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TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH CLUBS ON STUDENTS' SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

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Abstract: Students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) often struggle with speaking skills due to limited exposure to authentic communication and low confidence. These issues underscore the importance of examining how extracurricular activities, such as English clubs, can foster oral language development. This study examined the impact of English club participation on students' speaking proficiency from the perspectives of both a teacher and students at a senior high school in Ciamis, Indonesia. A qualitative case study approach was employed, involving an interview with one English teacher and the completion of open-ended questionnaires by five English club members. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework. Findings indicated that the English club was perceived as an effective platform for improving speaking ability. The teacher noted that the club provided meaningful speaking practice, enhanced student motivation, and reinforced classroom learning. Students described the club as enjoyable and supportive, with activities such as debates, storytelling, and role-plays that helped improve fluency and confidence. The findings showed that participation in the English club significantly increased speaking confidence, improved vocabulary use, and fostered more active communication among students. However, challenges such as limited vocabulary, time constraints, and initial nervousness were acknowledged by both the teacher and students. Despite these obstacles, students favoured the English club over traditional classroom methods. The study concludes that English clubs can positively influence speaking proficiency when designed with engaging, student-centred activities and supported institutionally. Future research is recommended to examine the long-term outcomes of participation and to explore the potential integration of digital tools or native speakers to enrich the learning experience further.

Keywords: English club; speaking proficiency; EFL learners; teacher perspective; student perspectives

INTRODUCTION

Speaking proficiency is one of the most essential skills in English language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. It serves as the primary medium for verbal expression and effective communication, enabling learners to convey ideas, thoughts, and emotions in diverse social and academic situations. However, in Indonesia, particularly at the senior high school level, many EFL learners continue to face considerable challenges in developing speaking proficiency. Factors such as limited opportunities for real-life practice, fear

of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and rigid classroom structures often hinder students' achievement of oral fluency (Abdala, 2021; Maulida, Faridah, & Tarwana, 2024). These constraints are further exacerbated by traditional teaching approaches that emphasise grammatical accuracy and written examinations over communicative use of language, leaving students with insufficient exposure to authentic spoken interaction.

Additionally, the predominance of teacher-centred instruction limits learners' chances to engage in meaningful dialogue, reducing their opportunities to develop essential communicative strategies such as turn-taking, negotiation of meaning, and spontaneous speech production (Chand, 2021). In many cases, students' affective barriers, including anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, also discourage them from actively participating. This aligns with Krashen's affective filter theory, which highlights the role of emotional factors in language acquisition. Moreover, the sociolinguistic environment outside the classroom rarely supports the use of English, as daily communication predominantly occurs in Indonesian or local languages. As a result, students often lack consistent exposure to natural language input, making it difficult for them to internalise pronunciation patterns, vocabulary usage, and pragmatic norms necessary for fluency. These challenges collectively demonstrate the need for more interactive, supportive, and learner-centred approaches to strengthen speaking proficiency in Indonesian EFL classrooms.

These challenges have prompted educators and researchers to explore alternative strategies that can supplement formal instruction and provide students with authentic contexts for practising English. One such strategy is the implementation of English Clubs, extracurricular communities where students engage in structured yet informal speaking activities. English Clubs have been found to offer a supportive and low-pressure environment conducive to improving fluency, vocabulary, and overall communicative competence (Desmiyanti, 2022; Holandyah, 2022; Matarima, 2022). Activities such as debates, storytelling, role-plays, and discussions allow students to experience meaningful communication, which is often lacking in traditional classroom settings. (Virawan, 2022; Aryanti, 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature affirming the effectiveness of English Clubs, most existing studies primarily quantify learning outcomes using pre- and post-tests. While these studies, e.g., Bitadi, (2022) & Ngadimun et al., (2019), to provide empirical evidence of improvement in students' speaking scores, they often overlook participants' nuanced experiences and perceptions. Moreover, relatively few studies have explored how English Clubs are perceived by both teachers and students, particularly in rural Indonesian contexts. Understanding these perspectives is vital, as they offer insight into the factors that motivate students, the challenges they face, and the potential improvements needed to optimise the learning experience (Suherman, 2022)..

