

**IMPROVING YOUNG LEARNERS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY AND
CONFIDENCE THROUGH FUN LEARNING AT BAN BANGOISINAE
SCHOOL**

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Abstract

This community service program was conducted at Ban Bangoisinae School, Yala, Thailand, to address primary students limited English vocabulary mastery and low confidence in basic oral communication. Preliminary observations indicated that many fourth-grade students were reluctant to use English and experienced difficulties in constructing simple sentences. To address these challenges, a fun learning approach was implemented through interactive classroom instruction, complemented by a supplementary program entitled *One Word One Sentence Weekly Vocabulary*. The program emphasized student centered and enjoyable learning activities, including games, flashcards, repetition, and guided sentence construction. The activities were implemented over a two-month period comprising 26 instructional sessions. The findings demonstrate notable improvements in student engagement, vocabulary retention, and confidence. Approximately 70% of students in class 4/1 and 75% of students in class 4/2 actively participated in learning activities and successfully completed assigned tasks. Moreover, more than 80% of students were able to recall and appropriately use newly introduced vocabulary. These results suggest that the fun learning approach is effective in enhancing motivation, basic English competence, and learner confidence within an international community service context.

Keywords: English learning, fun learning, primary education, vocabulary acquisition

INTRODUCTION

English has become an essential global language that plays a pivotal role in education, technology, and international communication. Proficiency in English enables learners to access academic resources, participate in international discourse, and improve future academic and professional opportunities (Kizi et al., 2025). Within the domain of second language acquisition, vocabulary mastery is widely recognized as foundational; without a sufficient lexical repertoire, language learners struggle not only with comprehension but also with productive skills such as speaking and writing. Vocabulary knowledge thus serves as a critical predictor

Volume 02, Issue 2, January, 2026

of overall language competence, particularly for learners at the early stages of English learning (Katushemererwe & Ruyema, 2025).

In non-English-speaking contexts, young learners encounter unique challenges in developing English proficiency. Primary students often experience language anxiety, limited exposure to meaningful communicative contexts, and low motivation, especially when learning is dominated by conventional, teacher-centered instruction (Lin et al., 2025). Such conditions can result in passive learning behaviors and restricted language use, inhibiting the development of vocabulary and communicative confidence. This issue is especially pronounced in contexts where English is learned as a foreign language and opportunities for natural use are limited (Maldin & Sianipar, 2025).

Research suggests that traditional pedagogical approaches such as rote memorization of word lists with minimal meaningful practice are insufficient for fostering deep vocabulary acquisition among young learners. To address these challenges, educators and researchers have increasingly turned to interactive, enjoyable instructional methods that promote engagement, intrinsic motivation, and active language use. (Meisuri et al., 2025) found that the integration of songs and interactive games significantly improved English vocabulary acquisition, recall, and learners' confidence among young children. Their study, conducted with first-grade students, highlighted that repetition, play, and interactive activities can create a learning environment that supports both linguistic comprehension and active participation, thus reducing anxiety associated with traditional language lessons.

Similarly, research on game-based learning demonstrates positive effects on vocabulary development. A study by Pelangi et al., (2025) investigated the use of educational games, storytelling, and multimedia tools to enhance vocabulary acquisition in EFL classrooms. The findings showed that playful and multimedia-enhanced activities significantly increased vocabulary retention and conversational ability, offering practical insights for interactive pedagogy in young learner contexts.

In addition, educational games have been repeatedly shown to enrich vocabulary mastery and learner engagement. Hidayatullah et al., (2025) reported that game-based activities using digital platforms such as Wordwall improved students' vocabulary scores in EFL settings, fostering active participation and motivation. This study suggests that learner-centered gamified environments can contribute to more effective vocabulary acquisition compared to conventional instruction alone.

Despite growing evidence supporting interactive and learner-centered approaches, many primary schools—particularly in rural or resource-limited settings—continue to rely on traditional instructional methods that do not sufficiently engage learners. In such contexts, English instruction often prioritizes textbook-based exercises and teacher explanations, with minimal incorporation of

Volume 02, Issue 2, January, 2026

playful or interactive elements. As a result, students tend to adopt passive learning behaviors, exhibit low participation, and experience difficulty retaining new vocabulary. Research indicates that psychological factors such as anxiety and self-esteem significantly influence learners' willingness to engage in classroom discussions; learners with high anxiety often hesitate to communicate due to fear of making mistakes or negative evaluation, which restricts their active participation in language use (Tahang et al., 2025). Moreover, limited opportunities to practice English and insufficient exposure to meaningful communicative contexts have been shown to inhibit language use and increase reluctance to speak, particularly in EFL classrooms where authentic language use is scarce (Shen & Chiu, 2019). Studies on foreign language anxiety further demonstrate that discomfort and avoidance of speaking tasks can negatively affect both learners' participation and vocabulary retention (Kasap, 2019).

