



INTERACTIVE AND GAME-BASED ENGLISH LEARNING FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE TEACHING: A CASE QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Article History

Received : 22/05/2025

Revised : 05/09/2025

Accepted : 17/09/2025

Keywords:

Interactive, Game-based learning, English learning, Collaborative teaching.

Abstract. Despite the growing recognition of interactive and game-based learning in language education, limited research has explored how collaborative teaching strategies can effectively enhance elementary students' motivation, confidence, and language learning in rural Indonesian contexts. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of interactive and game-based English learning through collaborative teaching strategies in enhancing elementary students' motivation, confidence, and language acquisition. The study was conducted at SDK Ri'I, Cibal Distric, Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Using a case qualitative study approach, data were collected through classroom observations, student interviews, and teacher reflections. The participants of the study were one teacher and 25 students who involved in the teaching and learning process. The participants were taken purposively based on predetermine criteria. The findings revealed that the integration of games and interactive activities through collaborative teaching strategy increased student engagement, fostered a supportive learning environment, and improved vocabulary comprehension and pronunciation. Students showed enthusiasm, active participation, and a strong sense of collaboration during group-based tasks. However, challenges such as varying proficiency levels, fluctuating attention spans, and the need for diverse game types were also identified. Despite these challenges, the approach proved successful in promoting both cognitive and affective development. The study highlighted well-designed interactive strategies to make learning enjoyable and support holistic language development. Thus, it's essential to integrate interactive and game-based methods through collaborative teaching strategy in English language instruction at the elementary level.

How to Cite: Daar, G. F., Abida, F. I. N., & Fahri, F. (2025). INTERACTIVE AND GAME-BASED ENGLISH LEARNING FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE TEACHING: A CASE QUALITATIVE STUDY. *Prima Magistra: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan*, 6(4), 652-662. <https://doi.org/10.37478/jpm.v6i4.5767>

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Publisher:

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INTRODUCTION

In elementary education, English learning is not only about mastering linguistic forms but also about fostering communication, confidence, and curiosity. A teacher need to design an interactive and enjoyable teaching method to attract students' attention. To this extend, interactive and game-based approaches offer pathways to language acquisition by stimulating students' multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983). It promotes collaborative learning, and incorporates contextually meaningful tasks that mirror authentic communication (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023).

Interactive learning emphasizes student engagement through participatory activities, while game-based learning fosters motivation and enthusiasm by embedding instructional content within fun, competitive, or cooperative games (Rai, 2024). These approaches are especially effective for young learners, who often require dynamic and enjoyable classroom experiences to maintain attention and develop foundational language skills. When applied thoughtfully, such methods can help improve students' vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, and speaking skills in a more meaningful and memorable way (Smiderle et al., 2020).

Collaborative teaching, in which two or more teachers plan, implement, and evaluate learning activities together, provides a powerful framework for delivering interactive and game-based instruction (Singh Sedhu, 2015). In elementary classrooms, collaborative teaching can create a richer learning environment by combining diverse pedagogical strategies and

perspectives (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023). Collaborative teaching also facilitates the integration of play-based learning techniques. It enables English to be taught in ways that align with children's cognitive and emotional development (Hunter, 2020).

The study was conducted at Ri'i Catholic Elementary School in Bea Mese, Cibal District, Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara, a rural area where access to English language resources is limited. In this place, students often begin learning English with little to no prior exposure. The school has recently begun exploring innovative methods to teach English to its students. The school recognized the importance of developing language skills at an early age. Teachers have shown interest in integrating interactive and game-based methods, supported by collaborative teaching practices, to make English more accessible and enjoyable for their students.

Several prior studies have explored the effectiveness of game-based learning in English language teaching for young learners. Kaur & Abdul Aziz (2020) studied the use of language game in enhancing students' speaking skills. Similarly, Ningrum et al. (2024) conducted a study on utilizing board games to enhance English vocabulary for early students. Moreover, Wong & Yunus (2023) studied the use of online board game to improve speaking skills among elementary pupils. Dewi et al. (2016) also studied on using communicative games in improving students' speaking skills. These studies highlighted the value of interactive and game-based strategies, especially when combined with teacher collaboration to enhance students' participation and motivation to learn English. However, most existing studies have been conducted in urban or well-resourced schools, and few have examined how these approaches function in rural and resource-limited contexts like Manggarai, Indonesia. Moreover, there is limited research that specifically explores the synergy between game-based learning and collaborative teaching in elementary English instruction. This creates a research gap that calls for an in-depth investigation of how these methods can be effectively implemented and sustained in rural schools.

