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The Effect of Asian Parliamentary Debate to Hone Students' Critical Thinking

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Abstract
Various studies have shown that critical thinking development is vital in language learning as it facilitates language acquisition, helps communication skills improvement, and boosts language proficiency. This study aims to investigate the potential impact of the APD technique on students' critical thinking skills development. Conducted in SMA Negeri 71 in Jakarta over a period of over 3 months data was collected through a pre-test and a post-test employing a critical thinking test called Watson-Glaser Test. The results indicated that APD has a significant effect on students' critical thinking abilities. The mean scores of the pre-test and post in the experimental group were 45.2 and 62.3 respectively while the mean pre-test and post-test scores in the control group were 40.56 and 52.1 respectively. The experimental group's critical thinking improved from a good level to an excellent level, while the control group's critical thinking improved from a good level to a very good level. Based on the findings, it was concluded that APD is beneficial in enhancing students' critical thinking skills.

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INTRODUCTION

In modern times, the emphasis on 21st-century skills, known as the 4Cs, has become prominent in various educational settings, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. This focus originates from the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where 21st-century education aims to equip students to compete globally (Ratama, 2021). The National Education Association (2015) highlights that 80% of executives believe a combination of the 4Cs enhances students' preparedness for the industry. Consequently, education strives to nurture critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity in students, considering critical thinking as pivotal, especially in education. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) underscores critical thinking as the most crucial skill, given a significance level of 4.57 (98.5%) and a proficiency level of 3.68 (55.8%) compared to other competencies. This correlation supports the idea that student proficiency in career readiness improves through such competencies (Gray, 2021).

Critical thinking, essential for analyzing and evaluating arguments effectively, often poses challenges for students in identifying logical fallacies, which can undermine an argument's credibility (Jones, 2018). Observations during teaching practice at SMA Negeri 71 Jakarta in 2022, as detailed in a teaching practice report by Harefa (2022), indicate that students encountered difficulties with critical thinking. Many students relied heavily on internet sources for answers instead of independently reasoning through problems. This reliance prompted them to reflect on the implications of such dependence, highlighting the importance of engaging in deeper analysis, and considering source credibility and potential biases, even in an era of abundant online information (Smith, 2021).

This study aims to explore the potential impact of the APD technique on students' critical thinking skills and their perception of its application, considering the crucial role critical thinking plays in students' future endeavors. APD, a type of debate involving argumentation between government and opposition, is utilized to sharpen students' critical thinking. It encourages them to engage in critical argumentation, brainstorm within their teams, present arguments, counter opposing viewpoints, and stimulate independent thinking. This approach not only enhances critical thinking but also improves English language proficiency, fosters creativity, promotes group collaboration, and hones effective argument delivery skills.

The study builds on previous research by employing a mixed methods approach, specifically a transformative design combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative insights. While classroom debates have shown promise in enhancing critical thinking, there remains a scarcity of research focusing on the critical thinking aspect within debates. Existing literature, however, supports the notion that debates can significantly improve students' critical thinking abilities, problem-solving skills, and knowledge transformation. Fuad's (2016) research highlighted the positive impact of incorporating debates in classrooms, particularly in developing students' critical thinking and verbal reasoning skills. Kristanti's (2020) work also affirmed that debate activities in English lessons bolstered critical thinking and theoretical examination. Sanjaya's (2014) study

echoed these findings but noted challenges, such as students' lack of confidence hindering critical thinking.

Critical thinking is a vital cognitive ability essential for navigating the complexities of existence. Halpern (2010) defined it as the use of cognitive strategies to improve the expected ideas so that it covers the skills employed in conclusion drawing, decision-making, problem-solving, and the like. According to Redhana (2021), critical thinking comprises two dimensions: inclinations and abilities. Karakoc (2016) expands this by linking critical thinking to creativity, encompassing adaptability, diverse thinking, environmental and human awareness, and the capacity to arrive at varied conclusions. It involves active and adept comprehension, application, interpretation, synthesis, and evaluation of information for students to derive solutions or conclusions (Changwong, 2018). Wang (2008) extends this understanding by defining critical thinking not only as logical and scientific reasoning but also as a form of practical reasoning within competence, corroborated by Albergaria-Almeida's (2011) research on social intelligence, highlighting critical thinking, questioning, and innovation as integral components of intelligence. In the context of language learning, Pardede (2019) viewed critical thinking as the capability of students to passionately and sensibly take, apply, and control their thinking skills (question, analyze, criticize, reflect, and synthesize), develop appropriate principles and standards to appraise their thinking, and willingly judge, accept or reject new ideas, concepts, and viewpoints.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), as noted by Heard (2020), subdivides critical thinking into three stages: knowledge construction, evaluating reasoning, and decision-making. Emphasizing the importance of engaging with accurate information, validating arguments, and making informed decisions. Kivunja (2015) defines critical thinking skills as the analytical, evaluative, and creative processes enabling deep problem-solving in various ways. This underscores the increasing significance of critical thinking, urging students to scrutinize topics thoroughly and make competent judgments.

