

## **Increasing Student Argumentative Speech through Basic Debate Training**

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**Abstract:** *This article aims to show the impact of basic debate training on their ability to perform argumentative speech. This training was conducted at SMAN 3 Batusangkar with 14 participants. The training used the Asian Parliamentary Debate System because it is the most widely used debate system in high school. After the training was conducted four times, it was found that their abilities improved both in terms of the quality of their public speaking, their intelligence in arguing, and their confidence. It is hoped that after this debate training, students will be able to compete well in the world of debate.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Current high school students have varying abilities in performing argumentative speech. Some students are able to find topics, develop strong arguments, and show examples and references to support their positions. They are able to design a pattern of developing an argument into something persuasive and convincing. They were also able to refute opposing views by targeting the weaknesses of the opponent's position. However, many students have difficulties in developing their talents and need a lot of guidance and practice to improve their argumentative speech. It is very important

for teacher to act as facilitators in improving their argumentative speech, such as outline making techniques, strategies in researching problems, and suggestions in writing their arguments.

There are many approaches that can be used for argumentative essays, but there are two common models that can help writers to start outlining their argument: the Toulmin model and the Rogerian model. Toulmin's model consists of four steps, which can be repeated as many times as necessary for the argument: make a claim, give reasons (evidence) for the claim, explain the warrant (how the reasons support the claim), and state

support (why the warrant is good) (Qin, 2013; Siregar, Syarif, & Amri, 2021). The Rogerian model analyzes the two sides of an argument and reaches a conclusion after weighing the strengths and weaknesses of each. Argumentative essays should be objective in their approach; arguments should rely on logic and evidence, not on exaggeration or appealing to emotions (Teich, 1987; White & Billings, 2013). Writing a persuasive essay requires ideating on a topic, formulating a research question, creating a working thesis, conducting preliminary research, and demonstrating the application of dialectics and reasoning to change points of view. A strong persuasive argument requires critical thinking and analysis of evidence.

Argumentative speech and debate are closely related as both involve presenting a position on a topic and supporting it with evidence. Argumentation is a social process that involves two or more people arguing with each other, responding to each other, and modifying or defending their positions (Tigris, 2021; Volkova, Mishlanov, & Salimovskii, 2019). Debate, on the other hand, is a formal discussion in which two opposing parties present arguments and counter-arguments on a specific topic (Anggraini & Marlina, 2014; Hidayoza, Amri, & Wahyuni, 2019). In both argumentative speeches and debates, the goal is to persuade the audience to accept a particular point of view based on claims supported by evidence (Turmudi, 2020).

An argumentative essay has a lot in common with an expository essay, and it consists of an introduction, body, and conclusion. The essay should include the opposing argument or counterargument and the author's response to it, supporting evidence from five to seven additional sources, and a conclusion that not only restates the thesis but also re-addresses the thesis based on the evidence provided (Aisyah & Rahmawati, 2019; Putri, 2021). In a debate, participants must follow certain communication rules, such as avoiding personal attacks and sticking to the topic at hand. Both argumentative speeches and debates require critical thinking, research, and analytical skills.

Argumentative speech is an important skill for students to develop as it can benefit their future in a variety of ways. First, this skill can help students to develop critical thinking skills, which are crucial for success in academic and professional settings. By learning how to analyze and evaluate evidence, students can become better problem solvers and decision makers. Secondly, argumentative speech can help students to develop communication skills, such as public speaking and debating, which are highly valued in various fields. These skills can help students to become more confident and effective communicators, which can benefit them in their personal and professional lives. Lastly, argumentative speech can help students to become more informed and engaged citizens by encouraging them to research and analyze

important issues and develop their own opinions based on evidence and reason (Dunn & Pogrud, 2020). Overall, argumentative speech is an important skill for students to develop as it can benefit their future in many ways.

The purpose of this research article is to investigate the effect of basic debate training on students' argumentative speech skills. In this case, the researcher focuses on the development of students' abilities before receiving basic debate training and after receiving the training. The development seen from students starts from the development of students' critical thinking, their development in developing their arguments, and their ability to communicate their opinions so that they can convince others.

