

ENHANCING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH DEBATE TECHNIQUE

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Abstract:

Speaking is an ability that is taken for granted, learned as it is through process of socialization through communicating. It seems very important because by mastering speaking skill, people can carry out conversations with others, give the ideas and exchange the information with others. In the third semester of English Department, the students get difficulties to speak English well. They lack of mastering the component of speaking. They only have a little chance to practice speaking English out of class because most of their friends speak Indonesian. Students' speaking problem can be solved by giving a lot chance to them for practicing English either in the classroom or out of classroom. Practicing speaking English in the classroom should be interested with appropriate technique in order to improve students speaking skill. One of technique can be used in teaching speaking is debate. This research was aimed to improve the third Semester Students of English Department at STKIP PGRI Tulungagung through debate technique. This research was classroom action research done in two cycles. The data collection was done using observation and test. The participants of this research were 24 students. The result of this research showed that using debate technique can improve students' speaking skill. This was proven by students' test score that improved in every cycle. In the first cycle, the students' average score was 71 and in the second cycle students got 82. Thus, debate is an appropriate technique used to improve students' speaking skill.

Keywords: Speaking skill, Debate Technique

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is the verbal use of language to communicate with others (Fulcher, 2004). It means that by speaking to others someone can express and communicate their ideas and thoughts. In other words, it can be said that it is a person's way of expressing thoughts, ideas, or information orally. It is also as one of the language skills which becomes an important topic to be addressed in language teaching since it can be used to measure a person's success in learning a language.

The ability to speak coherently and intelligibly on a focused topic is generally recognized as a necessary goal for ESL students (Murphy, 1991). The success in speaking skill is measured in how to carry out conversation in language speaking in an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. In speaking, students should master the elements of speaking, such as vocabularies, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency. Speaking is making use of language in ordinary voice; uttering words; knowing and being able to use a language; expressing oneself in words; making speech. In short speaking can be as the way to carry out feeling through words, even conversations with other.

They are many elements of speaking that must be mastered by students in order to be a good speaker such as; connected speech, expressive devices, lexis and grammar, and negotiation language. In addition, in speaking, speakers often present expressions prematurely. By this, it means they later change their minds and revise or abandon those expression (Clark, 2002).

Teaching speaking is started at teaching the students how to speak in English as their foreign language, for then ask them to be able to pronounce the new language accurately. It is continued then to guide students to a point where they can begin to judge whether their sound productions are correct or not. At this point, teacher is no longer primarily to correct, but he or she is supposed to encourage students to practice speaking the target language.

There are seven principles for teaching speaking skills (H. D. Brown, 2007)

1. Focus on both fluency and accuracy, depending on your objective.
2. Providing intrinsically motivating techniques.
3. Encourage the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts.
4. Provide appropriate feedback and correction.

5. Capitalize on the natural link between speaking and listening.
6. Giving students opportunities to initiate oral communication.
7. Communication Encourage the development of speaking strategies.

In teaching speaking, the activities in the classroom that focus on teaching speaking skills should involve activities where learners speak in tasks that involve settings that match real communication closely and where learners get ample opportunity for practice (i.e., repetition)(De Jong, 2014).

There are some characteristics of spoken language can make oral performance easy as well as, in some cases, difficult (K. Brown, McCarthy, & O’Keeffe, 2006). There are clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, contractions, elisions, reduced vowels, etc., colloquial language, rate of delivery, stress, rhythm, intonation, and interaction.

Speaking activities in the language classroom can have a variety of goals. These include the following: the learning of content matter, the learning of language items from other participants, the development of fluency, learning communication strategies, and developing skill in discourse. (Nation, 1989)

Oral communication skills can be improved by incorporating a set of four presentation tasks into the classroom, beginning with a very easy one and increasing to a task that is moderately challenging (Grace & Gilsdorf, 2004).

