

El arte como medio instruccional para fortalecer las habilidades de comprensión auditiva y expresión oral en inglés en jóvenes aprendices de un contexto escolar público

Using Art as an Instructional Medium to Enhance English Listening and Speaking Skills among Young Learners in a Public-School Context

L'arte come mezzo didattico per potenziare le abilità di comprensione e produzione orale in inglese nei giovani apprendenti in un contesto scolastico pubblico

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Artículo de Investigación

***Recibido: 01-08-2026 * Aceptado: 02-09-2026 * Publicado: 18-09-2026**

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Resumen

El presente estudio analizó el uso del arte como medio instruccional para fortalecer las habilidades de comprensión auditiva y expresión oral en inglés en niños de entre ocho y diez años pertenecientes a una institución educativa pública. La intervención se desarrolló en el marco de un programa universitario de vinculación con la comunidad, en el cual estudiantes de pregrado en formación para convertirse en docentes de inglés participaron directamente en la planificación e implementación de actividades de enseñanza basadas en recursos artísticos como dibujo, manualidades, música, narración, movimiento y dramatización. El proyecto tuvo una duración de un año y se organizó en dos fases: durante los primeros seis meses se ejecutó la intervención pedagógica con los niños, mientras que en los seis meses siguientes los estudiantes universitarios diseñaron cuadernillos didácticos contextualizados a partir de la experiencia obtenida en la institución, los cuales posteriormente fueron donados a la escuela. El estudio siguió un enfoque cuantitativo con un diseño preexperimental de pretest y posttest. Los datos fueron procesados mediante IBM SPSS Statistics y analizados a través de estadística descriptiva. Los resultados mostraron incrementos consistentes en los criterios evaluados de listening y speaking, con mejoras tanto en la comprensión de instrucciones y preguntas sencillas como en la producción oral, el uso de vocabulario y la participación en interacciones breves. En términos generales, los hallazgos sugieren que la integración del arte puede constituir una estrategia pedagógica significativa para promover el desarrollo de habilidades orales en inglés en niños de educación básica, al mismo tiempo que fortalece la formación práctica de futuros docentes y genera recursos sostenibles para la comunidad educativa.

Palabras clave: enseñanza del inglés; arte; comprensión auditiva; expresión oral; jóvenes aprendices; vinculación con la comunidad; formación docente.

Abstract

This study examined the use of art as an instructional medium to strengthen English listening and speaking skills among children aged eight to ten attending a public educational institution. The intervention was implemented as part of a university community service program in which undergraduate pre-service English teachers planned and delivered art-based English lessons using activities such as drawing, crafts, music, storytelling, movement, and role-play. The project lasted one year and was organized into two phases. During the first six months, the pre-service teachers worked directly with the children and implemented the instructional intervention. During the following six months, they used the experience and information gathered from the school context to design contextualized instructional booklets, which were later donated to the institution. The study followed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental pre-test/post-test design. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics through descriptive statistical procedures. The results showed consistent increases across the listening and speaking assessment criteria, particularly in understanding oral instructions and simple questions, using familiar vocabulary, responding orally, and participating in short communicative interactions. Overall, the findings suggest that art-integrated instruction can provide a meaningful and age-appropriate context for

developing oral English skills in young learners while also strengthening the practical preparation of future English teachers and contributing sustainable educational resources to the school community.

Keywords: English language teaching; art integration; listening skills; speaking skills; young learners; community service; pre-service teachers.

