



## Enhancing communicative competence of future athletes through the integration of international languages in team sports among multicultural students

*Mejorando la competencia comunicativa de los futuros atletas a través de la integración de idiomas internacionales en deportes de equipo entre estudiantes multiculturales*

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** The integration of English as an international language in team sports provides a unique opportunity to enhance communicative competence and teamwork in multicultural environments. Team sports serve as an effective platform for fostering linguistic and intercultural skills.

**Objective:** This study aimed to evaluate the effects of using English as the primary language of communication in team sports on the communicative competence, collaboration, and performance outcomes of culturally diverse Physical Education students.

**Methodology:** A mixed-methods approach was employed, including pre- and post-assessments, surveys, focus group discussions, and observations. The study involved 240 undergraduate students from three universities, divided into Experimental and Control Groups, focusing on football, basketball, and volleyball during one semester.

**Results:** The Experimental Group showed significant improvements in communicative competence, collaboration, and teamwork compared to the Control Group. Performance outcomes varied by sport, with significant improvements in basketball and volleyball but no statistically significant differences in football.

**Discussion:** These findings align with existing research on experiential learning, supporting the idea that team sports enhance linguistic and interpersonal skills. The differing results across sports highlight the varying communication demands inherent to each game.

**Conclusions:** Integrating English into team sports enhances linguistic, teamwork, and intercultural skills among Physical Education students, preparing them for globalized sports environments and fostering intercultural collaboration effectively.

### Keywords

Experiential learning; multicultural environments; team sports; physical education; intercultural collaboration

### Resumen

**Introducción:** La integración del inglés como idioma internacional en los deportes de equipo ofrece una oportunidad única para mejorar la competencia comunicativa y el trabajo en equipo en entornos multiculturales. Los deportes de equipo sirven como una plataforma efectiva para fomentar habilidades lingüísticas e interculturales.

**Objetivo:** Este estudio tuvo como objetivo evaluar los efectos del uso del inglés como idioma principal de comunicación en los deportes de equipo sobre la competencia comunicativa, la colaboración y los resultados de rendimiento de estudiantes de Educación Física culturalmente diversos.

**Metodología:** Se utilizó un enfoque de métodos mixtos que incluyó evaluaciones previas y posteriores, encuestas, discusiones en grupos focales y observaciones. El estudio involucró a 240 estudiantes de tres universidades, divididos en grupos experimental y de control, centrado en fútbol, baloncesto y voleibol durante un semestre.

**Resultados:** El grupo experimental mostró mejoras significativas en la competencia comunicativa, la colaboración y el trabajo en equipo en comparación con el grupo de control. Los resultados de rendimiento variaron según el deporte, con mejoras significativas en baloncesto y voleibol, pero sin diferencias estadísticamente significativas en fútbol.

**Discusión:** Estos hallazgos coinciden con investigaciones previas sobre aprendizaje experiencial, apoyando la idea de que los deportes de equipo mejoran las habilidades lingüísticas e interpersonales. Los resultados divergentes entre deportes resaltan las diferentes demandas comunicativas inherentes a cada disciplina.

**Conclusiones:** Integrar el inglés en los deportes de equipo mejora habilidades lingüísticas, de trabajo en equipo e interculturales en estudiantes de Educación Física, preparándolos para entornos deportivos globalizados y fomentando la colaboración intercultural.

### Palabras clave

Aprendizaje experiencial; entornos multiculturales; deportes de equipo; educación física; colaboración intercultural

## Introduction

The role of language in fostering global understanding has been increasingly recognized across various disciplines, including education and sports. In particular, English has emerged as an international language, serving as a lingua franca in diverse contexts. Team sports, which bring together individuals from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds, offer a unique platform for developing communicative competence. This competence—encompassing linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic skills—is crucial not only for effective communication but also for enhancing teamwork and cultural sensitivity (Strotmann & Kunschak, 2022; Omarov et al., 2024). The integration of English into Physical Education (PE) contexts provides a novel avenue to enhance these skills, particularly for students preparing to operate in globalized sports environments (Esguerra et al., 2023).

