

## **IMPROVING ELEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY BY USING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE IN PATTANI THAILAND**

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### **Abstract**

This paper concerns at brief descriptions about how the implementation of parliamentary debate is able to improve the students' speaking ability. However, many students find speaking as one of the most difficult skills in learning English. Therefore, parliamentary debate appears as a solution to enhance the eleventh grade students' speaking ability in Azizstan Foundation School Pattani Thailand. Meany (2002: 6) mentioned that Parliamentary Debate teaches sophisticated skills in extemporaneous speaking, critical listening, critical thinking, research, and presentation. The theory above is also supported by a study result of analyzing students' speaking ability in the class that has conducted towards eleventh grade students of senior high school which consists of 30 students.

The findings revealed that compared to the first cycle, the students are able to deliver their arguments effectively by using their notes as a guidance to elaborate more arguments, point by point in the second cycle. All in all, it can be concluded that Parliamentary Debate is able to significantly affect the overall performance of the students' speaking ability.

**Key Words:** *Parliamentary Debate, Speaking Ability*

### **I. Introduction**

In Thailand, English is taught as the foreign language, from elementary level until senior high school level. English is so important in Thailand, because basically Thailand is really famous with its tourism places, wonderful sites and unique culture. Indeed, the King Bhumibol Adulyadej told the Ministry of Education Somchai Wongsawat in Basic Education Core Curriculum (2008) that English becomes a tool for communication, education, seeking knowledge, livelihood, and creating understanding of cultures and visions of the world community. This aimed for preparing Thailand easily to face the globalization in which English is used as a means of oral and written communication.

As mentioned above, Basic Education Core Curriculum has certain extent that students should have mastered. The certain extent according to curriculum has aimed at enabling learners to acquire a favorable attitude towards foreign languages, the ability to use foreign languages for communicating in various situations, seeking knowledge, engaging in livelihood and pursuing further

education at higher levels. Learners will thus have knowledge and understanding of stories and cultural diversity of the world community, and will be able to creatively convey Thai concepts and culture to the global society. According to the Curriculum, The main contents include: a) Language for Communication, b) Language and Culture, c) Language and Relationship with Other Learning Areas, d) Language and Relationship with Community and the World. From those aspects, the researcher focuses on Language for Communication which concern on the usage of foreign languages for listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Meanwhile, In Indonesia, Indonesian Curriculum directly focuses on four basic skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, which are different from Thailand Curriculum. In Thailand, especially in Southern Part of Thailand, the students have to learn 4 languages; Thai, Melayu, Arabic, and English. This becomes a problem because they consider English is the hardest language to be learnt, especially when it comes to speaking.

Speaking is a crucial part of the language learning process (Burkart, 1998 in Atiqoh, 2007). However, many students in Thailand find speaking as one of the most difficult skills to be learnt. It is supported by Brown and Yule (1999) who state that spoken language production or learning to talk in foreign language is often considered to be the most difficult aspect in language learning. A lot of students in senior high schools still cannot speak English fluently, including the eleventh grade students of Azizstan Foundation School Pattani Thailand in 2014 / 2015 academic year. This is because the teacher uses the Teacher-Centered method which focuses on teacher's activeness, not the students'. Moreover, the students feel bored and lazy with the method. This makes the students want to experience something new.

One method which is rarely used in teaching speaking is Debate. According to Cambridge Dictionary (2008), Debate means discuss subject in a formal way, which is related to definition that the researcher found in Oxford Dictionary (2008); Debate means discuss something formally. Furthermore, when it comes to a formal situation, the researcher specifically concern on a parliamentary debate, which means a debate that is conducted by using a specific format and possibly in a formal discussion.

Parliamentary debate has some advantages to speaking. It is supported by Meany (2002) Parliamentary debate teaches sophisticated skills in extemporaneous speaking, critical listening, critical thinking, research, and presentation. This means, parliamentary debate, indeed is very useful to be used as a method in improving speaking ability of the students.

Based on the preliminary study by conducting interview to the English teacher of grade 11 students at Azizstan Foundation School, there were factors causing the students' problems in teaching English, especially in learning speaking. The difficulties in learning speaking occurred when the students cannot mention the correct pronunciation and they are not confident with themselves. This problem is also affects students' participation in teaching and learning process. Besides the interview, the problems were proved in the classroom observation. It was found that many students of class grade 11 have low speaking ability, in fact, mostly they have weaknesses in pronouncing V becomes W; for example Seven Eleven becomes Sewen Elewen, and in pronouncing /ch/ becomes /s/; for example, mostly they say Teasher rather than Teacher. However, all of these observations and assumptions need to be proved, and will be proved through this research.

Based on the above information, it is known that parliamentary debate has some advantages to the speaking ability of the students, which can be used to overcome the students' problem in learning English, especially in speaking. The researcher is going to make a research entitled "Improving Students' Speaking Ability by Using Parliamentary Debate at Azizstan Foundation School Pattani Thailand in the 2014 / 2015 Academic Year"

### ***Parliamentary Debate***

Meany (2002) states that Parliamentary Debate is a format for extemporaneous debate. Parliamentary debate involves two-person or three-person teams. Formats include two or four competing teams in a single debate. Debate is on a topic announced some 15 to 20 minutes before each debate. Limited parliamentary procedures (points of information, points of personal privilege, point of order) are used in the contests, varying by tournament guideline. Parliamentary debate concern on the use of its format, and still connected with its basic style of

debating, such as; giving arguments, refutations, and responds towards the opponents.