Riassunto

Questo studio ha esaminato l'uso dell'arte come mezzo didattico per potenziare le abilità di comprensione orale e produzione orale in lingua inglese di bambini di età compresa tra gli otto e i dieci anni, frequentanti un'istituzione educativa pubblica. L'intervento è stato realizzato nell'ambito di un programma universitario di servizio alla comunità, nel quale studenti universitari in formazione per diventare insegnanti di inglese hanno pianificato e svolto lezioni basate sull'integrazione dell'arte, attraverso attività quali disegno, lavori manuali, musica, narrazione, movimento e drammatizzazione. Il progetto ha avuto una durata di un anno ed è stato articolato in due fasi. Durante i primi sei mesi, i futuri insegnanti hanno lavorato direttamente con i bambini, implementando l'intervento didattico. Nei sei mesi successivi, sulla base dell'esperienza e delle informazioni raccolte nel contesto scolastico, hanno elaborato materiali didattici contestualizzati sotto forma di fascicoli, successivamente donati all'istituzione. Lo studio ha adottato un approccio quantitativo con un disegno pre-sperimentale basato su pre-test e post-test. I dati sono stati analizzati mediante IBM SPSS Statistics utilizzando procedure di statistica descrittiva. I risultati hanno evidenziato miglioramenti costanti nei criteri relativi alla comprensione e alla produzione orale, in particolare nella comprensione di semplici istruzioni e domande, nell'uso del vocabolario familiare, nella capacità di rispondere oralmente e nella partecipazione a brevi interazioni comunicative. Nel complesso, i risultati suggeriscono che l'integrazione dell'arte nell'insegnamento dell'inglese può offrire un contesto significativo e adeguato all'età per sviluppare le competenze orali dei giovani apprendenti, contribuendo al contempo alla formazione pratica dei futuri insegnanti di inglese e alla creazione di risorse educative sostenibili per la comunità scolastica.

Parole chiave: insegnamento della lingua inglese; integrazione dell'arte; comprensione orale; produzione orale; giovani apprendenti; servizio alla comunità; futuri insegnanti.

Introduction

Learning a foreign language during childhood can open opportunities that extend far beyond the classroom. For young learners, English provides a means of communicating, discovering new ideas, and gradually developing confidence in interacting with a wider world. Nevertheless, learning English in a public-school context can be challenging, particularly when children have limited opportunities to hear and use the language outside formal lessons. In such settings, the classroom may represent one of the few spaces in which learners can experience English as a meaningful form of communication. This makes the quality of the learning experiences offered to children especially important. Rather than approaching English exclusively through

memorization, repetition, or decontextualized vocabulary exercises, young learners need opportunities to listen, respond, move, create, and communicate in ways that are appropriate to their age and interests.

Listening and speaking are particularly relevant during the early stages of foreign language development because they allow children to encounter language as communication before they are expected to manage more complex written forms. Listening provides learners with exposure to pronunciation, rhythm, vocabulary, and recurring language patterns, while speaking gives them opportunities to transform this input into meaningful interaction. These two skills are closely connected: children listen to understand instructions, stories, questions, songs, and their peers, and they gradually use this linguistic input to produce words, phrases, and simple exchanges of their own. For learners between eight and ten years old, however, meaningful oral participation is more likely to emerge when language is connected to experiences that are concrete, enjoyable, and understandable rather than presented as an abstract academic exercise.

One way of creating these experiences is through art. Within language education, art can be understood not simply as an additional classroom activity or a reward after completing academic work, but as an instructional medium through which language can be experienced and practiced. Drawing, painting, crafts, music, movement, storytelling, role-play, and other forms of creative expression provide contexts in which children can associate words with images, actions, sounds, emotions, and personal creations. In this sense, an art-based English lesson may ask children to do much more than produce an artistic object. Learners may listen to instructions while creating something, identify colors and objects, follow sequences, sing or respond to rhythmic language, describe their work, answer questions, interact with classmates, or present what they have created. English therefore becomes connected to an immediate communicative purpose.

Research provides support for this relationship between arts integration and oral language development. Brouillette (2012) argues that arts-integrated experiences can support the language development of young English learners by providing contextualized and multimodal opportunities to understand and express meaning. This is particularly relevant for children who are still developing the linguistic resources needed to communicate confidently in English. Instead of relying exclusively on verbal explanations, artistic experiences allow meaning to be reinforced through gesture, visual representation, movement, and interaction. These additional channels can make linguistic input more accessible and give learners alternative ways of participating while their English develops.

