CLUBHOUSE AS VIRTUAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS TO PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT
Clubhouse application, since it is found, becomes the popular application to practice English. It is because it is easy to use worldwide as well as provides good features and a community system. This case study investigated whether the Clubhouse application could become a virtual community of practice (VCoP) and motivate non-native English speakers (NNES) to speak within the community system. The data were collected through questionnaires with a Likert scale and semi-structured interviews. The participants were the members of the Smart and Easy English club, one of the biggest English clubs in the Clubhouse, who come from Morocco, Afghanistan, and Indonesia. The results revealed some points including 1) Based on the club system, Clubhouse can become an ideal IDLE for VCoP; 2) Clubhouse application motivates the NNES to practice English in the VCoP depending on the features and system used by the club or community; 3) The leadership role in the club does not influence the NNES to practice on Clubhouse as VCoP. The study concluded that Clubhouse is a virtual community of practice which features and community system motivate non-native English speakers to practice English regularly. The findings suggested that the Clubhouse application can be used by English instructors to enable their learners to have English-speaking practice in VCoP. The results of this study may be advantageous for English-speaking course developers with contemporary channel practice.
Keywords: Clubhouse, Virtual community of practice (VCoP), Non-native English speakers (NNES)

INTRODUCTION

Clubhouse application is an Informal Digital Learning of English (IDLE) used by non-native speakers worldwide to practice English. It is a social application that brings a voice-mediated platform launched in March 2020. Zhu (2022) confirms that Clubhouse is the most popular application used to create communities (so-called clubs) and build intensive communication based on his study. Clubhouse facilitates individuals to build community through clubs as well as interact with people worldwide with no regional limit. It is an audio-based application so the people merely focus on the audio, no videos are needed. Some English teachers and practitioners own English clubs to spread the teaching or facilitate the people to practice English speaking. They open free public rooms or paid private rooms. It becomes a signature goal of the community.

Dealing with the application, two phenomena arouse in which (i) Clubhouse becomes a popular IDLE for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) online learning and (ii) Clubhouse turns into a virtual community practice (CoP). The fame of Clubhouse as an IDLE is

supported by Lee and Drajati's idea (2020) that technology-enhanced learning brings wider opportunities for cross-cultural communication because of the accelerated advancement of communication technologies and digital media. Lee (2018) also adds that there is a rising number of self-directed digital settings used by EFL students. Lousada (2021) adds that Clubhouse enables the speakers to gain meaningful information through voiced real-time communication which is applied to language learning.

Meanwhile, when it comes to a community of practice. Lave & Wenger in Nagao (2018) defines a CoP as a group of people who have a mutual understanding of the goals, roles, and meaning of their activities despite the diverse ideas and interests, and they remain collaborating to practice together. Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner (2015) mentions three main characteristics of CoP as follows (i) it shares the same domain of goal and interest, consequently, it needs the commitment to develop the corresponding competencies (ii) its members help each other, share information, and build relationships to conduct collaborative learning, and (iii) in its practice the members evolve habitual resources to solve problems or sustain the interaction. The CoP recently develops through virtual technology implementation and it is called a virtual community of practice (VCoP).

There have been some studies regarding CoP or VCoP in EFL learning both in classrooms and social media. First, Koga, Furuya, and Miyo in Nagao (2018) reveal that in higher education EFL classrooms in Japan, it is suggested to treat smaller groups of students and an instructor in a classroom unit as a CoP, in which the teacher ought to acknowledge the problem and discuss the solution proactively. In other words, CoP characteristics in these classrooms are to clarify the issues, solve them, and create a mutual goal. According to Nagao's study (2018), in college classes, CoPs were suggested (i) to form knowledge based on the situation and relations of the collaborative activities among the members and (ii) to form the acquired knowledge and skills for the general personal characteristic as identity development. In a real EFL classroom context, the students experienced a community centre in learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP), particularly English for business and management. Therefore, the curriculum and syllabus are designed to combine the characteristics of activity individually, in pairs, or groups, and the teacher set the environment which enables the students to help their classmates to gain collaborative learning.

