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Promoting Non English Department Students' Reading Comprehension Through Adapting Topics of Local Culture and Potential

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Abstract: This research aimed to know whether local culture and potential can be adapted to be used as reading material for non-English department students and what is the result of the adapting teaching material towards the students' ability in English. To answer those questions, there are three steps done in this research. First, need analysis to collect information about students' need in learning English. It means that need analysis is a process for identification and defining instructional objective. Need analysis focuses on students' need which consists of topic of teaching material, language skills, problems on English teaching and learning. The data were collected through questionnaires to the students. Questioners were developed to elicit the data on students' learning needs. Second, after getting the data about students' need in learning English, topic based on local culture and potential were adapted and organized into teaching material. In organizing the adapted topics related to language skills which are found in need analysis. Third, action research is done to answer the second research question. Through the teaching and learning activity, in cycle I, the writer taught reading by conventional teaching. Next in the cycle 2, the writer taught the students by using topics on local culture and potential. After undertaking test in cycle I, students got score 65.33 and in cycle II they got 80.00. It meant that there was an improvement of the average score. In addition, students' competence in reading comprehension improved as well.

Keywords: reading comprehension, adapting topic, local culture and potential

English teachers often face many problems in teaching English for non- English Department students. The problems arise because non English department students are different with those students who majoring in English. The different such as learning objectives in every department, students' age because there are many students enter university directly after they graduate from senior high school but others students want to continue their diploma level to bachelor degree, number of students in class, and total of credit for English subject in each department. To overcome the problems English teachers undertake continuously to achieve the objective of teaching English in non-English department students.

Another problem is teaching material. Material for teaching English has a fundamental role in language learning. The way to design teaching materials, the content, the context, the source will influence students' learning process. Teaching material is necessary for learning language since it can motivate and change students' attitude in the classroom. The first problem with teaching material is that the material is too general not based on students' need and interest. The second problem is lack of students' involvement during teaching and learning process. The third problem is that teaching material diminishes students' activity in language skills.

One of the efforts to solve the problems is by adapting English teaching materials. The teaching material to be adapted is local culture and potential. The consideration in choosing local culture and its potential is that graduate students are expected to be able to communicate in English, understand textbooks written in English as well understand their local culture and potential, thus they are selected as English teaching material for non-English department students. English teacher integrates various language skills and language component in one selected topics. The teaching material are made in the

form of reading text since the objective of teaching English in non-English department students is in order that students can communicate in English and understand reading texts written in English.

According to Act of Republic Indonesian government No. 20/2003 on National Educational System, Indonesian government supports educational development based on regional potencies which is intended to form the students understanding of potential in the area where he lives. In Article 77 of Government Regulation No. 32/2013 regarding Amendment to Government Regulation No. 19/2005 on National Education Standard states that national content for each educational unit and local content for education unit based on local potential and uniqueness. It is supported by the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 81A/2013, the local culture should be integrated into learning at any subjects. Regarding to those regulations, Indonesian government support local content and its potential as teaching materials. It also supports by McKay (2000) states that the use of cultural content in classroom is for the supposition that will foster learner motivation.

Culture in this writing refers to local culture of West Nusa Tenggara Province. By understanding culture students can build character according to national education objective. In other words, English language learning should affect students' own cultural values and integrity in their English proficiency. Then, it is the role of teachers to manage and adapt teaching materials containing such cultural values in English language teaching. Besides cultural values as teaching materials, it is important to insert local potential in order that students understand and participate to cultivate them.

In spite of availability of English teaching material, teachers may produce their own teaching material or innovation in teaching material is needed. Innovation itself must be adjusted to students; sociocultural condition. One of the innovations in teaching learning material is adaption. Adaption relates to one of the material development values as combining the learning materials based on students characteristics as their language and culture (Schulman, 1987). It deals with the starting point to create materials by considering the students' condition. Some teachers may ask question why adapt teaching material is needed if everything they need is already in textbooks? The reason as McDonough (2013) highlights, depend on a whole range of factors operating in each teaching situation and one teacher's priorities may differ from another. Maley (2011), points out that due to individual differences amongst students and teachers factors, there will be never a perfect between the teaching material, the teachers and the students. Teachers' factors include: degree of language proficiency and confidence; previous personal learning experience as learner rather than as teachers; own personality; preferred teaching style and cultural background. Mishan and Timmins (2015), however, make a question if it is right to adapt material according to the teacher's own preference and insist that adaption must be driven by learners' needs instead of teachers' preferences, thus suitable teaching material should be selected. Adaption material is adjusted to the students' local condition. Hence, English teacher should match material by considering their students' condition such as students' competence in English, motivation, social, culture, profession, need and interest. The materials which can be adapted have to show students' creativity to study in order to increase their language skills. As stated by Tomlinson (2007) that teaching materials should motivate students to develop their learning skills and apply the skills outside the class. In addition, Masuhara (2004) points out that adaption involve changing existing materials in some forms so that they become suitable for specific purposes, students, teachers or situation. It meant that teachers have to create a strategy to adapt material to the specific learning context. It shows that there is a close relationship between adapted materials to the students' condition to improve their language skills.

