

IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH DEBATE

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Abstract

Speaking is one of the important skills in language learning. Speaking is the act, utterance or discourse of one who speaks. It also can be defined as an activity in giving and asking information as if dialoguing by two or more people. In speaking, there is a process of communication between speaker and listener. People put ideas into words, talking about perceptions and feeling they want other people to understand. The writer observed that most students are difficult to put ideas into word through communication in speaking English. To solve the problem, the writer conducted classroom action research, by implementing debate. The writer applied two cycles in this research. Each cycle consist of three meetings. The participant of this study was one class consists of 32 students. The instrument for collecting the data was speaking test, observation sheet and document. Based on the research result, showed the progressive mean of the students. The first meeting was 46,87, second meeting was 50,09, third meeting was 60,28, the fourth meeting was 65,12, the fifth meeting was 73,56 and the sixth meeting was 77,81. So, the mean in the second cycle was higher than the first cycle. It is indicated that the application of debate technique improve students' speaking skill.

Keywords : *Improving, Speaking Skill, Debate*

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental function of language is an instrument of communication. English is used by millions of people all over the world. In Indonesia English is considered as a foreign language that has been taught to be elementary school up to the university. In education aspect, the students hopefully to be able to speak English fluently in order to the technology development. Speaking is one of the important skills in language learning besides listening, writing and reading. Speaking is the act, utterance or discourse of one who speaks. It also can be defined as an activity in giving and asking information as if dialoguing by two or more people. In speaking, there is a process of communication between speaker and listener. People put ideas into words, talking about perceptions and feeling they want other people to understand.

In teaching learning English as the foreign language, most students cannot speak English well. For that condition, there are some factors of the difficulties. There are internal and external factors. Internal factors come from the student themselves. These concern with personality factors. Brown states that personality factors within a person that contribute in some way to the success of language learning. He explains that personality factor is an important aspect of carrying on discourse. Another factor is feeling ashamed. The students were afraid to express their ideas. They worried everyone will mock them. External factors come out

from students. These concern with their environment, parents and teaching learning technique in their school. Teaching learning technique is the important factor to the success of language learning for all aspects in education. But for the fact, the teacher doesn't choose the suitable technique of teaching speaking. She teaches them by asking the students to read the dialogue in front of the class. These activities do not give any opportunity to express their idea directly. So, students cannot improve their speaking skill in teaching learning process.

Debate is a formal argument or discussion of a question at a public meeting, with two or more opposing speakers (Krieger:2005). While Ardi states debate is a form of modern rhetoric in general, it is identified by the presence of two or more speakers establish a mutual communication with language and trying to influence attitudes and opinions of the person or others so they do the act, or they have a tendency to follow with what desired by the speaker. They explain that debate is a forum which is very appropriate and strategic to develop thinking skills. Debate can be a valuable method for promoting thinking and reflection, especially if students are expected to take a position that may be contrary to their own. Debate actively involves every student in the class.

It is important to apply debate technique in senior high school, because it is an age of transition, confusion, growing, and changing minds. Intellectual capacity add abstract operational thought around the age. Intellectual processing is increasingly possible. It means that complex problem that they find around them can be solved with logical thinking. So, debate is the most functional way, enhance and develop verbal communication. Through debate, the speaker can show his intellectual attitude. Debate is a communication event because in debate, the use of speaking and listening technique will be processed into one.

The Description Theory of Speaking

Communication with language is carried out through two basic human: Speaking and Listening. According to Jo Mc Donough and Christopher Shaw (2000:152) Speaking is desire and purpose driven, in order to communicate something to achieve a particular end. This may involve expressing ideas and opinions; expressing a wish or desire to do something; negotiating or solving problem; or establishing and maintaining social relationships and friendship. In listening, the people turn words into idea; trying to reconstruct the expression they want other people to understand.

Speaking Skill

Nunan states speaking is the productive aural/oral skill, it consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning (2003:48). Speaking is fundamentally an instrumental act. Speakers talk in order to have some effects on their listeners. They assert things to change their state of knowledge. They ask them questions to get them to do things for them. And they promise, bet, warn and exclaim to affect them in still others ways. Basically, speaking is intended for

two-way communication. The speaker and listener negotiate the meaning of what they say.

Speaking skill is described as the ability to express oneself in life situations or the ability to report acts or situations in precise words, or the ability to converse, or to express a sequence of ideas fluently. The ability is used in essentially normal communication situations the signaling systems of pronunciation, stress, intonation, grammatical structure, and vocabulary of the foreign language at a normal rate of delivery for native speakers of the language.

