

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

Teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia often faces various challenges.¹ English teachers apply various strategies to create effective learning in response to these challenges. These strategies aim to increase student interest by applying relevant teaching methods. Thus, teachers are encouraged to participate in training programs that aim to improve their competence in teaching.² In addition to the challenges faced by teachers, there are also challenges faced by students, especially junior high school students, which need to be considered in learning English to improve the quality of education in general.

Learning English as a foreign language is generally challenging for junior high school students due to the fact that the pronunciation in English is often different from the writing, and the various tenses and rules need to be understood and memorized.³ These factors make English perceived as difficult and confusing by many students. In addition, this difficulty arises because there is a significant difference between the sounds of English and Indonesian, the mother tongue. According to Douglas Brown in the book *Teaching by Principles*, the more important the difference between a student's mother language (L1) and English (L2), the greater the likelihood that students will face difficulties. For example, the grammatical structure and sentence patterns in English may be very different from the student's

¹ Lenny Marzulina and others, 'Challenges in Teaching English for Efl Learners at Pesantren: Teachers' Voices', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 11.12 (2021), 1581–89..

² Roi Boy Jon and others, 'The Challenges of English Language Teaching in Indonesia', *International Journal of English and Applied Linguistics (IJEAL)*, 1.3 (2021), 158–68.

³ Sukristiningsih Sukristiningsih and Suardi Sahid, 'EFL Teaching Material Development for Junior High Schools in Arfak Mountains Regency, West Papua', *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 5.2 (2022), 364–73.

mother tongue, thus hampering their understanding.⁴ Difficulties for junior high school students in learning English as a foreign language can be caused by differences in pronunciation, word structure, and grammar rules. As Douglas Brown explains in his book, the possibility of students experiencing difficulties increases when significant differences exist.

Junior high school students generally do not have optimal concentration in the learning process. Teenagers are also characterized by unique development, requiring an educational approach to their needs.⁵ Therefore, teenagers tend to be more easily distracted and need more interactive and interesting teaching methods to maintain focus. The task of an educator is to understand and apply the right strategies so that learning can take place effectively and facilitate the development of student knowledge.

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language taught in schools as a subject.⁶ English teaching in Indonesia is limited to academic environments, where students do not have many opportunities to use English in everyday life. This makes the role of schools very important in providing the basics of English language skills for students. However, the challenges in mastering this language are quite heavy due to limited practice outside the classroom. There are several challenges students face when learning English, especially in speaking skills, because they are afraid of making mistakes and become embarrassed to speak, so the sound that comes out is less clear to hear. In addition, students have difficulty mastering vocabulary, but it is because some of them are lazy to learn new vocabulary.⁷

⁴ H. Douglas Brown, *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*, ed. by Heekyeong Lee, *Language*, Fourth Edi (London, Inggris: Pearson Education, 1995),.

⁵ Rodolfo Josafat Gultom and others, 'Teachers Strategies in Teaching English Vocabulary in Junior High School', *Journal of English Language and Education*, 7.1 (2022), 9–15.

⁶ Hilma Amalia, Fuad Abdullah, and Asri Siti Fatimah, 'Teaching Writing to Junior High School Students: A Focus on Challenges and Solutions', *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17.2 (2021), 794–810.

⁷ Amrina Rosyada-AS and Tri Wintolo Apoko, 'Investigating English Vocabulary Difficulties and Its Learning Strategies of Lower Secondary School Students', *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 11.3 (2023), 489.

The report book has three core subjects, one of which is English. Mastery of English is not only an academic requirement but also a skill that can support future development in the world of work. In various levels of education, English is the basis for students to be able to compete with the outside world. English can help people connect with the international world. Being an international language, English can be linked with the outside world and is a way to communicate with the global community. English has become a universal language in various fields, such as education, technology, business, and culture. Therefore, mastering English can provide a way to interact with the outside world and exchange information with people from various countries to broaden horizons and international relations.

Al-Hikmah Junior High School pays special attention to developing students' English language skills. The application of English language skills acquired through English Club is clearly visible in the experience of a student who became a translator for guests from aboard, and this was a source of pride for the teacher and the student himself. This experience shows that English Club activities can be crucial in developing students' English language skills. English club facilitates active English learning and builds students' confidence through interesting and fun activities.⁸ Therefore, this study aims to learn how students' perceptions of their ability in English can influence or relate to the existence of English Club activities.

The extracurricular English Club at Al-Hikmah Islamic Junior High School provides a fun and interactive learning environment, which can foster students' motivation and interest in learning English. Activities that are interesting and relevant to students' interests can foster their curiosity and passion for learning.⁹ In addition, social interaction with peers in a

⁸ Sofyan Assauri, 'THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH CLUB DISCUSSION TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY AT TENTH GRADE OF', *Journal of English Education and Literature*, 1.3 (2024), 91–96.

⁹ Irza Yuzulia, 'A Study on Students' Motivation towards Learning', *ELTIN Journal*, 9.1 (2021), 1–8.

relaxed atmosphere can also reduce students' fear or anxiety about using English, so they are more motivated to participate actively in learning.

