

Improving Students Reading Comprehension Ability Through Integrated Thematic Learning With School Literacy Movement Support

Ryan Dwi Puspita^{1)*}, Dadang Sunendar²⁾, Bachrudin Musthafa³⁾, Rully Agung⁴⁾

¹⁾Elementary School Teacher Education, STKIP Sebelas April, Sumedang

²⁾French Language Teaching, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

³⁾English Language And Literature Teaching, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

⁴⁾English Language Teaching, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung

Jl. Angkrek Situ, No. 19. E-mail: dwiryan531@gmail.com*

Abstract: PISA's findings reported that Indonesian elementary school students (IESS) achieved their average reading comprehension ability which were below the standard set by OECD. This research proposed school literacy movement (SLM) as an apparatus to cultivate IESS reading and writing skill habit. SLM served as the basis for achieving the 2013 Curriculum requirement. This study applied quasi-experimental method with employed sample of 126 IESS of 5th and 4th graders and their teachers serving in four schools. This study showed that there was significant effect of ITL to improve IESS reading comprehension ability of 5th graders.

Key Words: Indonesian Elementary School Student (IESS), Integrated thematic Learning (ITL), Reading comprehension, School literacy Movement (SLM)

Abstrak: Temuan PISA terkait skor rata-rata kemampuan membaca yang diperoleh siswa sekolah dasar Indonesia masih di bawah rata-rata negara OECD. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh pembelajaran tematik terpadu untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca pemahaman siswa kelas 5 sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini mengungkap GLS sebagai sarana untuk menumbuhkembangkan pembiasaan baca-tulis siswa sekolah dasar sebagai dasar untuk mencapai tagihan Kurikulum 2013. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode eksperimen kuasi dengan sampel 126 siswa kelas 5 dan 4 guru di 4 sekolah dasar. Penelitian menunjukkan adanya pengaruh yang signifikan pembelajaran tematik terpadu untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca pemahaman siswa kelas 5 sekolah dasar.

Kata kunci: *Indonesian Elementary School Student (IESS), Integrated thematic Learning (ITL), Reading comprehension, School literacy Movement (SLM)*

Information literacy has been an essential part to deal with for IESS since they belong to digital native. Information literacy is closely related with reading comprehension ability. Unfortunately in Indonesian context, there is an alarming report from international organization concerning IESS reading comprehension ability to consider. Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) reported findings concerning IESS average score of reading comprehension ability were low and fell below the OECD countries average. IESS low reading comprehension ability was influenced by their poor understanding on: main idea of a paragraph, graph reading, relationships between facts and relation-

ships of linguistic logic understanding (Bybee & McCrae, 2011).

Another international organization featured similar daunting report. Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) reported that IESS were poor at performing reading comprehension ability. Those report carried out by PISA and PIRLS sent strong signal for Indonesian government to take a swift action in resolving the problem (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, Trong, & Sainsbury, 2009), (PISA, 2012), (Kemdikbud, 2016). The reports above were in line with research findings from several studies (BROWN, 1987), (Wallace, 1992), (NICHHD, 2000), (Togersen, 2002),

(Fleischman, Hopstock, Pelczar, & Shelley, 2010). In a nutshell they reported that delay of initial reading and writing skill affected vocabulary growth, changed students' attitude and motivation to read, and contributed to missing opportunities to develop reading comprehension strategies and students had little chance to practice reading and writing skill.

To cope with this circumstance, reading comprehension and writing skill strategies should be reinforced by teachers in learning subjects not only Indonesian language subjects but also other subjects. It goes without saying that all the efforts must be delivered to create good learning environment in order to achieve maximum results, especially IESS reading comprehension ability. The efforts include primarily learning strategy creation which is organized and delivered systematically by teachers in their classroom.

Learning strategy should be delivered to IESS by considering some principles. It should be carried out by teachers in a step by step manner and well planned. In addition it should be done completely by considering various components involved in learning process. It is expected that the result will trigger learners to think analyze and solve problems and make decisions (Iskandarwasid & Sunendar, 2011).

Learning process, as it is discussed by several experts, is essentially a system. In the context of learning there are components that take place and interact with the learning component itself, namely: methods, media and learning resources, students, teachers, physical and non physical environment. Given the above notion, learning is a system, the current study believes that learning tools are very paramount to be developed by teachers in order to achieve learning outcomes.