Second, the study of Facebook as a virtual community of practice (VCoP). Peeters and Pretorius (2020) conduct research to find out the use of social media based on the graph theory of empirical approach for exploring the VCoP configuration relating to the

community's interaction. The social media analysis shows that the research subject groups establish peer work and they contribute different roles in the groups. The participation matrices show that different participants lead to certain factors in incorporating online and offline assignments through the collaborative dialogue within VCoP on Facebook. Dealing with Facebook, Peeters, and Pretorius (2020) believes that social media brings a new atmosphere to enhance the students in higher education to conduct interpersonal communication. The informal engagement among the students increases their motivation as well as solidarity so that it could be used to evaluate the target language. Based on this study, the community concept in CoPs or VCoPs remains unjustified because the students' behavior and configuration rely much on the environment, the design, the role flexibility, and the actor's freedom in a collaborative dialog. In addition, the students' interaction online can work only if both the teacher and students are solid in acknowledging the roles.

Third, Nematzadeh, et al (2021) conducts a study on the use of intercultural on EFL learners' social and cultural VCoP in Iran. They found that EFL learners communicate with each other interactively in the VCoPs through texts and voices. They obtain awareness and knowledge about the specific syntax and elements of the foreign language while implementing intercultural movie clips for discussion. Furthermore, the use of intercultural movie clips in VCoP reveals that exposure to authentic and intercultural material can enhance the EFL learners' awareness about the individuals' opinion diversity so that it can improve their social interaction. However, the study merely focuses on the Iranian context and learners' intercultural identity.

Responding to the mentioned previous studies, this study focuses on the Clubhouse application which has not been examined for VCoP in the EFL context before and it relates to the motivation of non-native English speakers (NNES) in practicing English on this application.

To analyse the implementation of the Clubhouse application as VCoP dealing with the NNES, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Based on the club system, can Clubhouse become an ideal IDLE for VCoP?

2. To what extent does the Clubhouse application motivate the NNES to practice English in the VCoP?

3. Does the leadership role in the club influence the NNES to practice on Clubhouse as VCoP?

RESEARCH METHOD

A case study design that included five participants was implemented. A case study was chosen because according to Heale and Twycross (2017), a case study is particularly seen in examining the phenomenon in social and life sciences. It is an intensive study of individuals, groups, or units. Sandelowski in Heale and Twycross (2017) suggests a case study for examining the holistic phenomena in the natural setting. Several participants from English clubs are chosen randomly in this study. The steps are shown as follows.
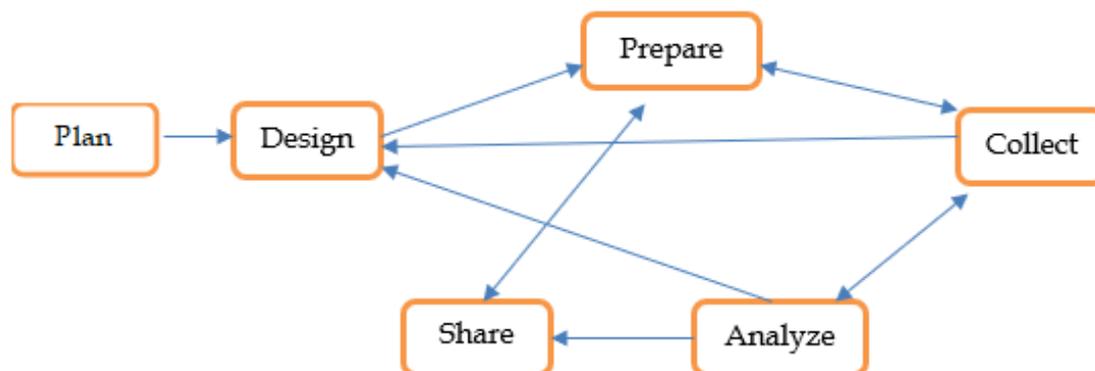

Figure 1. Case Study Design and Methods (Yin, 2018)

In brief, the steps are (i) planning the study after the preliminary study, (ii) designing the research components (participants and clubs), (iii) preparing the consent forms for the participants, the questionnaires, and the interview questions, (iv) collecting data from the questionnaire and interview, (v) analyzing the data collected using classification and coding technique, and (vi) sharing the finding.

The community studied is the "Smart and Easy English" club which is one of the large English clubs on the Clubhouse application. The research participants are from each role except the founder because he is a native English speaker, while this research focuses on NNES. They are Yonas of Morocco (27, leader), Novita of Indonesia (24, leader), Norahmad of Afghanistan (33, leader), Elhamullah of Afghanistan (22, speaker), and Ghandi of Indonesia (13, speaker). All of them are regular in participating in the speaking practice rooms and have been a member of the community for more than six months. They come from the countries that usually attend the speaking practice rooms.

