Sociolinguistic functions of politeness in school debate: A road to peace education

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Abstract: Schools and even difficult terrains can be used for structured argumentation for children of different socio – ethnic backgrounds. Debate educated the children about values of tolerance in a more practical way by organizing a competition outside classroom. Similarly, the debate taught the participants different pedagogies to promote cultural tolerance among children which include, human rights, encouragement of the participants to express their views and feelings regarding all issues without feeling restricted. Similarly, the debate exposed the children to discussing issues with their fellow age mates unrestrictedly in an open environment which is less boredom compared to classroom. Regardless of medium of deliverance, peace education as the kind in this paper provided the learner with much skills of understanding how other people think, behave and respond to situations even if they are unfavorable. Similarly, the type exercise provided in this paper offered unique opportunities for both participants and non participants alike to live in harmony with people unconditionally.

Keywords: peace; education; debate; politeness; violence

INTRODUCTION

This article is an attempt to unveil politeness as a social act, displaying adequate accepted standard of social etiquette, avoiding conflict in social interactions. It is meant to educate readers on social obligation in face – to – face interaction, making sure that social interaction is smooth, which is a road to making peace process viable. Two theories have been found worthwhile in this paper, and provide the frame on which peace education is anchored.

An overview of theoretical approaches to politeness is provided by Watts et al[1,p-4-20], whose social norm is based on equating linguistic politeness with patterns of behavior recognized by a community as the standard against which all interactions is stressed. The standard is said to be linked with a particular style of speech and is imposed by prescriptive treatment of language correction. A conversational maxim approach is represented by Leech cited in Miriam A Locher [2] who advocates a study of language by means of conversational principle. Leech points out the following politeness principles (pp):

- Tact Maxim: (a) minimize cost to other; (b) maximize benefit to other.
- Generosity Maxim: (a) minimize benefit to self (b) maximize cost to self.
- Approbation Maxim: (a) minimize dispraise of other (b) maximize praise of other.
- Modesty Maxim: (a) minimize praise of self (b) maximize dispraise of self.
- Agreement Maxim: (a) minimize disagreement between self and other (b) minimize agreement between self.
- Sympathy Maxim: (a) minimize antipathy between self and other (b) maximize sympathy between self and other.

It is pointed out that these generalized maxims are to be observed up to a certain point in any social communication especially while making peace. In general, the Tact Maxim and Approbation Maxim mean that the maxims oriented to 'other' are believed to be more important than their counterpart oriented to 'self'. More so, the Tact maxim is claimed to be the most powerful of all, Leech[2]. In addition, within each maxim, it is the sub – maxim (a) and therefore the negative from of politeness that represents more significant consideration than (b), i.e. basically positive politeness orientation.

Abstracting from particular terms and formulation, it seems that on the whole, the two theoretical models of politeness i.e. Brown and Levison [3] and Leech [2] on the other hand are not incompatible. On the contrary, they have a great deal of assumption in common. Firstly, they both in a way draw attention to the fact that there is always the potential for conflict or at least tension in communication and that politeness principle

instructs the interlocutors that it is primarily the other's face that should be attended to. Second, they both assume that at least in English, it is the negative form of politeness associated with avoidance of discord and imposition in general that has primacy in regulating communicative behavior. Third, they both identify the same or similar values such as agreement, sympathy, solidarity, minimum cost to/imposition on other, and maximum benefit to appreciation of other to be adhered to in order to follow politeness line. Fourth, both models take account of the same social factors influencing the degree of politeness, i.e. authority or power on one hand and social distance on the other hand. Last, both theories of politeness is understood as allowing communication among partners with potentially conflicting or competing goal, Leech, [2] and potentially aggressive parties Brown and Levison[3].

In Watts [1, p-43], linguistic behavior should be oriented towards maintaining social equilibrium or in Leech's term, 'politic verbal behavior'. His argument is based on the fact that there are to be found several types of verbal interaction dominated by confrontation and competition rather than by cooperation, which however, can be interpreted as socially appropriate. This kind of communication is exemplified by political debates or quarrels about personal rights and possessions. Watts's distinction between *politic* and *polite* behavior is based on the assumption that in any speech community, there are observable patterns of politic behavior, i.e. behavior defined as 'socio – culturally determined behavior directed towards the goal of establishing and/ or maintaining in a state of equilibrium. In other words, politic behavior can be described as unmarked form of verbal interaction characteristic of a particular social activity. Watts [1, p-51] further points out that the assessment has to be done on the basis of the following factors: the type of social activity, the special event involved, the degree to which participants share expectation about the activity as well as the assumption about the information state of the interaction and social distance and dominance relationships between participants. Based on these theories, peace education can be taught because humans should be considered equal. The root cause of most violence in the globe is somehow related inequality both in resource sharing and power. Consequently, if peace education must be preached, and taught, the right medium must be employed.