In Indonesian context, fostering IESS reading and writing interest is considered the most challenging task to accomplish by teachers in many cities and regencies not to mention Bandung regency. This demanding mission requires education actors to make their school as a learning organization so that all its citizens grow as lifetime learners. In an effort to support this campaign, Ministry of Education and Culture develops School Literacy Movement (SLM). SLM strengthens the movement of character growth on the part of students as it is set in the regulation made by the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 23 year 2015. SLM encourages some activities including a 15 minute book reading which does not belong to subject book. This non-subject book reading activity is done before learning activity takes place or in the beginning period. This is implemented to foster IESS reading interest

and to improve reading skills so that they can achieve knowledge better. Reading materials contain character values in the form of local, national, and global wisdom which is conveyed according to the IESS developmental stage (Kemdikbud, 2016). SLM is believed to promote IESS reading and writing interest especially for 5th graders.

SLM is expected to boost IESS reading ability because it is designed to stimulate students to have a high interest not only in reading but also in writing written form review. SLM is in line with the need for integrated thematic learning (ITL) that prepare students to be able to access, understand and use information intelligently.

Like writing, Reading refers to a sociopsycholinguistic process. Reading process is viewed as either a transaction or interaction between the reader's mind and the language of the text in certain situational and social contexts (Weaver, 1988; Tompkins & Hoskisson, 1991). Meaning occurs as a result of transaction and negotiation between reader and text. Reading comprehension does not come from text reading to the reader, on the contrary, it is a complex negotiation between the text and the reader that is immediately shaped by the situational context and more broadly with the sociolinguistic context. Reading comprehension will be effective if it is supported by many factors especially SLM. SLM aims to make school as a fun place, supporting atmosphere and child friendly learning park that can promote schools to organize and manage knowledge to deliver to their IESS (Kemdikbud, 2016).

Taking into account the advantages of SLM to promote IESS reading comprehension, this study applied ITL to improve IESS reading comprehension skills. With the assistance of SLM to promote strategy for reading and writing skills among IESS of 5th graders, this study tried to deliver effective learning environment for IESS, since it was believed as high effective teaching model, and to improve IESS reading comprehension ability. In addition SLM thoroughly touches in an integrated manner all IESS dimensions covering emotion, physical, and academic.

METHOD

This research was conducted in elementary schools located in Bandung regency Indonesia. The population were IESS of 5th graders with their average ages of 10-11 years. Samples of this study were taken randomly on the basis of SLM model schools and non-SLM model schools. Out of 4 classes select-

ed, 2 classes, Sekarwangi state elementary school and Muhammadiyah elementary School, served as experiment classes because they applied SLM class model. Two remaining class, namely Simpang Baru State Elementary School and Junti Girang 03 state elementary school, served as control classes because they did not apply SLM class model. The research involved both 126 students and 4 teachers. The study applied a quasi experimental method.

This study used quasi-experimental method in the form of pretest and posttest group design with control group. Two classes were experimental classes, sixth grader consisting 65 students and two remaining classes were control classes with 61 students. The data required in this study was (1) existing condition of reading comprehension learning in the schools; (2) current data regarding IESS reading comprehension ability in the schools; (3) data showing the effectiveness of ITL applying SLM to improve reading comprehension ability of IESS in the schools.

The first and second data was collected through interview, observation, pre test and post test. These instrument investigated existing learning condition of reading comprehension which was implemented in the schools. The second data on IESS reading ability in the schools was currently obtained through observation. In addition questionnaires were given to their parents in order to gain in depth information for data. The third data refers to the effectiveness of ITL with reference to SLM in improving reading comprehension ability. This data was taken from test which was developed through pretest and posttest. This data was analyzed both quantitatively applying t-test and qualitatively.

RESULTS

The following table displays the result of t test gain concerning IESS reading comprehension ability of 5th graders from control and experimental classes.

Table 1 shows that the mean of difference test for gain reading comprehension ability of the experimental class and control class was at the 0.05 significance level which was obtained p (sig. (2-tailed)) = 0,000. T table can be searched with the t distribution table at the level of trust 95% ($\alpha = 5\%$). Since the t test was two-sided, the value of $\alpha/2 = 5\% = 0.025$ and degrees of freedom ($df = n-2$). Since $p < 0.005$, H_1 was accepted and H_0 was rejected, this is to say that there is a difference between two averages of experimental and control classes. Decision-making can

Table 1. Gain Difference Tes of Reading Comprehension Ability of 5th Graders

t_{hitung}	df	Data Gain Eks Kontrol		
		t_{tabel}	Sig.	Decision
9,116	72	1,800	0,000	There is a difference
9,721	52	1,300	0,000	There is a difference

also be done by comparing the value of t arithmetic with t table and it should meet the following conditions:

- if $t_{observed} < t_{table}$, H_0 is accepted and H_1 is rejected.
- If $t_{observed} > t_{table}$, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted.

$T_{observed} > t_{table}$ or inside H_0 's rejection area it is decided that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. Thus it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the average score of experimental classes gain and control classes concerning reading comprehension ability at 95% confidence level.

