

Strengthening Students' Basic English Skills Through Collaborative Fun Learning at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah

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Abstract

Purpose: This community service program aims to improve students' basic English skills at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah, Indramayu, through fun learning methods. It was initiated because of students' low interest and confidence in learning English, caused by conventional approaches.

Methodology: The program was conducted at MDTA Amaliyah, Gaunter District, Indramayu Regency, involving 45 students aged 7–9 years. Activities included observation, coordination with teachers, material preparation, and interactive learning using singing, games, illustrated guidebooks, and simple conversation exercises. Evaluation was performed through pre-test and post-test quizzes and observations of student participation.

Results: The program led to improvements in students' English skills, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary recognition, and participation confidence.

Conclusions: The fun learning-based program was effective in enhancing MDTA students' basic English skills, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and learning participation, making it suitable for early students in madrasah diniyah.

Limitations: The short duration and limited sample size mean that the findings represent only short-term effects and may not be widely generalizable.

Contributions: This study reinforces the effectiveness of fun learning methods in early childhood English education and provides a practical learning model for madrasahs with limited resources.

Keywords: *Basic English Skills, Community Service, Early Childhood Learners, Fun Learning, Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah*

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1. Introduction

English plays an essential role as a foundational competence in responding to the challenges of globalization and the evolving demands of 21st-century education (Mauliska & D'Angelo, 2024). Beyond its function as a medium of international communication, English enables learners to access a wide range of global knowledge, technology, and information. For children in the early stages of development, language learning becomes more effective when it is delivered through enjoyable, repetitive, and developmentally appropriate activities, such as games, songs, visual aids, and movement-based learning (R. N. Hidayati, Inawati, & Iftinan, 2023). Nevertheless, in many non-formal educational settings, English instruction has not yet been optimally presented through engaging and interactive approaches (Saraka, 2020).

Initial observations at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah in Indramayu reveal that students commonly face difficulties in recognizing the English alphabet, understanding basic vocabulary, and pronouncing simple words ([Mbupu et al., 2025](#)). These challenges are closely related to teacher-centred instructional practices, limited availability of learning media, and lack of varied activities suited to children aged 7–9 years ([N. N. Hidayati, 2020](#)). Educational games contributed to improvements in early childhood English abilities, particularly in vocabulary acquisition and comprehension of simple instructions ([Saraka, 2020](#)).

Previous research has shown that fun learning approaches incorporating elements such as games, songs, physical movement, and visual media can foster greater motivation, attention, and active participation in English learning ([Ningsih, Sihombing, Azarah, Pancenang, & Novitasari, 2024](#); [Wahyuni & Khasanah, 2025](#)). In a related study, [Anggraini and Sriemulyaningsih \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that educational games contributed to improvements in early childhood English abilities, particularly in vocabulary acquisition and comprehension of simple instructions. However, most of these studies were conducted in formal early childhood or primary school environments, where learning is supported by structured curricula, sufficient instructional time, and technological resources.

In contrast, the application of fun learning strategies within non-formal religious institutions, such as madrasah diniyah, remains relatively limited. In the MDTA context, instructional activities are primarily focused on religious education, with constrained learning time and limited integration of foreign language instruction. Consequently, a gap emerges between the developmental needs of early learners for basic language exposure and the teaching practices commonly implemented in madrasah diniyah settings.

Based on this gap, this study addresses the following operational issues.

1. How can fun learning activities be effectively adapted and implemented in the MDTA learning environment?
2. How does the fun learning approach support students' basic English skills, particularly vocabulary recognition, pronunciation, and classroom participation?
3. How can this approach be applied within the time and resource limitations of non-formal religious education institutions?

The novelty of this study lies in its contextual adaptation of a fun learning model within a madrasah diniyah setting, which differs from previous studies conducted in formal schools ([Mbupu et al., 2025](#)). Unlike formal institutions with standardized instructional structures, this programme modifies fun learning strategies to fit the limited duration and contextual realities of MDTAs ([Saraka, 2020](#)). Furthermore, this study contributes a community service-based learning model that integrates basic English instruction into non-formal religious education without undermining its core educational mission ([N. N. Hidayati, 2020](#)).

