

## Debate as an Alternative Technique of Teaching Speaking for the Students

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### Abstract

Nowadays, a problem faced in teaching speaking at school is still about the lack of student's skill in conveying ideas. How teacher dominates the learning also takes part in aggravating the situation of the learning. The effect of that situation is that the students' speaking skill is undeveloped optimally. This study reveals the existence of an alternative technique that can be applied by Indonesian teacher, which is debate. The method used is a literature review by adopting many studies, then analyzing it based on the application in the learning. According to the analysis result, it can be seen as an alternative in improving students' speaking skill.

**Key words:** *debate, learning technique, speaking skill*

### INTRODUCTION

Language is one of important aspects that become a learning target, either in elementary school, junior high school, senior high school or university. In its function as a communication tool, language learning --- Indonesian Language--- aimed to improve students' skill in communicating by using Indonesian language both orally and in writing (Depdikbud 1995:3; Diknas 2002: 2). Accordingly, it is natural if the teacher teaches his/her students to be language-skilled both oral and written which hopefully the students can have a good

language competence (Tarigan 1990: 2). Language skills are divided into four aspects; those are listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Tarigan 1997: 35). Those four skills have a mutual relation (1988: 1; Burns 1996 in Samadhy 2000: 3) so that the learning is expected for having a stable portion.

Facts in the field show that students' speaking skill is still far from the expectation. Based on researcher's observation, the situation of learning speaking in class has not shown the satisfying result yet. In addition to the lack of teacher's creativity in determining

teaching technique, it is also the lack of media or learning material which being used. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the students are reluctant to speak, feeling shy, and lack of vocabularies. It causes the final value of the students' speaking ability is relatively low.

Moreover, according to Tampubolon (2001: 86), in fact, Indonesian learning still prioritises of rational aspects, especially grammar, although there has been a renewal of curriculum by adding communicative aspects. Thus, he reports that for teaching speaking is not done optimally at school.

Another datum has been reported by Samady (2000: 320-321), who explains there are many teachers --especially elementary school teachers-- still have a thought that speaking learning is not obligatory taught in school. It is because the students have gotten it in their family environment, which is communication with their parents and family members. This fact signifies that skill and comprehension of elementary school teachers about speaking learning is still low enough.

The result of Sutopo's research (2001: 64-65) by observing and interviewing some teachers is enough to describe the situation of teacher's

quality in teaching speaking which is low. In his report, Sutopo reveals the data that most of teachers have low comprehension in the learning. In addition, it is described an example of learning illustration as if these statements; the teacher asks the students to memorize the text and present it orally before the class. The assessment done from that speaking practice is the students' ability in memorizing the text. Based on that situation, it can be assured clearly that the learning result of speaking skill will not reach the suitable target because the students' potential is not developed maximally.

From those bad learning illustrations, it seems exactly right what has been stated by Tarigan (1987: 88) that the condition of speaking skill learning is still not satisfying yet. The students' skill in speaking is not adequate yet.

According to the facts in the field about the students' low-skill in speaking, it needs an alternative technique of the learning which allow the students to maximize their potential in speaking orderly, systematic, and logical in the formal situation so that the students can have the speaking skill intensively.

One of the techniques that can be used is debate technique.

Debate is a technique strongly assumed can improve students' speaking skill. It is because in debate, there are pros and cons groups. Each group try to keep their ideas, then they also try to persuade the participants/listeners to accept their motions or opinions. Moreover, in the end of the debate, the winner is determined through voting or the judges' decision (Wiyanto 2003: 4) that will stimulate the students to give more argumentation.

The study of using debate technique on teaching speaking skill hopefully can give two advantages. Those are theoretically and practically.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED THEORIES**

### **The Essence of Speaking**

Based on his study, Tarigan (1988: 15) informs that speaking is one of the tools to communicate the ideas constructed and developed that are suitable with the listeners' needs. The limitation implies a meaning that speaking activity must be adjusted with the listeners. In other words, before the speaker speaks, s/he should be able to understand his/her listeners, with whom s/he talks, and for what occasion

Both of the advantages are described as follows:

Theoretically, this study is useful to enrich the study about an alternative technique of teaching speaking at school and develop new knowledge for the teachers to teach their students speaking skill. For the Indonesian teacher, hopefully it can be used as an alternative technique which is appropriate and effective in teaching speaking for the students. Practically, this study can be applied by the teachers in teaching speaking skill. The other teachers who do not teach Indonesian language also can apply this technique (debate) in their teaching process.

s/he talks so that the ideas that are delivered can be accepted well by the listeners. It is because the real essence of speaking is to communicate (Krisdalaksana 2001: 30), which is communicating ideas to the listener.