Violence has taken on a new face globally with the end of the Cold war. The contemporary society is faced with violence of varied sorts within nations. However, intra - societal violence is not confined to with national boundaries as the cases in Rwanda, Burundi, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Republic of Congo, Sudan, etc. Violence can spill across communities and boundaries like Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Pakistan; El Shabab in Somalia, Kenya, Uganda; Boko Haram in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad; Hesbolah in Lebanon, and Yemen; Hamas in Palestine and Israel; Islamic States in Syria and Iraq.

In the world, there are 3,500 population groups that describe themselves as 'nation states' while only 185 of such groups are actively recognized by the international community. The potential for inter-societal and intra – societal violence involving a large number of these 3,500 population groups is enormous and provides a powerful rational for pragmatic solutions for promotion of culture of peace.

Factors which are important in promoting culture of peace are environmental concerns, sustainable economic development, solutions for the increasing number of a culture of peace. Development of a new paradigm for peace in response to the challenges of increased societal violence is required world –wide. The participation of students and adolescents in refugee camps and difficult terrains can be critical component.

Tools which have been used in the past were inefficient. Similarly, military approach may also seem inadequate. Furthermore, diplomacy too provides just a minimal solution especially when the root cause of the violence expands beyond state territories. Thus, the challenge in dealing with violence is the establishment of peace in nations and provision of education which makes people to learn the way of peace.

Using education as tool for changing world violence to peace has been a welcome idea which UNESCO's task. The United Nation General Assembly at its 52nd session on November 20, 1999 adopted by consensus two major resolutions on the culture of peace. In adopting the latter resolution, the General Assembly called for the promotion of culture of peace based on the principles established in the Charter of the UN and on respect for human rights, democracy and tolerance, education for peace, etc. Giving the great challenge placed before it, the world requires people, and corporate organizations to proffer solutions to achieve the UN's peace education. Therefore, there is a great demand for public speaking construction in all schools and to all children of school age across the globe. This explains that to receive relevant education regardless of their specific locations, social status, race, religion, political ideologies, etc. and one standard area is language art which is better met by practicing debate and its associated components.

A general education can develop young people's attitudes through civic sense and tolerance which contributes to proper functioning of the society which is achievable through multiple literacy approach through forensic skills such as debate. Similarly,

education addresses problems unique in human development. Without requisite education, their development not only would the young people be ill prepared for the workplace but also be susceptible to juvenile delinquencies thereby exhibiting high social and criminal tendencies.

The world needs peace at all cost. Peace is not a set of actions, or even a state of affairs, but the orientation of the individual's character. In order to establish peaceful society, it remains necessary to establish and promote public education systems[4]. Peace education is much more realistic and effective if it is cultural base. It should also be enriched with spiritual values of the environment. Similarly, Fountain, [5] argues that peace education refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structured; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace whether at an intra – personal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.

Peace education does not simply entails learning about various types of conflict, and how curtail, rather, it involves participation of young people in expressing ideas and cooperating with each other irrespective of any form difference which exists. Similarly, peace does not merely imply the absence of overt violence; it also encompasses the presence of social, economic and political justice which is essential to the notion of positive peace[6].

Objectives
- To examine and discuss values, attitudes, tolerance and human dignity;
- To develop social interaction skills;
- To promote peaceful relations among internally displaced people in the north eastern Nigeria;
- To discuss topics that raise issues related to peace and cultural understanding outside classroom;

