
THE EFFECT OF THE AUSTRALASIAN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE TECHNIQUE ON STUDENTS' ARGUMENTATIVE SPEAKING ABILITY

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research was to investigate whether the use of the Australasian Parliamentary Debate had an impact on students' argumentative speaking ability. The method was quantitative with a quasi-experimental design, and the participants of this research were SMAN 29 Jakarta 10th grade social students in the academic year 2017/2018. They were X IIS 2 as the experimental group and X IIS 3 as the control group, consisting of 32 students for each group. Convenience sampling was used to select the participants for this research, and the data were collected using an oral test. The argumentative speaking rubric was used to assess the students' argumentative speaking ability in the pre- and post-tests. The results of statistical hypothesis testing, using independent sample t-test, found that the t-value was 2.23 on the significance level of 5 percent ($\alpha = 0.05$), whereas the t_{table} was 1.99 or $t_{observe} > t_{table}$. H_0 was therefore rejected and H_a was accepted. This finding shows that the use of the Australasian Parliamentary Debate has a positive effect on students' ability to speak argumentatively.

Key Words: Argumentative speaking; Australasian Parliamentary Debate; quasi-experimental

ABSTRAK

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menginvestigasi apakah penggunaan *the Australasian Parliamentary Debate* memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap kemampuan berbicara argumentatif siswa. Metode yang digunakan adalah kuantitatif dengan quasi-experimental sebagai desain penelitian. Partisipan penelitian adalah siswa SMAN 29 Jakarta kelas X IPS di tahun akademik 2017/2018. Mereka adalah X IIS 2 sebagai kelas eksperimen dan X IIS 3 sebagai kelas kontrol yang masing-masing kelas terdiri dari 32 siswa. Convenience sampling adalah teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan untuk pengumpulan data. Instrumen dalam penelitian ini menggunakan tes lisan dengan rubrik berbicara argumentatif untuk menguji kemampuan argumentasi siswa pada pretest dan posttest. Hasil dari tes hipotesis statistika menggunakan uji T- sampel independen menunjukkan bahwa pada degree of significance 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$), t_{value} sebesar 2.23 sementara t_{table} sebesar 1.99 atau $t_{observe} > t_{table}$. Maka dari itu, H_0 ditolak dan H_a diterima. Hal ini membuktikan adanya pengaruh positif penggunaan teknik *the Australasian Parliamentary Debate* pada kemampuan berbicara argumentatif siswa.

Kata Kunci: Berbicara argumentatif; Australasian Parliamentary Debate; quasi-experimental

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INTRODUCTION

Students need to learn English speaking as it is one of the basic language skills of English. It is a productive skill through which we produce utterances to express our feelings or ideas. Therefore, speaking seems intuitively the most important skill to master. The success is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information (Hasanah, 2012). In addition, she said that by improving speaking skills people can participate in conversations, express ideas and exchange information with others.

There are, however, some barriers that students face in learning to speak. Generally, students at the high school level are taught almost all English basic skill components of the English language, yet many of them remain unable to speak the language fluently. In addition, in the teaching and learning processes at this school level, students tend to lack exposure or role model and supportive English learning environments. Meanwhile, supportive teaching and learning environments are of great importance to the success of English education at all levels. Hans (2017) states that a supportive learning environment is needed to promote

good and successful teaching and learning processes in the classroom.

Furthermore, people's opinions sometimes can also be obstacles to using English. The position of English itself in Indonesia is a foreign language. Therefore, whenever a person is listening to someone who is speaking English with accented pronunciation, for example, they may respond to that accented speech negatively, and as a result that unfortunate situation may lead to the fact that English learners in this country tend to hesitate to speak English confidently. Moreover, most students as EFL learners tend to be passive and a lot of them are shy to use English in actual conversations. Therefore, the majority of them do not use English in real and authentic communication activities. Because of its position as a foreign language in Indonesia, most students do not learn English outside the classroom let alone speaking the language in daily life (Iman, 2017).

