Strategies for Learning English as a Foreign Language in Improving Students' Language Proficiency

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Abstract

Humans, nature, animals, and plants are a unit that forms the life cycle. These four elements are a condition of balance for the survival of life. If one is disturbed, the other elements will also be shaken. Environmental problems that are happening are also caused by the very apprehensive economic conditions of the people. Because of poverty, nature is the only object seen as capable of liberating it from the myriad of economic problems increasingly entangling in life. If so, then the balance of nature for the next generation's life is no longer thought of. The increasingly brutal behavior of society causes various kinds of life problems to emerge. Therefore, in this study, researchers will discuss ecological awareness and economic development carried out by social institutions, namely the Sembalun Community Development Center, which is currently on the island of Lombok, to be precise in Sembalun village, a village around the slopes of Mount Rinjani. The method used in this study is qualitative, descriptive analysis. In this study, it can be seen that SCDC plays an essential role in maintaining the balance of nature and the socio-economic welfare of the community.

Keywords: Awareness, Ecology, Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that has extraordinary natural beauty [1]. Indonesia's natural wealth has also been recognized by various countries worldwide. Especially the beauty of the beach and mountains are, of course, the main objects of beauty. Therefore, it is uncommon for local and foreign tourists to come in droves to enjoy its natural beauty.

Likewise, one of Indonesia's islands is the island of Lombok. An island in the Lesser Sunda Islands or Nusa Tenggara, the Lombok Strait separates from Bali to the west and the Alas Strait to the east from Sumbawa. Lombok Island is indeed famous for its exotic and enchanting natural beauty. The island of Lombok has now become one of the icons of Indonesian tourism [2]; the beauty of the island of Lombok is second to none in Indonesia, the friendliness of the Sasak people, the beauty of its beaches, coral reefs, and extraordinary biological wealth, the splendor of Mount Rinjani and the uniqueness of Sasak culture many of which invite admiration from tourists, as well as abroad. With beautiful beaches, Mount Agung Rinjani and spectacular marine life are exciting to explore. Lombok Island in West Nusa Tenggara has many tourist destinations on land and sea. No wonder Lombok is the most popular destination in West Nusa Tenggara. Not only is it beautiful, but it is also rich in natural products such as mining, petroleum, and marine products. Few foreign people hunt for rocks in Martapura and pearls in Lombok. Having such, extraordinary natural wealth assets certainly make people live prosperously.

However, looking at the facts, there are not a few people with low incomes classified as poor. If we compare it with the Netherlands, which is small and cannot produce spices, stones,
petroleum, and marine products, it is listed as one of the countries with the happiest people in the world. More precisely, the Netherlands is in fourth place after Denmark, Finland, and Norway. Seeing the reality that is happening, of course, this is not following the natural conditions that are so rich and the condition of the people who are still relatively poor. Natural resources and human resources significantly affect a country's welfare level. So far, the researchers' observations are based on the facts that occur in the problem of poverty, of course not because of the condition of natural resources, but can be said because of the low level of human resources.

Indonesia's Human Development Index (IPM) is ranked 121st out of 187 countries. We are far below neighboring countries such as Singapore (ranked 18th), Malaysia (ranked 64th), Thailand (ranked 103rd), and the Philippines (ranked 114th). Likewise, if we look at the structure of the Indonesian workforce, as many as 55.3 million (46.8 percent) have graduated from elementary school (SD). Based on the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2014) report, Indonesia's competitiveness rating is 38th. It is still lower when compared to several neighboring countries such as Singapore (second rank), Malaysia (24th rank), and Thailand (37th rank) [3].

Likewise, what happened in West Nusa Tenggara? The lowest NTB Human Development Index (IPM) results are no. 2 from the bottom of 33 provinces in Indonesia [4]. This is enough to prove the low level of human resources. Moreover, if the problem of poverty affects the destruction of nature, many experts argue that poverty is one of the leading causes of environmental damage [5]. The poverty rate in Indonesia is still relatively high. The number of poor people living in Indonesia is 12.49% of the total population. As a developing country, this percentage can hinder the population's welfare. Poverty in big cities may not have much effect on environmental damage, but poor people who live in villages tend to destroy the environment to meet their needs. If pressed by economic needs, they can destroy the forest or the surrounding environment or take natural wealth without calculation [6]. Poor people will cut down trees to make ends meet. They make use of marginal land disproportionately. If there is no reliable source of income to make ends meet, they are forced to seize natural wealth to fulfill it [7]. The forest is the only place they can use to survive. The environmental damage caused by people experiencing poverty tends to influence their mindset. The environment is only seen as a tool to meet the needs of life, so there is yet to be a plan to utilize the environment's wealth as effectively as possible.