This study uses several data sources; they are documentation, field notes, questionnaire, and recording. Ten questionnaires and semi-structured interview questions were asked to participants respectively. The questionnaire result was documentation, while the interview result was recording, coding, and field notes. All of the data sources covered the participants' views about Clubhouse application as VCoP, to what extent it motivates

them to practice English, and whether the leadership roles influence the club's sustainability. The study was carried out qualitatively in a natural context to gain data from the participant's perspective as Aydin (2012) mentioned about a case study.

Case study research typically includes multiple data collection techniques and data are collected from multiple sources. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations (direct and participant), questionnaires, and relevant documents (Yin, 2014). The participants completed the questionnaire in the form of text on the Likert scale (Appendix 1), then the researcher classified the total score. Next, the participants were interviewed based on their statements in advance (Appendix 2). The interview questions were also read first by the participants because knowing the questions before helped them to answer more accurately (Diaz et al, 2015).

In this study, the answers to the questionnaire of the Likert scale are classified based on the research questions.

Table 1. The Classification Table of Characteristics of VCoP (RQ 1)

Total Score	Category
21 - 30	Clubhouse is VCoP
11 - 20	Clubhouse is fairly a VCoP
1 – 10	Clubhouse is not VCoP

Table 2. The Classification Table of the Relation between Clubhouse Application and NNES motivation to practice (RQ 2)

Total Score	Category
5 – 10	Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English
1 – 5	Clubhouse does not motivate NNES to practice English

Table 3. The Classification Table of between Leadership Role and NNES' Motivation to Practice (RQ 3)

Total Score	Category
5 – 10	Leadership role in Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English
1 – 5	Leadership role in Clubhouse does not motivate NNES to practice English

After classifying the category, the researcher interviewed the participants deeper about their responses to have the further discussion through calls and it was recorded.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results in this study include two results. The questionnaire result deals with the Likert scale categorization and the interview result in the form of coding and documentation. The total score us based on the research questions (RQ) which was then classified based on the category in the classification table above.

Questionnaire Result

The questionnaire result below was represented respectively based on the research participants' responses.

Table 4. Yonas' Perception about Clubhouse as a VCoP (Morocco, 27, leader)

Total Score	Category
28	Clubhouse is VCoP
10	Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English
10	Leadership role in Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English

Table 5. Novita's Perception about Clubhouse as a VCoP (Indonesia, 25, leader)

Total Score	Category
29	Clubhouse is VCoP
10	Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English
10	Leadership role in Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English

Table 6. Norahmad's Perception about Clubhouse as a VCoP (Afghanistan, 32, leader)

Total Score	Category
28	Clubhouse is VCoP
10	Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English
10	Leadership role in Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English

Table 7. Elhamullah's Perception about Clubhouse as a VCoP (Afghanistan, 23, speaker)

Total Score	Category
21	Clubhouse is VCoP
8	Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English
7	Leadership role in Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English

Table 8. Ghandi's Perception about Clubhouse as a VCoP (Indonesia, 13, speaker)

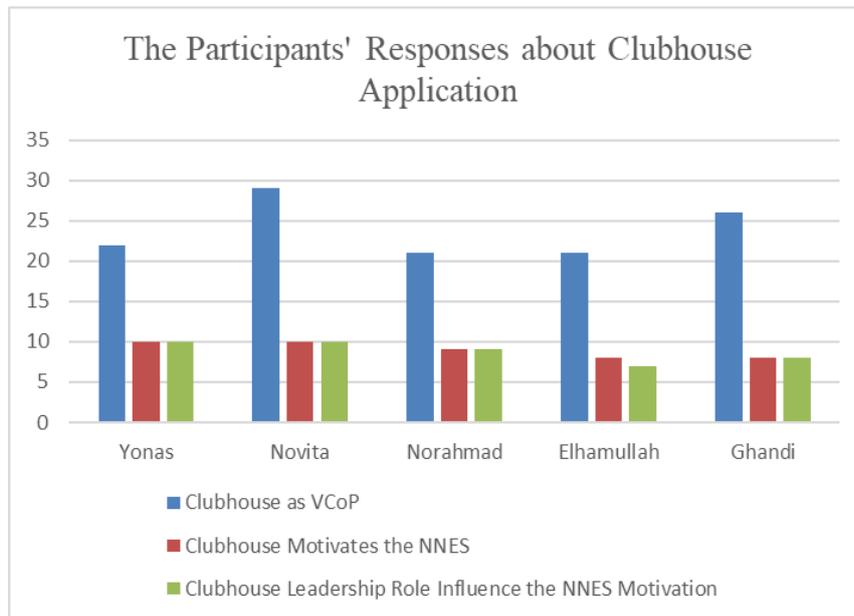| Total Score	Category
26	Clubhouse is VCoP
8	Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English
8	Leadership role in Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English

The brief scores difference is shown as follows.

