CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter consist of background, focus of the research, problem statement, objective of the research, significance of the research and scope of the research.

A. Background

The Indonesian government has placed a strong emphasis on developing 21st century competencies in education, with English proficiency being one of the most crucial skills (Kemendikbud, 2021). Under the Kurikulum Merdeka, students are encouraged to become independent learners who can compete in a global environment. One of the initiatives supporting this goal is the integration of extracurricular programs, including English Clubs, into school activities. These clubs are promoted through Permendikbud No. 62 of 2014, which highlights the importance of non-formal education in developing students' potential. English Clubs create a less rigid and more student-centered environment for practicing English (Madina & Sidabutar, 2024). This informal setting complements classroom learning by offering additional opportunities for language exposure.

English Clubs have been implemented in many schools as platforms to support English communication, especially speaking skills. Unlike formal lessons that often focus on grammar and exams, English Club activities promote natural and practical use of language (Richards, 2015). Students engage in debates, drama, storytelling, and games, which stimulate their interest and motivation (Harmer, 2015). These activities not only help improve fluency but also boost students'

confidence in using English in public (Seong et al., 2019). Moreover, they provide a social learning atmosphere where students learn from each other. As a result, English Clubs are seen as effective tools for enhancing communicative competence (Wahyuniati et al., 2020).

Despite their potential benefits, English Clubs are not equally effective in all schools. Some institutions run them with clear goals, structured schedules, and committed facilitators, while others lack planning, consistency, or support, making the club less impactful (Madina & Sidabutar, 2024). This variation often results from differences in resources, teacher availability, and student interest. In some cases, English Clubs function only to fulfill administrative requirements without real engagement. Consequently, the effectiveness of English Clubs depends heavily on how they are organized and maintained.

This inconsistency is particularly concerning in vocational schools where communication skills are vital for students' future careers. Vocational students are expected to use English in job interviews, workplace interactions, and customer service (Maming et al., 2024). Many of them, however, do not specialize in English, so they need learning environments that are engaging but less formal. English Clubs can fill this gap by offering practical speaking opportunities outside the curriculum. Through real-life simulations and social learning, these clubs provide relevant language experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Therefore, their role in vocational education deserves serious attention.

English Clubs are also beneficial from a psychological perspective. Research by Astari and Hadi (2022) indicates that such clubs help reduce anxiety and foster self-confidence through informal learning. Seong et al. (2019) support this view by showing that students gain fluency and vocabulary more easily in relaxed, peer-driven settings. However, the impact is not the same for every student. Some still struggle with self-doubt, inconsistent attendance, or lack of facilitator support (Lestari & Mahmud, 2020). These challenges limit the full potential of the English Club experience. Thus, further investigation is needed to understand which factors support or hinder students' growth.

Observations conducted at SMKN 7 Pinrang revealed a range of English Club activities, including English Camp, scrabble, singing performances, and weekly games. Many students participated actively and showed enthusiasm during group-based tasks. Some students reported that the club helped them become more confident in speaking and allowed them to build friendships with peers who also wanted to learn English. However, the use of English during sessions was inconsistent, with students occasionally switching to Indonesian. This suggests that while students are engaged, they may still lack confidence or vocabulary to speak fully in English. These findings reflect both the strengths and challenges of the English Club at SMKN 7 Pinrang.

Although some previous studies have explored English Club participation, most have focused on student perceptions rather than actual learning outcomes. For example, Badarudin (2024) analyzed students' emotional and behavioral attitudes

toward English Club activities. While these studies offer valuable insight into motivation, they do not explain how participation influences speaking skills over time. There remains a gap in the literature about the direct relationship between club engagement and communicative competence. This is especially important for vocational students who require English for functional use (Maming et al., 2024). Therefore, it is necessary to go beyond perception-based research and explore real learning experiences.

The absence of such research highlights the need to explore how students experience learning English through extracurricular activities like English Clubs. Not all students benefit equally, and their individual reflections can reveal which practices are most effective. A phenomenological approach is well suited for this purpose, as it focuses on lived experience rather than general assumptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By exploring students' narratives, researchers can uncover practical insights into what works and what does not. These insights can inform future program design and support more inclusive language development. As a result, English Club programs can be improved based on evidence, not assumptions.

This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the experiences of English Club participants at SMKN 7 Pinrang using a phenomenological approach. The research focuses on how students perceive their progress in speaking, what challenges they face, and what aspects of the club support their learning. It will analyze the influence of peer interaction, activity type, and facilitator roles on students' development. Data will be collected through interviews, observations, and

documents to provide a comprehensive understanding. The findings are expected to help teachers, school leaders, and policymakers enhance extracurricular learning. Ultimately, this study will contribute to the development of more effective English Clubs, especially in vocational education.

B. Focus of the Research

After outlining the background and rationale of the study, it is necessary to define the specific focus that will guide the investigation.

This study focuses on exploring students' lived experiences in learning English through their participation in English Club activities at SMKN 7 Pinrang. English Clubs offer an informal and interactive environment where students can develop language skills in a more relaxed setting. Unlike formal classrooms, these clubs emphasize student participation through role-plays, games, discussions, and performances. Such activities are known to increase motivation, reduce anxiety, and improve fluency (Astari & Hadi, 2022; Seong et al., 2019). This makes English Clubs an important complement to formal English instruction. The study examines how students engage with English in this extracurricular context and how these experiences influence their overall language learning.

In addition, the research explores how peer interaction, facilitator roles, and activity types shape students' engagement and progress. The focus extends beyond linguistic outcomes to include emotional and social aspects such as self-confidence and communication willingness. A phenomenological approach is employed to capture the depth and complexity of students' personal reflections (Creswell, 2018).

This approach allows the researcher to gather rich descriptions of students' experiences rather than generalize their performance. It provides an opportunity to understand learning from the perspective of those directly involved. The findings will offer practical insights into how English Clubs contribute to holistic language development in vocational school settings (Maming et al., 2024).

C. Problem Statement

This study seeks to explore the dynamics of English language learning within the context of extracurricular activities, specifically through the English Club at SMKN 7 Pinrang. In line with this purpose, the research aims to answer the following questions:

1. How are the students' experiences in learning English through English Club activities at SMKN 7 Pinrang.
2. What are benefits and challenges of learning English through English Club activities at SMKN 7 Pinrang.

