



# A Comprehensive Review of Kangguru International Education Service (KIES) Course: An Evaluation of Its English Language Program

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## ABSTRACT

*As a consequence of globalisation, there is a growing desire for people to be able to communicate effectively in English, which has led to the expansion of private English language learning institutions. This study provides an analysis and evaluation of Kangguru International Education Service (KIES), a private English language school located in Aceh province. This study utilises an interview with the institution's manager to conduct a SWOT analysis on KIES, which examines the company's strengths, vulnerabilities, opportunities, and threats. KIES offers a variety of English language learning programmes and maintains international ties with other institutions to ensure the institution's continued growth and success. The research demonstrates KIES's capacity to contribute to the expansion of English language proficiency in Aceh province and reveals the significance of private English learning institutions.*

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesians belong to a vast array of ethnic groups and speak one of the country's hundreds of indigenous tongues. During the period when the Dutch used Dutch as their colonial language, the Dutch language had an impact on the social, cultural, and economic aspects of Indonesian society (Siregar, 2021). This led to the formalisation of language in the process of governing the governmental system. Because it was against the law for natives to speak their native languages, they were forced to speak Dutch instead. Bahasa Indonesia became the official national language of Indonesia shortly after the independence of the Republic of Indonesia was declared on August 17, 1945 (Montolalu & Suryadinata, 2007). Bahasa Indonesia is utilised in every aspect of life in Indonesia. Over time, Dutch replaced Bahasa Indonesia as the second official language of Indonesia. Simultaneously, substantial efforts were made to promote Dutch as a significant global language (Officile Bescheiden, 1971). Despite the fact that the Dutch left Indonesia in the 1970s, many terms and situations in the Indonesian language continue to employ Dutch vocabulary and expressions. According to Sumintono et al. (2019), the Dutch language continues to play a significant role in illuminating the history of Indonesia.

The ever-changing language policy has generated considerable opposition to the incorporation of language study into school curricula, resulting in a number of obstacles. The National Language Policy refers to the national policy involving the planning, standardisation, education, and development of the Indonesian language as well as the local languages (Hamied, 2012). According to Suwanto and Rahman (2021), the national language policy is linked to the guidelines that serve as a standard for Indonesia's overall language management. They claim this because the outlines are a component of the national language policy. In addition

to the country's national language and local languages, Indonesia's language policy encourages the teaching and use of English and other foreign languages (Musgrave, 2014; Zein et al., 2020). This is accomplished in tandem with the national language.

As a result of the effects of globalisation, the use of English as a spoken international language has dramatically increased in a large number of countries within the expanding circle, including Indonesia. According to Kam (2002), the application of learning English in education policy was based on the effect of mass globalisation occurring in the majority of South East Asian nations, which compelled those nations to undergo fundamental changes in wealth and power. This argument is based on the fact that the majority of South East Asian nations were forced to undergo fundamental changes in their power and wealth. This has led to the development of English language learning programmes in a variety of Indonesian educational institutions, both public and private. In Indonesia, the ability to communicate in English has emerged as a crucial determinant of educational and occupational opportunities, as well as social mobility.

Decree No. 096/1967, issued by the Minister of Education on December 12, 1967, established English as the first foreign language to be taught in Indonesian schools, as reported by Alwasilah (1997).

*“Since the Independence of Indonesia in 1945, English has been formally taught only from the secondary level to the university level. However, in anticipation of political, economic, educational and cultural globalisation, the Government of Indonesia introduced the 1989 National Education Law which required that English should be taught in primary schools beginning at Grade 4”.*

However, the addition of English to the school curriculum was unsuccessful. The implementation of English in Indonesian schools is viewed as less successful compared to the national language literacy rate. This issue was caused by a combination of factors. First, it was due to the inconsistent and monotonous teaching technique. In schools of varying levels, a grammar-centered approach was the standard method. This method resulted in the teacher dominating the classroom. Thus, it restricts the teacher's creativity and influences the students' attitude towards English. Zein et al., (2020) reasoned that the poor quality of English instruction in Indonesia was due to language teachers' inadequacies in motivating students and detecting a positive attitude towards English. Then, in 1984, the Indonesian Ministry of Education implemented a new English curriculum with a communicative approach that encouraged students' active engagement in the learning process. There are now more opportunities for students to practise English conversation. Thus, the emphasis of English instruction has shifted from grammar to practical application, and the teaching style has shifted from a teacher-centered to a more learner-centered approach (Lengkanawati, 2019).

