

## Exploring Students' Perspectives on Efclusda Program in Enhancing Speaking Skill

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### Abstract

This research explores students' views on EFCLUSDA (English Fun Club Matsanisda), an extracurricular English program at MTsN 1 Sidoarjo, and its contribution to improving their speaking skills. The study used a qualitative approach, with data collected through semi-structured interviews involving active participants of the program. The findings show that students consider EFCLUSDA effective when it provides practical, interactive, and student-centered activities within a supportive environment. They also highlighted the importance of varied tasks, the use of technology, and guidance from mentors to make speaking practice more meaningful. These insights indicate that EFCLUSDA plays an important role in helping students build fluency and confidence, while also giving schools direction in designing programs that respond to students' needs. The study further suggests that integrating students' perspectives into program design is essential for the success of English learning. In addition, practical recommendations such as increasing opportunities for speaking practice, using diverse themes, and inviting guest speakers can strengthen the program's impact.

**Keywords:** Student Perspectives; Extracurricular Program; Speaking Skills

### INTRODUCTION

School program, both inside and outside the classroom, play a significant role in determining student achievement. Extracurricular activities, in particular, provide valuable opportunities to develop language skills such as communication, comprehension, or presentation in class, as well as social interaction and personal development (Ginosyan et al., 2019). These programs aim to develop students' communication skills, particularly those related to interpersonal communication (D. Hammond & C. Harvey, 2018). According to (Vygotsky, 1978) theory of human development, social interaction is crucial for learning, and collaborative learning helps students acquire language. Indeed, (Dewey, 1938) experimental learning theory emphasizes the importance of learning through experience, emphasized that education should be implanted in real-life experiences. Dewey believed that learning occurs most effectively when students are actively engaged in meaningful activities. While (Bandura, 1977) social learning theory emphasizes the importance of observation, imitation, and feedback. These facts illustrate why after-school English club are a powerful way to improve communication skills. Communication is a crucial part of language learning and one of the most difficult skills for students to master. It requires patience, confidence, and communication skills. According to (Ervin-tripp, 2015) explains that speaking is a form of communication that encompasses social and cultural situations, including verbal and nonverbal communication. Effective communication requires the ability to ask questions, listen to new ideas, and express one's own thoughts clearly (Thornbury, 2015). However, many students still face challenges such as low confidence and limited vocabulary. To help them overcome these barriers, nonverbal communication plays an important role, while curriculum design also aims to create supportive language learning

experiences (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Speaking programs that focus on communication practice whether through intensive courses, extracurricular clubs, or workshops have been shown to improve students' fluency and confidence when these activities are prioritized (Vandell et al., 2020).

A number of studies highlight the positive influence of extracurricular English activities on students' proficiency. For instance, (Sari et al., 2024) found that learners who joined an English meditation program showed better motivation and language skills compared to those attending only face-to-face courses. Accordingly, (Simbolon et al., 2023) demonstrated that speaking, writing, and language skills were significantly improved by 50% when using an English reading program. In a similar, (Aenum et al., 2022) showed that students' knowledge increased when extracurricular and classroom activities were integrated. These findings suggest that language instruction should not only rely on the formal curriculum but also include learner-centered approaches. Understanding how students view the course is also crucial. Perspective theory, according to (García-Moya et al., 2020), explain that perspective theory relates to how individuals interpret and respond to experiences based on their knowledge, attitudes, and background. Considering diverse viewpoints means acknowledging each student's unique way of learning and engaging. When applied to education, this approach highlights the value of student voice, especially in programs designed to build speaking confidence. Research by (Astawa et al. 2024) further argue that student voice enables greater participation and deeper learning. In this sense, involving students' perspectives in extracurricular programs by exploring their interests, needs, and challenges provides essential input for designing activities that are both meaningful and effective.

In one Islamic school that called by MTsN 1 Sidoarjo there are English club known as EFCLUSDA (English Fun Club Matsanisda) is a creative illustration of an after-school program that emphasizes speaking. The three primary departments of EFCLUSDA storytelling, olympiad, and speech were founded in 2017 with the goal of improving various facets of English communication. Through competitions and group projects, the program offers real-world experiences in addition to structured practice. This method encourages self-assurance, creativity, and language proficiency, which is consistent with the idea that meaningful social interaction lowers affective barriers and encourages students to use English more frequently. While previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of English language courses in general, few have examined EFCLUSDA specifically from the perspective of participants. Understanding how students perceive the program, what they value, and what improvements they expect will help improve its effectiveness. Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of students' perceptions of EFCLUSDA in improving their speaking skills. By focusing on student voice, this study seeks to understand how the program supports language development, builds confidence, and meets students' needs, providing insights for educators and policymakers in designing student-centered English language courses.