Efforts to minimize this have been carried out by many people and certain groups from both the government and ordinary people. However, to prevent this kind of societal behavior, it is certainly not enough to prohibit it without the best solution to answer the problem. What is going on? One of the communities or organizations in Lombok that seeks to answer the problems that occur and become a driving force for the community to preserve nature while providing solutions to people's economic problems is the Sembalun Community Development Center (commonly called the Sembalun CDC or SCDC). SCDC is a community or organization that is very open to anyone wanting to participate in its program. The many volunteers who helped both local and foreign evidence this.

SCDC is an organization led by a young man named Royal Sembahulun. Royal is a native of the village of Sembalun who is the origin of this community. He is one of five award winners from the NTB Culture and Tourism Office (Disbudpar) for his dedication and participation in advancing NTB tourism. The award was handed over at the close of the 2015 Lombok-Sumbawa Cultural Month (BBLs). Regarding tourism, for Royal Sembahulun, NTB had all the necessary conditions. According to him, beautiful nature, diverse cultures, various historical sites, and thick cultural wisdom and traditions are tourism assets with high selling value. This includes security issues.
2. METHOD

The research method that the author uses is qualitative. Meanwhile, the notion of qualitative methods is interpreted as a type of data related to data analysis and interpretation or object of study [8]. Moreover, the implementation of research starts from experience. By making field observations at the Sembalun Community Development Center, the authors also conducted data analysis, starting to see the condition of the SCDC institution and the programs being implemented and conducting interviews and documentation.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Profile of Sembalun Community Development Center

SCDC is a non-profit organization engaged in the social, environmental, economic, and educational fields. This organization has been established since 2009 until now. This organization's purpose is for society’s welfare, both from environmental and economic conditions. The community fostered by SCDC is the Sembalun village community itself as, a community that will play a direct role in realizing the goals of the SCDC itself. The Sembalun community is immediately given guidance in stages by people who are experts in specific fields according to what is required by the SCDC itself. The mentors who guide the Sembalun community are not only local people but also come from abroad. They are all volunteers who deliberately visited to guide after they first registered online. Here people's skills are trained until the community is ready to enter the field. However, the unique thing is that not all forms of activities or programs carried out by SCDC can be separated from SCDC's efforts to protect the environment so that it remains a remembered object. Therefore, indirectly SCDC’s primary goal, namely as an organization that loves the environment and has a sense of responsibility to protect, care for and maintain it, is to provide appropriate solutions to address the socio-economic conditions of the Sembalun people.

3.2. Location of Sembalun Geographically

Geographically Sembalun is located at an altitude of 0 – 2,000 meters above sea level, with the boundaries of the area to the north of the Java Sea, to the south of Suela District, East Lombok, to the west of North Lombok Regency and Mount Rinjani National Park. East of Sambelia District, East Lombok Regency. Thus, Sembalun is an area with natural resource potential, which is very potential to be developed, especially for the tourism sector.

Apart from tourism, the main driving sectors of the community's economy are agriculture and plantations. The agricultural sector's commodities are generally upland plants, vegetables, and fruits. The area of land designated as a source of livelihood for the community is 1,060 hectares of agriculture and 1,900 hectares of gardens. Or with the average land ownership per person, 5 acres of agriculture and 8 acres of gardens. Sembalun has a population of 21,000. Suppose it is related to the availability of land, which is a source of livelihood for the community. In that case, one can imagine how economic growth can lead the Sembalun people to become prosperous.

3.3. Background to the Establishment of SCDC

Natural resources are the natural environment that has value to meet human needs. Natural resources are also defined as the environmental conditions of the raw materials used by humans to meet their needs and improve their welfare. Natural resources such as land, water, forests, grasslands, and so on can be recovered. Therefore, natural resources are all from the abiotic and biotic environment that can be used to produce goods to meet human needs.

Sembalun's natural resources have the potential to be developed, especially for tourism. The beauty of nature, cool air, culture, friendly and helpful community characteristics, and
various other supporting factors make Sembalun a very appropriate object for tourism. Sembalun is one of the most effective entry points for climbing Mount Rinjani. It has recently developed into a tourist destination, especially for foreign tourists, and the public has benefited directly from it. However, the benefits of tourism development in this area are still more remarkable for outsiders to Sembalun. The various opportunities open to developing society, especially the economy, to encourage a more prosperous society are still constrained by a need for more human resources. This is an obstacle that hinders progress and affects the minimum level of community participation in building it.

