

English Fun Class to Increase English Learning Interest among Children in Taba Sating Village

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Abstract

Limited opportunities for enjoyable non-formal English learning may affect children's interest and confidence in engaging with English, particularly in rural communities. This community service program aimed to increase children's interest in learning English through the English Fun Class in Taba Sating Village, Kepahiang Regency, Bengkulu Province. The program involved 20 elementary-school-aged children and adopted a learning-by-playing approach implemented through six face-to-face meetings of approximately 60–90 minutes each. Learning activities included ice-breaking, educational games, songs, flashcards, interactive quizzes, pair and group practice, and simple English conversations covering self-introduction and greetings, numbers, colors and things around us, and family members. Program outcomes were evaluated descriptively through direct observation of children's participation, enthusiasm, willingness to respond, and confidence in using basic English. Descriptive comparison of observations across the six meetings indicated positive changes in children's behavioral engagement with English learning. Children who initially tended to be hesitant gradually demonstrated more active participation, greater enthusiasm in interactive activities, increased willingness to respond, and greater courage to pronounce basic English words and simple expressions. These findings suggest that playful and interactive community-based English activities can provide positive learning experiences and foster children's engagement with English. However, the outcomes represent observable behavioral changes rather than statistically measured gains. Sustained implementation and simple age-appropriate pre- and post-program evaluation are recommended for future programs.

Keywords: Community-Based English Learning, English Learning Interest, Learning-By-Playing, Rural Children, Young EFL Learners

1. INTRODUCTION

English learning at an early age can provide children with a foundation for continued language development and broader access to communication, knowledge, and educational opportunities. For young learners, however, meaningful English learning involves more than exposure to linguistic content. Enjoyment, participation, interaction, and positive emotional experiences can shape how children engage with foreign-language learning activities. Tsang and Davis found that young foreign-language learners associated enjoyable classroom activities with fun, opportunities to gain knowledge, and interaction. These findings highlight the importance of designing English learning experiences that encourage children to participate actively while developing positive perceptions of the language (Tsang & Davis, 2024).

Providing such experiences may be particularly important in rural communities where opportunities for additional English exposure are relatively limited. Community-based learning can complement formal schooling by creating alternative spaces in which children encounter English through more flexible, participatory, and contextually appropriate activities. Sovania et al, for instance, implemented playful English learning with elementary students in a rural Indonesian community using songs, storytelling, games, and thematic activities and

reported positive responses in children's enthusiasm and participation (Erina Sovania et al., 2026). Similarly, Al-Farizy et al. (2025) demonstrated the relevance of simple and interactive English activities for elementary learners in a rural community-service context. These initiatives indicate the potential of community-based programs to provide additional opportunities for children to experience English through enjoyable activities (Al-farizy et al., 2025).

A comparable need was identified in Taba Sating Village, Tebat Karai District, Kepahiang Regency, Bengkulu Province. Preliminary observations indicated that children had limited opportunities to participate in non-formal English learning activities. English was primarily encountered through formal school instruction, while opportunities to practise speaking and interact with English through enjoyable activities were limited. Initial observations also indicated hesitation and limited confidence in producing basic English vocabulary and speaking in front of others. At the same time, elementary-school-aged children in the village showed enthusiasm toward new educational activities, suggesting an opportunity to provide an alternative community-based English learning experience.

Playful and game-based activities offer one pedagogical response to this situation because they can provide opportunities for learners to interact with language through participation rather than relying primarily on explanation and memorization. Ahmed reported positive effects of game-based learning on EFL learners' motivation and language-learning anxiety (Chen, 2023). Gamified learning environments have also been associated with motivational engagement in EFL learning (Zhang & Crawford, 2024). In a study involving rural and urban elementary EFL learners, (Liao, Chin-Huang & Wu, Wen-Chi & Gunawan, Venny & Chang, 2023) demonstrated the potential of game-based learning to support language learning and motivation, although their intervention involved augmented-reality technology. In the Indonesian elementary EFL context, a non-technological game-based vocabulary learning tool and reported positive outcomes in vocabulary performance, engagement, and collaboration (Tai & Choi, 2025)(Nolan & McBride, 2014). Taken together, these findings suggest that playful activities can function not merely as entertainment but as structured opportunities for children to encounter, practise, and reuse English.

