

## **Literacy Learning Based On Mother Tongue in Isolated Tribe**

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**Abstract :** *Attempting to provide educational services to all illiterate citizens regardless of their status and life background has become a commitment and a duty to all of us. Literacy learning as one of the non-formal education programs is expected to be a program capable of freeing illiteracy. However, in some locations including isolated tribe have not fully obtain adequate education services. This research was conducted to reveal whether literacy learning based on mother tongue can accelerate illiteracy eradication in isolated tribe in Bone Regency. The research subjects were the adult women of Bajo's citizens who live in coastal area of Bone Regency. Literacy learning based on mother tongue was tested in two study groups (experimental group and control group). The result of data analysis proves that the literacy learning based on mother tongue supported by literacy materials which is arranged related to their learning habit is one alternative of effective learning model to eradicate illiteracy on isolated tribe in Bone Regency.*

**Keywords:** *Literacy, Mother Tongue, Isolated Tribe*

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Date of Submission: 17-03-2018

Date of acceptance: 02-03-2018

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### **I. Introduction**

Education is a fundamental human right, because every person in his life journey needs an education service so that his potential can grow according to his age and personality level. But in many areas, there are still found citizens with illiteracy. They are the main obstacles for individuals to access information and develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. As a result, they are not able to adapt and cannot rise from the compulsion of ignorance, poverty, and deterioration in their life.

Generally, a person experiencing illiteracy due to structural factors and non-structural factors (Kusnadi, ddk, 2005). The structural factor is meant that one's illiteracy caused by environmental and cultural factors, such as isolated tribes that live in isolated environments, as well as non-future-oriented cultures. Many isolated tribes live in remote areas, mountains, remote islands and in the middle of forests that are difficult to reach by transportation and literacy events, both from government and private institutions. They are illiterate due to the environmental structure that does not allow education service programs and other social programs to reach them. As a result, the level of illiteracy in such society will increase from year to year.

In addition to structural factors, non-structural factors also come into the cause of someone to be illiterate. The factors are closely related to poverty as found in marginal groups who always grapple for a living throughout their lives, without having the opportunity to follow literacy programs.

It is a worldwide reality that illiterates generally live in poverty, ignorance, and backwardness (UNESCO, 1980). Such society is usually found with shallow knowledge and understanding, also not comprehend the conditions in a modern life order. Therefore, every citizen needs to have functional literacy skills that enable a person to continually develop his knowledge, skills, and attitudes so as to adapt and survive in an ever-changing, uncertain and competitive situation.

Literacy learning is directed to improve the intelligence level of citizens and provide facilities to achieve quality improvement, standard of living, and empowerment (Archer and Cattingham, 1996). The concept of literacy learning should have the following approaches: (1) emphasizing writing rather than passive reading of existing texts; (2) emphasizing the active and creative involvement of learners; (3) building knowledge, experience, and pay attention to learners' oral traditions, and other literacy; (4) ensuring that the learning process is responsive and relevant to the social context; and (5) the place of learning would be better if they learn in an open environment rather than in classroom.

Literacy learning should be viewed as a decentralized process of citizens empowerment. Implications of decentralized education policies in community-based education, place-based education, become as learning models that are designed, coordinated, and implemented through increased participation and involvement of citizens in the context of individual's behavior development and changing as the learners along with the improvement of life quality in the learning process.

By the increasing and diverse demands of citizens, the autonomous, community-centered, and "decentralized" education model becomes as one of the most appropriate and sufficient alternatives for meeting the learning needs of citizens, including illiterates.

Since 2009, Indonesian government has provided literacy education programs, both basic literacy which are illiteracy eradication programs as well as independent literacy programs or other various literacy menus as the program of literacy nurturing and improvement. This is done because there is a tendency of new literates or adult citizens who have already attended literacy course program become illiterates again if their literacy skills are not used in a functional and sustainable manner.

The implementation of literacy learning this far has been able to meet the results because it has succeeded in reducing illiteracy rate. Even so, less successful in various literacy learning programs are found caused by several factors, such as the lack of teaching tutoring skills and non-discipline learners.

The research results by the NGOs in cooperation with the Directorate General of PAUDNI Kemdiknas (2010) found that out of the 3,048 outsiders of literacy education programs spread in South Sulawesi Province, there were 54% unfinished or illiterate, meaning that the outcomes of the program had to be repeated in next year. This is very worrying because illiteracy eradication program through annual literacy course program costs a lot with less satisfactory.