Starting from the experience of the founder of SCDC himself, Mas Royal Sembalun, when he was climbing Mount Rinjani, he met a foreign tourist who then asked him to have a chat together. In short, the foreign tourist asked Mas Royal Sembalun, that is, as a native of Sembalun with extraordinary natural assets, if they are well developed, then what can he do and give to nature and its people. Is he just a connoisseur who only sees and realizes his natural wealth without taking action on how to change and maintain nature so that it remains an asset that can promise the welfare of its people? This question was the first time he thought and pondered about the condition of nature and its people. He realized that he had enormous assets that he could develop to improve the welfare of his people, both in terms of nature and in terms of the economy.

He has coupled with frequent natural disasters such as floods and landslides around Sembalun Lawang, which are shipments from the surrounding hills. He realizes that the worsening natural conditions are detrimental to the community in terms of property and body and soul. This natural condition needs to be properly maintained; the local community exploits the forest unfairly. However, he also cannot blame the people's behavior because he realizes that the people's economic conditions are getting increasingly complex, making them depend on nature, especially forests. Seeing the imbalance that exists between people's behavior and natural conditions that are getting worse, Mas Royal begins to think about how he can invite his people to preserve and protect nature adequately, namely not to behave destructively or to over-exploit nature, besides being able to provide solutions to address social problems. Community regarding their economic condition. Because he is aware that the condition of chaos in nature and socio-economic society cannot be allowed to continue, if it is allowed to happen without any empowerment action, he will be prepared to face extinction and other disasters in the future.

Because of this, this was the background for Mas Royal, who initially only founded a small community consisting of several Sembalun youths, and over time faced many challenges and obstacles from both his community and outside the Sembalun community, such as direct opposition by traditional leaders because it is considered that this activity will shift the local culture of the Sembalun adat, namely the customs of their ancestors that have been for hundreds of years. This is one of the biggest challenges the SCDC community faces before it can finally provide concrete evidence for the community and become a reasonably large institution that is respected by the Sembalun village community.

3.4. Principles and Characteristics in the Work of SCDC Institutions

In carrying out all forms of activities guided by the principles of local culture and upholding the spirit of cooperation. The Sembalun community is a society that firmly adheres to its cultural customs. Therefore, as a traditional society, the mindset and perspective of everything cannot be separated from the cultural influence of the people. The Sembalun people are very anticipatory of interpretations from outside. For example, foreign cultures that enter must first pass through the filter stage from traditional leaders and community leaders.

As for the results of the interview regarding Principles and Characteristics in the Work of SCDC Institutions, namely:
“SCDC principles are reflected in every aspect of my work. First, we focus on empowering communities, not just providing assistance without involving them. Second, inclusion is key; we ensure all voices are heard, especially those that are often marginalized. Lastly, sustainability. We seek to build community capacity so they can continue to thrive after our assistance ends (S-1).”

Then related to the election in favor of SCDC institutions and the main attraction of their principles and characteristics.

“The characteristics of SCDC are especially important in rural areas. We approach every project with a deep understanding of the local context. Flexibility is key, as each community has different needs. We also encourage active participation, ensuring that our policies and programs truly reflect the aspirations of local communities (SW-1).”

Next, the characteristics of SCDC influence program implementation in rural areas.

“I believe that true change comes from empowering people. SCDC principles, such as inclusion and sustainability, create long-term impact. I saw how this institution not only provides instant relief, but also builds the foundation for sustainable change and supports society (BP-1).”

From the results of interviews with three different sources, a rich picture was drawn regarding the important role of the principles and characteristics of SCDC (Socially Conscious and Developmental Change) institutions in bringing about a positive impact in their work.

First, SM, a social development expert, highlighted the essence of focusing on community empowerment. For him, empowerment is not just providing assistance, but also encouraging community involvement in decision making and program implementation. This holistic approach creates a dynamic where the community is not only a beneficiary, but also an active partner who plays a role in every step of change. Second, SW, SCDC program coordinator in rural areas, highlighted the key role of inclusion in successful program implementation in rural contexts. By understanding the unique needs of each community, SCDC designs programs that take diversity into account, ensuring that everyone’s voice is heard.

This approach not only reduces the risk of inequality, but also increases its positive impact at the local level. Third, Bambang Prakoso, SCDC’s main donor, highlighted the importance of sustainability in this institution’s work. More than just the continuity of physical projects, the sustainability principles promoted by SCDC include sustainable positive impacts in society. By building community capacity, these institutions create a solid foundation for long-term change, helping communities become more self-reliant and able to face future challenges. In this way, SCDC not only provides instant solutions, but also makes a sustainable contribution to achieving social development goals.

