

AN ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN KECAMATAN PADANG UTARA

Welmita¹, AnFauziaRozaniSyafei², YuliTiarina³

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

State University of Padang

email: Welmita@rocketmail.com

Tujuan dari penulisan artikel ini adalah untuk menganalisa kegiatan kelas di sekolah dasar yang berada di Kecamatan Padang Utara dalam aspek: 1) kesesuaian antara aktivitas/kegiatan belajar bahasa Inggris dengan kurikulum (KTSP 2006). 2) kesesuaian antara aktivitas/kegiatan belajar bahasa Inggris dengan perkembangan kognitif anak, dan 3) kesesuaian aktivitas/kegiatan belajar bahasa Inggris dengan perkembangan sosio emosional anak. Data penelitian ini adalah aktivitas/kegiatan belajar bahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar. Sumber data penelitian ini adalah tujuh sekolah dasar negeri yang terdapat di Kecamatan Padang Utara. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan metode observasi langsung dengan menggunakan *checklist format*. Temuan penelitian yaitu 1) aktivitas/kegiatan belajar bahasa Inggris di Kecamatan Padang Utara sesuai/ relevan dengan KTSP, 2) aktivitas/kegiatan belajar bahasa Inggris di Kecamatan Padang Utara kurang relevan dengan perkembangan kognitif anak, dan 3) aktivitas/kegiatan belajar bahasa Inggris di Kecamatan Padang Utara kurang relevan dengan perkembangan sosio emosional anak.

Key words: Classroom Activities, KTSP (School based curriculum), Cognitive Development, Socio Emotional Development

A. Introduction

In the case of teaching English at elementary school, English is not a compulsory subject but it is as a local content. Teaching English at elementary school is not easy. There are some reasons why teaching English at elementary

¹Student of English Language Teaching Program of FBS UNP graduated on March 2013

²Advisor, Lecturer in Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Padang

³Co-Advisor, Lecturer in Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Padang

school is difficult. First, English is a foreign language. Second, in teaching elementary school students, the teacher should consider about children's developments; they are socio emotional and cognitive development because children at the age of 7 to 12 are in the development phase. In socio emotional development, Erikson (1968) says that elementary school students are in the fourth developmental stage "*Industry versus Inferiority*". He says that the teachers have responsibility to guide the students to direct their energy toward mastering knowledge and intellectual skills (industry) and avoid students from feeling incompetent and unproductive. To develop their socio emotional development above, Erikson states that adult, in this case parents and the teacher must become their guidance as the caregiver.

According to cognitive development of the children, Piaget (1980) assumes that students of elementary school are in the concrete operational stage in which they begin to conceptualize and do some abstract problem solving which is supported by concrete and specific examples. Those concrete and specific examples above automatically should promote *creative, free* and *fanciful* learning atmosphere. So, the English teachers need to conduct the interesting teaching activities.

In relation to the above argument, government has revised the policy about teaching English for elementary schools through *Permendiknas* no.22 in 2006 and no.41 in 2007 known as (KTSP) *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*. Based on *Permendiknas* no.22 in 2006, it is stated that the background of teaching English for elementary schools is based on the demand of using English for communication to elementary school level. Then, it has been limited to the classroom and school context. Further, the aim is to make them able to communicate in oral form for language accompanying action in the school context. In addition, English should be taught from the fourth grade to sixth grade. Looking at *Permendiknas* no 22 2006 and *Permendiknas* no 41 2007, it is clear that the government has given the good guidance for teaching English at elementary school.

However, based on preliminary observation toward some schools in Kecamatan Padang Utara, it was found that not many elementary schools apply the curriculum provided by the government as their standard in teaching young students. Some schools perceive some difficulties in applying it. Therefore, they use their own curriculum which is not really fit with children's development. So, English becomes the difficult and uninteresting lesson for young students.

The difficult and uninteresting lesson mentioned above may happen because the material is too hard, then no media used to help them in understanding the lesson, while the classroom techniques and activities used by the teacher do not seem really interesting in which no learning playing and learning by doing.

Based on their cognitive development, there are several characteristics of classroom activities which are relevant with elementary school students' cognitive development. These characteristics were adapted from Piaget (1977), Salkind

(1985), Thomas (1992), Massey (2004), Cook (2005) and Kay (2011), the characteristics were described as follow; (1) concrete event and situation are used in teaching activities which provide personal experience for the students, (2) teacher continues to ask students to justify their answers, (3) teacher encourages students to work in group or pair and exchange thought, (4) teacher involves the students in the tasks, (5) the students follow the rule given by the teacher, (6) students are given opportunities to play with other children, (7) students have fantasy to do role playing with other children, (8) activities are based on action orientated activities, (9) activities give learning experience through project.

