

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING AN ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

Speaking skills are essential for effective communication and play a significant role in academic achievement, especially in the context of learning English as a foreign language. However, many students face difficulties in fluency, pronunciation, and confidence when speaking English. Traditional teaching methods often fail to sufficiently enhance students' speaking skills, necessitating the exploration of more interactive approaches such as debate. This research investigates the effectiveness of using debate technique to improve the speaking skills of class XI A at a private Islamic school in Ngemplak area. This study applies a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test model. A total of 26 female students were selected as participants using purposive sampling, considering institutional regulations. The research process consisted of three phases: an initial assessment (pre-test) to evaluate students' speaking skills, an intervention stage where the debate technique was applied, and a final assessment (post-test) to measure the improvement. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests. The results reveal a significant enhancement in students' speaking performance following the debate technique application. The mean score of the post-test (77.88) showed a notable increase compared to the pre-test score (61.92), with statistical analysis confirming a significant difference ($p < 0.05$). This finding suggests that the debate technique is effective to improving students' fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence in English communication. In summary, incorporating debate as a learning method allows students to develop structured argumentation, strengthen critical thinking, and engage in interactive discussions. Educators are encouraged to integrate debate techniques more frequently to maximize speaking practice. Further research should consider other influencing factors and extend the study duration to optimize students' learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Debate technique, Speaking skill, Argumentative texts*

INTRODUCTION

English has become an international language essential for global communication and education. Agustina & Fajarina (2023) emphasize that

English is widely recognized as a global language and serves as a crucial means of communication worldwide. In Indonesia, however, English is categorized as a foreign language rather than a second language (Baso, 2016). Despite this classification, its role in the education system is significant, requiring a balanced development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, with speaking often regarded as the primary measure of language proficiency (Sa'adah et al., 2024).

The Indonesian government has reinforced the importance of English learning through the enactment of PERMENDIKBUD No. 12 of 2024, which mandates English instruction from the fourth grade of elementary school through university. The regulation aims to equip students with essential language abilities necessary for academic and professional success, fostering their communication skills, cultural awareness, and critical thinking. Through a structured and progressive curriculum, students are introduced to fundamental English skills at an early stage, which advance in complexity as they progress to higher education. The policy underscores English as a vital tool for lifelong learning and career advancement, acknowledging its significance across various domains, including science, technology, business, and the arts.

Among the four key language skills, speaking is often considered the most challenging for learners due to various barriers, such as a lack of practice, self-confidence, and vocabulary (Rao, 2019). Speaking skills are fundamental for effective communication, allowing individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, and opinions fluently (Zuhriyah et al., 2018). Despite its importance, many Indonesian students struggle with spoken English, often exhibiting hesitation and a lack of confidence in formal and academic settings. Effective classroom communication requires teachers to employ appropriate strategies that encourage student participation and practice (Putri et al., 2019). To address this issue, innovative teaching methods, such as debate techniques, have been proposed as an effective means to enhance students' speaking skills.

Debate has been recognized as an effective pedagogical tool in teaching speaking skills. According to (Werdiningsih, 2018), debate facilitates students'

ability to think critically and articulate their arguments effectively. Elmiyati (2019) asserts that debate enhances not only oral communication but also critical thinking and logical reasoning skills. It provides opportunities for students to engage in meaningful discussions, develop structured arguments, and challenge assumptions, fostering an environment conducive to intellectual and ethical growth. Furthermore, Laia (2019) highlights that debate encourages students to think creatively, engage actively in classroom discussions, and improve their overall confidence in using English.

In the context of a private Islamic school in Ngemplak area, a semi-modern Islamic boarding school with a strong emphasis on language learning, students in Class XI A have been observed to struggle with speaking skills despite their proficiency in reading, writing, and listening. The school's administration has implemented weekly speech programs to enhance students' oral proficiency, but challenges remain in developing critical speaking, logical reasoning, and argumentation skills. While various teaching methods have been applied, debate has never been introduced as a technique for improving speaking skills. Given the competitive and interactive nature of debate, it presents an opportunity to improve students' speaking fluency, critical thinking, and confidence in public speaking.

