

# DISCUSSION GAMES AS AN INNOVATION TO IMPROVE THE SPEAKING ABILITY

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## ***ABSTRACT:***

*Speaking is one of the skills that have to be mastered by the learners in teaching learning process. Whenever students want to speak, they always feel afraid of making mistake. Based on the problem above, the teachers have to find the appropriate technique or media. Discussion games can help the students to improve their speaking ability. The main intention of discussion games is, to get the students to talk and to stimulate their interest and imagination. By using discussion games the teacher can also use this game to improve the atmosphere in the class and help students cooperate better with each other.*

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## **A. Introduction**

Since English has reached a status as a global language, the need of using it becomes more and more important. Brown (1983: 1) explains that during the first century, the emphasis in foreign language teaching was laid on the teaching of written language and, specifically, of literary language.

From time to time, the views on the development of speaking skill are also changing. Rivers (1972: 6) state that according to the progressive development view, ability to speak the language derives from the systematic study of grammar, phonology, and lexicon. Meanwhile the immediate communication view holds that speaking skill is developed from the first contact with the language. Students may be encouraged to express themselves in simple ways under the guidance of the teachers.

Among on the four main language skills, speaking is one of the main language skills. Speaking English as a foreign language is difficult to do. Whenever students want to speak, they always feel afraid of making mistake. This situation should be considered by the teacher of

English who direct action in teaching and learning process. Teacher should create atmosphere in the classroom that will raise the students' ability to speak English. Bailey (2005) said that many teachers make the students afraid to speak English. Therefore, teacher should give many opportunities for their students to practice their speaking and expressing their ideas.

As Rivers (1972) states that the teacher should give many opportunities to practice their speaking because through speaking students can express their feeling, thought, emotion, and their intention. Therefore teacher should create or choose good techniques which stimulate students to use the language in expressing his/her intended meaning, within the limit of what he/she has learned so far.

## **B. Factors Influence Speaking Ability**

Motivation has been identifying as the learner's orientation with regard to goal of learning a second language. In order to make the language learning process a more motivating experience instructors need to put a great deal of thought into developing programs which maintain student interest

and have obtainable short term goals. At university level this may include, as suggested by Luoma (2004), any number of foreign exchange programs with other universities, overseas "homestay" programs, or any other activities which may help to motivate students to improve their target language proficiency.

Therefore Que (2004 : 11-12) did her research about students motivation to speak English through pair talks. Her findings are as follow: The implementation of combining, co-operating and superior and imperious tasks engage students actively in speaking English that is the students use English most of the time and are almost never confused or silent in their talking activities.

- 1) Factors hampering the student in speaking English are almost as follow:
  - a. A psychological factor that is the students are usually ashamed, awkward, and afraid of speaking English to the other people.
  - b. A cognitive factor that is the students are lack of mastery English grammar and vocabulary. They are also difficult to pronounce English words and their ideas in English.
  - c. The lack of practice that is the students are difficult to find out the situation in which they practice their English more frequently.
- 2) Find same factors that hinder the students in speaking, they are as follow:
  - a. Cognitive factors, in which the students lack of" mastery English elements namely: Pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.
  - b. Psychological factors in which the students are ashamed and afraid of

making mistakes and being considered conceited by their friends.

- c. The students sometimes do not want to speak out because they are ashamed. Some reasons cause the students afraid and ashamed. They are as follow:
  - 1). The lack of practice because the students rarely speak English either in the classroom or outside the classroom.
  - 2). The students have interest toward speaking but do not get enough opportunities to speak English in the classroom.

### **C. The Teaching of Speaking**

There have been so many ways and theories found to help teachers develop students' capability in using the language. Various kinds of speaking activities, such as role-play, discussion, sharing and drama that can be done both in pairs and in groups or games that are usually favorable to the students, hopefully, can be applied in English class. Teachers are expected to gain fresh insight into the nature of classroom communication and learn how to create materials that will engage the learners in meaningful face-to-face interaction (Tompson, 1990: 281). Still in his explanation that if the objective is to enable the learners to use the foreign language as a medium of oneself conscious expression, then teachers need to include activities which offer practice in negotiation and self-expression.

