

# The Impact of Discussion to Develop English Language Speaking

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## **Abstract:**

*This study describes two groups of university students who negotiate two different topics to reach acceptable solution. They follow the procedures provided by the discussion method or technique. The instructor 's main points in this respect are to let the students speak at their ease in spite of the mistakes they make, to think about problems and then come up with solutions or ideas. In addition, in such tasks students are given the chance to talk and practice to oral skills. There are a lot of grammatical and structural mistakes, but the message in general is delivered and understood. The students able to discuss the topics, reach conclusions and then do the job. It is recommended that these sessions of discussion are held constantly among students because they give them a chance to speak, listen, think and solve problems. Therefore, such skills are basically advised to be acquired by students.*

**Keywords:** discussion, discussion method, group discussion

## **Introduction:**

There has been a shift from the emphasis on the structural to the communicative approach (Al – Abed Al – Haq and Ahmed, 1994, Willins, 1974 Strevens, 1977, Brown and Yule, 1983; Richards and Rodgers, 1988). The function of language according to this approach is to enable its users to communicate messages in both their oral and written forms ((Al – Abed Al – Haq and Ahmed, 1994).

Students think constructively while they are conversing with each other (knechel,1992). It is better to have a small group of students when following this method or technique rather than a large one (Graft,1991). Each group should have a leader (Cavalier, Klein and Cavalier, 1995). There are certain steps or instructions that the discussion method stresses. First, a foundation must be laid for the discussion through asking some challenging questions. Second, stimulate the trainees or students to discuss these questions. Third, lead the discussion to a conclusion. Through discussion, students contrast and weigh ideas, concepts, and facts (Brookfield and Breskill, 1999) . Discussion methods also require trainees to solve problems (Levin, 1995). In order to have better benefits, students should have previous knowledge or familiarity with the subject in question. In the discussion method, you have to be apart of the group of the discussion, for example by being in the front of the group or wondering, and all the members see each other (Slavin, 1990). In conducting a classroom discussion, following techniques:

- 1- Build a background for the discussion so that students can focus on the subject matter or the main problem (Cooper and Mueck, 1992).
- 2- Ask questions that provoke thought (Aranda , Aranda and Conlon, 1998).
- 3- Ask questions to keep the discussion within the desired limits (Johnson and Johnson, 1989).
- 4- To activate the discussion, encourage the timid and restrain the talkative communicatively and cooperatively (Levin, 1995).
- 5- Accept temporarily incorrect ideas because judging the student's answers with "No" or "Wrong" will hinder the going on of the discussion or end it (Kowalski; weaver, and Hensonk, 1990).
- 6- Give students enough opportunity to express their own ideas before expressing yours (Natasik, and Clements, 1991).
- 7- Emphasize correct ideas, clear up misunderstanding and summarize the discussion at intervals (Welty, 1989).

**Discussion:**

The study consisted of two groups, each group consisted of four students, who were given two English topics to discuss. They were in the second year of English majors at Umm-Alqura university.

The first topic is as follows:

What would you do in the situation where you are on a desert Island?

The second is for students to play roles in a debate showing whether they are with or against a certain plan.

In each case, students were to give reasons or evidence for supporting or refusing the plan to settle down the problems. The two discussion were recorded and reported here as they were taken. So, the researcher put the student's turns of discussion in inverted commas as quotations. He analyzed their speech to see how they interacted with each other in terms of the discussion method, and how they managed to solve the problems they negotiated.

The following question showed the discussion among students in the first group.

**What would you do in the situation where you are in a desert island?**

A: "if I was on a desert island going to found the water to drink it and built house behind the water to see someone to help me."

B: "the morning is hot, but in the night the weather is good. I will hunt a fish to eat it, and draw the sand "help me" because if plane is fly to see this and survive. If a plane not see me, I try to make a small boat."

Teacher: I want each one of you to work at or build on the point of his colleague who has just finished speaking through statements or question, so that we reach conclusion.

C: "I had eaten the fish which I had hunted from the see. When I explored the island I found a river and many animals which I can eat it. I made so many things from animal's bone. I still in the island until I can build a boat from trees and bones, and I go back to home by it."

D: " Try to find something that benefit from it the same kind of the trees and plants that I can feed from it. And to build a shelter from some trees that I can save myself from the dangerous animals. I'll try to make a knife to save myself from animals attacking. I will try to make a fire or something good that attract attention if any ships going beside the island. I 'll try to make wood boat that I can sailing by it to find a way or the exit. I use my experience to keep myself alive and to survive."

The first student, that is, student A thought of the question as having three dimensions when he is alone on a desert island. It occurred to him that he would search for water to drink in order to survive. Then, he

would build a house in order to live in as a shelter from wild animals and any dangers. At last, he would build a house for an important purpose, that is, for the purpose of being seen by any passers by, or for the purpose of seeing a ship across the sea, so that he would make a signal to it. It's important to notice that these three ideas will be repeated by all the students because they are the basics for survival. But it's important to notice that there is elaboration on them, and there are other points provided by the other students in the group.

