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The Use of Debating Activities to Improve Students' Speaking Skill

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Abstract— Speaking skill is one of important elements in English. The teacher can see the process of students in studying English by seeing their speaking skill. The purpose of this research is to find out whether debating activities can better improve the students' speaking skill. This research was conducted at the third year students of STIKes YPAK Padang. This research used action research. The researcher collected data from test, observation and interview. It was found that the students' speaking skill by using debating activities could better improve than before the research was conducted. The researcher found that the average score of the pre test was 48,1. The average score in the first cycle was 51,4. So, the result score from pre test to cycle 1 was a little improvement. Then the average score in the second cycle was 70,3. In the second cycle there was good improvement in speaking. In short, debating activities could improvement the students' speaking skill at the third year students of STIKes YPAK Padang.

Keywords— Debating activity; Speaking skill; Teaching speaking; Action research.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is a compulsory subject at the school and university level. It means that English is an important to be studied. This condition makes English becomes important to be studied.

One of skills in English is speaking. The teacher can see the process of students in studying English by seeing their speaking skill. It means that if the students are not good at speaking, they are not good at English. So, to make the students good in English, they have to be active to practice their English.

Dealing with explanation above, the teacher should be able to find new strategy in teaching speaking. One of strategies is debating activity in the class. Debate is believed to be able to improve verbal communicate and critical thinking skill. It builds confidence and self esteem of students. This is a strategy that involves every student actives in the class.

Based on the diagnoses above, there are some problems find in the classroom. The

problem may come from the students and the teacher. The problem from the students is that they have low motivation in speaking so that makes them lazy to practice English in their daily life. In the class, students do not have self-confident because they are shy if their friends laugh at them when they do mistake in speaking. The other problem is that they lack of vocabulary. These problems make students uncomfortable in speaking. Moreover, in learning strategy, the lecturer's strategy is monotonous. The lecturer rarely encourages the students to participate in the class.

[11] states : "Speaking activities inside the classroom need to embody both interactional and transactional purposes, since language learner will have to speak the target language in both transactional and interactional setting. For interactional, a speaker and a listener do a conversation in order to serve social function mainly interaction. On the other hand, in transactional, the message is the central focus. Students must keep staying on

the topic of speaking for example in an interview. They should understand and keep talking accurately about what both speaker and listener achieve.

In addition, [8] states “speaker of English – especially where it is a second language – will have to be able to speak in a range of different genres and situation, and they have to be able to use a range of conventional and conversational repair strategies”. These situations involved different micro skill and certain way in expressing meaning for example, body language, gesture, intonation, form and function of language and interaction.

Furthermore, [13] suggests that there are eight methods in teaching speaking. They are: 1. Asking and answering question. The teacher asks questions about the texts or other things and let the students answer. In this way, students can exercise both listening and speaking ability, and it can also help the teachers to have deeper understanding of their students. 2. Pattern drills. By using this method, students can review and drill grammars and sentence patterns orally. It is better they written exercises, because it will save time for students to have more chances in classes. 3. Making dialogues. By making dialogues, the students adjust the way he speaks according to the situation he is in and students can exercise both writing and structure. 4. Talking about a picture or pictures. By telling the picture, students can practice their speaking to be better and Let the students use their own words to express the contents of those pictures. The teachers can check students degree of level and help them to improve their learning. 5. Story telling. Speaking out the contents that the students have read and listened, it is the way to understand the content that the students get. By understanding the story, it will enrich students’ vocabularies. 6. Oral composition and report. At the beginning of the class, the teacher asks one student to give a class report about weather, attendance, and some important events happening in schools. This is a good way to make students exercise their speaking to be better 7. Simulation and role-play. Students are the main participants, and teacher is the organizer, observer, adviser and encourage. 8.

Discussion and debate. It can train students’ ability to expound their viewpoints and participate in another’s opinion can be small speech. The students can explore their opinion about the topic.

The teacher should select appropriate materials of speaking. They should have program and some ways to manage the students. A good teacher ought to create conducive situation that is effective for teaching speaking

The teachers need to hold debate in the classroom because by doing this the students will be able to enrich and develop their critical thinking as well as their speaking skill. Debate is process of presenting idea or opinion which two opposing parties try to defend their idea or opinion. [12] says that debate is an excellent activity for language learning because it engages students in variety of cognitive and linguistic ways. [7] says that debate forces students to think about the multiple sides of an issue and it also force them to interact not just with the details of a given topic, but also with one another. From the opinion above we can conclude that debating is a clash of arguments for every issue. There are always different sides of the story and people support or disagree with certain issue. Debating seek to explore the reasons behind each arguments. To make those reasons understandable and convincing, debaters should deliver their arguments with good communication skill.