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using debate techniques, specifically the Asian Parliamentary Debate (APD), in improving students' speaking skills at a private Islamic school in Ngemplak area. The APD format is structured and encourages critical thinking, logical reasoning, and teamwork, making it an effective method for fostering students' speaking proficiency (Kristanti & Basuni, 2021). By implementing debate in the classroom, this research seeks to determine whether it significantly enhances students' speaking skills and contributes to their overall language development. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights into the potential of debate as an instructional strategy for English language learning, benefiting both educators and learners in similar educational settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking

Speaking is the process of transforming thoughts into spoken language, enabling communication in various contexts (Guebba, 2021). It serves multiple functions, including informing, persuading, entertaining, building relationships, and expressing emotions (Hakim, 2019; Gamble & Gamble, 2023). Speaking is essential for students, particularly English Language Learners (ELLs), as it enhances communication skills necessary for academic and professional success (Rao, 2019). According to Xue et al. (2022), speaking involves micro-skills, such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency, and macro-skills, including discourse management, pragmatics, interaction, and non-verbal communication. Developing these skills is crucial for effective and meaningful spoken interactions. Speaking is the ability of a person to release something that has been managed by the brain and feelings and then released orally with sounds, words and sentences. Speaking is not just saying words or sentences but speaking must use appropriate intonation and be clear to the interlocutor or other people. In language learning, speaking is a very important aspect because it can make us communicate directly and actively.

Debate

Debate is a structured discussion between opposing teams aiming to defend their stance and persuade the other side. According to Laia (2019), it fosters active participation, critical thinking, and effective communication. Debates can take various forms, including parliamentary, Lincoln-Douglas, Oxford, Karl Popper, American Model, and formal debates (Saputri et al., 2022). Debate techniques such as rebuttal, cross-examination, constructive speech, and point of information enhance argumentation skills. The Asian Parliamentary Debate format, as described by Kristanti & Basuni (2021), involves government and opposition teams, each with specific roles and speech structures. Debate is an effective method for teaching speaking skills, encouraging student engagement, collaboration, and confidence (Pradana, 2017). Despite requiring

extensive preparation and self-control, its advantages in improving students' speaking abilities outweigh its challenges (Somjai & Jansem, 2015). Debate is an activity of exchanging opinions between two or more groups that have different points of view on an issue. In the process of debate, everyone tries to present reasonable arguments supported by strong reasons to convince the other party. The essence of debate lies not in a loud voice, but in how to express opinions clearly, orderly, and accompanied by convincing evidence.

Argumentative Text

Argumentative text is a form of writing that aims to persuade readers by presenting a clear stance supported by evidence, logical reasoning, and counterarguments (Billia, 2022). It fosters critical thinking and enhances communication skills. According to Gavrishina (2024), argumentative texts take various forms, including essays, opinion articles, political speeches, and debates. Essays provide in-depth analysis, opinion articles express personal viewpoints, political speeches persuade audiences on policies, and debates present contrasting arguments on a subject. These forms contribute to effective argumentation and the development of persuasive communication.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test. According to Watson (2015), quantitative research includes various methods focused on the systematic exploration of social phenomena through the use of statistical or numerical data. The research design used to measure the effectiveness of the debate technique in improving students' speaking skills. The research was conducted at class XI A at a private Islamic school in Ngemplak area from 9th of October up to 12nd of November 2024. The population consists of 63 students in the 11th grade, with a purposive sampling technique used to select 26 female students from Class XI A. The selection was based on recommendations from the school principal and English teacher, considering the school's policy as a Pesantren-based institution

that restricts interactions between male and female students.

Data collection was carried out through pre-test and post-test to measure students' speaking skills before and after applying the Debate Technique. The pre-test was conducted to assess students' initial speaking skill, while the post-test was administered after three treatment sessions to evaluate their improvement. The speaking assessment focused on pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, using a rubric adapted from Brown & Abeywickrama (2019). To ensure the validity and readability of the instrument, the study conducted validity and readability tests before its implementation.

For data analysis, the study applied descriptive statistics to determine the mean, median, and mode of students' scores. To determine the significance of the students' improvement, a paired sample t-test was performed using SPSS version 16.0. Before conducting the t-test, a normality test was applied to ensure that the data were normally distributed. The paired sample t-test compared students' speaking scores before and after treatment. If the Sig. (2-tailed) value was less than 0.05, it indicated a significant difference, confirming the effectiveness of the Debate Technique in improving students' speaking skills.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher presents the answer to the problem statement contained in this chapter. The problem statement is to know the effectiveness of using debate technique to improve students' speaking skills. After collecting the data, the researchers analyzed the data using SPSS version 16.0.

