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STUDENTS' LEARNING EXPERIENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 'STARLIGHT CADRE' ACTIVITY ON STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL AT SMAN 1 TUNTANG

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the implementation and effectiveness of the Starlight Cadre activity to improve speaking skills of the students at SMAN 1 Tuntang English Club at the 2025/2026 academic year. This research using a qualitative descriptive research design and included students of the English Club who were selected through random sampling. Interviews, observation, and documentation were utilized in collecting data for information about students' perceptions and experiences. The data analysis were interpreted according to Miles and Huberman's data condensation, display, and drawing conclusions phases. Findings are that the Starlight Cadre is applied actively and systematically through interactive speaking and listening activities such as storytelling, flashcard games, and pair discussions. Students exhibited noticeable improvement in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence. The observation revealed a positive and supportive learning atmosphere that encouraged participation and communication. The program successfully combined communicative and learner-centered approaches to gain linguistic achievement and motivation. The findings show that well-designed extracurricular activities can potentially enhance students' English speaking ability and confidence in future communication.

Keywords: *English club, speaking, student perceptions.*



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Introduction

In Indonesia's English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, speaking remains one of the most challenging skills for students to master. Speaking as a productive skill enables learners to convey ideas, express opinions, and engage constructively in real communication (Harmer, 2015). However, Indonesian EFL learners are faced with various challenges such as minimal exposure to real use of the target language, anxiety in speaking production, inadequate classroom practice, and cultural tendencies to shun communication because of fear of errors (Brown & Lee, 2015). These challenges are further exacerbated by a national curriculum that emphasizes reading and writing ability, if not at the sacrifice of speaking skills. Therefore, students tend to graduate from high school with inadequate fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, or comprehension and with negative confidence in speaking and are hindered in their readiness for global communication or future academic and professional pursuits (Sabilla & Kaniadewi, 2025).

Extracurricular activities such as English clubs have surfaced as possible means to address the abovementioned concerns through providing informal, learner-focused, and low-stakes environments for the use of language. English clubs offer a multitude of discussion topics in terms of activities, role-plays, conversations, and games that enhance immersion, peer communication, and low speaking apprehension, therefore oral proficiency and motivation and establishing self-confidence. Scholars still point out that English clubs are indispensable places where students can engage in verbal practice in a comfortable and enjoyable setting. Octaberlina & Muslimin (2022) describe that "one of the ways to improve English mastering skills these days is to join an English Club (E-Club), which usually is a special opportunity for students who want to study and learn more in English with their friends as an extra activity outside the class" (p. 415). The key purpose of such clubs is the acquisition of English competence through cooperative and interactive speaking and listening practice exercises and enhanced motivation and practice opportunities for languages. In this respect, Maros et al. (2023) argue that "an English club enables students to voice their opinions, ideas, and feelings using speaking activities to develop their communicative competence" (p. 83). The variety of activities performed in

English clubs is as varied to cater to students' interests, ranging from simple personal introductions to advance topics like storytelling of city and country life or book discussion and city experience (Elnadeef & Abdala, 2019). Speaking is a fundamental skill that enables communication and the building of social relations and is a competence that is obligatory in Indonesia's 2013 curriculum to increase students' engagement and communicative ability (Holandyah et al., 2024). Speaking competence not only increases vocabulary and grammar ability but strengthens other language capabilities as well and brings students greater opportunities in education, employment, and career development.

Despite the identified contributions, existing research has had limitations, particularly in Indonesian senior high school contexts. Previous studies tend to focus on general contributions of English clubs to speaking improvement with no exploration of particular teacher strategies, activity type, or innovative pedagogical approaches (Virawan et al., 2019). Quantitative studies by Hamadameen & Najim (2020) demonstrate positive impacts of English clubs on communication skills but without detailed qualitative insights into speaking components or implementation processes within the high school setting. However, demonstrate how English clubs facilitate positive English-speaking environments conducive to motivation and confidence but without examining specific pedagogical approaches or activities through which speaking skill is acquired (Astari & Hadi, 2023). Similarly, Gunawan, Supardi, and Arifin acknowledge the positive role of English clubs but omit detailed exploration of planning, implementation, and evaluation processes (Supardi et al., 2016). Syahfutra et al. discuss grammar enhancement without addressing speaking skills enhancement (Syahfutra et al., 2025). Whereas Husniya et al. provide descriptive accounts, limited to single school contexts without analyzing effectiveness or transferable strategies (Husniya et al., 2023).

