



Challenges and Solutions in Using the Debating Technique to Enhance Speaking Performance among University English Majored Seniors

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ABSTRACT: In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, debate has emerged as a promising communicative technique for enhancing students' speaking abilities. Despite its potential, implementation among university English majors particularly seniors presents persistent challenges. This study explores the difficulties encountered and possible solutions in applying the debating technique to improve speaking performance among senior English majors at Sai Gon University. The research aims to examine both pedagogical barriers and the practical benefits of debate in promoting fluency, coherence, and critical thinking within academic speaking contexts. A mixed-methods design was adopted, combining quantitative data from structured questionnaires with qualitative insights derived from semi-structured surveys. One hundred English majored seniors participated in the study. The results indicate that while debate significantly boosts students' fluency and speaking confidence, several challenges remain, including anxiety, limited vocabulary, weak critical thinking skills, and unfamiliarity with debate structures. Students cited time limitations and a lack of instructional support. To address these issues, the study recommends pre-debate training, scaffolding of debate topics, and gradual integration of debate into the speaking curriculum. Ultimately, the findings underscore the effectiveness of debate when supported by appropriate pedagogy and emphasize the need for contextualized teaching strategies and instructor development.

Keywords: Debate, debating technique, speaking, speaking performance, English majored seniors.

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1. Introduction

In the field of English language teaching, the development of communicative competence particularly speaking skills remains a core objective, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Speaking is often considered one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners to master, as it requires not only linguistic knowledge but also fluency, confidence, and the ability to think critically in real-time. With the growing demand for globally competent graduates, enhancing students' oral communication skills has become a top priority in higher education institutions, particularly for English majors who are expected to communicate effectively in both academic and professional environments.

Among the various communicative teaching techniques, debate has been widely recognized as a dynamic and interactive approach to developing speaking skills. It encourages students to use language persuasively, organize ideas logically, and respond spontaneously to opposing viewpoints. In recent years, debate-based instruction has gained attention in many EFL classrooms worldwide. However, despite its potential benefits, the practical

implementation of debating in Vietnamese university settings—especially among senior English-majored students—has not been extensively explored. There remains a gap in understanding how this technique is applied in real classroom contexts and what challenges students face when engaging in debate activities.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the challenges encountered by English-majored seniors at Sai Gon University when participating in debate-based speaking tasks, as well as the pedagogical solutions that can support their learning process. While prior studies have emphasized the positive impacts of debate on speaking performance, few have examined the obstacles students experience in EFL tertiary contexts and how these may be mitigated through targeted strategies.

This research aims to fill this niche by examining both the effectiveness and limitations of using the debating technique in speaking classes. Through a mixed-methods design, combining surveys, the study seeks to identify common barriers such as anxiety, lack of vocabulary, or unfamiliarity with debating structure, and propose practical solutions to enhance students' engagement and performance. The findings are expected to offer useful implications for EFL instructors seeking to implement debate more effectively in their teaching practice, particularly in Vietnamese university contexts.

2. Literature review

2.1. The importance of speaking in EFL contexts

In EFL education, speaking is widely acknowledged as one of the most critical and complex skills for language learners to acquire. Unlike receptive skills such as reading and listening, speaking requires real-time language processing, interaction, and self-expression. According to Jack C. Richards (2008), speaking is not only a key component of language proficiency but also a means of establishing social relationships and expressing personal identity. In academic settings, especially for English majors, effective speaking ability is essential for presentations, discussions, and future professional communication.

2.2. The role of debate in enhancing speaking performance

Debate has been increasingly incorporated into communicative language teaching as an effective technique for improving students' oral fluency, logical reasoning, and confidence. Deborah Tannen (1998) emphasized that debate promotes critical thinking and the ability to formulate and defend opinions persuasively. Similarly, Joseph A. M. Belchamber (2007) argued that debating encourages spontaneous use of language and creates a meaningful context for language practice. Through structured argumentation, learners engage in negotiation of meaning, thus enhancing fluency, accuracy, and interactional competence.

2.3. Reviewing previous relevant literature

Numerous studies have confirmed the positive impact of debate on speaking development. For instance, Nour Al-Mutairi (2015) conducted an experimental study in Kuwait and found that debate significantly improved students' speaking fluency and motivation. Likewise, Abdu Mohammed Baniabdelrahman (2013) investigated Jordanian EFL learners and reported improvements in grammar usage, pronunciation, and confidence through debate activities. In the Vietnamese context, Tran Thi Thu Ha (2020) found that incorporating debate into speaking classes at the university level fostered learners' critical thinking and vocabulary acquisition. These findings support the view that debate is an effective pedagogical tool for enhancing speaking skills.

2.4. Identifying limitations of previous research

While previous studies highlight the benefits of debate in EFL classrooms, they often overlook the specific challenges students face in adapting to this method. Most research has

focused on general improvements in speaking without examining obstacles such as anxiety, cultural reluctance to argue, or lack of familiarity with debating conventions. Moreover, limited attention has been paid to the experiences of senior English majors in Vietnam - a group expected to exhibit advanced speaking skills but who may still struggle with academic discourse.

2.5. The purpose of the research

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the specific challenges faced by English-majored seniors at Sai Gon University when participating in debate-based speaking tasks, and by proposing practical solutions to address these issues. By focusing on a clearly defined context and learner group, this research provides new insights into how debate can be effectively adapted and supported in Vietnamese tertiary EFL settings.

2.6. Research questions

Question 1. What challenges do English-majored seniors at Sai Gon University face when participating in debate-based speaking activities?

Question 2. What strategies can be implemented to overcome these challenges and enhance students' speaking performance through debate?

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of using debate in speaking classes. The quantitative data provided measurable insights into students' perceived improvements in speaking performance, while the qualitative data captured deeper reflections on personal experiences and encountered difficulties. This triangulation allowed for a more nuanced and reliable interpretation of the research problem.

3.2. Participants

The participants were 100 English-majored seniors enrolled at Sai Gon University. These students were chosen purposively, as they had completed several speaking-focused courses and were considered advanced EFL learners. All participants had experienced at least one semester involving debate-based speaking activities, making them suitable for reflecting on both benefits and challenges.

3.3. Data collection instruments

Data were collected using two main instruments:

A structured questionnaire containing Likert-scales and multiple-choice items designed to assess students' perceptions of speaking improvement and the specific challenges faced during debate tasks.

Semi-structured surveys conducted with 100 volunteer participants, aimed at gaining in-depth insights into their personal experiences, difficulties, and suggestions for improvement in debate-based activities.