One of the important aspects of speaking skills is being able to express the idea of causality. To express a causality event itself, students need to have a strong argumentative speaking skill. After all, the ease to make argumentation depends on students' knowledge of the good language and how to apply the knowledge into the

arguments, so that their critical thoughts are accessible to others. Therefore, a teaching technique that integrates both strong speaking and critical thinking skills becomes extremely important. One of the speaking techniques that could be implemented by a teacher in the classroom is the technique of debating. Debating can be applied in a speaking class because students are expected to express their ideas and to convince their claims to their audience.

The debating activity itself has a number of advantages including to develop students' argumentation skill since talking about the debate is about how they convince others with their arguments. Johnson (2009) states that debating requires to convince their audience about the truth or falsity of the debate motion. Therefore, in debating it is necessary to be able to show facts and figures of causality events.

Furthermore, debating also increases students' critical thinking to solve problems in real life. According to Scott (2008), the debate process combines critical thinking and a lot of other important skills including listening, researching, problem-solving, reasoning, questioning, and communicating. In addition, debating also offers a second advantage in that it

enables educators to promote other important aspects of critical thinking, namely, social awareness and criticism (Rear, 2018).

In response to the problem described above, based on a pre-observation of the researchers in SMAN 29 Jakarta, there was a debate activity in the English club at the school and this school indeed has actively joined debate competitions. When the researcher served as the English teacher intern at the school, she had the opportunity to accompany a group of students of the school in a local debate competition. During her companion, the students complained about the interest of their junior participation in joining debating activities. They were worried their school team would lose its generation with a strong debating team. Not to mention their tutors in debating activity rely mostly on their senior students.

Meanwhile, based on the experience of the researcher as a debater, students who actively join English debating clubs tend to show better abilities in speaking and to be more confident to speak in public occasions. This is because students who actively join debating communities are used to having more chances to demonstrate their speaking ability as well as their critical thinking through

lessons and exercises during their argumentative activities. Indeed, debating activity trains students to organize their speech well and to become more rational thinkers. Thus, the researchers believe that there is a good connection between a debating technique and students' argumentative speaking skill that can be developed inside or outside of the classroom.

Related to debating activities, there are a number of debating formats across the world, but some famous formats are American, British Parliamentary, Australasian Parliamentary, and Asian Parliamentary debate styles. The American style is the format that is commonly used in the American settings only, while the Asian Parliamentary is an adoption of the Australasian format with some modifications. The British parliamentary format is more suitable for university students, while the Australasian style seems to be the best fit for high school students.

Although the last two debate formats above are originally from England and Australia, their influences are around the worlds. Therefore, Australasian and British parliamentary styles are used as the combination for World Schools Format in some international-scaled competitions.

World Schools format is also used to choose high schools' students in a national competition called National Schools Debating Championship (NSDC) organized by the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Republic of Indonesia. The selected students will be the next Indonesian delegation for the World Schools Debating Championship (WSDC).

Based on the rationale described above, it would be beneficial to implement the Australasian Parliamentary style of debating as one alternative of the English teaching techniques in the classroom. The researchers assume that this style can motivate students to be able to elegantly maintain their arguments or at least to be brave to speak. The students also make a better speech when they organize their arguments sequentially, chronologically, and thematically.

Based on the explanation above, therefore, the researchers are interested in conducting a study to examine whether the use of the Australasian Parliamentary debating technique has an impact on the ability of argumentative speaking ability among SMAN 29 students.

Related the speaking term, there are various oral productions considered by Bailey (2003). This involves oral

development in a wide variety of genres, including reciting poems, participating in debates, engaging in class discussions, and leaving messages on answering machines (Bailey, 2003). Furthermore, the nature of speaking as a productive skill and its spontaneity is needed to make the speaking attitude as natural as native. It has to be pointed out that speaking could be studied explicitly and empirically (Brown, 2004).

Argumentative speech can be developed for debating participation. The argumentative speech is a convincing speech in which the speaker attempts to convince his or her audience to change their point of view on a controversial topic that has more than one side. The argumentative speech tries to fundamentally alter the views already held by the audience. The goal is to get to the truth of the matter by exploring all the details of the issue. This style of speech is extremely challenging; thus, the speaker should be careful to select a topic that he felt prepared to support with a clear statement (Siquig, 2015).

