

RESEARCH JOURNAL

TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN ISLAMIC STATE UNIVERSITY IN AMBON

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A. Background of the Study

This study is concerned with investigating ways of students in teaching and learning in English through outdoor experiential learning.

Senior in Harmer (2006) points out that when the students come to class they bring with them their own personalities and their learning expectations. Their behavior will also be influenced by their current circumstances and by what happens in the lessons. There is always, as well, the possibility of interpersonal tensions between students and between students and their teacher. Based on that, teacher have to know about students characteristics to plan the good way in teaching and learning of English. Learning English is still difficult for most students in Ambon. In English learning, students seldom practice their speaking because they are afraid of making mistakes. Harmer (2006) said that, students are often reluctant to speak because they are shy and are not predisposed to expressing themselves in front of other people, especially when they are being asked to give personal information or opinions. Language is an effective instrument to build relationship and to cooperate each other. Therefore, the students should learn how to speak correctly and fluently because the function of speaking is conveying the ideas and thoughts.

This is related with Jazadi (2009) in *Jakarta Post* newspaper said that the poor English proficiency of Indonesian students, both in high school and university, is mostly because the country's system of teaching English still focuses on studying about a language rather than studying how to use the language. Ideally, six years of studying English at high school should be enough to create fundamental communicative competence. Students should, at least, be able to speak basic English conversation.

Outdoor experiential learning still provides a unique learning style in Indonesia. Some schools have not implemented this learning style yet because it is rather different compared to other teaching and learning. Outdoor experiential learning provides an interesting and challenging for the students especially in learning speaking as stated by Dewey (1859-1952) that students should be involved in real-life tasks and challenges. Learning with experience make students actively involved in the learning process and understand deeply about the material.

One ways to achieve the goal as reflected in learning speaking is with outdoor experiential learning. Outdoor experiential learning is the process of actively engaging students in an experience that will have real consequences in out of the classroom. *Priest and Gass, 1997, p. 17 in Denise Dumouchel (2003) said that outdoor education follows the experiential philosophy of learning by doing. It takes place primarily, but not exclusively, through involvement with the natural environment. In outdoor education, the emphasis for a subject of learning is placed on relationships concerning people and natural resources. Therefore, outdoor experiential learning can make actively involved in students' English.*

Outdoor experiential learning has been developed to influence students speaking. The research conducted by Doi (2008) support the idea that outdoor experiential learning may encourage the students to start communicating with one another to form a felt-community. The similar research by Wighting, Nisbet, and Tindall (2005) also found that students and the teacher may take the benefits from the summer English language camp experience in order to increase the spoken English proficiency. They learn how to teach speaking in meaningful and effective method. These camps also have a great potential to provide rich opportunities for exchanging individual worldviews, promoting cultural understandings, experiencing professional and personal growth, and fostering meaningful and lasting friendship across cultures.

From the discussion above it is assumed that outdoor experiential learning can influence students' English ability. Therefore, it is considered essential to conduct an investigation to explore more on adapting outdoor experiential learning toward students' teaching and learning of English. Thus, this study investigated in Islamic Education of Islamic State University in Ambon.

B. The scope of the Study

This research was conducted at Islamic Education of Islamic State University in Ambon in the year of 2016/2017, the first semester class was taken as sample of this research. The materials focused on this research in outdoor experiential learning toward students' teaching and learning in English.

C. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to give contribution in two ways aspects, which are theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research provides the readers understanding on teaching English by conducting outdoor experiential learning. Practically, this research can become a source of information for teachers to innovate or develop the way of their teaching and also to identify the benefit and challenges of outdoor experiential learning in teaching speaking as perceived by students and teachers and how do teachers cope with the challenges of the teaching English of outdoor experiential learning. A technical term to avoid possible misunderstanding and misinterpretation in order to clarify variables involved in the study is outdoor experiential learning.

D. Purpose of the study and Research Question

The purpose of this study are:

1. To know the ability of Islamic Education students in English through Outdoor Experiential Learning.
2. To know the benefits and challenges of outdoor experiential learning in English as perceived by students and teacher?

