

The Management of a Community-Based English Language Course in the 21st Century: A Case Study of The Bale English Course, Central Lombok

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><i>Article History</i> Received: June 3, 2025 Revised: June 14, 2025 Accepted: June 25, 2025 Published: August 31, 2025</p>	<p>Non-formal education plays a crucial role in developing 21st-century competencies, particularly in English language skills. This study aims to analyze the implementation and management of learning at the Bale English Course (BEC), a community-based non-formal education institution, in developing the English language skills of rural communities. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews. The results show that the learning program at BEC includes class divisions based on ability, the use of participatory methods, the integration of 21st-century skills (4C), as well as support for contextual activities such as public speaking and social service. Obstacles faced include limited teaching staff and limited infrastructure. BEC plays a crucial role in developing English language skills, particularly in responding to 21st-century challenges through a community-based approach and simple, contextual learning programs, while maintaining the continuity of learning activities with an inclusive approach. The implications of this study show the importance of policy support and strengthening institutional capacity for non-formal education in rural areas.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most widely used foreign languages and serves as a global communication tool (Kurniawan, 2024; Rao, 2019). As Schneider (2005) states, English has become the dominant language in many regions of the world. In the current 21st-century era of globalization and digitalization, English language skills have become essential for accessing information, technology, education, and establishing international cooperation (Hasni, 2025). Although English has been widely integrated into the formal school curriculum, many learners, especially in rural or semi-urban areas, still face difficulties in achieving adequate proficiency (Setianingsih, 2025). Thus, learning English has become a necessity for every individual, either through formal or non-formal learning environments (Saraka, 2020; Suri et al., 2024; Tsamarahani et al., 2025).

Both formal and non-formal education share the same goal: to enhance learners' skills and competencies (Arfani, 2024). As one of the primary forms of non-formal education, course institutions play an important role in complementing formal education pathways (Andini et al., 2025; Irsalulloh & Maunah, 2023). Courses are defined as out-of-school education units that consist of individuals providing specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes to learning citizens (Reka, 2023). The existence of non-formal education institutions offers flexibility and contextual relevance in developing English language skills,

particularly in areas where access to formal education remains limited (Satria et al., 2025).

Several recent studies have highlighted the role of non-formal education in enhancing English language skills. For instance, a study conducted at Madrasah Diniyah in Central Java demonstrated that English storytelling techniques significantly enhanced the learning motivation and speaking ability of non-formal students, with speaking scores increasing from 55% to 87% following the intervention (Pramasdyahsari & Romadlon, 2024). In addition, a study on Kampung Inggris Kediri emphasized that non-formal institutions like this are effective in lowering affective filters, providing intensive language exposure, and facilitating fun and communicative learning activities (Rahayu, 2020). Another study from Majene showed that learners experienced a noticeable improvement in their speaking skills after attending learning programs in non-formal institutions, thanks to the supportive and interactive learning atmosphere (Danial et al., 2023).

To address this gap, this study examines the Bale English Course (BEC) in Pengejek Village, Central Lombok, a community-based English course initiated and managed by local youth. BEC offers a contextualized and sustainable approach to developing English skills and 21st-century competencies in rural settings. This research specifically aims to analyze the implementation of non-formal learning activities at BEC, focusing on management practices, learning strategies, and development efforts to

understand how such an institution supports English language learning in a rural community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Time and Place

This research was conducted from March to June 2022 at Bale English Course (BEC), a non-formal educational institution located in Pengerjek Village, Jonggat District, Central Lombok Regency. BEC serves approximately 120 participants across various age groups, with a teaching staff of 10 tutors. The institution was selected because it represents a unique example of community-based education, focusing on developing 21st-century competencies through English language learning and offering small-class learning experiences with personalized attention.

Research Design

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study: the management practices of non-formal course institutions and the implementation of local needs-based learning. This design was chosen to capture the meaning and subjective experiences of the informants, as well as the social and cultural context that influences the implementation of activities at BEC (Waruwu, 2024).

Research Subject

The subjects in this study were the founder, manager, and students at the Bale English Course. The technique of determining informants employed a purposive sampling approach, which involves selecting informants who are considered to have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement with the topic under study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2019). Key informants in this study include the institution's founder, several tutors, and students from various grade levels.

This research does not employ quantitatively defined variables. Instead, it focuses on qualitative themes that emerge from the data analysis process, including the motivation for establishing the institution, participant management strategies, the implementation of learning, and the challenges faced. The primary instrument in this research is the researcher, serving as a human instrument, supported by semi-structured interview guidelines, observation guides, and field notes (Zahroh et al., 2025).