On the other reference, Tarigan and friends (1997: 34) define speaking as a skill of delivering the messages orally. Those messages will be accepted by the listeners if conveyed with the

harmonious and clear intonation. Of course, the listeners will really understand and be glad if the messages delivered by using verbal words regularly and systematically, so it does not cause multi interpretation, even wrong interpretation.

The next theory is stated by Arsjad (1988: 23). According to Arsjad, speaking skill is an ability to pronounce sentences for expressing, stating, conveying thoughts, ideas, and feelings. It is clear that what communicated is an idean in the head, then being transferred to the listeners in form of verbal message that can be listened to and interpreted its meaning. When someone is too skilled in speaking, it will be more skilled and easy for him/her to give a speech and deliver his/her thoughts, ideas, and feelings to the others. Then, their train of thought becomes clearer because actually someone's language reflects someone's thought (Ramelan 1978: 22; Tarigan 1988: 1). If it is delivered regularly, clearly, and with the suitable tone, it sill be easier for the listeners to accept the messages.

Furthermore, Ahmadi (1990: 18) in his book entitled *Strategi Belajar Mengajar Keteramplan Berbicara dan Apresiasi Sastra*, expresses his ideas

about the essence of speaking skill. In his thought, speaking skill essentially is a skill of producing system of articulatory sound to convey the wishes, needs, feelings, and pretensions to the others. This definition implies the existence of important role of language as a communication tool. The language is pronounced by doing activity of producing sounds neatly and containing the meaning. It is done orally to communicate with other people. This systematical and organized oral communication is called as speaking skill.

Based on those statements given by experts above, it can be concluded that speaking skill essentially is a communication skill. This communication is a skill of communicating ideas, concepts, thoughts, and feelings coherently, systematically, and logically. It is done by the speaker to a person or group of people through oral media in form of articulatory sounds that contain the meaning.

### **Technique of Teaching Speaking Skill**

A learning, it must be success if being done by using the

appropriate approach, method, and technique. Method is a plan to serve the material completely with systematic order according to a certain approach. While technique is the efforts, exertions, and ways used by the teacher to reach a direct purpose in the learning process (Sabana and Sunarti TTh: 20). These technique and method synergize to create the right and effective learning.

In teaching qualified speaking skill, a teacher must be able to use an appropriate method and technique. These method and technique can be adjusted with speaking style and the purpose that will be achieved in the learning topic. Tarigan et al (1997: 152) says that the effective method of speaking skill has 10 (ten) criterias. Those ten criterias can be explained as follows: (1) being relevant with the learning purpose, (2) facilitating the students in understanding the learning material, (3) developing the items of process skill, (4) being able to create the learning experience that has been constructed, (5) stimulating the students to study, (6) developing the students' performance, (7) developing the students' creativities, (8) not defend complicated tools, (9) being easy to done, and (10) creating the

learning situation which is relaxing. In other words, if those ten criterias can be implemented well, it will make the speaking learning held in the class perfect.

To stabilize those ten criterias stated by Tarigan and friends above, (Subana and Sunarti Tth: 217) discover that there are three kinds of techniques that can be used in teaching speaking activity. Those three techniques are; (1) guided technique, (2) semi-guided technique, and (3) free technique. Guided technique is a technique of speaking learning done by asking the students to say the similar things just like the example. Then, semi-guided technique is a technique of speaking learning when the teacher gives one guidance topic, while the students are given the freedom to express their ideas in oral form. The last, free technique is a technique of speaking learning done by freeing the topic and style of speaking to the students. In other words, free technique gives a freedom to the students to share their ideas orally using the way they like. From those techniques above, free technique seems becoming a favourite

technique chosen by the students because this technique gives the freedom for the students to express their competences maximally.

### **The Essence of Debate**

Debate is one of the rhetoric forms in dialogue activity, in which there is a mutual conversation between two persons or more. Some experts have defined what the debate is. Commonly, the limitation given implies a demand of speaking ability from the participants.

Tarigan (1988:86) states that debate is an argumentation to determine whether or not a certain motion which is supported by a group called pros or affirmative, and refused or denied by another group called cons or negative.

