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## Improving the Quality of Students' Speech Through Structured Discussion Methods to Reduce Undirected Talk

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**Abstract:** This study aims to improve students' speaking skills and reduce off-topic conversations in class VIII-C of SMP Negeri 27 Malang through structured discussion methods. The background of this study highlights the importance of effective communication in supporting students' intellectual, emotional, and social potential. The results of observations showed that students tend to be active in speaking but often deviate from the topic due to less interesting teaching methods, lack of opportunities to practice, and nervousness experienced by students. This study used a qualitative approach with the Kurt Lewin model in the form of Class Action Research (PTK), which included two cycles involving 27 students. The results showed an increase in the quality of students' speaking and a decrease in irrelevant conversations after the implementation of the structured discussion method. Feedback from the first cycle resulted in clearer learning strategies and increased group roles in discussions. This study concluded that the structured discussion method is effective in creating a conducive classroom atmosphere and improving students' communication skills.

**Keywords:** Class action research; students' speaking skills; structured discussion method; undirected conversation

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### Introduction

Education is an important way to shape students' personalities and potential to become intellectual, emotional, and socially intelligent personalities. Speaking or communication skills are important in the educational process. Good speaking skills can make it easier for the interlocutor to understand what is in the mind and intention of the speaker. In the context of high school learning, speaking skills are not only related to their ability to express opinions, but also are effectively and politely related in terms of interactions with the same age, teacher, and environment. This skill is also important in improving the quality of learning, where

students not only speak to convey opinions, but also to think critically and responsibly in managing conversations. Ideally, in the classroom, students are expected to have structured speaking skills, be relevant to the learning topic, and be able to communicate politely and confidently. Students are able to express their ideas and opinions clearly, use the right language, and be able to formulate logical and in-depth arguments. This speaking ability is expected to support the development of critical thinking skills and effective assertive communication (Saliya et al., 2023).

In fact, the classroom learning process is still coloured by various tasks related to

student activities. Based on the researchers' initial observations in Class VIII-C SMP Negeri 27 Malang, we found that many students tend to speak actively, but the direction of conversation is often not related to this topic. The low quality of speaking skills in students is caused by several internal factors, namely: (1) Lack of active participation of students in speaking activities because the learning methods applied by teachers are less interesting and innovative; (2) The lack of evaluation of speaking skills makes students rarely practice and consider speaking activities as easy; (3) When speaking in front of the class, students have difficulty structuring ideas so that the conversation is not well organized; (4) The feelings of nervousness, embarrassment, and lack of confidence experienced by students have an impact on the deterioration of the quality of their speech; (5) Students have difficulty developing ideas and thoughts thoroughly, and lack focus when expressing opinions in front of the class. As a result, not only do some students lose focus in classroom learning, but both engage in unrelated conversations and passive bristlers. This indicates that even if students have the courage to speak, they still do not have good speaking skills in terms of the quality and precision of the direction of the speech (Hayani, 2019).

Uninstructed talk in class is a weak indicator of a student's classroom management and communication skills. Conversations that are not well organized and unrelated to the subject matter can reduce students' concentration and disrupt the learning process in the classroom. Based on initial observations, it was revealed that this condition often occurs due to the lack of active participation of students in learning activities, so they tend to have other unrelated conversations. Therefore, educators need to understand the importance of designing learning strategies that not only motivate students to speak, but also equip them with direction so that the conversation stays focused on the issues being discussed and in accordance with the learning objectives. The approach that can be used is a structured

discussion method (Bramantya, Pujiati, Azmi, et al., 2024; Nasrah & Fuadi, 2022).

