

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Background**

Globalization has brought significant changes to various aspects of human life, particularly in the field of communication. One of its most notable impacts is the increasingly important role of the English language as a tool for global interaction. English functions as a common language that facilitates communication between individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds, promoting a more connected and globalized world. As such, English is no longer merely a foreign language, but a fundamental skill required in various fields such as education, science, technology, international business, and digital communication. This worldwide transformation has led numerous countries, including Indonesia, to reconsider their English language education policies in order to stay competitive on the global stage. However, the extent to which these global policies are effectively translated into local educational contexts remains uncertain, especially in regions with significant disparities in access and resources.

In Indonesia, the demand for English proficiency has risen significantly in recent years. This trend is reflected in the broadening of English curricula at various educational levels and the growing interest in extracurricular English programs. Nevertheless, Indonesia's position in the EF English Proficiency Index (2023)—ranked 79 out of 113 countries—reflects the relatively low English proficiency of its population. This is a concerning issue, especially in light of the World Economic Forum's (2022) emphasis on English proficiency as a key component of competitiveness in the global workforce. Although efforts have been made to improve English instruction, challenges remain in ensuring equal access across all regions of Indonesia.

As English education gains greater national attention, its implementation at the primary school level in Indonesia remains uneven. The removal of English as a compulsory subject in previous national curricula has relegated its status to an extracurricular activity, accessible only to schools with adequate resources—typically in urban or private settings. This situation has created a stark gap between students in urban and rural areas, particularly in Eastern Indonesia, where limited infrastructure and teacher shortages are persistent issues. This inequality raises critical questions about how English language education can be made more inclusive and accessible for all Indonesian children, regardless of their geographic or socio-economic background. Addressing these disparities requires not only national policy reform but also locally grounded initiatives that directly respond to the realities of rural communities.

To address this issue, the Indonesian government has introduced the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum and announced the reintroduction of English as a compulsory subject at the primary level starting in 2027. This policy represents a step toward a more equitable and structured national language education framework for English. However, for the program to be truly effective, strategies must be tailored to local contexts and the actual needs of communities in remote and underserved areas. Significant challenges persist, including the lack of qualified English teachers, limited teaching materials, and a general lack of awareness about the importance of early English education, particularly in rural communities. These challenges highlight the need for alternative approaches that extend beyond the formal education system, particularly those that empower local actors and utilize community resources. In order to understand the pedagogical implications of early English instruction, it is essential to first consider the theoretical perspectives that underpin second language learning.

From a theoretical perspective, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research underscores the importance of early exposure to a

second language. Ellis (2008) emphasized that language acquisition involves both conscious and unconscious processes shaped by input, interaction, and individual learner differences. According to the Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967), there is an optimal window during childhood when the brain is most receptive to language learning. Lightbown and Spada (2006) also argued that early and natural exposure to a second language can result in better pronunciation and grammatical sensitivity than when learning begins later in adolescence or adulthood.

Pedagogically, introducing English at the elementary level provides both cognitive and social benefits. Early language instruction can improve learners' awareness, memory, concentration, and self-confidence. However, the effectiveness of English language education for young learners depends largely on how it is delivered. Simply adding English to the curriculum is not enough; teaching must be engaging, relevant, and responsive to the cultural and contextual realities of learners. A one-size-fits-all approach often fails to meet the diverse needs of children, especially those in rural or marginalized communities. Consequently, the success of English learning among young learners depends greatly on how local communities adapt teaching practices to their specific cultural and social environments.

In remote and resource-limited communities in Eastern Indonesia, traditional classroom teaching is often not possible due to limited infrastructure. This reality calls for innovative community-based learning models that leverage local resources, social support systems, and volunteer participation. Community-Based English Learning (CBEL) programs offer an alternative approach, enabling children to access English language education despite institutional and logistical barriers. These programs typically involve community volunteers, informal learning spaces, and materials adapted to the local context and learners' needs. Such programs serve as both educational and social movements, emphasizing collective responsibility and shared participation in children's learning.

A relevant case study is in Hutumuri, a traditional village (*negeri adat*) located in the southeastern part of Ambon Island, within the administrative boundaries of Leitimur Selatan District, Ambon, Maluku. Situated along a winding coastal road, Hutumuri is approximately one hour by motorcycle or two hours by public transportation from Ambon City. The village is bordered by Toisapu to the north, forested hills leading toward Kilang to the east, and the Banda Sea to the south. To the southwest, it shares a boundary with Negeri Rutong. Despite its relatively remote location, Hutumuri functions as an educational center for surrounding communities, hosting two elementary schools (SD Kristen Hutumuri and SD Inpres 52 Lawena Hutumuri), one junior high school (SMP Negeri 8 Ambon), and one senior high school (SMA Negeri 8 Ambon). Beyond its geographical and educational profile, understanding the social and cultural characteristics of Hutumuri is essential to contextualize how CBEL operates within this unique environment.

Socially, the community of Hutumuri is predominantly Christian and known for its strong communal ties rooted in customary (*adat*) traditions. Values such as mutual cooperation, collective responsibility, and religious harmony are highly respected and practiced in daily life. These social dynamics create favorable conditions for grassroots, community-driven initiatives, including non-formal educational efforts. The strong social cohesion and shared cultural identity of Hutumuri provide a solid foundation for supporting alternative education models outside the formal system. These communal values not only facilitate cooperation but also cultivate a sense of shared purpose that aligns closely with the principles of community-based education.

What makes Hutumuri particularly unique as a research site is the combination of its geographic isolation, educational limitations, and strong community cohesion rooted in customary (*adat*) traditions. Unlike many other rural areas, Hutumuri functions as a central educational hub for surrounding villages, despite the lack of English teachers in both of

its elementary schools. The community's active role in sustaining a non-formal English program—entirely initiated and maintained by volunteers—demonstrates a rare form of grassroots educational resilience. This blend of remoteness, educational disparity, and cultural strength provides a distinctive and meaningful context for studying how CBEL can thrive in underserved areas. Therefore, Hutumuri offers an ideal setting to examine the dynamics of educational sustainability within a community-led framework.

