

## THE EFFECT OF DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE AND ENGLISH LEARNING MOTIVATION TOWARD STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate whether there is (1) a difference in the speaking ability between students who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique; (2) an effect of interaction between the speaking techniques applied and English learning motivation toward students' speaking ability; (3) a difference in speaking ability between students with high English learning motivation who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique; and (4) a difference in speaking ability between students with low English learning motivation who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique. The study used a 2X2 factorial design, which involved a sample of 96 students. The data were collected by using questionnaire and a speaking test then analyzed by Two-way ANOVA. The result indicates that (1) there was a significant difference in speaking ability between the students who were taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique; (2) there was a significant interactional effect between the teaching techniques applied and students' motivation toward their speaking ability; (3) there was a significant difference in speaking ability between students with high English learning motivation who were taught by using discussion technique and those taught with the conventional technique; and (4) there was significant difference in speaking ability between the students with low English learning motivation who were taught by using discussion technique and those taught with the conventional technique.

**Key words:** discussion technique, motivation, speaking ability

### INTRODUCTION

Speaking is considered as a major skill to be mastered by students in terms of communication need. This is because the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication. However, learning toward a good speaking competency is not an easy task for students. Students mostly find it difficult to communicate in English. Speaking ability has been considered difficult for them. The students are not ready for real communication and cannot cope with all of the simultaneous demands in

learning activity (Larzarton in Celce-Murcia, 2001: 103). A few of them might want to express their ideas spontaneously in English but they do not know how to, so they use their body language and speak with lot of pauses.

The students' inability to speak in English is caused by a number of factors. Wendi (2008: 3) in Astiti (2012:2) states that the students' speaking difficulties could be caused by inside and outside factors. The inside factors are certain lacks such as lack of self confidence and lack of motivation which could make students feel ashamed to

speak, scared to make mistakes, and have no confidence. Besides, Gardner (2002) in Astiti (2012: 2) further states that the inside factors have a very important role to make students gain success in learning a language. Meanwhile, the outside factor is related to the teacher. The teacher should be able to recognize the students' problem and to create conducive atmosphere in the classroom that will raise the students' ability to speak English. Consequently, English teachers are expected to apply the appropriate technique which will surely work to fulfill learners' need of English communication. This notion is in line with the communicative approach which defines language as communication and the goal of language teaching is to develop communicative competence (Hymes in Richard & Rogers, 2002: 159). In supporting ideas of communicative language teaching as described above, speaking instructors are expected to provide themselves with wider variety of methodological options to choose techniques and materials according to the needs of the learners. Related to this purpose, discussion technique is potential to be implemented, which is expected to enable students to promote their speaking ability. In line with this, Killen (1996: 28) discloses his logical argumentations in supporting the notion that discussion technique is an appropriate technique in the area of teaching speaking. Those are: (1) discussion is an active learning process, which is more likely to maintain students' interest than a passive, teacher-directed learning experience; (2) it secures active involvement in learning which motivates students, particularly when they can see that others value their contributions and respect their points of view; (3) it develops students' ability to analyze the lesson content and express ideas orally, thus enhancing their thinking and communication skills; (4) it can be an effective way of allowing students to share their knowledge and experience and an appropriate way to demonstrate to students the relevance of their background knowledge; (5) it can generate new ideas or produce original solutions to problems by stimulating divergent or lateral thinking; (6) it is better than lecture as a way of helping students

develop problem-solving and critical – thinking skills; and (7) it is a technique in which teachers show tolerance to students' opinions and attitudes, which can help to develop rapport between instructors and students. Further, Killen (1996: 36) highlights that discussion technique is potential to be applied in EFL teaching because: (1) it prompts students for further responses; (2) it engages a reluctant students; (3) it focuses student's responses; and (4) it prompts students to think at higher level. Additionally, Kelly (2010) explains three basic logical reasons for why discussion technique is very applicable in teaching speaking: (1) instructors maintain a greater control over what is being taught because they are able to steer the discussion; (2) discussion technique is comfortable for the teacher because it is a modified form of lecture; and (3) students have a tendency to stay focused on the lesson because they might prepare to share their ideas.

