

Optimising Basic English: Fun and Interactive Learning for School-Aged Children at St. Andreas Baumata

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Abstract

The target beneficiaries comprised 47 school-aged children representing three educational levels. To ensure that instructional activities were developmentally appropriate, participants were divided into three learning groups according to their educational stage. The first group consisted of 21 pupils in Years 1-3 of primary school, the second group included 12 pupils in Years 4-6 of primary school, and the third group comprised 14 lower secondary school students. Fun and interactive learning method were applied. In conducting it, shadowing technique of teaching was implemented at the beginning of teaching class. The results of conducting this teaching service for community at ST. Andreas Baumata are: pupils have basic English such as; how to introduce themselves, telling time, talking about part of body and also telling daily activities.

Keywords: Fun and Interactive Learning, Shadowing, Basic English

1. INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language that plays a pivotal role in international communication, access to knowledge, academic development, and workforce competitiveness in the twenty-first century. As globalization and digital transformation continue to reshape education and employment, English proficiency is increasingly recognized as an essential competency that should be nurtured from an early age. Early exposure to English provides children with opportunities to develop communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and lifelong learning skills that support their academic and personal development. Consequently, improving the quality of English language education for school-aged children has become a priority in many educational systems, including Indonesia.

From a developmental perspective, English language learning for children should be designed in accordance with their cognitive, emotional, and social characteristics. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, primary school children are predominantly in the concrete operational stage, during which learning is most effective when concepts are presented through direct experience, meaningful activities, and concrete learning materials. Likewise, Vygotsky's social constructivist theory emphasizes that children's learning is fostered through social interaction, collaboration, and guided participation. These perspectives suggest that effective English instruction for young learners should extend beyond teacher-centered explanations and memorization towards learner-centered activities that actively engage children in meaningful communication.

The importance of creating a positive learning environment is further supported by Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which argues that language acquisition is facilitated when learners experience low levels of anxiety and high levels of motivation. Enjoyable and interactive learning environments reduce emotional barriers, enabling learners to participate more confidently in language learning activities. Consequently, instructional approaches that integrate educational games, songs, storytelling, role-play, collaborative learning, and communicative tasks are widely recognized as effective strategies for promoting children's English language development.

Recent empirical studies have reinforced the educational value of enjoyable and interactive English learning activities. Mada et al. (2023) reported that game- and song-based English learning significantly increased children's motivation and facilitated vocabulary acquisition during community-based educational programs. Similarly, Hasby et al (2023) found that Fun English Learning created more engaging learning experiences and improved children's understanding of basic English vocabulary. Marasabessy and Que (2024) further demonstrated that the implementation of an English for Fun program enhanced primary school pupils' vocabulary mastery, classroom participation, and enthusiasm through educational games, songs, picture cards, and collaborative activities. Likewise, Ramdan and Febianti (2024) concluded that enjoyable English learning activities positively transformed pupils' perceptions of English from being a difficult subject into an engaging and enjoyable learning experience. Complementing these findings, recent studies on game-based learning have consistently shown that interactive educational games enhance learner engagement, motivation, communication skills, and overall learning achievement, particularly among young learners.

Despite these encouraging developments, equitable access to meaningful English learning opportunities remains a significant challenge in many local communities. This situation is particularly evident in the community of St. Andreas Baumata Catholic Mission, where opportunities for children to practice English outside formal schooling remain limited. Preliminary observations and discussions conducted with church leaders, parents, and community members revealed that English learning was largely confined to classroom instruction, with very limited opportunities for communicative practice in informal settings. Consequently, many children demonstrated restricted basic English vocabulary, limited confidence in speaking English, and minimal exposure to enjoyable learning experiences that could reinforce classroom learning. Furthermore, no structured community-based English learning programme had previously been implemented within the mission, highlighting the need for educational initiatives that complement formal schooling.

