# TO BE A DIPLOMAT, WHY NOT?
## (A Case Study on the Students' Enthusiasm towards Model United Nations: An Innovative Teaching Method in the 21st Century)

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**Abstract:** Model United Nations (MUN) as a teaching method is being developed to be implemented in many schools in many countries to acquire the demands of living in international community. High schools in Indonesia started practicing it in 2010. As this is quite new, its practicality is still frequently rare and quite complicated to do. Therefore, this study aimed at researching the students' enthusiasm towards model united nations as a path to know whether this kind of teaching method is acceptable for them. The subjects of the research were 40 students of PondokPesantren Modern Darul Mursyid, Tapanuli Selatan, North Sumatera who joined the school's English club. This is a qualitative research designed in a case study employing three instruments in collecting the data; interview, observation, and documentation. The interview showed that the students were enthusiastic to implement MUN, curious to know further, and engaged with all of the activities. The observation showed that the students were active, consistent and discipline in following all the activities. While the documentation showed that their success in implementing this kind of teaching method was equipped by their sufficient background of English language mastery. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the students' enthusiasm towards MUN was sophisticatedly high and their capacity to follow the teaching method was satisfying. These findings imply its possibility to be implemented in the class. The suggestion is addressed for teachers to simplify the procedures to make its practicality more tangible to do.

**Keywords:** *Speaking, Teaching Method, Discussion Text*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is the most effective way to actually express intention, thought, and everything which someone has in their mind. Through speaking, people can reach what they intend, and pursue what they think they have right on by communicating to other people. Speaking as the way to communicate is everybody's need as a human being. Haliday in Rahmah (2011 : 6) states that there are three functions of communication. They are to exchange information, to represent the idea and to organize the experience. These functions are employed by everyday people as a part of social being without which it is almost possible for them to survive. In line with the afore-mentioned purposes of speaking to communicate, this article focuses on a strategy employing speaking as the way to express idea to overcomeproblem, together with other people, exchange the information needed, and represent the idea for facing problems. Those are all wrapped in an activity called Model United Nations.

Fegan and Prankel (2011, p. 3) state that Model United Nations is originally an event inspired by the biggest organization in this universe called United Nations and is conducted by either sholars or students.The practicality of model united nations is reflected by what the delegates do in the united nations. The main aim of this currently-famous event is to disseminate ideas as a way to inspire the world to overcome the current world-wide problem. It is evidently able to sharpen the participants' caring toward the problems this world is facing. Through model united nations, the participants which in this case are also called as delegates are in charge of discussing, debating, initiating, and disseminating their constructive ideas for the betterment of the world. This is also to prepare them to be a real future diplomat.

In education, it is employed as the way to improve the students' speaking competence and their critical thinking as well as caring towards the development of the world and its current issues. Regarding the curriculum, it is implementable to, practically in spoken form,

enhance the students' mastery of discussion text because the students are going to confront different and contradictive ideas and at the end are also asked to come up with final decision by doing reconciliation which have to cater the social benefit. Therefore, at the end of the event, it is hopefully not only to improve the students' speaking competence. Far beyond that, it is also expected to mediate the growth of the students' affective skills in terms of caring to the social betterment, dedicating the knowledge that they have to improve the world-wide quality life, respecting different opinion, imparting the value of team work, and so on.

However, looking at the status quo of EFL students such as those in Indonesia on how they respond the skill of speaking English as the hardest skill to master, there must be a big challange to condut this kind of teaching method. Not to mention its frequency of practicing in shools in this country is quite rare. Model United Nations is regarded as a new teaching method whose practicality is still in need of scrutinizing because of its complicatedness. Additionally, the students' responses towards Model United Nations are also researched. Therefore, there are two major problems which will be explained in this journal. First, whether or not the students are enthusiatic toward the implementation of Model United Nations. Second, whether or not the students are ready towards the implementation of Model United Nations.

MUN is still new for Indonesia. Universitas Indonesia is the first institution organizing MUN. The participants of MUN are commonly from non-education program students such as law, politics, international relations, and other majors with sufficient background of knowledge about being a diplomat. Unfortunately, research about MUN in education is still rare. One of the rarities is a research from Bastaki in 2013. She conducted a case study entitled "*Model United Nations and the perception of global citizenship*" in 2013 to find out the practicality of MUN for teaching English at semester II students in Birmingham University. The finding showed that MUN is implementable and practicable for teaching English because the students looked enthusiastic and all procedures of

MUN could run well. However, Bastaki's focus is on changing students' perception to global issue. She aims at imparting the value of leadership, critical thinking, cooperativeness, negotiation which become the factors embodying the students' betterment and is less concerned with speaking improvement. Moreover, the subjects of the research are those from English speaking country. Their language status certainly helps them a lot to conduct MUN. So, the question about whether it is practicable for English for foreign language (EFL) students, particularly Indonesian students, remains exist.

