



EXPLORING STUDENT'S IN LEARNING ENGLISH SPEAKING THROUGH ENGLISH CLUB ACTIVITIES AT SMP NEGERI 9 SALATIGA

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Abstract

This study explores how fun English Club activities can help improve students' speaking skills at SMP Negeri 9 Salatiga. Many junior high school students feel shy, nervous, or afraid of making mistakes when speaking English in class. English Club provides a relaxed and enjoyable environment where students can practice speaking without pressure. Using a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected through observations, questionnaires, and interviews with eight English Club members. The findings show that students enjoy the club because the activities are fun, varied, and help them practice vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. They also feel more confident to speak English because their friends and tutors give positive support. However, some challenges still appear, such as noise, discipline problems, and limited vocabulary. Overall, the study concludes that English Club can be an effective way to enhance students' speaking skills when activities are enjoyable, supportive, and well-organized. The study also highlights the need for better classroom management and consistent practice to help students overcome remaining difficulties.

Keywords: *english club, speaking skills, communicative learning*

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INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, English speaking skills have become a key competency that students must master to communicate effectively in various international contexts. Speaking skills involve not only vocabulary and grammar mastery but also the ability to express thoughts and feelings spontaneously and meaningfully. According to Brown (2004) in *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*, speaking is a complex skill that encompasses spontaneous language use, correct pronunciation, and effective communication strategies. This is supported by Harmer (2007) in *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, which emphasizes that speaking allows students to interact directly, yet students often face difficulties such as awkwardness, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence when speaking in a foreign language. Richards and Renandya (2002) in *Methodology in Language Teaching* add that teaching speaking requires a learning environment that encourages active participation and meaningful communication, which is often lacking in formal classes due to academic pressures and a lack of practical opportunities.

Despite the importance of speaking skills, the reality on the ground shows that junior high school students often struggle to develop these abilities. Many students feel intimidated by English as a foreign language, which causes them to avoid speaking practice and prefer passive activities like reading or listening. This can hinder the development of communicative skills necessary for daily life and future careers. To address this issue, extracurricular activities like English Club emerge as a natural and enjoyable solution. English Club provides an informal space outside of formal classes, where students can practice speaking through more relaxed activities relevant to their interests. Nunan (2003) in *Practical English Language Teaching* explains that informal activities like English Club help students use the language in real-life contexts, while Richards (2015) in *Key Issues in Language Teaching* and Wright (2017) in *Extracurricular Language Learning* emphasize that this non-formal environment enhances learner autonomy and intrinsic motivation, as it focuses on real-life communication rather than formal tests or assessments.



One key aspect of English Club's success is the concept of "enjoyment," or pleasure in learning, which is closely related to affective factors. Enjoyment refers to the positive feelings that arise when students feel successful, challenged, and accepted in the language learning process. Krashen (1982) in the Affective Filter Hypothesis states that affective factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety influence the success of language learning; enjoyment can lower the "affective filter" so that students are more open to receiving language input. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014, 2016) in the concept of Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) explain that enjoyment is a positive feeling that is inversely proportional to anxiety, although both can occur simultaneously, depending on the context. Furthermore, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) in Positive Psychology highlight that positive emotions such as enjoyment can increase motivation, creativity, and learning retention, which is highly relevant to language education that emphasizes happiness as a driver of learning. In the context of English Club, Dewaele et al. (2018) found that FLE increases when students feel the social environment is supportive (friendly atmosphere), activities are interesting and aligned with their interests, and there is an opportunity to express themselves without fear of mistakes. Reeve (2012), in his Self-Determination Theory (SDT), added that enjoyment arises when students' basic needs are met, namely autonomy (freedom of choice), competence (a sense of ability), and relatedness (a sense of acceptance), all of which can be met through English Club activities.

Although the concept of enjoyment has been widely discussed in language education literature, there is a research gap regarding its application in the context of English Clubs at the junior high school level. Most studies on enjoyment focus on formal classes or higher education levels, with little research exploring how enjoyment is shaped through extracurricular activities such as English Club in junior high schools. Therefore, this study aims to explore the forms and factors that build students' enjoyment when participating in English Club activities at SMP Negeri 9 Salatiga, with the hope of providing practical insights for the development of more effective and enjoyable extracurricular programs. This research is expected to contribute to a deeper



understanding of how English Club can be a means to improve speaking skills through an enjoyment-based approach.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to investigate how students experience enjoyment while learning English speaking through English Club activities at SMP Negeri 9 Salatiga. Twelve students who actively participated in the club during the 2025/2026 academic year were selected using purposive sampling based on their regular attendance and willingness to share their experiences (Creswell, 2014). Of these participants, eight students were involved in the interview process.