Killen's and Kelly's concepts above are in line with Brown's notion. Brown (2001:178) affirms essential advantages of group discussion in EFL teaching: (1) students are able to generate interactive language; (2) students are embraced by an effective climate; (3) students are to promote learner responsibility and autonomy; and (4) students are able to understand toward individualizing instruction. Moreover, Suryosubroto (2002: 179) also highlights that discussion is a strategy in teaching in which the teacher gives great opportunity to the students for having scientific dialogue in gathering opinions, making conclusion, or giving an alternative solution to a certain issue. He asserts that discussion technique provides opportunities for students' thoughtfulness about information received in class so that they are able to solve the problem discussed.

By regarding the strengths and logical reasons described above, it is obvious that discussion technique encourages students to communicate in English. Therefore, this leads the current research to conduct an experimental study to justify whether or not discussion

technique has an effect toward students' speaking ability.

Another insight that is worth serious attention in foreign language teaching is the students' motivation. Students' success of learning English cannot be separated from their motivation. If the students have high learning motivation, they will do more learning activity. For the teachers, knowing students' English learning motivation has a very important role to make students gain success in learning a foreign language. It is an urgent variable to be considered by EFL teacher in recognizing the students' problem and to create conducive atmosphere in the classroom that will drive the students to do more toward learning English. With strong motivation the learners are expected to respond promptly to the learning situation, seek out all opportunities to acquire the target language, make maximum use of the opportunities afforded to practice the target language, possess analytic skill, be adaptable in learning situation possess, self-esteem, and take a risk for their learning. Thus, undoubtedly the most frequently used catch-all term for explaining the success or failure of virtually any complex task, motivation is a star player in the cast of characters assigned to second language learning scenarios around the world (Brown, 2007: 168).

Moreover, Harmer (2007: 98) highlights that students' success of learning English cannot be separated from their motivation. According to Harmer, motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes learners to do things in order to achieve their language learning aim. By knowing learners' motivation, English learning reinforcement can be developed, learning objectives clearer, and it makes learning persistent. With the above notion, it is clear to affirm that if students have high learning motivation, they will do more learning activity which will directly affect their effort toward better speaking proficiency. So, it is suggested that the teacher must improve students' English learning motivation. Without having high English learning motivation, there is no pulse; there is no drive in learning activity and no better speaking proficiency. When teachers learn to incorporate direct approaches to

generating student motivation in their teaching, they will become happier and more successful teachers. Similar insight is also highlighted by Gardner, who posits that students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels of English learning motivation (Gardner, 2006 in Tamimi and Shuib, 2009). He further adds that if one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc. Synthesis from learning motivation described above, it can be concluded that motivation is like smart engine mover toward students' successfulness.

In contrast, there are students who are not able to speak English spontaneously, fluently, and comprehensively. One variable to be considered in relation to this lack of ability is the students' lack of motivation towards learning English. This is because learners' motivation has been widely accepted as a key factor which influences the rate and success in second/foreign language learning. Low motivation of the students is one of the most important factors causing their failure in learning a foreign language. Realizing the role of English learning motivation described above, the researcher was affirmed that students' English learning motivation is important to investigate. Therefore be made it a moderator variable in this study. The consideration was that English learning motivation might encourage the students to do more practice in English, which will support them in acquiring good ability for their speaking proficiency.

Addressing discussion technique and students' motivation in learning English, the study purported to answer four questions, namely: (1) whether there is a significant difference in speaking ability between students who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique; (2) whether there is a significant interactional effect between the speaking techniques applied and English learning motivation toward students' speaking ability; (3)

whether there is a significant difference in speaking ability between students with high English learning motivation who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique; and (4) whether there is a significant difference in speaking ability between students with low English learning motivation who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique.

The undertaking as such aimed at (1) finding out whether there is a significant difference in speaking ability between students who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique; (2) finding out whether there is a significant interactional effect between teaching techniques applied and students' English learning motivation toward speaking ability; (3) finding out whether there is a significant difference in speaking ability between students who had high English learning motivation taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique; and (4) disclosing whether there is a significant difference in speaking ability between students with low English learning motivation who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Conducted at the second semester of English Education Department of St. Paul College of Education Ruteng, West Flores, this research was done in three months (February – April) in the academic year of 2012/2013 at the odd semester. The population was all students who took Speaking II course. The total number of population was six classes, which altogether consisted of 216 students. A sample of 96 students was used, which was selected by using *Random Sampling Technique*.

