

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six main subsections that lay the foundation of the research: (1) research context explaining the background of the problem; (2) research focus indicating the direction of the study; (3) research objectives; (4) significance of the research, both theoretical and practical; (5) scope and limitation of the study; and (6) operational definitions of key terms. These sections together provide a conceptual framework and clear direction for this research.

1.1 Research Context

In the age of globalization, English has become the most popular global language for communication between countries, cultures, and industries. (Raja et al., 2022). English serves as a global lingua franca, serving not only as a means of interpersonal connection but also as a key component of success in academic, social, and professional domains. (Situmorang, 2022). Instructional policies that support English-Medium Instruction (EMI) as a means of preparing students for global involvement while preserving national identity serve as evidence of the importance of English in Indonesia (Fitriati & Rata, 2020). As a result, mastering English has become a key objective for students at all educational levels, including those in vocational high schools.

In response to the growing global importance of English, Indonesia's Ministry of Education has officially reinstated English as a compulsory subject at the primary level under the 2023 "Merdeka Belajar" curriculum, highlighting the government's effort to strengthen early-stage English learning (Widagsa & Khusnia, 2023).

However, implementing English as a medium of instruction in schools poses challenges such as teacher preparedness and instructional materials, though it offers promising opportunities for enhancing students' language competence from an early age (Paneswari et al., 2024).

To build on the curriculum's foundation, it is essential to prioritize vocational students' English-speaking abilities. Research shows that these students often struggle with fluency and accuracy due to limited practice and psychological factors like nervousness. (Cendra & Sulindra, 2022). Furthermore, a pragmatic teaching approach emphasizing cultural context, real-life communication, and teacher scaffolding has effectively enhanced speaking performance among SMK students. (Anita et al., 2023). These insights affirm that improving speaking skills is crucial for vocational learners to succeed in real-world, professional environments.

In teaching speaking, several aspects must be mastered by the students, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency (Chintya Winda et al., 2023). For vocational students, speaking ability is crucial for effective workplace communication, but many still struggle due to limited practice and a lack of confidence (Amini et al., 2019). As shown in a study conducted at SMK Negeri 3 Sorong, students face difficulties such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and limited vocabulary, which hinder their speaking performance (Maji et al., 2022). Therefore, teachers need to apply innovative and interactive speaking activities to encourage students' participation and confidence (Sari, A. P.; Ramadani, 2022).

Despite the importance of speaking skills for students in professional schools, many students still struggle with developing their speaking abilities. According to

previous research, professional understudies frequently struggle with speaking anxiety, limited vocabulary, language deficiencies, and the need for practice speaking, all of which impair their ability to communicate effectively (Fitriana 2023); (Yusuf et al., 2023). Similar problems were discovered based on preliminary impressions carried out at SMKN 01 Nglegok, where students frequently feel shy and confused about making mistakes when speaking English. These obstacles make it difficult for individuals to clearly express their ideas, successfully focus on communication tasks, and build confidence when speaking English.

Although English is already part of the school curriculum, formal instruction alone has proven insufficient in overcoming speaking challenges. A case study at a vocational institution found that participating in an English Club extracurricular activity led to a 15% increase in speaking ability and improved self-confidence and communication skills among students. Similarly, Desmiyanti (2022) reported that English Clubs in an Indonesian senior high school contributed to increased students' vocabulary, fluency, and self-confidence through a student-centered, culturally relevant approach.

The researcher submitted a research permit request to three schools: SMKN 01 Nglegok, SMK YP Kotamadya Blitar, and SMK Negeri 1 Blitar. However, only SMKN 01 Nglegok and SMK YP responded. A preliminary study was conducted at SMKN 01 Nglegok on October 30, 2024, and at SMK YP Kotamadya Blitar on November 4, 2024. Based on an interview with one of the English teachers at SMK YP, it was found that the use of technology in teaching was rarely implemented, even though students brought their mobile phones every day. The teacher explained that students tended to search for answers on Google without proper guidance, and

the teaching method mostly relied on lectures. Moreover, there was no English Club activity that supported the improvement of students' speaking skills. Meanwhile, SMK Negeri 1 Blitar did not respond to the research request letter, so the learning conditions at that school could not be confirmed. Based on the preliminary study results and the relevance of the activities, SMKN 01 Nglegok was selected as the research site because it has an active English Club that aligns with the research focus, namely improving students' English speaking skills.