The structured discussion method acts as an approach that helps students speak in a directed manner according to the learning topic, as well as providing space for them to explore different points of view in an academic environment. The structured discussion method is a learning strategy that allows students to speak in a systematic, directed, problem-based context or a specific topic. By using clear guidelines, students gain space to express their opinions, exchange ideas, and respond to colleagues' ideas. Structured discussions provide students with active subjects and excellent listeners. In the context of learning, the discussion method has advantages, including: a. The discussion method involves students directly in learning, b. The discussion method can make students dare to speak in public, c. The discussion method can improve students' understanding to think critically about the problems given through LKPD. Students are trained to speak in context, to express their opinions based on facts and arguments, and to respect the opinions of others. In addition, this method also supports the formation of a culture of critical thinking and assertive communication in the classroom (Pahleviannur et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2024).

This research is designed using a qualitative approach in the form of Classroom Action Research (PTK), which aims to explore in-depth information on learning dynamics and changes in students' attitudes during learning with structured discussions. Through this approach, researchers can observe the process and impact of applying the method directly in the field, as well as gain a contextual understanding of the problems that occur in class VIII-C.

Based on the background and the urgency described above, this study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) How can the structured discussion method improve the speaking skills of students in Class VIII-C of SMP Negeri 27 Malang? (2) What are the changes in students' participation, focus, and confidence during

the learning process after the implementation of the structured discussion method?

This research is relevant to the current conditions of education, where teachers are required to create interactive, meaningful, and student-center learning (Bramantya, Untari, & Nafsiyah, 2024). The application of structured discussion methods in this context is not only to improve the quality of students' speaking skills, but also to create a more comfortable, conducive, and humane classroom atmosphere. The author hopes that the results of this study can be a reference for researchers, and other teachers in overcoming student communication problems in offline learning at school, and can strengthen pedagogic competence in implementing innovative and solution learning strategies (Badriyah, 2023).

## Method

This research is a Classroom Action Research (PTK) that adopts a descriptive qualitative approach. PTK was chosen with the aim of improving the learning process in the classroom directly through actions designed, implemented, observed, and reflected by researchers who also play the role of teachers. A qualitative approach is used to understand the phenomenon in depth, especially in improving the quality of speech and reducing irrelevant speech through interaction and observation of students' behaviour in structured discussion activities. The researcher chose the PTK method using the Kurt Lewin model, which consists of four main stages, namely: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The subject of this study is grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 27 Malang in the ongoing school year, consisting of 27 students. The selection of these students is based on the results of initial observations that show problems, namely the low quality of speaking in discussions and the high frequency of irrelevant conversations during the learning process (Bramantya, Untari, Zamroh, et al., 2024; Jonassen et al., 2008). This research was carried out at SMP Negeri 27 Malang, in classrooms VIII-C. The implementation of the research is planned to

last for two months, which is divided into two cycles, with each cycle consisting of four stages: planning, implementation of actions, observation, and reflection (Susilo et al., 2022).

The data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative data from observations, field notes, and student reflections were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to student engagement and creativity. Quantitative data from performance assessments were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores and percentage of improvement across cycles, to measure the enhancement of student learning outcomes.

This comprehensive methodological approach ensures that the impact of the implemented teaching strategy can be thoroughly evaluated in terms of both process and product.

## Results

This research was carried out in two cycles involving 27 students of class VIII-C SMP Negeri 27 Malang as participants. The main objective of this study is to improve students' speaking skills and reduce irrelevant speaking habits during the learning process. In its implementation, the strategy used is a problem-based learning model (Problem Based Learning) with a structured discussion method in groups. The results of this activity were developed into products in the form of infographics and short videos, which were then presented by students in front of the class (Tan et al., 2021).

### Results of Cycle I

In the first cycle, the learning process is directed at the stage of problem recognition and the implementation of group discussions systematically. However, based on the results of observations, there are still many students who are not able to speak in focus according to the learning material. Some of them actually engage in conversations that are not related to the topic, especially during discussion sessions. This situation occurs

because students do not fully understand how to discuss effectively and still have difficulty controlling concentration when speaking. Concretely, it can be seen through the assessment rubric that has been conceptualized in the teaching module.

