

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the introduction to the research consisting of (1) background of the study, (2) identified problem, (3) limitation of the problem, (4) research questions, (5) research objectives, (6) the specification of the product, (7) significance of the research, (8) assumption and the limitation of the development, and (9) definition of key term.

1.1 Background of the Study

The 21st century requires students to master literacy skill which is strongly related to the demand of reading skill to understand the information critically and reflectively and make it as an important part in education process (Kemendikbud, 2016). The era of 21st century also highlights the advance development of technology which makes information grow rapidly in this globalized world. To utilize the information optimally it requires individual to be literate. By having literacy skill, a person can evaluate and absorb the information critically to increase knowledge, the way of thinking, and character growth (Kemendikbud, 2016). It shows that literacy is highly needed to survive and compete in this 21st century.

According to Kemendikbud (2016), basic literacy competency involves several abilities such as absorbing- speaking, reading-writing, counting, and observing-drawing, must be established starting from primary education that will be further continued in higher education level. It is done to make the students able to evaluate the obtained information since literacy leads the students to have ability in understanding messages of a text or printed materials. It can be seen that

literacy plays a vital role for individuals to increase the quality of themselves since literacy could lead them to be more critical and competence.

Batubara & Ariani (2018) defined literacy as the ability to access, understand, and utilize the information critically. Being literate allows a person to be able to understand written information and communicate effectively. It is also in line with Hannon (1995) in Nutbrown et.al (2017) people who are able to use written language, they will be able to convey meaning, express ideas, and store information. Hence, literacy needs to be possessed by individual to survive in the academic and non academic life.

Unfortunately, Indonesian students have low literacy skill. The current phenomenon in Indonesia showed that students' literacy is lower than other countries. According to Laksono & Retnaningdyah (2018), based on the result of the Progress International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2011 evaluated reading ability of grade four students showed that Indonesia ranked at the 45th place out of 48 participating countries with a score of 428. This score was below the average value of 500. This happens due to some factors such as the lack of reading interest, an inadequate of the availability of books throughout Indonesia, low motivation in reading from the students, the teachers, and other communities (Laksono & Retnaningdyah, 2018).

Additionally, another fact that shows students' literacy is still categorized low can be seen from the result of Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015. It showed that Indonesian students' literacy is lower than the students' literacy in the world. Indonesia ranked 61st out of 69 countries with the mean score of reading literacy was 397 in which this score was still under the

mean score of all countries which was 493 (OECD, 2016). It showed that reading literacy did not show significant improvement.

One of the Indonesia government efforts to tackle the low literacy skill of the students, the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2015 developed a program called School Literacy Movement (GSL). One of the activities is by assigning students to read for 15 minutes before the lessons begin. This activity is done to build students' interest in reading and enhance the reading skill (Kemendikbud, 2016). This program requires educational components such as teacher, student, principle, parents, and society to take part in supporting the program. Besides that, it also needs to be supported by other ways such as engaging students with real world literacy, providing students with authentic materials when the teachers teach, or encouraging students to read as a part of their daily life in which these are done to maximize the improvement of students' literacy skill.

To start the program, it can be introduced to the students from the early age so that they are familiar with the literacy activity. According to Ariati, Padmadewi, & Suarnajaya (2018), the children will get more experiences when literacy is introduced earlier to enable them to survive in educational and social lives. The children who did not get sufficient reading writing development in early age tend to encounter difficulties in following education since the text will be longer and more complicated (Myrberg 2007 as cited in Genlott & Gronlund (2013). By having literacy skill the students can think critically and logically on a particular issue which makes them not to easily trust the obtained information and they can evaluate the information that they got as stated by Jonner (2008) in Silvina, Fitriawati, & Saepudin (2017).

Besides mastering the literacy skill, on the other hand, English is also needed to prepare students for life and work in the globalized world. English could help students gain more opportunities to communicate in wider society whereas English is an International language used by people all over the world. Mastering English literacy enables the students to obtain knowledge and communicate across different culture. Regarding to the demand of English literacy, there is a need that English literacy needs to be taught seriously from the early years. The English language learning could be introduced or started early to give maximum exposure to the linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1997 as cited in Rich 2014). The introduction of an early start in English for children is believed that the children would be easier to learn the language and enable them to achieve greater proficiency (Nunan 2003, in Rich 2014).