Empirical evidence has also shown promising connections between arts-based instruction and listening and speaking. Brouillette, Childress-Evans, Hinga, and Farkas (2014) examined an arts-integration initiative implemented with children in kindergarten through second grade, including English language learners in high-poverty schools. The program incorporated visual arts, theatre, and dance into classroom learning. Their findings indicated benefits for student engagement and showed that participation in theatre and dance was associated with improvements in English

learners' speaking and listening performance. Although this work was conducted in a different educational context, it is significant because it suggests that the arts can provide conditions in which young learners actively process and use oral language rather than remaining passive recipients of instruction.

Similarly, Brouillette, Grove, and Hinga (2015) investigated the use of arts-based strategies to strengthen the oral language development of English language learners in the early primary grades. Their work focused on a model in which teaching artists collaborated with classroom teachers over an extended period, with listening and speaking development assessed through English language proficiency measures. The study reinforces the pedagogical potential of integrating artistic experiences into language instruction and, importantly, shifts the role of art from decoration or entertainment toward purposeful language learning. Such an approach is especially appropriate for children because creative activities can reduce the distance between learning a language and actually using it. A child who may hesitate when directly asked to “speak English” may be more willing to use the language when describing a drawing, participating in a role-play, responding to a song, or collaborating on a creative task.

The educational value of this approach also needs to be considered within the realities of public education. Access to meaningful foreign-language learning experiences is not always equally distributed, and children studying in public institutions may have fewer opportunities for additional English exposure outside school. Consequently, initiatives that connect universities with local schools can contribute to expanding learning opportunities while responding to concrete educational needs. At the same time, these initiatives can create authentic teaching environments for undergraduate students preparing to become English teachers.

Community service and service-learning experiences are particularly valuable in teacher education because they connect university preparation with the realities of classrooms and communities. Rather than developing pedagogical knowledge only through coursework, pre-service teachers have opportunities to plan lessons, interact with children, adapt activities, observe learner responses, and reflect on the effectiveness of their instructional decisions. Külekçi (2014), in a study involving 40 pre-service English teachers participating in community service learning, emphasized the role of these experiences in teacher preparation and examined the professional learning that emerged when prospective teachers worked in authentic educational settings. In a similar context, Yoedo and Puspitasari (2023) studied undergraduate students who taught English in a public elementary school as part of community service. Their findings highlight how direct teaching experiences and subsequent reflection can contribute to the development of pre-service teachers' beliefs and understanding of English language teaching.

This reciprocal dimension is central to the present project. Undergraduate students preparing to become English teachers enter the public-school classroom not only to complete a university requirement but also to place their developing professional knowledge at the service of children in the community. The schoolchildren receive additional opportunities to encounter and use

English, while the pre-service teachers experience the complexities and possibilities of teaching young learners in an authentic context. When art becomes the instructional medium connecting these two groups, the classroom can become a space where language, creativity, participation, and teacher development intersect.

Despite growing interest in arts integration and experiential teacher education, there remains a need for more context-specific research examining how art-based English instruction operates within university community service programs, particularly in public-school EFL contexts where children have limited exposure to English. Previous research has provided evidence concerning arts integration and oral language development, as well as the professional value of community service for pre-service English teachers; however, these strands have often been examined separately. Less attention has been given to experiences in which future English teachers employ art intentionally as a language-teaching medium while working with primary-school children as part of a university-community partnership.

Against this background, the present study examines the use of art as an instructional medium for developing English listening and speaking skills among children between eight and ten years old attending a public educational institution. The intervention is implemented by undergraduate pre-service English teachers participating in a university community service program. Through age-appropriate artistic and communicative activities, the project seeks to create opportunities for children to listen to English meaningfully and progressively use the language in oral interaction. More broadly, the study explores an educational experience in which art serves as a bridge between language and expression, while community engagement connects the preparation of future English teachers with the learning needs of children in a public-school setting.

Methodology

The study was conducted within the framework of a university community service project designed to strengthen English learning opportunities for children attending a public educational institution. The project followed a quantitative approach and used a pre-experimental pre-test/post-test design to examine changes in the children's English listening and speaking performance after participating in an art-based instructional intervention. In addition to evaluating the children's language development, the project sought to provide pre-service English teachers with authentic teaching experience and to develop contextualized instructional resources that could remain available to the school after the completion of the intervention. The entire project was implemented over a period of one academic year.

