Model United Nations: Improving the Students' Speaking Skill

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Model United Nations promotes students' learning opportunities in three successive ways: optimizing individual development through unmoderated caucus, growing competitiveness through working paper forum and sharpening problem solving skill through draft-resolution forum. This is a classroom action research that investigates the improvement of students' speaking skill taught by using Model United Nations at Pamulang University. Two cycles were conducted where the first cycle consisted of four meetings and the second cycle consisted of three meetings. The population of this study was the fourth semester students in the academic year of 2017/2018. Both quantitative and qualitative data were employed to analyze the data. Quantitative data were in the form of oral test scores taken from students' public speaking skill. On the other hand, qualitative data were in the form of observation sheet, questionnaire sheet, and documentation. The treatments signified improvements of students' public speaking skill in each cycle which is represented by the mean score. The mean score of pre-test was 58.775. It improved to 69.525 in the first cycle, and became 78.675 in the last cycle. The observation sheet, questionnaire sheets and documents proved that students performed active participation and engagement during the instructional process that fostered better skill in public speaking.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Model United Nation, Speaking Skill

INTRODUCTION

While the urgency of education in the 21st century is echoing, many English education practitioners are spinning with conventional instructions that cannot promote skills needed in this globalization optimally. English-teacher voices should have moved from discussing what teaching method to be best implemented to how to encourage students to possess skills they need for their future. Accordingly, mainstream of instructional process in classroom has recently suggested that teaching-learning English advance to significant extent Nasution (2016) . Teachers should leave behaviorism learning theory where teachers are central in instructional process and move to constructivism idea that students share dominant roles. Practically, this trend should bring some influences to classroom practices. One of which is in selecting teaching method as one of elements in achieving successful instructional process. Lubis et al. (2018) believe that most of the teaching practices using proper teaching method evidently influence fruitful improvement to the students' achievement. Teaching method should be based on accommodating students to innovation, cooperativeness, problem solving, and creativity. In addition to facing globalization, teaching method should also be addressed to answering challenges coming from students.

Challenges particularly occur to students in speaking class as states that among listening, speaking, reading, and writing, it is found that speaking is the most challenging one . Some reasons need to concern with, such as students' self- underestimation of grammatical mastery, students' low confidence, and students' lack of vocabulary. These are worsened by the status quo where the time allocation is not enough to accommodate all students to actively speak up in their class.

Those factors also happened to the fourth semester students of English Literature Department of a private university in South Tangerang, Indonesia. Most of them have low speaking ability which is documented by their lecturer's score documentation. Ihsan (2016) Ihsan (2016) revealed that English teachers mostly face some problems like some students are high motivated, but some others are low even ignorant. On the other hand, the lecturer revealed that the problems mostly occurring to the students are (1) they are not confident in speaking and will speak if they are only asked to speak ; (2) they still find that grammatically error in speaking is something embarrassing; (3) they have limited vocabulary which makes them stutter while speaking. These three major factors hamper them to develop their speaking skill. On the other hand, the chosen teaching method has a significant influence toward students' speaking skill too. The lecturer said that the teaching-learning process is underpinned by task-based syllabus. It stimulates them to talk to each other to accomplish the task burdened to them. However, it was found that those who are passive remain passive and those who are active dominate the group.

Therefore, it is necessary to solve the afore-explained problems and to cover current learning orientation where students are demanded to develop social cognitive development such as communicative tasks to exchange ideas Mullock (2002) caring about the world development, possessing good skills of leadership, being cooperative and honest, and others. This is significant regarding to the spread of globalization where the important of English as a lingua franca which demands institution to provide high quality English education Baker (2016) .

However, most of instructional setting is stagnant and far from innovative teaching method. It causes a question on what if our future generation cannot compete with other nations. This has been a debatable question in the 21st century; how to improve students' cognitive skill in many aspects like negotiating skill, high-order critical thinking, critical reading, effective writing without ignoring the significance of confidence, cooperativeness, competitiveness, problem-solving, and so on. This prolonged debate is the one behind why our study is significant to do.

