Learning Beyond the Classroom: English Clubs and Students' Speaking Competence in an Indonesian EFL Context

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Abstract

This study investigates learning beyond the classroom by examining the role of English Clubs in enhancing students' speaking competence within the Indonesian EFL context. It is motivated by the limited opportunities for authentic speaking practice in formal classrooms, which remain predominantly grammar- and exam-oriented. Focusing on the English Club at SMA 54 Jakarta, the research aims to describe its design and management, analyze how its activities support students' speaking development, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors affecting its effectiveness. Adopting a qualitative descriptive–interpretative approach, data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with the club advisor and 10–15 student members, and documentation of club activities and student outputs. Thematic analysis identified recurring patterns in learning practices, perceived progress, and influencing factors, supported by triangulation for credibility. Findings indicate that the English Club serves as an alternative, empowering learning space that complements formal instruction through communicative activities, debates, storytelling, public speaking, and games, that foster fluency, confidence, pronunciation, and interactional strategies. Key enablers include intrinsic motivation, peer solidarity, and teacher support, while time constraints and varied proficiency levels present challenges. The study contributes to understanding English Clubs as communities of practice that operationalize Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning, offering a replicable model for schools and policy support for student-led initiatives.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of English language education in Indonesia, speaking competence remains the greatest challenge for most students. Although English has been taught since elementary school, many high school students still struggle to express their ideas orally with confidence and fluency. One of the main causes is that classroom instruction continues to focus on grammar, vocabulary, and written examinations (Phung et al., 2023; Tonenchuk et al., 2024). Classroom activities are often one-directional, with the teacher as the center of knowledge and students as passive recipients. Consequently, opportunities for students to practice speaking naturally, spontaneously, and communicatively are very limited. Within this context, extracurricular activities such as the English Club emerge as alternative learning spaces that offer more communicative, interactive, and student-centered learning experiences (Nguyen & Stracke, 2021; Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2022).

The phenomenon of English Clubs in Indonesian secondary schools is particularly interesting because it originates from students' own initiatives to deepen their language competence beyond formal classroom hours. Through activities such as debates, storytelling, language games, and public speaking practice, students interact with their peers in a relaxed atmosphere, free from the pressures of academic grades. Many supervising teachers view the English Club not merely as a hobby group but as an effective form of language learning because it creates a social environment in which language is used for authentic purposes (Fazzi & Lasagabaster, 2021; Mashudi et al., 2023). However, from an academic standpoint, the role of English Clubs in developing students' speaking competence has not been systematically examined, particularly in the Indonesian high school context. Understanding how such informal learning spaces function can contribute significantly to the development of more authentic and sustainable language learning models.

Previous literature shows that language learning does not only occur within classrooms but also through active participation in social communities that use the language as a means of communication. Korkmaz and Mirici (2023), Madhavi et al. (2023), and Zakian et al. (2022), through the concept of communities of practice, explain that learning is a social process that occurs when individuals engage in meaningful practices within their communities. In the context of English language learning, extracurricular activities such as English Clubs can serve as communities of practice where students interact, share experiences, and construct their identities as language learners. Kessler et al. (2021) and Tai (2024) emphasize that collaborative environments allow learning to occur naturally through peer interaction rather than solely through formal teacher instruction.

Numerous international studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of extracurricular language activities in improving speaking skills. Khany and Khosravian (2014) found that students who actively participated in communication-based activities outside the classroom demonstrated higher fluency and confidence than those limited to formal instruction. Similarly, Mann et al. (2022) and Xiuwen and Razali (2021) highlight the importance of extracurricular learning environments in strengthening students' communicative skills and linguistic identity. In Malaysia, Rahimi and Fathi (2024) and Wongsa and Son (2022) reported that English Clubs play a significant role in enhancing students' public speaking skills, particularly through project-based and game-oriented approaches. Likewise, Al-Sobhi and Preece (2018) found in Saudi Arabia that language clubs provide safe spaces for students to practice speaking without fear of making mistakes, thereby improving their speaking confidence and communicative competence.

