
VIRTUAL DEBATE IN EFL CLASSROOM: IMPACTS ON THE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to describe the implementation of virtual debate in teaching speaking and to identify students' speaking skill improvement after being taught by using virtual debate. To achieve the objective of the study, a qualitative descriptive method was used. The data was gathered through debate speeches given by eight debaters from SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Kualuh Hulu. It includes the Opening Government team (Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister), the Opening Opposition team (Leader of the Opposition and Deputy Leader of the Opposition), Closing Government (Government Member and Government Whip), and Closing Opposition (Closing Government and Closing Whip) taken from the practicing debate for 4 meetings. The data in this study were the transcription of debate activities. The steps taken in this analysis were collecting data by transcribing debate speeches into text, identifying improvisation and fluency, and concluding the analysis. The results showed that the improvisation and fluency of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Government Member, Government Whip, Closing Government, and Closing Whip were in medium levels from the beginner level. In both improvisation and fluency levels, debate speeches showed considerable improvisation and fluency.

Keywords: Virtual debate, EFL classroom, Speaking skill

INTRODUCTION

In language education and language teaching, speaking skills are viewed as incredibly important. Speaking is an active and dynamic skill in which language students require interactive instruction and need more educated, organized, and targeted support (Dehham, 2021). Generally, Speaking is the process of expressing thoughts and feelings via spoken words (Jordan, 2009). Similarly, Šolcová (2011: 17) adds that Speaking is an instinctively prepared activity in which participants replace their roles as speakers and audience members and use both verbal and nonverbal means to achieve their communication goals. In short,

speaking is an interaction between a speaker and a listener in which they communicate and receive information with paralinguistic characteristics (Iman, 2017).

For the EFL context in Indonesia, speaking is not an easy skill to be achieved. Many students experience difficulties and are dissatisfied with their performance in speaking. Numerous studies had reported that Indonesian students still got obstacles in mastering speaking skills. Arung & Jumardin (2016) in their research found that the students were unable to communicate their ideas because they were frightened of making mistakes and lacked sufficient language. Similarly, Laia (2019) reported that students are unable to be dynamic and innovative in their speaking abilities. In the process of teaching speech, students just listen and remain silent. They are unable to demonstrate and communicate their opinion and argument. It shows that mastering the speaking skill is challenging since it takes a significant amount of tremendous effort.

In addition, there were some factors influences the students' difficulties in mastering speaking skill. According to Fauzan (2014), students do not want to speak In English because they are too shy to do so, they seem to be afraid to make mistakes or having their friends laugh at them, and they are also nervous because they have not had many opportunities to speak or because the teacher always criticizes and corrects their mistakes right away besides that, Most students fail to speak English because they are unmotivated Marcellino, M. (2005). Finally, The majority of them do not practice English in real-life communication and circumstances (Iman, 2017).

Considering the conditions stated above, it is necessary to implement innovative techniques to foster the improvement of speaking ability. One of the techniques that can be used by the teacher is using virtual debate. Debate is a formal technique of interactive and representational argument to convince an audience (Fauzan, 2014). A debate in the foreign language can be utilized as a reflection of a communicative approach to develop a wide variety of communication functions to achieve a team agreement between sentences and sentences through logical connectors, to support a view with evidence, to express agreement or disagreement or to show appreciation for speech (Alasmari & Ahmed, 2013; Dalton-puffer, 2013). Therefore, The use of debate in EFL classrooms will help students overcome their fear of the English language. Furthermore, the debate will help them enhance their fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Some researchers had examined the impact of utilizing debate as a way to improve speaking skills (Arung & Jumardin, 2016; Scot, 2008). However, few studies concentrate primarily on speaking fluency and do not investigate the use of virtual debate in the Speaking

classroom. Thus, this study focused on analyzing students' speaking ability through virtual debate and fluency level found in debater's speeches. the implementation of the virtual debate was supported by zoom meeting which facilitates the video section to do debate practice and chatting column section to keep if any comments during the debating session happening. Finally, this study also attempts to investigate the characteristics of debater's speeches in terms of language skill to characterize if those debate speeches can be categorized into written or spoken language.

