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## ENGLISH CORNER USING CREATIVE WORK: SUPPLEMENT AND BOOSTER TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' ENGLISH PERFORMANCE

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate EFL students' perception of English Corner (EC) and how EC is constructively designed and developed in English Education at a private University as a non-credit course that consists of five programs that all participants might optionally select dealing with their interests and talent. The data to be analyzed were collected from the observation and questionnaire from 40 participants and the data analysis used Triangulation. The findings showed that all facilitators and participants get involved to opt, adjust and match the materials over steps and strategy. They opt for one of the programs following their interest and talent. Based on the questionnaire computation using SPSS, from the highest scale 5, the average of participants' responses is 4,43 for improving their English vocabulary, 4,4 for improving their English speaking skills, 4,35 for improving their English grammar, 4,38 for affecting other academic courses, and 4,38 of dismissing their fear of making mistakes in using English vocabulary. In conclusion, EC using creative work is beneficial to use and it can be a booster and supplement to support participants' English performance.

Keywords: English Corner (EC), English performance, Creative work.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This study reports an outstanding supplementary fun-learning so-called English Corner. This idea preliminarily came up due to the emergence of all students' potential in creative works and the idea to manifest those creative works into EC. Those creative works, beyond the main academic subjects that the students must pass through, consist of singing, drama, storytelling, poetry reading, and public speaking which are rolled up in EC. In singing, the students focus on singing English songs along with learning songs'

vocabulary, pronunciation, and meaning (setyaningsih, 2007). In drama, the students learn how to write an English drama script, learn how to play it, and make a review in English. In storytelling, the students must learn how to tell English stories. In poetry reading, the students have two optional choices. First, they must find the poem and learn how to read and understand it. Second, they can create the poem on their own and read it (Guliyeva, 2011). In public speaking, the students must learn and practice their speaking skills consisting of speaking in the seminar, talk show, and speech, and the most important thing is speaking in front of the classroom as a teacher considering that the students will have teaching practice in the last semester. Thus, EC's purpose is to accommodate all students' creative works.

Therefore, English is a hub in EC. It takes time and energy to learn English for EFL learners, even for college students because English is not used for daily communication in Indonesia. Despite being studied from primary up to tertiary education, EFL learners still consider Engl as a hard subject (Ubaidillah, 2018). An effective teaching strategy is highly needed to enhance EFL students' English performance (Manara, 2007). The teacher scaffolds the students not only in terms of designing the material, and constructing teaching strategies but also in building students' attitudes toward English. One of the major supports to develop students' English performance is to organize EC because EC has been considered to be an effective way to boost students' English competency. EC with creative works is the extension of a common English conversation club. Its uniqueness makes all the participants enjoy practicing English in the creative works of EC.

English Corner was preliminarily developed in China for different purposes, such as for English gathering, finding business partners, or even finding a partner for further dating. EC functions to energize the students to keep practicing English. This outdoor gathering was set without a formal teacher because it is a non-academic activity that is free and everyone can join it. The attendees could be diverse throughout the day (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002). In the morning, not many attendees, but at the peak time, participants are getting more and more coming until dinner time. During the activity, all attendees feel free to put forward some topics on their own to be discussed. EC in the People's Republic of China is rapidly blooming. More importantly, it is due to the metaphor that English is a 'passport' for global business. They race to learn English by any means. So, EC in China is simply for English discussion (Li, 2004).

English corner has the same concept as other English conversation clubs (ECC). They all come from the main theory called Community English Learning (CLL) by Charles Current in the1970s which has the characteristic of using the Counseling-learning theory to teach language. According to Currant cited in Richards & Rogers (2001), the key idea of this theory is the students determine what is to be learned, so the teacher is a facilitator and provides support. That key idea is also reflected in EC and ECC. Thus, previous studies of this research take English corner (EC) from Kellaway (2013) and Cantero & Sanderson (2018), English Conversation Club (ECC) from Kurniasih (2019), and Community Language Learning (CLL) from Halimah (2018).