Participants

The participants were children between eight and ten years of age enrolled in a public educational institution. English was learned as a foreign language, and the school context provided the setting in which the instructional intervention took place. The children participated in English lessons developed around artistic and creative activities intended to provide meaningful opportunities to listen to and use the language. Particular attention was given to

listening and speaking because these skills allowed learners to interact with English through instructions, songs, stories, descriptions, questions, short conversations, and other age-appropriate communicative situations.

A second group involved in the project consisted of undergraduate university students preparing to become English teachers. Their participation formed part of a university community service program through which pre-service teachers were required to apply their academic and pedagogical preparation in a real educational context. During the project, they assumed an active instructional role by planning and implementing English lessons for the children under the general orientation of the community service initiative.

The relationship between the two groups was an important component of the project. The schoolchildren benefited from additional opportunities to learn and practice English, while the undergraduate students experienced the realities of teaching young learners in a public-school environment. This experience also allowed the pre-service teachers to identify the children's interests, difficulties, learning responses, and preferred ways of interacting with instructional activities. The knowledge gained during this direct contact with the learners was later used to create instructional materials specifically adapted to the school context.

Instruments

Data were collected through a pre-test and post-test administered to the participating children. The two assessments were used to identify changes in their English listening and speaking performance before and after the instructional intervention. The pre-test was administered before the systematic implementation of the art-based English activities and provided a baseline measure of the children's initial performance. The post-test was administered after the instructional period and was intended to determine whether changes had occurred following their participation in the project.

The assessments focused on age-appropriate listening and speaking abilities consistent with the objectives of the intervention. Listening tasks evaluated the children's ability to understand familiar vocabulary, simple oral instructions, questions, and short messages presented in English. Speaking tasks focused on their ability to respond orally, identify or describe familiar elements, answer simple questions, and produce short expressions related to the language practiced during the instructional activities.

The results of both assessments were recorded numerically and analyzed through a quantitative comparison of the pre-test and post-test scores. The pre-test results represented the children's performance before the intervention, whereas the post-test results represented their performance following the instructional experience. Comparing these scores made it possible to identify patterns of improvement in the targeted language skills and to determine the extent to which the children's performance changed over the course of the intervention.

Design and Procedure

The project was developed over one year and was organized into two interconnected phases of approximately six months each. This structure allowed the community service experience to move from direct intervention with the children to the development of a sustainable educational resource for the public school.

During the first six months, the undergraduate pre-service English teachers worked directly with the children at the participating institution. Before beginning the instructional intervention, the pre-test was administered to establish the learners' initial level of performance in listening and speaking. The university students subsequently planned and implemented English lessons in which art served as the principal instructional medium. Activities incorporated age-appropriate forms of creative expression such as drawing, coloring, crafts, music, storytelling, role-play, movement, and other artistic tasks that could naturally encourage children to listen to and speak English.

Rather than treating art as an activity separate from language instruction, the lessons integrated linguistic objectives into the creative process. For example, children could listen to instructions while completing an artistic task, identify vocabulary represented visually, respond to questions about their work, repeat and use expressions within songs or stories, describe drawings or objects, and participate in short oral interactions related to the activity. In this way, the artistic component provided a meaningful context in which English was connected to actions, images, sounds, and personal expression.

Throughout this first phase, the pre-service teachers also became familiar with the educational context and with the way the children responded to different types of instruction. Direct classroom interaction allowed them to recognize which activities generated greater participation, which vocabulary and language structures were more accessible or challenging, how children responded to visual and artistic support, and what kinds of materials appeared to facilitate listening comprehension and oral participation. At the end of the instructional phase, the post-test was administered. Pre-test and post-test scores were subsequently compared quantitatively to identify changes in the children's listening and speaking performance.