One of the methods suited to the needs is Model United Nations (MUN). Fegan (2011) suggest MUN as an event originally practicing the most intact body in the world United Nations (UN). Either sholars or students are warmly welcomed in this constructive series of activities. Further, Cates (2011) states that MUN offers students: a) skills to acquire critical and creative thinking, communication, cooperative problem-solving, informed decision making, nonviolent conflict reso-

lution, and the ability to perceive issues from more than one perspective. On the other hand, necessity to solve world problems is not the main goal, b) a medium to learn global attitudes including, curiosity, global awareness, an appreciation of other cultures, a commitment to justice, respect for diversity, and empathy with others; and c) action as the result of the global attitudes— democratic participation in the local and global community to solve world problems. Accordingly, there was an urgency to conduct a study that aims at finding out whether the implementation of Model United Nations improved students' speaking skill.

Practically, MUN is still new for Indonesia. Those who participate at MUN are mostly from other than English study program students such as international relations, law, economy, and other majors whose education background about being a diplomat is sufficient. Model United Nations is originally designed for professional speakers like diplomat who are familiar with and have abundant experience in sharing, debating, discussing, disseminating, and overcoming certain issues. There must be modification to English literature students who have no sufficient exposure to international politics or alike as teaching needs to be adjusted with students' capacity and background knowledge Sukmawati (2018) .

Accordingly, the activities in Model United Nations are mostly to have the participants actively participate by speaking. This is strongly supported by Youngstown State University Regional High School (2002) that the mission of MUN is to develop, sponsor, and promote extracurricular that has academic orientation to students designed to increase global awareness, cross-cultural understanding and sensitivity, while providing students a forum to explore issues that are paramount to embody bright futures.

Studies about MUN that come from English program area are not popular yet like what has been studied by Dittmer (2013) and Engel et al. (2017) . One study tried to popularize it is a case study from Bastaki (2012). The finding showed that using MUN for teaching English is practicable proven by students' enthusiasm. It was also found that all procedures of MUN could be conducted well. However, Bastaki focuses on changing students' thought to world-wide issue. Specifically, thestudy aims at whether MUN could raise leadership, critical thinking, cooperativeness, and negotiation skills instead of at whether it can be used to improve students' speaking performance. Another difference is from its subject that all the students are from English-speaking country leaving a question of whether it is implementable for English for foreign language (EFL) students.

Xiaoyu and Jian (2019) in their Applying Modern Technique and Carrying out English Extracurricular – on the Model United Nations Activity" state that the implementation of MUN is also able to improve students' English comprehension for English teaching-learning context. It is because MUN deals with Piaget's constructivism in principle that learning is discovery. By implementing MUN, it is found that students acquire comprehension beyond English proficiency. Students'

skills in negotiating, respecting, and diplomacy are potential to develop. The paper finds that implementing MUN is able to improve students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as vocabulary, and researching ability. However, there is still lack of discussion on how its implementation can achieve those complex skills in language learning. Accordingly, the main point this paper is different from the previous papers is that this paper focuses on finding out the effect of MUN towards students' speaking skill in EFL countries.

Tanjung (2012) explored the effectiveness of British Parliamentary Debate and students' critical thinking to improve their speaking skill. He found that implementing the parliamentary debate encourages students' skills in public speaking especially in arguing. However, critical thinking as the attributive variable to scrutinize should be debatable because technically, critical thinking belongs to one of the indicators of debating. It signifies that the author gave treatment to improve the students' critical thinking. Whereas, the idea of attributive variable is to show its influence to the dependent variable without any treatment. Attributions that exclude the indicators of debate or MUN are learning motivation, self- esteem, creativity, and so on.

Othman et al. (2013) conducted a study entitled "An English Debate League Competition among Lower Form Students: An Experiential Learning Activity." It scrutinizes the role of implementing English debate league in improving the students' speaking performances. However, they focused on researching members of the university's English club who are used to conducting debate parliamentary. Accordingly, revealing whether implementing the method can influence the students with sufficient experience to debate is not necessarily valid.