The target beneficiaries of this Community Service Programme comprised 47 school-aged children representing different educational levels within the community. The participants were organized into three learning groups according to their educational stage: 21 pupils from Years 1-3 of primary school, 12 pupils from Years 4-6 of primary school, and 14 lower secondary school students. Grouping participants according to their developmental characteristics enabled the learning materials, instructional strategies, and classroom activities to be adapted appropriately to their cognitive abilities, language proficiency, and learning needs. In addition to these educational needs, the community demonstrated strong social support for educational initiatives, as reflected in the active involvement of church leaders, parents, university lecturers, students, and alumni throughout the programme. Such

collaborative engagement provided favorable conditions for implementing a sustainable community-based English learning initiative.

Although previous community engagement programs have successfully introduced enjoyable English learning activities, relatively few have implemented a structured Fun and Interactive Learning approach specifically designed for mixed-age groups within a faith-based community setting. Moreover, many existing programs primarily focus on vocabulary enrichment without simultaneously addressing learners' communicative confidence, active participation, and sustained learning motivation. This gap highlights the need for an integrated learning model that combines enjoyable instructional activities with meaningful communicative practice to support children's holistic English language development.

The present Community Service Programme was developed as an evidence-informed educational initiative that translates findings from research on young learner pedagogy, communicative language teaching, and game-based learning into practical learning experiences for children. The programme adopted a Fun and Interactive Learning approach that integrated ice-breaking activities, educational games, songs, storytelling, role-play, flashcards, collaborative group tasks, quizzes, and simple communicative practices related to everyday situations. Through these activities, participants were encouraged to learn English actively while developing confidence, motivation, and positive attitudes towards language learning.

Based on the conditions identified within the community, the principal problem addressed in this programme was how a Fun and Interactive Learning approach could optimize basic English learning among school-aged children at St. Andreas Baumata Catholic Mission by improving vocabulary mastery, communicative confidence, and active learner participation. Accordingly, this Community Service Programme aimed to optimize basic English learning through the implementation of a Fun and Interactive Learning approach. Specifically, the programme sought to: (1) improve participants' mastery of basic English vocabulary; (2) enhance their confidence in using English for simple daily communication; (3) increase their active participation and motivation during learning activities; and (4) provide an enjoyable and sustainable model of community-based English learning that complements formal education.

Overall, this program is very targeted to a certain audience, that is, children in primary schools where English is not yet part of the core curriculum. Besides, the choice of a fun and interactive approach, supported by shadowing techniques, has proven to be the right choice. We are aware that teaching English pronunciation is a difficult task. This is because phonemes must be articulated with great attention to the place and manner of articulation, as well as the speech organs of each participant. If we consider these three components, we can make teaching materials that flow easily and are easy to understand.

The significance of this programme extends beyond improving participants' English language competence. It represents the implementation of the university's commitment to the Tri Dharma of Higher Education through meaningful community engagement while contributing to the promotion of inclusive and quality education within the local community. Furthermore, this programme offers an evidence-based model for implementing enjoyable English language learning in community settings and may serve as a practical reference for future community

service initiatives aiming to strengthen children's language learning through participatory and interactive educational approaches.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To ensure the successful implementation of this community service program, the following preparations were undertaken: (1) preparing teaching materials tailored to the participants' age and abilities; and (2) preparing appropriate teaching methods and equipment to ensure the material was effectively absorbed. The chosen teaching approach is both fun and interactive, as instructing children requires techniques that resonate with their world. Learning materials are more easily grasped when students are given the opportunity to learn in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Furthermore, instruction becomes more memorable when it is interactive—a method particularly well-suited for this age group. Consequently, we employ the "shadowing" method for all participants. This technique—mimicking sounds and pronunciation—is ideal for students aged 6 to 12. Each lesson begins with a set of ten sentences or common expressions; the tutor first recites them, and then asks the participants to repeat them. This process continues until every participant can successfully pronounce the ten sentences correctly. Additionally, students engage in "substitution drills," consisting of ten sentences that incorporate interchangeable words. These substitute words are arranged sequentially, allowing participants to repeat the same sentence structure while using different vocabulary. The goal is for each participant to build a new vocabulary. This activity serves to assess the participants' initial proficiency before they progress to independent conversations with their classmates.