D. Objective of the Research

In line with the research questions above, this study is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore students' experiences in learning English through their participation in English Club activities at SMKN 7 Pinrang.

2. To identify the perceived benefits and challenges students of learning English through English Club activities at SMKN 7 Pinrang.

E. Significance of the Research

This study contributes to the academic discourse on language acquisition through extracurricular activities, providing both theoretical and practical benefits.

1. Theoretical Significance

This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of how extracurricular activities, particularly English Clubs, support second language acquisition in EFL contexts. It emphasizes the role of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in promoting authentic and meaningful interaction among learners (Richards, 2016). The study also aligns with Experiential Learning Theory, which views learning as a process shaped by reflection on real experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). English Club activities provide natural opportunities for students to engage in language use that connects directly with their lives and interests. In addition, this research supports the value of informal learning environments, which are increasingly recognized as essential to learner autonomy and lifelong learning (Schugurensky, 2020). Overall, the study reinforces modern language education frameworks by highlighting the effectiveness of interactive, student-centered, and socially-driven learning contexts.

2. Practical Significance

This study is expected to offer both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of English language education, particularly in the context of informal learning environments such as English Clubs. The significance of this research is outlined as follows:

a. For Teachers

This research highlights the various benefits that students can gain through active participation in English Club activities. Informal environments like English Clubs help reduce students' anxiety and allow them to practice speaking more freely (Astari & Hadi, 2022). Activities such as games, storytelling, and discussions promote vocabulary development, speaking fluency, and confidence. Students also gain motivation as they learn collaboratively with peers and experience real-life communication. These positive experiences may encourage them to take ownership of their language learning and explore English beyond classroom boundaries. Ultimately, the study empowers students to value English Club as a meaningful and supportive space for improving their language skills.

b. For Students

Teachers can benefit from this study by gaining insights into students' needs, motivations, and learning preferences in informal settings. The findings can help teachers design more engaging and communicative English Club activities that align with students' real-life use of language (Richards, 2016). Applying strategies from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), teachers can create low-anxiety environments that promote student interaction and confidence (Seong et al., 2019). Furthermore, the study encourages teachers to act as facilitators who guide discussions and support peer learning, rather than dominate instruction. This approach allows teachers to respond to students more personally and adaptively. As

a result, teachers are better equipped to enhance speaking opportunities and foster meaningful English practice beyond the classroom.

c. For Schools

This study provides recommendations for schools to improve the quality and sustainability of their English Club programs. Schools are encouraged to set clear objectives, assign committed facilitators, and ensure consistent scheduling of activities (Maming et al., 2024). Well-structured English Clubs support national goals related to 21st-century skills such as communication, collaboration, and confidence. These extracurricular programs can increase student engagement and complement academic learning outcomes. The findings also suggest that English Clubs should not be treated as optional, but as an essential part of holistic language education. By investing in effective club management, schools can enhance students' English proficiency in both academic and real-world contexts..

d. For Future Researchers

This study contributes methodologically by applying a phenomenological approach to investigate students' real experiences in learning English. It demonstrates how interviews, observations, and document analysis can be used to explore non-formal learning in depth (Creswell, 2018). To ensure research credibility, it applies validation strategies such as triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Future researchers can build upon this study to examine other informal or extracurricular environments. The study

also opens new avenues for exploring learner motivation and autonomy in second language acquisition. Thus, it serves as a strong foundation for further qualitative research in EFL education.

F. Scope of the Research

To ensure clarity and focus, it is important to define the boundaries of this study. This section outlines the specific scope of the research based on its disciplinary foundation, thematic content, and research activities. By clearly identifying these aspects, the study aims to maintain coherence and relevance throughout the research process. The following subsections explain the scope of the research in three key dimensions: by discipline, by content, and by activity.

1. By Discipline

This research is framed within the field of applied linguistics, focusing on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in non-formal educational settings. It draws on contemporary theories of language acquisition that emphasize communication, learner autonomy, and social interaction (Richards, 2016; Schugurensky, 2020). The study explores how extracurricular programs like English Clubs influence students' engagement with English and support their language development in meaningful ways. As English is a key competency in vocational education, the study focuses on practical and communicative use of the language among students at SMKN 7 Pinrang. This research integrates perspectives from Communicative Language Teaching and Informal Learning Theory to address how learning happens outside traditional classrooms (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

Therefore, the disciplinary scope includes EFL education, informal learning, and student-centered pedagogical practices.

2. By Content

Content wise, the research investigates students' lived experiences in learning English through English Club activities. It examines how learners interact with English in non-formal settings, build speaking fluency, and develop motivation and confidence (Astari & Hadi, 2022). The study focuses on various aspects of learning, including vocabulary acquisition, peer support, emotional responses, and engagement with club activities. The scope also includes how facilitators and activity types affect student participation and perceived learning outcomes (Seong et al., 2019). While speaking is an important aspect, the study does not limit itself to it alone, but considers overall English development. This comprehensive focus allows a deeper understanding of how English Clubs contribute to holistic language learning.

3. By Activity

The scope of research activity is limited to a single research site: SMKN 7 Pinrang, which has an active English Club. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study collects data through interviews, observations, and document analysis to understand student experiences in depth (Creswell, 2018). Participants are selected purposively, ensuring that they have been actively involved in English Club activities for at least one semester. The researcher observes interactions, behaviors, and language use during club meetings without interfering. Triangulation of data sources is applied to enhance the credibility and validity of

the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). By limiting the research setting and participants, the study aims to achieve rich, contextualized, and trustworthy results.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE RIVIEW

This chapter reviews relevant literature related to English Club activities and students' speaking skills. It covers previous research findings and key theoretical concepts that support the study. These include Communicative Language Teaching, Experiential Learning, and other frameworks that explain how English Clubs help learners develop confidence and fluency in speaking. The literature serves as the foundation for analyzing students' experiences in this phenomenological research.

A. Some Related Research Findings

Kolb and Kolb (2017) emphasized that learning is a holistic process involving the transformation of experience into knowledge. Their Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) consists of four cyclical stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. This model suggests that effective learning happens when individuals actively engage in experiences, reflect on them, conceptualize the meaning, and apply what they have learned. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), this theory aligns well with the activities conducted in English Clubs. Students participating in club-based learning are exposed to real-life language use, allowing them to practice speaking, collaborate with peers, and reflect on their performance. Thus, Kolb and Kolb's theory provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how students develop their English skills through experiential activities in English Clubs.