During the second six months, the focus of the project shifted from direct classroom instruction to the development of educational materials. Drawing on the experience and information obtained during the first phase, the undergraduate students designed a series of instructional booklets for teaching English to young learners. These materials were not created independently from the school reality; instead, they were informed by what the pre-service teachers had learned about the children's linguistic needs, age characteristics, interests, difficulties, responses to art-based activities, and ways of learning English within that particular educational context.

The booklets included art-integrated English activities designed to continue supporting listening and speaking development. Their purpose was to transform the experience gained during the

intervention into a practical resource that could continue to benefit the educational community after the university students had completed their community service. Consequently, the materials emphasized accessible activities that could be used or adapted by teachers in the public institution according to the needs of their learners.

At the end of the project, the completed instructional booklets were donated to the participating public school. This final stage was conceived as an element of sustainability within the community service initiative. Instead of ending when the university students completed their required teaching hours, the project left behind instructional resources developed from direct experience with the children themselves. In this manner, the one-year process connected assessment, classroom intervention, reflection, material development, and community contribution. The design therefore sought not only to examine changes in children's English listening and speaking performance, but also to establish a reciprocal relationship in which young learners received additional educational opportunities, pre-service teachers strengthened their professional preparation, and the school received contextualized resources for future English instruction.

Results

The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were processed and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the mean performance of the participants before and after the implementation of the art-based English instructional intervention. The assessment focused on two main dimensions, listening and speaking, with four evaluation criteria established for each skill. A four-point performance scale was used, in which 1 represented the initial level, 2 the developing level, 3 the satisfactory level, and 4 the outstanding level. Mean scores were calculated for each criterion, as well as for the listening and speaking dimensions as a whole. The difference between the pre-test and post-test means was also calculated to determine the magnitude of change observed after the six-month instructional intervention.

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Results for English Listening and Speaking Skills

Evaluation Criteria	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Difference
Understanding familiar words and expressions in English	1.74	3.58	1.84
Understanding and following simple oral instructions	1.69	3.64	1.95
Identifying key information in short oral messages	1.71	3.52	1.81
Understanding simple questions in English	1.77	3.69	1.92
Listening Mean	1.73	3.61	1.88
Responding orally to simple questions	1.63	3.47	1.84
Using familiar vocabulary and expressions orally	1.68	3.56	1.88
Describing pictures, objects, and artistic creations	1.59	3.42	1.83
Participating in short conversations and oral interactions	1.61	3.51	1.90
Speaking Mean	1.63	3.49	1.86

Note. Zambrano, J.; Lozano, C.; Recalde, F.; González, L.; Albán, D.

Table 1 presents the descriptive comparison between the pre-test and post-test results for the eight criteria used to assess the children's English listening and speaking skills. The results show a consistent increase in the mean scores across all evaluation criteria after the implementation of the art-based instructional intervention. In the listening dimension, the mean scores increased from values ranging between 1.69 and 1.77 in the pre-test to values between 3.52 and 3.69 in the post-test. The greatest improvement was observed in understanding and following simple oral instructions, with a mean difference of 1.95 points, followed by understanding simple questions in English, with an increase of 1.92 points. The overall listening mean increased from 1.73 to 3.61, representing a difference of 1.88 points.

A similar pattern was observed in speaking. Pre-test mean scores ranged from 1.59 to 1.68, while post-test means ranged from 3.42 to 3.56. The largest increase in this dimension was found in participation in short conversations and oral interactions, with a difference of 1.90 points. The overall speaking mean increased from 1.63 in the pre-test to 3.49 in the post-test, resulting in a mean difference of 1.86 points. Considering both dimensions together, the overall mean increased from 1.68 to 3.55, with a total difference of 1.87 points. These descriptive findings

indicate that the participants demonstrated higher levels of performance in all assessed listening and speaking criteria after the intervention, with comparable gains across both language skills.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the integration of art into English language instruction can provide a meaningful environment for developing listening and speaking skills among young learners in a public-school context. The increase observed between the pre-test and post-test means across all assessment criteria indicates that the children performed better after participating in the six-month instructional intervention. Particularly relevant is the similarity between the gains in listening and speaking, with mean differences of 1.88 and 1.86 points, respectively. Rather than showing improvement concentrated in only one area, the results reveal a relatively balanced development of receptive and oral productive abilities. This finding is consistent with the nature of the intervention, in which children were not expected to practice language skills in isolation but to listen, respond, create, and communicate as interconnected parts of the same learning experience.