This lack of formal instruction has left a significant gap in early English education, which is usually introduced only at the junior high school level. During their primary years, children have limited access to structured learning, although many are exposed informally to English through digital media such as YouTube, online games, and social platforms. This informal exposure presents an opportunity to develop a CBEL program tailored to the children's specific learning environment. By leveraging community resources and culturally relevant teaching methods, the CBEL program in Hutumuri responds to both the linguistic and social needs of its young learners in a context where formal solutions are not yet available. This initiative illustrates how grassroots movements can complement formal education policies by addressing local needs directly through community-driven efforts.

To address this educational gap, a CBEL program was initiated in August 2024 for elementary-aged children in Hutumuri. The program aims to provide free, engaging English lessons outside the formal school system, focusing on basic communication skills through contextualized and interactive methods. It is run by two dedicated volunteer teachers without formal funding and has been sustained by strong community support from parents and local youth.

Even without institutional support, the CBEL program in Hutumuri continues to function consistently. Learning sessions are held twice a week and include songs, games, stories, and local cultural content to create a fun and relevant learning atmosphere. Lessons focus

on foundational English skills such as basic vocabulary (e.g., numbers, fruits, classroom objects), greetings, everyday expressions (e.g., asking for permission, saying thank you), simple self-introductions, and classroom routines. As the program continues, it offers valuable insights into both the opportunities and challenges of sustaining CBEL initiatives in resource-limited settings.

Children participating in the CBEL program in Hutumuri exhibit diverse learning needs and abilities. Some are enthusiastic and eager to communicate in English, while others require more time and support to grasp basic expressions or follow simple instructions. This variation reflects their different levels of exposure to English, cognitive development, and learning styles. Understanding how these students engage with the lessons, what motivates them, what challenges they face, and how they respond to different types of instruction, is crucial for evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of CBEL as an alternative educational model.

While the CBEL program in Hutumuri demonstrates stability and strong community involvement, it lacks formal program documentation. There are no written lesson plans, weekly or term-based learning schedules, or systematic records of students' progress beyond attendance lists and occasional worksheets. Instructional decisions are made spontaneously by facilitators based on immediate classroom conditions rather than a documented curriculum or evaluation framework. This absence of formal documentation makes it difficult to monitor learning trajectories, ensure instructional continuity if facilitators change, or clearly communicate the program's structure to external stakeholders. At the same time, it highlights a critical gap between the program's potential contribution to early English education and the limited tools available to sustain and institutionalize such initiatives.

The CBEL program in Hutumuri is sustained not only by volunteer teachers but also through strong involvement from parents and other community members. Parents consistently motivate their children

to attend sessions, supervise their learning and occasionally assist with instructional materials at home. Youth volunteers help organize activities and maintain a safe and engaging learning environment. Local leaders, including church figures and village officials, have shown their support by acknowledging the program's social value and providing informal legitimacy. This collective involvement contributes to the continuity, relevance, and shared ownership of the program, which are essential for its operation in a resource-limited community context. However, the long-term sustainability of such initiatives remains a key concern, as many community-based programs struggle to maintain consistency without external support or structured management.

In recent years, various studies have highlighted the significance of community participation in language education. Darma and Apriani (2024), for instance, found that engaging local communities can enhance student motivation and participation, particularly in Indonesia's 3T regions (*Tertinggal, Terdepan, dan Terluar*). Similarly, Andianto et al. (2023) emphasized the effectiveness of interactive teaching strategies in community settings, although their research primarily focused on secondary school learners. In another context, Bolaños et al. (2018) demonstrated that community-based approaches in rural areas of Latin America substantially improved children's foundational English skills.

Despite these contributions, existing research has paid limited attention to non-formal, volunteer-driven English programs designed for elementary learners in coastal and underserved Indonesian communities. In particular, little is known about how such initiatives are implemented and sustained over time in contexts lacking formal instructional documentation. Issues of long-term sustainability in resource-constrained rural areas therefore remain under-explored. Accordingly, this study examines the CBEL program in Hutumuri as a community-led initiative and analyzes how implementation, instructional practices, learning outcomes, and sustainability interact within its sociocultural context.

Sustainable education programs in rural contexts require careful design, local ownership, and consistent support. According to UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) framework, effective interventions must engage local stakeholders and empower communities to take responsibility for their children's learning. In this regard, this study will investigate how collaboration between parents, local village leaders, and volunteers can strengthen the sustainability and impact of the program.

Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the development of alternative, context-sensitive English language education models that are inclusive, sustainable, and replicable across rural Indonesia. By focusing on community-based approaches, this study supports the vision of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) for inclusive and equitable quality education, ensuring that no child is left behind regardless of their condition, geographic or socio-economic background. Therefore, this study adopts a qualitative case study design to explore how CBEL can foster inclusive and sustainable English learning among elementary school children engaged in the CBEL initiative in Hutumuri.

Overall, conducting this study is important both academically and practically. While national policies aim to improve English education access, they often fall short in rural areas due to infrastructure and staffing limitations. The CBEL program in Hutumuri offers a rare opportunity to investigate a community-driven model that operates with minimal resources but strong local support. Studying this initiative provides valuable insights into how non-formal, grassroots education can serve as a complementary solution to formal schooling in underserved regions. Moreover, this research fills a gap in existing literature by focusing on early English learning in a rural, coastal Indonesian village—an area rarely represented in previous studies. Hence, this study not only documents the implementation of a community-based English learning program but also contributes to broader discussions on sustainable and inclusive education in Indonesia's rural contexts.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following research questions, which are designed to guide the exploration of CBEL implementation, impact, and sustainability in Hutumuri:

1. How is the CBEL program implemented for elementary students in Hutumuri?
2. To what extent does the CBEL program support the development of students' foundational English skills (e.g., basic vocabulary, greetings, simple expressions, and classroom language) in Hutumuri?
3. What interactive teaching strategies are most effective in enhancing students' foundational English skills in the CBEL program in Hutumuri?
4. What are the main challenges in implementing and sustaining the CBEL program in Hutumuri?

