

# Basic literacy in indonesia education essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Literacy - the ability to read and write -. has an important role in any aspects of life, either in dealing with personal and social life. Basic literacy has become a great concern of global and national education goals. As Article 1 of The World Declaration on Education for All (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990 as cited in Singh, 2003: 1) reaffirmed the global community's commitment to provide an education where:

“ Every person - child, youth, adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should meet be varies with individual countries and culture & and inevitably, changes with the passage time”

In Indonesia itself, literacy has become a great concern in educational goal. It is stated in Government Policy about Curriculum Based Competence (CBC), the main goals of basic education that held in Sekolah Dasar (SD) or Madrasah Jbtidaiyah ' MJ) are to develop children's basic ability in reading, writing and counting, to develop their competence in solving problems and also to develop logical, critical, and creative thinking. In line with this. CBC considers three main principles that should be developed in teaching-learning process, such as,

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developing life-skills, concerning life-long education, and putting learners as the central of education.

Literacy in this research refers to the basic literacy as mentioned in Curriculum 2002 that is the ability to read, write and count. While for the particular purpose of this study literacy is defined as the ability of the students to develop their reading and writing skills in regards to the life skills development, by putting them as the active participant of the education with the principle of life long education. In this case, life long education refers to the students' awareness in developing their ability through learning by themselves whether in or out of the classroom.

Some scholars have proposed their interpretations about literacy. Goddard (1974) stated that literacy is not merely the ability of reading and writing but also involving their intellectual and emotional quotient. This view also supported by Hudelson (1994: 129-130) who stated that a literate child is the one who is not only able to read and write but is also able to select what to read as well as aware of the reason to communicate his ideas in written. In line to this, Pellegrini and Galda (1998) defined literacy as the ability to communicate through and about print.

The importance of literacy development has been a great concern of educational goal all over the world. In Australia particularly in Victoria, literacy education is implemented in accordance to the "Early Years Literacy Program". This program is based on the principle that effective teaching and

learning in the classroom have an important role in the process of Literacy education (Raban and

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Essex, 2002: 221 as cited by Cahyono, 2003: 223). The “ Early Years Literacy Program” has been considered a great success (Raban and Essex, 2002: 228 in Cahyono, 2003: 223). It has affected the way children learn literacy in their early years at schools (Cahyono, 2003: 223). The program applied “ two-hour literacy block” in primary schools as the key element. The two hours were allocated daily for structured literacy teaching, such as exposing students with reading and writing activities. Students were involved to read various kinds of reading materials related to children’s needs at the same time they were imposed to write their concrete experience in diaries writing.

Literacy is not only the concern of formal institution such as schools but also informal institutions’ of education such as local organizations. In Nigeria, informal institution initiated to support literacy through language program by making relevant and interesting reading materials accessible to community members come from local organization. Onukaogti (1999 as cited by Singh, 2003: 4) shared that Nigerian grassroots initiative in which reading clubs were conducted by a local organization called The Centre of Excellence for Literacy and Literacy Education (CELLE). It was aimed at not only to foster language skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, but to provide opportunities for critical thinking, questioning, and building self-esteem through group-based reading-writing activities.

Literacy in Indonesia has also become an important role in educational

goal. Based on Kurikulum Miiatan La/cal Sekolah Dasar/Madnisah fbtidaiyah Provinsi ibukota Jakana (2006). English teaching-learning process held

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on primary school is intended to develop students' English skill in order to be able to communicate for certain literacy level. In this case, the literacy is in performative level. According to Wells (1987) in the performative level, one is able to read, write, listen, and speak through the symbols which she/he has kunwu. The literacy level fr this study, define the ability of students to use English to develop their academic skills such as to read learning materials, to express their ideas in simple written English, and to pertbnn simple oral communication ' with the English teacher and their peers, to develop self- awareness through English for daily concerns such as awareness to read public notices, food and beverage labels, medical labels, and to entertain themselves through English like singing a song, listening to stories, and other enjoyable children activities. A primary school student is assumed to be literate when she or he is able to do such activities with simple English School through their curriculum can facilitate students to accomplish such ability by maximizing the teachers' role, providing meaningful learning materials and learning activities. In addition, any learning effort is meant to enhance the students' independence in order to support. their basic literac development.