As an academic and practical contribution, this community service (PKM) program implements fun learning strategies, including educational songs, alphabet and number games, picture-based materials, and simple conversational practice, to support the development of students' basic English skills ([Wahyuni & Khasanah, 2025](#)). The program focuses on strengthening alphabet recognition, basic vocabulary mastery, pronunciation practice, and learning motivation while offering a practical and sustainable instructional alternative for madrasah teachers ([Ibrahim, 2025](#)). Through this approach, English learning is expected to be perceived not as a difficult or burdensome subject, but as an enjoyable and meaningful learning experience that supports the holistic development of early learners in non-formal religious education contexts ([Warouw & Claudia, 2023](#)).

Learning foreign languages, particularly English, during early childhood offers distinct advantages because it occurs within a developmental stage commonly referred to as the *critical period of language acquisition (CoC)* ([Handayani, Riski, Hulu, Nulfikri, & Zanilam, 2025](#)). Within this CoC phase, children demonstrate a heightened capacity to absorb new sounds, language patterns, and vocabulary through imitation and repetition ([Winarko, Rini, & Kusumawati, 2023](#)). In line with Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children aged 7–10 years are in the concrete operational stage, where learning

becomes more effective when linked to real objects, visual representations, and direct experiences ([Mbupu et al., 2025](#)).

These developmental characteristics emphasize that language learning activities should involve hands-on practice, concrete visualization, and active interaction to maximize effectiveness during CoC ([Ibrahim, 2025](#)). In the context of English instruction, young learners tend to achieve optimal outcomes during the *critical period of language acquisition (CoC)* through a combination of simple immersion, repetitive exposure, and play-based activities ([Na'imah, 2022](#)). Language acquisition within the CoC is not an instantaneous process; rather, it requires continuous and structured stimulation so that vocabulary and pronunciation can be stored in long-term memory ([Winarko et al., 2023](#)).

Consistent with the developmental characteristics of CoC, children naturally learn by imitating sounds, associating meaning through visual cues and physical movement, and reinforcing understanding through repetition in an enjoyable learning environment ([Risarani, Syafrudin, & Oktarina, 2023](#)). Nevertheless, early learners also face challenges within the CoC, including pronunciation difficulties, limited vocabulary retention, and declining motivation, when learning activities are not aligned with their developmental needs ([Fitriyani & Na'imah, 2023](#)). The *fun learning* approach has been widely recognized as a strategy capable of addressing challenges faced during the *critical period of language acquisition (CoC)* ([Han & Bao, 2023](#)).

Within the CoC, fun learning emphasizes the creation of an interactive, relaxed, and student-centered environment that allows learners to explore language use without fear of making mistakes ([Novitasari, Prastyo, Reswari, & Iftitah, 2023](#)). In contrast to traditional instructional models that prioritize grammatical accuracy and memorization, fun learning during CoC focuses on emotional engagement and experiential learning ([Arumsari, Arifin, & Rusnalasari, 2017](#)). Activities such as games, storytelling, songs, and physical movements directly support the developmental characteristics of the CoC by embedding language input within enjoyable and memorable experiences ([Risarani et al., 2023](#)).

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of language learning strategies during the *critical period of language acquisition (CoC)*. [Nurdianingsih, Rozak, Rohmah, and Izza \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that movement- and song-based learning activities within the CoC enhance children's motivation, motor skills, and vocabulary retention. [Kurniawan, Putri, and Alianti \(2024\)](#) reported that the use of a pop-up QR book integrating audio, visual, and textual elements increased vocabulary recognition among children aged 3–4 years, as reflected in improved pretest and post-test outcomes. These findings confirm that multisensory learning environments, when applied during the CoC, play a crucial role in strengthening early language acquisition.