These pedagogical and affective challenges were also evident in the local context of Ban Bangoisinae School, a public primary school located in Yala Province, Thailand. Preliminary classroom observations conducted in July 2025 revealed that English lessons were predominantly teacher-led, with limited opportunities for student interaction or meaningful language practice beyond rote exercises. Consequently, many fourth-grade students struggled to recall previously learned vocabulary, construct simple sentences, and express ideas orally in English. Students also frequently displayed low confidence and reluctance to respond during English activities, reflecting broader challenges associated with traditional instructional practices in EFL learning environments.

These educational challenges reflect broader concerns in EFL pedagogy, where traditional instruction often falls short of engaging learners and addressing affective barriers such as anxiety and lack of motivation. The literature indicates a need for alternative instructional approaches that can transform the learning environment into one that is supportive, engaging, and conducive to meaningful language use. Fun learning defined as an instructional approach that integrates play, interaction, and creativity has been widely recognized as effective for young learners because it helps reduce pressure, increase enjoyment, and encourage risk-taking in language use. In particular, fun learning strategies such as games, songs, and interactive tasks provide learners with repeated exposure to vocabulary in meaningful contexts, thereby enhancing both retention and confidence.

Therefore, this study implemented a community service program at Ban Bangoisinae School to adopt a fun learning-based English instruction model aimed at improving vocabulary mastery and learner confidence. The intervention combined interactive classroom activities with a supplementary program titled *One Word One Sentence Weekly Vocabulary*. By incorporating enjoyable and student-centered learning experiences, the program sought to create an engaging environment in which students could practice English vocabulary more frequently,

Volume 02, Issue 2, January, 2026

build confidence in communication, and develop positive attitudes toward learning the language. This approach aligns with empirical evidence that interactive and playful pedagogies can enhance language learning outcomes, particularly within primary EFL contexts.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The community service partner in this program, Ban Bangoisinae School, represents a non-productive community group whose primary needs are related to educational service improvement and student capacity development. Based on preliminary observations and classroom interactions, two priority problems were identified. The first major problem was students limited English vocabulary mastery, which hindered their ability to comprehend lessons and construct simple sentences. Many fourth-grade students experienced difficulty recalling newly learned vocabulary and showed minimal ability to apply vocabulary in basic oral communication. This limitation significantly affected their participation during English lessons.

The second priority problem was students' low confidence and motivation in using English. English instruction at the school was predominantly delivered through conventional textbook-based and teacher-centered methods, with limited interactive engagement. Such approaches did not adequately address the developmental characteristics of young learners, who generally benefit from varied, enjoyable, and interactive learning experiences. As a result, many students adopted passive roles in the classroom, hesitated to respond to questions, and avoided speaking activities due to fear of making mistakes.

To address these priority problems, a fun learning approach was implemented as the main solution within the community service program. This approach emphasized enjoyable, interactive, and student-centered learning activities designed to improve learning motivation, engagement, and confidence. English instruction was delivered through games, flashcards, repetition exercises, group activities, and guided communicative practice, allowing students to learn vocabulary in meaningful and low-pressure contexts.

In addition, a supplementary program entitled *One Word One Sentence Weekly Vocabulary* was introduced to reinforce vocabulary acquisition beyond regular classroom instruction. Through this program, students were encouraged to learn one new word each week and practice using it in a simple sentence, thereby increasing exposure and repetition in a structured manner.

The objectives of these solutions were to enhance students' English vocabulary mastery, increase active participation in learning activities, and gradually build learners' confidence in basic communication. By implementing interactive and enjoyable learning strategies, the program aimed to improve the

quality of English learning services at the school and support sustainable development of students' basic communicative competence.

METHOD

This community service program employed a participatory educational approach, emphasizing collaboration between the service implementer and the partner institution, Ban Bangoisinae School, Yala, Thailand. The program was conducted over a two-month period, from July to September 2025, and involved fourth-grade students from classes 4/1 and 4/2 as the primary participants. Teachers and school administrators were actively engaged throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages to ensure alignment with the school's instructional needs.

The implementation process consisted of three main phases: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. During the preparation phase, initial observations and informal discussions with English teachers were conducted to identify students' learning needs, existing instructional practices, and available learning facilities. Based on this needs analysis, learning materials and activity designs were developed using a fun learning framework. The materials focused on basic English vocabulary, simple sentence structures, and everyday expressions appropriate to students' proficiency levels. The partner school contributed by providing classroom access, scheduling support, and basic learning facilities.

The implementation phase involved classroom-based English instruction using the fun learning approach. A total of 26 instructional sessions were conducted, including regular English lessons and substitute teaching sessions when classroom teachers were unavailable. Instructional activities incorporated games, songs, flashcards, word walls, repetition drills, and interactive questioning to promote active participation and reduce language anxiety. Responsibilities were distributed collaboratively: the service implementer designed and facilitated learning activities, while teachers supported classroom management, assisted students during activities, and provided contextual insights into students' learning behaviors.

In addition to regular instruction, a supplementary program entitled *One Word One Sentence Weekly Vocabulary* was implemented. In this program, students were introduced to one new English word each week and guided to construct a simple sentence using the target word. Teachers assisted in reinforcing the vocabulary during regular lessons, ensuring continuity and repeated exposure. This collaboration aimed to support sustainability beyond the duration of the program.

