

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in this study. It covers the research design, research subject, research instruments, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and the trustworthiness of the research.

A. Research Design

In this study, the researcher employed a qualitative method, specifically a descriptive qualitative design. This type of research is conducted systematically to explore and understand individuals' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors in depth. As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research is appropriate when the researcher aims to understand a phenomenon based on the meanings individuals assign to their experiences, rather than measuring it numerically. This design is particularly suited to the present study, as the aim is not to quantify the effectiveness of the English Club Community (ECC), but to explore how students experience their participation in the club and how those experiences shape their confidence and speaking skills.

Broadly speaking, a qualitative design is defined as an inquiry process of understanding grounded in distinct methodological traditions that explore social or human problems (Creswell, 2014). This approach prioritizes the observation and perception of specific phenomena to uncover deeper meanings that cannot be captured through quantitative measurement (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Within the qualitative paradigm, several distinct frameworks exist to guide researchers, including phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, and

narrative research. Narrowing down to the most suitable framework for this study, the researcher employs a descriptive qualitative design. This design is used to provide a systematic, factual, and detailed description of a phenomenon as it naturally occurs, without seeking to prove a pre-determined hypothesis (Stake, 1995).

The researcher chose this approach because the central purpose of this study is to describe and understand how eighth-grade students at MTsN 3 Kediri perceive the English Club Community and how the club supports their speaking skills. By adopting a descriptive qualitative design, the researcher is able to capture the students' voices through semi-structured interviews and direct observation, examining their motivations, experiences, and perceived improvements in a holistic and naturalistic manner.

B. Research Participants

The research participants in this study were students at MTsN 3 Kediri who were active members of the English Club Community (ECC) during the 2024/2025 academic year. The researcher employed purposive sampling, a technique in which participants are deliberately selected based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives, to ensure the richness and depth of the data collected (Tongco, 2007).

The criteria for selecting participants were as follows: (1) students who were currently enrolled in the eighth grade at MTsN 3 Kediri, (2) students who had been active members of the English Club Community for at least one semester, and (3) students who were willing to share their experiences and

perspectives openly during the data collection process. These criteria were essential to ensure that the participants had sufficient familiarity with the club's activities and program to provide meaningful and relevant insights.

This study involved approximately 6–10 participants. The number of participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, in which data collection continued until no new information or themes emerged from the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach is commonly applied in qualitative research to ensure depth and richness of data, rather than focusing on a large sample size. It is important to note that this study focuses exclusively on the students' perspectives; therefore, no teachers were included as research participants.

C. Research Instrument

In qualitative research, the primary research instrument is the researcher themselves. As emphasized by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the human instrument is central to qualitative inquiry because only humans are capable of capturing the complexity of lived experience, interpreting contextual meaning, and adapting to the dynamic nature of social interactions during data collection. Accordingly, in this study, the researcher acted as the main instrument who directly engaged with participants, observed the club's activities, interpreted both verbal and non-verbal cues, and made reflexive decisions throughout the research process. In line with this, Sugiyono (2018) emphasizes that in qualitative research, the researcher functions as the planner, data collector, analyst, and interpreter of findings.

To support and structure the data collection process, the researcher also utilized two types of secondary instruments: a semi-structured interview protocol and an observation sheet. These instruments were designed based on relevant theoretical frameworks and aligned with the research objectives. They served as tools to guide the researcher in collecting rich and credible data on students' experiences in the English Club Community, as well as in exploring how those experiences contribute to the development of their speaking skills.

a. Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

This study used semi-structured interviews as the primary instrument for gathering detailed information about participants' experiences and perceptions. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), semi-structured interviews are particularly useful in qualitative research for exploring personal perspectives that cannot be captured through observation alone. This format allows the researcher to use guided questions as a framework while maintaining the flexibility to probe deeper into topics that emerge organically during the conversation.

