

Using Debate to Enhance Students' Speaking Ability As Their Character Building

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Abstract. *The goal of language learning is to communicate. Therefore, it will be useless for a language learner who cannot use the language at the end of the study. As one of English skills to learn, speaking stands as an important aspect to be learned. It has been taught since the elementary schools, even now kindergarten and playgroup. Instead of getting more students who are able to speak fluently in English, the outcome seems not to be satisfied. For instance, it can be inferred that from a hundred of students, only one who is able to speak fluently in English. The methods and techniques conducted by the teachers in the learning and teaching process are considered as one of factors. In terms of conducting an alternative technique to enhance the speaking skills of the students, here is debate. In this cooperative learning method, as where this can be included, the students are encouraged to play their own roles in teaching and learning process. Through Debate as a technique, the students are expected to be more confident in delivering their own point of view in many issues in whatever circumstances. The character building can be considered as building confidence or mental aspects of the students. Whoever is it, they can freely show off in a more global situation, as example, which needs a skill of excellent public speaking. This article will describe the steps of debate in order to improve the student's speaking skill. Chronologically, the subtopics to discuss are: teaching speaking, which contains the principles of teaching speaking in English, debate in language teaching, contains the principles of debate used in language teaching-learning process, and the teaching procedures, which will discuss how it is conducted procedurally in the classroom.*

Key words: *speaking; debate; character building; confidence*

A. TEACHING SPEAKING

English is considered as a foreign language rather than a second language in Indonesia. The less use in daily conversation, as stated by Cahyono & Widiati (2011: 35), is the reason why it runs that way. Differently with its neighbor countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Philippines that English is used in almost every aspect of the people's life. However, at certain levels or circumstances, the language is commonly used. In an academic environment, as example, English is familiar to be used in communication between scholars. There so, the staffs of offices use English by code-mixing and code-switching in Indonesian and English. Based on this background, the field of teaching and learning English is still large to be done in Indonesia.

One can be recognized as an expert of English by the way he/she speaks. The teaching of English in this country is considered as failure to achieve the purpose (see Cahyono & Widiati, 2011: 36). While the present global era requires people from any other countries to have an ability to communicate as global as possible, which is considered to have a global language like English, the need to improve the human resources becomes increased. To prepare such a goal is the most complicated one. Here is the challenge of the educators around the country to face. The English teachers, especially, need to work more in improving their students' competence. The character building runs the same way in it: to be able to compete with people from other countries in the global stage.

The teaching of speaking in Indonesia is not as easy as to imagine. Problems always occur. Some of them are the errors made by the students in pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, and interactive communication (Cahyono & Widiati, 2011: 37). Furthermore, the characteristics of spoken language make it easy as well as difficult to be done. According to Brown (2001: 267), they are clustering (organize output both cognitively and physically), redundancy (make meaning clearer), reduced forms (contractions, elisions,

reduced vowels), performance variables (hesitation, pause, backtracking, correction), colloquial language (word, idiom, phrase), rate of delivery (fluency), stress, rhythm, intonation (pronunciation), and interaction (conversational negotiation).

To be successful in teaching speaking, according to Brown (2001: 271-274) several classroom activities could be conducted, such as imitation (drilling), intensive speaking, responsive speech, transactional dialogue (exchanging specific information), interpersonal dialogue (maintaining social relationships), and extensive monologue (oral reports, summaries, short speeches). In further, the principles of designing such speaking teaching techniques are as follows (see Brown, 2001: 275-276):

- The techniques could cover the student needs (language-based focus on accuracy and message-based focus on interaction, meaning, and fluency).
- The techniques are intrinsically motivating.
- It encourages the use of authentic language in meaningful contexts.
- It provides feedback and correction.
- It capitalizes on the natural link between speaking and listening.
- The students have opportunities to initiate oral communication
- It develops the speaking strategies.

Cahyono & Widiati (2011: 38) states that the focus of speaking teaching is on either training of speaking correctly (such as in pronunciation and grammatical structures) or encouraging students to speak fluently. The group activities are the most suggested concept to conduct in teaching speaking. Instead of increasing the teacher's role as facilitator, it also improves the students' motivation to participate in classroom's activities.

B. DEBATE IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Debate is one of strategies to improve speaking skills. It deals with a form of discussion, but in extent, it is a form of arguing ideas between pros and contras. Ewbank and Auer (1947: 394) defines debate as "a parliamentary procedure designed to give proponents and opponents of measures as nearly equal opportunities as possible to present their evidence and argue their conclusions before the voters make their decisions." According to Balcer and Seabury (1965: 190), debate is closely allied with discussion. Debate is "a discussion as a cooperative attempt by two or more individuals, with stimulation and guidance by a leader, to find the best solution to a problem" (Balcer: 310).

