

Innovative Techniques to Learn English among EFL Learners: A Case Study in Indonesian

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Abstract

Speaking is a challenging skill for students to master. It requires a lot of practice. Teachers have to facilitate students to practice by providing interactive activities. Debate technique builds two-way interactions since it requires affirmative and negative teams to argue each other. This research aims to investigate whether debate technique is able to improve students' speaking skill. This study was conducted in MA DDI Sendana, Majene, West Sulawesi, Indonesia. The population of this study was the XII-year students. the number of populations was 22 students. The samples were taken by using total sampling technique. This study used pre-experimental research design. To gain the data, the researchers used pre-test and post-test. Pre-test was used to gain information about prior knowledge before treatment, and post-test to gain information about students' achievement after treatment. There were six meetings in the treatment. The data were analyzed by using t-test. After analyzing the data, it was found that there was significant difference ($t=52.973$; $\text{sig}/p < 0.05$) of students' scores before and after treatment. Students' score in post-test increased. It means that debate technique is able to improve students' speaking skill.

Keywords: Debate, Speaking, English, English Foreign Language

1. Background

To build interaction between or among human beings, people need a language. It functions to create understanding between or among them. Language is powerful (Salleh, 2014). Language works like a remote control. It can adjust people to be happy, sad, encouraged, passionate, curious, angry, etc. In other word, language is able to affect people's mood. Language can also be used to put ideas into someone's mind. People can influence others through language. If someone wants goodness for himself, then he or she must use good language, and vice versa.

Nowadays, the global world strengthens foreign languages as important thing in communication. A saying implies that people can grasp the world when they master foreign

languages. No one can deny that in this modern era English is the most widely studied foreign language. Each person has different needs for English. For example, level demand in the industrial world and business world influences businessmen greatly to expand their business; therefore, to build wider networking all over the world, they have to learn English. For academics, English assists them to read reference books, journal articles provided in this type of international language.

The main purpose of learning a foreign language is to use it productively. Only few of people who learn English not for communication; therefore, students are expected to be able to master productive skills. Every day people spend more time to speak than to write (Lai-Mei Leong, 2017). Starting from waking up, people have started to communicate verbally. When working, they also communicate more verbally. Until bedtime, people still communicate verbally. They communicate in writing only at certain times. That's why English teachers have to concern on students' improvement in speaking skill.

Speaking is one of productive skills which is very crucial to master. Speaking is language used verbally to communicate with others. Speaking activities involve two parties, namely a speaker and a listener (Fulcher, 2003). Both a speaker and a listener play important roles to build two-way communication (Nasir, 2018). When a speaker articulates their idea to a listener, a listener receives the message delivered by a speaker. Then, the listener in turn acts as a speaker when he or she replies or responds the message. According to Jones, in speaking people aims to accomplish something, explore ideas, work out for daily affairs, or just gather together (Jones, 1996). Speaking skill becomes a demand for students.

In fact, learning English in the classroom is more theoretical than practical. Students are more proficient using English tenses formulas with all the rules of language rather than verbal communication. They know many kinds of texts, such as narrative text, descriptive text, etc, but again they are inarticulate to speak English. Only few of students are fluent in speaking English (Rasdiana; Reski Alifa Ansari; Ade Mandala Putra, 2019). If so, then the main purpose of learning a language for communication is not achieved.

In MA DDI Sendana particularly in English class, students are passive speakers yet they are actively speaking in Indonesia. When they discussed about several movies and songs, they are so exited in giving comments. After the classes, they often took a chit chat each other. They talked about gossips or issues about actress and actors. They shared their opinion. Unfortunately, those speaking activities are only in Indonesia. As the twelfth-year students who are going to continue their study in universities, they have to prepare their English verbal communication ability. They will face many discussion forums in which they will state their opinion, ideas and position to something in English. They have to be prepared for those situations. That's why; students' passivity in speaking English must be immediately addressed.