Students' speaking skill before being taught using debate technique

Pre-test question was given before the researchers gave treatments or experiments to students. The data of the pretest is shown in the table:

Table 1: Descriptive statistic of pre-test score

Pre-test	N	Lowest	highest	Sum	Mean
	26	50	80	1.610	61,92

Based on the table above, the highest score on the pre-test was 80 and the

lowest score was 50. Then, the mean of pre-test was 61,92 below the passing score KKM is (77). It can be concluded that students' speaking skill is low or categorized as below the KKM standard. Several factors contributed to the students' low speaking performance. Lack of practice in academic situations can hinder the development of their speaking skills. Triwittayayon & Sarobol (2019) emphasized the importance of creating a learning environment that encourages students to practice language skills, receive constructive feedback and learn from peers. They also emphasized that speaking provides immediate feedback which is very important for improving language skills. Additionally, low self-confidence discouraged students from participating in formal discussions, making them hesitant to express their ideas (Suryadi, 2018). Learners who struggle with vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar may tend to lose their confidence (Pangket, 2019). Another significant challenge was limited vocabulary, which affected students' ability to articulate their thoughts clearly (Noviana & Ma'rifatullah, 2024; Amin & Fajarina, 2024). Derakhshan et al. (2016) explain that cognitive, linguistic and emotional factors contribute to students' speaking fluency. They assert that lack of vocabulary can be a major barrier for students in expressing their ideas and opinions effectively. Furthermore, insufficient critical thinking and argumentation skills made it difficult for students to construct logical and persuasive arguments, which are essential for effective communication (Triwittayayon & Sarobol, 2019).

Student's speaking skill after being taught using debate technique

After being given treatment using the Debate Technique, students took a post-test. Post-test question was different from the pre-test, the data of the post-test is shown in the table:

Table 2: Descriptive statistic of post-test score

Post-test	N	Lowest	Highest	Sum	Mean
	26	60	100	2.025	77,88

Based on the table above, the highest score on the post-test was 100 and the lowest score was 60. Then, the mean of the post-test was 77,88 above the

passing score KKM is (77). It can be concluded that students' speaking skill improved after using the debate technique and can be categorized as "Fair" according to the score range determined by the English teacher. These results indicate an improvement in students' speaking skills after treatment. The Debate Technique helped students become more active, think critically, and develop their argumentation skills. They were eager to express their opinions and enjoyed learning. At the beginning, students were enthusiastic about debating, and after receiving instruction, they were divided into four groups, each group consisted of 6 students divided into 3 students of the pro team and 3 students of the contra team, the remaining 3 students became the timer of the debate. They prepared arguments, presented their points, and engaged in rebuttals while being observed by the researcher, teacher, and peers.

Students responded positively to the Debate Technique, as it had never been applied in their class before. Their enthusiasm showed that debate made learning more engaging, built confidence, and fostered critical thinking. The researcher gave supporting vocabulary related to the topic, then the researcher gave 15 minutes to each group to prepare arguments and counter-arguments. Each group had 10 minutes to express their opinions and remained excited to learn speaking. The limited time for arguments also motivated them to articulate their thoughts efficiently. Atik & Çelik (2021) emphasized that student motivation and engagement at all education levels play a crucial role in supporting learning, improving academic performance, and shaping positive attitudes. This explains the increase in students' speaking test scores after the Debate Technique was implemented.

After the Debate Technique was applied, the researcher gave a post-test question by asking students to prepare their argument sentences on 1 topic chosen among the 3 topics given by the researcher, students prepared arguments on selected topics and presented them individually. Their enthusiasm inspired them to perform confidently in front of their peers. Tianame et al. (2019) stated that debates enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills, while Nasution (2023) found that English debate helps students communicate effectively,

engage actively in speaking lessons, and enhance fluency. It also fosters teamwork and critical, logical, and democratic thinking. Ban et al. (2023) reported that debate improves students' speaking abilities and critical thinking skills, allowing them to speak more confidently through consistent practice.