To begin this research, the researcher visited SMKN 01 Nglegok to seek information about how English instruction is carried out at the school. During the initial visit, one of the vice principals directed the researcher to meet with Bu Rida, an English teacher known for her understanding of the students' needs and her active involvement in activities that support English language development.

A preliminary interview conducted on October 30, 2024, with Bu Rida revealed that many students were initially shy and afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. However, since the English Club is an extracurricular activity that aligns with their interests, it gradually helps them overcome such fears, including hesitation when speaking. Bu Rida stated:

"Initially, many students in my class were shy and even afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. However, since we have the English Club as an extracurricular English activity, they have become more interested in it. It slowly helps them overcome these fears, such as hesitation when speaking. I think the English Club allows students to practice speaking more actively. They can express their ideas freely without worrying too much about making mistakes."

(W01-INT-BR-30/10/2024)

After joining the English Club, students are involved in various speaking activities designed to build their confidence and fluency. The teacher explained that the club regularly conducts activities such as role-plays, group discussions, storytelling, simple presentations, interactive games, and routine memorization practices, allowing students to express their ideas in a supportive environment. These interactive activities help the students to practice speaking English naturally, reduce their fear of making mistakes, and gradually improve their speaking performance.

"In English Club, we usually practice speaking through role plays, storytelling, simple discussions, games, and routine memorization. This helps them speak more confidently and not be too afraid of making mistakes."

(W02-INT-BR-30/10/2024)

When the researcher asked about the implementation scope, the teacher explained that the English Club participants come from grades X and XI, as the 12th-grade students no longer join extracurricular activities. The meetings are held weekly every Wednesday at 3 PM after school hours. The materials covered include vocabulary memorization, passive voice, verb discussion, and games. However, not all topics are delivered in every meeting; instead, the content depends on the specific focus of each session. Speaking practice is also incorporated through casual daily conversations between the mentor and the students to help them get used to speaking English. In addition, after the material explanation, students are usually given short exercises to practice the materials they have just learned.

"The participants are from grades 10 and 11, because grade 12 no longer participates in extracurricular activities. English Club meetings are held every Wednesday at 3pm after school. The materials include

vocabulary memorization, discussion of passive voice, verb, and games. But, in one meeting, not all materials are directly discussed. Speaking is also not every meeting, but is often done in daily conversations between the speaker and friends so that they get used to it. Usually after the material is finished, there is a little practice or exercise so they can practice directly.”

(W03-INT-BR-30/10/2024)

Regarding the assessment, the teacher explained that, for now, no formal test is applied in the English Club. The evaluation is mostly informal, conducted through daily speaking practices, simple vocabulary memorization, grammar exercises, and games during each session. After delivering the material, students are given exercises related to the topic. However, the teacher added that if the students’ abilities continue to improve, a more formal test may be conducted in the future.

"For now, there is no formal test. We conduct speaking practices every meeting, such as simple conversations, vocabulary memorization, passive voice, grammar exercises, and games. After delivering the material, students usually do short exercises related to the topic. If later they show more improvement, we may conduct a formal test to evaluate their skills. The main purpose of this English Club is to provide a space for students to practice their English speaking skills and build their confidence”

(W04-INT-BR-30/10/2024)

In addition to its role in regular speaking practice, the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok also played a significant role in preparing students for various English competitions. According to the club advisor, before the temporary break and prior to her involvement, the club had actively helped students participate in inter-school English competitions, such as English drama performances and speech contests. In

the future, the advisor plans to strengthen this function by focusing the club's activities on organizing and preparing students for various events and competitions.

"In addition to speaking practice, the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok used to be very helpful for inter-school English competitions. Before the temporary break and before I joined, the club had previously participated in competitions such as English drama performances and speech contests under the guidance of the previous advisor. In the future, I also plan to focus the English Club activities on such events and competitions."

(W05-INT-BR-30/10/2024)

Furthermore, the teacher explained that although the number of participants after the program resumed was relatively small, with only seven students, they enjoyed participating in the English Club and showed great enthusiasm. Over time, the small group setting allowed them to build closer relationships and feel more comfortable practicing English. Gradually, the students overcame their initial nervousness and participated more confidently in various speaking activities.

"After the program resumed, there were only seven students, but they were very enthusiastic and enjoyed the English Club activities. Because the number is small, they get along faster and are no longer shy when practicing speaking. As time goes by, they become more confident in participating in the activities."