Research Procedure

The research implementation was carried out through several stages:

1. Researchers made an introduction and initial approach to the institution; introduced ourselves to the institution, and established rapport with informants.
2. Data collection was conducted through: (1) in-depth interviews with founders, tutors, and course participants, each lasting 25–30 minutes. Furthermore, (2) direct observation of the learning process and institutional activities, both inside and outside the classroom, to capture the natural learning atmosphere.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019), consisting of three stages:

1. Data Reduction: Categorizing and filtering important information to highlight emerging themes.
2. Data Presentation: Displaying data using descriptive narratives and thematic matrices.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Continuously conducted throughout data collection.

To enhance data validity, the study employed multiple techniques:

- Source Triangulation: Data were collected from interviews, observations, and documentation to minimize single-source bias (Donkoh, 2023; Meydan & Akkas, 2024).
- Member Checking: Informants reviewed preliminary interpretations to ensure accuracy and credibility of the findings.
- Audit Trail: Maintaining detailed field notes and documentation to provide transparency in the analysis process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Facilities and Infrastructure at the Bale English Course

In general, BEC provides various basic learning facilities, such as whiteboards, markers, erasers, chairs, and a 'berugak' (traditional gazebo) for informal discussions or small-group activities. Simple toilets are also available near the rice fields to meet the needs of participants and tutors during activities. A unique feature of BEC is the learning hall, built amidst rice fields, which creates a natural, open, and distraction-free environment away from the hustle and bustle of the city. The outdoor setting enhances comfort and engagement, providing participants with a unique learning experience. In addition to the main hall, a dedicated registration area facilitates administrative processes for prospective participants and new members.

The combination of functional infrastructure, open learning spaces, and proximity to nature demonstrates that BEC prioritizes not only academic learning but also the holistic experience and comfort of participants. This distinctive environment supports participant motivation and engagement, making BEC an attractive institution for non-formal education.

Learner Management Planning at Bale English Course

Heriyadi, as the founder of Bale English Course (BEC), stated that the primary motivation for establishing this course institution was his desire to make a real contribution to increasing the students' capacity in Pengerjek Village to face the challenges of the times. He realizes that the era of globalization requires every individual, including the younger generation in rural areas, to possess adequate skills to compete at both national and international levels. One of these important provisions is the mastery of English as the language of global

communication.

Improving English language skills is one of the strategic steps to prepare young people who are adaptive to the times, especially in the 21st century. He refers to the four main competencies of the 21st century, namely Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity (4C). These four competencies are directly integrated into the learning planning and implementation process at the Bale English Course. Through the development of English language skills, students are expected not only to master the linguistic aspects but also to be trained in critical thinking, collaboration, effective communication, and creativity.

In the process of learner management planning, BEC not only focuses on the learning aspect in the classroom, but also provides comprehensive and contextual programs. Some of the activities designed include class divisions based on the learners' ability levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced), preparation of teaching materials tailored to the needs and characteristics of the participants, group discussions, and thematic learning that emphasizes language practices in everyday life.

In addition, BEC also develops supporting programs such as public speaking training, educational camping activities, and social services as a form of character education and soft skills strengthening. These activities are designed to shape individuals who are confident, communicative, and environmentally conscious. Bale English Course also collaborates with various parties, such as a travel team from Mataram, to broaden students' horizons and provide direct opportunities for interaction with English speakers. With an approach based on the needs of learners and the demands of the times, the management plan at Bale English Course demonstrates a strong commitment to creating a dynamic, inclusive, and relevant non-formal learning ecosystem.

Implementation of the English Language Development Process at the Bale English Course

The process of developing English language skills at the Bale English Course (BEC) begins with open recruitment for new learners. This activity is coordinated directly by the founder of BEC, Heriyadi, M.Sos, in collaboration with the teaching team that has been integrated into the institution's management structure. Open recruitment is conducted periodically as a starting point for participants to join the learning programs designed by the institution. The learning process at Bale English Course consists of three main stages: the introduction stage (orientation), the core stage (learning implementation), and the closing stage (evaluation).

1. Introduction Stage (Orientation)

At the initial stage, learners were introduced to the learning system implemented at BEC. The teachers give a warm welcome while explaining the various programs and activities that the participants will undergo during the course. This orientation activity aims to build self-confidence, closeness between participants and teachers, and mentally prepare participants for learning.