The research design was a *posttest only control group design* using a 2 x2 factorial arrangement. Two classes as experimental group were taught by using

discussion technique and two classes as control group were taught by using the conventional technique. Three variables were identified in this research, namely; independent variable (discussion technique), moderator variable (English learning motivation, which was classified into high and low), and dependent variable (speaking ability). The data were collected by using English learning motivation questionnaire and a speaking test. These instruments had been tried out to measure their validity and reliability. The data collected by using the test were scores in oral individual performance test which were obtained on the basis of an Analytical Scoring Rubric. To collect this data the students were asked to speak on a topic given in front of the class individually. Their oral individual performances were then rated by three raters to ensure the reliability of the rater's scores. Whereas the second type of data comprised the data that were collected by using a non-test instrument. These data were collected by using the scale of English learning motivation. A closed format question was applied in all items, in which the students were provided with 5 answers. The statements were in the form of positive and negative statements.

The test was constructed based on the speaking blue print. Data analysis was conducted after obtaining the scores from four post-tests given to both experimental group and control group. The scores obtained were then analyzed by using two forms of statistical analysis; descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis which were done by using two-way ANOVA and continued by Tukey test to find out the interactional effect between the teaching techniques applied and the students' English learning motivation toward their speaking ability. Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics was applied to test the normality of the data distribution, whereby it was found the data were normally distributed. Besides, Levene's test of Equality of Error variance found that the variances of the data were homogeneous.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

It has been stated previously that this research tried to answer four research questions. The following description explains the finding that answers each research question. The first research question is concerned with whether there is a significant difference in speaking ability between the students who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique. Inferential statistics finds that both the discussion technique and the conventional technique have an effect on students' speaking ability. The result of the analysis shows the coefficient of ANOVA as  $F_A = 51.121$ . This result is then compared to  $F_{cv(1,96;(005))} = 3.94$ , and from the comparison, it is found that  $F_A$  is higher than  $F_{cv}$ . From this result the first research question is answered, that is, there is a significant difference in students' speaking ability between the students who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique. Besides, inferential statistics also shows that the discussion technique is more effective than the conventional technique. The mean score of the students' speaking ability who are taught by using the discussion technique ( $X_{A1} = 79.4583$ ) is higher than the mean score of the students' speaking ability who are taught by using the conventional technique ( $X_{A2} = 72.1667$ ).

There are some considerations why discussion technique is superior than the conventional technique. Larson (1997) highlights that the implementation of discussion technique could give the student a chance to promote their higher-level thinking, develop student attitudes, and advance student capability in speaking. Additionally, Killen, (1996: 24) affirms that discussion is an orderly process of face-to-face group interaction in which people exchange ideas about an issue for the purpose of solving a problem, answering a question, enhancing their knowledge of understanding, or making a decision. He also discloses that discussion technique is potential to be applied in speaking class because students are motivated to create the initiative ideas toward speaking topics

discussed. Students are able to share their notions, explore their ability and use their creativity to create their own concept in the form of presentation or discussion at second semester students of English education department of St. Paul College of education in the academic year of 2012/1013, where this research was conducted. Speaking activities done by the students in the class were not only focused on what the students could get from the speaking topics but also their initiative toward the topics. In responding to the topics given, the students had to be able to relate the speaking topics with their own life as to get the self-reflection, so that their understanding was better. Moreover, Suryosubroto (2002: 179) also highlights that discussion is a technique in teaching in which the teacher gives great opportunity to the students for having scientific dialogue in gathering opinions, making conclusion, or giving an alternative solution to a certain issue. He asserts that discussion technique provides opportunities for students' thoughtfulness about information received in class so that they are able to solve the problem discussed. The implementation of discussion technique in this research could stimulate students to have a great opportunity to activate their brains toward speaking English in supporting them to be autonomous language users. Furthermore, Killen (1996: 27) affirms that discussion technique is an appropriate technique for EFL teachers because it helps students to: (1) think critically about the subject and develop their skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation, rather than just memorize facts; (2) encourage students to work together and share their ideas by talking about them publicly; (3) develop students' communications skills such as stating their ideas clearly, listening to others, or responding appropriately to others; (4) generate students' own ideas; and (5) discover new knowledge through sharing ideas in group. Killen's concept above is in line with Brown's notion. Brown (2001:178) affirms the essential advantages of group discussion in EFL teaching: (1) students are able to generate interactive language; (2) students are embraced by an effective climate; (3) students are to promote learner

responsibility and autonomy; and (4) students are able to understand toward individualizing instruction. Hence, it can be summed up that the strong points of discussion technique are students are able to promote their higher-level thinking, initiative learner, autonomous language user, caring student, and high responsible student.