The first previous study comes from Kurniasih, et. al. (2019) entitled English conversation class (ECC) to create English Environment in Nusantara senior high school (SMAINUS). The finding showed that students who attend ECC had positive responses because ECC used game interesting media in English conversation activities. While English corner, which is similar to the English conversation club, in the present study uses creative work. Second is the finding from International research, Kellaway (2013), which is entitled English Corner: at the crossroads? Kellaway explored that EC as a speaking English community was practiced in China. It also elaborated the role of EC in the community with no formal teachers involved. Kellaway explained also that EC is no longer necessary since online-moderated communication has replaced face-to-face practice. It also elaborated the role of EC in the community with no formal teachers involved. Kellaway's finding showed that most attendees of EC expressed dissatisfaction due to boring topics. In addition, the absence of a facilitator makes EC dominated by talk active attendees and they don't want to give other people the chance to talk. However, EC in this current research engages the facilitator to guide, facilitate, and manage the activity. Third, a finding from Halimah (2018) entitled Boosting students' speaking ability through Community Language Learning. Halimah's finding showed that Community Language

Learning (CLL) can boost students' speaking ability. In this current study, CLL can be associated with EC. Fourth, a finding from Cantero & Sanderson (2018) deals with describing the experience of promoting oral skills in two State-funded Primary Schools in the A Coruña area (Spain) using the English Corner. EC was practiced in primary school, while in the present study, EC has been practiced in university with creative works.

Among other aforementioned studies, this present study has a focus on the content of EC that upholds students' creative works rather than conversing with some topics which are sometimes silly topics. Another focus of EC in the present study is taking university as an academic setting used for EC activity. This modern EC has been descended from the mixture of Community Language Learning (CLL) by Curran and Suggestopedia by Lazanov. Both are included in the Humanistic approach. The humanistic approach focuses on a human being physically but also emotionally. Thus, learning language based on Humanistic theory tends to underpin individual self-concept development. Three prominent Humanistic theorists are Erikson, Maslow, and Rogers. However, only Rogers upholds the view that human beings as a whole (Fauziati, 2009; Nunan, 1991; Moskowitz, 1978). Rogers also highlighted that a humanist teacher must meet the qualifications consisting of empowering the student's affective and cognitive, building students' positive self-concept, and having the important role to be a facilitator in the learning process.

Branches of humanistic are suggestopedia and community learning. The latter has specific characteristics such as "the cozy room and furniture with the music as background to make students more relaxed in learning a language" (Stevick, 1976). The activities in suggestopedia include singing songs, role-playing, games, and other creative works. It is in line with the content of EC in this present study. The former is derived from the counselor-client relationship to create a really warm community among learners. It also matches what is practiced in EC in this present study (La Forge, 1983) in which at the end of every activity, discussion, counseling, and feedback are offered in a very warm atmosphere.

There are two statements of the problem set in this research, as follows;

- 1. How is EC using creative works developed?
- 2. What is the participants' perception of EC using creative work?

The first statement of the problem requires classroom observation and the second statement of the problem requires students' perceptions obtained from the questionnaire.

# METHODOLOGY

The design of the study is a qualitative approach under a case study breaking up the phenomenon of English Corner (Creswell, John: 1998). In addition, Harling (2012) added that A case study is a holistic inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its natural setting. The phenomenon of this study is English corner using creative works: supplement and booster to enhance students' English performance. The reason for this research to use a case study is due to EC using creative work has been practiced for the last two years. Thus, EC using creative work in this research needs to be revealed for the sake of English Education progress. All EC participants consist of 40 students who took part in five programs of EC consisting of singing, poetry reading, storytelling, drama, and public speaking.

The research instruments of this research were an observation checklist and questionnaire sheets, The checklist was designed to note important activities during the observation including some strategies to run EC. The observation checklist included some points that implied EC's topic selection and reviews, problem encounters, and how to fix them up. The questionnaire for all participants was taken from the Likert scale which consists of five elements of choice, namely; strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree (Joshi & Pal, 2015). The questionnaire of this research has 10 statements concluding EC participants' perception of EC using creative work.

This study has two data collection methods. First, this study used observation to get the data. The observation was conducted in EC's program by using non participant observation. Nonparticipant observation occurs when the researcher is not involved at all in the activity which means the researcher just observes. Second, this study used the Likert scale questionnaire to collect the perception of 40 EC participants about EC using creative works. Likert scale is the questionnaire containing five optional items the participant must choose. They strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree (Sugiyono, 2013).

Data analysis used in this study is the Triangulation technique and source. Triangulation is a technique to examine the data credibility of qualitative research (Sugiyono, 2013). Triangulation is a cross-check of overall data taken from the observation, interviews with facilitators, and students' questionnaires (Turner & Burton, 2015).

#### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are two findings analyzed from the result of the observation and questionnaire. The first finding deals with how EC is developed. Based on the observation supported by the observation checklist, EC in English education fosters six programs including dancing, which has to be terminated due to the Pandemic. The first program is singing. Because this activity demands a sound system, EC takes place in a cozy room with a sound system, possibly a karaoke room alike where many songs to sing along to are available and lyrics are included. The rule of the game is that all songs must be English songs. The review will be performed at the end of each song. The review comprises the meaning or purpose of the song, whether it is addressed to a person who falls in love, broken heart, is a celebration of something, and many others. Discussing the song lyrics and their meaning usually takes time because of the enthusiasm of all participants. Many times, they forget they have to move to the next step, which is discussing the language because songs usually contain figurative words that need analysis. The next rule of the game states that all participants must speak English throughout the program and no excuses. During the pandemic, the singing program is virtually conducted via zoom or google meet. Even though the voice nature is not as clear as in a real situation. The singing program remains cheerful, exciting, and interactive due to some false voices or they cannot reach the highest tones. Then they laugh until they are not aware that they are practicing English. This singing program upholds learning outcomes in some major courses, such as speaking, listening comprehension, vocabulary, and literature because a study by Israel (2013) shows that most EFL was inspired by song or music so that they can easily absorb English learning.

The second program is Drama. Some participants created the script of drama or they googled in search of drama scripts. They practiced it in the classroom or outdoors. The facilitator will provide drama masterpieces to be displayed to make all the participants understand how to do acting. And then at the end of the session, they will get feedback from the facilitators on whether something went wrong with their pronunciation, speed, and diction (Barreto: 2014, Taskin: 2013). Then the program continues with questions and answers as well as during the interaction, they must speak English. No excuses. The drama will contribute to some courses such as speaking, literature, pronunciation, and speaking (Falvey & Kennedy, 2006; Hall, 2005; Mc Kay, 2001). At this point, the facilitator just decides on steps followed up during the program. However, all the participants feel free to decide the kinds of drama they are performing or they can ask for help from the facilitator to guide them (Fleming, 2006; Munther, 2003). If they create drama scripts on their own, it means it can enhance their proficiency in writing. If they google drama script, it means it can enhance their proficiency in reading and even listening when they find it on YouTube.

The third program in EC is storytelling. As what has been developed in drama, all steps in drama are applied. The difference is, that each performance must be in group drama. Meanwhile, only one student takes the stage in storytelling. This kind of activity takes part as a supplement and booster for students in learning English due to Drama script can be done by googling or creating the script on their own which means writing, reading, and speaking skills are trained. Storytellings an important role in building students' confidence to speak English (Lidiyatul, Mutiarani, 2015).

The fourth program in EC is poetry reading. Usually, the long winding debate, argument, and analysis occur in poetry reading since the poem contains stylistic and figurative language and it is often hard to reveal the purpose of a poem. During the interaction, all participants must speak English, and no excuses. The result shows that this activity contributes more to speaking and literature. In the pandemic era, poetry reading is virtually conducted via google meet or zoom. The public speaking activity contributes to better students' speaking competence.

The next program in EC is public speaking. Speaking has been learned and practiced in compulsory practice. So, in EC public speaking is highlighted as consisting of speaking English in the seminar as a moderator or presenter, speaking English for the campaign, speaking English for speech, or speaking English in the classroom as an English teacher because in the fifth semester they will do field practice in schools to teach English. All participants feel free to choose the topic and at the end of the program, they will analyze and discuss their performance including pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. In the pandemic era, public speaking is virtually conducted via google meet or zoom. Public speaking in EC psychologically contributes to better students' speaking competence (Ariyanti: 2016). Thus, the finding of the first statement of the problem revealed that in developing EC using creative works all facilitators get involved to opt, adjust and match the materials over steps and strategy (Brown: 2007).

Bearing in mind, EC is constructed by adapting the suggestopedia teaching method. This teaching method reinforces relaxation, ease, and a cozy setting to practice English with music included as developed by Lozanov as cited in Richards and Rodgers (1993). Despite practicing English online, a cozy, relaxed, and easy setting is guaranteed. Several programs such as singing, poetry reading, storytelling, drama, and public speaking are set on purpose to avoid boring topics that lead to discouraging EC participants. All have passed through students' need analysis that has been privileged upholding six programs to concern about.

The finding of the second statement of the problem is derived from the result of the questionnaire computation using SPSS which is elaborated as follows;

No	EC helps me to	Strongly disagree	disagree	Neutral	agree	Strongly agree
1	Improve my English vocabulary	C C			23	17
2	Improve my speaking performance			1	22	17
3	Understand English grammar better			3	20	17
4	Improve my achievement in all academic courses		2	4	11	23
5	Dismiss any fear of			4	18	18

Table 1. The frequency distribution of EC participants' perception

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making some mistakes	
in constructing my	
vocabulary	

Table I shows the frequency distribution of EC participants' perception of EC using creative works. 40 participants gave their perceptions. 23 participants agree and 17 of them strongly agree with statement one. 22 participants agree and 17 of them strongly disagree with statement two but 1 of them has no idea. 20 participants agree and 17 of them strongly agree with statement three, but 3 of them have no idea. 11 participants agree and 23 of them strongly agree with statement four but 4 of them have no idea and 2 of them disagree with statement four. 18 participants agree and 18 of them strongly agree with statement five but 4 of them have no idea.



