

Delving Debaters' Self-Development Strategies in Enhancing Their Speaking Performance

Husnul Khatimah ^{1✉}, Suzucy Yanelda ², Muslem ³

¹English Education Department, IAIN Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia,

²English Education Department, IAIN Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia,

³English Education Department, IAIN Langsa, Aceh, Indonesia

✉email: husnul@iainlangsa.ac.id

Received:

28 March
2022

Revised:

12 June
2022

Accepted:

26 June
2022

ABSTRACT

Debaters are examined as students who possess advance English speaking performance compared to other English Department students. In real life, debaters are fighting by themselves as autodidac learners to develop their speaking performance since there was no specific course provided for that purposes. This qualitative study aimed to explore the debaters' strategy in developing their speaking performance using self-development approach. The participants were four selected debaters from Zawiyah English Club (ZEC), a students' speaking community for preparing debaters in Langsa State Islamic Institute (IAIN Langsa). The purposive sampling method was used in selecting the participants as only four debaters who have experienced debate contests were chosen. The descriptive qualitative approach was used with interview as research data collection instruments. In analyzing the data, thematic analysis was applied using Reinder's cyclical nature of autonomous learning (2010). The researchers found that all of the participants were aware of their learning needs and goals, they knew how to select their learning materials, and they spent about 1-2 hours per day to practice developing their speaking. They monitored their progress based on the mistakes they have made or their peer's feedback in the ZEC club. From 8 stages suggested by Reinder (2010), almost all of the stages were followed by the participants as their learning strategies. It could be concluded that they are practicing their self-development strategy through implementing autonomous learning.

Keywords: *Self-development; Autonomous Learning; Debater; Speaking Performance.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a multicultural nation with more than a hundred languages. Indonesian citizen mostly speak in their local language for daily life and use Bahasa Indonesia as their second language. English is not familiar in their daily basis so it makes English learner in Indonesia faced difficulty in learning English especially in finding a partner to practice their English with.

To overcome this problem, some people decided to find an English private course in order to find an English teacher or to have a partner for practicing their English. In another side, some people chose to take English as their major study and

almost all of universities in Indonesia provide English major. For instance, IAIN Langsa is the Islamic institution where the researchers have worked. It is located in Langsa Town, Aceh province. According to the researchers' preliminary research, most of the fifth semester students at English Education Department of IAIN Langsa already mastered basic English skills, but most of them were not ready to speak English spontaneously in their daily life.

Speaking as defined by Hedge (2000) is a skill by which people are judged while first impressions are being formed. It implicitly means that the first and the last aim of acquiring such language skills is to achieve a high development of abilities to receive and produce the target language either in oral or written form, achieving a good mastery in the productive and receptive skills. As far as speaking is concerned, it is regarded as the major skill to be developed because it is necessary for displaying learners' language proficiency. However, as the lack of 'speaking with native speakers' experience, and supported with lack of practice time in the classroom where speaking class only about two hours a week, the speaking performance of students in IAIN Langsa remained passive. It emphasized by Harmer (1991) that speaking involves interaction with one or more participants. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. When students had lack of speaking partners and facilitation to practice in their daily life, their motivation to speak in English become lower, for some stages it lead them to be anxious.

Nevertheless, from those students' being observed, there were several students whose speaking capacity was outstanding than others. They revealed that they do self-develop their English speaking performance after they have joined debate club name Zawiyah English Club (ZEC) as an English club that train English debaters. A debate is a speaking situation in which opposite points of view are presented and argued. Debate competition is the competition where students take up positions on issue and defend their positions. The advance of English speaking performance and critical thinking are two mandatory components that debaters must possess in order to win the competition. So, it is undeniable that debaters' English speaking performance is better than ordinary English department students. It is supported by Hasibuan and Batubara (cited in Iman, 2017) who treated debate as a method of language learning that can improve both learners' English speaking skills and their critical thinking.

The next question that occupies the researchers' mind was about the debaters' learning self-development strategies: how they develop their English speaking performance? The role of community such as Zawiyah English Club is important in motivating their debaters to improve their speaking, but most of them revealed that their English speaking competence was the result of their persistent self-development.

Self-development is a conscious process of improving oneself in various aspects of life. It is a constant pursuit of growth by developing skills, competencies and knowledge. Self-development in educational field usually called autonomous learning, which means the learner learn by themselves to develop the quality of their study.