According to [10] debate can be classified into four types. They are: (1) Fishbowl debate. The teacher divides the class into two groups, and each group works together to formulate arguments for their assigned viewpoint. After each side has presented their arguments, the groups give rebuttal back and forth. In another type of fish bowl debate the students are divided into three groups-one group of expert for each side of issues and the remaining students represent the audience. (2) Think pair share debate. Students’ first think and make notes individually. Then they work in pairs to create lists of reasons to support both sides of an issue. Next, two points work together to come to a consensus on which side they wish to support and refine their list of

reasons for that side. Finally, each group of students shares its conclusion and supporting arguments with the whole class. (3) problem solving debate. It involves eight participants, four on each side, debating a question such as “Should capital punishment be abolished?” in this format, the first two speakers present the historical and philosophical background information, the second set of speakers explain why changes are or are not justified, the third pair of speakers suggests a plan, and the last two speakers summarize the position of each team.

There are some procedures of debate: according to [7] there are six steps in debate: first, students must first be made aware of a debatable topic and of the variety of potential positions that can be taken on the topic. Second, students should be given an opportunity to research the topic somehow and form their own opinion on the issue. Third, the next pairs or small groups should be formed where like-minded students can share their opinions on the topic and gain information from others. During this step students should be encouraged to think about the potential arguments that will come from the other side and how they can respond to these arguments. Four, now some form of debate must take place where the two (or three or four) sides share their opinions and present their arguments. This could take the form of a classic debate, with opening and closing arguments from both sides and time for rebuttals all done as a class. Alternatively, it could simply be small groups or pairs sharing their differing prints of view with another. Five, the instructor should follow-up with a summary of the opinions and views expressed by all sides and an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. Finally, the class and instructor should be allowed to express their opinions on which side made the case must convincingly. This step is important in that it helps the students to understand that this type of thinking and debate process can lend to real result and provide some sense of closure on the topic.

In [13] there are some items related to debate: “1. Motion. The topic debated is called a motion. Usually, motion stars with word like

“this house” (TH) “or “this house believes that (THBT)”. Both affirmative and negative teams are debating upon a motion which should be debatable and impartial. Debatable means that the motion is still falsifiable can be denied in some ways. Impartial implies a meaning that the motion should stand in the middle of neutral; it doesn’t incline to any sides. For example, this house believes that (THBT) e-book contributes for developmental education. So, both teams need to prove or justify whether e-book really can contribute for developmental education. 2. Definition. Debaters should “down to earth” or see the current issue happened in society. Definition can be done in two ways; word by word definition or the global definition. In fact, the word E-book is rarely heard’ thus we need to define it first. Or anyway, when we heard motion, “that sex education must be socialized in the school” what we need to do is giving the global meaning on it. 3. Theme line. To agree or disagree towards a motion, the reason must lie on a strong ground that could cover the whole argumentation. Theme line is the underlying reason which answers the big question “why” one side of the house supports or opposes a motion. Theme line is what a team needs to proof, it is also the main reason why a team attacks the opponent’s case. 4. Argument. A debate is like a battle of argument, in which each team stands on their position, attacks the opposite and defends their own case. The praiseworthy jobs can be done well by using critical and logical thinking. Argument is the fragment of thought to support the theme line. 5. Rebuttal. To win a debate, debaters not only need to build a strong case but they also have to attack their opponent’s arguments and provide strong defense from any attacks. That is why, rebuttal is one of the key to get the crown of victory. Basically, there are two kinds of rebuttal. Global rebuttal: it is an attack against the main core of the opponent’s case, the theme line. Consequently, their case is crumbling down. Detailed rebuttal: it is an attack towards each argument or example. 6. Sum-up/closing. Closing is simply concluding what has been through. A nice summary is preferable.”

Before starting debate, debaters should know these parts of debate in order to be a good debater. It also hoped that debate will run success.

Debating usually consist of three members in every team, although sometimes four members in many debates. Debates are varied in use, sometimes it used based on the number of students in the classroom and the level of students.