In addition to fun learning, this study integrates the *Cycle of Consolidation (CoC)* approach as a complementary theoretical framework ([Soliha, Hoernasih, & Suminar, 2024](#)). The CoC is defined as a structured learning cycle consisting of three interconnected stages: exposure, recall, and evaluation ([Fitriana, Putri, Harwindito, Noviadi, & Maryetti, 2025](#); [Pangestu, Suri, Fitri, Dewi, & Widjayatri, 2022](#)). This framework is directly linked to learning activities, as exposure provides initial input, recall reinforces memory through repetition, and evaluation ensures comprehension and retention. The CoC is aligned with the theory of spaced repetition, which posits that information presented and revisited at structured intervals is more likely to be retained in long-term memory ([Chusna, 2023](#)). Consistent application of this cycle during learning activities allows learners to gradually consolidate new knowledge through repeated engagement and reflection ([Aprilia, Adhitama, & Kustiani, 2023](#); [Verani, Somad, & Warmansyah, 2022](#)).

In the context of early English learning, the *Cycle of Consolidation (CoC)* approach can be operationalized through concrete classroom activities. In the CoC, the exposure stage introduces new language elements through songs, visuals, and demonstrations. The recall stage encourages learners to retrieve previously learned vocabulary through games and guided questioning, thereby reinforcing memory in line with the CoC framework. Finally, the evaluation stage involves simple assessments of understanding, such as question-and-answer sessions, short oral responses, or brief presentations. By

consistently linking each stage of the CoC to fun learning activities, this approach ensures that theoretical principles are directly translated into practical instructional strategies ([Akbar, Kasmawati, & Jusman, 2025](#)).

Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah represents a non-formal religious education institution at the elementary level, where instructional activities primarily focus on Islamic education and are conducted outside formal school hours. In this context, the limited duration of learning sessions, students' physical fatigue after attending formal schools, and restricted learning facilities present specific challenges to English instruction. To address these constraints during the *Cycle of Consolidation (CoC)*, learning models must be efficient, engaging, and adaptable to non-formal educational environments. By linking each stage of the CoC (exposure, recall, and evaluation) directly to classroom activities, instructional strategies can be aligned with the specific needs of MDTA learners while maintaining consistency with the theoretical framework ([Hidayatullah, Izza, Ardyansyah, & Setiyowati, 2024](#)).

Despite the growing literature on fun learning and multisensory approaches in early English education, research focusing on *madrasah diniyah* contexts remains limited. Most existing studies have been conducted in formal kindergarten or elementary school settings with relatively adequate resources and instructional time ([Muzammil, Purnawati, Andy, & Arifani, 2024](#)). This study addresses this gap by adapting fun learning and the *Cycle of Consolidation (CoC)* approach to the specific conditions of MDTAs. By linking each stage of the CoC—exposure, recall, and evaluation—directly to fun learning activities, this study contributes a context-sensitive instructional model suitable for non-formal religious education institutions. Based on the reviewed literature, it can be concluded that fun, interactive, and multisensory-based approaches have a strong potential for enhancing early English language skills. The integration of fun learning strategies with the *Cycle of Consolidation (CoC)* framework is particularly relevant, as each stage of the CoC—exposure, recall, and evaluation—can be directly linked to classroom activities. This alignment ensures that theoretical principles are consistently applied to address the challenges of English instruction in MDTA Amaliyah.

In this study, pretest and posttest results were used as supporting quantitative evidence to strengthen the qualitative findings derived from observations and documentation. The primary focus of the analysis remained descriptive and qualitative, emphasizing changes in learning behavior, participation, and language use during the implementation of the program. Within the framework of the *Cycle of Consolidation (CoC)*, these instruments are directly linked to the evaluation stage, which assesses learners' ability to consolidate knowledge after exposure and recall activities. Accordingly, this study formulated the following hypotheses:

- H*₁: The application of the *CoC*-based fun learning method will be indicated by improvement in students' English alphabet pronunciation ability at MDTAs.
- H*₂: The combination of songs, educational games, and visual media within the *CoC* framework will be indicated by improved mastery of numbers in English among MDTA Amaliyah students.
- H*₃: Fun and interactive learning methods, consistently linked to the *CoC* stages of exposure, recall, and evaluation, are indicated by students' increased confidence and active participation in English learning.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach combined with action research to tackle practical learning issues in Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to try out, observe, and improve teaching methods through repeated cycles of planning, doing, observing, and reflecting. The action research method allows for ongoing improvements in learning activities while collecting detailed qualitative information about how students learn and respond.

