ATLANTIS
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English Foreign Language Students' Perceptions of an Online English Speaking Club in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT
One of the crucial steps in curriculum design and lesson planning is discovering students' perceptions of the teaching and learning processes. This study is an evaluative research that aims to determine the perception of English Foreign Language (EFL) students of the Speaking Club in higher education. The student perception is an important consideration for evaluating the Speaking Club in terms of context, input, process, and product (CIPP). The researcher used an online questionnaire to collect the data. The respondents were 27 EFL students who joined the Speaking Club. The results of the data obtained in this study indicate that most students consider the Speaking Club as a significant opportunity to improve their speaking skills. The students stated that the Speaking Club was a great way to increase their confidence in speaking, enabling them to make new friends, experience, as well as speaking knowledge and skills. In addition, students found some shortcominga of the Speaking Club based on their experiences. The paper ends with a discussion of the students' perceptions and suggestions based on students' perceptions for the progress of the Speaking Club.

Keywords: EFL in higher education, speaking club. speaking skills, students' perception

1. INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have studied student perceptions as a crucial consideration in evaluating teaching and learning processes. Students' perceptions of the learning environment have an impact on how much they learn as well as the effectiveness of the teaching environment [1] [2]. In addition, teachers' approach to teaching affects how students learn [3] [4].

Considering the money and time spent on teaching and learning foreign language from elementary school to higher education, the results obtained are not satisfactory. Due to a lack of ability to evaluate the flaws, the wrong solutions have been proposed [5].

By considering this, an evaluation is needed to improve the teaching and learning processes. In education, evaluation is defined as the process of defining, clarifying, and analyzing criteria to assess the objective value, quality, benefits, performance, and importance of evaluation [6][7]. In addition, evaluation is a continuous process that can be used both in planned and unexpected situations, with the aim of deliberately questioning the value of an object [8]. In line with this,

this study tries to answer these problems in the context of the Speaking Club in higher education.

One of the important skills in English that is needed by higher education students is speaking. The ability to speak is important in communication because it allows people to convey messages and exchange information in real-life circumstances [9]. As a result, many foreign language students consider mastery of speaking English as a top priority [10]. The participation of students in speaking is one of the important factors that determine the success of teaching speaking. The quantity and quality of interaction are critical dimensions of effective classroom teaching [11] [12].

On the other hand, most of the EFL students face some difficulties speaking in English. Student barriers, lack of words, low involvement, themes to be represented, and the use of mother tongue are all issues that need to be addressed [13] [14]. Furthermore, there are still many students who have difficulties. The most significant barriers affecting their capacity to speak are shyness, nervousness, and a lack of motivation [15][16].

One of the alternatives for students to improve their speaking abilities is to join an English Speaking Club. A

speaking club is a form of communication that allows people to connect. The goal is to improve students' speaking abilities as well as their willingness and confidence to talk as often as possible. In addition, the Speaking Club serves as a catalyst for students to improve their English skills, especially speaking skills.

In term of importance, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta accommodates higher education students with the opportunity to improve their speaking skills through extensive learning course. At the Language Training Centre of Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, there is a Speaking Club program to enhance the students' speaking skills. In order to improve the quality of the Speaking Club, an evaluation process is needed. Therefore, it is necessary to know the students' perceptions of the Speaking Club as the main consideration for evaluating the program.

A number of studies on students' perceptions of Speaking Club activities have been carried out. The English club program, according to the students, helps them gain confidence in speaking English outside of the classroom by providing more speaking opportunities [17]. Furthermore, there are various strategies to improve English clubs, such as implementing various activities and creating an interesting and fun learning environment to make students feel comfortable [18]. Moreover, data from several studies show that teachers can correct the shortcomings of the Speaking Club based on the students' perceptions [19]–[22].

Taking these considerations into account, the purpose of this study is to describe the students' perceptions of the Speaking Club program. Therefore, this study poses the following research questions: (1) how are the students' perceptions of the Speaking Club in its context, input, process, and product (CIPP)? (2) what are the students' perceptions of the Speaking Club in general, their learning activities, shortcomings, and suggestions?

Perception is preceded by sensing, which is the process of the humans receiving stimuli through their senses [23]. Perception also refers to how a person (student) feels about specific items, both consciously and unconscious, visually or auditory, as well as ideas that are triggered by brain processes [24]. In other words, the perception of people's opinion about something that they think is true. That is, perception refers to a person's feelings or views of a particular object.

One of the most important factors to examine when measuring instructional success is the student's perception. It is very important to understand students' perspectives since it allows teachers and lecturers to assess their own instruction. Teachers or lecturers can adjust what students don't like and increase what students appreciate after learning about their perspectives, be it about how to educate or deliver material to students. As a result, student perspectives are

critical, especially for teachers or lecturers because they are used to improve the instructional design.

The student perception is very important to measure learning outcomes. In addition, student perception is a solution of components and indicators in explaining the classroom conditions [25]. Students' perceptions of the learning environment have an impact on how much they learn and thus on the teaching and learning processes [1][2]. Therefore, student perceptions are significant not only for estimation but also for teaching development purposes.

