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## **Enhancing Speaking Skills of EFL Students Through Debate**

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### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui penggunaan dari metode debat meningkatkan prestasi keterampilan berbicara siswa dalam bahasa Inggris dan seberapa banyak debat berkontribusi pada setiap aspek keterampilan berbicara. Desain dari penelitian ini adalah kualitatif sebagai studi tindakan. Sebelas siswa Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pengetahuan jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris semester 5 menyelesaikan survei. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner survei sebagai teknik pengumpulan data, termasuk pertanyaan Ya atau Tidak dan satu pertanyaan pernyataan. Secara keseluruhan, para mahasiswa percaya bahwa debat adalah kegiatan belajar yang baik. Data penelitian ini adalah semua kegiatan dalam proses belajar mengajar terkait dengan fokus studi di bidang keterampilan berbicara yang berkaitan dengan siswa EFL, sedangkan proses belajar mengajar sebagai implementasi penulisan terintegrasi sebagai sumber data. Para responden percaya bahwa debat membantu meningkatkan dan membangun keberanian untuk keterampilan berbicara mereka. Selain itu, seperti klaim mahasiswa, manfaat lain dari debat termasuk membangun keberanian dengan argumen spontan, meningkatkan kepercayaan diri, memiliki kosakata baru, dan belajar bagaimana berpikir dengan cara yang kritis.

Kata Kunci: *Keterampilan berbicara, siswa EFL, debat*

## Abstract

*This study aims to determine the use of the debate method to improve the achievement of students' speaking skills in English and how much debate contributes to every aspect of speaking skills. This was a qualitative research design as an action study. Eleven students Faculty of English Teaching semester 5 completed the survey. Data collected through a survey questionnaire as a data collection technique, containing Yes or No questions and one question need statement. Overall, students believe that debates are good learning practices. Participants confirmed that the debates helped to improve and develop confidence in their speaking skills. This research data is all activities in the teaching and learning process related to the focus of study in the field of speaking skills related to EFL students, while the teaching and learning process as an integrated writing implementation as a data source. Respondents believe that debates help increase and build courage for their speaking skills. Besides, as students claim, other benefits of debate include building courage with spontaneous arguments, increasing self-confidence, having the new vocabulary, and learning how to think in critical ways.*

*Keywords: Speaking skills, EFL students, debate*

## ملخص البحث

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو معرفة استخدام المناقشة لأداء تحسين إنجازات الطلاب في مهارة التحدث ومقدار مساهمة النقاش من جوانب مهارات التحدث. وهذا تصميم بحث نوعي لدراسة عملية. قام أحد عشر طالبا في الفصل الخامس بكلية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية بإكمال المسح. وتم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان مسح بها هناك أسئلة بأجوبة (نعم أو لا) وهناك سؤال يحتاج إلى بيان. بشكل عام ، يعتقد الطلاب أن النقاش نشاطٌ تعليميٌ جيدٌ. ويعتقد المشاركون أن المناقشات ساعدنَ على تحسين وبناء مهاراتهم الشجاعة. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، كما يدعي الطلاب ، تضمنت المنافع الأخرى للمناقشات بناء الشجاعة بحجة عفوية ، وتعزيز الثقة ، والحصول على كلمة جديدة ، وتعلم كيفية التفكير بطريقة نقدية الكلمة الأساسية؛ مهارة التحدث ، مناقشة، الطلاب EFL.

## A. Introduction

Language is an aspect of human intercultural communication through knowledge, belief, and behavior which could be explained and shared. This sharing is based on systematic, conventionally used signs, gestures, sounds, or marks that communicate understood meanings within a group or society. Nowadays, in the globalization era, English as an international language plays a key role in every field of economics, politics, social, and education, requiring strong command of English as a means of communication. English is one of the most important languages to learn and master. English is quite popular in Indonesia and its taught as a foreign language from low to higher education.