Argumentative speeches typically answer issues that are being debated by society or existing problems of discord. Such issues also emerge from political discussions and topics that are widely seen in the media. Economic, political,

social, or ethical problems are the focus chosen. The speakers need to convince their audience that they are reliable speakers by referring their claims and assertions to relevant studies and presenting reasonable arguments to support them by speaking articulately and argumentatively. The ability to use reason, logic, and facts are needed to show the audience why their side makes the most sense.

Argumentation requires specific vocabulary because the person that is engaged in argumentation should be able to make a statement, inference, or belief, to dispute something, to deny something, and so on. The specific terms and sentences for the execution of all those types of statements are usually needed to make them convincing to the audience.

Generally speaking, argumentation counts heavily on speaking mastery and any individual engaged in argumentation has to intentionally choose to use verbal means effectively and in a convincing way. To master speaking thoroughly, several goals of speaking components should be considered. They are called as functional intelligibility, functional communicability, enhanced self-confidence, and speech-monitoring capabilities (Romero, 2018).

Harris (1969) includes several other components that are related to the topic including comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Comprehension means students' understanding of daily communication and frequent classroom discussions without difficulty. Fluency refers to students' speech in daily conversations and classroom discussions, which is articulate and tends to be effortless on the part of the speaker. Vocabulary means using words or expressions of causality in argumentative speeches such as because/because of/due to, agree/disagree, that's why, for this reason, the reason why, is caused by/is the effect of, in addition/moreover/not only-but also (Grace, 2014). Meanwhile, grammar refers to grammatical rules such as word order and structural patterns that are also based on contextual clues. Finally, pronunciation means the way students say and articulate words including word stress and sentence intonation.

As the argumentation has a close relation to the critical thinking processes including reasoning element, it plays an important role and permeates many areas of our lives. As Lucas (2007) said, reasoning is simply the process of making a conclusion based on evidence. It is an important part of persuasive speaking (Lucas,

2007). Furthermore, Lucas (2007) mentions four fundamental methods of reasoning and how to use them in our arguments: reasoning from concrete cases, reasoning from theory, causal reasoning, and analogical reasoning.

The Australasian Parliamentary debate elements include chairperson, speaking time and timekeeper, motion, layout and venue, adjudicators, and speakers (Quinn, 2009). A debate should be directed by a chairperson. A male chair is usually referred to as Mr. Chairman while a female chair as Mrs. Chair. Debaters should always begin their speeches by remembering both the chair and the audience

Speaking time for debating depends on the regulation of the committee. However, the common standard is 5 to 7 minutes for substantive speech and 3 to 5 minutes for reply speech. There will be a person, called timekeeper, who makes time signals following the rules of the debating event.

Motion is the debate topic or resolution that contains a case or policy that must be solved by each debating team based on their speaking roles. Motion typically starts with the expression, "This house believes that....", "This house should....", "This house regrets....". The phrase "This house" could be defined as the

Government Representatives, United Nations, Organizations, or anything that is going to be explained by the speaker based on the context of the case itself (Quinn, 2009).

The adjudicator is someone who carefully watches and follows the debate to agree on the outcome. Adjudicators are not permitted to make random or arbitrary decisions. They must follow clear guidelines on what is good or is not good about a debate (Quinn, 2009).

The layout of debate venue can be seen in the following figure (adopted from World Schools Debating Championship 2017):

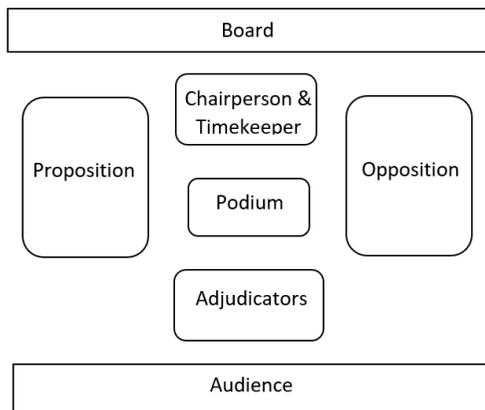


Figure 1. Layout of Debate Venue, Australia-Asian Style

In general, there are two benches in the debate: an Affirmative and a Negative. The first Affirmative speaker opens the debate, followed by the first Negative speaker.

