

**EFL STUDENTS' CHALLENGES IN PARTICIPATING IN A DEBATING
COMPETITION**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out what challenges students faced when participating in debate competitions. In this study, the researcher used qualitative methods. The participants of this study are English students majoring in English at UKI Toraja who have participated in debate competitions. The researcher used purposive sampling to select participants. The research selected 4 participants who had participated in a debate competition in Palopo. The data of this study was collected by conducting interviews. The data obtained Analysis in three main phases, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The results of the study found that the challenges faced by students in participating in debate competitions are, the challenges that arise are facing critical thinking process, Building arguments, challenges applying critical thinking, verbally expressing your arguments, two opposing parties, defending arguments, motion, first challenge in debate, challenges listening opponent, defence / POI.

Keywords: EFL, students', debating, challenges

INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) English was designated as the first foreign language in accordance with the decree of the Minister of Education and Culture. No. 096/1967 dated December 12, 1967 (Kartono, 1980: 126). The selection of English as the first foreign language in Indonesia among other foreign languages is based on several considerations as stated by Kartono (1980: 125) that our national language at this time cannot be used as a means of communication with the outside world in the context of foreign policy and to establish friendship with other nations, and the fact that English is the language of international communication, the language of science, modern technology, trade, politics, and is spoken in almost all fields, so English should obviously be given the first priority to be learned among other foreign languages.

English debate competition become a very popular in the world. English debate have many benefits, especially in the world of education. This requires students to able to express ideas in English and be able to master global knowledge, analyze, make judgments and convince the public. According to Zainulridlo (2015) English debate competition is an English-language competition that raises social, cultural, political, economic, and education al themes both nationally and internationally which are currently being discussed by the public. In addition, this competition also aims to increase the participants' critical thinking patterns to hone their English speaking skills.

The Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of Indonesia's Directorate General of Learning and Student Affairs has developed an English debate competition, namely National University Debate Championship (NUDC) starting 2008 and has been held for a long time and attended through several universities in Indonesia, one of which is UKI Toraja which has participated in this activity only 6 times in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2021 and the last in 2022.

Concerning the participation of UKI Toraja in NUDC, there had been English language debate choices at UKI Toraja prepared by the English department. Some months ago there was also an expansion debate which was participated by UKI Toraja students. The aim is to select the excellent team to be able to constitute UKI Toraja in the debate competition in Palopo. But at that time only a few students from thousands of students at UKI Toraja participated in the debate competition. This is caused by anxiety when you want to participate in a debate because there is no experience. So researchers want to find out what challenges students face when participating in debates so that participants who will take part in debates can prepare well to succeed in debate competition.

METHOD

The writer applied qualitative method in this researcher. According to Sukmadinata (2009) qualitative method is a method which is used to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perception, and people individually or grup. Based on the explanation above, the writer use qualitative method to find out what are the challenges for students when arguing by interviewing them. before carrying out the research, the researcher prepared an administrative file obtained from the campus to be used as an introduction to the research to be carried out. After that, researchers select students who have participated in english debate competitions. When the participants have been determined, the researcher also prepares a draft of the questions to be asked. Use it to obtain data developed from the theory in chapter II. The

next step is for researchers to interview students who have participated in English debate competitions with a number of questions that have been compiled, after conducting interviews the researcher makes a transcript of the interview results, and the last step of the researcher is to analyze the data by following data analysis techniques.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

In this section, the writer displays the description of the research finding as a result of analysis process collected through interview with the students. The findings displayed are based on the initial research question, that is “what are the challenges are faced by English Department students in English debate competition?”

The data was collected from the students of English Department in UKI Toraja who are still active in that university. There were 4 students who have been interviewed about the challenges are faced by English Department students in English debate competition. The interview was held in campus and home from 15th February 2023 to 18th February 2023.

The challenges faced by the students based on the result of interview are described as follow:

1. Challenges in Building Argument

The challenge in building a good argument in a debate is that the debater must have real evidence and clear sources so that the argument built can be trusted and convince the opponent. As YB said in the interview namely: *My challenge in building a good argument in the debate is that find a motion there are several motions whose topic I am not good at so in building the argument it becomes a challenge for me because I lack mastery of the motion given.*

2. Challenges in applying critical thinking

Critical thinking skills is the lack of relevant evidence and facts about the motion that is given, making it difficult to build arguments in debate. As YB said in the interview namely: *my challenge in building a good argument in the debate is that I find a motion there are several motions whose topic I am not good at so in building the argument it becomes a challenge for me because I lack mastery of the motion given.*