The New Curricula for Life Skills
So many Governments across the world are mindful of the rapid changes and challenges the world is facing. In demonstration for the welfare of humans, social integration, security, and economic prosperity necessitated by globalization of the economy, environment, and democratization, many Governments tend to align their missions to meet up these challenges. Since the world has turned into a global village, it has implication for the new skills required by the labour market and citizenship. For instance, Peace Education is a practical step taken to a swift response to frequent conflicts and displaced individuals in war affected areas across the globe. In the 21st century, the world is facing a great change with many nations

embracing democracy. To sustain both old and young democracies, Human Rights Education, Values Education and Developments in Citizenship Education are to be introduced in school curricula. Also, passion and awareness towards environment has necessitated the inclusion of Education for Sustainable Development which is being promoted via the United Nations. Furthermore, the HIV/AIDS epidemic which has claimed millions of lives gives rise to new Health Education. These 'new' subjects consist of the curricula area of Life Skills which is recognized globally and it is being promoted by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations in collaboration with United Nations High Commission for Refugees Reardon [7]. To acquire Life Skills entails social attitudes, basic and practical skills that will enable the child to be both socially relevant and economically productive[7] World Education forum defines quality basic education as the kind of education that gives the learner skills in literacy, numeracy and essential Life Skills. The Dakar Framework for Action emphasizes that education should be elaborate to cover skills such as:

(i) Learning to know: Thinking abilities such as problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making, and understanding-sequences.
(ii) Learning to be: Personal abilities such as communication, negotiations, assertiveness, teamwork and empathy.
(iii) Learning to do: Mutual skills such as practicing to know-how required for work and tasks.

These curricula goals can therefore be translated into:
(i) Equity and Social Justice Curriculum is designed to carter for Life Skills in the area of learning, to be 'somebody'.
(ii) Environment Education Curriculum provides the learner with the skills of unity among the citizens with high sense of stewardship.
(iii) Peace Education focuses on the skills of living together without any form of conflict Dubois and Trabelsi [8].

In view of wars and ethnic violence that ravaged lives and property, countries such as Bosnia and Jordan have incorporated these skills as themes across subjects in schools, while Nepal included the skills in specific subjects.

In attempts to curtail the spread of HIV/AIDS, world organizations such as World Health Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Bank, and other donor agencies advocate for HIV/AIDS prevention, with the requirement skills from students for behavioral and

attitudinal change, interpersonal communication, value clarification, decision-making, negotiations, goal setting, self-assertion, and stress management[9, p-34]. According to United Nations AIDS Interagency Task Team on Education [10, p-112], only 70 countries of the world have incorporated HIV/AIDS into primary schools curricula while 62 nations did that into secondary school curricula, Boler and Jellema [11]. In 2004, an estimated three million people died from the HIV/AIDS worldwide, with over 70 of the figure from Africa but with adequate education of the vulnerable group and the public, HIV/AIDS will be prevented.

Education serves as a means in which the 'whole child' gets transformed for better, but where ignorance replaces it, underdevelopment emerges. United Nations Development Programme [12, p-150] reported that over one thousand Sierra-Leonean ex-combatants had no access to good education. Similarly, social disorder in countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nigeria, etc. has a link with the inability of the nations to provide qualitative education.

In an attempt to reduce and control conflict among United Nations member states, UNESCO and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees have implemented Interagency Peace Education programmes in Sri Lanka, Kosovo and Pakistan. The programmes serve as intervention to the high rate of untrained teachers, irrelevant and rigid syllabi. In fact, this is the right time that human right based education is crucial in this century as argued by Baxter and Ikobwa [13, p-28]. *It is activity-centered and participatory, based on games and activities and the resulting discussion. Most of the activities are based on a 'what happens when /if...' exploratory learning approach. These activities enable children to 'do peace'...Peace.*

Considering the number of people living in refugee camps across the globe, and the consequences of illiteracy in this century, specialized education is being introduced by United Nations High Commission on Refugees which allocates one lesson per class weekly in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda respectively.

The world needs peace at all lost, and only the relevant and specialized education can yield the result. Barrett A [14] cited Peace Education Programme is: *a fun learning experience, full of activity, varied from lesson to lesson with competitions outside activities, song, drama and group work.* Since Nigeria has a high rate of adult illiteracy, Multiple Grade System of Education can be of use. It is specialized type of education in which different grades of learners receive education in the same class usually in low income communities around the world. In Nigeria, the method best suits vast and remote areas predominately occupied by the Fulani of northern Nigeria, the Koyam and the Shuwa-Arabs of

Borno and Yobe states also in Nigeria. Similarly, the fisher folks of Cross River, Bayelsa, Lagos, Akwa-Ibom, Adamawa, Delta, Taraba, Kogi and Benue states of Nigeria stand to gain from this system of education. Furthermore, migrant farmers from Benue, Kogi, Edo, Enugu, Nasarawa , Anambra and Cross River states also in Nigeria could be salvaged from the bondage of illiteracy, because this is what characterizes education in many countries such as Australia, Columbia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Pacific islands, Pakistan, India, and Zambia.   Both quantitative and qualitative education must be accessible to all people in respect of geographical location, beliefs and social status because it has direct influence on social, health and life expectancy of the citizenry.