In Indonesia, several studies have begun to explore extracurricular language learning practices. Hanafiah et al. (2022) and Homayouni (2022) revealed that English Clubs in high schools in Yogyakarta help students overcome foreign language anxiety. Informal activities such as role play, games, and casual discussions encourage students to speak without fear of immediate correction. Research by Alfatihah et al. (2022) and Fu et al. (2022) found that students who actively participated in English Clubs showed significant improvements in fluency and vocabulary range. Meanwhile, studies by Biantoro et al. (2023) and Khairunnisa

et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of supportive teachers who act as facilitators rather than instructors to maintain a participatory learning atmosphere. These studies point in the same direction: English Clubs have strong potential to enhance students' speaking abilities, but their social dynamics, pedagogical strategies, and management approaches remain underexplored.

In addition, literature on *learning beyond the classroom* highlights that the most meaningful language learning experiences often occur outside formal classroom boundaries. Nonformal learning environments allow students the freedom to take active roles in organizing activities, choosing topics, and determining how they learn (Cheng & Lee, 2018; Wahyuniati et al., 2020). This aligns with the principle of autonomous learning, in which learners take responsibility for their own learning processes (Wang et al., 2013; Zuhriyah, 2017). In the context of English Clubs, such autonomy is reflected in how students design activities, manage schedules, and evaluate their own progress. Studies by Daud and Astuti (2023), Lathifah et al. (2020), and Simbolon et al. (2023) even argue that language clubs can serve as bridges between the pedagogical theory of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and real-world communicative learning practices.

However, most previous studies have tended to focus on learning outcomes quantitatively, such as improvements in speaking scores or reductions in anxiety, without examining the underlying social and pedagogical dynamics within English Club activities. To understand how such clubs function as alternative learning spaces, it is essential to examine how students interact, negotiate meaning, and build confidence through everyday social practices. Studies by Putera (2019) and Syahidah et al. (2019) have begun to observe student interaction in English Clubs in Surabaya, but their focus remains limited to the teacher's role as facilitator. The social, cultural, and collaborative dimensions among club members, central to language learning in informal contexts, have yet to be deeply explored.

Hence, there is a need to view the English Club not merely as an extracurricular activity but as a social and pedagogical phenomenon with significant potential for developing Indonesian students' speaking competence. SMA 54 Jakarta, for instance, has an English Club entirely managed by students with minimal teacher supervision. In this club, project-based activities such as debates, storytelling, mini dramas, and speech training are designed by the students themselves, representing genuine forms of learner autonomy and collaborative learning. This unique context provides valuable opportunities to understand how language learning can develop organically beyond formal classrooms and how Indonesian students build speaking competence through peer interaction and authentic experiences.

This study aims to fill an underexplored gap in the literature on English language learning in Indonesia. While numerous studies have examined classroom teaching methods, few have focused on how students' extracurricular activities play vital roles in developing their communicative abilities. By exploring the lived experiences of students and a supervising teacher in the English Club at SMA 54 Jakarta through a qualitative descriptive–interpretive approach, this study seeks to provide deeper insights into the meaning of learning English beyond the classroom. Through a social and interactional lens, it demonstrates that language

learning need not always be structured and teacher-controlled but can instead grow from active participation, ownership, and collaboration among learners.

Thus, this research contributes not only empirically to the understanding of English Clubs as alternative learning spaces but also theoretically to the broader concept of how *learning beyond the classroom* enriches EFL education. This approach invites schools to reconsider the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic achievement while encouraging policymakers to recognize the pedagogical value of student-led initiatives. Ultimately, the study asserts that speaking competence is not merely the result of linguistic practice but the product of social interaction, confidence, and creativity that flourish beyond the formal classroom.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive–interpretive approach as outlined by Bhangu et al. (2023) and Choudrie et al. (2022), since its primary objective is to understand the experiences, practices, and social meanings that emerge from language learning activities outside the classroom through English Clubs. This approach is best suited to exploring complex, dynamic processes that cannot be measured quantitatively but must be understood from participants' perspectives. It enables the researcher to examine how students make sense of club activities, how they interact, and how these experiences contribute to their speaking development. The descriptive–interpretive approach allows not only for the description of phenomena but also for the interpretation of their social and pedagogical contexts in depth.