Next, participants were grouped according to their level of English proficiency, as determined through an

initial survey. This class division consisted of Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Classes. The purpose of this classification is to ensure the delivery of targeted material and support cooperation between participants of equal ability. This process also practiced collaboration skills from the beginning.

2. Core Stage (Learning Implementation)

The core stage is the primary implementation of learning activities, which occurs through various intensive and thematic learning programs. Each class has a learning schedule tailored to its level, with a frequency of meeting three times a week for three months for one learning cycle. The Three-Month Program is the main program in each class. In it, each month is focused on the gradual development of one or two 21st-century skills (4Cs):

- First Month: Focus on developing Critical Thinking and Literacy through analyzing images, readings, music, or podcasts. These activities are designed to help participants Practice Their Listening and Reading Skills.
- Month Two: Focus on Collaboration and Communication. Participants are divided into groups to discuss vocabulary, organize it into sentences, and present the results. This activity develops speaking skills and teamwork.
- Third Month: Participants are challenged to demonstrate Creativity through a project-based final project that emphasizes Writing skills and original idea delivery.

In addition to the regular program, BEC also develops two main supporting programs, namely: (1) Camping Program: Aimed at Advanced Class participants, it is held once every six months. This program includes intimacy nights, group discussions, public speaking, and study tours that aim to actively and intensively train the use of English outside the classroom. (2) Creativity Program: In this program, the board forms Creativity Teams that involve students in social activities such as community service, recruitment of new members, and management of institutional activities. This program aims to develop managerial skills, foster creativity, and cultivate a sense of belonging to the institution.

3. Closing Stage (Evaluation)

At the end of each program, whether monthly or special, such as camping, learners will participate in a learning evaluation that includes written and oral tests, as well as feedback sessions with the teacher. This evaluation is conducted in stages based on grade level (Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced) to measure the achievement of the skills that have been developed. This feedback is also used as a reflection and reference for program development in the next period.

Barriers in the English language development process at the Bale English Course

In the process of developing English language skills in the community, non-formal education institutions are not free from various obstacles. This is also experienced by the Bale English Course (BEC), which is one of the

English courses that actively contributes at the local level. Some of the challenges faced in implementing its program include aspects of human resources, learners, and learning facilities and infrastructure.

One of the primary challenges is the limited number of teaching staff. Until now, the institution still relies on teaching staff who are not permanent, considering that most of them have other commitments outside of teaching activities. This condition affects the continuity and consistency of learning activities designed by the institution.

Another significant obstacle is the limited learning space. Initially, learning activities were conducted in private homes that had limited capacity. As the number of participants increased, the learning space became inadequate, and the effectiveness of learning activities decreased. Expansion efforts were made by opening new land and building additional facilities; however, the limited land and funding remain challenges in the institution's physical development.

Discussion

Learning Environment as a Support for Non-Formal Education Processes

The learning space at BEC, situated amidst rice fields, creates a natural and open atmosphere that enhances participants' comfort, focus, and socio-emotional development, including empathy, emotion regulation, and interpersonal skills (Fikri & Oktaviani, 2023). Outdoor learning methods applied at BEC have been shown to improve speaking ability, vocabulary, and social interaction, consistent with findings from other non-formal and rural educational settings (Rahmawati, 2021; Wulandari & Mubaroq, 2022). The combination of adequate physical infrastructure, such as open halls and registration areas, with the natural environment supports a holistic learning approach that integrates cognitive, affective, and social aspects, aligning with garden-based and outdoor education theories (Annisha, 2024).

This learning environment effectively connects field observations with relevant theories and previous research, enhancing holistic development and supporting 21st-century skills (4C: Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Creativity). However, some references were duplicated, slightly interrupting the flow of discussion, and while challenges in learning implementation are identified, actionable solutions or recommendations remain limited.

21st Century Competency-Based Learner Management Planning Strategy

The community approach in non-formal education provides space for active participation of local people in designing programs that meet local needs (Johnson & Majewska, 2022). In the context of the Bale English Course (BEC), the initiative born from the village community reflects a bottom-up model of education that allows for a direct response to local and global challenges. The local youth-based management structure, as well as the operational flexibility of BEC, aligns with findings that non-formal education can bridge the limitations of the formal education system, especially in rural areas (Johnson

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Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) theory explains that learning materials become more effective when they are relevant to participants' real-life experiences (Jubhari et al., 2022). At BEC, the implementation of CTL is seen through thematic activities such as group discussions, public speaking, and educational camping, all of which relate English to everyday life situations. This approach supports the simultaneous and meaningful development of 21st-century skills (Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity), as also found in the study using CTL to improve the narrative writing ability of EFL students in Indonesia (Jubhari et al., 2022).