Method

The present research was carried out in Nusa Tenggara Barat University and there were 72 non English department students taken as subjects. The students were chosen as subject of the research

because based on the preliminary observation they were considered to have crucial problems of reading comprehension.

This research aimed to know whether local culture and potential can be adapted to be used as reading material for non-English department students and what is the result of the adapting teaching material towards the students' ability in English. This research developed the quality of teaching and learning English due to the problem faced by the non English department students of Nusa Tenggara Barat University in their reading comprehension. Thus, this research is designed to improve the students' reading comprehension utilizing local culture and local potential as reading material. The materials are attempted to help the students' problem in reading skill which appears as their major problem in their learning process.

This research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). Before applying CAR, need analysis is done. Need analysis is intended to collect information about students' need as need analysis (Richard: 2001). In addition Hutchinson and Waters (1987) states that need analysis is a device to know the students' necessities, needs, and lack in order to develop courses that have a plausible content for development in the classroom. It means that need analysis is a process for identification and defining instructional objective. The instructional objective facilitates learning in an environment that is closely related to the real life situation of the students. This research focuses on students' need which consists of topic of teaching material, language skills, problems on English teaching and learning. The data were collected through questionnaires to the students. Questioners were developed to elicit the data on students' learning needs.

Considering that the second objective of this research aimed to know the result of adapted topic of local culture and potential toward students' ability in reading comprehension. For the objective, the classroom action research is applied. Classroom Action Research is a form of reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in a social (including education) situation in order to improve the rationality and justice of a) social or educational practices, b) their understanding of these practices and c) the situations in which practices were carried out (Kemmis, 1992). According to Burns (2010) action research can be a very valuable way to extend our teaching skills and gain more understanding of ourselves as teachers and our students. Creswell (2008) states that action research designs are systematic procedure done by teachers (or other individual in educational setting) to gather information about and subsequently improve, the ways their particular educational setting operates, their teaching and their students' learning.

Each step in Classroom Action Research was conducted in order to develop students' reading comprehension by using local culture and local potential as adapted topics. The action research itself included four steps consisted of planning, action, observation and reflection.

Students' ability in reading comprehension is known through preliminary study in their midterm score. The result of preliminary study showed that 1) students were lack of vocabulary that made them unable to understand what they read; 2) most of them were not confidence to answer questions related to reading text and 3) students still confuse in getting the idea of the reading text.

Cycle 1 is done after preliminary study consisted of planning, action, observation and reflection. In planning, the writer prepared lesson plan, instrument, teaching material, students' worksheet dealing with the teaching reading by adapting local culture and local potential. In action step, the writer continued by teaching the students reading comprehension of English texts without using topics on local culture and potential (conventionally). In observation step, the writer collected numerical and verbal data. Numerical data were gained from the students' reading comprehension scores. Meanwhile, the students' attitude during the implementation of teaching reading comprehension of English texts without using topics on local culture and potential as verbal data. In reflection, the writer noted all

weaknesses as the problem during undertaking teaching and learning process in cycle 1. All of the problems in cycle I were recorded and as indicators to be upgraded in cycle 2.

The step in cycle 2 was started by planning. In this step the writer prepared revised lesson plan teaching material, students' worksheet dealing with the teaching reading by adapting local culture and local potential. In the action step the writer taught the students reading comprehension using topics related to local culture and potential and gave them test. In observation step, the writer collected the data occurred during the implementation of teaching reading by adapting topics local culture and potential. In reflection step, the writer noted all improvements made by the students.

Result and Discussion

The data were taken from questionnaire about students' need and the following was the results of the questionnaire.

Table 1. Preference on topic of teaching material

No	Topic in Teaching Material	Total	Percentage
1	Local potential	17	23.6
2	Daily activities	5	6.9
3	Local culture	35	48.6
4	Related to students' job	15	20.8
	Total	72	100

Table 2. Students' response about the advantage use of local culture and potential as teaching material

No	Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	Local culture and potential allow me to interact easily with classmate and teacher through discussion because easy to understand	47 (65.27%)	13 (10.05%)	12 (16.66%)
2	Local culture and potential is easy to understand because they are all around us	59 (81.94%)	10 (13.88%)	3 (4.16%)
3	Local culture and potential provide me to enrich vocabulary and easy to study grammar and language skills	40 (55.55%)	25 (34.72%)	7 (9.72%)
4	Learning activity on Local culture and potential motivate me to learn more about English	52 (72.22%)	15 (20.83%)	5 (6.94%)