In spite of the importance need to develop basic literacy through formal education, there has not been enough number of studies concern on it. Nunan (1989: 152) explained that idealized curriculum process is for learners

to be grouped according to some common criterion or need', and lbr teacher negotiate content, materials and methodology with the learner. In other words, teachers should know the needs and interests of the students. If the teachers want to create

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learning experience based on the students' need and interest, they should adjust the content of the lesson, the materials and the methodology with the students' need and interest. In line to this idea, Hudelson (1994: 256-7 as cited by Madya, 2004: 202) stated that children not only learn through hands-on-experiences but also experience which enable them to interact with and learn from other people. Learning through hands-on-experiences can be one way out from what Nunan had been suggested in creating the idealized curriculum process.

The point of teaching-learning here is based on what the children have experienced with the language, not on what they have known about the language. The learning experiences should be based on the children's needs and interest. Scarino (1994) in Teaching implication of the Eight Principles of Language Learning stated that learners learn a language best when they are exposed to sociocultural data direct experience of the culture(s) embedded with the target language. Further, she explained that learners learn a language best when they are treated as individuals with their own needs and interests. For example, the students are asked to make a chores table based on their daily chores, they are asked to tell stories about their personal experience, etc.

Studies on English at the primary school level students were done more related with students' learning activities preference (Siska Rizkiani, 2006) and their attitudes through learning experiences (Eudah Asika Dewi, 2006). Most of the studies were conducted by survey. The result from the studies showed that most of the students (77.76%) preferred learning activities by reading storybooks and doing activities in group. This implied that students prefer to have enjoyable

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language learning experiences to learn about the language. They tended to have very positive attitude toward English, means that in spite of English is a new subject for them and many shortcomings in conducting the English class, yet the students like this subject very much. Mother study conducted by Efrmni (2004) showed That students' attitude towards English were positive, the most influencing factors to the students' attitude was the learning materials employed in the class, the teacher, and the students' motivation. It means that interesting experiences as result of the learning materials used in the teaching-learning activity give most impression to students as the young learner of English as a foreign language. The last a study conducted by Yushadi Taufik (2007) described about students' organizational skills in writing through graphic organizer. The resdt showed that through graphic organizer students' writing organization (focus on main idea) was improved. In this study, the students were exposed with activities to express ideas through brainstonning, using graphic organizers as ge-writing activities.

Efforts from the English teachers to enhance basic literacy development haven't been optimum either. Alwasilah (2000), noted that most of primary-school teachers in Indonesia teach elementary-school students like they teach adult; students are more exposed on the language aspects such as grammar, meaning, structures, etc. Little touch was given to the need and curiosity of students as young learners.

Further, Alwasilah (2000) reminded that the role of learning experiences and learning materials are prominent in developing student's basic literacy, It should be noted that students between 11-12 years old have an optimum ability to

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acquire foreign language through language exposure. The language exposure itself can be given through learning experiences and learning materials. Moreover, it also stated by Cahyono (2004) that various learning activities, teachers' encouragement can support one's basic literacy development. Therefore, this has given more support to conduct a study that portrays the learning experiences that might happen in the Indonesian educational context particularly in primary-school level.

This study is beneficial to be conducted in terms of gaining the factual information about the English class in the primary school level especially, to portray the English learning experiences that the students are involved. The records on primary school English teaching and learning showed that there has not been a significant support yet to the basic literacy development as the prime goal of teaching English in this level. It is assumed that most of



piiniaxy-schools students were improperly exposed with English learning experience.

## B. Problem identification and research questions

Previous studies have shown that learning experiences has an important role in supporting students' basic literacy development (Raban and Essex, 2002: 221 as cited by Cahyono, 2003: 223, Onukaogu 1999 as cited by Singh, 2003-4). Since experience has an important role in supporting students' basic literacy, it is necessary to be examined whether the students are engaged sufficiently with the respective learning experience or not.

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The problem identified in this study is the role of English learning experiences in supporting students' basic literacy development. The research questions of this study are:

- How much the students are exposed with the learning experiences during English teaching-learning process?
- What kinds of learning experiences that students are engaged in?
- To what extend do the experiences support the basic literacy development?

## C. Definition of terms

Basic literacy in this study is the students' ability to read and write and also to have self-awareness in using English to flulfill their needs as primaivy schools students such as to perfonn the school assignments, to expand their

general knowledge and to entertain themselves. Basic literacy here is in the context of school-based literacy.

