

Creating English Environment at School Through English Club Extracurricular

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Abstract

English proficiency has become something that should be mastered in this modern era. The limitations of educational institutions make the students lack mastery of the English language itself. Some schools solve the problem by making English extracurricular a “container” for students to express their interest and potential in English. This study aims to find out how the existence of an extracurricular English club can create a comfortable English environment for students. This study uses qualitative research with descriptive methods conducted through interviews and observations over 10 students as the respondents. The techniques for analyzing the data in this study used the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data display, and drawing the conclusions. The results of the study found that the English club was a good means for students to practice English, as well as preparing students to be more mature and ready to compete.

Keywords: *English Club, Environment, Extracurricular, School*

Introduction

English is one of the important components in the world of education in this modern era. This is evidenced by all levels of education that have required English lessons in their curriculum. It's assumed a significant part on the world and it is utilized in many fields of life, for example, in legislative issues, financial aspects, social, amusement, instruction, etc. In Indonesia, English is instructed as an unknown dialect and as necessary subject in the educational program. It is begun from primary school level to college level which comprises of four abilities to be specific perusing, tuning in, talking, and composing (Hasanah, 2020).

Students have studied English since they were in elementary school to high school. But sometimes, the essence of learning and teaching English seems to be considered inappropriate. At the beginner and middle school levels, students are constantly focused on studying written materials, as well as various theories. While in high school, students usually focus on grammatical lessons and memorize all the formulas. The teacher should also focus on using English as well as habituation in everyday life because habituation is the most appropriate way to learn a language. Djaali (2013: 128) reveals that habituation is a way of acting that is obtained through repeated learning, which in the end becomes permanent and automatic.

Amin (2015: 57) mentions the indicators of habituation are as follows: (1) Routine, the goal is to familiarize children with doing something well. (2) Spontaneous, the goal is to provide education spontaneously, especially in getting used to being polite and commendable. (3) Exemplary, aims to set an example for children. Therefore, the teacher's role in the application of English and the school environment is very important in the progress of learning English. At

international schools, they apply a bilingual system that focuses on the students' speaking habits. Not only international schools, but several national private schools also apply this system to their learning at school, both inside and outside the classroom. Even though the time or class hours are limited, the teacher should be able to create a learning atmosphere, as well as a comfortable bilingual environment. So that students can feel the atmosphere of effective English learning (Harisiswana, 2017).

Extracurricular is a special program provided by the school as a student support facility outside of classroom activities. The establishment of extracurricular programs is to provide space for students to develop their talents and interests, and students are free to choose whether they want to participate or not. The English Club is a program organized by the school to allow students to improve their English. With the English Club, students have more exposure and time in learning English, because they don't get extra time in regular classes (Yuliandasari, A., & Kusriandi, W., 2015).

Improving students' English takes a place to develop student's talents and interests. Talent is an inherent ability in a person which is innate from birth and is related to the structure of the brain (Siteatava, 2013). Therefore, several schools provide special facilities to answer this problem, namely by holding an English extracurricular which is commonly called an English club. According to Herpratiwi and Purnomo (2015:3), English Club is an extracurricular activity that aims to develop students' abilities in the field of English. This English club itself has a different system from formal English classes. Students freely choose to take part in this activity or not, so it is certain that students who take part in this activity have a strong interest in English or even feel lacking in English or could be students who need the English environment itself. English club is a media bridging one person with the others in which the purpose is not only to improve their speaking abilities but also to improve students' motivation and build up their confidence to speak as much as possible (Destrianti, E., S, S., & Hati, G. M., 2018). English club is one of the alternative ways to develop the speaking ability of the students. Furthermore, the English club becomes a facilitator for students to improve their ability in mastering English skills especially speaking skills.

This English club activity generally exists from elementary school to high-level education with the aim that students can develop their talents and potential in themselves, as well as create a comfortable English-speaking environment. In some schools, the English club has even become a forum to prepare students to take part in competitions held between schools. This has a very positive impact on both schools and students. This activity is certainly useful to avoid bad possibilities for students who have too many free hours, as well as the school's efforts to become facilitators for students in channeling their interests.