In the Australia-Asia style, each side consists of three speakers. Each speaker talks for a set time, with a warning bell to give them a little time to sum up and to finish, then a final bell. Every speaker has other roles to play while speaking (Incorporated, Debating SA, 2008). Whereas, in the format of British Parliamentary Debate, there are four teams per round. Two teams represent the Government and the other two become the Opposition teams. Each team should consist of two speakers (Summary of The Four-Team British Parliamentary Debate Format, 2015).

Although there are some speaker variations of debate styles and formats, generally it is divided into two types, the substantive speaker and reply speaker. The explanations above are about the substantive speaker and the upcoming is about the reply speaker, an extra role of speaker in a team who is common in three on three debate.

Reply speaker is a speaker who delivers reply speeches from their team. It can be the first or second speaker to do, but not for the third speaker of a team. It is also worth noting that the order changes after the first three speeches of each side, so the opposition reply speaker gives their speech straight after the third opposition speaker and the proposition reply

speech is the final one to end the debate. The reply speech is intended to explain why their side has already won the debate. A reply speaker has a side position as "an adjudication from our side" and his speech is a summary of the key issues in the debate.

As a general rule, a reply speaker who falls to the level of dealing with individual examples might not understand either the issues of the debate or the principles of a good argument. There is no time for a reply speaker to deal with small arguments or individual examples. The speaker will deal with two or three key topics in the debate on a global basis. They demonstrate how they support the speaker's team and work against the opposition team (Erskine, 2017).

Scott (2008) reveals that debates in the classroom have been effective in increasing critical thinking by letting students connect as they learn subject knowledge. In their classes, 82% of students thought they understood the subject, and 85 % thought they learned something important. In addition, strategic problem solving, coordination, presentation, and team competence were enhanced by debating activity. Moreover, the debate involves students in the research and analysis of a controversial topic. It means that this

kind of situation urges the students to think fast and critically.

On the contrary, debate tends to be dualistic, with dualism being defined as the division of something (conceptually) into two opposite or contrasting aspects, or the state of being so divided. In the classroom, this means that debate persuades students to consider the issue as having only two positions (yes or no) instead of allowing students to consider a multiplicity of perspectives.

In this research, the researcher has performed a number of roles as a subsidiary English teacher, as an adjudicator, and a debate coach. She has not only practiced the Australasian Parliamentary Debate but in teaching argumentation she also has another responsibility to boost students' critical thinking. In addition, Hooley (2007), suggests that teaching critical thinking skills is one of the most essential aspects of high school education, and no class has done this better than strategic debating. Additionally, the activities and skills utilized in preparing for a debate punch the envelope out at the top of Bloom's Taxonomy with students synthesizing and evaluating research evidence.

The Australasian Parliamentary debate is a natural fit for the course, as topics are linked to current events, and

students are allowed to critically analyze a controversial topic while practicing other skills such as writing, presenting information, and higher-level thinking (Scott, 2008). It means that active learning is optimally exercised through debating activity. The course is more fun for both teachers and students, and, most importantly, it helps students to think critically (Duron, Limbach, & Waugh, 2017). Therefore, as Willingham (2007) emphasizes, it is impossible to teach students factual content without giving them opportunities to practice using it as it is also impossible to teach students critical thinking without giving them chances to use factual content appropriately.

METHOD

This research used a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design. The main reason why the researchers prefer this design to experimental one is that the researchers cannot arbitrarily construct a category since it would interrupt classroom learning by randomly assigning students to the two classes. Thus, the researchers used two existing classes as the experimental and the control groups. In the experimental group, the researchers performed a pretest, treatment using the Australasian Parliamentary Debate, and then a post-

test. Meanwhile, in the control group, the researchers had only given a pre-test and post-test without any treatment. The researchers used convenience sampling to measure the argumentative speaking ability. The availability of convenience sampling came after the researchers got permission from the school principal and English teacher. The research was conducted at the SMAN 29 Jakarta. The research population was the tenth-grade SMAN 29 Jakarta students in the 2017-2018 academic year. The students involved in this research were all in the same social science concentration in the same academic year, and they were taught by the same English teacher during the course of the research. Two classes of social science participated as participants of this study, X IIS 2 with 32 students as the experimental group and X IIS 3 with 32 students as the control group. The researchers had four treatment meetings and two pretest and posttest meetings. It was conducted from April 14th up to June 5th 2018, and it was exactly in the second semester when the students were learning to express cause-effect and causality verbs in chapter 10 on the elective program of the English book.