According to [5] the Indonesian schools debating Championship us the world school Format as follow: first of all, there are 2 teams debating, each consisting of 3 or 4 debaters who would be 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th speakers of the team. Second, one team shall be the government or affirmative side. This is the side agreeing with the motion. The other team shall be the opposition or negative side. This is the side disagreeing with the motion. Third, each speaker will deliver a substantial speech of 8 (eight) minutes in duration, with the affirmative going first. Afterward, either the 1st or 2nd speaker on both sides will deliver the very speeches of 4 (four) minutes in duration, with the negative going first.

Thus, the complete order of speaking during a debate is as follow:

Table 1:
Complete order of debating

No	Group	
1	1 st Affirmative	1 st Negative
2	2 nd Affirmative	2 nd Negative
3	3 rd Affirmative	3 rd Negative
4	4 th Affirmative	4 th Negative

Every team is given 30 minutes preparation time after the motion is released and before the debate begins. During this preparation time, teams are not allowed to get help from anybody or use dictionary, or any communication devices. From the procedures above it is obvious that each of the speakers has a different job in the debating activities. Each of the speakers has to prepare himself before the debate begins, for example, searching for the information about the issues being debated. In addition, the members of the teams need to

have sufficient preparation in order to be successful.

There are some researchers that have done this research. Firstly, [2] did the research entitle “Improving students speaking skill trough debate. This research was conducted to the grade XII of SMA Negeri 1. This research found that students got a good level to the five components of students’ communicative competence in English debate such as vocabularies, grammatical structure, fluency and comprehension.

Moreover, another research is suggested by [12] she had done the research about “Improving students’ speaking skill trough debate echnique”. She found that debate technique can improve students’ speaking skill. This is proven by students’ test score that improved in every cycle. She concluded that debate which is applied to teach students in the first semester was an effective technique. Debating activity also help the students to develop their speaking skill in interesting activities so that their speaking ability can be developed in narural way.

Then, [1] also conducted the research about improving the students’s speaking skill through debate technique. He concluded that 1) the use of debate technique has been advocated in teaching speaking process. 2) teaching speaking through debate can be enjoyable experience for both teacher and students.

II. METHOD

This research was called action research. This research was done by the researcher to improve students’ speaking ability in the classroom. [6] state that “action research is the process in which individual or several teachers collect evidence and make decisions about their own language, performance, beliefs, and effects in order to understand and improve them.” The characteristic of action research is collaboration. According to [3] action research is a collaborative approach to research that provides people with the means to take systematic action in an effort to resolve specific problems. Then [5] classroom action research

is a systematic way for teachers to discover what works best in their own classroom situation including their reflective idea in order to apply their way to solve classroom problem, so it can bring changes, and improvement in practice.

The researcher will collect the data in two ways. They are quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is to know what extent debating activities can improve the students' speaking ability. In quantitative, the researcher will collect the data through students' test. Qualitative data is to know what factors influence the development of the students' speaking ability. In qualitative, the researcher will collect the data through observation and interview. This research was conducted at STIKes YPAK Padang. It was located on Jl. S Parman Lolong. The number of students in the class was 16 students. The researcher conducted at the second year students. The time for each meeting is 90 minutes twice in a week.

In this research, the researcher herself is the key instrument. She is involved in every activity in the class. Since this was a quantitative and qualitative research, the data from quantitative would be taken by using test. The data from qualitative would be taken from observation and field notes.

1. Test were given based on the indicators of speaking. In doing the test, the researcher used oral test in the form of debate. There are five elements of speaking that used to assess students' speaking skill; they are pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. According to [4] there are five components of indicator in language that influence speaking skill. They are as follow:

Table 2.
Assesments of Speaking

NO	ASPECTS OF ASSESSMENT	SCORE	DESCRIPTION
1	Pronunciation	17-20	Have few traces of foreign accent.
		13-16	Always intelligible, though one is conscious of a definite accent.
		9-12	

		5-8 1-4	Pronunciation problems necessitate concentrated listening and occasionally lead to misunderstanding. Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently be repeated. Pronunciation problems to severe as to make speech virtually un intelligible.
2	Grammar	17-20 13-16 9-12 5-8 1-4	Makes few (if any) noticeable errors of grammar or word order. Occasionally makes grammatical and word order errors which do not, however, obscure meaning. Makes frequent errors of grammar and word order which occasionally obscure meaning. Grammar and word order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase sentences and/or restrict himself to basic patterns. Errors in grammar and word order so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.
3	Vocabulary	17-20 13-16	Use of vocabulary and idioms is virtually that of native speaker.

