



Enhancing Elementary School Students' English Communication Skills through a Fun-Interactive English Camp Based on Team-Building Games

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/ljce.vii.98>

Article History:

Received: 13 January 2026

Revised: 17 March 2026

Accepted: 14 April 2026

Keywords:

English Communication Skills, Team-Building Games, Experiential Learning

Abstract:

This community service program aimed to enhance elementary school students' English communication skills through a Fun-Interactive English Camp based on team-building games. The program was designed to create an engaging, collaborative, and experiential learning environment that encourages active participation and reduces students' speaking anxiety. An innovative, intervention-based approach was implemented involving 32 students in Grades 4–5. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and pre-test and post-test speaking assessments focusing on fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, and willingness to communicate. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' English communication skills after the intervention, particularly in speaking confidence and willingness to communicate, which were strongly supported by the implementation of team-building games and interactive learning activities. Students showed higher engagement, improved collaboration, and greater motivation in using English during tasks such as vocabulary relay, role-play, group challenges, and communicative games. The study confirms that experiential learning combined with team-based game activities effectively enhances young learners' communicative competence. This study implies that integrating structured fun-learning and collaborative game-based strategies can serve as an effective alternative model for English instruction in elementary education and can be adapted in broader educational contexts.

INTRODUCTION

English communication has become an important social competency for elementary school students because it supports access to information, intercultural interaction, educational mobility, and future participation in a connected society today. Beyond vocabulary and grammar, effective communication requires confidence, interaction, collaboration, and willingness to express meaning. This broader competency is increasingly relevant as children encounter English through education and digital communication. Hiver et al. (2024) emphasize that engagement is central to successful language learning, while Nassaji (2025) highlights learner engagement and skill development as important dimensions of contemporary language education. Positive learning experiences can further

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strengthen motivation and communication readiness (Lee & Taylor, 2024; Pu et al., 2025). Therefore, developing communicative English abilities during elementary education is socially important because it can strengthen children's educational participation, interpersonal communication, and preparation for future opportunities within an increasingly interconnected society for all learners.

Creating supportive opportunities for children to communicate in English is also important because language learning outcomes are influenced by the quality of learners' experiences. When students actively participate, interact with peers, and experience enjoyment, language learning can extend beyond memorization toward meaningful use. Hiver et al. (2024) identify engagement as a multidimensional component of language learning, while Lee and Taylor (2024) show the relevance of positive psychological experiences to young learners' willingness to communicate. Pu et al. (2025) likewise associate enjoyment and learning environments with language performance. Evidence from experiential learning further indicates that active participation can support English acquisition among young learners (Ahmedtelba, 2025; Amanah & Dewi, 2025). Consequently, community-oriented English programs that create enjoyable, interactive, and participatory experiences are important not only for language achievement but also for strengthening confidence, social interaction, and inclusive educational opportunities for children.

Despite this importance, many elementary school learners still experience difficulties using English for spontaneous communication. Classroom practices that emphasize memorization, written exercises, grammar, and teacher-led instruction may provide insufficient opportunities for authentic speaking practice. Consequently, students may possess basic vocabulary but remain hesitant when responding to questions, expressing ideas, or interacting with peers in English. Such difficulties are associated with limited engagement, anxiety, and insufficient supportive interaction during speaking activities (Huang et al., 2024; Bielak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2024). Interactive approaches provide an alternative by increasing opportunities for participation and meaningful language use. Research on games and experiential learning demonstrates potential benefits for young learners' English development (Mammadova, 2024; Gelizon, 2024). Thus, the general problem is the limited availability of engaging communication-oriented learning experiences that can simultaneously support English performance and students' confidence in schools.

This problem is relevant to the community context in Malang, where elementary school students increasingly need accessible opportunities to practice English beyond conventional classroom routines. In community-based educational activities, learners may demonstrate basic knowledge but hesitate to communicate when tasks require spontaneous speaking, peer interaction, or presentation. A short, intensive English Camp can address this condition by creating a learning environment centered on interaction, teamwork, movement, and communication. Outdoor and experiential activities are particularly relevant because they provide varied contexts for participation and social interaction (Kiviranta et al., 2024; Widiastutik et al., 2025). Previous efforts have shown the value of improving English skills among elementary learners (Azizah et al., 2023). Therefore, addressing communication difficulties through an accessible team-

based program can provide community benefits by increasing participation, communication practice, and students' readiness to use English in social situations.

