



Students' Perceptions of an English Club Activities in Enhancing Speaking Confidence among Junior High School

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-07 Revised: 2026-05-19 Accepted: 2026-08-10 Keywords: <i>English Club; speaking confidence; students' perception</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.12052 Corresponding Author: Nida Khasanatu Zain nidakhasanatu@students.unnes.ac.id English Education, Semarang State University, Central Java	<i>Speaking confidence is an important factor in students' participation in English speaking activities, yet previous English Club studies have mainly focused on students' learning outcomes rather than how speaking confidence develops through their participation. This study aims to explore junior high school students' perceptions of English Club activities and how these activities contribute to their speaking confidence. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, this study involved six students who actively participated in an English Club at SMP Negeri 25 Semarang. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. The findings revealed three themes: (1) the English Club as an enjoyable and supportive learning environment, (2) perceived growth in speaking confidence through speaking experiences, and (3) different activities addressing different speaking needs. Students perceived that repeated speaking practice, observation of teachers and peers, feedback and encouragement, and reduced nervousness contributed to their speaking confidence. These findings were interpreted through Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. The novelty of this study lies in explaining how students' experiences in different English Club activities are perceived to contribute to speaking confidence through the sources of self-efficacy. The study highlights the importance of providing varied speaking activities and a supportive environment to foster students' speaking confidence.</i>

1. Introduction

One of the most important skills in learning English is speaking, which enables students to effectively convey their ideas, thoughts, and feelings in real-world situations. Speaking is regarded as the most quickly recognizable and useful sign of communication competency (Hameed & Ali, 2022; Nggawu & Thao, 2023). Although this ability is important, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for many learners of English as a foreign language (EFL).

Linguistic factors, such as pronunciation difficulties, limited vocabulary, and grammatical issues, as well as affective factors, such as anxiety and a lack of self-confidence, contribute to these difficulties (Pollard & Anderson, 2008; Tristasari, 2025). In this regard, Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) explains that students with high levels of anxiety and low self-confidence tend to have difficulty processing and producing language, which ultimately hinders their speaking ability.

Among these affective factors, speaking confidence plays an important role in encouraging students' willingness to communicate. From Bandura (1997) perspective, this confidence is conceptualized as self-efficacy, reflecting an individual's ability to perform specific tasks. Even when learners have adequate language skills, they tend to avoid speaking situations when they have low self-efficacy. Preliminary Interview and observations with students at SMP N 25 Semarang Central Java clearly illustrated this phenomenon. Many students reported difficulties in expressing their ideas orally even though they understand the vocabulary and grammar.

They reported that they struggled to speak fluently, choosing the right words, and construct sentences, while hesitancy and low involvement were also caused by a lack of self-confidence and fear of making errors. This condition indicates that speaking difficulties are not influenced not only by cognitive factors but also affective factors. Therefore, students require a distinct learning atmosphere that can reduce nervousness, provide emotional support, and foster their confidence in speaking English. Preliminary interviews further prefer that students are more interested in learning environments that are enjoyable and less intimidating, where they are more likely to learn English alongside other students.

To overcome these obstacles, establishing an English club as an extracurricular activity is one effective way to achieve this. English clubs help non-native English speakers learn the language by providing a relaxed and calm environment that fosters interest and promotes learning success (Hamadameen & Najim, 2020). English clubs provide opportunities for students to practice English in a more interactive, engaging, and less formal setting compared to regular classroom instruction. Hamadameen and Najim (2020) describe English clubs as purposeful gatherings where members practice English in a collaborative and informal environment. Students can communicate more easily through activities

such as games, storytelling, and speaking exercises. Communicative activities such as speech, public speaking, role-playing, and interactive games improve their fluency, pronunciation, and confidence when speaking English. (Trang, 2024).

Moreover, previous studies revealed that English club activities assist students in developing their self-confidence and speaking skills through interactive, relaxed, and engaging activities. Researchers have shown that participation in English clubs assists positively in increasing vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking confidence by offering opportunities to practice in an engaging environment. (Aryanti et al. 2024; Do & Cam, 2024; Khaliduddin et al., 2025 Maming et al., 2024; Nguyễn, 2021; Riyadini 2022). Beyond these linguistic and affective benefits, several studies have reported additional contributions of English Clubs.

For instance, Toboula (2021) found that sustained participation in English Language Learning Communities enhanced learners' self-assurance and oral communication skills, while Elnadeef and Abdala (2019) reported that English Clubs helped Saudi EFL learners reduce language anxiety and develop higher-order communication skills, including critical thinking and persuasive speaking. Additionally, research on students' perceptions demonstrated that students who perceive English club setting as encouraging are more likely to participate actively and improve their speaking skills (Aryanti et al., 2024; Hijrah & Umar, 2021).

In spite of these positive results, most previous studies have focused more on the students' outcomes in English clubs than on exploring how speaking confidence develops, therefore several important gaps remain. First, speaking confidence has typically been treated as a general concept without being examined through a clear theoretical framework. As a result, the psychological processes that influence speaking confidence or the reason why students, despite having basic language proficiency, persistently find it challenging with speaking remain insufficiently explored.

Second, although many researchers have identified varied English Club activities that support language learning, they have provided limited understanding of how students perceive these activities and how such experiences assist to the development of their speaking confidence. Most findings describe the advantages of English Clubs as a whole, while giving less attention to students' own perspectives on the learning experiences that build confidence. Third, many studies have been conducted on senior high school and university students. There has been little research on the experiences of junior high school students participating in English clubs. They tend to have different developmental characteristics, learning needs, and levels of emotional and social maturity. These differences may influence how they participate in English club activities and how their confidence in speaking improves.