Fun learning is also relevant in non-formal and community-based educational settings. Agustina, A. R., Hartono, Widiyati, E., & Nugroho, (2025) found that games, songs, and group tasks supported motivational engagement among beginner-level children participating in non-formal English education. Khodijah et al. (2025) similarly implemented fun learning activities with children in a village context and emphasized active and enjoyable experiences as a means of supporting English learning motivation. More locally, Putri et al., (2026) implemented interactive vocabulary learning with children in Bengkulu through fun learning and interactive activities. These studies strengthen the rationale for providing children with accessible and enjoyable opportunities to interact with English outside conventional classroom instruction.

Building on this pedagogical orientation, the English Fun Class was implemented as a community-based educational program for children in Taba Sating Village. The program adopted a learning-by-playing approach combining ice-breaking activities, vocabulary games, flashcards, interactive quizzes, pair and group practice, and simple spoken-English activities. Six face-to-face meetings of approximately 60–90 minutes were conducted. Learning content progressed from self-introduction and greetings to numbers, colors and things around us, and family members, followed by a final review using quizzes and games. The program was therefore designed to provide repeated opportunities for children to interact with basic English through familiar topics and playful activities.

Although recent studies have demonstrated the potential of playful and game-based approaches for young EFL learners, the present community-service program focuses specifically on observable changes in children's English learning engagement during a short-term intervention in a rural Bengkulu community. Rather than

treating program completion as evidence of success, the evaluation focused on behavioral indicators of learning interest, including participation, enthusiasm, willingness to respond, and courage to pronounce English vocabulary and simple expressions. These indicators were documented through direct observation and compared descriptively across the implementation period. Thus, the program does not claim experimentally measured changes in motivation or English proficiency; instead, it documents how children's engagement with English developed during the six meetings.

Accordingly, the English Fun Class program aimed to increase children's interest in learning English through educational, enjoyable, and interactive activities in Taba Sating Village. More specifically, the program sought to provide positive English learning experiences, encourage active participation, develop children's confidence in producing basic English vocabulary and expressions, and explore the potential of playful community-based learning as a complementary form of English education in a rural context.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Program Setting and Participants

The English Fun Class was implemented as a community-based educational program in Taba Sating Village, Tebat Karai District, Kepahiang Regency, Bengkulu Province. The program involved 20 elementary-school-aged children residing in Taba Sating Village. The activities were conducted at the KKN community post located in RT 02/RW 01, which was selected because it was accessible to the participants and provided a suitable environment for non-formal learning activities.

Preliminary observation indicated that although children in the village showed enthusiasm toward new educational activities, opportunities to participate in non-formal and interactive English learning were still limited. The program was therefore designed as a complementary educational activity rather than a replacement for formal English instruction at school.

2.2 Program Design and Implementation

The program employed a learning-by-playing approach, in which basic English content was integrated with educational and interactive activities. The learning materials were organized progressively around topics familiar to children, including self-introduction and greetings, numbers, colors and things around us, and family members. The final meeting was devoted to review and evaluation through quizzes and games.

Several learning media were employed to facilitate children's participation, including illustrated vocabulary flashcards, simple visual materials, worksheets, quiz sheets, word-guessing cards, and a question-and-answer ball. These relatively simple resources were selected to support active participation without requiring sophisticated technological infrastructure.

The English Fun Class consisted of six face-to-face meetings conducted from July 13 to July 30, 2026, with each meeting lasting approximately 60–90 minutes. Each meeting generally involved four stages: (1) opening and ice-breaking, (2) interactive presentation of learning materials, (3) guided pair or group practice, and (4) question-and-answer activities, brief reflection, and appreciation for participation.