Previous research has established that game-based, interactive, experiential, and collaborative approaches can support English learning. Computer games have been associated with improved speaking proficiency (Al-Jamili et al., 2024), while interactive and game-based activities have supported communication and vocabulary development among young learners (Bilous et al., 2025; Ningrum et al., 2024). Board games and role-play likewise provide opportunities for speaking practice (Nuraini & Mubarak, 2025; Tania, 2025), and systematic evidence supports gamification in K–12 education (Dehghanzadeh et al., 2024). However, much of this literature examines individual techniques, digital platforms, or regular classroom interventions. Less attention has been given to short-term community service programs that combine several communication-oriented games within an intensive English Camp. This gap is important because community interventions require practical, adaptable, and low-technology models that can accommodate young learners' linguistic and social needs simultaneously and sustainably in primary education.

The present program addresses this gap by positioning team-building games as an integrated framework for English communication development rather than treating games as isolated instructional activities. The intervention combines ice-breaking, vocabulary relay, role-play, group communication challenges, outdoor tasks, and the Compass Direction Project, creating repeated opportunities for students to communicate while completing shared objectives. This intervention design connects language practice with collaboration, peer interaction, and active participation. It also differs from technology-dependent approaches reported in digital game-based language learning research (Kazu & Kuvvetli, 2023; Liao et al., 2023) by emphasizing non-digital, face-to-face interaction. Research also supports interactive activities for communication skills (Kashchuk & Posokhova, 2025) and experiential learning for young learners (Amanah & Dewi, 2025). Thus, the contribution lies in systematically testing an integrated, short-duration, community-based intervention and examining changes in fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, willingness to communicate, and participation.

Based on these conditions, the specific community problem addressed by this program is the limited opportunity for elementary students to practice English communication confidently, actively, and collaboratively in meaningful and authentic situations. The program therefore aims to enhance students' English communication skills through a Fun-Interactive English Camp based on team-building games. It targets fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, and willingness to communicate, while encouraging teamwork, peer interaction, and active participation. The program involved 32 Grade 4–5 students in Malang and used an innovative, intervention-based approach centered on experiential and student-centered activities. Its scope focuses on practical spoken communication rather than formal academic achievement alone. The program seeks to provide an accessible learning model that responds to local educational needs while strengthening young learners' communication competence, confidence, collaboration, and readiness for future social participation within local educational settings and wider communities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This community service program employed an innovative and intervention-based approach designed to enhance elementary school students' English communication skills through a Fun-Interactive English Camp using team-building games. A one-group pre-test-post-test design was employed to identify changes in students' communication performance before and after the intervention. This design was selected because the program focused on implementing and evaluating a practical educational intervention within an authentic learning setting. The approach integrated experiential, interactive, collaborative, and student-centered learning activities, which are relevant to young learners' language development (Ahmedtelba, 2025; Amanah & Dewi, 2025). The intervention was conducted over two consecutive days and involved 32 students from Grades 4–5. The activity structure included ice-breaking, vocabulary relay games, role-play, group communication challenges, the Compass Direction Project, and outdoor collaborative tasks. The intervention was designed to provide repeated opportunities for meaningful English communication.

The program was conducted at an elementary school in Malang City, East Java, Indonesia, involving students from Grades 4–5. The location was selected because it provided an authentic school-based context in which the intervention could be implemented directly with elementary learners and their regular peer groups. The selection also supported the program's emphasis on active, contextualized, and collaborative English learning rather than isolated language practice. The learning environment enabled students to participate in classroom and outdoor activities, allowing communication tasks to be adapted to different physical and social contexts. This setting was considered appropriate for an intervention emphasizing games, teamwork, and experiential learning, as previous research has demonstrated the potential of interactive and experiential activities to support young learners' English development (Bilous et al., 2025; Gelizon, 2024). Data were collected through participant observation, field notes, documentation, and speaking performance assessments. The speaking assessment was administered before and after the intervention and covered fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, and willingness to communicate.