Along with Tarigan, Hendrikus (1991: 120) explains that debate is an activity of competing argumentation between one and another or group of human, with the aim to become a winner. Accordingly, to be a champion, each side has to try to defeat their rival by giving strong logical argumentation.

With a simple language, Wiyanto (2000: 54) says that debat is an exchange of thoughts about something by giving each reason to

defend the opinions. In debate, there are affirmative and negative groups lead by a moderator and being limited by the time and the rules.

From that limitation, it can be understood that debate is competing argumentation between two persons or more about a certain topic consisted of pros side and cons side that each group tries to persuade the others in order to receive the motion conveyed by giving reasons and strong proofs, lead by a moderator, and at the end of activity, the winner will be decided.

### **The Aspects of Debate**

In order the students can do the debate well, they have to follow the rules in it. Then, it also needs to pay attention to the debate aspects maximally. There are many aspects that support debate activity. According to Wiyanto (2003: 16-25), the aspects in debate activity are: (1) theme, (2) moderator, (3) participants, (4) listeners, (5) judges, and (6) motion. Those explanations are as follows.

Theme is an important thing in debate. It is a problem that will be a point of the debate. The theme

which is going to be debated has been decided and announced before the debate being held. This theme becomes a main point of the debate. Then, moderator is the leader of the debate. As a leader, s/he does guide and organize debate traffic. There are some tasks that have to be done by a moderator. Those are: (1) opening the debate, (2) announcing the motion which will be debated, (3) announcing debate rules, (4) keeping the orderliness of the debate, (5) giving chance to all participants, (6) keeping the smoothness of the debate, (7) making a note while leading the debate, (8) announcing the debate result, and (9) closing the debate (Wiyanto 2003: 18-20).

Moreover, basically the debate participants are the actors of this activity. To be able to do this activity

well, the participants must have a good preparation both material and mental. Then, the judges have a duty to observe all process of the debate, give assessment, and decide the participant or group of debate who win or lose. However, in debate, it does not always need the judges because there is a debate that trusts the listeners as the judge.

The next aspect is time. Time in debate has been decided by the organizer, and being reported by a moderator. It is meant to limit the activities. The last aspect is motion. Motion in debate should be supported by three factors; those are core, argumentation, and verification (Wiyanto 2003: 26-27).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Debate as a Technique of Teaching Speaking Skill**

Many activities can be used as a technique of teaching speaking skill. Those activities are talk, speech, discussion, panel discussion, debate, seminar, and symposium (Subana in Sunarti Tth: 219). All this time, technique used by the teacher or

lecturer revolves around talk, speech, and discussion level, while the others ---debate, seminar, and symposium--- are rarely done in teaching speaking skill.

The superiorities of debate technique according to Roestiyah (2001: 148-149) are: (1) with the sharp debate will sharpen the

speaking, (2) both sides of the matter can be used for discovering more appropriate result about its problem, (3) the students can be stimulated to analyze the matter in the group, (4) in the debate the facts are delivered from both sides of the issue, then those facts being researched, which one is more true/valid and able to be accounted for, (5) debate can raise the interest to speak up, (6) if the issue that being debated is interesting, it is able to keep the students' interest in following the debate.

There are many studies become a proof that debate technique is effective in improving students' speaking skill. In 2004, Larasati have held a research in SMKN 8 Semarang by implementing debate technique to improve students' speaking skill. In her research, it is concluded that learning through debate technique, the students' speaking skill increases about 11,38% with the students' average value about 64,67 in the cycle I and 76,05% in the

cycle II. This improvement is followed with the change students' positive attitude in learning speaking, which are; the students study enthusiastically, being brave to convey their opinions, and more confident when speaking in formal forum.

The next research, has been held by Suyoto et al in 2010. In his research entitled *Peningkatan Keterampilan Berbicara dengan melalui Teknik Debat pada Siswa Kelas X SMA Ibu Kartini Semarang tahun Ajaran 2010/2011*, it produces a conclusion that the learning with debate technique improves students' speaking skill 7,12% with the average value about 68,20% in cycle I and 73,43 in cycle II. This study also followed by positive change of students' behavior in learning speaking. The students are more confident and enthusiastic in doing the learning.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the research that has been done, it can be concluded that debate is able to be an alternative technique in teaching speaking. By debate technique, the students will

stimulate to actively talk with the team and their rival. Also, the students are happy because the learning is not dominated by the teacher. Moreover, the suggestion



that can be given is Indonesian teacher should choose the debate technique in teaching speaking skill to the students.

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