

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY  
THROUGH DEBATE TECHNIQUE**

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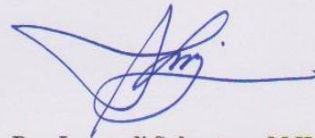
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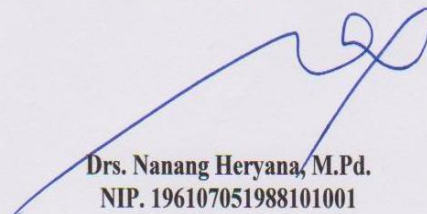
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# IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY THROUGH DEBATE TECHNIQUE

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**Abstract:** The purpose of conducting this research is to improve students' speaking ability in giving opinion and responding to another's opinion through debate. The methodology of this research is a classroom action research which consisted of 3 cycles. The subject of this research was the eighth grade students of SMPN 7 Sungai Raya, B class which consists of 26 students. To collect the data, the researcher used observation checklist and field notes. Through observation checklist the researcher observed students' activity in the classroom and by using field notes the researcher reflected the problem found. Based on the research findings, debate technique which was applied to the subjects of research showed the improvement of students' speaking ability. Based on the result of the researcher's observation using observation checklist and form of field notes, it can be seen that students' speaking ability in giving opinion and responding to another's opinion have been improved. The percentage of students' activity in the classroom when debate, in the first cycle was 57%, in the second cycle was 67% and the third cycle was 76%. It indicated that debate technique had improved students' speaking ability in giving opinion and responding to another's opinion.

***Key words: Speaking Ability, Debate Technique, Classroom Action Research***

**Abstrak:** Tujuan dari pelaksanaan penelitian ini adalah untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa dalam mengungkapkan pendapat dan menanggapi pendapat yang lainnya melalui debat. Metode yang digunakan di penelitian ini adalah Penelitian Tindakan Kelas (PTK). Subjek penelitian adalah murid kelas 8 dari SMPN 7 Sungai Raya, kelas B yang terdiri dari 26 murid. Peneliti menggunakan observasi ceklis dan field note. Melalui observasi ceklis peneliti mengamati kegiatan murid di dalam kelas dan peneliti merefleksikan masalah yang ditemukan menggunakan field note. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, teknik debat yang diterapkan kepada subjek penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan kemampuan bicara murid dalam memberikan pendapat dan menanggapi pendapat yang lain. Berdasarkan observasi peneliti dapat terlihat bahwa kemampuan murid dalam mengungkapkan pendapat dan menanggapi pendapat telah meningkat. Persentase dari kegiatan siswa di dalam kelas ketika debat, untuk cycle pertama adalah 57%, untuk cycle kedua adalah 67% dan cycle ketiga adalah 76%. Hasil tersebut membuktikan bahwa debat dapat meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara siswa dalam mengungkapkan pendapat dan menanggapi pendapat.

***Kata kunci: Kemampuan Berbicara, Teknik Debat, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas***

Speaking is a speech production that becomes a part of our daily activities (Thornburry, 2005:8). Speaking is used to express their ideas and to communicate to people in civilized world. Speaking ability serves students to be able to communicate their opinion, feeling and expression with no limitation of different native language, culture and country. Speaking is very important because by mastering speaking skill, people can carry out conversations with others, give the ideas and exchange the information with others. Speaking is one of the four skill that need to be mastered by everyone, because by speaking, someone is able to convey the meaning, express feeling, give opinion, etc.

Based on the writers' observation, students could not giving opinion and responding to another opinion into English. They were not able to give their opinion and respond another opinion whether they are agreeing or disagreeing with someone's opinion. They kept quiet when the teacher asked them. They were passive in speaking especially if the teacher asked them about their opinion. They were afraid to giving opinion and responding on another's opinion because they didn't know how to deliver their opinion or their arguments. The students afraid to make mistakes, they also did not know the expressions of giving opinion, and responding to another's opinion. Therefore, by applying debate as a technique in teaching speaking, it was proved that the students could give the opinion and respond to another's' opinion.

