Debate as a method for mastery speaking ability in EFL: How effective is it?

Haliimatussa'diyyah[1], Zaitun[2]
English Department Program, University Muhammadiyah Jakarta[12]

Corresponding author
Email: Diyyahhalimah27@gmail.com

Abstract
This study aims to find out the effectiveness of debate as a method used in improving students' speaking skills ability in EFL. This was a quantitative study with a pre-experimental research design that used pre-test and post-test as data collection instruments. This research was conducted at Senior High School 1 Babelan Bekasi to 30 students in 11th grade who were the participants of the school English Club. These students were selected by the purposive sampling technique. The data was analyzed statistically by using t-test. The results of this study revealed that: the students' mean score on the pre-test was 61.03 while their post-test one was 75.90. Additionally, statistical calculation of t-test resulted t-cal (6.30) > t-table (2.045) with significance level of 0.05. Thus, these findings confirmed that the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted and the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected. Therefore, this research work concluded that debate used as a method of improving students' speaking ability is effective.

Keywords: Debate method, Speaking ability, EFL students.

INTRODUCTION

Language is more like to bridge communication among people from all over the world. Therefore, the vastness of the world can be seen widely by using language as a tool. Through language, people can express their ideas, thoughts, opinions, and whatever exists in their minds. To communicate across countries, English is officially acknowledged by people around the world as an international language. As a world language, English plays a further and necessary additional role in many elements of humans.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. The students who learn the language are required to master the four skills namely listening, writing, reading, and speaking. Among this four, speaking takes the major role since the main tool of people learning a language is to be able to use that language orally. According to Correa (2015), speaking is an intellectually and socially requesting ability that requires coding and offering viewpoints in an intelligible and logically fitting discourse stream. It is a way of expressing, stating, and conveying ideas to others by using spoken language that can be understood by others.

Regarding English, learning to speak has always been one of the biggest obstacles for EFL students. However, English speaking ability is often considered difficult to learn because this aspect refers to the verbal generation of a set of words to convey an idea or message. Mridha and Muniruzzaman (2020) described that language is usually learned in its written manifestation and often conversation skills are ruled out. Therefore, teaching

English is more about learning theory, and students that lack practice in doing so, do not dare to express their thoughts. Many teachers stop trying to teach speaking skills and teach more theory. While in fact, taking the students to practice their speaking is very important because the environment the students have in Indonesia does not support them to use English anywhere and anytime. Practicing English more in the classroom under the guidance of the teacher will escalate their speaking skill faster rather than just learning theories. The main goal of speaking skills is communication. Therefore, while practicing, students can learn how to deliver their thoughts and listen to someone's opinions, and exchange opinions, where students can get new vocabulary and new ideas.

There are various teaching methods to teach speaking including role play, storytelling, debate, and reporting. Among these methods, a teacher is suggested to choose one which can arise students' interest to follow the process of teaching and learning such as debates. Debates are considered an active learning process because they involve all students in the class so that students can share knowledge, improve their ability to solve problems, and courage them in expressing opinions in public.

As Majidi et.al. (2021) explained that debate is considered as a potentially effective pedagogical tool for developing language skills. In the debate method, one of the most important skills needed is speaking. In debate activities, students are required to think quickly to solve a problem and respond the opposing arguments. Somjai and Jansem (2015) argued that debating is a challenging and very rewarding activity for the participants and they have many opportunities to practice and work together. It teaches students a sense of responsibility, encourages creativity, deepens friendships, and strengthens the relationship with a teacher. This implies that debate learning includes interactive learning methods and requires students to take an active role in the learning process. The debate as a competency approach is effective for students to engage in the learning process since it measures the speaking ability.

Speaking ability in debate method

Speaking is one of the four basic skills of English. Speaking is not limited to theory, but more to practice. Speaking ability plays an important role in life because it is a means of communicating with someone. Speaking is an oral skill that includes smooth and fluent speech, a diverse vocabulary and perfect sentences when needed, appropriate auditory discrimination and skills and the sequence of a story, or connecting events in a reasonable and logical sequence. Goh (2017) explained that speaking is a cognitive skill and a social burden that requires coding and thinking in a speech path that makes sense and fits the context. That is, the ability to speak can be a bridge in expressing ideas or feelings about something that happens in social events.