However, the existence of English literacy is not well emphasized and established in elementary schools. According to Hayes (2007) as cited in Artini (2017), English is a component of basic education which it is not a mere subject in primary school. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, English is a local content in the curriculum, not compulsory at primary level. It means that English is only additional subject to be taught at elementary school. Moreover, the time allotment for teaching English is limited. Most students only get English subject once a week with 35 minutes for a meeting as stated by Nurpratwi, Artini, & Marhaeni, 2013. Besides that, the textbook used by the teacher does not provide the students with real context materials. The materials which are written on the textbook do not show the real context which make the students have fewer chance to read and understand the basic concept of English lesson in the real context

(Nurpratiwi, Artini, & Marhaeni, 2013). They further explained that the methods of teaching applied by teachers in teaching English are still conventional which make the students do not have motivation to study English.

Based on the result of preliminary observation, the English teacher relies on English worksheet in which the materials and activities presented do not reflect to the real life situations. Hence, the students are not provided with real world activities in learning English. The activities presented are mostly grammar oriented such as arranging the words into correct order, reading conventional texts, or speaking practice in which the dialogue text is provided for them. Besides that, the English is not frequently used by the teacher and students. The teacher uses Indonesia language in teaching and the students use Indonesia language to communicate with their friends. It shows that the students get limited exposure to English whereas the teacher does not show role model to use English in the class. It can hinder the students to make use of the language since they only focus on learning the grammar, do not have freedom to express the language they learn, and get limited exposure to English.

Reflecting on the above problems, it is necessary that English literacy must be taught by exposing students with real life literacy activities. It is done to prepare students for their lives and able to handle problems that occur in the real life. It can be supported with the help of teachers to engage and provide the students with authentic materials and activities taught to the students. Besides that, the students also need to be encouraged that reading is a part of their daily life which is done consistently and continuously. The character of reading as the foundation of literacy skill should be built in the students themselves. They should

have the willingness to read which come from themselves and have awareness that reading and writing could help them survive in education and social life.

Dealing with the need of English literacy and to provide real world literacy activity, therefore, this study attempts to develop English literacy-based activities so that the students' literacy culture can be built and enhanced. The product which is developed will be in the form of worksheet which contains contextual materials and real world literacy activities which can be implemented by teachers to teach English literacy. It also enables the teachers to expose the students to the real life situation which might be experienced by the students.

1.2 Identified Problem

1.2.1 Students' English literacy skill is low. The students show unsatisfactory performance during the process of English learning in the classroom. The students mostly speak Bahasa Indonesia when they get English subject. It means they do not practice to use or communicate by using English. They also find it difficult to understand an English text and to answer the questions in English. On the other hand, it is clearly stated that by having literacy skill allows the students to use, communicate, and understand the printed materials. These situations show that the students are not able to use, communicate, and understand English. It means that their English literacy skill is low.

1.2.2 The lack of learning sources which can support the students' to enhance their English literacy skill. Based on the observation, English book or English worksheet with fun and authentic activities is limited. In other

words, the worksheet used by the students in elementary school does not contain activities which reflect the real life situation. The students are not exposed to experience real world activities in the classroom.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

The limitation of the problem was focusing on developing English literacy-based activities for the first semester of sixth grade students and examining its effectiveness.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the research questions will be formulated as follows.

- 1.4.1 How to develop English literacy-based activities for the first semester of 6th grade elementary school students?
- 1.4.2 What literacy-based activities are developed for the first semester of 6th grade elementary school students?
- 1.4.3 How effective is the English literacy-based activities for the first semester of 6th grade elementary school students?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the problem statement above, the purposes of this study can be seen as follows.

- 1.5.1 To develop English literacy-based activities for the first semester of 6th grade elementary school students.
- 1.5.2 To describe English literacy-based activities developed for the first semester of 6th grade elementary school students.