## **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

In alignment with the research questions, this study is intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To describe the implementation of the CBEL program for elementary students in Hutumuri,
2. To examine the improvement of students' foundational English skills through the CBEL program,
3. To identify the interactive teaching strategies used in the CBEL program,
4. To explore the challenges encountered in implementing and sustaining the CBEL program in Hutumuri.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

Understanding the significance of this study requires recognizing both its academic contributions and its practical implications for community-based language learning. The findings of this study are

expected to contribute to the following significance:

1. Theoretical Significance

This study enhances the academic discourse surrounding Community-Based Language Learning (CBLL) by examining its impact on young learners acquiring English. It sheds light on how CBLL can function as an alternative or complementary pathway to formal education, particularly in communities lacking access to qualified English instructors. In addition, this research illustrates how foundational concepts from SLA including comprehensible input and sociocultural learning theories can be meaningfully implemented in community-driven educational initiatives.

2. Practical Significance

- 1) For Educators and Volunteers: The results provide actionable recommendations regarding teaching techniques, instructional resources, and learner engagement strategies suitable for non-formal education contexts. These findings can help both current and future facilitators improve the effectiveness and reach of CBEL programs.
- 2) For Local Community and Policy Makers: This study provides data-driven insights that can inform village leaders, local and wide policy stakeholders in strengthening the sustainability of the initiative. These insights may assist in shaping policies, guiding resource distribution, and encouraging collaborative efforts to expand access to English language learning for children in the community.
- 3) For Future Researchers: This case study serves as a valuable point of reference for scholars examining the long-term viability, implementation challenges, and instructional possibilities of community-based education models, particularly those relevant to remote and underserved Indonesian regions.

Overall, this study is also expected to inform future community service and language education programs in rural Maluku, highlighting

the potential of community-based initiatives to bridge educational inequality. More importantly, the findings contribute crucial information regarding both the effectiveness and the risks of unsustainability of CBEL, offering critical policy recommendations for the government's efforts to integrate English language learning as a mandatory subject nationwide.

### **1.5. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

#### **1. Scope of the Study:**

This study focuses on four core aspects of the CBEL program: (1) program implementation, (2) the development of students' foundational English skills, (3) interactive teaching strategies employed by facilitators, and (4) challenges related to program sustainability within a rural, resource-limited context. These aspects are examined through patterns of classroom interaction, student participation, and community involvement in order to capture the social and pedagogical dynamics of the program.

The study is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of SLA, particularly the concept of comprehensible input and community-based learning. Rather than examining policy, curriculum development, or formal assessment, this study focuses on how CBEL fosters social interaction and participation in a non-formal rural learning environment. The findings derived from this scope are expected to reflect authentic classroom interactions and social participation within the CBEL setting.

#### **2. Limitations of the Study:**

Despite its comprehensive scope, this research acknowledges several limitations that may affect the generalizability of its findings. This study was conducted only in Hutumuri Village, Ambon, Maluku. Therefore, its findings may not be generalizable to other rural areas that have different social, economic, or cultural contexts. The study was also limited to elementary students who actively participated in the CBEL program, excluding those who did not engage in the

program.

As this is a qualitative study, data were collected through classroom observations, interviews with facilitators and parents, and analysis of relevant documents such as teaching materials and students' assignments. Consequently, the assessment of students' English progress does not rely on standardized testing procedures and may vary among participants. The limited timeframe for data collection may also restrict the ability to observe the long-term impact and sustainability of the program. Furthermore, potential issues such as limited teaching resources and fluctuating attendance may influence instructional consistency and data quality.

In addition to these limitations, several potential challenges may arise during the research process. These include inconsistent student attendance due to family obligations or weather conditions, limited availability of facilitators and parents for interviews, and the possibility of interruptions in regular CBEL sessions. To mitigate these issues, the researcher will apply a flexible observation schedule, conduct interviews during convenient hours, and collect supporting data from multiple sessions to ensure data completeness and reliability.

Nevertheless, by employing flexible scheduling, triangulated data collection, and contextual sensitivity, the researcher aims to ensure that the findings remain credible and representative of the realities in Hutumuri.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Previous Studies

Research on community-based English learning initiatives in rural contexts has gained increasing attention in recent years, particularly as an alternative model where formal instruction and resources are limited. One of the earlier studies in this field was conducted by Bolaños et al. (2018), who implemented a community-based English project in a rural EFL classroom in Colombia. This study emphasized the integration of local context in teaching materials and promoted active student participation through collaborative approaches. Using a qualitative method involving classroom observations and teacher reflections, the researchers found that community involvement and participatory strategies significantly enhanced students' motivation and language skills. However, as the study was conducted in Latin America, its findings present contextual differences from rural Indonesian settings such as Hutumuri, particularly in terms of socio-cultural structures and educational infrastructure.

In a more recent study, Andianto et al. (2023) examined the optimization of the Banjarrejo Language Village program through the ESTAGE approach (English for Students through Active and Guided Engagement). This initiative, rooted in the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model, utilized participatory methods to engage community members. The findings showed that ESTAGE improved English literacy among teenagers and adult learners. Nevertheless, the study did not focus on primary school-aged children, which are the target group of the current research. Furthermore, it lacked a detailed exploration of teaching strategies that are developmentally appropriate for young learners, such as the use of songs, games, and storytelling.

Darma and Apriani (2024) investigated the role of parental and community support in promoting English language learning among

children in South Sumatra. Employing a mixed-method approach that combined surveys and interviews, the study revealed that strong social support from parents and community members enhanced children's motivation and confidence in learning English. However, the study primarily focused on social dynamics rather than instructional strategies or classroom practices. As such, it did not address how specific community-based teaching methods could be designed and implemented for younger learners in rural contexts.

Broadening the discussion to a national scale, Stroupe (2024) explored the challenges and opportunities of English language education across seven rural regions in Indonesia. Employing a comprehensive methodology that involved 27 classroom observations, surveys, and interviews with 446 participants, the study highlighted key issues such as limited teaching resources, lack of professional development, and deficits in digital infrastructure. While this research provided a valuable macro-level perspective, it emphasized the need for more localized, community-level studies that explore how rural communities can creatively respond to these challenges—an area that the current study seeks to investigate more deeply.