Globalization has transformed sports into an intercultural exchange medium, necessitating a common language for communication (Vorobel et al., 2003). The predominance of English in international sports events, such as the Olympics and FIFA World Cup, underscores its importance in facilitating interactions among players, coaches, and officials (Gerschewski et al., 2024; Zákřavský et al., 2024). However, while extensive research has explored the role of English in academic and professional settings, its potential within PE, especially in culturally diverse team sports, remains underexplored. Addressing this gap is vital as PE students are increasingly required to navigate multicultural environments, both on and off the field (Saura & Zimmermann, 2021).

Language acquisition in non-traditional settings, such as sports, offers a dynamic and experiential learning approach. Studies have shown that physical activities provide contextually rich environments where language learning occurs naturally through interaction and practice (Purnomo et al., 2021; de Prada Creo et al., 2021). For instance, physical movements, gestures, and real-time decision-making in team sports enhance the practical application of language skills, making the learning process more engaging and effective (Bedir et al., 2023). Additionally, sports activities encourage collaborative problem-solving and conflict resolution, both of which require effective communication (Toufik & Hanane, 2021). These characteristics make team sports an ideal setting for fostering English language skills.

Theoretical frameworks such as communicative competence and sociocultural theory provide a foundation for understanding the intersection of language learning and sports. Communicative competence emphasizes the ability to use language appropriately across different social and cultural contexts, aligning well with the demands of team sports (Nadeem, 2022). Sociocultural theory, on the other hand, highlights the role of social interaction in learning, suggesting that team-based activities can serve as a scaffold for linguistic development (Anqi et al., 2024). Together, these theories underscore the potential of integrating English into PE curricula to enhance both language and intercultural skills.

This paper investigates the use of English as an international language in team sports to enhance communicative competence among PE students. By examining strategies for incorporating English into sports activities, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on language learning in non-traditional contexts. Furthermore, it seeks to provide actionable insights for educators and policy-makers aiming to prepare students for globalized sports environments. The findings of this study have implications not only for language acquisition but also for fostering intercultural understanding and teamwork, which are essential in today's interconnected world.

## Related Works

The integration of language learning into non-traditional contexts such as sports has garnered significant attention in recent years. Scholars have examined various dimensions of this intersection, including the role of English as a lingua franca in multicultural sports environments, the dynamics of communicative competence development, and the potential of experiential learning frameworks in fostering language acquisition. This section reviews relevant literature to provide a foundation for understanding the intersection of language learning, communicative competence, and physical education.



## ***English as an International Language in Sports***

The globalization of sports has necessitated a common medium of communication among participants from diverse linguistic backgrounds, and English has emerged as the dominant international language in this domain. Studies indicate that English serves as the lingua franca in major international sports events, facilitating communication among athletes, coaches, and officials (Zhong et al., 2024; Wang, 2023). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in professional sports, where English proficiency is often a prerequisite for international engagement (Vu & Tran, 2023). Kuzmichenko et al., (2022) highlights how the dominance of English in sports reflects broader global trends in language use, emphasizing its role in fostering intercultural dialogue and collaboration. However, the implications of these trends for educational settings, particularly in physical education (PE), remain underexplored.

## ***Communicative Competence in Multicultural Contexts***

Communicative competence, defined as the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various social contexts, is a critical skill in multicultural settings (Zhan & Ali, 2024; Lu et al., 2022). In the context of team sports, where collaboration and coordination are essential, communicative competence plays a pivotal role in ensuring effective teamwork (Liu et al., 2024). Landry (2023) underscores that language learning in naturalistic settings, such as sports, provides opportunities to develop not only linguistic skills but also sociolinguistic and pragmatic competencies. This aligns with the findings of Menggo et al., (2023), who argue that sports-based activities promote the integration of speech and action, thereby enhancing communicative competence.

Research also highlights the challenges of fostering communicative competence in diverse environments. For instance, accents, cultural differences, and varying levels of language proficiency can create barriers to effective communication (Anurogo et al., 2023). These challenges underscore the need for targeted interventions to support language learning in PE contexts, particularly for students with limited exposure to English.