The research site was SMA 54 Jakarta, a public high school in an urban area known for its active and sustained English Club. The site was chosen purposively, not for statistical representativeness but for its relevance and richness in providing data needed to address the research questions. The English Club at this school stands out for being autonomously managed by students, with the supervising teacher acting primarily as a facilitator. These characteristics make SMA 54 Jakarta an ideal setting to explore learning beyond the classroom and examine how student autonomy and peer interaction create effective alternative learning spaces. Additionally, routine activities such as debate sessions, storytelling, and public speaking training provided opportunities for the researcher to observe various forms of authentic speaking practice.

The informants consisted of one supervising teacher and ten to fifteen active members of the English Club from grades X to XII. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their roles and engagement in club activities. The supervising teacher was chosen for their insight into the planning, facilitation, and evaluation of club activities, while the students were selected as primary actors who directly experienced the learning processes. The relatively small number of participants allowed for in-depth exploration of individual experiences, consistent with qualitative research principles that prioritize depth over breadth (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; St. Pierre, 2020). Including students from different grade levels also enabled the researcher to capture variations in experiences according to

maturity and duration of involvement.

Data collection employed three main techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participant observation was conducted by directly attending several English Club meetings to understand interactional dynamics, speaking strategies, and the learning atmosphere. This technique allowed the researcher to engage naturally in the context, capturing social and emotional nuances that might not surface through interviews alone (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). Observations recorded details such as discussion topics, communication patterns, member participation, and the teacher's role throughout the sessions.

In-depth interviews were conducted with both the supervising teacher and club members using a semi-structured format to allow informants to express their views and experiences freely while remaining aligned with the research focus. Questions covered topics such as learning experiences in the club, motivations for joining, perceived improvements in speaking ability, and challenges faced. These interviews served not only to gather factual information but also to uncover the subjective meanings students attributed to their experiences, consistent with Doyle et al. (2019) on qualitative interviewing.

Additionally, documentation was used as supplementary data, including meeting schedules, activity notes, competition videos, and students' project outputs such as speech texts and presentations. These documents provided concrete evidence of practices and complemented observational and interview data. Document analysis also helped the researcher understand how club activities were designed, structured, and evaluated by students, offering richer contextual understanding of observed interactions.

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (Kodithuwakku, 2022; Mohajan, 2018), involving iterative reading of all data, coding of meaning units, grouping of codes into themes, and interpretation of relationships among themes. This flexible approach allowed systematic identification of learning practices, speaking strategies, improvement patterns, and supporting and inhibiting factors. All analysis was conducted inductively, meaning that themes emerged from the data rather than being imposed by rigid theoretical assumptions.

To ensure credibility and validity, the study applied source triangulation by comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation. When a finding appeared consistently across multiple sources, it was considered more credible. Member checking was also performed by asking informants to verify the researcher's interpretations of their interview responses, ensuring that meanings accurately reflected participants' perspectives (Pyo et al., 2023). Through these combined strategies, the study maintained the integrity of qualitative research while ensuring that its conclusions were grounded in participants' lived experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

English Club as a Social and Pedagogical Learning Space

The English Club at SMA 54 Jakarta is not merely an extracurricular forum; it has evolved into a vibrant socio-pedagogical space where English learning occurs naturally and meaningfully. Field observations conducted over several months revealed that club activities took place in a relaxed and inclusive atmosphere. Every Saturday morning, the meeting room used by club members was filled with laughter, light English conversations, and the enthusiasm to practice without the fear of making mistakes. The circular seating arrangement, free from rigid rows typical of classrooms, created an egalitarian environment, emphasizing that relationships among members were not hierarchical between teacher and student, but collegial among fellow learners. In this sense, the English Club embodied the idea of learning beyond the classroom, expanding the boundaries of formal learning into a more humanistic and participatory social domain.