Based on these research gaps, the aim of this study is to explore how students perceive English club activities and how these activities improve their confidence

in speaking. In this study, the concept of speaking confidence is grounded in Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, underlining students' beliefs about their ability to achieve speaking tasks by their own efforts. This framework was chosen because it aligns closely with the aim of the research. Even though Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis demonstrate how affective factors, such as motivation, anxiety, and confidence, affect learners' capability to process comprehensible input and to acquire a second language, and MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) Willingness to Communicate (WTC) model explains the external and internal factors that influence learners' decisions to speak, these theories do not specifically explain how speaking confidence develops through learning experiences. In the context of English speaking confidence, self-efficacy refers to students' confidence in their ability to successfully use the language for communication.

This idea is investigated through four primary sources of self-efficacy: mastery experience, referring to successful prior speaking experiences; vicarious experience, involving the observation of peers' successful performances; verbal persuasion, including encouragement and constructive feedback from peers and teachers; and physiological and affective states, regarding emotional conditions such as anxiety, tension, or confidence when speaking English. Hence, these four sources provide a suitable framework to obtain a comprehensive grasp of how English club activities can enhance junior high school students' confidence in speaking English.

By addressing these gaps, this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions. In theoretical terms, this study expands the existing literature on self-confidence in speaking by explaining the psychological processes underlying how English Club activities can foster students' self-confidence, drawing on Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy. Rather than viewing speaking confidence merely as a learning outcome, this study examines how such confidence is gradually developed through students' learning experiences in an extracurricular context. While in practical terms, the findings are expected to offer understanding for English teachers, English Club mentors, and school administrators in designing English Club programs that not only develop students' speaking performance but also strengthen their confidence throughout meaningful speaking practice, peer modeling, constructive feedback, and supportive learning environments.

The study aims to answer the following questions: (1) How do students perceive English club activities? (2) How do English club activities influence students' speaking confidence? and (3) What aspects of English club activities contribute to students' speaking confidence? Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to explore students' perceptions of English club activities, to analyze how these activities influence students' speaking confidence, and to identify the aspects of English club activities that contribute to the development of speaking confidence. The novelty of this research lies in explaining the development of speaking confidence through students' participation in English Club activities by applying

Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy within the context of junior high school students, a setting that has received relatively limited attention in previous research.

2. Method

To explore how students perceive English club activities and how these activities contribute to their confidence, a qualitative descriptive design was used in this study (Sandelowski, 2000). This design was regarded as appropriate because the research aimed to capture students' experiences, perceptions, and views in their own words rather than measure them statistically. In line with the characteristics of qualitative research, the study intended to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations within their natural learning environment (Creswell, 2017). The study was carried out at SMP N 25 Semarang Central Java, involving students who were active participants indicated by their regular attendance and active involvement in the English club program for a year. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, as they were considered appropriate for providing rich and relevant insights derived from their direct involvement in the English club activities. The research involved a sample of six students. The adequacy of the number of participants was determined by the richness and recurrence of the information gathered from the interviews.

Semi-structured interviews and observations were used to collect data in order to gain a deeper understanding of the students' experiences and perspectives. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allow participants to express their opinions without interfering with the research objectives (Creswell, 2017). The interview questions were developed based on the self-efficacy theory proposed by Bandura (1997), which includes four key dimensions: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional state. The interviews were conducted face to face in Indonesian and then transcribed; each student's interview was 30 minutes long. Within participants' permission the interview was recorded. The transcripts were subsequently translated into English for data analysis and presentation in this manuscript. In order to determine the kinds of activities implemented in the English club, observations were also made. The purpose of these observations was to corroborate the conclusions drawn from the interviews by offering contextual information.

The primary instrument of this study was the researcher, assisted by an interview guide created using Bandura (1997) four sources of self-efficacy to make sure the interview questions stayed in line with the goals of the study. In addition to the semi-structured interviews no-participant observation was carried out during the English Club session to gain a contextual understanding of the learning activities and environment. The observation focused on speaking activity, students' involvement, relationships between teachers and peers, and the overall learning

environment. The observation provided contextual information that supported the interpretation of the interview findings. Information from the observation helped interpret the results of the interview. Therefore, observation did not function as an independent source of themes but was used to support the interpretation of students' reported experiences.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six-phase framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Initial codes were generated from recurring patterns in participants' accounts without imposing Bandura's self-efficacy categories as predetermined themes. Related codes were then grouped into broader themes representing students' perceptions of their English Club experiences. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory was subsequently used as an interpretive framework in the Discussion to explain how the identified experiences may contribute to students' perceived speaking self-efficacy. Field notes observations were reviewed along with the interview data to identify supporting evidence. The integration of interview and observation data helped provide a more contextualized interpretation of students' perceptions and strengthened the credibility of the findings.

3. Result

This study analyzed interview data from six active English Club participants using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The analysis of interviews with six active English Club participants generated three themes: (1) English Club as an enjoyable and supportive learning environment, (2) repeated speaking practice and perceived growth in speaking confidence, and (3) different activities addressing different speaking needs. These themes emerged from recurring patterns across the participants' accounts rather than being predetermined by Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy. Observation data were integrated to provide contextual support for the interview findings.