Moreover, discussion technique proved to be an appropriate technique in teaching speaking has been supported by relevant researches done by Gall and Gall (1990) (in Killen, 1996: 26) who found out that discussion was an effective technique of facilitating students' communication skills. Additionally, Blackwell (1998) in Electrical Engineering Technology in Perdue University encountered that group discussion technique was able to increase students' interest and learning English. Larson (1999) in Western Washington recommended that discussion was a good technique to the college students engage in a lesson to learn academic content by encouraging verbal interaction to promote students' speaking achievement more effectively. Tsou (2005) in Southern Taiwan at the Foreign Language Classes further discovered that discussion increased students' oral participation in class significantly and lead to improvement of students' speaking proficiency. Next, Kusmaryati (2009) also encountered that discussion technique was effective in improving the English speaking ability. This technique could be applied in teaching English, because it has improved the ability of students' speaking ability. By applying this technique, the students were given a big opportunity to express their own ideas and it can arouse their motivation to speak in the classroom. Raheem (2011) in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, further disclosed that discussion technique was better than basis the conventional lecture technique in improving students' achievement and retention in social studies. Discussion technique promoted students for sharing of ideas, development of social skills of talking and listening, clarification of ideas and promotion of team work.

This research has the similarities of the research findings from those six

previous researches, such as: (1) discussion technique is able to facilitate the students to communicate in English; (2) discussion technique can encourage verbal interaction; (3) discussion technique supports students' team work; (4) discussion technique can develop students' interest in learning English; and (5) this technique creates carefulness in expressing their ideas. However, this research findings are different from those six researches in terms of autonomous language user and initiative learner. By applying discussion technique, students were motivated to be responsible for the learning a foreign language. All speaking activities were done by students themselves. They were the main processors in the classroom, meanwhile speaking instructor was as the real facilitator and motivator.

The second research question is whether or not there is a significant interactional effect between techniques applied and students' English learning motivation toward students' speaking ability. The two-way ANOVA shows that the value of  $F_{AB}$  on the interactional effect is 4.868, whereas  $F_{cv(1,96;(005))}$  is 3.94. Since  $F_{AB}$  is higher than  $F_{cv}$ , this indicates that there is a significant interactional effect between the teaching techniques applied and the students' English learning motivation toward the speaking ability. There are two interactions found out: (1) between the students who have high English learning motivation taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique and (2) between students with low English learning motivation taught by using discussion and those low motivated students taught by using the conventional technique.

The first interaction between the students who have high English learning motivation taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique was proven to be significant. Inferential statistics shows that the mean score of students who have high English learning motivation taught by using discussion technique (XA1B1: 83.4167) is higher than the mean score of the students who have high English learning motivation taught by using the conventional technique

(XA2B1: 73.8750). To make it sure that these means difference are significant, the Tukey test is also conducted. The Tukey test shows that The  $Q_{cv}$  on  $df = 96$  at the significant value 0.05 is 3.94, whereas  $Q_{ob}$  is 11.70225. From the calculation,  $Q_{ob}$  is higher than  $Q_{cv}$ , indicates that significant mean this difference is answered. The result proven by inferential statistics and Tukey test above in supporting first interaction also has been strongly supported by previous relevant researches and previous theories, which highlight the importance of learning motivation toward students' successfulness in acquiring a foreign language. Harmer (2007:98) asserts that the students' successfulness of learning English cannot be separated from their motivation. He discloses that motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something. Harmer's idea is in line with Williams & Burden (1997: 120) in Harmer (2007:98), which reveals that motivation is a state of cognitive arousal which provokes a decision to act, as a result of which there is sustained intellectual and/or physical effort so that the person can achieve some previously set goal. Furthermore, Uno (2009: 27) affirms the main roles of motivation in terms of learning English. They are: (1) motivation can determine learning reinforcement, (2) motivation makes learning objectives clearer, and (3) motivation makes learning persistent. Whereas, Djamarah (2002: 157) in Astuti (2012: 6) states that motivation is a psychology factor that can influence the process and the result of learning. If the students have high learning motivation, they will do more learning activity. Additionally, Rost (2006) puts emphasis that as teachers, they often forget that all of their learning activities are filtered through their students' motivation. In this sense, students control the flow of the classroom. Without student's motivation, there is no pulse; there is no life in the class. When teachers learn to incorporate direct approaches to generating student motivation in their teaching, they will become happier and more successful teachers. This notion means, as teachers, they can directly influence their students' motivation about

learning English. Hence, it can be summed up that learning motivation is an essential variable to be involved in determining students' successfulness in mastering English courses. Students' learning motivation is a smart engine mover, which influences their best achievement significantly in the area of speaking achievement.

