

PROMOTING BIG BOOK AND READING CORNER TO SUPPORT *GERAKAN LITERASI SEKOLAH (GLS)* IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of literacy socialization and training to some of the primary school teachers to support the government action in response to the Indonesian students' low reading habit, called *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS)*. This program focused on the English language literacy through promoting suitable material in media, namely Big Book and encouraging the school to provide reading corner to accommodate the literacy source storage and comfortable area to enjoy literacy activity. This is considered crucial since the comfortable area and neat arrangement of book play significant role to attract the students' motivation in reading, later it is expected that they share about what they have read by listening to others, communicating with others, and writing their idea about what they found. The trainees agree that this kind of event is supposed to be conducted continuously to facilitate the teachers in enriching their updated information as well as creativity for producing appropriate media as a literacy source for the students to develop their literacy skill.

Keywords: *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS)*; Big Book; Reading Corner

INTRODUCTION

In response to the fact that the reading habit of Indonesian people is still low, the government has tried to give solution to build literate environment by releasing the Indonesian minister of Education and Culture Regulation number 23 Year 2015, namely *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS)*. This program is applied to all levels of education, both primary and secondary level – elementary school, Junior High School, Senior High School, Vocational School, and School for students with disabilities-. The guide for the school stakeholders,

especially teacher, has already been provided through a book for each level. The content of the book elaborate about *GLS*, why should implement *GLS*, how to do *GLS*, and what to prepare in *GLS*. By reading the books, every person in the school including teacher is expected to comprehend the concept of *GLS* and its significance for different level of student in order to achieve the goal of this program.

Primary education is the beginning section to build students' reading habit, and this is the prospective zone where the students

get more exposure to enhance their knowledge. During this age, it is believed that any information is easily transferred, including literacy with English language reference as long as there is intensive guidance from the teachers. This is in line with Houry (2015) who states that to promote reading habit as a daily routine, it is necessary to comprehend that the students are interested in picking up a book to read it not for educational purposes, rather for the sake of reading it and enjoying it. To simplify, she uses interesting analog to view the way how to enhance students reading habit as follows: "Similar to sleeping and exercising, the reading habit needs to be developed by children as early as their first months of age in order for it to be internalized and consistently reproduced on a lifelong basis." To accommodate this situation, elementary school teachers play a major role in enabling students to acquire this habit. Therefore, *GSL* program particularly building reading habit by reading 15 minutes before starting lesson is appropriate and interesting to apply for the elementary school students in

Indonesian context although many obstacles appear during the implementation. It is believed that if they can be exposed to a positive habit to love reading, it will give something more beneficial for their future.

The government program to attract students interest in reading does not always run smoothly. In some observed schools, the data showed that encouraging the students to do 15 minutes reading before learning was hard job. The teachers shared ideas that during the real practice they lack of English references that are interesting for the students and there is no reading corner in each class. In addition, the activities done in the class seems to be monotonous. They just read and share what they get to their friends. First, it is new for them, but after repeated several days it that activity turned to be boring. Another factor influencing unsuccessful implementation of *GLS*, especially in English literacy is that in the target school, most of the teachers do not have educational background of English Education. This affects the variation of language learning

activities. Consequently, the activity that is expected to be fun and positively impressed becomes usual thing like other materials.

To sum up, based on the analysis of the targeted schools which are trying to conduct *GLS*, there are three main obstacles, namely limited teacher with English Education background, facility in terms of reading corner, literacy materials and media. Accordingly, the schools inform that they need an activity that can help them to explore on how to conduct more enjoyable activities for *GLS* in English reference in the form of socialization and training on some aspects related to *GLS* in elementary school.