The afore mentioned studies signify the urgency of finding out whether implementing Model United Nations can improve speaking skill of the fourth semester students of English Literature department at a private university in South Tangerang, Indonesia. Practically, MUN consists of several committees that focuses on specific and particular desk job. They are Economic and Social Council, Security Council, The General Assembly, International Court of Justice, United Nations Environment, United Nations Children's Fund, Pro United Nations Development Program, World Health Organization, United Nations Educational, and World Trade Organization. This so-called division assigns the participants to accordingly bring related issues currently happening world-wide which require international participation to involve in. In academic context, the students are responsible to have background knowledge of the field before coming into the stage to bring responsibility as a representative of a particular country. Amron (2011) describes the general procedures in conducting MUN which is depicted by **Figure 1**.

METHODS

Taking place at a private university in South Tangerang, this study was conducted from March to May 2018. The population of this study was the fourth semester students of English and Literature Department in the academic year of 2017/2018 and the subjects of the study were the fourth semester students who undertook speaking as one of the semester's subjects. The data were in form of both qualitative and quantitative. This is a classroom action research that that focused on improving students' speaking skill by using Model United Nations thanks to Harmer (2002) enlightening that every CAR is to a series of procedures teachers can engage in, either because they wish to improve aspects of their teaching, or because they wish to evaluate the success and or properness of certain activities and procedures. The criteria of success is, therefore, if students' general score can improve to 70 as the minimum standard to reach "good" grade. The procedural implementation of this study dealt with the one proposed by Kemmis and Mc. Taggart in Nunan (1993): (1) planning: the first step to identify problem(s) and develop a plan or strategy to solve the problem.; (2) implementing: the second step to implement the strategy that has been planned.; (3) observing: the third step to observe the effects of strategy and collecting data needed in solving the problem; (4) reflection: the last step of the cycle to analyze, evaluate, and Tanjung (2012) describe the influence of implementing the strategy to the improvement of the students' speaking skill. Douglas (2003) 's indicators in testing students' speaking skill is depicted in **Table 1**.

In analyzing the data from the performance test, descriptive analysis was employed. To find out the mean, median, and mode score of students' speaking skill, **Figure 2** depicts.


FIGURE 2 | Mean score Formula
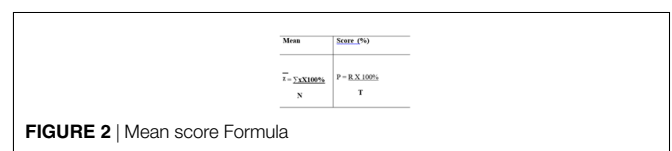
Mean score was obtained from dividing the total score by the number of students, and the score percentage (P) was to classify students who obtained above 75 categorized as good in speaking. It was calculated from dividing the number of students who got score 75 (R) multiplied by 100% then divided by the number of students who joined the test.

The questionnaire used in this study was meant to validate the finding of the test together with documentation and observation. 5 questions were given to the students related to their response to the whole instructional process. Items like whether applying MUN can boost the students' confidence in speaking, improve their critical thinking, and provide sufficient exposure to using English in situational context were answered by the students using Likert scale.