(W06-INT-BR-30/10/2024)

From the interview, the teacher explained that the English Club plays an important role in developing students' speaking skills and boosting their confidence. This extracurricular activity allows students to practice speaking regularly and prepares them for the demands of the workplace, where English skills are increasingly required. Although the number of participants is relatively small

after the club resumed, the teacher observed that the students are highly enthusiastic, motivated, and more comfortable interacting with one another. Through various activities such as vocabulary exercises, grammar practice, games, memorization, and daily speaking exercises, students gradually build their fluency and speaking confidence.

Previous studies have also demonstrated the significant influence of anxiety on students' speaking performance. One such study by (Amini et al., 2019) highlighted the relationship between students' anxiety levels and their speaking performance in an EFL context. The study employed a quantitative method to analyze the correlation between anxiety and oral presentation performance. The results showed that students with higher levels of anxiety tended to have lower speaking performance, particularly in oral presentations. This indicates that anxiety is one of the major obstacles in developing speaking skills, which suggests the need for supportive speaking environments such as English Club activities.

Similarly, Putri (2015) explored students' perceptions of speaking skills in vocational high schools through her research entitled “Students' Perception on Speaking Skill of the Eleventh Grade Students at SMKN 1 Salatiga in the Academic Year of 2014/2015.”

Furthermore, Pratiwi et al. (2024) investigated the use of the Direct Instruction Model in teaching speaking ability to vocational high school students through the research entitled “Teaching Speaking Ability of Vocational High School Students through Direct Instruction Model”. The research employs a quasi-experimental design with a sample of vocational high school students. The results indicated that

the Direct Instruction Model effectively improved students' speaking ability, as it provided clear guidance, structured practice, and opportunities for students to participate and receive immediate feedback during the learning process actively.

The above studies provide valuable insights into efforts to improve students' speaking skills, especially in English language learning. However, the implementation of speaking activities through extracurricular programs such as English Club at the Vocational High School (SMK) level is still limited. This research seeks to fill the gap by implementing speaking activities in English Club programs to help vocational students improve their speaking skills. Therefore, based on the interviews and review of previous research, this study aims to explore how English Club contributes to improving students' speaking skills by using qualitative case study method to examine its implementation at SMKN 01 Nglegok, as stated in this thesis entitled "Speaking Instruction through English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok.

1.2 Research Focus

Building on the background described above, this research primarily sub focuses on examining how speaking instruction is implemented through the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar. The specific aspects of this research focus are detailed as follows:

1) Planning the implementation of English club to enhance speaking abilities

This study investigates how English teachers design and plan speaking instruction activities within the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar, guided by the question: How do English teachers plan the implementation of

the English Club to enhance students' speaking skills at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar?

2) The Implementation of English club to enhance speaking abilities

This study examines how the planned speaking instruction is put into practice through the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar, as reflected in the question: How do English teachers implement the English Club program to improve students' speaking skills at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar?

3) The Evaluation of English club to enhance speaking abilities

This study explores how English teachers evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of speaking instruction delivered through the English Club, as outlined in the question: How do English teachers evaluate the implementation of the English Club in enhancing students' speaking skills at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar?

4) The Challenges of Speaking Instruction through English Club to enhance speaking abilities

This study also aims to identify the challenges faced by teachers and students, as well as the strategies or solutions proposed when implementing the teaching of speaking through the English Club, guided by the questions: What challenges are encountered in teaching speaking through the English Club, and what solutions are proposed at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research focus described above, the objectives of this study are to:

1. To describe how English teachers plan speaking instruction through the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar.
2. To describe how speaking instruction is implemented through the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar.
3. To describe how English teachers evaluate the effectiveness of speaking instruction through the English Club.
4. To describe the challenges encountered and explore the solutions proposed in conducting speaking instruction through the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok Blitar.

1.4 Research Significance

The significance of this research is divided into two aspects, namely theoretical significance and practical significance, which are described as follows: The significance of this study can be viewed from two perspectives: theoretical significance and practical significance, as detailed below:

A. Theoretical Significance

1. Contribution to English Language Teaching Research

This study enriches the field of English language teaching by exploring how speaking instruction can be effectively integrated into extracurricular activities, particularly through English Clubs. It contributes to the existing

literature by demonstrating the role of English Club activities in enhancing speaking skills among vocational high school students, who require practical communication competence for their future professional environments.

2. Development of Speaking Instruction Strategies

The findings of this study offer insights into effective strategies and instructional practices that can improve students' speaking abilities through non-formal learning settings. By examining planning, implementation, and evaluation processes, this research provides theoretical references for educators and researchers interested in integrating speaking practice into extracurricular programs, thereby supporting future academic discussions on speaking instruction in English as a foreign language contexts.

