

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, the research question, the research objective, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Effective communication is an indispensable skill in today's interconnected world, especially in the context of learning English as a foreign language. As one of the fundamental language skills, speaking significantly influences students' academic achievements and their ability to interact socially. In Indonesia, however, many students face considerable challenges in achieving proficiency in speaking English, which can impede their active participation in both academic settings and everyday conversations (Razaq et al., 2022). This struggle is often intensified in traditional classroom environments, where opportunities for interactive speaking practice are limited, and the inherent pressure to perform can lead to anxiety and a reluctance to engage.

Extracurricular activities, particularly English Club Community, provide a valuable alternative for students to practice their speaking skills in a more relaxed and supportive environment. English Club Community are structured to promote communication through a variety of engaging activities, allowing students to support their vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall fluency (Hanim, 2018). Despite their potential benefits, participation rates in these clubs often do not meet expectations, suggesting a disconnect between students' needs and the available

opportunities for practice. Factors such as scheduling conflicts, lack of awareness about the clubs, or insufficient promotion by educational institutions may contribute to this issue.

Understanding students' perceptions of extracurricular activities like English Club Community is crucial for supporting their effectiveness. Perception significantly influences students' motivation to engage in speaking practice. Positive experiences within the English Club Community can greatly enhance students' confidence and willingness to communicate in English (Melviza et al., 2017). Conversely, negative perceptions such as feeling intimidated by peers or instructors can deter students from fully participating, hindering their language development.

The increasing need for research into students' perceptions of English Club Community is particularly relevant as educators strive to create environments that facilitate language acquisition beyond the formal classroom setting. By examining the factors that shape students' attitudes towards these clubs, this study aims to identify strategies that can boost participation and, consequently, improve speaking skills.

Moreover, this research emphasizes the importance of incorporating enjoyable and relevant activities into the English Club Community curriculum to cultivate a more engaging learning atmosphere. Activities such as storytelling, debates, and interactive games not only provide essential practice opportunities but also make the learning process enjoyable (Agustiyaningsih, 2015). This dual

focus on skill enhancement and engagement is critical for fostering a love of learning English among students.

While previous studies have examined the impact of extracurricular activities like English Club Community on language skills, there is a significant gap in understanding the nuanced perceptions of students involved in these clubs. For instance, Yulianasari and Kusriandi (2015) found that students who actively participate in English Club Community tend to have a more positive attitude toward speaking compared to their non-participating peers. Their research emphasized the supportive environment fostered by English Club Community, which enhances students' confidence and fluency through activities such as debates and presentations. However, most existing research primarily focuses on quantitative measures of language acquisition or academic performance outcomes, overlooking the subjective experiences and attitudes of students themselves. Moreover, studies often fail to differentiate between the types of activities offered within English Club Community or consider the variability in student engagement and motivation. Therefore, qualitative research that captures students' voices is needed to explore how participation in English Club Community communities influences their speaking skills and overall language confidence. This understanding can provide invaluable insights into the effectiveness of English Club Community programs in facilitating language acquisition.

The English Club Community at MTsN 3 Kediri stands out as a unique platform for language development, offering a supportive and interactive environment where students can build their English-speaking skills. Unlike

traditional classroom settings, this club emphasizes fun and engaging activities such as debates, storytelling, and group discussions, which help alleviate the anxiety often associated with learning a new language. It fosters a sense of camaraderie among students, enabling them to learn from one another while forming lasting friendships. Additionally, the club is student-led, with guidance from teachers, making it a collaborative space where students feel empowered to take risks and practice English without fear of judgment. This distinctive approach not only enhances linguistic competence but also nurtures confidence and positive attitudes toward language learning, making the English Club Community a vital component of the students' educational experience at MTsN 3 Kediri.

In conclusion, exploring students' perceptions of the English Club Community as an extracurricular activity is vital for understanding its impact on their speaking skills. This study aims to offer insights that can inform the development of more effective English Club Community, ultimately contributing to improved language proficiency and greater student engagement in learning English. By addressing both the positive and negative aspects of students' experiences, educators can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that encourages active participation and continuous improvement in speaking abilities.

B. Research Questions

Since this research aims to explore students' perceptions of the English Club Community as an extracurricular activity to support their speaking skills, the researcher is particularly interested in focusing on the following question:

1. What are students' perceptions of the English Club Community at MTsN 3 Kediri to support students' speaking skills?
2. How does the English Club Community at MTsN 3 Kediri support students' speaking skills?

