

# The Value of Field Trips for Indonesian Primary School Students in Learning English (A Case Study in Merlion School Surabaya Indonesia)

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**Abstract:** This study is categorized a case study with a qualitative approach. This aim is to contribute some insight of the body of knowledge about the value of field trips in teaching English for primary students associated with the direct learning experience that can affect student attitudes, critical thinking skills, deepen relationships with friends, and create the motivation of students. To collect the needed data, some of the research instruments are used by applying the following three methods such as making field notes, conducting an in-depth interview, and doing documentation. On the basis of findings of the study known that some kinds of field trips activities, students, and teachers perspectives strengthen about the beneficial of field trips in learning English. Based on the practices viewed that interview, discussion and making report be a part of student activities during field trips.

**Keywords:** Field trips, Learning English, Primary school students.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

World globalization has generated a growing interest in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to young learners all over the world. Nowadays, there has been an explosion of English classes for young learners all over the world. In fact, English is an important to be mastered as it is one of the international languages in the world. Therefore, many people all over the world want to master English, including those in Indonesia. English was first officially introduced at primary level in Indonesia in 1994 (It is based on the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture no. 060/U/1993 and 1994 Curriculum). The Indonesian government releases the latest curriculum namely the 2013 curriculum (*Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Nomor 81A Tahun 2013* concerning Curriculum implementation). In this case, English at Primary level in Indonesia is categorized as a local content subject. The implementation of the 2013 curriculum in Primary level does not really maximally support Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) in terms of students' practices and motivation to create English environment. The method of learning English as a Foreign Language in primary schools tend to burden the students. It can be seen from the increased cognitive load to be borne as to memorize a lot of vocabulary, much grammar, many assignments and homeworks to be unclear objectives. It affects the students' motivation to learn English as a Foreign Language. According to Dörnyei (2009) motivation is an early stage that encourages students to learn a foreign language, because of without sufficient motivation students can't achieve long-term goals. To solve the problems, it needs an innovation and reference to enrich students' competency in learning and applying English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Primary School is the beginning level of students to learn English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia. The process of learning is part of the students successful to enrich their ability in English. Moreover, students' environment is very important to develop students motivation to learn English. Relating to the teaching of English to the theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), there is a common belief that children are better language learners than adults (Gass & Selinker, 1994: 239). Children, adolescents and adults have different neurological, cognitive and psychological learning foreign languages. In general, children become better learners than adolescents and adults, they are affected by factors

**International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning**Vol. 4, Issue 3, pp: (1-7), Month: May – June 2017, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

other factors beyond, Zhao (2004). Children have a natural desire to actively participate in the social life around them that helps them to learn a foreign language. If they know how to say it is easy for them to add to their spoken vocabulary, it will affect their confidence in communicating actively. While adolescents increasingly want to take responsibility for their own life, including forming their own views on education, and the way in which it is done. And adults will tend to be embarrassed and frustrated if they feel incapable to say the exact language of they means, Lightbown & Spada (1999). Most of the people support the claim that it is better to start learning language at young age rather than at adulthood. Children have more opportunities than adults because they do not have other responsibilities, while the main task of a child is learning. In addition, they can learn all the time with no worries and responsibilities are much like adult.

Children have benefit more than an adult in learning a second language. It is viewed from two different perspectives: learner characteristics and learning condition, Lightbown and Spada (1999: 33). In terms of learner characteristics, children get more benefits because their knowledge of another language, cognitive maturity, meta-linguistic awareness, and knowledge of the world is not that much compared to an adult. In addition, children will not feel nervous whenever they are unable to express the ideas in a language clearly and correctly, but adult will. In terms of learning condition, there are a number of situations which cause children to be more successful than adult; namely silent period, ample time, corrective feedback, and modified input (Lightbown&Spada, 1999: 33). It can be clearly seen that while children have the right to be silent until they are ready to produce the language, adults are seemed to be forced to produce the language.