Like writing, speaking is a complex skill requiring the simultaneous use of a number of different abilities which often develop at different rates. There are five components that are generally recognized in analyses of the speech process: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Many classroom speaking activities which are currently used are:

- 1) **Acting from script.** This activity encourages students to act out scenes from plays or their course books, sometimes filming the result.
- 2) **Communication games.** Speaking activities based on games are often a useful way of giving students valuable practice, where younger learners are involved.
- 3) **Discussion.** One of the reasons that discussion fail is that students are reluctant to give an opinion in front of the whole class, particularly if they

cannot think of anything to say and are not confident of the language they might use to say it. Many students feel extremely exposed in discussion situations.

- 4) **Prepared talks.** A popular kind of activity is the prepared talk where students make a presentation on a topic of their own choice. Students should speak from notes rather than from a script. Prepared talks represent a defined and useful speaking genre, and if properly organized, can be extremely interesting for both speaker and listener.
- 5) **Questionnaires.** Questionnaires are useful because by being pre planned they ensure that both questioner and respondent have something to say each other. Depending on how tightly design they are, they may well encourage the natural use of certain receptive language pattern and thus be situated in the middle of our communication continuum.
- 6) **Simulation and role-play.** Many students derive great benefit from simulation and role play. Students simulate a real life encounter as if they were doing so in the real world. A simulation and role-play can be used to encourage general oral fluency to train students for specific situation.
- 7) **Debate.** Debate is an activity in which opposite points of view are presented and argued. Debate can present opportunities for students to engage in using extended chunks of language for a purpose: to convincingly defend one side of an issue.

As with any other type of classroom procedure, teachers need to play a number of different roles during the speaking activities. However, three have particular relevance if teacher are trying to get students to speak fluently:

- 1) *Prompter.* Students sometimes get lost, cannot think of what to say next, or in some other way lose the fluency teacher expect of them. However, teacher may be able to help them and the activity to progress by offering discrete suggestions. If this can be done supportively without disrupting the discussion, or forcing students out of role it will stop the sense of frustration that some students feel when they come to a “dead end” of language or ideas.
- 2) *Participant.* Teacher should be good animators when asking students to produce language. Sometimes this can be achieved by setting up an activity clearly and enthusiasm. At other times, however, teachers may want to participate in discussions or role plays themselves. That way they can prompt covertly, introduce new information to help the activity along,

ensure continuing student engagement, and generally maintain a creative atmosphere.

- 3) *Feedback provider*. The vexed question of when and how to give feedback in speaking activities is answered by considering carefully the effect of possible difference approaches.

A debate is a speaking situation in which opposite points of view are presented and argued. A debate is about the real or simulated issue. The learners' roles ensure that they have adequate shared knowledge about the issue and different opinions or interest to defend. At the end of activity, they may have to reach a concrete decision or put the issue to a vote. Debate is data in which people take up positions, per sue arguments and expound on their opinions on a range or matters; with or without some sort of lead figure or chair person. Debate is one of effective speaking activity which encourages students to improve their communication skill.

Debates are most appropriate for intermediate and advanced learners who have been guided in how to prepare for them. Based on the definitions above, it can be concluded that debate is an activity in which students take up positions on issue and defend their position. It is also stated by Jagger that the debate provided an example of a student finding an innovative way to express his viewpoint. This debate utilized more affective characteristics than all the other debates – students experienced the actual principles discussed – respect, empathy, tolerance and what happens when there is a lack of them (Jagger, 2013).

Debate as a communicative and an interactive technique is an interested activity to be practiced in the classroom (Conway, 1976). It means that debate has many benefits for students:

- 1) Improve students' critical thinking. In debating, every student is proposed to analyze a problem critically.
- 2) Develop students' communication skill. Debaters spend many hours assembling and practicing hundreds of public speeches on topics of national importance.
- 3) Questioning skill developed in and struggle--often in the face of disappointment and defeat.

- 4) They are capable of making and defending informed choices about complex issues outside of their own area of interest because they do so on a daily basis.
- 5) Debate is thus not only a way to connect students with academic subjects in meaningful ways; it is also a way to re-connect students to public life if they have been overcome by feelings of alienation.
- 6) Policy debate specifically teaches students to adopt multiple perspectives which describe as one of the most important problem solving skills.

