

**ASSESSING THE ROLE OF DEBATES IN IMPROVING LANGUAGE SPEAKING  
SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS**

**Submitted for approval**

**By**

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**Dedication**

This proposal is dedicated wholesomely to my father and guider **Mr. Odwar Simon**, and my mother **Mrs. Lilly Odwar**. Thank you very much for everything and for bringing me up to this level.

I also specially dedicate this piece of writing entirely to my late brother, **Okello Innocent**. May his soul rest in eternal and perfect peace!

**Statement of Declaration:**

I declare that this research proposal is my original work, and its contents have not partially or wholly been presented for an academic award by any person in any University or Institution of Higher Learning.

**TALI FIONA** .....

**Date**.....

**Endorsement by the Supervisor**

This research proposal has been prepared under my supervision upon appointment by Busitema University.

**M/S KWAGALA OLIVIA** .....

**Date**.....

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## **SUMMARY**

*Debates play a very big role in improving speaking skills among learners in secondary schools in Uganda. Debates are interactive in nature and help in nurturing students' confidence, widening their vocabulary, critical thinking and fluency in the English language among learners. English being an official language in Uganda, one therefore needs to possess necessary speech skills in order to overcome challenges of speech arising in the near future. Debates, therefore, play a big role in improving language speech skills in learners. This proposed research therefore intends to find out answers to the following research questions: 1- What are the roles played by debates in improving language speech skills in secondary school learners? 2- What are the current challenges of the debating program in improving speech skills among learners? 3- How best can the debate program be revised and improved to impact the speech skills of learners in secondary schools in Uganda?*

Keywords:

Debates, speech skills.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, and objectives, significance of the study, the context of the study and the definition of key terms.

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Speaking is a productive language skill, which involves the act of giving speeches and talks (Cobuild, 2006). Speaking is an activity used by people to communicate with each other. It takes place everywhere and it has become part of our daily activities. Lindsay (2006, 57) says that speaking involves putting together a message, communicating that message and interacting with people. Speaking therefore involves a number of activities, which includes identification of the right speech message, intonation, questioning, responding appropriately, and possessing the right body posture and critical thinking among others.

However, speaking becomes difficult for foreign language learners because the ability of effective oral communication requires using the language appropriately in social interactions (Richards, 2002, 204). This therefore calls for a great deal of training and craftsmanship in language learners and users. Debates are therefore important platforms for putting to practice these various aspects involved in speech.

A theoretical review shows that speaking has five major components (Hughes, 2003). These are; grammar, pronunciations, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. That is why Jones (1989) notes that it is important that everything we want to say is conveyed in an effective way because speaking is not only producing sounds but also a process of achieving goals that involves transferring messages across. He adds that how one says something can be important as what you say in getting your meaning across.

This shows how important one has to put language into constant practice in order to acquire mastery in all the components of speech mentioned by Hughes (2003). That is why Kiranawati (2011) defines debates as a teaching method to improve the academic student's ability. Debates are ways of making students think critically about problems. It also involves proper use of language and appropriate arguments, negotiations and healthy confrontations among people, with learners inclusive.

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