Camps for youth include the year –round solidarity camps in Rwanda which brings together young people of different ethnic groups for recreational and community service activities.

The peace camps in Lebanon focused on bringing together young people from different ethnic backgrounds and engaging them in recreational activities, vocational training and study of history and geography of the country. Summer school camps in Egypt have focused on the issue of dealing with differences and have brought socio – economic and cultural groups together. Similarly, training for community leaders has been carried out in refugee camps in Burundi, Congo and Tanzania for people who were frequently in community peace – making roles such as religious leaders, social workers and political leaders. Furthermore, Somalia has developed peace training for women's group. Travelling theatre has been used in Burundi, Mozambique, and Rwanda. In 1993, Liberia has used art, drama song and dance in *Kukatonon* progarmme, enabling young people to express themselves and serve as community education. Additionally, television and radio spots have been used in Burundi to raise public awareness of peace and conflict issues.

Contest and exhibition can build awareness of peace and conflict issue. For instance, Rwanda conducted national contests to develop education for peace with the theme, 'peace building and tolerance'. Similarly, Liberia used exhibition of children's drawings about the effects of armed conflict to encourage public discussions about the need for peace. Furthermore, Burundi designed a calendar, depicting children's rights. Additionally, Colombia has held a competition on the theme of peace as right.

The following list summarizes aims found in Table-1 UNICEF peace education programme. These are commonly expressed as knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Peace campaigns can take many from and can be powerful way to create a broad basic support for peaceful social change.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this paper was obtained from participants of Sri Lankan secondary school students debaters. The participants were divided into proposition and opposition team, or government and opposition, with each consisting of four debaters. The British parliamentary debate format was adopted. Each of the speakers has a unique function to play. (Table-2).

Although the Table-2 describes all the formal speeches, but it does not describe one important and dynamic part of the debate: point of information. Points of information provide for members of the team to interact with opposing members of the team.

Points of information can be requested after the first few minutes of a speech and prior to the last few minutes of each speech. The first and last minutes of each speech are 'protected' against interruption. The point of information cannot last for more than 15 minutes and may take the form of a question, a statement, or an argument. Only the team defending the opposite side is allowed to make a point of information.

The debater giving the speech has the authority to accept or refute the request for a point of information. In general, debaters should accept a minimum of two points during their speech so that the judges and the audience will know they are able to answer point quickly and directly. Accepting more points is not advisable because it may have the effect of disrupting the speech. On the other hand, refusing to accept a point of information may require the debater to say, 'no, thank you' or not at this moment' or simply a hand gesture to indicate the person should withdraw. If the request for point of information is granted, the asker has a maximum of 20 seconds to make the points. Accepting a point of information, the speaker should answer the question directly.

Table-1: Summarizes of UNICEF peace education programme

Knowledge	Country/date
Awareness of own needs, self awareness	Yugoslavia,1996, Rwanda 1997
Understanding nature of conflict	Burundi, 1994
Ability to identify causes of conflict, non- violent means of resolution	Sri Lanka, undated
Mediation process	Liberia, 1993, Sri Lanka, undated
Understanding rights and responsibilities	Burundi,1994, Lebanon, 1993, Rwanda, 1993
Awareness of cultural heritage	Lebanon, 1993
Recognition of prejudice	Burundi, 1994
Conflict analysis	Sri Lanka, undated
Skills	**Country/date**
Communication: active listening, self –expressing, paraphrasing, reframing	Burundi, 1994, Croatia 1997, Yugolsavia,1996, Lebanon,1993, Rwanda, 1997, Tanzania,1997
Ability to corporate	Croatia, 1997, Egypt, 1995, Lebanon, 1993, Rwanda,1997, Tanzania, 1997
Affirmation	Croatia,1997, Sri Lanka, undated
Critical thinking	Burundi, 1994, Tanzania 1997
Ability to think critically with prejudice	Burundi,1994, Tanzania, 1997
Ability to deal with stereotypes	Tanzania, 1997
Problem solving	Liberia, 1993
Conflict prevention	Yugoslavia, 1996
Ability to live with change	Gambia, 1997
Attitudes	**Country/date**
Self respect, positive self- image, strong	Burundi, 1994, Egypt 1995
Self –image, self- concept	Lebanon, 1993
Tolerance, acceptance of others, respect for difference	Yugoslavia, 1996
Gender equity	Egypt, 1995
Reconciliation	Croatia, 1997, Liberia, 1993
Sense of justice	Burundi, 1994
Joy in living	Burundi, 1994