Extracurricular activities are activities that are conducted outside of common subject hours (the outside of intra curricular), and most of the materials are outside of intra curricular as well. Its main purpose is to facilitate or develop student abilities that meet his or her interest and talent, broadening knowledge, learning to socialize, enriching skills, using their free time, etc (Azadi, S., Aliakbari, M., & Azizifar, A., 2015). Actually, English Club is a learning that the main point is also back to the lessons in the classroom. However, what they have in common is that they provide opportunities for English learners to practice English in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere (Tom, 2013). The English club itself has different concepts depending on the school which also adapts to the needs of its students. In some schools, English club activities have teaching templates that refer to modules whose variations are usually determined and repeated continuously, for example, there are public speaking, storytelling,

listening, reading comprehension, and writing. Usually, this kind of school is an example of a school that channels the interests of its students as well as prepares them to be able to compete.

The point of the English club program held by school is to allow understudies opportunity to work on their English particularly their talking ability and have more openings and time in learning English, since they don't get additional time in normal class. Another concept from another English club is to provide lesson materials and package them in a more relaxed and brief manner. Usually also accompanied by games and quizzes which aim to warm up as well as a cool down, which makes students maintain their concentration and understanding even in non-formal situations. At this point, the teacher still underlines the importance of the environment to accommodate students in expressing themselves in English. This is of course a very innovative breakthrough, seeing that this extracurricular is 100% facilitated by the school and is free of charge if it burdens the parents.

In its development, schools have different ways of building the "atmosphere" and environment for speaking English. However, the existence of this English club may be the right means for students to hone their speaking skills. According to Taylor (1990) language acquisition is influenced by three important variables, (a) the language acquired, (b) the child who acquires the language, and (c) the environment in which the language is acquired. A child can acquire language because he is equipped with a physical condition that allows him to use language and his cognitive abilities. English club has been used to supplement and motivate the regular instructional work. Because the nature of the club programs and the frequency of the meeting have varied with the capabilities and enthusiasm of his classes for this form of activity and with their capacity to profit from such situations.

Method

This study uses qualitative research with a descriptive approach. Descriptive characteristics not only describe situations or events but also explain relationships, test, hypotheses, make predictions and get the meaning and implications of a problem to be solved (Rukajat, 2018:1). The techniques for collecting the data in this study used interviews and direct observation, and the techniques for analyzing the data in this study used the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data display, and drawing the conclusions. The researcher focuses on how the existence of an English club extracurricular can create and build an English-speaking environment in schools. The researcher describes the students' views on how the English club can provide a comfort zone, as well as improve students' language skills.

Based on the statement above, this research is focused on analyzing students' perceptions of the existence of English club activities on students' English skills. Researchers conducted interviews involving 10 students as the representatives. An interview is a way of collecting data through conversations between researchers and research subjects or respondents or data sources (Sugiyono, 2015). In this case, the interviewer conducts a conversation by asking several questions so that the interviewee is willing to express his opinion. It employs interviews, diaries, notebooks, classroom observations and immersions, and open-ended surveys to collect, analyze, and interpret data from visual and textual materials, as well as oral history (Zohrabi, 2013). The researcher uses an unstructured interview method, which is free and does not use systematic guidelines, but rather an interview guide that outlines the problem.

Results and Discussion

The researcher also made brief observations during the English club activities. The researcher also conducted interviews with 5 students from different classes and asked several questions related to how the English club can create a strong English environment, with the following questions:

Table 1. Interview Questions

No	Question	Answer
1.	Why did you choose the English club extracurricular?	
2.	What skills do you hope to improve after joining the English club?	
3.	How do you feel when you study in a formal class and an English club?	
4.	Is there a skill that improved the most after you joined the English club?	
5.	How do you feel about joining the English club?	

