



Promoting Critical Thinking and Public Speaking Skills Through Debates at Tridinanti University

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Abstract

Critical thinking and public speaking skills are common issues now in Indonesia, but not many high school students have good critical thinking and public speaking skills in English. Therefore, this study was aimed to find out whether or not there was any significant differences in speaking skill between students who were taught by using debate technique and those who were not. There were 16 students of the third semester students involved in this study as the sample. They were divided into two groups, experimental group consisted of 8 students and control group consisted of 8 students. This study used quasi nonequivalent group design. The experimental group were taught by using debate technique meanwhile the control group were taught by using lecturing method. The result showed that the mean score of experimental groups increased from 63.28 in pretest to 73.80 in posttest. Furthermore, the result of independent t-test from experimental and control group shown that the t-obtained was 10.942 and it was higher than t-table 2.0049. It meant that there were any significant differences between experimental and control groups which was caused by debate technique given to the experimental group. It can be concluded that there was any significant difference between students who were taught using debate and students who were not. The results show that using debating activities played a significant role in improving and enhancing the critical thinking ability of high school students. Students' feedback concerning the use of debating activities are, in general, also quite optimistic. Besides, the research proposes some suggestions for minimizing the drawbacks of using debating activities to enhance the potentiality of this method and make it more interesting, meaningful and effective.

Keywords: *critical thinking; debating; public speaking*

Introduction

Critical thinking and public speaking skills are common issues now in Indonesia. Those may be a prerequisite for the teachers/lecturers to familiarize the understudies with this way of critical thinking beginning from primary school until college level. The address is, do all instructors or teachers have comparative thought with respect to the definition of critical thinking? Agreeing to Angelo and Cross (1995) critical thinking skills are related to higher level abilities such as examination, union, distinguishing and understanding issues, making deductions or conclusions and assessing things. Besides, basic considering aptitudes can too be characterized as the method of finding the meaning, understanding things, considering a number of conceivable outcomes, and making reflection to the way of self-thinking (Hasmah & Munirah: 2013).

Furthermore, to acquire the public speaking proficiency in the target language may have some problems, both internal and external. Internally, they may have experienced the feeling of anxiety. They may feel reluctant to use the target language as they may be afraid of making mistakes. Students might feel uncomfortable in using the target language as it pulls them of their normal means of communication, (Nascente, 2001). Besides, according to English Proficiency Index 2022, Indonesia was the 81st rank among 111 countries in the world. This result showed the ability of speaking practice is still low. It is important for lecturers to encourage and motivate them to speak English, especially in class.

Related to instructing and learning setting these days, basic considering is in line with the way of high-level considering that can be connected in fathoming issues confronted by the understudies either within the classroom when they are learning, or exterior the classroom when they bargain with genuine life circumstance. Be that as it may, it needs an enormous exertion to familiarize and indeed to cultivate the understudies to have critical thinking. One of the endeavors that can be conducted by the addresses is applying an inventive educating method. These days, numerous colleges utilize wrangle about as one of inventive educating procedures. In debating procedure, understudies are required to plan themselves by perusing numerous sources some time recently performing the talk about. This action makes debating to be considered viable to advance students' basic considering ability. Through perusing numerous sources, talking about with numerous individuals, or conducting mini-research, understudies can stand on their contentions, either professional or cons based on the movement given by the teacher.

Those who do not plan themselves by perusing and talking about will not be able to keep up their contention and might become the failures within the wrangle about. Gervey, Drout, and Wang (2009) state that after utilizing wrangle about

procedure in financial course, the understudies ended up more curious and this curious intellect leads them to construct basic considering capacity. Indeed, in spite of the fact that in a few considers it is expressed that debate is considered as not comfortable by understudies (Gervery, et. al, 2009) however they are challenged to perform well by planning themselves through perusing distinctive sources. The action of perusing from numerous sources moreover lead to cultivate basic considering capacity. Behar-Horenstein, L. S., & Niu, L. (2011) discover that talk about strengths understudies to analyze what they studied. Analyzing implies that it is not merely reading but attempting to get it the content and in the event that it is required the understudies will compare what they discover from one source to a few other sources.