In general, teaching and learning activities are carried out in the classroom. But in fact, students feel bored with the conditions of instruction in the classroom, so that the teaching and learning activities become less effective. It is necessary an innovation in learning English to student feel comfortable. Learning activities can be done not only in the classroom but also can be done outside the classroom. Having field trips is one of out-door English learning activities which are effective for students to facilitate good learning experiences. It is a wonderful opportunity for students of the Primary level to take a break from classroom activities and to have some fun and enjoyment in the entirely new environment while learning at the same time.

## 2. METHOD

The study employed a case study with a qualitative approach, adapted by Creswell (2010: 20). A case study is selected because it analyzes in detail and thoroughly on a case. It is used to study in-depth a unit of a social institution, Latief (2011). The subjects of the study were the principal, the Head of school, 6 English teachers, and 9 students of Merlion School. Meanwhile, the data of the study was taken from the principal, the head of School, the English teachers, the students, and from school documents. To collect the needed data, some of the research instruments were used by applying the following three methods; making field notes, conducting an in-depth interview, and documentation. Finally, in analyzing the collected data, the steps of qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984) and Patton (2002) covering data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification are used.

According to Patton (2002), the fundamental problem included in the qualitative approach are the data collection methods through several specific techniques employed in collecting needed data, such as field-notes, interview, and documentation.

### **Making Field-Notes:**

In this study, making field notes on teachers is also focused more on their activities in helping, guiding, and monitoring students' activity outside the classroom. Moreover, making field notes is also done to collect the data related to students' performance during the English practices outside the formal setting involving both their attitude and commitment in learning to improve their English proficiency.

### **In-Depth Interview:**

An in-depth interview is done by interviewing the school leaders, the teachers, and the students. In this study, an open-ended interview was done. The interview guide for the school leader consists of 9 items related to the role of the headmaster's policies, vision, and missions to build up a positive school culture and maintaining an inviting school climate. The interview guide for the teachers consists of 10 items related to the role of the teachers in handling English class, techniques used, and treatment of individual uniqueness. The interview guides for the students consist of 10 items related to what the student learns, kind of activity done, student's difficulty in joining the class and activity. Informally,

the process of collecting data was started when the researcher had preliminary observation. For the researcher would employ a case study, the researcher had to present some empirical data related to what makes effective practices for young learners to learn English EFL context. Although the data collection was done in term of preliminary observation, the collected data significantly supported the needed data of the study.

#### **Documentation:**

Documentation is employed to collect the data related to the school program about the field trips. In fact, the results of documentation are useful to support the lack of data collected through interviewing headmaster, teachers and students.

### **3. FINDINGS**

Teachers provide an important role in the success of out-class activities such as field trips and other outdoor activities. They make a plan that is suited to the material being taught previously. There are some out-class activities which are developed by some primary schools. One of the out-class activity is having field trips. The field study is one form of outdoor learning which occurs observation to uncover the facts in order to obtain data by waterfalls directly to the field. The field study is a scientific way that is done with the design operations in order to get more accurate results. In a field study, students invited to visit the spot where the objects will be studied that is available there. Various locations that can be used for field studies range from environment around the school, the original area of habitat of certain animals or plants, and the tourism area. In addition, some of the field trips are often made as museums, science centers, zoos, and other informal environment, (Cox-Petersen, 1998).

The field trips is giving opportunities for the students to learn out school through the study. The objectives are to build camaraderie and team works, develop/gain self-confidence and trust, and participate in different socialization and physical activities. Merlion school Surabaya had the following field trip program. The names of them are (1) UTC Field trip for Primary 6; It is done usually two days. The activities are fun which involves boating, practice for the night's performance and prepare for grilling corns, outbound activities, and flying fox. (2) Jogjakarta Field Trips; this trip is given to the primary 4 students every year. The objective of this trip is to explore the culture of Indonesia, learn the religion about Buddhism and Hinduism, to be familiar with the product made by the local people. Jogjakarta is a place in Indonesia which is very rich in its cultures. Students were also given chance to visit the king's Palace which is until now existing. The trip was 3 days and 2 nights, students took the train to reach the destination. (3) Mangrove Field Trips; for Primary 6 students to learn about the mangrove plantation and how to preserve them, students learned also the use of mangrove to the environment. This was a project for them. Since English was used during field trips, here the school provided a good learning environment. It was a non-threatening atmosphere in learning English. English was used in any contexts that made students more creative to use language. The well-planned activities help them to communicate in English naturally.