In addition, Erikson (1968), Lovett (1986), Dart and Bastable (2007) and Kay (2011) propose several characteristics of classroom activities which are relevant with elementary school students' socio emotional development. These characteristics are: (1) teacher encourages independence, active participation/active involvement from the students, (2) teacher uses logical explanation in explaining the lesson or topic, (3) teacher allows time for students to ask questions, (4) teacher establishes role model for the students, (5) teacher uses play therapy, (6) teacher provides group activities (cooperation) for the students, (7) teacher provides purposeful or meaningful activity in the form of doing things beside and with other students, (8) students have ability to complete the task from the teacher, (9) teacher gives appreciation (reinforcement) to the students to build students' feeling competent and to avoid inferiority.

Based on some problems above, this research was conducted in order to see how classroom activities were carried out by English teachers at the fifth grade of elementary schools in *Kecamatan* Padang Utara, whether the classroom activities were relevant with KTSP, cognitive and socio emotional development.

B. Research Methods

This research is a kind of descriptive design because it described about classroom activities which were carried out by English teacher at Elementary schools. As stated by Gay (1980), the descriptive research involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. This research was done by using descriptive design in the form of observational research. Then, descriptive research is used to establish the existence of phenomena by using clear explanation. Further, Gay also defines that observational research is the type of descriptive studies in which the researcher obtains the desires data through direct observation. This research was used to classify, analyze, and describe the data by using checklist format for direct observation.

The data of this research were classroom activities carried out by English teachers at Elementary schools in *Kecamatan* Padang Utara at the fifth grade. There were seven elementary schools that would be observed as the source of data in this research. This source of data was chosen by using random sampling which permits to choose just 30% from total amount of elementary schools (25 schools) in *Kecamatan* Padang Utara. In addition, each English teacher who teaches in this

area was involved as informant. In this area, there is only one English teacher for one elementary school.

The data from the checklist formats for direct observation were analyzed by doing the following three steps by Sudjana (1991):

1. Counting the percentage of each item in checklist format by using the formula as follow:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where

P = Percentage of relevancy of classroom activities

F = Frequency of emergence

N = Total number of indicators in checklist format

2. Converting the percentage as following:

Percentage	Description
81%-100%	Very relevant
61%-80%	Relevant
41%-60%	Less relevant
0%-40%	Not relevant

Adapted from Sudjana (1991)

3. Converting the scale into descriptions.

C. Discussion

1. The Relevancy of Classroom Activities with KTSP

The percentage of relevancy of classroom activities in all elementary schools based on KTSP will be tabled as follow:

Table 1. The relevancy of classroom activities based on KTSP

Elementary school	Percentage	Description
1	82%	Very Relevant
2	65%	Relevant
3	53%	Less Relevant
4	47%	Less Relevant
5	65%	Relevant
6	65%	Relevant
7	59%	Less Relevant
Average	62%	Relevant

From the table above, it is shown that from the 7 elementary schools in Kecamatan Padang Utara, there was just 1 elementary school indicated as very

relevant level with KTSP. Then, there were 3 elementary schools which were relevant with KTSP. There rests of 3 elementary schools were less relevant with KTSP.

In short, by counting the percentage of classroom activities in all elementary schools based on KTSP, it was found that elementary schools in *Kecamatan Padang Utara* **were relevant** with KTSP.

2. The Relevancy of Classroom Activities with Cognitive Development

The percentage of relevancy of classroom activities in all elementary schools based on cognitive development will be tabled as follow:

Table 2. The relevancy of classroom activities based on cognitive development

Elementary school	Percentage	Description
1	80%	Relevant
2	47%	Less Relevant
3	47%	Less Relevant
4	33%	Not Relevant
5	63%	Relevant
6	57%	Less Relevant
7	57%	Less Relevant
Average	55%	Less Relevant

From the table above, it is shown that from the 7 elementary schools in *Kecamatan Padang Utara*, there was just 2 elementary school indicated as relevant level with cognitive development. Then, there were 4 elementary schools which were indicated as less relevant with cognitive development. Then, 1 elementary school was not relevant with cognitive development.

By counting the percentage of classroom activities in all elementary schools based on cognitive development, it was found that elementary schools in *Kecamatan Padang Utara* **were less relevant** with students' cognitive development.

3.The Relevancy of Classroom Activities with Socio Emotional Development

The percentage of relevancy of classroom activities in all elementary schools based on socio emotional development will be tabled as follow:

Table 3. The relevancy of classroom activities based on socio emotional development

Elementary school	Percentage	Description
1	85%	Very Relevant
2	65%	Relevant
3	38%	Not Relevant
4	32%	Not Relevant
5	58%	Less Relevant
6	41%	Less Relevant
7	53%	Less Relevant
Average	53%	Less Relevant

From the table above, it is shown that from the 7 elementary schools in *Kecamatan Padang Utara*, there was just 1 elementary school indicated as very relevant level with socio emotional development. Then, 1 elementary school was indicated relevant with socio emotional development. 3 elementary schools were less relevant with socio emotional development. Further, 2 elementary schools were not relevant with socio emotional development.