3.4. Data collection procedure

The questionnaire was administered online via Google Forms, ensuring accessibility and confidentiality. All data were anonymized and handled ethically. Quantitative responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean), while

qualitative responses were coded thematically to identify recurring patterns related to challenges and proposed solutions.

4. The main findings

4.1. Improvement in speaking performance

The majority of English-majored seniors reported improvement in fluency, vocabulary range, and coherence after participating in debate-based activities. Debate encouraged spontaneous language use and helped students practice critical thinking while speaking.

4.2. Major challenges identified

Despite the improvements, students encountered several challenges. These included language-related issues (e.g., limited vocabulary and grammar accuracy), psychological barriers (e.g., anxiety, low confidence), and structural unfamiliarity with debate formats.

4.3. Positive perceptions but uneven confidence levels

Students generally had a positive attitude toward debating as a learning tool. However, weaker students expressed hesitation and stress when facing competitive debate situations, which sometimes hindered full participation.

4.4. Proposed pedagogical solutions

Students and instructors suggested various solutions to overcome the challenges, such as:

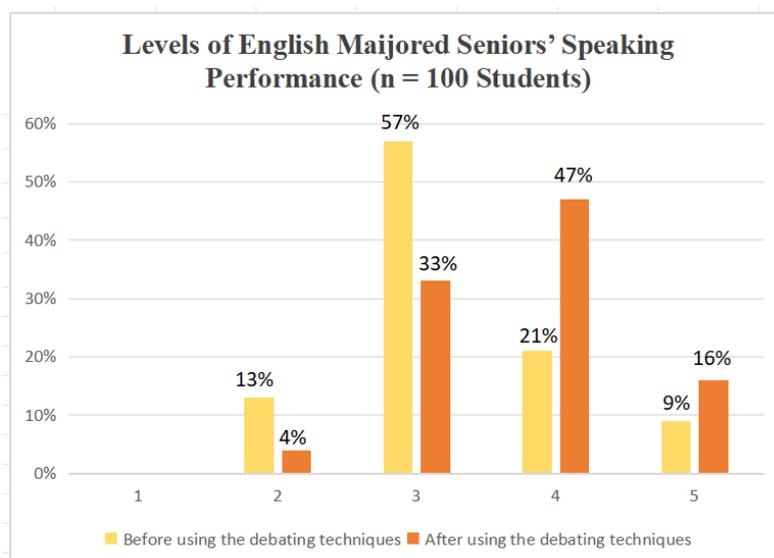
- (1) pre-debate vocabulary and idea brainstorming.
- (2) modeling structured debate.
- (3) using guided debates for lower-level students.
- (4) fostering a supportive and non-threatening environment.

5. Results

5.1. Current state of students' speaking performance

100 English majored seniors' speaking proficiency survey was evaluated and categorized into five scales (1-5) based on their scores: 1 = 1.0–4.0 (Poor), 2 = 5.0–6.4 (Average), 3 = 6.5–7.9 (Fair), 4 = 8.0–8.9 (Good), 5 = 9.0–10.0 (Excellent).

Figure 1. English majored seniors' speaking proficiency (before and after using the debating technique)



The figure 1. shows that no students were at the lowest level (1) of speaking performance either before or after the intervention, suggesting a minimum baseline of ability in the group.

There was a clear decrease in the number of students performing at an average level (2), indicating improvement (13% before → 4% after).

Level 3 (Fair), 57% before → 33% after: This was the most common performance level before using debating techniques. Afterward, the proportion dropped significantly, showing that many students improved beyond the "fair" category.

Level 4 (Good), 21% before → 47% after: This level saw the largest increase, suggesting that the debating techniques helped a substantial number of students move from fair to good speaking performance.

Level 5 (Excellent), 9% before → 16% after: The percentage of students achieving excellent speaking performance nearly doubled, reflecting high-end gains from the intervention.

The results show that 87% of students (scale 3 and above) demonstrated an average to excellent level of speaking performance after participating in debate activities. Only 13% remained in the average range. This suggests that the debating technique had a generally positive impact on students' speaking competence, especially in fluency and coherence.

Prior to engaging in debate-based lessons, informal diagnostic tests showed that over 40% of students scored below scale 3, indicating low fluency and confidence. After structured debate integration, this figure dropped dramatically, demonstrating notable progress in speaking performance.

5.2. Key speaking skills improved

To evaluate the impact of debate-based learning on students' speaking skills, a pre- and post-debate survey was conducted with 100 participants. Students rated their ability in six key speaking skills using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "Poor" and 5 represented "Excellent." The results, summarized in the table below, clearly show marked improvement in all assessed areas after students engaged in structured debate activities.

Table 1. The impact of debate-based learning on students' speaking skills

Speaking Skill	Before using debating technique (%)					After using debating technique (%)				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. Fluency	0%	21%	49%	24%	6%	0%	10%	21%	55%	14%
2. Idea organization	0%	26%	40%	26%	8%	0%	5%	23%	47%	25%
3. Confidence in public speaking	0%	22%	43%	28%	7%	0%	5%	27%	45%	23%
4. Vocabulary use	0%	27%	44%	23%	6%	0%	18%	21%	42%	19%
5. Pronunciation clarity	0%	22%	40%	29%	9%	0%	14%	23%	46%	17%

6.	Grammatical accuracy	0 %	25 %	43 %	27 %	5%	0%	16 %	22 %	41 %	21 %
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Across all six speaking skills, there was a consistent shift from lower ratings (levels 2 and 3) to higher ratings (levels 4 and 5) after using the debating technique. For example, fluency improved significantly, with the percentage of students rating themselves as “Good” or “Excellent” increasing from 30% (levels 4 and 5) to 69%. Similarly, the ability to organize ideas rose sharply, with 72% of students rating themselves at the top two levels post-debate, compared to only 34% beforehand. Notably, confidence in public speaking also showed substantial gains (from 35% to 68%), indicating that debate fostered not only language accuracy but also performance-related aspects such as clarity, assertiveness, and control.

These results suggest that debating is an effective pedagogical technique to enhance both linguistic competence and communicative confidence in English speaking among students.

5.3 Psychological and linguistic barriers

During the research, students identified several obstacles that hindered their performance when engaging in debating activities. These barriers were both psychological (affective) and linguistic in nature.