Furthermore, while English Clubs are typically championed for their benefits, they are not without limitations. Common issues include inconsistent guidance, insufficient institutional support, and limited integration with classroom instruction. Amri et al. (2023) and Suherman (2022) underscore the need for research that not only evaluates outcomes but also examines how English Clubs function as learning environments from the perspectives of both facilitators and participants. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating teachers' and students' perspectives on the impact of English Clubs on students' speaking proficiency in a senior high school in Ciamis, Indonesia. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how English Clubs contribute to language development, the challenges encountered in the process, and ways to enhance their effectiveness. A related study by Barbara (2025) revealed that English clubs in communities enhance learners' English competencies, as pupils attending such clubs develop competencies more than those who do not attend. However, this study practice English club not in the community, but in a formal school. Another related study was conducted by Veda et al. (2024), focusing on the challenges learners face in learning English and the role of clubs in enhancing their language learning process. However, this study does not

focus on the learning process, but on speaking proficiency. In contrast with this study, Lim & Toh, (2024) revealed that the use of apps is beneficial for scaffolding learning in the secondary English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. The findings of the present study are expected to make theoretical contributions to language learning research and to have practical implications for language educators, school administrators, and curriculum designers. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore both teachers' and students' perspectives on the impact of English Clubs on students' speaking proficiency.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore teachers' and students' perspectives on the impact of English Clubs on students' speaking proficiency. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate as it enables an in-depth understanding of participants' lived experiences, social interactions, and personal interpretations within a natural educational setting. (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is particularly suited for capturing the complex realities of EFL learners, where subjective experiences and classroom dynamics play a significant role in shaping language development (Denzin, 2018). The case study methodology, informed by Chowdhury & Shil, (2021), was chosen to allow a detailed, contextual exploration of how English Clubs operate and influence language learning at a senior high school in Ciamis, Indonesia. By adopting a qualitative case-study approach and thematic analysis, this research provides a rich, contextualised understanding of English Clubs as tools for improving speaking in EFL settings.

The participants in this study consisted of one English teacher and five students who were active members of the school's English Club. These individuals were purposively selected for their active involvement in the club for at least 1 academic year, ensuring they could provide rich, relevant insights into the research topic. (Palinkas et al., 2015). The teacher had experience guiding English Club activities, while the students regularly participated in various speaking-based programs such as debates, storytelling, and role-plays. All participants gave informed consent prior to data collection, and their identities were anonymised to protect confidentiality.

Data were collected using two primary qualitative instruments: a semi-structured interview for the teacher and open-ended questionnaires for the students. The teacher interview was conducted using an interview guide adapted from Rubin (2020), which allowed flexibility while ensuring thematic consistency. The interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or via a WhatsApp voice call, depending on the participant's availability. Meanwhile, student data were gathered through an open-ended questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, a method well-suited to eliciting reflective, detailed responses in participants' own words (Dornyei & Taguchi, 2009). This digital format also provided convenience and accessibility for participants, encouraging honest and thoughtful responses.

All responses were collected over two weeks, then transcribed and organized for analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the data, following the six-phase framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method included familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, development of themes, refinement of themes, definition of themes, and final reporting. By systematically coding and categorizing the data, the researcher identified patterns and key themes that reflected the core perspectives of both teachers and students. No qualitative software was used; all analysis was conducted manually to maintain closeness to the data. Methodological triangulation, through the combination of teacher interviews and student responses, was applied to ensure credibility and deepen the understanding of findings (Patton, 2014).

In line with ethical research practices, the study upheld participant anonymity, voluntary participation, and transparency throughout all phases. The integration of multiple sources and perspectives, combined with a rigorous, transparent analytical process, aimed to provide a comprehensive, trustworthy account of the English Club's impact on speaking proficiency in an EFL high school context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study delineates the teachers' and students' perspectives on the impact of English clubs on students' speaking proficiency. To obtain the data, semistructured interview and questionnaires were employed. The semistructured interview was administered to teacher; while a set of questionnaires was conducted to find out students' perception on the impact of English clubs on students' speaking proficiency. The result of analyzed data is to be discussed in the following organization:

Teachers' perspectives on the impact of English clubs on students' speaking proficiency

The finding of the first research question related to teachers' perspectives on the impact of English clubs on students' speaking proficiency, obtained the data from the teachers' interviews, emphasising that English Clubs served as a vital platform for practical speaking practice, which complemented formal classroom instruction. According to the teacher, students involved in English Club activities demonstrated greater fluency, improved pronunciation, and higher levels of confidence compared to their non-participating peers. The relaxed and engaging nature of the club environment was identified as a motivating factor, enabling students to speak more freely without the anxiety often associated with traditional classroom settings.