Data analysis combined descriptive qualitative analysis with a simple quantitative comparison of pre-test and post-test results. Observation data and field notes were reviewed to identify patterns of student engagement, peer interaction, participation, and English communication during the intervention. Documentation was examined to support descriptions of activity implementation and student group outputs. Quantitative analysis involved calculating the mean scores for each communication indicator before and after the intervention, gain scores, and percentage improvement. These results were compared descriptively to identify changes following the program. The use of multiple data sources strengthened the interpretation of intervention outcomes. Data validity was established through triangulation by comparing observation records, field notes, documentation, and speaking assessment results. Prolonged engagement throughout the two-day intervention was also used to strengthen the credibility of observations. In addition, facilitators conducted reflective discussions after activities to review observations and minimize individual interpretation bias. This

procedure followed the importance of combining multiple perspectives when evaluating interactive language-learning interventions (Hiver et al., 2024; Dehghanzadeh et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Implementation of the Fun-Interactive English Camp Intervention

The Fun-Interactive English Camp was implemented using an innovative and intervention-based approach designed to improve elementary school students' English communication skills through structured, interactive, and collaborative activities. The intervention involved 32 students from Grades 4–5 and was conducted over two consecutive days. The program consisted of several communicative activities, including ice-breaking sessions, vocabulary relay games, role-play simulations, group problem-solving tasks, and outdoor communication challenges.

The activities were organized to provide students with repeated opportunities to use English during individual, pair, and group tasks. Students were required to respond to instructions, exchange information, practice vocabulary, perform role-plays, solve problems, and present their work. The activities were conducted in a team-based format, with students working together to complete assigned communication tasks.

One of the main activities was the Compass Direction Project. In this activity, students worked collaboratively to construct and present cardinal directions in English using manila paper. Students identified the required directions, discussed the task within their groups, prepared the visual material, and presented the completed work. The activity provided observable opportunities for students to use English during group discussion, task preparation, and presentation.



Figure 1. Students' Participation During Fun-Interactive English Camp Activities

Figure 1 documents students' participation during the Fun-Interactive English Camp activities. The photograph captures students engaged in group-based activities as part of the intervention.

Student Engagement and Participation

Observation data were collected throughout the two-day intervention to document students' participation in English-speaking activities. On Day 1, approximately 65% of students were observed actively participating in English-speaking tasks, while 35% demonstrated limited participation or hesitation in verbal interaction.

By the end of Day 2, active participation increased to approximately 90%, while the proportion of students demonstrating limited or hesitant participation decreased to 10%. The observed participation included responding to questions and instructions, speaking with group members, contributing ideas, participating in role-play activities, and presenting group work.

Table 1. Student Participation During the Intervention

Observation Stage	Active Participation	Limited/Hesitant Participation
Day 1	65%	35%
End of Day 2	90%	10%

The observation results indicate a 25-percentage-point increase in active participation between the initial observation on Day 1 and the final observation on Day 2.

Pre-Test and Post-Test Results of English Communication Skills

Students' English communication skills were assessed before and after the intervention. The assessment consisted of four indicators: fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, and willingness to communicate (WTC). The assessment involved all 32 participating students.

Table 2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Results of English Communication Skills (n = 32)

Indicator	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Gain Score	Improvement (%)
Fluency	58.0	78.0	+20.0	34.48%
Vocabulary Use	60.0	82.0	+22.0	36.67%
Confidence	55.0	80.0	+25.0	45.45%
WTC (Willingness to Communicate)	57.0	85.0	+28.0	49.12%
Overall Mean	57.5	81.25	+23.75	41.30%

The overall mean increased from 57.50 in the pre-test to 81.25 in the post-test, resulting in a gain of 23.75 points and an overall improvement of 41.30%.