Most of them are passive in English speaking activity. They make alibi that they do not need to speak more because what they want to say is only same as what their friends have said. In the preliminary study, when the researchers asked students' opinion about national examination which will be abolished, one of students gave response. He said that he

disagreed if national examination would be abolished because it actually encouraged students to learn more. If there is no more national examination, students will be discouraged to learn. When researchers asked again to other students, they only said that they were in line with their friends. This simple response influence oral production activities in the classroom. Teachers have to stimulate students deeply to be able to express their ideas. In addition, sometimes students also have no idea for issue discussed by their teachers since they are not interested in it, such as political issues. Topic selection has to be considered in teaching materials. Rao asserts that to select topics, teachers are recommended to consider students' interest and needs in order to lead them to be more enthusiastic and exited in learning (Rao, 2018). When students are interested in the topics, they will participate more actively.

This situation is actually very potential to improve students' speaking ability. One way to address this situation is implementation of debate technique. It encourages students to express different or various ideas. Teachers have to provoke students to think critically and deliver their arguments in English. In connection with teaching critical thinking, debate technique is an educational strategy to boost critical thinking and critical reasoning. It also upholds values, awareness of attitudes, and belief (Huber, 2006). Through debate, the teacher can stimulate students to think critically so that they are able to express more English sentences in conveying ideas from another perspective.

Ramezani et al examined the relationship between speaking ability and critical thinking ability of EFL learners. They took 100 samples from Payame Noor University students. He applied IELTS speaking test to measure students' speaking ability, and he used Lauren Starkey Critical Thinking Test to categorize students as critical thinkers. They discovered that there was a significant correlation coefficient between those variables. It meant that English students who were categorized as critical thinker had better performance in their speaking (Ramezaani, Raana; Larsari, Ebrahim Ezzati; Kiasi, 2016). This study shows that the critical thinking skill is influencing students' speaking ability.

Considering the problems and the previous study above, this research offers debate technique to implement in MA DDI Sendana. This research would like to investigate whether debate technique is able to improve students' speaking ability in MA DDI Sendana or not.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Concept of Speaking Skill

To fulfill someone's desires and deeds, they share their thoughts and ideas with other people through communication. There are two kinds of communication, namely verbal and written communication. Verbal communication is used more frequently than written communication. Verbal communication or speaking is speech production in which people transfer information and express idea each other. It is a daily activity. People interact verbally with others all the time (Thornbury, 2005). According to Hornby, speaking is offering words, making use of words in natural voice, making speech, knowing and being able to use a language to express one-self in words (Hornby, 1995). In short, speaking is an activity to use

words by producing sounds to convey someone's feeling, ideas, though. It is oral production activities.

In EFL teaching, speaking skill is completely denied whereas communication is more required than technology in employability (Srinivas Rao, 2019). However sophisticated a technology is, it is still controlled by humans, and humans need to communicate to build understanding which leading to harmonious relationship among them. Foreign language teaching like English which does not emphasize speaking skill improvement will become an obstacle when students will become alumni. In the next few years, when applying for a job the future alumni will not only compete with fellow nationals but also from other nations. Therefore; teaching speaking skill becomes an urgent demand.

It is inevitability that speaking skill is not easy for students. Students have to learn hard. It needs long process and takes time to speak English fluently. Bueno et al state that the one of most challenging skill that language learners face is speaking skill (Bueno, 2006), however; it is the most beneficial in real life situation. There are many advantages of English speaking skill, namely getting better opportunities in job selection, acquiring broad knowledge, and interacting with many more people around the globe (Srinivas Rao, 2019). The teacher must play a role in convincing students the importance of being skillful in speaking. Teachers also have to think of teaching strategies or technique to implement in the classroom so that students do not have difficulty in learning speaking.

There are five components which form a good speaking (Harris; David P, 1969). The first is pronunciation. Every utterance that someone has produced produces sounds. Every sound has a different meaning. Therefore, pronunciation errors produce sound errors which have an impact on meaning errors. In improving English speaking skill, teachers cannot deny pronunciation. It aims to make sure that every single word that students produce is understandable for their listeners. Students do not need to be like English native speakers to speak English. Teachers just have to make sure that the words or sentences that students produce are proper. As a result, what students mean can be accepted by their audience.

The second is vocabulary. In learning speaking, an adequate amount of vocabularies influences someone's speaking ability. If teachers expect their students to speak more, they have to give a bunch of vocabulary as input for them to express their ideas. Sometimes someone express a word which is different from what they mean. It happens because they have lack of vocabularies to express the proper meaning. For example, they mean to say "Your body temperature has risen"; then they say "Your body is hot". If they have adequate vocabulary, they will use word "Warm" rather than "Hot". In that sentence, "Hot" has negative connotation. In addition, even someone have good idea but if they do not have any representative words to express, then they are judged "They cannot speak". Vocabulary is powerful in speaking.