Astari and Hadi (2022) explored the role of English Clubs in helping Indonesian high school students improve their speaking skills and confidence. Their research found that students who regularly participated in English Club sessions developed better fluency, reduced speaking anxiety, and showed more willingness to participate in class discussions. Activities such as storytelling, language games, and small group presentations allowed students to practice in a relaxed setting. The study emphasizes that informal language environments are essential for building communication skills. It also highlights the importance of teacher facilitation and peer support in encouraging student participation. The authors concluded that English Clubs are effective for creating low-stress environments conducive to speaking practice.

Seong et al. (2019) investigated how peer-assisted learning within English Clubs contributes to students' oral communication abilities. Conducted in the context of extracurricular programs in Korea, the study showed that learners working in pairs or small groups demonstrated improvements in vocabulary, fluency, and sentence construction. The research emphasized that structured collaboration among peers enhances learning by offering both modeling and scaffolding opportunities. Students also developed better pronunciation and gained the confidence to speak publicly. The findings support the idea that English Clubs can serve as informal learning communities. The study suggests integrating peer support systems into English language programs to maximize student outcomes.

Wahyuniati et al. (2020) examined students' involvement in English Speaking Clubs and its effects on speaking fluency. The study found that consistent participation in speaking-focused extracurricular activities resulted in greater spontaneous speaking, increased motivation, and reduced speaking errors. Students expressed that club activities helped them apply vocabulary they had learned in class and improve their sentence fluency. It was also observed that the variety of English Club activities kept learners engaged. The study concludes that English Clubs act as a complementary platform to classroom learning. The authors recommend that schools encourage regular attendance and active participation in these clubs.

Maming, Sianna, Hasman, Cabuso, dan Sasmita (2024) conducted a study on the existence of English Meeting Clubs in supporting university students' English-speaking skills. Their research involved members of the LIBAM English Meeting Club at IAIN Parepare and utilized a descriptive qualitative case study approach. Through interviews with seven students, they found that the majority perceived the English Club as highly beneficial in improving their speaking abilities. Improvements included reduced use of filler words, better pronunciation, and greater speaking confidence. The club also provided opportunities for students to participate in a Training of Trainer (TOT) program, preparing them to teach English in school programs. The study concluded that English Meeting Clubs offer an informal, supportive environment that encourages students to practice speaking without fear of making mistakes, significantly enhancing their speaking skills.

Elsadig and Hamdan (2019) conducted research on debate-based learning in English Clubs in Sudanese secondary schools. Their study revealed that debate practices enhanced students' ability to construct logical arguments and respond critically in English. Students showed noticeable improvement in their confidence and articulation skills over time. The structured format of debates was also found to help students with organization of thought and academic vocabulary usage. Furthermore, participation in debates fostered critical thinking and boosted self-esteem. This study suggests that integrating academic-oriented speaking tasks into English Clubs strengthens both linguistic and cognitive development.

Several studies have discussed the role of psychological factors in English language learning, especially in speaking skills. Jannah, Maming, and Badaruddin (2025), in their study published in the *Musamus Journal of Language and Literature*, investigated the relationship between students' self-efficacy and their English-speaking ability at the secondary level. Using an ex-post facto quantitative design, the researchers found a strong correlation ($r = 0.629$) between students' self-efficacy and their performance in speaking. This result indicates that learners with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to perform better in oral communication. The findings highlight that confidence and belief in one's own ability are significant factors influencing students' speaking performance. This study is relevant to the present research, as English Club activities also provide an environment that builds students' confidence and self-efficacy in using English actively.

Badarudin (2024) explored students' perceptions of English Club activities in a vocational school context. The study discovered that students perceived English Club as a space where they could practice speaking without fear of judgment. Many students reported increased self-confidence and a stronger motivation to learn English as a result of regular participation. However, the research also found that student outcomes varied depending on their personal engagement and the support they received. The researcher concluded that understanding individual student experiences is vital for designing effective English Club programs. The study recommends providing more structured guidance and reflective sessions within club activities.

Onah and Marcellus (2023) conducted a study in several primary schools in Nigeria, focusing on challenges faced by students in learning English due to mother tongue interference. The findings showed that local languages strongly influenced students' syntax and semantics when speaking English. The research emphasized the need for innovative teaching strategies to address these challenges. Students often struggled with basic sentence formation, pronunciation, and fluency. The authors suggested extracurricular platforms like English Clubs as alternative learning spaces to reinforce correct language patterns. The study highlights the importance of informal settings for overcoming L1 interference.

Rubab and Zaidi (2022) investigated the teaching of English in India, highlighting the challenges caused by the use of grammar-translation methods and mother tongue instruction. Their study revealed that students learning English

through Hindi or Urdu often faced difficulties in both speaking and writing. Errors were common in sentence structure, verb usage, and pronunciation. The researchers found that English Clubs offering immersive speaking activities could help overcome these challenges. The study advocated for more interactive and student-centered learning environments. It also emphasized the importance of informal practice for improving communicative competence.

Yanti and Sulistyo (2018) examined the implementation of English Clubs in junior high schools in East Java. Their study showed that English Clubs helped students improve vocabulary retention and sentence construction. The researchers also found that students became more active in using English in both formal and informal contexts. Participation in club activities led to increased enjoyment in learning and stronger peer relationships. However, challenges included lack of facilities and teacher training. The study recommended more institutional support and professional development for facilitators of English Club programs.

Rahmawati (2021) focused on the use of English Club activities in developing speaking fluency among vocational students. Her study highlighted that vocational students often lacked exposure to English outside of class, making English Clubs a vital space for real-life practice. The research found that regular speaking activities such as role-playing, interviews, and storytelling boosted students' verbal confidence and fluency. Students appreciated the chance to speak freely without fear of grammatical mistakes. The study supports the integration of communicative

tasks in extracurricular programs. It also emphasized that speaking improvements were most evident among consistent participants.