This study aims to address this gap by examining how interactive and game-based English learning is implemented through collaborative teaching at Ri'i Catholic Elementary School (*SDK Ri'i*). The research is guided by the following questions: (1) How do sixth-grade students respond to interactive and game-based English learning strategies? (2) What challenges and successes are observed in implementing interactive and game-based English learning in the classroom? These questions are explored through rich, qualitative data collected over a six-week period of classroom intervention and reflection.

It is expected that the findings of this qualitative study will contribute to the literature on language teaching methodologies for young learners, especially in under-resourced settings. The study aims to provide practical insights for elementary school teachers, educational policymakers, and curriculum developers seeking to enhance English instruction in rural schools. By documenting the processes, successes, and obstacles encountered, this research hopes to offer a model for implementing interactive and game-based English learning through collaborative teaching in similar educational environments.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a case qualitative study design to explore how interactive and game-based English learning strategies influence sixth-grade elementary students' language development. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of students' learning experiences, behaviors, and responses within the natural classroom context. This design is suitable for capturing the richness and complexity of language learning through observation, interaction, and reflection rather than focusing solely on measurable outcomes. By employing a descriptive qualitative method, the study aims to explore the learning process holistically during classroom implementation. This includes examining how students engage with interactive methods, how games influence motivation and participation, and what challenges or successes emerge.

The participants of this study were a single class of 25 sixth-grade students and one English teacher from Ri'i Catholic Elementary School (*SDK Ri'i*), Cibal District, Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara. The study was conducted qualitatively. Therefore, the researcher involved



in direct observation to 25 students joining the English class. 5 students and one teacher were chosen as the subject of interview. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the primary criteria; 1) being the teacher's interest in interactive learning methods; 2) Students who have joined the English class; and 3) students have basic familiarity with English. In this study, English teacher's insights are valuable for understanding the planning and implementation process, as well as changes in student behavior and language use during the learning process.

The data in this study were collected using interview, direct observation and Teacher's reflection journal of English language learning process. Thus, in line with these methods, to collect rich and varied data, the study employs three main qualitative instruments: classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and teacher's reflection sheets. Classroom observation was conducted by the researcher during English lessons where interactive techniques and educational games were implemented. The observation focused on student engagement, collaboration, verbal participation, and emotional responses, using a structured checklist and descriptive field notes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both the teacher and a selected group of students after the intervention. These interviews provide deeper insights into their experiences, challenges, preferences, and perceived benefits of the interactive and game-based learning approach through collaborative teaching strategy. Additionally, teacher reflection sheets were used to gather feedback from teacher at the end of each session. These instruments enable the triangulation of data and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the teaching and learning process.

The data collected from observations, interviews, and reflection sheets were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher organized and coded the raw data, identified recurring patterns and meaningful segments across the data sources. Initial codes were grouped into broader themes that reflect student engagement, enjoyment, collaboration, and language use. Manual coding methods was used to manage and analyze the data efficiently. The analysis seeks to understand how students respond to the learning methods and why interactive and game-based strategies are effective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is presented the data of students' responses, challenges and the success of using interactive and game-based learning through collaborative teaching in the English language teaching and learning for elementary students at Catholic Elementary school of Ri'i at Bea Mese, Cibai District, Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara.

Students' Response to using interactive and game-based English learning through Collaborative Teaching Strategies

The description of students responses to using interactive and game-based English learning strategies include their perception and experiences of using in in the classroom. The application of interactive and game-based English learning strategies aims to introduce the students with basic English vocabulary and speaking using fun and interactive activities. Thus, English teachers need to ensure that learning English is fun. It's done through using games, songs, and other educational activities. Based on the results of interview and observation, it's found that students showed positive responses.

