

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The introduction of literacy from an early age plays a key role in shaping a children's academic and social development. The National Early Literacy Panel emphasizes that early language and literacy experiences play a crucial role in future reading development (Piasta et al., 2020). Early literacy experiences not only help children develop reading, writing, and oral language skills but also contribute to the development of critical thinking abilities, broaden their understanding of the world, and foster social emotional skills such as effective communication, empathy, and positive peer interactions (Marie et al., 2023). These benefits demonstrate that early literacy provide a strong foundation for children's overall development, including the skills needed for later reading success. However, international assessments reveal ongoing challenges in literacy achievement. According to OECD, (2023) PISA 2022 results showed a significant decline in Indonesian student's reading performance, with an increasing proportion of student's performing below the minimum proficiency level. These highlight the importance of strengthening literacy experiences from the preschool years as early literacy experiences provide a strong foundation for children reading development (Sinaga et al., 2022). Providing meaningful literacy experiences in early childhood can be achieved

through various learning contexts, including the introduction of an additional language such as English.

One way to support early literacy development is through the introduction of English. Given its increasing importance in a global context, English can be introduced during the preschool years helps children develop early language skills that support latter literacy development. According to Wealer et al., (2022) that preschoolers basic literacy skills not only in their mother tongue, but also in additional languages can predict their reading and spelling abilities in a second language when they enter first grade. These findings suggest the long-term academic significance of early multilingual exposure. In line with this, research by Puspita et al., (2023) found that early English language learning enhances children's vocabulary and language development, which are essential foundations for early literacy. However, language development alone does not guarantee successful reading experiences. Although, Rismadewi, (2023) involved university students, the study found that language-related difficulties, such as unfamiliar vocabulary and challenges in understanding texts, can create barriers during reading activities. These findings emphasize the importance of providing reading materials with language that is appropriate for learners' developmental level. Nevertheless, early literacy instruction and early English exposure alone are not sufficient to ensure literacy outcomes without meaningful student engagement in reading activities.

Beyond providing opportunities to learn English, it is equally important to ensure that children engage in reading activity. One key factor that influences the effectiveness of early literacy experiences is children's reading engagement.

Reading engagement refers to the level of children's involvement in reading activities, which includes interest, motivation, and active participation during the reading process (Guthrie et al., 2007). In early childhood education, reading engagement is essential because these experience support the development of foundational literacy skills that contribute to later reading achievement (Chuang, 2023). To support the reading engagement, interesting reading media are very necessary, because young children who are regularly read to have a stronger foundation in their cognitive and emotional development (Pergar & Hadela, 2020). Reading engagement can also be seen from students behavioral reading engagement, which refers to students' observable actions during learning activities, such as paying attention, responding to questions, and actively participating (Fredricks et al., 2004). Students Behavioral reading engagement in preschool children is reflected through observable behaviors such as paying attention to the reading material, concentrating on the story, and actively responding during reading activities (Son et al., 2023). Behavioral reading engagement encompasses student's active participation, effort, and observable behaviors during learning activities. Maintaining a high level of behavioral reading engagement is crucial, as low engagement can exacerbate learning difficulties if left unaddressed (Zhu et al., 2019). Furthermore, Afendi et al., (2020) emphasized that teacher scaffolding talk, including prompting, dialoging, and modeling, succesfully facilitated student's behavioral reading engagement by keeping them focused and encouraging active responses.

Maintaining students behavioral reading engagement can be challenging for many preschool children because due to limited attention spans and the need for interactive learning experiences. Therefore, the use of appropriate and engaging reading media, particularly visual media, is crucial to maintain children's attention and encourage active participation. One type of reading medium that is used is Big Book. The type of reading book designed in large format with an attractive illustrations, making it ideal for young children (Rofiah et al., 2021). The Big Book serves as an instructional medium presented as an oversized book with large, clear text, vivid illustrations, and bright colours, and with simple stories children can easily read them repeatedly, which support the development of early reading skills (Prawiyogi et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Big books are commonly used in shared reading, through shared reading activities, children are encouraged to demonstrate behavioral engagement, such as paying attention, responding verbally, and actively participating in guided reading interactions. As summarized by Son et al., (2023), previous research indicates that children who are actively engaged in shared reading activities are more likely to benefit from the activity because it provides greater opportunities to develop and practice early literacy skills. In addition Altamimi et al., (2023) reported that teacher student interaction during shared reading plays an important role in maintaining students' focus and active involvement. Through shared reading, big books promote active participation, as children engage in discussions, answer questions, and retell stories activities that enhance literacy development (Hidayah et al., 2023)