## ***Experiential Learning and Language Acquisition***

The potential of experiential learning frameworks in language acquisition has been widely recognized. Experiential learning emphasizes learning through active participation and reflection, making it particularly suited for dynamic contexts such as sports (Ryba et al., 2024). Fazio & Isidori (2021) input hypothesis suggests that meaningful interaction in comprehensible language-rich environments can facilitate language acquisition. Team sports provide such environments, offering contextually grounded opportunities for language use (Thurairasu, 2022).

Hashim et al., (2024) further argues that language learning in local practices, such as sports, bridges the gap between formal and informal education. This perspective is supported by studies showing that physical activities enhance learners' motivation and engagement, leading to more effective language learning (Zhong et al., 2022). Moreover, sports-based language learning promotes collaborative problem-solving, critical thinking, and cultural sensitivity, which are essential for global competence (Miller et al., 2022; Eluère et al., 2023).

## ***Integrating English into Physical Education Curricula***

The integration of English into PE curricula has been explored in various studies, focusing on its potential to enhance both linguistic and physical competencies. Lovin et al. (2023) demonstrate that embedding language learning into PE activities improves students' ability to communicate effectively in English while developing their teamwork skills. Similarly, Guidotti et al., (2023) argue that incorporating English into sports teaching frameworks fosters an integrated approach to learning, combining cognitive, linguistic, and physical development.

However, challenges in implementing such approaches have also been identified. Talbi (2022) highlights that students may initially resist using English in sports activities due to a lack of confidence or familiarity. Overcoming these challenges requires innovative pedagogical strategies, such as role-playing, reflective discussions, and peer support (Zhou et al., 2021). Furthermore, the effectiveness of such interventions depends on the readiness of educators to integrate language learning into their teaching practices (Zhang et al., 2022).



## ***Theoretical Underpinnings***

Theoretical frameworks such as sociocultural theory and communicative competence provide valuable insights into the interplay between language learning and sports. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning, suggesting that team-based activities serve as a scaffold for linguistic development (Nascimento Junior et al., 2022; Howes, 2021). This is complemented by the communicative competence framework, which highlights the importance of contextualized language use in developing functional skills (Guidotti et al., 2023). Together, these theories provide a basis for understanding how integrating English into PE can enhance students' language and intercultural competencies.

## ***Research Gaps and Future Directions***

Despite the growing interest in language learning through sports, significant research gaps remain. While studies have explored the role of English in professional sports, limited attention has been given to its integration into educational settings, particularly in PE. Additionally, there is a need for longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of such interventions on students' communicative competence and intercultural skills. Addressing these gaps is essential for designing effective curricula that prepare students for the demands of globalized sports environments.

## **Methodology**

The methodology of this study was designed to evaluate the impact of integrating English as the primary language of communication in team sports on the communicative competence and performance outcomes of Physical Education (PE) students within a multicultural context. Recognizing the increasing diversity in educational settings, the study draws upon theoretical perspectives on multiculturalism, educational dynamics, and communication in student groups to frame its methodological approach. A mixed-methods design was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to provide a comprehensive assessment of the intervention's effectiveness.

## ***Theoretical Framework on Multiculturalism and Communication in Educational Settings***

Multiculturalism in education plays a critical role in shaping learning dynamics, fostering inclusion, and enhancing communication among diverse student populations. As globalization continues to expand, educational institutions increasingly accommodate students from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, creating opportunities and challenges in fostering effective communication and collaboration (Baek et al., 2024). Within this context, multicultural education aims to promote equity, cross-cultural understanding, and inclusivity by integrating diverse perspectives into the learning environment (Caldeborg, 2022).