After conducting several observations and interviews, the researchers found the results described as follows; (1) Many students like English, so they have a great interest in exploring their knowledge of English through the English club. They feel that limited lesson hours are one of the factors that make them experience limitations in learning English, especially the lack of time to practice speaking. Speaking is one of the skills that must be mastered and really must be able to be practiced in the field with other people as the interlocutor (Astrawan, 2013). Therefore, the English club is a means for students to practice speaking, (2) Students learn a lot from wider media. When learning in the classroom, the limited time makes the teacher unable to use many different media, and often cannot even provide games for warming up/cooling down. English clubs can make students explore themselves with different non-formal media, such as listening to songs, watching short films, and others. Tutors also provide games to train students' motor skills, so students don't get bored.

(3) The perceived difference between formal learning and English club is quite large. This, of course, cannot be compared, judging from the English club which focuses on students' specialization. However, students are helped by the English club. They became more comfortable with a non-judgmental environment, even some children who previously did not like English, gradually improved in terms of speaking practice. (4) The English club does not study English based on books, the topics are light and more about what happens in everyday life. So students can ask more questions about what makes them curious. Therefore, learning is not centered on the teacher, but students are also actively asking and expressing their opinions.

(5) From the teacher's perspective, the teacher is greatly helped by the English club. Teachers can distribute material that the average student does not understand, and can also provide input to tutors about what needs to be improved in student abilities. On the other hand, tutors can also convey student complaints that occur during the English club. All of them are continuous for the understanding and improvement of students' English. On the student side, teachers can also prepare students for inter-school English competence. Students become more prepared and have provisions that they can use continuously, not just practicing and learning when competitions are going to be held. (6) Teachers sometimes have difficulty finding the right tutor for students, because it takes good creativity and can build easy-going classes so students don't get bored.

(7) The material studied at the English Club is not limited. The material is grouped by dividing it per week. In one week there is 1 meeting, which means 4 times in a month. In 4 meetings, 2 meetings in the first and third weeks discussed light material in the form of

exercises, games, and quizzes. Meanwhile, in the second and fourth weeks, the material provided is specific skills for predetermined development, as well as to prepare students for competitions. In this case, the English club refers to examples of competitions that are often held between schools, namely Storytelling, Speech, Spelling Bee, and Debate (specifically for grades 8 and 9). So in 4 meetings in one month, the English Club does not only focus on creating an English language environment but also prepares students to be ready to compete.

(8) The purpose of the English club to create an English language environment is to increase students' confidence in English and focus on improving the four English skills, namely Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing. However, in this case, both the researcher and the teacher agreed that the students' speaking ability was the most significant improvement. The student also revealed that he was not ashamed to just answer questions, because even though he was wrong, the tutor still appreciated and corrected the answers. While at the English club, they are also not afraid of making mistakes and affecting their grades, because this extracurricular is not mandatory, and only by participating in attendance, students will get additional marks.

The results of this study are also confirmed by Hamadameen (2020), which shows that English clubs provide opportunities for English learners to practice using English in a fun and varied learning environment. Based on the data from the questionnaire, most of the students admitted that the English Club really helped them in increasing their confidence in English. The students are very interested in joining the English Club because in there are various activities in each meeting, and it is really different from the activities in the regular classroom.

Conclusion

The four skills in English, namely speaking, reading, listening, and writing, are closely related to the process of learning English. Apart from having their respective important roles in the learning process, these four skills are also a benchmark for students' abilities and understanding of English. The English club creates an environment that at least allows students to express themselves in their respective English skills. This activity can "fish" the potential that is already inside, but sometimes there are obstacles when showing it. Storytelling and speech in the scope of the English club class will increase insight as well as speaking skills. Likewise, practicing reading a story, practicing listening to a song, also writing about their own experiences will bring up their ideas and thoughts that we don't know about. All of these activities encourage students to be freer in their thinking, and will also foster their critical thinking outside the formal classroom. Likewise in a competition, students will not be surprised or afraid when asked by the teacher to take part in the competition. They will be more confident and active in any activity because they feel they are "ready" and their mentality will be honed day by day. Students will not hesitate to show their abilities, because they are used to practicing in the English club. The essence of this research is that the English club has an important role in creating a friendly bilingual environment for students and the advancement of their English. Although there may still be some schools in Indonesia that have not facilitated English clubs as one of the extracurricular activities, the researcher hopes that in the future schools will be aware of the importance of English clubs.

Acknowledgment

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