English Club as an Enjoyable and Supportive Learning Environment

Table 1. English Club as an Enjoyable and Supportive Learning Environment

No	Questions	Answer
1.	What made you want to join the English Club?	S1: "It's fun because at English Club, learning English feels like play, with lots of games; I also wanted to practice vocabulary and build my confidence in speaking English, since English is an international

		language."
		S2: "Because English is important, and I want to improve my speaking skill so that when others speak to me I understand, and when I say something in English, they understand me too."
		S3: "I want to learn English more deeply and be able to speak it more fluently."
		S4: "Because English is important, so I want to be confident speaking it."
		S5: "So I can improve my speaking skill; the times keep advancing, so learning English is very important — a lot of apps use English too."
		S6: "I want to develop my English fluency."
2	What activities are usually done in the English Club?	S1: "Games, then speech, storytelling, dialogue/drama, describing for example, looking at a picture and writing what it shows in English." S2: "Speech, storytelling, conversation, then vocabulary games using a speaker; sometimes we write down what we hear or describe an object." S3: "Lots — vocabulary games, conversation, dialogue, speech, storytelling, and describing an object, like a water bottle." S4: "Storytelling, speech, conversation, and vocabulary translation games; also describing pictures or objects around us." S5: "Vocabulary games, storytelling, speech, and describing pictures." S6: "First we practice public speaking, then play games — like guessing an object's English name, or choosing an item to describe by color and shape. We were once taught debate too, plus storytelling about holidays and conversation practice."
3	What do you	S1: "Fun, the teacher is kind; friends are supportive,

	think about the atmosphere in the English Club?	so I feel more confident speaking English — the atmosphere is relaxed and comfortable, I'm not afraid to speak." S2: "Fun; the teacher is kind and humble, so the atmosphere isn't tense — it's relaxed." S3: "Fun, not tense, unlike in class — and not boring." S4: "Fun, because there's a lot of practice and games — relaxed, not tense." S5: "Fun; it doesn't make me nervous because friends are fun too, the teacher is humble, and if we're wrong we get corrected and encouraged." S6: "Fun; I don't feel anxious, and when we make mistakes, we are encouraged and corrected by our friends and teachers."
4	What are the benefits of joining English Club?	S1: "It makes me more confident, my English speaking becomes fluent, I know more vocabulary — it helps me dare to speak English and boosts my confidence." S2: "My public speaking gets better, and I become braver — not afraid of mistakes." S3: "It improves my pronunciation to sound more like a native speaker; I can also construct sentences better and speak in front of many people." S4: "I become more confident speaking in front of many people, and I learn English as an international language that broadens my social connections — plus it helps with things like using English apps and correct pronunciation." S5: "I can speak English better than in elementary school (where there was no English subject), and I'm more confident speaking compared to friends who didn't join." S6: "I gain new vocabulary, learn to speak more smoothly, and become more confident speaking in

front of many people."

Note: S = Student

The students consistently described the English club as a learning environment that is relaxing, encouraging, and supportive. Across the six interviews, they reported that the environment was more relaxed than the formal English classes where they felt more comfortable speaking English and experienced less pressure. Although students' reasons for joining the English club were different, their reasons generally reflected a desire to improve their English. Some students joined because they were motivated by the importance of English as a global language, while others wanted to improve their English speaking skills and confidence. For example, S1 wanted to increase her self-confidence while expanding her vocabulary, S3 and S6 wanted to become more fluent. On the other hand S2 and S5 were inspired by the significance of English as an international language.

Students also highlighted the roles of teachers and classmates in creating a comfortable environment to speak English. During speaking activities, classmates were seen as supportive and respectful toward one another. Students also emphasized the supportive roles of teachers and peers in making the English Club a comfortable place to use English. The teacher was seen as friendly and always encouraging. In addition, S4 emphasized how educational games and interactive speaking exercises made learning more enjoyable than traditional classroom instruction. The students also emphasized that mistakes are a normal part of the learning process. The teacher did not criticize students for their mistakes but encouraged them to participate in the activities. Not only that, friends responded with a positive attitude by listening carefully and reinforcing one another during speaking activities.

During the observed English club session, the teacher was seen actively encouraging students and providing constructive feedback while students practiced speaking English. Peers also responded positively through applause and verbal encouragement. These observations were consistent with students' descriptions of teacher and peer support and of the English Club as a comfortable environment for practicing English.

Several students also reported that the English club offered a variety of speaking activities that encouraged students to actively use English. They described exercises such as language games, speech, storytelling, and dialogue/conversation, while S6 mentioned an occasional debate session. Participants described these activities as opportunities to practice different aspects of oral communication, including pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, public speaking, and spontaneous conversation. Rather than focusing only on grammatical knowledge, the English Club was perceived as providing

opportunities to use English orally through engaging activities.

The results show that students perceived the English Club as an enjoyable and supportive setting to enhance their speaking skill and confidence. The combination of teacher encouragement, peer support, and engaging speaking activities characterized the learning environment described by the participants.

Perceived Growth in Speaking Confidence Through Speaking Experiences

Table 2. Perceived Growth in Speaking Confidence Through Speaking Experiences

No	Questions	Answer
1.	Do you think your speaking ability has improved since joining the English Club?	S1: "Yes, it's improved — I can do a speech now and feel more confident and brave, not nervous." S2: "Yes, it's improved — my pronunciation of vocabulary is more accurate now, which makes me more confident speaking English." S3: "Yes, definitely — I'm more confident answering questions in English in front of friends now." S4: "Yes, improved — my vocabulary has grown a lot through games, so my confidence in speaking has grown too." S5: "Yes, definitely — my confidence in speaking English has increased; I've become braver without being too afraid of mistakes." S6: "Yes, I think it's improved — especially in pronouncing words correctly."
2	Does seeing friends, teachers, or tutors speak English influence your confidence?	S1: "Yes — seeing a miss or mister who is good at English motivates me to become good like them." S2: "Yes — seeing a friend who used to be quiet now dare to speak English makes me feel I can do it too. I want to join practice more because I see my friends' progress." S3: "Yes, it motivates and boosts my confidence — like, 'wow, she's so cool, I can definitely do that too, let's study more.'" S4: "Yes, especially seeing someone fluent — it makes