The results from related researches show that illiteracy eradication programs make people learn literacy using conventional models conducted by organizers and tutors in the field which lasted an average of eight months (M.Ali Latif, 2010). This takes time, less effective, and still far from expectations.

The successful of illiteracy eradication should be supported by various factors such as recruitments, learners' preparation, involvement of teachers/tutors, curriculum, facilities and infrastructure, a conducive learning environment, and assessment process. Learning motivation by the learners also determines the involvement and participation in literacy learning activities. One of the expected factors in order to stimulate the learners continues to learn is the local-based content of learning materials. Learners' attendance and high participation supported by the tutor's activeness in teaching can accelerate the material literacy mastery.

The acceleration of illiteracy eradication does not only use conventional learning models this far, but also use instructional materials in Bahasa (Indonesian language). It also needs to develop a model of learning literacy with materials that can be accepted by the isolated tribe. Education should be able to provide services that are easy, inexpensive, and able to accelerate citizens' understanding of the delivered materials. Literacy learning based on mother tongue emphasizes the material arrangement which is derived from the socio-cultural life of local people, using the local language/mother tongue combined with Bahasa. In addition, the main language used by tutors in teaching also is the local language/mother tongue.

Literacy learning based on mother tongue supported by learning materials that are composed related to the daily life of the citizens as the learners is one alternative of effective model for literacy learning on the isolated tribe such as Bajo tribe, while preserving the local language as a diversity and cultural richness of our nation.

Based on the description above, this research illustrates the characteristics of literacy learning based on mother tongue and proves the effectiveness of this learning model in accelerating the illiteracy eradication for the citizens in the isolated tribe.

The results of this research can be an input for policy makers and non-formal educational practitioners especially in learning literacy, in order to improve literacy learning services to be better. Also, it can accelerate the target achievement of illiteracy eradication with the enrichment of learning models variation that can be applied in serving the needs of illiterate citizens.

## **II. Research Methods**

This research is an experimental research with two groups, namely experimental group and control group, with the citizens as the research subjects divided into two groups (10 participants in the experimental group and 10 participants also in the control group). The experimental group contains citizens as the learners who are taught with conventional learning or without using mother tongue.

The location of the research was conducted in Bone Regency in South Sulawesi Province, considering that in the area there are still illiterate citizens from the isolated tribe (Bajo tribe) and they have different life characteristics than most people.

In order to obtain different types of data or information from various sources, several methods and instruments for data collection are used as follows: (1) basic literacy test; (2) recording in observation; and (3) documentation. Those three methods used to support and complement each other in obtaining the required data.

Specifically, the quantitative data which is obtained by conducting literacy competency test for learners in two study groups (experimental and control group) is processed and analyzed using analytical (inferential) technique to discover differences in literacy competency from the different groups at the end of the learning

program. It is also used to prove the hypothesis that literacy learning based on mother tongue can effectively eradicate illiteracy for citizens in the isolated tribe (Bajo tribe).

### **III. Results and Discussion**

Here are the following characteristics of literacy learning model based on mother tongue: (1) The illiterate citizens who are considered as the learners are they who live in adjacent residences (neighbors); recruited by predefined tutors; (2) Tutors as the educators of literacy learning appointed by the organizers/committee before learners recruitment, serve learning program according to their ability with no obligation only to 10 people, master the local language/mother tongue, and a native of Bajo tribe; (3) Learning are done in groups and individuals. In groups, tutors conduct learning in study groups, by doing learning simultaneously; while for individuals, tutors perform learning by visiting the learners/citizens at home; (4) Learning Curriculum of Literacy is developed based on standard competence of basic literacy which its indicators are determined by Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia; (5) Learning materials in literacy are developed from the daily life of Bajo tribe which uses local language/mother language combined with Bahasa.

Learning materials are made and developed from their language (Bajo tribe) with the intention that citizens will learn and understand easily, so do for tutors in teaching. Learning materials are not only accommodate words, sentences, language with their familiar surrounding, but also accommodate the standard symbols of numbers and letters; (6) Material Evaluation of literacy mastery is carried out by the appointed tutors and assessment team. The Assessment Team consists of organizers, tutors, and inspectors. The Level of Literacy Mastery of the learners is measured by their standard competence mastery in basic literacy. Evaluation is done during the learning process by the tutor and at the end of the learning program by the assessment team.