This study aims to fill these gaps by qualitatively examining senior high school students' perceptions of the 'Starlight Cadre' English Club at SMAN 1 Tuntang, a semi-rural Indonesian school. By using semi-structured interviews, it seeks to understand how students experience the club's implementation, the multifaceted effects on their speaking proficiency, and the enabling or inhibiting contextual factors. Specifically, the current research is concerned with answering two questions: (1) How is the program being practiced in this school? and (2) How do students' learning experience in speaking English while joining in the program of starlight cadre?. This research contributes student-centered insights to EFL pedagogy by revealing how extracurricular English club programs can be planned and executed effectively to enhance speaking skills in similar educational settings. The

findings are expected to support educators and policymakers in fostering more engaging, communicative, and confidence-building speaking environments beyond formal classrooms.

Research Methods

This section describes the methodology of the study, where it is systematic in nature and follows a sequence of design, participants, instrument, data collection, and data analysis.

The research design applied is qualitative descriptive research, as outlined by Miles & Huberman (2014) to explore students' perceptions of the English club activity. The participants are students that actively involved in the English club, providing relevant insights into the club's implementation and effects. The data will be collected using interview, observation, and documentation to collect the data and information from respondents (Sugiyono, 2018). Data collection utilized multiple instruments, including observation sheets, interview guidelines, and documentation, allowing comprehensive gathering of information through observations, interviews, and documentation.

Analysis of data was informed by Miles and Huberman's process, encompassing data condensation to examine essential information, displaying and arranging data for facile interpretation, drawing and verifying conclusions regarding their validity, and employing triangulation to examine credibility through cross-validation of evidence from different sources (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

Design

The research design applied is qualitative descriptive research0;. As suggested by Miles & Huberman (2014), this design is suitable for providing an unambiguous and detailed description of the phenomena being studied, particularly students' perceptions of the English club activities. It offers a comprehensive insight into students' experiences and perceptions without intervening into variables, such as in the descriptive study being conducted.

Participants

The participants of this study consists of students actively participating in 'Starlight Cadre' English Club for the 2025/2026 academic year. There are 13 students actively involved in this activity. They were selected using simple random sampling, a probability sampling technique that gives every member of the population an equal chance to be chosen as a sample. This method ensures that the sample is representative of the

population, thereby enhancing the validity and generalizability of the study findings while capturing diverse student perspectives. Using this technique, we select 7 students as samples for this research.

Instrument

The instruments that researchers would employ in this research are observation sheets, interview guidelines and documentation, as proposed by Sugiyono (2018). The instruments allow the researchers to gain much data from different approaches and give precise information about the dynamics of the English club and students' participation. Observation sheets facilitate systematic observation of activity, interview guidelines help in gathering personal observations in detail from respondents, and documentation facilitates provision of supporting evidence such as records and other material. Using these diverse tools facilitates overall understanding of the phenomena of interest.

Data Collection

The researchers will collect the data through three main methods: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation involved maintaining a systematic observation of the English club activities to gather real-time information about student participation and interactions. Interviews were conducted through structured guidelines to acquire incisive insights from the students about their perceptions and experiences. Documentation involved collecting relevant records, reports, and other written materials that support the study's findings. Using these complementing data collection methods guaranteed data validity through triangulation.

