

A Narrative Inquiry between Input and Output Ability: CTS Connection in Debate for EFL

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Abstract

This study delves into the correlation between critical thinking and input ability skills within the framework of debate. While debate often highlights spontaneous and responsive skills, the overlooked essential is the input ability, encompassing tasks like confirming information, summarizing, and catching details. These skills precede output ability and are crucial in effective debating. Drawing from sources spanning the past decade, this qualitative research employs the narrative inquiry method to explore the role of critical thinking in language input ability. Data collection involves questionnaires targeting students with debate experience, focusing on the impact of input and output skills on their debating. Utilizing interviews, the research reveals that a balance between input and output abilities is vital for successful debate performance. The result is participants have different points of view in choosing whether input or output which affects their critical thinking mostly, the strategies they used, the importance of output and input abilities, and emotional intelligence, it shows the need for strategies to enhance input abilities alongside output skills to gain maximum potential in debate. Future research aims to develop methods for fostering balanced improvement in input abilities, shifting from a sole focus on output proficiency.

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INTRODUCTION

The correlation between the amount and quality of input and the success of language learning has been thoroughly examined in the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Input, in this context, refers to verbal expressions that the learner has comprehended, encompassing both their speech and that of others. This includes instances where the utterances were accurately produced by native speakers of the second language (L2) or inaccurately by non-native speakers of the L2 (Flege, 2018). These input abilities play an important role in comprehending the debate situation. The listening and reading skills in the debate need to have more attention since people mostly rely on their products such as speech and arguments whilst ignoring the process of gathering information ability.

The assessment of input ability is ideally conducted by testing sample knowledge through the evaluation of the structure, reading process, listening process, and information processing simultaneously within a debate framework (Muchsonny & Hidayatullah, 2021). Critical thinking refers to an individual's capacity to analyze and assess information, making appropriate decisions tailored to diverse situations and contexts (Paul & Elder, 2006). According to Freeley, (2013), critical thinking is essential for decision-making due to its necessity in life and the dependence of rational decision-making on critical thinking. This involves (a) the need for examination and assessment of arguments, and (b) a skill that enhances advocacy and the utilization of information. This perspective aligns with Johnson, (2002), who characterizes critical thinking as (a) a clear and organized process integral to mental activities such as problem-solving, decision-making, persuading, analyzing premises, and scientific inquiry; (b) the capacity for organized reasoning; and (c) a systematic process enabling students to formulate and evaluate their own beliefs and claims. Purposely, critical thinking skills heavily affect the process of input abilities.

A prior relevant study conducted by Aclan & Aziz (2014) and Chen (2018) focused on utilizing debate as an instructional tool to enhance learners' communicative competence. Miller (2013) and Syukri & Mardiana (2016), in a related study, also examined the use of debate as a means to assess fluency and reported only modest improvements in communication skills. Consequently, there is a pressing need for researchers to delve deeper into the underlying causes rather than solely focusing on the end product. In the case of the product value, it is affected by internal factors such as critical thinking skills and emotional intelligence.

Critical thinking skill has a role in processing information gathered when debating, but the reading activity plays a more critical role in pre-debate situations. One of the most crucial abilities that learners should learn is reading. Because learners must first comprehend the words to pronounce them correctly, reading, especially reading-intensive, is a difficult skill to learn Sari & Prasetyo (2021). The relation of critical thinking, input, and output ability in debate situations cannot be separated (Dahlan, 2018).

According to Willingham, (2010), critical thinking involves acknowledging multiple perspectives on an issue, remaining receptive to new evidence that challenges one's beliefs, reasoning impartially, insisting on evidence to support claims, drawing logical conclusions from available information, problem-solving, and more. Engaging in critical thinking not only enhances creativity and improves time management skills, but it also encompasses the ability to apply logical thinking and probability to real-life problems. Developing critical thinking skills can lead to a deeper understanding of oneself, foster objectivity, help regulate emotions, and encourage open-mindedness by appreciating diverse viewpoints (Hader, 2005).