DISCUSSION

Having analyzed the above statistical results, this study concludes that that ITL featuring SLM has proven to have a significant influence to improve reading comprehension ability in the schools. The increase of students' performance was also supported by SLM promotion and implementation in their school. This is to say that SLM promoted and maintained IESS interest in reading and writing skill in the schools. This finding is in line with the previous study conducted by Correnti (2007) which promoted school literature program to improve reading comprehension of elementary school students. The study reported that the program improved students' reading comprehension and integration of reading and writing skill for elementary school students. In a nutshell reading comprehension and writing skill requires program that is likely to offer and enhance student literacy in the school. Literacy needs to be nurtured by the school and family of elementary school students.

Speaking of literacy development, Musthafa (2014) states the importance of a literacy environment for children's literacy development. Parents are expected to create literacy supporting practices for their children. These effort are in form of academic artifacts and supporting atmosphere for children literacy development. Academic artifacts and supporting atmosphere are likely to contribute to students exposure to literacy. Parents determination and effort influence their achievement and failure to promote children

literacy development. This is to say that parents role is crucial in building literacy development for elementary school students.

In Indonesian context, the gap of literacy development among children occurs due to the diversity of children literacy backgrounds. Two types of background can be used to explain this namely: literacy rich home and disadvantaged literacy home. To overcome gap of children literacy development, SLM is very appropriate campaign and effort to be implemented by school in order to help unfortunate children in terms of literacy development. SLM is a social movement with collaborative support of various elements in the society. Feasible efforts are done by LSM to make literacy development happen. Promoting reading habits for IESS is one powerful step provided by SLM. This habit is facilitated by providing a 15 minute reading activity. In this activity the teacher reads the book and students and other residents read silently. This reading habit maintenance is tailored to meet children literacy demand and the objectives of education set by the school. It is expected that students' reading habit will take place. If this reading habit exists, it will be directed to achieve literacy development the demand of Curriculum of 2013 set by the government.

In order to successfully implement SLM, there are variations of activities which are possible to be combined in form of receptive and productive skills. Teachers may conduct review of text made by their student from reading activity. SLM in this study has proven to bring a significant influence to cultivate IESS reading and writing skill in order to improve IESS reading comprehension ability. IESS level of reading comprehension demonstrated by 5th graders of SLM classes in this study included: 1) literal understanding, in this case the students were able to recognize and capture the written material that was written explicitly; 2) Reorganization, in this level students were able to classify, describe, summarize, and synthesize the information presented in the text, 3) Inferential understanding, in this level the students were able to exploit the information explicitly stated in the text along with personal experience and prior students' knowledge, 4) and last level where students were able to compare previous experiences toward new elements in new materials such as content, style, expression, information and ideas, opinions or values delivered by the author of the text they were reading (Nuttal, 1985). Evaluation level includes students' ability to differentiate fantasy from reality, distinguish fact from opinion, determine relevance, and assess suitability, complete-

ness, worthiness, agreement, or acceptance with reference to the text they were reading (Tollefson, 1996).

The previous discussion has shown that ITL featuring SLM contributed to students achievement in reading comprehension. Other contributing factors that are worth mentioning are teachers' role in implementing the program. In this study, the teachers' role were important because they were the leading actors who implemented ITL featuring SLM program in elementary school. Their effort to implement SLM program really contributes toward students achievement in reading comprehension. Studies show the significance contribution and teachers' role in shaping and developing students' reading comprehension (Abzol & Haron, 2017).

To achieve students reading comprehension, teachers need to apply various strategies. Kamgar & Jadidi (2016) suggested that teachers implement various strategies in teaching reading comprehension for elementary school students. They reported that there are many benefits for students when various strategies are implemented in learning. The benefits include; the increase of students' motivation, promotion of autonomous learning, and the development of learning autonomy. Teachers were also encouraged to create fun and motivating environment for students to learn in elementary school. Chu, Angello, Saenz, & Quek, (2017) also reported that students best learning experience can be achieved by providing ITL.

CONCLUSION

This study reported the implementation of ITL featuring SLM in elementary schools. This study found that ITL featuring SLM had a significant influence to improve reading comprehension ability of 5th graders in the classes applying SLM. This significant increase was influenced by the application of SLM that was able to overcome the literacy gap existed among students due to the diversity of their background literacy from home. SLM was an effort implemented in the schools to develop the reading and writing habits for IESS. It can be used by the teachers to improve IESS performance in reading comprehension ability so that they can perform better to achieve national education objectives.

Students' habit of reading and writing which was formed after SLM implementation, served as a powerful effort to meet the demands of Curriculum 2013 emphasizing ITL. Their habit is expected to boost their reading comprehension skill and writing skill. Students'

Level of understanding achieved in this research were four types namely: literal, reorganization, inferential and evaluation. These four types of reading comprehension clearly indicate their good performance in reading comprehension ability.

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