ENHANCING STUDENTS’ SPEAKING SKILL THROUGH DEBATE COMPETITION TECHNIQUE

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This article focuses on describing the use of debate technique to increase students’ speaking skill. The objectives of this study are to describe the implementation of debate technique in teaching speaking and to identify how much students’ speaking skill improvement after being taught by using debate technique, the problem faced by the students and the advantage of using debate technique in speaking class. This study is Classroom Action Research (CAR) which consists of Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting. This research was managed in two cycles. The participants of this research were the seventh grade students in MTs Darul Falah Ternate, North Maluku. The instruments used in this research were observation and test. The result of this study showed that using debate technique can improve students’ speaking skill. This is proven by students’ test score that improved in every cycle. In the first cycle, the students’ mean score was 64.20 and in the second cycle was 80.33. Thus can be concluded that debate is an appropriate technique used to improve students’ speaking skill. The result of this study is beneficial for the teacher who teaches at this class and for all teachers in general to have more appropriate technique in teaching speaking for EFL students. The teachers should implement the innovative teaching techniques like debate technique in order can challenge students to be more active, think critically, foster higher student interest in learning, and motivate students to work, in accordance with the demands of learning in the era of disruption 4.0.

Keywords: debate technique, Classroom Action Research, Speaking skill, EFL Students.

1. Introduction

Language is the most effective communication tool to convey ideas, thoughts, intentions, and goals to others. The current era of globalization requires us to master English, which we know that English is an international language. The globalization era makes the people from other countries can easily enter Indonesia. On the other hand, we also have the same opportunity as the world community to compete in any fields; education, economics, health and so on. If we can take the advantage of this opportunity, of course it will be very profitable for us. To be able to compete, of course, one of the efforts is by mastering English. In learning English, there are four skills that must be mastered, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is one of the skills that must be mastered well by students[1].

The ability to speak English requires elements that must be mastered to produce sentences orally, including: a) Connected Speech, b) Lexis and Grammar, c) Negotiation Language, and d) Expressive Devices (Harmer, 2002)[2]. Those four elements must be mastered well by students in speaking English so that can be understood properly by the people they talk to. In addition, according to Harris (1969) students must also master the 5 components to analyze the speech process. They are: 1) Vocabulary, 2) Pronunciation including segmental features of vowels and consonants, stress and intonation, 3) Fluency: ease and speed in producing speech, 4) Comprehension: For oral communication, of course, requires someone to respond to speech, as well as to initiate it, and 5) Grammar. Those five components also play an important role in
mastering speaking skills so that they must be mastered well by students in order to speak English well and fluently[3].

In fact, students still have anxiety in mastering speaking skills. Speaking is one of the difficult skills to master for students because when students want to speak in English they have to translate their ideas into speech. That is why speaking in a foreign language is not an easy task for language learners (Lazaraton, 2002 in Fauziati, 2010)[4]. In addition, English is a foreign language for Indonesian students, which they do not use it in daily life. They only use it in class, so they don't practice speaking English in their daily conversation. While the time allocation for practicing speaking in speaking classes is also very limited because there are many other language skills and knowledge that must be learned. The limited opportunities to practice can be the reason of lack of confidence, shyness and silence that inhibits natural communication (Juhana, 2012)[5]. In addition, speaking in class or in front of other students may cause more anxiety because the students are afraid of making mistakes or being laughed at by others (Price, 1991). Those things make it difficult for them to convey what they want to tell in English meanwhile they have to use their English speaking skill well so that it can be understood by their teacher and friends[6].

The teacher has important role in speaking skills class[7]. According to Harmer (2002)[2], there are 3 roles of teachers in speaking skills class so that students can speak fluently; 1) Feedback Provider, 2) Prompter, and 3) Participants. The teachers must pay attention to their roles in teaching speaking skills as stated above so that the teaching and learning process of speaking skill can run well. The use of teaching techniques in the learning process is very important.[8] Teaching techniques emphasize the way teachers to deliver lessons to students. Teaching technique is the method adopted by the teacher to direct student activities to achieve learning objectives which means that the technique is a tool of the teacher to achieve those goals (Gerlach, 2006)[9]. On the other hand, Brown (2001) defines a teaching technique as a variety of exercises, activities, or tasks which is used in language classes that is consistent with the method and therefore aligned with an approach as well. The use of teaching technique can facilitate the teaching and learning process. For the teacher it can make easier in handling the teaching and learning process to get the best result. For the students it can motivate them in learning, eliminate the boredom during the teaching learning process, and learn many things[10][11].

