



## **Mastering Professional Communication: The Power of Discussion Techniques in Speaking**

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### **Abstract**

Teaching speaking in a professional setting entail utilizing a variety of strategies, like discussion groups, to increase student engagement, creativity, and learning confidence. In order to support their professional development and deliver materials, instructions, and feedback to students, English lecturers must be able to communicate effectively in professional settings. Therefore, the research aims to describe students' competence in speaking fluently and accurately. Qualitative research is implemented in this research. In addition, the data collection used in this research includes observation, interviews, and documentation. In analysing the data, the researcher used data analysis steps. The findings show that discussion techniques are extremely helpful to make students active, creative, and confident in speaking. The implications of this research highlight the importance of appropriate technique to enhance students' speaking. In sum, this research contributes valuable knowledge to the implementation of a discussion technique.

## **1. Introduction**

One of the required courses in the English education department is speaking in a professional setting. With a course code of ENG6310 and a weight of three semester units, this is a prerequisite course for third semester students. Speaking in a professional setting is taught and learned in person. The purpose of this course is to provide students with advanced English language proficiency for fluent, accurate, and appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication in public in both academic and non-academic contexts. Additionally, students will gain cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity that will support their professional development as students or graduates and enhance their abilities as English educators and practitioners, educational researchers, teaching material developers, and translators (RPS, 2022).

While speaking in a professional setting, students frequently struggle with three issues: (1) they lack confidence and feel humiliated while speaking; (2) they lack language and pronunciation skills; and (3) they often have no idea what to say and tend to remain silent. As a result, it is

crucial that lecturers play an engaging and innovative role in helping students succeed when speaking (Nunun, 2022).

In English education major, speaking for professional context, public speaking and speaking for general purposes are prerequisite courses. In this study, speaking learning focuses on speaking in a professional context. Speaking for professional context that is directly integrated with the world of work. With this learning, students are educated or taught to later become good English educators or translators. The learning materials taught include speaking skills which consist of reporting, interviewing, giving instructions, hosting events, leading a formal meeting, facilitating and conducting formal discussions, and so on (Nunun, 2022).

In addition, the use of English among teenagers such as in seminars for young people or middle-class workers in the workplace and the use of English by radio broadcasters or television presenters can be easily found. Nowadays, individuals need English to communicate with others in international forums. However, it turns out that some problems were found by researchers in the professional class context of the third semester of class E UIN Raden Intan Lampung, such as, some students easily feel shy or not confident when speaking and also lack of vocabulary so that students have no idea what to say. And problems also occur to lecturers such as students who are not disciplined and noisy in class and students who do not understand the material presented. Therefore, efforts must be made to improve the quality of English teaching.

Discussion technique exposes students to various points of view and to the ways of supporting those viewpoints; therefore, it helps students to learn the content of speaking material, as well as teaches them how to know new content. Brown, (2001:28) states that, discussion is one of the techniques used in language teaching. Discussion technique also can help the students, with or without lecturer presence, actively can exchange opinion and solve problems. The technique chosen not only improve speaking ability but also provides opportunities for students to learn to monitor their own learning and thinking. Discussion technique is very simple to apply. It is observing that discussion technique effects increasing the academic success in addition to the social and intellectual abilities of the students. Various research has shown that discussion technique is effective in learning process.

Numerous studies have discussed the use of discussion techniques. For instance, discussion techniques help students enhance their speaking skills, including fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy. The teacher provides several teaching materials in a discussion session and then stimulates the students to share their ideas orally Azizah (2018). In addition, Susanti et al. (2021) describes how small group discussions can improve students' speaking skills. The students' improvement covered several indicators such as pronunciation, grammar,

vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The students can show a better speaking score after conducting two cycles of the treatment.

The previous research has used discussion and small group discussion to be implemented in teaching speaking skills. Then, it showed that students' speaking skills had improved. This current research also focused on using discussion techniques taken from Slavin's theory. Therefore, this technique is used to teach university students to emphasize speaking in a professional context.

