

English Day as a Strategy for Improving Speaking Skills: A Study at the University of Mataram

Rinda Dwi Cahyani, Kamaluddin, Yuni Budi Lestari

English Education Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Mataram, Indonesia

Received : 9 July 2026

Revised : 29 September 2026

Accepted : 29 September 2026

Published: 30 September 2026

Corresponding Author

Author Name: Rinda Dwi Cahyani

Email: rindadwicahyani983@gmail.com

DOI: 10.29303/jeef.v6i3.1065

© 2025 The Authors. This open access article is distributed under a (CC-BY License)



Abstract: This study investigated the implementation of SAE2P Day as a strategy to improve speaking skills among active members of the Student Association of English Education Program (SAE2P) at the University of Mataram. This study used a mixed-method design involving 10 active members selected through purposive sampling. The data were collected through questionnaires, self-reported speaking scores, and semi-structured interviews. The findings showed that most participants had positive perceptions of SAE2P Day because the program encouraged English use and increased confidence in speaking. Members used English more actively in informal contexts because they felt more comfortable and less pressured. However, the quantitative results showed that the improvement in speaking scores was still limited, with some participants showing improvement while others remained stable or decreased. Despite this, the qualitative findings revealed that SAE2P Day positively supported confidence, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and speaking habits. Therefore, SAE2P Day can be considered beneficial in supporting English speaking practice in a non-formal learning environment.

Keywords: English speaking practice, non-formal learning environment, SAE2P Day, speaking skills, students' perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability is a productive skill that plays a crucial role in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). This ability reflects not only vocabulary and grammar mastery but also the ability to use language appropriately in the communication context. Chaney and Burk (1998) describe speaking as the process of building and sharing meaning through verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts. According to Brown (2004), speaking ability involves several important components, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, which must develop in a balanced manner for effective communication. Therefore, learning English should not only focus on mastering theory but also require opportunities for learners to use the language directly in meaningful situations.

Even though students have studied English for years, many still experience difficulties when speaking. These difficulties are caused by a lack of opportunities to practice the language, limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and low self-confidence. Harmer (2007) explains that speaking ability develops through active language use in real-life communication, not just through learning language structures. Therefore, learners need an environment that allows them to use English consistently in various communication situations.

One environment that can support the development of speaking skills is a non-formal learning environment. Unlike classroom learning, which tends to be structured, non-formal environments provide students with opportunities for more natural and communicative interaction. Krashen (1982) stated that language acquisition is more effective when learners engage in meaningful communication focused on conveying a

message. Opportunities for interaction and output also support second language development (Ellis, 2015). Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that language development occurs through social interactions that enable learners to construct knowledge collaboratively. Therefore, regular use of English outside of the classroom has the potential to increase self-confidence and develop students' speaking skills.

One form of non-formal learning is found in the Student Association of English Education Program (SAE2P) at the University of Mataram through its SAE2P Day program. This program encourages all active members to use English as their primary language of communication two days a week, both in formal organizational activities and in everyday informal interactions. Through continuous use of English, members have the opportunity to practice speaking skills in authentic communication contexts, making language use more natural and not limited to classroom learning activities.

Several previous studies have shown that English Day programs and community-based activities can have a positive impact on the development of speaking skills. Munir et al. (2023) found that senior high school students perceived an English Day program as improving their vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and pronunciation, although they felt burdened by the punishments used to enforce it. Research by Wahyuniati et al. (2020) also found that speaking club activities help improve pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. However, these studies have focused on the school or community environment in general and have not specifically examined the perceptions of active members regarding the implementation of English Day programs within student organizations, particularly by comparing English use in formal and informal contexts.

Based on this gap, this study aims to explore active members' perceptions of English use during SAE2P Day in both formal and informal interactions and analyze their perceptions of SAE2P Day implementation as a strategy for improving speaking skills. This research is expected to contribute to the development of non-formal environment-based English language learning and provide input for student organizations in optimizing programs that support the improvement of English-speaking skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a mixed-method research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate active members' perceptions of the implementation of SAE2P Day as a strategy for improving English speaking skills in the Student Association of the English Education Program (SAE2P) at the University of Mataram. A mixed-method approach was selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by combining numerical data with participants' lived experiences. Quantitative data were used to identify patterns in participants' perceptions and speaking performance, whereas qualitative data provided in-depth explanations of their experiences during the implementation of the program.