Lestari and Mahmud (2020) investigated how students' psychological factors influenced their participation in English Club activities. The study found that students with higher self-esteem and intrinsic motivation were more likely to engage in speaking tasks. Those with language anxiety often avoided participation unless given encouragement and peer support. The research also showed that speaking confidence developed gradually through repeated practice and positive feedback. The English Club setting helped reduce anxiety over time. The authors concluded that understanding psychological variables is essential in creating inclusive and supportive English Clubs for diverse learners.

Based on the definitions above, the researcher concludes that English Club activities significantly contribute to the improvement of students' speaking skills in EFL contexts. Studies have shown that participation in English Clubs helps students enhance their fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and speaking confidence through meaningful and interactive activities. The English Club environment also reduces students' anxiety, promotes peer collaboration, and provides more opportunities for authentic language use compared to formal classroom settings. Furthermore, the findings highlight the importance of structured yet flexible extracurricular programs in supporting language development. These insights provide strong empirical support for the present study, reinforcing the relevance of

investigating students' lived experiences in English Club activities at SMKN 7 Pinrang.

B. Some Pertinent Ideas

To support the objectives of this study, several pertinent ideas are reviewed. These ideas provide the theoretical and conceptual foundations needed to understand the learning experiences of students participating in English Club activities. This section discusses the key concepts related to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the role of English Clubs in language development, and the techniques that enhance speaking skills through informal and experiential learning. Each of these ideas serves to frame the analysis of how students' speaking abilities are influenced by their active involvement in English Club environments.

1. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) remains a widely accepted approach in modern EFL education, emphasizing the use of language for meaningful communication. According to Richards (2015), CLT aims to develop learners' communicative competence by promoting activities that simulate real-life interaction, such as discussions, problem-solving tasks, and role plays. In the context of English Clubs, CLT principles are particularly visible, as students are encouraged to express themselves freely and prioritize conveying meaning over grammatical perfection. These opportunities for spontaneous communication help reduce learners' speaking anxiety and foster fluency development.

Recent studies support the relevance of CLT in informal learning environments. Seong, Lee, and Park (2019) explain that peer-based communicative activities, such as those found in English Clubs, increase learners' willingness to communicate and enhance their speaking confidence. By interacting with peers through meaningful tasks, students not only improve their language skills but also build social skills that are critical in real-world communication. Therefore, the application of CLT principles in English Club settings strengthens both the linguistic and interpersonal development of EFL learners.

Based on the definitions above, the researcher concludes that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes the importance of real life communication in language learning. It provides a strong basis for developing speaking skills by encouraging students to use English meaningfully rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy. In the context of English Clubs, the principles of CLT enable students to improve their fluency, confidence, and interactive competence through authentic communicative activities.

2. English Club

English Clubs have been recognized as an effective platform for enhancing students' speaking abilities outside formal classroom settings. Madina and Sidabutar (2024) observed that students who actively participated in English Club activities showed notable improvements in their fluency, pronunciation, and overall confidence. The less formal atmosphere of English Clubs reduces students' fear of making mistakes, allowing them to practice speaking in a supportive and

encouraging environment. Moreover, English Clubs promote student-centered learning, where participants engage in collaborative activities such as games, discussions, and debates that simulate authentic communication situations.

In addition, Maming et al. (2024) found that English Meeting Clubs provided students with opportunities to develop not only language skills but also leadership and teaching abilities through programs like Training of Trainers (TOT). By practicing English in various activities, students experience language use as a social and purposeful tool rather than a classroom subject. The findings suggest that English Clubs contribute significantly to learners' speaking development by offering a space where practice is natural, frequent, and meaningful. Consequently, English Clubs serve as a vital complement to traditional EFL instruction by emphasizing experiential and communicative learning.

Based on the definitions above, the researcher concludes that English Clubs serve as vital informal learning spaces that support students' English speaking development. By offering various activities such as discussions, games, and debates, English Clubs allow students to practice English naturally and with reduced anxiety. Participation in English Clubs not only improves language proficiency but also fosters social skills, motivation, and learner autonomy.

3. Learning Technique

The learning techniques employed in English Clubs align with modern experiential learning models, where knowledge is constructed through direct

experience. Kolb and Kolb (2017) highlight that experiential learning involves active participation, reflection, conceptualization, and application. English Club activities, such as debates, storytelling, and role-plays, engage students in tasks that require them to experience language use firsthand and reflect on their communication strategies. This process supports deeper learning by connecting theoretical language knowledge with authentic, lived experiences.

Furthermore, informal learning theories emphasize the role of self-directed and socially driven learning. According to Schugurensky (2020), informal learning occurs naturally during social interaction and is crucial for lifelong language development. English Club settings foster such informal learning by encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning progress while collaborating with peers. This environment not only enhances linguistic skills but also builds learner autonomy, critical thinking, and social competence. Thus, the techniques used in English Clubs mirror the best practices of contemporary language education, making them highly relevant for EFL development.

Based on the definitions above, The learning techniques used in English Clubs align with experiential and informal learning theories, emphasizing learning through active engagement and reflection. These techniques allow students to connect language use with real-life experiences, promoting deeper understanding and skill retention. By fostering self-directed and socially interactive learning, English Clubs provide an effective environment for meaningful language acquisition.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODE

This chapter describes the research method used to investigate students' experiences in learning English through English Club activities. It includes the research design, research site, participants, techniques of data collection, procedures of data analysis, and steps taken to ensure the validity of the findings. Each component is explained in accordance with the qualitative phenomenological approach applied in this study.

A. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. Phenomenology focused on understanding the lived experiences of individuals in a particular context (Creswell, 2018). In this study, the goal was to explore how students experienced learning English through participation in English Club activities. The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to investigate students' perspectives in depth and capture their unique learning journeys. With this design, rich descriptions of students' feelings, perceptions, and reflections were gathered. The focus was not on quantifying results but on interpreting and understanding meaning.

B. Research Site

This research was conducted at SMKN 7 Pinrang, a vocational high school located in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The school had implemented an English Club as part of its official extracurricular activities. The English Club served as a platform for students to practice speaking through various activities such as English

Camp, scrabble games, storytelling, singing, and drama. This site was selected because of its active English Club program and relevance to the research objectives. The variety of activities and student engagement levels provided a suitable environment for studying real-life language learning experiences. Moreover, vocational school students offered a unique context where English was expected to support future professional communication..

