

# Sekolah Pantai as the Exposure of Creating Holistic Fun English Experience in Pacitan

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## **7** SEKOLAH PANTAI AS THE EXPOSURE OF CREATING HOLISTIC FUN ENGLISH EXPERIENCE IN PACITAN EAST JAVA

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to know the implementation of fun English learning through *Sekolah Pantai* in Pacitan East Java and the obstacles in implementing fun English learning to the children. The vision of this program is for every child in Indonesia has the opportunity to learn, to have healthy start, and to feel supported and secure living in a clean environment that is prepared for natural disasters. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative research design. The data are collected through observation and interview to the children and the volunteers of *Sekolah Pantai*. The result shows that all of the programs use English language with small portion of Indonesian language completed with theoretical input, group work as well as active sports games or garden work. English is included implicitly in four basic activities: ocean conservation, open class for kids, environmental workshop day with eco-ambassadors from high schools, and supporting local teachers through seminar and workshop to create fun English learning at schools. The volunteers use methods of teaching through arts, music, dance, storytelling, and other ways to share knowledge and integrate soft skills into the practical learning. However, there are some obstacles appeared during the program, such as: the children's anxiety in communicating using English language, distrust from the public schools that need effort to make them believe to the programs, distrust from the society because of the native speakers volunteer, time management in conducting parallel activity for the students in private schools.

**Keywords:** English learning, environmental learning, sekolah pantai

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

At 2015, United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) issued that the economy loss because of plastic pollution is growing. It reaches USD 13 billion dollars. China is the highest rank in plastic pollution, and surprisingly, Indonesia is in the second place. In Indonesia, around 87% from the 3.8 billion tons are thrown into the beach along the costal line from Sabang to Merauke. The research shows that averagely in a minute, the people use more than one plastic bag. Then, 50 percent from those plastic pollutions are used only once. Later, it is just placed into the rubbish basket. There are only five percents that is admitted as reusable plastic bag.

Those problems have to be eliminated for the future lives. The sustainable environment is truly important for the next generation. However, many people are unaware of this problem. Therefore, this problem can be eliminated start from young generation through environmental education. Environmental education is actually arisen at 1960. It is as the term for the educational dimensions of the environment movement that was concerned about air and water quality (air and water pollution), the fast growth in world population, continuing depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation. Those problems are very complex to be solved.

Some people believe that environmental education is a process to promote the awareness and understanding of the environment, its relationship with man and his activities. It is also aimed at developing responsible actions necessary for

preservation, conservation and improvement of the environment and its components.

Viewing that environmental education is truly important to be implemented in Pacitan, Project 2 Child organization makes Sekolah Pantai. The vision of this program is for every child in Indonesia has the opportunity to learn, to have healthy start, and to feel supported and secure living in a clean environment that is prepared for natural disasters. The programs combine the environment champagne and teaching English for children. The English is taught in fun activities, as well as based on the environmental theme. English is taught implicitly in the various supporting natural champagne to the students. Environmental education is started from the elementary school level because they will continue the role of their priors. They will make the rule that is important for the future. Therefore, the awareness to keep the earth is started from the children education level.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

English is related closely to the world matter. Therefore, it will be fun if the environmental issues combine English curriculum. It creates environmental education. It is impossible to see the teaching and learning process successful if the students are ignorant to the environmental issues. Babcock (1993) supports it. He says that the successful learning of a language involves equally successful combining of acquired micro and macro skills in terms of appropriate communication and environmental issues that are rich source of material for communication. In addition, Brown (1991) says that teachers of English have a mission to help everyone in the world to communicate with each other and solve global problems. It indicates that English language can be a medium to solve the environmental problems.

According to Kirova and Veselinovska, (2013:1065), environmental education represents concentrated efforts organized responsibly to teach or draw the attention of human beings to how natural environment functions and how human beings can manage and protect them. Here, the English Foreign Language teachers can give contribution toward the awareness on environment.

Some theories support that teaching English can raise the students' awareness of environmental sustainability. According to Tang (2009), the aim of incorporating environmental education in teaching English as foreign language/second language is to raise the awareness of students about global environmental crises. In dealing with those activities above, it needs the critical thinking built. It will be started up to the adulthood. Yukiko Ishikawa (2007) supports the theory above that the critical thinking skills in the classroom where English as a foreign language taught can help in further development of communicative abilities of students and their analytical thinking; it also allows them to apply communication in various situations when debating on global environmental issues. Here, critical thinking is differently defines and its role in the learning process (behavior change) is frequently emphasized (Kirova and Veselinovska, 2013:1067).

