from observation, interview, and document study conducted in preliminary observation had been described qualitatively in order to know the literacy coverage in those schools.

It is continued by analyzing the data from syllabus analysis. Those data, then, would be described qualitatively in order to know the standard competency and basic competence of teaching reading for elementary school of grade six. After that, library research was conducted in order to gain the information about theories and empirical studies needed in this study. These results were also used as considerations in developing rich language learning environment. The data was described qualitatively.

In checking the quality of the prototype being developed, the data gathered through some instruments was analyzed quantitatively. The quality of the prototype being developed can be measured through its validity (*content* and *construct validity*), practicality, and effectiveness. The validity of the prototype was judged by 8 experts.

As stated previously, the validity of the prototype was measured by experts

about its content and construct. The result would be some revisions of the prototype. Later, the experts were given scoring rubric to fill. The scoring rubric used Likert Scale where score 5 is *Excellent*, 4 is *Good*, 3 is *Average*, 2 is *Below Average*, and 1 is *Poor*. Then the score is measured by following the formula below.

$$M_i = \frac{1}{2} (\text{Score Max} + \text{Score Min})$$

$$S_{di} = \frac{1}{3} M_i$$

$$S_r = \frac{\text{Total Score}}{\text{Total Item}}$$

Note:

M_i : Ideal Mean

S_{di} : Ideal Standard Deviation

S_r : Score

Later, the data gathered is converted into some scales by using the formulas which is adopted by Nurkencana and Sunartana (1992).

The practicality of the prototype was measured by the ability of the students in doing the prototype in learning process, students' activeness during the implementation, and from the responds of the teachers and the students toward the prototype. Those were measured by using some instruments which used Likert scale where the data was measured by the following formula.

$$M_i = \frac{1}{2} (\text{Score Max} + \text{Score Min})$$

M_i

$$S_{di} = \frac{1}{3} M_i$$

$$S_r = \frac{\text{Total Score}}{\text{Total Item}}$$

Note:

M_i : Ideal Mean

S_{di} : Ideal Standard Deviation

S_r : Score

The effectiveness of the prototype could be measured through the score of the implementation of post-test. Therefore, the mean score of the pre-test of the students would be compared with the mean score of the students in post-test by using *Dependent T-Test for Paired Samples*. The measurement was conducted by using *SPSS 16.0*. The purpose of this measurement was to find

out whether there is significant different after the implementation of rich language learning material.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study it was found that that the sixth grade students of elementary schools had a problem in literacy skills (reading and writing). To solve that problem the material of reading and writing in English to support student's literacy skill is needed to be developed. Those problems then were used as consideration in developing Rich Language Learning Environment (RLLE) material. This study was developed by using R&D model proposed by Sugiyono (2009). The development of the prototype was based on the criteria of good material proposed by Tomlinson. The Indonesian culture had been inserted in this material.

LITERACY COVERAGE

Based on the result of study it was found the English literacy coverage of sixth grade students of elementary school could be seen from the curriculum; syllabus (competency standard and basic competency); teaching English material; and from the process of teaching English in the classroom. Generally, the sixth grade students of primary schools in Bali province liked English very much especially reading and writing lesson. The students had high motivation in studying English. However, they had some problems during the learning process. It can be seen in the data gathered in preliminary observation such as; the material which is used by the teacher did not appropriate with the student environment. In short, the contextual material is still limited. The other problem was the time limited time in studying English. It was happened because there was much subject matter that must be taught in elementary schools. Students only study English once in a week with the time allocation thirty-five minutes (1 x 35

minutes) for a meeting. Of course it was not enough time for student in mastering a language, in this case is English. As we know the characteristics of the young learners are they are commonly easier to learn new something but they will easy to forget it too.