Moreover, the experts' insights stated above are in line with previous relevant researches, such as: Degang's research (2010) to Thai students majoring in business English at an English-medium University which revealed that students were relatively highly motivated, close to equally motivated to learn English Tamimi. Furthermore, Shuib (2009) did the research at petroleum engineering undergraduates in Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology, Malaysia encountered that students' achievement in acquiring a foreign language cannot be separated from their English language motivation; and Carreira (2006) in Japanese Elementary Schools further proved that motivation could shed light on how the teaching methods for elementary school students in the higher grades can be improved. The result of these previous relevant researches are in line with the the result of this study in terms of the role of English learning motivation in acquiring a foreign language.

In this study, the students who have high English learning motivation are appropriately taught by using discussion technique since they are able to be critical speakers, involve actively, become high responsible students, eager to be challenged, and be brave to share their ideas.

Finally, there is significant difference in the speaking ability of low motivated students who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique. These findings are also in line with the result of inferential statistics and Tukey test, which indicates that mean score of the students' speaking ability who have low English learning motivation taught by using discussion technique (A1B2: 75.5000) is higher than the mean score of the students' speaking ability who have low English

learning motivation taught by using the conventional technique (A2B2: 70.4583). Besides, the result of Tukey test signifies that the value of  $Q_{cv}$  in  $df = 96$  at the significance level 0.05 is 3.94 from the calculation, it is found that  $Q_{ob} > Q_{cv}$ , which means there is a significant difference in the speaking ability between the students who have low English learning motivation taught by using discussion technique and the students who have low English learning motivation taught by using the conventional technique. This finding indicates that discussion technique works was not only for high motivated students but also to the low students.

### **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the result of the data analysis, the conclusion of this study can be posed as follows: (1) there is a significant difference in speaking ability between the students who are taught by using discussion technique and speaking ability of the students who are taught by using the conventional technique. The students' speaking ability is better when they are taught by using discussion technique than when they are taught by using the conventional technique; (2) there is a significant interactional effect between the teaching techniques applied and students' English learning motivation toward their speaking ability; (3) there is a significant difference in speaking ability between the students who have high English learning motivation who are taught by using discussion technique and those taught by using the conventional technique. Discussion technique gives better contribution to the students' speaking ability than the conventional technique; and (4) there is a significant difference in speaking ability between the students who have low English learning motivation who are taught by using discussion technique and those students who have low English learning motivation who are taught by using the conventional technique. The students who have low English learning motivation who

are taught by using discussion technique shows higher mean score in their speaking ability than those who have low English learning motivation taught by using the conventional technique.

From the result of discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of discussion technique gives a better achievement in the area of speaking ability than the conventional technique. When the English learning motivation of the students is considered, it is found that the implementation of discussion technique makes better achievement to both high and low motivated students.

The implication of this study can be described as follows: (1) It shows that the conventional technique that has been being applied by the speaking lecturers need to be reconsidered in the future speaking technique. The speaking lecturers should consider implementing the discussion technique as one of potential techniques in teaching speaking II course since it had been proven in this study. It is found that the application of discussion technique supports better achievement in speaking ability toward students who have both high and low English learning motivation; (2) discussion technique is appropriate with high and low motivated students, particularly for the university students of English program in speaking courses. Through discussion technique, high and low motivated students are able to be major processors and critical thinkers; speaking lecturer becomes the real facilitator and motivator for the students. Therefore, this technique is suitable to be applied.

Speaking lecturers are suggested to apply discussion technique in their speaking classes to engage students to be high responsible students, critical thinkers, individualizing learner in acquiring their foreign language. Moreover, the speaking II lecturers are also suggested to realize the major role of knowing students' English learning motivation, which significantly influences their speaking ability. Then, for next researchers, they are able to use this research as an insight to conduct other researches in connection with variables studied.



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