

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents context of the research, statement of research problems, objectives of the research, the significance of the research, scope and limitation of the research, and definition of key terms.

A. Context of the Research

Having an ability to speak English is an essential need for university students in today's era of expanding global communication. English, as an international language, plays a significant role in academic, professional, and social spheres. Proficiency in spoken English is especially important in this age of globalization, where individuals are increasingly required to interact and communicate with people from different countries. Therefore, developing English speaking skills has become a major focus in many educational institutions.

In Indonesia, English proficiency is often considered a benchmark for students' success in facing global challenges. Students with strong English-speaking abilities tend to have better job opportunities, both nationally and internationally. English proficiency is a crucial factor when seeking employment. For this reason, English teaching or learning must address this need. However, it is regrettable that academic grades do not always reflect students' practical skills, particularly in the context of English. As a result,

students need to master speaking skills to compete in the workforce.¹ Moreover, having English proficiency can be an asset for students who wish to pursue higher education. Many students even receive scholarships to study abroad due to their strong English skills.

In today's world, many students use English as a tool for communication, such as chatting with friends, seeking information, or even creating captions on social media. However, students without a formal educational background in English often struggle to improve their speaking skills due to a lack of exposure to English-speaking environments, limited opportunities for practice, and a lack of confidence in speaking. The scarcity of English-speaking practice partners, both at university and at home, has become a barrier for students to improve their speaking competency. It is difficult for students to find partners to practice English and a supportive environment.²

To address the challenges students' face in learning English, many educational institutions, from primary schools to universities, now offer opportunities for those who want to enhance their English skills, particularly in speaking. One activity that students can participate in is an English Club (EC) or a tutoring centre specifically for English language learning. English clubs offer many benefits; through these clubs, students can improve their English abilities and overcome anxiety by practicing speaking in front of others during

¹ Karimah Tauhid and ; | Patiyasa Lubis, *Pentingnya Menguasai Bahasa Inggris Dan Faktor Yang Mempengaruhi Kemampuan Berbahasa Inggris*, 2024, III.

² Zulfitri and Nurlaili, 'Sebuah Analisa Faktor – Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Kesulitan Bahasa Inggris pada Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa UMN Al – Washliyah Medan', 2020.

meetings.³ The main goal of extracurricular programs like English clubs is to foster motivation and enthusiasm for English language learning and to provide spaces where this can happen. Students have the choice to participate in the activity or not. The aim of the English club program is to give students opportunities to improve their English skills, especially their ability to communicate in English. Additionally, students have more time to study English, compared to the limited time they receive in regular classes.⁴

In response to the challenges described, UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung has established an English club known as The *English Club of University* (ECU). This community is part of an effort to improve students' speaking skills through interactive and collaborative learning. Participants in this English Club are not only students majoring in English Education Program, but also those from non-English Education Programs. The main purpose of the ECU is to provide an environment that supports students in practicing speaking English actively or as a forum for students from various majors to practice their speaking skills in a supportive environment. ECU is designed to help students improve their speaking skills through various activities such as group discussions, debates, presentations, and games which are presented in English. With ECU, students cannot only deepen their speaking skill, but also get the opportunity to interact across major departments and develop social networks in a relaxed and supportive learning atmosphere.

³ Sonia Fitriany and others, *The Importance of English Club: A Case at English Education Study Program Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang*, English Community Journal, 2021.

⁴ Najim Qani and Hamadameen Shelan, 'The Impact of English Club Activities on EFL Students' Communicative Skills', *ZANCO Journal of Humanity Sciences*, 24.4 (2020)

The activities of the *English Club of University* (ECU) at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung are not guided by lecturers or native English tutors. However, all the activities and programs of the ECU are handled by undergraduate students of English Education study program as the tutors. Even though this English Club is not guided by lecturers or more knowledgeable persons, the programs or activities ran well in terms of the processes and the contributions. The participants participate actively by involving themselves in discussion and collaboration set by the mentors. The set programs and activities have given contributions to both English Education Program and the non-English Education Program. There must be great efforts done by the tutors to make all the participants coming from different departments can learn and practice speaking better.