English has become the primary lingua franca of an increasingly interconnected globalized world in intercultural communication. An important foreign language in Indonesia is English. It can be seen that English is the first foreign language in Indonesia as one of the important subjects in the Indonesian education curriculum which is taught from elementary to university level and also the involvement of English as one of the important subjects in the Indonesian education curriculum. Indonesia people's awareness of the importance of English is greatly increased, it is based on the desire to continue their studies abroad, get a job, and travel. Therefore, there are so many English courses in Indonesia that offer to learn English quickly. Four skills in learning English which is, listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the context of the English language, speaking skills are very important. That's because through verbal language, speaking can express one's ideas and thoughts, and being able to have speaking skills is one of the important to language learning (Fauzan, 2014). Self-speaking skills are productive skills in oral mode. This is more difficult than any other skill. In this skill, students not only say the words but also to interact well with others in order conversation to occur. Communication through speaking is generally done in face-to-face interactions.

Nowadays, the EFL learning process requires a great emphasis on teaching speaking skills because English is considered the international language and used for interpersonal communication. In this context, a lot of EFL students want to become fluent and develop their speaking skills despite difficulties and fears that hinder free communication.

The main activities which may reinforce the EFL learners' speaking skills are of great importance. If the EFL teachers were aware of the appropriate material and activities which would enhance the EFL learners' speaking performance, so they would certainly decrease most of the problems that learners face in speaking and starting a better teaching method for EFL students.

### **Speaking Skills**

Speaking is a speech production that becomes a part of our daily activities (Thornbury, 2005:8). To express the ideas and to communicate with people in a civilized world, speaking is used. The ability to speak serves students to be able to communicate their opinions, arguments, feelings, and expressions without the restrictions of different languages, cultures, and countries. The learning and teaching process in speaking skills should be in a language class because this can enable students to communicate in English, so speaking skills require special treatment in the learning process. So, as English teachers, we have to get used to providing material in English. Speaking skills also have a significant role to play in language learners who need them for instruction, discussion, and argument (Iman, 2007).

Speaking not only knows the linguistic features of messages that expand oral communication, it requires not only memorized vocabulary and grammar but understanding. One of the many obstacles in learning to speak is the method between the material at school and the course so, that most teachers at school do not facilitate the situation for real practice in

speaking. Besides, teachers should be considered the interests and needs of students and effective ways so that the needs of students are met.

Speaking is also a part of human daily life and cannot be separated, which should be developed by everyone in a detailed and subtle language. In language, one of the keys factors is language related to social and cultural contexts (Schmitt, 2012). The culture in question is very large, which includes all institutions, attitudes, and man-made features of a large group of people who are not homogeneous. Everything about culture itself, the teacher cannot teach it, but through parameters: sources of information, and types of activities, they can improve intercultural awareness (Cullen & Sato, 2000). Speaking is a form of conveying information through words or sentences through spoken language. Speaking is used to express their ideas and opinions and to communicate with people in the world.

There are two main categories in the production of speaking skills, namely: accuracy and fluency. Five main components in speaking skill:

1. Pronunciation
  - a. Segmental features-vowels
  - b. Consonants
  - c. Stress
  - d. Intonation patterns
2. Grammar
3. Vocabulary
4. Fluency: ease and speed of speech flow
5. Comprehension

Five factors for speaking skills have an important role to play in speaking. By mastering all factors, people would produce good and true speech. “the ability to keep going when speaking spontaneously” (Gower, Philips, & Walter, 1995). Bygate (1987) states that there are two elements in language ability, namely production and interaction skills.

1. In production skills, speaking ability occurs without a time-bound environment.
2. In interaction skills, there are negotiations between students.

Both of these skills allow students to develop their speaking skills more easily. Stuart (1989) says that by practicing requires students to plan and adjust their conversation, and be proficient as an effective speaker. This shows that high-risk activities if students do not practice first in these activities. this will also create anxiety and cause students to worry about embarrassment if they are wrong.

Students should master the elements in speaking, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency. Indonesian as a foreign learner, Most students have a lot of vocabulary and grammatical structure, but they also have trouble and less confidence in speaking. This problem also exists in students of English Department Universitas Ibn khaldun 5th semester. The mastery of English speaking skills is the most important for foreign language learners who in that country do not use English at all. Therefore, students often evaluate their own success in language learning and the effectiveness of their English courses based on how well they feel and improve in their spoken language skills and how words are spoken. One of the basic language skills that must be mastered by foreign learners because of its significance and its use for intercultural communication is speaking. Not only to improve knowledge and skills and it will be easier for them to get a job, get friends, and travel all over the world. Therefore, it will be very useful for those who understand and can speak English because it is the most commonly accepted language in the world.