Speaking is one of the macro language skills, besides writing, listening, and reading [26]. Speaking is a meaningful interaction between people [27]. Moreover, speaking is a productive skill, where a speaker uses this skill to convey meaning to his listener [28]. In addition, speaking or verbal communication is when two or more people in the role of listeners, and the speakers have to react to what they hear and contribute with great speed [29].

Speaking can also be defined as the process of creating and communicating meaning in various situations using verbal and nonverbal symbols [30]. This means that English speakers must be able to speak in different genres and situations [31]. Students' speaking skills will be better when they have tried speaking in different situations. The frequency with which the student uses the target language determines his or her ability to use it orally. Therefore, to speak fluently, students must do enough speaking practice.

The English Speaking Club serves as a medium to connect people. The goal is to increase students' motivation and confidence to communicate as much as possible [10]. Students can share their knowledge with their peers by joining the Speaking Club. It might also be a good place to discuss students' problems with speaking practice and hope to find solutions to their problems.

Stufflebeam was the first to use a management-oriented evaluation approach to help program managers make the best judgments possible. Context, Input, Process, and Product Evaluation Model is the name of his evaluation method (CIPP). The CIPP evaluation approach has been extensively developed and deployed since 1965.

In terms of evaluating program quality, the CIPP model is flexible and targeted [32]–[34]. Evaluations is carried out in one of two ways: (a) improvement/formative evaluations carried out at the end of a program to guide the creation of a new program or to improve existing one; or (b) a summative evaluations conducted at the start of a program to assist the development of a new program or the improvement of an existing one; or (c) accountability/summative evaluations carried out during program implementation to determine conformity with the intended program outline. After determining their orientation, evaluators

take a more prescriptive approach to program evaluation by specifying components for each of the four main evaluations of the CIPP model.

Program's objectives, policies that support the institution's vision and mission, the appropriate environment, identification of requirements, opportunities, and problem-specific assessment can all be evaluated in a large-scale context. Evaluation inputs are used to offer information about available resources to meet program objectives.

Finding a problem-solving approach, planning, and designing programs are all done with evaluation inputs. The purpose of the evaluation process is to provide feedback to individuals to hold them accountable for the program or curriculum activities. Monitoring potential sources of failure, preparing preliminary information for making decisions, and explaining actual procedures are all part of the review process. Achievement of goals is measured and interpreted through product evaluation. Expected and unintended impacts are also measured as part of the product evaluation process.

The decision-making process is carried out by comparing the findings/facts found in context, inputs, processes, and product standards or criteria that have been set. Complete context evaluations to help define objectives, evaluation of inputs to help shape the proposals, process evaluation to guide implementation, and product evaluations to assist recycling decisions are part of the core CIPP framework. As a result, this model has a comprehensive basic framework, with the evaluation context assisting in the formulation of objectives, evaluation input assisting program preparation, the evaluation process directs the applicability of a program, and product evaluation determines the success of the program.

Figure 1. The CIPP model of evaluation

When assessment tries to remove boundaries and continue to improve performance both personally and institutionally, it is conducted to provide feedback on curriculum implementation. The abbreviation CIPP stands for context, input, process, and product. The CIPP evaluation methodology is often used to assess a program or policy, and can also be used to assess curriculum in a small-scale teaching and learning program.

2. METHOD

This study was evaluation research which serves as an interpretation utilized in studies where the researcher attempts to understand better the context, people, and phenomenon [35]. In this study, the researcher tried to collect, analyse, interpret, and describe the students' perceptions of English-Speaking Club activities by looking at the students' responses.

The participants of this study are 27 students of Yogyakarta State University who joined the Speaking Club. Moreover, the participants consisted of 22 female and 5 male students. The participants' ages range from 18 to 28 years old. They were from different study programs in undergraduate and graduate study. The majority of the participants want to be teachers, lecturers, and businessmen. They stated that their goals motivate them to learn English. Therefore, they decided to join the Speaking Club.

An online questionnaire was used to collect the data, which consisted of fifteen items. Ten items were in the form of Likert-scale statements adapted from Karataş and Fer [5] with four options each, and five items were open-ended questions. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: students' personal information, opinions about the Speaking Club in terms of its context, input, process, and product (CIPP), and students' opinions and suggestions to the Speaking Club by answering the open-ended questions. All 27 students returned the complete questionnaires.

The total number of options provided by the respondents determined the questionnaire's scores. The results were formulated using the values received from the data analysis. The result and discussion section contains the results of the data analysis calculation. The percentages were used to represent the results of the data analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

This paper begins with the research question: what are the students' perceptions of the Speaking Club's context, input, process, and product (CIPP)? Then, the data analysis results answer the research question.

Twenty-seven students completed the questionnaire to uncover the students' perception of the Speaking Club. In terms of context, based on the questionnaire results, most of the students (74.07%) strongly agree that the Speaking Club is appropriate to support the students in improving their speaking skills. In addition, the majority of the students (25.93%) agree that the duration of the Speaking Club is adequate.