Knowles (1975) states that “autonomous learning is a process in which individuals take initiative, with or without the help from others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material learning resources, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.” Aziz & Khatimah (2019) explain autonomous learning as the way in which learners are aware of and being responsible for the sustainable of their learning process by committed to continuously learning through their whole life.

Papleontiou-louca (2003) also treats the self-development proses with self-regulation, in which known as “the metacognition in action.” Metacognition, according to Magaldi (2010), shortly could be understood as “thinking about thinking,” where the students aware about their thought, cognition, weakness, strength and other thinking processes. Papleontiou-louca (2003) suggest several steps to be applied by the students in order to take the metacognition in to next level as the metacognitive learning strategies, such as: identifying what you know and what you do not know, planning and organizing strategy, generating questions, choosing consciously, getting and pursuing goals, evaluating the way of thinking and acting, and identifying the difficulty.

Furthermore, self-development is an abstract concept and hard to be measured. Many expert was having different ideas on how to measure students’ self-development process. However, for this study, the researchers adopted Reinders & Lazaro (2011) ideas who defined the learning autonomy measurement as the path that should be followed by the students in order to be autonomous. It is eight cyclical nature that had been suggested by him, which means it was unstoppable process, the more students go trough the whole process repeatedly, the better their learning autonomy promotion will be. Those eight stages are: 1) Identifying needs: learner experiences the difficulties in using the language, 2) setting goals: contextually determined, relatively flexible, 3) planning learning: contextually determined, very flexible, 4) selecting resources: self-selection by learners, 5) selecting learning strategies: self-selection by learners, 6) practice: implementation (language use) and experimentation, 7) monitoring progress: self-monitoring, peer feedback, and 8) assessment and revision: self-assessment, reflection.

There are several studies had been conducted about the debate as the method to improve students’ speaking performance. Tianame (2014) had proven that debate can help senior high school students improve their speaking skill. It was proven by the test score, in which pretest score was 70% good and the post test score was 90% good and it is increased almost 100%. Furthermore, Iman (2017) examined that debate not only enhance students’ speaking ability, but debate also increase students’ critical thinking. Besides, this study also mentioned how much the debate improve fluency, grammar, pronunciation, comprehension, and also vocabulary. In addition, Wahyuni (2019) had studied how debate improve students’ critical speaking, where students were able to persuade someones’ else to believe and think the way he/she did. However, most of these studies explored the enhancement of senior high school students and none of them were discussing about debaters’ self-development in enhancing their speaking

performance. Therefore, the researchers decided to figure out about how debaters' self-development in improving their speaking capacity through debate practice.

METHOD

This research was a descriptive research which used a qualitative approach. According to Sandelowski (2000) qualitative descriptive study is the process of retrieving information from stakeholders about their own experiences with the institutions in order to reconstruct the actual governmental design of public policies or organizational management system. Thus, the method employed has to faithfully draw the picture upon which most of the interviewees from a given setting will agree.

Research Setting

This research was held in the Zawiyah English Club (ZEC) of IAIN Langsa, located on Meurandeh Street, Langsa Lama, Kota Langsa, Aceh Province Indonesia. This organization had been established since 2012 and it was under the auspices of IAIN Langsa. All students in IAIN Langsa are able to join as its members. The objective ZEC's activities to facilitate the students of IAIN Langsa in practice and learning speaking, such as preparing them to be able to follow debate competition.

Research Participants

Zawiyah English club has more than 20 active members currently. However, only four of them had had experience in following many English debate competitions. According to Giorgi as cited in Lambert & Lambert, (2012) "the descriptive method in human science recommends that one uses at least three participants. Because one or two subjects would be too difficult for the researcher to handle in terms of their imagination." He further points out that, "Research-based on depth strategies should not be confused with research-based upon sampling strategies." This implies that the number of participants may vary from three or twenty; nonetheless, the amount will not greatly affect the outcome of the research. For this reason, four participants were chosen to be the participants of this research applying purposive sampling technique. In choosing them, several main criteria were put into consideration, namely their English learning experience, their speaking ability, and their experience in following debate contest.

Research Instruments and Procedure of data collection

In this research, the researchers used interview as the instrument. Interview is activity that involves interviewer and interviewee where the interviewer will give some questions to be answered by interviewee. Based on Creswell (2012) classification who had divided interview into four categories; (1) one-on-one interview, (2) focus group interview, (3) telephone interview, (4) electronic E-mail interview, the researchers used one-on-one interview types in this study. According to him, one-on-one interview is data collection process in which the researcher asks questions and records answers

from only one participant in the study at a time. The researcher prepared twenty questions related to the research question. To collect the interview data, the researcher made some procedures, (1) prepared the concept of questions that will be asked to the participants, (2) the researchers interviewed the participants in face to face interview while the process of interview was recorded through video recording, and then all of the result of interview was transcribed into words version.