Based on the practices, there are some activities including in field trips such as interview, discussion and making a report. Then the students work in groups to interact with each other. The activities of field trips help the EFL students speak naturally and communicatively as possible (Cahyono, 2011). All activities make the student more active to speak English. The students' interview happen between student and teacher or tour guide. Student thinks critically about something new. The process of interviewing and discussing interact student relationship. It is related to what Behrendt (2014) concluded that student should discuss their observation and experiences to maximize student interest and learning. In-depth interviews of field trips revealed positive long-term retention of information (Leatherbury, 2011).

The learning activities outside class are more challenging for students and building bridges between theory in the book and the fact that in the field. The quality of learning in a real situation will increase the capacity of learning achievements through the object being learned and can build social skills and personal the better. Outside learning can be done at any time in accordance with the design program created by the teacher. Outside learning can be done in normal learning time, before or after school learning activities, and the moment of school holidays.

In addition from students and teachers perspective about field trips. Some students who are interviewed feel interested and enthusiastic to join field trips. It gives positive effects on student attitudes towards learning (Leatherbury, 2011). Students were interested in exploring new experience and places. The relationship among students happened during field trips. Student asks many questions about the object in the places in English. The ability of students' speaking English can increase during field trips activities. In addition, it influences student motivation to learn English. The benefit of field trips is also stated by some interviewed teachers. Based on the result of interviewing teachers, some teachers who joined field

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Vol. 4, Issue 3, pp: (1-7), Month: May – June 2017, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

trips said that field trips can maximize student ability to speak in English, it can also make the students feeling confident to visit new places and help students to think critically when student observe and discuss that object in the places. It is appropriate to teachers' perspective in Anderson, et al (2004). Teachers make a connection between reality and theory learned in the classroom, in addition to provide an authentic learning experience for the students, then the students can interact with others and this is a fun activity. The teachers perceive that the field trips provide valuable experience for the students. Besides, the field trips also affect the students' experience, so the teachers should make plans that are tailored to the needs of students. Then field trips also help to increase the students' knowledge in addition to that obtained in the classroom.

### 4. DISCUSSIONS

Based on the findings, out-side learning activities are some alternative ways how the teacher improve the learning capacity of the children. Children can learn in more depth through the objects encountered than if they have learning in the classroom that has a lot of limitations. Furthermore, learning outside the classroom can help children to apply knowledge. Knowledge is part of metacognition. Metacognitive includes two elements: skills and knowledge. Metacognitive skill is self-regulating activity shown by students that can be used before, during and after the learning activities. Metacognitive knowledge refers to the knowledge of students. This knowledge is magnified by the reflection of the learning experience and can be used in the planning of tasks to learn more. The learning experience here related to the experience of students in acquiring a language. Besides, Jager (2004) said that metacognition does not develop automatically for all students and teachers play an important role in its development. This is also supported by research conducted by Nielsen (2009) describing the behavior of students during visiting to the amusement park. Student behavior manifested through the interaction of students in their groups during field trips. The interaction between the students made through a learning task in engagement with their group. Students who participate actively demonstrated to increase awareness of themselves become metacognitive through talking to each other.