MATERIAL NEED TO BE DEVELOPED IN RICH LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (RLLE)

Based on the result of the study there were found some literature review that relevant to this study, such as the development of RLLE material was used R&D model proposed by Sugiyono (2009). It was also based on the criteria of good material proposed by Tomlinson. In the first step, the researcher designed the material based on the new syllabus. The new syllabus consisted of three units, those are *Unit 1 Transportation*, *Unit 2 Occupation* and *Unit 3 Part of House*. The second step, the researcher tried to find some literature reviews through library research. Then, the researcher found some appropriate activities to be inserted in every unit. It is called *Multiple Literacy Experience* (Winch et.al; 2006). There were five activities to be involved in every unit. Those were *Topical Vocabulary (TV)*, *Grammar Focus (GF)*, *Everyday Expression (EE)*, *Language Game (LG)* and *Time for Story (TFS)*. Based on the result of the study, the developing of RLLE material used the fifteen criteria proposed by Tomlinson in Kusuma (2012). This criteria consist of three aspects such as *content* (6 statements), *language used* (3 statements) and *activities and assessment* (6 statements).

In this study, there were two products had been produced by the researcher; those are the Rich Language Learning Environment (RLLE) material and student's worksheet. The development of student's worksheet was same as what had been done in developing RLLE material.

THE QUALITY OF RLLE

The quality of the RLLE material could be seen from its validity (from content and construct), and practically. The data about the quality of the product gained from implementing some procedures such as *Expert Judgment* and *Prototype Try-Out*. Some instruments were used such as scoring rubric in expert

judgment and questionnaires about the prototype. In the collecting the data of expert judgment, the researcher used scoring rubric where there were 26 statements which required the experts to give score to each statement. The scoring used in this rubric was Likert Scale.

Table 1 *The Quality of RLLE Material as seen from Experts Judgment*

| Judges | Result of Judgment | | | Note for Improvement |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| | Linguistics (10 statements) | Non-Linguistic (10 statements) | Content (6 statements) | |
| Judge 1 | 44 | 41 | 27 | Create an attractive cover for student's worksheet. |
| Judge 2 | 38 | 41 | 21 | Use short and clear instruction. |
| Judge 3 | 45 | 43 | 27 | Use simple word in the short text. |
| Judge 4 | 43 | 44 | 26 | Add five more questions in first activity (Topical Vocabulary) |
| Judge 5 | 44 | 42 | 27 | Missing letter can be used in language game. |
| Judge 6 | 45 | 44 | 26 | Place the relevant picture in a good order in every exercise. |
| Judge 7 | 46 | 47 | 28 | Student's worksheet must be set as the material |
| Judge 8 | 45 | 46 | 29 | The developed materials have to match with the syllabus of grade 6. |
| Total Score | 350 | 348 | 211 | |
| Average Score | 4.375 | 3.48 | 4.3958 | |
| Qualification | Good | Average | Good | |

The development of RLLE material was categorized as *Good* where $3.49 \leq 4.37 < 4.485$. Totally, there are twenty-six statements used to check the quality of the material. Those statements are the implementation of three components such as, linguistics, non-linguistics and content. By looking at the above table, it can be

seen that the experts mostly agreed the quality of RLLE material can be categorized into good material. It indicated the prototype could improve student's literacy skills (reading and writing) which contained by interesting pictures, activities and close to their daily life. The data about prototype try-out was gained by giving

questionnaire to check headmasters, teachers and student's respond toward the implementation of RLLE material. Then the result of measurement data was categorized as *Good* where $3.49 \leq 4.05 < 4.485$. It means that headmaster liked Rich Language Learning Environment Material to be implemented as the learning media for their students.

The result of teacher's questionnaire could be categorized as *Excellent* where $4.49 \geq 4.485$. It means that teacher liked Rich Language Learning Environment (RLLE) material very much and agreed that it could help students in improving their literacy skills. The following table is the result of headmaster questionnaire.

