



Student Responses to the Implementation of Song- and Game-Based Language Learning at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe students' responses to the implementation of language learning based on songs and games at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand. The research was conducted at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand, during the International Teaching Assistance Program from November 10, 2025, to January 5, 2026. The population consisted of students participating in the language learning program, while the sample comprised 25 Mattayom 3 students selected through purposive sampling. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The primary research instrument was the researcher as the human instrument, supported by observation guidelines and field notes for data collection. Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicate that song- and game-based language learning generated positive students' responses. These responses were reflected in increased student engagement during learning activities, active participation in instruction-based games, more communicative interactions between students and teachers as well as among peers, and improved attention to verbal instructions. Therefore, song- and game-based language learning can serve as an effective instructional strategy for creating active, enjoyable, and student-centered learning environments in cross-cultural language education.

Keywords: students responses, songs and games, language learning, Thailand

Respons Siswa terhadap Penerapan Pembelajaran Bahasa Berbasis Lagu dan Permainan di Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan respons siswa terhadap penerapan pembelajaran bahasa berbasis lagu dan permainan di Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand, pada program Asistensi Mengajar Internasional yang berlangsung pada 10 November 2025 sampai 5 Januari 2026. Populasi penelitian adalah seluruh siswa mengikuti pembelajaran bahasa pada program tersebut, sedangkan sampel penelitian berjumlah 25 siswa kelas Mattayom 3 yang dipilih secara purposive. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Instrumen utama penelitian adalah peneliti (human instrument) yang didukung oleh pedoman observasi dan catatan lapangan sebagai instrumen pengumpulan data. Analisis data menggunakan model analisis interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan dan verifikasi simpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan pembelajaran bahasa berbasis lagu dan permainan memperoleh respons positif dari siswa. Respons tersebut ditunjukkan melalui meningkatnya keterlibatan siswa selama pembelajaran, partisipasi aktif dalam permainan berbasis instruksi, interaksi yang lebih komunikatif antara siswa dengan guru maupun antarsiswa, serta meningkatnya perhatian siswa terhadap instruksi verbal. Dengan demikian, pembelajaran bahasa berbasis lagu dan permainan dapat menjadi alternatif strategi pembelajaran yang efektif dalam menciptakan suasana belajar yang aktif, menyenangkan, dan berpusat pada siswa pada konteks bahasa lintas budaya.

Kata kunci: respons siswa, pembelajaran bahasa, lagu dan permainan, Thailand

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INTRODUCTION

Language learning is an educational process that focuses not only on mastering linguistic elements but also on developing students' ability to communicate effectively through meaningful learning experiences. In the context of foreign language learning, learning success is influenced by the teacher's ability to create a learning environment that encourages student involvement, participation, and active interaction. Therefore, the learning strategies used serve not only as a medium for delivering material but also as a means of building motivation and creating an enjoyable learning experience.

Language learning in a cross-cultural context faces more complex challenges than learning in a first language environment. Differences in mother tongue (first language/L1), cultural background, and limited exposure to the target language often cause students to experience obstacles in understanding material and using language communicatively. These conditions result in low self-confidence, learning motivation, and student participation during the learning process. Therefore, teachers are required to implement learning strategies that are adaptive, contextual, and appropriate to the characteristics of students in a multilingual environment.

One strategy widely used in language learning is the use of songs and games as learning media. Songs can create a relaxed learning atmosphere, increase motivation, improve pronunciation, and help students remember vocabulary more easily. Meanwhile, games provide opportunities for students to learn through fun activities, thereby increasing engagement, communication, and interaction among students without excessive academic pressure. The combination of songs and games makes the learning process more student-centered, especially in foreign language learning.

This strategy was implemented in an international teaching assistance program at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand, which took place from November 10, 2025,

to January 5, 2026. Learning activities were conducted using English and Indonesian as the medium of instruction, adapted to the students' language proficiency. During the learning process, songs and games were used as media to create an active, communicative, and enjoyable learning atmosphere, which is expected to increase students' positive responses to language learning.

Although various studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of songs and games in improving motivation and language skills, research specifically examining student responses to the application of these strategies in the context of cross-cultural learning in Thai Islamic schools is relatively limited. Most research focuses on improving learning outcomes or language competency, while studies on student engagement, participation, and interaction during the learning process are scarce. These three aspects are crucial indicators for achieving meaningful learning.

Based on this background, the research question is: How do students respond to the implementation of song- and game-based language learning at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand?

This study aims to describe students' responses to the implementation of song- and game-based language learning at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand. The research focuses on three main aspects: student engagement, student participation, and student interaction during the language learning process.