All four indicators recorded higher post-test means than pre-test means. Fluency increased from 58.0 to 78.0, representing a gain of 20.0 points. Vocabulary use increased from 60.0 to 82.0, with a gain of 22.0 points. Confidence increased from 55.0 to 80.0, resulting in a gain of 25.0 points. WTC showed the largest increase, from 57.0 to 85.0, with a gain of 28.0 points.

In terms of percentage improvement, WTC recorded the highest increase at 49.12%, followed by confidence at 45.45%, vocabulary use at 36.67%, and fluency at 34.48%.

Changes in Students' Communication Performance

The pre-test and post-test comparison showed a consistent increase across all assessed communication indicators. Fluency increased from 58.0 to 78.0, while vocabulary use increased from 60.0 to 82.0. Confidence increased from 55.0 to 80.0, and willingness to communicate increased from 57.0 to 85.0.

The results demonstrate that the post-test mean was higher than the pre-test mean for every measured indicator. The difference between the two assessments was most pronounced for WTC, followed by confidence, vocabulary use, and fluency.

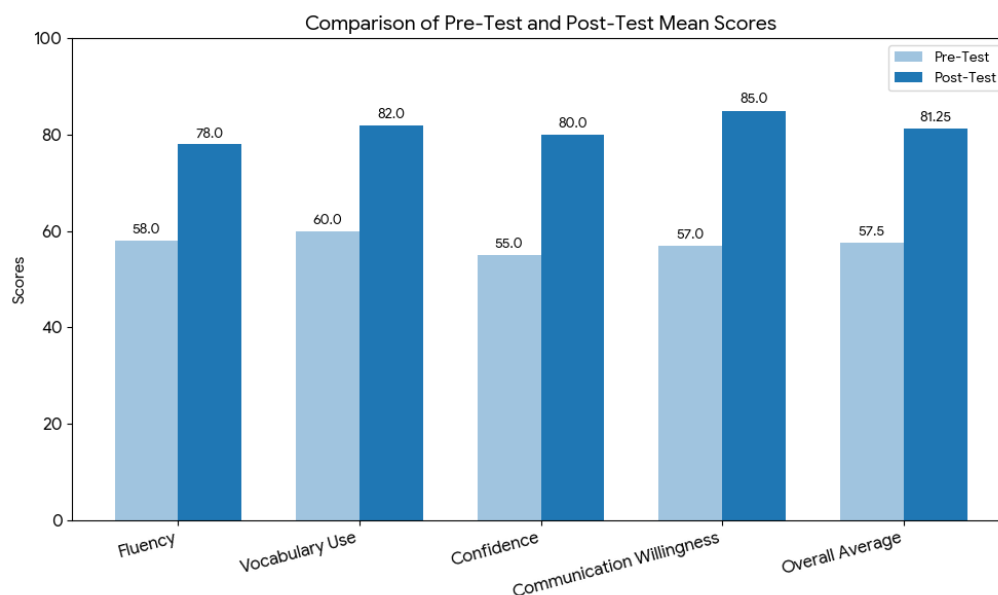


Figure 2. Pre-Test and Post-Test Comparison of English Communication Skills

The overall score comparison is also presented visually in Figure 2, showing an upward change from the pre-intervention assessment to the post-intervention assessment.

Participation in Team-Based Communication Activities

During the intervention, students participated in various team-based communication activities. The activity records showed student involvement in vocabulary relay games, role-play simulations, group problem-solving tasks, the Compass Direction Project, and outdoor communication challenges.

In the vocabulary relay activities, students exchanged and used English vocabulary as part of team tasks. During role-play simulations, students practiced spoken English according to the assigned situations. Group problem-solving activities required students to communicate with team members while completing the assigned tasks.

The Compass Direction Project involved collaborative preparation and presentation. Students worked in groups to identify cardinal directions, prepare visual materials, discuss the content, and present the results in English. Outdoor communication challenges involved students in group-based tasks requiring verbal responses and interaction with other team members.

The intervention records therefore documented students' participation in English communication activities across different task formats, including classroom-based, group-based, presentation-based, and outdoor activities.