The club is designed and managed autonomously by students, supported by a teacher supervisor who serves as a facilitator. Based on interviews with one of the core members, R., they collectively plan their weekly agendas. Every member has the opportunity to propose activity ideas, ranging from debate sessions, storytelling, and speech practice to interactive games such as Guess the Word or English Jeopardy. This planning process demonstrates a strong form of student agency, students are not passive participants but active designers of their own learning experiences. The supervising teacher, Mrs. S., explained that her role was primarily to monitor, provide thematic input, and ensure the activities remain aligned with the goal of developing speaking skills. This approach reflects a pedagogical paradigm shift that positions the teacher as a learning partner rather than a sole authority figure.

In practice, club activities are flexible yet structured. Each meeting begins with a short warm-up session, often a word game or a light discussion, to break the ice and build confidence. The main session then focuses on speaking practice, such as individual speeches, group debates, or mini-project presentations. Field observations revealed that members actively provided feedback to one another. For instance, when a member made grammatical mistakes, others responded supportively rather than mockingly. Such interactions fostered a safe and empowering learning space in which mistakes were perceived not as failures but as integral to the learning process.

This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Butarbutar et al. (2023) and Purwanto & Despita (2022), who emphasize that learning occurs through active participation within communities that share practices, goals, and identities. In this context, the English Club functions as a community of practice where students share a common goal of improving speaking ability, developing distinctive discursive practices, such as using code-switching to explain complex ideas or giving feedback in simplified English. Their identity as language learners is shaped not by formal evaluation but by peer recognition and active participation.

Furthermore, the social dynamics among members highlight the principles of sociocultural learning as discussed by Anabel & Simanjuntak (2022) and Sidik et al. (2021), which posit that language learning occurs through meaningful social interaction. Through

discussions, games, and collaborative projects, students learn not only linguistic forms but also internalize communication norms and social strategies in using English. As one member, M., expressed, she felt "more confident speaking English in the club because no one here judges me." This statement reinforces that the English Club provides psychological safety that fosters risk-taking behavior, a key factor in speaking acquisition.

The teacher's role in this context is mediative rather than instructive. The teacher acts as a knowledge broker, bridging students' informal practices with formal pedagogical principles. Observation notes showed that the teacher often employed subtle scaffolding strategies, such as offering short feedback during evaluation sessions or adding idiomatic expressions after a student's speech. This aligns with Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development, where teachers support learners in reaching beyond their actual abilities through social and collaborative assistance.

Table 1 Types and Objectives of English Club Activities at SMA 54 Jakarta

Type of Activity	Description of Activity	Language Learning Goal	Social Character
Debate Session	Two teams discuss a popular issue	Train argumentation, turn-taking, and fluency	Competitive yet collaborative
Storytelling	Students deliver short stories	Improve verbal expression and pronunciation	Personal and creative
Public Speaking Practice	Individual speech rehearsals	Develop confidence and speech organization	Supportive and appreciative
English Games	Word games, quizzes, role play	Enhance vocabulary and spontaneity	Relaxed and egalitarian

Source: Research findings, 2024

Observation data indicated that students' favorite activities were storytelling and games, as these created a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Meanwhile, debate sessions posed a greater challenge for intermediate-level students due to lexical precision and quick thinking requirements in English. Yet, through these challenges, students developed resilience and negotiation of meaning, two essential aspects of intercultural communication.

The club also fostered a sense of ownership over the learning process. Interviews revealed that members viewed the club as "their own space," where decisions, rules, and activities were collectively determined. This autonomy positively impacted students' intrinsic motivation as they felt valued and in control of their learning. Such active engagement is rarely found in teacher-centered formal classrooms. Thus, the English Club functions as a micro-community of practice that cultivates independence and genuine collaboration in language learning.

Communicative and Creative Practices Enhancing Speaking Competence

The English Club at SMA 54 Jakarta offers a distinct learning atmosphere from that of formal classrooms. In a modest room equipped with a small whiteboard, portable speaker, and circular seating, students create a communicative, creative, and meaningful learning

space. Field observations revealed that every meeting was characterized by enthusiasm and high participation. Activities went beyond speaking drills, allowing students to experiment with language through role plays, impromptu presentations, and collaborative projects that fostered confidence. Here, the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) naturally manifest, not as rigid pedagogical frameworks, but as authentic practices designed and implemented by the students themselves.