## **2. Literature Review**

According Edmun (1976) (Rajagopalan, 2019:6) defines teaching as an interactive process, primarily involving classroom talk which takes between lecturer and pupil and occurs during certain definable activities. Therefore, Nilsen and Albertall (2002) (Bethel, 2013:37), teaching is the process whereby a lecturer guides a learner or a group of learners to a higher level of knowledge or skills. Teaching is scientific process and its major components are content, communication and feedback.

Learning is shown by change in behaviour as result of experience. Learning has a sense of acquiring knowledge, through experience, mastering the experience and get information or find (Cronbach, 1954) (Wahyuni, 2010). It means that every single activity that has been done by the students at their previous life will be brainstormed so that they can elaborate their knowledge.

Those two ideas about teaching and learning are about how to collaborate students' life skill. The students join interactive process in the classroom both online or offline then they shall transfer the knowledge through effective activities. Moreover, this activity will occur continuously to get significant output.

In this study, the skill is focus on speaking. Therefore, the definition of speaking is ability to speak fluently assumes not only the features of knowledge (e.g., speech, expressive, lexical and grammatical as well as language negation) but also skills for processing information (e.g., language processing, interacting with information processing and others) (Harmer, 2001) (Gaya, 2018:36). It means in expressing the ideas orally a speaker should process the information in their mind first. There several aspects of speaking, they are:

1. Pronunciation. Pronunciation is basic quality of language learning. In pronouncing the words, the learners regularly have problems distinguishing between sounds in the new language that do not exist in languages they already know.
2. Fluency. Fluency refers to the smoothness of flow which sounds, syllables, words, and phrases are joined together when speaking. In the classroom, the students often speak

English with pause, they often say “ums” or “a”. They are not fluent to speak English in the classroom.

3. Vocabulary. Vocabulary is very important because without words we cannot speak at all. Vocabulary can be said as a collection of all the words understood by the person or all words that are likely to be used by that person to compile new sentences.
4. Accuracy. Accuracy is ability to produce correct sentences using grammar and vocabulary in natural interaction.

After knowing about speaking, then the researcher discusses about the technique. The technique used in this research is discussion technique. Discussion technique is three or more people interacting face to face, with or without an assigned leader in such a way that each person influences, and is influenced by another person in the group (Barker, 1987) (Sitti, 2010). Discussion techniques create classes that involve dependent students who are responsible for various aspects of the content and teaching of other members of the group. Group work is not finished until all members have mastered the content.

Moreover, there are several types of discussion technique. One of the examples is group discussion. This stage is elaborating by Slavin (1995:130). Therefore, the lecturer in this research implemented this type. They are:

1. Pre-discussion activities

In this stage, the lecturer employed information about the technique and directly showed the reading text as the discussion material.

2. While discussion activities

In this stage, the lecturer asked the students to do group discussion. The activities included answering several questions, reporting the discussion, presenting the result of discussion.

3. Post discussion activities

In this stage, the lecturer asked the students to collect their discussion works. Then, the lecturer gives feedback toward their ideas.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Research Method**

The method of this research is qualitative research. Qualitative research that aims to explain phenomena by collecting data as deep as possible. Creswell stated that qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants setting, data analysis inductively

building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretation of the meaning of data (Creswell, 2009).

### 3.2. Participants

The participants of this research are third semester students of English Education Study Program in Uin Raden Intan Lampung. They took speaking for professional context course.

### 3.3. Instrument

The research instrument is a research tool that involves the researcher himself. Therefore, the researcher as an instrument must be "validated" to what extent qualitative researchers are ready to conduct research. Qualitative researchers are "human instruments", whose function is to determine the focus of research, select informants as data sources, collect data, assess data quality, analyse data, and draw conclusion from their findings (Sugiyono, 2015).