C. Research Participants

The participants of this study were students who were active members of the English Club at SMKN 7 Pinrang. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants based on their experience and level of participation. The criteria included students who had been involved in the club for at least one semester and showed varying levels of speaking proficiency. The researcher aimed to involve 8–12 participants to allow for in-depth data collection while maintaining manageable analysis. Participants were selected to ensure diversity in terms of gender, performance, and engagement. To protect their identities, pseudonyms were used in all documentation and reporting..

D. Procedure of Collecting Data:

To explore the students' experiences comprehensively, this study will use three data collection techniques: interviews, observations, and document analysis.

1. in-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences, feelings, and opinions regarding their involvement in English Club

activities (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This flexible and interactive format allowed participants to share their thoughts openly while addressing key research topics (Patton, 2015). The interview guide was adapted and modified from Badarudin's (2024) undergraduate thesis, which investigated English Club members' perceptions at SMA Negeri 2 Palu. Questions covered motivation for joining the club, types of activities involved, perceived improvements in speaking skills, challenges faced, and suggestions for program enhancement (Creswell, 2018). Each interview session lasted approximately 5 to 10 minutes to allow for in-depth reflection and elaboration. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

After data collection, recordings were transcribed verbatim and reviewed multiple times to identify recurring themes and unique responses (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The researcher created a comfortable atmosphere to encourage honest and thoughtful responses (Patton, 2015). These rich qualitative data formed the core of the thematic analysis for this study. To increase credibility, interview findings were triangulated with observational and document analysis data, providing a comprehensive understanding of students' lived experiences (Denzin, 1978). The semi-structured interview method allowed for deep exploration of individual perspectives within the group context. This approach supported the research's aim to understand how English Club participation influenced students' language learning journeys, consistent with Badarudin's (2024) findings.

2. Observations

The researcher conducted non-participant observations by attending several English Club sessions without actively participating in the activities to avoid influencing students' natural behavior (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). This method allows the researcher to witness authentic interactions and engagement in a natural learning environment. The observation approach is adapted and modified from Badarudin's (2024) undergraduate thesis, which examined English Club members' experiences at SMA Negeri 2 Palu. Observation focuses ere included participation levels, speaking confidence, fluency, vocabulary use, peer interaction, and responsiveness to facilitators. Non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and gestures were carefully recorded to capture unspoken feelings of comfort and confidence. Multiple sessions will be observed to ensure a comprehensive and reliable data set.

Field notes were taken systematically during various club activities, including games, role-plays, and presentations, to document student dynamics and interaction patterns. These notes were coded and analyzed thematically to identify patterns in language development and social behavior within the club. Observational data will serve to validate and enrich interview findings, adding contextual depth to the study (Patton, 2015). By observing firsthand, the researcher can capture spontaneous learning moments and group dynamics that may otherwise be overlooked. Conducting multiple observation sessions will enhance the reliability and consistency of data collection (Cohen et al., 2018). This method aligns with

Badarudin's (2024) emphasis on the importance of direct observation to understand English Club learning experiences.

3. Document Analysis

Document analysis complemented and supported data from interviews and observations by examining English Club activity logs, attendance records, program schedules, students' written reflections, and facilitator notes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Creswell, 2018). These documents provide essential context on how the English Club is organized, the frequency and variety of activities offered, and levels of student engagement over time. Students' written reflections, in particular, offer insight into their personal learning journeys and self-perceived progress in speaking English. Activity logs and program schedules can reveal which types of sessions such as debates, storytelling, or role-plays garner higher participation or more positive feedback, while attendance records help track consistency and commitment among members.

Each document were analyzed for both content and tone, paying close attention to recurring themes, key expressions, and narrative patterns that either corroborate or nuance findings from interviews and observations (Patton, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By triangulating these multiple sources, the researcher enhances the validity and credibility of the study's conclusions. Furthermore, document analysis illuminates the institutional support structures such as facilitator involvement and resource allocation that underpin the English Club's alignment

with broader educational goals and best practices in extracurricular language learning.

E. Technique of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which involves identifying and interpreting patterns within qualitative data. This method suits phenomenological research by helping to organize large amounts of narrative input. The process includes familiarization with data, coding significant segments, developing and refining themes, and interpreting their meanings. Themes are then named and illustrated with participant quotes in the final report. This structured approach ensures that findings are deeply rooted in the data and aligned with the study's objectives. Thematic analysis also allows flexibility in exploring different layers of meaning, enabling the researcher to connect individual experiences to broader themes relevant to the context. Moreover, this method supports transparency and rigor by providing clear stages of analysis, from initial coding to final interpretation. By adopting Braun and Clarke's model, the study will capture the complexity of students' lived experiences and offer rich, contextual insights into how English Club activities shape their speaking skills.