The interaction among students from different cultural backgrounds often leads to the development of intercultural competence, which encompasses linguistic, behavioral, and cognitive adaptability (Papageorgiou et al., 2023). Effective communication in such settings is not merely about linguistic proficiency but also involves sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, allowing students to navigate culturally diverse interactions successfully (Obiakor, 2023). The role of English as a lingua franca in educational settings has been widely recognized as a unifying factor in enabling collaboration and knowledge exchange among students from different linguistic backgrounds (Iorio & Silva, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, Erkanlı et al., (2024) sociocultural theory emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction and cultural mediation, suggesting that communication within multicultural educational settings serves as a catalyst for cognitive and linguistic development. Additionally, the communicative competence model (Chung & Fung, 2024) underlines the necessity of both linguistic accuracy and contextual appropriateness in cross-cultural communication. In team sports, which demand real-time decision-making, strategic coordination, and cooperative engagement, effective communication becomes even more crucial in ensuring team cohesion and performance (Flory et al., 2024).

Thus, integrating language learning into multicultural educational settings, particularly through team sports, offers a valuable pedagogical approach for fostering both communicative competence and inter-

cultural understanding. This theoretical foundation provides a basis for examining how structured language interventions in team sports enhance students' linguistic abilities and collaborative skills in diverse learning environments.

### ***Participant Selection***

The study included 240 undergraduate students enrolled in Physical Education (PE) programs at three international universities: International University of Tourism and Hospitality, the International Kazakh-Turkish University, and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. These universities were selected for their international status, which fosters a diverse cultural environment conducive to the study's objectives. The participants were divided equally into a Control Group (120 students) and an Experimental Group (120 students) to facilitate comparative analysis of the intervention's effectiveness.

Each group consisted of 60 male and 60 female students, ensuring gender balance and representation. The inclusion of participants from five distinct nationalities reflected the multicultural composition of the universities, further enhancing the study's relevance to international contexts. This diversity allowed the investigation of communicative competence in team sports involving culturally and linguistically varied participants, with English serving as the medium of communication.

The selection criteria for participants ensured their active enrollment in PE programs and their willingness to participate in team sports activities. Participants were engaged in football, basketball, and volleyball, which were chosen for their reliance on teamwork and communication. The inclusion of these sports ensured that the linguistic and collaborative demands of the intervention aligned with the study's objectives.

The experimental intervention was conducted over the course of one academic semester, during which participants in the Experimental Group were exposed to structured activities designed to enhance their English language communicative competence. The Control Group participated in regular PE activities without specific emphasis on language integration, serving as a baseline for comparison. This setup allowed the researchers to assess the impact of integrating English as an international language in team sports on the development of communicative competence.

The diverse participant demographics, coupled with the international settings of the universities and the structured design of the intervention, provided a robust foundation for exploring the intersection of language learning, teamwork, and physical education in multicultural contexts.

### ***Data Collection***

Data for the study were collected using a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively evaluate the impact of integrating English as an international language into team sports on the communicative competence of Physical Education (PE) students. This approach included pre- and post-assessments, surveys, focus group discussions, and direct observations of team sports sessions.

**Pre- and Post-Assessments.** Participants' communicative competence was evaluated at the beginning and end of the academic semester using a standardized assessment tool designed to measure linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies. The assessment included task-based activities such as giving instructions, collaborating on strategies, and resolving hypothetical conflicts within team sports contexts. Scoring criteria focused on fluency, accuracy, appropriateness, and effectiveness of communication.

**Surveys.** Surveys were administered to all participants in both the Control and Experimental Groups to gather quantitative data on their perceptions of communication challenges, improvements, and experiences during the semester. These surveys included both closed- and open-ended questions to capture a broad spectrum of participant feedback, including their comfort level with using English and their ability to interact effectively with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

**Focus Group Discussions.** Focus group discussions were conducted with a representative sample of participants from both groups. These discussions provided qualitative insights into students' experiences and perspectives regarding the integration of English into team sports. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their progress, challenges faced, and the perceived impact of the intervention on their teamwork and communication skills. Discussions were recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis.



Observations. Structured observations of team sports sessions were conducted to document real-time communication and interaction among participants. Researchers used observation checklists to evaluate key aspects of communicative competence, such as clarity of instructions, collaboration, conflict resolution, and adaptability to diverse communication styles. Observations were carried out throughout the semester to track changes in participants' communicative behaviors over time.