The implementation of learning out-class activities are proposed to create each individual to develop creativity and personal initiative. Another objectives are to make student be able to realize the potential of every individual to life, provide opportunities for learners to perceive directly on the material being presented, and make learners enable to develop their skills and interest of students in activities outside the classroom, develop the relationship between teachers and students better with a variety of experiences that can be found, provide opportunities and direct learning experience for students. Besides, they can increase students' ability to use existing sources in the outside environment and the surrounding communities. The process of learning outside the classroom will be able to develop and build a learning environment that is so much fun through challenging and motivating in which students not only interact with a source of learning, but it can learn from experiences and interaction with the environment to places visited. Learning outside the classroom use several activities such as assignments, frequently asked questions, and learn by doing or practicing with learning situation. According to Ellison (2012:348), the outdoor space can provide opportunities to develop not only their physical skills but also emotional, social, and cognitive skills. In other words, through play, for example flying fox, the students experience a wide range of skills –mathematical, technological, and linguistic- in the enjoyable and independent way.

In addition, there are also some benefits of learning outside the classroom for the student in this case related to field trips activities. Having field trips can increase students' knowledge. Through field study students will have a high learning experience for interacting with objects directly. Students who participated in field trips have educational experiences and knowledge more than those who are just learning in the classroom. It gives positive effects on student cognition (Leatherbury, 2011). In addition, the students can learn more in the field of activities rather than textual learning through books. This matter due to a variety of real phenomena that are not contained in the book can be observed directly so that the curiosity of students. Curiosity will encourage students for answers or hard study. In this case, the student do not only observes the object directly but also obtain information by conducting interviews or listening from the teacher or tour guide. Even it is line with Rachmajanti (1995) that students can exchange information obtained from another student, it aims to improve their communication skills through combining arrangement. Moreover, field trips can also be used as additional source of learning and giving the student's experience of visiting new places. It means that on learning outclass activity use concrete learning media and students understanding the environment around it. It is supported by Dewitt (2008)who summarizes that field trips have an effectiveness as a learning experience for the students. Legutko (2005) suggest that field trips give positive effects on student learning.

Then, one of the major joys that the children like is to stay in enough space, outside the room, to be energetic, to explore to the limits their physical skills and to gain the confidence to take manageable risks in their play. Another value of field trips like taking students to an art museum can improve students' critical thinking skills. When a museum guide explains about a certain object, the students are interested in questioning when, how it happened a long time ago. Their critical thinking improves by being stimulated both the existence of objects and the guide explanation during in the museum. It is related to Mahgub (2014) that field trips were beneficial learning and develop innovative skills and create the student to think critically.

According to Chavez (2016), there are five advantages of having school field trips: 1) Field trips enable students to visit new places and new environment. It erases the boredom of classroom lecture, especially on their most hated subject and teacher, even just for a while. New environment provides new challenges that motivate the student to learn and get new learning information. 2) For students, field trips is a day-off from class or a no class at all activities. It is more about excitement, enjoyment, fun without the pressure of being called to answer a question or be given a shocking quiz. They are given the opportunity to interact with one another in more informal, natural, relax atmosphere. 3) Through field trips, students learn naturally by doing a hand-on experience. They learn effectively because their senses are actively interested in what they are doing that is more applicable than in classroom setting. 4) Field trips are amazing opportunities for students to be exposed to places that are not commonly visited by their family. Parents may want to expose their children to many places and event that are of educational value, but due to unavoidable reasons, for example lack of time, knowledge and money, they are not able to do so. 5) Field trips are effective methods to teach difficult and complicated topics like when the teacher teaches writing descriptive and historical facts. With field trips, students can understand easily the real object that they want to describe. Before the actual trip, the students should already be given an advance list of the task that they should perform so they will have insight on what is going to do when they arrive in their trip destination, Pamela (2011).

Field trips help students not only to acquire work skills from education but also to increase their appreciation to the breadth of human accomplishment. The objective of education is to transfer the value from the last generation to today-generation. Someday they are expected to be a more civilized young generation. In addition, exposing students to actual learning experiences like school trips is effective in the sense that it is totally a different experience and approach for students to acquire knowledge while having fun and relaxation at the same time. The concept that students learn better when they are enjoying themselves is increasingly accepted nowadays.

