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## Students Vocabulary Learning Experiences in an Extracurricular English Study Club: A Descriptive Qualitative Study

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**abstrak** – Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman belajar kosakata siswa dalam kegiatan ekstrakurikuler English Study Club di MTs Darul Falah Kedungprimpen Kanor Bojonegoro. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dengan melibatkan 15 siswa perempuan yang aktif mengikuti kegiatan English Study Club. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi, dan dokumentasi.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa memperoleh pengalaman belajar kosakata yang positif dan bermakna melalui berbagai kegiatan interaktif seperti permainan, diskusi, storytelling, kuis, dan praktik berbicara. Lingkungan belajar ekstrakurikuler mendorong siswa untuk berpartisipasi secara aktif, berkomunikasi dengan lebih percaya diri, serta mempraktikkan kosakata dalam konteks yang bermakna. Selain itu, interaksi antarteman yang suportif dan suasana belajar yang santai memberikan pengaruh positif terhadap motivasi, kepercayaan diri, dan keterlibatan siswa dalam kegiatan pembelajaran kosakata.

Namun, siswa masih mengalami beberapa tantangan, seperti kesulitan mengingat kosakata, masalah pelafalan, keterbatasan penguasaan kosakata, dan kesulitan menggunakan kosakata secara tepat dalam komunikasi. Meskipun demikian, paparan kosakata yang berulang dan kegiatan pembelajaran kolaboratif memberikan kontribusi yang signifikan terhadap perkembangan kosakata, kemampuan komunikasi, dan kepercayaan diri siswa. Oleh karena itu, temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan English Study Club berfungsi sebagai lingkungan belajar ekstrakurikuler yang efektif dalam mendukung pengalaman belajar kosakata siswa melalui kegiatan pembelajaran yang interaktif, kolaboratif, dan berbasis pengalaman.

**Kata kunci** – Pembelajaran kosakata, English Study Club, Pengalaman siswa, Kegiatan ekstrakurikuler, Studi kualitatif deskriptif

**Abstract** – This study aimed to explore students' vocabulary learning experiences in an extracurricular English Study Club at MTs Darul Falah Kedungprimpen Kanor Bojonegoro. This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design involving 15 female students who actively participated in the English Study Club activities. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation.

The findings revealed that students experienced positive and meaningful vocabulary learning through various interactive activities such as games, discussions, storytelling, quizzes, and speaking practice. The extracurricular learning environment encouraged students to participate actively, communicate more confidently, and practice vocabulary in meaningful contexts. In addition, supportive peer interaction and a relaxed learning atmosphere positively influenced students' motivation, confidence, and engagement in vocabulary learning activities.

However, students still experienced several challenges, including difficulty remembering vocabulary, pronunciation problems, limited vocabulary mastery, and difficulty using vocabulary appropriately in communication. Despite these challenges, repeated vocabulary

exposure and collaborative learning activities significantly contributed to students' vocabulary development, communication skills, and self-confidence. Therefore, the findings indicate that English Study Club activities function as an effective extracurricular learning environment that supports students' vocabulary learning experiences through interactive, collaborative, and experiential learning activities.

**Keywords**— Vocabulary learning, English Study Club, Students' experiences, Extracurricular activities, Descriptive qualitative study

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a significant role in English language learning because it enables learners to understand messages, participate in communication, and express their ideas more effectively in various learning contexts. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts such as Indonesia, vocabulary mastery becomes highly important because students have limited exposure to English in their daily environments. Students with sufficient vocabulary knowledge tend to communicate more confidently, comprehend texts more easily, and participate actively during English learning activities. Conversely, students with limited vocabulary often experience difficulties in understanding English materials, expressing ideas, and participating during communication activities. Therefore, vocabulary mastery significantly influences students' success in learning English.

Alqahtani (2015) states that vocabulary is a fundamental aspect of language proficiency that contributes to learners' ability to communicate successfully. Vocabulary learning involves understanding meaning, pronunciation, spelling, and contextual usage through repeated exposure and meaningful interaction. Therefore, vocabulary learning should not only focus on memorizing word lists but also involve meaningful communication activities that allow students to use vocabulary naturally.

However, many students still experience difficulties in learning vocabulary effectively. Students often forget vocabulary after learning it, mispronounce English words, or experience difficulties using vocabulary appropriately in communication. In classroom learning situations, vocabulary learning is sometimes dominated by memorization activities and limited interaction, causing students to feel bored, anxious, and less motivated during learning activities. Consequently, students need

alternative learning environments that provide more enjoyable, interactive, collaborative, and meaningful vocabulary learning experiences.