## **METHOD**

Current high school students have varying abilities in performing argumentative speech. Some students are able to find topics, develop strong arguments, and show examples and references to support their positions. They are able to design a pattern of developing an argument into something persuasive and convincing. They were also able to refute opposing views by targeting the weaknesses of the opponent's position. However, many students have difficulties in developing their talents and need a lot of guidance and practice to improve their argumentative speech. It is very important for teacher to act as facilitators in improving their argumentative speech,

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## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Result***

The first activity in this training is the provision of ways to be confident in

public speaking. This is very useful for students due to the delivery of arguments in the debate. This training was attended by 14 selected students who have an interest and talent in the world of debate. This training was first held on August 11, 2023 at the SMA Negeri 3 Batusangkar library. This training was led by Mr. Arjus Putra, M.Pd. After the presentation on how to be confident in debate, students were given an interesting debate topic. The topic given was "Everyone is allowed to have more than one religion". This is interesting because students can explore

their thoughts because this is very unusual and very interesting to discuss. Afterward, they were divided into two camps, the pro and con camps. After the division of camps, they were given 15 minutes of freedom to find points or reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the given topic. After 15 minutes, they were gathered back into the library. Finally, they were appointed one by one in turn to present their reasons for their position on the motion (Asra, Saputra, Isda, Fadlia, & Diani, 2023).



**Picture 1. First meeting of Debate Training**

The purpose of giving them the opportunity to perform is to train students in arguing using English and to make them confident. It is also important for the coach to measure their ability to express their opinions and what to improve with their potential. For this stage, they have not been introduced to the AREL Concept because the team wants to see how deep their knowledge is in the world of debate before being given further training. After they performed their motions, the trainers gave feedback on their performance in outline. Furthermore, in preparation for

the next meeting, they were required to prepare their arguments against the motion "People are allowed to be naked in public places". This motion was chosen to prepare students to think critically and systematically.

The second meeting was held on Thursday, August 24, 2023. This meeting began with a performance from each trainee. The difference between their performance in the first meeting and this second performance was that when their motions were given, they were not given their position on the motion. So, when

they prepared themselves at home, they had to prepare motions for both sides. In their second performance, it was seen that they were better prepared and more confident than the first meeting. The main factor for them to be able to present their opinions in this debate was that they had a long preparation time. After their performance, the trainers gave constructive feedback to the trainees.

After the students received feedback on their performance, the students received the second training material from the trainer. The trainer provided material on how to define motions and build arguments using the AREL concept. Defining a motion is a way of making the topic of discussion in a debate more specific. In other words, defining the motion is narrowing the subject matter in the debate so that the debate process that takes place becomes more focused. Furthermore, the trainer provides material about AREL (Assertion, Reason, Evidence, and Link Back). This AREL method can make students able to be directed in compiling and building arguments logically and reliably so that students can improve their argumentation skills (Calista, 2019; Chaira, 2020; Kristanti & Basuni, 2021). Their ability is characterized by their sentence patterns that become more structured and systematic. In this case, the explanation of the basics in delivering this opinion is a preparation for students to face the world of debate later.

The third meeting of the debate training was held on Saturday, September 09, 2023. This meeting was started by giving material from the trainer about speech to persuade. This material was given to the trainees because in the implementation of the debate, debaters must be able to hook the jury to side with them. Therefore, they are given this material so that they are expected to persuade people to side with them. After they were given the material, the trainer appointed four people randomly to do a real debate simulation. The motion raised in this debate was "The government abolishes subsidized fuel oil". After they performed, they were given brief feedback from the trainers.