In terms of the input, most of the students (62.96%) agree that the Speaking Club has provided adequate activities to improve their speaking skills. In terms of

the process, the majority of students (62.96%) stated that the Speaking Club used an appropriate method that enables students to participate actively in learning processes. At last, most of the students (51.85%) agree that the Speaking Club helps them speak English more confidently and improve their speaking skills for their needs as the product of the Speaking Club.

Aside from collecting data through the questionnaire, this study also used open-ended questions to collect more detailed student responses to answer the second research question. The first item is used to uncover the students' opinion on the Speaking Club in general. Based on the results, the majority of the students have positive attitudes toward the Speaking Club. In addition, they agree that the Speaking Club is useful to help them improve their speaking skills.

The second question was used to discover the students' perception of the learning activities in the Speaking Club. Again, the majority of the students stated they enjoyed the learning activities because they provided many opportunities to speak in various contexts. In addition, the students stated that the learning activities are enjoyable, exciting, easy to follow and making the students feel at ease in learning.

The third question was used to reveal the students' perception of the impact of joining the Speaking Club on their speaking skills. The majority of the students stated that the Speaking Club helped them be more confident speaking in English because they feel they have improved their speaking skills.

The fourth question was used to discover the students' perception of the drawback of the Speaking Club. The majority of the students stated that they are satisfied with the Speaking Club to help them in improving their speaking skills. However, the other students said that there are some shortcomings in the Speaking Club. For example, there is no session with native speakers, there is a lack of theory sessions before practicing, and the number of participants is inconsistent. In addition, the students stated that it would be wonderful to have more participants so that the practices would be more interactive.

The last question was used to uncover the students' suggestions for the betterment of the Speaking Club. The majority of the students stated that the Speaking Club is good enough. However, the other students responded that they wished to have more IELTS for speaking materials and more time to get along with friends. They also stated that it would be better to have a post-test at the end of the meeting. Finally, in terms of duration, the students said they wished the session would last longer with more online learning activities.

3.2. Discussion

This study aims to evaluate the Speaking Club program based on the students' perceptions of the

Speaking Club program. Accordingly, this study has answered the research questions regarding the students' perceptions of the Speaking Club in terms of its context, input, process, product (CIPP), learning activities, drawbacks, and suggestions.

Based on the questionnaire, the majority of the students have positive perceptions toward the Speaking Club. The students' perceptions act as a means for teachers to evaluate the teaching and learning process and learning outcomes [25]. Students' perceptions of a learning environment influence how much they learn. Therefore, it helps teach development purposes [1], [2].

The result of the study is in line with the previous studies. The students stated that the Speaking club program helped them be more confident speaking in English [17]. Moreover, most of the students noted that the Speaking Club plays a vital role in improving their speaking skills. The students stated that the Speaking Club has a great way to encourage them to be more confident in speaking, enables them to get new friends, experiences, and knowledge of speaking [19]–[22].

This study discovered some drawbacks of the Speaking Club such as; the duration for each session is too short, there is no learning module, there is no fixed schedule shared to know the topics in each meeting, there is no face-to-face meeting through online platforms, no session with native speakers. In addition, the number of participants is inconsistent. The students wish to have more participants so the practices will be more interactive. Moreover, they want to have more theories of speaking before speaking practice in English. Regarding the drawbacks, students gave suggestions to improve the Speaking Club, such as using various online learning activities, inviting native speakers for practices, and having more participants join the Speaking Club.

This study is a small-scale evaluative study with some limitations. First, the participants of the study are limited to 27 students. To get better results, future research can be done with a more significant number of participants. Second, the questionnaire was adjusted into a small number of questions focusing on specific aspects of the Speaking Club. In line with this, future research can involve more questions to seek deeper information on students' perceptions of the teaching and learning processes. Third, the drawbacks and suggestions presented in this study can be used as consideration for future research. For instance, one of the lacks in the Speaking Club is there is no learning module yet. Thus, there is a need for future research to develop a learning module of speaking, especially for the Speaking Club in a higher education setting.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the research study reveal essential points related to the student perception of the Speaking Club program. First, as indicated by the questionnaire

responses, most of the students gave positive responses to the Speaking Club in terms of its context, input, process, and product (CIPP).

This study provides evidence that the Speaking Club plays an important role in improving students' speaking skills. Based on these responses, students enjoy learning activities because they provide many opportunities to speak in various contexts. In addition, most of the students stated that the Speaking Club helped them to be more confident in speaking in English.

However, the students stated that there were some weaknesses of the Speaking Club. For example, there are no learning modules, no session with native speakers, the lack of theory sessions before practice, and inconsistent participants. Correspondingly, this study also revealed that students gave some suggestions for the progress of the Speaking Club.

Nevertheless, this study is only a small-scale evaluative study. The results of this study will help improve the Speaking Club program. In line with this, future research in developing materials for the Speaking Club and other studies related to teaching and learning speaking is needed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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