Table 1. Implementation of the English Fun Class Program

Meeting	Learning Focus	Main Activities	Expected Engagement
1	Self-introduction	Introduction and ice-breaking	Initial engagement and familiarity with the program
2	Introduction and greetings	Pair Q&A and educational games	Willingness to use simple expressions

Meeting	Learning Focus	Main Activities	Expected Engagement
3	Numbers 1–20	Songs and counting games	Active vocabulary participation
4	Colors and things around us	Flashcards and guessing games	Vocabulary recognition and use
5	Family members	Contextual and interactive activities	Use of familiar vocabulary
6	Review and evaluation	Quizzes and educational games	Recall, participation, and willingness to respond

2.3 Program Evaluation and Data Analysis

Program outcomes were evaluated using a descriptive qualitative approach based on direct observation. Rather than administering standardized achievement tests, the evaluation focused on observable changes in children's learning behavior throughout the six meetings. The main indicators included participation, enthusiasm, willingness to respond or speak, and confidence in using basic English vocabulary and simple expressions.

Observation notes from the initial, intermediate, and final meetings were compared descriptively to identify patterns of change in children's participation, enthusiasm, willingness to respond, and confidence in using basic English. The analysis therefore emphasized patterns of observable behavioral engagement rather than numerical measurement of motivation or English proficiency.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Development of Children's Participation during the Program

During the first meeting, most children appeared hesitant and shy when asked to introduce themselves, although curiosity and interest in the new activity were observable. The initial meeting therefore served not only to introduce basic English but also to familiarize the participants with the interactive format of the English Fun Class.

In the second meeting, simple expressions related to introduction and greetings were practised through pair-based question-and-answer activities. The children gradually became more willing to participate and attempt the expressions introduced during the session. This transition from initial hesitation toward greater willingness to participate constituted an early observable change in children's engagement with English learning.

Participation continued to develop when learning content was connected with familiar topics and playful activities. Numbers from 1 to 20 were introduced through songs and counting games, while colors and objects in the children's surroundings were practised using flashcards and guessing activities. Vocabulary related to family members was subsequently connected with children's everyday experiences. These activities created repeated opportunities for children to hear, recognize, recall, and attempt to produce basic English vocabulary in an interactive setting.

During the final meeting, quizzes and games were used to review materials introduced throughout the program. Observation records indicated development in children's active participation, enthusiasm, willingness to ask and answer questions, and courage to pronounce English words and simple expressions. These findings represent observable changes during the program rather than statistically measured learning gains because the evaluation relied on descriptive observation.

3.2 Observable Changes in English Learning Engagement

The development of children's learning interest was reflected in several behavioral indicators. Initial hesitation gradually shifted toward more active participation in games, quizzes, pair activities, and question-and-answer sessions. Children also demonstrated greater willingness to respond and greater courage in pronouncing basic English vocabulary and expressions. Learning interest in this program was therefore interpreted through observable engagement rather than through a standardized motivation or interest scale.

Table 2. Observable Changes in Children's English Learning Engagement

Indicator	Initial Condition	Observed Development during the Program	Evidence from Activities
Learning participation	Children tended to be hesitant and shy during initial activities	Children became increasingly involved in learning activities	Participation in games, quizzes, pair work, and Q&A
Learning enthusiasm	Curiosity was observable, although initial participation was limited	Greater enthusiasm was observed during interactive activities	Songs, counting games, guessing activities, and final quizzes
Willingness to speak	Several children were reluctant to introduce themselves in English	Children became more willing to pronounce words and use simple expressions	Greetings, self-introduction, pair practice, and Q&A
Vocabulary engagement	Opportunities to use basic English vocabulary were initially limited	Children increasingly attempted to recognize, recall, and use vocabulary introduced during activities	Numbers, colors, surrounding objects, and family-member activities
Confidence	Children appeared hesitant when asked to speak	Greater courage was observed when responding and using simple English	Pair interaction, group activities, games, and review sessions

As summarized in Table 2, the changes observed throughout the English Fun Class were primarily behavioral. Children did not simply report enjoying the program; increasing engagement was reflected through their participation, willingness to respond, involvement in games and vocabulary activities, and courage in attempting basic English.

