

**EXPLORING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE
AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL TO DEVELOP
SOFT SKILLS IN THE EFL/ESL CLASSROOM**

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Abstrak

Kemahiran insaniah adalah sama penting atau lebih penting daripada kemahiran teknikal pada abad ke 21 ekonomi pengetahuan ini. Walau bagaimana pun, wujud ketidakpadanan antara kemahiran insaniah yang diperoleh graduan dengan kemahiran insaniah yang dikehendaki industri. Kajian lepas menunjukkan kekurangan alat pedagogi untuk membentuk kemahiran insaniah. Dengan ini, kajian ini bertujuan meneroka bagaimana debat sebagai satu alat pedagogi yang merangkumi tiga peringkat, iaitu sebelum debat, semasa debat dan selepas debat dapat membentuk kemahiran insaniah seperti yang digariskan dalam Modul Pembentukan Kemahiran Insaniah Malaysia (MSSM). Peserta kajian ini terdiri daripada lima pakar debat yang mempunyai pengalaman berdebat dan pernah mengajar Debat Parlimen Asia sekurang-kurangnya dua tahun dalam konteks EFL/ESL. Temu bual bersemuka secara separa struktur diguna untuk kutipan data. Untuk triangulasi pandangan pakar debat, temu bual berfokus dikendalikan dengan enam pelajar debat dalam kelas yang terdiri daripada tiga negara Asia. Data yang telah ditranskripsi dianalisa menggunakan model aliran analisis data dengan data dikecilkan, disusun, difokus, diatur dan dibentang menggunakan perkataan kata demi kata para peserta. Pendekatan template juga diguna untuk menganalisa data. Dapatan daripada peserta menceritakan bagaimana sebelum debat, peringkat asas yang penting untuk menggariskan kes dan hujah kumpulan dengan disokong bukti daripada penyelidikan dapat membentuk kemahiran insaniah dalam MSSM, terutamanya kemahiran kerja berpasukan dan pemikiran kritikal dan penyelesaian masalah. Para peserta juga menerangkan bagaimana semasa debat, peringkat yang paling mencabar disebabkan masa percakapan yang terhad dan titik-maklumat, dapat membentuk kemahiran insaniah, terutamanya kemahiran pemikiran kritikal secara pantas dan komunikasi efektif. Mereka juga menggambarkan bagaimana peringkat selepas debat dapat membentuk pelbagai kemahiran insaniah dengan menonjolkan kemahiran sepanjang hayat dan pengurusan maklumat dan komunikasi. Satu model pedagogi debat untuk mengajar kemahiran insaniah telah dibentuk berdasarkan dapatan kajian ini. Isu dan cabaran yang mungkin dihadapi pemegang kepentingan sekiranya debat diperkenalkan dalam seluruh kurikulum EFL/ESL juga telah dikenal pasti peserta kajian ini.

Kata kunci: Kemahiran insaniah, alat pedagogi, Modul Pembentukan Kemahiran Insaniah Malaysia, Debat Parlimen

Abstract

Soft skills are considered equally essential as hard skills or even more important than hard/technical skills in the 21st century knowledge economy. However, a mismatch exists between graduates' acquired soft skills and the soft skills required by industries. Literature shows the scarcity of pedagogical tools to develop soft skills. Thus, this study explored how debate as a pedagogical tool with three stages, i.e. pre-debate, actual debate and post-debate can develop the soft skills prescribed in the Malaysian Soft Skills Development Module (MSSDM). The participants were five debate experts with debating experience and had taught All-Asians Parliamentary Debate for at least two years in the EFL/ESL contexts. A semi-structured one-on-one interview was used for data gathering. To triangulate the debate experts' perspective, a focus group interview was conducted with six classroom debate students from three ASEAN countries. The transcribed data were analysed using data analysis flow model where the data were reduced, sorted out, focused, organized and presented using participants' verbatim words. Template approach was also used to analyse the data. In the findings, the participants described how the pre-debate, the crucial foundation stage to outline the team's case and arguments supported by evidences from research, can develop the soft skills in MSSDM especially teamwork and critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The participants also described how the actual debate, the most challenging stage due to time limit in speech and Point-of-Information, can develop soft skills particularly quick critical thinking and effective communication skills. They also portrayed how the post-debate can develop various soft skills by highlighting lifelong learning and information management and communication skills. From the findings, a debate pedagogical model to teach soft skills was developed. Issues and challenges stakeholders might face if debate is introduced across the EFL/ESL curriculum were also identified by the participants.

Keywords: Soft skills, Pedagogical tool, Malaysian Soft Skills Development Module, Parliamentary debate

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In this highly competitive 21st century when every industry expands its doors towards a globalized perspective, human resource units in charge of the business's human capitals have changed from choosing employees well equipped with only technical skills to those with a certain degree of desirable soft skills as well as hard skills. In fact, many companies worldwide nowadays put a greater weight on soft skills over technical skills while some consider them equally important or complementary to each other (Cranmer, 2006; Kemenade, 2012; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2001; Waggoner, 2012; Young & Chapman, 2011). Due to the changing job environments brought about by globalization and technological innovations, university graduates need to be equipped with soft skills apart from technical skills for them to survive in the demanding workplace. However, despite the recognition of the primary importance of soft skills in the workplace, there is scarcity of literature on how soft skills should be developed.

In his best-selling book, "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ," Daniel Goleman (1995) recognizes that in the increasingly knowledge-based society, technical skill is certainly one of the measures of success. However, he emphasizes that a combination of competencies, i.e., both hard/technical skills and soft skills, is necessary and the individuals' ability to manage themselves and relate to other people matters twice as much as IQ or technical skills in job success. As a professor from Harvard University, Goleman's (1995) claim was supported with research proving how important soft skills are in an individual's success in life yet little is known in the

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