

IMPROVING SPEAKING SKILL BY DEBATE METHOD AT GRADE 8 SMP SWASTA MUHAMMADIYAH 21 SERBELAWAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to find out the application of Debate method for improving the students' achievement in speaking skill at the eighth grade of SMP Swasta Muhammadiyah 21 Serbelawan. This research used a quantitative approach with a true experimental method design. The population of this research was eighth grade students consisting of 64 students from 2 classes, and all were used as the sample through saturated sampling technique. The data collection technique was pre-test and post-test. The result of the research showed that the hypothesis testing of post-test control class and post-test experimental class shows that $t_{count} = 5,409 > t_{table} = 1,695$. So, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. It means that the application of debate method to improve students' achievement in speaking skill was significant. The treatment involved explaining what a debate is, types of debates, and how to express a good opinion. After giving examples on topics like the internet, full-day school, and government, students were asked to express their opinions about TikTok's influence. After students were able to express their opinions confidently, they debated on topics such as social media and online games, arguing for or against their effects. Based on the analysis, there was improvement in fluency, confidence, and critical thinking. Students were able to express their arguments more clearly and organize their ideas logically. Though some minor mistakes remained, their overall speaking performance showed significant progress. The findings suggest that the debate method is an effective strategy for improving speaking skills.

Keyword: Debate Method, Speaking Skill, Student Achievement, Experimental Research, Eighth Grade Students Debate Method, English Learning, Quasi-Experimental, Junior High School

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Language is a system for the expression of meaning. Its primary function is for interaction and communication. Language is used by human in order to know and understand each other. There are four skills in learning English language, they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking is very important because speaking and human being cannot be separated from each other. Speaking is used to express their ideas and to communicate to people in civilized world.

Speaking seems intuitively the most important skill to master. The success is measured



in terms of the ability to carry out conversation in language speaking in an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. Speaking is very important because by mastering speaking skill, people can carry out conversations with others, give the ideas and exchange the information with others.

In speaking, students should master the elements of speaking, such as vocabularies, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency. As a foreign learner in Indonesia, many students have amount vocabularies and mastering the grammatical structure, but they still have difficulty in speaking. This problem also appears to the students of SMP Swasta Muhammadiyah 21 Serbelawan, Simalungun.

Debate is a teaching technique to improve verbal communication and critical thinking skill. Maryadi (2008: 16) states that "debate can motivate students thinking, moreover, if they must defend their stand or opinion which is in contradiction with conviction them".

Debate is a great way to improve the students' speaking skills. It also allows them to do research and read more texts in English. During the process, they can widen their vocabulary too. Most of all, their critical thinking skills are enhanced. There are four major components in English proficiency. This includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Throughout the debating process, from the researching of issues, expressing arguments, listening to opponents and hearing teacher's feedback, all four skills are given emphasis.

1.2 Problem Of the Research

The Problem of this research "What is the effectiveness of debate method in improving the English-speaking skills of 8th grade students of Muhammadiyah 21 Serbelawan Private Middle School?"

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The Objective of this research is to find out the effectiveness of debate method in improving the English-speaking skills of 8th grade students of Muhammadiyah 21



Serbelawan Private Middle School.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Definition Speaking Skills

The researcher has found several resources that explain and clarify speaking. According to Scoot (2005:79) "Speaking is considered as the productive and oral skill. Speaking is a cognitive skill, is the idea that knowledge become increases automatedly through successive practice." According to Nunan (2003:48) "Speaking is the productive oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterance to convey meaning." Kayi, H (2006) adds that speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts. It means that speaking is an interaction between speakers with listeners.

Based on the previous definitions, the researcher concludes that speaking is the process of sharing with others, knowledge, interests, attitudes, opinions or ideas. The speaker's ideas become real to him and his listener. Speaking skill is the ability to say, to address, to make known, to use or be able to use a given language in the actual communication. In the light of these highlighted definitions, the researcher can compose an operational definition of speaking skill in this study as speaking is the ability to produce meaningful utterances/discourse orally to address other people and to be accurate in using grammar and vocabulary.

Definition of Debate

Debate is a very important strategy in developing speaking skills of learners effectively. Bambang (2006:125) defines debate as an "activity which is used for understanding of the topic. It is done by two groups. Every group consist of three or five students. It is "pro" group and "contra" group." Maryadi (2008:16) said that "Debate can motivate students' thinking, moreover if they must defend their stand or opinion which is in contradiction with conviction themselves." Krieger, (2005:1) defines debate as "an excellent



activity for language learning because it engages students in a variety of cognitive and linguistic ways."

Shan (2005, p.21) debate is defined as "two groups of people on opposite sides of the issue discussing an agreed upon topic in the agreed upon rules, and the judges listen to both sides of the argument, choosing the winning team based on the reasoning and evidence provided."

In the light of these definitions, the researcher can compose an operational definition of debate in this study that Debate is the process of presenting ideas or opinions which two opposing parties try to defend.

III. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Design of Research

Research is an activity which analyses and critically evaluates some problems. Nunan (1992: 9) said that research is a process which involves defining a problem, stating an objective, and formulating a hypothesis.