The characteristics shown in the learning based on mother tongue are parts of the application of community-based learning models. Community-based learning has several following measurements: (1) as an effort to improve the life quality, empowerment and solution of community problems and as a defending program from various forms of deprivation; (2) emphasizing on community involvement whether in planning, implementing and evaluating education programs, so that they have a high sense of belonging, concerning about citizens' needs and existence, also being responsible for the success of education programs in the environment.

The literacy learning characterized in the explanation of the research results indicates that the learning program is mostly carried out by bottom-up in order to meet the interests and learning needs of the citizens. Literacy materials based on the mother tongue are centered on issues, interests, and learning needs, which also developed from the atmosphere of life, work equipment, and the work products of local people.

To create a good literacy learning program that can motivate and empower the illiterate citizens as the targeted students, and in accordance with the needs and circumstances of each region, it is necessary to notice the principles by Kusnadi et al (2005) as follows: 1) Local context, in the sense that literacy learning is carried out by adapting situations and conditions in which the targeted learners are supported by the availability of local learning resources and learning facilities. Learning program applied for the citizens in isolated and traditional tribe, begins with the effort to educate people in the economic aspects so that they are able to perform the functions of providing production facilities, production of goods, and marketing the results.

For example, the citizens of Bajo tribe who live in coastal area with the main job as fishermen and earn a living in the sea, then they do learning activities such as identifying fishing equipments, selecting equipments for fishing, the introduction of marine species, cultivating marine products to increase plus value and its marketing. In the learning process with a discussion related to the main job of the citizens, it is constantly oriented in understanding the material of reading, writing, and numeracy. While learning from the elements related to the main job, it can also improve their literacy skills.

The ability to write and read letters, numbers, and sentences can be trained through learning about the types of marine species, the ability of numeracy (plus, minus, times, divide) can be informed or trained by calculating profit and loss and venture capital through learning the cultivation of marine products and its marketing; (2) Local design implies that in designing literacy learning programs related to the objectives, target groups, the number of learners studying in groups, learning materials, learning activities, time allocation, and place of meetings should be appropriate to the situation and condition of each study group in learning area; (3) Functional Learning Outcomes implies that the learning outcomes obtained by the learners/citizens should be utilized in everyday life. From the results of the learning process, they are expected to analyze and solve problems for improving the quality and standard of living. Dixon, et al, (1996) suggested several estimates of learning outcome functionalities, such as: (a) applying the ability to read for finding new information and ideas; (b) applying the writing skills to describe the experience, make a written plan, and fill in several application forms; (c) applying the numeracy skills to organize their finance and calculate related to daily life.

If we take a detail look, literacy learning based on mother tongue for the isolated tribe is included as one of the non-formal education programs in the empowerment of certain communities with cultural and life

characteristics that are different from other communities. The concept of empowering in non-formal education was developed by Kindervatter (1979) who considers empowerment as a process of giving strength and power in the form of education aimed at shaping the awareness, understanding and sensitivity of citizens to learn about social, economic, and political developments which leads to the ability in restoring and developing his position in society. Empowerment which is originally known at the micro-individual level has shifted and evolved toward the empowerment of groups and communities. This development is used as an action, movement, and strategy in addressing individual and group issues (Saraka, 2002).

There are eight characteristics of non-formal education as a process of empowerment, such as: (1) Learning in small groups; (2) Providing greater responsibility to the learners during the learning activities; (3) The group leadership is played by the learners; (4) Learning resources/tutors act as facilitators; (5) The process of learning activities takes place democratically; (6) The mutual principle and ways in achieving goals; (7) Using methods and learning techniques that can lead to confidence in learners; (8) Having ultimate aims to improve the social, economic, or political status of the learners/citizens in society (Kindervatter, 1979, Anwar, 2005).

Language is an effective communication tool if the language used can be understood by the user, in this case the speaker and the opponent speaker or author and reader. The local language which also called as mother tongue is a language used by certain communities in a region as a way to convey their ideas, opinions or desires, both in oral and written form. The isolated tribe (Bajo tribe) who live on the coastal area of Bone have their own language whereas the using of mother tongue in literacy learning becomes an important part, both in the preparation of literacy materials and in the materials presentation materials by the tutors in the study groups. The learning materials created and developed from the daily life of the community in the target area by using the local language/mother tongue combined with Bahasa is intended to make the citizens learn and understand easily, and to ease the tutors in teaching. Learning materials are not only accommodate words, sentences, language with their familiar surroundings, but also accommodate the standard symbols of numbers and letters. One of the teaching materials developed by the literacy educators in Bajo community, entitled "Introduction to Calistung", which in its contents include a description in the local language, accompanied by Indonesian translation, illustrated by colorful images related to marine products, fishing equipment, words in daily conversations, and the state in Bajo tribe's houses. This teaching material is equipped with instructions for teaching and learning.