One of the most frequent activities is the debate session. Students are divided into two teams to discuss relevant issues, such as "Is social media harmful for students?" or "Should online learning replace classroom learning?" The teacher, serving as moderator, provides only general guidance, allowing students to manage the flow of arguments independently. Observations showed that debates served as effective spaces for practicing fluency and interactional strategies. Students learned to respond quickly, negotiate meaning, and maintain conversational cohesion. As one member, L., explained, she initially struggled to find words during rebuttals but gradually became more spontaneous and confident after several weeks of practice. This finding supports Sutisna & Vonti's (2020) argument that language proficiency develops optimally when learners engage in communicative tasks with clear objectives and tangible outcomes.

Storytelling, another hallmark activity, involves students narrating personal experiences, folktales, or inspirational stories in English. Stories are often performed expressively, some students even use simple props or dramatic gestures. Observations revealed that storytelling enhanced pronunciation, intonation, and confidence, while fostering natural narrative skills. As one member, A., noted, "It feels easier to speak English when telling a story because it doesn't feel like a test." Amara (2021) and Purwadi et al. (2021) highlight that such experiences exemplify active learning cycles in which students perform, reflect, and internalize speaking skills through direct engagement.

Public speaking sessions also play a vital role in developing performance competence. Typically, two or three students deliver speeches during each meeting, followed by peer feedback on structure, vocal delivery, and body language. This setting promotes constructive and supportive peer feedback. Observations showed that even initially anxious students exhibited marked improvement in fluency and delivery over time. The teacher explained that "a non-judgmental environment makes them more willing to speak and experiment with language." This supports CLT principles asserting that low-stakes environments encourage language risk-taking, essential for natural speaking development.

The club also integrates lighter activities such as English games and mini dramas, often used as icebreakers or closing sessions. In English games, students play Taboo, Word Chain, or Guess the Character, which require quick thinking and spontaneous responses in English, enhancing vocabulary and contextual fluency. Meanwhile, mini dramas build teamwork, expressive skills, and improvisation. Field notes revealed that quieter students became more active during dramatic play, gaining confidence through role immersion that made language use feel natural and free from academic pressure.

Table 2 Communicative Activities and Aspects of Speaking Competence Enhanced

Type of Activity	Focus of Activity	Developed Aspects	Form of Interaction
Debate Session	Argumentation, negotiation of meaning	Fluency, Interactional Strategy, Vocabulary	Competitive–collaborative
Storytelling	Personal and expressive narration	Pronunciation, Confidence, Fluency	Individual with peer support
Public Speaking	Formal presentation	Confidence, Speech Organization	Individual with peer evaluation
English Games	Language play	Vocabulary, Spontaneity	Collaborative and relaxed
Mini Drama	Role-play and dialogue	Pronunciation, Expression, Teamwork	Collaborative and creative

Source: Research findings, 2024

Collectively, these activities represent the task-based learning cycle as described by Hamid et al. (2024) and Setyarini et al. (2021), encompassing three stages: pre-task (context introduction), task performance (communication practice), and post-task reflection (evaluation and feedback). Reflection is often conducted informally at the end of meetings, where teachers and students discuss what went well and what could be improved. This reflective process enhances linguistic awareness and strengthens students' ability to conduct constructive self-assessment.

Interviews consistently showed that frequent participation led to higher fluency and confidence. One member, D., admitted that she initially feared public speaking but later felt "more at ease speaking because friends always cheer me on." Such evidence underscores that a supportive social environment reduces language anxiety, a common barrier to foreign language learning.

Moreover, the English Club fosters experiential learning. Referring to Kolb's model as reconceptualized by Phung et al. (2023), club activities encompass a full learning cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This cycle nurtures not only technical speaking competence but also emotional and social growth.