In a more focused study, Nurteteng et al. (2024) examined how English language teaching curricula were adapted in Sorong, West Papua, to cope with resource limitations. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the researchers found that teachers modified lesson plans, instructional methods, and assessment strategies to suit local conditions. While not explicitly centered on community-based education, the study highlighted the importance of teacher adaptability and local innovation—key aspects that also shape the dynamics of community-based programs in under-resourced areas such as Hutumuri.

Two international studies further contributed valuable insights to this discussion. Guo et al. (2022) explored the practice of remote co-teaching in rural classrooms using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The study demonstrated how urban-based teachers

collaborated with rural teachers to deliver lessons remotely despite technological and logistical constraints. Although this context differed from Hutumuri, it offered a useful model for sustaining community programs in the absence of permanent facilitators. Similarly, Sun et al. (2024) investigated how live-streamed remote education transformed learning outcomes for rural students in China. Their findings emphasized the critical role of local teachers in adapting content and maintaining student engagement. This insight aligns with the objectives of the present study in ensuring the sustainability of informal English learning in the absence of consistent leadership.

Another relevant contribution came from Duque Salazar et al. (2024), who conducted a systematic literature review on bilingual education in rural Latin America. Their review highlighted the significance of interculturality, community participation, and linguistic identity in shaping bilingual learning experiences in under-resourced rural areas. While the study did not examine a specific CBEL program, it provided a strong theoretical basis for integrating cultural values and local knowledge into English language teaching. This aligns with the present research, particularly in its effort to contextualize learning within Hutumuri's social and cultural environment. Nevertheless, the study's macro-level synthesis lacked concrete insights into instructional strategies appropriate for younger learners in informal, non-school-based settings.

In the Turkish rural context, Kırmızı Ayyıldız and Akkuş Çakır (2022) conducted an action research study to explore how English coursebook activities could be adapted to better suit rural learners. The study involved collaboration with local teachers to modify existing textbook content using sociocultural learning principles. The results indicated improved student engagement and more meaningful classroom interaction when materials reflected the learners' real-life contexts. While the setting was formal schooling, the study reinforced the idea that localized and culturally responsive materials—similar to those

used in the Hutumuri CBEL program—can enhance learning outcomes. However, it did not explore how such adaptations function in non-formal, volunteer-led environments.

Xin Xin (2023) introduced an augmented reality (AR)-based design for Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) targeting young English learners in rural China. The study demonstrated that integrating AR elements into language instruction increased student motivation, vocabulary retention, and interaction. Although the approach was technology-driven and situated in a different context, it illustrated the value of immersive and engaging methods in supporting foundational English skills for children. The study supported the pedagogical rationale for using interactive strategies—such as songs, games, and storytelling—in CBEL programs like the one in Hutumuri. Nonetheless, its reliance on digital infrastructure makes its direct applicability limited in low-tech environments.

In the Indonesian context, Rahmadani, Pammu, and Nasmilah (2021) investigated the use of board race games to improve students' vocabulary memorization among first-year English education students. The study reported that competitive, interactive gameplay supported vocabulary retention and increased learner engagement during classroom activities. Although conducted in a higher education setting rather than among elementary learners, the study highlights the pedagogical value of game-based techniques in strengthening vocabulary learning—an approach that is also reflected in CBEL sessions in Hutumuri, where games are used to encourage participation and reinforce key vocabulary through repetition and peer interaction.

More recently, Tunru, Pammu, and Nasmilah (2024) explored students' perceptions of the Total Physical Response (TPR) method in teaching vocabulary in an English course context. Their findings indicate that movement-based instruction was perceived to support comprehension, motivation, and confidence in learning vocabulary. While conducted in a formal English course setting rather than a

volunteer-led rural program, this study provides empirical support for kinesthetic and child-friendly strategies that align with CBEL practices (e.g., action games, gestures, and movement-based drills), particularly for supporting young learners in low-anxiety learning environments.

Taken together, these previous studies highlight the transformative potential of community-based and interactive English learning initiatives in rural contexts. However, they also reveal three major gaps: limited focus on primary school learners, lack of detailed analysis regarding child-friendly and context-sensitive teaching strategies, and insufficient attention to long-term sustainability in the absence of a central facilitator. These gaps form the foundation for the present study, which aims to describe how a CBEL program is implemented, examine its effects on students' foundational English skills, identify effective interactive teaching strategies, and explore the key challenges faced in implementing and sustaining the program in Hutumuri.

Accordingly, this study extends prior CBEL/CBLL research by focusing on elementary-aged learners in a rural Indonesian community, where English exposure is largely absent in formal schooling. It also contributes a practice-based account of how interactive strategies operate in a volunteer-led, non-formal setting and how sustainability challenges shape program continuity.

## **2.2 Theoretical Discussion**

### **2.2.1 Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories**

SLA is the process through which individuals learn a language other than their mother tongue. SLA research focuses on understanding how people acquire language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a new language, as well as the factors that influence the success of this process. Various theories in SLA highlight cognitive, social, and environmental aspects that contribute to effective language learning. Within community-based English learning, SLA theories inform the design of strategies that are developmentally appropriate and

socioculturally responsive. Together, these SLA perspectives provide an analytical lens for examining how facilitators in Hutumuri structure learning activities and how children respond to input, interaction, and opportunities for output. This framework guides the interpretation of teaching strategies and observed learning outcomes discussed in Chapter IV.

### **1. Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967)**

The CPH proposed by Eric Lenneberg in 1967, posits that there is a biologically determined window during early childhood when the brain is most receptive to acquiring a language. This period is believed to last until puberty, after which the brain's plasticity begins to decline, making natural language acquisition more difficult. During this period, children are thought to acquire language more efficiently, particularly in terms of phonology and grammar.

The hypothesis draws on neurological evidence that young learners possess high cognitive flexibility, allowing them to mimic sounds, intonation patterns, and sentence structures with greater ease. Once this critical period closes, it generally becomes more challenging for individuals to develop native-like fluency, especially in pronunciation and grammatical intuition (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

For CBEL, CPH underscores the value of early exposure through meaningful, low-anxiety activities. Since children in Hutumuri typically do not receive formal English education until junior high school, CBEL can provide crucial early exposure. Programs that target young learners during this sensitive phase may significantly enhance language outcomes, particularly when instruction is embedded in natural, culturally relevant, and emotionally supportive environments.