The interview protocol was structured around six thematic sections, each designed to address a specific dimension of the research questions. Interview protocols play a crucial role in the process of gathering information, as they guide the interviewer using a consistent set of questions to ensure that comparable information is obtained from each participant (Billups, 2021). The complete interview protocol is attached in the Appendix. The following table presents an overview of the interview sections and their respective purposes.

Table 1. Interview Protocol Overview

Section	Indicator of Positive Perception	Interview Questions	Purpose
1. Participant Profile	Student has been an active ECC member for at least one semester, indicating sustained voluntary engagement	• What is your full name and class? • How long have you been an active member of the English Club Community?	To establish participant identity and confirm eligibility based on grade level and minimum membership duration.
2. Students' Perceptions of ECC Atmosphere (RQ 1)	Student describes the ECC environment as more relaxed, enjoyable, and free from grade pressure compared to regular classrooms	• In your opinion, what is the English Club Community at MTsN 3 Kediri like? • How do you feel about the club atmosphere compared to your regular English classroom? • Do you feel comfortable making mistakes or asking questions during ECC sessions? Why or why not?	To explore whether students perceive the ECC as a low-anxiety and comfortable space for speaking practice, which indicates a positive perception of the club's learning atmosphere.
3. Students'	Student describes	• How would you	To explore whether

Perceptions of Peer Relationships (RQ 1)	ECC peers as supportive, non-judgmental, and closer than regular classmates, including cross-class friendships and sibling-like bonds	describe your relationship with other ECC members compared to your regular classmates? • Do your fellow members support you when you make mistakes while speaking? How? • Do you feel a sense of belonging or closeness within the ECC community?	students perceive peer relationships within the ECC as warm, supportive, and motivating, which indicates a positive perception of the club's social environment.
4. Support Through Activities (RQ 2)	Student identifies specific game-based and practical activities (brain-teasers, word-guessing, sentence-making, outdoor vocabulary tasks) as enjoyable and effective for vocabulary and speaking development	• What specific activities do you do most often in ECC, such as games, storytelling, or speaking tasks? • How do activities like word-guessing or brain-teaser games help you practice speaking or build vocabulary? • Can you describe an	To identify the specific oral activities used in ECC and whether students perceive them as effective and engaging for speaking skill development.

		activity that you found most helpful for improving your English speaking?	
5. Tutor and Senior Support (RQ 2)	Student describes tutor guidance as encouraging and clue-based rather than direct correction, and mentions senior mentoring particularly during English Camp	• How does your tutor or teacher help you when you struggle to find the right words in English? • Does your tutor give you the answer directly or guide you through clues? How does that make you feel? • Have older or senior ECC members ever helped you improve your speaking, such as during English Camp?	To examine the quality of tutor scaffolding and peer mentoring as perceived by students, and whether these forms of support positively contribute to speaking confidence (RQ2 — Theme 2).
6. High-Stakes Performance Experiences (RQ 2)	Student describes English Camp competitions, storytelling contests, speech events, or MC roles as confidence-building and	• Have you ever participated in an English Camp or speaking competition through ECC? How did that experience affect your speaking confidence?	To explore whether high-stakes performance opportunities within ECC, such as English Camp and leadership roles, are perceived as transformative

	motivating experiences	• Have you ever taken on a leadership role, such as being an MC at an ECC event? How did it feel? • Did performing in front of a large audience change the way you feel about speaking English?	experiences that accelerate speaking confidence.
7. Gradual Speaking Progress (RQ 2)	Student reports noticeable improvement in vocabulary, fluency, or reduced anxiety over time as a result of consistent ECC participation	• Since joining ECC, how have your vocabulary and fluency in speaking English changed? • Do you feel less nervous when speaking English now compared to when you first joined? Why? • On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your speaking improvement since joining ECC, and what contributed most to that progress?	To assess whether consistent participation in ECC activities leads to students' self-reported speaking improvement and decreased performance anxiety over time (RQ2 — Theme 4).