		me want that too, and want to practice to be confident speaking." S5: "Yes, especially when the teacher demonstrates speaking English clearly and gives encouragement so we're not afraid to make mistakes — it makes me feel more confident to try, even if I'm not fluent yet." S6: "Yes — like the teacher modeling confident use of English, and teaching us words and how to read them fluently."
3	Does feedback or praise from teachers/tutors/friends influence your confidence?	S1: "It really affects me — when I'm wrong, the teacher corrects it and encourages me, often saying 'good job.'" S2: "It really affects me — the teacher usually says 'good job,' corrects mistakes gently, and friends never laugh at us." S3: "It affects me — the teacher often says 'good job, excellent.'" S4: "It really affects me — the teacher often says 'good job, excellent' when we answer correctly." S5: "The teacher tells us when our pronunciation isn't quite right, models the correct way, and often says 'good job' when we can do it." S6: "It really affects me — it motivates me to be more confident using English and to keep improving."
4	How is the support from friends and tutors when you try to speak English?	S1: "Friends support each other — if I don't know a word, I get helped." S2: "Friends encourage each other, and the teacher gives motivation — 'it's okay to be wrong, the important thing is being brave and learning again.'" S3: "Friends encourage each other; if someone makes a mistake they're not laughed at, and after presenting we get applause."

		S4: "We encourage each other, and the teacher gives input on mistakes plus praise like 'very good.'" S5: "Friends give encouragement and never judge." S6: "The teacher motivates me, and my friends encourage me too."
5	Do you feel more comfortable speaking English in the English Club than in class?	S1: "Yes — at English Club almost everyone uses English, so it feels like learning together; the activities are fun with lots of games." S2: "Yes — in class it can feel a bit scary, especially with different teachers and teaching styles, but English Club is more fun." S3: "Yes — the atmosphere is more relaxed than in class, where the teacher tends to call on students directly, which is tense." S4: "Yes, more comfortable and enjoyable — the activities and atmosphere at English Club are fun." S5: "Yes, more enjoyable — if I make a mistake speaking, friends and the teacher don't laugh at me." S6: "Yes — in class some students like to joke around, so mistakes sometimes get laughed at; that's different from English Club, where friends are supportive."
6	Has joining an English Club helped reduce your fear of speaking English?	S1: "Yes, it reduces my fear — speaking in front of the class used to feel scary and nerve-wracking, but over time that faded." S2: "Yes, it really reduces nervousness — before, I felt anxious and embarrassed speaking English in front of friends, but the supportive environment made me more confident to try." S3: "Yes — before, I was afraid to speak English, worried about being wrong." S4: "Yes, it reduces nervousness — now I'm more confident because the teacher always says it's okay to be

wrong, so I feel braver to try speaking."

S5: "Yes, it reduces nervousness — before, I was afraid of being wrong whenever I spoke English or the teacher asked me something."

S6: "Yes — being in an English Club feels motivating, like it builds confidence to communicate in English; before, speaking English felt nerve-wracking."

Note: S =

The students perceived improvement in their speaking skills and their self-confidence through their participation in the English Club. They reported becoming more confident when expressing their ideas in English. They also felt less nervous when participating in speeches, storytelling, conversations, and other activities. For example, S1 and S5 stated that their confidence increased and they were no longer nervous when speaking in front of others. Similarly, S2 explained that her pronunciation had improved, making her feel more confident to communicate in English. While S4 emphasized that vocabulary games expanded her vocabulary, which in turn increased her confidence to express ideas orally.

Participants further associated their perceived improvement with repeated opportunities to practice speaking. They described participating in speeches, storytelling, conversations, and other speaking activities that required them to use English orally. Rather than reporting confidence as a single change, participants described several related changes, including greater willingness to speak, improved ability to express ideas, and reduced concern about making mistakes. Repeated participation in speaking activities was a recurring feature in students' descriptions of their speaking development.

Supportive feedback and encouragement were also frequently mentioned in relation to students' speaking experiences. Participants reported that teachers provided supportive comments, corrected errors politely, and encouraged them to continue participating rather than focusing on their mistakes. Students also described their peers as supportive when they experienced difficulties, such as forgetting vocabulary. They reported that classmates listened to one another, provided assistance, and did not laugh at students who made mistakes. These experiences were also observed during the English Club session, in which the teacher provided constructive feedback and encouragement while students practiced speaking, while peers responded positively through applause and verbal encouragement.

Reduced nervousness was another recurring pattern across the six interviews. All participants reported that their fear or nervousness when speaking English had decreased. S1 described speaking in front of the class as previously scary and

nerve-racking, but reported that this feeling gradually faded. S2 similarly described becoming less anxious and embarrassed when speaking in front of others. S4 reported feeling braver to speak after repeatedly receiving encouragement from the teacher, while S5 described becoming less afraid of making mistakes. S6 also reported that speaking English had previously felt nerve-racking but that participation in the English Club helped build confidence to communicate.

The students also reported that observing teachers and peers who were fluent in English affected their self-confidence and contributed to their willingness to participate. S1, S5, and S6 explained that seeing the tutors speak English fluently encouraged them to participate without fearing mistakes and to become equally proficient. On the other hand, some students highlighted the influence of their peers. S2 shared that observing a previously shy classmate become confident in speaking English encouraged her to believe that she could improve as well. Similarly, S3 also expressed feeling inspired after seeing friends perform confidently during English Club activities. Additionally, S4 expressed admiration for English language proficient speakers that made her want to become more fluent. Participants therefore described observing other speakers as an experience that encouraged them to participate and improve their own English speaking ability.