Regarding to this phenomenon, the researcher wants to explore further how the practice of the English Club of University's tutors at UIN SATU Tulungagung contributes to improving the speaking skills of non-English Education students. This study highlights the effectiveness of the approach used by the tutors, as well as the responses and developments of non-English Education students during this activity. As a matter of fact, the tutors' academic level is equal to that of the participants of the ECU. However, the tutors' roles have offered significant impact of the participants' speaking performance.

So far, the study related to the roles of English Club have been conducted by some previous researcher Ali Elsadig Elnadeef & Hamad Elneil Hamdan

Abdala⁵, Najim Qani & Hamadameen Shelan⁶, Quynh⁷, Fitriany et al⁸, and Maros et al⁹. For example, a study by Ali Elsadig Elnadeef & Hamad Elneil Hamdan Abdala¹⁰ focused on the benefits of activating English clubs at universities in promoting speaking skills and raising awareness among university English teachers about the importance of using them. The research used a descriptive analytical method with questionnaires as the research instrument. The researcher randomly sampled students from the Faculty of Science and Arts-Dhahran Aljanoun, King Kalid University. Based on data analysis, English club and test-based teaching strategy fostered Saudi university students to promote their speaking skills and the English clubs help Saudi students overcome language anxiety and the monotony of routine classroom activities and provide them with joyful opportunities to practice speaking English.

The second study by Fitriany et al¹¹ focused on the importance of English clubs in improving English proficiency among English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang. The research used a descriptive

⁵ Elsadig Ali Elsadig Elnadeef and Ayman Hamad Elneil Hamdan Abdala, 'The Effectiveness of English Club as Free Voluntary Speaking Activity Strategy in Fostering Speaking Skill in Saudi Arabia Context', *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Translation (IJLLT)*, 2019

⁶ Najim Qani and Hamadameen Shelan, 'The Impact of English Club Activities on EFL Students' Communicative Skills'.

⁷ Nguyễn Thị Nhã Quỳnh, 'Students' Perception of Speaking Practice in Step Up English Club at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education', *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 1.3 (2021).

⁸ Fitriany and others, *The Importance of English Club: A Case at English Education Study Program Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang*, v.

⁹ Mahran Abdi Maros, Ridha Ilma, and Renny Kurniasari, 'Speaking Activities Implemented in an English Club: Students' Voices', *The Journal of English Literacy Education: The Teaching and Learning of English as a Foreign Language*, 10.1 (2023), pp. 81–92.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

qualitative research design with questionnaires to collect data, which was analysed using percentage analysis. The population of this study was all English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang. Forty-seven fourth-semester students were selected as samples using a conventional sampling technique. The results showed that students believed that English clubs were beneficial for improving their English skills, especially speaking. After joining the English club, students were able to organize their ideas for speaking, felt more comfortable speaking English, required less effort to understand, and were more willing to communicate in English.

Meanwhile, a study by Maros et al¹² focused on students' responses to various types of speaking activities organized by the English club. A qualitative research approach was used in this case study. The subjects of this research were three students who were members of the English club at a high school in Palembang, and semi-structured interviews were used as instruments. The study revealed that (1) debate activities did not improve speakers' pronunciation, comprehension, or grammar; (2) speaking activities helped students' speaking components, including pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and grammar during speaking; (3) students could practice English speaking skills as well as pronunciation, comprehension, fluency, and grammar through story-based activities; and (4) news broadcasting activities did not help students in teaching and learning vocabulary.

¹² Maros, Ilma, and Kurniasari, '*Speaking Activities Implemented in an English Club: Students' Voices*'.

The previous studies above involved students majoring from English Education Program. However, no study involved students from non- English Education Program as the research participants. That is why, the present study is intended to fill the mentioned gap related to the participants to be involved in the study. Practically, it would be very interesting to investigate practices employed by the ECU in facilitating the non-English Education Program students to improve their speaking proficiency. In other word, the present study is directed to find the secret how ECU facilitates the non-English Education Program students to improve their speaking skill. This discrepancy prompts the researcher to explore how the English clubs design appropriate learning activities for the non-English Education students. This research is also intended to discuss how the tutors, who are still active students of the English Education Program, provide effective and proper guidance to help their members speak English fluently. Therefore, on the basis of the context and the gap of the study above, this study is carried out entitled **The Practice of The English Club of University's Tutors to Improve Non-English Education Students' Speaking Proficiency at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung.**

B. Statement of Research Problems

Based on the research background above, the research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. How do the tutors facilitate the non-English Education students to improve their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation as requirements to be able to speak English well?