Xiayou and Jian (2013) in their "*Applying Modern Technique and Carrying out English Extracurricular – on the Model United Nations Activity*" state that applying MUN for English language teaching context is evidently able to improve students' English comprehension. The learning principles offered by MUN deals with Piaget's constructivism that learning is discovery and by discovering knowledge through MUN, students learn a lot of additional benefits besides English proficiency such as negotiating, compromising, respecting, understanding, careful communicating and overall appreciation for the work of the United Nations. From these benefits, it can be concluded that the focus of the research is so wide. The findings show that MUN can improve students' reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, and researching ability. However, the researchers do not put any reasons how MUN can do so. It is better to only focus on finding the benefit of a particular skill with reasonable evidence why MUN can influence the skill. Accordingly, the ultimate point that makes this paper different from the two is that this paper aims at focusing on finding out the influence of MUN towards students' speaking skill.

Kurniasih in 2011 conducted a research entitled "*Teaching the Four Language Skills in EFL Classroom: Some Consideration.*" She states that MUN is a new and practicable method to be used to improve the four skills because all activities during MUN need the four skills. However, she also does not explain how MUN can improve students' skills in detail. Reading activity in MUN is just to read

articles as many as possible to enrich our knowledge to be used to speak up more actively in the conference. Writing activity in MUN is just actually to make a draft resolution and take a note of speakers' important points or other things which need to be noted. In short, students are not guided, taught, encouraged, or demanded to read and write well. It must drive all MUN enthusiasts to question how to improve students' reading and writing skills through MUN. Differently, speaking is obviously in concern. Activities in MUN are all about speaking. Therefore, scrutinizing the influence of MUN to teach speaking is more acceptable.

Firman (2012) scrutinized the influence of British Parliamentary Debate which is principally almost equal to MUN and students' critical thinking to improve students' speaking skill. He proves that using the method and the attributive variable show significant interaction to, hand in hand, improve students' speaking skill. However, choosing critical thinking as the attributive variable needs to be criticized because technically, critical thinking belongs to the indicators in debate technique. It means that, there is a treatment given to improve the students' critical thinking. Whereas, the idea of attributive variable is that it is supposed to give influence to the dependent variable but it is not treated. The other attributions which are out of the element of debate or MUN are motivation, self-esteem, creativity, and so on.

Otman, Mohamad, and Amiri's research (2013) entitled "*An English Debate League Competition among Lower Form Students: An Experiential Learning Activity*." The research found that implementing English debate league improves students' speaking skill well. However, the subjects were all the members of the university's English club who are used to conducting the debate. They have experiences in conducting the method so the problems while conducting the debate were alleviated. So, it cannot be said that the treatment influences the students' speaking skill.

It is realized that Model United Nations as a teaching method does not sound familiar to teachers as well as students. Accordingly,this article is aimed at exploring the students' enthusiasm as well as their readiness towards the implementation of Model United Nations and also Model United Nations' implementability for the senior high school students.For the researcher, this research benefits to enrich the knowledge about which teaching method the students are enthusiatic with. For other researchers, this study can be a source of information and parameter about the degree of the students' enthusiasm towards the implementation of Model United Nations so once they find it possible, they can also implement it to their students. While for further research, this research serves informative input so that other researchers can conduct further research related to the implementation of Model United Nations for senior high schoolstudents.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
### 2.1 At Glance about Model United Nations

Mehra (2010, p. 7) states that Model United Nations (MUN) is an extracurricular activity in many schools and universities where students assume the roles of countries and organizations represented in the United Nations in specific committees and debate about issues concerning the world.

The history of Model United Nations was commenced in the United States of America. As noticed, the born day of United Nations was declared at the end of World War II. During the 1920s at the University of Harvard, students and teachers of International Relations and Politics courses created a simulation known as Model League of Nations. After World War Two, once the United Nations was established, Harvard replaced the Model League of Nations with Model United Nations (MUN). Mehra also states

"The aims of an MUN conference are to encourage debate and sharing of views among students from different schools and of different ethnicities. The Ultimate goal of an MUN Conference is to promote awareness of international relations and issues in young people, and to inspire global mindedness and an understanding to the problems of the world and how to combat them, whilst providing an atmosphere where students

can progress in their communication skills and open mindedness".(2010, p. 7).

Further, Mehra explains that MUN can be done by any student in their respective High school; as it relies on an international understanding and debate skill, which is obtained at a later age. As the purpose of MUN is to emphasize global understanding and promote awareness of international relations, it can be done by anyone wishing to exercise these aims.