### 3.4. Data collecting technique and analysis

This research focused on using observation, interview, and documentation to collect the data. The researcher observed the teaching speaking process in classroom. Then, the researcher asks several questions to the lecturer to gather the data about students' problems in learning speaking by using discussion technique. At last, the researcher submits the documents such as syllabus, recording of students' discussion, and several photograph. The usage of data analysis steps was the main emphasis of this study. Gathering and collecting data, organizing and connecting the data, analysing the data for insights, and reporting on the insights generated from the study are the five processes that commonly make up the qualitative data analysis process.

## 4. Findings

In researching discussion techniques in speaking for professional context classes, researchers involved three techniques, namely observation, interviews and documentation. In collecting data, the researcher conducted two meetings in the class. Researchers come directly to class and follow the course of learning. During the observation, the researcher saw the most common way of learning by using discussion techniques and in this case the main focus of the researcher was paying attention to the actions of the teacher and students during learning. Next is by interview, in this case the researcher asks the teacher to get more accurate information and to confirm the information obtained through observation. Finally, the use of documentation is used to strengthen the results of this study. After gathering the information, the researcher reviews the information contained in the observations and interviews. As pointed out by Miles

and Huberman, there are three important expressions in information investigation, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing.

Here are several results of this research:

#### 4.1. Observation

Table No. 1 Result of Observation

No.	Stages	Activities
1.	Pre-Discussion Activities	Before the learning activities begin, the lecturer arranges the material. The lecturer opened the class by greeting students and checking the list of student participation. Then the lecturer asked about the material last week. At this stage, the lecturer provides an explanation regarding the strategies, systems and steps of the material to be studied. In this stage, the lecturer gives examples of material topics and several questions with a time span of this activity is 5 minutes.
2.	While-Discussion Activities	During this activity, the lecturer asks students to form a discussion group, determine topics and hold discussions, respond to questions posed by the lecturer, then present the results of the discussion. While other groups responded to the results of the discussions that were presented. During this activity, the lecturer must pay attention and ensure that all group members participate in this discussion activity. The duration of time given is 15 minutes to discuss and 30 minutes to present the results of the discussion.
3.	Post-Discussion Activities	The lecturer provides comments on the results of the discussions that have been presented and gives a score to each group and individual who has participated in the discussion activities. The lecturer provides corrections and solutions and gives several oral questions to individuals and groups randomly, the lecturer also provides conclusions regarding the material that has been presented.

The result of the observation shows that the lecturer has set appropriate procedures for teaching speaking by using discussion techniques. The students have greatly participated in joining the discussion with the time and topic provided by the lecturer. Therefore, the lecturer also gave comments on the results of the discussion. The discussion session really allowed the students to share their ideas. Thus, the students can train their pronunciation and fluency through discussion with the group.

#### 4.2 Interview

Table No 2 Result of Interview

No.	Questions	Answer
1.	How long is the duration of time you use to provide learning in speaking for professional context classes and is that	Each meeting has 100 minutes, then I usually divide the 100 minutes into a small presentation of material, then there are in-

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	time sufficient to complete the material presented on that day?	group discussions related to the projects that I provide, sometimes one material is enough for one meeting and there are more than one meeting. So, I deal with a material that, for example, is not resolved in one meeting, so I will continue it in the next meeting.
2.	Are there any difficulties you face in providing this speaking for professional context learning material?	The difficulty is, there are some students who are still lacking in understanding the material that I convey in English so I have to repeat the material in Indonesian, then other difficulties are such as calling students to speak in front of the class it takes quite a long time until they are ready and confident to move forward even though not all students, but some students are like that.
3.	Why do you use discussion techniques for learning speaking?	I use the discussion technique at the beginning of learning to help students improve self-confidence and also use this discussion technique so that students can get more speaking experience.
4.	How is the situation in the learning process of speaking for professional context? In your opinion, do students understand the material that you have conveyed?	The learning process situation is filled with various kinds of student characters, some are very active, some are active, some are less active and some are not even active at all and one of my ways is to group them in a group and ask them to try to speak in their group before performing their projects.
5.	Does the use of discussion techniques reduce students' shyness in speaking?	According to my observations, this discussion technique is effective for triggering passive students to try to speak in their groups, so before they try it in front of the class they try to practice speaking in groups and I think it is quite effective.
6.	In your opinion, apart from the activeness of students, what other support factors the success of learning speaking for professional context?	Apart from being active, I also see the content that students convey in each of their projects. So, because speaking for professional context is still in the realm of public speaking, so they need to effectively and efficiently convey a topic according to the material that has been determined, so I see it not only from their liveliness but also from the content of the topics they convey as well.