In addition to academic aspects, BEC explicitly designs soft skills training activities, including public speaking and social service, which educate participants to become confident and communicative individuals. Studies on soft skills development in non-formal institutions show that participatory social activities strengthen participants' interpersonal and leadership skills (Putra, 2023). This finding highlights that multifaceted approaches, such as those at BEC, are practical in developing the personal and social competencies essential for the 21st-century generation.

Implementation of 4C-based Thematic Learning at BEC

English language proficiency is one of the strategic steps to prepare young people who are adaptive to the times, especially in the 21st century (Buasuwan et al., 2025; Soghomonyan & Karapetyan, 2023)—referring to the four main competencies of the 21st century, namely Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity (4C). Trilling and Fadel (2009) assert that 21st-century skills are inseparable from collaborative, reflective, and creative learning processes, which reflect the importance of mastering expert thinking, complex communication, and applied imagination and invention. These four competencies are directly integrated into the learning planning and implementation process at the Bale English Course.

In the first month, multimodal analysis involving image processing, reading, music, and podcasts encouraged learners to think critically. This is in line with the explanation in Lubart et al. (2023), which states that critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (4C) skills interact dynamically, and that critical thinking in particular develops through the integration of reflection, evaluation, and problem solving in a challenging and meaningful learning context.

In the second month, the focus is on developing collaboration and communication competencies through group work and oral presentations. Learners participate in vocabulary discussion activities, sentence construction, and oral presentations of results in a group forum. Such activities not only train speaking skills, but also build effective teamwork. This finding aligns with those of Sulisyana (2023), who stated that the use of group work encourages students to be more active in their learning, trains them to collaborate with their peers, and fosters thinking activities that involve expressing ideas orally.

In the third month, learners are challenged to demonstrate creativity through a project-based final assignment that emphasizes writing skills and the original presentation of ideas. This approach enables participants to explore ideas independently and present them in a creative and meaningful manner (Habibah, 2024), providing space for students to experience contextual and applied learning that extends beyond traditional learning methods focused on memorization or one-way lectures (Hidayatullah & Udayani, 2025).

This project-based learning strategy directly supports the development of creativity skills, one of the main pillars in 21st-century competencies. In line with this approach, Trilling and Fadel (2009) emphasize that creativity and innovation are integral to 21st-century learning. It is essential to create a learning environment that enables students to generate innovative solutions, think creatively, and respond to real-world challenges in flexible and original ways.

Limited Learning Resources and Infrastructure

Based on the research results, the Bale English Course (BEC) faces significant challenges due to the limited number of non-permanent teachers. Personal adjustments to teachers' commitments outside of teaching activities affect program consistency. This finding aligns with research by Rahmi Fadilah et al. (2023), which indicates that the limited quality and stability of teachers in rural areas hinder the effectiveness of English language learning (Fadilah et al., 2023). Similar results were also reported by Pramesty et al. (2022), who stated that some teachers in rural areas come from non-English educational backgrounds, resulting in limited teaching competence and loyalty (Pramesty et al., 2022).

Inadequate learning space and facilities at BEC hinder effective interaction when the number of participants increases. This situation is reminiscent of the findings of Fitri Nur Laila et al. (2022), who noted that the lack of basic facilities, such as proper classrooms and learning materials, is a significant obstacle to teaching English in rural areas (Laila et al., 2022). Similar conditions were also identified by Saputri and Sukarno (2024), who highlighted the direct relationship between limited infrastructure and low student learning motivation in rural schools (Saputri & Sukarno, 2024).

The transformation of BEC into an inclusive and responsive institution shows that non-formal education can be a pioneer of community change. This principle aligns with a study by Yasinta & Sukarno (2024), which found

that active community participation strategies and non-formal program innovations can enhance education sustainability, particularly in overcoming formal access limitations (Saputri & Sukarno, 2024). This initiative shows the strong potential of community-based education to create an adaptive and relevant learning ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Bale English Course (BEC) effectively utilizes community-based non-formal learning to develop English language skills in Pengerjek Village, meeting the demands of the 21st century. Through well-structured management practices, contextual learning strategies, and development efforts, BEC fosters a dynamic and inclusive learning environment, despite its limited staff and basic facilities. The findings suggest that community-based non-formal education institutions can play a crucial role in enhancing English competence beyond formal education channels, underscoring the importance of ongoing support from local governments and education stakeholders.

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