8. Closing and Recommendations	Student offers constructive suggestions such as more frequent activities, expanded games, or storytelling texts, indicating active investment in the club's development	• What additional activities or changes do you think would help ECC better support your speaking skills? • Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience as an ECC member?	To capture student-driven recommendations and any unexpected insights that reflect their level of engagement and ownership over their learning experience.
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b. Observation Sheet

In addition to the interview protocol, the researcher utilized a structured observation sheet to systematically document students' behaviors and interactions during English Club Community meetings. According to Creswell (2014), observation as a research method provides valuable insights into the context and processes that influence student learning experiences, particularly in naturalistic settings. Rather than relying solely on participants' self-reported accounts, observation allowed the researcher to cross-verify the behaviors described in the interviews with what was directly witnessed during club activities.

The observation sheet was organized around six key criteria, each linked to one or both of the research questions. For each criterion, the researcher recorded observable indicators, a checklist response (Y = Yes, N = No, P = Partial), and detailed behavioral notes. The complete observation sheet is presented in the

Appendix. The following table provides an overview of the observation criteria used in this study.

Table 2. Observation Sheet Overview

Observation Criteria	Observable Indicators	Checklist (Y/N/P)	Researcher Notes
1. Interactional Support (RQ 2)	• Students use English to communicate with peers. • Students use English to communicate with the tutor. • Tutor provides immediate feedback or scaffolding when a student is stuck.		Note instances of code-switching or specific tutor prompts used during the session.
2. Peer Encouragement (RQ 1 & 2)	• Peers give verbal praise after someone speaks. • Stronger students assist peers with vocabulary or pronunciation. • Absence of mockery when mistakes are made.		Does the community feel supportive or competitive?
3. Risk-Taking Behavior (RQ 1)	• Students volunteer to speak without being called upon. • Students attempt to use new or complex vocabulary. • Students continue speaking even after making a grammatical error.		Observe body language: eye contact, hand-raising, and vocal volume.

Observation Criteria	Observable Indicators	Checklist (Y/N/P)	Researcher Notes
4. Activity Delivery (RQ 2)	• The activity requires every student to produce spoken output. • The tutor uses media or tools to trigger speaking practice. • Activities move progressively from simple to more complex tasks.		Describe the specific design and delivery of the activity being observed.
5. Student Engagement (RQ 1)	• Students arrive on time and remain focused. • Students display enthusiasm through active listening and participation. • Students ask clarifying questions during activities.		Do students perceive the club as a fun or serious learning space?
6. Language Output Quality (RQ 2)	• Clarity: Can the student be understood? • Fluency: Are there long pauses or filler sounds? • Vocabulary: Are students using words beyond basic greetings?		Record specific breakthrough moments where a student produces a full and meaningful sentence.

D. Data Collection

The data collection process in this study was carried out through two primary methods: semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation. These two methods were selected to ensure data triangulation, whereby findings from one source were systematically cross-checked with findings from the other to strengthen the credibility and validity of the overall data (Denzin, 1978; Creswell, 2014). The integration of both methods allowed the researcher to build a more complete and nuanced understanding of how students perceived the English Club Community and how the club supported the development of their speaking skills.

a. Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 6–10 purposively selected participants to capture rich, detailed narratives of their experiences in the English Club Community (Creswell, 2014). Each interview was scheduled to last approximately 20 to 30 minutes and took place in a quiet and comfortable environment within the school premises, such as the school library or a vacant classroom, to ensure participants felt at ease sharing their perspectives. All interviews were audio-recorded with prior informed consent from each participant and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy during the data analysis phase.

The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to use a consistent set of guided questions as a framework while maintaining the flexibility to probe into emerging themes and seek further clarification when needed (Bernard et al.,

2017). Participants were encouraged to respond in the language they felt most comfortable with, whether English, Indonesian, or a combination of both, to minimize anxiety and promote open, honest responses. Before conducting the actual interviews, the researcher piloted the interview protocol with two individuals not involved in the main study to assess the clarity of the questions and estimate the appropriate duration. Based on the feedback received, minor revisions were made to improve the phrasing of certain questions.

