CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Nowadays, English language skills are critical to master, especially for Department of English Education students, who play an essential role in language intelligence for future generations. As a foreign language, English became the foreign language that was taught at schools for years ago. The status of English as a foreign language was declared formally in 1955 in a teacher-trainer conference (Lauder, 2008). According to Chodijah (2000), learning English is needed for all groups, whether from early childhood or adulthood, because English is an international language that all groups must know. Not only is it understood and understandable, but English must also be mastered. English proficiency includes mastery of four language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. The four skills are certainly interrelated with each other in language development. Freeman et al. (2011), in their book "Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching" explain that the four English language skills are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Although all skills are essential to master, speaking is often the most challenging aspect for learners, mainly due to the lack of opportunities to practice in authentic situations.

In teaching English, students should be given many opportunities to speak the target language in meaningful contexts and situations. Thus, students will get used to speaking the target language (Nunan, 1991). Nunan (2004) emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and collaborative learning environment where students feel comfortable speaking in authentic contexts. Gardner (2010) underlines the role of intrinsic motivation in language learning, pointing out that active participation in speaking activities can increase students' motivation to improve their speaking skills. Freeman et al. (2011) advocate for exposure to diverse language contexts, stating that engaging in various interactive speaking activities can foster linguistic competence and confidence among students.

According to Malu et al. (2016), teaching English as a foreign language through study clubs has begun to develop in many countries where study clubs are only held for a few hours each week. Providing the English Club can help overcome the knowledge gap in the target language. English club becomes a facilitator for students to improve their ability to master English, especially speaking skills (Wetherby, 2011). Therefore, the Department of English Education established an English study club program for students, namely Saturday

English Gathering (SEGA), to improve students' English skills, especially speaking skills, outside of lecture hours.

Saturday English Gathering (SEGA) is an important alternative to help students improve their English, especially speaking skills. Saturday English Gathering (SEGA) is held every Saturday, and qualified students tutor each study group. This activity offers informal and relaxed learning with friends in a smaller setting. So, the activity is expected to help students improve their English skills.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher wanted to examine the impact of Saturday English Gathering (SEGA) on the speaking skills of Department of English Education students.

B. Limitation of the Study

The limitations of this research are object and subject. The objective of this study is the Saturday English Gathering (SEGA) program to improve students' speaking ability at the Department of English Education. The subjects of this research are 3rd and 5th semester students of the Department of English Education at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

C. Research Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher has the following problems to analyze:

1. What is the students' perspectives on SEGA?
2. What is students' perspectives on how SEGA have an impact on their speaking ability?
3. To what extent does SEGA have an impact on their speaking ability?

D. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem statement above, the purposes of this study are:

1. To examine the students' perspectives on SEGA
2. To examine the students' perspectives on how SEGA impacts their speaking ability
3. To describe the extent to which SEGA impacted their speaking ability

E. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to guide facilitators in improving students' speaking skills by understanding their perspectives. Thus, in its implementation, SEGA can be more effective in achieving the learning objective.

F. Research Paper Organization

To make this research accessible to understand, this research is organized into five chapters:

1. Chapter I is the introduction, which includes the background of the study, Limitations of the study, research problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and research paper organization.

2. Chapter II contains a literature review related to the study. This chapter discusses the underlying theories and previous research on previously related theories.

3. Chapter III is the research method. This relates to research methods, which include the research design, the research, the time and place of the research, the research subject and object, the data and data sources, the technique for collecting data, trustworthiness, validity, and reliability, and the technique for analyzing data.

4. Chapter IV contains the findings and discussion on students' perceptions of Saturday English Gathering (SEGA) and the extent to which SEGA has an impact on their speaking abilities.

5. Chapter V is the last chapter, containing conclusions, pedagogical implications, and suggestions for further research.