Due to its crucial role in shaping the person's characteristic in reading preference through *GLS*, this present study focuses on the program 15 minutes reading before starting to learn the school lesson on English literacy by giving socialization of *GLS* and training on how to make Effective Big Book to two elementary schools in Sidoarjo, Indonesia. Highlighting this current issue, it is interesting to investigate the implementation of socialization

and training program as the effort to fulfill the need of the teachers. It is also necessary to know how the program gives benefits for the teachers and the students.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF *GLS* SOCIALIZATION

During the implementation of socialization, both the speaker and the audience give serious attention to get the correct idea about *GLS* program in general context. There are several points presented by the speaker to the teachers for one and half an hour, namely the condition of low reading habit in Indonesia, the definition of literacy in the context of *GLS*, the purpose of *GLS*, steps in implementing *GLS*, *GLS* in school as habitual, developing, learning activity, and the definition of literate class. After following this session, the audience did self reflection on their *GSL* activity. They shared about their experience about their difficulty in implementing this *GLS* program, particularly how to create effective literate environment. In the same time, they also asked for alternative solution to improve their performance in encouraging their

students’ participation. To response this, the speaker tried to convince the teachers to be creative in using facility around the school.

To create literate atmosphere, the teachers do not need to buy expensive things, but take the existing objects. The teachers and students may also collaborate to give decoration to make it more interesting. They can use the students’ art work to hang in the class and give label about the name and description of the thing. Cohen and Cowen (2007) justify that labeling is an important way to help children learn language. It is also excellent to learn defined concept. They argue that this activity is relevant for enhancing student thinking and reading comprehension. Generally labeling activity can be conducted in three kinds: naming, classifying, and relating.

Besides, trade books also contribute to this point. Students can read trade books in reading corner while discussing the information based on their experience. According to Everett & Moyer (2009), she supports literacy to be inserted in learning process, especially in the

cycle of inquiry learning, namely Engage, Explore, Explain, Extend, and Evaluate (The 5E Learning Cycle). Of course, the books have to pass review from reputable source if the school want to have good quality literacy.

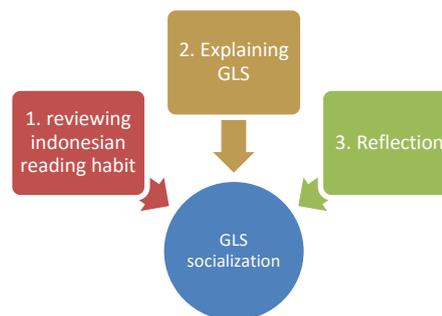


Chart 1. The Activities in GLS socialization

TRAINING OF ENGLISH LITERACY TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Having conducted *GLS* socialization, the following activity presented in the program is English literacy training. The speaker first gave introduction about English reading. Then the teachers read the simple text in Power Points (ppt) slide. From this activity the speaker tried to check their English speaking skill. The result showed that the teacher were able to pronounce the words quite fluently since some of the audience are English teachers. Moreover, the second speaker

explained the correlation between *GLS* and English literacy. English literacy that is proposed to support *GLS* is through English for pleasure. It means that the students read references in English for entertainment without any difficult task. Clark & Rumbold (2006) have summarized from a number of research idea that has proved reading for pleasure gives good effects to the literacy-related activities, namely reading attainment and writing ability, text comprehension and grammar, vocabulary mastery, positive reading attitudes, self confidence, and pleasure reading. Accordingly, the students will be eager to read the books and enjoy to discuss the content with teacher and friends. It is obvious that the students tend to feel much more enjoyable in reading for pleasure outside of school. Thus, the teachers need to think how to make reading activities in school more pleasurable for students. It will be more helpful if we ask information to them about what reference they like and try to provide it in the class.

Next, in the training program the audience were asked to follow

the discussion of literacy media, specifically big book. Big book is recommended to use due to its benefits. In addition to its attractive shape, this medium also can make the students focus on the content. The students can read it by themselves, or the teacher read it aloud in front of the students. In this session, before the teachers tried to make their own big book and apply it to their students, there was a teaching simulation of university students to give illustration on how to use big book in the class. It is significant to share since it can be the solution for overcoming boredom to conduct 15 minutes reading before learning lesson.

According to *Panduan Gerakan Literasi Sekolah di Sekolah Dasar, Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (2016)*, big book is literacy media for reading aloud activity. There are some guidelines to do this activity.

- Before reading aloud, the teacher should:

- a) greet the students and give explanation why the big book is selected.
- b) show the cover of big book and give brief summary.
- c) tell the title, author, and big book illustrator.
- d) explore the students' experience in reading book, by asking: have you ever read this book? Do you have this book? Anybody can tell the content of this big book?
- e) start tracking the illustration.
- f) read the big book in front of the students interestingly.
- During reading aloud, the students should:
 - a) give clear voice, intonation (not too fast or slow), expression, and suitable gesture.
 - b) be friendly.
 - c) respond the students' comment and question.
 - d) ask the students to focus.
 - e) share information and discuss during reading the book.
 - f) encourage the students to ask.
 - g) encourage students to retell the story briefly.

