

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I, there are several aspects explained which include research background, problem identifications, research questions, research objectives, the specification of the product, research significances, scope of research, and definition of key terms, as explained below:

1.1 Background of the Study

As a human being especially in this 21st century, English language is extremely important to be mastered. First, English is language used as a means of communication by almost all people in the world (Sukarno, 2008). English is considered as an international language, everyone must be able to master it so that later they can communicate with anyone from any country (Ahmadi, 2018). Especially at this time, aspects of life such as politics, economy and culture have been influenced by the development of globalization which leads people to be able to compete and join the global world community. Within the global community and this competition, truly qualified human resources are needed to be able to support the progress of the country in increasing its competitiveness (Adnyani et al., 2021). Of course, in facing global competition, humans are not only proficient in communicating using English but are able to keep up with other knowledge such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity.

In order to be able to grow people into a good quality resources, literacy development is the most important basis for them (Adnyani et al., 2021). According to Rintaningrum (2009) literacy skills also invite people to compete globally, and

require people to take an active part in international activities which cover a wide area such as join research, international conference, research exchange, etc. In addition, developing literacy can lead us to be success, whether in life or at school (Rintaningrum, 2009). Therefore, all children should have adequate knowledge of literacy skills, especially from schools. When literacy skills, such as reading and writing, are taught, it will be useful to assist children in dealing with continuous changes in particular the guidance of individual competencies in the use of written language (Genlott & Grönlund, 2013). Moreover, Wulandari et al. (2021) stated that literacy plays a crucial part especially for language learner because being illiterate means that people seems able to create, understand, comprehend, and communicate whether the information provided is in the form of written, spoken, or even the digital one.

Unfortunately, the literacy culture in the community in Indonesia, especially children or young learners, is very worrying (Sumaryanti, 2018). According to the World's Most Literate Nations Ranked in 2016, Indonesia ranks 60 out of 61 countries as a country with a very low literacy culture (Sumaryanti, 2018). In addition, there is an organization that functions to assess children's readiness, and assess what children can do according to what they already know, which then links it to education, namely the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which also owned PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) according to (Hipkins, 2019). Suniyasih et al. (2020) pointed out that this program (PISA) has tested students in Indonesia, then the results in 2018 are that students in Indonesia have a relatively low average score, especially in the reading field, which is 371 below the average score of the Organization for

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), namely 487. Therefore, the low literacy skills of children in Indonesia are the reason for the need for encouragement to improve children's literacy skills.

There are several factors that hamper the development of children's literacy in Indonesia. According to Abrori (2018) low literacy skills are caused by the main factor, namely the low quality of education. There are also other factors, namely the incomplete infrastructure that supports education (computers, electricity, gadgets, signals, learning media, complete libraries and books, etc.), as well as students' low reading interest (Abrori, 2018). In addition, Akbar (2017) stated that the factors hinder the development of student literacy come from various directions. One of these factors, such as literacy habit, has not become a habit and has not become a priority at school. Reading activities are only based on coercion not coming from within students, so reading activities here are only carried out solely to meet academic demands. In addition, the lack of sources or reading books appears to be a serious problem for developing student literacy. The lack of variety of written works, discrepancies between content and student interests, causes students not to be interested in reading. Then, an unsupportive environment where students are not given good examples of the importance of reading also results in low interest in reading so that literacy skills are greatly reduced. Those are some of the factors that can affect students' literacy skills which can briefly be seen coming from within and outside the students themselves.

In order to develop literacy skills, it must begin at an early age. Especially when it comes to target language or English. The particular reason for this circumstances, is that children who are taught earlier will be able to achieve an

understanding and mastery of the target language more quickly (Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018). On the other hand, Apriliana (2018) states that children have a strong and short-term memory, it causes the knowledge of the target language that is learned continuously from an early age can last a long time in their memory. In addition, children who learn foreign languages from the start gain a lot of benefits such as having better listening skills and pronunciation (Cameron, as cited in Anggraini, 2018). Additionally, Wulandari et al., (2020) stated that teaching English at young age learner seems interesting because young learners themselves easily absorb other languages. Not only that, young learners love to learn new things, they can gain new experiences, and they are very active also have such a lot of energy, it is the perfect time to teach them anything including language.