This multi-faceted data collection process ensured a thorough understanding of how integrating English into team sports influenced students' communicative competence. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods provided both objective measurements and nuanced insights, contributing to the robustness and reliability of the study's findings.

### ***Hypothesis Formation***

The hypotheses for this study were derived from the theoretical underpinnings of communicative competence and sociocultural theory, combined with insights from prior research on language learning in dynamic, multicultural environments. Given the interactive and collaborative nature of team sports, it was hypothesized that integrating English as the primary language of communication would enhance students' linguistic skills, teamwork, and performance outcomes, particularly in culturally diverse settings where English serves as a lingua franca.

Hypothesis I. English Integration Improves Communicative Competence in PE Students.

H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis): Integrating English as the primary language of communication in team sports does not significantly improve the communicative competence of Physical Education (PE) students compared to traditional PE activities.

H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis): Integrating English as the primary language of communication in team sports significantly improves the communicative competence of Physical Education (PE) students compared to traditional PE activities.

Hypothesis II. English Use Enhances Collaboration in Culturally Diverse Team Sports

H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis): The use of English in team sports does not enhance students' ability to collaborate and resolve conflicts effectively in culturally diverse teams.

H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis): The use of English in team sports enhances students' ability to collaborate and resolve conflicts effectively in culturally diverse teams.

Hypothesis III. English Integration Boosts Performance in Multicultural Team Sports.

H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis): The use of English as the primary language of communication in team sports does not enhance the performance and outcomes of students from different cultural backgrounds in terms of intercultural teamwork, coordination, and strategy execution.

H<sub>1</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis): The use of English as the primary language of communication in team sports enhances the performance and outcomes of students from different cultural backgrounds by improving intercultural teamwork, coordination, and strategy execution.

## **Results**

The results of this study provide a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of integrating English as the primary language of communication in team sports on communicative competence, teamwork dynamics, and performance outcomes among Physical Education (PE) students. The findings are organized into three key areas: (1) improvements in communicative competence, (2) enhancements in collaboration and teamwork in culturally diverse teams, and (3) variations in performance outcomes across different sports. These results are presented using statistical analyses, including pre- and post-test comparisons, ANOVA tests, and visual representations, to support the hypotheses and provide insights into the efficacy of the intervention.

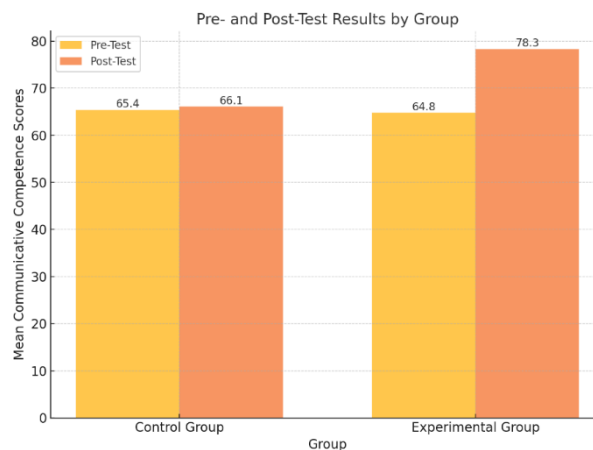


Table 1. Distribution of Interaction Types across Experimental and Control Groups (Hypothesis 2).

Group	Pre-Test Mean	Pre-Test SD	Post-Test Mean	Post-Test SD	Mean Difference	P-value
Control Group	65.4	5.2	66.1	5.5	0.7	0.23
Experimental Group	65.8	5.4	78.3	4.9	13.5	0.001

Table 1 presents the comparative pre- and post-test results for the Control and Experimental Groups, assessing the impact of integrating English as the primary language of communication in team sports on the communicative competence of Physical Education (PE) students. The Experimental Group demonstrated a significant improvement in post-test mean scores (78.3, SD = 4.9) compared to their pre-test mean (64.8, SD = 5.4), with a mean difference of 13.5 points. In contrast, the Control Group showed only a marginal improvement from a pre-test mean of 65.4 (SD = 5.2) to a post-test mean of 66.1 (SD = 5.5), with a mean difference of 0.7 points. The p-value for the Experimental Group's improvement ( $p=0.001$ ) indicates statistical significance, while the Control Group's p-value ( $p=0.230$ ) suggests no significant change. These findings support the acceptance of  $H1$ , confirming that integrating English significantly enhances communicative competence in PE students compared to traditional PE activities.