The observation data provided contextual support for the speaking experiences described by the participants. During the observed English Club session, students participated in a speaking activity while receiving constructive correction and positive encouragement from the teacher. Peers also responded supportively to classmates' participation. However, because the observation was conducted during only one English Club session, it does not establish changes in students' speaking confidence over time. Instead, it provides contextual evidence that the speaking practice, feedback, and supportive interaction reported in the interviews were present during the observed session.

Overall, students associated their perceived development in speaking confidence with repeated speaking practice, supportive feedback and encouragement, observation of other speakers, and reduced nervousness. These patterns represent different aspects of the speaking experiences that students associated with their perceived development in confidence.

Different Activities Addressing Different Speaking Needs

Table 3. Different Activities Addressing Different Speaking Needs

No	Questions	Answer
1.	Which English Club activity most helps increase your speaking	S1: "Speech, because we read in front of many listeners, so it trains our confidence." S2: "For me, speech too — it trains us to speak in front of many people."

	confidence?	S3: "Conversation, because it's spontaneous — if I'm asked something and can answer, I immediately become braver to speak." S4: "Storytelling, because we speak in front of others and present what we wrote, like our holiday experience." S5: "Games, because they add new vocabulary, which helps me speak more fluently." S6: "Storytelling, because it boosts confidence to come forward and speak English in front of friends."
2	Besides speaking activities, are there other aspects that help build your speaking confidence?	S1: "The supportive, comfortable atmosphere — the teacher is kind, and friends are supportive too." S2: "Support from friends and the teacher, plus a comfortable, non-judgmental environment." S3: "Support from friends, and the teacher's role in giving motivation." S4: "The relaxed atmosphere, plus being given motivation." S5: "I think support is very, very important — it has a big impact on confidence because it makes us feel motivated." S6: "The enjoyable environment and my friends' support."

Note: S = Student

The Students identified different activities as particularly helpful in improving their speaking confidence, according to the speaking experiences and skills they perceived as relevant to their needs. Rather than identifying one activity as universally effective, participants valued activities according to the type of speaking experience or skill they perceived as most relevant to their needs. Speech, conversation, storytelling, and games were mentioned as activities that provided different opportunities for practicing English.

S1 and S2 identified speech as the most helpful activity because it required them to speak in front of many listeners. They perceived this activity as providing direct experience in speaking before an audience. In contrast, S3 preferred

conversation activities because they required spontaneous responses during communication. She reported that being able to respond to questions during a conversation made her feel braver to speak. These responses indicate that speech and conversation were valued for different speaking demands: speaking before an audience and responding spontaneously.

S4 and S6 identified storytelling as particularly beneficial. S4 valued storytelling because it allowed her to speak in front of others while presenting a story based on what she had written, such as a personal holiday experience. Similarly, S6 associated storytelling with greater confidence to come forward and speak English in front of her friends. Thus, both students valued storytelling as an opportunity to organize and communicate ideas orally in front of others.

S5, in contrast, identified games as the most helpful activity because they provided opportunities to learn new vocabulary. She associated the acquisition of vocabulary with greater fluency when speaking. This response differed from those of students who emphasized public speaking or spontaneous communication.

In addition to specific speaking activities, all participants mentioned the importance of supportive aspects of the English Club. S1 and S2 emphasized the comfortable and non-judgmental atmosphere and support from teachers and friends. S3 highlighted peer support and teacher motivation, while S4 valued the relaxed atmosphere and encouragement. S5 described support as important for maintaining motivation, and S6 emphasized the enjoyable environment and support from friends.

The findings show that students did not perceive a single English Club activity as equally beneficial for everyone. Instead, they valued different activities according to the speaking experiences they provided, including speaking before an audience, responding spontaneously, presenting personal experiences, and developing vocabulary for more fluent communication. These differences reflect the varied ways in which students experienced and perceived the usefulness of English Club activities.

4. Discussion

Students' Perceptions of English Club Activities

The finding that students perceived the English Club as a relaxed, enjoyable, and supportive learning environment is consistent with previous studies highlighting the role of English Clubs in creating less formal spaces for language practice. Hijrah and Umar (2021), for example, reported that English Clubs provided students with opportunities to practice English in a comfortable and supportive environment. Similarly, Do and Cam (2024) found that language clubs created an interactive environment that supported students' language development through meaningful practice. These similarities suggest that the informal and socially supportive nature of language clubs can distinguish them from more formal classroom settings.

However, the present findings provide a more specific explanation of why this

environment was perceived as supportive for speaking confidence. Students did not describe the English Club as comfortable simply because it was less formal. Rather, their sense of comfort was associated with several interacting conditions, including teacher encouragement, positive peer responses, opportunities to make mistakes without being ridiculed, and enjoyable interactive activities. This suggests that informality alone may not be sufficient to create a supportive speaking environment. What appears to matter is whether the informal setting reduces students' concerns about negative evaluation while encouraging them to participate in oral activities.

This finding is also related to previous research on affective factors in language learning. Elnadeef and Abdala (2019) found that English Clubs could reduce language anxiety by providing students with opportunities to interact in a less threatening environment. The present study similarly found that students experienced less pressure when speaking in the English Club than in formal English classes. However, rather than treating reduced anxiety as an isolated outcome, the present findings suggest that students' perceptions of safety were constructed through repeated social interactions. Teacher encouragement and peer responses appeared to shape how students interpreted mistakes and speaking difficulties. When mistakes were treated as a normal part of learning rather than as a reason for criticism, students appeared more willing to continue speaking.