## METHOD

This research applied a qualitative descriptive design. Qualitative research that states by (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) that seeks information through case studies, interviews, and so on to discover and describe in the form of narrative reports what specific people do in their daily lives and what their actions mean to them. This highlights that qualitative research may explore the understanding related to the specific perspective of students' on the EFCLUSDA program to enhance speaking skills. The population in this study consisted of students at MTsN 1 Sidoarjo who joined the EFCLUSDA program. The sample was taken from students who had actively participated in the program for at least one semester. To represent each department, the researcher interviewed three students from storytelling, three students from Olympiad, and

three students from speech, so the total of the students was 15 students. Most of the participants were seventh-grade students with different levels of speaking ability and involvement in club activities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed the researcher to ask guided questions while also giving space for participants to express their thoughts freely. The instrument that is used is an interview guide containing open-ended questions that focus on students' experiences, challenges, perceived benefits, and suggestions for improvement. The research was conducted at MTsN 1 Sidoarjo, an Islamic junior high school located in Sidoarjo, East Java. The school organizes the EFCLUSDA program as an extracurricular activity to enhance students' English proficiency, particularly in speaking.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The results of semi-structured interviews with students involved in EFCLUSDA (English Fun Club Matsanisda) at MTsN 1 Sidoarjo are presented in this chapter. Student experiences, comparisons to traditional classroom settings, speaking exercises, the effect on speaking abilities, and recommendations for development are the main topics of the analysis..

#### *Student Experiences*

Most students described EFCLUSDA as “fun,” “memorable,” and “educational.” They appreciated the relaxed environment compared to formal classes. The informal and student-friendly environment contributed significantly to their engagement and enjoyment. One student described the experience as “*exciting, especially during training events,*” highlighting the memorable nature of special events organized by the club. One student said, “*This program really helps me to learn English in a fun and not boring way.*” These responses indicate that EFCLUSDA succeeds in making language learning enjoyable, and students value the break from formal classroom structures. Additionally, several students commented on how EFCLUSDA helped build a stronger sense of community and belonging. One response read, “*I can meet friends from other classes and study together.*” This aligns with (Vygotsky, 1978) Social Development Theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning. Students highlighted that EFCLUSDA built not only language skills but also community and confidence.

#### *Comparison with Regular English Classes*

When asked to compare EFCLUSDA with regular English classes, students overwhelmingly indicated that EFCLUSDA was more interactive, creative, and student-focused. Regular classes were described as rigid and focused on grammar and textbook exercises. On the other hand, through a variety of exercises like games, storytelling, and discussions, EFCLUSDA gave students greater freedom to experiment with language use. EFCLUSDA was consistently rated by students as being more creative and interactive than traditional English classes. One student said, “*EFCLUSDA has more practice and games, while my English lessons in class are just studying and doing questions.*” “*At EFCLUSDA, I feel more relaxed and free to express myself, but in class, I often feel pressured because of the score,*” another person wrote. This reflects (BRUNER, 1977) Discovery Learning Theory, which suggests students learn best through hands-on and exploratory activities. EFCLUSDA reduces affective barriers and prioritizes real communication, unlike the more rigid classroom setting. Students shared that EFCLUSDA gave them the confidence to apply what they had learned in class in a more spontaneous and fluid manner. This bridge between theory and practice plays a critical role in language development.

#### *Speaking Activities*

Speech delivery, storytelling, and role-playing were the most valued activities. Students highlighted how these exercises enhanced their expression and fluency, saying, “*Practicing*

*speech in front of friends often makes me no longer afraid to speak.*" *"Storytelling teaches me to be more expressive when speaking,"* another person commented. In line with (Bandura, 1977) Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes learning through observation, imitation, and feedback, improvement was also supported by feedback from mentors and peers. As a sign of their growing control over the educational process, some students even reported starting small groups to rehearse speeches outside of scheduled classes. An important component of long-term language development is learner autonomy, which is demonstrated by this proactive behavior.