Supporting the development in this case means giving more portions to students to be engaged with language activities during the English teaching-learning process in order to make them have more experiences with English. Having more experiences with English means that the students are getting more and more involved with English in daily class activities in order to develop their basic literacy - ability to read and write and have self awareness - in relation to the life skills development as stated on CBC 2002. It can be facilitated through activities in which they interact with teacher such as: greeting, answering

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questions, asking questions, suggesting and doing class assignment and interact with peers such as; conducting class assignments, making joke, having a chat, and also for other purposes such as; selecting class activities, finding extra learning materials, and entertaining them selves such as: singing English songs, read English magazines, commercials, and so forth.

English learning exoeriences in this study is defined as the students' experiences with English as the result of learning activities carried out. Among of the experiences are responding to the English teacher's classroom language, using verbal expression to interact with their peers, and entertaining themselves with English.

ft. Scope of the study

The study focuses on the learning experiences which are employed to support students' basic literacy development in the respective case.

### **E. Significance of the study**

The study is mainly to portray an empirical data on the kinds of learning experiences employed during the teaching and learning process and to see whether they support the development of students' basic literacy. Result of this study will share a thick description on what has been going on in the English class in the primary school level. The findings can be contributed as current information for teachers in primary school level about teaching English as foreign language in Indonesian context.

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## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter will discuss some scholars' ideas and opinions; and some related issues on English teaching-learning process, the importance of learning experiences and basic Literacy development. This part will also present the conceptual frameworks as the basic thought in this study.

### **A. Issues on Teaching English as Foreign Language for Young Learners**

Since 1994, English in primary school started to be taught. It is an optional subject. It is meant to overcome the problems faced by the students in secondary level. Due to the fact that the result of teaching-learning in junior or senior high is not satisfactory (Sadtono, 1997 quoted in Renandya in

Rachmajanti, 2003), therefore, the government made a policy about giving English subject in primary level. It can be seen that government have a high expectations on English subject. These expectations are affirmed in the National Standard of Jakarta's Local Subject, 2006 (Standar Isi Kurikulum Muatan Lokal Provinsi DKI Jakarta, 2006). The aim of giving English in primary-school level are developing basic communicative competence in school context with emphasize on oral ability, especially language accompany with action and developing students' language- awareness in the context of global community.

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It means that the target of learning English in primary school is to develop a basic literacy, which is the ability to communicate through and about the print as stated in the introduction of the national standard, especially in the objective;

In order to achieve the educational goal stipulated in the curriculum, the students need optimum language exposure, especially in school context. The language exposure itself can be initiated through the teacher's role, students experience in class, and materials. The examples of some language exposure in school context are: good morning, how are you, hello, yes, no, what, understand; some expressions used by teachers and students in class; the teacher's instructions and commands; some expressions used by students with their peers; and others (ok, sorry, by the way, etc). These exposures are not only given to be heard by students but also read, written,

and said. It is aimed to familiarize students with the English expressions and to sharpen their language awareness. This awareness in English is not enough for competing in the global society as mentioned before, but the students should use their awareness in order to improve and increase their self-confidence when they read, write, listen and speak (express their ideas orally). Automatically, they will have enough confidence to deal with English.

This study will focus on the language experiences that students have during the English teaching-learning. The development of students' basic literacy and awareness in English can occur when the students experience language exposure. As states by Alwasilah (2000: 88), that it should be understood that children (11-12 years old) have a high ability to master a language through language exposure. It is the responsibility of the teacher to give the students

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chances to experience the language with the maximum exposure, such as in classroom activities or on extra assignment that the teacher gives. It is supported by Agustien (2002: 5) who states that in a foreign language context, children as well as teachers do not have access to those day-to-day expressions that can be heard everywhere in English speaking countries; all of them need to be 'taught' and carefully introduced by teachers step by step. It means that language exposure is highly needed to be given in which they can meet the needs of socializing and doing the 'here and now' business with their peers.

However, Alwasilah (2000: 90) also states that students learn faster when

they are motivated to learn. In order to motivate them, students should be engaged with activities, such as follows:

a. Learning activities should be fun and interesting

ii Students can be seen flint result of study (for instance, with showing their work on the bulletin board)

c Engage students through activities that related to their world (ie considering their interest, experiences, background and social enviromnent)

While Pellegrini and Galda (1998: 167) discuss that:

First, we discuss the ways in which joint book reading can be used as a way in which children learn the vocabulary and behaviors associated with school-based literac. We also presented ways in which peers can be helpful in teaching literar . Unlike many extant models of peer teaching we suggest that the children's close relationship with peers may maximize learning.