The role of peer interaction further distinguishes the present findings from studies that primarily emphasize teacher support. Students in this study described classmates as important sources of encouragement because peers listened, assisted when students experienced difficulty, and responded positively to their attempts to speak. This complements Mawaddah et al. (2025), who highlighted the importance of peer and teacher encouragement in supporting students' confidence. At the same time, the present findings suggest that peer support was meaningful not merely because students interacted with one another, but because those interactions created a non-judgmental social environment in which students could participate without fear of ridicule.

From Bandura's (1997) perspective, this supportive environment may provide conditions through which different sources of self-efficacy can operate. Encouragement from teachers and peers can function as verbal persuasion, while observing supportive and confident peers can provide vicarious experiences. More importantly, a less threatening environment may reduce negative physiological and affective reactions associated with speaking English. Therefore, the contribution of the English Club environment to speaking confidence may lie not in its being simply "fun" or "relaxed," but in its ability to create conditions in which students are willing to attempt speaking, receive feedback, observe others, and interpret their speaking experiences more positively.

Overall, the present study supports previous research describing English Clubs as supportive and less formal learning environments, but extends this

understanding by showing that students' perception of a supportive environment was connected to specific social and pedagogical conditions. The findings therefore suggest that an English Club may contribute to speaking confidence when informality is accompanied by encouragement, respectful peer interaction, tolerance of mistakes, and meaningful opportunities to use English orally.

How and Why English Club Activities Strengthen Speaking Confidence

The finding that students perceived growth in their speaking confidence after participating in the English Club is broadly consistent with previous research showing that participation in English Clubs can support students' speaking ability and confidence. Aryanti et al. (2024), for example, reported positive contributions of English Club participation to students' speaking-related development, while Maming et al. (2024) found that participation in English Club activities supported students' vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking confidence. Similarly, Toboula (2021) reported that sustained participation in English language learning communities was associated with greater self-assurance and oral communication skills. These findings are comparable with the present study because students also associated their participation with greater willingness to speak, improved ability to express ideas, and reduced nervousness.

However, the present study moves beyond identifying confidence as an outcome of English Club participation by showing how students perceived this development through their speaking experiences. Participants repeatedly referred to opportunities to speak, including speeches, storytelling, conversations, and other oral activities. These experiences appear to have provided students with repeated opportunities to attempt speaking, receive responses to their performance, and recognize their own progress. From Bandura's (1997) perspective, such experiences can constitute mastery experiences because students obtain direct information about their capability through performing a task. Thus, the contribution of repeated practice may not simply be that students practice English more frequently, but that repeated performance provides opportunities for students to experience themselves as increasingly capable speakers.

This interpretation adds nuance to previous studies that have mainly emphasized the positive outcomes of English Club participation. Rather than assuming that participation automatically produces confidence, the present findings suggest that confidence may develop when participation involves repeated and meaningful opportunities to perform speaking tasks. A student who initially feels nervous but repeatedly succeeds in expressing an idea, completing a conversation, or speaking before classmates may gradually interpret these experiences as evidence of personal capability. In this sense, the findings provide a more process-oriented explanation of how speaking practice may be associated with perceived confidence development.

The findings regarding teacher and peer feedback are also consistent with

previous research emphasizing the importance of encouragement in English learning. Khaliduddin et al. (2025) reported that positive feedback and supportive correction encouraged students to communicate more willingly, while Mawaddah et al. (2025) highlighted the contribution of teacher and peer encouragement to students' confidence. The present study supports these findings but provides a more specific interpretation of why feedback appeared meaningful. Students did not merely value receiving positive comments; they particularly described situations in which teachers corrected their mistakes politely and encouraged them to continue participating. This combination may have allowed students to recognize areas for improvement without interpreting mistakes as evidence that they were incapable of speaking English.

The role of encouragement can therefore be understood through Bandura's (1997) concept of verbal persuasion. Encouragement may strengthen students' beliefs that they are capable of performing a task, particularly when it occurs during an actual speaking attempt. However, the present findings also suggest that verbal persuasion alone may not explain students' perceived growth. Encouragement appeared alongside repeated speaking practice and positive responses from peers. This indicates that encouragement may be most meaningful when it supports students while they are actively attempting a speaking task, rather than functioning as isolated praise.

The influence of observing other speakers provides another important dimension. Students reported that seeing teachers, tutors, and peers speak English confidently encouraged them to participate and believe that they could also improve. This finding is consistent with Mawaddah et al. (2025), who identified peer observation as a source of motivation and self-improvement. Nevertheless, the present study provides a more specific insight by showing that students did not only observe highly proficient speakers; some were encouraged by seeing previously shy classmates become more confident. This may be particularly meaningful because a peer who has experienced similar difficulties can provide a more relatable model of possible improvement. In Bandura's (1997) terms, such observations can function as vicarious experiences by providing students with information that improvement is attainable.

Reduced nervousness was another recurring aspect of students' perceived confidence development. This finding is consistent with Elnadeef and Abdala (2019), who reported that English Clubs could help reduce language anxiety, and with Mawaddah et al. (2025), who found that students' nervousness could decrease as they gained more experience performing. However, the present findings suggest that reduced nervousness should not be understood simply as a direct result of attending the English Club. Rather, students' reduced nervousness appeared together with repeated speaking opportunities, supportive feedback, and positive social interactions. From Bandura's (1997) perspective, changes in physiological and affective states can influence how learners judge their capability. As speaking

became more familiar and students experienced supportive responses to their attempts, they may have interpreted nervousness as less threatening and become more willing to participate.