Collaborative and Social Participation

Observation during the intervention also documented students' participation in collaborative activities. Students were involved in distributing group responsibilities, exchanging information, assisting peers, contributing ideas, and completing tasks together.

The observed collaborative activities included:

- assigning and accepting responsibilities within groups;
- exchanging information with group members;
- contributing ideas during task completion;
- assisting peers during English-speaking activities;
- participating in group presentations;
- responding to questions from peers and facilitators; and
- completing team-based challenges.

These forms of participation were observed throughout the two-day intervention and were particularly visible during group tasks and presentation activities.



Figure 3. Awarding and Closing Ceremony with Students After the English Camp Program

Figure 3 presents the students during the awarding and closing ceremony following completion of the Fun-Interactive English Camp. The photograph documents the final stage of the intervention and students' participation in the closing activities.

Overall Results of the Intervention

The intervention results showed changes in both students' observed participation and English communication assessment scores. Active participation increased from 65% on Day 1 to 90% at the end of Day 2, representing a 25-percentage-point increase.

The pre-test and post-test assessment showed an increase in the overall mean score from 57.50 to 81.25, with a gain of 23.75 points and an overall improvement of 41.30%. All four assessed indicators increased after the intervention.

The highest percentage improvement was recorded for willingness to communicate (49.12%), followed by confidence (45.45%), vocabulary use (36.67%), and fluency (34.48%). These quantitative results were accompanied by documented

student participation in team-based communication, group problem-solving, role-play, presentations, and outdoor communication activities throughout the two-day intervention.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the Fun-Interactive English Camp substantially improved students' English communication skills, with the overall mean increasing from 57.50 to 81.25 (41.30%). This result is consistent with Al-Jamili et al. (2024), who found that game-based learning improved English speaking proficiency, and with Kaharuddin et al. (2025), who reported positive effects of interactive and collaborative strategies on oral English proficiency. Similarly, Sancar-Tokmak and Bostanci (2025) demonstrated that non-digital gamification could improve elementary students' speaking skills. The present findings therefore reinforce evidence that interactive games can support oral language development. However, unlike studies examining specific digital or non-digital game interventions, this study integrates multiple team-building activities into an intensive two-day English camp, providing a more comprehensive intervention structure for young learners.

The improvement across fluency and vocabulary use further corresponds with previous research emphasizing interaction and contextualized language practice. Fluency increased by 34.48%, while vocabulary use improved by 36.67%. Iglesias-Diéguez et al. (2025) found that peer-to-peer interaction in task-based learning supported productive vocabulary development among young EFL learners. Similarly, Cai and Zhang (2023) demonstrated that collaborative dialogues enhanced communication strategy use and oral English performance. The current findings extend these results by combining vocabulary practice with movement-based games, role-play, problem-solving, and presentation tasks. In particular, the Compass Direction Project required students to apply vocabulary in a meaningful context rather than practice isolated lexical items. Thus, the contribution of the intervention lies in connecting vocabulary development with functional communication through collaborative task completion.

The strongest improvement was found in willingness to communicate (WTC), which increased from 57.0 to 85.0, representing a 49.12% improvement. This finding is consistent with Zhang et al. (2024), who identified communication confidence and motivation as important mechanisms associated with WTC, and with Ye et al. (2025), who demonstrated that motivational interventions can improve WTC and self-confidence. Hejazi et al. (2023) similarly highlighted the relationship between supportive learning conditions, anxiety, and WTC. The present study complements these findings by showing that WTC can increase substantially within a short, highly interactive intervention. Moreover, the observed increase in active participation from 65% to 90% corresponds with the improvement in WTC, suggesting alignment between students' assessed willingness and their observable participation during communication activities.

Confidence showed the second-highest improvement, increasing from 55.0 to 80.0 (45.45%). This finding supports Aftinia et al. (2025), who reported that game-based EFL learning could enhance both speaking skills and self-efficacy. It also corresponds with Zhang et al. (2024), who positioned communication

confidence as an important factor associated with WTC. However, the present intervention differs from studies relying primarily on digital games or technology-supported environments, such as Liao et al. (2023) and Yan et al. (2024). The current findings demonstrate that confidence can also develop through non-digital, face-to-face activities involving peer interaction, physical movement, and collaborative challenges. This represents an important practical contribution because the intervention does not require specialized digital infrastructure. Team-based tasks may also provide repeated opportunities for students to speak within a socially supported environment.