After each interview was completed, the audio recordings were transcribed and reviewed multiple times to minimize transcription errors. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, for example S1 for Student 1, S2 for Student 2, and so on, to protect their confidentiality and facilitate systematic identification during the analysis process. All files were securely stored and regularly backed up to prevent data loss.

b. Non-Participant Observation

In addition to interviews, the researcher conducted non-participant observations during English Club Community meetings to gather direct contextual data about students' actual behaviors and interactions. Non-participant observation was chosen to allow the researcher to observe the natural flow of club activities without interfering with the group dynamics (Creswell, 2014). During each observation session, the researcher used the structured observation sheet

described in Section 3.3.2 to systematically record specific behaviors and events as they occurred.

The observation focused on documenting the step-by-step flow of activities, the frequency of student verbal contributions in English, the quality of peer-to-peer interactions, the level of student enthusiasm during speaking tasks, and the tutor's role in facilitating each session. By focusing on specific, observable indicators rather than general impressions, the researcher was able to generate detailed behavioral evidence that could be directly compared with the perceptions reported by participants in the interview phase.

Taken together, the combination of semi-structured interviews and systematic observation ensured that the data collected were both subjectively meaningful and empirically grounded, providing a robust foundation for the thematic analysis conducted in the following stage

E. Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis was conducted using Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2022) thematic analysis framework. Thematic analysis is a flexible and widely used qualitative method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns of meaning, or themes, within a dataset. This approach was selected because it is not tied to a specific theoretical framework, which made it appropriate for exploring the range and diversity of students' perceptions and experiences in the

English Club Community. Braun and Clarke's framework consists of six sequential phases, each of which is described below.

Phase 1: Familiarising Myself with the Data

The first phase involved the researcher immersing themselves in the entire dataset. All audio recordings from the semi-structured interviews were first transcribed verbatim. The researcher then read and reread the transcripts and observation notes multiple times to develop a thorough understanding of the content and context. During this process, initial impressions and preliminary ideas were noted in the margins of the transcripts. By the end of this phase, the researcher had developed a solid foundational familiarity with the data that informed all subsequent stages of the analysis (see Appendix 3).

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

In the second phase, the researcher systematically coded interesting and meaningful features across the entire dataset. Each transcript was carefully reviewed, and relevant phrases, sentences, or segments were labelled with a code that captured their semantic or latent meaning. Both data-driven codes, which emerged directly from the participants' words, and theory-driven codes, informed by the research questions, were applied throughout this process. The resulting codes were subsequently organized into a codebook to facilitate cross-case comparison in the next phase (see Appendix 4).

Phase 3: Generating Candidate Themes

After coding was complete, the researcher conducted a cross-case analysis by reviewing all codes across the ten participants' codebooks. Codes with

similar or related meanings were grouped together into code clusters, which were then examined for broader patterns. These patterns were used to generate a set of initial candidate themes that represented recurring aspects of students' experiences. At this stage, the researcher used a hybrid approach, combining patterns emerging from the data with the structure provided by the research questions, to ensure that the candidate themes were both data-grounded and analytically coherent (see Appendix 5)

Phase 4: Reviewing and Developing Themes

The fourth phase involved reviewing and refining the candidate themes to ensure that each theme was internally coherent, clearly distinguishable from the others, and genuinely representative of the data. The review was conducted in two stages: first, by re-examining all coded data within each candidate theme; and second, by re-reading the entire dataset to confirm that the thematic structure as a whole accurately reflected the breadth of participants' experiences. Where necessary, themes were merged, separated, or discarded, and their boundaries were clarified (see Appendix 6).

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

In the fifth phase, the researcher refined, defined, and named each theme and its corresponding sub-themes. Clear and concise definitions were formulated for each theme to capture its essential meaning and to specify which aspects of the data it covered. Each theme and sub-theme was assigned a descriptive name that accurately reflected its content. Through this process of definition and naming, the researcher produced a final thematic map organized

according to the two research questions, which served as the analytical framework for presenting the findings in Chapter IV.