This interpretation is consistent with literature emphasizing the role of enjoyable and interactive experiences in young learners' foreign-language engagement. Tsang and Davis (2024) highlighted enjoyment and opportunities for interaction as important elements of young learners' experiences in foreign-language classrooms. Agustina et al. (2025) similarly reported that fun-learning activities involving games, songs, and group tasks supported motivational engagement among children in a non-formal English learning setting.

Nevertheless, the present findings should not be interpreted as evidence that the program quantitatively increased motivation. The behavioral indicators used in the English Fun Class provide descriptive evidence of developing engagement during the six sessions. This distinction is important because the evaluation did not employ a validated learning-interest questionnaire or experimental comparison.



Figure 1. Children participating in interactive learning activities during the English Fun Class program

3.3 Vocabulary Engagement through Playful Learning

Vocabulary constituted an important component of the English Fun Class. Rather than presenting vocabulary as isolated word lists, the program embedded basic words in songs, games, flashcards, guessing activities, familiar objects, and family-related contexts. Children's increasing willingness to participate in these activities and attempt the vocabulary introduced during the sessions indicated developing engagement with basic English vocabulary.

Previous research provides empirical support for the pedagogical potential of game-based vocabulary activities among elementary EFL learners. Sofiana et al. (2025), for example, developed the non-technological “Lingo Climb” game for Indonesian elementary students and reported improved vocabulary performance together with positive responses related to engagement and collaboration. The results of game-based learning research more broadly have also demonstrated its potential for supporting motivation in EFL learning (Sinar et al., 2024; Liao, Chin-Huang & Wu, Wen-Chi & Gunawan, Venny & Chang, 2023; Al et al., 2022)

Although the English Fun Class did not employ the same interventions or standardized vocabulary testing, these studies provide useful external evidence concerning the potential of interactive and game-based activities. Accordingly, the contribution of the present program should be understood primarily in terms of vocabulary engagement rather than measured vocabulary mastery. The observation data indicate that children increasingly attempted to recognize and use vocabulary during activities; they do not establish the magnitude of vocabulary acquisition.

3.4 Developing Confidence and Willingness to Use English

Another notable development concerned children's willingness to use spoken English. At the beginning of the program, several children appeared reluctant to introduce themselves. As the meetings progressed, however, they became increasingly willing to pronounce vocabulary and practise simple expressions, particularly when speaking was embedded in pair interaction, games, and question-and-answer activities.

The structure of the activities may have supported this development by reducing the formality associated with individual performance. Pair and group activities allowed children to imitate, repeat, respond, and practise with peers before or while using English more publicly. In this sense, playful interaction served not only as a means of presenting language content but also as a supportive environment for participation.

Fakhrunnisa et al., (2025) similarly emphasized enjoyable, communicative, and interactive activities in a village-based English program for children, reporting positive responses related to motivation and confidence. Sovania et al. (2026) also reported increased enthusiasm and participation when rural elementary learners experienced English through songs, storytelling, games, and thematic activities. These similarities do not establish that the same causal mechanisms operated in Taba Sating; however, they provide contextual support for interpreting repeated and enjoyable interaction as a promising means of encouraging children's willingness to participate in English activities.

3.5 Community-Based English Learning in a Rural Context

The English Fun Class also illustrates the potential role of community-based education in complementing children's formal English learning. Preliminary observations in Taba Sating indicated limited opportunities for non-formal English activities, despite children's enthusiasm toward new educational experiences. The program consequently provided an additional setting in which children could encounter and practise English through activities different from their regular classroom experience.

Evidence from other rural Indonesian settings supports the relevance of such initiatives. Al-farizy et al., (2025) implemented simple English learning activities for rural elementary students using accessible and participatory approaches. Sovania et al. (2026) similarly implemented playful English activities in Ligarmukti Village in response to limited exposure to English among rural elementary learners. Their use of songs, storytelling, games, and thematic learning resulted in positive responses in enthusiasm and participation.