The last meeting was held on Sunday, September 10, 2023. At this meeting, students were given three debate motions. The motions given were: "Homework should be banned at school", "Medical students should be required to perform one year of community service", and "All parents should be required to attend parenting classes before having a child". At this meeting, a debate simulation was held. Unlike the previous meetings, this meeting held a live debate simulation so that they know how the rules and procedures in the debate competition. In this case, they finally united their views in teams, one team consisted of two people, they discussed their arguments within 15 minutes, then the brainstorming phase was over. The debate finally began. They felt how to

finally convince the judges to side with them and gained increased confidence. This was evidenced by the fact that they had more speaking time than in previous meetings.

### ***Discussion***

This debate training program has a progressive and structural approach to improve students' public speaking quality, their ability to argue, and their confidence. Specifically, the benefits that students get after participating in this debate training are as follows:

1. **Confidence Building:** The first part of the training focused on building students' confidence in public speaking, which is a crucial aspect of debate. This is essential for students to effectively deliver their arguments and express their viewpoints.
2. **Topic Selection:** The choice of debate topics, such as "Everyone is allowed to have more than one religion" and "People are allowed to be naked in public places," is interesting and thought-provoking. It encourages students to think critically and explore unconventional ideas, thereby enhancing their ability to argue and engage in debates effectively. According to Zahradnik and Levine (2017) research, selecting a well-defined and researchable topic can help debaters develop their critical thinking skills. By analyzing

arguments and evidence, debaters can improve their ability to think critically and make informed decision

3. **Positional Debate:** Dividing students into pro and con camps to discuss the given topics promotes the development of well-rounded argumentation skills. It encourages students to view issues from different perspectives and construct arguments both in favor of and against a particular motion. Based on Asif, Ain, & Siddiqua (2023), positional debate requires participants to argue in favor of a position that they may not personally agree with. This can help participants develop empathy and understanding for different perspectives and opinion
4. **Feedback and Improvement:** The provision of feedback from trainers after students' presentations is crucial for their growth. It allows them to identify areas of improvement and refine their argumentation and public speaking skills progressively. Feedback and improvement can help participants feel more confident in their abilities. By practicing and refining their arguments, participants can gain confidence in their ability to articulate their ideas and engage in intellectual discourse (Málaga & Redondo, 2019)

5. **Introduction to AREL Concept:**

The introduction of the AREL concept (Assertion, Reason, Evidence, Link Back) is an important step in teaching students how to structure and build logical arguments. According to research conducted by Burek and Lasos in 2014, A-R-E-L is the basic framework of an argument and is used to structure the argument as a whole (Calista, 2019). It equips them with a framework for constructing persuasive and well-reasoned arguments.

6. **Speech to Persuade:** The focus on persuasive speech training demonstrates the importance of not only presenting arguments but also persuading the audience or judges to side with their viewpoint. This is a fundamental skill in competitive debating.

7. **Live Debate Simulation:** The inclusion of live debate simulations with specific motions, such as "Homework should be banned at school" and "Medical students should be required to perform one year of community service,"

provides students with a taste of real debate competition. According to Gyetvai, Lovas, Kiss, & Talas (2022), live debate simulation provides participants with a realistic experience of engaging in a debate. It helps them understand the rules and procedures and further boosts their confidence.

8. **Progressive Improvement:** The findings suggest that as the training progressed, students became better prepared, more confident, and had more speaking time. This indicates that the training program was effective in enhancing their skills over time.

Overall, this research shows that the structured debate training program had a positive impact on students' confidence, argumentation skills, and ability to present well-structured and persuasive speeches. The progressive nature of the program, introducing different aspects of debate over multiple sessions, seems to be an effective approach in develop the talents of potential debaters.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the debate training held at SMA Negeri 3 Batusangkar, it can be concluded that students have a good response to this training. The results obtained include improved English language skills, mastery of the Asian

Parliamentary Debate System, strong critical and analytical thinking skills, increased self-confidence and communication skills, and readiness to compete in the debate arena. All of these outcomes will help prepare them for the challenges of the competitive world of



debate and competition. It is expected that the students who join this program will become qualified, knowledgeable debaters, and able to contribute significantly to the debate world and win the debate competitions they will face.

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