To sum up, by counting the percentage of classroom activities in all elementary schools based on socio emotional development, it was found that elementary schools in *Kecamatan Padang Utara* **were less relevant** with students' socio emotional development.

To make it clear, the relevancy of classroom activities in all language skills at the 7 elementary schools in *Kecamatan Padang Utara* with KTSP, cognitive and socio emotional development will depicted on the following diagram:

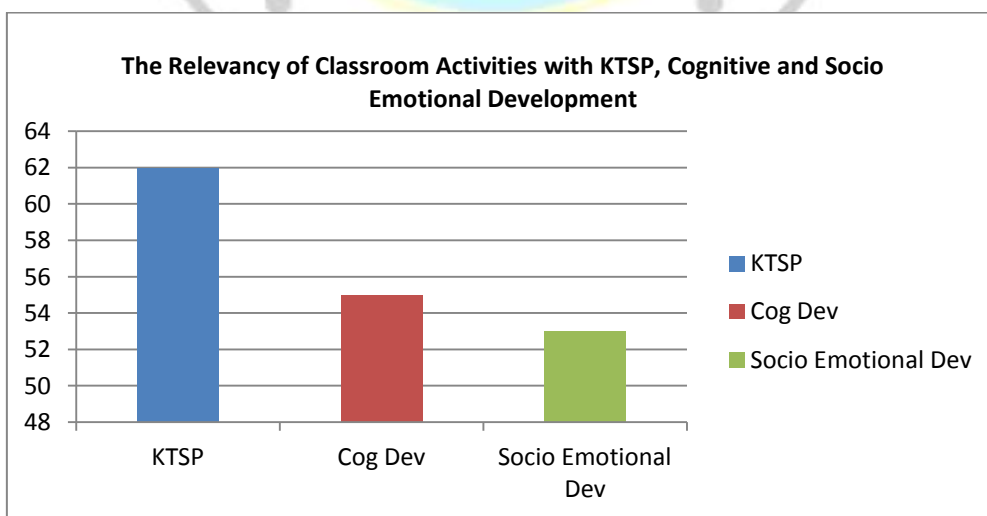


Diagram 1. The Percentage of Relevancy of Classroom Activities with KTSP, Cognitive and Socio Emotional Development

Diagram 1 shows the classroom activities carried out by English teachers at 7 elementary schools in *Kecamatan* Padang Utara. Based on the result above, it indicates that elementary schools in *Kecamatan* Padang Utara were relevant with KTSP. However, these schools were less relevant with cognitive development and socio emotional development of the students.

D. Conclusions and Suggestions

1. Conclusions

Based on the findings which were conducted toward classroom activities in seven elementary schools in *Kecamatan* Padang Utara, there are some conclusions that can be drawn.

Based on the finding above, from seven elementary schools, there was one elementary school (1) which had high relevancy or very relevant (82 %) with KTSP. 3 elementary schools (2), (5) and (6) were relevant (65%) with KTSP. The rests of 3 elementary schools (3), (4) and (7) were less relevant (53%, 47% and 59%) with KTSP. In short, classroom activities at the fifth grade of elementary schools in *Kecamatan* Padang Utara were relevant with KTSP.

Regarding with cognitive development, there were just 2 elementary schools (1) and (5) which were relevant (80% and 63%) with cognitive development. Then, elementary school 2, 3, 6 and 7 were less relevant (47% and 57%) with cognitive development. While elementary school 4 was not relevant (33%) with cognitive development. To sum up, classroom activities at the fifth grade of elementary schools in *Kecamatan* Padang Utara were less relevant with students' cognitive development.

The last based on socio emotional development, there was 1 elementary school (1) which was very relevant (85%) with socio emotional development. Henceforth, elementary school 2 was relevant (65%) with socio emotional development. Elementary school 5, 6 and 7 were less relevant (58%, 41% and 53%) with socio emotional development. Then, Elementary school 3 and 4 were not relevant (38% and 32%) with socio emotional development. All in all, classroom activities at the fifth grade of elementary schools in *Kecamatan* Padang Utara were less relevant with students' socio emotional development.

2. Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, some suggestions can be given as the following:

1. It is suggested for principle to give such a kind of training for teachers to use the School Based Curriculum (KTSP) as guidance in designing appropriate classroom activities for elementary school students.
2. Because of the importance of considering students' developments (cognitive development and socio emotional development) which demand enjoyable and fun activities in the form of learning by playing and learning by doing. It is suggested for the government to give the workshop or

training for the English teachers at elementary schools related to these students' developments.

3. For the other researchers, it is hoped that there will be more research and study about classroom activities for elementary schools students especially in specific language skill. It is also suggested for the researcher to develop the new strategy or method in teaching elementary school students which is appropriate with children's developments.
- 4.

Note: This article was created based on the writer's thesis and the advisors: Dra An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A and Yuli Tiarina, M.Pd

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