### ***Impact on Speaking Skills***

The majority of students said that their speaking abilities had improved in a number of areas. These included greater self-confidence, improved fluency, improved pronunciation, and more efficient vocabulary use. Students reported significant gains in pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. *"Now I am more confident in public speaking,"* one student explained, while another added, *"I used to have difficulty pronouncing English words correctly, but now I'm more fluent."* These reflections show both technical and psychological growth, supporting (Brown, 2015) view of speaking as an interactive process of meaning-making. EFCLUSDA aligns with this definition by promoting real-time, purposeful communication. Many shared that they felt more prepared for academic presentations or speech competitions. These broader educational benefits demonstrate the holistic impact of EFCLUSDA and reinforce the value of school-based extracurricular programs in supporting comprehensive student development.

### ***Suggestions for Improvement***

Based on the students' open responses and interviews, several suggestions came up that could help improve the EFCLUSDA program in the future. Most students agreed that the program is already helpful, but they also believe that some things could be improved to make it even better and more relevant to their needs. While satisfied with the program, students suggested more frequent speaking sessions, relatable topics, and practical materials such as vocabulary lists. Others suggested collaborating across schools: *"It will be more exciting if we can join speech competitions with other schools."* Still others suggested inviting native speakers or guests. These concepts show students' active participation and are consistent with (Astawa et al., 2024), that student viewpoints are essential to curriculum development. Students believed that this would help them become more motivated as well as enhance their listening and pronunciation.

## **Discussion**

According to the results, students' perspective of EFCLUSDA highlight how crucial it is to create programs that are directly related to their real needs in order to enhance their English-speaking abilities. When the school thinks about creating a speaking-specific program or improving the current EFCLUSDA, it must make sure that the program is structured based on what students really expect and experience. Their perspective offer insightful information on a number of topics that can direct the future evolution of educational initiatives. First and foremost, the curriculum ought to be student-centered and based on students' viewpoints, as student-centered approaches have been widely recognized to foster greater motivation, engagement, and achievement when learners' perspectives are actively considered in the learning process (Tang, 2023). The answers demonstrate that speaking exercises cannot be limited to those found in textbooks. Pupils look for activities that have relevance to their everyday lives, like talking about current events or sharing personal stories. This strategy guarantees that the activities directly address their learning objectives and makes the program more engaging. Second, active and practical learning must be prioritized. Referring to Dewey's experiential learning (Dewey, 1938), students gain more benefit when they learn through real experiences rather than abstract drills. Role plays, storytelling, and classroom presentations, as

well as other activities, foster students' competency in English in real-life situations, a finding consistent with previous research that has shown role-play and simulation to significantly improve learners' speaking skills, vocabulary, and communicative competence (Valero Redondo, 2024). This contributes to the improvement of their fluency and the value of the learning in actual communication. The students appreciate interactive and collaborative learning, as well. Collaborative and interactive learning environments are key elements to the acquisition of language, according to Vygotsky and Bandura's theories. Students gain confidence and effective talking strategies through the interactions of peer dialogues and cooperative tasks, additionally learning from role models like mentors and more capable peers. Students anticipate more engaging and varied activities. To avoid monotony, the syllabus should include diverse tasks for students such as storytelling, group debates, and role plays, as varied and interactive activities have been shown to enhance engagement and significantly improve learners' motivation and speaking competence (Romero, 2022). The relevance of these activities to students' interests and current issues will enhance their focus and engagement level. Finally, the students recognize the importance of both mentors and technology in learning, which is consistent with research highlighting that effective mentorship not only supports academic and personal development but can also be strengthened through digital platforms and e-mentoring that widen access and opportunities (Marshall et al., 2022). Students have more free practice opportunities with the internet, and mentors, in addition to criticism, help facilitate the learning. Mentors, as well as modern learning aids, promote ease in learning and mastery of the speech.

## CONCLUSION

This research focused on the students' perceptions on the role of the EFCLUSDA program in developing their classroom speaking skills. Findings show that through playing games, engaging in dialogues, conversations, and discussions, the EFCLUSDA program helps students learn English and become proficient participants. The students become more confident, less anxious, and more proficient in the use of the English language. Understanding that effective communicative instruction must be learner-centered, this study reiterates the importance of integrating learners' viewpoints in the development of language instruction. The scope of this course primarily concentrates on communicative skills and does not address the other skills of writing, reading, and listening. Additional research is needed to fully capture the impact of EFCLUSDA on the learners' English language proficiency.

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