Debating not only helps students develop their critical thinking ability, but also helps them improve their communication skills in a systematic way. The benefits of this argument are found by (Gervery, Drout and Wang (2009). When students are able to communicate systematically, it improves their cognitive ability. are also found to promote active student participation (Zare and Othman, 2013). Furthermore, they also agree that debate has a high chance of improving speaking because the activity requires students to speak. express an idea by verbal communication. This means that using debate as a teaching/learning method has many benefits for learners, including promoting critical thinking skills, mastering course content, and improving public speaking skills. Most importantly, Syamdianita & Maharia (2019) says that debate can encourage students thinking. The ability of the students in English communication would be better through debate; students would have higher ability in sharing idea, showing opinion and presenting their perception (Kennedy, R. 2007).

Based on the explanation above, the researchers were interested in conducting the research at Tridinanti University. This university is the one of universities which has good predicate in improving students English speaking in Palembang. This university has a commitment to ask students to join National University Debating Championship (NUDC) although for last two years no students join that activity. Therefore, the researchers had an eagerness to apply debate technique in improving students' critical think and public speaking skill. The concept of active debate is not only to enable student to speak fluently and accurately as native speakers but also to speak fluently, they should have enough vocabularies, expressions and be able to share opinions. Australian Parliamentary debate is used because this kind of debate has been done by previous researchers. Thus, based on the problems above this study was conducted to improve students' critical speaking skill. Therefore, this

study would like to promote the use of debate in order to improve students' critical thinking and public speaking skill to the Third Semester Students of Tridinanti University.

Method

In this study, the researchers used a quasi-experimental design that was Non-Equivalent group design. According to Creswell (2012), a quasi-experimental design has both pretest and posttest, experimental and control groups, but nonrandom assignment of subjects. The design involved the experimental group and control group. Both of groups were given a pre-test and post-test. Pre-test was administered before the treatment and the post- test was administered after the treatment. The quasi-experimental design was shown in Figure 1 below.

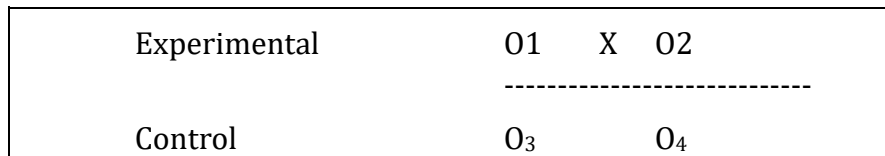


Figure 1. *Non-Equivalent Group Design*

The subject of this study was all the third semester students of English Education Study Program of Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Tridinanti University in the academic year 2022/2023. It consisted of 16 students. In addition, the researchers used pretest and posttest. The researchers used monologues form in pretest and posttest. In scoring the speaking skill, the researchers were helped by two raters. The topics in each meeting are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Topics for The Experimental Group*

Meeting	Materials
1	Pre-Test: English is the most important subject at school.
2	History is an important subject at school.
3	Cell phone would be banned at school.
4	Single sex at schools is better for students.
5	Full-day school is wasting time.
6	Short answer items are more effective than multiple choice.
7	National examination would be banned.

Results

The Result of Paired Sample Test in Experimental Group

The result of paired sample statistic of experimental group showed in Table 2. It was used to find out whether debate technique could improve critical thinking and public speaking skill or not.

Table 2. *The Result of Paired Sample Test in Experimental Group*

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pre_ Ex - Post_ Ex	- 10.5179	2.3033	.4353	-11.4110	-9.6247	-24.163	27	.000

The table showed that the mean different between pretest and posttest in experimental group was 10.5179, the standard deviation was 2.3033 and standard error mean was .4353, then degree of freedom 27 and to obtain was 24.163 higher t-table was 2.0049 and the last significance (2tailed) was .000. Since significance 2 tailed .000 was lower that alpha value 0.05, it was inferred that debate technique in experimental group was effective to improve students' critical and public speaking skill.

The Result of Paired Sample T-test of Control Group

The result of paired sample statistic of control group showed in Table 20. It was used to find out whether lecturing method could improve students' speaking skill.