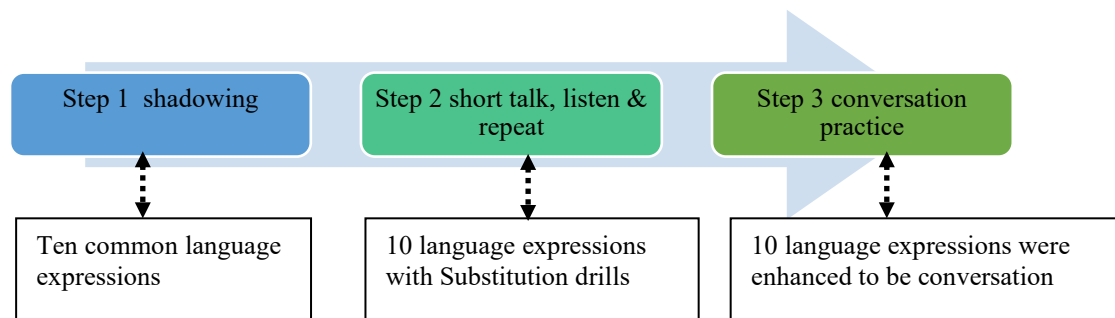
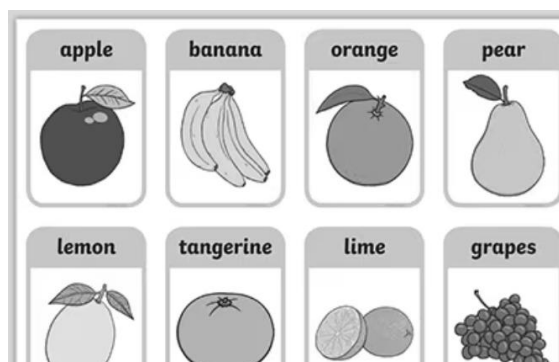


Figure 1. Teaching service flow diagram

Sample conversation materials have been provided for the learners. However, in practice, both learners and tutors are encouraged to adapt the conversations by using vocabulary that is easy for the learners to understand and pronounce. The focus is on using simple language. The goal is to build the learners' confidence, showing them that they are capable of speaking simple English sentences. This makes it easier to guide them into paired conversation practice. Games are also incorporated into the lessons; they serve to engage the learners and keep their full attention focused on the material. Although the activity involves play, the person leading the game must still use English. The games selected are relevant to the topic being discussed. For instance, if the lesson is about "introductions," learners are introduced to new vocabulary—such as fruit names—which are assigned to them as their "names" for the activity; they must then use these names in various sentences. Flashcards featuring fruits like apple, mango, banana,

and jackfruit are distributed to each participant. Each learner practices saying phrases like "I am Apple." Once they understand the fruit names and how to pronounce them correctly, they are guided to create slightly more complex sentences, such as: (1) "I am Aldora. I like apples. They are sweet." (2) "I am Boni. I like jackfruit. It is sweet." and so on.



Flash Cards. Fruits

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This Community Service Program adopted an evidence-informed educational intervention designed to optimize basic English learning among school-aged children through a Fun and Interactive Learning approach. The program integrated educational games, songs, storytelling, role-play, flashcard-based instruction, collaborative learning, and simple communicative activities to create an engaging learning environment that encouraged active participation and meaningful language use.