## 2.2 The Procedures in Conducting Model United Nations

As how it is in United Nations, MUN also is comprised of some committee focusing on specific and particular concern. They are The General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, Security Council, International Court of Justice, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Environment, Pro United Nations Development Program, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Human Rights Council, International Monetary Fund, Disarmament Committee, United Nations High Commission for Refugees, World Food Program, World Health Organization, and World Trade Organization.

Furthermore, procedure is a vital aspect of Model UN for its complicatedness yet challenging. In every committee, there are very specific guidelines that must be adhered to when one wants to make an action. While rules of procedure vary from conference to conference depending on each of committee's policy. Therefore, it is quite hard to generalize the procedures for all committee. However, Amron (2011, p. 6) describes the general procedures in conducting Model United Nations as follows.
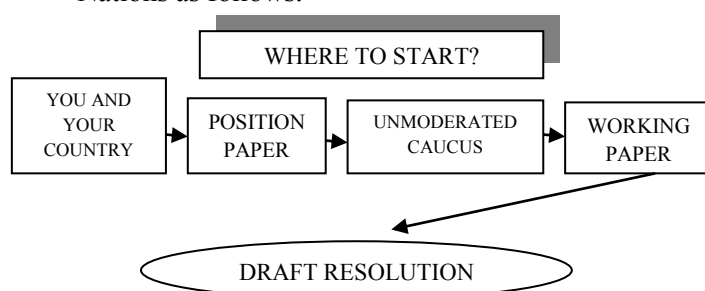


Figure 1. Procedure of Model United Nations (Amron, 2011, p.6)

First, every participant chooses what country he/she wants to represent by sending a proposal. If the committee agrees, so he/she becomes the delegate of that country. Then, in the venue, they are asked to make a position paper related to the chosen motion. Position paper is the delegates' written form made to explain their country's stance and proposal toward the issues at hand. It will help direct their research preparation as well as inform your fellow delegates of your country's position. Further, working paper is then made to communicate one's stance, interest, and proposal toward the problems at hand in written form. It serves as a point of reference for discussion in committee by putting abstract ideas into a concrete, written form. These two kinds of paper are discussed and debated in a row aiming to result a draft resolution, i.e.; a formal document in which a committee spells out the action to be taken in order to solve a particular problems posed by the topic area currently under discussion answering the QARMAs (Questions a Resolution Must Answer). This draft resolution is then revised in amendment step aiming at improving draft resolutions as the course of debate evolves to reflect concerns that may not have been addressed in the original document. To know more about the complete procedures of MUN, see Porter (2011, p. 1-17).

## 2.3 Students' Enthusiasm

Wood (2008, p. 21) states that enthusiasm is a degree of attention man gives to something they are attracted with. Enthusiasm has something to do with the level of attention someone expresses while he or she is facing something. In relation to this, students' enthusiasm is the degree of attention the students pay on something. In this research, the students' enthusiasm goes to Model United Nations on how enthusiastic they are in learning the theory of MUN, following all the training sessions, being active in raising questions, giving full attention on the process, following the practice, and so on.

## 3. METHOD

This study on the afore-mentioned spirit was conducted from January 2014 to February 2014 in Islamic Boarding School Darul Mursyid, South Tapauli, North Sumatera. The study was carried out speacially for the

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English club of the school that had 40 members. This study was conducted after all the members of the English club followed a two-day MUN seminar and conducted their own simulation of Model United Nations in the school. The organization that they chose together was United Nations Children and Fund,one of organizations which focuses on the development of children all over the world. Their major topic was whether or not the world should urge and compel youth to participate in millitary countries like North Korea, South Korea, and some other countries to be deployed as parts of national millitary instead of giving them full access to study in schools. After following the seminar, each of them was delegated to represent some countries like South Korea, Japan, North Korea, Myanmar, the United States of America, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and some other countries belonging to UNICEF member registry. The simulation was conducted for three days.

During conducting the simulation, the study was then conducted. The study was on exploring the students' enthusiasm toward Model United Nations. This study was wrapped in a qualitative research in the form of case study. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010:156) state that case study is intended to cover the contextual conditions which are highly relevant to the phenomenon undera a case, to discover meaning, to investigate processes, and to gain insight into and in-depth understanding of an individual, group, and situation.

In collecting the data, three instruments were employed; unstructured interview,observation,and documentation to fulfill the need of one of ways validating the data called triangulation data. The interview was conducted towards 10 among fourty members as the representatives to go on the point of their enthusiasm in conducting the simulation of Model United Nations in their school. The observation was conducted from the very beginning of the meeting until the last day of the event. The kind of the observation is participant observation in which an observer was employed to be one of the participants to observe and make notes all the activities and everything happening during the study. The last instrument was documentation. There were two documentations achieved. One documentation was from the extraculiculer's documentation given by the supervisor of the club called official documentation and the other one was from the portfoliounder the performance of all participants during the seminar and simulation.