5.3.1 Commonly reported barrier

Survey challenges affect challenges do English-majored seniors face when engaging in debate. (Rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5: 1 = No impact, 2 = Slight impact, 3 = Moderate impact, 4 = Strong impact, 5 = Very strong impact)

Table 2: Barrier of English-majored seniors face when engaging in debate

Barrier	No impact	Slight	Moderate	Strong	Very strong
1. Initial reluctance and speaking anxiety	3%	17%	40%	18%	22%
2. Fear of making mistakes	2%	6%	14%	32%	46%
3. Limited ability to reason persuasively	4%	10%	25%	34%	27%
4. Difficulty responding under pressure	2%	5%	15%	28%	50%
5. Feeling judged by peers	5%	9%	22%	33%	31%
6. Not enough motivation through competition	12%	20%	28%	25%	15%
7. Lack of language awareness	6%	13%	30%	31%	20%
8. Lack of critical thinking	5%	12%	29%	30%	24%
9. Limited practice time	4%	8%	18%	36%	34%
10. Unequal participation within groups	7%	14%	26%	31%	22%

11. Limited topic familiarity and vocabulary gaps	10%	20%	30%	19%	21%
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Table 2. illustrates the perceived challenges that one of the most prominent challenges identified is "Difficulty responding under pressure," with 50% of respondents rating it as having a very strong impact, and an additional 28% marking it as strong. This indicates that time-constrained thinking and high-stress interaction environments are a major source of struggle for many students.

Similarly, "Fear of making mistakes" emerges as a major issue, with 46% selecting very strong impact and 32% indicating a strong impact. These figures suggest that anxiety around linguistic accuracy and peer judgment may strongly inhibit students' willingness to participate actively in debates.

The issue of "Limited practice time" is also highlighted, with 36% of students rating it as strong and 34% as very strong. This suggests a significant proportion of learners feel unprepared due to insufficient exposure to practice or rehearsal opportunities.

"Feeling judged by peers" and "Limited ability to reason persuasively" are also widely recognized barriers. Respectively, 64% and 61% of respondents indicated these challenges have either a strong or very strong impact. These findings point to the social and cognitive demands of debate as being areas where learners often feel confident.

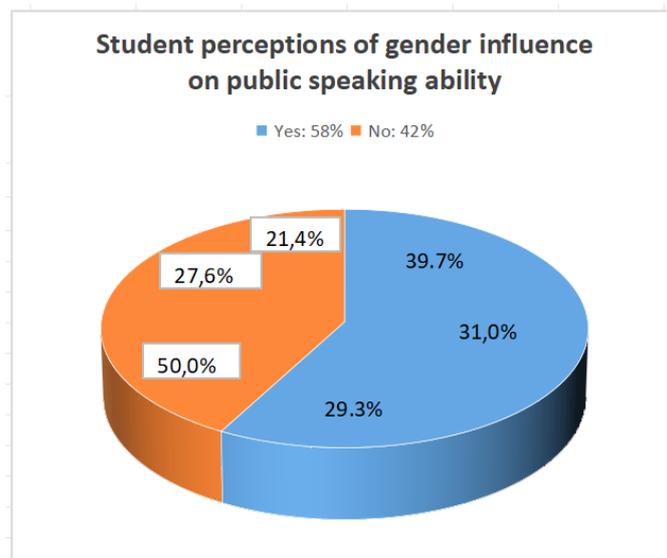
In contrast, some factors are perceived as less critical. For example, "Not enough motivation through competition" received the lowest combined strong and very strong ratings (only 40%), with a notable 12% reporting no impact and 20% identifying only a slight impact. Similarly, "Limited topic familiarity and vocabulary gaps" garnered relatively moderate concern, with the highest percentage (30%) indicating only a moderate impact.

Across the board, challenges linked to communication anxiety, cognitive overload, and lack of preparation or practice tend to dominate as primary barriers. These insights suggest that educators and program designers should prioritize helping students manage performance-related stress, provide more structured practice time, and foster a supportive peer environment to reduce fear and enhance engagement.

5.3.2. Gender differences in perceived barriers

100 (female = 60, male = 40) English majored seniors' speaking proficiency survey about gender (being male or female) influences a student's ability in public speaking through the following table:

Figure 2. Student perceptions of gender influence on public speaking ability



The figure 2. shows students who answered "Yes" (58 students). Most common reasons provided:

a. Different levels of confidence between genders

"Female students tend to be more nervous and afraid of making mistakes, which affects their speaking fluency." → 23 out of 58 responses (39.7%)

b. Social and cultural expectations

"Boys are often encouraged to speak up more, while girls are told to be quiet or polite, especially in group settings." → 18 out of 58 responses (31.0%)

c. Personality tendencies linked to gender

"Male students are often more assertive, while female students are more cautious, especially when presenting arguments in debates." → 17 out of 58 responses (29.3%)

Students who answered "No" (42 students). Most common reasons provided:

a. Public speaking depends on practice, not gender

"Speaking well is about how much you practice and prepare, not whether you are male or female." → 21 out of 42 responses (50.0%)

b. Both genders can be equally confident or anxious

"I've seen both male and female students perform very well or poorly—it depends on the individual." → 12 out of 42 responses (28.6%)

c. Teaching and environment matter more than gender

"With the right support and training, any student can improve their speaking ability." → 9 out of 42 responses (21.4%)

A majority (58%) of students believe gender does influence public speaking ability, citing confidence levels and cultural roles.

However, a substantial 42% argue that individual effort and environment play a greater role than gender.

These insights suggest that while gender perceptions still exist among students, effective instruction and equal opportunity can help bridge the gap.

The study found slight gender-based variations. Female students were more likely to report fear of judgment and making mistakes, while male students more frequently mentioned difficulty with spontaneous response. This implies that solutions may need to be tailored by gender to be more effective.

Female students: The predominant barriers identified by female students were fear of judgment and making mistakes. These concerns can lead to decreased self-confidence and reluctance to participate in speaking activities. As Nguyen Thanh Tan and Tong Thi Truong Nhung (2024), apprehensions are consistent with findings from other studies, which highlight that fear of making mistakes and being observed are significant obstacles to public speaking among students.

Male students: Male students more frequently cited difficulty with spontaneous responses as a barrier. As Truong Trong Nhan et al (2022) wrote that this challenge may stem from a lack of practice in thinking and speaking on the spot, which is crucial in debate settings.

So, the need for quick thinking and articulation in debates can be particularly demanding for students who are less accustomed to such activities.

5.4. Individual differences

5.4.1. Personality traits

a. Introversion vs. extraversion

Students with introverted personalities often experience anxiety and discomfort in public speaking situations, leading to reluctance in participating in debates. Conversely, extraverted students tend to engage more actively, demonstrating greater confidence and fluency.