The following key aspects of CPH are especially relevant to designing effective CBEL programs:

1. **Optimal Age for Learning:** Early childhood is the most effective time for language acquisition. Community programs should prioritize young learners to maximize their potential.
2. **Neurological Flexibility:** Children’s brains are highly adaptable, allowing them to mimic sounds, intonation, and sentence structures easily, which supports the development of native-like speaking skills.
3. **Program Focus:** Since the critical period is limited, community learning programs should target early ages and provide consistent, meaningful exposure to the language.
4. **Teaching Approach:** Instruction should match children’s cognitive and emotional development, using natural, enjoyable, interactive, and contextual methods to keep learners motivated and comfortable.
5. **Long-term Benefits:** Early language learning often leads to better long-term proficiency, enabling spontaneous and confident language use later in life.
6. **Motivation & Engagement:** Early success in language acquisition boosts children’s confidence and motivation, encouraging continued participation in learning activities.

In summary, the implications of the CPH for CBEL can be seen in the table below.

**Table 2.1** Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967): Key Implications for CBEL

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Implication for CBEL</b>
Optimal Age for Learning	Early childhood is the best period for language acquisition.
Neurological Flexibility	Children can develop native-like pronunciation and grammar.

Program Focus	Community programs should prioritize young learners.
Teaching Approach	Use engaging, contextualized, and age-appropriate methods.
Long-term Benefits	Early learning leads to higher proficiency and easier mastery.
Motivation & Engagement	Early success increases motivation to continue learning.

Although debates persist regarding its precise boundaries, CPH remains a foundational lens that justifies prioritizing early, community-embedded exposure in contexts where formal instruction is delayed

## 2. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982)

Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) is one of the foundational theories in SLA. It posits that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input—language that is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency but still understandable through context. This concept is captured by the formula  $i+1$ , where  $i$  represents the learner's current level, and  $+1$  represents the next stage of attainable input.

According to Krashen, language is acquired naturally when learners focus on meaning rather than form. Learners do not need to understand every word or grammatical structure in the input; rather, as long as the overall message is comprehensible, acquisition can occur. He also emphasized that language learning is more successful when learners are not placed under stress—thus, affective factors such as motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence significantly influence the acquisition process.

In the context of CBEL, Krashen's theory is especially relevant. Learners in informal, community settings often encounter

English through authentic and low-pressure interactions—such as songs, storytelling, or casual conversation with peers and facilitators. These natural interactions can serve as effective sources of comprehensible input, especially when they are aligned with the learner’s interests and local cultural context. In Hutumuri, facilitators routinize greetings, classroom expressions, and story keywords so that repeated, meaningful input gradually builds comprehension.

For instance, children in Hutumuri may encounter comprehensible input during CBEL sessions through storytelling, group singing, and language games. Such activities lower the affective filter, making it easier for learners to internalize the language. Furthermore, exposure to repeated and meaningful input over time such as basic expressions, greetings, and classroom instructions can gradually build learners’ understanding and fluency.

However, one limitation of the Input Hypothesis is that it tends to overlook the importance of language output such as speaking and writing as an active part of the learning process. While input is necessary, several scholars (notably Swain, 1985) argue that learners also need opportunities to produce language in order to process, internalize, and test their hypotheses about how the language works.

Therefore, in CBEL contexts, relying solely on input without facilitating opportunities for students to speak or write may result in passive knowledge that does not translate into communicative competence. In this study, comprehensible input is examined through recurring classroom routines, facilitator talk, and the use of visuals and songs that support meaning-making.

Accordingly, CBEL requires a balance of input-rich exposure and opportunities for output—a point addressed in the next section on Swain’s Output Hypothesis.

### **3. Swain’s Output Hypothesis (1985)**

In response to the limitations of the Input Hypothesis, Merrill Swain (1985) developed the Output Hypothesis, which states that

language learning occurs not only through understanding input, but also through language production. Swain argued that students need to produce language through speaking and writing to truly understand the structure and rules of the language.

When students try to speak or write in English, they are forced to construct sentences correctly, select appropriate lexis and attend to grammatical form. This process helps them identify mistakes and correct them gradually, which ultimately improves their language proficiency.

In learning communities, this theory is applied through a variety of interactive methods that encourage students to use English actively. Some examples of community-based strategies that support this hypothesis include:

- 1) Role-play: Students simulate real-life situations such as shopping or greeting visitors in English.
- 2) Group discussions: Learners are encouraged to express their opinions on everyday topics in English, fostering spontaneous spoken interaction.
- 3) Communication-based projects: Students may interview community members in English or create a presentation on a specific topic.

Empirical evidence from Gass and Mackey (2021) supports this hypothesis. Their work suggests that learners who regularly engage in speaking and writing tasks tend to show stronger development in grammatical accuracy and oral fluency than those who rely mainly on passive exposure.

The table below compares Krashen's and Swain's hypotheses, highlighting their application and limitations within the CBEL context:

**Table 2.2** Comparison Between Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Swain's Output Hypothesis (CBEL Applications)

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Main Focus</b>	<b>Application in CBEL</b>	<b>Limitation</b>
Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982)	Language reception through comprehensible input	Storytelling, songs, and casual discussion	May not sufficiently prompt active production.
Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985)	Language production through speaking and writing	Role-play, discussion, community-based communication projects	Requires supportive, low-anxiety settings to encourage participation.

The comparison indicates that CBEL initiatives relying exclusively on input risk under developing communicative competence. Therefore, this study considers how a balanced instructional approach, integrating both input- and output-focused activities, may support more effective English learning outcomes.

Opportunities for output are examined through children's verbal responses during drills, role-play, and guided speaking tasks.

In conclusion, while the Input Hypothesis provides foundational insights into the role of comprehension in SLA, the Output Hypothesis highlights the importance of active use in mastering language. Within the context of community-based programs, a synthesis of both perspectives is essential to help learners not only understand English but also use it confidently and meaningfully in their daily lives.