Fachrurrazy (2011: 59) classifies debate as a cooperative learning model. Meanwhile, Cahyono (2011: 39) classifies debate as interactional group activity. Debate is considered as another variation of speaking concept to enrich the students' experience. In the classroom, debate might be done in a form as follows:

- The students are divided into two groups.
- One group is pro, and another is contra to the topic (motion).
- Each group discusses their own part.
- Then, the teacher asks each group in turns to deliver their ideas.
- The teacher may write all the ideas on the board.
- When they have finished debating, the teacher and the students make a conclusion

Debate contributes several aspects of development. Balcer and Seabury (1965: 23) stated that the contribution of speech training is as follows:

1. To help students develop and maintain sound physical and mental health and fitness.
2. To improve the ability to think, express thoughts and listen.
3. To help students to deal with social life, especially in a global stage.
4. To build an ethical character.

Kruger (1960: 5) states the advantages of academic debate:

1. It trains how to think quickly as well as critically.
2. It trains how to express ideas clearly so that they may be understood and evaluated by others.
3. It develops tolerance for different points of view, and is thus a valuable means for seeking the truth.
4. It also trains how to speak effectively before a group.
5. It motivates the student to learn more about current social, political, and economic problems.
6. It provides healthy competition and helps cultivate a sense of fair play.

American/British-Style Debate

Balcer and Seabury (1965: 319) provide an American/British style of debate which consist of only two speakers a team. The first round is to construct case. The second is to rebut. It could be done in once or separated (see also Ewbank and Auer, 1947: 410). The roles of each speaker are as follows:

First speaker of affirmative

Introduce the motion by indicating the importance of debating it, by

- developing briefly the history of the motion
- defining the terms
- stating the main or major arguments in the affirmative case
- developing the first or second main argument with adequate supporting evidence
- summarize clearly and concisely the presentation

First speaker of negative

- Offer a counter plan (an alternative solution of the problem)
- Refute or show that the arguments of the first affirmative speaker are not inherent in the motion

- State clearly the point of to be refuted
- Make adequate refutation
- Show importance of the refutation of the point to the affirmative's case

Second speaker of affirmative

- To continue the affirmative case by presenting the plan, but not to rebuild the case as the first has done
- Respond to the first negative rebuttals and rebuild arguments

Second speaker of negative

- Continue to attack the affirmative case and rebuild arguments
- Advance new negative arguments

An effective rhetoric could support the way to deliver ideas in debate. The forms might be used as follows (Ewbank: 458):

1. Questions (to be answered by the opponent)
2. Illustrations (explains the ideas)
3. Examples (to make the ideas clear)
4. Figurative language (metaphors, comparisons)
5. Loaded words (linking case with ideas)
6. Humor (not distract attention from the central idea)

Australian/Asian-Style Debate

In this style of debate, the members of a debate team consist of three either affirmative or negative (Quinn: 3). The procedures are almost the same with the American/British style, except the number of members to speak. This style provides the third speakers the same way with the previous ones. In after, one of them will again rebuild their case. If in American/British style the way to construct cases are separated with the chance to rebut, Australian/Asian style provides construction and rebuttal at the same time. However, the first speaker of

affirmative is not in the place to rebut, but to define. It also means that the more members to speak, the more the team would have a good teamwork in constructing arguments.

C. TERMS IN DEBATE

In debate, there are two teams in a battle to argue with each other (Quinn, 2005: 3)

Affirmative : team who argue that the topic is true

Negative : team who argue that the topic is not true

Chairperson : person to control the debate

Adjudicator : person to adjust/judge the debate

The categories to consider are (Quinn: 5):

- Manner (the way speech is presented)
- Matter (the arguments presented)
- Method (the structure of speech)

Motion/Proposition : debatable topic to be debated

Examples:

- The house would recommend Bahasa as one of instructional languages of the UN
- The house should focus on decreasing poverty of the country
- Indonesia is the most democratic country around the world
- The most corrupt department is police department
- We should turn back into such a system in New Order era to fix recent crisis

Argument : a form of discourse having conclusion and a reason for believing it. (Kruger: 5)

Evidence : the basis of an argument, the substance from which the inference, or conclusion, is derived, the proof of the conclusion, or a reason for believing the conclusion. (Kruger: 132)

Case : a series of statements which, if supported to the satisfaction of the listeners, should logically lead them to the desired conclusion on the main proposition (motion) (Ewbank and Auer: 426)

Rules to build a case:

1. The statements of the case should be arranged as to indicate a sequence or progression of ideas
2. The main points or statements in a case should be few in numbers
3. The relations between statements should be clearly indicated
4. The phrasing of the statements should have headline value (short and familiar words)
5. The case should not attempt to prove too much

Refutation/Rebuttal : a denial of the material and reasoning of the opposition. (Crocker: 139)

D. ASSESSMENT

To assess a debate activity, teacher shouldn't focus on the content of debate, instead of the way the students deliver their ideas orally. In order to assess, various ways in speaking skills assessment is found in some references. Fachrurrazy (2011: 82) divides aspects of speaking to be assessed as ideas/comprehension, fluency, diction (choice of words), and accuracy (pronunciation, stress, intonation, and grammar). Then, by a scale of 4 (excellent), 3 (good), 2 (fair), 1 (poor) for each points, those scores are totaled as the final score.

Another form of assessment could be conducted. Yuliasri in Cahyono (2011: 45) states that speaking assessment is conducted based on either the criteria judge students' performance, such as students' speech comprehensibility, organization of the spoken materials, the way the messages are delivered, or the quality categories of the students' performance, like superior, advanced, intermediate, and

novice. These two forms could reduce subjectivity in assessing students' speaking proficiency.

E. TEACHING PROCEDURES

To conduct such a technique, it will need more than one meeting. A debating process will spend about 30 minutes or more. The process depends on the number of the students. Each debate needs approximately six persons: three for affirmative; three for the opponent. If the number is about 24 students, they can be divided into six teams with three times of battle.

Level	: University
Purpose	: Speaking skills
Activities	: Debate
Number of students	: 24
Activity type	: Group work
Material	: Video and news

Procedure:

Meeting 1

Pre-Debate Activities

1. Teacher explains about debate.
2. A video describing the process of debating is shown as sample.
3. A simulation of debating by the students who are expert in debating.
4. The students are divided into two big groups: affirmative and negative. Each should choose three keynote speakers.
5. A motion is decided by the teacher to be debated:
"The house would recommend Bahasa as one of instructional languages of the UN"
6. The teacher gives a general explanation about the motion supported by a copy of news about the motion.

7. Either affirmative or negative team is decided by lucky draw

Whilst-Debate Activities

8. The students are given several times to discuss about the motion and to build a case.
9. The time is given to the affirmative group to define the motion and build their case theme.
10. Next is negative team to rebut and build their arguments.
11. Three times, it runs the same way until the third speaker of negative group is finished to deliver his/her speech. Finally, each group chooses one speaker to conclude each team's point of view.

Post-Debate Activities

12. For the next meeting, they are divided into six groups consist of three.
13. There will be a session of debate a meeting with a battle between two teams. Approximately, the activities will run until three meetings.
14. Each battle will debate one motion. Each group is expected to prepare for the debate session with exploring the motion from references.

Meeting 2 – 4

Pre-Debate Activities

1. The teacher gives a general information about the motion
2. First debate battle is done by the first two groups in front of the class.
3. The procedure will run the same way as before.
4. Both groups sit face-to-face in front of the class.
5. The teacher roles as an adjudicator and chairperson.
6. A volunteer will be a time keeper.

Whilst-Debate Activities

7. The first speaker of affirmative team speaks for about 5 minutes.
8. The first speaker of negative team speaks for 5 minutes.
9. The second speaker of affirmative speaks for 5 minutes.
10. The second speaker of negative speaks for 5 minutes.

11. The third speaker of affirmative speaks for 5 minutes.
12. The third speaker of negative speaks for 5 minutes.
13. The first or the second speaker of affirmative concludes his/her team's case for 3 min.
14. The first of the second speaker of negative concludes his/her team's case for 3 min.

Post-Debate Activities

15. The teacher and the entire students, but those who have been performed, give comments on the groups' performance.
16. The teacher and the other students choose the best speaker.

F. REFLECTION

Through debate, the students are expected to be fluent in speaking English. A debatable topic could be a factor to motivate them to speak. Everyone would have their own point of view about a topic. Once, they would be difficult to say something, because of lack of vocabulary or pronunciation. However, the more they practice, in a desire to show their disagreement on their friends' point of view, the more they are able to deliver ideas in English.

Based on the writer's experience, teaching speaking through debate is interesting and challenging. Implemented in a class of first semester students of university level, debate seemed to be something new for them, maybe just few who know. The interesting topic to be debated, such as the controversy of polygamy regulation in Indonesia – since they were from an Islamic-background university, and that is why it was so interesting for them- made them encouraged to speak up; to deliver their points of view on the topic. Although errors in pronunciation and lack of vocabularies that made their speech so long and many pauses occurred, they were regularly delivering their ideas in English! That is the point of these activities: to speak. The way to pick interesting and familiar topics is considered important, for teachers, in implementing such activities in an ELT class.