Debate

Debate is the process of inquiry and advocacy, a way of arriving at a reasoned judgment on a proposition (Austin&David:2009). Individuals may use debate to reach a decision in their own minds; alternatively, individuals or group may use it to bring others around to their way of thinking. So, debate provides reasoned arguments for and against a proposition. It requires two competitive sides engaging in bipolar clash of support for and against that proposition.

Debate also has important role in education to rise pupils confidence in facing audience, fluency, and rhetoric (Krieger: 2005). It is also a method of instruction for the public. In some situations scientific arguments are useless; a speaker has to educate the audience by framing arguments with the help of common knowledge and commonly accepted opinions.

Debates are most appropriate for intermediate and advanced learners who have been guided in how to prepare for them. Debates require extensive preparation by learners, call for interaction in groups, and make use of at least the following language function: describing, explanation, giving and asking information, persuading, agreeing, and disagreeing.

To prepare students for the debate, teachers need to make sure that students have been given all the necessary resources and information in order to research and present their side of the issue. It means that teachers have given the topic for students. So, they can prepare them self to present the topic based on their own side, and they have a preparation to debate.

Kinds of Debate

According to Austin and David (Austin&David:2009) debate can be classified into two broad categories applied and academic debate. **Applied Debate:** This kind of debate is conducted on propositions, questions, and topics in which the advocates have a special interest, and debate is presented before a judge or an audience with the power to reader a binding decision on the proposition or respond to the question or topic in a real way. Applied debate may be classified into four kinds, namely:

Special debate: Special debate is conducted under special rules drafted for a specific occasion, such as political campaign debates. For example, debate

between presidential candidates before an election. This kind of debate is most often associated with political figures and campaign issues, it may be used by anyone on any proposition or set of questions or topic.

Judicial debate : Judicial debate is conducted in the courts or before quasi-judicial bodies, governed by the rules of a court of law, its purpose is the prosecution or defense of individuals charged with violation of the law or the determination of issues of law alleged to be applicable to specific cases before the court.

Parliamentary Debate: Parliamentary debate is conducted under the rules of parliamentary procedure. Its purpose is the passage, amendment, or defeat of motions and resolutions that come before a parliamentary assembly. The practice of parliamentary debate may be observed in the house of representative, city councils, and town governing bodies, and at the business meeting of various organizations.

Non-formal Debate: Non-formal debate is conducted without the formal rules found in special, judicial, parliamentary, and academic debate. This is the type of debate to which newspaper and television commentators about controversies issues in public interest. The term *nonformal* has to reference to the formality or informality of the occasion on which the debate take place. Example of nonformal debate can be found in national political campaigns, in community hearings or town hall meeting about water pollution or new school bond issues. Norformal debate occur in scientific and research realms.

Academic debate is conducted under the direction of an educational institution to provide educational opportunities for students. Academic debate can teach us to become effective essential art. The goal of academic debate is to train the student in the tools of argumentation, to train him how to construct logical arguments and to detect weakness or lapses from logical standards in the arguments of others. Academic debate is by no means limited to the classroom and the argumentation course. Many schools and universities conduct programs of academic debate by organizing debating teams, which give students to express their idea about one topic.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses classroom action reserach. Action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher researchers, principals, school counselors, or other stakeholders in the teaching learning environment to gather information about the ways that their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. This information is gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment outcomes and the lives of those involved (Geoffrey:2000). Classroom action research concerned to four steps, namely, planning, action, observation and reflection. Planning means the reflection of the action had done. Action means the activities that would be done. In this step, the writer will make the teaching program, lesson plan and also media that use to teach speaking to the

students, in the end of the action that they are learned. This action would be done continuously until the teacher get satisfying result. Observation is the result of action that was done. And reflection is the evaluation of actions that had been done. It recalls action as it had been recorded in observation. The reflection would be done to recover the problem happen in the previous cycle. In this research, the writer collaborated with teacher to become a team work who work together to solve the students' problem in increasing speaking skill through debate.

The participant of this study were the eleventh grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Padangsidempuan. It consist of 32 students. The reason of choosing this class because the writer found the problems of speaking skill in this class. Another participant in this research was an English teacher of SMA N I Padangsidempuan. The writer observed the activities in the class while the teacher was doing an action in this class. Then, teacher also helped the writer analyzed the data from the observation and made plans for each cycle.

The action research followed the model that was developed by Kemis and Robin. It was a famous representation of the action research "spiral" that contained four stages as follows: 1). Planning, 2). Acting, 3). Observing, and 4). Reflecting. In this research the writer applied two cycles. Each cycle consists of three meetings. Each meeting consists of 90 minutes. So, there were six meetings during research process. Each cycle consist of four steps; planning, acting, observing ad reflecting. The classroom action research base on the following assumption; for the first cycle, the process of teaching and learning speaking was not optimally occurred because the applying debate technique was not well organized yet. The second cycle, students become active and interested in learning process. It could be seen from the students' activities in the class.