Phase 6: Producing the Report

The final phase involved compiling the analysis into a coherent narrative that addressed the research questions. The report presented the identified themes and sub-themes, supported by illustrative quotations from the interview transcripts and contextual details drawn from the observation notes. Relevant literature was integrated throughout to strengthen the analytical arguments and situate the findings within the broader field of English language education. The complete findings are presented in Chapter IV of this thesis.

F. Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness is a fundamental aspect of qualitative research that ensures the findings are credible, accurate, and representative of participants' actual experiences. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness in qualitative research consists of four interrelated components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This study applied all four components to ensure the quality and integrity of the research findings.

Credibility refers to the extent to which the research findings accurately represent the experiences and perspectives of the participants. To ensure credibility, the researcher carefully selected participants through purposive sampling, restricting involvement to eighth-grade students who had been active ECC members for at least one semester, thereby confirming that all participants possessed directly relevant experience. The primary data were collected through

semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to describe their experiences in depth and in their own words, ensuring that the findings were grounded in the participants' own perspectives rather than the researcher's assumptions.

Crucially, credibility was further strengthened through data triangulation. As defined by Denzin (1978), triangulation involves using multiple data sources or methods to cross-check findings and reduce the potential for researcher bias. In this study, triangulation was achieved by combining two distinct methods: semi-structured interviews and systematic non-participant observation. The interview data, which reflected students' subjective perceptions of the ECC and its impact on their speaking skills, were directly cross-verified with behavioral evidence gathered during club observation sessions. For instance, when a participant reported feeling more confident speaking in front of peers, the observation sheet was used to record whether voluntary speaking behaviors, peer encouragement, or risk-taking actions were visible during actual club meetings. This alignment between interview accounts and observed behaviors provided a stronger and more reliable basis for the study's conclusions than either source of data could have offered alone.

Additionally, the researcher applied member checking after the interview data were transcribed and interpreted. Several participants were invited to review the researcher's interpretations of their responses to confirm that the findings accurately reflected their intended meanings. This process helped to minimize

misunderstanding and ensured that the analysis remained consistent with the participants' actual perspectives.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings of this study may be applicable to other contexts or settings. To support transferability, the researcher provided thick, detailed descriptions of the research context, including the characteristics of the participants, the setting of MTsN 3 Kediri, the structure and activities of the English Club Community, and the specific procedures followed during data collection. By documenting these contextual details thoroughly, readers are equipped to judge for themselves whether the findings may be relevant to similar educational environments or extracurricular language programs elsewhere.

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research process. To maintain dependability, the researcher conducted all stages of the study in a systematic and carefully documented manner. The interview procedures, transcription process, coding procedures, theme development, and thematic analysis were all carried out according to an explicit and consistent protocol. Furthermore, the researcher repeatedly reviewed and reread the interview transcripts and observation notes throughout the analysis to ensure that the themes generated were stable and consistent with the evidence in the data.

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings are grounded in the participants' actual data rather than in the researcher's personal opinions or assumptions. To ensure confirmability, all themes and sub-themes generated in this study were derived directly from the interview transcripts and observation

notes, and were supported by specific illustrative quotations and behavioral evidence. The researcher maintained a reflective stance throughout the analysis, actively working to distinguish participants' voices from their own interpretive perspective. By anchoring the analysis firmly in the empirical data, the researcher ensured that the findings were transparent, traceable, and independently verifiable.

In summary, the trustworthiness of this study was established through a combination of careful participant selection, semi-structured in-depth interviews, systematic non-participant observation, data triangulation across two methods, member checking, consistent and transparent analytical procedures, and a thorough contextual description. Together, these measures ensured that the findings of this study are credible, reliable, and grounded in the authentic experiences of the participants.