By cultivating critical thinking, individuals gain confidence in presenting innovative perspectives and fresh insights.

Emotional intelligence affects the product of speech since students are forced to speak. It causes the students to hold their potential and be shy about making mistakes, (Fadilah & Wijaya (2022) Khalil (2018) Saputri et al., 2022) also stated that the internal factors in students' difficulties are composing words or sentences, also confirmed emotional intelligence as a factor that triggers students to speak is considered high while being pressed by the teacher's expectation to at least fulfill their communication needs.

The objective of this study is to underscore the significance of how critical thinking skills affect input and output proficiency in the debate section. Drawing upon the aforementioned citations and the discussed issue, the researcher gains insight into the potential causes behind suboptimal outcomes observed in various educational contexts, such as classroom action research and experimental settings. This research assumes a pivotal role in discerning the educational requirements of students within the domain of debate, with a particular emphasis on refining pedagogical approaches to maximize the efficacy of debate as a teaching framework.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is centered on conducting a compact narrative inquiry, in which the researcher gathered narrative data from accomplished debaters affiliated with Lambung Mangkurat University within the ELESP (English Language Education Study Program) domain. To align with the study's objectives, the adoption of a narrative inquiry approach appears most suitable, as it places a strong emphasis on human experiences and effectively captures comprehensive narratives of individuals' life experiences, as advocated by Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Walker (2010). The data analysis will conduct interviews, audio and video recordings, and fieldnotes to help the researcher in sorting the results to gain more specific and true result (Creswell, 1998; Polkinghorne, 2005).

This study's instrument weaves together respondents' narratives, exploring their debating experiences, achievements, and emotions about speaking anxiety. By using personal stories, it delves into each participant's unique journey, unraveling the complexities of their engagement. Participants reflect on pivotal moments and notable achievements, revealing the depth of their involvement in debating. The instrument also focuses on speaking anxiety, providing a psychological dimension for a comprehensive exploration. This narrative-driven approach aims to capture both quantitative data and qualitative nuances in respondents' multifaceted relationship with debating.

Purposive sampling technique, which is a method of data sample selection considering specific characteristics. This consideration can include someone who has in-depth knowledge about the subject under investigation or possesses relevant authority, thereby assisting the researcher in delving deeper

into the information about the object or social situation being examined (Sugiyono, 2013).

In selecting respondents for the study, the researcher maintained the respondents in the ELESF (English Language Education Study Program) batch 2021 domain, three key criteria were established to ensure a comprehensive and qualified sample. Firstly, the willingness of potential respondents to participate actively in the research process was considered pivotal. This criterion aimed to gauge the enthusiasm and commitment of individuals towards contributing valuable insights on the topic under investigation. Secondly, the criterion of experience in debating was deemed essential, as it provides a foundational understanding of the subject matter and ensures respondents possess a nuanced perspective derived from practical engagement in the field. Lastly, the criterion of achievements in debating was incorporated to identify individuals who have demonstrated notable success and proficiency in this domain. This multifaceted approach to respondent selection, encompassing willingness, experience, and achievements, aimed to yield a diverse and informed pool of participants, enriching the study with varied perspectives and expertise. The location of the data collection is offline or online as long as the students can answer the given questions, the questions given will be:

1. How long have you been in the debate community/society?
2. What Problems do you face in practicing debate?
3. Which is more important, speaking or listening? Why?
4. Is emotional intelligence important in the debate? (Anxiety, shyness, etc)
5. Does the pressure affect your potential in the debate?
6. Which strategy do you use in debate to maximize your potential?

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The told stories

AR and FQ are 6th-semester students from batch 2021, AR and FQ have taken sufficient speaking and listening classes including debate material, and were chosen as the participants to accomplish this research. The reason both of the participants were chosen because they have achieved numerous debate achievements and studied deeply in the area of debate

Within this section, the researcher retold the stories shared by the participants regarding their experience in the debate society and the connections between input ability and critical thinking skills.