In collecting data, the writer as the key instrument also used speaking test and observation sheet. Test is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain. A test is first a method. It is an instrument-a set of techniques, procedures, or items-that requires performance on the part of the test-taker. Second, a test must measure. Some tests measure general ability while others focus on very specific competencies or objectives. Finally a test measures a given domain. In this case of a proficiency test, even though the actual performance on the test involves only a sampling of skills that domain is overall proficiency in a language-general competence in all skill of a language (Brown:2004). The kind of speaking test was oral presentation. The students are expected to give a short talk on topic which he has either been asked to prepare beforehand or has been informed of shortly before the test.

The data will be analyzed through quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data is used to describe the situation during the teaching process. Quantitative data is used to analyze the score of students. The quantitative data is collected and analyzed by computing the score of speaking test.

RESULT/FINDINGS

The writer divided this action research into two cycles. Each cycles consisted of four stages; namely plan, action, observation and reflection. In this chapter the writer described the research and findings. Before doing the cycles, the writer gave pretest to the students to know their speaking skill.

The first cycle was conducted for three meetings. Every meeting was done for ninety minutes. The writer observed all the activities in the classroom based on the observation, some students seemed to be interested in teachers' teaching technique. It could be seen from their enthusiasm in doing the debate. However, some students were still uninterested yet. Moreover, students still had low motivation in participating in learning speaking activities. The students also difficult to express their idea because lack of vocabulary. So, the writer planned the activities for the second cycle.

Second cycle was conducted for three meetings. Every meeting was done for ninety minutes. The writer observed all the activities in the classroom. Based on the observation the students were being active in discussing and giving opinion. And there was an improvement in teaching learning process.

A test through debate was given in every meeting. Based on the result of all meetings conducted, it was found that the students' score kept improving started. This increase showed that score from the first meeting until the six meeting. Through debate students are able to improve their speaking skill. The improvement of the students' score in speaking English could be seen from the mean of the students' score during the research. The mean of the students' score in the second cycle was higher than first meeting. So it can be said that the students' speaking skill through debate increased from 46.87 to 77.06. It can be seen in the following table.

Table 1
The improvement of students' mean

	Meeting	Total Score	Mean
Pre-test	I	1388	43,75
Cycle 1	II	1500	46,87
	III	1603	50,09
	IV	1929	60,28
Cycle 2	V	2084	65,12

VI	2354	73,56
VII	2490	77,81

DISCUSSION

Classroom activities in using debate should maximize opportunity to learners to use target language for meaningful purposes, with the attention on the message they are talking rather than correction of language structure. Students are given opportunities to focus on their own learning process and developing of appropriate techniques for autonomous learning. The teacher will give more topics, giving students time to think and respond to classroom interaction. After making students feel comfortable in using the language, it seems advisable to challenge them to think critically with it. By using debate the students' speaking skill would improve.

In this study, it had found that the improvement of the students' score, In the first meeting, the mean of the students were 46.87. In this meeting there was no students got 73 point. In the second meeting, the mean of the students were 50.09. In this meeting there was 3 students got 73 point. In the third meeting, the mean of the students were 60.28 there was 12 students got 73 point, in the fourth meeting, the mean of the students were 65.12 there was 17 students got 73 point. In the fifth meeting, the mean of the students were 73.56 there was 25 students got 73 point. In the six meeting, the mean of the students were 77.81 there was 32 students got 73 point. So, from the result above the students' speaking skill improved by using debate.

The reason above have related with some existing theories, they are Mel Siberman stated that debate can be a valuable method for promoting thinking and reflection, especially if students are expected to take a position that may be contrary to their own it can be actively involves every student in the class.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, it was found out that the students' score increased from the first cycle to the second cycle. It means there was an improvement on the students' speaking skill by using debate. It can be seen from the improvement of the mean of the students' score.

The first cycle consist of three meetings. From the speaking test the mean score of the students showed improvement. The mean of the first meeting was 46.87, second meeting was 50.09, the third meeting was 60.28. It also could be seen from the observation sheet, it was found that the teacher came to the class on time and also did the orientation. She was serious in teaching learning process and concluded the material. But in this cycle the teacher did not monitor all the groups. For the students, most of students did not enthusiastic in teaching learning process. In the second cycle, there was an improvement of the students' means' score from

65.12 to 77.81. While from observation sheet, the teacher could improve her ability in teaching. The students were active in giving opinion through debate activities.

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