1. Data Collection

Data were gathered through classroom observations, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and supporting documentation. Observations across several meetings enabled the researcher to identify indicators of enjoyment, including enthusiasm, active participation, and engagement during speaking tasks (Moleong, 2017). Questionnaires provided general insights into students' perceptions, while interviews offered deeper accounts of their feelings, challenges, and learning experiences. Additional documents were used to complement and verify data from the primary instruments.

2. Data Analysis

The analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework, involving three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. All student responses and observed behaviors were organized, coded, and grouped into emerging themes. These themes were then interpreted descriptively to explain how students experienced enjoyment in English Club activities.

3. Trustworthiness of the Study



To ensure the rigor and quality of the findings, four trustworthiness criteria were applied: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.1 Credibility

Credibility was strengthened through data triangulation by comparing information from interviews, observations, and questionnaires. Member checking was also carried out by asking participants to review and confirm interview summaries. In addition, peer debriefing with two English Club tutors helped refine coding decisions and minimize researcher bias.

3.2 Transferability

Transferability was enhanced by providing a detailed description of the research context, including the school environment, English Club activities, and participant characteristics. This allows readers to determine whether the findings may be relevant to similar educational settings.

3.3 Dependability

Dependability was ensured by maintaining a comprehensive audit trail consisting of observation notes, interview records, coding decisions, and theme development processes. This documentation allows the research procedures to be reviewed and verified by others.

3.4 Confirmability

Confirmability was supported through reflective notes made throughout data collection and analysis to monitor potential bias. All interpretations were grounded in direct quotations and observable behaviors, ensuring that conclusions were based on participants' actual experiences rather than the researcher's assumptions.



4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed to protect the rights and welfare of all participants. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the school administration and the English Club coordinator. Students were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that participation was voluntary. They were free to decline any question or withdraw at any stage without consequences.

Because the participants were minors, verbal informed consent was obtained within the scope of normal school activities. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms and participant codes (S1–S8 for interviewees) were used in all transcripts and findings. All data, including recordings and notes, were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. The interview questions were designed to be age-appropriate to avoid any discomfort or psychological pressure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Interviews and observations with eight English Club members (coded as S1–S8) revealed five major themes:

- (1) enjoyment and fun activities,
- (2) increased speaking confidence,
- (3) practice-based learning through speech and games,
- (4) social support from peers and tutors, and
- (5) practical barriers such as noise and limited vocabulary.

1. Enjoyment and Fun Activities

Almost all students described English Club as enjoyable and relaxing compared to regular classroom lessons. Observations confirmed that students demonstrated high enthusiasm, active participation, and positive attitudes during speaking activities. One participant



stated that English Club was “fun and not stressful like class,” while another noted that vocabulary games made learning “more exciting.”

2. Increased Speaking Confidence

All eight participants reported improvements in their confidence to speak English. They felt more willing to speak, volunteer, and practice during English Club sessions. One student expressed that although they were initially shy, they could “speak little by little” after joining the club. Another explained that they felt braver because tutors were supportive and non-judgmental.

3. Practice-Based Learning: Speech and Games

Students valued the emphasis on practice through short speeches, pronunciation tasks, vocabulary drills, and English games. They perceived these activities as beneficial for improving pronunciation, vocabulary recall, and fluency. For example, one student mentioned that speech practice helped them “pronounce words better,” while another said games helped them “remember vocabulary faster.”

4. Social Support

Supportive peers and tutors played an important role in reducing anxiety and encouraging participation. Students felt safe to make mistakes and appreciated that both peers and tutors offered help rather than criticism. Several participants mentioned that receiving encouragement made them more comfortable speaking English.

5. Practical Barriers

Despite the positive experiences, some challenges persisted. Students mentioned difficulties such as noise, crowded rooms, and occasional lack of discipline, which disrupted concentration. Vocabulary limitations also remained a barrier for several participants, especially during spontaneous speaking tasks.