The findings showed a significant improvement, with the pre-test mean score at 61.92 and the post-test mean at 77.88. This indicates that students' speaking skills improved significantly after receiving treatment using the Debate Technique. Additionally, students interacted more freely with teachers and peers, gaining confidence in expressing their opinions with supporting evidence. They were unafraid to ask about unfamiliar vocabulary, which positively impacted their speaking skills. Inayat & Ali (2020) highlighted the importance of teacher-student interaction in fostering engagement and a sense of belonging, further supporting students' learning and confidence.

Significant difference between the students' speaking skill before and after being taught using debate technique

After collecting the result of students' scores of pretest and post-test data in the class, it can be concluded that after using taught debate technique, students' speaking skills improved because the mean score from the pretest to post-test increased. To determine the significance of the effect of using debate technique on students' speaking skills, the pretest and the post-test were analyzed using paired sample t-test. Bellow the result of pre-test and post-test normality and paired sample T-test based on the SPSS 16.0 application.

Table 3: Result of Normality Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Pre-test	.136	26	.200	.950	26	.237
Post-test	.135	26	.200	.958	26	.353

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

In the normality test based on Shapiro Wilk, the data were stated as distributed normally when sig. scores higher than 0.05. It means the significant value of the data > 0.05 it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed.

Furthermore, the data would be analyzed with Paired sample t-test, The aim of a Paired sample T-test result is to test hypothesis.

Table 4: Result of Paired Sample T-test

		Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest-Posttest	-1.596E1	4.24717	.83294	-17.67701	-14.24607	-19.163	25	.000

Based on the data above, the Sig (2-tailed) shows data is 0.000 that is lower than 0.05 (<0.05) so it can be said that the underlying “Hypothesis is accepted”. In addition, it can be that there are significant difference in the score of students’ speaking skills before and after being taught debate technique. So, it can be concluded that using Debate Technique is effective to improve students’ speaking skills.

However, there are several reasons why debate technique is effective in students’ speaking skills. Initially, students struggled with fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension due to a lack of confidence and practice. The structured nature of debates provided opportunities for active participation, fostering engagement and motivation (Rao, 2019). These results align with previous research, which highlights the debate technique’s role in enhancing communication skills and student involvement (Baso, 2016; Werdiningsih, 2018; Elmiyati, 2019; Firmansyah & Vegian, 2019; Apriliani et al., 2021).

Beyond improving speaking fluency, the Debate Technique also developed students’ critical thinking and argumentation skills. Preparing for debates required research, logical reasoning, and anticipating counterarguments, reinforcing higher-order thinking (Elmiyati, 2019). The interactive nature of debates also strengthened verbal interactions between students and teachers, which is crucial for language learning (Inayat & Ali, 2020). Although the post-

test scores only slightly exceeded the passing grade (KKM = 77), the findings confirm that debates positively impact students' confidence, participation, and speaking skill. Previous studies also showed similar trends, demonstrating significant improvements in speaking scores and engagement levels (Baso, 2016; Werdiningsih, 2018; Elmiyati, 2019; Firmansyah & Vegian, 2019; Apriliani et al., 2021).

Overall, this study supports existing research on the effectiveness of the Debate Technique in improving students' speaking skills. The significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores indicates that debates not only improved fluency and pronunciation but also boosted confidence in public speaking. These findings reinforce that incorporating debate techniques into language learning fosters better communication skills and overall linguistic competence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, the study concludes that the debate technique is an effective strategy for teaching speaking skills. The pre-test results showed a mean score of 61.92 and below the KKM (77). After implementing the debate technique, the post-test mean score increased to 77.88. The paired sample T-test analysis showed a significance score of 0.000 (<0.005), confirming a significant improvement in students' speaking skills. Therefore, the debate technique effective to improve students' speaking skills. This study provides suggestions for students, teachers, and future researchers. Students should actively participate in debates, expand their vocabulary, and practice independently to enhance their confidence and speaking skills. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate debate techniques, support students lacking confidence, and select engaging debate topics to increase participation. Future researchers may explore additional influencing factors, apply different methodologies, and extend the study duration to achieve more comprehensive results. This research can serve as a valuable reference for further studies. Hopefully, the suggestions that have been given can be useful for teachers, students, and future researchers.

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