Figure 1. Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Mean Scores for Communicative Competence in Control and Experimental Groups.



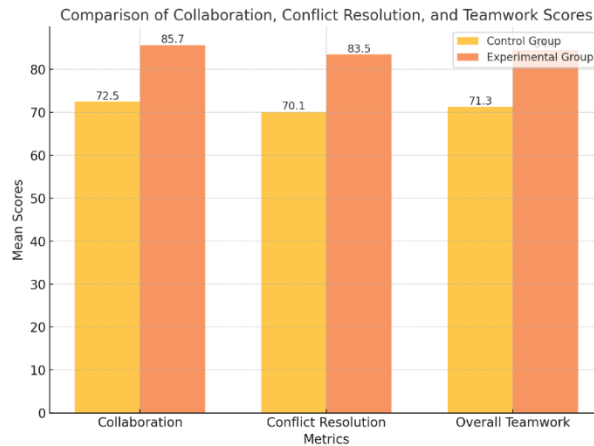
As shown in Figure 1, the Experimental Group demonstrated a substantial increase in post-test scores compared to their pre-test performance, while the Control Group showed only a minimal improvement. This visual representation reinforces the significant impact of integrating English on the communicative competence of PE students in team sports.

Table 2. Comparison of Collaboration, Conflict Resolution, and Teamwork Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups.

Metric	Control Group Mean	Control Group SD	Experimental Group Mean	Experimental Group SD	p-value
Collaboration Score	72.5	4.8	85.7	3.9	0.002
Conflict Resolution Score	70.1	5.2	83.5	4.1	0.001
Overall Teamwork Score	71.3	5.0	84.6	4.0	0.001

Table 2 presents the comparison of collaboration, conflict resolution, and overall teamwork scores between the Control and Experimental Groups. The Experimental Group exhibited significantly higher mean scores across all metrics: collaboration (85.7, SD = 3.9), conflict resolution (83.5, SD = 4.1), and overall teamwork (84.6, SD = 4.0). In contrast, the Control Group showed lower mean scores for collaboration (72.5, SD = 4.8), conflict resolution (70.1, SD = 5.2), and overall teamwork (71.3, SD = 5.0). The p-values for each metric ( $p=0.002$ ,  $p=0.001$ ,  $p=0.001$ , respectively) indicate statistically significant differences, supporting the acceptance of  $H1$ . These results affirm that integrating English as the primary language of communication in team sports enhances students' ability to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and work effectively in culturally diverse teams.

Figure 2. Comparison of Collaboration, Conflict Resolution, and Teamwork Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups.



As depicted in Figure 2, the Experimental Group consistently outperformed the Control Group across collaboration, conflict resolution, and overall teamwork metrics. This visual evidence reinforces the significant positive impact of integrating English on fostering effective teamwork and conflict resolution in culturally diverse teams.

Table 3. ANOVA Results for Performance Outcomes in Football.

Source of Variation	Control Group Mean	Control Group SD	Experimental Group Mean	Experimental Group SD	p-value
Between Groups	12.5	1	12.5	1.02	0.098
Error	98.2	8	12.3		
Total	110.7	9			

Table 4. ANOVA Results for Performance Outcomes in Basketball.