In relation to the speaking skill, Arung (2016)[8][12][1][13][14] investigated the model of teaching to applied the debate technique to improve the student’s speaking ability. The result found that the students' anxiety in mastering speaking skills can be solved by using debate techniques. Debate is an interesting activity where students have many opportunities to practice speaking in the Speaking class. According to him, students are also actively involved during the debate process to defend their opinions. Debate is speaking in which points from opposing points of view are presented (Dale & Wolf, 2000)[15][14][16]. Debates can be in the form of real issues or simulations. The students’ role ensure that they share sufficient knowledge about the issue and differing opinions or interests to persist. At the end of the activity they may have to reach a concrete decision or put the issue to a vote (Littlewood, 1981)[17][18]. Moreover, their fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary will improve using debate. They will also be familiar with statement and technical terms as debating covers a variety of areas and issues.[1]

Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that debate is an activity where a problem is presented to be given a response in the form of an opposing opinion from the student's point of view. Students can defend their opinion by providing strong arguments to support their point of view. And this activity is effective to be carried out in the classroom because it can improve their communication skills. In (Mellshaliha : 2008), there are some items related to debate: 1) Motion (The topic debated is called a motion), 2) Definition, 3) Theme line (Theme line is the underlying reason which answers the big question “why” one side of the group supports or opposes a motion, 4) Argument (Argument is the fragment of thought to support the theme line), 5) Rebuttal (it is an attack towards each argument or example), 6) Sum-up/closing (Closing is simply concluding what has been through).[19]
Debate is very interesting to carry out in improving speaking skill (Rubiati, 2010)[20][7]. She added that students have many opportunities to practice speaking and are actively involved in the debate competition. They cooperate very well and try to maintain their team and try to be active in speaking in class. Teaching and learning process using this technique can be an enjoyable experience for both teachers and students. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research on the impact of using debate techniques in teaching English speaking skills.

2. Method of Research

This research used Classroom Action Research (CAR) with the aim of making a better teaching learning process and more effective. Action research is the systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change (Bodgan & Biklen, 1992)[21]. According to Allwright and Bailey (1991), classroom action research is a research which centers on the classroom, and tries to investigate what actually happens inside the classroom. It treats classroom interaction as virtually the only object worthy of investigation. In addition, Richards & Lockhart (2007) also added that action research involves small scale investigation projects in the teacher’s own classroom consists of a number of phases which often recur in cycles: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting[22].

The research brought into two cycles which each cycle contained pre-test and post-test. The subject study was seventh grade students which consisted of 39 students. There were seven meetings to do this research covered on those two cycles; three meetings were for tests, and the other four meeting were doing treatment. The treatment was teaching speaking skill using debate technique. The instruments used in this research were documentation, observation, and test. Documentation technique was used to record the teaching and learning process based on observation instruments. The tests were used to test the students on pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2. The results of the test are used to know the improvement of the students’ English speaking skill.

2.1 Finding and Discussion

The research was done at MTs Darul Falah Ternate, North Maluku on seventh grade in odd semester 2020/2021 academic year. The meetings were conducted in seven times. The use of debate technique was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle was done in four steps including (1) planning, (2) acting, (3) observing, and (4) reflecting.

1) Cycle 1

The first cycle covers four steps, namely: a) Planning. The researchers prepared lesson plan to be implemented on the treatment contained some procedures of debate technique for teaching and learning speaking skill; b) Acting. The researchers conducted the meetings four times. In first meeting, pre-test was given to the students. The test consisted of speaking test which was about self-introduction. On the second meeting, the researchers explained about the concept of debate technique, and then they applied debate technique in teaching and learning speaking skill. The researchers gave a motion to be discussed. The first motion/topic was about “sport”. The researchers gave a motion “Football is the most popular sport in the world”. The two groups gave their opinion whether they agree or disagree with that statement and gave their arguments and did rebuttal to defend their arguments. And the last, they gave the conclusion of the discussion; c) Observing. During the treatment, the researchers monitored students’ development and evaluated their progress; d) Reflecting. The researchers made some notes to evaluate the result of the debate technique implementation in teaching learning speaking skill.

Table 1. Meetings in cycle 1

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<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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The researchers gave a speaking test for the pre-test. The researcher gave a topic about self-introduction and asked the students to introduce themselves in 5 minutes.

The researchers explained about the concept of debate technique. The researcher gave example of the procedures that should be done in practicing debate technique. The researchers monitored the students' activities during the lesson whether they got difficulties or not in comprehending the discussion.