One learning environment that can support vocabulary learning is the English Study Club. English Study Club is an extracurricular learning activity where students practice English collaboratively through interactive activities such as games, discussions, storytelling, quizzes, and speaking practice. Benson (2011) explains that learning outside the classroom provides authentic opportunities for learners to develop language skills through meaningful interaction and communication. Through English Study Club activities, students can practice vocabulary in relaxed and supportive learning situations without excessive academic pressure. Interactive learning activities also provide opportunities for students to improve their communication skills and participation during English learning. Tirtanawati (2022) explained that engaging learning media encourage students to participate more actively and develop better speaking competence through meaningful interaction.

Previous studies have shown that English Study Club activities positively contribute to students' vocabulary learning and motivation. Research conducted by Sabila and Erzad (2023) found that interactive and collaborative learning activities improve students' vocabulary retention and participation. Furthermore, Ningsih, Rozak, and Prastiwi (2023) explained that activities in English Conversation Clubs encourage students' speaking participation and confidence through collaborative interaction and communication practice. Mu'arifah, Tirtanawati, and Prastiwi (2024) also found that interactive vocabulary activities improve students' vocabulary mastery and classroom engagement.

Moreover, Kurniawati, Tirtanawati, and Prastiwi (2024) explained that interactive vocabulary games positively influence students' vocabulary acquisition because students learn vocabulary through enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. Nevertheless, most previous studies mainly focused on vocabulary improvement and learning motivation rather than exploring students' vocabulary learning experiences in depth.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore students' experiences in learning English vocabulary through English Study Club activities at MTs Darul Falah Kedungprimpen Kanor Bojonegoro. This study specifically focused on students' learning experiences, motivational factors, as well as the challenges and benefits experienced during participation in English Study Club activities.

## **METHOD**

This research used a descriptive qualitative design to investigate students' experiences in learning English vocabulary through participation in English Study Club activities. Qualitative research was considered appropriate because this study focused on understanding students' perceptions, feelings, experiences, and interactions during vocabulary learning activities rather than measuring variables numerically. Creswell (2014) explains that qualitative research is appropriate for exploring participants' experiences and understanding social phenomena in natural settings.

The research was conducted at MTs Darul Falah Kedungprimpen Kanor Bojonegoro during English Study Club activities. The participants of this study consisted of 15 female students who actively participated in the English Study Club. Purposive sampling was applied to select participants who could provide relevant information regarding their vocabulary learning experiences during English Study Club activities.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions, feelings, confidence, motivation, and challenges during vocabulary learning activities. Observation was conducted during English Study Club activities to observe students' participation, interaction, vocabulary use, confidence, and learning atmosphere. Documentation such as attendance lists, activity notes, and learning materials was also used to strengthen the research findings.

The data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis procedures proposed by Miles and Huberman consisting of data reduction, data display, and

conclusion drawing. To ensure data credibility, triangulation techniques were applied by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Students' Experiences in Learning English Vocabulary through English Study Club**

The findings revealed that students generally experienced positive and meaningful vocabulary learning experiences during participation in English Study Club activities. Most students explained that vocabulary learning became more enjoyable, interactive, collaborative, and less stressful compared to classroom learning. Students stated that activities such as games, discussions, storytelling, quizzes, and speaking practice helped them understand and remember vocabulary more effectively.

One student stated:

"I feel happy because learning vocabulary in the club is fun and not too serious."

(S1)

Another student explained:

"We learn vocabulary through games and discussions, so it is easier to remember."

(S4)

The observation findings strengthened the interview findings. The observation results showed that 86.7% of students actively participated during learning activities, while 93.3% of students demonstrated enthusiasm throughout the activities. Furthermore, all students or 100% experienced relaxed and non-stressful learning situations during vocabulary learning activities.

These findings are in line with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which emphasizes that learning becomes more meaningful when students are actively involved in practical experiences and reflection. During English Study Club activities, students not only memorized vocabulary theoretically but also practiced vocabulary directly through discussions, games, storytelling, and communication activities.

The findings also support Nation's theory that vocabulary learning becomes more effective when students repeatedly encounter vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Through repeated exposure and collaborative interaction, students gradually improved vocabulary understanding and retention.

Furthermore, the findings are relevant to Mu'arifah, Tirtanawati, and Prastiwi (2024), who found that interactive vocabulary activities improve students' vocabulary mastery and classroom participation because students learn vocabulary through enjoyable and collaborative learning situations.

In addition, students explained that English Study Club activities helped them become more confident in speaking English. Several students stated that repeated speaking practice and supportive peer interaction reduced their anxiety during communication activities.

One student stated:

"Before joining the club, I was shy to speak English, but now I am braver." (S5)

Another student explained:

"I am not too afraid of making mistakes because my friends help me." (S8)

Observation findings also showed that 80% of students were not afraid of making mistakes during speaking activities, while 93.3% of students appeared comfortable during learning activities. These findings indicate that supportive and collaborative learning environments positively influenced students' confidence development. The findings are also supported by Ningsih, Rozak, and Prastiwi (2023), who explained that collaborative interaction in English Club activities positively encourages students' speaking participation and self-confidence.