B. Practical Significance

1. For Teachers

This study provides practical insights and concrete examples of how English Club activities can be used to improve students' speaking skills. It offers teachers a variety of speaking practice strategies suitable for extracurricular settings, helping to build students' confidence and fluency. Furthermore, by identifying common challenges and proposing solutions, this research supports teachers in designing speaking activities that better address students' vocational needs and speaking difficulties.

2. For Students

This study benefits students by highlighting the value of participating in English Club activities, which offer a supportive and relaxed environment for speaking practice. Such participation can help students gradually reduce

speaking anxiety, build self-confidence, and improve fluency. Additionally, through English Club activities, students can better prepare for job interviews, workplace communication, and other real-world speaking situations relevant to their vocational fields.

1.5 Research Scope & Limitations

A. Scope

Study focuses on the implementation of English club to enhance speaking abilities at SMKN 01 Nglegok, Blitar. It specifically examines four aspects:

1. How does the English teacher plan the implementation of the English Club to enhance students' speaking skills?
2. How is the implementation of speaking instruction carried out through various English Club activities to enhance students' speaking skills?
3. How does the teacher evaluate students' speaking progress within the English Club program?
4. What challenges are encountered in conducting the English Club to improve speaking skills, and what solutions are proposed to address these challenges?

The study is limited to the activities and experiences of the English Club during the academic year 2024/2025, involving active club participants from grades X and XI, and the current English Club supervisor.

B. Limitations

This study was conducted only at one vocational school, SMKN 01 Nglegok, which may not represent English Club practices at other schools. Data collection was limited to interviews with the current club supervisor, without including the club's previous initiator due to changes in management. Furthermore, the number of active participants during the research period was only seven students, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The study also focuses exclusively on speaking instruction; other language skills such as reading, writing, and grammar mastery are outside the scope of this research.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. English Club

According to Fitriyani (2015), an English Club is an extracurricular program designed to give students additional opportunities to practice English through informal and interactive activities. Similarly, Desmiyanti (2022) describes English Club as a student-centered forum where learners can improve their language skills beyond the formal classroom setting.

In this study, English Club refers specifically to the extracurricular activity at SMKN 01 Nglegok, which provides students with opportunities to engage in discussions, vocabulary memorization, passive voice practice, games, and routine speaking exercises aimed at building confidence and fluency in speaking English.

2. Speaking Instruction

Brown (2001) defines speaking instruction as the process of designing activities and tasks to develop learners' ability to communicate orally in the target language. According to Richards (2008), speaking instruction involves various techniques, from dialogues and role plays to discussions and presentations, to enhance fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence. Brown (2001) defines speaking instruction as the process of designing activities and tasks to develop learners' ability to communicate orally in the target language. According to Richards (2008), speaking instruction involves various techniques, from dialogues and role plays to discussions and presentations, to enhance fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence.

In this study, speaking instruction refers to the teaching and learning activities organized within the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok, including structured speaking practices, casual conversations between students and instructors, and interactive speaking tasks conducted to improve students' oral communication skills.

3. SMKN 01 Nglegok

Vocational High Schools (SMK) in Indonesia aim to equip students with practical and professional skills relevant to the job market (Fitriati & Rata, 2020).

In this study, SMKN 01 Nglegok refers to a vocational high school located in Nglegok, Blitar, East Java, which organizes English Club as an extracurricular program to support students' English proficiency.

4. Case Study

Yin (2018) defines case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. In this study, the case study design is used to explore how speaking instruction is implemented through the English Club at SMKN 01 Nglegok.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses the relevant theories and previous studies related to the research. It includes the definition of Speaking, English Club, previous studies, and the conceptual framework

2.1 Speaking Instruction

2.1.1 Definition of Speaking Instruction

According to Safitri (2018), speaking is a fundamental component of language learning that enables individuals to communicate ideas, emotions, and intentions effectively. As an active and productive skill, speaking involves not only linguistic competence but also confidence, fluency, and the ability to interact spontaneously in real-time communication. Mastering speaking skills requires continuous practice and exposure to authentic language use, which can be achieved through various interactive methods and supportive environments. Effective speaking instruction should focus on both accuracy and fluency, encouraging students to express themselves meaningfully while gradually improving their grammatical and lexical control. However, teaching speaking also presents several challenges, such as managing students' anxiety, encouraging active participation, and providing adequate feedback. These factors must be carefully addressed to create a learning environment that fosters communication and builds students' confidence in using the language.