The observational results indicated that as the activity began, the students' enthusiasm was clearly evident. They welcomed the teaching team with smiles and a strong sense of curiosity. The teacher initiated the lesson by introducing basic vocabulary using pictures and gestures to aid students in remembering the meaning of each word. The students quickly grasped the concept, and some even began to use the new vocabulary in simple conversations. When the teacher encouraged them to say the new words out loud, they did so with great enthusiasm and confidence.

The students' enthusiasm during the activity demonstrated that an interactive and contextual teaching approach, particularly one utilizing a collaborative teaching strategy, can create an enjoyable and effective learning environment, especially for young learners (See



Figure 1.). The use of visual aids and physical movements in introducing vocabulary proved beneficial in helping students understand and retain word meanings more rapidly. Through this method, students were not merely passive recipients of information; rather, they actively engaged in the learning process, thereby strengthening their memory and comprehension of the new vocabulary.



Figure 1. Students' Responses to using interactive and game-based English learning through Collaborative Teaching

The students' positive responses also highlight the importance of well-designed collaborative teaching as an effective instructional strategy for fostering students' confidence in speaking. When asked to pronounce new words aloud, they did so without hesitation, indicating that the approach had successfully created a safe and supportive environment for self-expression. This finding is consistent with interview data from several students, who expressed that learning English through games and collaborative teaching created an enjoyable classroom atmosphere.

"I enjoyed the games. Learning English through games helps me study with enthusiasm. I learned some new English vocabulary today." (FBD)

The interview data above reveal that the use of interactive activities and games through collaborative teaching not only influences students' cognitive development but also supports affective aspects such as self-confidence and learning motivation. The continued application of this method and strategy has the potential to foster students' confidence from an early age, helping them attain the desired English language proficiency.

Several students admitted that the most exciting part of the lesson was when the teacher and students engaged in various educational games. The teacher divided the class into several groups and assigned challenges such as word guessing and simple conversations. Additionally, the teacher introduced a matching game where students paired English words with their Indonesian translations. These findings align with the observation results, which noted that the classroom became increasingly lively during the game activities, filled with cheers and laughter as students enjoyed each activity. Students supported one another and demonstrated excellent teamwork, indicating that enjoyable learning methods can significantly enhance students' motivation. Observational data (see Figure 2.) also showed that group division and the introduction of challenges, such as word guessing, simple dialogues, and word-matching games between English and Indonesian, successfully fostered an active, collaborative, and enthusiastic learning environment. Students exhibited joy, laughter, and meaningful interaction during the activities, suggesting that interactive methods and games implemented through collaborative teaching are not only engaging but also promote meaningful learning.



Figure 2. Introducing English Vocabulary through Pictures

Moreover, the spirit of collaboration observed during the games reflects how a collaborative approach can foster students' social and emotional development in addition to their cognitive growth. Students were not only learning English but also practicing communication, mutual assistance, and problem-solving. Therefore, this strategy enriches students' language competence while positively shaping their character and learning motivation.

Observational data also indicated that another interactive activity employed by the teacher was the use of songs as a medium for teaching English. The teacher introduced simple English songs that were easy to follow. Students quickly memorized the lyrics and sang with enthusiasm. Music served as an effective aid in helping them understand and retain new vocabulary more easily. Several students appeared very confident while singing, showing no hesitation. This strategy proved that introducing simple English songs can effectively capture students' attention and enthusiasm. The students were able to memorize the lyrics and sing energetically, indicating that music can be a fun and accessible medium for language learning. The songs helped reinforce vocabulary acquisition through engaging and repetitive exposure that did not feel monotonous.

The singing activity also proved effective in boosting students' confidence in using English. Some students sang without hesitation, demonstrating noticeable progress in their willingness to speak a foreign language. The joy and excitement reflected on their faces indicated that music-based methods can create a positive and inspiring learning environment. Moreover, this strategy serves as an effective means of cultivating an early interest in learning English.