In some certain countries like Indonesia, English is used as a foreign language, because we can only find it in a classroom where the language is being learned at schools. The development of

English teaching and learning here, such as aims and goals of English instruction, methods of teaching, familiarity with the curriculum, etc have also been surveyed (Tompson, 1990: 67-68). The majority of the students, teachers, and parents stated that English instruction should not be targeted only at the acquisition of reading skill, but should also be aimed at the development of speaking skill (Tompson, 1990: 68).

Meanwhile According to Bailey,(2005: 39-40)there are three principles in teaching speaking they are :

- (1) Provide something for learners to talk.  
In teaching speaking the teachers should attend to the communicative needs and purposes of language learners. It means that the teacher's talk should be based on the learners' need and what the teacher talk is about learners' goal in every classroom speaking practice. Traditional English teachers in language classroom sometimes forget the natural joy and enthusiasm of talking about something interesting, or accomplishing a genuine purposes for communicating with others. English language teachers should provide something for learners to talk about. Interesting talking in teaching speaking can be in the form of students' hobbies and / or their world.

- (2) Create opportunities for students to interact by using group-work or pair work.

Using group-work and pair-work can improve learners' motivation and promote choice, independence, creativity, and realism. From this statement it can be said that, creativity of an English teacher is needed to create his or her instructional method to

give new atmosphere in teaching learning process in speaking class.

- (3) Manipulate physical arrangements to promote speaking practice.

Seating and other aspects of environment are said to be influential during the teaching and learning, and students' anxious and their reticent cause them nothing to talk. One of the ways to solve this problem is by changing the arrangement of desks. Dealing with students speaking ability, the arrangement of the desks can be inside-outside circle, that is a technique for giving students the chance to share their idea in discussion way. In this procedure, the learners talk briefly with different people and then move on talk to someone new, as if they were at social gathering (Bailey,2005:39-40).

#### **D. Games**

Games are activities with rules, a goal, and element of fun. For many years ago, games were used to teaching learning process. Many teacher use games as they can be used to create fun and relaxation situation in the classroom in order the students will interested to learn English. Davidson (1978) state that games involve (1) rules which must be followed (2) competition between individuals or teams (3) Determination of a winner if teams or players are a part of the game plans, cooperative learning as well as competition can result.

There are many kinds of games; the teacher may choose a game which relax and fun base on the goal of the subject. Dobson (1975:295) says that many teachers of English as second language who use game with children and teenagers and even adult are extremely pleased by the result. Next,

game even more complicated than just that assumption by considering that games need planning, preparation which must be considered by the teacher.

### E. Game as Technique Speaking

Games bring the students into enjoyable activity from serious activity of learning; it must be more than just fun. It aims to be the innovation technique of the speaking in teaching learning process. Games give many practices certain language items that are very useful for the learners. In speaking, the students always reluctant to share their idea, by using game it will reduce learning anxiety.

### F. Principle of Games Selection

Weed (1972:29) proposes some principles of game selection when effectiveness and successes are needed. The principles can be used as a sort of a checklist when selecting a game, in which there are factors that the teacher must take into account.

- 1) The purpose of the game  
The teacher should refer to the section concerning purposes and relate the purpose to the particular point to teach in the lesson (e. g. for command: *come on, hurry up, etc*)
- 2) The space to play the game  
The teacher should check whether there is a possibility for having active games in a limited space in a room.
- 3) The number of the students  
The teacher should know that there are some games, which work well only for a large number of students, and some which work quite well with two people. Still there is a possibility of adapting a game to some situation if it is thought of beforehand. It means that the game

has to be well planned in advance before applying to the class activity.

