

COMMUNITY SERVICE ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: INTRODUCING ENGLISH THROUGH ECOLINGUISTICS GAMES AMONG RURAL CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT This research aims to introduce basic English to children in rural areas through ecolinguistics-based games in community service activities oriented to environmental education. This activity was carried out in the rural area of Tangerang, Indonesia, involving 20 children as participants. The method of implementing this activity is participatory and educational, by utilizing games that combine elements of English and environmental concepts, such as the names of plants, animals, and environmentally friendly activities in English. Data collection was conducted through documentation of activities and distribution of a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions to explore participants' responses and understanding of the material presented. The documentation results showed high enthusiasm from the children during the activity. Based on the results of the questionnaire, most of participants showed an increased understanding of basic English vocabulary related to the environment as well as awareness of the importance of protecting the surrounding nature. This research shows that the ecolinguistics approach through games can be an effective and fun strategy in introducing foreign languages while instilling ecological values to village children. This activity also strengthens the role of community service as a sustainable and meaningful educational medium.

KEYWORDS: *English; Community Service; Ecolinguistics; Educational Games; Children*

1. INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency is one of the most important skills in the era of globalization, not only for educational purposes but also for facing the challenges of the workplace and international communication. However, access to English language learning remains a challenge, especially in rural areas with limited facilities, teaching resources, and engaging learning approaches for children. On the other hand, low environmental awareness is also a real issue in society, where most children have not received contextual environmental education from an early age (Kartikasari et al., 2021a). This highlights the need for educational efforts that address two important aspects: English language introduction and environmental education.

The current phenomenon shows that English language learning in rural areas tends to be passive, focusing on memorization and not yet linked to the daily lives of children (Alam, 2014). Mostly, Rural children tend to prefer outdoor activities and physical games, but this potential has not been utilized in structured educational activities only. hence, environmental education is still considered a secondary issue and has not become part of an integrated learning approach, especially among elementary school-aged children in non-urban areas.

The gap in research and community service lies in the lack of integration between ecolinguistics and environmental education through enjoyable and interactive approaches, especially those conducted directly within the community. To date, community service activities have tended to be one-sided and have not fully explored local potential and children's learning styles, which tend to be visual, kinesthetic, and experience-based (Anggraini et al., 2024). Additionally, the ecolinguistics approach, which combines language and ecology, is still rarely applied in the context of children's learning in rural areas.

The uniqueness of this research lies in the integration of basic English language learning with environmental education through ecolinguistics games. The games developed are designed to introduce English vocabulary relevant to the natural environment, such as the names of plants, animals, and environmental conservation activities, while actively involving children in the learning process (Arjulayana, 2016). This approach not only touches on the cognitive aspects but also the affective and psychomotor aspects of children, as well as fostering a sense of concern for nature.

This activity was carried out as part of a community service program in the rural area of Tangerang, Indonesia. The activity was also designed to be replicable and adaptable to the needs of other communities, thereby having a broader impact. The purpose of this research is to introduce English to rural children through games based on environmental education (ecolinguistics games), while fostering ecological awareness from an early age. This research also aims to show that

community service activities are not only social in nature, but can also be an innovative educational tool that is relevant to local needs and characteristics. The results of this activity are expected to serve as a reference for educators, volunteers, and educational institutions in designing similar programs that are interactive, contextual, and impactful.

Literature Review

The integration of environmental education into language learning in the context of community service is supported by several theoretical frameworks. Experiential learning theory emphasizes the importance of learning through direct experience, which is highly relevant in game-based educational activities and environmental exploration (Sciences et al., 2015). This approach also aligns with (Dewey, 2024) philosophy of education, which emphasizes that the learning process becomes more meaningful when rooted in the real-life experiences of learners. In this context, rural children who are naturally close to nature can learn English through direct experiences such as playing in open spaces, observing plants or animals, and linking these experiences to English vocabulary (Rahman & Angraeni, 2020).