METHOD

This study was a descriptive qualitative research with the instrument analysis was debate observation through virtual zoom meeting. The debate ran during four meetings with eight debaters based on the British Parliamentary formula. According to Nassaji (2015), the goal of descriptive research is drawing and classifying the phenomenon. In addition, Walliman (2011) defines that descriptive research relates to an observation in collecting the data. Regarding the explanation above, the researcher aims to improve students' speaking ability by comparing the debate results from the first meeting and the last meeting.

The data of this study were the transcriptions of debate activity from the source of data. The transcription of debate activities was used for the analysis of improving debate ability and the speeches are used for the analysis of fluency level. The source of data was debaters' speeches from the two teams at second grade of SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Kualuh Hulu. The debaters' speeches were eight debaters as English beginners that have selected by the researcher and one English teacher at SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Kualuh Hulu.

The data analysis used the theory of Miles, Huberman & Saldana (2014) concept. First, data collection activities data are not usually immediately accessible for analysis but require some type of processing: audio recordings need to be transcribed and analyzed. In this research, the technique of collecting data that the writer used was document type as the observation type. The observation type was the process of learning from what was written and seen from the document. The document in this research was spoken texts which are the debaters' speeches from students at SMA Muhammadiyah 9 Kualuh Hulu. Second, data condensation was elaborating starting from selecting and how the researcher transform all the data condensation to data explanation. Third, data display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing in action.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research describes the improvement of students' speaking ability before and after debate speeches. In this research, the researcher tried to compare at the very first debate and at the very end debate to know before and after version. The first meeting, the researcher explained in 30 minutes the introduction of debate as to the definition of debate in the introduction and provided a simple mechanism for debate according to the AREL flow (Assertion: Statement of agreeing or disagreeing about a motion, Reason: Red line why we agree or disagree regarding a motion, Evidence: Facts and data for example what we support is real and reasonable and Link Back: Closing the debate by providing the ultimate goal to achieve and win the debate).

This study provided a debate simulation with the motion "This House Forbids Student's Dating", then conducted a sharing session as a brainstorming. The researcher explained the good and bad effects of dating students and students discussed and shared their ideas with other perspectives in English and Bahasa Indonesia to make each other feel more like nature. After the introduction was done, the debate continued into the second until the fourth meeting with one motion to get focus and deep discussion.

The results of the debate simulation were very unique because that is the first time the students have debated in an open-minded session with mixed languages. They looked very nervous, unconfident, much error in choosing English words, and clumsy. The description of students' debate can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Debate Flow

Debate Flow	
First Debate	Last Debate
<p>Assalammu'alaikum wr.wb Good evening all. First, honorable our judges miss Asriani Zuriah Harahap and honorable all the members in this zoom meeting. First of all, we give thanks to Allah SWT with has given us the opportunity to come and get this debate. So, <i>aaa</i> let me tell you. Introduce to my opinion about this house will permanently inaugurate online school.</p> <p>So, I think this method is quite effective in reduces the spread of the COVID-19 transition. Besides that, this matter can also improve the students to be able to make the technology where now is the era of technology of 4.0 and online learning... and online learning method is the way for students to</p>	<p>Assalammu'alaikum wr. Wb thank you for judges to giving me opportunity to speak today, I really agree about this motion because I think the online school is more efficient and flexible. When online school we don't need go to school <i>aaaa</i> that have to achieve extra journey to go to school. we all not need it. And the online school just like <i>emmm</i>. Harus dandan rapi, harus terlihat formal, kita ga perlu kaya gitu.</p> <p>We can <i>eee</i> learn <i>ee</i> without creating priority about our outfit and too formal with the unicorn, tie and shoes. So, <i>emmm</i> online school is very flexible because we can learn at anywhere <i>emmm</i>. Get learning at bathroom, living room <i>aa</i> maybe at cafe</p>