Student B looked at finding food through fishing, a point which wasn't mentioned by student A. that means, we have a variety of ideas that we can negotiate to come up with a better and developed solution. Secondly, It's interesting to notice that this student has a strategy. He will delay trying to catch a fish until night so that the weather will be nice and helpful. Other students in the group will benefit from Such a strategy because they will think of other strategies and take them all to build on. This student thought of survival in a way that is different from the first student although the two ways were for the same aim, being seen by someone to help. This student thought of survival through drawing on the sand the word "help me". The help in this respect was thought of to come from a plane not a ship like the first student. The second way of escape from the desert was thought of by this student to be through building a boat. Again a point that wasn't thought of by the first student, student A.

Student C, the third student gave a new idea, that is, of exploring the island. As a result, he found a river and an animal which he caught and used as food and weapon. Again the idea of the weapon is new to the discussion. The idea of building a boat for escape was provided before by the first student. This student was mistaken in understanding what was required. He looked at the topic as a past event, so his discussion came as something happened, not an event to happen.

Student D, the fourth one, supplied a new idea. He thought of feeding on trees and plants, not like students A, B or C in order to keep alive. We noticed that A thought of water, B of catching a fish and C of catching an animal. Different means, ideas, for one purpose which is staying alive. This student brought a new idea to the discussion when he thought of making a fire as a signal for a ship crossing the sea, whereas other ideas given by student D were presented before by his colleagues.

In conclusion, the researcher noticed that the students tackled different ideas, they negotiated these ideas and tried to reach a solution of escaping from the island and survived. Their participations enriched the discussion as a whole as they invented different points that contributed a lot to the discussion.

The second group discussion went on as the following:

This is the context for the debate. What is needed is to take part in the debate consisted of four roles to show you are for or against the plan of building a new refinery. The roles are: A greenpeace activist, an unemployed person with children, an owner of a fishing boat and a representative of the oil refinery.

The second group read the following paragraph and asked to have their discussion concentrated on the previous roles:

"Dolwyn Bay is a small fishing town (population 8000). It is in a beautiful coastal area where there is a wildlife park. Most people work in the fishing industry which is unfortunately no longer successful. The population is getting older, many young people have left the area to look for work in the big cities. They have just discovered oil under the sea near Dolwyn Bay and there are plans to build a big oil refinery".

A greenpeace activist: "I disagree this idea because this project will kill wildlife in this area. I think the development of Dolwyn Bay would be a disaster for the marine life in the area. So, we prefer to stay a greenpeace and work in marine life."

- An Unemployed person: "in my opinion it is good chance for us".

- The owner of a fishing boat: "I am against the plan. The oil refinery will pollute the sea, so that fish will die. It is better to put the money for fishing industry. For example, we can build with the money fishing boats".
- A representative of the oil company: the oil refinery will be very good. It will get a lot of money. It has a very positive result. First, it create a very good perfect job with excellent salary. Second, it saves a power to get the electric to become the life easy. Third, it makes us get of unemployment".
- The unemployed person: "that is right, the plan be very good. I need work to bring money for my children. And it will make our town a big city. We would still keep a small area for rare birds".
- Greenpeace activist: "what? It will destroy our town with its pollution. And what is the use of it if our green sight go?".
- The owner of fishing boat: "that's right. We do not need money."
- The representative of the oil company: "that's not right. You are mistaken. You all need money."

The first student, the Greenpeace activist was against the plan of getting out the oil and building the refinery. He supported his opinion with supporters as: the project will kill the wildlife in the area, and it will kill marine life, too. The researcher noticed that the two ideas given by this student are in harmony with his role as a Greenpeace activist. So, he took care of greening the area and of protecting the animals there. The second student who is the owner of a fishing boat is against the plan, too. But he looked at the subject from a different angle. So, his ideas were also in harmony with his role. He said that the oil refinery would pollute the sea and kill the fish there. He suggested that the money that he would be spent on building fishing boats instead.

Here , we can see how the different ideas of the different roles enrich the argument of opposing the plan. Having and negotiating more ideas will give the discussion more energy and more stimuly for approaching a solution and then an agreement or discussion which is the final stage in the discussion method.

The other side of the debate for the third student played the role of the representative of the oil company. It's expected that his argument will be with the plan, in accordance with the role he played. He argued that the refinery will bring a lot of money and create a lot of job opportunities. According to him, the plan will make life easier by providing people with electricity. The fourth advantage of the plan is that it will bring unemployment in the area to an end. So, the plan is beneficial and of great importance to the people of the area.

The fourth student reinforced the ideas given by the third one through giving more and new creative ideas supporting the plan. This student played the role of unemployed person. He argued that the plan is very good because he needs to work in order to get money to provide for his family. The plan will enlarge their town into a city. This student tried to make some compromise in the debate. He argued that they could build the refinery, and kept an area for wildlife. This is a new development in the debate as it is a kind of compromise between the two opinions.

The coming two arguments by greenpeace activist and the owner of the fishing boat unite in to one position. An agreement on the idea that they will not replace the beautiful and natural sights of their town with the refinery and money was reached.

The last role played was by the representative of the oil company who stayed at his position through responding – you are mistaken.

**Conclusion:**

The researcher can conclude that the participants negotiated the topic from their points of view.

Each participant tried to convince the others of his point. This process of inventing and creating ideas enriches the subject and makes it active, interesting and stimulating. These qualities are the ones or skills that the discussion method raises so that an agreement or a solution is reached at the end. And this is what we notice in these two discussions. So, we recommend this method be adopted more in education because of its great benefits.

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