Additionally, the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and CLT approach are also relevant, as it allows for the teaching of content (such as environmental issues) in a foreign language while simultaneously enhancing content mastery and language proficiency (Arjulayana & Tri Pujiati, 1980; Bradley, Joff P. N. et al., 2017; Dupuy, 2011). These frameworks show that learning English through ecolinguistics games in community service programs is not only based on creativity but also has a strong theoretical foundation in experience-based learning and content-language integration. Ecolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field of study that examines the relationship between language and the environment. This concept evolved from critical linguistics and systemic ecolinguistics, which aim to explore how language shapes the way humans understand, interpret, and act toward the environment (Arjulayana et al., 2024; Pujiati & Arjulayana, 2024). Stibbe (2015) explains that language not only reflects reality but also constructs reality, including our perception of nature. Through language, humans can strengthen or weaken ecological awareness. In the context of education, ecolinguistics offers a new approach to language learning by placing environmental issues at the center of the learning process.

The ecolinguistics approach is highly relevant in English language learning, particularly in introducing vocabulary and values related to environmental conservation. For example, learning can focus on introducing the names of plants, animals, weather, and environmentally friendly activities in English (Luardini & Simbolon, 2018; Zhang, 2022). This not only introduces contextual thematic vocabulary but also encourages learners to be more aware of the connection between language and

their surroundings. Thus, children not only learn about language structure but also engage in the development of ecological literacy from an early age.

In the context of children in rural areas, the ecolinguistics approach becomes even more significant. This is because they live closer to nature, making environment-based learning resources easily accessible. Unfortunately, the language learning approaches used in rural elementary schools often still focus on conventional methods, such as memorization or translation without context (Shelestyuk, 2023). However, the potential of the surrounding environment can be utilized as authentic teaching materials through an enjoyable and down-to-earth ecolinguistics approach. This is where ecolinguistics-based games play an important role as an effective teaching method, especially when linked to community service programs.

Games in language learning have long been recognized as effective in increasing learning motivation, especially among children. Fleming et al., (2017) state that games support the learning process through interaction, collaboration, and enjoyable hands-on experiences. When these games are linked to ecological values, learning becomes not only cognitive but also affective. In this context, ecolinguistics games enable children to learn English through environmental exploration, observation, and creative activities such as creating picture cards of local flora and fauna, matching names in English, or engaging in role-playing games about maintaining environmental cleanliness.

Practically speaking, community service can serve as a strategic medium for implementing this approach (arjulayana & Supraba Lastari, 2022). Community service activities enable communities, especially rural children, to access innovative learning while strengthening their awareness of environmental issues. By integrating ecolinguistics into community service activities, the learning process is not merely about conveying material but also becomes a process of social and ecological awareness. In the long term, this can shape a generation that is not only linguistically competent but also ecologically cultured.

Thus, the ecolinguistics approach in educational game-based English language learning is not only an innovation in language education but also a tangible contribution to environmental awareness. This approach supports holistic learning efforts, is relevant to the local context, and supports the creation of a sustainable education model.

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach in the form of community service activities based on environmental education. The activities were carried out in a rural area in Tangerang, Indonesia, which is characterized by a lack of interest among children in learning activities, particularly in foreign language acquisition.

The activity involved 20 elementary school-aged children as participants, consisting of 15 girls and 5 boys. These children are residents with limited access to engaging and contextual English language learning.

The material was delivered through ecolinguistics games that introduced environmental vocabulary in English, such as the names of plants, animals, and eco-friendly activities. Data was collected through activity documentation and a questionnaire containing 10 questions. Descriptive analysis was conducted to evaluate the participants' level of understanding and enthusiasm during the activity.



Figure 1. Early activity during Community service

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

This activity provides a new experience for those rural children, because they can learn English and play with fun through utilizing things around them. They practice the English vocabulary based on the things around them such as the weather, some plants name, animal's name in their environments, and how to cure with English vocabulary uses. Here are some activities how children are learning with English game during the community services:



Figure 2. Students practice how to read



Figure 3. children discuss the learning media related to ecolinguistics



Figure 4. students tell the story with new English vocabulary



Figure 5. individual practice and show the eco media

The results of this activity show that the ecolinguistics-based game approach can increase enthusiasm and basic understanding of English among children in rural areas of Tangerang. During the activity, the children were very active and fully engaged in each game session that introduced environmental vocabulary in English, such as the names of plants, animals, and environmentally friendly activities (Pettersson, 2012). Documentation of the activity shows that the learning atmosphere was cheerful, dynamic, and enthusiastic.