C. Objectives of the Study

Since this research intends to know students' perceptions of the English Club Community and its support for their speaking skills, the researcher will concentrate on the following objectives:

1. To know students' perceptions of the English Club Community at MTsN 3 Kediri support their speaking skills.
2. To know how the English Club Community at MTsN 3 Kediri support students' speaking skills.

D. Significance of the Study

The study is expected useful for:

- A. For English Teachers, this study offers practical insight for EFL teachers regarding the value of extracurricular English Club Communities in supporting students' speaking development. By understanding students' perceptions and the activities that build oral

confidence, teachers can design more engaging and low-anxiety speaking environments, adopt scaffolding techniques, and consider implementing similar club-based programs to complement formal classroom instruction.

- B. For EFL Students, this study helps students recognize that speaking skills develop not only through classroom learning but also through consistent practice in supportive, community-based environments. Students may become more aware that anxiety and vocabulary limitations are natural parts of the learning process, and that regular participation in extracurricular activities can gradually build the confidence and fluency needed for effective communication in English.
- C. For Future Researchers, this study may serve as a reference for researchers interested in extracurricular language learning, students' perceptions, and speaking skill development in EFL contexts. Future researchers may expand upon these findings by exploring different educational levels, school settings, or language skills, or by applying mixed-method and longitudinal designs to gain a broader understanding of how community-based learning environments influence language acquisition.
- D. For Educational Institutions, this study provides empirical evidence of the positive contribution of extracurricular programs to students' speaking development. The findings may encourage schools and

administrators to invest in and strengthen existing English Club programs, ensuring that such activities are well-structured, adequately supported, and recognized as an essential complement to formal English language education.

- E. For the Researcher, this study deepens the researcher's understanding of how extracurricular environments influence EFL speaking development while also strengthening competence in qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviewing, non-participant observation, and thematic analysis, providing a solid foundation for future academic and professional growth in English language education.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research will specifically explore students' perceptions of the English Club Community as an extracurricular activity at MTsN 3 Kediri, with a focus on its role in supporting speaking skills among high school students, assessing how their involvement in the club influences their speaking abilities and motivation to participate in speaking activities, thereby emphasizing the club's significance within this educational framework. However, the findings may not be generalizable to other educational contexts due to the limited sample size and the specific demographic focus solely on students from MTsN 3 Kediri. Moreover, the study will exclusively address students' perceptions and experiences associated with the English Club Community, consciously omitting

any investigation into other extracurricular activities or their possible effects on different language skills, such as listening or writing. Additionally, the research's temporal constraints, being conducted over a brief duration, may further limit the capacity to assess the long-term impacts of participation in the club on the students' overall speaking proficiency and development.

F. Definition of Key Term

To avoid misunderstandings, here are the definitions of key terms used in this study:

1. English Club Community (ECC): In this study, the English Club Community refers to the structured extracurricular program at MTsN 3 Kediri that provides 8th-grade students with a voluntary, informal space to practice English speaking outside of regular classroom hours. Unlike formal instruction, the ECC at MTsN 3 Kediri operates through game-based oral tasks, peer collaboration, tutor scaffolding, and high-stakes events such as English Camp, all of which are designed to create a low-anxiety environment where students feel encouraged to communicate in English without fear of judgment or academic evaluation.
2. Speaking Skills: In this study, speaking skills refer to the students' developing ability to express ideas and communicate in English through oral production, encompassing vocabulary use, pronunciation clarity, fluency, and confidence in front of others. Speaking skills in this context are not measured through formal

assessment, but are observed and self-reported by ECC members at MTsN 3 Kediri as gradual improvements in their willingness to speak, their ability to form sentences, and their reduced anxiety during oral performance activities such as competitions, storytelling, and event MC roles.

3. **Students' Perceptions:** In this study, students' perceptions refer to the personal interpretations, feelings, and attitudes that 8th-grade ECC members at MTsN 3 Kediri formed toward the English Club Community as a learning environment. These perceptions include how students experience the club's atmosphere compared to regular classrooms, how they view peer relationships and tutor support within the club, and how they assess the club's contribution to their speaking confidence and oral skill development. Perceptions in this study were explored qualitatively through semi-structured interviews and are understood as subjective but meaningful indicators of how the ECC environment is received and internalized by its members.
4. **Extracurricular Activities:** In this study, extracurricular activities refer specifically to the English Club Community program at MTsN 3 Kediri as a voluntary learning activity conducted outside of formal school hours. This activity is distinguished from regular classroom instruction by its informal structure, student-centered participation, and emphasis on enjoyable and communicative

tasks rather than academic assessment. Within this study, the ECC serves as the primary extracurricular context through which students' speaking skills and perceptions are examined.