Speaking is an activity to provide information that is done orally. But not everyone is able to do that well. Speaking is an activity carried out by two people, when speaking both must be able to communicate effectively so that what the communicator tells can be well received by the communicant, so that there is no misperception. Othman, et.al.

(2017), effective communication is considered as one of the most important skills for every individual. That is, effective communication is when the ability to speak in conveying to someone can be easily understood. Because the key to successful communication is being able to speak effectively and the associated articulation can occupy important positions both individually and socially.

a. *Speaking ability in TEFL (Teaching English Foreign Language)*

Teaching speaking is the process of acquiring and learning one of the four English language skills between students and teachers. Tiname, et.al. (2019), the purpose of teaching speaking skills is to increase the effeciency of students oral production abd communicating. That is, by continuing to practice speaking it will improve students' language skills. Therefore, someone who has good speaking skills will gain social advantages in interacting with many people. Sabbah (2015) described that teaching speaking is a way for students to express their emotions, communication needs, interact with other people and influence others in any situation. For this reason, when teaching speaking skills, a clear understanding of speaking is needed.

Many teachers agree that learning a second language is important for interacting with people around the world. Therefore, students must learn important components in speaking skills, including; comprehension, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency. In short, the role of the English teacher here is very important, namely making the class a fun class, interesting learning method and also a fun teacher so that students will like and easily accept and understand speaking skills lessons.

b. *The implementation debate in TEFL (Teaching English Foreign Language)*

Debate is a rethorical practice that dates back to ancient Greece and is based on an interactive and representational argument to persuade judges and audiences (Cinganotto, 2019). During a debate, various logic-building and delivery strategies are used to guide the taget audience to a conclusion on a contentious issues. Debate can be used in the classroom to teach English since t engages students' verbal and cognitve abilities. The debate method improves students' speaking skills by conveying arguments related to developing issues. This is an effective way for both teachers and students to do this.

a) *The advantage of debate teaching*

Debate is a fun activity to do in the classroom since it is both verbal and engaging. Debate can benefit in teaching and learning process. Somjai and Jansem (2015) said that debate has some advantages in teaching and learning process, including:

1) Debate teaches students how to learn and deal with succes and failure in both social and academic settings.

2) Students can make and defend informed decisions about complex subjects outside of theit field of study.

3) Debate can help students connect with more than just academic subjects; it can also help them engage with public life.

4) Training critical, logical, and agile thinking. By sharing various opinions, students must claim which truth actually happened.

b) *The disadvantages of debate*

Debate has its own constraints in the learning process, in which the teachers could minimize these (Somjai and Jansem, 2015). The followings are some of those disadvantages:

1) Debate techniques can only be employed for specific issues, such as those that deal with agreeing and disagreeing, as well as offering arguments.

2) Debate preparation taken a long time. Debate necessitates much preparation in order to ensure that the debate runs smoothly. students should prepare their arguments before to the debate so that they can more effectively challage to other viewpoint.

C. *EFL students (English Foreign Language Students)*

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a term used to describe learning English by non-native speakers in countries where English is not the main language. English as a second language has a different meaning, so don't confuse it. Peng Si (2019) explains the difference between a "foreign language" and a "second language" depending on the locale, language input, emotional factors that influence the learning process, and more. Therefore, EFL means learning English in a country that does not speak English. These are countries where students want to learn English for educational and career prospects such as: Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, etc. ESL means English as a Second Language, as more important than your native language, and English is used as a means of communication in everyday life, but students still study English, as in Canada, Australia and the United States etc.

English is a language that can connect people from different countries. English is an interesting language for people all over the world to learn, especially because of its many advantages as a means of communication. English is a bridge between countries for communication. Moreover, because English is an international language, it is very important language for learning, especially education. Students can master English so

they can introduce the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country. Looking at the era of globalization of the world, the importance of oral communication skills is emphasized, and its impact facilitates opportunities for academic and professional students. Therefore, English teachers need to be able to provide teachers with specific methods in situations where the needs of English-speaking students may increase.