Procedures of Data Analysis

According to Sugiono (2008) the qualitative data analysis could be done in three steps; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction means the process of selecting, identifying, classifying and coding the data that are considered important. In gaining the data, the researchers might obtained unimportant data, so that the reduction process was needed to select the valuable data. The researchers reduced the data by identifying the strategy that debaters used to self-develop their speaking performance through debate. Data display means the process to simplify the data in the form of sentence, narrative, or table. For the last process is conclusion and verification. In this research, the researchers made conclusion from the data display.

Shortly, the researchers' steps in analyzing the data were: (1) the researchers collected the data through interview and documentation. Then, the data were selected, identified, and focused based on the formulation of the research problem. (2) After selecting the data, the researchers displayed those data into proper sentences. (3) After displaying data, the conclusion is drawn.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

There were twenty interview questions answered by four debaters. All of the participants revealed that their self-development through the debate learning had boosted their awareness towards the eight cyclical nature of learning autonomy. To be more specific, the researchers would elaborate the findings based on each cycle of Reinders & Lazo (2011) nature of learning autonomy:

1. Identifying learning needs

Each participants explained differently about how they identify their learning needs, such as the first interviewee stated "I reflect on what I'm bad at and then asking people's feedback." The second interviewee said "By observing my mistake." The third said "the way I identify my learning needs is by doing a reflection of each part that makes me low," and the fourth said "based on what I like, I more like speaking and I need something that force me to speak like debate." Overall, the researchers could measure all of them were aware about their learning needs and knew how to identify it.

2. Setting goals of Learning

In line with the learning needs, all of the participants were aware about their learning goals, as all of them spontaneously answer "yes" when asking about their awareness, but their goals was almost similar with their needs in which to improve their speaking trough debate.

3. Planning Learning

They aware of their learning plan, but all of them were treating the learning plan as part of their learning practice. First interview revelead that she plan and practice her speaking an hour a day at home and once in two days in the club with debate partners. Other three participants had almost the same amount of planning and practicing time, 1-2 hours per day.

4. Selecting learning Resources

In case of selecting learning resources, all of the participants agreed that they used online materials, such as youtube video, journals and other internet stuff, as the first and the fourth interviewees said "the internet and YouTube really helps me." The second one said "Internet," the third said "I find it on internet as well as journals or research."

5. Selecting Learning Strategies

For the learning strategies, only two participants (the third and the fourth) were having various learning strategies, as they revealed "said "yes, I am. Because when one learning method does not makes me improve so I tend to use another methods that help me improve and get better." And the fourth said "yes I am." While two others (the first and the second interviewees) explained no different strategies had been used, they just learned the way they learned speaking in their english class.

6. Practice

In term of speaking practice, all of four participants were practicing their speaking in daily basis. The amount of their practice time was about oen to two hours per day, whether they practiced a lone at home or with friends. As first interviewee said "Maybe once in two days, I usually practice with my debate partner by sparring with other team. But I also practice at home in an hour by talking in front of the mirror." The second one "1-2 hours per days by talking to my foreign friends by phone, and repeating what I just heard from movies." The third stated "I have spent at least 2 hours per day to practice two motions in debate. We always connected in the debate club, where the people or someone who also passionate in the debate." The last interviewee said "about 1-2 hours in a day. Combining with reading some news in English, watching YouTube, listening to the music."

7. Monitoring Progress

In monitoring their progress, all of them aware about their weaknesses in speaking, such as being nervous when speaking in front of others, lack of vocabularies,

hard to build their critical thinking and topic. This could be studied from their utterance, such as the first interviewee said “my struggle is when I have to speak in front of people.” The second said “vocabularies shortage,” and the third one said “the hardest process during debate is I think how to build my critical thinking within the debate motion. In addition, I also find a problem in proven the idea of my argument in the evidence. While sometimes, I also get stuck during my 7 minutes speech. Due to the less of vocabulary or knowledge that I have.” The last participants said “build the topic, it is difficult to control what the first that I should say”.