No.	Nama Siswa	Indikator				Nilai
		Penyampaian Hasil Diskusi	Arah Ide dan Gagasan	Respon atas Pertanyaan	Perilaku Presentasi	
1.	Siswa 1	3	2	3	2	50
2.	Siswa 2	4	3	3	5	75
3.	Siswa 3	3	3	3	3	45
4.	Siswa 4	2	3	3	2	50
5.	Siswa 5	4	4	3	5	80
6.	Siswa 6	4	3	3	4	70
7.	Siswa 7	5	3	3	4	75
8.	Siswa 8	3	3	3	3	45
9.	Siswa 9	4	3	3	4	70
10.	Siswa 10	3	3	3	4	65
11.	Siswa 11	4	3	3	4	70
12.	Siswa 12	2	2	3	2	45
13.	Siswa 13	3	2	3	4	60
14.	Siswa 14	3	4	3	4	70
15.	Siswa 15	2	3	3	3	55
16.	Siswa 16	2	3	3	3	55
17.	Siswa 17	3	3	3	4	65
18.	Siswa 18	3	3	3	3	60
19.	Siswa 19	3	3	3	3	60
20.	Siswa 20	4	3	3	3	65
21.	Siswa 21	5	4	3	5	85
22.	Siswa 22	4	3	3	4	70
23.	Siswa 23	3	3	3	4	65
24.	Siswa 24	2	2	3	2	45
25.	Siswa 25	3	3	3	4	65
26.	Siswa 26	3	3	3	3	60
27.	Siswa 27	3	3	3	4	65

Figure 1. Value Skills Cycle 1

Although most groups successfully completed products such as infographics and short videos, student engagement in discussions was not evenly distributed. The presentation was still dominated by one or two students who were more active than the other members.

## Results of Cycle II

In the second cycle, a number of strategic improvements were made based on reflections from the implementation of the first cycle. These improvements include providing more detailed discussion guidelines, the division of roles in groups (such as facilitators, recorders, and presenters), and increased teacher assistance during discussions. Teachers also provide concrete examples of how to speak effectively and relevant to the learning material. As a result, the number of students speaking

outside the learning context has decreased significantly. Group discussions take place more actively and directed, students begin to show the ability to express opinions that are in accordance with the topic, and are able to respond to the opinions of their group mates. Infographic products and short videos produced in the second cycle also increased, both in terms of content and group member participation. Presentations are also more organized by actively involving more students. As a result, the following assessment table can be seen:

No.	Nama Siswa	Indikator					Nilai
		Pemahaman masalah	Kerja sama kelompok	Isi produk	Kajian budaya	Presentasi	
1.	Siswa 1	3	3	3	4	3	80
2.	Siswa 2	3	3	3	4	4	85
3.	Siswa 3	3	3	3	4	3	80
4.	Siswa 4	3	3	3	4	4	70
5.	Siswa 5	4	4	3	4	4	95
6.	Siswa 6	3	3	3	4	3	80
7.	Siswa 7	3	3	3	4	4	85
8.	Siswa 8	3	3	3	4	3	80
9.	Siswa 9	4	4	3	4	4	95
10.	Siswa 10	4	4	3	4	4	95
11.	Siswa 11	4	3	3	4	4	90
12.	Siswa 12	3	3	3	4	3	80
13.	Siswa 13	3	3	3	4	3	80
14.	Siswa 14	4	4	3	4	4	95
15.	Siswa 15	3	3	3	4	3	80
16.	Siswa 16	3	3	3	4	3	80
17.	Siswa 17	4	4	3	4	4	95
18.	Siswa 18	3	3	3	4	3	80
19.	Siswa 19	3	3	3	4	3	80
20.	Siswa 20	4	3	3	4	4	90
21.	Siswa 21	4	4	3	4	4	95
22.	Siswa 22	4	3	3	4	3	85
23.	Siswa 23	4	3	3	4	3	85
24.	Siswa 24	4	3	3	4	3	85
25.	Siswa 25	3	3	3	4	3	80
26.	Siswa 26	3	4	3	4	3	85
27.	Siswa 27	4	3	3	4	4	90

Figure 2. Value of Cycle II Skills

## Discussion

Based on the results of the research carried out over two cycles, there was an improvement in the quality of student speaking and a decrease in the number of conversations that were not related to the subject matter. This increase did not take place directly, but was the result of the improvement of the learning strategy carried out in the second cycle after reflecting on the implementation in the first cycle.