Introversion and public speaking anxiety

Students with introverted personalities often experience anxiety and discomfort in public speaking situations, leading to reluctance in participating in debates. This aligns with findings from various studies indicating that introverts may face challenges in expressive tasks due to their preference for solitude and introspection. For instance, research by Dörnyei (2005) suggests that introverts' lower working memory capacity can affect their speaking fluency, as they may be slower to process and articulate their thoughts.

Extraversion and active engagement

Conversely, extraverted students tend to engage more actively, demonstrating greater confidence and fluency. Studies have shown that extraverts often perform better in speaking tasks due to their sociability and comfort in social interactions. For example, a study by Selvianita Rahayu (2020) found that extraverted students were more active, friendly, and responsive in speaking classes, enjoying the opportunity to share their opinions and engage in discussions.

Impact on debate participation

The study at Sai Gon University highlighted that introverted students were less likely to participate in debates, often due to fear of judgment and a preference for avoiding public attention. In contrast, extraverted students were more inclined to take on debating roles, displaying higher levels of enthusiasm and assertiveness. This disparity suggests that personality traits significantly influence students' willingness to engage in debate activities.

b. Fear of judgment

A significant number of students reported fear of making mistakes and being observed, which erodes their confidence during debates. This fear is consistent with findings from

other studies, where students expressed concerns about being judged negatively in public speaking scenarios.

Fear of judgment and public speaking anxiety

A significant number of students reported fear of making mistakes and being observed, which erodes their confidence during debates. This fear is consistent with findings from other studies, where students expressed concerns about being judged negatively in public speaking scenarios. For instance, a study by R. Grieve et al (2021) identified "fear of being judged" as a prevalent concern among students, with many expressing discomfort about standing up and speaking in front of an audience. Comments such as "Don't like people looking at me" and "Worried about what people will think" were common among participants.

Impact on debate participation

The study at Sai Gon University highlighted that students' fear of judgment significantly influenced their participation in debates. Those who feared being judged were more likely to avoid speaking opportunities, leading to reduced engagement and practice in public speaking. This avoidance behavior can hinder the development of speaking skills and negatively affect academic performance.

c. Assertiveness

Students lacking assertiveness may struggle to present their arguments effectively in debates. This lack of assertiveness can result in under representation of their viewpoints, affecting the overall quality of the debate and their speaking development.

Assertiveness and debate participation

Students lacking assertiveness may struggle to present their arguments effectively in debates. This lack of assertiveness can result in underrepresentation of their viewpoints, affecting the overall quality of the debate and their speaking development. As *Wikipedia* (access on April 1st, 2025) indicates that assertiveness is a key factor in effective communication and leadership. For example, a study by Jackson Lu in Julia Pugachevsky (2025) at MIT found that employees who received training in debate were more likely to advance into leadership roles, suggesting that assertiveness enhances one's ability to express opinions confidently and influence others .

Impact on debate performance

In the context of the study at Sai Gon University, students with low assertiveness often hesitated to voice their opinions, leading to missed opportunities to contribute meaningfully to debates. This reticence not only diminished their individual speaking performance but also affected the dynamics of group discussions, as diverse perspectives were underrepresented. Furthermore, students who lacked assertiveness were less likely to engage in critical thinking and argumentation, which are essential components of effective debating.

5.4.2. Prior experiences

a. Previous exposure to public speaking

Students with prior experience in public speaking activities often exhibit higher confidence and proficiency during debates. Their familiarity with speaking in front of an audience enables them to manage anxiety and articulate their thoughts more effectively.

Impact of prior public speaking experience

Students with prior experience in public speaking often exhibit higher confidence and proficiency during debates. Their familiarity with speaking in front of an audience enables them to manage anxiety and articulate their thoughts more effectively. For instance, a study by Amitha TK (2024) found that students with prior positive experiences in public speaking showed lower levels of anxiety and higher self-esteem compared to those with neutral or negative experiences.

Enhanced confidence and proficiency

The study at Sai Gon University highlighted that students with previous exposure to public speaking were more confident in presenting their arguments and engaging in debates. This confidence translated into more fluent and persuasive speech, as these students were accustomed to managing stage fright and organizing their thoughts coherently.

b. Academic background

Students with a strong academic background in English may find it easier to construct arguments and engage in debates. In contrast, those with limited exposure to academic discourse may face challenges in organizing and presenting their ideas coherently.

Impact of academic background on debate participation

Students with a strong academic background in English may find it easier to construct arguments and engage in debates. Their familiarity with academic discourse enables them to manage anxiety and articulate their thoughts more effectively. For instance, a study by Benni Ichsanda Rahman Hz and Achmad Ramadhan (2022) found that students with a background in natural sciences achieved slightly higher scores in public speaking tasks compared to those from social sciences, suggesting that prior exposure to structured thinking and presentation may enhance speaking skills.

Limited exposure

In contrast, students with limited exposure to academic discourse may face challenges in organizing and presenting their ideas coherently. These students often struggle with vocabulary usage, grammar, and structuring their arguments logically. A study by Imaniah, Goziyah and Chooi Heji (2018) highlighted that students' difficulties in academic speaking presentations stemmed from a lack of goal setting, poor prioritization of essential points, and inadequate planning, which are indicative of limited exposure to academic discourse.

Academic background plays a significant role in students' engagement and performance in debate activities. While students with a strong academic background in English may find it easier to participate in debates, those with limited exposure can benefit from targeted interventions that enhance their academic discourse skills.

Cultural factors such as reluctance to argue or challenge peers may contribute to student hesitation. Additionally, test-oriented learning in earlier education may leave students underprepared for interactive, communicative approaches like debate. These contextual elements need to be addressed in EFL pedagogy.

5.5. Cultural influences

Cultural background plays a crucial role in shaping students' communication styles. In collectivist cultures, students may prioritize group harmony over individual expression, leading to hesitancy in voicing personal opinions during debates. This cultural trait can impede active participation and the development of speaking skills.

Cultural factors such as reluctance to argue or challenge peers may contribute to student hesitation. Additionally, test-oriented learning in earlier education may leave students

underprepared for interactive, communicative approaches like debate. These contextual elements need to be addressed in EFL pedagogy.

5.5.1. Communication styles

Students from collectivist cultures may be less inclined to engage in debates that require individual expression and confrontation. This cultural orientation can result in reluctance to participate in debates, affecting their speaking performance.

The study by IELTS.Net (access on April 3rd, 2024) writes that collectivist cultures, prevalent in many Asian societies, prioritize group harmony, interdependence, and respect for authority. These values significantly shape communication behaviors, often leading to indirect, reserved, and non-confrontational interaction styles. In educational settings, this cultural orientation can influence students' willingness to engage in debates that require individual expression and confrontation.