Through debate, students could improve their critical thinking and improving communication skills. Based on Allison (2002:13), debating is the ultimate multi-task activity since it involves research, writing, speaking, listening, and teamwork". Othman (2013:1507), stated debate encourages students to learn course content better, since they are engaged in the course content actively, broadly, deeply and personally. It also trains them to assess the data they get on a daily basis. In addition, debate provides a valuable opportunity to develop learners' speaking ability. Debating is an effective pedagogical technique because of the level of responsibility for learning and active involvement by all students. Through debate, students got enjoyable to speak and express their opinion or ideas. The more students express their opinion, the great possibility they could improve their speaking ability. In addition, by speaking through debate had allowed students easier to communicate and express their opinion or ideas.

## **TEACHING SPEAKING THROUGH DEBATE**

Debate is process of presenting idea or opinion which two opposing parties try to defend their idea or opinion. Debating can be used in EFL classes as a tool to make students practice skills of English language in real-life situations. Here, parts of debate as follows: (1) Motion; (2) Definition; (3) Theme line; (4) Argument; (5) Rebuttal; (6)Sum-up/closing.

Debating will help the students to overcome their fears to share ideas and develop students' oral English skill. Based on Rybold (2006:2) debating will help students to be a better speaker in any situation. Through debate, students will gain confidence and they will express their ideas more clearly when they speak. Based on Bellon, J (2000) as cited in Othman (2013:158) through debate students learn

how to use the library to reason, to analyze, to clarify ideas, and to present arguments.

Debate also develops several other skills that will help students to communicate effectively in English or in any language student use. In order to conduct debate in the classroom, the teacher should prepare as follows:

1. Prepare carefully
2. Set a goal or outcome
3. Brainstorm
4. Divided students into two groups (pro and cons)
5. Prepare the motion
6. Give the students short article (to help students got the information to support their opinion)
7. Give the students time to prepare
8. Allow students to work at their own levels
9. Observe the students while debate

In addition, debate can be practice in two groups (pro and cons) which consisted four students each group. By doing that students can deliver their opinion or ideas that they have in their mind. It could help students improve their speaking ability. The teacher also should keep motivating students to speak. 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. Krieger (2005) says that debate forces students to think about the multiple sides of an issue and it also forces them to interact not just with the details of a given topic, but also with one another.

## **METHOD**

The method of this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). According to Harmer (2003:344), action research is the name given to a series of procedures teachers can engage in, either because they wish to improve aspects of their teaching, or because they wish to evaluate the success and or appropriacy of certain activities and procedures. Dave Ebbut as cited in Rubiati (2010:23) stated that action research is about the systematic study of attempts to improve educational practice by group of participants by means of their own practical action and by means of their own reflection upon the effects of those actions.

Kemmis and Mc. Taggart (1993:18) add in Nunans' book explain that action research is a group of activity and a piece of descriptive research carried out by the teacher in his or her own classroom, without the involvement of others, which is aimed at interesting our understanding rather than changing the phenomenon under the investigation that would not be considered by these commentators to be 'action research', the essential impetus for carrying out action research is to change the system. There are four stages of Classroom Action Research: planning, observing, acting, and reflecting. In this study, the writer used several approaches to measurement and data collections; they are Observation, and Field notes.

This action research entitled "Improving Students' Speaking Ability through Debate Technique" was conducted at the eighth grade students "Class B"

of SMPN 7 Sungai Raya in the first semester of academic year 2016/ 2017 which is consisted of 26 students. The writer and the English teacher of SMPN 7 Sungai Raya had followed the procedures of action research as follows:

1. **Planning the Action:** the stage of identifying a problem and developing a plan of strategy to overcome the problem. The strategy will be prepared, implemented, revised, re- implemented, and revised again until it is effective to solve the problem.
2. **Implementing the Action:** the stage of implementing strategy that has been planned. The teacher will implement the strategy in line with the syllabus.
3. **Observing:** the stage of observing the effects of strategy and collecting data needed in solving the problem.
4. **Reflection of the Action:** the stage of analyzing, evaluating, and describing the effects of the strategy to find out how far the strategy has solved the problem.

Technique of data analysis comes from the interpretation of the data collection. In analysis the data, the researcher gets the data from observation checklist and field notes of students' activity in the classroom, observing the teaching learning process, and students' activity in debate. In processing the data, the researcher uses descriptive analysis. It is 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 ability.