2.2 Research Site and Timeline

The research took place at MDTA Amaliyah, which is in Mekarjaya Village, Ganter District, Indramayu Regency, West Java. This location was chosen because it fit the program's goals, had limited exposure to English learning, and had support from the institution for carrying out the program. The study was conducted in three stages: a needs assessment on October 16, 2024, three sessions of the learning program from November 6 to November 8, 2024, and an evaluation on November 9, 2024.

2.3 Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants included 45 students aged 7 to 9 years who studied at MDTA Amaliyah. A total sampling method was used, which included all students in the target age group who regularly attended the madrasah during the program. This method was chosen to ensure that everyone was included and to obtain a full picture of how students responded to learning in a non-formal educational setting. All participants attended formal elementary schools in the mornings and had not previously received structured English lessons at the madrasah.

2.4 Research Instruments

Several tools were used to collect data and ensure the thoroughness of the study:

1. **Participatory Observation Sheets**
These were used to record the students' engagement, pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary use, confidence, and participation in learning activities. Observations were guided by predefined indicators aligned with the study objectives.
2. **Semi-Structured Interviews**
Interviews were conducted with madrasah teachers to gather insights into students' initial learning conditions and perceived changes during program implementation. Informal interviews were also conducted with students to explore their learning experiences and perceptions.
3. **Pre-Test and Post-Test (Oral Assessment)**
The oral test assessed students' ability to pronounce English alphabets (A–Z) and numbers (1–10).
 - a. **Format:** Individual oral responses guided by flashcards and verbal prompts.
 - b. **Scoring Rubric:** Pronunciation accuracy and correctness were rated using a three-level scale (1 = inaccurate, 2 = partially accurate, and 3 = accurate).
 - c. **Purpose:** Pretest results provided baseline data, whereas posttest results served as supporting quantitative evidence to reinforce qualitative findings.
4. **Audio-Visual Documentation**
Photographs and videos were used to document learning activities and student participation, supporting observational and interview data.

2.5 Learning Materials and Activities

The learning materials covered recognizing the alphabet (A–Z), numbers (1–100, with a special focus on 1–10), basic object words (e.g., table, chair, book, and pen), and color words (e.g., red, blue, yellow, and green). The instructional tools included educational songs, flashcards, English learning videos, whiteboards, markers, and simple rewards to make learning more motivating. The activities were designed based on fun learning principles and the Cycle of Consolidation (CoC) stages: first, introducing concepts through songs and pictures; second, helping students remember through games; and third, assessing understanding through guided speaking practice.

2.6 Program Implementation Procedures

The program was implemented in three stages.

1. **Preparation Stage**
We conducted site surveys, coordinated with madrasah staff, performed needs analyses, prepared learning materials, and developed research instruments.
2. **Implementation Stage**
Conducted over three sessions.
 - a. **Session 1:** Alphabet introduction, pre-test, pronunciation practice, and alphabet games
 - b. **Session 2:** Number vocabulary learning through songs, object-counting activities, and games
 - c. **Session 3:** Review activities, Word Memory Challenge, post-test, and reflection

3. Evaluation Stage

Analysis of observation notes, test results, interview data, and formulation of recommendations for future learning.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data were analyzed using a descriptive method following three steps: reducing the data, organizing it, and drawing conclusions. The data were categorized into themes such as pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary knowledge, student confidence, and participation. Pretest and posttest results were presented descriptively to support the qualitative findings. Multiple data sources and methods were used together to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study. Permission was formally obtained from the madrasah head, and informed consent was provided by parents or guardians. The identities of the participants were kept private, and all data were used only for research. During the program, students were treated with respect, given positive feedback, and not compared negatively to maintain a supportive and encouraging learning environment.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of an initial survey conducted on October 16, 2024, English learning at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah shows several learning conditions that can still be optimized to increase the effectiveness of the learning process. One such aspect is the limited availability of English learning media. In the early stages, learning relies primarily on whiteboards, while the use of visual and audio media has not been fully explored. This condition has the potential to limit the variety of material presentations, especially for young students who tend to learn more effectively through multisensory stimulation ([Setiyowati et al., 2025](#)).