Thus, teaching literacy to children is said to be better started with vocabulary. Vocabulary itself is the smallest and most important component in language learning (Suniyasih et al., 2020). Vocabulary mastery is a very basic and important main pillar because then the four aspects of language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) can also be well understood (Rahmadhani, 2015). In conclusion, vocabulary learning is the basis for improving student literacy, especially since students are at a young age.

Since vocabulary is the basic material in order to increase student's literacy, it is necessary to have the right media to teach vocabulary. The answer for this circumstance is a dictionary which acts as an explicit medium and is the most important aspect during the process of acquiring foreign language (Pousi, 2010; Ali, 2012). The other reason that supports this statement is that the dictionary is a tool

that helps students master the target language in general by enriching vocabulary, pronunciation, and understanding the meaning of each word (Abbasi et al., 2019). The dictionary actually provides a lot of information in the form of vocabulary and their usage (Aleeva & Safiullina, 2016). Moreover students get benefits regarding knowledge of grammar, pronunciation, phonetics, and root words from the dictionary (Tulgar, 2017). From this explanation, we can conclude that the dictionary is an effective media in vocabulary learning which also impacts student literacy.

Based on the preliminary observation, it is found that most of the students in nine school which located in nine sub-district in Buleleng said that English is a vital subject to be learned, especially for mastering the vocabulary itself. Not only the student, but the teacher gave the same statement about the importance of learning English and mastering the vocabulary. Moreover, during the learning process of English students only absorb the knowledge from the book, worksheet, dictionary especially printed and bilingual (English-Indonesia), and sometimes listen to the teacher's explanation only. On the other hand, there are differences between rural and urban area. Students in rural area mostly have a lack of source in learning English, and the dictionary itself, not all of the students have it and can operate it since they use Balinese on their daily life. From this case, students tend to have such a lack of vocabulary mastery. Because of this, one way that is believed to improve and support children in improving their literacy skill toward mastering the vocabulary is by the use of interesting and good media in the form of digital dictionary. Teacher and also the student agreed with digital dictionary which can help them in the process of teaching and learning English and it is accessible.

Following up on the statement above, previously there has been research on the use of dictionaries in teaching students in elementary schools (early age), namely the multilingual thematic picture dictionary by Adnyani et al., (2021). The dictionary has even been created to influence students' interest in learning and has succeeded in becoming an effective medium for sixth grade of elementary school student in learning by adding thematic images and three languages in the form of printed paper. However, in an era that is already sophisticated with technological advances, it is necessary to develop a dictionary that represents the existence of digital literacy and the development of ICT in education. The existing dictionary (multilingual thematic pictures dictionary) is expected to be better developed by including pronunciation, and in the form of digital dictionary. This problem is the basis for developing a digital dictionary primarily aimed at children in elementary school grade 6th, this dictionary designed to use three languages, an audio or sound included, picture and also example of the sentences. It is hoped that this will further support children to become educated and improve their literacy skill.

Furthermore, this study is an umbrella research of Ratminingsih, et al (2021). The development of multilingual thematic digital dictionary for sixth grade which is focused on developing dictionary in the form of digital media. This dictionary includes audio or sound of how to pronounce the vocabulary, example of the vocabulary use in sentences, and the most unique is the use of three languages (*English-Indonesian-Balinese*). The reason for this circumstances is digital media was more effective (Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2020).

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the research background, these are the problems:

- 1.2.1 Children need literacy development in order to become educated learners and become a high quality human resource.
- 1.2.2 Indonesia is still considered as a country with a low level of literacy. The factors that cause it come from inside and outside the student.
- 1.2.3 Teachers must use the media interestingly and reflect the era of digital literacy in the 21st century to help students develop and improve literacy skills.