In observation checklist there are six aspects that should be observed. These six aspects are the indicator whether or not the students do each step of the implementation of Debate. The field notes will be analyzed descriptively.

**Table 1**  
**Description of Students' Involvement from Observation Checklist**

No	Activities	Grade					Score
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Student pays attention to researcher's explanation						
2.	Student gives the opinion by using the expression						
3.	Student gives the opinion with clarity and appropriate volume						
4.	Student responds to another opinion						
5.	Student have minimal reliance on note						
6.	Students' activeness and enthusiast in debating.						

Total Score

*Adapted from Rubiati, R (2010)*

$$Score = \frac{\text{Total Score}}{\text{Maximum Score}} \times 100$$

**Table 2**  
**Description of Students Involvement from Checklist Observation of Students' Activity**

No	Categories	Decription
1	Very poor	Less than 20% of the students do the activity
2	Poor	20%- 40% of the students do the activity
3	Fair	41%- 60% of the students do the activity
4	Good	61%- 80% of the students do the activity
5	Very Good	81%- 100% of the students do the activity

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Findings

In this part, the researcher would like to describe and discuss the findings of the research. The research findings were discussed based on the result of observation checklist and field notes. In this part, the researcher elaborated the stages of implementation of classroom action research. This classroom action research was conducted in three cycles. The results descriptions of all cycles are as follows:

**Table 3**  
**Observation Checklist in the First Cycle**

No	Activities	Grade					Score
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Student pays attention to researcher's explanation				√		4
2.	Student gives the opinion by using the expression			√			3
3.	Student gives the opinion with clarity and appropriate volume		√				2
4.	Student responds to another opinion			√			3
5.	Students have minimal reliance on note		√				2
6.	Students' activeness and enthusiast in debating.			√			3
<b>Total Score</b>							<b>17</b>

The score of the observation as follows:

$$Score = \frac{Total\ Score}{Maximal\ Score} \times 100$$

$$Score = \frac{17}{30} \times 100$$

$$Score = 57\%$$

Based on the observation checklist above, it could be seen there was 57% students' activity in debate. In the first cycle, the researcher observed students' activity in the classroom while debating. Based on the observation, most of the students paid attention to the researcher's explanation. Some of students also joined the class enthusiastically.

**Table 4**  
**Observation Checklist in the Second Cycle**

No	Activities	Grade					Score
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Student pays attention to researcher's explanation				√		4
2.	Student gives the opinion by using the expression				√		4
3.	Student gives the opinion with clarity and appropriate volume		√				2
4.	Student responds to another opinion			√			3
5.	Students have minimal reliance on note			√			3
6.	Students' activeness and enthusiast in debating.				√		4
<b>Total Score</b>							<b>20</b>

The score of the observation as follows:

$$Score = \frac{Total\ Score}{Maximal\ Score} \times 100$$

$$Score = \frac{20}{30} \times 100$$

$$Score = 67\%$$

Based on the observation checklist table above, it could be seen that most of students paid attention and joined the class enthusiastically. Teaching learning process run well and the students' activity in debate was better than before in the first cycle. There were 6 students from pro group who could give the opinion well and have minimal reliance on note. There were 3 students from pro group could respond to the opinion from cons group. From cons group, there were 5 students who could give the opinion and 2 students could respond to the opinion from pro group. The rest members of pro group could not give and respond the opinion well but they tried. Besides most of students still could not give and respond to the opinion with clarity and appropriate volume.



**Table 5**  
**Observation Checklist in the Third Cycle**

No	Activities	Grade					Score
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	Student pays attention to researcher's explanation					√	5
2.	Student gives the opinion by using the expression				√		4
3.	Student gives the opinion with clarity and appropriate volume			√			3
4.	Student responds to another opinion				√		4
5.	Students have minimal reliance on note			√			3
6.	Students' activeness and enthusiast in debating.				√		4
<b>Total Score</b>							<b>23</b>

The score of the observation as follows:

$$Score = \frac{Total\ Score}{Maximal\ Score} \times 100$$

$$Score = \frac{23}{30} \times 100$$

$$Score = 76 \%$$

Based on the result observation in the third cycle above, it can be concluded that this cycle was better than the first and second cycles. The majority of the students paid attention to teacher's explanation. The majority of students also joined the class enthusiastically. All activities in the third cycle could run well. It can be seen from their responses. While the process of debate, majority of the students were taking good involvement. In the third cycle, the teaching learning process ran well and the students showed their improvement in speaking ability. Most of students could give the opinion with the expression well. They spontaneously raised their hand and gave their opinion. They were also could respond the other group opinion. They automatically gave their opinion when the debate was begun. Some of students had minimal reliance on note while give and respond to another's opinion. Some of students also could give and respond the opinion with clarity and appropriate volume. The students' activeness in debate was improved. The students were active in giving opinion and respond the other opinion.