The study was conducted within SAE2P, an English student organization in the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Mataram. SAE2P implements an English immersion program known as SAE2P Day, in which members are encouraged to communicate exclusively in English during two designated days each week. The program involves both formal organizational activities, such as meetings and work-program discussions, and informal interactions, including casual conversations and daily communication among members. This setting was selected because it provides an authentic non-formal environment for practicing English and developing communicative competence.

The participants consisted of ten active SAE2P members selected through purposive sampling. They were undergraduate students from the 2024 cohort who had actively participated in the SAE2P Day program and possessed direct experience with its implementation. Their involvement in the program enabled them to provide relevant information regarding English use in both formal and informal interactions as well as the program's contribution to the development of their speaking skills.

Data were collected using three instruments: a questionnaire, participants' speaking assessment scores, and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms to obtain quantitative data regarding participants' perceptions of SAE2P Day and their English use during the program. Participants' speaking assessment scores were collected as supporting evidence to describe changes in their speaking performance throughout the implementation of SAE2P Day. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences, opinions, and perceptions. Open-ended questions allowed participants to explain their experiences freely while enabling the researcher to explore emerging issues related to the research objectives. Each interview lasted approximately

20–25 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent to ensure accurate transcription.

The data collection process was conducted in four stages. First, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the SAE2P organization. Second, questionnaires were distributed electronically to all participants through Google Forms. Third, participants' speaking assessment scores were collected to complement the questionnaire findings. Finally, individual interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences and perceptions in greater depth.

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires and speaking assessment scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and score comparisons. Meanwhile, qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically (Bryman & Burgess, 1994) by identifying recurring patterns and organizing them into themes related to English use, speaking development, and participants' perceptions of the implementation of SAE2P Day. To enhance the credibility of the findings, methodological triangulation was employed by integrating questionnaire responses, speaking assessment scores, and interview data. The combination of these data sources enabled the researcher to validate the findings and provide a comprehensive interpretation of the implementation of SAE2P Day as a strategy for improving English speaking skills.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of research regarding active members' perceptions of the implementation of SAE2P Day as a strategy to improve speaking skills. The research results were obtained through questionnaires, interviews, and comparison of speaking ability scores. The presentation of the results focuses on the main findings related to members' perceptions of program implementation, the use of English during the activities, and the development of speaking skills after participating in SAE2P Day.

Result

Table 1. Member Perceptions of SAE2P Day Implementation

No.	Category	Amount	Percentage
1.	Essential	4	40%
2.	Useful	5	50%
3.	Rather Useful	1	10%
4.	Not sure	0	0%
5.	Useless	0	0%

Most respondents gave a positive perception of the implementation of SAE2P Day. Fifty percent of respondents considered the program useful, while 40% considered it essential in supporting English language use. Only one respondent (10%) rated it as rather useful. No respondents gave a negative assessment of the program. These results indicate that SAE2P Day was well received by active members as a program that supports English speaking practice.

Table 2. English Use during SAE2P Day

Context	High	Moderate	Low
Formal	50%	30%	20%
Informal	80%	20%	0%

The results showed that English use was higher in informal contexts than in formal ones. In informal interactions, 80% of the respondents reported a high level of English use and none reported a low level, whereas in formal activities only 50% reported a high level and 20% a low level (Table 2). Most respondents actively used English when interacting informally with fellow organization members. Conversely, English use in formal activities was still dominated by a mix of English and Indonesian. This finding indicates differences in members' comfort levels in using English based on the communication situation.