Reluctance to express personal opinions

Students from collectivist cultures may hesitate to voice personal opinions during debates, fearing they might disrupt group harmony or cause embarrassment. This reluctance can result in passive participation, where students contribute minimally or avoid speaking altogether.

Example 1: A Vietnamese student in a debate might choose to remain silent or agree with the majority opinion, even if they have a differing perspective, to maintain social harmony and avoid potential conflict.

Preference for group consensus

Emphasis on group consensus over individual expression can lead students to prioritize collective viewpoints during debates. While this fosters unity, it may suppress diverse perspectives and critical thinking, essential components of effective debate.

Example 2: As Syasya et al (2025) said that in a debate on environmental policies, a student may align their arguments with the group's stance, overlooking personal insights or alternative solutions, to avoid standing out.

Fear of losing face

The concept of "losing face," or causing embarrassment to oneself or others, is a significant concern in collectivist cultures. This fear can deter students from participating in debates, where the risk of making mistakes or being contradicted is perceived as potentially damaging to their reputation.

Example 3: A student might refrain from challenging a peer's argument during a debate, even if they believe the information is incorrect, to avoid the possibility of public embarrassment.

These cultural communication styles can lead to several challenges in academic settings:

Limited critical thinking development

Reduced engagement in debates may hinder the development of critical thinking skills, as students may not practice evaluating and constructing arguments actively.

Suppressed individual expression

The emphasis on group harmony can suppress individual expression, leading to a lack of diverse perspectives in academic discussions.

Inhibited language proficiency

Minimal participation in debates may limit opportunities for students to practice and enhance their speaking skills, affecting overall language.

5.5.2. Attitudes toward authority

In some cultures, students may have a high regard for authority figures, leading to hesitancy in challenging ideas or presenting opposing viewpoints during debates. This deference can limit the depth and breadth of discussions, impacting speaking development.

Cultural context and attitudes toward authority

Vietnamese culture, deeply rooted in Confucian values, places a high emphasis on respect for authority figures such as teachers and elders. This cultural norm often leads to a deferential attitude, where students may hesitate to challenge ideas or present opposing viewpoints, even in academic settings like debates. Such hesitation can limit the depth and breadth of discussions, thereby affecting the development of speaking skills.

Supporting evidence from related studies

As Nguyen Thanh Tan and Tong Thi Truong Nhung (2024) wrote that English major students faced difficulties in public speaking, with fear of making mistakes and being observed as significant barriers. These challenges were linked to a lack of confidence, which can be exacerbated by cultural norms that discourage open expression and confrontation.

Furthermore, the research by Dinh Ngoc Long and Nguyen Dang Nguyen (2024) highlighted that Vietnamese students' reluctance to engage in debates or challenge ideas is often due to cultural tendencies to avoid conflicts and maintain harmonious relationships. This aligns with findings from Aspland et al (1999), who noted that Chinese students, sharing similar cultural backgrounds, were unlikely to pose questions or challenge instructors due to their cultural upbringing.

Implications for speaking performance

The deference to authority figures can lead to a passive learning environment where students are less likely to practice critical thinking and articulate their thoughts freely. In debates, this manifests as a reluctance to present counterarguments or engage in discussions that may be perceived as confrontational. As a result, students miss opportunities to develop essential speaking skills such as persuasion, argumentation, and spontaneous thinking.

5.5.3. Language proficiency

Cultural factors can influence language acquisition and proficiency. Students from backgrounds with limited exposure to English may face additional challenges in articulating their thoughts during debates, affecting their overall speaking performance.

Understanding the individual differences in personality traits, prior experiences, and cultural influences is essential for addressing the challenges students face in debate-based speaking activities. Tailoring instructional strategies to accommodate these differences can enhance student engagement and improve speaking performance. For instance, providing supportive environments for introverted students, offering opportunities for public speaking practice, and fostering cultural sensitivity can mitigate challenges and promote effective learning outcomes.

By acknowledging and addressing these individual differences, educators can create inclusive and effective learning experiences that cater to the diverse needs of students, ultimately enhancing their speaking abilities.

Personality traits play a significant role in students' engagement and performance in debate activities. While extraverted students may naturally excel in such settings, introverted students can also benefit from debate through tailored approaches that accommodate their preferences and reduce anxiety. By understanding and addressing these individual differences, educators can enhance the effectiveness of debating techniques in improving speaking performance among university students.

Overall, the results demonstrate that debate is an effective method for enhancing speaking performance among English-majored seniors. However, its success depends heavily on how it is implemented, particularly in addressing affective and linguistic barriers.

6. Discussions

6.1. Strategies to overcome challenges and enhance students' speaking performance through debate

While debate is a powerful tool to improve speaking performance, its effectiveness can be limited by challenges such as students' lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, poor grammar, and weak idea organization. To overcome these obstacles and fully maximize the benefits of debating, the following targeted strategies can be implemented:

6.1.1. Scaffolded debate preparation

a. Challenge addressed

Students lack confidence or are unfamiliar with the structure of debates. and may experience performance anxiety in public speaking. This is particularly relevant for English-majored seniors whose language proficiency may still be developing in areas such as spontaneous speech, vocabulary usage, and grammatical accuracy.

Scaffolded debate preparation

As Sawyer, R. K. (Ed.) (2006) said "Scaffolding is an instructional technique whereby the teacher models the desired learning strategy or task, then gradually shifts responsibility to the students. It involves breaking the learning into chunks and providing a tool, structure, or support with each chunk." And Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976) wrote that "Scaffolding refers to the steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult skill she is in the process of acquiring.". Scaffolding is an instructional strategy that involves breaking learning into chunks and providing a tool, structure, or support with each chunk. As students become more proficient, the supports are gradually removed.

b. Strategy

Provide step-by-step training in debating skills before actual debates take place. For instance:

Begin with teaching basic debate formats such as the Oxford style (two teams, structured argument) and Lincoln-Douglas (one-on-one, values-based debate) (<https://oracylab.org/exploring-various-debate-formats-2/>);

Clarify roles (affirmative/negative), speaking turns, time limits, and rebuttal procedures.

Offer templates for structuring arguments (e.g., claim-evidence-reasoning). Introduce structured tools like Claim-evidence-reasoning (CER) frameworks. For example:

Claim: Online learning is more effective than traditional learning.

Evidence: Studies show that students retain 25-60% more material when learning online.

Reasoning: The flexibility of online platforms enables personalized learning at one's own pace.

Practice mini-debates on light topics to reduce pressure.

Use non-threatening, relatable topics like "Cats vs Dogs" or "Coffee vs Tea."