Overall, the success of the club lies not only in its activity design but also in the fear-free atmosphere cultivated by its members and facilitator. Within this "learning without fear" environment, students freely experiment with language, make mistakes, and learn from them. This condition directly reinforces communicative competence, encompassing linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic dimensions central to the CLT framework.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Students' Learning Experiences

The activities of the English Club at SMA 54 Jakarta reveal a rich and complex dynamic of English language learning, in which students' success is not solely determined by pedagogical strategies or implemented activities but also by social and affective factors that either support or hinder their learning processes. Findings from observations and in-depth

interviews with club members and the supervising teacher indicate that the effectiveness of the activities largely depends on the interaction among intrinsic motivation, social solidarity, teacher support, and various contextual constraints such as time, scheduling, and differences in members' language proficiency. These factors are interrelated and collectively shape a unique learning experience beyond the boundaries of the formal classroom.

One of the most prominent strengths supporting the English Club's success is members' intrinsic motivation. Students do not join the club due to curricular requirements but rather from a personal drive to develop their speaking and interactional skills in English. Based on interview data, most students mentioned that the desire to "speak confidently" and "communicate naturally" was their primary reason for actively participating in the club. One informant, R., expressed that she felt "more excited to learn English when I can practice directly without fear of being judged." This statement reflects the essence of Self-Determination Theory, which posits that learning becomes meaningful when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and social relatedness (Korkmaz & Mirici, 2023; Zakian et al., 2022). In this context, the English Club provides a space for fulfilling these three psychological needs: students can freely choose their roles in activities, receive positive peer feedback, and feel part of a community with shared goals.

Peer support constitutes another crucial dimension that reinforces student engagement. Solidarity among members was clearly evident in nearly every meeting. When one member struggled to find words or lost their train of thought, peers did not laugh but instead helped supply words or encouraged them with applause. Such moments frequently occurred during field observations, the atmosphere was filled with laughter and mutual support rather than pressure (Pratiwi & Rohmadi, 2021; Rusdin & Purwati, 2023). The supervising teacher explained that this culture of respect and support grew naturally as members understood that everyone was learning together. This finding supports Madhavi et al. (2023), who emphasized that positive affective factors such as belongingness and social support play an essential role in sustaining learning engagement.

The supervising teacher also plays a significant role. Rather than assuming a dominant instructor role, the teacher acts as a facilitator and mentor who ensures that the learning rhythm remains productive and inclusive. In the interview, the teacher stated, "My job is not to teach grammar or evaluate them, but to help them stay confident in speaking." This approach demonstrates a deep understanding of the importance of affective scaffolding, a form of emotional support that fosters students' sense of safety and confidence. Such support has been shown to strengthen self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to accomplish a specific task (Hanafiah et al., 2022; Kessler et al., 2021; Tai, 2024). Within the English Club, self-efficacy was evident in students' behavioral changes, from being passive participants to taking active roles as speakers or moderators.

Nevertheless, the club's success is not free from structural and psychological challenges. Time constraints emerged as the primary obstacle. Since the English Club is an extracurricular activity, meetings often had to adjust to the school's busy schedule, particularly during exam periods or major school events. Observations showed that sessions

were sometimes canceled or postponed due to overlaps with student council (OSIS) activities or competition preparations. One committee member, S., stated, "We often struggle to find time because everyone has other commitments." This irregular scheduling disrupted the continuity of speaking practice, which ideally should occur regularly to maintain fluency and confidence.

In addition to time constraints, differences in members' proficiency levels also posed challenges. The club consists of students from grades X to XII, with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Some had strong speaking skills due to prior competition experience, while others still struggled to construct simple sentences. Observations revealed that in several activities, more proficient members tended to dominate discussions, whereas less confident ones preferred to remain silent or act as listeners. However, this dynamic also provided opportunities for peer learning. Advanced members frequently helped explain vocabulary or provide sentence examples, creating effective peer scaffolding. Within the framework of sociocultural learning theory, as described by Vygotsky (2008), such interaction allows learners to progress through guidance from peers who operate within their zone of proximal development.

Limited facilities occasionally hindered the activities, although not significantly. The club did not have a permanent room, so sessions often rotated between the library, a small hall, or even the schoolyard. Observations indicated that the learning atmosphere remained lively despite occasional distractions from nearby activities. Interestingly, this flexibility encouraged students' creativity in adapting to various situations. They learned to utilize available resources, using mobile phones for background music, writing scripts on scrap paper, or transforming open spaces into makeshift stages for drama performances. Such conditions illustrate learning resilience, or the capacity to continue learning amid limitations.