In addition, English was not fully introduced in many regions of Indonesia. This condition was prompted by the scarcity of English teachers who could instruct in many areas of Indonesia. Only government primary schools in urban areas and private schools taught English; in rural schools, English was not a priority due to the limited number of teachers who could reach the schools (Kam, 2002). Abdul-Hamied (2010) also argued that ELT was introduced effectively in certain private schools in Indonesia, but was hopelessly limited in urban elementary schools. In addition, because English is comprised of two skills (receptive and productive skills), Indonesian schools have prioritised teaching the English skills that are most in demand. In the past, reading and listening were prioritised to be taught in school over writing and speaking. However, in 2004, it was determined that speaking and listening skills should be taught in primary school, while writing and reading skills should be taught in secondary school (Zein et al., 2020).



Moreover, Kirkpatrick (2011) argued that the failure of English instruction in Indonesia was implicitly due to the curriculum and teacher selection. Students in Indonesia were indirectly exposed to "Anglo" culture, which affected their English learning absorption. The majority of English textbooks used in South East Asian countries were published in the United Kingdom and the United States. The content of the English textbooks appeared to be inappropriate for the ASEAN culture (Kirkpatrick, 2017). Kirkpatrick added that teachers must also understand the cultural background of their students. Kirkpatrick (2020) suggested that, for the Indonesian context, it is preferable to hire multilingual trained non-native English teachers rather than monolingual native speakers (Rao & Chen, 2020; Rahman & Yuzar, 2020).

According to the preceding description, English is considered the essential language for navigating the challenges of the globalisation era. In early childhood, parents encourage their children to learn English. However, several factors contribute to the deficiencies in English Language Teaching in Indonesian schools (Mbau & Sugeng, 2019). Now, the Indonesian government is striving to develop effective English language instruction in order to realise its dream of producing capable human resources to meet the demands of the modern era. Therefore, future students are encouraged to study abroad in order to advance the theoretical foundations of English language instruction (Andrian et al., 2019). Later, English knowledge was practically incorporated into university curriculum to produce competent and professional English teachers. As a result, English is not only taught formally in the school system, but also in non-formal English private courses aimed at specific purposes, such as job requirements and English proficiency tests for admissions requirements. This may result in a business opportunity to build and establish an English language learning institution that attracts individuals interested in taking multiple English proficiency exams.

## METHODS

This research is based on the critical review methodology, which entails gathering and analysing data from various sources in order to assess the effectiveness of a specific programme or phenomenon (Hyett et al., 2014). The primary data for this study came from an interview with the manager of KIES, who provided important information about the institution's history, staff, and programmes. The literature study approach was used in this study to supplement the information gathered from the interviews. Using books, articles, and relevant previous studies, the researcher was able to conduct an in-depth analysis and description of KIES.

A descriptive review was used to present the findings and discussion. The researcher narrowed her search for relevant published journal articles and classified them into specific and designated topics. This method enabled the researcher to identify any trends or draw broad conclusions about the advantages of existing KIES conceptualizations, propositions, methods, or findings. Further, a descriptive review allows the researcher to interpret and summarise the information gathered and draw conclusions. It also enables the researcher to identify literature gaps and recommend future research directions. This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of KIES's English language learning programme in Aceh by utilising both primary and secondary data sources and a descriptive review methodology.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Overview of Kangguru International Education Service (KIES)

Aceh is one of the Indonesian provinces located at the southernmost tip of the island of Sumatra. Aceh has endured numerous political conflicts that have contributed to the plight of its people. Aceh was once involved in a conflict between the Indonesian central government and the Free Aceh Movement, also



known as *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* (GAM). As a result of prolonged conflict and terror, community activity and access to sources of societal needs were restricted. Aceh ultimately became one of Indonesia's underdeveloped regions. In addition, the 2004 Tsunami that struck Aceh was the culmination of the problems. This catastrophic event halted all aspects of life in Aceh and garnered increasing international attention. In spite of this, the effects of the disaster have also inspired the idea of initiating a peaceful amendment between the Indonesian republic and GAM, facilitated by other nations. The international community contributes to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Aceh in all sectors, including education.

Australia, as one of the countries that provided support, established a partnership with the Indonesian government, particularly Aceh, in order to significantly maintain a focused and comprehensive media outlet or location that can enhance the growth of human resources in Aceh. Therefore, Australian Corner or Kangguru International Education Service (KIES) serves as the basis for these realisations. This institution was founded by the Australian Scholarship Alumni Association, which served as a forum for alumni to share information and make contributions in response to the 2004 tsunami. This institution's mission is to preserve Aceh's human capital by maintaining educational partnerships with Australian universities.