(Adapted from UNICEF 1999)[15]

Table-2: Speakers responsibility

Speaker	Speakers' responsibility
Prime Minister 1st speaker for proposition	Defines and interpret the motion; develops the case for the proposition
Leader of Opposition	Accepts the definition of the motion, refutes the case of the first Proposition; constructs one or more arguments against The Prime Minister's interpretations of the motion
Deputy PM 2nd speaker for the Proposition	Refutes the case of the 1st Opposition, rebuilds the case of the 1st Opposition, may add new arguments
Deputy Leader Opposition	Continues refutation of 1st Proposition, rebuilds arguments of the 1st Opposition, may add new arguments to the case of the 1st Opposition
Member of Government	Defends the general direction of the case 1st PM, continues to refute 1st case of the Opposition, and develops a new argument that is consistent with the case of the PM (extension).
Member of Opposition	Defends the general direction taken by the 1st Opposition, continues general refutation of 1st proposition case, and provides more specific refutation of 2nd Opposition arguments
Government Whip	Summarizes the entire debate from the point of view of the Proposition, defends the general view point of both Proposition team with a special emphasis on the case of the Proposition.
Opposition Whip	Summarizes the entire debate from the point of view of the Opposition, defends the general viewpoint of both opposition members with special concern on the 2nd Opposition, and should not add new arguments

Debate topics

- The house argues that it is high time China takes the leadership initiatives to counteract climate change initiatives.
- This house will protest the reclamation of the sea in order to construct luxurious commercial cities.
- This house will make agro – chemical companies pay for medical treatments of farmers suffering from chronic kidney disease.
- This house will support the relocation of all Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza to neighboring Arab countries.
- This house believes that peace education should not be initiated by non- governmental organizations.
- This house believes that only military should manage peace.
- This house believes that peace education should be the concern of individuals.

RESULTS/ DISCUSSIONS

Excerpt (1). Mr. Speaker, Sir, Members of the House, what I am going to do in my speech right here today – I am going to give a case to the side Opposition.

The strategy of giving deference mainly using the address form, 'Sir' has been found in the number of the participants' talks. This strategy indicates that the addressee is of higher social status than the speaker, who humbles himself/herself. In the debate, all participants were all secondary school students, with probably similar social class, yet this technique indicates that the speaker is such humble fellow, who sees the personality of the opponents being higher than his/hers.

Excerpt (2).Ladies and gentlemen, would you demolish the universities just because more people are getting out of it?

The speaker in (2) desires to state something but s/he is conventionally constrained to use an indirect method, the use of indirect marker, 'would' to begin the rhetorical question. The question forms indirectly show the speaker's desire not to impose upon the addressee.

Excerpt (3). In Sri Lanka, we have free education, but by using the internet, you have to pay. Free education, you don't pay. We don't reject, but restrict a little.

Excerpt (4). We Members of the proposition, the Opposition said access to education is a crime because according to them, if you use access to education, you just …

In (3 and 4), the speakers tend to seek agreement and avoid disagreement. They allow the speakers to show their agreement with the addressees, at least pretending to agree, thus, minimizing the threats.

Excerpt (5).Martin Kuther King put certain document on the wall of a Charter has caused revolution, but ladies and gentlemen, we are moving to the 21st century where social media is far more accessible one. The illustration above indicates a token agreement at the initial stage, which is a good peace talk strategy, but puts a mild disagreement to conclude the statement.

Excerpt (6).Now, let's look at the playboy. We see that women are generally identified as sex objects. We see that women are identified as beautiful creatures. We see outward appearance. We see nothing more than that, Mr. Speaker.

Above is a technique of repetition, which demonstrates agreement/ appealing for agreement with what has been previously said.