This community service activity is grounded in constructive experiences and insights derived from prior research relevant to the activity's objectives. Examples include: (1). The Role of Greetings and Introductions in Developing Communicative Competence Among Young Learners (2025). Purba et al. stated that greetings and introductions are essential communication skills for young English learners because they help build confidence, social interaction, and basic speaking ability. (2). Implementation of English Language Learning on "Parts of the Body" Using Songs for Grade IV-D Students at SDN 060871 Medan Timur (2025) Rahmadani et al. discovered that using songs to teach "parts of the body" significantly improved elementary students' English vocabulary mastery and classroom engagement. (3). Developing Animation Videos and Game Cards for Teaching Telling Time in English to Fourth-Grade Students (2025). Kurniawati & Widagdo (2025). The results showed that the learning media improved students' understanding of telling-time expressions and increased their engagement during English lessons. (4). Application of the Grammar-Translation Method in English Language Learning on the Topic of Daily Routines (2025). Amisyah et al. (2025). The results indicated that GTM helped students better understand sentence structures and English texts related to everyday activities.

The program was implemented over four consecutive weeks, with two sessions conducted each week, resulting in a total of eight learning sessions. The instructional design was informed by contemporary research on young

learner pedagogy, communicative language teaching, and game-based learning, which emphasizes that children acquire language more effectively when learning activities are interactive, enjoyable, and developmentally appropriate. Rather than functioning as a conventional teaching program, this initiative was designed as a community-based educational intervention that complemented formal English instruction by providing additional opportunities for children to practice English in authentic and supportive learning situations.

The program was conducted at St. Andreas Baumata Catholic Mission, Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The mission serves as an important community center where educational, religious, and social activities are regularly organized for children and families. The program was implemented collaboratively by five lecturers from the English Language Education Program at San Pedro University, assisted by volunteer undergraduate students and alumni who served as learning facilitators throughout the program.

The target beneficiaries comprised 47 school-aged children representing three educational levels. To ensure that instructional activities were developmentally appropriate, participants were divided into three learning groups according to their educational stage. The first group consisted of 21 pupils in Years 1-3 of primary school, the second group included 12 pupils in Years 4-6 of primary school, and the third group comprised 14 lower secondary school students. Grouping participants according to their cognitive and linguistic development enabled facilitators to adapt instructional materials, classroom activities, and communication tasks to the learners' abilities and learning needs.

One of the teaching strategies to increase students' enthusiasm to study is fun learning exercise. Another way to create a welcoming and enjoyable learning environment in the classroom is by the enjoyable learning activity. Learning while playing or learning through some games can be an alternative to make learning English fun and easy according to Silalahi (2019). Students will definitely find it easier to learn the subject, enjoy their learning more and be more engaged when lessons are taught through games. The activities also stimulate the child to compete, to analyze feelings, to get to know and to collaborate with his peers.

Researchers tested various games using word-wall media and attempted to create their own games to help teach the subject matter for the sake of fostering the enjoyable learning strategies. Anindyajati and Choiri (2017) explained that word-wall is an educational tool, which is used, not only shown or observed. It can be used to enhance learning group activities and to involve students in its production and use. The researchers also played a game of charades. The object of this game is to encourage pupils to obey the teacher's instructions. For example, if the teacher says, "Nose!" the students have to touch the part of the body that she names. Then students are asked to form groups and compete with their peers in a whispering game. Here the teacher will whisper an English sentence to a student in the back row. The teacher will repeat the sentence to a friend before him, until the student in the front row is obliged to speak it aloud.

The community service program that is targeted at teaching English to children uses suitable teaching methods and instructional materials that are appropriate to the needs of the participants. Instruction is presented in four kinds of material: introductions, body parts, telling time and days of the week, and daily activities. In the implementation of this program, researchers focus on the application of shadowing technique in teaching. The importance of

pronunciation in second and foreign language learning is that it significantly affects learners' perceived ability to use the language and the effectiveness of their communication. But it is difficult for language learners to pronounce words correctly, especially strange phonetic patterns and sounds. The pronunciation is one of the important parts of speech used for communication. When things are pronounced correctly people listen better. If the speaker has clear pronunciation, he/she can express ideas with confidence in a conversation with others (Zaigham, 2011). If a word is mispronounced, it will be pronounced in another way and there will be misunderstandings in the speaker and audience and the listener will not be able to understand what the speaker is saying. As a result, teachers are always looking for new pedagogical strategies to help students improve their pronunciation.