These help students develop fluency and engage in speaking without pressure to be perfect.

c. Outcomes and justifications

Builds confidence gradually

By engaging in incremental skill-building, students develop both procedural knowledge (how to debate) and pragmatic competence (how to use language effectively in social interaction). Confidence grows as students experience success in small, manageable tasks.

Familiarizes students with debate routines

Debate becomes less intimidating when students understand the rules, expectations, and structure. Familiarity reduces cognitive load, allowing them to focus on content and delivery rather than mechanics.

Encourages language practice in context

Unlike mechanical drills or scripted dialogues, debates offer authentic, meaningful opportunities to speak. Scaffolded preparation ensures that students are not thrown into these tasks unprepared, which could discourage them.

Examples from classroom practice

Example 4: An English lecturer might begin a 4-week debate module by spending the first week exclusively on debate vocabulary, such as "assertion," "counterargument," "rebuttal," and discourse markers like "on the contrary," or "it follows that..."

Example 5: In week two, students might be assigned roles in a mock debate about whether smartphones should be banned in classrooms, using a debate map with sections like "Main Claim," "Supporting Points," "Counterpoints," and "Rebuttal."

Example 6: Before the full debate, students could practice 1-minute persuasive speeches on funny or personal topics (e.g., "Why pineapple does/does not belong on pizza"). These activities reduce stress and encourage spontaneous thinking.

d. Pedagogical implications

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978) highlighted that the strategy aligns with constructivist learning theory and his zone of proximal Development (ZPD) where students perform best when tasks are slightly beyond their current ability but supported by guidance. Scaffolded debate preparation offers that guided support. It also integrates task-based language teaching (TBLT) principles, where learners are engaged in meaningful use of language with a clear outcome.

e. Result:

Builds students' confidence gradually while familiarizing them with the process. Scaffolded debate preparation is not merely a preparatory phase; it is a transformative instructional strategy. It systematically addresses major barriers to student speaking performance especially confidence, familiarity, and anxiety by providing a structured path from controlled practice to authentic performance. By progressively building skills, scaffolding ensures that students are not only better debaters but also more competent, confident English speakers fulfilling one of the central aims of university-level English language education.

6.1.2. Pre-debate vocabulary and grammar clinics

a. Challenge addressed

One of the most common challenges for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners, particularly at the university level, is limited vocabulary and grammatical inaccuracy when engaging in spontaneous speaking tasks. In the context of debates, these limitations can hinder students from articulating arguments clearly, responding to opponents effectively, or using persuasive language appropriately.

b. Strategy

Introduce pre-debate language support sessions. For instance:

Teach relevant topic-specific vocabulary, focus on key grammar structures for expressing opinions, making comparisons, or using modal verbs (e.g., should, must, might), provide sentence frames or functional phrases (e.g., “In my opinion...”, “However, some may argue...”).

Theoretical basis and supporting literature

This strategy draws on several key educational and language acquisition principles:

As lexical approach (Lewis, 1993) emphasized the importance of collocations, phrases, and lexical chunks in language fluency. “*Fluent language is largely composed of prefabricated chunks.*” Thus, teaching functional phrases like: “From my perspective...”, “It is widely believed that...”, “A counterargument could be...”, ...helps students develop natural-sounding, fluent language suited for debate interaction.

Focus on form approach (Long, 1991) suggests integrating grammar instruction within communicative tasks, rather than teaching it in isolation following *Focus on form: A design feature in language teaching methodology*.

By embedding grammar review in the context of upcoming debate topics (e.g., modal verbs for persuasion: should, must, may), the language becomes meaningful and immediately applicable.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) Ellis (2003), learners acquire language more effectively when the focus is on real-world tasks with authentic purposes.

Debate is a real-life communicative task, and pre-teaching grammar, vocabulary aligned to debate themes allows students to succeed during the task.

Practical implementation: What it looks like in class

Step 1, pre-teaching topic specific vocabulary

If the debate topic is “University education should be free,” teachers might introduce:

Key nouns: tuition, scholarship, public funding, access, inequality.

Useful verbs: subsidize, allocate, prioritize.

Adjectives and adverbs: affordable, equitable, financially burdensome.

Step 2, grammar focus in context

Focusing on:

Modal verbs for suggestion/necessity: should, must, might.

Comparatives: “better than,” “more affordable than,” “less likely to...”.

Conditionals: “If education were free, more students could...”.

Students practice using these structures in sentence transformation tasks, guided writing, and role-play exchanges.

Step 3, functional language practice

Providing sentence frames or expressions for different debate functions:

Stating opinion: “I strongly believe that...”.

Agreeing: “I share your point to some extent, but...”.

Countering: “However, another way to look at this is...”.

c. Expected results and pedagogical benefits

Equips students with the language tools they need to express themselves more accurately and fluently during debates.

Improved fluency and accuracy

Equipping students with the right vocabulary and grammar in advance increases both spontaneity and correctness in debates. It reduces cognitive overload, as students are not struggling to form correct sentences under pressure.

Increased participation

With better linguistic tools, students are more likely to engage actively in debates, even those who are usually passive or afraid of making mistakes.

Greater argumentative clarity

Students learn to structure their ideas logically, using cohesive devices and grammatical structures to support their points, making arguments more persuasive and easier to follow.

Example 7. scenario from a Vietnamese EFL classroom

In a speaking class at Saigon University, students were preparing to debate the motion: “*Social media does more harm than good.*” In the pre-debate clinic:

Vocabulary was introduced through word maps: *privacy invasion, digital footprint, cyberbullying, echo chamber.*

Grammar review included modals: “*Governments should regulate social media more strictly.*”

Functional expressions were practiced in pairs: “*While I see your point, I’d argue that...*”

As a result, students were more confident, their speech contained richer vocabulary, and their sentence structures were more complex and accurate.

Pre-debate vocabulary and grammar clinics serve as a crucial scaffolding strategy (see Vygotsky, 1978) that empowers English majors to express their thoughts fluently, accurately, and persuasively. By integrating topic-specific language input and functional grammar, these sessions reduce linguistic barriers and create conditions for more successful and confident student performances during debates.

6.1.3. Use of peer feedback and self-evaluation

Challenge addressed: Students don’t know how to assess or improve their own speaking.

Strategy: After each debate, have students evaluate themselves and their peers using rubrics focusing on fluency, coherence, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar; reflect on what went well and what could be improved in journal entries or group discussions.

Result: Encourages metacognitive awareness and continuous improvement.

6.1.4. Rotating roles and structured participation

Challenge addressed: Unequal participation or fear of public speaking.