Based on the purpose of the study above, the present study endeavored to address the questions are:

1. How the ability of Islamic Education students in English through Outdoor Experiential Learning.
2. What are the benefits and challenges of outdoor experiential learning in English as perceived by students and teacher?

E. Review of literature

This chapter reviews the relevant literature that informs the research work undertaken in Islamic Education Department of Islamic State University in Ambon, where students were studying English as a foreign language. The literature provides into three fundamental areas. The first one is experiential learning, the second one is learning styles, the third one is assessment. The research employs some theories and related studies as fundamental concept to conduct the study.

Experiential learning is a process of constructing knowledge that involves a creative tension among the four learning modes that is responsive to contextual demands (Kolb, 2005). This process is portrayed as an idealized learning cycle or spiral where the learner “touches all the bases”—experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting-in a recursive process that is responsive to the learning situation and what is being learned. Immediate or concrete experiences are the basis for observations and reflections. These reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn. These implications can be actively tested and serve as guides in creating new experiences (Figure 1). ELT proposes that this idealized learning cycle will vary by individuals’ learning style and learning context.

Therefore, the goal of experiential learning is to know about the world as we experience it, and both theory and practice are components in the scientific method for achieving this knowledge. This is relevant to Dewey’s philosophy of education, the goal of education is not the right answer, for that might change. The goal is being able to understand and use our experience, and this is achieved by developing the thought processes with which we examine our experience.

6.1. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)

ELT defines learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb 1984: 41).

Experience grasped through apprehension and transformed through intention results in what will be called divergent knowledge. Experience grasped through

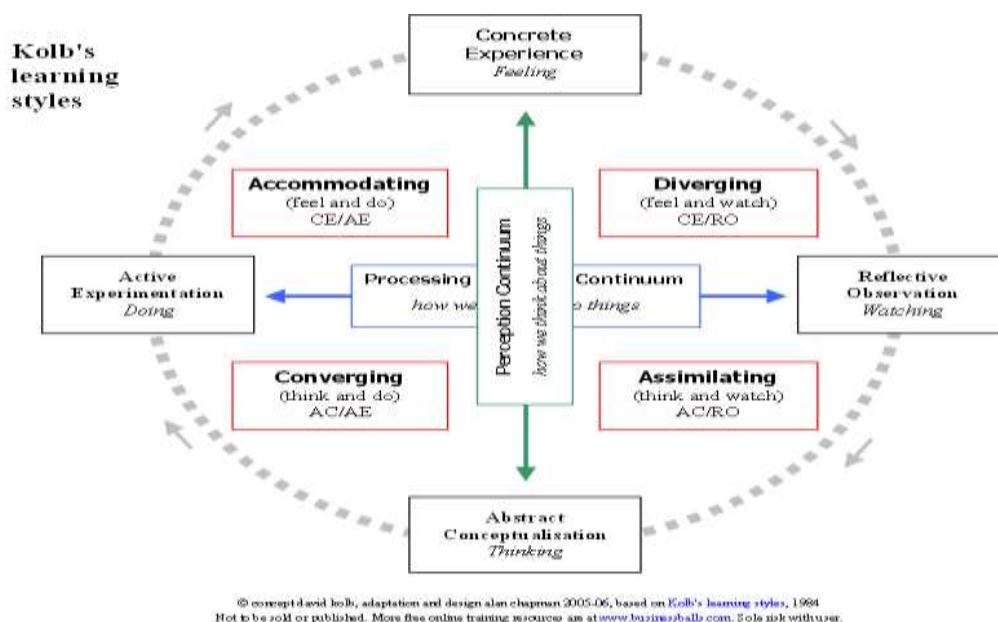
comprehension and transformed through intention results in assimilative knowledge. When experience is grasped through comprehension and transformed through extension, the result is convergent knowledge. And finally, when experience is grasped by apprehension and transformed by extension, accommodative knowledge is the result.