Figure 1. The average of EC's participant responses

Based on the results of the questionnaire computation, it can be concluded that from the highest scale of 5, the average of EC participants' response is 4,43 to improving their English vocabulary which means most participants agree that EC can improve their English vocabulary, 4,4 of improving their English speaking skills which means most participants agree that EC enhances their speaking performance, 4,35 of improving their English grammar which means most participants agree that EC improves their competency in English grammar, 4,38 of affecting other academic courses which means that most participants agree that EC affects their academic courses, and 4,38 of dismissing their fear

of making some mistakes in constructing English vocabulary in a sentence which means most participants agree that EC can dismiss their fear in constructing vocabulary in a sentence. More elaboration is detailed as follows;

Students' response to statement one deals with students' opinions about their improvement in English vocabulary in EC. From the interview result of 40 students, the conclusion shows that all students find EC increases their achievement in building their English vocabulary and diction. They view that they don't find any difficult to construct English vocabulary since they are always supported and peer-reviewed by other members and facilitators in EC. In addition, EC makes them motivated and encouraged as well as far from being lazy to get to know such vocabulary compared to learning English in the classroom with formal teachers (Campillo: 2007). They also blend it with their talent without being pressured.

Students' response to statement two deals with the influence of EC on students' outcomes in speaking English. The conclusion of forty responses shows that initiating speaking English can be so hard for EFL learners. Besides being hard, the academic setting such as the classroom completes the learning tension implicating the learning outcome which remains standard and not satisfactory. The emergence of EC using creative work gradually contributes to the elevation of students' speaking achievement because they practice English with joy, fun, no scoring and test, and relaxation (Harmer: 2015).

Students' response to statement three deals with students' competence in speaking English with good grammar. Most of the participants deem that EC is a valuable non-credit activity that can be a supplement, recovery, and booster to make students better English performance with good functional grammar. In the beginning, they started with incorrect grammar. However, the longer they get involved in EC, the more they watch and observe how good grammar is put in the right way beyond their awareness. They practice it and it becomes such a habit (Roohani & Etemadfar: 2021).

Students' response to statement four deals with the fact that all participants' English performance in EC has contributed a significant performance to their academic courses. It makes sense because EC is primarily designed to build students' English performance more aesthetically. In this way, EC has the main role to construct what the students need in academic courses.

Students' response to statement five deals with their agreement that EC using creative work can dismiss their fear of making mistakes in constructing vocabulary in English sentences because they get distracted to embody their passion and talent instead of learning English. Psychologically, they enjoy exploring their talent and good English performance is a bonus for them (Jamila, Marium: 2014).

Thus, the finding of the second statement of the problem is most participants agree that EC using creative work is effective to use and it can be a booster and supplement to support their English competency. Furthermore, students' expectation of EC is simply just to expect EC gets more intensive because all the participants pick up the fruits of EC either or support their academic achievement or their self-esteem and self-confidence to be amongst the English language community.

#### Discussion

The finding of the first statement of the problem revealed that in developing EC using creative works all facilitators get involved to opt, adjust and match the materials over steps and strategy. The participants assisted by the facilitator decide what kind of song, drama, storytelling, poetry reading, and public speaking will be selected for the next meeting. They also decide on group members and the strategy to be performed. Thus, democracy in EC comes first due to the comfort of all EC participants will lead to better student outcomes in EC. It is in line with what has been described in EC in China by Kellaway (2013) that all EC participants managed and organized the topics and places for each session and EC was conducted everywhere. The participants could come anytime and the topics could pop up from anyone else without being well-prepared. However, the difference between EC according to Kellaway and EC in the present study can be displayed as follows;

Table 2. The differences between EC in this present study and any other ECs

EC in the present study	other ECs
Restricted participants in such a community (e.g. academic community) that has chemistry among all participants	
participants	