Early childhood is a crucial stage for instilling positive values and habits, as children begin to learn from the people and environments around them during this time. At this age, children possess a natural curiosity and readily seeking new knowledge through everyday experiences (Gruber & Fandakova, 2021). Therefore, introducing the concept of sustainability early on can help children understand simple values such as maintaining the cleanliness of their surroundings, caring for the environment, and respecting shared spaces. These values are closely connected to children's daily lives, making them easier to understand through meaningful learning activities, such as storybooks and other sustainability-based experiences (Mukhlis et al., 2024). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provide a global framework for promoting sustainable development across social, economic, and environmental dimensions (United Nations, 2015). One of these goals, SDG Goal 11 (Cities and Communities), focuses on creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable communities. Although SDG 11 is often associated with urban development, its values are also relevant to early childhood education because they introduce children to simple concepts related to caring for their surroundings, maintaining cleanliness, and respecting shared spaces. These concepts are closely connected to children's daily lives, making them easier to understand through meaningful learning activities. In this study, SDG 11 is integrated into a Big Book used during shared reading activities, allowing children to learn sustainability values through stories and illustrations while participating actively in the reading process.

Pre-observation was conducted at TK Lab Undiksha. The Pre-observation results indicate that English learning at kindergarten level implemented through thematic activities, such as introducing family members, and shapes. The teacher had implemented several shared reading strategies, such as reading aloud, pointing to illustrations, and asking questions. However, these activities have not been optimally supported by large-format reading materials like Big Books, and their implementation had not been consistently carried out as a routine classroom practice. In addition, English book or storybook were not readily available in the classroom, as they were mainly stored in the teacher room, and brought into the classroom only when needed. No Big Book or book integrating Sustainable Cities and Communities were available. These conditions underlie the selection of an SDGs 11 based Big Book to be developed in this school, and the reason for this chose because this value closely related to children's daily lives, such as their homes, schools, playgrounds, and surrounding environment, making the ideas easier for preschool students to understand in a concrete way.

Introducing these values at an early age is important to build children's awareness. On the other hand, Although English instruction had been regularly implemented and supported by dedicated English teachers, the available reading materials were still limited and had not been specifically designed to facilitate shared reading or maintain children's reading engagement. Nitiasih et al., (2022) emphasize that instructional media play a crucial role in helping students understand lesson content and creating more meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, Big Books are considered the appropriate medium because they support

reading activities, attract children's attention through large text and attractive illustrations, and increase student engagement in English learning.

Previous research has discussed the development of Big Books as a medium to improve early childhood reading engagement. Oktaviana et al., (2021) found that children aged 5–6 years who learned with Big Book media achieved significantly higher reading scores compared to those who used magazines. Meanwhile, Cahyani & Megawati, (2024) found that students had a positive perception of Big Book reading, as it stimulated creativity and encouraged them to be more active in reading activities. However, there are still very few studies that specifically develop SDGs based Big Books to support children's reading engagement and integrate of the concept sustainability, especially in the context of sustainable city and community development. Therefore, this study aims to Developing a Big Book as a shared reading medium to support student behavioral reading engagement and integrate Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Cities and Communities) Content at TK Lab Undiksha.

1.2 Identification of Problems

Identification of problem have several factor contributing to the research problem were identified. The availability of reading materials or media in the classroom was limited, thereby restricting opportunities for students to engage in classroom reading activities. Furthermore, Big Books were not available to support shared reading activities. Additionally, there was a lack of reading materials integrating Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 specifically regarding Sustainable Cities and Communities. These conditions indicate the need for a Big

Book that can support shared reading, engage children in reading activities, and introduce SDG 11 concepts in a way that is appropriate for young children.