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The second result is taken from interview data. The result shows that the students have received appropriate materials from the lecturer. Therefore, the students obtain speaking experiences from the discussion activities. Importantly, students' confidence also improved. On



the other hand, several students were also less active in sharing ideas during the discussion session. Then, other members of the discussion help to attract fewer active students.

#### 4.3 Documentation

There are several artifacts that can be a documentation. For instance, syllabus, lesson planning, students' performance, and photographs. This sample is one of documentation in this research.



Figure No 1 Discussion Activities

The result of the artefact shows that the lecturer firstly gave an instruction of the discussion. She has prepared the topic of the discussion. Then, she shared to the member of the discussion. The group of students are ready to discuss their topic in group. They sit a group and try to share the ideas. They are allowed to take a note in building the case.

#### 5. Discussion

The used of various collecting data would like to enrich the result of the research. The researcher has used observation, interview, and documentation in collecting the data. Firstly, the result of observation showed that every stage in learning speaking through discussion technique were run well. Since, speaking is productive skill the students should work hard in order practicing their fluency and pronunciation. In the other hand, they should also minimize their error and control their self to be brave.



Secondly, the result of interview also adds valuable information about the implementation of discussion technique in learning speaking. It has been explained by the lecturer that the use of discussion technique assists the students to more confident in expressing their ideas during a discussion activity. Therefore, the more they practice they would get knowledgeable experience. The students can enrich their vocabulary then they can freely to express their ideas by using their critical thinking.

The last is the result of documentation. In documenting important artefact, the researcher has checked that the syllabus and lesson planning is equivalent with the implementation of discussion technique in teaching speaking. Moreover, the researcher also took several pictures during the discussion activities. It has been portrayed that the students can express their ideas well. On the other hand, the whole teaching process can be expected run well but it is also several inhibition and strength.

Implementing the discussion technique in teaching speaking has several implications. For instance, it promotes students' fluency and accuracy; improves participation and confidence; increases social skills; and helps manage the teaching and learning activity. All things considered, the discussion technique seems to be a useful approach to raising students' speaking proficiency, encouraging engagement, and augmenting their language arts skills. To guarantee its efficacy in the classroom, though, meticulous preparation and oversight are necessary.

At last, the lecturer has to be aware of several limitations when implementing discussion techniques to teach speaking. For example, the lecturer has to manage the class size. It will be difficult to manage unequal students in groups. In addition, the lecturer has to control students' hesitation and shyness. Some students may be hesitant or shy to participate in discussions. Students' preparation is also important. Students may not be adequately prepared for discussion and misunderstanding. Lecturers can better equip themselves to handle the difficulties and make sure the discussion technique is successful in enhancing students' speaking abilities by being aware of these limits.

## **6. Conclusion**

The conclusion of this research is that the teaching and learning process of speaking by using the discussion technique is successful. The students can join the discussion technique. Although several students are still nervous to express their ideas, they still need to learn a lot to enrich their vocabulary so that they can recognize the instructions well. Then, they can participate in discussion techniques. They can also increase their self-confidence. Those explanations belong to the inhibition of this implementation. On the other hand, the students

who play actively during the discussion technique can influence their members of the group and motivate them to speak fluently.

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