TABLE 1 | Speaking Indicators

Aspect	Description	Score
1. Pronunciation		
Unsatisfying	Errors in pronunciation are frequent but can be understood.	1-4
Fair	Accent is intelligible though often quite faulty	5-8
Good	Errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb.	9-12
Very good	Errors in pronunciation are quite rare	13-16
Excellent	Equivalent to and fully accepted by educated native speakers	17-20
2. Fluency		
Unsatisfying	No specific fluency description.	1-4
Fair	Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social situations, including introductions and casual conversations about current events.	5-8
Good	Can discuss particular interest of competence with reasonable phase. Rarely has to grope for words.	9-12
Very Good	Able to use the language fluently on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. Can participate in any conversation within the range of this experience with a high degree of frequency.	13-16
Excellent	The fluency is accepted by educative native speakers.	17-20
3. Grammar		
Unsatisfying	Errors in grammar are frequent but speaker can be understood.	1-4
Fair	Can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately but doesn't have through or confident control of the grammar.	5-8
Good	Control of grammar is good. Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations.	9-12
Very Good	Able to use the language accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs. Errors in grammar are quite rare.	13-16
Excellent	Equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.	17-20
4. Vocabulary		
Unsatisfying	Speaking vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs.	1-4
Fair	Has speaking vocabulary sufficient to express himself simply with some circumlocutions.	5-8
Good	Able to speak the language with sufficient vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations.	9-12
Very Good	Can understand and participate in any conversation within the range of his experience with a high degree of precision of vocabulary.	13-16
Excellent	Speech on all levels is fully accepted by educated native speakers in all its features including breadth of vocabulary and idioms, colloquialisms, disciplinary knowledge, technical jargons, and pertinent cultural references.	17-20
5. Comprehension		
Unsatisfying	Within the scope of his very limited language experience can understand simple questions and statements if it is delivered with slowed speech, repetition or paraphrase.	1-4
Fair	Can get the gist of most conversations of non-technical subjects	5-8
Good	Comprehension is quite complete at a normal rate of speech	9-12
Very Good	Can understand any conversation within the range of his experience	13-16
Excellent	Equivalent to that of an educated native speaker	17-20

FIGURE 1 | Procedure of Model United Nations
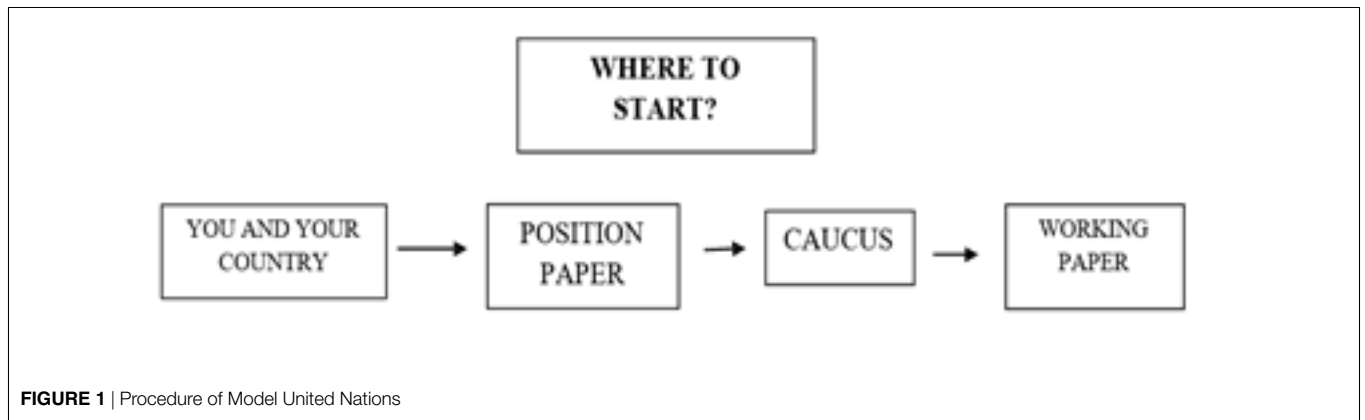
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted based on steps Model United Nations suggested. Within two consecutive cycles, where the first cycle consisted of four meetings, and the second cycle consisted of two meetings. Several findings were found and depicted by **Table 2**.

TABLE 2 | Students' Mean Scores

re-Cycle	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
58.775	69.525	78.675

The first cycle concluded that the students' mean score of speaking skill was still below standard (75). They only reached 69.525 as shown in Table 3. Qualitative data also suggested that many students were still confused following the steps of MUN. The second cycle showed improvement in many aspects. Quantitative data portrayed students' means score was already above average where most of them passed the minimum score stipulated. They reached 78.675. In addition, qualitative data also showed satisfying engagement and participation from the students in every single activity MUN had.