From the problems above, it can be concluded that the development of vocabulary learning media to improve students' literacy skills is needed. One of these media is the multilingual thematic digital dictionary which includes audio or sound of how to pronounce the vocabulary, example of the vocabulary in the form of sentences, and the most unique is the use of three languages (*English-Indonesian-Balinese*).

1.3 Research Limitation

This research limited on the development of a multilingual thematic digital dictionary for the sixth grade elementary school students. This dictionary in the form of a digital dictionary including three languages, in line with the progress of time as well as digital literacy in this 21st century. This multilingual dictionary will be useful as a medium to increase students' interest in developing their literacy skills. This multilingual thematic dictionary is focused on grade 6th elementary school students, based on the scope of learning. This current study also took

samples from nine schools of nine sub-district in Buleleng. For the questionnaire there are 225 students who are involved.

1.4 Statement of Problems

- 1.4.1. What is needed by sixth grade of elementary school students in developing their literacy skills?
- 1.4.2. How to develop multilingual thematic digital dictionary for sixth grade of elementary school students?
- 1.4.3. What is the quality of multilingual thematic digital dictionary for sixth grade of elementary school students?

1.5 Research Objectives

In this study, the objectives of the research are divided into two parts, below:

1.5.1 General Objective

In this research, the general objective is to develop an effective vocabulary learning media as a step to develop children's literacy skills especially used for 6th grade elementary school students. That dictionary namely in the form of a multilingual thematic digital dictionary which is digitally designed. This dictionary also consists of three languages (English-Indonesian-Balinese), also include an audio or voice of how to pronounce the word, the example in the form of sentences in three languages, and also include picture as the visualization.

1.5.2 Specific Objective

- a. To identify of what is needed by student (students' need) in developing their literacy skill at sixth grade elementary school students.
- b. To design and develop multilingual thematic digital dictionary for sixth grade elementary school students. This dictionary is in the form of digital, uses three languages (English-Indonesia-Balinese) which also occupied with audio, and thematic picture.
- c. To evaluate the quality of multilingual thematic digital dictionary for sixth grade elementary school students.

1.6 The Specification of the Product

These are the specifications of the product, as stated below:

- a. The product of this study is a multilingual thematic digital dictionary for sixth grade of elementary school students. It is use to support them in improving their literacy skill. Moreover, a list of words is provided in this dictionary which also can assist students in improving their literacy skill.
- b. The product of this dictionary can be used by the students in the process of learning English since it is also presented in three languages at once (English- Bahasa Indonesia-Balinese). Each vocabulary or word designed with a picture as its visualization, sentence example, and audio of how to pronounce the word, in order to help students understand better.

- c. The product of this dictionary provide ten themes for sixth grade of elementary school students. Since this product is designed digitally, the product is using PowerPoint where it can be accessed whether online or offline.

1.7 Research Significance

This research is supposed to be able to give an important and useful role to all children regarding the development of a multilingual thematic digital dictionary, especially both to improve and develop their literacy skills theoretically and practically.

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

This study is supposed to give such a good benefit from the development of a multilingual thematic digital dictionary. Theoretically, this research can contribute in terms of developing a multilingual digital dictionary which can be efficient and suitable for learning English in the context of EFL in Bali.

1.7.2 Practical Significance

Basically, since this study occurs in education area especially in the school and in grade 6 of elementary school, the following is its practical significance as seen from:

- a. Students

This study is expected to be able to affect children and motivate them to develop their literacy skills in the era of the 21st century by developing digital thematic multilingual dictionaries. The media in the form of a

digital dictionary can make it easier for them to learn the smallest aspects of language, namely vocabulary.

b. Teachers

For an educator, of course this research is expected to make a contribution, namely being a source of teaching materials and supporting media to teach their students. As it is known that this study is to develop a digital multilingual thematic digital dictionary for grade 6 elementary school children, which serves as a source of information about abundant vocabulary in three languages at once (multilingual).

c. Other Researchers

Other researchers who want to conduct further research on the topic of developing a multilingual thematic digital dictionary can make this research a reference source.