The trustworthiness of the study was not only gained by relying on the triangulation data, the study also used rich, thick description in conveying the detailed fidings as well as bias clarification to obtain an open and honest narrative in analyzing the data. In analyzing the data, grounded theory was deployed. Glasser and Strauss cited in Vanderstoep & Johnston cited in Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009 : 192) stated that grounded theory approach is the process of discovering a theory through data exploration and analysis.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As this study was equipped by three instruments in collecting the data, the tree instruments'results is as follows:

### 4.1 Interview

As the interview was an unstructured interview, the order of the questions was not organized but all of the questions given was to explore their enthusiasm of Model United Nations. Based on all recored interview, no one of the students felt them selves unenthusiastic towards Model United Nations. They said that it is totally new for them and thanked the trainer so much for having introduced them such a systematical method of making meaning of speaking competence. They also said that Model United Nations encouraged them to speak up confidently because the scenario allowed them to feel really like a diplomat talking to thousand people and all the words they spitted out sound so important for the continuation of million people's life. One of the samples said that he was never as enthusiastic to speak up as this before because Model United Nations looked so elegant and prestigious. Some students loved the way they prepared all the things related to the given topic, discussed it altogether with many other delegates from other countries, debated, disseminated and came up with some resolutions to gain the betterment for many people. They said that

since they were totally involved and acted as the main actors, they caredso much and paid full attention towards every single process happening. At the end, since they knew what to say, the manipulated venue was given, the international atmospehere was designed, they felt very honored to speak up to propose many proposals for overcoming the problems.

## 4.2 Observation

The observation was intended to take notes everything important and supooting the study. The findings of the observation showed that all the things ran smoothly. The class did not go passive all along the activities. It was found that in the two-day seminar, many of the students got confused about the theory of Model United Nations. That was shown by so many questions raised even when the trainer was still in the process of explaining. It clearly showed their curiousity towards Model United Nations. Their activeness was quite significant. It was shown by their consistency in following every single agendum made by the trainer. The meeting was scheduled to be conducted from 8 a.m to 4 a.m. However, in the night, many of them came to the trainer's dormitory to discuss further about the topic given. They questioned many things about how to formulate a good resolution, how to speak up well in front of many people without feeling nervous, and so on. No one of the participants did not come in the two-week project although they could just do it. They came on time everyday and were already in the class before the trainer came.

The students' English capacity was good. As the members of the school's English club, it is a compulsary for them to communicate by English. So they basically get used to using English as a daily life communication. Ignoring some grammatical errors, their overall English was intelligible. Their teachers always controlled their consistency in using English and were also in the every agenda to accompanythem and assisted the trainer and the observer.

## 4.3 Documentation

The school's Eglish club is one of extraculiuler which was established ten years ago as the media of catering the students' needs of particpating in English development. As the official organization, it has a supervisor

who actively guided the members. The club's portfolio showed that they won many English competitions locally, regionally and nationally. Some of the members championed the year's regent cup in speech competition. They were the first winner of South Tapanuli English festival two years in a row. In regional category, they grabbed the third winner of debate competition for senior high school level in Medan. In national category, they ever participated in Association of Laws Students of Indonesia University (ALSA-UI). The club's annual report also showed that their activenees in conducting weekly meeting is consistent. The senior trains the junior and the teachers guide them.

While based on the observer's documentation, their achievement was very good. In conducting the simulation, all of the instructions and procedures were in order. By being guided by the trainer, the students were able to act like a future diplomat speaking as the agent of betterment in front of many audience confidently and enthusiastically. All the technical needs like conference room, lighting, scaffolding technology like projector, computer, and so on were completely fulfilled. It directly improved the students' enthusiasmnaturally.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Teaching method holds significant effect in succeeding the students' learning process. However, not all teaching method can be implemented. Sometimes, particular teaching method cannot evidently attract students' enthusiasm. Therefore, it is very important to find out the students' enthusiasm towards certain teaching method because by having high enthusiasm, commonly students pay more attention to the learning process triggering the better achievement.

As this study was aimed at finding out the students' enthusiasm towards a teaching method called model united nations, it comes up with satisfying result that the students being observed had high enthusiasm to follow every single process of MUN which is practically quite complicated. It is good to also know that not only did they have high enthusiasm. They also could follow all the implementations very well.

Therefore, it implies the bravery or confidence of the teachers to start implement this in teaching speaking in the class. Enthusiasm is definitely the fundamental and big capital for the students to start learning. It is a power which persistently recharges their energy to keep following the learning process. On the other hand, it should be a parameter to measure how acceptable MUN to be implemented in other schools.

Accordingly, MUN should be considered by the teachers as one of possibilities to be used in teaching speaking prominently in teaching discussion text. MUN also should be considered by other researchers to be further scrutinized and researched whether its implementation can be developed to other field of study.

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