An Analysis of the English Club to Support Students' Speaking Performance at Junior High School

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Abstract: *This study discusses how the English Club supports students' speaking performance at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga. Several previous studies have shown that English Clubs can improve fluency and confidence, but few studies have discussed how club activities are carried out and how clubs support the improvement of students' speaking performance at the junior high school level. This study aims to fill this gap by describing the implementation of the English Club and the forms of support provided to students. The study uses a descriptive qualitative method through observation and semi-structured interviews with eight members and two facilitators of English Club. The results show that activities such as discussions, interactive games, paired conversations, and role-plays improve students' fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence. The relaxed and supportive environment reduces anxiety and encourages active participation. This study confirms that English Clubs are an effective platform for developing students' speaking performance and provides practical implications for schools and teachers in designing more structured and meaningful club activities.*

Keywords: *English Club, Extracurricular Activity, Speaking Performance, Students' Confidence*

INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak English is one of the fundamental skills that junior high school students must master, because speaking is not only a means of expressing ideas but also builds confidence and expands academic and professional opportunities. However, many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in Indonesia face significant psychological barriers such as speaking anxiety, which hinders their oral performance (Abdullah et al., 2022). Other research indicates that shyness and a deficiency of confidence in verbal communication can significantly reduce student engagement in the classroom (Nuralika et al., 2023).

Contextually, in many junior high schools in Indonesia, students rarely have the opportunity to actively speak English due to the dominance of traditional or teacher-centered teaching methods. This is further worsened by psychological pressures such as fear of making mistakes and low self-confidence, which have a negative impact on students' fluency and

willingness to participate in oral interactions (Wisrance & Kristanti, 2024). This condition shows that students' need to practice speaking is not fully supported by the opportunities available in formal classes. In addition, research conducted by Rizki et al. (2021) found that students with higher levels of speaking anxiety tend to have poorer speaking performance, indicating that psychological barriers significantly reduce their confidence and readiness to speak in English.

In response to this issue, English Clubs have emerged as an effective and strategic solution in schools. By providing a non-formal extracurricular forum, English Clubs allow students to practice speaking through activities such as discussions, speeches, and presentations in a more relaxed and supportive atmosphere. Research at SMPN 3 Majene found that the English Club program significantly improved students' speaking skills and confidence (Imansari et al., 2024). Moreover, research at SMP Negeri 8 Pematang Siantar also showed that the English Conversation Club can be an effective alternative to address this issue. In this research, 55% of respondents strongly agreed and 23% agreed that participation in the club helped increase their confidence in speaking English (Damanik et al., 2023). Findings from other studies also highlight the important role of English Clubs in supporting the development of students' speaking skills. A qualitative study by Asatari & Hadi (2022) revealed that English Clubs provide a comfortable English-speaking environment where students can practice through activities such as storytelling, speeches, games, and various other non-formal learning media. This environment not only expands students' vocabulary but also boosts their confidence in speaking because the learning situation is more relaxed, non-judgmental, and encourages active participation.

Despite these positive contributions, most existing studies focus more on the outcomes gained by students rather than exploring how the English Club is implemented and how its activities function as support mechanism for speaking development. Additionally, studies on English Club activities in junior high school settings remain limited, particularly regarding how activities within the club contribute as support to students' speaking performance (Nawati et al., 2024). This gap indicates the need for research focused on junior high school setting, where the implementation and support mechanisms of the English Club may present features that have not been explored in previous studies.

This study is built upon the identified gaps and aims to investigate the English Club at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga, which was intentionally chosen due to its active and systematic extracurricular activity that supports students' speaking performance. The English Club at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga is designed to provide students opportunities to practice speaking English outside of regular classes. The club functions as a structured yet informal learning space where students can engage in interactive and communicative speaking activities, such as discussions, interactive games, paired conversations, and role-plays. These activities are different from formal classroom settings that tend to prioritize on textbook-based tasks, limited

speaking time, and mainly aimed at preparing for exams. This supportive environment encourages students to take part actively and helps ease their anxiety when speaking, which is especially important at junior high school level where students are still building their confidence in speaking. Furthermore, this study focuses on the implementation of English Club in the school setting and examines what kinds of support are provided to enhance students' speaking performance. Through investigating the club's structure, activities, and learning interactions, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the English Club functions as a speaking support for students.