Viewed for the importance of English and the critical thinking toward the environmental issues, it is possible to blend the English material related to the environmental issues. It is not only the material, but also the techniques in teaching. The most suitable approach is related to communicative competence. Based on Crandall (1987), communicative approach is dominant in second language instruction and that languages are best learned when they are used to communicate meaning, rather than when teachers concentrate only on explicit learning of

1 ammar and vocabulary. Based on Kirova and Veselinovska, (2013:1067), the students can create and develop materials in these following ways:

- a. They can bring articles of audio/video clips from newspapers, magazines, radio and TV shows or the internet into the classroom,
- b. Songs in English with environmental themes performed by artist devoted to ecology. The contents of these songs can be used as topics for debate.
- c. Conversation about environmental issues related to some events at the local level (illegal logging, killing the endangered species, burning grass, etc.).
- d. Developing surveys for classmates dedicated to environmental issues whose results will later be analyzed in terms of whether they are environmentally acceptable or not.

### 3. METHODS

6 The researcher used descriptive qualitative research design. The data were collected through observation and interview to the children and the volunteers of Sekolah Pantai. The data were collected since April and July 2017.

### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 The Implementation of Fun English Learning

The program of Sekolah Pantai is under the Project Child Indonesia. The main aim is making English fun for children. They break the conservative ineffective teaching learning process into the effective ones.

##### 1) Ocean Conservation

Considering the increasingly polluted beaches around Pacitan, Sekolah Pantai decided to focus on seaside and environment protection awareness. It dealt with the guiding principle programs of ocean conservation. Besides, most of lesson content which made by Sekolah Pantai were focused about environment and ocean conservation. For example, the children were taught the lesson about trash in the ocean and how long it can be recycled. They were also informed to protect the ocean from pollution, the air and water pollution. In the next program, Sekolah Pantai had planned to invite students from junior high school and senior high school in Pacitan to join this class. Therefore, it can develop the knowledge of youth in Pacitan about ocean conservation and their environment.



Picture 1: Volunteer with Kids Clean the Beach



**Picture 2: Poster about Estimated Decomposition Rates of Common Marine Debris Items**

## 2) Open Class for Kids

Sekolah Pantai was launched in Pacitan at 2014 with the idea to provide the project's own teaching facilities that offers the kids a broad field for experience and learning. The organization wished that, by joining Sekolah Pantai, the students will have the opportunity to explore a new and natural space for learning and playing and to participate in a sustainable way of living.

The idea of holistic teaching and supporting individual growth is of highly important. The main aim was giving the students more than just a cognitive input, but also emotional, motor and spiritual development. Affected by the positive and informal learning atmosphere, the kids were free to act autonomously and develop their creativity.

To fulfill this idea, Sekolah Pantai decided some programs, such as English Class for kids in Sekolah Pantai. The school, located in Pancer beach Pacitan, comprised an open-space classroom, an office building, a kitchen, a sanitary facility, a playing field, a campfire site, and a chill out area, making the school a sufficient and comfortable place for children to learn and explore.

English Class for kids is usually held weekly. The participants are the kids in age 5-14. Now, around 30 students from the neighborhood showed up and joined the English Class, bringing along their curiosity and enthusiasm. The first meeting was intended to get the children to know each other and the volunteers. Therefore, the staff had prepared some introductory and ice-breaking games.

The games were delivered in both Indonesian and English. The volunteer could start to see how good their English vocabulary was. Sekolah Pantai had a class full of energetic group activities from 3 PM to 5 PM, and the children were very excited to join all of them. The parents were also excited to this program. When the parents dropped their children off, some of them encouraged the kids to join the class, and some stayed in the school area throughout the class session to watch their kids with joy. The activities took place in both the classroom and the sports field. The wide school area allowed the children to move around freely, thus they seemed to love the space. Some of the children even stayed longer after class to play some sports with the volunteers.

The English material were divided into some thematic programs related to the environmental issues. The theme was changed in each of two-weeks period. English language was taught inductively based on each theme. For example, in the

implementing of transportation theme, the volunteer asked the children to simultaneously learn about transportation English vocabularies, as well as the pollution affected.

There were a total of 15 volunteers and staffs helping in this first meeting, consisting of local staffs and volunteers from Pacitan, Yogyakarta, and foreign staffs and volunteers from Germany. The volunteers who taught in Sekolah Pantai are students in local university in Pacitan.



**Picture 3: The Teaching and Learning Process**



**Picture 4: Teaching Learning Process (after Class)**

In addition, Sekolah Pantai also took a roadshow program in implementing fun English learning through Drinking Water Program (DWP). The main program was implementing English in fun activities as well as giving campagne for drinking health water. Here, the children were taught about the ideas of the health water characteristics. They were not only taught theoretically, but also they practically diffetreniated it.

Drinking Water Program (DWP) was implemented into eight elementary schools along the Pacitan district as the sample for the first session program. It focused on the elementary school at the village. They taught the elementary students once in a week. The material given was related the material of open class in Sekolah pantai Pacitan, eventhough the result will be different because the students' characteristics and social background are different.