Table 3. Development of Speaking Skills

Result	Frequency	Percentage
Improved	4	40%
Stable	2	20%
Decrease	4	40%

Based on a comparison of speaking scores before and after SAE2P Day, four respondents experienced an increase in speaking ability, two respondents showed stable results, while four respondents experienced a decrease in their scores. These results suggest that each member's speaking ability develops differently depending on their level of participation, experience, and individual abilities.

Discussion

The research results showed that SAE2P Day was positively perceived by most active members because it provided broader opportunities to use English in organizational life. The intense use of English during the activities helped members develop more consistent communication habits. In addition to increasing the frequency of language use, the program also provided a space for members to practice without the pressure often encountered in formal learning. This finding is consistent with Munir et al. (2023) and Wahyuniati et al. (2020), whose participants also reported that English Day and speaking club activities supported their speaking, and with Littlewood's (1981) view that learners develop communicative ability through activities that require real communication.

The differences in English use between formal and informal contexts indicate that the communication environment influences members' confidence in speaking. In formal situations, some members still felt hesitant to use English fully due to concerns about making mistakes when expressing their opinions. Conversely, informal interactions created a more relaxed atmosphere, allowing members to feel more confident in using English spontaneously. This situation suggests that informal environments can support the formation of language habits through more natural communication. This pattern reflects Krashen's (1982) view that learners acquire language more readily when their anxiety is low, and Vygotsky's (1978) view that language develops through social interaction.

Although the results of the comparison of speaking ability scores indicated that not all participants experienced improvement, interview findings indicated that most members experienced positive changes in their confidence, fluency, and

courage to initiate conversations in English. This shows that the success of SAE2P Day can not only be measured through changes in speaking ability scores, but also through the development of habits of using English as a means of daily communication in the organizational environment. Such habits can be seen as learning strategies, that is, deliberate actions that learners take to practise and improve their use of the language (Cohen, 2014; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). However, with only ten participants and mixed score results, these findings should be interpreted with caution.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated active members' perceptions of the implementation of SAE2P Day as a strategy to improve English-speaking skills within the Student Association of the English Education Program (SAE2P) at the University of Mataram. The findings revealed that participants perceived SAE2P Day positively because it provided authentic opportunities to practice English in both formal and informal interactions. Although the quantitative findings indicated that measurable improvement in speaking performance was relatively limited, with 40% of participants showing improvement, 20% maintaining stable performance, and 40% experiencing a decrease in their speaking assessment scores, the qualitative findings demonstrated that the program positively influenced participants' confidence, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary development, and willingness to communicate in English. These findings suggest that consistent exposure to English in a supportive non-formal learning environment contributes to speaking development beyond measurable test performance.

This study highlights the educational value of organization-based English immersion programs in promoting authentic language use among EFL learners. Therefore, student organizations are encouraged to incorporate more structured communicative activities, such as presentations, discussions, debates, and periodic speaking assessments, to enhance measurable speaking achievement further while maintaining a supportive environment that encourages active participation. Future research is recommended to involve a larger sample, a longer implementation period, and more objective speaking assessment measures to obtain a broader understanding of the effectiveness of non-formal English-speaking programs.

REFERENCES

- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices*. Pearson Education.
- Bryman, A., & Burgess, R. G. (Eds.). (1994). *Analyzing qualitative data*. Routledge.
- Chaney, A. L., & Burk, T. L. (1998). *Teaching oral communication in grades K–8*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Cohen, A. D. (2014). *Strategies in learning and using a second language* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Ellis, R. (2015). *Understanding second language acquisition* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Longman.

- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
- Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative language teaching: An introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Munir, S., Zulhermindra, Z., Putra, H. E., & Fajriati, F. (2023). A qualitative exploration of students' perception on English Day program at SMAN 1 West Sumatera. *Jurnal Simki Pedagogia*, 6(1), 66–72. <https://doi.org/10.29407/jsp.v6i1.208>
- O'Malley, J. M., & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Wahyuniati, Maulidiyah, N., & Qolbia, M. (2020). Improving speaking skill through speaking club viewed from students' perception. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on English Language Teaching (ICONELT 2019)* (pp. 130–134). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200427.026>