The research used a descriptive qualitative approach to give a detailed picture of how the English Club activities naturally implemented and how it impacted students' speaking performance. Theoretically, the study contributed to the limited existing literature on the implementation of English Club in junior high school setting, especially in terms of its role in supporting students' speaking performance. Practically, the findings provided useful insight for teachers and program developers in improving and designing English Club activities to build a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking performance remains one of the most challenging components of language learning, as it requires learners to integrate vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and confidence simultaneously when communicating. According to Harmer (2007), speaking is a complex productive skill that requires learners to produce language spontaneously while integrating linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, and communicative confidence in real-time interaction. Speaking is also considered a complex productive skill because students must process ideas quickly while maintaining accuracy and clarity.

In relation to this, recent studies show that many students experience difficulties in speaking performance in formal classes due to limited speaking time and high levels of anxiety. Brown (2004) emphasizes that affective factors such as anxiety and motivation play a crucial role in second language learning and can significantly influence learners' oral performance. A lack of motivation further significantly influences students' engagement and learning achievement, including their speaking performance (Wattiheluw et al., 2024). This condition is further explained by Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which states that high anxiety, low motivation, and low self-confidence can block language input and hinder speaking development. To overcome these challenges, English Club has emerged as an alternative platform that provides additional opportunities for students to practice speaking in a meaningful and supportive environment.

The implementation of English Club activities is very important to support the development of students' speaking performance. From a

sociocultural perspective, Vygotsky (1978) argues that language learning occurs through social interaction and collaborative activities, where learners construct meaning by actively engaging with others. Previous studies emphasize that the English Club program improves students' confidence, fluency, and pronunciation through structured activities such as storytelling, speeches, discussions, and role-play. Furthermore, English Club practices contribute greatly to creating a supportive learning environment, reducing anxiety, and fostering students' willingness to communicate. Such conditions help lower learners' affective filter and encourage more active participation in speaking activities (Krashen, 1982). Similarly, Damanik et al. (2023) found that students who consistently participated in English Club activities showed higher levels of motivation and confidence in speaking. In addition, Imansari et al. (2024) recommended collaborative and student-centered tasks as key components in the successful implementation of English Club.

Participation in the English Club is also closely related to the cognitive process of producing spoken language. Brown (2004) explains that speaking performance involves the interaction of linguistic competence, cognitive processing, and affective readiness, which together determine the quality of learners' oral output. Vadriani et al. (2023) revealed that linguistic, motivational, and cognitive variables interact significantly in speaking performance, indicating that an increase in students' communicative confidence will improve the quality of their spoken output. These findings support a holistic approach that integrates speaking practice, psychological readiness, and cognitive strategies, making the English Club a powerful platform for improving students' overall communicative competence. Through this comprehensive framework, the English Club enriches pedagogical practices aimed at strengthening students' speaking performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative method to explore the implementation of the English Club and its role in supporting students' speaking performance. The descriptive qualitative method was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore a phenomenon and create detailed descriptions of participants' experience within their actual environment context. Yesodharan et. al (2021) explain that qualitative research involves broadly stated questions about human experiences and realities, which are explored through sustained engagement with participants resulting in detailed and meaningful data. Similarly, Doyle et. al (2020) stated that descriptive research is a method used to collect data that helps to explain "who, what, and where" of events or experiences from the participants' perspectives. Through this method, the researcher was able to comprehensively portray how the English Club was implemented and what kinds of support it provided to enhance students' speaking performance.

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga, in which the subjects of the study involved active members of the English Club. Research data was collected through observation and interviews. The English Club at

SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga was chosen as the research location due to its active and organized English Club program. It provides a well-established and consistently implemented program that offers rich opportunities to observe students' speaking activities within an authentic school setting. Furthermore, this study was conducted over a three-week period, during which the English Club was held once a week. It enabled researchers to assess the consistency of activities, patterns in students' involvement, and the methods facilitators used to encourage speaking practice throughout various sessions.