The researchers gave some topics/motions related to sport. Then, she asked four students to practice the debate in front of the class. The four students were divided into two groups. The two groups were given a motion “Football is the most popular sport in the world”. The first group agreed with the motion and gave their arguments. Otherwise, the second group did not agree with the motion and gave their arguments. Each group gave their rebuttal to defend their arguments. And the last they gave their conclusion. After the two groups finished their debate, the researchers asked the other students to do the same thing like the first session with different motion/topic.

The researchers gave the first post-test.

The results of teaching and learning English speaking skill in cycle one are: a). There are 21 students who were not able to do the test optimally at the first post-test, so they got under 70. The mean score of the first post-test is 64.20. The minimum score is 50.00; b). Most of the students were participated actively in the teaching learning process, but some of the students still go difficulties in sharing their idea fluently because of lack of vocabularies; c). The students enjoyed the teaching learning process by using debate technique because they could develop their critical thinking by using this technique.

2) Cycle 2
In the second cycles, the activities were the same with the first cycle, the aim was to improve the mean score so can reach the minimum criteria score. This cycle covered four steps as follows:

The second cycle covers four steps, as follows: a) Planning. The researchers made some revisions on the lesson plan. On previous treatment, some of students still confused about the steps to do in the debate technique, in the revision, the researchers added guideline of debate technique; b). Acting. The researchers conducted 3 meetings for the action and the post test. The researchers gave a speaking test to review the students speaking skill. The researchers gave the different topic from the previous meeting. It was about hobby; c). Observing. The researchers found that there were improvements in every treatment. Based on the data, there is an improvement from pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test (2);
and d). Reflecting. Based on the data shown, the improvement of the score has met the researchers’ expectation.

Table 2. Meetings in cycle 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Treatment 3</td>
<td>The first cycle did not fulfill the researchers’ expectation, so the researchers continued the research on the cycle 2. On this treatment, students still did the same treatment but they prepared with the guideline to practice debate technique in developing their speaking skill based on certain topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Treatment 4</td>
<td>The researchers assessed and evaluated the students’ project. Each group practiced their speaking skill through the debate in front of the class. The researcher made the reflection about debate technique in learning speaking skill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Post Test</td>
<td>The researcher gave the second post-test.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Improvement on Students’ Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre Test 1</th>
<th>Post Test 1</th>
<th>Post Test 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Score</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Score</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>51,54</td>
<td>64,20</td>
<td>80,33</td>
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</table>

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that there were some improvements in Cycle two as follows: a). The increasing of the students’ score, the students’ mean score of the post-test 2 increased, from 64,20 in the post test one into 80,33 in the post test two. These scores showed that the students get better understanding after getting treatments by using debate technique in the teaching learning process; b). In the teaching learning process, the use of debate technique in developing the students’ speaking skill made the students attracted to practice speaking; c). The students could improve their critical thinking by using the debate technique; and d). The students became more confident to express and deliver their ideas to their friends and teacher since they were given a freedom to share their ideas.

Based on the researchers’ observation, it was found that there are some problems faced by the students during practicing the debate technique as follows:
1. The students had lack of vocabulary mastery in order they got difficulties in sharing their arguments.
2. The students were fear of making mistake and being laughed at so they seemed like to be so careful in producing speech.
The researchers also find the advantages of using debate technique for improving speaking skills as follows:

1. The students were attracted to practice speaking English during the teaching and learning process.
2. The students could improve their critical thinking because they could criticize their friends’ opinion by giving their arguments.
   The students became more confident to express and deliver their opinion and ideas to their friends and teacher since they were given a freedom to share their ideas.

3. Conclusion

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that the use of debate technique improved students’ speaking skill. The students became more confident, active, and critical using this technique in speaking class. By using debate technique, the teaching and learning process became a student-centered which the focus of the teaching and learning process was not the teacher anymore, but the students. There were interactions among the students as the debaters during practicing debate technique. They were free to give and share their opinions and arguments during the debate session, in order they could be more active in speaking. They could also criticize their friends’ opinion by doing rebuttal to defend their arguments.

From the data collected by the researchers, it can be concluded that the use of debate technique could improve students’ score. This indicates that debate technique is one of good techniques to be implemented in teaching and learning process, especially in teaching English speaking skill. We can see students’ score improvement on pre-test was 51, 54 became 64, 20 on post-test one, and became 80, 33 on post-test two. So, this technique is strongly recommended to teach English speaking skill.

Referencee