Students' Challenges of using interactive and game-based English learning through Collaborative Teaching Strategies

Based on interview data with the teacher, one of the main challenges students face in interactive English learning through games is maintaining consistent enthusiasm and engagement throughout the learning process. Although students initially displayed high levels of excitement and curiosity, not all were able to sustain focus and active participation evenly during the session. Several contributing factors include the relatively long duration of activities, the fluctuating attention spans typical of young learners, and a lack of variation in the types of games and activities offered. When visual stimuli and movements became overly familiar, some students began to lose interest due to the absence of new challenges or variations that could spark renewed curiosity.

"Using the same game repeatedly may lead to a decline in students' enthusiasm. Therefore, offering a variety of games could help address student boredom." (MRD)

Observational data also indicated another challenge related to the varying levels of English proficiency among students. While most students were able to grasp basic vocabulary quickly, some struggled to keep up with the pace of the lesson, especially in pronouncing new words aloud or using them in simple conversations. This highlights the need for more differentiated instructional strategies to ensure that students with varying learning speeds can

remain actively engaged and not feel left behind. Thus, although the interactive approach through collaborative teaching has proven to be generally effective, addressing individual learning needs and sustaining motivation throughout the lesson remain critical considerations for future instructional planning.

This finding is supported by teacher interview data, as reflected in the following statement:

"Our students may be different from those in urban areas who are more accustomed to learning English. They perceive English as difficult and their English proficiency levels vary widely. Generally, our students have low English proficiency." (ENT)

Based on this data, one of the main challenges in game-based English instruction lies in effectively managing group dynamics. Although the classroom environment becomes lively and students demonstrate high enthusiasm, differences in ability within groups can lead to imbalanced participation. More active or confident students tend to dominate the games, while shy or less proficient students remain passive. This indicates that, in collaborative learning, teachers must ensure equal opportunities for all group members to contribute—through role assignments or task rotations during activities, for example.

Another challenge is maintaining focus amidst the noisy and enthusiastic atmosphere. While such excitement is a positive indicator of student engagement, it may also lead to a lack of direction in the learning process if not balanced with effective classroom management. Excessive noise may reduce concentration for some students and interfere with their ability to reflect on the learning material. Therefore, a balance between entertainment and educational objectives is essential in designing learning games. Teachers must provide clear instructions, limit activity durations, and include reflection or assessment sessions to ensure that enjoyable activities genuinely contribute to the students' language competence development.

Students' Success of using interactive and game-based English learning through Collaborative Teaching Strategies

Interview and observation data indicate that the implementation of interactive learning activities and educational games significantly helped to improve students' enthusiasm and joy in learning. From the beginning of the sessions, students' excitement was evident through their cheerful facial expressions, smiles, and high levels of energy. When the teacher introduced basic English vocabulary using pictures and gestures, students responded positively. They quickly grasped the meaning of words and were able to recall them easily. This visual and kinesthetic approach proved highly effective in helping students acquire new vocabulary in a fun and non-burdensome way.

Another indicator of success was observed when students were encouraged to pronounce new vocabulary aloud. They did so confidently, without fear or hesitation. This reflects the success of a teaching approach that fosters a safe and supportive learning environment where students feel free to express themselves. Students' confidence in using English, even in its simplest forms, serves as an important indicator that the learning process is effective not only cognitively but also affectively. The joyful atmosphere succeeded in fostering students' intrinsic motivation to learn and take risks in using a foreign language.

"Students seemed confident when answering certain questions or words. I think it's because they enjoy learning while playing." (SKN)

When students were divided into groups to play various games, such as word guessing, simple conversations, and matching English and Indonesian words, the classroom atmosphere became very lively. Laughter, cheers, and active interactions among students reflected high engagement in the learning process. They not only enjoyed the activities but also participated actively, demonstrating that game-based methods are highly effective in increasing student engagement and understanding of the material.

"It was very clear that the students were enthusiastic about the English games. These games motivated them to be excited about learning English." (YER)

Observational data also showed that beyond improving vocabulary comprehension, educational games strengthened students' collaboration skills. They supported each other in

tackling the game challenges and demonstrated exceptional collaborative spirit. This success lies not only in the linguistic outcomes but also in the development of students' social and emotional aspects. Through these activities, they learned to cooperate, respect others' opinions, and solve problems together. These values are essential for shaping positive character and are integral to holistic education.