3. Challenges in verbally expressing your arguments

The challenge of expressing arguments orally in debate is that they feel unsure of the arguments that have been built because of the lack of strong evidence and then get a refutation from the opposing party will interfere with concentration in expressing arguments so that the arguments presented are not systematic. As BN said in the interview namely: *The challenge I face regarding verbally expressing arguments in debates is that first in some cases when I participate in debates I often feel intimidated or down because my opponents have strong arguments so I feel down and result in me presenting my arguments less than optimally and also because what I said is a lack of evidence so I don't feel confident to present my arguments in front of the audience.*

4. Challenges in taking a position in a debate

The challenge in taking a position in a debate must be understanding the duties and roles of each position in the debate. Before participating in the debate, you should find out and understand the duties of each position in the debate so that it

is easier to understand the motion given. As BN said in the interview namely: the challenges faced *My challenge in taking a position in a debate is actually I already understand what to do when in government or opposition but once when I participated in the debate I misinterpreted the motion so I should have been on the side of the opposition but I supported the motion instead.*

5. Challenges in defending argument

The challenge in defending an argument against the opposing party when the opponent has a strong argument and concrete evidence, another challenge is to make a strong argument that has no blemishes to be supported by the opposing party. As YB said in the interview namely: *The challenge, I face in defending an argument against the opposing party is that when the opposing party gives a rebuttal to my argument, I often find it difficult to respond back because I often find it difficult to find evidence or concrete examples that can make my opponent's argument lose.*

6. First challenges in debate

The challenge they faced when they first participated in the debate was nervous and did not understand Rool Fulfilmet in a debate competition. As HS said in the interview namely: *The challenge I faced when I first participated in the debate was that I felt a little difficulty in understanding and carrying out the duties of each position I took in the debate position because I had never previously learned about the duties and roles that a debater had to undergo.*

7. Challenges in listening opponent

The challenge when listening to the opponent convey his argument is still not good at listening, when the opponent conveys his argument too quickly then the opponent conveys his argument with articulation and pronunciation is not clear. The challenges faced by JC during the debate were: *The challenge I face is that we as opponents try to find fault or try to find evidence and strong sources to weaken those arguments well usually the challenge is when we don't have a strong source and lack knowledge of the motion so we can't weaken the opponent's argument.*

8. Challenges in Defence/POI

The challenge faced when you want to do a POI is as much as possible the POI delivered in accordance with the statement submitted by the opposing party, then in the debate the time given to do the POI is very short so as much as possible the POI delivered must be short and clear.

Discussion

In this section, the researcher will discuss and describe the students' challenges' in participating in a debating based on what has been displayed in the data display section.

1. Challenges in Building argument, the writer explored students' challenges in a debating competition building argument. Argumentation is in the first instance a skill that develops from the social experience that happens when one person makes a claim and someone else

contests it. An entire array of skills evolves in oral situations around the production of arguments designed to back up one's own position or weaken someone else's (Kuhn, 1991; Kuhn & Udell, 2003; Toulmin, 2003).

From the data found, most of the challenges students have in building good arguments [...argument must be equipped with real reasons and evidence...] (S1) [...didn't have many sources and evidence about the motions...] (S4), [...in building the argument it becomes a challenge for me because I lack mastery of the motion...] (S3).

Based on the material above and the author's experience, it can be concluded that the research data and the material have something in common. Because from the material to build a good argument, it must have real evidence.

The data above can be concluded that most students have difficulty in building good arguments due to the lack of strong and tangible evidence.

2. Challenges in applying critical thinking the writer explored students' challenges in a debating competition the challenges is critical thinking. Maiorana (1992) noted that the purpose of critical thinking is to use questioning techniques to achieve understanding, evaluate view-points, and solve problems.

Most students were highly satisfied with the debate process and felt that the debates increased their critical-thinking skills. However, some students did not enjoy the debate process. Despite this minor issue, a science and technology course is an excellent environment to increase critical thinking through the use of debates.

Based on this research and this research, Critical thinking is one of the challenges when participating in debates because critical thinking must be with facts to support the arguments we present.

CONCLUSION

From the findings and discussion above, the challenges faced by students when participating in English debate competitions, the challenges that arise are facing critical thinking process, Building argument, challenges applying critical thinking, verbally expressing your arguments, two opposing parties, defending argument, motion, first challenge in debate, challenges listening opponent, defence/poi. But despite the difficulties students face, there are ways for students to solve challenges while arguing. Each student builds a good argument when arguing by collecting data that is clearly true, in taking a position in the debate students must first know the role fulfilment, how to defend an argument against the opposing side by showing real evidence.

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