Strategy: Assign rotating roles (e.g., main speaker, rebuttal speaker, timekeeper, questioner) to ensure everyone has a part. Use small group debates before full-class debates to create a safer, low-stress environment.

Result: More balanced engagement and gradual exposure to public speaking.

6.1.5. Integrate debate topics with students' interests and academic content

Challenge addressed: Lack of motivation or engagement.

Strategy: Select debate topics that are relevant to students' personal interests, current events, or their academic subjects; culturally familiar or controversial enough to spark authentic discussion.

Result: Increases motivation, participation, and meaningful language use.

6.1.6. Instructor feedback and language correction

Challenge addressed: Persistent language errors and lack of improvement.

Strategy: After debates, instructors should give targeted feedback on language use (especially on recurring grammatical errors); highlight good use of complex structures or vocabulary; use recorded debates for reflective analysis and correction.

Result: Reinforces learning and helps students internalize more accurate language use.

By combining language support, structured practice, feedback mechanisms, and motivation-enhancing techniques, these strategies create a more supportive and effective learning environment. They not only address the common barriers in implementing debate activities but also ensure that students grow in fluency, accuracy, confidence, and critical thinking all essential components of speaking proficiency.

6.2. Role of teacher facilitation

Effective implementation of debate relies on teachers' ability to scaffold tasks, reduce performance anxiety, and create a positive learning environment. Without this support, weaker students may disengage or view debate as stressful rather than empowering.

To overcome the difficulties, students proposed several practical and insightful strategies, reflecting their needs and learning preferences.

From the post-activity reflections, students identified the following preferred solutions such as pre-debate vocabulary preparation (directly addresses the number-one barrier, lack of vocabulary), practice/mock debates to build familiarity (aim to reduce pressure and increase familiarity with the debate format), group support and peer encouragement, detailed teacher feedback after debates illustrating the need for a more collaborative and low-anxiety learning environment, reduced evaluation pressure/less emphasis on grading during debate reflects students' desire for learning-focused rather than performance-focused activities.

Role of the teacher

Students emphasized the role of the teacher in facilitating a supportive atmosphere. Suggestions included: using encouraging language, correcting mistakes gently, providing example arguments, assigning rotating roles so all students gain experience.

To optimize the impact of debating techniques, the following approaches are recommended: Incorporate vocabulary lists before each debate topic, schedule practice sessions and allow informal debates, foster a supportive culture among students, shift from performance grading to formative feedback, provide targeted training in spontaneous speaking strategies.

Effectiveness of support strategies, students who received pre-debate preparation and peer collaboration reported feeling more confident and performed better in debates. Teacher who scaffolded debate tasks (e.g., providing sample arguments or sentence frames) observed greater student engagement and reduced anxiety.

6.3. Tailored gender solutions

The gender-specific barriers identified suggest that interventions to enhance speaking performance should be customized to address these distinct challenges.

For female students: Interventions could focus on building confidence and reducing anxiety. Strategies might include creating supportive classroom environments, providing positive reinforcement, and incorporating activities that encourage risk-taking in speaking without fear of judgment.

For male students: To address difficulties with spontaneous responses, activities that promote quick thinking and impromptu speaking could be beneficial. Truong Trong Nhan et al (2022) said incorporating exercises that require students to formulate and express ideas rapidly may help improve their ability to respond spontaneously in debates.

By recognizing and addressing these gender-based differences, educators can implement more effective strategies to enhance speaking performance among university students.

6.4. Strategies to mitigate fear of judgment

To address these challenges, the study recommends several strategies:

Creating a supportive environment: Fostering a classroom atmosphere where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities can help reduce the fear of judgment.

Encouraging peer support: Implementing peer feedback sessions can provide constructive criticism in a non-threatening manner, helping students build confidence.

Gradual exposure: Starting with small group discussions before progressing to larger debates can help students acclimate to public speaking and reduce anxiety.

6.5. Strategies to enhance assertiveness

To address these challenges, the study recommends several strategies:

Training in assertive communication: As *Wikipedia* (access on April 1st, 2025) write that implementing programs that focus on developing assertive communication skills can help students express their opinions confidently without being aggressive. Such training can include role-playing exercises, public speaking workshops, and feedback sessions.

Creating a supportive environment: Establishing a classroom atmosphere that encourages open dialogue and respects diverse viewpoints can help students feel more comfortable expressing themselves. For example the study of Kristin Stuart Valdes (2018), this environment can be fostered through group activities, peer discussions, and teacher modeling of assertive behavior.

Gradual exposure to public speaking: Starting with smaller, less intimidating speaking opportunities can help students build confidence. For instance, beginning with small group discussions before progressing to larger debates can ease students into public speaking.

6.6. Strategies to leverage prior experiences

To capitalize on the benefits of prior public speaking experience, the study recommends several strategies:

Peer learning: Encouraging students with prior experience to mentor their peers can facilitate knowledge sharing and skill development.

Advanced debate formats: Implementing more complex debate formats can provide experienced students with opportunities to further hone their skills.

Recognition of achievements: Acknowledging the accomplishments of students with prior public speaking experience can motivate them to take on leadership roles and inspire others.

6.6. Strategies to bridge the gap

To address these challenges, the study recommends several strategies:

Explicit vocabulary instruction:

Plays a crucial role in equipping students especially those with limited academic backgrounds with the linguistic tools necessary to engage effectively in academic debates.

Explicit vocabulary instruction matters:

In academic debates, the ability to express nuanced opinions, justify arguments with clarity, and respond critically depends heavily on the use of appropriate and sophisticated vocabulary. Students who lack exposure to academic English often struggle with: using imprecise or vague language, misunderstanding debate terminology (e.g., rebuttal, counterclaim, fallacy), difficulty forming cohesive arguments, explicit instruction bridges this gap by deliberately teaching vocabulary in context, ensuring students not only recognize words but also apply them meaningfully in discourse.

Integration of academic discourse practices: As *Wikipedia* (access on April 3rd, 2025) Incorporating practices such as structured debates, academic presentations, and critical discussions into the curriculum can familiarize students with academic discourse conventions.

Peer learning and mentorship: Encouraging students with stronger academic backgrounds to mentor their peers can facilitate knowledge sharing and skill development.

Specific benefits in debate contexts

Improved clarity and precision: Students can better explain ideas such as cause-effect relationships (e.g., “consequently,” “therefore”), contrast (e.g., “on the other hand,” “however”), and certainty (e.g., “undoubtedly,” “it is evident that”), which are essential in debate.

Enhanced confidence and fluency with a reliable academic vocabulary bank, students hesitate less and participate more actively in debates, knowing they have the words to support their thoughts.