#### 4. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory provides a comprehensive lens for understanding cognitive and language development by emphasizing the critical role of social interaction and cultural context. According to Vygotsky (1978), cognitive growth does not occur in isolation, but is deeply rooted in social relationships and culturally mediated practices. Learning is facilitated through meaningful interactions between learners and more knowledgeable others (MKOs), such as teachers, parents, peers, or community members, who provide guidance and support.

A central concept within this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what a learner can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with appropriate assistance. The ZPD reflects the learner's potential development that can be realized through collaboration and scaffolding—temporary, adaptive support offered by MKOs. This scaffolding can take multiple forms, including modeling, questioning, prompting, or giving feedback, all of which gradually shift responsibility to the learner. In CBEL sessions, scaffolding may take the form of choral modeling, guided repetition, or prompting during pair work. Scaffolding and mediation are analyzed through facilitator prompting, peer support, and choral participation during activities.

Language is not merely a means of communication in Vygotsky's framework; it is a primary cultural tool that mediates thinking and learning. Vygotsky (1986) proposed that internalization is the process by which social interactions are transformed into internal cognitive functions. This process is essential to both language acquisition and higher-order cognition. Through dialogic exchanges, learners internalize linguistic and cognitive strategies that shape their development.

Sociocultural Theory carries significant implications for second language education. It promotes learner-centered pedagogies that

emphasize active participation, social collaboration, and culturally relevant learning experiences. Instead of viewing language acquisition as passive reception, this theory highlights the co-construction of knowledge through dynamic and authentic social engagement.

Empirical studies further support the theory's relevance to second language learning. Research by Mercer (1995) and Donato (1994) illustrates that peer interaction, social negotiation, and scaffolded collaboration enhance learners' linguistic competence and metacognitive awareness. These findings underscore the importance of creating classroom and community environments that foster dialogue, shared responsibility, and mutual support. These insights motivate the design of CBEL sessions in Hutumuri as dialogic, collaborative, and culturally anchored.

In summary, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory offers a robust framework for understanding language learning as a socially situated and culturally mediated process. Effective SLA, particularly in community-based settings, depends on meaningful social interaction and the gradual internalization of knowledge through guided participation within the learner's ZPD.

The integration of key SLA theories such as the CPH, Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Swain's Output Hypothesis, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory offer a multidimensional perspective on language learning. Each theory contributes unique insights:

1. The CPH highlights the importance of age and neurological flexibility;
2. Krashen's Input Hypothesis emphasizes comprehensible input as the basis for acquisition;
3. Swain's Output Hypothesis underscores the necessity of active language production;

4. Vygotsky's theory positions language learning as a culturally mediated, interactive process.

Together, these theories justify a CBEL design that blends rich input, structured output, and scaffolded social interaction in a culturally responsive manner. These perspectives provide a strong theoretical foundation for designing effective, inclusive, and context-sensitive English language learning programs. This synthesis is particularly relevant to community-based and non-formal educational settings in rural areas, where social, cultural, and infrastructural factors significantly influence the language learning process.

### **2.2.2 Community-Based Language Learning (CBLL)**

In this study, CBEL is grounded in the broader concept of CBLL, which places the community at the center of the learning process rather than relying solely on formal classroom instruction. In CBLL, language learning occurs within authentic social and cultural contexts, allowing learners not only to acquire linguistic knowledge but also to practice language skills through everyday interactions with community members (Smith, 2010). Such community-oriented learning environments emphasize social participation, local practices, and shared responsibility in supporting learning processes, particularly in non-formal and rural settings (Evans & Hornberger, 2014). This orientation is particularly relevant for rural initiatives like CBEL in Hutumuri, where learning occurs in informal, community-run spaces.

A fundamental principle of CBLL is learner-centered instruction that aligns content with students' real-life experiences, needs, and local culture. This contextualization helps learners internalize language more naturally and meaningfully (Johnson, 2018). Instructional materials are often adapted to reflect local customs, communication patterns, and cultural practices, enabling children to relate the language they learn to their daily lives. This approach is aligned with language learning theories that emphasize the role of social context in enhancing motivation and

second language acquisition (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Such contextualization not only enhances comprehension but also supports motivation and sustained participation in non-formal settings.

One of the major strengths of CBLL lies in its potential to increase learners' motivation by fostering a sense of ownership and belonging in the learning process. Community involvement such as local storytelling, games, or cultural activities conducted in English creates enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences (Rahman, 2017). Practical examples can be found in English learning initiatives in rural Indonesian villages, where children engage with the language through drama, songs, and daily conversations led by local teachers and volunteers (Putra, 2019). This aligns with the CBEL sessions in Hutumuri, where songs, storytelling, and everyday dialogues are embedded in local practices.

However, CBLL also faces several notable challenges. These include the shortage of qualified personnel with sufficient English proficiency and pedagogical skills, limited availability of relevant teaching materials, and the lack of institutional support from educational authorities (Lee, 2020). In remote areas like Hutumuri, geographic isolation and underdeveloped infrastructure can further hinder the implementation and sustainability of CBLL programs (Sari, 2021). Despite these obstacles, CBLL presents promising opportunities to expand access to English language learning for elementary students in rural communities by promoting participatory, context-sensitive, and flexible approaches. Addressing these constraints requires participatory planning, low-cost materials, and flexible facilitation, which CBEL models can accommodate.

Moreover, CBLL supports the development of authentic communicative competence and fosters inclusive, lifelong learning consistent with non-formal education principles (Evans & Hornberger, 2014). Accordingly, CBEL represents a strategic and equity-oriented

pathway that complements formal schooling, particularly where certified English teachers are unavailable.

Another important dimension of CBLL is its ability to respond to learners' individual differences and specific needs. In rural and resource-limited settings, children often have varying levels of prior exposure to English and different cognitive and emotional readiness for learning. CBLL's informal and adaptive nature allows facilitators to apply differentiated instruction by adjusting activities, pace, and materials according to students' characteristics.