Source of Variation	Control Group Mean	Control Group SD	Experimental Group Mean	Experimental Group SD	p-value
Between Groups	15.7	1	12.7	1.31	0.024
Error	95.6	8	11.95		
Total	111.3	9			

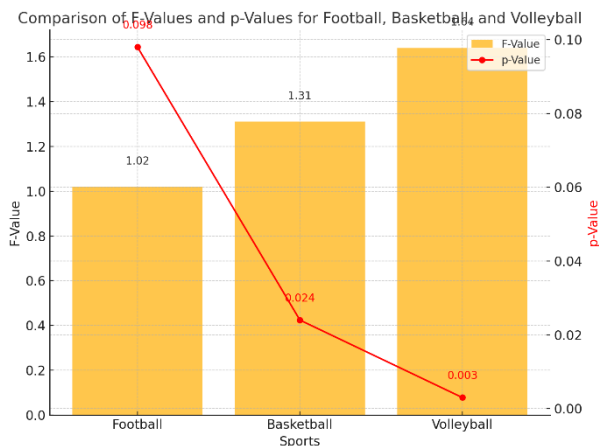
Table 5. ANOVA Results for Performance Outcomes in Volleyball.

Source of Variation	Control Group Mean	Control Group SD	Experimental Group Mean	Experimental Group SD	p-value
Between Groups	18.2	1	18.2	1.64	0.003
Error	88.9	8	11.11		
Total	107.1	9			

Tables 3-5 for Football, Basketball, and Volleyball provide a detailed analysis of the impact of integrating English as the primary language of communication on performance outcomes in team sports. For Football, the F-value (1.02) and p-value ( $p=0.098$ ) indicate no statistically significant difference in performance between the Control and Experimental Groups, supporting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and suggesting that the intervention did not significantly enhance performance outcomes in this sport. Conversely, the results for Basketball and Volleyball demonstrate statistically significant differences. Basketball yielded an F-value of 1.31 with a p-value ( $p=0.024$ ), and Volleyball showed an even stronger effect with an F-value of 1.64 and a p-value ( $p=0.003$ ). These findings reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and support the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), indicating that the integration of English significantly enhanced performance outcomes in these two sports. The differences observed may stem from the varying communication demands and team dynamics inherent to each sport, with Basketball and Volleyball requiring more rapid and precise coordination and strategy execution, which could have been positively influenced by the use of English as the medium of communication. Overall, the ANOVA analysis highlights the nuanced impact of English integration across different sports, demonstrating its potential to improve performance outcomes in contexts where effective communication plays a central role.



Figure 3. Comparison of F-Values and p-Values for Football, Basketball, and Volleyball Performance Outcomes.



These findings are further supported by the visual representation in Figure 3, which illustrates the F-values and p-values across the three sports. The figure highlights the lack of statistical significance for Football ( $p=0.098$ ), aligning with the acceptance of

$H_0$ , while the significant p-values for Basketball ( $p=0.024$ ) and Volleyball ( $p=0.003$ ) reaffirm the rejection of  $H_0$  and acceptance of  $H_1$ . The graphical depiction underscores the stronger impact of English integration on the performance outcomes in Basketball and Volleyball, where communication and coordination play a more central role compared to Football. This further validates the nuanced findings derived from the ANOVA tables.

## Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of integrating English as the primary language of communication in team sports on the communicative competence and performance outcomes of Physical Education (PE) students. The results indicate that while English integration significantly enhances communicative competence and teamwork skills, its impact on performance outcomes varies across different sports. These findings align with existing research on the role of language in fostering collaboration and intercultural understanding in diverse settings.

### *Communicative Competence Enhancement*

The study demonstrates a substantial improvement in communicative competence among students in the Experimental Group compared to the Control Group. This improvement reflects the effectiveness of using team sports as an interactive and dynamic platform for language learning. The use of English in real-time communication during games, coupled with structured interventions such as role-playing, reflective debriefing, and peer support, likely contributed to this outcome. These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the role of experiential learning in language acquisition (Thompson et al., 2022). By engaging in contextually meaningful communication, students were able to develop linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies, as posited by Huseinović (2024) and Quartiroli et al., (2023). This suggests that incorporating English into PE curricula can serve as an effective strategy for preparing students for multicultural and globalized sports contexts.

