

Critical Thinking Skills: British Parliamentary Debate System to Improve English as Foreign Language (EFL) Students' Critical Speaking

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Abstract : Debate as one of techniques in teaching speaking has been believed can accommodate and facilitate teachers in improving students speaking skill. It is also believed that students' critical thinking can be ignited though debate technique. This research, therefore would like to employ the debate technique of British parliamentary system in teaching speaking in order to initiate students critical thinking. This is a quantitative research by applying experimental method. The population of this study was English speaking class in private Higher Education (PTS) in Aceh and the sample were two English speaking classes in Private Higher Education in Aceh. The sample, however, were two English speaking classes in Private Higher Education in Aceh. The data of this study were gained from pre test and post test, thus the results of the test were then analyzed though statistic formula. From the analyzed data, it was showed that in sample 1, the *t* table was 2.145 and *t*-test was 6.006, in sample 2 the *t* table was 2.228 and *t*-test was 2.936. The research finding revealed that, the *t*-test found was higher than *t*-table. It can be concluded that *H*₀ in the study was rejected that there was an improvement on students' critical thinking skill after applying the British Parliamentary debate system.

Keywords : debate technique; speaking skills; critical thinking; british parliamentary system

I. Introduction

Speaking as EFL is demanded to be learned by all of the learners. It is a particular way to express an idea to other people, speak without stuttering and establish the unbiased instruction during a communication. Speaking is a pleasant activity not only due to the ease of using it in extending, sharing and collaborating with others but also to the chance of individuals, particularly students, to communicate with English native or non-native speaker. Therefore, in everyday's life, everyone has to be able to communicate in oral form in order to involve into an interaction among people around. Moreover, it is an indirect form of obligation for any individuals to master speaking skill for their purpose to establish a social relationship among the society which is very essential in life. As stated by Brown (2004:140), speaking is a productive skill that can be observed directly and empirically. Moreover, speaking is a way to interact by using language in an oral production to share or express ideas, to discuss or establish friendships. So, speaking can be measured empirically when the process of sending information is done effectively.

Mastering speaking skill is complex. It is not only about expressing the idea but also ensuring the interlocutors understand about the point that has been delivered through the various signals given by the interlocutors during the speaking such as nodding, facial expression, and also eyes movement. Moreover, the speakers are required to have clear

pronunciation, numbers of vocabularies and fluency to ease the process of transferring the information to the listeners.

In addition, speaking skill requires the listening ability at the same time to support the process of transferring and receiving the message. Both skills should be mastered well by the speakers because speaking has a wide range of possible response that could not be predicted hence the way to have effective communication is by listening and responding.

Critical speaking skill problem is beyond the language boundary. Iskandar (2009) argued that the ability to think is the reasoning activity that carried out in all of a sudden or reflexively, critically, creatively, and oriented to the process of thought which is resulted in establishing the concept. The challenge among students in being critical is not merely the language but also the capacity of the individual to evaluate and associate the evidence. Subsequently, the critical speaking brings a new challenge for students to master the ability to evaluate and associate the evidence as well as to pack the information with some various type of vocabulary which is uttered with clear pronunciation and also a fluent flow of the speaking itself.

Regardless of the issues above, students are expected to be able to use English in speaking subject as well as to improve their ability in critical speaking. That is why the solution to these challenges is urgently needed to be discovered. However, to cover higher students critical thinking issue in improving their speaking skill, the lecturer should be able to select the most appropriate technique to those demands. There are some classroom speaking activities that can be either respectively or collectively used by a lecturer in the teaching-learning process, such as storytelling, group discussion, role play, and debate. The debate is one of the techniques that can be used in teaching English speaking in order to improve students speaking skill.

The debate is speaking situation that pushes students to think critically in multiple perspective so far an issue. The goal of the debate is to persuade judges to believe in all of the statements given. Maryadi (2008:16) stated that debate can motivate students to think, and they should defend their stand or opinion which is aimed to convince other individuals. The debate can be used in EFL classes as a tool to make student practice their skills in speaking the English language in a real setting. The procedure of debate involved the speaking and listening skill for instance, while a speaker delivers his/her substantive speech the other listens to it. This technique is effective to give them chance to share ideas and thoughts in front of audiences with the formal setting. Besides this technique is also the potential to disappear students nervousness during speaking. Nesbett (2003:210) stated that debate is an important educational tool for learning analytical thinking skills as well as for forcing self-conscious reflection on the validity of one's idea.

One of the common systems used in the debate is parliamentary debate such as British, Asia, Australian, and other formats. British Parliamentary System is the debate parliamentary system which is used universally by universities in Indonesia. This system includes 8 people consisting of 4 teams with different sides of arguments (pros and cons). British Parliamentary System is a Parliamentary debate which is a debate held in a parliamentary session in England and officially adopted as the debate format used in WUDC (World University Debating Competition). The use of this parliamentary system in the educational context is unpopular. That is why it needs to investigate further on the effectivity of the system to improve students' critical speaking ability.