Because of some benefits above, debate really need to be practiced in speaking classroom. It is appropriate for students to improve their speaking skill. It is also emphasized by Tessier who said that learning was greatest when students wrote about a debate they witnessed, the teacher provided debate questions, and students received a reward for winning (Tessier, 2009).

Speaking activities and speaking practice in the classroom should enable students to gain experience using all the “prerequisites “for effective oral communication. The most important feature of a classroom activity is to provide an authentic opportunity for the students to get individual meanings across and utilize every area of knowledge they have in the second or foreign language. They should have the opportunity and be encouraged to become flexible users of their knowledge, always keeping the communicate goal in mind. One of the ways to encourage students to improve their speaking skill is by using debate.

Debate can present opportunities for students to engage in using extended chunks of language for a purpose: to convincingly defend one side of an issue. The debate is probably more often used in content area classrooms than in ESL classrooms. 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 functions: describing, explaining, giving and asking for information, agreeing and disagreeing.

Debate in speaking class is aimed to improve students’ critical thinking and students’ communication skill. By performing debate students have a lot of opportunities in practicing speaking. Students’ involvement is very important in implementing debate.

Every technique that applied in process learning and teaching has strengths and weaknesses. Debate has many strengths. They are:

- 1) Train the students to cooperate well with other friend.
- 2) Train the students to express their opinion.
- 3) Involve all the students to participate in debate activity.
- 4) Improve the students' speaking ability. Speaking skill automatically improved when students practice debating, because they have a lot of opportunity in practicing speaking.

Although debate has many strengths, it also has many weaknesses too. The weaknesses are:

- 1) Debate is only used for certain subject.
- 2) Debate needs long times and preparations.
- 3) Influence the students' emotion in defending their argument.

In Indonesia, many students have amount vocabularies and mastering the grammatical structure, but they still have difficulty in speaking. Most of the students complained that enough time was not given for the improvement of speaking ability in the classroom (Khan & Ali, 2010). The person who has not good communication skills will suffer badly in this era of competition in comparison to the person who has good communication skills and can soon catch the eyes of an authority to award him a higher position or responsibility in order to increase his self-esteem and reputation (Khan & Ali, 2010).

This problems also occurred in the third semester students of English department. The students found difficulties in speaking English. They have limitation in mastering the component of speaking. They also practiced speaking English rarely. They only had a little chance to practice speaking English. Students' speaking problem could be solved by providing a lot chances for them to practice speaking English. Practicing speaking English in the classroom would be interested if the lecturer uses the appropriate technique which can improve the students' speaking skill.

One of technique that can be used in teaching speaking is debate. Debate is presented as a valuable learning activity for teaching critical thinking and

improving communication skills. Debating is an effective pedagogical technique because of the level of responsibility for learning and active involvement by all students.

Based on the problem above, the researcher was intended to conduct a research to solve the problem in the students' speaking skill of the third semester at STKIP PGRI Tulungagung in academic year in 2016/2017.

METHOD

This research was a classroom action research. It involved 24 students of the third semester of English Department. There were two cycles in this research. Each cycle consisted of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The procedures of the research were as follows:

- a. *Observation*, in observation, the researcher intended to find out:
 - 1) *Data collected such as documentation includes the number of the students, students' list, and the course plan.*
 - 2) *Observe the class.*
 - 3) *Identify the problem.*

- b. *Planning in action*, in this research, the researcher planned to conduct the cycle in classroom action research. There were four steps process in each cycle for doing classroom action research.
 - 1) *Planning*. Planning was an action research by focusing on who, what, when, where, and how the action would be done.
 - 2) *Action*. The planning strategy was applied in teaching learning process. In this phase, the researcher got some items which relate to the debate process.