1.3 The Limitation of The Study

The scope of this research focuses on the development and evaluation of Big Book as shared reading medium specifically designed for preschool students. Targeting students aged 4 to 6 in early childhood education settings, this research aims to support student behavioral reading engagement through shared reading. In addition, this research integrates sustainability awareness by including SDGs based narratives, specifically SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). This research conducted at the TK Lab Undiksha. This study evaluates the quality of the developed Big Book through expert validation, its practicality through user judgment, and preschool students' behavioral reading engagement during its implementation.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How is a Big Book designed and develop as a shared reading medium integrating Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Cities and Communities) to support Preschool students behavioral reading engagement in English Language Learning?
2. What is the quality of the developed Big Book as a shared reading medium integrating SDG 11 (Cities and Communities) to support Preschool students behavioral reading engagement in English Language Learning?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To design and develop a Big Book as shared reading medium integrating SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities to support preschool student's behavioral reading engagement in English Language Learning.
2. To evaluate the quality of the developed SDG 11 based Big Book as a shared reading medium for preschool students' English language learning through expert judgment, user judgment, and behavioral reading engagement checklist.

1.6 Significance of the research

1.Theoretical Significance:

This study is expected to enrich the knowledge of researchers and academics regarding the development of Big Book learning medium based on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 to support student behavioral reading engagement and awareness of sustainability in childhood. Furthermore, this study is expected to enrich the literature on the integration of literacy, English language learning, and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the context of early childhood education.

2.Practical Significance:

a. For Teacher

The results of this study are expected to be reference for teachers in selecting and using creative, interactive, and developmentally appropriate learning media, especially in English Language Learning, while instilling sustainable values.

b. For Students

Through the Big Book medium that developed, students are expected to be able to learn English in a more fun and interactive way, and understand the values of SDG 11 from an early age.

1.7. Definition Of Key terms

1. Conceptual Definition

a. Behavioral Reading Engagement

Behavioral reading engagement refers to the observable actions students display during learning activities, such as paying attention, following instructions, responding, and showing initiative (Finn et al., 1995; Luo et al., 2009). In reading contexts, it represents how visibly active and involved students are as they interact with reading materials.

b. Big Book

A Big Book defined as a learning medium with a larger physical size than regular books, such as A3, A4, A5, or newspaper-sized formats, and is designed with consideration for readability so that it can be clearly seen and read by all students in the classroom. Usaid (as cited in Akbar et al., 2022).

c. Shared Reading

Shared reading as an established literacy practice in which an adult reads and discusses a book with a small group of children to support language and literacy development (Zhou et al., 2025).

d. Sustainability Development Goals

United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which introduced 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global

framework to address social, economic, and environmental challenges while promoting sustainable development for present and future generations (United Nations, 2015).

e. SDG 11 (Cities and Communities)

Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 11 focuses on promoting inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities settlements while addressing various urban challenges to support sustainable development (Almulhim et al., 2024).

2. Operational Definition

a. Behavioral Reading Engagement

In this research, behavioral reading engagement operationalized through specific observable indicators during reading sessions, such as children's attentiveness to the Big Book illustrations, their active participation in repeating words or answering questions, their initiative in pointing to images or commenting on the story, and their ability to stay focused and follow classroom routines. These observable behaviours recorded using an observation checklist during the implementation phase.

b. Big Book

Big Book in this study refers to an A3-sized illustrated storybook developed as a shared reading medium for preschool children. The book features large illustrations, enlarged printed text, simple vocabulary, and meaningful stories integrating Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. The A3 size was selected to ensure that all children could clearly see the text and illustrations during shared reading activities while remaining practical for classroom use. The Big

Book was designed to support student's behavioral reading engagement through shared reading.

c. Shared Reading

In this study, shared reading refers to a teacher-guided reading activity in which the teacher and preschool students read a specially developed Big Book together through interactive discussion. The activity is conducted in three stages, First Pre-reading, second during-reading, and third post-reading. encouraging students to observe illustrations, answer questions, repeat key vocabulary, make predictions, and discuss the messages presented in the story.

d. Sustainability Development Goals

In this study, the Sustainable Development Goals refer to the global framework establish by the United Nations and integrated into the learning content of the developed Big Book. The SDGs serve as the basis for selecting educational themes that introduce sustainability values to preschool aged children through meaningful shared reading activities.

e. SDG 11 (Cities and Communities)

In this study, SDG 11 refers to sustainability theme integrated into the content of developed Big Book. That introduced students to simple concepts of maintaining cities and communities, while encouraging positive behaviours.