Experiential learning theory (ELT) provides a holistic model of the learning process and a multilinear model of adult development, both of which are consistent with what we know about how people learn, grow, and develop. (Kolb, Boyatzis, and Mainemelis, 1991). In this research, the term the people used for the students in the school.

More details, the term “experiential” is used therefore to differentiate ELT both from cognitive learning theories, which tend to emphasize cognition over affect, and behavioral learning theories that deny any role for subjective experience in the learning process.

In another case, another reason the theory is called “experiential” is its intellectual origins in the experiential works of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget. Taken together, Dewey’s philosophical pragmatism, Lewin’s social psychology, and Piaget’s cognitive-developmental genetic epistemology form a unique perspective on learning and development (Kolb, 1984).

It has been drawn by Kolb that the experiential learning cycle to make clear the process of experiential learning. (Kolb diagrams updated May 2006)



F. Review of related studies

This research is comprehended by including some inquiries that are closely related to the topic of the discussion. In addition, the involvement of those inquiries studies is helpful as a guideline in conducting this research.

1. **The first related study is from Akiko Doi, Ph.D. (2008)** with the title “Let the felt sense speak in English: Experiential learning and teaching of English as a second language”. This study explores the idea that outdoor experiential learning may encourage the students to start communicating with one another to form a felt-community.
2. **The second related study is from Mervyn J. Wighting, Deanna L. Nisbet and Evie R. Tindall (2005)** with the title “Exploring a Summer English Language Camp Experience in China: A Descriptive Case Study.” This study also found that students and the teacher may take the benefits from the summer English language camp experience in order to increase the spoken English proficiency. They learn how to teach speaking in meaningful and effective method. These camps also have a great potential to provide rich opportunities for exchanging individual worldviews, promoting cultural understandings, experiencing professional and personal growth, and fostering meaningful and lasting friendship across cultures.

G. Methodology

In this section provides regarding the purpose of the study and research question, research design, setting, participants, data collections and analyses.

1. Setting and Participant

Setting

The research undertaken at the Islamic Education Department of Islamic State University in Ambon.

Participant

The participants of this study are in first semester of Islamic Education Department of Islamic State University in Ambon. The determination of particular place of investigation at a certain period of time. Also, the observation of study occurred in 12 weeks, however, there were a number of meetings which did not observed because the process of teaching and learning was changed by games or lesson review.

The students learnt actively involved in this study, they had offered with English subject and using Local Wisdom and Multiculturalism content for first semester. The material was applied learning by doing. In the middle of learning process, the teacher provides a game that makes students to be able to think, to speak, and to act without any fear and blame.

Population and Sample

The population on this research is the classes in Islamic Education on first semester in year 2016/2017. Whereas the sample, was taken on three students of each of that classes with purposively.

Research Design

Relevant to the purpose and research question above, a qualitative study which embraced characteristics of several research methods was employed. This study will explore clearly of practical ways in which teacher's conduct outdoor experiential learning toward students' English teaching and learning and to identify whether this method have benefits and challenges as perceived by students and teachers in process of

teaching and learning in Islamic Education of Islamic State University in Ambon. Therefore, a case study investigation will be conducted by utilizing three data collection techniques such as observation, document analysis and interview.

Here, the observation is intended to see the process of conducting outdoor experiential learning toward students' English and to observe teachers' and students' benefits and challenges in that method and also to identify how the teachers cope with the challenges of the speaking of outdoor experiential learning. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyze intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 106-107). By making use of the observation, it is expected that the influence of outdoor experiential learning toward students' English may be figured out.

Then, the document analysis will be intended to identify whether the applying of outdoor experiential learning is successful in the learning and teaching process.