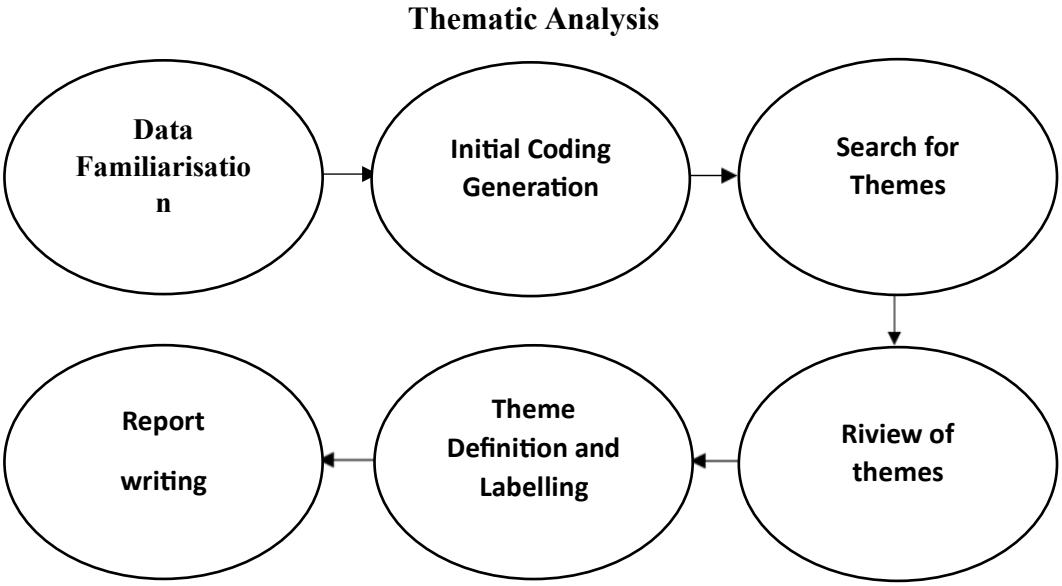


Figure 1 The technique of data analysis

1. Data Familiarisation

The first step in thematic analysis was data familiarisation. At this stage, the researcher read and re-read the interview transcripts and observation notes to become deeply immersed in the data. This process helped the researcher gain an initial understanding of the participants' experiences and identify patterns of meaning. In the context of this study, this step involved carefully reviewing students' narratives about their engagement in English Club activities. Notes and reflections were written during this phase as a foundation for later coding.

2. Initial Coding Generation

Once familiar with the data, the researcher began generating initial codes. Coding involved identifying and labeling relevant features of the data that related to the research questions. For instance, if a student said, "I became more confident after doing presentations," this was coded as "increased confidence" or "public

speaking experience.” At this stage, the researcher coded as many potential ideas as possible, without yet grouping them into broader themes..

3. Search for Themes

In this phase, the researcher examined the codes and began organizing them into candidate themes. A theme represented a broader pattern of meaning or an aspect of the participants' experience. In this study, for example, codes like “encouraged by peers,” “felt supported,” and “joined with friends” fell under a theme called Peer Motivation. This phase involved grouping related codes into clusters that told a bigger story about the data..

4. Review of Themes

After the initial themes were created, the researcher reviewed and refined them. Some themes overlapped and needed to be merged, while others were not supported by enough data and were removed. The goal was to ensure that each theme **was** meaningful, distinct, and strongly grounded in the data. In this study, reviewing themes ensured that they accurately represented the diverse experiences of students participating in English Club activities.

5. Theme Definition and Labelling

Next, the researcher defined the essence of each theme and provided a clear name or label that captured its meaning. The description explained what the theme included and how it related to the overall research objectives. For example, a theme labeled *Speaking Development* included participants’ feelings about fluency, confidence, and progress in oral communication. The goal was to make the themes understandable and relevant to the reader..

6. Report Writing

The final step was writing the research findings. The researcher presented a narrative of the themes identified, supported by direct quotes from participants. This phase involved interpreting the themes and showing how they answered the research questions. In this study, the final report described how students experienced English Club activities, including the benefits, challenges, and their personal reflections on learning English through this extracurricular setting.

F. Research Validity

To ensure trustworthiness in this qualitative study, multiple validation strategies were applied. First, methodological triangulation combining interviews, observations, and document analysis was used to verify consistency across data sources (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Second, member checking invited participants to review transcripts and preliminary interpretations, thereby confirming accuracy and enhancing credibility (Birt et al., 2016). Third, peer debriefing sessions with knowledgeable colleagues provided external critique and helped minimize researcher bias (Nowell et al., 2017). Fourth, thick description offered rich, contextualized accounts of the research setting, participants, and findings, enabling readers to assess transferability (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Finally, rigorous ethical safeguards, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring anonymity, and affirming voluntary participation, were maintained throughout the study to protect participants and reinforce integrity (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study. The findings are based on data collected through in-depth interviews with eight members of the English Club at SMKN 7 Pinrang. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which identified key themes related to students' experiences. This chapter is divided into two parts: **A. Findings**, which outlines the main themes that emerged from the data, and **B. Discussion**, which connects those findings with relevant theories and previous studies.

A. Research Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results are organized thematically to address the research questions and provide a comprehensive picture of students' experiences in learning English through English Club activities at SMKN 7 Pinrang. To ensure the validity of the findings, data triangulation was applied, allowing patterns and themes to emerge consistently across different sources. The analysis generated two main themes, namely *Students' Experiences in Learning English through English Club Activities* and *Benefits and Challenges of Learning English through English Club Activities*. Each theme is further divided into several sub-themes that illustrate the nuances of students' linguistic, psychological, and social development. The following sections elaborate on these themes by presenting detailed narratives supported with direct quotes, coding tables, and connections to the existing literature..

1. Students' Experiences in Learning English through English Club Activities

a. Students Motivation to Join in English Club

Students joined the English Club for both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons related to learning English. Student 1 expressed, *"tertariknya untuk menambah pengetahuan dalam bidang Bahasa Inggris"*, which reflects a desire for academic improvement. Student 2 emphasized the importance of mastering a foreign language, saying, *"alangkah bagusnya kalo kita mempelajari Bahasa asing"*. Student 4 viewed English as a skill for career preparation, *"kalo kerja ki toh kalo misalnya bisa Bahasa Inggris pasti utama ki"*. Observations confirmed strong interest during the recruitment phase, where many students enthusiastically registered. Mentor records also revealed that open registration and promotion successfully attracted students every semester.

b. Learning Activities

The English Club offered diverse activities that supported students' language development. Student 1 shared, *"kita praktekkan di depan di lihat sama ibu Uci... itu sangat membantu"*, reflecting the impact of speech practice. Student 2 explained the usefulness of Scrabble games, *"kita tidak ekspect bakal kata apa yang kita keluarkan"*, which expanded vocabulary. Student 5 added that movies enhanced memory, *"karna lebih gampang di hafal karna di dengar"*. Student 6 agreed, noting that subtitles and listening reinforced vocabulary learning. The mentor confirmed

through documentation that activities were arranged in a structured syllabus including speech, storytelling, debate, and English Camp.

c. Atmosphere of English Club

Students consistently described the club atmosphere as fun and engaging. Student 3 explained, *"seru ya seru"*, emphasizing enjoyment during group sessions. Student 5 added, *"karna game nya"*, showing that interactive games enhanced participation. Student 8 highlighted a positive emotional experience, *"menyenangkan, senang, gembira"*. Student 2 also stressed the balance between learning and play, *"bukan saja belajar ya tapi sambil bermain"*. Observations during English Camp confirmed that laughter and motivation characterized most activities, while the mentor explained that games were intentionally integrated to maintain students' enthusiasm.

d. Role of Mentor

The mentor played a central role in guiding and sustaining the English Club. Student 1 explained, *"tanpa Pembina otomatis organisasi tidak akan bisa berjalan dengan baik"*. Student 4 pointed out discipline and advice, *"mengatur memberi nasehat atau apa mengajari begitu"*. Student 5 emphasized motivation, *"karna di dampingi ki baru di kasih kata kata motivasi"*. Student 7 mentioned that the mentor provided vocabulary through games, while Student 3 added that the mentor frequently reminded him about events. The mentor herself confirmed this, stating that she prepared syllabi and organized programs every semester. These findings suggest that the mentor's involvement ensured both academic and affective growth.