2. How do the tutors set activities to stimulate the non-English Education students to practice their speaking?

C. Objectives of the Research

Based on research questions above, the research objectives can be formulated as follows:

1. To identify and elaborate how the tutors facilitate the non-English Education students to improve their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation as requirements to be able to speak English well;
2. To explore the types of activities initiated by the tutors that are specifically designed to encourage and stimulate non-English Education students to practice their speaking.

D. The Significance of the Research

The findings of the present study are expected to be contribute to students, lecturers/tutors and other researchers:

- a. For the students

By knowing the results of this study, they can stimulate the students to participate actively to practice speaking with other participants of ECU supported by the same purpose. Moreover, the students can take the advantage of the importance of learning in collaboration to practice and get feedback during speaking activity.

b. For lecturers/tutors

The results of this study can help the lectures/tutors determine and find out more inviting learning programs and activities to facilitate the students to practice their speaking.

c. For other researchers

The focus of this research is the implementation of the English Club in the speaking training of non-English Education students and the motivation given by the undergraduate students so that students can be consistent while participating in the English Club. The results of this study can later help other researchers to be used as a source of reference in their research with the same research focus.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Research

Based on the research context above, the scope of this study is the practice of tutors of ECU at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung in facilitating the improvement of speaking proficiency among non-English Education students. This study specifically focuses on the tutors of ECU, who are not lecturers or professional teachers, but active undergraduate students from the English Education Study Program. These tutors are the sole subjects of this research.

Practically, this study is limited to examining the strategies and practices implemented by the ECU tutors in guiding and facilitating the improvement of speaking skills among non-English Education students. However, this study does not include an investigation into how the students responded to the tutors'

guidance or the learning strategies they used while participating in ECU activities. It would have been more comprehensive if the study had also explored the students' learning strategies and how they responded to the tutors' instructions during their participation in ECU.

F. Defintion and Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstandings of the terms used in this study, they need to be defined as follows:

1. Speaking proficiency

Speaking skills are a person's ability to convey ideas verbally given by others¹³. Therefore, speaking skills must be possessed by everyone, and speaking must also be in the correct language arrangement so that others can readily accept the language.

2. *English Club of University (ECU)*

English Club of University (ECU) is a program organized by UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung to allow students to improve their English. This English Club was founded by several English students and accompanied by one of the English Education lecturers, Prof. Erna Iftanti, S.S., M. Pd. English Club can be joined by all active students of UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung who have the desire to learn and explore their English proficiency. The activities are regularly held every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the theater room of the Saifuddin Zuhri Building.

¹³ Titin Wijayanti, Suhartono Suhartono, and Juhana Juhana, 'Pengaruh Kecerdasan Emosional dan Kemandirian Belajar Terhadap Keterampilan Berbicara Siswa di Sekolah Dasar', *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 3.4 (2021), pp. 1953–61,

Participants who will join are invited to register themselves through the G-form provided by the tutors by completing their biodata and others. The tutors owned by this English Club are 15 people who are still active students, not experienced teachers. This club is not only attended by English Education students, but is attended by students from all majors. This club has approximately 50 active members from various majors and currently the ECU is coordinated by Nabilla Salsabilla Fisabilillah, a sixth-semester active student of the English Education Study Program, who manages and oversees the running of the club activities. With the English Club, students have more exposure and time in learning English, because they don't get extra time in regular classes.¹⁴

3. Non-English Education Students

Non-English Education students are those who take study programs out of English Language Education Program. These students come from various programs such as Economics, Psychology, Law, or Social Sciences, where English is not the main focus of their academic curriculum.

¹⁴ Aida Yulindasari and Wendi Kusriandi, 'Students' Perception on English Club Extracurricular in Speaking Practices At Madrasah', *ELT Perspective*, 3.2 (2015).