### **Factors Motivating Students' Vocabulary Learning**

The findings revealed that enjoyable learning activities, supportive learning environments, and collaborative interaction became important motivational factors influencing students' vocabulary learning participation.

Students explained that games, storytelling, quizzes, and collaborative speaking activities made vocabulary learning more interesting and less monotonous. Students became more enthusiastic because they learned vocabulary through enjoyable and interactive activities rather than passive memorization.

The observation findings showed that 93.3% of students demonstrated enthusiasm and positive attitudes during learning activities. These findings indicate that enjoyable learning activities positively influenced students' motivation during vocabulary learning.

In addition, supportive learning environments also became important motivational factors. Students explained that facilitators and peers created comfortable learning situations where students felt safe practicing English without fear of making mistakes.

Collaborative interaction also positively influenced students' motivation. Students frequently helped peers understand vocabulary, corrected pronunciation mistakes, and practiced speaking collaboratively. Observation findings revealed that 100% of students helped peers understand vocabulary during activities, while 86.7% of students practiced vocabulary collaboratively during discussions and speaking activities.

These findings support Benson (2011), who explains that collaborative learning environments support learner autonomy, participation, and communication practice. Moreover, the findings are relevant to Kurniawati, Tirtanawati, and Prastiwi (2024), who found that interactive vocabulary learning activities create enjoyable learning atmospheres that positively influence students' engagement and motivation during English learning activities.

### **Challenges and Benefits Experienced by Students**

Despite positive learning experiences, students still experienced several vocabulary learning challenges during English Study Club activities. The findings revealed that vocabulary retention, pronunciation difficulties, limited vocabulary mastery, and contextual vocabulary use remained major challenges experienced by students.

One student stated:

"I often forget vocabulary after learning it." (S3)

Another student explained:

"Pronouncing English vocabulary is still difficult for me." (S5)

Furthermore, another student stated:

“Sometimes I know the meaning of vocabulary, but I do not know how to use it in sentences.” (S8)

These findings indicate that vocabulary learning remained complex because students needed to understand vocabulary meaning, pronunciation, spelling, and contextual usage simultaneously.

Observation findings strengthened the interview findings because 60% of students experienced difficulty remembering vocabulary, while 60% of students mispronounced vocabulary during speaking activities.

The findings are relevant to Nisa, Tirtanawati, and Prastiwi (2024), who explained that vocabulary retention and pronunciation difficulties remain common challenges in English vocabulary learning, particularly for students with limited English exposure.

However, despite these challenges, students also experienced many positive benefits after joining English Study Club activities. Students explained that English Study Club helped them improve vocabulary mastery, confidence, communication skills, and motivation toward English learning.

One student stated:

“I know more vocabulary now after joining the English club.” (S6)

Another student explained:

“I become more confident speaking English.” (S6)

Observation findings revealed that 80% of students used vocabulary appropriately according to context during activities, while 93.3% of students demonstrated positive attitudes toward English learning activities.

These findings support Mariappan (2025), who explains that experiential and interactive learning activities positively contribute to vocabulary retention, communication skills, confidence, and students' participation during language learning activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that English Study Club activities created positive, collaborative, meaningful, and enjoyable vocabulary learning experiences for students. Through experiential and interactive learning activities, students

became more motivated, confident, active, and engaged during English vocabulary learning activities.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that English Study Club activities contribute positively to students' vocabulary learning experiences at MTs Darul Falah Kedungprimpen Kanor Bojonegoro. Based on the research findings, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, students experienced enjoyable, interactive, collaborative, and less stressful. Vocabulary learning experiences during participation in English Study Club activities. Activities such as games, storytelling, discussions, quizzes, and speaking practice helped students understand and remember vocabulary more effectively. Students also became more active and comfortable during learning activities because the learning atmosphere was relaxed and supportive. These finding is consistent with Tirtanawati (2022), who found that interactive learning media positively influence students' participation and confidence during English learning activities because students are encouraged to communicate actively in meaningful contexts.

Second, enjoyable learning activities, supportive learning environments, and collaborative interaction became important motivational factors influencing students' vocabulary learning participation. Students felt more motivated because they learned vocabulary through interactive and meaningful activities rather than passive memorization. In addition, support from peers and facilitators encouraged students to participate actively and practice English more confidently during communication activities.

Third, although students still experienced several challenges such as difficulty remembering vocabulary, pronunciation problems, limited vocabulary mastery, and difficulties using vocabulary contextually, English Study Club activities also provided many benefits for students. Repeated vocabulary exposure and collaborative interaction significantly contributed to students' vocabulary

development, communication skills, confidence, participation, and motivation toward English learning.

Therefore, English Study Club activities can function as effective extracurricular learning environments that support student's vocabulary learning through interactive, collaborative, and experiential learning activities.

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