## **Discussion**

From the research findings above, it could be seen that the students' speaking ability increased from cycle to cycle. The students improved their speaking ability after being taught through debate technique which was applied during three cycles. As the whole meetings were ran well. There was significant improvement from first cycle to third cycle.

In the first cycle, the percentage of students' activity in debate was 57%. The teacher used debate as technique in teaching speaking. In teaching learning process there were many students who joined the class enthusiastically but there were also some students who did not paid attention. There were many students who still confused about debate technique because they never practice debate before. The researcher found many students that were still confused to join debate. The researcher also found that many students who still could not give the opinion by using the expression well and they could not respond their friends' opinion well. There were many students who could not give and respond the opinion accurately and use appropriate volume. They were still shy and afraid to make mistakes. Then, there were many students who still looking at the note or handout.

In the second cycle, the percentage of student's activity was 67%. It can be seen that teaching learning process was better than the previous one. The students could give their opinion and respond to another opinion well while debating. They could use the expression well to give and respond the opinion. In this cycle, most of students were more confident than before. They did not seem as nervous or as shy as like in the first cycle but still could not use the appropriate volume to give and respond the opinion. But, there were students who could not respond the opinion well. So, the researcher continued the research into the third cycle because there were some students needed more practice.

In the third cycle, the percentage of students' activity was 73%. It can be seen that teaching learning process was better than in the first and second cycle. The students could give their opinion well in debating, they used the expression of giving opinion accurately and they could give respond to another opinion while debating. They did not see their handout to help them speaking.

Debate technique could not overcome the entire students' problem in speaking, but through debate the students were not afraid and more confident to deliver their opinion and in performing their speaking. By applying this technique in the classroom, the students who were passive during teaching learning process, being forced to be more active because they need to talk to complete their task. Through debate, the students were enthusiast to speak in the class. The students could deliver what opinion they have to respond to another opinion.

The above description showed that debate technique could improve students' speaking ability especially in accuracy of used the expression of giving opinion and fluency. In addition, this technique could help students to overcome their problem of being nervous and ashamed.

In conclusion, the research finding of classroom action research is satisfying but the researcher still expects that there were more research in this area.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

The research conclusion is presented according with the data which have been analyzed in the previous chapter. From all the data analysis about using debate technique to improve students' speaking ability (a classroom action research to eighth grade students of SMP 7 Sungai Raya in academic year 2016/2017, it can be concluded that:

1. Students' speaking ability at eighth students of SMP 7 Sungai Raya in academic year 2016/2017 has been improved through debate technique.
2. Students' speaking ability in term of giving opinion has been improved through debate technique.
3. Students' speaking ability in term of responding to another's opinion has been improved through debate technique.
4. Debate could positively involve all students to participate in the teaching learning process in the classroom.
5. The use of debate technique has been advocated in teaching speaking process. Typically, debate is very interested to be implemented to improve speaking ability. Students have a lot of opportunity to practice speaking and have active involvement in debate. However, they worked very cooperative and they were more active to speak in classroom.

### **Suggestion**

Research findings of this research may suggest something to improve the teaching learning activity especially in teaching speaking. The suggestion of this research is defined as follows:

1. Debate technique is good to be used in teaching English especially in teaching speaking. It is shown by the result of research that has been done by the researcher.
2. The students more active and participate to speak in speaking class. So, the researcher recommends that teacher can applies debate to guide students to speak in the class.
3. When choosing the topic, the researcher should give interesting topic for students to make students enthusiast to give their opinion.
4. The researcher can reduce students' nervousness by making them enjoy to speaking English and focus on their speaking performance.
5. The researcher also recommends for further research. It can be about the use of debate technique to improve students' other skill in English.

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