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Takes place in a confirmed place (e.g. on campus) Focusing on enhancing participants' English performance by employing their talent and interest	Takes place everywhere in public spots or indoor enhancing participants' English performance with a different purpose (e.g. from social gatherings to finding potential partners)
No teachers but facilitators	No formal teacher
No test but fun quizzes	No tests
Six programs, so-called six creative works, are formed. So, topics have been adjusted with each program in line with the participants' talents and interests to avoid boring activities. The material and the topic of every meeting have been confirmed by all participants assisted by the facilitator a week before the session	Focusing on practicing English with pop-up topics without being well-prepared. Frequently topics are boring and silly. Every meeting has various topics and sometimes it lacks ideas on what to discuss
Review dealing with grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is available	No review dealing with language competence
The environment must be cozy, relaxed, comfortable, and entertaining.	The environment can be everywhere (e.g. in the market, in the office, near the station)
The combination between CLL and Suggestopedia	It is only derived from CLL

Table 2 shows the uniqueness of EC using creative work compared to other ECs. This is the best tool for students or participants to achieve better English outcomes. One of the reasons is they get some valuable feedback that has enjoyable delivery and it doesn't make them stressed.

EC's instructor is called the EC facilitator because all activities are stirred and navigated by the students. The facilitator (English lecturer) just decides what to practice next and prepares all the materials required in the practice and steps that must be carried out during EC. Those steps have been compiled in a syllabus. If necessary, the facilitator can ask what materials the students want to practice. Each student is free to join and pick one of EC's courses but their participation is compulsory even though this is not included in academic credits. EC has been applied for the past few years. However, during Covid 19 outbreak, all programs must be virtually passed through. Above all, enthusiasm and joy appear during the practice and escape a little while from their routine. Apart from giving joy to the students, EC academically has a good contribution to their study because what they academically learn is related to what they practice in EC. Practicing English songs may improve students' grades in pronunciation practice, listening, and Introduction to Literature because songs usually use figurative words. Practicing drama, poetry reading, and storytelling may affect students' academic grades in speaking, writing, reading, and literature. Public speaking can give a good contribution to students' grades in speaking.

The finding of the second problem statement deals with participants' perception of EC using creative work. Most EC participants agree that EC using creative work is effective. It is a booster and a supplement for them to achieve better English performance, such as improving their English vocabulary, their English speaking skills, their English grammar, affecting other academic courses, and dismissing their fear of making mistakes in constructing English vocabulary in sentences. This is supported by Halimah (2018) in her research dealing with Community Language Learning (CLL) which has the same concept as EC. Her findings showed that CLL boosts students' motivation to speak English without any hesitation. It is based on students' perception that English Conversation Class (ECC) leads them to achieve better English performance. Furthermore, Kurniasih (2019) revealed that ECC, which has the same concept as EC, shares a role in reviving students' English performance. Although the design is quite simple, students responded positively to the ECC activity due to their freedom of choosing the topic of their interest and ECC used the game as interesting media in English conversation activities. This second research finding is also in line with the one of Cantero & Sanderson (2018) that revealed that the English Corner is an appropriate place to promote and facilitate the acquisition of both oral receptive and oral productive skills in a more natural way than in the conventional classroom environment. On the contrary, EC in this current study is more likely English gathering using some creative works. They are not just talking English but also how to manifest what they have discussed into real practice. There are three roles of EC. The first role is as a supplement for the students to improve their mastery of basic English skills (Thakur, 2015). The second role of EC is as a way for students to recover from a lack of basic English performance. The third role of EC is as a booster because, in general, human beings like singing and other creative works. Thus, EC can recharge students to learn more about English in such an entertaining way when they start getting bored and tired of learning their academic courses. In another word, EC is a way for the students to escape from their fatigue. Then, EC will raise their motivation to study English. In a way, EC can be a beneficial intermezzo to lead the students to achieve their learning outcomes by digging up their creative potential.

The creation of five programs in EC without assessment consisting of public speaking, drama, poetry reading, storytelling, and singing, has formed a massive enthusiasm from the participants. Most of them can absorb the hub of pronunciation, speaking, and figurative speech during the discussion because of the cozy, relaxed, and easy setting. English education. The students no longer view speaking, reading, writing, and other academic courses as hard courses to pass through because it is quite obviously observable since the engagement of entertainment such as singing and any other creative works can easily cool off the tensed nerves while the mind is wide open to welcome such academic inputs.

# CONCLUSION

To some certain extent, EC contributes intense achievement to the student's academic achievement. All participants have a positive perspective about EC and they claim that EC is a supplement and booster in learning English. They also put expectations on EC to remain available and if necessary, they get ready to share their insightful ideas for EC sustainability. It is suggested for any other ECs to be developed under a specific program to frame topics to be discussed. So, a specific syllabus is highly needed with obvious steps included.

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