The students were also given a questionnaire to know student's respond toward the implementation of RLLE material. Then the result of measurement data was categorized as *Excellent* where $4.53 \geq 4.485$. It means that students loved Rich Language Learning Environment Material very much. It could also help them in improving their English literacy skill (reading and writing).

By looking at the above data, it can be said that generally Rich Language Learning Environment material had excellent practically since almost all scored were categorized into *Excellent*. The headmasters, teachers and students were very happy as part of this study. That was what had been expected by the researcher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RLEE MATERIAL

Generally, the data gained from administering test shown that there was significant effect of rich language learning environment upon students' literacy skills of the sixth grade students in primary schools in Bali. The mean score of the pre-test of the students would be compared with the mean score of the students in post-test by using *t* test. The

measurement was conducted by using *SPSS 16.0*.

Based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that there was a significant increase of the mean score between the results of student's pre-test and post-test. It can be found at the percentage of average increase at SDN 5 Sukawati (**83.53%**) where the mean score of student's pre-test was **58.67** and it was increased significantly to **72.1**. Besides, it can be explained, the smallest increase of percentage average score is found at SD Muhammadiyah 2. It was only increased **16.05%**. It was happened because students of SD Muhammadiyah 2 learn English twice in a week with the time duration 45 minutes for each meeting. This school also has a special program to help students in improving their English skill, for instance by inviting native speakers to the school is one of the school programs. It can make students use English communicatively (listening and speaking skills). It can be concluded that the material of Rich Language Learning Environment was proven can improve the sixth grade students' English literacy skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding and discussion above, it can be conclude that Rich Language Learning Environment (RLLE) can support sixth grade student's literacy skills. The result of the study showed that the sixth grade students of elementary schools had a problem in reading and writing. To solve that problem the material of reading and writing in English to support student's literacy skills is needed to be created. Those problems then were used as consideration in developing Rich Language Learning Environment (RLLE) material. This study was developed by using R&D model proposed by Sugiyono (2009). The development of the prototype was based on the criteria of good material proposed by Tomlinson. The Indonesian culture had been inserted in this material.

In the implementation of material, the researcher started from first step, identifying the literacy coverage of teaching English by conducting syllabus analysis, observation, document study, expert judgment, questionnaire and administering tests. Then it was continued with collecting the data, designing draft of prototype, developing the draft into prototype, expert judgment, validating of prototype, prototype try-out and administering test. In the first step, the researcher designed the material based on the new syllabus. The new syllabus consisted of three units. Those are *Unit 1 Transportation*, *Unit 2 Occupation* and *Unit 3 Part of House*. The second step, the researcher tried to find some literature reviews through library research. Then, the researcher found some appropriate activities to be involved in every unit. It is called *Multiple Literacy Experience* (Winch et.al; 2006).

The quality of the RLLE material could be seen from its validity (from content and construct), and practically. The data about the quality of the product gained from implementing some procedures such as *Expert Judgment* and *Prototype Try-Out*. Some instruments were used such as scoring rubric in expert judgment and questionnaires about the prototype. In the collecting the data of expert judgment, the researcher used scoring rubric where there were 26 statements which required the experts to give score to each statement. The scoring used in this rubric was Likert Scale. Based on the measurement, the mean score was 4.37. It was categorized as *Good* where $3.49 \leq 4.37 < 4.485$. It indicated that the experts mostly agreed the prototype could improve student's literacy skills (reading and writing) which contained interesting pictures, activities and close to their daily life. The data about prototype try-out was gained by giving questionnaire to check headmasters, teachers and student's respond toward the implementation of RLLE material. The results were categorized into *excellent* where the headmaster's respond to the material was categorized into *Good* while the teachers and students' respond were *Excellent*. It

indicated that RLLE could truly represent the characteristics of the elementary school level. It has been able to overcome the limitations of time and limited contextual materials especially in teaching reading and writing. The effectiveness of the material can be seen from the result of student's pre test and post-test. The score was increase significantly. The mean score of student's post test was higher than the mean score of pre test.

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