This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the results are expected to enrich the study of song- and game-based language learning strategies, particularly in cross-cultural learning contexts. Practically, this research is expected to serve as a reference for educators in selecting learning strategies that can increase student engagement, participation, and interaction, thereby creating a more communicative and enjoyable learning process.

Theoretically, this research is based on the concept of communicative language learning,



which places interaction at the heart of the language learning process. Richard (2023) explains that effective language learning focuses on the use of language in real-life communication so that learners gain meaningful learning experiences and develop their communicative competence. This approach emphasizes the importance of learning activities that actively engage learners through direct experience.

The application of songs as a learning medium is supported by research by Dalleda & Mosa (2025), which showed that a song-based approach can increase learning motivation, improve pronunciation, and create a more comfortable learning environment for EFL learners. Furthermore, the application of games in language learning is seen as enhancing student engagement and interaction through collaborative and enjoyable activities. Adzmi et al. (2025) explain that gamification can increase learner engagement while reducing academic pressure during the learning process, making students more willing to participate in learning activities.

Several previous studies have shown results relevant to this study. Dalleda & Mosa (2025) found that the use of songs effectively increased the motivation and language skills of EFL learners. Research by Adzmi et al. (2025) demonstrated that gamification-based games can increase student engagement and interaction during language learning. Furthermore, Harjono & Wachyunni (2025) demonstrated that language learning in a cross-cultural environment requires adaptive strategies that overcome linguistic and cultural barriers so that students can actively participate in the learning process. Unlike these studies, this study focuses on student responses, including engagement, participation, and interaction, during the implementation of song- and game-based language learning in an international teaching assistantship program at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to in-depth describe student responses to the implementation of song- and game-based language learning at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can depict phenomena that occur naturally during the learning process, allowing researchers to understand student engagement, participation, and interaction in the context of cross-cultural learning. According to Creswell and Poth in Tri Mulyono et al. (2021), qualitative research aims to understand the subjects' experiences based on real-world conditions, thus presenting the data in descriptive form.

The research was conducted at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand, during the International Teaching Assistance Program, which ran from November 10, 2025, to January 5, 2026. The subjects consisted of 25 students from grade 12 of Mattayom 3 (equivalent to grade 12 of high school) participating in song- and game-based language learning. Subject selection was purposive because all students were directly involved in the learning process, which was the focus of the research.

Data collection techniques were conducted through observation and field notes. Observations were conducted directly during the learning process to obtain data on student engagement, participation, and interactions during the learning activities. Field notes were used to document various verbal and nonverbal responses from students, the learning atmosphere, and various events that occurred during the activities, so that the data obtained could comprehensively describe student responses.

The learning process was implemented through several stages: introductory activities, material delivery using songs, implementation of instruction-based games (instruction games), and a closing activity in the form of learning reflection.

At each stage, researchers observed student responses, including aspects of involvement, participation, and interaction as the main focus of the research.

The data analysis technique used the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana Puspitoningrum et al. (2024), which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by grouping observation results according to the research focus, namely student engagement, participation, and interaction. Next, the data was presented in descriptive form so that student response patterns could be systematically identified. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions based on the overall research findings, resulting in a picture of student responses to the implementation of song- and game-based language learning.

RESULTS

1. Student Engagement in Song- and Game-Based Language Learning

Based on observations, students in grade Mattayom 3 demonstrated high engagement from the beginning of the learning activity. When the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Feet" was sung together, almost all students enthusiastically followed the teacher's demonstrations. Student responses were evident through cheerful facial expressions, focused attention on the learning activity, and active participation in each movement. In addition to physical engagement, students also demonstrated emotional engagement through enthusiasm and enthusiasm throughout the activity. Observations also showed that the use of songs created a more relaxed learning atmosphere, allowing students to feel comfortable participating in the learning process. No students exhibited passivity or reluctance to participate from the beginning of the lesson.

2. Student Participation in Instruction-Based Games

After the singing activity, the lesson continued with an instruction-based game using the Simon Says concept. The teacher gave instructions in English, such as "touch your ear" or "touch your shoulder," but deliberately demonstrated movements that differed from the spoken instructions.

Observations showed that all students attempted to follow the teacher's verbal instructions. In the initial stages of the game, some students still imitated the teacher's movements, resulting in errors. However, after several rounds, they began to differentiate between the instructions heard and the movements demonstrated. These errors actually led to shared laughter, maintaining a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

The game encouraged all students to actively participate, as each student tried to pay attention to the teacher's instructions before performing a movement. No students chose not to participate during the activity.