Figure 2. The Participants' Perspective of Clubhouse

Interview result

1. Yonas

As the leader, Yonas thought that clubs in the Clubhouse share different goals and interests. Some of them seek quantity and not quality. However, the English clubs, commit to developing the competency of education and mostly help to build a good learning

environment. Dealing with collaborative learning, he could not really tell if the majority of club members help each other to conduct collaborative learning, but most of the members he encounters on the Clubhouse, exit on the platform for one reason, which is to learn something new every day. However, some members do not sustain themselves because of learning disappointments. As long as they are regular, they develop super quickly for goal achievement. Club members are most comfortable practicing when the application provides them with different good features, especially the audio-based feature.

Dealing with NNES, he agreed that NNES needs a public platform to practice English, so as long as Clubhouse support this feature, the NNES can get highly motivated to practice English in the community. The club or community system helps the members a lot since the NNES suffer from the lack of new language communication which makes them afraid of speaking the language. Furthermore, the NNES can be easily influenced by leaders to be able to speak as comfortably as the leader, because all they seek is, motivation to start the learning journey. Lastly, the leadership role in the club is the most important part of helping the sustainability process for the community of English practice in the Clubhouse.

2. Novita

Novita thinks that some clubs in Clubhouse share the same goal and the members commit to developing the competencies in the club. It can be reached by helping each other practice, sharing information, and building collaborative learning. The members also interact regularly to achieve their goals by using the features of Clubhouse. The audio-based system motivates the NNES to speak more without worrying about judgment or personal life. The club system also takes a role in influencing the NNES motivation because it can be improved depending on the moderators/interlocutors provided by the clubs. The levels of club leadership somehow affect the NNEs to come and practice in the club. It could be because they are fond of the position or the comfort to be with them in the club. Therefore, the leadership role also helps to sustain the club as a VCoP.

3. Norahmad

According to Norahmad, the clubs in Clubhouse do not share the same domain of goal and interest because there are various goals of each member inside, and not too much need for commitment to developing the corresponding competencies in the club. However, he agrees that the members of the club could conduct collaborative learning to build relationships, help each other, or share information. They also take part in sustaining the interaction in the club so they keep developing to achieve their goals. The comfort of club members in practicing English depends on whether the replay is on or off. Replay off means

there is no recording during the live room, and replay on means there is automatic recording while they are speaking in the live room. The features of Clubhouse motivate the NNES to speak in terms of audio-based, raising a hand, social room, and community room. The club system and management also motivate them because the founders, leaders, and moderators always encourage them to practice and speak every day in their free rooms. Therefore, the leadership role also influences them to practice and helps sustain the club as VCoP.

4. Elhamullah

Elhamullah is a speaker in several English clubs. He disagreed that the clubs in Clubhouse share the goal and interest because many clubs are established due to various goals. However, he supported the idea that in every club the members need the commitment to develop their skills through helping each other, sharing knowledge, and building relationships for collaborative learning. The members need to sustain the interaction for reaching their goal and the Clubhouse features make them comfortable to practice, especially for the NNES. Besides the features, the club or community system of Clubhouse strongly motivates the NNES to practice in their community. Dealing with the leadership role, Elhamullah takes the neutral insight because leadership is only the structure of the club organization. Eventually, the members are the ones who sustain the club as a virtual community of practice in English.

5. Ghandi

Ghandi is the youngest speaker of an English club. He has a high motivation to come regularly to the live rooms. He often becomes the moderator as well. Although the Clubhouse shares the same target and interest, the commitment to developing competencies in the club less exists according to him. Collaborative learning is implied among the club members such as sharing knowledge, bonding with each other, and helping each other. Moreover, they should sustain the interaction daily so they can develop and achieve their goals. Dealing with the Clubhouse features, Ghandi agrees that it is useful and makes them comfortable to practice English in the community. The NNES which is the majority of members of the Clubhouse are strongly motivated due to the features and the club or community system. The leadership role here also influences the NNES to practice on the Clubhouse as a VCoP because it sustains the club age and the bonding among the members.