Rather than separating friends during instructional periods, as some teachers may be tempted to do, we suggest that childien should be placed with their friends and encouraged, not discouraged, to interact.

It is obvious that tim learning activities, students' involvement during the English learning activities, students' close relationship which help them interact with their teachers and peers, support their basic literacy development.

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As a matter of fact, in Indonesia the English teaching-learning process has not facilitated the developnieitt of students' literacy yet. According Madya et. al (2004: 194) instead of teaching English through joyful activities, the teachers as observed by Bambang Sugeng (2000), Husna (1998), Hanie (1997), Nafsiah Indarwati (2001), and Suyati (2002) taught grammar too much, used translation without any context, and gave students too much tiring work.

In addition, Alwasilah (2000: 80) argues that teachers in primary-school level tend to teach the children like they teach adult. On the contrary, children and adults are different; therefore, teaching students in primary school is different from teaching adults. It is supported by Hanner (2002: 38) who states the characteristics of young learners in learning, they are:

a Students respond to meaning even if they do not understand individual words.

b. They often learn indirectly rather than directly - that is they take in information from all sides, learning from everything around them rather than only focusing on the precise topic they are being taught

c. Their understanding comes not just from explanation, but also from what they see and hear ami crucially have a chance to touch and interact with.

d. They generally display an enthusiasm for learning and a curioslty about the world around them.

e. They have a need for individual attention and approval from the teacher.

f They are keen to talk about themselves, and respond well to learning that uses themselves and their own lives as main topics

### **in the classroom.**

g They have a limited attention span, unless activities are extremely engaging they can easily get bored

At this level, students should be provided by a rich diet of learning experiences which encourages them to get information from a variety of sources. Students need to work individually and in groups in order to develop a good relationship.

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However, it is also exposed by Snyanto and Chodijah (2002) that in reality, there have been many schools adapting English as local content in their curriculum regardless of the resources (that they have). Many schools, because of their limited resources, just appoint one of the teachers who seem to like English, use some proper materials and rely on the assessment on the test from Kanwil,

From the explanation above, it can be seen that language exposure that might the students have during the teaching-learning process is minimum and the students have not been engaged in teaching-learning process yet. While according to Alwasilah (2000), Hudelson (1994), and Pellegrini and Zaida (1998), to promote the development of children basic literacy, they



should be given the language exposure through learning activities that they have in or out of the classroom.

Nevertheless, English in primary-school level got positive responses from the society, whether the schools, students, or parents. It can be seen from the eagerness of school in providing English as their local content. As stated in Suyanto and Chodijah (2002) that many schools in Indonesia start teaching English to their students even from the first grade. A survey that conducted by Suyanto (2001 as cited on Suyanto and Chadijah. 2002 : 5) in ten provinces showed that students who are attending English classes have positive attitudes towards the lesson, 61. 7% students have learned English in the primary school. most of them stated that they like studying English (87. 6%) although many of them (62. 9) have difficulty. Rachrnaianti (1998) also exposed the similar phenomena that the response of English is very positive, it can be seen from the

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courses that spread everywhere and the implementation of giving English in many primary schools.

Above of all, the policy of giving English subject started from primary school level got positive response whether from the students, schools, and parents. But, the matter is whether the English teaching-learning process have provide students with enough exposure since the English subject is a subject in primary- school, which can develop students' basic literacy.

## **B. Related Researches on Basic Literacy Development**

Basic literacy has been a great concern of the entire world. Some studies have been done related to basic literacy. Christie and Misson (1998: 15) in their book titled *Framing Issues in Literacy Education* explain about young children 'entering literate world' they expose various aspects of early literacy learning. Literacy development started by decoding symbols like pictures thus the students start to develop their literacy by speaking and using metalanguage in which they get from the book. Here, they start to use metalanguage, they first should get the meaning from the text.

In Hawkins' article entitled *Becoming a Student: Identity Work and Academic Literacies in Early Schooling* (2005: 59), argues that the ability to engage successfully with academic literacies was distinct from their ability to engage successfully in social interactions. The language and literacy development was not necessarily determined by economic and cultural capital nor by their social status within the classroom.