As Tomlinson (2014) notes, effective learner-centered teaching considers students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Within a CBLL framework, such responsiveness is essential to ensure that all children including those who require more support can meaningfully participate and benefit from the learning process. In this way, CBLL promotes not only inclusion but also learner agency and engagement through socially grounded practices. This pedagogical stance underpins CBEL in Hutumuri, informing inclusive grouping, paced scaffolding, and activity choice that respect children's readiness and interests.

## **2.3 Context of the Study: Hutumuri and the CBEL Program**

### **2.3.1 Hutumuri as a Rural Learning Context**

Hutumuri is a coastal village in the South Leitimur District of Ambon Island, Maluku, characterized by limited educational resources and restricted access to qualified English teachers. For more than a decade, English has not been taught at the elementary level, resulting in minimal exposure to the language among young learners. Consequently, elementary-aged children have limited English exposure and few opportunities for meaningful interaction.

Despite these constraints, Hutumuri remains a socially cohesive community supported by strong customary values and a culture of mutual cooperation. This communal solidarity enables the emergence of volunteer-led educational initiatives such as CBEL, where learning is shaped by peer interaction, scaffolded support from facilitators, and

shared social participation. These characteristics align with sociocultural perspectives on language learning, which emphasize the importance of community mediation in shaping children's cognitive and linguistic development.

Given the absence of formal English instruction, children rely primarily on incidental and informal exposure to the language, making CBEL an essential source of structured yet accessible comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) and meaningful opportunities for output (Swain, 1985). Thus, the rural context of Hutumuri not only motivates the establishment of CBEL but also shapes the learning processes that occur within it.

### **2.3.2 Characteristics of the CBEL Program in Hutumuri**

The CBEL program in Hutumuri emerged as a volunteer-driven response to the educational gap experienced by elementary-aged children. Operated without a formal curriculum, CBEL adopts a flexible, context-responsive approach that reflects available community resources and the learning characteristics of young children. Instruction is delivered through interactive, child-centered routines using low-cost and locally available materials.

A defining feature of the program is its improvisational nature. Activities are adjusted spontaneously according to children's engagement, comprehension, and classroom dynamics, allowing facilitators to provide scaffolded support despite resource limitations. This adaptability reflects the participatory and responsive nature of community-based learning, where instruction evolves from ongoing interaction between learners and facilitators.

The sustainability of CBEL is reinforced by strong parental support and broader community involvement. Parents encourage attendance, youth volunteers assist with classroom management, and local leaders recognize the program's social value. These forms of collective participation contribute to the continuity and relevance of CBEL within a rural, underserved context.

### **2.3.3 Program Legitimacy and Supporting Documentation**

Although the CBEL program in Hutumuri operates as a non-formal, community-led initiative, its existence and implementation are supported by various forms of empirical and social documentation. Unlike formal school-based programs, CBEL does not rely on institutional authorization, a written curriculum, or standardized lesson plans. Instead, the program is sustained through engaging practice, community participation, and a locally recognized educational need.

The legitimacy of the program in this study was established through observable continuity and community recognition. English language learning activities have been conducted regularly since August 2024 and are attended by elementary school children from the surrounding community. Attendance records are maintained throughout the program to document student participation and the frequency of sessions. Additionally, the learning activities yield tangible instructional artifacts, including student worksheets, visual learning materials, and photographs that document classroom interactions and engagement.

Ethical and social legitimacy were further ensured through parental consent and community involvement. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from the parents or guardians of participating children, demonstrating awareness of the learning activities and the research process. Parents and community members also demonstrated ongoing support by encouraging children's attendance, assisting with learning materials, and facilitating a safe learning environment. To further document this support, written statements from parents and community representatives were collected and included as supporting documentation. (see appendix G).

Therefore, the absence of formal program documentation, such as written lesson plans or a structured curriculum, is understood not as a methodological weakness but as a defining characteristic of the program's informal and community-based nature. This reflects the reality of grassroots education initiatives in rural contexts, where learning

practices often emerge organically in response to local needs and available resources. Recognizing this form of legitimacy allows the study to examine how English learning can be implemented, sustained, and given meaning outside formal institutional frameworks.

#### **2.3.4 Objectives of the CBEL Program**

Although the CBEL program does not operate with formal curriculum documents or explicitly stated objectives, its underlying goals can be analytically inferred from the learning activities implemented, the observed needs of local children, and the intentions expressed by community volunteers. These reconstructed objectives are used to guide the interpretation of findings in Chapter IV rather than to evaluate the program against predetermined institutional targets. Based on field observations and principles of community-based learning, the following objectives are reconstructed for analytical purposes:

1. To provide early exposure to English for elementary-aged children in a context where formal English instruction is absent. Due to the absence of English teachers for more than a decade, CBEL offers foundational exposure through regular, developmentally appropriate sessions.
2. To develop foundational English skills through interactive and child-friendly activities. Targeted skills include basic vocabulary, greetings, simple expressions, and classroom language used in instructional routines.
3. To increase children's engagement, confidence, and motivation in learning English. Interactive, low-anxiety activities—such as songs, games, and role-play—support learner participation and build confidence.
4. To strengthen community involvement in children's education and promote local educational resilience. By involving youth volunteers, parents, and community leaders, the program fosters collective responsibility and supports the sustainability of non-formal education.

These objectives do not represent formal program targets but serve as an interpretive framework for examining how the implementation of CBEL supports learner engagement and the development of foundational English skills in a community-based context.

## **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

In this thesis, the program is locally known as the English Learning Program (ELP). However, for analytical consistency, it is referred to as Community-Based English Learning (CBEL), as it reflects the program's community-driven and non-formal characteristics. The concept of CBEL is theoretically grounded in Community-Based Language Learning (CBLL), while Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories provide the analytical framework for examining instructional practices and learning processes.

Specifically, theories of SLA such as comprehensible input, opportunities for output, interaction, and sociocultural mediation—are used to analyze how instructional practices within CBEL facilitate students' English learning in a non-formal, community-based setting. Rather than viewing language learning as the result of a formal curriculum, this framework is designed to examine how English learning emerges through flexible teaching practices and limited formal documentation within a community-supported environment.