### ***The Steps of Parliamentary Debate***

If a debate is a form of argument then it logically follows that there must be something to argue about (Kretsch, 2009 in Werdiningsih, 2010). Related to the statement above, the first step to do is defining the motion. Motion is also can be stated as topic, and it is often about current issues of public importance; “THBT (This House Believe That) Pattani should be independence country” or about general philosophies or ideas; “THBT computer is better than teacher”. All motions begin with the word "That". As in other arguments there are two sides to any motion.

Secondly, two teams represent each side of the topic (motion) for debate. Each team has two people. This means that eight students participate in any given debate. Every speaker gives one speech, and students may attempt points of information during all speeches. Of the two teams on the same side of the motion, one is designated first proposition and the other as second proposition. The same is the case for the opposition teams: teams are listed as first or second opposition. The first proposition and first opposition do the constructive speeches. The second proposition team provides an extension of the original case of the first proposition team, and expands the debate to new areas. The second opposition team refutes this new argument direction. The final speakers for each team in the debate are like the rebuttals and do their job to summarize the winning points of the debate for their respective side (Meany 2003).

Meany (2003) also said that there are eight speeches in the debate. Each speaker delivers a single speech. Each speech is the same duration, usually five or seven minutes. There is no preparation time for speakers during the debate.

Finally, the students perform the debate. Each member of the team needs to reinforce the team line and be consistent with what has already been said and what will be said by the other members of their team.

## *Speaking Ability*

Speaking ability refers to students' ability in expressing their ideas in spoken form including in fluency and accuracy in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar (Johnson, 1995 in Atiqoh, 2007). Related to the statement above, the speaking ability is not only focused on fluency, but it is also focused on accuracy which can be expanded to accuracy in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

There are two major components generally recognized in the analysis of speech namely fluency and accuracy of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

Fluency is the quality or condition of being fluent (Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, 2000). Fluency in speaking ability can be obtained through students' experience in practicing the language repeatedly. The fluency of the students in speaking ability is not only focused on how students produced the language fluently, but it is also necessary to consider the appropriateness of what they want to talk, or in other words its accuracy.

Accuracy in speaking English depends on the mastery of the language system, in expressing the idea in English and the ability of speaking requires the mastery of language system (Byrne, 1986 in Atiqoh, 2007). In this case, the students need to know the aspects of the language system such as the pronunciation rules and the knowledge of vocabularies and grammar.

Pronunciation becomes a very important component in teaching spoken language (Meade, 1961 in Atiqoh, 2007). The students are required to discriminate the sounds or words spoken in isolation. Besides, the students should know and identify the stress or intonation of each vocabulary.

Vocabulary means the total number of words with the rules of combining those words to make up a language (Hornby, 1995 in Atiqoh, 2007). To make an effective communication, the students need to know a large number of vocabularies and also the ability of using it.

Grammar is the rules for forming words and making sentences (Oxford Pocket Dictionary, 2000). Grammar is one of the aspects of the language system and essential element of speaking that relates to whether or not the students use correct form of the target language. Teacher has to remember that in teaching the spoken language, he does not only teach how to speak well but also makes the

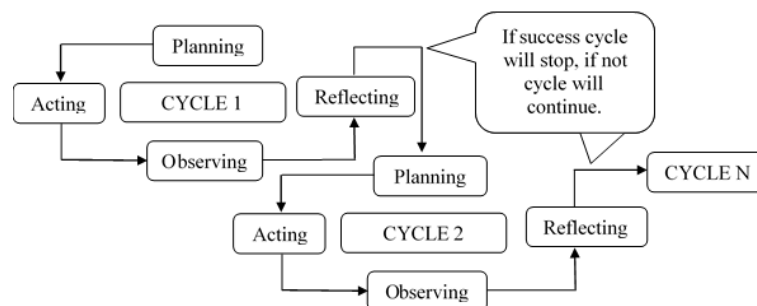
students understand the theory of how to produce sentences. Through grammar we will know the way to be fluent in a language, so that the listeners do not get difficulties to understand what they mean.

### ***The Use of Parliamentary Debate to Students' Speaking Ability***

Debate can improve the speaking ability by developing students' activeness in expressing oral argument (Lieb, 2008). Meanwhile, Meany (2002) states that parliamentary debate teaches sophisticated skills in extemporaneous speaking, critical listening, critical thinking, research and presentation. Parliamentary debate has dynamic way and students must deliver their arguments logically, which means the students have to be brave to speak and defend their arguments using ARE (Assertions, Reasons, and Evidences). By enhancing the students' confidence and creating the positive learning environment in the classroom, it is indeed that the student will gain improvements in their speaking ability.