Based on the background above, the writer formulated the research question as follow: Does the use of British Parliamentary debate system improve students' critical thinking in speaking skill?

II. Methodology

The population in this research was the private higher education in Aceh that has English Education Department. The reason behind this decision was that the number of critical thinking ability in the private university in Aceh was still low due to the lower position of National University Debating Championship that annually been conducted by Coordinator of Private Universities Region XII (Kopertis XIII) one of the debate tournament that standardizes the critical thinking ability of the participants.

The sample of the research was Abulyatama University, Aceh Besar and Al-Muslim University Bireun. The sample was selected purposely based on the result of National University Debating Championship (NUDC) 2018 which shows both universities achieved better rank among other private universities in Regional Circuit. The researcher used a quasi-experimental study which pre-test, treatment, and post-test were applied to the same group to analyze the groups' improvement.

The instrument used in this research was the test which divided into pre-test and post-test. 25 questions were given to the participant to assess their ability in identifying, constructing, evaluating arguments and solving problems given during the debate.

III. Discussion

The research was aimed to investigate the improvement of students' critical thinking after applying debate technique using British Parliamentary System. The samples were given pre-test, 7 sessions of treatments that underdone in 4 days and post-test. The result was presented in form of quantitative based on the pre-test and post-test result. The result was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solution) 24.0 for Windows. The data in both samples were analyzed as table follow.

Table 1. The summary of the T-test Table in sample 1

<i>Type of data</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
<i>Mean</i>	60.38461538	67.84615
<i>Variance</i>	2.08974359	17.97436
<i>Observations</i>	13	13
<i>Pooled Variance</i>	10.03205128	
<i>Hypothesized Mean Difference</i>	0	
<i>df</i>	24	
<i>t-test</i>	-6.00606722	
<i>P(T<=t) one-tail</i>	1.67843E-06	
<i>t Critical one-tail</i>	1.71088208	
<i>P(T<=t) two-tail</i>	3.35686E-06	
<i>t Critical two-tail</i>	2.063898562	
<i>Degree of freedom = 0,05</i>		

Table 2. The summary of the T-test Table in sample 2

Type of data	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	60.3	62.2
Variance	2.677777778	1.511111111
Observations	10	10
Pooled Variance	2.094444444	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	18	
t-test	-2.935649355	
$P(T \leq t)$ one-tail	0.004418579	
t Critical one-tail	1.734063592	
$P(T \leq t)$ two-tail	0.008837159	
t Critical two-tail	2.100922037	

Degree of Freedom = 0,05

From the tables above, we can conclude that the number of t_{table} in the first sample is 2.160 which is less than the t_{test} 6.006. While the number of t_{table} in the second sample is 1.987 which is also less than the number of t_{test} 2.936. However, based on the test criteria for a test that if $t_{test} \leq t_{table}$ it means that H_0 is accepted. On the other hand, if $t_{test} > t_{table}$ it means that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. So, the conclusion stated that the $t_{test} > t_{table}$ that mean H_0 in both samples was rejected and H_a was accepted. It can be interpreted that the students' skill in critical thinking has improved after applying the debate technique using British Parliamentary System in both samples.

Meanwhile, the hypothesis on the significance test was as follow.

H_0 :the students' critical thinking ability did not improve after applying debate technique using British parliamentary debate system

H_1 :the students' critical thinking ability improved after applying debate technique using BritishParliamentary Debate system

The criteria for assessing the significance-test based on t_{table} are 1) if the level of significance degree $> 0,05$ then H_0 is accepted. and, 2). if the level of significance degree $\leq 0,05$ then H_0 is rejected/ H_a is accepted. After assessing the data, it was found that the level of significance degree (sg) in the first sample is 0.000 and 0.004 in the second sample. Hence, in the first sample, $0.000 < 0,05$ and in the second sample $0.004 < 0,05$ which showed that the level significance in both samples were less than 0,05, so, H_0 is rejected in both samples. The result can be interpreted that there is a significant difference in the students' critical thinking skill after applying debate technique using British Parliamentary System in both samples.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the data above, the conclusion can be drawn that the use of debate technique with British Parliamentary System is effective to increase students' critical thinking skill in private higher education students. Moreover, the use of this technique is highly recommended for lectures to increase students' critical thinking especially in the area of speaking. British

Parliamentary System still needs further development in many areas, so that it can be adapted to the learning needs with a much greater participation and complexity of the material adjustments that are much higher than just discussing the current issues randomly.

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