Support for critical thinking, complex thinking often requires precise language. Teaching terms like “bias,” “evidence,” “assumption,” or “justification” enables students to frame and challenge arguments critically.

Practical classroom examples

Pre-debate vocabulary lists: Before debates, teachers provide curated lists of key terms related to the debate motion (e.g., “freedom of speech,” “social inequality,” “government regulation”) and model their usage in sentences.

Word mapping activities: Students create concept maps linking new vocabulary with synonyms, antonyms, and context sentences reinforcing retention and usability.

Rephrasing exercises: Students practice rewording informal statements into more academic forms.

Example 8:

Informal: "I think this is bad."

Academic: "This policy may have detrimental consequences for low-income communities."

Error correction and feedback: During practice debates, instructors correct misused vocabulary and provide alternatives in real-time or in post-activity reflections.

Mohd Haniff Mohd Tahir and colleagues (2020) underscores the importance of explicit vocabulary instruction in enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge, which in turn can improve their performance in academic tasks such as debates. Students who were taught academic language used more discipline-specific terminology and showed better organizational structure in their arguments.

Explicit vocabulary instruction is not just a supportive tool - it is a transformational strategy for enabling meaningful participation in academic debates.

6.7. Recommendations for overcoming cultural barriers

To mitigate these cultural barriers and enhance debate participation, the following strategies can be implemented:

Creating a safe and supportive environment, establishing a classroom atmosphere where mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities can encourage students to participate without fear of judgment.

Incorporating group discussions, starting with small group discussions before full-class debates can help students build confidence and practice articulating their thoughts in a less intimidating setting.

Providing clear expectations and guidelines, clearly outlining the objectives and rules of debates can help students understand the purpose and structure, reducing anxiety and promoting active participation.

Encouraging critical thinking, encouraging students to reflect on their participation and identify areas for improvement can foster a growth mindset and motivate continued engagement. Incorporating activities that promote critical analysis and questioning can help students become more comfortable with presenting and defending their viewpoints.

Cultural sensitivity in teaching, teachers should be aware of the cultural dynamics at play and adapt their teaching methods to foster an environment that values diverse perspectives and open dialogue.

By addressing these cultural factors, students can develop greater confidence in their speaking abilities, leading to more dynamic and effective debates.

6.8. Long-term impact

Relating the problem to teaching and learning, the challenges uncovered point to a need for curriculum adjustments and teacher training in debate-based techniques. Introducing debate gradually, with attention to learners' psychological readiness and linguistic support, can make it a more inclusive and sustainable strategy for speaking development.

If effectively implemented, debate can have a long-term impact on learners by building confidence, critical thinking, and communication skills essential for academic and professional success. It promotes not only speaking fluency but also autonomous learning and collaboration, aligning with the goals of modern TESOL programs.

7. Conclusion

This study has explored the challenges and pedagogical solutions related to using the debating technique as a tool to enhance the speaking performance of English-major

seniors at Sai Gon University. Through a mixed-methods approach involving surveys, the research has provided a comprehensive view of how debate can serve as an effective method for developing essential components of speaking, such as fluency, idea organization, and confidence.

The findings confirm that the debating technique significantly contributes to students' oral performance by providing a dynamic, interactive platform for language use. Most participants reported improvements in their ability to express ideas clearly, think critically, and engage in spontaneous communication. However, the study also highlighted considerable challenges, including linguistic limitations (e.g., restricted vocabulary and grammar), psychological barriers (e.g., anxiety, fear of judgment), and a lack of familiarity with formal debating formats.

To address these challenges, students and instructors proposed several effective strategies: providing structured pre-debate preparation, modeling debate structures, scaffolding argument development, and fostering a supportive classroom environment. These solutions were found to mitigate learner anxiety and enhance participation, particularly among students with lower language confidence.

In conclusion, the debating technique holds strong potential as a pedagogical approach in EFL speaking classes, especially for university students preparing for professional and academic communication demands. For debate to be truly effective, it must be contextually adapted and carefully supported by instructors. Future studies could further explore its long-term impact and extend the investigation to diverse EFL settings or other language skill areas.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Survey on students' speaking performance before and after using debating techniques

(*n* = 100 students, based on performance scoring scales: 1 = 1.0–4.0 (Poor), 2 = 5.0–6.4 (Average), 3 = 6.5–7.9 (Fair), 4 = 8.0–8.9 (Good), 5 = 9.0–10.0 (Excellent))

Question 1. *How would you rate your overall English speaking performance before and after participating in debate activities?*

Instructions for students: Please tick (✓) the box that best represents your answer.

Timeframe	Poor	Average	Fair	Good	Excellent
Before using debating	<input type="checkbox"/>				
After using debating	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Appendix B: Pre- and post-debate (using the debating technique) survey on speaking skill development

Instructions for students: For each skill listed, please rate your ability before and after participating in debate activities using the scales below:

N = 100 (% = (students/ 100) × 100%); likert scales: 1 = 1.0–4.0 (Poor), 2 = 5.0–6.4 (Average), 3 = 6.5–7.9 (Fair), 4 = 8.0–8.9 (Good), 5 = 9.0–10.0 (Excellent)

Survey statement	Before using the debating technique	After using the debating technique
1. How would you rate your fluency when speaking English?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. How well could you organize your ideas while speaking?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
3. How confident did you feel speaking in front of an audience?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. How would you rate your range and use of vocabulary in speaking?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
5. How clear and accurate was your pronunciation?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. How accurately could you use grammar while speaking?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

Appendix C: To what extent did each of the following challenges affect your speaking performance?

((Rate on a Likert scale from 1 to 5: 1 = No impact, 2 = Slight impact, 3 = Moderate impact, 4 = Strong impact, 5 = Very strong impact))

Barrier	1	2	3	4	5
1. Initial reluctance and speaking anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Fear of making mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Limited ability to reason persuasively	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. Difficulty responding under pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. Feeling judged by peers	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. Not enough motivation through engagement and competition	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. Lack of language awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. Lack of critical thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. Limited practice time	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. Unequal participation within groups	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. Limited topic familiarity and vocabulary gaps	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Appendix D: Do you think gender (being male or female) influences a student's ability in public speaking?

Yes No

Please choose one (Yes/ No) and explain why: _____

- If "Yes", choose one of most common reasons:

- a. Different levels of confidence between genders
- b. Social and cultural expectations
- c. Personality tendencies linked to gender

- If "No", choose one of most common reasons:

- a. Public speaking depends on practice, not gender
- b. Both genders can be equally confident or anxious
- c. Teaching and environment matter more than gender