METHOD
Research design

Research methods are a modern approach to contributing to the validity and realible results and decision-making of policy makers. Avineri (2017) opined that quantitative research has two important concepts: validity and reliability. The purpose of testing validity and reliability is to ensure that the combined studies are really good at measuring symptoms and generating valid data.

In this study, the writers used a quantitative study using design of experiments. Quantitative methods are used to confirm the theory and test the relationships between variables (Nimachisalem, 2018). Quantitative data are collected from multiple cases and analyzed using statistical methods. The data collection of this study adopted a pre-experimental approach of pre-test and post-test designs in one class. The pre-test was used to determine the ability of the students to speak before the treatment applied and the post-test was aimed to measure speaking ability of the students after treatment.

The population of this research was all the 11th grade students at the school. There are 10 classes of 11th graders which comprise two majors; 4 classes for Social Sciences Major and the other 6 are Natural Sciences Major. Each class is occupied by more or less 30-32 students.

For the sake of this study, the writers applied "Purposeful Sampling Technique" to select the sample of the research. This technique is also called assessment sampling in which the researcher chooses the participants deliberately based on certain qualities related to the purpose of the research (Etikan, 2016).

In this research, several criterions that the writers determined before selecting the sample are: (a) The students are in grade 11, (b) The students are those who join English Club held by the school, (c) The students are not seen from their majors, (d) The students have been joining this English Club for more than 6 months. After consulting those criterions to English teacher of the school, all 30 students who join English Club will be involved as the samples. In the process of this research, only those who fully participate from the beginning (pre-test) until the end (post-test) of this research process will be counted.

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To collect the data the writers used pre-test, treatment and post-test. Pre-test was conducted to measure students' speaking ability before taking action in treatment. In treatment, the writers began to conduct experiments on the students studied. The treatment was carried out 6 times as a minimum requirement in conducting experimental research. The post-test was carried out after the treatment was held. This is to measure the students' speaking progress before and after learning through the debate method. To analyze speaking ability of students, the researchers used the formula bellow:

$$D = \sum_{i=1, j=i}^{n} \frac{Xj - Xi}{n}$$

After the writers got the scores of the students' speaking performance (referring to Table 3.1 above), the scores will be classified into the following scales;

Table 3.1
Speaking proficiency classification

No	Classification	Score
1	Excellent	86-100
2	Good	71-85
3	Fair	56-70
4	Less	41-55
5	Poor	≤ 40

Source: (Cordier and Speyer, 2015)

To find out the result speaking ability, the writers used the formula bellow:

$$Variance\ (s^2) = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1, j=i}^{n} ((Xj - Xi)D)^2$$

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at Senior High School 1 Babelan Bekasi in the 2021/2022 academic year. The writers did their experimental study at the English

Club of the school. Thirty students in 11th grade participated in this research work. In the experiment, the writers applied debate as a method to improve students' mastery of speaking ability.

Both pre-test and post-test were used as the instruments in collecting the data. The results of those tests were analyzed by the writers to get the significant results of debate as a method used in speaking activities of the students. Pre-test and post-test results were described in the following table.

Table 4.1
The frequency of students' pre-test results

Score Interval	Total Students	Relative %
0-40	0	0%
41-55	7	23,3%
56-70	20	66,7%
71-85	2	6,7%
86-100	1	3,3%

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On the table above, it can be seen that 0 students (0%) got scores between 0-40, 7 students (23,3%) got scores in the range of 41-55, 20 students (66,7%) got scores under the interval of 56-70, 2 students (6,7%) got scores between 71-85 and 1 student (3,3%) got score in the range of 86-100. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the students got score around 56-70 in their speaking Pre-tests

In order to see the difference, the following table 4.3 presents the frequency of students' Post-test results based on the interval score:

Table 4.2
**The frequency of students' post-test results**

Score Interval	Total Students	Relative %
0-40	0	0%
41-55	0	0%
56-70	9	30%
71-85	15	50%
86-100	6	20%

From the results presented in table 4.3 above, it can be summarized that 0 student (0%) got scores between 0-40, 0 student (0%) got scores in the range of 41-55, 9 students (30%) got scores in the interval of 56-70, 15 students (50%) got scores in between 71-85 and 6 students (20%) got scores in the range of 86-100. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the students got scores around 71-85 in their speaking Post-test.