One of the approaches that is gaining popularity in language teaching is the shadowing technique. Shadowing technique is a method of learning a language in which a student repeats what he hears while listening to a native speaker in the target language simultaneously, according to Alexander Arguilles. This method helps students to mimic the natural rhythm and flow of a native speaker's speech, improving their pronunciation, intonation and fluency. It can be used with a variety of audio resources, including podcasts, radio shows, or recorded conversations, and is frequently employed in language immersion programs. Shadowing is a technique that requires active participation and repetition to help students internalize language patterns and develop speaking skills.

The effectiveness of pronunciation teaching has been a subject of interest for researchers of second language acquisition for a long time. Various approaches and strategies have been explored to enhance learners' pronunciation skills. Among these methods, the shadowing method has gained popularity due to its ability to enhance students' oral competency, pronunciation accuracy and fluency. Students immediately try to match native speech with shadowing. It was originally developed as a therapeutic technique for people with speech difficulties, As soon as the learners hear the speaker's utterances, they imitate them and practice intensively and intensively to reproduce not only the phonetic sounds but also the rhythm, intonation and prosody of the target language.

Teaching the topic of "Greetings and Introductions" is straightforward and directly relates to the individual; consequently, the challenges participants face is limited to mastering specific terms, words, phrases, or simple clauses—specifically understanding them and learning how to pronounce them correctly. Therefore, the shadowing technique in teaching English for young learners comes up as the best solution. This technique was covered by fun and interactive learning method.

Following is the material of greeting and introduction for kinds.

Greetings and Introduction

1. Hello
2. Good morning
3. I'm John Smith
4. Are you Kenny?
5. Yes, I am
6. How are you?
7. Fine thanks.
8. How is Gianna?
9. She's very well, thank you.
10. Good afternoon Mrs. Green.
11. Good afternoon Mr. Brown
12. How are you this evening?
13. Good night, Aldora.
14. Good-bye, Austin.
15. See you tomorrow



Tutor asks students to listen to his / her. He pronounces those sentences at the beginning of the class. After that, he asks students to listen and repeat. This step is a kind of brainstorming the students' mind on how to produce the sound system of the language expressions. Students may get self confidence in producing the language. After completing the activity, tutor leads them to have a small talk.

1.
 - A : Hello, How are you?
 - B : Fine, thanks.



2.
 - A : How are you this evening?
 - B : Very well, thank you.

3.
 - A : How are you this afternoon
 - B : Fine, thanks. How are you?



4.
 - A : Are you Bill Jones?
 - B : Yes, I am.

- 5.

A : Are you Helen?

B : Yes, I am.

6.

A : Good night, Bill.

B : Good night John.

7.

A : Good bye, Mrs. Brown.

B : Good bye Mr. Green.

8.

A : Good afternoon Bill, how are you?

B : Good afternoon, Mr. Green. I am very well, thank you.

9.

A : I'm John Smith. Are you Bill Jones.

B : Yes, I am.

10.

A : Good night, Mr. Green

B : See you tomorrow, Mrs. Brown. Good night.

11.

A : Hello, how are you?

B : Fine.

12.

A : See you tomorrow.

B : Fine

Assessment of Teachers

The quantitative results were supported by teacher assessments of participants' pronunciation skills, which showed that pupils in the experimental group had significantly improved their pronunciation accuracy and fluency. Additionally, teachers saw that shadowing participants were more open to trying out new pronunciation patterns and practicing independently outside of the classroom. Overall, the results point to the shadowing method as a useful

teaching strategy for improving students' pronunciation in a second language setting. Shadowing promotes the development of precise pronunciation, fluid speech production, and natural-sounding prosody by offering intense and concentrated practice in imitating native speech patterns. These results underscore the significance of incorporating cutting-edge pronunciation instruction techniques, such as shadowing, into language programs to promote communicative competence and language proficiency. These findings have implications for language teaching and curriculum development.