Based on the research data, the interactive and game-based learning experiences demonstrated that enjoyable and contextual approaches can significantly enhance students' English language proficiency. Students learned actively, confidently, and supported one another throughout the learning process. This success serves as strong evidence that the use of appropriate teaching methods can create meaningful learning experiences with long-term positive impacts. Accordingly, interactive and game-based learning makes a substantial contribution to improving the quality of English language instruction at the elementary level, while also laying a solid foundation for the students' future language development.

Based on the results of the study, three components that are discussed in the study including students' responses to using interactive and game-based learning through collaborative teaching, challenges and Students' Success of using interactive and game-based English learning through Collaborative Teaching Strategies. In terms of students' response to using interactive and game-based learning through collaborative teaching, the study found that using interactive and game-based strategies in English language teaching significantly fosters student engagement, enthusiasm, and language acquisition, particularly in vocabulary learning and speaking. The positive student responses observed in this study, characterized by smiles, curiosity, and willingness to participate (Sung & Hwang, 2013). It's in line with the study findings of Singh Sedhu (2015) stating that young learners show greater motivation and retention when language instruction is delivered in an interactive and playful environment. In their study, students exposed to games and songs were more eager to use English in authentic contexts and demonstrated improved vocabulary recall.

Similarly, Tayeh et al. (2024) asserted that games in language classrooms reduce anxiety and increase student confidence, particularly in speaking tasks. This aligns with the observed behavior in the current study, where students enthusiastically repeated and used new vocabulary during classroom interactions. It indicates that the low-stress environment enabled by games supports students' affective needs in language learning. In addition, Kim & Linan-Thompson (2013) examined the impact of gesture-supported vocabulary instruction and found that visual and kinesthetic learning tools significantly enhanced vocabulary retention among primary school students. The current study affirms this finding. Students were able to quickly associate meaning with new words when introduced through pictures and gestures.

Moreover, the collaborative aspect of the interactive strategy implemented in this study is in line with Rai (2024), who emphasized that task-based language teaching, particularly in group or pair activities, enhances learner autonomy and peer-supported learning. Students in the present research were not only engaged but also helped each other complete language tasks. It demonstrates that games can cultivate both language skills and social-emotional development through collaboration (Singh Sedhu, 2015; Liu & Chu, 2010).

However, contrasting perspectives have been presented by Smiderle et al. (2020) in their study, stating that while games may initially attract student interest, they may lose effectiveness without careful variation and alignment with learning objectives. It's in line with some limitations found in this study, particularly the risk of declining student attention when game formats become repetitive (Dewi et al., 2016). Thus, it's important to select the game and constant innovation in instructional design to maintain student interest and ensure continued linguistic progress. Moreover, it is imperative that teachers monitor the classroom dynamics and adjust instructional methods to meet diverse learner needs while sustaining engagement over time (Tuan & Thi Minh Doan, 2010; Hwang et al., 2017).

The findings of this study underscored the effectiveness of collaborative teaching combined with interactive activities and games in fostering students' confidence and motivation in speaking English. These results align with previous research emphasizing the role of



collaborative learning and play-based strategies in language acquisition. For instance, [Tsai, \(2024\)](#) found that digital game-based learning environments significantly improved learners' speaking confidence and motivation by creating low-anxiety contexts conducive to participation. Similarly, [Singh Sedhu \(2015\)](#) emphasized that classroom activities incorporating games and group work enhance students' willingness to communicate by making the learning process enjoyable and socially supportive. The students' readiness to pronounce new words aloud without hesitation, as observed in the current study, suggests a positive emotional climate that supports affective learning outcomes, consistent with the theory on motivational components in the language classroom. It stated that positive group dynamics and enjoyable tasks contribute to learners' self-confidence ([Kadwa & Alshenqeeti, 2020](#)).