In addition, preliminary observations show that student participation in English learning is limited. Some students appear cautious and require time to adjust when asked to pronounce vocabulary or letters in English. This is understandable considering that students do not use English daily and that the learning approach used before was simple. This situation indicates the need for a learning strategy that can encourage more active and gradual student engagement. These initial conditions are important foundations for the design and implementation of fun-learning-based English learning programs with the CoC approach.

This program is designed to strengthen the learning process through the presentation of activities that are more varied, interactive, and in line with the developmental characteristics of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah students, so that it is expected to support the improvement of the English learning experience in a more positive and sustainable manner. The learning program was conducted for three meetings with a total duration of 180 minutes. Each meeting was systematically designed with clear learning objectives and structured activities that were flexible and fun for students. The fun-learning approach was applied through a combination of songs, educational games, and interactive activities that encouraged active student involvement.

3.1 Meeting 1: Introduction to the Alphabet (November 6, 2024).

The first meeting focused on introducing the English alphabet. The activity began with an *icebreaker* to create a comfortable learning atmosphere and reduce student awkwardness. Next, the students were introduced to the song "ABCD Song," which was presented through an animated video. At this stage, the students entered the *memorization phase* in the CoC approach, where they were introduced to the alphabetical order through the repetition of songs with cheerful rhythms. Observations showed that the use of songs as a learning medium helped students remember the order of the alphabet more easily. Most of the students showed high enthusiasm and actively participated in singing together, although the pronunciation of some letters was still imperfect. This shows that songs serve as an effective initial stimulus for introducing new material without creating learning pressure.

The next stage is *recall*, in which the students are asked to recall the letters that have been learned through question-and-answer activities and the use of exercise books. This activity encourages students to actively access information that they have received before. Although some students still need the help of a facilitator, their ability to pronounce the designated letters shows that the learning process is beginning to take shape. These findings indicate that the fun learning approach can create a safe learning environment in which students can try and make mistakes without fear.

3.2 Meeting 2: Number Vocabulary (November 7, 2024).

The second meeting focused on the introduction of English number vocabulary. The session began with a review of the alphabet material using the same song as in the previous meeting. Observational data indicated an improvement in students' pronunciation fluency compared to the first meeting, suggesting that repetition in a positive and enjoyable learning environment contributed to better articulation and retention. During the material reinforcement stage, number recognition was introduced through English number songs accompanied by finger-counting activities. This multisensory approach enabled students to simultaneously associate sounds, visual cues, and body movements. Students demonstrated a better understanding of numerical concepts as they actively listened, observed, and practiced during the activity. Increased enthusiasm and sustained attention were observed when students were instructed to count while pointing to their fingers, indicating that kinaesthetic elements played a significant role in maintaining students' engagement.

The evaluation activity was conducted using a number-recognition game in which students were asked to pronounce numbers written randomly on the board. This activity served to assess students' ability to recall and accurately pronounce English numbers in a spontaneous context. Observations revealed that most students were able to pronounce numbers 1–10 more fluently than in the initial condition, indicating that the integration of songs, movements, and games effectively supported vocabulary recall and pronunciation accuracy.

3.3 Meeting 3: Consolidation and Evaluation (November 8, 2024)

The third meeting aimed to consolidate all learning materials and evaluate students' overall learning outcomes. Review activities were conducted by combining alphabet and number songs to strengthen students' memory of previously learned content. In addition, students participated in simple show-and-tell activities in which they introduced themselves using basic English expressions. This activity encouraged students to apply vocabulary in a more authentic and communicative context. The Word Memory Challenge was implemented to assess students' ability to recall alphabet letters and number vocabulary without the assistance of songs or visual prompts. Through this activity, students were encouraged to rely on their memory and pronunciation skills, providing additional evidence of learning progress achieved during the program.