		9-12	Sometimes uses un appropriate terms and/or rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.
		5-8	Frequently uses the wrong words, conversation somewhat limited
		1-4	because of inadequate vocabulary.
			Misuse of words and very limited vocabulary make comprehension quite difficult.
			Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.
4	Fluency	17-20	Speech as fluent and effortless as that of a native speaker.
		13-16	Speed of speech seems to be slightly affected by language problems.
		9-12	Speed and fluency are rather strongly affected by language problems.
		5-8	Usually hesitant, often forced into silence by language limitations.
		1-4	Speech is so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.
5	Comprehension	17-20	Appears to understand everything without Difficulty.
		13-16	Understands nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition may
		9-12	

		5-8	be necessary.
		1-4	Understands most of what is said at slower than normal speed with repetitions. Has great difficulty following what is said.
			Can comprehend only "social conversation" spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.
			Cannot be said to understand even simple conversation English

2. Observation. The researcher observed the problem in teaching leaning process and tried to look for good solution to solve the problem
3. Field notes. The collaborator will take note during teaching learning process in the classroom. Field notes contain both teacher and students' activities
4. Interview. Interview was taken when the researcher asked the students about their condition in teaching learning. It is used to gain information about their comment of debating activities.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in two cycles. There were four meetings in each cycle, three meetings for debating activities and one meeting for the test. Each cycle has four stages; plan, action, observation, and reflection. Before doing the research, the researcher did pre-test for speaking skill. In this test the researcher called the students one by one. The researcher gave the question and asked students' opinion.

In pre-test score showed that the highest score was 65 and the lowest score was 39. The mean score of the students' speaking skill was 48,1. The result of student' speaking score in pre-test become the main consideration for the researcher to continue her research in cycle 1.

Cycle I

In the first cycle, there were four meetings, three meetings for implementing

debate activities in the class and one meeting for the test. Test was given orally one by one.

There were three activities in debate. They were pre, while, and post activity. In the pre activity, the researcher started the class by greeting and asking the students' condition. In the while activity, the researcher introduce about the debate. She also explained some advantages of debating in improving their speaking skill. Then, she prepared a controversial topic/ motion and guided the students about how to do debate in speaking.

The first meeting, the researcher had a topic about "Internet is very important in our life". The researcher showed the real object related to the internet. The researcher showed cellphone and picture and then gave some guided questions "what are advantages and disadvantages internet". The researcher also tried to invite the students' knowledge about the expression of agreement and disagreement. Then, the researcher explained the rules of the debate. After explaining the rules of debate and they were ready to present their ideas about the topic chosen. Before the researcher divided the students, she gave the students time to think or to discuss some arguments about the topic. Then, the researcher divided the students into two teams, affirmative and negative teams. To decide the students to be affirmative or negative, the researcher made small paper and wrote in the paper number 1,2 ,3, and 4. 1 meant speaker 1. 2 meant speaker 2. 3 meant speaker 3 and 4 meant speaker 4. If the student took number 1, so he/she tobe speaker 1. Then the researcher chose some other students to be a time keeper, a chair person and adjudicator. But for adjudicator, the researcher is adjudicator.

Since it was the first time in doing debate, the students were not active yet. They spoke by reading the note and often ask the reseacher about the meaning in English. And she motivated them to speak.

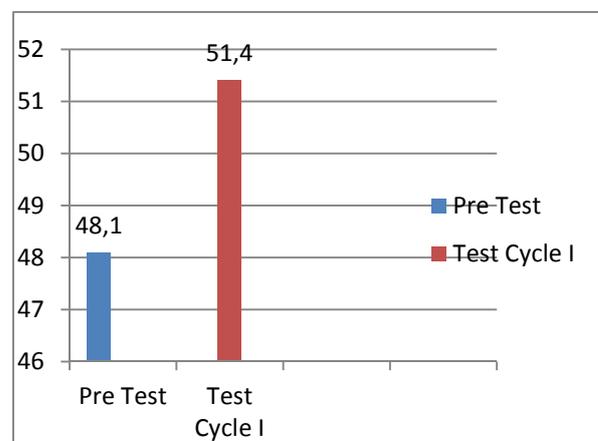
At the end of the class activity, the students were asked to rearrange their seat as usual. Before closing the meeting, the researcher guided them to discuss and get conclusion about the topic had been presented. The researcher wrote the key arguments on the

white board and asked the students to copy it on their note book.

It was continued by the next meeting about *smoking should be banned* and *alcohol should be illegal*.