Table 3. The Result of Paired Sample Test in Control Group

	Paired Differences	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper
Pair 1 PreCon- PostCon	-1.7679 1.1586	.2189	-	-	2.2171	1.3186	-8.074	27	.000

The table showed that the mean different between pretest and posttest in control group was 1.7679, the standard deviation was 1.1586 and standard error mean was .2189, then degree of freedom 27 and t-obtained was 8.074 higher than t-table was 2.0049 and the last significance (2-tailed) was .000. Since significance 2 tailed .000 was lower that alpha value 0.05, it was inferred that the students' in control group also gained speaking skill significantly.

The Result of Independent Sample T-test

After the data were collected from both control and experimental group, the writer used independent sample t-test to compare the result of posttest from both control and experimental group. Table 4 below shown the result of independent sample t-test.

Table 4. The Result of Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Post Equal variances	.251	.619	10.942	54	.000	14.1607	1.2941		16.7553

Test assumed								11.5662	
Co & Equal variances Ex		10.942	51.417	.000	14.1607	1.2941		11.5632	16.7582
not assumed									

The result of independent sample t-test showed that the significance (2-tailed) was 0.00, this coefficient was lower than 0.05 in two tailed testing with $df = 54$, the t-obtained 10.942 was higher that critical value of t-table 2.0049, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. In other words, there was any significant difference on students' speaking skill who were taught using debate technique.

Discussion

After calculating all the data, the researchers came to the interpretations. There was strong evidence that students' who were taught by using debate technique showed their progress and improvement in expressing opinion and rebutting argument in their debate while being given and after the treatment. Before being given the treatment, they did not know how to do debate well. However, debate technique has increased their ability in speaking skill. They were treated to express opinion with the strong evidence and example, then rebut the opposite argument. The writer calculated the independent sample t-test to find out whether or not there is any significant difference between students who were taught speaking skill by using debate technique and those who were not. It showed that the gain score of pretest and posttest mean score improved significantly.

Finally, debate gives new learning speaking style. Most of the students were interested in debate technique to practice their speaking skill. Debate technique brought them into attractive way in learning speaking, it made them thinking more critically, and made students speak more confident in front of many people. Debate could bring students into learning speaking easily and fun, therefore they got new experience in learning different with other ways of learning. Those statements were in line as Somjai and Janssem (2015) study, they state that debate has helped students improve their crucial critical thinking skills but also contributed to their social skills, then most students were happy and enjoyed studying debate with the teacher. And the result of that study was the debate developed the students' English-speaking ability. It is also supported by the research of Darby, M. (2007), he says that debating is an effective pedagogical strategy because of the level of responsibility for learning and active involvement required by all student debaters. Moreover, it provides an experience by which students can develop competencies in researching current issues, preparing logical arguments, actively listening to various perspectives,

differentiating between subjective and evidence-based information, asking cogent questions, integrating relevant information, and formulating their own opinions based on evidence.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis acquired and calculated, the researchers concluded that debate technique was strongly effective to improve students' speaking skill in debating and giving opinion and to be implemented in teaching learning process. It was proven by significance different between pretest and post test score in experimental group, the significance (2-tailed) was 0.00, this coefficient was lower than 0.05 in two tailed testing with $df = 54$, the critical value of t-table was 2.0049 since the value of t-obtained 10.942 was higher than critical value of t-table. Other evidence shown that before the students got treatment, they did not know how to debate with the right steps but after the treatment students understand it well. So, the researchers could conclude that it significantly increased.

In addition, the result of this study also emphasized that debate technique was considered to be able to accommodate the students' style, especially for students who were shy and difficult to express their opinion. By practicing debate, students had to speak in front of their friends and audiences and it made their confidence increased. Debate makes students think critically and easily connect to real evidence in order to make them speak encouragingly, it makes the students become more aware in their social life.

Furthermore, the research proposes some suggestions for minimizing the drawbacks of using debating activities to enhance the potentiality of this method and make it more interesting, meaningful and effective. Thus, the researchers recommend that the accuracy and good plan from the lecturers in implementing debate technique also give significant influence. Every process of debate has important role and it could form good impacts for students' public speaking skill. So, if the lecturers could run every debate process well, the students' public speaking skill could be improved well.

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