8. Assessment and Revision

About assessing and revising their speaking learning, only two participants who did the process by evaluating their speaking progress, as the first interviewee said “by seeing how much I have improved my speaking skill and my confidence.” The third one said “the way I evaluate my learning progress is always after how my speaking or argument getting improve within the debate.” Otherwise, the Second one did not evaluate his learning, but the last one, even she did not evaluate her learning, she could feel the improvement in her performance as she revealed “by change one under word to higher word for formal, I never evaluate it. But I can feel my English has a progress when I speak up more fluent.”

Discussion

Based on the research finding, it could be understood that all of the participants were willing to self-develop their speaking performance without any force from other people. Since, their engagement in the ZEC was a voluntary activities, where all of them were being members because of their own preferences. This basic concept had supported the idea of self-development, in which it also treats similar to autonomous learning, which means the learners learn by themselves to develop the quality of their study. Knowles (1975) states that “autonomous learning is a process in which individuals take initiative, with or without the help from others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material learning resources, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.” The result of this study also confirmed the knowles statement where all of the participants were diagnosing their learning needs, selecting their learning resources, practicing and evaluating their learning outcomes.

In addition, all of the participants’ confirmed that during the debate speaking learning, the participants were aware of the steps they need to apply for developing their self-regulation as their metacognitive strategies as proposed by Papeleontiou-louca (2003). They spontaneously answered ‘yes’ to all of these steps; identifying what you know and what you do not know, planning and organizing strategy, generating questions, choosing consciously, getting and pursuing goals, evaluating the way of thinking and acting, and identifying the difficulty.

Furthermore, as the main measurement adopting Reinders & Lazarro (2011)

cyclical nature of learning autonomy, most of all participants were applying the stages from identifying needs to assessment and revision. Those stages are; 1) Identifying needs, 2) setting goals, 3) planning learning, 4) selecting resources, 5) selecting learning strategies, 6) practice, 7) monitoring progress, and 8) assessment and revision. From these eight cyclical stages, only two participants who did not understand the specific strategies he and she used during the learning process in the phase of 'selecting learning strategies,' and only one participant who did not explicitly evaluate his speaking performance and his learning process. Otherwise, all of the participants were aware of those eight stages and applied it in their learning process, especially for 'practice' phase, all of them were practicing their speaking in the daily basis about one to two hours per day. This findings emphasized their commitment to their speaking development even though it was not graded by their lecturers. It reflected their responsibilities to their own learning in which was defined as being autonomous learners (Aziz & Khatimah, 2019).

Therefore, it could be concluded that all of the four participants were self-developing their speaking performance by promoting their learning autonomy and adapting metacognitive learning strategies into their learning process.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing and discussing the reseach findings, the researchers concluded that it was the participants' self-develoment process, in which adopting the learning autonomy concept and adapting metacognitive learning strategies, that enhanced these four debaters' speaking performance. The eight cyclical nature of learning autonomy path was adopted from Reinders & Lazaro (2011) such as; 1) Identifying needs, 2) setting goals, 3) planning learning, 4) selecting resources, 5) selecting learning strategies, 6) practice, 7) monitoring progress, and 8) assessment and revision. The steps to metacognitive strategies by Papeontiou-louca (2003) such as; identifying what you know and what you do not know, planning and organizing strategy, generating questions, choosing consciously, getting and pursuing goals, evaluating the way of thinking and acting, and identifying the difficulty. The ZEC club and the debate learning process only played the role as the supporting agents and facilitation for the participants.

REFERENCES

- Aziz, Z. A., & Khatimah, H. (2019). Enjoying Learning Writing Trough Facebook Group. *Lingua Cultura*, 13(2), 115–119.
- Creshwell, W. (2012). *Research Design: Qualitative Method*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska.
- Harmer, J. (1991). *The Practice of English Language Teaching. The 3th Edition*. London & New York: Longman.
- Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Knowles, M. S. (1975). *Self-directed learning: A guide for learners and teachers*. New York: Association Press.
- Lambert, V., & Lambert, C. E. (2012). Qualitative Descriptive Research: An Acceptable Design. *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, 16(4), 255–256.
- Papleontiou-louca, E. (2003). *The Concept and Instruction of Metacognition*. Cyprus: Frederick Institute of Technology.
- Reinders, H., & Lazarou, N. (2011). Beliefs, identity and motivation in implementing autonomy: The teachers' perspective. In G. Murray, uesong (Andy) Gao, & T. Lamb (Eds.), *Identity, motivation, and autonomy in language learning*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Sugiono. (2008). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan R&D*. Jakarta: Albeta.
- Tianame, M. (2014). *The Implementation of Debate Technique to Enhance Students' Speaking Skill*. Banda Aceh: Universitas Syiah Kuala.