AR's stories

AR joined the debate society since 2022 in LMDS (Lambung Mangkurat Debate Society). AR's problems in the debate are stuttering in giving a speech and time management in case building, as well as problems in acknowledging the keywords in debate motions. AR stated that listening is greater than speaking in the debate, since in a debate, AR needs to listen to the opponent

team's arguments to counterattack their argument, especially if AR is in the closing team, so good listening skills are elevated in this situation.

AR answered that emotional intelligence is important to master since the transition between online and offline competition has different conditions, but the only problem is, emotional problems such as anxiety attacks when it comes to the motion that AR has not yet mastered, and it hinders AR's speech potential.

To overcome the problem and maximize his listening skills, AR said that debate drills are important to enhance AR's knowledge of related motions, reading a dictionary to enrich his vocabulary, especially academic terms, and watching many debate competition videos online to make his counterarguments and listening skills better.

FQ's stories

FQ has joined the debate society since 2021 in LMDS (Lambung Mangkurat Debate Society). FQ's problems in debate are the broad topics in debate such as internationals or politics, besides the motion theme, FQ has problems in arranging words to utter her ideas. FQ's said speaking is more credible in debate since the panels are paying more attention to her arguments rather than the POI (Point of Information), which means that FQ promotes speaking rather than listening.

FQ also answered that emotional intelligence is important in a debate, and she gave an example that the opponents sometimes get personal in arguing with her arguments, adding anxiety problems that pressure her, FQ even added that the anxiety comes earlier, especially in the case building section.

FQ's problem is in understanding the motion first, it causes over-anxiety, and it is pressuring FQ to maximize her speaking potential in debate. To overcome the problem, FQ said that suitable teammate are important to make good communication to boost their teamwork, speaking drills are also important in many different topics and lastly, joining competitions to measure FQ's ability.

Discussions

Debate problems and challenges

Both individuals articulated their concerns during the debate, emphasizing a shared recognition of the paramount importance of acknowledging the motion in shaping the outcome of their deliberations. Additionally, they both remarked on the challenge of structuring their arguments effectively within the confines of spoken discourse during debates. However, a notable point of divergence emerged: while AR focused on bolstering his counterarguments, FQ prioritized enhancing her understanding of the motions under consideration. This divergence aligns with the findings of Dahlan (2018) and the research conducted by Sari & Prasetyo (2021), which both highlight the prevalence of such challenges within the context of debating.

One of the most intriguing challenges arises during the case-building phase, where participants often experience heightened pressure and a sense of mental block. Both participants share similar sentiments, concurring that this phase emerges as a pivotal point in their debating journey, given the demanding nature of synthesizing information and exercising critical thinking skills within the constraints of time pressure. This struggle to effectively utilize the limited time available to construct well-structured arguments underscores a significant hurdle in their debate progress. This observation resonates with the insights of Freeley (2013), who suggests that the exigencies of time and pressure in such situations may not always facilitate optimal critical thinking, thus impacting the quality of their speech output. Aligned with the findings of the study conducted by Astuti (2018) revealing the challenges encountered by students during debate practice sessions in academic speaking classes. These challenges encompass difficulties in articulating speech, delineating the motion, setting limitations, assuming the role of the first speaker, vocabulary limitations, formulating rebuttals, articulating arguments, sourcing supportive data, fostering critical thinking, managing time effectively, maintaining eye contact, utilizing notes during debates, and managing anxiety levels.