The implementation of pre-tests and post-tests, both verbally and in writing, provides a clearer picture of improving students' abilities after participating in the learning program. The results of the post-test showed significant improvement in the ability to pronounce the alphabet, mastery of numbers, and students' courage in using English simply. A comparison of the pre-test and post-test results shows that students not only experience improvements cognitively, but also affectively, especially in terms of confidence and active participation.



Figure 1. Oral post-test activities

The photo depicts the implementation of oral post-test activities conducted at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah. This activity is part of the learning evaluation stage after students receive the material that has been delivered previously. In this oral post-test activity, students are asked to answer questions or practice the material directly in front of the class, while teachers and researchers observe students' abilities. The purpose of this post-test is to determine the improvement in students' understanding and ability after the implementation of the learning method used. In addition, this activity also helps teachers evaluate the effectiveness of learning and identify aspects that still need improvement. The documentation in the photo shows an active and participatory learning atmosphere in which students are directly involved in the evaluation process, while teachers act as facilitators and assessors.



Figure 2. Post-test activities in writing

The figure shows the implementation of post-test activities in writing conducted at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah. This activity is part of the learning evaluation stage after students participate in the learning process and complete an oral post-test. In this written post-test, students are asked to answer questions in writing, both on the board and on sheets that have been provided. Students write answers based on the material that has been studied, while teachers and researchers observe and assess the results of students' work.

The implementation of this written post-test aims to measure the level of students' understanding in writing and strengthen the data from the evaluation results obtained from the oral post-test. By using the same test form as in the pre-test, learning outcomes can be systematically compared to determine the improvement in students' abilities. Based on the documentation, it can be seen that students are actively involved in completing the assigned tasks, while teachers play the roles of companions and evaluators. This shows that the evaluation process is running in a structured and conducive manner.

Table 1. Analysis of Reliability Aspects in Learning on Student Satisfaction

Reliability Aspect	Description of Reliability in Learning	Influence on Student Satisfaction	Satisfaction Indicators
Teaching Consistency	The teacher provided concepts and instructions in a stable manner at each meeting.	Students felt comfortable because the learning pattern did not change.	Students participate in activities without confusion and focus on learning.
Accuracy of Material Delivery	The material was delivered in accordance with the learning plan and objectives.	Students were satisfied because the material was neatly arranged and easy to understand.	Students can recall the taught material.
Reliability of Learning Media	Songs, games, and whiteboards are used regularly and functionally.	Interest has increased because the media used consistently helps understand the material.	The students were actively involved and showed enthusiasm.
Teacher Responsiveness	The teacher provides directions when the student is having difficulties.	Increased learning satisfaction occurs when students feel helped.	Students ask questions and attempt to answer them in front of the class.
Regularity of Activity Schedule	Activities were conducted at a consistent and structured time.	Students felt familiar and comfortable with the rhythm of the activity.	Student attendance was stable, and participation rates increased.

The table presents primary data from the research processing, which focuses on the reliability aspect in the learning process and its effect on student satisfaction. Each aspect of reliability is analyzed through a description of the learning implementation, its impact on student satisfaction, and the satisfaction indicators observed during teaching and learning activities. In terms of teaching consistency, teachers provide concepts and instructions stably at each meeting. This makes students feel comfortable because the learning pattern does not change, as evidenced by the ability of students to follow activities without confusion and stay focused while learning.

The accuracy of the delivery of the material is reflected in whether the material is delivered in accordance with the learning plan and objectives. A structured and easy-to-understand delivery creates a sense of satisfaction in students, which is reflected in their ability to recall the taught material. Furthermore, the reliability aspect of learning media is demonstrated through the regular and functional use of songs, games, and whiteboards. The consistent use of media increases students' interest in learning and helps them understand the material, so that students look active and show enthusiasm during learning. In terms of teacher responsiveness, teachers provide direction and assistance when students experience difficulties. This responsive attitude makes students feel helped and increases learning satisfaction, which is characterized by students' courage to ask questions and attempt to answer questions in front of the class.