The third is grammar. Grammar also has a central role in speaking. English speakers have to know rules of English grammar as a provision for speaking. English grammar and Indonesian grammar are very different. For example, to express noun phrase, Indonesia and English have reversed pattern. In Indonesia noun comes first then adjective, but in English

adjective comes first then noun. Inaccurate word order in sentences has the potential to be confusing. Both listener and reader may have no idea about what speaker and writer mean.

The forth is fluency. “Fluency in a language means speaking easily, reasonably quickly and without having to stop and pause a lot” (Learn English Teens, 2013). To be fluent in speaking foreign languages, it may take times; many years. There have to be a lot of practices. There have to be extra efforts such as being confident and not afraid of making mistakes. Students have to high motivation to learn so that they are encouraged to keep practice. Students have to practice consistently to achieve good progress every time. Teachers play role to mediate and support the students to maximize their potential.

The last is comprehension. Someone who wants to speak has to understand what the ground idea that they want to deliver. They have to comprehend what they are talking about. It aims to make sure the message that they deliver can be reached by their respondents. It means to prevent misunderstanding caused by misinformation delivered by speakers. Comprehension is very strategic to build verbal communication between or among people. This should not be ruled out.

Speaking is effortful because there are many things related to make a speaking activity effective. Someone has to belong to ability to utilize the language in social interactions properly. Social interaction involves three important elements, namely verbal communication, paralinguistic elements of speech and nonlinguistic elements. Forms of paralinguistic elements of speech are intonation, stress, and pitch, while forms of nonlinguistic elements are body language, gesture, and expression (Richards, J. C; Renandya, 2002). Nonlinguistic elements are able to convey messages even though a speech is not delivered. Students have to learn to put them together when speaking so that they can make effective speaking. Speaking skill is very urgent for students in this current era.

Brown and Yuke argue that a student will be admitted good in English when they perform good English speaking. Speaking becomes a barometer among other skill in real life situation (Brown, 2004). Even though a student has a lot of vocabularies, understands the complexity of the English structure and grammar is able to read English texts and even is able to write English scripts well but cannot speak English fluently, then according to Brown the student is still considered not skillful in English yet by many people. In order that learning English as foreign language is meaningful, teachers have to create opportunities for students to practice their memorized vocabularies into speaking. Speaking activity should be effective.

2.2. Debate Technique

According to Dale and Wolf, debate is defined as a situation in which people present and argue contrast point of view (Dale, Paulette; Wolf, 2000). Hawkes defines debate as an activity which requires integrated knowledge because the activity presents pro facts and data while argues the contra statements from various perspectives (Hawkes, 2016). As conclusion, debate is an arguing activity between two parties in discussing a topic or motion while they try to defend their ideas. Through debate, students have opportunities to involve and

contribute their ideas by presenting data and facts to convince other parties regarding an issue. They use convincing sentences or statements to argue with others and defend.

There are a number of attractive activities that teachers can implement to improve students' speaking skill. Those activities are being vlogger, being radio announcer, role play, and debate. Debate is suitable for learners in intermediate and advanced levels. As the last year students in MA DDI Sendana, debate is appropriate to use in their level to improve their English-speaking skill. Dundes reveals that debate is a teaching technique that can encourage students who seldom talk or participate in speaking activities (Dundes, 2001). Considering the problem faced by the XII-year students in MA DDI Sendana, debate is potentially able to improve students' participation in speaking since they have to try to defend their arguments in front of public.

The implementation of debate technique in speaking class requires students to master the topic or motion. Students have to provide data to support their arguments and to prevent students from unclear debate. Debate trains students to think critically. It also demands students to prepare various references to argue. It supports students to broaden their knowledge. This debate not only sharpens students' thought, but also students' speaking skill. Through debate, students train to arrange convincing statements. They will try to make many more verbal arguments to defend their position which is contrast to other parties.