In the debate, members refer to each by the names of communicative roles they play such as Proposition/Opposition, first speaker proposition/ opposition as the case may be or honorable. The designations are meant to indicate a sort of deference for all participants and to establish dignity to the exercise as members make criticism and comment less direct, which respect for all participants. Members do, however, sometime inadvertently omit 'honorable'. This often goes unchallenged, but it is always required by the convention.

The style of the debate has been one speaking while others listen. However, listeners sometime intervene to reactions to opponents' view which is handled peacefully. When interrupted, the speaker who holds the floor has the right to be listened to.

To maintain spontaneity of the debate, reading a prepared speech is not allowed, though the use of notes is. However, participants hold notes on possible supplementary questions drawn to aid them in providing debate questioning time.

Language and expressions used by the students confirm to the discourse community conventions which states 'good temper and moderation'. Insulting each other has been discouraged, or prohibited.

To participate in communicative activity such as debate by students of various socio – cultural backgrounds entail standing in some social relationship. This is of course one of the ways in which social contests is geared into wider and peaceful society.

Since relationships are in the process of change, the object will be to bring the encounter to satisfactory close. This perspective accounts for the rituals of greeting and farewell which occur when the debaters begin the exercise or depart from each other. Greetings provide a way of showing that relationship is still what it used to be, personality of the interlocutors is cherished, hence the need to maintain it. Similarly, greetings serve to clarify the role that the participants will take during the occasion of talk, and to commit participants to these roles, while farewell provides a way of unambiguously terminating the encounter. Furthermore, greeting and farewell may be used to state and apologizing for, extenuating circumstances that has kept the participants from interacting until now, in the case of farewell, for circumstances that prevent the participants from continuing their display of solidarity and understanding.

The positive remarks such as in 'thank you' used in the closing turn signals that the speaker appreciates the listenership of the audience and participants. Similarly, it implies that the debate was enjoyable, and views understood.

Another important aspect of 'thank you' is an expression of thanks for the talk, which presupposes that the conversation is an imposition on the other and serves to minimize that imposition in a deferent manner. This strategy may be used in peace process which could imply that the time spent talking to and listening to, is worthwhile.

There is great demand for public speaking construction in all schools and to school age children across the globe. This explains that children receive sophisticated and relevant education regardless of their specific locations, social status, race, religion, political ideologies, etc. and one crucial way to achieve this through forensic skills, and debate in particular.

Many participants found out practice structure arguments dramatically improved their ability to read and produce persuasive discourses as they all participated in specialized communication. The children acquainted themselves with communicative goals of a discourse community as they produced specific genres. Similarly, the young debaters demonstrated genres typical of the community they belong as they all exploited discourse conventions in response to both cultural and sociolinguistic demands of the society. Debate in the school was more than just a form of argument; it was a gathering of people with different people. As the participants were allotted equal time and opportunity to speech to present a case either for or against a topic and only one person was allowed to speak while other listened, it signaled equality of human race. Outcome of the debate was decided by a voting by judges who indicated justice and equity in all whole exercise.

The debate communication was characterized by the following: interaction was between many young people, face –to – face interactions; spoken; social distance ranged from minimal to maximal; purpose was to create a forum for open demonstration for togetherness, mutual respect, and understanding; social status of the participants was almost the same as they ate, slept and did all thing within a confined environment. The field of the discourse was specific, and controversial, yet, not personal.

The debate was a very successful tool in which crucial issues were discussed openly. Competitive

debate like the one under investigation served and accomplished many purposes, which include:

1) Offered unique opportunities to relate to often abstract theories to 'real world' issues in area of interest for the children.

2) Provided significant educational experience. Obviously, the children learnt about the process of debate and decision – making during the activities. Additionally, the debate utilized skills such as public speaking, logic, persuasion, organization, research, composition, and other relevant complex arts.

3) It encompassed an element play and competitions that attracted and stimulated participants which promoted the educational process.

4) Served as ways to foster inter – ethnic understanding, cooperation, free and lively exchange of ideas.

5) In bringing children of vastly different background, religions, beliefs, customs and traditions, debate offered much more than contesting of semi – formal argumentation.

6) By its convention, the debate broke boundaries, showing that opposing views could be explained in a way that connected rather than divide people.

7) As a process, the debate both embodied and encouraged peaceful discussions rather than aggressive confrontations.

CONCLUSION

Debate could well supplement traditional texts, because it can provide the children with politically contextualized understanding of issues which are related to their immediate environment.

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