Finally, the regularity aspect of the activity schedule shows that learning is conducted consistently and in an orderly manner. This condition makes students accustomed and comfortable with the rhythm of activities, which has an impact on stable student attendance and increased participation in the learning process. Overall, the data in the table show that the application of reliability aspects in learning contributes positively to student satisfaction, both in terms of comfort, understanding, and active student involvement. The teacher also expressed his desire to continue this method after the program ended. They asked for simple guides and reusable learning media, which had been prepared in the form of PowerPoints and educational videos that could be accessed at any time.

The results of this study show that *fun learning* CoC-based is effective in improving the basic English skills of MDTA Amaliyah students. These findings are in line with previous research that has shown the effectiveness of fun approaches in learning a foreign language for children ([Putri, Cahyanti, Aida, & Hidayani, 2025](#)). The CoC method is considered effective because it is grounded in the principles of spaced repetition and active recall, which are widely recognized for enhancing long-term memory retention. In this study, the memorization stage was implemented through songs and visual media to help students recognize and retain English vocabulary in an enjoyable learning environment.

The recall stage was conducted through play-based activities that required students to actively retrieve previously learned vocabulary, thereby strengthening neural connections. Meanwhile, the checking stage involved simple tests and short presentations, allowing students to apply their knowledge in a meaningful and contextualized manner. This instructional design aligns with cognitive load theory, which emphasizes presenting learning materials in ways that minimize unnecessary cognitive burden on learners' working memory. The use of songs, games, and movement helps reduce cognitive load by creating a natural and engaging learning atmosphere, enabling students to focus on language acquisition rather than task pressure.

[Kurniawan et al. \(2024\)](#) added that the audio-visual integrated Pop-Up QR Book makes learning a foreign language more interactive and interesting for early childhood. This study developed a pop-up book equipped with a QR code so that children can access additional audio-visual content through digital devices. This media combines visual aspects (pop-up images), kinesthetics (interaction opening folds), and auditory (sound from QR codes) aspects so that children learn English in a multisensory way. Research has found that children are more enthusiastic and understand vocabulary easily because the learning experience feels like play.

Children aged 7–8 years generally have a limited attention span, typically ranging from 15 to 20 minutes, and may lose interest when learning activities are monotonous. The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of a fun learning approach helped sustain students' attention and learning motivation throughout the instructional sessions, as reflected in their continued participation and engagement during the learning activities. These findings are in line with *self-determination theory*, which states that students' intrinsic motivation will increase if their basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and connectedness—can be met. The fulfilment of these three needs was reflected in the learning activities implemented in this study.

First, autonomy is shown through giving students the opportunity to choose the English song they want to sing again, so that students feel in control and actively involved in the learning process. Second, competency is reflected in the students' experience of improved English language skills, which is reinforced through positive feedback and a simple form of appreciation for their achievements. Third, connectedness is built through warm interactions between facilitators and students, as well as cooperation between students in group games, which creates a supportive and fun learning atmosphere. The fulfilment of these three psychological needs contributes to increased motivation and student participation during English learning, thus enabling the learning process to take place in a more meaningful and sustainable manner. [Anggraini and Sriemulyaningsih \(2024\)](#); [Ningsih et al. \(2024\)](#) state that digital educational games, *Brainy Games*, significantly improve children's English skills. Although this study used non-digital (offline) games, the principle of gamification remains the same: making learning feel like play, so that children learn without feeling like they are learning.

An important finding of this study is that fun learning methods can be effectively applied even in the context of early madrasah with limited time, facilities, and teacher competence. This answers the research question because previous research was mostly conducted in formal kindergartens/elementary schools with adequate resources ([Muzammil et al., 2024](#)). This study shows that with the right methods and simple media (songs, videos from the internet), English learning can still be done effectively at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah. The key to its success is:

- a. Focus on basic understanding relevant to the child's life
- b. Using methods that don't require expensive infrastructure

Although the results were positive, the study had some limitations.

- a. **Short Duration:** The program lasts for only three meetings (total 180 minutes). To assess long-term retention, a follow-up study after 1–3 months is required.
- b. **Limited Sample:** Only 15 students from one madrasah were involved. Generalization to other madrasahs requires replication with a larger and more diverse sample.
- c. **Limited Material Focus:** Includes only the alphabet and numbers. Expanding the program to include other thematic understandings (e.g., colors, animals, and fruits) will enrich the learning experience.
- d. **Qualitative Evaluation:** This study used a qualitative approach. Advanced research can use a quantitative pretest–posttest with a control group to statistically measure effect size.