Besides, to have big book, teachers do not have to buy it in book store with costly budget. It can be designed and created based on the students' need. During the accomplishment in creating big book, the teacher can make their own material and ask the students' contribution in finishing and beautifying the big book. This activity can be conducted anytime, and the result can be used in longer time. The teacher also can build good communication with the students. Another positive thing is that the students' sense of belonging is stronger; consequently, they will try to maintain what they have produced in the class.

In the following agenda, the speaker discussed the concept of reading corner. In the application, reading corner has several names, namely *sudut baca*, *pojok baca*, *taman baca*, *pos baca*, and so forth. Furthermore, the shapes of reading corner are various. Different materials are used by the school to make comfortable and interesting spot to store and enjoy the literacy source. The point of preparing reading corner is that to facilitate the

students to spend their time accessing and using literacy in that area. This is actually related to classroom design. Thomsen (2014) states that in designing classroom for elementary students should provide maximal opportunities for quality learning. There are three things that need attention: “furniture arrangement, the opportunities activities centers bring, and the importance of a literature center.” To fulfill it, the role of reading corner is not only to realize the literature center for the students, but also build scientific literacy activities as well as support the look of the classroom.

Creating Big Book Activity

The last activity is the practice of creating big book. The committee had prepared the materials such as pictures, scissors, glue, colorful paper, and so on before they audience start making big book. There some some characteristics of big book that need to be considered by the teacher. Here are the main points:

- Consist of short story (10-15 pages)
- Has one main understandable story idea

- Clear sentence structure
- Meaningful big and visible pictures
- Clear font type and size
- Used for : Pre-school, kindergarten, elementary school

(Source : Panduan Gerakan Literasi Sekolah di Sekolah Dasar, Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2016)

There were several topics to choose. One school selected “Transportation” and the other one is “Occupation.” Based on the topic selected, the teachers expressed their ability in composing English text and creativity in decorating the big book performance. When composing the text the teachers carefully construct the content by considering the level of students’ cognitive. In this case, the teachers taught upper class so the texts created is simple sentences. One of the groups also provided vocabulary boxes to give some clues stated in the text. If the students do not understand certain word, they can open the box to get the meaning of the word. The activity took around

two hours until the head of training closed the session.

Monitoring Reading Corner and Book Charity

The last activity conducted a week later after the socialization and literacy training was over is monitoring reading corner provided in the selected schools and book charity. It is a concern of this program to give positive contribution not only in the form of sharing information, but also providing English literacy source to give students more English exposure so that it can be inserted into *GLS* activity to enrich the students literacy experience.

At that time, having arrived in the spot, the school gave warm welcome to the authors visit. They showed the reading corner in one of the classes which was fulfilled by some reading texts with clean and quite comfortable area for reading. Then the writers gave some books for reference variation in term of short stories and educative comics which are very popular reading source, but the school had not had it yet at that time.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

To sum up, the implementation of *GLS* needs to be supported from all parties to enhance human resource quality by encouraging Indonesian young generation to love literacy activities started from reading. It is necessary to start from the school especially teacher who directly communicate with the students in the class. Doing literacy activities will reflect how much information someone has achieved from reading. Therefore, the role of teacher plays significantly to facilitate students' access in getting information as much as possible. Next, to build literate atmosphere, the schools in any level of education are expected to provide comfortable reading corner, then the teachers together with the students maintain its existence by providing a lot of relevant references, reading and using the available things, and building good communication wheather with other students or the teacher to achieve meaningful activities with English skills.

It is undeniable that people live in digital era nowadays;

therefore, for future researchers, it is recommended to conduct further and deeper study to the implementation of *GLS* program in different scope in term of literacy source from mobile device. Plenty of researchers believe that mobile application can be used as an educational tool in teaching English (Cavus & Ibrahim, 2017). What about in *GLS* program? Is it good to apply? And how to do it? To answer these questions, more investigation needs to be studied.

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