In addition, Australian Corner/KIES serves a broader purpose, which is to enable future students from Aceh to pursue bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in a variety of universities, not only in Australia, but also in the United States, New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom through English language learning programmes. KIES was founded in 2007 at Mr. Samsul Bahri Usman's initiative. As a participant in the AusAID programme, he was inspired to establish the Australian Corner following the 2004 tsunami in Aceh. He had participated in numerous formal and informal rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes in various Aceh regions. KIES (Kangguru International Education Service) provides an intensive English learning preparation programme and administers the official English proficiency tests. Some those major programs are:

1. Being an excellent and professional agent for school, universities, and TAFEs in Australia for Indonesia
2. Bridging Educational institutions between Indonesia and Australia
3. Building Australian Scholarships Alumni Networks
4. Conducting ETS TOEFL International
5. Conducting IELTS International Testing
6. Conducting Teacher Training Program
7. Promoting Australia Awards (ADS& Endeavour)
8. Providing Academic and General English Language Training.
9. Providing Free Consultation on Study in Australia
10. Providing IELTS Preparation Training Program

### **An Evaluation of Its English Language Program**

In Aceh, the English language was occasionally used for specific purposes. English was widely used as a promotional language in promoting local tourism. Aceh has promising natural resources such as beaches and mountains that can attract a large number of tourists. The English language is critical in attracting international attention and increasing local revenue. Furthermore, English was used as the educational language taught in both formal school and private courses in Aceh, aimed at a wide range of ages. English is now one of the required subjects in the school curriculum. English is also one of the prerequisites for enrolling in universities and applying for jobs (Pearson, 2019). As a result, there are numerous learning institutions in



Aceh that offer intensive English language training with a focus on mastery of English proficiency exams such as the TOEFL, TOEIC, and IELTS.

KIES maintains a collaborative partnership with the Australian government and other educational agencies to provide official scholarship information and an official English proficiency test system in order to preserve and produce qualified human resources in Aceh. KIES works with the Australian government to disseminate information about the Australian Award Scholarship (AAS). KIES also maintains its collaboration with English Testing System (ETS), the educational agency that facilitates the official TOEFL test, and with the IDP, the official partnership for the IELTS test. Many future students who want to pursue their education at universities abroad should have applied and registered in KIES in order to intensively meet their standard English score requirements. As a result, English becomes a new language that many people in Aceh study and learn for academic or non-academic purposes.

Although English has become the standard language and is taught in all schools and educational institutions, it has had no effect on the Acehnese community's native language. Acehnese people are known for their strong adherence to traditional rules, customs, norms, local culture, and Islamic values. This belief becomes an important factor in defending against external negative factors such as global English usage. In practise, KIES hires Non-Native English teachers to teach KIES students. In their daily lives, both non-native teachers and local students must use their native language and mother tongue. However, once in primary school, most Indonesians will learn the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, and will use it as the language of education, as a lingua franca among Indonesians, and as the official language for the rest of their lives (Bloomfield, as cited in Kirkpatrick, 2011).

KIES and other private English courses have evolved into a community that promotes English in human life. Students are encouraged to learn and use English in school and in their daily lives. However, English cannot be used in place of the local language, nor can Bahasa Indonesia be used as the national language. English is only used for specific communication purposes, whereas local language and Bahasa Indonesia have become the primary languages used in all Acehnese aspects.

## CONCLUSION

The Australian Corner/KIES is widely regarded as one of the most prestigious private English language learning institutions in Banda Aceh. In the past, Mr. Samsul Bahri Usman was responsible for establishing KIES, and the Australian Scholarship Alumni Association was responsible for its inception. In addition to providing an intensive programme for learning English, KIES also provides the link and network related to the Australian Award Scholarship (AAS) and cooperates with the official test programmes for IELTS and TOEFL. Due to KIES's extensive collaboration with the Australian government, the organization's preferred mode of communication is British English. Having said that, due to the fact that KIES also administers the official test and prediction test for the TOEFL and TOEIC, KIES and its teaching staff have contextualised the pronunciation, lexicon, phonetics, and cultural background of students in accordance with the respective types of tests.

In addition, KIES was responsible for the operational management and used to work and hire the Inner-circle Teaching staff, which originated from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. However, in order to address a number of concerns and avoid negative outcomes, KIES has decided to replace its imported teachers with those who have been trained to teach non-native speakers of English. It was determined that those local teachers were more effective and efficient in terms of understanding the cultural background of the students, which ultimately led to them being encouraged and improving their English

learning outcomes. In conclusion, despite the fact that the majority of people in Aceh view English as a necessary language, the community of speakers of the local language cannot be eliminated or replaced by English alone. Because of their steadfast commitment to local traditions, customs, and cultures, the locals have managed to stave off the influence of the English language on their language.

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