In cycle 1, some reasons that many students were confused with MUN which eventually influenced their low score were: (1) MUN needed students to prepare themselves well by doing some researches before starting the class. They were not ready to this as it was their very first time conducting MUN. Second, MUN catered the needs of technical vocabularies which other people might hear them rarely through operational words list. The students already read the list and the researcher explained it as well, but they were not used to using it yet. Third, the topic or motion to discuss was contextually complicated for them. This difficulty is reasonable as Cates (2011) states that MUN needs complex and higher-order thinking skills, such as problem solving and negotiation with many steps to go.

Accordingly, some evaluations were formulated and then implemented in the second cycle. Some evaluations were (1) to re-explain to them more carefully procedures in conducting MUN, what to do in position paper, unmoderated caucus,

and working paper respectively; (2) to re-introduce list of jargons used in MUN to the students and its contextual usage to improve their vocabulary; and (3) to inject grammar lesson such as the use of conditional sentence which is frequently used in their speaking activities; and (4) to envision that MUN is actually able to implement for education purpose. This is in line with Xiaoyu and Jian (2019) suggesting that MUN fully represents a new pedagogical way to turn students from learning how to communicate properly with others but not ultimately what knowledge to learn. It sharpens a point that implementing MUN is not aimed to make up but more simply it is aimed as a way to obtain more chances of patronizing and fostering speaking ability.

After conducting MUN for the second time, most of the students found it actually interesting and joyful. It was also found that their scores improved significantly. There are some reasons why it could be achieved; (1) in terms of vocabulary, as stated in the beginning of this paragraph, MUN provided them a list of vocabularies that is commonly used by diplomats while speaking. It benefitted the students that by stuffing themselves with the list, being encouraged to employ the vocabularies in arranging position paper and draft resolution as well as in speaking, they had wider exposure to vocabularies; (2) MUN was effective in influencing students' fluency. In MUN, every participant called as delegate was given chance to speak up individually in front of many people and in group discussion as well while conducting unmoderated caucus. With those opportunities completed with their well-prepared matter to deliver, the students looked more confident to fluently communicate with others as well as deliver their individual speech; (3) MUN created opportunity for students to improve their grammar. Every sentence which the students produce was grammatically checked by the Dias. It was meant to also influence their score. The students, in the beginning of every conference, were noticed that to achieve honorable mention title, he/she had to minimize their grammatical errors as one of the indicators; (4) MUN concerned with students' comprehension. The activities in MUN starting from the pre-conference to the closing conference were in efforts to embody students' comprehension of the

discussion quality. In pre-conference, the students were stuffed with printed materials that concerned with motions provided by the teacher. These findings deal with Xiaoyu and Jian (2019) that students learn both English proficiency and skills needed in the 21st century.

Here, they were asked to read it optimally so they had background knowledge and prediction what and how the conference would run. They were then asked to formulate their position paper. This was aimed at broadening their insight and link it to the motion making them have to concentrate and concern with the topic to discuss later. In the on-going conference, debate and discussion were also meant to make them master or comprehend the topic. By debating and discussing, they shared their knowledge, confronted each other, and ended up with some resolutions.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded positive appraisal to the implementation of Model United Nations in improving students' speaking skill. It was evidently and empirically proven by quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Quantitative data showed improvement from pre-test to evaluation in cycle 1 for 10.75, and that from evaluation in cycle 1 to evaluation in cycle 2 for 9.15. In conclusion, implementing Model United Nations could

improve the students' speaking skill. Result of observation showed that students were engaged to every step of MUN and performed improved active-participation from one cycle to the other cycle. Questionnaire showed that students dealt with revealing that MUN boosted their confidence, critical thinking, and exposure to wider knowledge outside English. Some suggestions are addressed to Speaking lecturer, and researchers who concern with speaking area that MUN is originally complicated to implement, so Speaking lecturer needs to simplify the procedure, and encourage students to be attentive and participating actively. To researchers who wish to conduct similar research, this can be referred to enrich content yet the implementation of MUN should involve contextual adjustment to make it properly implementable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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