Figure 1
Students actively participating in the game with the teacher.



Figure 2
Students following the teacher's verbal instructions.



1. Student Interactions During Learning

Positive interactions were observed throughout the learning activities. Students interacted not only with the teacher but also with their classmates through verbal and nonverbal communication. When a classmate made a mistake, other students provided cues and assistance, ensuring a collaborative atmosphere throughout the activity.

Furthermore, several students responded with laughter, applause, and spontaneous comments during the game. This demonstrates that the learning process fosters two-way communication between teachers and students and strengthens interactions between students during the language learning process.

2. Student Cognitive Responses to Game Instructions

Instruction-based games require students to pay attention to the verbal information provided by the teacher before executing actions. Based on observations, most students were able to adjust their responses after several games. Students appeared more focused on listening to instructions rather than simply imitating the teacher's movements.

These changes indicate an increase in students' ability to focus on the instructions received during the learning process.

These are the learning phases. First, the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Feet." Students responded by following the song and movements together. All students were enthusiastic, focused, and active. Second, the instruction-based game. Students responded by following the teacher's verbal instructions. All students actively participated, despite making mistakes. Third, the learning interaction phase. Students responded by communicating with the teacher and their peers. Collaboration, mutual reminders, and a pleasant learning atmosphere occurred.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of song- and game-based language learning increased student engagement, participation, and interaction throughout the learning process. Students demonstrated enthusiasm from the beginning of the learning activity through physical, emotional, and cognitive involvement while following the song and instruction-based game. This situation indicates that songs and games can create a more active, enjoyable, and student-centered learning atmosphere.

These research findings align with research by Dalleda & Mosa (2025), which states that the use of songs in language learning can increase learning motivation and create a more comfortable learning environment for EFL learners. Urbaite (2025) also explained that song-based learning integrates auditory, visual, and kinesthetic elements, helping to improve attention and retention of material. Therefore, the use of songs in this study not only serves as a learning medium but also as a means to build meaningful learning experiences.

In addition to increasing student engagement, instruction-based games also encourage active participation from all students. At the beginning of the game, some students were still following the teacher's movements, but after several repetitions, they began to focus on the verbal instructions given. Mistakes did not instill fear but instead created a relaxed learning atmosphere, encouraging students to continue participating.

These findings are supported by research by Adzmi et al. (2025), which states that gamification can increase student engagement through enjoyable learning activities. Research by Salih (2025) also shows that the Simon Says game effectively improves students' listening, attention, and response control skills. Justo et al. (2022) add that game-based learning can reduce barriers to effective learning, thus increasing students' confidence in participating in learning activities.

The interactions between teachers and students, as well as between students, demonstrated that the use of songs and games not only enhanced learning activities but also fostered collaborative communication. Students helped each other, reminded their peers of mistakes, and responded spontaneously with laughter and applause throughout the activities. This demonstrates that the language learning process is not solely focused on mastering the material but also on fostering positive social interactions.

The results of this study align with those of Harjono & Wachyunni (2025), who stated that social interaction is a crucial element in language learning because it can increase students' confidence in communicating. Dinh Thi (2025) also explained that game-based learning encourages more active communication between teachers and students. Furthermore, Nuraidayati et al. (2022) emphasized that peer support in cross-cultural learning contributes to a collaborative learning environment.

From a cognitive perspective, instruction-based games also train students' ability to focus attention on verbal information and control spontaneous responses. This demonstrates that games serve not only as a refreshing activity but also as a learning strategy that can develop students' listening and concentration skills. Therefore, the application of songs and games can be used as an alternative language learning strategy, especially in classes with diverse student characteristics or in cross-cultural learning environments.

This study has the advantage of being conducted within the context of cross-cultural learning through the International Teaching Assistance Program at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand, providing an empirical overview of student responses to the EFL environment. However, this study was limited to a single class of 25 students, making the results less generalizable. Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of participants and

incorporate a qualitative approach to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of song- and game-based language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of song- and game-based language learning at Eakkapapsasanawich Islamic School, Krabi, Thailand, has received a positive response from students. This response is reflected in increased student engagement in learning activities, active participation during instruction-based games, and more communicative interactions between students and the teacher and between students. Furthermore, instruction-based games also help train students' attention and ability to understand verbal instructions during the learning process. Thus, song- and game-based language learning can be an effective alternative learning strategy for creating an active, enjoyable, and student-centered learning environment, particularly in the context of language learning in a cross-cultural environment.

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