Student problems exist when they speak English. This is due to the limitations of students' ability to master the speaking aspect and component. Besides, students rarely practice speaking English inside or outside the classroom. Problems in speaking students can be solved by giving students

plenty of opportunities to practice English both in the classroom and outside the classroom. Practicing speaking English in the classroom should be with interest with appropriate techniques to make students speaking skills can be improved and the process of learning can be enjoyable.

As Rivers (1981) argues, speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing in our communication. Many experts define speaking in different ways. Brown and Yule (1983) stated that "speaking is to express the needs-request, information, service, etc." "Another definition of speaking skill " the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non – verbal symbols into a variety of context." (Chaney, 1998: 13). Therefore, speaking is not an easy task, its mastery claims a lot of experience and practice. Luoma (2004: 1) argues that "speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence in speaking takes a long time to develop."

## **Debate**

Learning about speaking English, many various ways have been used as the method of teaching and learning English process to make the students understand easily the English subject starting using traditional tools such as book, chalks, blackboard or whiteboard into the newer and modern method by using a real object, pictures, music, video, etc. One of the modern methods that can be used to learn speaking skills is the form of debate. It is seen as an active learning process, and students can learn more through the process of building and developing, collaborating in a group, and also sharing knowledge. Researchers think that there should be a way to solve the problems faced by students.

The debate is one of the most exciting and valuable experiences for college students. Those who learn to debate well learn how to research and gather a significant question in-depth and learn how to organize research or arguments into a meaningful and persuasive presentation. The debate also

builds critical thinking of student. The debate is definitely one of the most exciting and valuable experiences for college students. Those who learn to debate well learn how to research and gather a significant question in-depth and learn how to organize research or arguments into a meaningful and persuasive presentation. The debate 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.

To make students practice and learn English language skills in real-life situations, the Debate method can be used in EFL classrooms as a tool. Zare and Othman (2013:1506) state: The debate has the potential to improve speaking 10 abilities since the activity requires a lot of speaking practices and verbal discussions among debaters. Krieger (2005) states that their skills to express and defend ideas through practice in debates, many students have clear progress.

Debates are interactive and representational of formal methods of argument aimed at convincing hearings about our opinions. To be able to teach speaking in EFL classes, debate is suggested. (Krieger, 2005: 1) said, in language learning, debate is a very good activity, it's involves students in various linguistic and cognitive ways and is active in the classroom. Not just speaking, Debates also provides meaningful listening and writing exercises, they can also be amazingly effective in developing argumentative skills for speech, persuasive writing, and for issuing opinions on an issue.

According to Alastair & Ahmed (2013: 148), debates can be used very well to improve students' speaking skills. Using debates in EFL classes, learners will first dispel students' fears about English and foster a sense of courage in speaking English that has been held back. Besides,



the debate will improve pronunciation, increase vocabulary, and fluency. Students will be familiar with Jargon and technical terms because debates cover a variety of fields and issues.

Various types of debate are shown at the high school and college levels, as well as in the political arena. There are two sides to each type of debate, but there are two general types of debate; Issue debate, which focuses on philosophic questions, such as whether something is correct or wrong, and debate structures that deal with practical issues, such as how something should be done.

### 1. British Parliamentary Style Debate

The British parliamentary-style debate is one of the most popular forms reported on the British parliamentary debate. Initially adopted by British universities, it is now popular in competitions around the world.

The discussion is divided into two opposite parts: the opposition and the proposition. Each part is included divided into an "opening" team and a "closing" team, with four speakers each with two speakers. They have been nominated for their equivalent position in the British Parliament.

### 2. Australia-Asia Debating

The Australia-Asia Debate sometimes referred to as the "Australian controversy" or "southern style", is a form of academic controversy. The style of this controversy has grown considerably in Australia and Asia in recent years, but in Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines, it has been used in conjunction with the British parliamentary format. Australian -Asian debate styles are used in different contexts but are commonly used in Australia at the primary and secondary school level. And a series of finals have been going on for over a year. It is also commonly used on a university level.

The Australia-Asia Debate divides two teams the first is a positive team or government and the second is a negative team or position. Positive teams agree on the subject and provide a discussion to show the truth of the subject. Negative teams disagree with the subject and present arguments that deny the truth of the subject. Each team must convince the judges (judges) that the arguments on their side are correct and that the opponents are incorrect. Depending on the context of the debate, it may be appropriate for the audience to determine the winner of the debate. However, in a formal debate, the referee is responsible for determining the winner of the debate.