Debate technique engages students to be active. This kind of technique makes every student becomes a speaker. None of them only become an audience. They work in groups. One group consists of two or three students. There are two groups who debate each other for one session. One group stands for pros group, and another group stands for cons group. Everyone has a chance to be a debater, so everyone practices English speaking in the classroom. Every group defends their argument by providing supporting data. It builds two-ways interaction. The debate activity is more interesting when topics given to students are familiar topics for them. They are able to explore their ideas. Therefore, topics or motions selection should be consideration for English teachers. When they have no idea about the topic, they will have no vocabularies to express the ideas. As a result, there is no English-speaking activity in the classroom.

Bellon argues that there are several advantages of debate as follow: 1) Improving students' critical thinking. A debater has to analyze the motion from multi perspectives critically. In certain parts, he/ she have to try to rebut his/her rivals' arguments by convincing them. He/she also may interrupt others to clarify others' statements; 2) Developing students' communication skill. A debater trains their public speaking. They try to arrange powerful sentences which are able to persuade others to have the same opinion with them. Good pronunciation, vocabularies, grammar, fluency and comprehension really contribute to a debater's performance; 3) Developing questioning skill and struggling ability. In a debate, when a debater refutes others' opinion, they may ask questions. In addition, a debater has fighting spirit to defend their opinion. When their rivals disprove them, they have to be ready mentally because it is a part of the game; 4) Increasing ability to make and defend choices from complex problems which may not be their interest; 5) Connecting students to academic

subjects and real life; 6) Teaching students to adopt various perspectives which lead students to improve their problem solving skill (Bellon, 2000). Considering the advantages of debate technique in learning, there is no doubt to use debate in a speaking class.

There are a number of parliamentary debate formats. They are Australasian, Asian, and British parliamentary. This research used Australasian Parliamentary format. English debate by using Australasian Parliamentary consists consist of two teams, affirmative and negative team. Each team consists of three members. In affirmative team, the first speaker acts as prime minister, the second speaker acts as deputy and the third speaker acts as government whip. In negative team, the first speaker acts as leader of opposition, the second speaker acts as deputy, and the third speaker acts as opposition whip. In the classroom, the researchers divided students into several teams, so that everyone participated in the English debate.

In a debate, there are several terms which students need to know. Firstly is motion. It is a topic which will be debated by the team. A motion has to be debatable. It means that a motion is open to discuss or to argue. In addition, it also has to be impartial. It refers to neutrality. This does not benefit either party. For instance, this house believes that national examination must be abolished. Every team will argue each other to prove whether the national examination must be abolished or not. Motions offered in the debate are always begun by a phrase “This House (TH)” or by a sentence “This House Believes That (THBT)”. Affirmative and negative team debate the determined motion based on their position. The affirmative team agrees with the motion, yet the negative team disagrees. In the classroom, teachers have to make interesting motions to students in order that students are courage to learn speaking through debate technique.

Secondly is definition. The first speaker of affirmative team is the one who will start the debate session. He has to define the motion. He is able to define every word of the motion or he is able to define the motion globally. The definition should be based on consideration of the [resent issue which happened in the society. For example, the word “National examination” in the motion has to be clearly defined. Definition is very important to build common understanding by giving limitation. In a research term, it functions like operational definition.

Thirdly is theme line. It refers to strong ground which contains the overall argumentations. It becomes a basis why a team agrees or supports the motion, and why another team disagrees or contradicts to the motion. In other words, it is the fundamental reason why a team shoots down another team. In a brief, theme line is what a team requires to prove.

Fourthly is argument. In a debate session, there is a battle of argument. Every team defends their position to the motion by delivering arguments. Argument refers to contrast views in a discussion between two or more people. It is disagreement which is often based on facts and data. Each team strives and survives to keep arguing another team’s arguments. It needs logical and critical thinking skill to produce it. It is a part of thought to back up the theme line.

Fifthly is rebuttal. In an English debate, there will be a winning team. To win, the members of the team have to create a strong case. In addition, they have to break another team's arguments while present aggressive defense; therefore, rebuttal becomes part of the key to get the winning trophy. Rebuttal means to convince the opponent that their arguments are wrong. Rebuttal consists of two kinds, namely global and detailed rebuttal. Global rebuttal is opposing arguments against the essential core of opponent's theme line, while detailed rebuttal is a breaking argument toward every argument or an example.

Finally, is closing/ sum-up. It is a closing statement in which debaters convince the opponent and audience that their arguments are logical, valid and reliable (Mellshalihah, 2008). Students who will learn an English debate system have to be familiar with those terms. Teachers have to introduce those terms and its functions.