There were some items related to debate such motion, definition, theme line, argument, rebuttal and sum-up/closing. In this phase, the researcher did the following procedures:

- 1) *Dividing students into two teams.*
- 2) *Selecting debate topic and assigning the two teams to debate the topic.*

- 3) Ensuring that the participants have time beforehand to prepare for the arguments and to collect supporting data to present during the debate.
- 4) Presenting the topic and format of the debate.

c. *Observation.* Observation was the next step to monitor and watch closely teaching learning process and collect the data from result of action. The researcher prepared the observation paper to know class condition when the action done, then the researcher analyzed the result of observation, what the problem faced when teaching learning process and look for good solution to solve the problem. In this phase, the researcher observed and took notes during teaching learning process.

d. *Reflection.* Reflection meant to analyze the result based on the data that had been collected to determine the next action in the next cycle. In this phase, the researcher could observe the activity that results any process, the progress happened, and also about the positives and negatives sides.

The classroom action research needs the data to support the investigation. There are several ways to collect data like questionnaire, observation, field notes, interview, documentation, and test. In this research, the researcher gathered the data to support above. The researcher chose some of which are appropriate to her school environment, and can be done there. The techniques and methods which were used by the researcher to collect the data are observation and test. The scoring could be done quickly and easily. There were five aspects of assessment in speaking as mentioned Fulcher. They are vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency and comprehension (Fulcher, 2015).

Research instrument is a device used by researcher while collecting data to make her work becomes easier and to get better result, complete, and systematic in order to make the data easy to be processed. The assessment of speaking requires examination of assessment methods, scales, and raters (Ginther, 2013). An instrument could be in form of questionnaire, observation list, test, etc. In this study the researcher used questionnaire, observation, field notes, interview, documentation, and test.

Technique of data analysis came from the interpretation of the data collection. In analysis the data, the researcher got the data from document, observing the teaching learning process, and the result of the students' test. In processing the data, the researcher uses descriptive analysis. It was to explain the condition in raising indicator achievement every cycle, and to describe the success

of the teaching learning process using debate in improving speaking skill. The data from observation were grouped based on students' behavior and students' response that can be taken as a clue or indicator for students' activeness when the debate technique is introduced.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher used classroom action research. The subject of this research was the 24 students of the third semester. In the first cycle, the average result was 71. The teacher used debate as technique in teaching speaking. In teaching learning process, there were many students joined the class enthusiastically. They paid attention to the lesson, although many of students still confused with debate technique, because they never practice debate before. Researcher found many students that were still confused to join debate. In the second cycle, the average result was 82. The teaching learning process in this cycle was better the previous one. The researcher found that majority of students was enjoyed the activity. The researcher also found that the implementation of debate in teaching speaking was successful, because debate was an interesting activity where students had a lot of opportunity to practice speaking in speaking class. Students also had active involvement during the debate process in order to defend their opinions. So, researcher concluded that debate was one of appropriate technique used in teaching speaking for university students.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From all the data analysis about using debate technique to improve students' speaking skill (a classroom action research which third semester students of English Language Teaching Department of STKIP PGRI Tulungagung in the academic year of 2016/2017), it can be concluded that:

1. The use of debate technique has been advocated in teaching speaking process. Typically, debate is very interested to be implemented to improve speaking skill. Students have a lot of opportunity to practice speaking and have active involvement in debate.
2. Teaching speaking through debate can be enjoyable experience for both teacher and student. In fact, students can improve their speaking skill after being taught by debate technique. It can be seen by students' achievement in speaking test in each cycle.

In English language teaching and learning at university, the teacher must create enjoyable, fun and interesting situation as possible as the teacher can. The enjoyment ought to be the foremost aims which hopefully will have good effects on the education, because what they dislike, they drop as soon as possible. In other word, the teacher should make learning enjoyable because students love to play and learn best when they are enjoying themselves.

Teaching speaking using debate technique can motivate students to practice speaking more, and it improves student's speaking skill. The researcher suggests the other lecturers use this technique because it encourages students to speak in speaking class. It is also emphasized by Alcoff who said that the practice of speaking for others is often born of a desire for mastery, to privilege oneself as the one who more correctly understands the truth about another's situation or as one who can champion a just cause and thus achieve glory and praise(Alcoff, 1992)

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