

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher gives an introduction of the study and covers background, research problem, research objectives, significance of the study, research gap, and scope of the research.

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking is one of the core skills that must be mastered in learning a foreign language. According to Thornbury (2007), speaking is the ability to produce effective oral messages with correct grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Speaking allows people to convey their thoughts, feelings, and intentions clearly and efficiently. Speaking is a crucial indicator of English language proficiency when learning English as a foreign language.

Although English is learned as a foreign language in Indonesia, it's really incorporated into the mandatory subject of the national education curriculum. Of the four fundamental skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing speaking is typically considered the most difficult. A student can be said to have learned a foreign language when they are able to both write and speak it.

One of the ways to improve students' speaking skills outside the formal classroom is through English Club activities. English Club provides a more relaxed and interactive environment, where students are encouraged to speak freely without fear of being judged. Through such activities, students can expand their vocabulary, improve their fluency, and develop greater confidence. Rather than staying silent or being passive, students are encouraged to interact actively with peers. This interaction is essential in promoting meaningful language use.

Based on observations at SMPN 182 Jakarta, the school regularly holds English Club activities every Thursday. According to the teacher, these

sessions are designed to motivate students, enhance their speaking abilities, and improve their vocabulary. However, despite the availability of such activities, many students still find it difficult to speak English fluently. Factors such as lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, grammar difficulties, and anxiety are often identified as key challenges. To overcome these issues, teachers apply various methods to support students, but the researcher believes that English Club offers a potential alternative. Fatimah (2014) describes extracurricular programs as structured activities outside regular school hours aimed at complementing and enhancing students' abilities. Therefore, this study focuses on students' perceptions of English Club activities in enhancing their speaking skills, particularly in terms of motivation, self-confidence, and speaking fluency.

Although many studies have investigated various strategies for teaching speaking skills, most of them have focused on formal classroom techniques such as role play, storytelling, and task-based learning. However, only a few studies have examined students' perceptions of extracurricular activities such as English Clubs, particularly at the junior high school level. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by focusing on students at SMPN 182 Jakarta.

As stated by Mulyasa, quoted in Fatimah (2014), an activity program is a structured program conducted outside regular school hours to complement and enhance students' abilities. Based on this idea, the researcher hypothesized that students should have an alternative option to improve their speaking skills through English Club activities.

In this study, the researcher highlighted the student's perception towards English Club in enhancing speaking. There are five kinds which turn into evaluation in students' opinion: the first one is depth perception, the second one is movement perception, the third one is form perception, the fourth one is time perception, and the fifth one is size perception. From these opinions, the

researcher can gain insights into what students learn by participating in the English Club.

Although speaking skills has been recognized as one of the important indicators in mastering a foreign language, including English, and various studies have been conducted to explore strategies for teaching speaking skills, there is still a lack of studies that specifically examine students' perceptions of extracurricular activities such as English Club in improving speaking skills, especially at the junior high school level. Most previous studies have focused more on formal learning methods in the classroom, such as the use of role play techniques, storytelling, or task-based learning approaches. In fact, extracurricular activities such as English Club can also be a potential alternative because they provide a freer, more interactive environment and support student-centered learning.

Based on the problem of the study, the researcher was interested to know about the students' perception of English club activities to improve speaking skills at SMPN 182 Jakarta.

1.2. Problem of the Study

Based on the background that has been described. The research problem is: What are the students' perceptions of English Club activities in improving their speaking skills at SMPN 182 Jakarta?

1.3. Objective of the Study

In relation to the problem of the study, the objectives of this study are: To investigate how participation in English Club activities improves students' English-speaking skills at SMPN 182 Jakarta.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The outcome of this research provides up-to-date information for:

1. For teachers, this study identifies students' perceptions of the English Club as an extracurricular activity that enhances speaking skills and provides alternative learning opportunities.
2. For students, they can find alternative ways to improve their speaking skills by joining the English Club. And finally for schools, it can be applied as one way to improve students' ability to learn English, especially in speaking skills.
3. For readers, especially those interested in language learning and teaching, this research provides a practical example of how extracurricular activities can contribute to the development of students' speaking skills.
4. For other researchers, this study can serve as a reference for future research on extracurricular programs, particularly English Clubs, and their role in developing language skills, including studies that employ qualitative or mixed-method approaches.

1.5. Research Gap

Although previous studies have discussed learning strategies to improve English speaking skills, most of them have focused on formal approaches in the classroom, such as the use of role play techniques, storytelling, and task-based learning models. Only a few studies specifically highlight extracurricular activities such as English Club as an alternative in developing speaking skills. In addition, most major studies have been conducted at the senior high school (SMA) or college level, so the context and needs of students at the junior high school (SMP) level who have different developmental characteristics have rarely been studied in depth. These studies also tend to focus on students' cognitive achievements, without exploring much about affective aspects such as students' motivation, enjoyment, and confidence when speaking English. In this regard, the study conducted at SMPN 182 Jakarta offers a new contribution through the assessment of students' perceptions of English Club through a

quantitative approach that includes three main indicators: motivation and enjoyment, building self-confidence, and speaking fluency. This study also pays attention to variations in perception based on gender, which has not been widely discussed by previous studies. Therefore, this study fills the gap in the literature by providing a new perspective on the role of extracurricular activities in improving students' speaking skills at the junior high school level in a more effective and participatory context.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study examines students' perceptions of English Club activities as a means of enhancing speaking skills at SMPN 182 Jakarta. Methods to enhance students' speaking skills include group work, reading aloud, and guided dialogues.