## Cycle I Analysis

In cycle I, the application of the structured discussion method in the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model is directed at the stage of problem recognition and the implementation of discussions in groups. However, the learning process has not been running optimally. Many students are still not used to discussing in a focused manner on the topic being discussed. This condition shows that their speaking skills have not developed systematically, reflected in the tendency to speak out of context, the inability to convey ideas in a coherent manner, and the dominance of discussion by students who are more confident. These findings are in line with theories that reveal that students' cognitive development and language skills are greatly influenced by social interaction. In the context of this study, failure in the early stages was caused by the lack of scaffolding or adequate assistance from teachers in directing the course of the discussion. As a result, the learning process in cycle I has not fully taken place in the student's Proximal Development Zone (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978).

## Repair and Results of Cycle II

Based on the results of reflection from the implementation of cycle I, a number of strategic improvements were made in cycle II. These improvements include providing more detailed discussion instructions, division of roles in groups, and increasing the active role of teachers in facilitating discussions. The teacher also provides examples or examples of how to speak effectively and in accordance with the learning topic. In addition, students are given the responsibility to produce works in the form of infographics and short videos which are then presented in front of the class. The application of this strategy has a significant positive influence on student learning behavior.

The number of students who deviate from the topic of learning while speaking has decreased dramatically. Group discussions are becoming more directed and focused, and more and more students are showing courage in expressing their opinions and responding appropriately to their peers' ideas. The quality

of the resulting products has also improved both in terms of content and visualization, which reflects a more optimal understanding of the material and group collaboration. These findings are in line with the results of (Slavin, 2006) research which showed that group learning with clear division of roles can improve active participation and individual responsibility in teams. In addition, according to (Smith et al., 2005), structured group discussions effectively assist students in developing critical thinking skills and communication skills.

In Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) learning, the use of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model is able to create active learning that focuses on solving real problems (Bramantya, et al., 2024). This method encourages students to think analytically, discuss argumentatively, and work together, which is an important part of 21st century competencies. This is in line with the opinion of Tan (2003) who stated that PBL is effective in fostering collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills. Improving speaking skills through the application of structured discussions in PPKn learning is also in accordance with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, which prioritizes differentiation, project-based learning, and character strengthening. This method supports the achievement of the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, especially in the aspects of critical thinking, effective communication, and the spirit of mutual cooperation.

## Conclusions

This study shows that the application of structured discussion methods in the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model is effectively able to improve the quality of students' speech and reduce the tendency to speak irrelevant in the classroom. The process was carried out in two cycles involving 27 students of class VIII-C SMP Negeri 27 Malang. In the first cycle, learning is not optimal because students are not used to discussing in a focused and directed manner. However, through improving strategies in the

second cycle, such as providing clear discussion guidelines, role sharing, and modeling from teachers-students, there has been a significant increase in participation, focus, and the ability to convey ideas in a relevant manner.

The results of this study reinforce the importance of scaffolding in the development of students' speaking skills, as theorized by Vygotsky in the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In addition, this approach is in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum and 21st century competencies, as it encourages collaboration, effective communication, critical thinking, and responsibility in group work. The resulting products in the form of infographics and short videos are proof of student involvement in active and meaningful learning. Therefore, the structured discussion method in PPKn learning can be recommended as an effective strategy to improve the quality of student communication in the classroom.

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