3. Methodology

This research applied pre-experimental research design. It was one group pre-test and post-test. It was conducted to a single studied group. There was no control or comparative group. There were two variables in this research. Speaking ability was dependent variable, and debate technique was dependent variable. The population of this research was the XII-year students in MA DDI Sendana, Majene Regency, West Sulawesi, Indonesia. There were 22 students in that class. The samples of this research were taken by using total sampling.

This research used pre-test and post-test as instruments to measure students' ability before and after having treatments. Those tests were oral tests. Before giving treatments, the researchers conducted pre-test to measure students' prior ability. After that, the researchers taught speaking by using debate technique to students in six meetings. After that, the researchers conducted the post-test to measure the improvement of students' speaking skill. The data of this research were analyzed by using t-test. It aims to know whether there were different results between pre and post-test. The researchers used SPSS 17 to analyze it.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Result

After calculating the data, here are the results of pre and post-test. The improvement of the two tests is illustrated in the following chart:

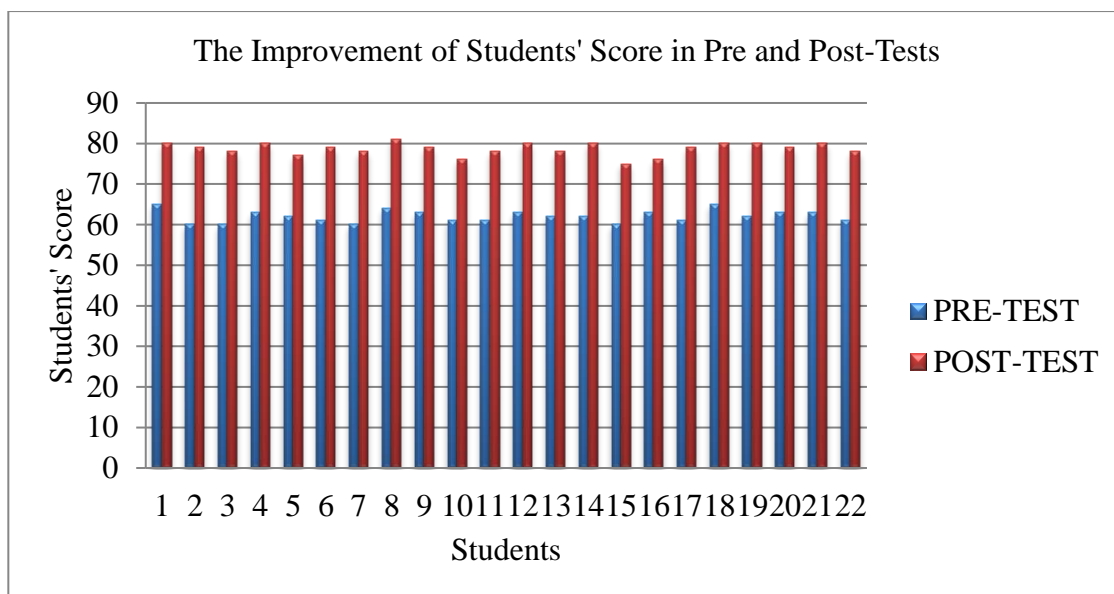


Figure 1. The improvement of students’ score in pre and post-test

Figure 1 above describes students’ scores before and after being taught by debating technique in their speaking class. It displays every student’s improvement in their pre and post-test. This figure presents that from 22 students in the XII class of MA DDI Sendana, students’ scores were increasing. In their pre-test, the students’ average score was 62.04. In their post-test, it improves into 78.63. In pre-test, the lowest scores were gained by four students, namely students 2, 3, 7 and 15. They got 60, while other students were higher than 60. The highest scores in pre-test were gained by two students, namely students 1 and 18. They got 65.

In post-test, the lowest score was gained by only one student. He is student 15. His score was 75. Comparing to students’ lowest score in pre-test, the difference in score was 15 points. It shows that the lowest score in post-test was increasing. For the highest score in post-test, it was gained also by only one student. She is student 8. Her score was 81. Comparing to the highest score of pre-tests, the difference in score was 16 scores. It means that there was positive improvement in post-test.

