ABSTRACT

English proficiency is an essential competence for university students, especially future English teachers. To build this competence, institutions implement speaking initiatives like the English Time Program to provide communication opportunities outside formal classes. However, the implementation process and students' perceptions remain underexplored. Therefore, this study aims to explore how students perceive the English Time Program in supporting their speaking skill development at the English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung and to identify the specific factors influencing their perceptions.

This qualitative research utilized a case study method involving 15 participating students as the primary data sources. Data were collected through field observations and individual interviews. Observations were systematically conducted in two 30 minute meetings and documented through photographs. Interviews were held in single 30 minute sessions per participant, involving 5 online Zoom sessions and 10 face to face sessions that were voice recorded and photographed. The data were then analyzed through a structured qualitative procedure consisting of familiarization, coding, categorizing, triangulation, and reporting.

The findings reveal that students perceive the English Time Program as a highly beneficial learning ecosystem that supports their oral communication skills. During the interactive activities, students actively apply meaning negotiation strategies and provide strong social support to one another during unexpected communication breakdowns. Furthermore, the program successfully lowers students' affective filters, builds their conversational confidence, and fosters consistent peer-to-peer support within a collaborative community. Internally, the friendly atmosphere and the complete absence of formal exams successfully reduce the students' fear of making grammar or pronunciation mistakes. However, the data also show that external, situational constraints such as room noise, crowded physical spaces, and late afternoon fatigue act as negative factors that hinder optimal speaking fluency.

In conclusion, the program serves as an effective mechanism for converting passive linguistic knowledge into active speaking habits within a safe and non-judgmental space. Despite logistical challenges, strong peer support successfully overpowers these physical limitations to create a confident speech community.

Keywords: English Time Program, Students' Perception, Speaking Skill, Communicative Language Teaching, Case Study.