The conceptual framework illustrates the interrelationship between program implementation, instructional practices employed by facilitators, and observed learning outcomes within the sociocultural realities of a rural community. Program implementation constitutes the primary unit of analysis, as it provides the context in which teaching strategies are enacted. Interactive teaching strategies represent the pedagogical processes through which SLA principles are operationalized in practice, while students' foundational English skills reflect the observable learning outcomes of participation in the program.

Rather than being treated as a final outcome, sustainability is examined as a key contextual factor influencing program continuity. Sustainability therefore influences all stages of the program, including instructional continuity, facilitator commitment, and the long-term viability of the learning process.

Accordingly, this conceptual framework does not function as a predictive or causal model, but as an analytical guide to examine relationships between program implementation, pedagogical practices, learning outcomes, and sustainability within the specific sociocultural context of Hutumuri.

This conceptual framework is constructed to guide the investigation of the four research questions concerning program implementation, instructional practices, students' English skill development, and sustainability in Hutumuri.

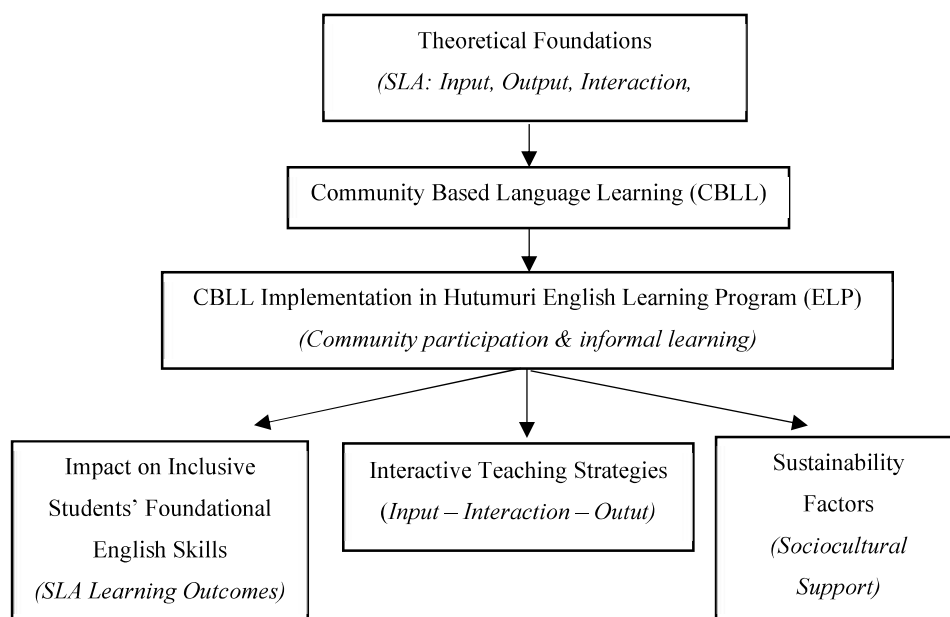
#### **2.4.1 Core Concepts**

1. CBLL: It is defined as language learning that occurs in community spaces and is supported by local participation, emphasizing authentic social interaction and culturally situated learning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Evans & Hornberger, 2014). In this study, CBEL is shaped by the involvement of facilitators, parents, youth volunteers, and learners themselves. Instruction is flexible, informal, culturally embedded, and grounded in local needs and resources.
2. CBEL Impact on Students: This refers to students' foundational English learning outcomes as a result of participation in the CBEL program. In this study, program impact is primarily examined through the development of foundational English skills, including basic vocabulary, greetings and classroom language, and simple expressions. Attitudinal and participatory changes, such as increased confidence and willingness to participate, are discussed as supporting outcomes that

accompany language development rather than as primary indicators.

3. **Interactive Teaching Strategies:** These refer to instructional activities such as songs, games, storytelling, role-play, and visual/written media. Such strategies support SLA processes by providing comprehensible input, opportunities for interaction, guided output, and scaffolded practice.
4. **Program Sustainability:** This refers to the program's ability to function consistently over time, supported by community motivation, availability of resources, facilitator commitment, and local ownership. Sustainability affects the continuity of implementation, the delivery of strategies, and students' learning outcomes.

Building on these core concepts, the conceptual model demonstrates how the CBEL program operates as an interconnected system. CBEL implementation serves as the starting point, which shapes the teaching strategies applied in the learning process. These strategies, in turn, influence students' foundational English learning outcomes. Sustainability factors—such as community support and resource availability—interact with and influence all stages of the process.



**Figure 2.1** Conceptual Framework of the Study

## 2.5 Operational Definitions

In this thesis, the program is locally referred to as the ELP in Hutumuri Village, while CBEL is used as the analytical term throughout the discussion.

Operational definitions in this study ensure that key terms are interpreted consistently within the specific context of CBEL in Hutumuri.

1. CBEL: This refers to non-formal English instruction conducted in community spaces and facilitated by volunteer members of the village. CBEL is characterized by flexible scheduling, local participation, and culturally responsive teaching practices that respond to the absence of formal English instruction in elementary schools.
2. Inclusive Elementary Students: This refers to all primary school-aged children who participate in CBEL, regardless of academic ability, socioeconomic background, or prior exposure to English. The term “inclusive” emphasizes equitable access and the program’s commitment to serving diverse learners.

3. **Rural or Underserved Area:** This refers to geographically remote locations with limited access to formal education infrastructure, educational professionals, and learning materials. In this study, Hutumuri is classified as an underserved rural area due to its geographic isolation, lack of English teachers in primary schools, and infrastructural limitations that affect educational equity and access. This classification highlights how contextual factors shape both the opportunities and challenges faced by CBEL programs.
4. **Foundational English Skills:** In this study, foundational English skills refer to the observable learning outcomes used to operationalize the “impact on students” component illustrated in the conceptual framework. The term “impact” does not refer to statistically measured gains or standardized test outcomes. Instead, it is interpreted as observable qualitative development in students’ foundational English skills, as evidenced through classroom participation, verbal production, vocabulary use, student work samples, and triangulated interview data. Therefore, impact is understood as contextually grounded improvement rather than quantifiable achievement scores.