These findings align with the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), which posits that a low-anxiety, high-motivation context enhances language acquisition. The teacher's observations support this claim, suggesting that the English Club's informal atmosphere effectively lowered students' affective filters, facilitating more spontaneous and confident verbal expression. Additionally, the teacher reported that English Club activities filled a critical gap in the curriculum by providing time for authentic speaking practice. This aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasises the importance of social interaction in language development (Gorospe, 2022). The English Club, through its group-oriented tasks such as debates and storytelling, created a collaborative space that extended learning beyond the classroom.

However, the teacher also acknowledged certain limitations. Time constraints and limited exposure to native speakers were viewed as barriers to maximising the club's potential. Compared with the findings of Aryanti (2024) and Rachmania (2022), who also reported issues related to instructor availability and sustainability, this study reinforces the idea that institutional support and innovative programming are critical for long-term success. These constraints highlight the need for schools to invest in structured scheduling, resource allocation, and opportunities for external engagement, such as virtual exchanges or guest speakers. Without such support, the effectiveness of extracurricular language programs may remain limited despite strong learner motivation and teacher commitment. In contrast to some previous studies that focused solely on measurable outcomes (e.g., test scores), this study highlights educators' subjective experiences. It offers pedagogical insight by emphasising not only the benefits but also the practical conditions necessary for English Clubs to succeed in Indonesian EFL contexts.

Students' perspectives on the impact of English clubs on students' speaking proficiency

The finding of the second research question, related to students' perspectives on the impact of English clubs on students' speaking proficiency, were obtained the data from the student responses, four main themes emerged: improved speaking confidence and fluency, a supportive and enjoyable learning environment, practical and varied activities, and a set of perceived challenges along with constructive suggestions for improvement. All five students reported that participation in the English Club led to greater fluency and reduced nervousness when speaking English. Students attributed this improvement to frequent practice, peer encouragement, and engaging activities such as role-playing and debates.

The significance of these results lies in their confirmation of the motivational value of extracurricular language learning spaces. As student 2 stated, "I practice often so I am not nervous anymore," which directly illustrates how the club environment fostered confidence-building. These qualitative findings support earlier conclusions by Bitadi (2022) and Desmiyanti (2022), who found that English Clubs increase students' willingness to communicate and develop speaking proficiency through regular exposure and positive reinforcement.

Students also consistently described the English Club as more relaxed and enjoyable than the classroom. This relaxed atmosphere was seen as reducing pressure and encouraging experimentation with the language, validating the emotional and social dimensions of language learning. The value of a safe learning environment, as expressed by Student 4; "I feel relaxed and not afraid of making mistakes", is consistent with findings from Chunda (2023), who emphasized that enjoyment and reduced anxiety are critical for language acquisition. This perception reflects the role of affective factors in second language development, particularly the importance of lowering the affective filter, a concept widely recognised in SLA research. When learners feel comfortable and supported, they are more willing to participate actively, take linguistic risks, and persevere through communicative challenges.

Moreover, the English Club's informal structure appeared to foster a sense of autonomy and ownership over learning. Students indicated that the club provided opportunities for spontaneous interaction, peer collaboration, and immediate feedback, elements that are often limited in formal classroom settings due to time constraints and curricular demands (Barabara, (2025)). These conditions align with sociocultural perspectives on language learning, which highlight the importance of meaningful social interaction and collaborative dialogue in developing communicative competence. The club environment, therefore, not only enhanced learners' motivation but also contributed to their confidence and willingness to communicate, reinforcing its complementary role to classroom instruction.

A distinctive aspect of the current study is the strong appreciation students showed for the variety of activities offered by the English Club. Unlike some previous studies that focus on single-mode practices, students in this case valued the mixture of games, storytelling, debates, and group discussions. This multimodal exposure aligns with principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which encourage authentic interaction and task-based learning as keys to communicative competence. The students' responses suggest that integrating diverse activities not only sustained their engagement but also catered to different learning preferences, allowing each participant to draw on their strengths while being challenged in new ways. For instance, interactive games encouraged spontaneity and reduced anxiety, while debates pushed students to use more structured, analytical language. Such variety supports the idea that language development is enhanced when learners are exposed to a broad range of communicative tasks that activate multiple linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural skills.