Taken together, these findings suggest that students' perceived growth in speaking confidence was shaped by the interaction of several experiences rather than by a single factor. Repeated speaking provided opportunities for mastery experiences, observing teachers and peers provided vicarious experiences, encouragement and supportive correction provided verbal persuasion, and reduced nervousness reflected more positive physiological and affective conditions. This interpretation extends previous research by showing that the relationship between English Club participation and speaking confidence may be better understood as a process in which students repeatedly interpret information about their own speaking capability.

Therefore, the present study does not simply confirm that English Club participation is beneficial for speaking confidence. It suggests that the perceived development of confidence occurs through students' interpretations of repeated speaking experiences and the social and emotional conditions surrounding those experiences. This provides a more nuanced explanation of how an English Club may support speaking self-efficacy among junior high school students.

Why Different Students Valued Different Activities

The finding that students perceived different English Club activities as particularly beneficial is consistent with previous research emphasizing the value of varied communicative activities in English Clubs. Trang (2024), for example, reported that activities such as speech, public speaking, role-play, and interactive games supported students' speaking development, while Mawaddah et al. (2025) highlighted the contribution of storytelling to students' confidence, fluency, and preparedness for communication. The present findings similarly show that students valued speech, conversation, storytelling, and games as opportunities to practice English orally. These similarities reinforce the view that varied communicative activities can provide meaningful opportunities for speaking development.

However, the present findings provide a more specific explanation of how students experienced the usefulness of these activities. Unlike an interpretation in which one activity is assumed to be generally more effective than another, students in this study perceived activities differently according to the speaking demands they encountered. Speech was valued by S1 and S2 because it required them to speak before an audience, while S3 valued conversation because it required spontaneous responses. S4 and S6 perceived storytelling as beneficial because it provided opportunities to organize and present ideas orally, whereas S5 valued games because they helped develop vocabulary that she associated with greater fluency. This variation suggests that the perceived usefulness of an activity was related to the particular speaking needs or difficulties that students experienced.

This finding extends previous research by suggesting that the contribution of an English Club activity may be learner-dependent rather than activity-dependent alone. Previous studies have generally demonstrated that particular activities, such as storytelling or games, can contribute to speaking development. The present study does not contradict these findings, but adds that students may experience the same range of activities differently. An activity that provides a meaningful challenge for one student may not address another student's most immediate speaking difficulty. Therefore, the effectiveness perceived by learners may depend partly on whether an activity allows them to practice an aspect of speaking that they consider important for their own development.

The differences among students can be further interpreted through Bandura's (1997) concept of mastery experiences. Mastery experiences are influential because successful performance provides learners with direct evidence of their capability. In the present study, however, the relevant mastery experience was not identical for all participants. For students who were concerned about speaking before an audience, successfully completing a speech may have provided evidence that they could perform publicly in English. For a student who valued conversation, responding successfully to spontaneous questions may have provided a more relevant experience of capability. Similarly, storytelling could provide evidence of students' ability to organize and communicate ideas orally, while games could support a student's perceived capability by helping overcome vocabulary limitations.

This interpretation also helps explain why the activities should not be viewed as isolated techniques that automatically increase self-efficacy. Their potential contribution appears to depend on the experiences they create for learners. Speech may create a public-speaking challenge, conversation may create opportunities for spontaneous communication, storytelling may require students to organize and deliver ideas, and games may make vocabulary practice more accessible and engaging. When students successfully engage with these different demands, the experience may provide information that strengthens their perception of what they are capable of doing in English.

The present finding also differs from a simple skills-based explanation of English Club activities. If activities were beneficial only because they developed particular linguistic skills, students might be expected to value the same activity for similar reasons. Instead, the participants in this study attached different meanings to the activities. S5, for instance, connected games primarily with vocabulary development and subsequent fluency, whereas other students focused more strongly on opportunities to perform publicly or respond spontaneously. This suggests that students' perceptions of confidence development involve not only what an activity teaches, but also how they experience the activity in relation to their own speaking challenges.

The findings therefore support the use of varied speaking activities within

English Clubs. Providing different types of speaking experiences may allow students with different needs to encounter activities that are personally meaningful and appropriately challenging. Rather than prioritizing one activity as universally superior, English Club instruction may benefit from combining public speaking, conversation, storytelling, games, and other interactive tasks. Such variety can provide multiple pathways through which students may experience successful speaking performance and develop stronger beliefs in their ability to communicate orally.

Overall, the present study extends previous research by showing that the value of English Club activities is not determined solely by the type of activity offered. It is also shaped by how individual students experience the speaking demands of those activities. From a self-efficacy perspective, different activities may contribute to confidence when they provide students with meaningful opportunities to experience successful performance in areas they perceive as challenging. Thus, the findings suggest that supporting speaking self-efficacy requires not simply providing more activities, but providing varied speaking experiences that respond to students' different perceived needs.

The findings provide several pedagogical implications for English teachers and English Club facilitators. First, teachers should provide varied speaking activities rather than relying on a single type of activity. The findings show that students perceived different activities as beneficial according to their individual speaking needs. Therefore, activities such as speech, conversation, storytelling, and language games can be combined to provide different opportunities for students to practice public speaking, spontaneous communication, organizing ideas, and vocabulary use.

Second, speaking activities should provide students with repeated and manageable opportunities to use English orally. Regular participation can allow students to experience successful speaking performances and gradually develop stronger beliefs in their ability to communicate in English. Teachers can therefore design activities that progress from less demanding speaking tasks to more challenging ones, allowing students to build confidence through successive speaking experiences.

Third, teachers should establish a supportive and non-judgmental learning environment. The findings indicate that students valued environments in which mistakes were treated as a normal part of learning. Teachers should therefore provide corrective feedback in a constructive manner and encourage students to continue participating after making mistakes. Peer interaction can also be structured to promote respectful listening, encouragement, and assistance rather than ridicule or negative evaluation.