Further, number of statements elaborated on the interview will be intended to measure students' benefits and challenges of outdoor experiential learning in English as perceived by students. Like Cohen and Manion (1994: 272) said that the interview may serve three purposes. *First*, it may be used as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives. As Tuckman describes it, 'By providing access to what is "inside a person's head", it makes it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences), and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs)' (Tuckman, 1972 in Cohen and Manion, 1994), the most important aspect of the interviewer's approach is conveying the attitude that the participant's views are valuable and useful (Marshall and Rossman, 2006: 101). *Second*, it may be used to test hypothesis or to suggest new ones; or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships. *And third*, the interview may be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking. As a result, a qualitative approach will be used to interpret the findings in a descriptive way.

2. Data Collection and Technique

The data collection techniques employ on this study were observation, document analysis and interview. As mentioned by (Fraenkel&Wallen, 1993; Denzin& Lincoln, 1993; Marshall &Rossan, 2006), there are three data collection techniques that commonly used by qualitative researchers such as *observation*, *interview*, and *document analysis*

First, the observation was intended to see the process of conducting outdoor experiential learning toward students' English and to observe teachers' and students' benefits and challenges in that method and also to identify how do the teacher copes with the challenges of the speaking of outdoor experiential learning. *Observation* is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry since it is used to discover or record complex interactions in natural social settings (Fraenkel&Wallen, 1993; Denzin& Lincoln, 1993; Marshall &Rossan, 2006). Here, the observational record is frequently referred to as *field notes*, which is detailed, nonjudgmental and concrete description of what has been observed. Observation method assumes that behavior is purposeful and expressive of deeper values and belief. The type of observation applied on this study was non-participant observation, possessed as *complete observer* in which the researcher observes the activities of a group without in any way becoming a participant in those activities (Fraenkel&Wallen, 1993, p.384). By making use of the observation, it was expected that the influence of outdoor experiential learning toward students' English may be figured out, that may be obvious through the students' curiosity to be involved in activities.

The second data collection technique on this study was the document analysis. *Document analysis* is an analysis of the written texts or visual contents of a document including textbooks, essays, newspapers, novels, magazine articles and other written or visual document (Fraenkel&Wallen, 1993; Denzin& Lincoln, 1993; Marshall &Rossan, 2006). Here, the source of materials used by the teacher will be analyzed to see whether students' English conducted is in line with the outdoor experiential learning. Also the students observed to the field to every villages in Ambon island in several groups. They observed about local wisdom or local culture that consists of Pela and Gandong, and also Masohi, Badati, and Maanu.

Finally, number of statements elaborated on the interview would be intended to measure students' benefits and challenges of outdoor experiential learning in English as perceived by students. *Interview* is one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to find out and understand what is on human beings mind, what they think or how they feel about something (Fraenkel&Wallen, 1993; Denzin& Lincoln, 1993; Marshall & Rossan, 2006). This interview was conducted to measure students' learning and teaching process and also their perception in English due to the outdoor experiential learning as described in section 3.2 in research design.

However, this study would employ three of the qualitative data collection techniques, which are the observation, document analysis, and interview.

First, in order to explore the outdoor experiential learning toward students' English, then six months observation has been conducted during teaching and learning process. The observation made use of observation sheet to note all activities occur in the class in relation to the outdoor experiential learning.

Along with the observation, document analysis is done to identify the relation of the source of materials used in outdoor experiential learning toward students' English.

Then, numbers of interview would be distributed to the students to ask on their learning in English due to the outdoor experiential learning implementation. Here, the students as the respondents of the study would be asked to answer all the questions related to the topic based on their own situation. After accomplishing the process of filling out the interviews, all data are then transcribed, calculated and put into a table of result as the fixed data to be analyzed and interpreted.

3. Data Analysis

The next process should be done after collecting the data is to analyze the data which gathered during data collection process. First, the data from the observation and document analysis will be analyzed based on the theory of outdoor experiential learning including characteristics of English. Then, the data from handy cam - record to identify the implementation of students' English through outdoor experiential learning.

All interview data were analyzed in steps. The first one was to put the interview into categories of numbers question. Then in each questions, it could be seen the same

or different perspective of them. After that, analyzing of each question in every student based on outdoor experiential learning basic principles.

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