The most common kind of debate is in a class when there is the option for two trainees or two groups to develop opposite opinions for a certain issue (Tumposky, 2004). The process of the debates starting with the choice of the topic or issue, which leads the two groups either to defend it or to oppose it; in other words, the one group supports the one aspect and the other group is opposed to it and how they hold their opinions consistently in theory and practice. However, in the debate, success does not mean victory, but the interest and motivation achieved by each group.

In EFL, where students have inadequate opportunities to learn and practice in English in everyday life, using language to express opinions and increase courage with logic and critical thinking, debate opens the opportunity. This is a single practice that requires students to use English skills simultaneously in vocabulary development and delivery. Makiko Ebata (2009) states:

“When learning a new language for global communication, students are required to confidently express their thoughts. In order for students to be vocal, critical thinking skills are essential. The use of debate has been an effective technique for strengthening my students’ speaking and critical thinking abilities.”

English teachers and users have proven that debate is an effective tool in teaching English and a source to teach for EFL teachers who have not used debate in their classrooms before.

The debate needs detailed and accurate information about the latest problems and ideas in various areas. Besides, they must carry out research on various problems that are happening. Debate requires basic presentation skills when explaining their reasoning and arguments to persuade judges and hearings that the points they put forth are valid and can not be changed. When practiced in EFL classes, debates make students use language and presentation skills.

In the debate technical system, we will have a variety of things related to the debate process. The following are some things related to the debate:

1. Motion

Motion is topic debated. Usually, motion participants with a word like “this house” (TH) or “this house believes that (TH) or “this house believes (THBT)”. For example, this house believes that (THBT) e-book contributes to developmental education. So, both teams need to prove or justify whether e-book really can contribute to developmental education.

2. Definition

Debaters should “down to earth” or see the current issue that happened in society and explain it with clarity. The definition can be done in two ways; word by word definition or the global definition.

3. Theme line

To agree or disagree with a motion, the reason must lie in a strong reason that can cover the entire argument. The theme line is what a team needs to prove, it is also the main reason why a team attacks an opponent's case and can break their argument.

#### 4. Argument

Debates are like a battle of arguments, where each team stands in their position, attacking opponents and defending their arguments. Praiseworthy work can be done well by using critical and logical thinking. The argument is a fragment of thought to support the theme line

#### 5. Rebuttal

To win debates, debates not only need to build strong arguments but they must also attack opponents' arguments and provide strong defense from any attack. That is why rebuttal is one of the keys to victory. Basically, there are two types of objections, namely:

- (a) Global Disclaimer: This is an attack on the main core of the opponent's case, the theme line. As a result, their argument collapses.
- (b) Detailed rebuttal: this is an attack on every argument or example the opponent presents.

#### 6. Sum-up/closing

Closing only concludes the results of the debate that had already taken place. A good summary is preferred.

Debates are used in various ways to improve students' English language skills. Some of them have been discussed in this paper. The teacher will work as a moderator and will facilitate student learning and the issues to be discussed. Feedback on speech will be given based on transmitting gestures more directly, loud pronunciation, accent, intonation, intonation, stress, vocabulary, choice of words; data, and details that should be relevant.

Debate allows students the opportunity not only to identify that there is a problem to be solved, but also to show a deeper analysis of the problem, including assessment, criticism, and the reason for the problem for a solution. Roy and Macchiette (2005) state Assessment and feedback

processes are important for the successful execution and application of debate techniques. So, as a teacher, should have and learn in advance how the debate technique so that students can understand very well about the debate

Overall, the findings of this study clearly show that debate in the classroom can help students improve their speaking skills among many other skills. Students learn the debate to courage in speaking about their thinking, analyze, and evaluate statements and arguments. The debate also shows active learning which allows students to participate in the learning process actively. Last but not least, the findings confirm that students reportedly liked the experience of debating and identified it as an interesting new approach, also build the characters of students to think much and speaking English in spontaneously way.