The findings concerning student participation are particularly relevant to collaborative learning literature. Active participation increased from 65% on Day 1 to 90% at the end of Day 2, while students demonstrated greater involvement in group discussion, role-play, problem-solving, and presentations. Fernández Sesma et al. (2025) reported that students perceived collaborative learning as supportive of speaking development, while Abdeta et al. (2026) showed the value of collaboration for language performance. Kaharuddin et al. (2025) likewise found positive effects of interactive and collaborative strategies on oral proficiency. The present study extends this literature by positioning collaboration not merely as a learning arrangement but as the central mechanism through which students completed communication-based challenges. Consequently, English use became necessary for completing shared tasks, creating an integrated relationship between communication, teamwork, and active participation.

The intervention also contributes to the growing literature on game-based English instruction for young learners. Recent studies have examined computer games, augmented reality, interactive PowerPoint games, and other technology-mediated approaches (Al-Jamili et al., 2024; Kazu & Kuvvetli, 2023; Liao et al., 2023; Roy et al., 2026). Lin and Tien (2026) further demonstrated the potential of game-based speaking instruction for young learners. In comparison, the present intervention emphasizes non-digital, team-building games within an English camp format. Its novelty lies in combining multiple communicative game formats—vocabulary relay, role-play, problem-solving, outdoor challenges, and the Compass Direction Project—within one coherent intervention. This design broadens the application of game-based learning by demonstrating how communicative English practice can be embedded in varied collaborative experiences without dependence on digital platforms.

Overall, the findings provide evidence that the Fun-Interactive English Camp contributes to English communication development through the simultaneous improvement of fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, and WTC. The results are broadly consistent with previous studies on game-based, collaborative, and motivational language learning, while extending them through a short-duration, non-digital, team-based intervention for elementary learners. The 41.30% overall improvement and 25-percentage-point increase in active participation indicate meaningful changes following the intervention. Its principal contribution is therefore the integration of linguistic, affective, and participatory outcomes within a single intervention model. The novelty lies in the Fun-Interactive English Camp format, which combines team-building games, contextualized communication tasks, and collaborative challenges as an integrated approach to young learners' English communication development.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this community engagement program is that the Fun-Interactive English Camp based on team-building games can support the development of elementary school students' English communication skills, particularly in fluency, vocabulary use, confidence, and willingness to communicate. The main lesson learned is that experiential, enjoyable, and collaborative activities can create a supportive learning environment that encourages students to communicate actively while reducing barriers to speaking. The implication of these findings is that English teachers and educational practitioners can incorporate team-building games and experiential learning activities into classroom instruction to promote more active, communicative, and student-centered English learning. The contribution of this program lies in demonstrating a practical community-based model for integrating game-based and collaborative learning into elementary English education, providing empirical support for the use of enjoyable learning experiences to foster communicative competence. Nevertheless, the program was limited by its short two-day implementation, relatively limited participant coverage, and evaluation focused primarily on immediate changes in students' communication performance. Future research should employ longer-term and longitudinal designs, involve larger and more diverse student populations, compare different types of game-based and experiential strategies, and examine their sustained effects on students' English communication skills and learning motivation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions who contributed to the completion of this study. Special appreciation is extended to the participating school principals for their willingness to share their experiences and insights. The authors also acknowledge the support provided by colleagues and academic mentors whose constructive feedback strengthened the development of this research. Finally, gratitude is conveyed to the affiliated institution for providing academic support throughout the research process.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author states that there are no financial, personal, or other conflicts of interest related to this study.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

AI-assisted tools were utilized in the preparation of this manuscript for language refinement, structural improvement, and enhancement of academic expression. The resulting content was fully reviewed, revised, and verified by the author. The author retains full responsibility for the scientific validity, originality, and overall integrity of the final manuscript.

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