<p>continue checking lesson without having meet directly with the teacher. Especially, for bad who lived far from school and hard to meet. Okay, enough miss.</p>	<p><i>emm</i> because we only need to study, kita ga not the school actually. Because in fact that we can study anywhere by online school. So, when we are outside such as example, we also can study there. We can study precisely when we have a journey anywhere. And then, by permanently this online school we also have a freedom to explore. For example... <i>eee</i> when we study <i>eee</i> the color of sky is blue and cloud is white. Then, we are curious to search immediately from our gadget when we are in the online school conditions.</p> <p>In the another side that the offline school, actually we can't bring our gadget in school timing. That's the big differences. So, precisely we also can explore, then as the bonus we will get the digital literacy understanding. <i>Eee</i> we don't know <i>aa</i> we all know that the students are so lazy to open their book than gadget. Students are addicted using gadget than anything.</p> <p>Like whatever the story, it's came up from gadget. So, <i>aaa</i> I think with online school can increased our digital literacy with our gadget through googling by the google machine. Searching a lot of information with a very easy ways without open a real book. So, at this point I think that the online school is to be okay to do permanent and it is also great. Okay, I think enough. Thank you and sorry for my English language mistake.</p>
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Table 2. The Differences Word Description From The Debate Result

The Differences Word Description From The Debate Result	
First Debate	Last Debate
Total Words : 140	Total Words : 359
Total English Words : 139	Total English Words : 335
Total Indonesian Words : 0	Total Indonesian Words : 11
Total Repetition Words : 0	Total Repetition Words : 0
Total Hesitation ' <i>aaa</i> ' : 1	Total Hesitation ' <i>aaa</i> ' : 13
Total Silent Time ' <i>...</i> ' : 5 seconds	Total Silent Time ' <i>...</i> ' : 3

Based on the table above, it shows that there was some improvement from the students' debate from the first until the fourth meeting. The proceed is the key answer to repair the problems. With just one motion and four meetings proceed, the improvement was much different when compared to the first and last debates.

Table 1 described an overview of individual improvement as the representative. The extra improvement was evident in how the debater shares their arguments. Most debaters used the Indonesian language, then mix the Indonesian language and English at the beginning of the debate. However, at the end of the debate, the debaters were in English almost fully and longer than before.

From table 2, the debater wasted a total number of words at the first debate was 140 words and the last debate was 359 words. The English words also improved as well as 139 words became 335 words. But, Indonesia's language words did not increase significantly from 0 words became 11 words because of nervous to forced herself used full English. Total repetition was the same from 0 words become 0 words. Again, total hesitation did not increase significantly from 1 word become 13 words. Finally, the total silent time from 5 seconds became 3 seconds.

The findings indicate that the debate method is able to improve student's speaking ability quite better. It is in line with the study conducted by Fauzan (2016), Arung (2016), and Scoot (2008) which reported the students' ability in speaking skills increased from poor become strong by using debate. Furthermore, the researcher found that using AREL flow helped the debaters to understand the debate flow and the debate runs very well. Moreover, wasted four meetings to do debate practice need to focus on one motion only. Ensure the motion under the status quo currently happening is crucial to build fire emotional in debate. By using these ways created the exclusive result for debaters who can not fluent in speaking English at the beginner becoming speak fluently at the end of the meeting.

At the end, the theory of Byrn (1991) is accepted that practicing speaking ability through debate can help students to develop effective speaking skills because debate includes critical thinking and negotiating that offering. Debaters not only need to speak in front of different audiences and judges, but also apply the best principles of public speaking to select, arrange, and present their materials. That's why they can become a flexible speaker that will be more confident to share ideas before to speaking in the public areas.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the findings, it can be concluded that debate is an appropriate medium for practicing students' speaking abilities. Debate is the correct option to have a better speaking activity in a short time, easier and more fun. The students with beginner-level also will relax and confident sharing their thoughts about a motion related to the status quo currently

happens. It will make beginners as new debaters will excited feel the emotions to speak in the debating chamber.

In addition, the researcher faced some matters that interrupted the process of completing this study. The researcher feels quite difficult and time-wasted to manually transcribe the debater speech recording for the researcher needs to listen to the recording more and more to make sure that the analysis is well-organized. The researcher suggests to the people who are interested in debate, it has many things to be discussed. From the debaters' speech speed rates, debaters' skills acquisition in listening, speaking, writing, and reading, as well as fluency made by debaters.

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