## **B. Method**

This study is aimed at implementing the Debate to solve the classroom problem in the teaching speaking. A survey questionnaire developed by researchers was given to explore student feedback about what experiences they had from attending debates in class. The survey was filled by 11 semester 5S and 5K students. The instrument consisted of four items with Yes or No questions and one question need the students' statement, the questionnaire items were developed following the research objectives of the researcher. This article focuses on debating experience in speaking skills; Do they like it? Does the debate method make your speaking skills increase? What makes you like learning speaking through debate? The types of questions to be asked are very general. One of the items states that 'Because I don't only add my new vocabulary in speaking, but also get and share something new from my debate partner.'. The complete questionnaire will be presented in the Results section.

## C. Result and Discussion

### Quantitative Results

Researchers provide several questions to find out student responses in learning to use the debate method. As mentioned earlier, the survey questionnaire consisted of three questions using Yes or No and one question need the students' statement. Table 1 below provides the answer.

1. Have you ever learned English through debate?
2. Do you like learning English through debate?
3. Does the debate method make your speaking skills increase?
4. What makes you like learning speaking through debate?

Note : Q = Question

No.	Class	Q 1	Q2	Q 3	Q4
1.	5S	Yes	Yes	Yes	Because in debate we learn how to think in critical way
2.	5S	Yes	Yes	Maybe I would	Because I don't only add my new vocabulary in speaking, but also get and share something new from my debate partner
3.	5K	No	Yes	Yes	Dengan debat bisa membuat kita improve bahasa
4.	5S	Yes	Yes	Yes	improve speaking skills, make me talked much
5.	5K	Yes	Yes	Yes	I can tell everything in my head
6.	5K	I Would	Yes	Maybe I would	Dapat membantu menambah kosakata and meningkatkan kepercayaan diri.
7.	5K	Yes	No	Yes	Meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara di depan umum
8.	5K	Yes	Yes	Yes	Just interesting

9.	5K	Yes	No	Maybe I would	Saat debat siswa biasanya lebih semangat untuk menyusun dan mencari kata2 baru untuk mempertahankan argumennya
10.	5S	Yes	No	Maybe I would	Apa ya mungkin karena di paksa ngomong jadi ngomong
11.	5S	Yes	Yes	Maybe I would	Seru

Table 1 Questionnaire Result

### Explanation

*“Dengan debat bisa membuat kita improve bahasa“*

*“improve speaking skills, make me talked much“*

*“I can tell everything in my head“*

*“Meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara di depan umum“*

The response said that the debate can increase the meaning of their speaking skills and make them confident in public speaking. Comments and statements show that using debate in learning speaking can improve speaking skills. Their opinion, debate helps issuing words in English more easily and spontaneously. From these statements, researchers assume that students' speaking skills can be improved through debate.

*“Because in debate we are learn how to thinking in critical way”*

Other students assume that debates can make critical thinking by issuing thoughts and opinions on an issue. Critical thinking itself is a skill to think rationally and logically about what to do or what to believe. Critical thinking also identifies, construct and evaluate arguments then solve problems systematically Conclusion

*“Because I don’t only add my new vocabulary in speaking but also get and share something new from my debate partner.”*

The debate is also able to help students find new vocabulary and facilitate speaking their English. As we know, vocabulary is very important in learning speaking, to facilitate interaction.

*“apa ya mungkin dipaksa ngomong jadi ngomong.”*

In the debate there is also a spontaneous element, for example, this student's statement assumes that there is an element of compulsion in speaking in the debate, so those who previously felt not confident in speaking English appear a sense of courage to express their opinions using English.

*“Seru.”*

*“just interesting.”*

These students said that the debate was very interesting to be an active learning method to improve speaking skills. The debate is said to be very interesting because students can speak and defend their arguments and there is disagreement with these arguments and students should be able to break other arguments clearly

*“I can tell everything in my head.”*

As has been said, the argument helps students who were previously not confident with the ability to speak English, will be able to spend at least the courage to defend his argument.

#### **D. Conclusion**

The results of this study show that learning speaking using the debate method is interesting, exciting, courageous and it can develop vocabulary. The respondents said that learning speaking through debate could help them be able to speak in public and enhancing their speaking skills. Zare and Othman (2013:1506) state: *“Debate has the potential to improve speaking*



10 ability since the activity requires a lot of speaking practices and verbal discussions among debaters.” Participants also said that the debate method can help them think critically and quickly Krieger (2005) says that many students have a clear improvement in their skills to communicate and defend ideas in a debate through learning and practice.

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