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### **However, Hudelson (1994: 151) in her journal entitled Literacy**

Development for Second Language Children states that:

the literacy practices such as; the utilization of dialogue journals, the creation of personal narratives, the focus on collaborative work in the study of important content, the practice of reading aloud from the wealth of children's literature, the utilization of predictable books, reflect children's

language and literacy development. These practices have several common characteristic:

& they make learners active participant in their own learning

b. they give learners opportunities to use oral and written language for a variety purposes

c. they promote interaction with others as central to learning

d. they involve learners in taking risks and being supported in their risk taking by adults and peers who respond to their efforts

e. they necessitate the organization of learner-centered language- rich environments that are both linguistically stimulating and

intellectually challenging and rigorous places for children to spend

### **their time.**

While Pellegrini and Galda (1998: ) in their book entitled *The Development of School-Based Literacy: A Social Ecological Perspective*, a case study was conducted on Betty Shockle's class for about two years, concludes that:

Recognition of the fact that school-based literacy and literate language are both language variants which are not better or worse than other variants but having access to them also provides access to power, resources and increased probability of success in school. Joint book reading can be used as a way in which children learn the vocabulary and behaviors associated with school-based literacy. Peers can be helpful in teaching literacy. The children's close relationships with peers may maximize learning. Rather than

separating trends during instructional periods, as some teachers tempted to do, we suggest that children should be placed with their friends and encouraged, not discouraged, to interact,

In addition. Cahono (2003: 236) in his journal entitled *Air/a and Her Mainstream Classroom: A Case Study of a Young English Language Learner's Literacy Development* concludes that the classroom environment and the variety of literacy learning activities (e. g. reading, hook-reading, home-reading, reading

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and summarizing, handwriting; spelling exercises, story writing, diary writing, etc) have been supported on English literacy learning. In addition, the teacher's encouragement was also supported in literacy learning. Case study was employed for nine-months on Aida, a young English language learner from Indonesia, who was mainstreamed in a Grade 2 classroom in a primary school in the south-eastern part of Australia.

From Hudelson, Pellegrini and Galda, and Cahyono's suggestion conclude that students' basic literacy development can be facilitated by giving them various

activities related to their interest and world, engaging them in activities, getting them into close relationship with their peers, and teachers' encouragement.

The target of students' basic literacy in this study is students' ability to develop their reading and writing skills in regards to the life skills development by putting them as the active participant of the education with the principle of life long education. In this case, life long education refers to the students' awareness in developing their ability - to read and write - through learning by themselves whether in or out of the classroom. This can be supported through English teaching learning process.

In terms of supporting basic literacy, English teaching learning process should be involved the students in academically literate activity and socially literate activity. Academically literate activity here such as: read learning materials, express their ideas in simple written English, and perform simple oral communication with the English teacher and their peers. While socially literate activity here means, such as: read public notices, food and beverage labels,

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commercials, sing English songs, listen to English story and other enjoyable children activity.

This conceptual framework will lead the writer in treating the study in data collection. The focus of the study is the learning experiences which are employed to support students' basic literacy development in the respective case. The data collection would be mainly to portray whether the learning experiences that took place in real classroom process have supported the students' basic literacy.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes how this study is carried out. It covers the material and subject of the study, the design of the study, the instrument of the study, data collection method, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

#### **A. Unit of Analysis**

##### **A1 Material**

The material of the study is all the experiences that students get with English in terms of interacting with teachers such as: greeting, answering questions, asking questions, suggesting and doing class assignment, interacting with peers such as: conduct class assignments, joke, have a chat, etc and other purposes such as: selecting class activities, finding extra learning materials, and entertaining themselves.

##### **A. 2 Subject**

Fourth and fifth grade of primary-school students in SD Negeri Tegai Lega 1 and 2, Bogor who have been involved in English for six and eight semesters. This selected subject is based on the assumption that students have a great desire in learning English though with all the minimum facilities and improper learning experience. They were observed, interviewed and given questionnaires in relation to data verification.

Both material and subject had been being studied since April 2007.

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## B. Design of the Study

The study will be conducted by a case study in order to investigate learning experiences happen during English teaching-learning process in the classroom.

## C. Methods of Data Collection

There are three kinds of instruments that employed in data collection of this study. They include observation as the main data collection, interview and questionnaire.

### **a. Observation**

To get the detail, accurate and deep information on language teaching and learning process, classroom observ