The improvement in listening was especially evident in the children's ability to understand and follow simple oral instructions, which presented the largest mean difference among the evaluated criteria. This result may be associated with the practical nature of the art-based activities. During drawing, crafts, movement, storytelling, and other creative tasks, learners were repeatedly exposed to instructions in English that required an observable response. Expressions related to actions, colors, objects, positions, and classroom procedures therefore became connected to something the children were actually doing. This relationship between language and action may have made oral input more comprehensible and meaningful than when vocabulary or structures are presented without an immediate context. Brouillette (2012) similarly explains that arts integration can support language development by providing multimodal contexts in which learners construct meaning through visual, physical, and linguistic forms of representation.

The results obtained for speaking are equally significant. Participation in short conversations and oral interactions showed the greatest improvement within this dimension, while progress was also observed in responding to questions, using familiar vocabulary and expressions, and describing pictures, objects, and artistic creations. These findings suggest that art may have functioned as more than a motivational component of the lessons. The artistic activities provided children with something concrete to talk about. Instead of being asked to produce English without a meaningful reference, learners could describe an image, respond to a creative task, discuss an object they had made, or participate in an interaction connected to an ongoing activity. In this sense, art served as a communicative bridge between what children could see or create and what they were gradually learning to express in English.

This interpretation is supported by previous research on arts integration and oral language development. Brouillette et al. (2014), in their investigation of arts-integrated instruction with young English language learners, reported positive associations between participation in theatre

and dance activities and students' speaking and listening development. Their findings are particularly relevant to the present study because they demonstrate how artistic experiences can create opportunities for children to develop oral language through active participation rather than through language exercises alone. Similarly, Brouillette et al. (2015) found that arts-based instructional strategies could contribute to the oral language development of young English learners when artistic experiences were deliberately connected to language-learning objectives.

The overall movement from a pre-test mean of 1.68 to a post-test mean of 3.55 also deserves attention from a pedagogical perspective. At the beginning of the intervention, the children's performance was situated predominantly within the initial-to-developing range of the assessment scale. By the end of the instructional period, their mean performance had moved into the satisfactory-to-outstanding range. Although these descriptive results alone do not establish that art-based instruction was the sole cause of the improvement, the consistent direction of change across every evaluated criterion provides encouraging evidence regarding the potential value of the approach in this particular educational context. The duration of the intervention may also have been important. Because the undergraduate teachers worked with the children over approximately six months, learners had repeated opportunities to encounter familiar language, participate in creative tasks, and gradually become more comfortable using English.

Another important aspect of the findings concerns the public-school setting in which the project was implemented. For children who may have limited opportunities to encounter English beyond the classroom, creating additional spaces for meaningful language use becomes particularly valuable. The intervention did not depend exclusively on sophisticated technological resources or specialized language laboratories; instead, it used accessible artistic and creative experiences to generate opportunities for interaction. This characteristic has practical implications for schools in which financial or technological resources may be limited. Art-integrated language teaching can potentially be adapted using materials already available in the classroom while still providing children with multimodal and participatory learning experiences.

The project also demonstrates the potential reciprocal value of community service in initial teacher education. The undergraduate participants were not simply delivering predetermined lessons; their direct contact with the children allowed them to experience how young learners responded to different activities, where difficulties emerged, and which forms of artistic support appeared to facilitate participation. Previous research has emphasized that community service and authentic teaching experiences can contribute to the professional development of pre-service English teachers by connecting university preparation with the realities of educational practice (Külekcı, 2014; Yoedo & Puspitasari, 2023). In the present project, this connection became especially important during the second phase, when the experience accumulated in the school was transformed into instructional booklets designed specifically for that educational context.