Based on the explanation above, it is known that the understanding of the students to the material can be increased, students have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and potential by perform daily activities in learning, in the specific, it has a positive influence on long-term memory and naturally the natural environment strengthens memory. The effective field trips and individual experiences can effect individual growth and improved social skills, it can improve the effective and bridging of the students' High Order Thinking (HOT), Stoddard (2009). Meanwhile some of the advantages of field trips such as it will enhance the learning achievements through ability to organize, the better approach for studying of direct object is the main thing, it can improve the attitude towards of good environment, the involvement of each participant is higher when compared to learning classical, The material or information obtained will be long remembered and not be abandoned.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

It can be concluded that having field trips is a school program designed by teachers for the creation of a pleasant learning environment outside the classroom that aims to improve enhance students' understanding regarding the material taught. It is a program of student learning directly into the field, to see and observe automatically arise curiosity of students and the need for the students to be a lot of asking for not being able to explain the phenomena observed directly in the field. Students will know more about learning objects than just reading a book by getting an explanation directly from experts, it is more encouraging to the students to think critically. Critical thinking skills are supposed to be part of the curriculum in the school. Lessons need to be conditioned for students to develop critical thinking skills (teaching for thinking). In other words, students must be given meaningful experiences for learning in order to develop their critical thinking skills. Thus, teachers as educators are obliged to condition the learning so that students are able to develop intelligence and critical thinking skills.

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 Vol. 4, Issue 3, pp: (1-7), Month: May – June 2017, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

It also provides experiences through objects, places, situations, and relationships between people in the school that can't be provided in class. Not all of the events and learning objects can be presented in the classroom, and therefore the field trips can solve the problem through direct research. It deepens relationship with friends in the classroom and training cooperation among students in a group. Field trips activities are required to be able to make a good report by a group, a good report could not have come if there is no good cooperation students in a group. Based on the above, it can be concluded that the outside class practices which having field trips are practically used to create a conducive environment for learning English, The activities are designed in increasing students' competency in learning English.

Then, The basic thing when it participated in the field trips is to increase knowledge other than that obtained from the classroom. Knowledge is part of the elements of metacognitive students have acquired through learning experiences that do not develop briefly but through a long process. As well as students who participate actively in the interaction within a group showed an increase in the student metacognitive awareness. A knowledge gained through field trips can affect long-term memory of students. Students interact directly with objects and have the experience felt by students.

Suggestions for the English teachers, the need to know how to set and met learning goals is important to be introduced (taught) not only for teachers but also students as well. This gives positive impact in which the teachers will know where and how they will conduct informal teaching practices. On the other hand, for the students they will know what they are going to achieve of the presented materials and the given exercises. Besides, creating a situation with low-pressure and helping students understand the more casual uses of English are requested. The created programs or activities can be used as valuable resources to facilitate the students to fully participate in a nurturing setting. The provided activities and strategies are able to invite student's engagement in practicing their English. That is why, the techniques of direct practice in peer and communicative learning are suggested being used to improve the student's active involvement.

Suggestions for researchers is a field trip must be prepared teachers with careful planning and has been included in the school curriculum, the activities required to reflect on the experience of students and reconnect with what is being learned in class, field trips take time and preparation of students for travel expenses also need to be taken into account appropriately. So all points already planned in accordance with what is expected by students and teachers.

Suggestions for the school that institution should understand the potential types of field trips that may involve students actively and support teachers in obtaining effective learning objectives through activities outside the classroom. It is a link between the school curriculum and the learning objectives to be achieved. It is necessary to build a good school culture to support the process of English teaching and learning. Positive connected among the schools' members enables the teachers and the students to create well learning environment. The created learning environment has a powerful effect in stimulating students and offering effect on learning motivation.

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 Vol. 4, Issue 3, pp: (1-7), Month: May – June 2017, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

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