The Effectiveness of Literacy Learning Based on Mother Tongue in eradicating illiteracy can be viewed in the following two ways: (1) Acceleration Mastery of reading, writing, and numeracy materials, recorded by three times or three assessing stages toward the learners. Each assessment was carried out at each 14 days of learning or 6 meetings between the learners and the tutors by conducting a recording (assessment) of learning outcomes in two groups (experimental and control group). In fact, the experimental group has significant progress in the mastery of reading, writing, and numeracy material. This means that literacy learning based on mother tongue can accelerate the illiteracy eradication in the isolated tribe (Bajo tribe) in Bone Regency; (2) Learning outcomes obtained by the learners at the end of the lesson: at the end of the third month since the beginning of literacy learning, it is found that the experimental group experienced higher learning outcomes than other literacy learning models. This means that the literacy learning based on mother tongue can accelerate the illiteracy eradication on the isolated tribe (Bajo tribe) in Bone District.

To determine the learning success of the learners, it is based on the assessment results conducted through assessment process and the final assessment of literacy learning program (Sudjana, 2005). The assessment process is also called as the assessment of learning progress which is aimed to discover the improvement or progress achieved by the learners from the materials that has been taught by the tutors. This assessment is intended to check and find out the mastery level of the materials achieved by the learners within a certain time by comparing the achievement of the lesson plans that have been made in the beginning of learning program. It is also intended as the prevention in detecting program deficiency to get immediate repairment as needed. The assessment process can be done with portfolio system and direct recording during the learning process.

In literacy learning program based on mother tongue, the assessment process is conducted in three stages which is intended to record the outcomes of learning progress and determine the mastery level of the literacy materials which has been previously explained by the tutors.

The final assessment is an overall assessment of the learning outcomes carried out at the end of literacy learning program which determines the level of literacy competency that the learners have achieved at the end of the learning program. The assessment of learning outcomes is an assessment of the overall competence or educational literacy material program that has been achieved by the learners/citizens. For the learners who meet the standards are declared as "completer". The assessment material of learning outcomes is referred to basic level of Literacy Standard Competence.

In the final assessment of literacy learning based on mother tongue, beside measuring the material mastery of literacy as a whole, it is also intended to determine and compare the mastery level of literacy from the two groups (experimental and control group) to make sure which group gain higher learning outcomes.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

Several conclusions that can be put forward: (1) Literacy learning based on mother tongue can accelerate the illiteracy eradication compared to other literacy learning models in the isolated tribe community (Bajo tribe) in Bone Regency; (2) The implemented model of literacy learning based on mother tongue model is characterized as follows: (a) The illiterate citizens who are considered as the learners are they who live in adjacent residences and recruited with certain identification by predefined tutors; (b) Tutors as the educators of literacy learning appointed by the organizers/committee before learners recruitment. Each tutor serves the learning program according to their ability in their adjacent residences; (c) Learning are done in groups and individuals. Methods and media are adjusted to the material taught and use the environmental resources of the learners; (d) Learning Curriculum of Literacy is developed based on standard competence of basic literacy issued by Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia; (e) Learning materials used in literacy program are developed from the daily life of Bajo tribe which uses local language/mother language combined with Bahasa; (f) Mastery Evaluation of literacy material is carried out by the appointed tutors and assessment team. Evaluation is done during the learning process by the tutors and at the end of the learning program by the assessment team.

Some suggestions to consider in this literacy learning based on mother tongue: (a) Organizers of literacy learning program that will serve isolated tribes such as Bajo tribe should consider their life characteristic; (b) The tutors assigned to teach illiterate citizens in reading, writing, and numeracy (calistung) should use mother tongue or local language alongside Bahasa (Indonesian language); (c) The implementation of literacy learning based on mother tongue can be implemented in the community, if supported by the involvement of all parties, including the learners or illiterate citizens.

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M Ali Latif " Literacy Learning Based On Mother Tongue in Isolated Tribe IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME) , vol. 8, no. 2, 2018, pp. 36-40.