The evaluation phase focused on monitoring progress, assessing outcomes, and identifying opportunities for sustainability. Evaluation was conducted through systematic classroom observations emphasizing student participation, task completion, vocabulary recall, and confidence in using English. Informal reflection sessions with teachers were held to discuss observed changes, challenges, and

Volume 02, Issue 2, January, 2026

recommendations for program continuation. The findings from these evaluations were used to assess the effectiveness of the approach and to propose adjustments, such as integrating fun learning activities into regular English lessons, to ensure long-term impact and sustainability of the initiative.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service program implemented at Ban Bangoisinae School yielded positive outcomes in addressing the primary issues of limited English vocabulary mastery and low learner confidence in basic oral communication. The application of a fun learning approach, supported by the *One Word One Sentence Weekly Vocabulary* program, contributed to notable improvements in student engagement, vocabulary retention, and willingness to use English in classroom interactions.



Figure 1. Teaching class 4/1 and 4/2.



Figure 2. Teaching English language with Fun Learning metode.

In terms of learner participation, students in both participating classes demonstrated increased active involvement during English lessons. Approximately 70% of students in class 4/1 and 75% of students in class 4/2 consistently participated in learning activities, including games, guided repetition, and group-based tasks. Compared to initial classroom observations, students showed reduced hesitation when responding to questions and greater confidence in attempting simple oral expressions. These outcomes indicate that the fun learning approach

effectively addressed learners' low motivation and anxiety, which had previously limited classroom interaction.



Figure 2. One Vocab One Sentence (Weekly Vocabulary program)

Vocabulary mastery also showed measurable improvement throughout the program. More than 80% of the students were able to recall newly introduced vocabulary and apply the words appropriately in simple sentence construction through the weekly vocabulary activities. The combination of repetition, contextual use, and enjoyable learning media supported students' ability to retain and retrieve vocabulary items. This finding suggests that frequent exposure in low-pressure learning environments enhances both vocabulary comprehension and retention among young learners.

The results of this community service program are consistent with the findings of Meisuri et al., (2025), who reported that the integration of songs and interactive games significantly improved vocabulary acquisition, recall, and learner confidence among first-grade students. Similar to their study, the present program employed repetition, play-based activities, and interactive instruction, which helped reduce language anxiety and encouraged active participation. The increased confidence observed among students at Ban Bangoisinae School reflects the supportive learning environment emphasized in Meisuri et al.'s research.

Furthermore, the findings align with Pelangi et al., (2025), who demonstrated that educational games, storytelling, and multimedia tools positively affected vocabulary retention and conversational ability in EFL classrooms. Although the present program did not rely heavily on digital multimedia, the use of physical games, flashcards, and interactive storytelling activities similarly created engaging learning experiences. This suggests that both digital and non-digital playful learning strategies can effectively support vocabulary development when designed to promote learner interaction and meaningful practice.

The results are also in line with Hidayatullah et al., (2025) who found that game-based activities using digital platforms such as Wordwall enhanced vocabulary mastery, learner motivation, and classroom participation. While the current program primarily utilized offline learning media, the shared emphasis on

Volume 02, Issue 2, January, 2026

learner-centered and gamified instruction resulted in comparable outcomes, particularly in terms of increased engagement and motivation. This similarity highlights that the effectiveness of game-based learning lies not solely in technology use but in the pedagogical principles of interaction, repetition, and learner involvement.

From a community service perspective, these findings indicate an improvement in the quality of English learning services at the partner school. The shift from teacher-centered instruction to a more interactive and student-centered approach addressed both cognitive and affective learning dimensions. Students not only improved their vocabulary knowledge but also developed more positive attitudes toward English learning and greater confidence in basic communication.

Several insights emerged for future initiatives. Sustaining fun learning practices beyond the program duration may further strengthen vocabulary development and learner confidence. Additionally, integrating simple digital tools alongside existing activities could enhance learning variety. Future community service programs may also incorporate pre-test and post-test assessments to provide stronger empirical evidence of learning gains.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that fun learning strategies and structured vocabulary reinforcement effectively enhance vocabulary mastery, learner confidence, and engagement among primary school students. The consistency between these outcomes and previous studies reinforces the relevance of fun learning approaches in improving English learning outcomes within international community service contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

This community service program demonstrates that fun learning strategies can effectively enhance young learners' English vocabulary mastery and confidence in basic communication. By creating an interactive and low-anxiety learning environment, students became more engaged and willing to use English during classroom activities. The integration of enjoyable learning tasks with structured vocabulary reinforcement supported positive learning attitudes and meaningful language practice. It is recommended that fun learning approaches be sustainably integrated into regular English instruction and adapted by teachers to suit learners' needs. Future community service initiatives may incorporate varied learning media and systematic assessment to further strengthen learning outcomes and program sustainability.

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Volume 02, Issue 2, January, 2026

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