In further, the classroom debate activities could be the basic training for the students in order to follow a debate competition. There are several competitions regularly held by university members. It has also covered by the Ministry of National Education as a prestigious event among scholars. From local, region, national level, even more until international level of competition, the basic training given in the classroom will give a great contribution for them who will advance their skills in debate or public speaking.

G. CONCLUSION

The writer extremely recommends such a technique to enhance any other English learners speaking skills. The aspects to motivate the students speaking automatically could be particularly considered as a reason why it is appropriate to be conducted in an L2 classroom, especially for intermediate and advanced level. The form of debate could be varied depending on the situation of the classroom. The number of the students and the level of understanding are aspects to be considered. It could be conducted in form of two large groups by pro and contra. If the time could be extent, they are separated into small groups consist of three to be battled each other group by group (two groups) in one occasion.

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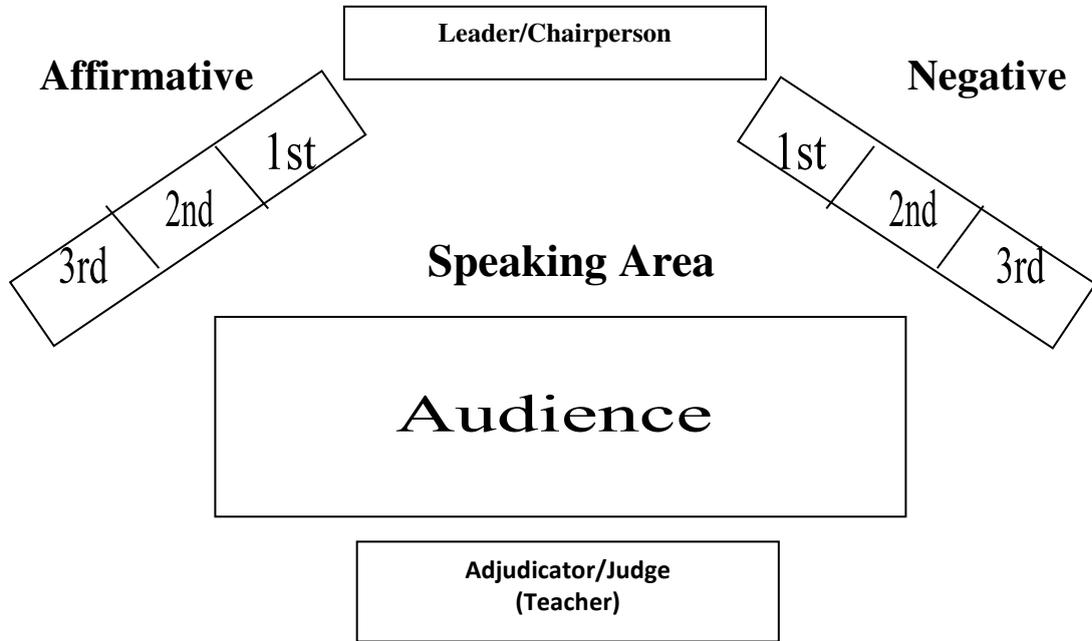
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APPENDICES

List of Popular and Recent Motions

1. Bahasa Indonesia is to be an instructional language rather than French in the United Nations.
2. The corruptors are to be punished by death penalty.
3. Freeport is to be kicked out of Indonesia.
4. The government should concern on the Papuans' welfare.
5. Bahasa Indonesia is to be the second language to be used and learned among ASEAN countries.
6. Bali is not only the trademark of Indonesia.
7. In the past, Islam has the most important part in getting the freedom of Indonesia.
8. Social network sites in the internet are bad for our children.
9. Corruption can't be solved.
10. President Abdurrahman Wahid should be legalized as a national hero.
11. The domestic products will be in threatened if the ASEAN free-trade regulation finally will occur.
12. Teaching English should be more practical, not theoretical.
13. Watching celebrity gossiping program is bad.
14. New leadership in Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) will really eradicate corruption in the country.
15. The members of parliament should not show off their wealth.
16. Smile and laughs can keep body healthy.
17. The capital of the country should be moved.
18. The national education system is broken.
19. The teacher certification program can not improve the educational system of the country.
20. The most corrupt department is police department.
21. Indonesia will not be able to be a developed country.
22. China and India will be the next superpower countries.
23. To solve the nuclear weapon issue in Iran is to close all nuclear program in all nuclear countries.
24. Nuclear is bad for mankind and environment.

The Map of Debating



Debating Process