Data analysis

Data analysis in this qualitative descriptive research consists of three main interactive and simultaneous processes: 1) data condensation, 2) data display, and 3) drawing and verifying conclusions. Data condensation is the initial step where collected data are selected, focused, and simplified by reducing them to the most important and relevant information, which facilitates manageable and meaningful analysis. Data display refers to the organized presentation of information, often through matrices, charts, or graphs, allowing researchers to see patterns, relationships, and trends clearly. The final process involves drawing conclusions from the displayed data and continuously verifying them to ensure validity and reliability (Miles & Huberman, 2014). Throughout these steps, triangulation is used to cross-check data from multiple sources, enhancing credibility. This framework

supports a systematic yet flexible analysis that captures rich descriptive insights into participants' experiences and perceptions.

Results and Discussion

The Results and Discussion section reports the results against the research questions and goals. Using qualitative descriptive approach, data were reduced, coded, and interpreted via interviewing, observing, and documentation triangulation for support in credibility. The section describes understanding of the English Club activities by students, in which how experience obtained from them improves the English speaking skill and confidence of the students. The research matches results to theoretical and conceptual literature to offer an holistic explanation of the phenomena being researched, emphasizing the interactive and facilitative nature of the English Club environment. This approach allows for dense, substance understanding without changing the variables being researched.

Results

1) *Program which practiced in this school:*

Based on the interviews conducted with participants who were selected using random sampling and supported by observation data, the findings reveals that the application of the Starlight Cadre activity in English Club at SMAN 1 Tuntang is implemented actively and systematically with the main goal of developing students' speaking ability. Most of the students enrolled themselves in the club due to intrinsic motivation to enhance their English-speaking abilities and become confident when speaking. Several of the participants, such as sample A1 and A2, mentioned that they were driven by their passion for English media such as films and games and also by their drive to be able to communicate well using proper pronunciation.

The English Club activities are varied but always focused on practice in listening and speaking. Common activities include pair or group discussion, reading aloud, question and answer, vocabulary games, and watching English videos with retelling activities. Observations confirmed that these kinds of activities are undertaken on a daily basis in almost every session, normally beginning with ice breaking games to enhance enthusiasm before engaging in significant speaking practices using flashcards, pictures, or video clips.

The Starlight Cadre activity itself worked in the generation of spontaneous speech. With random topic cards, students practiced expressing thoughts on everyday topics such as hobbies and experiences. The

methodology supported them in faster thinking in English, building vocabulary, and speaking more naturally in a relaxed setting. The facilitator provided constructive criticism and soft corrections throughout, building an energetic and interesting classroom atmosphere.

Observation results further indicated that the English Club learning environment was constructive and interactive. The facilitator offered materials and media for each session and encouraged collaboration through pair and group activity. The active learners were rewarded or praised at the end of each session, encouraging motivation and engagement.

All the respondents provided accounts of remarkable improvement in the area of speaking skills since becoming members of the English Club, including more confidence, more vocabulary, and better pronunciation. One respondent estimated her improvement at around 80% since joining. Observation data also provided evidence for the same, where there was more fluency and less hesitation while speaking. The students also suggested program extension, such as outdoor or music-based speaking activities and further promotion to attract new members. In general, the findings indicate that the Starlight Cadre activity has been effectively conducted and has a good impact on enhancing students' speaking ability and confidence in using English.

2) *Students' learning experience in speaking English while joining in the program of Starlight Cadre:*

The findings of the interviews and the observations indicate that the Starlight Cadre activity in English Club make the students expressed more confidence in speaking English after going through the program. From being shy at first due to limited vocabulary, they became more comfortable and fluent as a consequence of activities such as storytelling, flashcard discussions, and conversation games. One of the students estimated an improvement of 80% in her speaking performance. Observations also bore witness to this as students who once hesitated became more active and fluent during class interactions.

Starlight Cadre method also helped in the expansion of vocabulary and sentence formation for the learners. Spontaneous speech on random topics encouraged them to employ new words in real communication. Pronunciation and fluency were also enhanced through the facilitator's positive feedback and congenial class atmosphere. Observation also showed that over half of the students showed better fluency and active participation compared to the previous sessions. The constant encouragement and reward system of the facilitator helped in keeping everyone motivated and interested.