Social and affective factors intertwine to shape diverse learning experiences among members. Students with strong intrinsic motivation and robust social support tended to show significant improvement in speaking skills and confidence. Conversely, those with high anxiety or time limitations often experienced slower progress. Yet, the club's warm and collaborative culture gradually encouraged even passive members to become more engaged. Observations showed that such changes did not occur abruptly but progressively, through positive social experiences, small peer appreciation, opportunities to perform without pressure, and moral support from the teacher. In this sense, affective engagement serves as the bridge between motivation and performance.

Interestingly, inhibiting factors often triggered the emergence of adaptive strategies. When scheduling conflicts made in-person meetings difficult, club leaders began using instant messaging groups to share ideas or conduct brief online practices. The supervising teacher encouraged members to create short English vlogs as independent speaking exercises. Such initiatives demonstrate how autonomy and creativity flourish beyond institutional constraints. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory, these actions represent a high level of autonomy rooted in intrinsic motivation, students act not out of obligation but from personal awareness and commitment to learning.

Ultimately, the interplay between supporting and inhibiting factors reveals that the English Club's success lies not merely in improving members' linguistic fluency but in fostering learning resilience and self-efficacy. Students learn to manage time, overcome fear, and support one another within an empathetic learning community. As one senior member stated, "What I've learned in the English Club is not only about speaking, but also about confidence, teamwork, and how we strengthen each other." This statement encapsulates the essence of humanistic learning, that language mastery is not solely the result of cognitive training but emerges from the social relationships and positive emotions developed among learners.

English Club as a Model of *Learning beyond the classroom* in the Indonesian EFL Context

The English Club at SMA 54 Jakarta has developed into a learning ecosystem that transcends the boundaries of formal classrooms. It is not merely an extracurricular activity but a vibrant socio-pedagogical space where English is used, negotiated, and given meaning through authentic practices. Within the context of English education in Indonesia, often dominated by grammar-based and exam-oriented instruction, the presence of the English Club represents a new direction: autonomous, participatory, and contextual learning, a tangible form of learning beyond the classroom (Wongsa & Son, 2022). Within this framework, students are not merely recipients of knowledge but co-creators of learning spaces, shaping meaningful and sustainable learning experiences beyond formal systems.

Field observations reveal that English Club activities take place in an atmosphere far removed from traditional classroom hierarchies. There is no dominant position between teacher and students; instead, collaboration prevails. The supervising teacher acts as a facilitator who occasionally provides guidance, yet most activities are driven by students' own initiatives. They design activity schedules, determine weekly themes, and even organize peer-mentoring systems for new members. In one observed session, members discussed the format of the next meeting, whether to hold a debate, a language game, or a public speaking practice. The discussion was lively, filled with English arguments, laughter, and natural compromises. This atmosphere indicates that the English Club is not merely a speaking practice venue but also a social laboratory where students learn to negotiate, lead, and make collective decisions.

Several club members expressed that they feel freer to express themselves in the club than in class. One informant, N., stated, "In class, I'm afraid of making mistakes, but in the club, it's okay if the grammar isn't perfect, as long as I can speak." This perspective illustrates a shift in language learning paradigms, from an accuracy-oriented to a fluency- and confidence-oriented approach. Theoretically, this aligns with the autonomy-supportive learning environment proposed by Korkmaz and Mirici (2023), in which learners achieve autonomy not through unstructured freedom but through opportunities to practice and reflect within supportive social contexts.

Further observations indicate that learning within the club is highly authentic and situational. In activities such as storytelling and mini drama, students use English not because of assignments but due to genuine communicative needs. For instance, when preparing a

short drama performance, club members collaborate to write scripts, assign roles, and solve technical issues, all in English. The supervising teacher observes from a distance, occasionally offering brief feedback on pronunciation or word choice. Such interactions create what Octaberlina and Muslimin (2022) describe as a task-based natural learning environment, a task-oriented learning context that fosters spontaneous and meaningful language use.