The creation and subsequent donation of these booklets represents an additional contribution of the project. The first six months generated not only quantitative information about changes in

children's listening and speaking performance but also practical knowledge about how they learned and responded to art-based English activities. During the second six months, this experience informed the development of materials intended to remain in the institution after the university students had completed their community service. In this way, the project moved beyond a temporary educational intervention and attempted to leave a resource that could support continuity in English instruction. This feature strengthens the community-oriented dimension of the initiative because the knowledge generated through university-school interaction was returned to the participating institution in a usable pedagogical form.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted with appropriate caution. The study employed a pre-test/post-test design without a control group; therefore, the observed improvement cannot be attributed exclusively to the art-based intervention. Factors such as children's natural development, repeated exposure to English, familiarity with the assessment, and other learning experiences may also have contributed to the changes observed. Furthermore, the results represent the experience of children within one specific public-school context and should not automatically be generalized to other populations or educational settings. Future research could incorporate a comparison group, larger samples, inferential statistical analyses, and qualitative evidence such as classroom observations, interviews, or learner perceptions. Such approaches would make it possible to examine not only whether performance changes, but also how and why particular artistic activities support children's language development.

Despite these limitations, the findings provide a promising basis for considering art as a purposeful instructional medium in English education for young learners. The results suggest that when artistic activities are intentionally connected to linguistic objectives, they can create spaces in which children listen to English in order to act, speak in order to express meaning, and participate without separating language learning from creativity. At the same time, embedding this approach within a university community service program creates opportunities for future English teachers to develop their professional competencies while contributing to the educational needs of a public-school community. The value of the project, therefore, lies not only in the improvement observed in listening and speaking performance, but also in the connection it establishes among language learning, artistic expression, teacher preparation, and sustained university-community engagement.

Conclusions

The results showed a consistent improvement in the children's English listening and speaking performance after participating in the art-based instructional intervention. The increase observed across all assessment criteria suggests that integrating artistic activities into English lessons can provide young learners with meaningful opportunities to understand oral language, respond to instructions, use familiar vocabulary, and participate in simple communicative exchanges.

Art functioned as more than a motivational resource; it served as an instructional medium that connected language with visual, creative, and interactive experiences. Activities such as drawing,

crafts, storytelling, music, movement, and role-play helped make English more accessible to children between eight and ten years old by allowing them to associate language with actions, objects, and personal expression. This approach supported the simultaneous development of listening and speaking within the same learning experiences.

The community service project also created a reciprocal educational experience between the university and the public school. While the children received additional opportunities to learn and practice English, the pre-service teachers strengthened their pedagogical skills through authentic classroom experience. Moreover, the development and donation of contextualized instructional booklets extended the impact of the project beyond the intervention itself, providing the school with resources that could continue supporting English instruction after the completion of the university students' community service.

Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for English language teaching, teacher education, and university-community engagement. From a pedagogical perspective, the results suggest that art-based activities can be incorporated more intentionally into English lessons for young learners, particularly when the objective is to strengthen listening and speaking. Rather than using art only as a supplementary or recreational activity, teachers can design tasks in which drawing, music, storytelling, crafts, movement, and role-play become meaningful contexts for understanding and producing English. This may be especially useful in public-school settings where learners benefit from concrete, visual, and interactive experiences that make oral language easier to understand and use.

For pre-service teacher education, the project highlights the value of providing undergraduate students with sustained opportunities to teach in authentic school contexts. Community service experiences can help future English teachers connect university coursework with the realities of classroom practice, adapt their instruction to children's needs, and develop greater confidence in planning, teaching, and evaluating age-appropriate lessons. The second phase of the project also shows the importance of encouraging pre-service teachers to transform what they learn from classroom experience into practical instructional resources that respond to the specific characteristics of the community in which they work.

The study also has implications for educational institutions and university outreach programs. Partnerships between universities and public schools can move beyond short-term interventions when they are designed to leave sustainable outcomes, such as contextualized teaching materials, instructional booklets, or reusable classroom resources. In this sense, community service can contribute not only to student training but also to the strengthening of local educational practices. Future programs could build on this model by combining direct teaching, systematic assessment, reflective practice, and the development of materials that remain available to schools after the intervention ends.

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