Overall, the students found the Starlight Cadre activity to be an enjoyable and constructive way of practicing English speaking. The combination of interactive games, situational themes, and peer collaboration effectively provoked both linguistic and affective aspects of learning, bearing witness to the effectiveness of the program in improving students' speaking capacity.

Discussion

The implementation of the Starlight Cadre activity in the SMAN 1 Tuntang English Club appears to align with second language acquisition (SLA) theory and communicative language teaching. The systematic, interactive structure privileged speaking and listening in everyday contexts over mere drill repetition of grammar rules, which aligns with Brown & Lee's view that language learning needs to be usage-based, contextually embedded and socio-culturally oriented (Brown & Lee, 2015).

Students' intrinsic motivation turned out to be one of the most important factors emerged as a key contributor to the program's success. Many students joined because they liked English media or games and wanted to be able to speak more fluently this aligns with Brown & Lee's stress on learner agency, identity, and emotional investment as key drivers of effective language learning (Brown & Lee, 2015). Moreover, the supportive, low-anxiety environment created by the English Club helped reduce affective filters so that students could speak spontaneously without inhibition freely, a condition Brown repeatedly describes as necessary for fluency acquisition (Brown, 2001).

The variety of speaking activities pair talk, story telling, word games, retelling from video mirrored Brown & Lee's overarching language teaching classification: cognitive, socio-affective and linguistic components must collaborate if optimal learning is to take place. Starlight Cadre in particular enabled learners to speak at random on matters, boosting their ability to think in English and create vocabulary creatively conveying Brown's principle of automaticity and significant interaction.

These were also the most significant aspects of fostering learning through task design, peer consultation, and respectful corrective feedback. The findings showed that the facilitator did not act as an instructor only but as a mediator of learning an individual who was guiding students towards independence while still offering supportive interaction. The use of pairs and small groups was essential to this process. In these group activities, the students were encouraged to talk, negotiate meaning, and use actual

communication in English, which reflects an interactive and learner centered learning approach.

Furthermore, the language enhancement demonstrated heightened fluency, better pronunciation, and broader vocabulary indicates that frequent exposure to communicative practice supports the speaking ability of the students significantly. Students' progress was noticeable both in observable classroom behavior and students' own reported improvement, with some estimating up to 80% improvement in speaking proficiency. Such growth serves as a testament to the fact that frequent practice in a low-anxiety and supportive environment enhances not only linguistic aspects but also affective factors such as motivation, confidence, and willingness to speak.

The results also indicate the importance of purposeful and contextualized learning activities. The Starlight Cadre sessions provided an avenue for the students to use English in spontaneous and natural ways rather than memorization. It allowed them to think on their feet using English, construct sentences naturally, and apply vocabulary in real communication. These results affirm Brown's principle that effective language learning is grounded in purposeful interaction and active participation rather than passive learning (Brown, 2001).

Based on the results of the research, Starlight Cadre activity validly integrates key instructional principles identified by Brown and Brown & Lee i.e., communicative meaning, learner-centeredness, motivational support, and interactive learning environments. This study's findings illustrate that the application of these principles in an extracurricular setting can effectively develop students' speaking proficiency and also facilitate their affective willingness for English communication. The English Club, therefore, is not merely a language practice area but a community that also encourages confidence, creativity, and learner independence.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis results using the qualitative descriptive research, it highlights that the Starlight Cadre activity in SMAN 1 Tuntang English Club effectively improves speaking skill, confidence, vocabulary, and pronunciation among students with varied, interactive, and supportive practices. The program is in harmony with primary language acquisition theories, with an emphasis on learner motivation, communicative practice, and low anxiety conditions. Despite these strength points, the study has a limitation as it is based on a single school and comparatively minor sample size. Follow-up research can treat more comprehensive contexts and long-term impact. The proposed enhancements include taking activities outdoors and incorporating music-based speaking to further motivate learners. This

research recommends that well designed extracurricular programs can significantly support language development and learner autonomy.

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