Socially, the English Club functions as a learning community that embodies the spirit of learning beyond the classroom in its truest sense, learning that transcends spatial, temporal, and role boundaries. Activities do not end when meetings conclude. Based on interviews, some members continue discussions in online groups, share inspiring videos, or review one another's speaking practice videos posted on personal social media. In one observed online session, members used voice notes to practice pronunciation while others provided constructive English feedback. These activities illustrate a fully independent form of peer-led learning, without direct teacher instruction. As Korkmaz and Mirici (2023) emphasize, learner autonomy does not mean learning in isolation but rather the ability to take responsibility for one's learning within a mutually supportive social environment.

Interestingly, the English Club also serves as a bridge between formal classroom learning and social experiences outside school. Several English teachers acknowledged that students active in the club demonstrate significant improvements in speaking confidence and classroom participation. They are more responsive in discussions and often become positive role models for their peers. One teacher noted, "Students active in the English Club are usually more prepared to use English even in formal classes. They are not afraid of mistakes because they are used to speaking." This finding shows how nonformal activities can enhance formal learning outcomes through the transfer of communicative skills, self-confidence, and intrinsic motivation.

What is most compelling about the club's dynamics is how students construct their roles as learners. They do not wait for direction but create their own learning paths. When school schedules are tight and meetings cannot be held, they still find ways to practice, by creating mini projects such as an English Vlog Challenge or inter-member storytelling competitions. In an interview, S., one of the club leaders, explained, "We want the club to stay alive even when we're busy. So, if we can't meet, we still practice online." Such initiatives demonstrate a high level of agency, students' capacity to act based on awareness and commitment to their own learning (Kessler et al., 2021; Zakian et al., 2022). Within Indonesia's still largely top-down educational system, this practice reflects a cultural shift from dependence to learner autonomy.

From the perspective of experiential learning, direct experiences gained through club activities also reinforce reflective learning cycles. Students not only engage in activities (such as debates or dramas) but also reflect on them during post-activity discussions, analyzing what went well and what could be improved. In one observation, after a public speaking session, members gave each other feedback on speaking styles in a positive and constructive tone. This reflective process shows that the club serves as a reflective space, a venue where students reinterpret their experiences and develop metacognitive skills in language learning.

Conceptually, the English Club represents an ideal model of learning beyond the classroom within the Indonesian EFL context. It integrates individual autonomy, social collaboration, and authentic experience. Learning is not confined by classrooms, curricula, or examinations but emerges from interaction, experience, and ownership of learning. Students are no longer passive objects of instruction but active subjects shaping their own learning ecosystems. These findings affirm Hanafiah et al.'s (2022) view that long-term language learning success largely depends on students' ability to cultivate self-directed learning beyond formal institutions.

More broadly, this English Club model has the potential to be replicated in other schools as a strategy to strengthen speaking competence and promote student empowerment. It offers an alternative to traditional teaching approaches that remain focused on structural aspects of language. In educational policy terms, such clubs can be part of efforts to expand the definition of the "language classroom", one that is no longer confined to physical space but encompasses all social experiences in which language is used and negotiated. The English Club demonstrates that when students are given space to manage and interpret their own learning, the outcomes extend beyond linguistic proficiency to the development of reflective, collaborative, and resilient learner identities, the hallmarks of 21st-century learners.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the English Club at SMA 54 Jakarta functions as an effective alternative learning space that strengthens students' speaking competence through social, creative, and collaborative experiences beyond the formal classroom. Through student-led planning and management with the teacher serving as a facilitator, the club fosters an authentic and communicative learning environment where English is not merely an object of study but a medium of meaningful interaction. Activities such as debates, storytelling, and public speaking have been shown to enhance students' fluency, confidence, and interaction strategies naturally. Learning conducted in a non-evaluative atmosphere promotes intrinsic motivation, peer solidarity, and a sense of ownership over the learning process. Despite challenges related to time constraints and varying proficiency levels, students exhibited autonomy and learning resilience, demonstrating how learning beyond the classroom can be realized contextually within the Indonesian EFL environment. Thus, the English Club not only expands the boundaries of the classroom but also illustrates the potential of community-based learning as a model that fosters learner agency and enriches English language teaching practices in secondary education.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected

through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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