Output and input ability importance

The participants have different points of view on the importance of output and input abilities relating to debate. AR's stated that listening is greater than speaking, while FQ is the opposite. The reason AR stated listening is elevated in a debate is that the counter-attack argument in the debate is more precious to be honored by the panels, also to gain more precise pronunciations and vocabularies, AR needs to watch and listen to debate and speech videos online in that case, AR believed to hone his input abilities first more than the speaking. On the opposite end, FQ stated that speaking is more credible than listening since the product of the speech is honored by the panels more than the POI itself. FQ also stated that listening progress is not that important to be in debate, since the panels only score her speech. To maintain good receptive skills in gaining information, intensive reading involves a meticulous approach to understanding a text, encompassing careful word recognition, literal comprehension, and interpretation. Engaging in intensive reading can enhance reading proficiency and alleviate challenges encountered while reading (Roberts et al., 2015)

To align with FQ's statement, (Malmir & Shoorcheh (2012) researched the influence of incorporating critical thinking instruction on the speaking proficiency of learners. Their findings revealed that language learners who received training in critical thinking exhibited significant enhancement in their speaking abilities, actively engaging as participants in the interaction process. This underscores the importance for language learners to develop their critical thinking skills, as doing so not only improves their linguistic capabilities but also facilitates their participation, collaboration, and language practice within

various contexts. The results obtained from the questionnaire revealed that a significant majority of students, comprising 63.49%, concurred that engaging in debates could offer them the advantage of comprehending the central concepts articulated by others. This was closely trailed by a substantial proportion of students, totaling 58.73%, expressing confidence in their ability to refine their pronunciation skills through participation in debates. Additionally, there was a slightly varied response regarding the students who acknowledged the potential of debates to enhance their pronunciation, with 57.14% in agreement by Syamdianita & Maharia (2020). Also, AR's statement is supported by Fahim et al. (2010) in which the students who took critical thinking courses have a better understanding of vocabulary and higher performance when it comes to understanding their input material.

Emotional intelligence affects

The participants agreed that anxiety attacks occurred within the debate progress from the start until the end of the section. They agreed that in the debate section, extrinsic factors also affect their speech such as the opponent's attacks towards them. The intrinsic factor came from their inability to manage stress and anxiety, as well as their doubts about their ability to understand the motions. It is aligned with Saputri et al. (2022) that the ability in the debate could reduce the potential of an individual to make a good product of speech and it affects their critical thinking process in offering a good debate product. It is supported by Khalil, (2018) by doing an instructed debate test to measure speaking anxiety in the process of debate. The result envisaged a low level of anxiety after the students got the instructed method towards the debate itself. The participants agreed that anxiety comes in when they do not have enough time or knowledge to understand the motion and the rules.

Strategy to overcome the problems

The individuals enlisted in the identical institution with the shared aim of enhancing their prowess in debate. Additionally, they reached a consensus that regular participation in debate drills significantly contributes to the enhancement of their debating skills. This viewpoint resonates with the findings of Syukri et al. (2016), which asserts that individuals' communicative competencies are directly proportional to their engagement in debate activities. Even though participants may employ varying strategies to bolster their debating abilities, the eventual outcome is expected to exhibit notable improvements. AR believes that listening ability comes first to make his speech better since listening will affect his performance and it is aligned with Miller's (2013) research that resulted in good listening courses that will boost their speaking skills performance.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that input and output ability skills in the debate cannot be separated, instead, they affect each other. The input ability skills play a role in boosting the speech product and reducing the emotional intelligence problem that occurs in debate. It is important for the students especially to hone their listening ability first to align with their speaking ability. The anxiousness of an individual also affects the product of speech, but to overcome it, the participants agreed to have a systematic debate drill to improve their confidence and reduce the mental attacks that will reduce the participant's speaking potential. The critical thinking skills section occurs strongly in the building case section which is an important phase for their debate progress, but the pressure that happened at that moment could reduce the quality of their arguments. In the end, experience is the key to overcoming the problem in their confidence and anxiety problem, so the mentors or teachers need to be fully aware of both input and output skills to gain the most effective strategies in debate.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

This section envisages the contribution of YA to cater the importance of input and output ability in concern the affect to critical thinking skills on debate process for EFL students. The notion of emotional abilities affects the process of critical thinking skills is shown upperhand.

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