3.5. Activities Programs of the SCDC Institution
a. Conservation of Natural Resources

The issue of global warming, which has now become an international issue, has become the responsibility of all parties to anticipate and overcome it, and long before SCDC was founded, the pioneers driving this institution were active in activities related to the environment, especially forest issues.

Returning to the initial goal of the SCDC agency, which is to protect and preserve nature and the environment, of course, it does not necessarily just issue warnings or prohibitions not to damage nature, but SCDC must be able to answer and provide solutions to the conditions of community economic problems which are one of the factors in people's behavior that does not protect and preserving nature and the environment especially the forest which is a cornerstone of natural stability. The author will explain the efforts made by SCDC in responding to community economic problems in the next sub-discussion. The author will
explain SCDC's efforts to increase ecological awareness in the Sembalun village community in this discussion.

In carrying out community development and empowerment programs, natural resources are an integral part where for the ecotourism sector; nature is the primary object, so its sustainability must be maintained through various activities and efforts such as:

1) Reforestation (greening), namely planting trees on deforested land and places prone to landslides or other natural disasters. This activity is carried out once every six months or once a year, depending on the natural conditions. SCDC is a driving force for the community to run the program.

2) Carry out mountain cleaning activities, namely cleaning and bringing down the garbage on the mountain. Issue a warning to every climber climbing Mount Rinjani to bring down his or her trash while climbing. Then another effort to keep the mountain clean is to provide warning boards in every tourism sector of Mount Rinjani. This is one of the efforts made by SCDC to keep Mount Rinjani clean.

3) Not only cleanliness on Mount Rinjani but also cleanliness in the entire tourism sector is also maintained, such as the cooperation program in cleaning the local environment.

4) Control of the extraction of existing biological wealth, which may affect the ecosystems within the natural area and various other related activities.

5) Conduct regular environmental and forest checks every six months to maintain biodiversity.

b. Sembalun Community Social Entrepreneur By SCDC

Communities capable of entrepreneurship are the big aspirations of SCDC. They are a must for those who have participated in SCDC programs in the context of human resource development, such as English courses, internships, and other development programs. Some of the programs run by SCDC are:

1) Development and Empowerment of Human Resources (HR)

SCDC, in its pursuit of enhancing the productivity and creativity of human resources, as well as initiating community development efforts, has implemented a series of impactful strategies. Firstly, it has adopted a collaborative approach that encourages the community to explore their resources, while still adhering to reasonable limits. This approach fosters a sense of togetherness and allows for the responsible utilization of communal assets.

Secondly, SCDC is dedicated to providing motivation and encouragement to empower individuals, instilling self-confidence and nurturing independence among the community members. Moreover, SCDC has established seven English teaching classes across four villages in the Sembalun sub-district, catering to different age groups, including children aged 3-6 years, children aged 7-13 years, and adults aged 15 years and above. This initiative aims to equip the community with valuable language skills. Additionally, SCDC offers apprenticeship programs to enhance the skill sets of the community, opening up opportunities for personal growth and development.

Recognizing potential within the business sector, SCDC has identified opportunities in fields such as tourism, organic farming, creative workshops, and other productive endeavors. These ventures are seen as a means to provide value to society. Furthermore, SCDC is committed to creating diverse employment opportunities, particularly for those who have previously engaged in SCDC activities, such as courses and internships. This aligns with the institution's mission to support individuals in discovering and utilizing their full potential. In challenging circumstances where resources are limited, SCDC takes on the responsibility of facilitating various activities and providing essential facilities necessary for community development and empowerment.
Lastly, SCDC extends an invitation to volunteers who wish to contribute their creative ideas towards achieving SCDC’s goals, including environmentally responsible activities such as waste processing and conservation efforts. In the core principle of community empowerment, SCDC emphasizes the importance of allowing the community to harness natural resources to their maximum potential, while also respecting the rights of future generations to these resources and preserving the integrity of the natural ecosystem.

2) Organic agriculture

As an agricultural area, Sembalun is also inseparable from the chemical farming system. The use of pesticides no longer refers to the recommended use recommendations, thus creating high dependence on chemical drugs (pesticides). Besides that, it is clear that every agricultural commodity has a high chemical residue content, which threatens the sustainability of the farming system [9]. Moreover, what is more, frightening is the security of consuming the agricultural products themselves. Seeing this condition is necessary to make genuine efforts to maintain the sustainability of agriculture with organic farming alternatives that can guarantee safety in consumption and break away from dependence on drugs and chemical fertilizers. SCDC, in carrying out this program, besides direct practice as concrete evidence, also conducts campaigns for healthy living with organically grown food.