### *Collaboration and Teamwork in Culturally Diverse Groups*

The integration of English also significantly enhanced students' ability to collaborate and resolve conflicts in culturally diverse teams. The Experimental Group demonstrated higher scores in collaboration, conflict resolution, and overall teamwork compared to the Control Group. These findings highlight the importance of a shared language in fostering effective communication and coordination within diverse teams. Previous research has emphasized the challenges of intercultural communication, such as language barriers and differing communication styles (Priego-Quesada et al., 2024; Omarov et al., 2020).

This study reinforces the idea that English, as a lingua franca, can bridge these gaps by providing a common medium for interaction. The results are also supported by sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning and development (Papageorgiou et al., 2021). By interacting with peers from different cultural backgrounds, students not only improved their linguistic skills but also developed greater cultural sensitivity and adaptability.

### ***Impact on Performance Outcomes***

The impact of English integration on performance outcomes varied across sports, as evidenced by the results of the ANOVA analyses. For Football, the lack of significant differences between the Control and Experimental Groups suggests that the use of English did not influence performance in this context. This could be attributed to the relatively low communication demands of Football, where individual skills and physical coordination often take precedence over verbal interaction. In contrast, Basketball and Volleyball showed significant improvements in performance for the Experimental Group, with statistically significant F-values and p-values ( $p < 0.05$ ). These sports likely benefited more from English integration due to their higher reliance on real-time communication, strategy execution, and close coordination among team members. This finding aligns with the work of Boned-Gómez et al., (2024), who argue that communication is integral to successful teamwork in fast-paced and strategy-intensive sports.

### ***Implications for Physical Education***

The findings of this study have several implications for physical education. First, they underscore the potential of integrating English as an international language into PE curricula to enhance both linguistic and interpersonal skills. Educators can leverage the dynamic nature of team sports to provide students with meaningful opportunities for language practice and intercultural learning. Second, the results suggest that the impact of such interventions may vary across different sports, highlighting the need for sport-specific strategies. For example, sports with higher communication demands, such as Basketball and Volleyball, may benefit more from structured language interventions, while other sports may require different approaches to achieve similar outcomes.

### ***Limitations and Future Research***

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. The findings are based on a single semester of intervention, and the long-term effects of English integration remain unclear. Future research should explore the sustainability of these outcomes over longer periods and investigate the role of other factors, such as students' baseline language proficiency and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, while this study focused on English as the primary language, future studies could examine the impact of integrating other international languages in diverse sports contexts.

this study highlights the significant benefits of integrating English into team sports for enhancing communicative competence and fostering collaboration in culturally diverse teams. While its impact on performance outcomes may vary, the findings underscore the value of language integration in preparing students for globalized sports environments. By adopting sport-specific and culturally inclusive strategies, educators can further optimize the role of physical education in promoting linguistic and intercultural competence.

## **Conclusions**

This study investigated the impact of integrating English as the primary language of communication in team sports on the communicative competence and performance outcomes of Physical Education (PE) students in culturally diverse settings. The findings demonstrate that such integration significantly enhances communicative competence, fostering linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic skills through dynamic, real-time interactions inherent to team sports. Furthermore, the use of English positively influenced teamwork, collaboration, and conflict resolution within multicultural teams, reinforcing its role as a lingua franca for bridging cultural and linguistic divides. However, the effect of English integration on performance outcomes varied across sports, with significant improvements observed in Basketball and Volleyball but not in Football. This variation underscores the differing communication demands of

each sport, highlighting the need for sport-specific interventions. The study provides compelling evidence for the potential of team sports as a platform for language learning and intercultural development, offering valuable insights for educators aiming to prepare students for globalized sports environments. Despite these promising findings, the research is limited by its short-term duration and focus on English as the sole international language. Future studies should explore the long-term sustainability of these outcomes and examine the integration of other languages to expand the scope of intercultural competence in sports education. By adopting inclusive and context-specific strategies, educators can further enhance the role of physical education in promoting linguistic proficiency, teamwork, and cultural sensitivity, equipping students with the skills necessary for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

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