Based on the explanation mentioned above, the problem of the research is formulated as follows "how can the Parliamentary Debate improve the English speaking ability of the eleventh grade students of Azizstan Foundation School Pattani Thailand in the 2014 / 2015 academic year?". And aims to find out how can the Parliamentary Debate improve the English speaking ability of the eleventh grade students of Azizstan Foundation School Pattani Thailand in the 2014 / 2015 academic year. The result of the research is expected to be useful for the students, the English teacher, and other researchers.

## **II. Method**



**Figure 1.** Classroom Action Research Design

### ***Data Collecting and Analisis***

As the aim was to find the improvement of the students' speaking ability in the classroom during the teaching and learning process, data collection and analysis demanded several viewings of the relevant video material besides gathering data in class as well. During the observation process the observer concentrated on collecting data by recording 90-minute lessons with a video recorder. And also the researcher uses the observation checklist which has four indicators that indicates that the students are active enough or confidence enough to be recorded as a high self-confidence student. The indicators are: 1. paying attention, 2. asking Question, 3. answering Question, 4. performing the task.

### **III. Result and Discussion**

The result of the speaking test in the Cycle 1 showed that the mean score of the students' speaking ability was 62.68 and the percentage of students who scored was 51.85%, and the students' active involvement in teaching learning process was 48.33%. It means that the standard mean score (M=65), the requirement of students scoring (E = 70%) and the requirement of active student in observation process (70%) in Cycle 1 of this research had not been achieved. From the data above, it can be concluded that Cycle 1 was not successful.

Therefore, the researcher investigated the cause of this matter. In the first cycle, a lot of students were passive because parliamentary debate was a new method for them, they tend to only read their notes while in the process of debating and they were not used to practice their speaking. Moreover, the students didn't have enough vocabulary so they had difficulties in arranging words into good and grammatical sentences. From the reasons above, the action in the second cycle needs to be improved by giving more practice, give more explanation about parliamentary debate, esp. about how to create a good note and more challenging topics to the students.

Speaking is more than just a way of making conversation; we use spoken language for a variety of reasons in daily life. Brown (2003:140) stated that, speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed. Those observations are colored by the fluency, accuracy and effectiveness of a test takers' listening skill, which necessarily compromises the reliability and productivity of an oral production test. Brown and Yule (1983:25) add that the students need to know

the English fluency, the pronunciation rules, knowledge of unfamiliar vocabularies and structure. In this case the goal of the teacher in teaching speaking is to enable student to apply the language as a means of communication consisting of fluency and accuracy in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. From the statement above, it can be concluded that speaking ability in this research is the ability to express someone's ideas orally in spoken form including in fluency and accuracy in pronunciation and vocabulary. Based on the result of speaking test through parliamentary debate in Cycle 2, the students' speaking ability in Cycle 2 was better than in Cycle 1. It means that parliamentary debate is able to improve the students' speaking ability.

Debate emphasizes on the process of considering multiple viewpoints and arriving at a judgment, and its application ranges from an individual using debate to make a decision in his or her own mind to an individual or group using debate to convince others to agree with them (Freeley & Steinberg, 2005 in Kennedy, 2007: 183). In addition, Kennedy (2007:183) states in-class debates cultivate the active engagement of students, placing the responsibility of comprehension on the shoulders of the students. The students' approach dramatically changes from a passive approach to an active one and students place a higher value on learning by participating than on learning by being lectured at and receiving information passively. As one student said about debates which held in 5/11 UP Class in Azizstan Foundation School Pattani Thailand, "In most classes you sit around very quietly at a table and get lectured at. This was an opportunity to interrelate with the subject itself and let the teacher stand back for a while; and let us actually teach each other." This means that the benefits of using parliamentary debate as an instructional strategy also include mastery of the content and the development of critical thinking skills, empathy, especially in oral communication skills. As like Meany (2002) states that parliamentary debate teaches sophisticated skills in extemporaneous speaking, critical listening, critical thinking, research, and presentation.

In this research, parliamentary debate tries to build in student's ability to improve their knowledge through communication by developing their activeness in expressing oral argument logically in a systematic way. Debating opens



opportunities for the development of empathy. As Suriya, one student of Azizstan Foundation School said, “When you went to the debate you listened to both sides of the argument, which I thought was the main strength of the debates, you saw both sides, rather than just seeing it from one point of view. Teachers tend to have their own opinion, so in this way we heard both sides of the argument.” Another student said that parliamentary debates “taught me that I shouldn’t be so narrow-minded and should hear things out until I make a final decision” By learning about both sides of a controversial topic, students are more open-minded and better able to see another person’s viewpoint.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Based on the discussion of the result, it can be concluded that the use of parliamentary debate is able to improve the eleventh grade students’ speaking ability at Azizstan Foundation School Pattani Thailand in 2014 / 2015 academic year by developing their activeness in expressing oral argument logically in a systematic way because in debating, students are not only shouting arguments. Their arguments must be supported with facts and it must be done systematically in a debate procedure. Because it is an argument, it enables students to formulate opinion logically by developing reasons and evidence. If students often do the debate, it will increase their vocabulary and their confidence as well, and they will be able to speak English fluently.

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