In this research, the approach used by the researcher is quantitative approach. Quantitative approach stressed the analysis to the numerical data that is processed by statistical method. It is quantitative because the data will be gained are numeric and will be analyzed by using statistical computation. The method in this research was experimental research.

Location Of Research

The location of this research is in SMP Swasta Muhammadiyah 21 Serbelawan, where research taking data of eight grade, which is located at Jl. Merdeka No 24, Kec. Dolok Batu Nanggar Serbelawan, Kab. Simalungun, Sumatera Utara 21155, In the year of 2025.

Source Of The Data

Data

The data for this research were student scores obtained through assessment, specially



the pre-test and post-test for eight grade students at SMP Swasta Muhammadiyah 21 Serbelawan.

Source Data

The data source is the research that is the source of research data collection. So, the data source is the eight grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 21 Serbelawan.

Technique of Collecting Data

This research will make speaking test as the instrument for collecting data by considering speaking aspects such Vocabulary, comprehension, Pronunciation, Grammar, and Fluency. In this study the data are collected by video. The test are conducted to the students are speaking test.

Technique of Data Analysis

To determine the Improving of the debate method learning on the speaking skills of class VIII students of SMP Swasta Muhammadiyah 21 Serbelawan on the English speaking skills of class VIII students of SMP Swasta Muhammadiyah 21 Serbelawan, the researcher provided treatment and tests. The treatment was repeated four times, while the test was carried out in one stage, namely the Pre-test and Post-test was carried out after the treatment.

In this study, the data collection strategy only used one experimental class and one control class. As a result, data collection was only carried out in the Experimental class. The researcher conducted the research in a class that was statistically considered uniform and homogeneous. The researcher then explained the Definition of Debate to the class and provided materials.

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data Analysis

The research and analyzes the data on the students' speaking skills in videos related to their speaking by using the debate method. The researcher presents the findings and analysis of the data collected through the pre-test and post-test. The data analysis consists of both pre-test and post-test data.



The paired sample t-test was conducted to test the hypothesis about students' ability in speaking English using the debate method. Based on the results obtained, the T-counted is 5,409. The T-table, obtained from the statistical table by looking at the degrees of freedom (df) which is 31, is 1,695. Since T-counted is greater than T-table ($T_{\text{counted}} = 5,409 > T_{\text{table}} = 1,695$), it means that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in students' ability in speaking English using the debate method.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This research was purposed to find out the effectiveness of the application of using debate method to improve student achievement in speaking skill for the eighth-grade students of SMP Swasta Muhammadiyah 21 Serbelawan. Based on the result of data analysis, research finding and the discussion, the researcher conclude that the application of debate method was effective to improve students' speaking skill. It can be seen from pretest score in experimental class got mean 61,28 and 77,22 in the posttest. While from pretest in control class got mean 58,97 and 69,69 in the posttest. Based on the homogeneity testing of post-test control class and post-test experimental class shows that $F_{\text{count}} = 25,296 > F_{\text{table}} = 4,00$. So that it can be stated that the debate method in experimental class is valid homogeneous. Based on the hypothesis testing of post-test control class and post-test experimental class shows that that $t_{\text{count}} = 5,092 > t_{\text{table}} = 2,039$. So, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. It means that the application of debate method to improve students' achievement in speaking skill was significant.

It happened because the researcher gave a treatment in the experimental class, the treatment that I gave was explaining what a debate is, types of debates, and how to express a



good opinion, after that I gave them an example of how to give an opinion well and confidently, such as giving an opinion about the internet, full day school, government, then after I gave an example, I asked my students to give their opinions about the influence of the TikTok application and then they expressed their opinions about whether or not TikTok has a good effect on teenagers, after students were able to give their opinions about something confidently, then I gave them the topic of social media and online games to argue between the opposing team and the pro team to agree or disagree on the good and bad effects of the topic.

Based on the analysis of students' skills, it was found that there was an improvement in students' speaking skills, especially in fluency, confidence, and critical thinking, after the treatment. The students were able to express their arguments more clearly and organize their ideas logically during the debate sessions. Although some students still made common mistakes such as mispronunciation and minor grammatical errors, their overall speaking performance showed significant progress. The findings indicated that most students achieved better speaking scores compared to before the treatment. The debate method is an effective strategy to be applied in speaking classes; it encourages students to think critically, respond spontaneously, and speak more confidently.

Suggestion

After conducted the research, the researcher has some suggestions for the teacher, the student, the next researcher, the readers and for school:

1. For Teachers: English teachers are encouraged to adopt the debate method as a regular instructional strategy, particularly for improving speaking skills. The method fosters critical thinking, active engagement, and confidence in using English orally.
2. For Schools: Schools should support the implementation of communicative teaching strategies such as debates by providing adequate time, materials, and training for teachers to integrate them effectively into the curriculum.



3. For Future Researchers: Further studies could explore the long-term impact of the debate method on different language skills (e.g., listening or writing) and test its effectiveness across different grade levels and educational contexts.
4. For Students: Students are encouraged to actively participate in classroom debates as a way to improve fluency, vocabulary use, and overall confidence in speaking English.
5. For Readers: Readers are invited to consider the potential benefits of the debate method not only for language learning but also for fostering critical thinking and communication skills. Exploring alternative teaching methods like debates can enrich educational practices and contribute to the development of essential life skills.

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