Participant engagement was exceptionally high. Both girls and boys demonstrated a strong curiosity and quick responsiveness to game instructions. They swiftly grasped the rules, listened attentively to explanations, and attempted to mimic the English words they had just heard. Some children even confidently mentioned environmental vocabulary in English spontaneously during the games.

This activity also demonstrated that learning methods involving movement, visuals, and direct interaction are more effective for children in rural areas who tend to have kinesthetic and social learning styles. For example, during the “find and name” game, participants skillfully searched for natural objects such as leaves, flowers, and stones, then named them in English after being guided by the facilitator (Tejedor-García et al., 2020; Wulandari et al., 2019). This demonstrates that learning through real-life experiences accelerates the process of understanding foreign vocabulary.

Some activities also done in outside the room to introduce ecology in the practice of English learning with eco game, and this activity encourage children to practice their kinesthetics and collaboration also. The following is an example of outdoor activities and the children achievement after practicing the English in front of the public and their parent after the teaching and learning are finished.



Figure 7. learning process through ecology out of classroom



Figure 8. Using eco herbs students are practicing their conversation in English

The results of the questionnaire given to 20 participants reinforced the findings from the documentation. As many as 75% of children were able to recognize and name at least five English

words related to the environment, such as tree, leaf, clean, bird, and water. The children not only memorized the words but also understood their meaning in the context of daily activities, such as maintaining cleanliness and caring for plants. Most children also stated that they enjoyed learning English through games (Kartikasari et al., 2021b; Pathan & Aldersi, 2014).

The questionnaire also showed an increase in awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. Some children were able to respond to open-ended questions with simple sentences in Indonesian that demonstrated their understanding, such as “don’t litter” or “plant trees to prevent flooding.” This indicates that the ecolinguistics approach not only provides linguistic benefits but also instills ecological values in an enjoyable and memorable way (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Roe et al., 2023; Zhou, 2021).

The participants’ involvement in this activity also underscores the importance of a participatory approach in community service. Children are not positioned as passive objects but as active subjects who respond, ask questions, try, and even help each other when completing tasks in the game. Some children even helped their friends who were struggling to say words in English, indicating positive collaborative learning.

These results support Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of learning through real-life experiences (Sciences et al., 2015). Additionally, this approach aligns with the principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), where environmental learning materials are used as a medium to develop foreign language skills simultaneously. Thus, this activity has educational value that targets not only language but also fosters social and environmental awareness (Marenzi & Zerr, 2012).

In conclusion, the use of ecolinguistics-based games in this community service activity has proven to be an effective, enjoyable, and meaningful approach. Children not only begin to learn English in a context close to their daily lives but also develop an awareness of the importance of preserving the environment. This activity also demonstrates that community service can serve as a participatory, relevant, and sustainable learning medium, particularly for rural children who have previously faced limitations in accessing contextual learning opportunities (Luardini & Simbolon, 2018; Penz & Fill, 2022).

4. CONCLUSION

Community service activities based on environmental education using an ecolinguistics approach have proven effective in introducing basic English to children in rural areas of Tangerang. Through games that focus on environmental themes such as the names of plants, animals, and environmentally friendly activities, children can quickly and enjoyably understand and remember

English vocabulary. This activity has also successfully fostered enthusiasm for learning, particularly because the method used is participatory and involves direct interaction with the surrounding environment.

Participant engagement was very high, with children demonstrating quick responses, a strong desire to learn, and active involvement throughout the activity. They not only learned cognitively but also emotionally and socially, such as helping one another and showing concern for the environment. The questionnaire results showed an increase in understanding of English vocabulary and basic ecological awareness. So, the ecolinguistics approach through educational games can be an appropriate learning strategy in the context of community service, especially in areas with limited access to education. This approach can harmoniously and meaningfully combine language development and environmental education for rural children.

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