1.8 Scope of The Research

This current study will develop a multilingual thematic digital dictionary for sixth grade elementary school students. This dictionary is useful for helping students and support them in developing their literacy skill. This multilingual thematic digital dictionary designed focused on the ten themes which is based from sixth grade elementary school theme.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

1.9.1 Conceptual Definition

a. Literacy

Over time the development of the notion of literacy continues to develop, basically it is not only about the ability to read and write as a basis but

more than that. According to Paneton (2015 in Wulandari et al., 2021) literacy can be defined as a skill such as able to read and write but also covers skill including cultural, intellectual, and electronic literacy. Literacy actually means a skill where people are able to understand, interpret, create, and convey any information whether in the form of oral, written, spoken, or digital, and from various contexts. Literacy is said to bring successfulness in school and life (Suniyasih et al., 2020). In conclusion, literacy is an important skill to be mastered by student, and it is better to be taught as early as possible.

b. Young Learner

The meaning of young learner was children with age range from 3 until 12 years old (Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2020). At this vulnerable age, they are very active learners who loves to learn new things but at the same time also have a limited knowledge to understand. It is said by Lelawati et al., (2018) that children have such a difficulties to understand an abstract thing because on the other hand they have a lack of knowledge about the word. Because of this, it is believed that an appropriate and also interesting media is needed to teach them about the vocabulary. Not only that, the vocabulary itself should be consist of a picture as a visualization in order to make children understand the word better.

c. Digital Learning Media

In this case, media refers to the combination of both software and hardware (Akrim, 2018). In this study, it will be using digital learning media or can be said as instructional media. Ratminingsih & Budasi (2020) stated that digital media can be interpreted as media involving and utilizing technology.

In addition, this digital media has flexible characteristics, which means that it can be used at anytime, anywhere and of course more attractive and also interesting in order to be able to replace printed media. Moreover, Baidawi (2016) pointed out that instructional media are divided into three types includes visual media, audio media, and the last audio-visual media. Here, the multilingual thematic digital dictionary itself is an audio visual media because this product of dictionary contains picture as the visualization and audio of how to pronounce the word, and this is designed digitally.

d. A Multilingual Thematic Digital Dictionary

Walz (as cited in Huang & Eslami, 2013) defines dictionary as an extremely important source for getting information about words in a language. Basically, a dictionary is an alphabetical list composing words then meanings and information as well as pronunciation, definition and etymology is presented in dictionary (Rohmatillah, 2016). In line with this statement, Al-jarf (2015) stated that a dictionary is a device that lists words in alphabetical order and explain its meaning, in book form. Baskin & Mumcu (as cited in Suniyasih et al., 2020) convey that multilingual dictionary is a dictionary containing words in more than two languages. Saptiani (2016) explains that thematic dictionary is a dictionary in which a list of vocabulary is arranged thematically equipped with colorful pictures and arranged according to themes. Thus, multilingual thematic digital dictionary is a dictionary which consist of three languages, contains examples of sentences from three languages, equipped with picture and audio, arranged thematically, and in the form of digital product (PowerPoint).

1.9.2 Operational Definition

a. Literacy

In this current study, the literacy term used in this study refers to the sixth grade elementary school students' literacy.

b. Young Learner

In this current study, the sixth grade of elementary school student in nine school from nine sub-district in Buleleng, Bali, are considered the young learners.

c. Digital Learning Media

In this current study, the media that is developed namely a multilingual thematic digital dictionary, especially in the form of digital (audio-visual by the use of PowerPoint).

d. Multilingual Thematic Digital Dictionary

In this current study, the product that is developed is a multilingual thematic digital dictionary which is vocabulary-based dictionary. This dictionary provides the vocabulary which in three languages (English-Bahasa Indonesia-Balinese). Moreover, the dictionary includes ten themes in sixth grade for elementary school students based on the syllabus. This dictionary equipped with picture on each vocabulary as the visualization. Not only that, the vocabulary is also equipped with the example of sentences in three languages. Additionally, an audio is added into the dictionary so the user will able to know the pronunciation, and since this product is designed digitally, it is able to use both in offline and online situation.