Furthermore, the diversity of activities mirrors current understandings of multimodality in language education, which emphasise the importance of combining verbal, visual, and social modes of communication to create richer learning experiences. Storytelling activities, for example,

promoted narrative skills and creativity, offering opportunities for personal expression that deepened learners' emotional investment in the task. Group discussions fostered collaborative meaning-making, encouraging learners to negotiate meaning, clarify misunderstandings, and refine their ideas through peer interaction. These multimodal practices also resonate with the principles of task-based language teaching (TBLT), which argues that communicative tasks with real or simulated communicative purposes lead to more authentic language use and improved fluency.

Additionally, the varied activities contributed to a dynamic learning environment that contrasts with the more rigid structure of traditional classroom lessons. Students reported feeling more motivated and less constrained, indicating that such diversity helped maintain a sense of novelty and enjoyment throughout their participation. This finding underscores the pedagogical value of integrating multiple activity types to prevent monotony and promote sustained engagement, particularly in extracurricular language programs where voluntary participation is central to success. Collectively, these insights highlight the role of activity diversity in supporting both linguistic development and learner motivation, reaffirming the importance of multimodal and interaction-based approaches as essential components of effective language learning environments.

However, students also pointed out several challenges. These included limited vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, and occasionally inconsistent participation due to scheduling conflicts. They suggested improvements such as inviting native speakers, incorporating outdoor activities, and recognizing active participants with rewards or certificates. These suggestions mirror findings by Chunda et al. (2023) who also noted that diversifying English Club content and formats increases student engagement. What sets this study apart is the strong student-driven emphasis on enjoyment and practicality. Unlike studies that frame English Clubs primarily as supplementary academic tools, students here saw the club as a transformative space for real-life communication, identity development, and peer connection.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore both teachers' and students' perspectives on the impact of English Clubs on students' speaking proficiency at a senior high school in Ciamis. Through a qualitative case study approach, the research revealed that English Clubs serve as an effective and supportive platform for enhancing students' oral communication skills. The findings underscore the multifaceted benefits of English Club participation, particularly in improving students' confidence, fluency, and motivation to speak English.

From the teacher's perspective, English Clubs offered students meaningful opportunities to use real-world language beyond the limitations of the formal classroom. The teacher noted clear improvements in students' pronunciation, fluency, and classroom engagement, attributing these gains to the club's interactive, low-anxiety environment. Additionally, the English Club was seen as a valuable complement to classroom instruction, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Students likewise expressed highly positive views of their English Club experiences. They consistently reported increased speaking confidence, enhanced fluency, and greater enjoyment in learning English. The diversity of club activities, such as debates, role plays, and storytelling, was appreciated for making learning more engaging and relevant. Despite facing challenges such as limited vocabulary and occasional nervousness, students demonstrated resilience and a willingness to improve. Their suggestions for enhancements, such as involving native speakers and offering rewards, reflect a proactive attitude toward personal and group learning.

These findings reaffirm the importance of English Clubs in supporting EFL learners, especially in contexts where formal instruction alone may not provide sufficient speaking practice. By offering a relaxed, student-centred environment with varied, authentic communicative tasks, English Clubs have the potential to transform learners' attitudes, skills, and confidence in English use. Moreover, such clubs serve as meaningful extensions of classroom learning by creating spaces

where students can apply linguistic knowledge in real-time interaction, thereby strengthening the connection between theory and practice. With consistent participation, learners not only improve fluency but also develop greater autonomy, motivation, and willingness to communicate—factors essential for long-term language development.

In conclusion, English Clubs are more than extracurricular activities. They are dynamic learning spaces that foster not only linguistic growth but also emotional and social development. Their success, however, depends on consistent institutional support, trained facilitators, and continuous innovation in activity design. This study contributes to the growing literature advocating for the integration of English Clubs as a strategic component of EFL education, particularly in secondary schools across Indonesia and similar EFL contexts.

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