In addition, the following table presents the percentage of the frequency of students’ score in pre-test and post-test based on range scores.

Table 1. Students’ Percentage in Pre and Post-Test based on Range Scores

Score Range	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0-20	0	0	0	0
21-40	0	0	0	0
41-60	4	18	0	0
61-80	18	82	21	95
81-100	0	0	1	5
Total	22	100	22	100

Table 1 above describes that 82% students were in 61-80 level. The highest score was in this level too, while the others were in 41-60 level. The lowest score was in that level too. Comparing to the post test, mostly students were also in 61-80 level. Nevertheless, the highest score in post-test was not in that level. The highest one was in higher level, namely in 81-100 level. Score range level in post-test was increasing from score range level in pre-test.

To know the level of significances of the improvement, the writer analyzed the score by using t-test. The following was the result:

Table 2. T-Test Result

		Paired Samples Test						t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	PRE TEST - POST TEST	-16.591	1.469	.313	-17.242	-15.940	-52.973	21	.000	

Table 2 above shows that there was significant difference ($t=52.973$; sig/ $p < 0.05$) of students' score in speaking before and after they were taught by using debate technique. It means that there was significant improvement in students' speaking skill after they had treatments from the researchers. It implies the use of debate technique in speaking class was effective to improve students' speaking skill of the XII year students in MA DDI Sendana.

4.2. Discussion

Results of this study have answered the research question above. Debate technique helps students to participate a lot in speaking class. It influences to the improvement of students' score in post-test. During the treatment, every student had an opportunity as a debater. They were very interested. During the six meetings of treatments, they were very excited to involve themselves since the selected motions were issues that interest them. Those motions were (1) THBT full day school system has to be implemented; (2) THBT the use of mobile phone in the classroom is allowed; (3) THBT grading system at school is not proper; (4) THBT early marriage should be allowed; (5) THBT woman can be a good leader; and (6) THBT Social media leads people to be anti-social.

What Rao recommended to teachers about the caution in choosing topics (Rao, 2018) worked well. Teachers have to consider motions that they are going to select in a debate session. Teachers not only have to make sure about students' prior knowledge about the motion, but they also have to make sure that students are convenient with the topic. It is true that the more interesting a motion in a debate, the more enthusiastic the students to. Everyone wanted to deliver their idea about their position to the motion.

As stated by Huber, debate technique is a way to sharpen students' critical thinking (Huber, 2006). Students in the classroom thought deeply and considered multiple aspects of the motions. They tried to think out of the box to reply the speech from their opponent. They were effortful to do rebuttal by presenting convincing arguments. They read many references

to defend and to convince the audience about their alignment. Debate technique demands students to prepare materials for a debate session. In their preparation, they shared ideas with their group mate. It enriches students' knowledge and their reasons more critical.

In addition, Ramezaani et al said that critical thinkers have good performance in speaking (Ramezaani, Raana; Larsari, Ebrahim Ezzati; Kiasi, 2016). Critical thinkers have a bunch of qualified idea to deliver; therefore, they are able to arrange sentences from different views to persuade people to agree with them. The ability to make convincing statements verbally improves students speaking skill. It worked when a student, a debater, took their turn to speech their point of view to the motion.

What Dundes said that a debate technique is able to increase students' participation in speaking activities (Dundes, 2001) is very relevant to this research. Before having treatment, students were not really active to speak in English. They responded teacher's questions or statements very simple. After having treatment, students were so excited to argue, to answer, and to respond to any input they received. They became more critical and more active to participate in delivering their idea and arguments. The number of sentences they made increased.

Students' fluency, pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, and vocabulary improved after the treatment. It happened because, in debate technique, students are required to read first. This activity improved their vocabulary, comprehension and their grammar in speaking. In addition, students also were demanded to discuss with their team first before the debate session took place. This activity improved their fluency and pronunciation. All speaking components improved in learning speaking through debate technique.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion above, the writers draw a conclusion as follow: debate technique is able to improve students' speaking skill. Debate technique improves every component of students' speaking skill, namely students' vocabulary, comprehension, grammar, fluency and pronunciation. The improvement happened because there were pre-requisite activities in a debate technique, namely reading references and discussion with the team. Those activities help students to arrange good sentences verbally in a debate session. English teachers are recommended to use debate technique to improve students' speaking skill by considering interesting motions for students.

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