The purpose of the study was to explore the effectiveness of the shadowing method on students' pronunciation improvement. The findings illuminate the pedagogical implications and potential benefits of the shadowing method for language learners. The discussion also includes the importance of the findings, their connection to the existing literature, the limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research and practice. The results of shadowing exercises showed that the participants had a great improvement in the features of the accuracy of pronunciation which indicated the effectiveness of this method in improving students' pronunciation skills. These results are important for language training because they show that shadowing in language instruction can lead to measurable improvements in speech fluency.

The results of this study are consistent with earlier studies showing how the shadowing method can enhance pronunciation abilities in a variety of linguistic circumstances. Similar results have been documented in studies by Saito & Lyster (2012), Murakami & Tateyama (2013), and others, demonstrating the persistent advantages of shadowing for pronunciation enhancement. By offering more proof of the effectiveness of shadowing in a particular language learning setting, the current study adds to the corpus of literature. Notwithstanding the encouraging outcomes, a number of restrictions should be noted. First off, longitudinal research is required to examine shadowing's long-term impacts on pronunciation proficiency, as the study only examined its immediate consequences. Furthermore, the study sample could not be entirely typical of the larger population of language learners, which would restrict how broadly the results can be applied. Additionally, the study design did not adequately account for potential confounding variables including individual learner differences and prior shadowing exposure.

By carrying out longitudinal studies to look at the long-term impacts of shadowing on pronunciation proficiency, future research could overcome the shortcomings of the current study. Furthermore, a more thorough knowledge of the efficacy of shadowing across various learner populations and language environments may be possible with studies using bigger and more varied samples. Additionally, investigating the best ways to employ shadowing and combining it with other teaching techniques could increase its efficacy in language training. The study's conclusions have applications for curriculum designers and language instructors. Including shadowing exercises in language classes can give students excellent chances to practice pronouncing words accurately and fluently. Teachers can design dynamic and captivating learning experiences that encourage active engagement and real-world language use by incorporating shadowing into language instruction. In summary, the study offers strong proof of the shadowing technique's efficacy in enhancing students' speaking abilities. The results highlight the

significance of integrating immersive and interactive methods like shadowing into language teaching practices and advance our knowledge of creative ways to pronunciation instruction, even though they acknowledge their limitations. To optimize the possible advantages of shadowing for language learners, more investigation and study of the best implementation techniques are necessary.

4. CONCLUSION

After completing the dedication to the community in both the form of success and the obstacles found in the activity, it could be concluded that, this program is useful for young learners. Teaching English by implementing the fun and interactive strategy was meaningful because it goes with kids mental. Further, it was successful due to the implementing of shadowing technique in teaching basic common language expressions to young learners. Unfortunately, the obstacles of during this program are: first, pupils have no basic English at all, so to start this program we need to be more active at the beginning of class. Second, we need to design material by having the simple words or phrases or sentences. Third, we need to pronounce the common language expressions in each section again. At the conclusion of this entire community service program, we are providing certificates to all participants who actively engaged in the learning activities. These certificates serve as recognition that they have grasped the fundamentals of English, covering topics such as introductions, days of the week, parts of the body, and daily activities.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although this was a community service initiative, the contributions made by the team of lecturers were instrumental to the program's success. Their contributions included developing materials, selecting methods, creating instructional media, and preparing games; we are grateful for every contribution provided. We also extend our thanks to the St. Andreas Baumata for welcoming us. Their support—specifically in providing refreshments and teaching aids such as an LCD projector and a whiteboard—was also vital to the program.

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