

English learning in rural secondary schools: Songs and games-integrated English camp in a rural school in The Secondary Education Service Area Office Chaiphum

Sattra Maporn^{1*}, Mattanaporn Sansak²

¹ Faculty of Education, Chaiphum Rajabhat University, Chaiphum, Thailand

² Faculty of Science, Mahasarakham University, Maha Sarakham, Thailand

* Name Corresponding Author: Sattra Maporn E-mail: sattra.ma@cpru.ac.th

Received: 22 August 2024, **Revised:** 21 May 2025, **Accepted:** 16 June 2025

Abstract - This article provides the implementation of an English activities conducted for secondary school students in a rural area. The aim of the study is to address the impacts of English camp activities toward motivation and awareness of the importance of English due to socioeconomic challenges. The result shows Alumni from Chaiphum Rajabhat University (CPRU) played a key role in initiating acceptance within the community. The music-integrated and interactive activities into the theory introduced by Chen-Hafteck (1997). The success of the camp was attributed to the expertise of CPRU's students who created activities based on motivational and educational theories. The camp was successful in initiating students' awareness of the importance of English. However, sustaining these changes requires a lot more reinforcement in the future. The article also gives recommendations for maintaining support from alumni and regular English teachers in schools.

Keywords: English songs, rural education, interactive learning

1. Situation before the change occurred

As English has play important roles in several sectors such as aviation (Maporn & Praphan, 2022). This is why English has been included in curriculum. Some secondary school especially in rural areas always faces learning problems due to several underprivileged factors such as family, economic, and intellectual problems. Prior to the project, students lacked an understanding of the importance of learning English. More than half of the students came from less privileged backgrounds. The attitude towards English is a subject that is boring and irrelevant to their daily lives. This situation may happen due

^{1*} Corresponding author: Sattra Maporn

Email: sattra.ma@cpru.ac.th

to the limited experiences with practical English in their community (Abbas et al., 2018; Tariq et al., 2013). They may think English is not necessary for their future. The traditional way of teaching English makes it difficult for them to appreciate the value of learning a foreign language. This situation may call for an innovative approach that changes perceptions and motivates the students.

2. Participation and acceptance of the target society

At first, the student in the rural area may not accept the one from outside. The involvement of alumni from Chaiphum Rajabhat University (CPRU) played an important role in the connecting process between the school and the community. These alumni, who are currently teachers at the target school provide afford to the project. They understood the cultural and social dynamics of the area. Then, they try to encourage the school director to introduce the English camp. The English camp was designed to align with the interests and needs of the students, making it an appealing activity. The alumni's participation in the program added credibility to try to make it accepted by the school community. The collaboration between the school, alumni, and university create an environment where learning English is seen possible.

3. Processes undertaken to facilitate better change

To make learning English more interesting, an English camp was organized by the at least 40 students at Chaiphum Rajabhat University. Those students were tasked to design various activities that deviated from traditional English teaching. A component of the English camp was the use of English songs, inspired by the approach introduced by Chen-Hafteck (1997). The camp's curriculum was designed to integrate music and interactive activities which may persuade the target students. English songs and games were chosen not only for their entertainment but also for educational tasks. The students may acquire new vocabulary and improve their pronunciation in a fun way.

4. Knowledge and expertise utilized in the change

The success of the English camp design may come from the expertise of the English major students from CPRU, who were responsible for creation of the English songs and designing the activities. First of all, the knowledge required is the step of learning introduced by Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) Bloom's Taxonomy and theory of motivation to provide better motivation to students (Jabak, 2021) as well as learning English with song in practical (Hadi, 2019; Luo, 2019) in order to design the suitable songs to the target students. The use of music is a good choice that reflects an understanding of the cognitive and emotional benefits of learning. As proposed by Chen-Hafteck (1997).

5. Anticipation of consequences following the change

The project expectation of the English camp is to increase awareness of the students' attitudes toward learning English. It was anticipated that the English song & games may help the target students to realize the importance of English as a global language. By making it more enjoyable. The deep expectation is to transform the students' mindset from making English as a valuable subject or skill. It was also anticipated that the camp would establish an international sense of community and collaboration among the students, university, directors, administrators, etc. The project may encourage them to support each other in the future.

6. Evaluation of the outcomes of the change

The effectiveness of the English camp project was evaluated through student feedback after the end of the day. The feedback shows that the students found that the camp was enjoyable and fun. It is consistent with previous study that student has improved their language skills (Azhari et al., 2023). They also remember some basic vocabulary in English. The project can be summed up that the project was successfully make awareness to the rural students. The positive response also indicated that attitudes toward English are in transition of change. The use of music and interactive exercises was particularly well-received.

7. Guidelines for monitoring and maintaining the sustainability of the development

However, while the feedback on that day was positive, it was acknowledged that events might not be sufficient to sustain long-term transformation in those rural students' attitudes and skills. The attitudes may last long but skills may not. Follow-up activities are still necessary in the future. The most critical aspect of sustainable development is to initiate an awareness of the importance of English in students' minds. This still requires ongoing reinforcement through regular English learning in school. While it may be difficult to maintain the same level of excitement generated by the camp because after that day students will come back to the original routine at school and their family.

Declaration

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. This article has not specified the names of institutions or schools.

Artificial intelligent declaration

The content of this article was created by author and co-author. The artificial intelligent was used for correct English language and improve the coherence of academic writing.

References

- Azhari, M.A. ,Mulia L., Akbar, Z., Gunawan, R., & Jaelani, S. (2023). The Use of English Camp to Improve English Speaking Skill. *Jurnal Pendidikan Berkarakter*. 1(4), 277-289.
- Abbas, N., Ashiq, U., & Haq, M. A. (2018). Gap between acquired and required English learning objectives for the primary school students: Empirical evidence from Sargodha (Pakistan). *Cogent Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1457421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2018.1457421>
- Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A Taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Chen-Hafteck, L. (1997). Music and language development in early childhood: Integrating past research in the two domains. *Early Child Development and Care*, 130(1), 85–97.
- Hadi, M. S. (2019). The use of song in teaching English for junior high school students. *English Language in Focus*, 1(2), 107-112.
- Jabak, O. (2021). The role of English songs in Saudi students' self-learning of English. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 11(1), 1405-1415.
- Luo, S. (2019). Influence of singing English songs on vocabulary learning by senior school students in Guangzhou. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 9(11), 843-848.
- Maporn, S., & Praphan, P. (2022). Issue on study of aviation English as a lingua franca: A documents review. *Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research in Asia*, 27(1), 109 - 126.
- Tariq, A. R., Bilal, H. A., Sandhu, M. A., Iqbal, A., & Hayat, U. (2013). Difficulties in learning English as a second language in rural areas of Pakistan. *Academic Research International*, 4(6), 540-546.