2. Benefits and Challenges of Learning English through English Club Activities

a. Speaking Fluency and Confidence

The English Club contributed significantly to students' fluency and confidence in speaking English. Student 2 stated, *"saya semakin bisa mempercayai diri untuk bicara dalam bahasa Inggris"*, showing that practice increased self-assurance. Student 7 also explained, *"dulu nda percaya diri sekali… tapi setelah ikut lebih percaya diri"*, highlighting the confidence gained from activities. Student 1 admitted limited fluency, *"belum terlalu lancar… tapi ada peningkatan"*, indicating gradual progress. Observations supported this, as students increasingly used English during debates and storytelling sessions, even with some hesitation. The mentor confirmed that overall proficiency had improved to about sixty percent, which demonstrates steady but uneven growth among participants.

b. Challenges in Participation

Although students gained benefits, they also faced several challenges that limited participation. Student 1 said, *"susah membagi waktu dimana ada pelajaran di kelas dan English Club"*, which shows time management issues. Similarly, Student 2 experienced schedule conflicts, *"waktu pembelajaran di kelas… kadang berlanggar dengan organisasi lain"*. Student 3 highlighted logistical problems, *"mungkin kendaraan… jauh dua belas kilometer"*, indicating distance as a barrier. Observations confirmed inconsistent attendance, particularly when other school events overlapped with English Club meetings. The mentor also stated,

"antusiasmenya menurun… tetapi peningkatannya bagus", suggesting that while enthusiasm declined, learning outcomes still improved. These findings reveal that structural and personal challenges sometimes hindered full engagement in English Club activities

B. Discussion

Based on the findings, students experienced multiple positive outcomes from participating in English Club activities, such as improved speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, increased confidence, and reduced speaking anxiety. These results reflect the role of English Clubs as supportive environments that promote active participation, peer collaboration, and meaningful communication. The findings also show that students did not only develop linguistic abilities but also gained psychological and social benefits. By triangulating data from interviews, observations, and documents, the study provides a more holistic understanding of students' lived experiences. The triangulated evidence confirmed the coding results that highlighted themes such as Fun and Supportive Atmosphere, Speaking-Focused Activities, Personal Growth and Motivation, Benefits and Challenges, and Advisor's Essential Role. The following discussion elaborates on these outcomes by addressing the research questions and relating them to relevant theories and previous studies.

1. Students' Experiences in Learning English through English Club Activities

The findings of this study indicate that students' experiences in learning English through the English Club were highly positive and transformative. Interviews revealed that students perceived the club as an engaging and relaxing environment, often describing it as fun and supportive, which reduced anxiety when practicing English. This was confirmed through observations that showed enthusiastic participation during games and storytelling, while documentation such as photographs captured moments of joy and collaboration. The coding highlighted the theme Fun and Supportive Atmosphere, supported by quotes such as Student 1's statement: "Suasana… kayak English camp… menyenangkan juga karena ada games-gamesnya." This aligns with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that enjoyable learning environments reduce stress and enhance language acquisition. Previous studies such as Astari and Hadi (2022) also reported similar findings, noting that English Clubs in Indonesia provide a relaxed context that helps students build confidence.

Another important aspect of students' experiences was the presence of Speaking-Focused Activities, which included speeches, storytelling, and English movies. Students consistently reported that these activities helped them improve pronunciation, expand vocabulary, and practice public speaking. Observations confirmed that students actively engaged in speech practice, while documents such as the English Club syllabus showed that these activities were systematically

integrated into the program. For example, Student 4 explained, “Pidato juga itu bisa membantu, kayak kumpul kosakata-kosakata yang jarang diketahui begitu, o… story telling juga.” These results are in line with Kolb’s Experiential Learning Theory (2017), which emphasizes the role of concrete experiences and active experimentation in building competence. They also resonate with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritizes meaningful interaction and speaking practice. Thus, the triangulated evidence demonstrates that speaking practice was central to students’ learning experiences.

In addition to skill development, the English Club also supported students’ Personal Growth and Motivation. Interviews revealed that students gained motivation to learn English outside the classroom, such as watching movies without subtitles or communicating with online friends. Observations confirmed increased confidence over time, particularly when students received applause or encouragement from peers, while photos of competitions showed learners confidently performing in front of audiences. For instance, Student 3 noted, “Saya mempunyai teman jauh online… ingin lebih berkomunikasi dengan baik dengan menggunakan Bahasa Inggris.” The coding emphasized sub-themes such as “Increased motivation” and “Communication goals,” showing that students experienced growth in both confidence and aspirations. This finding corresponds with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation in sustaining learning. Similar to Lestari and Mahmud (2020), who found that repeated speaking practice reduces anxiety, this

study confirms that English Clubs contribute to both linguistic competence and psychological resilience.

2. Benefits and Challenges of Learning English through English Club Activities

The benefits identified in this study were diverse and extended across both linguistic and affective domains. Triangulated data revealed that students experienced improved speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary mastery, and increased confidence, as captured in the coding sub-theme Improved Speaking and Vocabulary. Interviews showed that students valued speech practice, observations confirmed that learners were able to express themselves more fluently over time, and documents such as photos illustrated active engagement in storytelling sessions. For example, Student 2 emphasized, “Speech for training our speaking in English,” while Student 7 admitted, “Dulu nda percaya diri sekali nda banyak kosa kata, jadi setelah ikut English Club lebih banyak kosa kata lebih percaya diri juga.” These findings are consistent with Rahmawati (2021) and Yanti and Sulistyo (2018), who argued that English Clubs provide authentic contexts for applying classroom knowledge. They also support Rubab and Zaidi’s (2022) recommendation for immersive, student-centered learning approaches.