The relevance of interactive community-based English learning is also evident in Bengkulu. Putri et al., (2026) implemented interactive vocabulary learning for children in Air Sebakul using fun and interactive activities. Although the program context, participants, and evaluation procedures differed from those of the English Fun Class, the initiative provides a useful local comparison and reinforces the potential of enjoyable community-based activities to expand children's opportunities to engage with English.

International evidence also provides a useful broader comparison. Liao et al. (2024) found positive outcomes for elementary EFL learners in both rural and urban contexts through an augmented-reality game-based application. Although the technology and evaluation design were substantially different from those used in the English Fun Class, their findings reinforce the broader pedagogical relevance of engaging and game-based experiences for young EFL learners. Similarly, Zhang and Crawford (2024) demonstrated the motivational potential of gamified EFL learning, although their technological intervention differs from the low-resource activities employed in Taba Sating.

An important feature of the English Fun Class was precisely that its implementation did not depend on sophisticated technology. Flashcards, pictures, songs, worksheets, quizzes, games, and peer interaction constituted the main learning resources. This accessibility is particularly relevant for community-service programs because learning activities can be adapted to locally available resources. The program therefore illustrates how relatively simple materials can be organized into interactive English learning experiences for children in a rural community.



(a)



(b)

Figure 2. Children participating in the final review and evaluation activities through quizzes and educational games

3.6 Program Limitations and Sustainability

Despite the positive observable changes, two practical constraints were documented. First, participating children entered the program with different levels of English ability. Second, the limited duration of the six-meeting program restricted opportunities to explore the learning materials in greater depth. These constraints indicate that a short-term community-service intervention should not be interpreted as sufficient for comprehensive English proficiency development.

The evaluation design also represents a methodological limitation. Outcomes were documented primarily through direct observation of participation, enthusiasm, willingness to speak, and confidence across meetings rather than standardized pre- and post-program measurements. Consequently, the findings support claims concerning observable changes in engagement and participation but cannot establish statistically significant changes in English proficiency, vocabulary mastery, or learning motivation.

Future implementations could extend the duration of the English Fun Class, differentiate activities according to children's initial English abilities, and incorporate simple age-appropriate pre- and post-program evaluation instruments. Sustainability could also be strengthened by involving local teachers, parents, youth volunteers, or subsequent community-service teams so that opportunities for playful English learning continue beyond the initial intervention.

4. CONCLUSION

The English Fun Class provided an enjoyable and interactive community-based English learning experience for 20 children in Taba Sating Village. Through six face-to-face meetings integrating educational games, songs, flashcards, quizzes, pair and group activities, and simple speaking practice, the program showed observable positive changes in children's engagement with English learning. Children who initially tended to be hesitant gradually demonstrated more active participation, enthusiasm in joining learning activities, willingness to respond to questions, and greater courage to pronounce basic English vocabulary and simple expressions. These findings indicate that a learning-by-playing approach can provide a supportive environment for fostering children's interest and confidence in engaging with English, particularly in a rural community where opportunities for non-formal English learning are limited. However, the outcomes should be interpreted descriptively because the program relied on direct observation rather than standardized pre- and post-program measurements. Differences in children's initial English abilities and the limited duration of the six-meeting

program were also identified as constraints. Future programs should therefore provide more sustained learning activities, accommodate differences in children's initial abilities, and incorporate simple age-appropriate pre- and post-program evaluation instruments. Involving local teachers, parents, youth volunteers, or subsequent community-service teams may also strengthen the sustainability of the English Fun Class and provide children with continued opportunities to engage with English beyond the initial program.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their appreciation to the community of Taba Sating Village, Tebat Karai District, Kepahiang Regency, for their support and participation in the implementation of the English Fun Class program. Special appreciation is extended to the children who actively participated in the learning activities and to all parties who supported the implementation of the community service program.

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