In this cycle, the students were not active yet. They spoke by reading the note and often ask the researcher about the meaning in English and the researcher gave support students to speak. The result of speaking test was not satisfied yet. It can be seen in this figure below

Fig. 1
The comparison of the students mean score between pre test and speaking test 1



According to the graph above, the mean score of pre test is 48,1 and test cycle 1 is 51,4. The students' mean sore of speaking test 1 is increased about 3,3. From the table above, there was no significant improvement.

Based on the data gathered in cycle 1, the researcher and collaborator determined to revise some activities in cycle 1 to be applied in cycle 2 in order to improve the students' speaking. The researcher found that there were some problems had found in the first cycle:

1. The students often spoke Indonesia in giving opinion
2. The students were lack of practice in speaking. this condition made them low in accent and fluency
3. The students were not ready to speak.

Based on the problem above, the researcher and collaborator planned to do some improvements for the second cycle.

CYCLE II

In the second cycle, the researcher made the revised lesson plan that referred to the problem found in the first cycle. There were some problems which had not been solved yet, such as:

1. The students were difficult to interact with their friends.
2. The students were not active in the debate
3. The students were depending on dictionary in debate activity

Based on the problems in the first cycle, the researcher and collaborator discussed to overcome the problem which could help the students to the second cycle. There were:

1. Before doing the debate, discuss first about the vocabulary that related to the topic/motion and also introduced how to pronounce the words.
2. Give more time to the students to prepare themselves before debating activities.
3. Give time to the students to ask the researcher if they do not know how to make a statement or a sentence.
4. Support the students in giving idea.
5. Give additional score if the students speak to give their opinion.

Related to the condition above, the researcher conducted the second cycle. The second cycle had 4 meetings included 1 meeting for the test.

The researcher continued teaching speaking by using debate activities to improve the students' speaking skill. Since the researcher was not successfully in cycle 1, in cycle II the researcher explained what the debate was and told the procedure. The researcher also explained the advantages of debating activities. After that she prepared the controversial topic/motion. Before doing the debate, the researcher invited the students' knowledge about the vocabulary that related to the topic by showing the picture. The researcher also gave more time to the student to prepare and discuss before doing the debate. The researcher also gave time to the students to ask the researcher if they do not know how to make a statement or a sentence. Next, the students divided into affirmative or pro group and contra group. The students sat in two sides. On the right side was affirmative or pro group

and on the left side was contra or negative group.

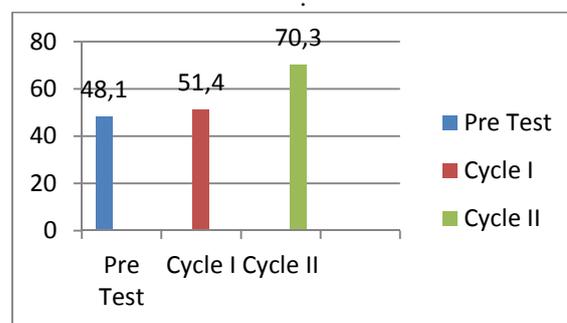
The students started debating by presenting the first speaker from affirmative or pro group. The first speaker of affirmative group gave definition of the motion and then the first speaker from negative group gave response to the definition. After that, continuously the next speakers from the pro and contra group.

While doing the debate, the researcher wrote some new vocabularies or new informations on the whiteboard. The researcher also supported the students in giving opinion. Some students became more active. Besides that, the researcher gave more additional score in the students spoke in the debate.

At the end of the debate, the researcher announced the winner of the debate activity. The researcher decided the winner based on the students' activeness in giving opinions. Before closing the meeting, the researcher guided the students to get conclusion about the topic/motion.

The result of cycle II can be seen in the figure below:

Fig. 2
The comparison of students mean score between pre test, test cycle I and test cycle II



From the graph above, there were good improvement. The students' score in pre test was 48,1. The test score in cycle 1 was 51,4. And the test score in cycle II had a good improvement. It was 70,3. It meant that, it does not need to move to another cycle.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that debating activities can better improve students' speaking skill at the third year students of STIKes YPAK Padang.

The process of teaching and learning using debating activities to improve students' speaking skill overall was succeed. It could be seen in the rising graph from pre- test to cycle II. The students' score in pre test was 48,1. The test score in cycle 1 was 51,4. And the test score in cycle II had a good improvement. It was 70,3. There are some factors that influence the changes of students' speaking skill: Material, the condition of the class, the teacher, condition of the students, and rewards. Moreover, through observation, the researcher found that the students enjoy and felt happy while speaking. This condition made the students had motivation to speak English.

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