Beyond skill development, students also gained affective benefits such as motivation, enjoyment, and confidence. Observations showed high enthusiasm during interactive activities such as Scrabble and role-plays, while documentation of English Camp highlighted the playful yet productive environment. The coding

identified “Motivation through Games” as a sub-theme, reflecting how recreational activities sustained engagement and reduced anxiety. As Student 5 stated, “Seru… karena game-nya, ada ice breaking juga,” this demonstrates that fun elements contributed to long-term interest in English learning. This aligns with Krashen’s (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis and supports the findings of Wahyuniati et al. (2020), who found that extracurricular activities promote self-directed learning. Compared to previous studies, this research adds nuance by showing that vocational students in particular benefited not only academically but also in terms of career-oriented motivation. Thus, English Clubs served as a bridge between formal learning and real-world application.

Despite these benefits, several challenges limited the full potential of the program. Interviews frequently mentioned time management as the biggest obstacle, with students struggling to balance schoolwork, internships, and club activities. Observations supported this issue, as inconsistent attendance and late arrivals were noted, while documents also showed gaps in participation records. For example, Student 1 admitted, “Biasanya susah membagi waktu… jadi susah ki handle,” and Student 2 added, “Waktu pembelajaran di kelas ada juga kegiatan lain… jadi ganti-ganti kalau waktunya berlanggar.” Other challenges included transportation difficulties and limited vocabulary knowledge, which sometimes hindered confidence. These findings are consistent with Yanti and Sulistyo (2018) and Rahmawati (2021), who also identified logistical barriers in English Club participation. However, unlike studies that emphasized facility limitations, this research highlights time management and accessibility as more pressing concerns

in vocational contexts. Addressing these challenges through flexible scheduling and targeted support may enhance future outcomes.

Another critical finding was the essential role of the advisor in sustaining the English Club, captured in the coding theme Advisor's Essential Role. Students repeatedly emphasized that without the guidance and motivation of their teacher, the club would not function effectively. Observations showed the advisor actively providing scaffolding, encouraging English use, and ensuring discipline, while documentation included photos of advisor-led feedback sessions. Student 1 strongly stated, "Tanpa Pembina otomatis organisasi tidak akan bisa berjalan dengan baik," which was echoed by Student 5, who said, "Bagus karena didampingi ki baru dikasih kata-kata motivasi." This finding aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of scaffolding, where teachers facilitate learners' progress within their zone of proximal development. It also resonates with Seong et al. (2019), who noted the importance of teacher facilitation in peer-assisted learning environments. Thus, the advisor's presence ensured that both academic and affective objectives were achieved.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

In this conclusion**,** this study was conducted to explore the experiences of vocational high school students in learning English through English Club activities at SMKN 7 Pinrang, as well as to identify the benefits and challenges they encountered. The data collection process for this research employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with the first stage being observation, the second stage conducting interviews with eight English Club members, the third stage reviewing related documents, and the fourth stage recording and transcribing the gathered information..

Students at SMKN 7 Pinrang experienced English learning in the club as engaging, supportive, and beneficial for their personal and linguistic development. Activities such as speeches, storytelling, language games, English movie sessions, and English Camps provided varied opportunities for authentic language use. The collaborative nature of the club fostered peer support, increased confidence, and encouraged active participation in communication. These experiences align with experiential and communicative learning principles, allowing students to develop not only their speaking skills but also social skills and self-esteem. The vocational school context further shaped students' experiences by linking English skills with career aspirations, making their participation goal-oriented. Overall, the English

Club served as a platform for meaningful practice that extended beyond formal classroom learning.

The benefits of English Club participation included improved speaking fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and sentence construction, alongside reduced language anxiety and enhanced motivation. Students also developed greater autonomy in learning, inspired to use English in contexts outside the club. However, challenges such as schedule conflicts, transportation difficulties, inconsistent attendance, and varied levels of engagement affected the program's effectiveness. These challenges were particularly influenced by the vocational school setting, where students often balance academic requirements with internships or part-time jobs. Addressing these constraints will be essential for sustaining participation and maximizing the club's impact. Overall, while the benefits strongly outweigh the challenges, strategic adjustments are necessary to enhance accessibility and inclusivity.

In conclusion**,** this study affirms that English Clubs can play a pivotal role in enhancing speaking skills, boosting confidence, and fostering social interaction in EFL contexts, particularly in vocational high schools. The combination of varied, student-centered activities and a supportive environment creates an effective platform for experiential language learning. Nonetheless, the sustainability and inclusivity of such programs depend on how well logistical and motivational challenges are addressed. By aligning activities with students' academic and career needs, English Clubs have the potential to serve not only as language learning

communities but also as developmental hubs that prepare learners for future professional and social engagement.

B. Suggestions

Based on the conclusions of this study, several suggestions can be proposed to maximize the effectiveness of English Club activities. First, English teachers and club advisors are encouraged to maintain and expand interactive speaking activities. These may include storytelling, speeches, English games, role-playing, and watching English videos. Such activities provide fun and practical ways to develop speaking skills. Advisors should also give encouragement and personalized support to help students overcome their fear of speaking. With proper guidance, students will feel more confident and engaged.

Second, school administrators should provide institutional support to ensure the success of English Club programs. Flexible scheduling is recommended so students can balance club participation with other responsibilities. Providing access to transportation or online participation may help those with physical or logistical constraints. Schools may also allocate a specific budget or resources for club development. Support from school leaders can increase student motivation and make the club more sustainable. Institutional involvement strengthens the long-term impact of the program.

Third, students should take initiative in participating actively in English Club activities. They should not rely solely on formal classes but see the club as a space to explore, practice, and grow. Regular attendance, willingness to speak up, and

engaging with peers are key to maximizing learning. Students are also encouraged to set personal goals for improvement. Reflecting on their experiences can help them track progress and stay motivated. The more students engage, the greater the benefits they will gain.

Finally, Future researchers are encouraged to examine the long-term impact of English Club participation on students' academic achievement or career preparation. Since this study only focused on students' immediate experiences and challenges, further research can provide deeper insights into how English Club involvement supports students' success beyond school, particularly in higher education or the workplace.

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