- 4) The time allocation  
Some games need a lot of time to play. A seemingly simple game may take a long time to play. Here, the teacher should choose the appropriate game.
- 5) The use of properties  
When a game needs some properties, the teacher should make sure to bring one and not make it for granted.
- 6) The necessary rewards  
The students are usually satisfied when they win the game. But, giving rewards can be part of the game.
- 7) The game suits the situation  
This is the most important point since there must be relation between the game and what is being taught. Again, almost any game can be changed in number of ways to fit the space of the room, the number of students, the properties available and so forth.

### G. Discussion Games

In discussion games, they are games like exercises that lead to discussions. The main intention of these exercises is, to get the students to talk and to stimulate their interest and imagination. By using discussion games the teacher can also use this game to improve the atmosphere in the class and help students cooperate better with each other. There are the kinds of discussion games Taken from Friederike Klippel:

#### 1. Optimist and Pessimists

*Aims:* skill-speaking

*Language:* expressing different points of view

*Level:* Intermediate

*Time:* 5-15 minutes

*Procedure Step 1:*

One student from team 1 (optimists)

begins by giving a statement, e.g. 'it is good for your health if you do some sport'. Then one student from the other team (pessimists) gives the other point of view, e.g. 'but sports like boxing or car racing are dangerous. 'The pessimists continue with a new-pessimistic-statement, which the optimists have to react to.

*Step 2:* After a few minutes of exchanging statements, the students are asked if they found it difficult to adopt one point of view throughout. They could also mention those statements which went against their personal viewpoint.

## 2. Awards

*Aims:* Skill-speaking

*Language-*describe someone, reporting someone's activities, giving reasons, contradicting, stating preferences, agreeing and disagreeing.

*Level:* Intermediate

*Time:* 25-45 minutes

*Procedure Step 1:*

The students talk about the awards they can think of

Such as 'Miss World, etc. the student try to think of many more possible award (e.g. Smile award, Listening award) all awards (they should be for positive qualities) are listed on the blackboard.

*Step 2:* Groups are formed and each group decides on two categories of award they would like to find candidates for.

*Step 3:* Now each group member describes one candidate for each award. (These should be people he knows personally.) Another group

member takes down some notes. When everybody has finished, the qualities of all people suggested for awards are discussed. The group members have to agree on whom to give the awards to.

*Step 4:* Each group reports its results to the class. A short discussion of the reasons for choosing these people follows.

## 3. What Evidence?

*Aims:* Skill-speaking

*Language-*discussing, giving reasons, agreeing and disagreeing.

*Level:* Intermediate

*Time:* 20-30 minutes

*Procedure Step 1:*

Each team or group receives a copy of the handout.

The students now have to discuss what evidence each of them would accept as regards the truth of each statement. They should not discuss whether they believe that a statement is true but what evidence would convince them. If the students cannot agree on acceptable proof they should note down their differences of opinion.

*Step 2:* When all the statements have been discussed, the groups report back to the whole class.

*The Hand out* What Evidence?

There are fifteen tables in this room.

Men are better cooks than women.

Children like ice cream.

Life is hard.

Girls are better storytellers than boys.

## H. Conclusion

Speaking is one of important skills that many students always difficult to master it. Here, Games are activities with rules, a goal, and element of fun will help students to

reduce their anxiety. Games are suggested to be applied in teaching learning process, because it can be used to create fun and relaxation situation in the classroom in order the students will interested to learn English. Games give many practices certain language items that are very useful for the learners. In speaking, the students always reluctant to share their idea, by using game it will reduce learning anxiety. In discussion games, they are games like exercises that lead to discussions. The main intention of these exercises is, to get the students to talk and to stimulate their interest and imagination. There are three kinds of discussion game: optimist and pessimist, award, and what evident. By using discussion games the teacher can also use this game to improve the atmosphere in the class especially their speaking ability and help students cooperate better with each other.

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