Based on the questionnaire and the interview result, all of the participants confirm that Clubhouse is a community of practice depending on the characteristics of community practice defined by Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner (2015). In other words, Clubhouse shares the same domain of goal and interest, consequently, it needs the commitment to

develop the corresponding competencies; Clubhouse members help each other, share information, and build relationships to conduct collaborative learning; and in its practice, the Clubhouse members evolve habitual resources to solve problems or sustain the interaction. Some notes came from Yonas and Elhamullah who revealed that regardless of Clubhouse as a VCoP, the club members themselves commit to realizing the characteristics of a community of practice. Clubhouse can be a supportive application, but eventually, the members take the main role in the reliable community of practice.

Dealing with the NNES motivation, all of the participants agree that Clubhouse motivates NNES to practice English. However, there is a note from Norahmad responding to the question about how Clubhouse features make the NNES comfortable to speak. According to him, the NNES' motivation enhances more if the live rooms do not provide the replays on. They feel more comfortable if they speak without being recorded. The Clubhouse members are also encouraged to learn continuously in the community or club system which schedule and opens the live rooms to practice every day. To sum up, the NNES motivation in practicing on Clubhouse is depended on the features and community system.

The leadership role in the community brought by Jewson in Peeters and Pretorius (2020) informs the mutual understanding concept of leadership and community within VCoP. The impact of leadership roles on the Clubhouse as VCoP does occur. However, in this matter, not all participants agree that the leadership roles in Clubhouse influence NNES to practice and help to sustain the club as a VCoP. Elhamullah and Jawadi prefer to say that the leadership roles do not impact the NNES' motivation to practice as well as sustain the club. It is the members themselves who can motivate their willingness to practice thus sustaining the club as VCoP. Meanwhile, Yonas, Novita, and Ghandi agreed that the leadership role also give an impact on the club as VCoP.

CONCLUSION

To draw conclusion, it should be understood that this study is aiming at investigating whether the Clubhouse application could become a VCoP for NNES to practice English regularly. Several participants from several countries have contributed their idea and opinions for the data in this study through the questionnaire and interview. The data collected deals with the research questions made by the researcher. Therefore, regarding the finding and the research questions, the conclusions are as followed:

1. Based on the club system, Clubhouse can become an ideal IDLE for VCoP.

2.   Clubhouse application motivate the NNES to practice English in the VCoP depending on the features and system used by the club or community.

3.   The leadership role in the club does not influence the NNES to practice on Clubhouse as VCoP.

Clubhouse application is inferred as one of the IDLEs for implementing online learning formally or informally. It is in line with Bell et al., (2017) that online learning enables the members to interact through the web or application despite the different places. Dealing with VCoP, Lindlof and Schatzer in Hafni (2021) confirm that a virtual community is basically a self-funded community by people who have the same interests and come with a certain goal. It is a good place for NNES to discipline themselves in practicing English in the community system despite the leadership role.

In conclusion, the Clubhouse application can be used by English instructors to enable their learners to have English-speaking practice in VCoP. The results of this study may be advantageous for English-speaking course developers with contemporary channels practice. Further research could be conducted which includes a wider population and motives of each club in establishing clubs or community on Clubhouse instead of focusing on one club only. The experimental method also could be done in future research to know the learners' English proficiency before and after practicing at Clubhouse by using pre-test and post-test.

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Appendix 1
The Questionnaire Questions
Scale from 1-5.
1= strongly disagree
2= disagree
3= neutral
4= agree
5= strongly agree

RQ 1: (based on the main characteristics of Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner (2015)
1. Do you think the clubs on Clubhouse share the same domain of goal and interest?
2. Do you think it needs the commitment to develop the corresponding competencies in the club?
3. Do you think the club members help each other, share information, and build relationships to conduct collaborative learning?
4. Do you think the club members sustain the interaction in practicing?
5. Do you think the club members keep developing to achieve their goals?
6. Do you think the features of Clubhouse enable the club members to comfortably practice in the club?

RQ 2:
7. Do you think the features of Clubhouse motivate non-native English speakers to practice English in the community?
8. Do you think the club/community system of Clubhouse motivates non-native English speakers to practice English in the community?

RQ 3:
9. Do you think the leadership role in the club influences non-native English speakers to practice on Clubhouse as a virtual community of English practice?
10. Do you think the leadership role in the club helps sustain the club as a virtual community of English practice?