At the first meeting of treatments, the researchers introduced and explained the module of the Australasian Parliamentary Debate,

then prepared students by dividing them into six groups of three students per each, while the others play some roles as chairperson, timekeeper, adjudicators, and audiences, not to mention to choose the debate motion (topic) for each chamber.

Coming to the next meetings, they practiced the Australasian Parliamentary Debate with the motions: 1) That early marriage brings more harm than good; 2) That Smoking in Public Places Should Be Banned; 3) That Homework Should Be Banned.

These motions were chosen with the adaptation of students' basic competence in the tenth grade in communicating causality event including consensus and disagreement in an argumentative manner.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The findings of the mean scores of the both experimental and control groups are illustrated in the following figure2.

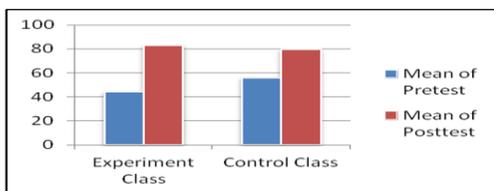


Figure 2. Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

As for the posttest result in the experiment class, the mean of the posttest has improved to 83.06 from 44.37 and the mean of the gained score is 38.68. This means that, on average,

students have passed the criterion or exceeded the minimum criterion. However, three students did not pass the Minimum Mastery Criterion and the remaining 29 students met the minimum mastery criterion. In addition, the highest score for the posttest was 95 achieved by only one student and the lowest score for the posttest was 71 achieved by only one student.

Meanwhile, according to the result of the control class, the mean score of the posttest has also improved from 56.03 to 79.31 and the mean of the gained score is 23.28. However, five students did not meet the Minimum Mastery Criterion and the remaining students met the minimum mastery criterion. Not to mention the highest score for the posttest is 92 for two students and the lowest score for the posttest is 65 achieved by only one student. From the differences in students' scores above, it can be seen that there is also an increase in students' scores in learning English. However, the outcome of the posttest shows that some of the scores are still below the minimum mastery criterion

at SMAN 29 Jakarta. Thus, it is concluded that the class which was taught without using the Australasian Parliamentary Debate technique still need efforts to meet the minimum mastery criterion.

The outcome of normality test of the pretest shows that the significance level of the experimental class is 0.065 and 0.050 and the control level is 0.200 and 0.181. This means that the likelihood value (p) of both the experimental and control classes is higher than (>) the degree of significance 5 percent ($\alpha = 0.05$). It is therefore concluded that all the experiment and control classes' pretest data are normally distributed.

The outcome of normality test of the posttest indicates that the significance level of the experimental class is 0.200 and 0.388 and the control level is 0.200 and 0.340. This indicates that the probability value (p) of both the experimental and control classes is higher than (>) the degree of significance 5 percent ($\alpha = 0.05$). It is therefore concluded that both the experiment and control classes' posttest data are normally distributed.

The result of the *Levene* statistical test for data homogeneity shows that the significance level or probability value (p) of the experimental and control class' pretest data is 0.071 and

0.707. This indicates that the significance level or the probability value (p) of the data is greater than the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). The result of the homogeneity test shows that the data from the sample have a homogenous variance.

More importantly, the outcome of statistical analysis for hypothesis testing shows that the value of $t_{\text{value}} = 2.238$ and the value of df (degree of freedom) of 62 for the value of 5 percent was 1.999. Comparing $t_{\text{value}} = 2.238$ with each value of the degree of significance or $t_{\text{table}} = 1.999$, this research has found that $t_{\text{value}} = 2.238$ is higher than $t_{\text{table}} = 1.999$. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is dismissed and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted.

The fact that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is dismissed actually means that the use of the Australasian Parliamentary Debate has a beneficial impact on the students' ability of argumentative speaking particularly that of causality expression. It also means that the Australasian Parliamentary Debate has contributed a positive influence on students' argumentative speaking of causality expressions at the tenth grade of SMAN 29 Jakarta in the academic year 2017/2018.