The participants of this study consisted of eight active members of the English Club and two English Club facilitators. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants, because they were directly involved in planning, implementing, and participating in the club's activities. As a result, the participants could offer relevant and detailed information about the research focus. In addition, data were collected through observation and semi-structured interviews. The observation took place during the three English Club meetings, with each session lasting around 100 minutes. Through this procedure, the researcher directly observed how the sessions were carried out, how the students participated in speaking practices, and how the facilitators guided each activity. To add more information, semi-structured interviews were employed, in which the questions were developed based on the research questions. Each participant was interviewed individually to examine their participation in various activities, the support they received, and their perception of how the English Club contributed to support their speaking performance.

The data analysis technique in this study used a model proposed by Miles, M. B., & Huberman (1994), which includes stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis was carried out throughout the entire research process, starting from the initial data collection up to the final stage, involving comparing, organizing, and interpreting the information gathered from the participants (Asipi et al., 2022). To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed triangulation techniques by cross-checking the results of interviews and observations (Nurfajriani et al., 2024). Through this process, the findings became more credible and able to accurately represent the implementation of the English Club and its support for students' speaking performance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents and discusses how the English Club at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga contributes to support students' speaking performance. The analysis was conducted based on interviews and observations of club and students' activities. In general, the data shows that the English Club provides a supportive learning environment and encourages students to practice speaking more freely, regularly, and confidently. These findings are

consistent with previous studies which state that English Clubs can be an effective space for improving students' fluency, vocabulary, and self-confidence.

In the English Club at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga, students engage in various speaking activities such as Quizzes, Kahoot, mini-games, pair or small group conversations, presentations, role plays, pronunciation exercises, and discussions on specific topics. These activities provide a regular opportunity for students to engage with a variety of English language contexts in an interactive and enjoyable way. One student said, "*Practicing often has helped me understand how to put words together. I used to pause or think for a long time, but now I speak more fluently.*" This indicates that repeated practice in a relaxed atmosphere can improve students' speaking fluency. These findings are in line with research results which state that the English Speaking Club serves as an effective extracurricular platform for developing students' fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence (Suryanto et al., 2025).

In terms of understanding the material, most students stated that the facilitator's delivery was easy to follow. Of the eight respondents, seven said the material was "*easy to understand*" and one said it was "*fairly easy.*" Several students emphasized that the facilitators helped them improve their pronunciation. One respondent explained, "*The facilitator likes to give examples before we practice. Then my pronunciation is often corrected, so I understand better.*" This practice of modeling and direct correction has been proven effective in improving pronunciation accuracy, as found by Wael & Hasanudin (2020) in their study at the Medina English Club.

Member participation also showed fairly good consistency. Six of the eight respondents said they participated frequently, while the other two admitted that they were sometimes absent due to their busy schedules, but remained actively involved when they did attend activities. One student even stated that he often helps his friends who have difficulty with pronunciation: "*I sometimes help my friends who are still confused about pronunciation, so we practice together.*" This shows the formation of a collaborative and supportive environment, in line with the findings Rizkiyah et al. (2023) about English Speaking Clubs that create positive interactions between members.

In terms of improving fluency, eight students reported significant improvement after joining the English Club. One respondent said, "*I used to pause a lot when speaking English, but now I can speak more fluently and without stuttering.*" This improvement came from the habit of speaking spontaneously in activities such as role play and conversation practice, which provided low pressure but intensive training. These findings support the report Damanik et al. (2023) which found that regular exposure to and use of English through the English Club can significantly improve students' fluency.

Vocabulary and pronunciation also showed improvement. Eight respondents said that their vocabulary had increased and their pronunciation had improved because they were often corrected or guided by the facilitators.

One student explained, *"I learned more new words from games and conversations. Then, if I mispronounced a word, I was immediately told the correct pronunciation."* This shows that the English Club functions as a space for balanced language input and output, as explained by Imansari et al. (2024) that English Clubs can improve speaking skills and confidence through regular and participatory speaking activities.

Students' confidence has improved the most. Six out of eight respondents said they became much more confident speaking English because of the relaxed and non-pressured atmosphere of the activities. One student said, *"I feel more confident because the atmosphere is relaxed and we are all learning together, so I'm not afraid of making mistakes."* Some respondents even mentioned that their confidence in speaking had increased not only in the English Club, but also in formal lessons and everyday life, *"Because I often speak English in the English Club, I have become more confident in class as well."* These findings are in line with research Wahidin (2025) in Fun-tastic English Club, which shows that English Club activities can improve junior high school students' speaking performance and confidence through interactive methods.