In order to get clearer idea of students' speaking tests' performance in both pre- and post-tests, the following Diagram 4.1 figures out their achievements:

Diagram 4.1

Students' speaking achievements in pre-test and post-test
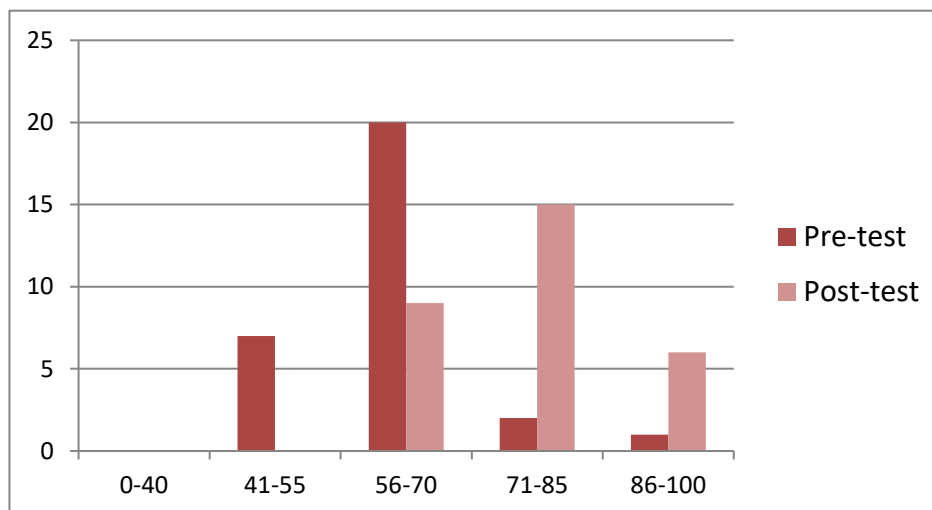
As it can be seen from the diagram 4.1 above, students' speaking achievement in post-test was higher than that in the pre-test. In other words, it can be said that students performed better in the post-test than in the pre-test in terms of speaking ability.

These results of the research were gained from both Pre-test and Post-test aadministered to the students participated in this research. In order to confirm the hyphothesis, those test results were analyzed by using t-test. The analysis showed that there was significant difference between the score of Pre-test and Post-test gained by the students. Therefore, alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted and null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected. This result also means that students' ability of speaking was affected positively by the used of debate method.

Additionally, statistical analysis of t-test calculation presented the score of 6.30 obtained in the degree of freedom (df) of 29 (30-1) with the significance degree of 0.05, gaining the score of 2.045. The results of the calculation revealed that the t-cal of 6.30 > t-table of 2.045. This calculation which revealed that t-cal was higher than t-table also confirmed that alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted while the null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected. Besides, the initial calculation of mean score the students obtained in pre-test (61.53) and in the post-test (75.90) became additional indicator that students' speaking performance in the post-test outperformed their pre-test.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to find out the effectiveness of debate used as the method in teaching 11th grade students' speaking ability. The results of this study revealed that students' post-test score was higher than their pre-test. This finding was also confirmed by the results of statistical analysis. The calculation of t-test showed that t-calculation reached by the students was 6.30 whilt the t-table was 2.045 in the significance level of 0.05. Thus, referring to these findings, it can be said that students' speaking ability

was better in the post-test. Besides, debate used as the method in teaching speaking found to be effective in which it gave significant effect to students' speaking achievement.

Therefore, this research work concluded that debate method was effective in the improvement of students' speaking ability. In other words, in responding to the hypothesis, this study accepted alternative hypothesis (H1) and rejected null hypothesis (Ho).

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