DISCUSSION

Reflecting on the findings of this study, the researchers discover two important points. First, the Australasian Parliamentary debate is an effective tool to teach argumentative speaking skills, as students can prepare for the discussion of important issues while also learning the skills required to succeed. Linguistic emphasis can be given on the language of dialogue with agreement and disagreement functions (Rear, 2018).

Those theories are similar to this research that indicates a positive result for the comparison of two comparable post-tests. It means that the students' ability to express causality shows variations in both the experimental and control classes. As we can see at the beginning, both classes did not meet the minimum criterion in the pretest. Subsequently, when compared to the posttest score, the mean of the experiment class was 83.06 and the mean of control class was 79.31 which meant that both the experiment and control classes passed the minimum criterion but the achievement of the experiment class was greater than the control class. Furthermore, the mean of gained score from the pretest to the posttest of the experiment class was 38.68 which was 15.4 higher than that of the control class, 23.28. This means that the experimental class' argumentative

speaking ability exceeded that of the control class significantly.

In addition, there is a similar study before this research on the Australasian Parliamentary Debate by Luthfiyyah (2014), entitled "*Risk-taking, Speaking Ability, and Australasian Parliamentary Debate; Do They Appertain?.*" The result of that study showed that there is a positive correlation between Risk-Taking (X), Speaking Ability (X), and the Australasian Parliamentary Debate (Y). It means that the improvement of students' risk-taking and speaking skill could be predicted by the improvement of Australasian Parliamentary Debate.

The difference between this study and the previously mentioned one is that whilst in Luthfiyyah's (2014) study the speaking variable is discussed in general terms, in this research it is particularly focused on students' argumentative speaking ability. Nevertheless, both studies have revealed the advantages of incorporating the Australasian Parliamentary Debate style in teaching argumentative speaking skill.

Second, the Australasian Parliamentary Debate style not only enhances students' linguistic skills but also strengthens their critical thinking skill. Generally speaking, students' macro skills of English, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, have

been encouraged by the incorporation of parliamentary debate in the teaching and learning process. (Suhendra, 2015). He also states that the parliamentary debate contributes to the students' critical thinking competence and self-confidence. These kinds of competencies are perfectly shaped during the process of debate that requires students to speak in front of the class to defend their side of arguments, and to prove that their arguments are more convincing than those of the opponent team.

In addition to providing meaningful listening, speaking and writing practice, the debate is also highly effective for developing argumentation skills for persuasive speech and writing (Siebold, 2016). Since debate does not happen smoothly without listening to each other, each debater also needs to listen to another side to successfully rebut their arguments.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The findings of this study suggest that the Australasian Parliamentary Debate has a positive impact on students' argumentative speaking ability. This is supported by the results of the statistical calculation in this study. In this regard, the researchers conclude that using Australasian

Parliamentary Debate has a beneficial effect on students' argumentative speaking ability.

In order to create student-centered activity during the teaching-learning process, the teacher should be more active in providing opportunities and creating an English environment among students either inside or outside the classroom. Teachers as mentors and supervisors in this debate technique process play key roles to engage students in elaborating their arguments.

It is predicted that conducting this debate style in the classroom would take a lot of time and energy. During the preparation itself, the teacher should guide students to build the case with valid facts and data. Both students and teacher need to read a lot of resources and pick relevant data to support their arguments. Whilst there is score improvement of students' argumentative speaking skill in this research, the researchers are also aware that the quality of students' speeches still do not meet the ideal speech yet. It can be seen from the duration of their speeches which were only in between 3-4 minutes by following the sentences on the module only. They would add their own arguments, but they were limited to what they found on the Internet only. Thus, they still needed more and

exercise to elaborate their arguments in a smooth and natural manner.

Furthermore, the researchers faced lack of time as the limitation in undertaking this research. Therefore, for any future researchers that are interested in investigating a similar issue, it is suggested that they consider sufficient time allotment for their research activities a whole as well as the number of their research participants.

Those suggestions hopefully can help teachers and students to teach and learn English in the classroom in more valuable and meaningful ways especially using this Australasian Parliamentary Debate style as a teaching technique.

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