In light of these limitations, this study recommends the following:

- a. **Program Extension:** Ideally, the program should be held for a minimum of 8-12 meetings to provide sufficient time for students to absorb and teach the material.
- b. **Step-by-step module development:** Compile multilevel learning modules from beginner (alphabet, numbers) to intermediate (thematic vocabulary, simple sentences).
- c. **Continuous teacher training:** Provide workshops to madrasah teachers so that they can continue the program independently and adapt methods for other materials.
- d. **Replication in Other Madrasahs:** Application of similar programs in other madrasahs in different regions to test generalizability and adaptability models
- e. **Longitudinal Study:** Conduct follow-up studies to measure long-term retention and the program's impact on students' attitudes towards English at the next level of education.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Conclusion

This community service program demonstrates that the CoC-based fun learning approach (Memorize–Recall–Examine) is pedagogically appropriate and practically effective in introducing basic English to students at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah (MDTA) Amaliyah, Indramayu. Through simple, enjoyable, and structured activities, the learning process shifted from teacher-centered instruction to a more interactive and learner-friendly environment. Consequently, students were able to engage with English in a relaxed and positive learning atmosphere. Several key outcomes indicate the success of the program. Student participation increased significantly, as reflected in more active classroom interactions, a greater willingness to respond, and reduced anxiety in using English orally. Learning achievement also improved, particularly in alphabet pronunciation accuracy and number recognition, as shown by higher post-test scores compared to pre-test results. In addition, students demonstrated increased confidence and motivation, as indicated by their readiness to answer questions and participate voluntarily in classroom activities.

The implementation of the CoC framework supported these outcomes effectively. Memorization through songs helped students become familiar with English sounds, recall through games encouraged repeated practice without pressure, and simple oral examinations enabled students to demonstrate understanding in a supportive environment. The use of multisensory learning media, such as songs, flashcards, and short videos, further enhanced engagement and helped overcome limitations related to instructional time and facilities. From an implementation perspective, the program proved feasible and adaptable. Learning activities were successfully conducted in short sessions of 30–45 min using low-

cost and easily accessible media. These characteristics indicate that the model can be replicated in other madrasah diniyah with similar educational contexts and limited resources.

4.2 Research Limitations

Despite these positive outcomes, this community service program has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the program duration was relatively short, consisting of only three meetings with a total duration of 180 minutes. This limited time frame did not allow for a deeper observation of the long-term retention of students' English skills. Therefore, the improvements observed mainly reflected short-term learning outcomes. Second, the number of participants involved in the program was limited to 15 students from a single madrasah diniyah. As a result, the findings cannot be broadly generalized to other institutions with different characteristics or learning environments. Third, the scope of the learning materials was restricted to the introduction of English alphabets and numbers. This limitation was necessary to accommodate the students' age level, the duration of the program, and their initial language proficiency. Consequently, the study did not explore broader aspects of language learning, such as thematic vocabulary development, simple sentence construction, or conversational understanding. Finally, the study applied a descriptive qualitative approach without involving control groups or inferential statistical analysis. Although this approach aligns with the context of community service activities, it does not allow for the statistical measurement of the effect size of the learning method.

4.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Based on the limitations identified, several recommendations can be proposed for future studies and program development. Future programs are recommended to extend the duration of learning activities, for example, by conducting eight to twelve learning sessions. A longer implementation period would allow researchers to observe medium- and long-term retention of students' English skills more comprehensively. In addition, future research should involve a larger number of participants from different Madrasah Diniyah or similar non-formal educational institutions to test the adaptability and generalizability of the CoC-based fun learning model. Further studies may also expand the scope of learning materials gradually, moving from alphabet and number recognition to thematic vocabulary and simple sentence structures related to students' daily experiences. From a methodological perspective, future research may consider applying experimental or quasi-experimental designs with quantitative pre-test and post-test measurements and control groups to provide more measurable evidence of the effectiveness of the learning approach.

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