**Picture 5: Drinking Water Program**

3) Environmental Workshop Day with Eco-ambassadors from High School

Sekolah Pantai made collaborations with high schools in Pacitan to send their students joining an environmental workshop day at Sekolah Pantai once a month. Moreover, those schools will bring their scouting department to different overnight camps to learn about environment and ocean protection. These students will go back to their schools as an “eco ambassador”, who will spread their knowledge among their classmates. In general, all learning units were held bilingually in Bahasa Indonesia and English and it consisted of theoretical input, autonomous group work as well as active sports games or garden work.



**Picture 6: English Camp**

4) Supporting Local Teachers through Seminar and Workshop

Sekolah Pantai also supports local teachers through seminar and workshop. In October 2015, Project Child Indonesia collaborated with STKIP-PGRI Pacitan held a workshop for English teachers in Pacitan entitled “Social Media Utilization for Education”. Some speakers gave speech in this workshop such as Jason Caniff (U.S.A.), Bridget Harilou (Australia), and staff from Sekolah Sungai in Yogyakarta. The speakers gave an understanding about media social usage in teaching English, and explained how to utilize media social as media to teaching English.

In July 2016, Sekolah Pantai Indonesia invited Marvin (Co Founder of Project Child Indonesia) to be the speaker in the Meeting MGMP of English Teacher in Pacitan. This meeting held in SMKN 1 Pacitan. In this meeting, they asked Marvin to talk and discuss about teaching learning method that are effective for teaching English. Now, Sekolah Pantai is collaborated with MGMP of English Teacher in Pacitan. They were invited in some meetings and seminars.



Picture 7: Workshop for Local English Teacher



Picture 8: Workshop for Local English Teacher

#### 4.2 The Obstacles in Implementing Fun English Program

##### 1) Students' Anxiety in Using English Language

This obstacle actually happened in Drinking Water Program. As mentioned above, the subjects of drinking water program are the students in the village. Those various students come from different social background, even different family background and cultural background. Some students even have no ability in speaking English because the curriculum K13 makes English subject only as the local content in Elementary School level. It makes the main obstacle in implementing fun English learning program.

The volunteer says that the students keep smile when the volunteer asks them by using English even for the casual opening conversation like "What's your name?" or "How are you today?" They feel shy, or even worry to answer the volunteer's simple questions. However, some cases tell that some students want to speak English, but they speak the other things that are not related to the material, like joking or verbal bullying to their friends. It makes the volunteer uses Bahasa Indonesia to explain the material. The students anxiety is also happen in students' performance. When the volunteer talks about "human body" by singing the song together, some students can follow the song and answer the questions, but some of them cannot answer the questions. They feel shy even to perform the answer before their friends. This happens because when they say wrong answer or funny answer or even cannot answer, the other students laugh at them.

##### 2) Distrust from the Public Schools

The volunteer says that they even get rejection from the public schools' authority. The teachers or even the principal says that the Sekolah Pantai volunteer will bring the bad impacts for them. As we know that, the founder of Sekolah Pantai is the native speaker from America. The schools are afraid if they bring the bad culture for their students. It needs big effort to make sure that their program is



independently to increase the students' ability in English with different interesting activities. This obstacle makes the program cannot run well. The school gives only limited time for the volunteer. The schoolteachers also accompany some volunteers when they implement the program from Sekolah Pantai.

### 3) Distrust from the Society

In spite of the distrust from the schools, the society also distrust to the Sekolah Pantai program on drinking water program. The reason is almost the same that the founder of Sekolah Pantai is the native-speaker from US. It is not only happened from the people surrounding, but also from the stakeholder in Elementary Education. Some parents do not allow their children to follow the Sekolah Pantai program. They feel worry if their children get bad impacts from the native speakers.

### 4) Time Management in Conducting Parallel Activity for the Students

It happens because of the school distrust toward the program. The schools sometimes deny the programmed schedule that was arranged by the volunteer and the schools. Therefore, when the volunteer come to the school, the students were going back to their houses. It makes the volunteer cannot implement the program at that day. Some teachers say that they forget to inform to the students when that day is the time for Sekolah Pantai volunteer to teach English. If one day skipped from the schedule, they have to reschedule again the program. This obstacle makes the volunteer work harder to persuade the school principal and to rearrange the schedule again.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that there are four basic program from Sekolah Pantai Pacitan: ocean conservation, open class for kids, environmental workshop day with eco-ambassadors from high schools, and supporting local teachers through seminar and workshop to create fun English learning at schools. However, there are some obstacles appeared during the program, such as: the students anxiety in using English language, distrust from the public schools that need effort to make them believe to the programs, distrust from the society because of the native speakers volunteer, time management in conducting parallel activity for the students in private schools.

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