Table 3. Preference on language skills

No	Language skills	Total	Percentage
1	Listening	10	13.9
2	Speaking	16	22.2

3	Reading	25	34.7
4	Writing	21	29.2

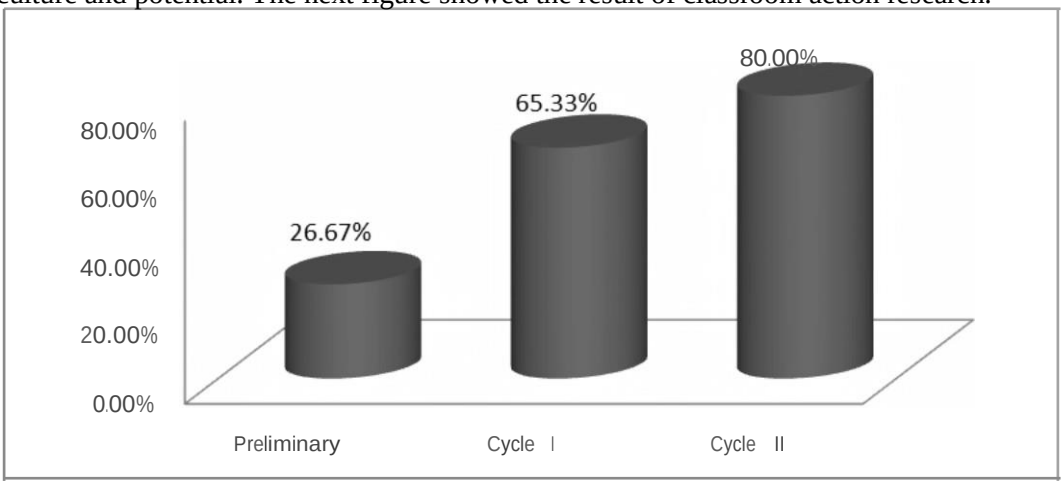
Table 4. Students' response on teaching and learning English

No	ELT problems	Percentage
1	English subject need to be taught more than 1 semester	57 (79.16%)
2	Grammar is the most difficult aspect	62 (86.11%)
3	More vocabulary need to be taught	53 (73.61%)
4	More practice in using English both in oral and written	45 (62.50%)

The result of questionnaire concerning topic in teaching material showed that students prefer topic about local culture and potential than others that stated in the table. They mentioned why they prefer the topic is because local culture and potential allow them to interact easily with their classmate and teacher through discussion because easy to understand, they are all around them; local culture and potential provide them to enrich vocabulary and easy to study grammar and language skills; learning activity on local culture and potential motivate them to learn more about English.

For language skills, students prefer to study reading than other language skills, it is because teaching material is presented in reading text. Students difficult in learning English because grammar is difficult aspect for them and less of vocabulary given to students. Therefore students want English subject is given more than one semester and more practice in using English both in oral and written.

Regarding to the findings of cycle 1, the result of test (pre-test) showed that the students' reading comprehension competence was quite low. It is indicated by students' understanding showed 65.33%. The second test (post-test) showed students' competence in reading comprehension improved. It is proven by students' understanding was 80.00%. Based on the result of the test in cycle 2, it can be inferred that students' reading skill improved significantly after they taught by using adapted topic of local culture and potential. The next figure showed the result of classroom action research.



Conclusion

This research aimed to know whether local culture and potential can be adapted to be used as reading material for non-English department students and what is the result of the adapting teaching material towards the students' ability in English. It is found that students need local culture and local potential as reading material in teaching English. Those topics are easy to understand because they are around students' environment. Local culture and potential provide them to enrich vocabulary and easy to study grammar and language skills; learning activity on local culture and potential motivate them to learn more about English. It implies that local culture and potential can be adapted to promote non English department students. The topics can promote students' understanding in reading English texts.

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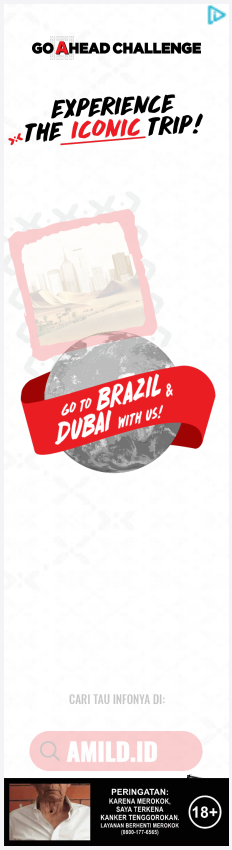

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