Discussion

These findings indicate that enjoyment plays a central role in shaping students' speaking experiences in extracurricular English learning. The prominence of enjoyment aligns with studies showing that Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) enhances learners' willingness to communicate and reduces speaking anxiety (Zheng & Zhou, 2023; Zhang, Gao & Liu, 2024). A fun, relaxed environment such as English Club lowers the affective filter and encourages greater participation and engagement.

The findings also highlight the importance of practice-based and extracurricular activities for improving speaking skills. Students' preference for speech tasks, vocabulary games, and interactive activities corresponds with previous research showing that English Clubs provide additional opportunities for oral practice beyond formal classroom instruction (Suryanto et al., 2025; Salsabila & Margana, 2021). These activities promote spontaneous communication, enhance fluency, and contribute to building communicative competence.

Furthermore, the results underscore the significance of social support in boosting learner confidence. Supportive peers and tutors reduce anxiety and strengthen students' academic self-concept, consistent with findings in EFL peer-support literature (Wu & Kang, 2023). When learners feel accepted and are not judged for mistakes, they are more likely to take risks and participate actively in speaking tasks.

However, the study also reveals ongoing challenges, including environmental distractions and linguistic limitations. Noise, lack of discipline, and vocabulary gaps reflect barriers commonly reported in extracurricular EFL settings (Setyaning et al., 2024). These constraints suggest that while enjoyment and social support create positive



learning conditions, structural and linguistic scaffolding are still necessary to optimize speaking development.

Implications for Practice

To maximize the effectiveness of English Clubs, instructors should:

- design varied and enjoyable activities (games, speeches, vocabulary drills) to sustain motivation;
- maintain a supportive environment that reduces anxiety and encourages risk-taking;
- implement clear rules and structured management to minimize noise and distractions;
- provide targeted vocabulary and pronunciation exercises to help students overcome linguistic barriers.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study involved eight participants from a single school and relied on qualitative data, limiting generalizability. Future research could adopt mixed-methods approaches, incorporate pre- and post-tests to measure speaking improvement, or examine English Clubs in different contexts. Including a larger number of participants and additional data sources would also strengthen the robustness of future findings

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

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The English Club at SMP Negeri 9 Salatiga has proven to be an effective extracurricular space for improving students' speaking skills by providing enjoyable activities, peer support, and wider opportunities for practice than those available in formal



classes. The sense of enjoyment experienced during the sessions helps reduce anxiety, build confidence, and encourage students to speak more freely. Activities such as short speeches, vocabulary drills, and language games not only enrich their vocabulary and improve pronunciation but also create a relaxed and supportive learning environment. Nevertheless, challenges such as noisy surroundings, disciplinary issues, and limited vocabulary still require careful attention, as these factors can hinder students' comfort and concentration. Overall, a well-managed English Club that balances fun, structure, and focused skill-building can significantly enhance junior high school students' English-speaking competence, as it promotes enjoyment, strengthens peer support, and encourages more active participation than formal classroom settings.

SUGGESTION

1. Suggestions for Teachers or English Club Tutors

Teachers and tutors are encouraged to design varied and engaging activities, such as games, short speeches, role plays, and vocabulary tasks to sustain students' motivation. Classroom management should be strengthened through clear rules and reduced noise levels. Providing ongoing encouragement and constructive feedback is essential to help students feel confident when speaking. Targeted practice in vocabulary and pronunciation is also recommended, as these areas were identified as key challenges.

2. Suggestions for Students

Students are advised to attend English Club sessions regularly and participate actively to maximize their speaking practice. They should remain open to making mistakes and seek support from peers or tutors when needed. To further improve fluency, students can engage in independent practice, such as watching English videos, listening to music, or using English in simple daily interactions.

3. Suggestions for Schools



Schools are encouraged to provide adequate facilities and a quiet, supportive environment for English Club activities. Scheduling sessions during less noisy times can help improve students' comfort and concentration. Schools may also expand the program by adding more tutors or grouping students by proficiency levels.

4. Suggestions for Future Researchers

Future research may involve larger participant groups or multiple school settings to increase generalizability. Using mixed-method designs or incorporating pre- and post-tests could provide a more accurate measure of speaking development. Further studies may also examine additional variables—such as motivation, anxiety, or digital media use—to deepen understanding of factors that influence students' speaking improvement.



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