Despite this study found some positive impacts of interactive game-based collaborative teaching, some challenges identified. The study also highlights the complexity of maintaining student engagement and accommodating diverse learning needs. It's in line with the study conducted by [Zhang & Hasim \(2023\)](#) emphasize that while game-based learning increases motivation, it can also lead to reduced effectiveness if not accompanied by instructional variety and structured progression. Prolonged exposure to repetitive game mechanics also leads to cognitive fatigue and disengagement, especially among younger learners with limited attention spans ([Hew et al., 2016](#)). Moreover, the need to maintain novelty and manage session length is needed. Game-based activities should be dynamic, diversified, and time-bound to sustain attention and ensure pedagogical impact ([Hwang et al., 2015](#)).

Another challenge is dominant students tend to overshadow passive ones during games. Students possess varying levels of English proficiency and they respond differently to collaborative game-based learning. This finding aligns with previous research on differentiated instruction. [Smiderle et al. \(2020\)](#) argues that group-based language activities often privilege more confident learners. It leads to uneven participation. Moreover, [Fard & Vakili \(2018\)](#) found that mixed-ability groups in interactive classrooms may marginalize less proficient students unless careful scaffolding and role distribution are applied. While classroom liveliness is often viewed as a positive indicator of engagement, [Huang & Hew \(2018\)](#) warn that without effective classroom management, noise and excitement can disrupt focus and hinder reflective learning. Therefore, a successful collaborative, game-based English learning environment must balance enjoyment with structure, integrate diverse activities, and ensure equitable participation through intentional planning.

In terms of the success, the implementation of interactive and game-based English learning through collaborative teaching strategies help students responded with enthusiasm, expressed confidence when speaking, and demonstrated better vocabulary recall. The use of visual and kinesthetic teaching methods such as images and gestures, was also shown to reinforce comprehension and retention. [Hew et al. \(2016\)](#) highlight that game-based learning promotes language acquisition by reducing anxiety and increasing student engagement, particularly in vocabulary learning and pronunciation tasks. Similarly, Su and ([Lafta Jassim & Dzakiria, 2019](#)) found that students who engaged in interactive English activities exhibited more positive attitudes, higher motivation, and better performance compared to those in traditional classrooms.

Moreover, the enhanced collaboration and social interaction observed during the game-based group activities in this study are consistent with the role of social interaction in language development ([Lin et al., 2016](#); [Charsky & Ressler, 2011](#)). [Kadwa & Alshenqeeti \(2020\)](#) argue that collaborative tasks within game-based learning environments improve not only linguistic skills but also teamwork and social awareness. The current study's emphasis on shared problem-solving, mutual support, and active participation mirrors these outcomes, indicating that game-based learning facilitates holistic development. Additionally, [Tuan et al. \(2010\)](#) notes that games create an engaging and low-pressure environment conducive to language practice, which fosters learners' willingness to take risks, evidenced here by the students' enthusiastic participation and improved confidence in speaking English. Thus, the integration of interactive and game-based strategies contributes meaningfully to both cognitive and affective language



learning outcomes, making it a valuable approach for elementary English instruction (Erhel & Jamet, 2013).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In Based on the study results and discussion, it's concluded that the use of interactive and game-based English learning through collaborative teaching strategies significantly enhances students' motivation, confidence, and engagement in the classroom. The integration of games and visual aids, such as picture cards and gestures, effectively supported vocabulary acquisition and encouraged students to speak without fear or hesitation. The collaborative nature of the activities also promoted teamwork, social interaction, and a joyful atmosphere that contributed to students' affective development. These findings highlight that enjoyable and student-centered approaches can create a safe learning environment. It helps students develop positive attitudes toward English and become more confident language users from an early age. Despite its strengths, the study also found several limitations. First, the relatively small sample size and the specific school setting may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the short duration of the implementation didn't capture long-term effects on language development. Additionally, challenges such as managing varying proficiency levels, sustaining attention throughout the lessons, and ensuring equal participation within groups were observed. Thus, further research is needed to involve a broader sample and extended implementation period to explore the long-term impact and refine strategies for more inclusive classroom practices. The study contributes to the field of English language teaching, especially at the elementary level. It also offers practical insights for teachers and educational practitioners for an effective English learning environments.

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