- 1.5.3 To examine the effectiveness of English literacy-based activities developed for the first semester of 6th grade elementary school students.

1.6 The Specification of the Product

There are several specifications of the product. They are formulated as follows.

- 1.6.1 The product was developed in the form of students' worksheet. The students' worksheet was developed for the first semester of sixth grade students.
- 1.6.2 The worksheet can be used by the students to learn English by doing several activities presented on the worksheet. The worksheet provides students with real world literacy activities which enable students to enhance their literacy skill.
- 1.6.3 The worksheet shows interesting pictures, exercises, and integrates the four skills of English (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

1.7 Significance of the Research

It is expected that this study can give its significance theoretically and practically.

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

The result of this study is expected to give contribution for the development of educational knowledge and give enrichment for literacy based activities for the first semester of the sixth grade elementary students.

1.7.2 Practical Significance

The result of this study is expected to give a significant effect for teachers, students, and other researchers.

a. The teacher

The result of this study is expected to be used as guidance to develop English literacy-based activities in teaching English literacy for the 6th grade elementary school.

b. The students

The result of this study is expected to be used in improving students' literacy skill, increasing students' motivation in learning English, and increasing students' awareness toward the importance of English literacy.

c. The other researcher

The result of this study is expected to give information as additional sources or reference for the other researchers to conduct further study related to the development of English literacy-based activities for teaching the 6th grade elementary students.

1.8 Assumption and the Limitation of the Development

The limitation of the development presents the restrictiveness of the product to cope the problems. In this research, the assumption and the limitation of the development of product are formulated as follows.

1.8.1 The product is developed based on the characteristics from the result of analysis. The product is only for the first semester of sixth grade students.

1.9 Definition of Key Term

Definition of key term concerns on explaining and defining the related terminologies of this research. It needs to be delivered in the beginning of the research to give insight of particular terminologies, different interpretation might come from individuals. Therefore, to avoid misinterpretation the explanation of particular terminologies need to be presented so that the unity of the vision on particular terminologies can be achieved. The explanation for each terminology is defined conceptually and operationally.

1.9.1 Conceptual definition

Conceptual definition is the definition derived from the existing concept and theory by the experts related to this current research. There are several terminologies which are defined namely literacy, real world literacy activity, and young learner. The definition of each terminology is presented as follows:

1.9.1.1 Literacy

Literacy is defined as the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute the printed and written materials (UNESCO, 2017). According to PISA literacy refers to the ability to understand, use, and reflect on written texts so that the goals, knowledge, and potential could be achieved and developed by individuals (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016). Another definition also comes from Kemendikbud in 2016 in which literacy in the context of school

literacy movement is defined as the ability to access, understand, and use something intelligently through various activities such as reading, seeing, writing, absorbing, and speaking. Literacy is also defined as the ability to read and write in which literacy is a necessary skill needs to be acquired by children (Yeung & King, 2015).

1.9.1.2 Young Learners

According to Pinter (2006) as cited in Rich (2014), the term "young learner" refers to children whose age starts from 13-14. Young learners are able to construct meaning from their experiences (Cameron 2001 as cited in Juhana 2014). Harmer 2001 as cited in Juhana (2014), stated that young learners do not only rely on explanation to understand something but they also get their understanding from what they see and hear, or when they have a chance to do activities. It can be said that young learners could understand or construct meaning from actively doing activities or experiencing something during the learning process.

1.9.2 Operational Definition

Operational definition is the definition of key terms derived from conceptual definition. This operational definition is interpreted and adjusted to the research. The terminologies are used operationally.

1.9.2.1 Literacy

In this study, literacy refers to the students' ability to read and write to understand and use the language.

1.9.2.2 English Literacy-based Activities

Literacy in this study refers to English literacy-based activities which are developed for the first semester of sixth grade elementary students. The activities developed are based on the topics, indicators, and learning materials gained from the syllabus in which the activities are further developed to reflect on real world activity and integrate the four skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

1.9.2.3 Young Learner

Young learner in this study is the first semester of sixth grade elementary students whose age is around thirteen years old. The English literacy-based activities worksheet is for the first semester of sixth grade elementary students.