Discussion

The implementation of the English Club at SMP 1 Negeri Salatiga was carried out through organized and interactive speaking activities such as Quizzes, pronunciation drills, pair conversations, role-plays, and topic-based discussion. These activities helped students use English in a meaningful way, which supports the idea that speaking performance develops through frequent communicative practice (Nunan, 2015). In addition, the facilitators developed a pleasant and supportive setting for learning by regularly encouraging students to use English and showing positive reactions to their efforts. This kind of support has been found to affect students' attitudes toward language and increase their willingness to take part actively in speaking activities (Mangngemba et al., 2024). The friendly environment helped reduce anxiety, aligning with the affective filter hypothesis, which suggests that low-stress situations improve spoken language performance (Krashen, 1982). An analysis based on Miles, M. B., & Huberman (1994) model revealed that facilitators supported learning by demonstrating, guiding practice, and organizing groups in a student's abilities level. This approach reflects Bandura's social learning theory, which highlights that learners acquire new abilities by observing models and imitating actions (Bandura, 1977). In the case of the English Club, students improved their speaking because the facilitators regularly demonstrated correct pronunciation, expressions, and speech patterns that the students could follow.

Compared to previous research, these findings correspond with studies that show English Clubs play a significant role in supporting students' speaking performance. Damanik et al. (2023) revealed that English Clubs help improve fluency by offering repeated opportunities for speaking, a pattern also evident in this study. Furthermore, research conducted by Imansari et al.

(2024) discovered that supportive club environment helps reduce students' anxiety of speaking, which is reflected in the students' positive descriptions of English sessions as enjoyable and comfortable. This study uniquely contributes to the existing literature by providing an in-depth exploration of how an English Club is systematically implemented in a public junior high school context, focusing not only on students' speaking outcomes but also on the structure, activities, and supportive learning interactions within the club. Unlike formal classroom instruction that often emphasizes textbook-based tasks and exam preparation, the English Club at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga functions as a structured yet informal learning space that offers interactive speaking activities and creates a low-anxiety environment for students at the early stage of confidence development. Similarly, Wahidin et al. (2025) found that interactive activities boost students' confidence and motivation, which supports the relevance of the practices observed at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga.

The result of this study indicates that English Club at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga effectively supported students' speaking performance by enhancing fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation and confidence. Students became more fluent through spontaneous speaking task that encouraged real-time communication. Their vocabulary and pronunciation were improved through interactive method like games, discussions, and instant feedback. Confidence showed the most significant improvement, because English Club offered a comfortable and supportive environment. It gave a safe space for students to practice without fear of making mistakes. As a whole, English Club created a positive environment that meaningfully supported students' speaking performance.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the English Club at SMP Negeri 1 Salatiga plays an important role in improving students' speaking performance through interactive activities, a supportive learning environment, and consistent practice opportunities. Students experienced noticeable improvements in fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence after participating in various activities. Overall, the English Club proved effective in supporting the development of students' speaking performance by combining practice, direct examples, collaboration, and emotional support. Although the level of improvement varied among students, the program consistently provided a positive space that encouraged students to speak with more confidence and fluency. These results confirm that the English Club is a valuable extracurricular activity for developing students' speaking performance in the context of learning English as a foreign language.

However, this study was conducted in a single school with a relatively limited implementation period, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. In addition, the data were mainly derived from students' perceptions and observations, so the results may not fully capture long-term or quantitatively measurable improvements in speaking performance.

Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to involve broader research settings, longer implementation durations, and mixed research methods to obtain more comprehensive and objective findings. Further studies may also explore additional factors such as speaking anxiety, learning motivation, or instructional strategies used in English Club activities.

The findings of this study also imply that English Club can be effectively utilized as a complementary learning space that supports formal English instruction. By providing a low-anxiety, interactive, and supportive environment, English Club offers meaningful opportunities for students to practice speaking beyond classroom limitations, thereby enhancing their confidence and fluency. Consequently, schools and English teachers are encouraged to implement English Club as a practical extracurricular program to strengthen students' speaking performance in English as a foreign language context.

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