Pedagogical Implication

The findings of this study have several pedagogical implications for English teachers, English Club coordinators, and school administrators. First, for English

teachers, the findings suggest the importance of providing students with repeated and meaningful opportunities to use English orally. Teachers may incorporate varied speaking activities rather than relying on a single type of speaking practice. Because students perceive different activities as beneficial for different reasons, teachers should consider students' individual speaking needs when selecting and designing activities. Teachers should also provide constructive feedback and encouragement in a supportive manner so that students can recognize areas for improvement without becoming afraid of making mistakes. Creating an enjoyable classroom atmosphere in which mistakes are treated as a normal part of learning may further encourage students to participate actively in speaking activities.

Second, for English Club coordinators and extracurricular teachers, the findings highlight the importance of designing English Club programs that provide varied and continuous speaking experiences. Activities should not focus only on language knowledge but should create opportunities for students to speak, respond spontaneously, present ideas, and interact with peers. Coordinators may also provide opportunities for students to observe and learn from peers who demonstrate greater confidence in speaking English. Since students may benefit from different activities according to their perceived speaking needs, English Club programs should offer a range of activities rather than assuming that one activity is equally effective for all students. Regular participation and continuity of activities are also important because students associate their increased confidence with repeated opportunities to practice speaking.

Third, for school administrators, the findings suggest the importance of providing institutional support for English Club activities as a complementary space for developing students' speaking confidence. Schools may support the program by providing adequate time, facilities, learning materials, and opportunities for students to participate in varied communicative activities. Administrators may also encourage collaboration between English teachers and English Club coordinators so that extracurricular speaking activities complement rather than duplicate formal English instruction. Supporting a positive and non-judgmental environment within the English Club may help students who experience hesitation or nervousness in formal English classes to obtain additional opportunities to practice speaking.

Limitation of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the interview data were drawn from six active participants at a single school, selected through purposive sampling of active members; this may have excluded the perspectives of less engaged or non-participating students and limits the transferability of the findings to other schools or educational contexts. Second, the findings rely substantially on students' self-reported perceptions of their speaking confidence and speaking ability. These perceptions were not corroborated by an objective, rubric-based assessment of

speaking performance. Therefore, students' perceived improvement in confidence may not necessarily correspond to measurable gains in speaking proficiency. Third, the observation was conducted during only one English Club session. Consequently, the observation provided contextual support for the interview findings but could not capture how students' participation, interaction, or speaking confidence developed across different sessions or over a longer period. Future studies could conduct observations across multiple sessions to provide a more comprehensive picture of students' speaking experiences. Finally, the study did not employ a longitudinal design. Consequently, students' accounts of becoming more confident over time reflect their retrospective perceptions rather than confidence being measured at multiple points throughout their participation in the English Club.

Recommendation for Future Research

Building on these limitations, future research could extend the present findings in several concrete directions. First, studies involving multiple schools and more diverse educational or geographic contexts would help establish whether the themes identified here, particularly the role of activity variety and peer similarity in vicarious experience, generalize beyond a single-school setting. Second, larger and more heterogeneous participant samples, including students who joined but later disengaged from an English Club, would help clarify which factors distinguish confidence-building experiences from less successful ones. Third, mixed-methods designs that pair interview and observation data with objective, rubric-scored pre- and post-assessments of speaking performance would allow researchers to examine whether perceived gains in confidence correspond to measurable improvements in speaking ability. Fourth, longitudinal designs that track students' speaking confidence at multiple points across an academic year would provide stronger evidence for developmental claims than the retrospective accounts used in this study. Finally, future studies could directly compare English Clubs with other extracurricular formats, such as debate clubs or drama clubs, to determine whether the mechanisms identified here, particularly structured mastery experiences and similarity-based peer modeling, are specific to English Clubs or apply more broadly to informal, low-stakes language learning contexts.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated junior high school students' perceptions of English Club activities and how they help to the development of their speaking confidence, framed through Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory. The findings show that students perceived the English Club as a helpful and enjoyable learning environment that provided a range of speaking-oriented activities, in contrast to the more formal and demanding setting of traditional classroom teaching. The findings show that these exercises resulted in the improvement of speaking confidence throughout four interconnected processes: repeated speaking practice, which created mastery experience; observation of peers and teachers, which

produced vicarious experience; constructive criticism and encouragement, which served as verbal persuasion; and a low-anxiety environment, which decreased negative physiological and affective states.

The research revealed that students valued a variety of speaking activities according to their speaking needs, and the supportive learning environment surrounding these activities was consistently regarded as similarly significant. However, no single activity was generally accepted as the most effective in supporting speaking confidence. Moreover, these results show that speaking exercises alone do not lead to junior high school students' speaking confidence; rather, the integration of positive social support, meaningful communicative practice, and a low-stakes learning environment conducted in English Club programs.

In theory, this paper offers a deeper insight in enhancing speaking confidence through the four primary sources of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura. Therefore, this research not only demonstrates that the English Club can enhance students' confidence but also clarifies the processes underlying that improvement. In practice, the findings of this study can provide recommendations for English teachers and English Club advisors in developing activities that not merely focus on speaking practice but also give students opportunities to learn from peers, receive positive feedback, and practice in an engaging, and low-stakes atmosphere. Utilizing the activities, it is expected that students' confidence in speaking English is developed more effectively.

The limitations of this paper is the relatively small number of participants (six students) at one school. It limits the generalizability of the findings, and dependence on students' perceptions may not fully capture actual changes in speaking performance. Hence, a substantial sample is essential for further research that integrates task-based speaking assessments with interviews and investigates how participation in the English Club boosts confidence over the long term.

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