3) Tourism

The natural potential as a tourist spot in Sembalun is very much. The existence of Mount Rinjani (active volcano), which is one of the tourist destinations, community culture, natural untouched natural conditions, and community activities, both agriculture, crafts, and other traditional activities is a potential that can be developed and become a tourism commodity that has an endless selling point [10]. Tourism development is driven under the principle of community empowerment by exploring local potential as a commodity with a selling value with participatory and sustainable management, where this can be realized by placing the community as the leading actor. The community-based tourism sector in Sembalun boasts significant potential for development across various dimensions:

a) Ecotourism

Sembalun is rich in natural beauty, offering soft tracks like the Sembalun Panorama walk, waterfalls, hills, leaf tours, and various other scenic spots. Additionally, trekking opportunities, particularly to Mount Rinjani, are abundant. SCDC plays a pivotal role in facilitating change within the local community, fostering their participation in the development of tourism in the Mount Rinjani National Park area [11]. This includes addressing social issues and providing assistance through programs focusing on environmental understanding, sustainable development, and responsible tourism. This support is particularly crucial for those engaged as Porters, Guides, and Tour Operators.

b) Cultural Tour

Cultural tourism is encouraged as an avenue for direct interaction between the community and tourists. This approach involves guiding tourists to stay in community homes and engage in various community activities during their time in Sembalun. By placing the community at the forefront of these experiences, cultural tourism becomes a practice that necessitates specific activities and infrastructure to empower the community [12], [13].

c) Teaching Tour

SCDC has introduced teaching tours, a groundbreaking concept that encourages tourists to participate in teaching activities, both in traditional schools and study groups fostered by the CDC, with a particular emphasis on English education. Similar to cultural tourism, tourists

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are encouraged to stay in the homes of residents during their visit, allowing for a more immersive experience.

d) Paragliding Tour

The establishment of the Sembalun paragliding club under the West Nusa Tenggara administration in 2013 has borne fruit, as it has produced talented young pilots from the region over the last two years. Paragliding, beyond being a competitive sport, has the potential to serve as an exhilarating tourist attraction, especially at locations like Puncak Bogor and the mountains [14], [15]. This not only opens up employment opportunities but also contributes to the growth of special interest tourism in Sembalun.

e) Bicycle Tour

Bicycle tourism is promoted through the provision of rental bicycles, allowing tourists to explore the diverse tourist attractions in Sembalun at their own pace. This initiative offers an enjoyable and eco-friendly means of experiencing the region's beauty.

4. CONCLUSION

From the results of the author's research at the Sembalun Community Development Center (SCDC) and the formulation of the problem that the author raises, the authors draw the following conclusions:

1. The role of the SCDC agency in increasing ecological awareness and developing the community's economy in Sembalun village is to pay attention to the ecological conditions of the Sembalun village community. Instil values of awareness to love and preserve the surrounding environment. Because natural resources are natural environments that have value in meeting human needs, SCDC makes Nature a resource that supports the improvement of human welfare, namely by providing programs related to nature observation activities such as reforestation, cleaning mountains, limiting the extraction of natural resources, carrying out periodic checks, efforts to recycle waste and work together in cleaning up the environment. The attitude of people who interact directly with Nature and their environment is an interaction of consciousness, which is nothing but a process of continuously giving birth to a world through life.

2. The role of the SCDC institution in developing the community's economy started with its efforts to invite the community to preserve its natural environment, which then impacted the community's economic condition. Because Sembalun is a mountainous area, it has much potential as a tourist attraction. Coupled with the well-maintained, beautiful and comfortable natural conditions, Sembalun is visited by many tourists. Therefore this is an excellent opportunity to answer the economic problems of the Sembalun village community. The tourists who visit are not only from the local community but also from abroad. Therefore, one of them is mastery of a foreign language, which must be considered. SCDC provides free foreign language courses. As hosts, the Sembalun people must be able to provide good service for tourists because this will also impact the income of the Sembalun people. SCDC, in this case, plays a significant role in the community because this institution directly provides coaching services to the community. The large number of people who take advantage of these tourist conditions, such as selling goods, providing places to take photos, which of course cannot be separated from choosing good spots, providing lodging and so on, proves that SCDC plays a significant role in efforts to prosper the economy of the Sembalun people. The community's level of success in managing their economy must be connected to SCDC's mentoring programs related to management and so on.
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Author declaration

Author contributions and responsibilities

The authors made major contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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