In addition, students need a place or environment that can give them more opportunities to practice English outside of classroom teaching.¹⁰ The opportunity to actively use English outside the academic environment is essential to strengthening English language skills. With additional spaces or programs, such as language clubs, extracurricular activities, or online learning platforms, students can become more comfortable using English in more authentic and varied contexts so that their English language skills can develop more quickly and effectively.

Furthermore, several extracurricular activities can help provide additional activities for students to deepen their English. Some activities or events gather people in a group with a common goal of learning English together. The student Conversation club is one of the extracurricular activities that focuses on developing English language skills as a foreign language, with various activities that can improve English language skills, both academically and non-academically.¹¹ The existing activities can attract students' attention so that students are enthusiastic and active in each activity. The atmosphere created makes students not feel like they are in formal learning activities but still within the learning rules. There is an activity called the English Club Project (ECP) in the world of lectures. ECP is an extracurricular activity held at the Vocational Midwifery Institute. In addition to developing English language skills, this activity also functions as a forum to strengthen communication and cooperation skills between

¹⁰ Amanah Suci and Tri Wahyuni Floriasti, 'DEVELOPING TASK-BASED ENGLISH SPEAKING MATERIALS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL', *The 4th International Conference on Linguistics and Language Teaching*, 2021, 433–38.

¹¹ M Yusril Rizqi Hidayat, Errend Marchella Leonie Franchsicha, and Wahyu Indah Mala Rohmana, 'The Implementation of Literature in Extracurricular "Student Conversation Club"', *Bahtera: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 22.2 (2023), 232–38.

students.¹² With the ECP, students are encouraged to improve and sharpen their abilities in academic and non-academic fields.

English Club activities are formed to create an English-speaking environment in schools. This activity improves students' speaking skills, increases their motivation, and builds their confidence in speaking as much as possible.¹³ The existence of such groups has been proven effective in increasing interest and talent in English. English Club becomes a facilitator for students to improve their ability to master English language skills, especially speaking skills.

In accordance of establishing the English Club at Al-Hikmah Islamic Junior High School Bence, the beginning of the formation of the English club was because of the desire of the English teacher herself. Students have the ability but are not developing well. So, the teacher held a test for candidate English club participants to determine the extent of the student's abilities. The teacher began to focus learning on students' speaking skills, actively involved students in various competitions, and the students were enthusiastic to participate in all English Club activities. Every activity that students participate in, including extracurricular activities, is documented in a report card or activity report as evidence of their participation and achievements. In addition, students' report books as the result of learning evaluation are also an essential concern for teachers.

Based on the phenomena above, the researcher is interested in conducting research titled "Students' Perception on English Club Activities at SMP IT Al-Hikmah Bence." The research explored what the activities are in the English Club and how students perceived these activities.

¹² Nur Rahmiani and Norhayaty M. Malena, 'The Model of Students English Club Contribution To Writing Motivation and Punctuation Awareness Improvement', *Journal of English Educational Study (JEES)*, 3.1 (2020), 71–80.

¹³ Afifah Maulina Astari and Muhamad Sofian Hadi, 'Creating English Environment at School Through English Club Extracurricular', *Jurnal Studi Guru Dan Pembelajaran*, 5.2 (2023), 185–90.

B. Statement of The Problems

As stated in the background of the study, the researcher would like to understand students' perceptions of English Club activities at Al-Hikmah Islamic Junior High School Bence from the perspective of language psychology and language motivation. Therefore, this research aims to answer the following question:

- a. How do students perceive English Club activities at Al-Hikmah Islamic Junior High School Bence in terms of language psychology?
- b. How do students perceive English Club activities at Al-Hikmah Islamic Junior High School Bence in terms of learning motivation?

C. Purpose of The Study

In line with the problem statement, the study aims to explore students' perception towards English Club activities at Al-Hikmah Islamic Junior High School Bence in terms of language psychology and learning motivation.

D. Significance of The Study

This section describes some expected significances, considering the proposed research. This research was intended to benefit the readers, the English Language Education Department, English teachers, and students. Each is explained below.

- a. To the readers, the result of this research is expected to be a reference for conducting another related research.
- b. To the English Language Education Department, the result of this research is expected to encourage other students of English Language Education to conduct similar research with a different focus.
- c. To English teacher, this research is expected to give English teachers additional knowledge and experience on how to teach English in a fun way.
- d. For the students, it may be a positive as an alternative to improve English skills in a fun way.

E. Scope and Limitations

The limitations and scope of this study are determined by the subjects and objects studied. This study aims to explore students' perceptions of the aspects of language psychology and learning motivation formed through their involvement in the English Club extracurricular activities at SMP IT Al-Hikmah Bence. The main focus of this study is on students' understanding of the influence of their participation on the development of language psychology and learning motivation, not on the evaluation or analysis of the English Club activities themselves. The subjects of the study were students who were registered as members of the English Club extracurricular at SMP IT Al-Hikmah Bence in the 2023/2024 academic year. This study uses a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of students' perceptions and to explore the factors that contribute to their active participation in the activities.