Facione's California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) outlines crucial facets of critical thinking: truth-seeking, open-mindedness, analyticity, system-anticity, critical thinking self-confidence, inquisitiveness, and cognitive maturity (Facione, 1994). Redhana (2021) reinforces these components, advocating for their assessment and integration into critical thinking evaluation, focusing on inquisitiveness, systematicity, analyticity, truth-seeking, self-confidence, and cautious decision-making.

However, the Watson-Glaser (2002) model proposes a different perspective on critical thinking components, highlighting five elements for measurement: arguments, assumptions, deductions, interpreting information, and inferences (Zulmaulida, 2018). Known as RED Watson-Glaser, this approach prioritizes assumptions, evaluates arguments, and draws conclusions, showcasing its relevance in academic contexts for assessing students' critical thinking abilities.

In EFL classrooms, critical thinking could be honed by implementing appropriate instructional strategies, learning approaches, and activities. Zhao, Pandian and Singh (2016) listed three teaching strategies: explicit instructions, teacher questioning, as well as active and cooperative learning strategies. Shirkani and Fahim (2011) described how

assessment is employed to develop critical thinking. Reading is also an effective tool to develop students' critical thinking (Pardede, Rafli & Iskandar, 2023). Another tool is debating activity that has been integrated into many institutions to facilitate issue resolution. Schools incorporate debates as student activities to bolster critical thinking. Rooted in concentrating students' thoughts on specific issues or topics, debate techniques aim to solve problems or form opinions (Obaid, 2022). Rasyid (2021) defines debate as an exercise where students defend ideas, encouraging them to articulate thoughts, engage in dialogue, defend their viewpoints, counter arguments, and research related issues. APD, a debate format featuring a three-on-three argument between Government and Opposition teams, compels teams to captivate juries and audiences through persuasive arguments (Kida, 2013).

This study was conducted at SMA Negeri 71 Jakarta investigating the potential impact of the APD technique on students' critical thinking skills development. Data was collected to test the following hypotheses:

H_0: APD does not have any significant effect on students' critical thinking abilities

H_a: APD has a significant effect on students' critical thinking abilities.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach, focusing on two variables: the independent variable, APD, and the dependent variable, students' critical thinking. To obtain quantitative results, a quasi-experimental research method was utilized, employing two distinct groups: the experimental group and the control group. The research, conducted at SMA Negeri 71 Jakarta, spanned three months, from March to May, encompassing a total of 14 sessions equally distributed between the two groups over seven meetings each. The assessment of students' critical thinking utilized the Watson-Glaser Test, (2002) a well-known and widely used assessment tool worldwide, even in corporate settings, as noted by Zulmaulida (2018). This test, developed 85 years ago, has undergone iterative refinement while retaining its core evaluation criteria. Comprising 86 questions across five sections—assumptions, analyzing arguments, inference, deduction, and interpretation—the test aims to gauge critical thinking skills.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

a. Pre-Test

Table 1. Pre-Test Descriptive Data Result

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-experimental	36	31	84	45.19	13.386
Pre-control	36	28	50	40.56	5.406
Valid N (listwise)	36				

The pre-test was given to both the experimental and control groups to determine the students' critical thinking abilities using the Wetson-Glaser Test. The pre-test outcomes are presented in Table 1 which displays the mean scores of the pre-test for both groups. The experimental group exhibited a mean score of 45.19, while the control group had a mean pre-test score of 40.56. This suggests that both groups' critical thinking levels were categorized at the same level, specifically classified as 'Good' based on the Wetson-Glaser score classification. Furthermore, Table 1.1 presents the range of scores in the pre-test. Within the experimental group, scores ranged from a minimum of 31 to a maximum of 84 among the 36 participating students. Meanwhile, in the control group, scores ranged from a minimum of 28 to a maximum of 50 across 36 students.

b. Post-Test

The researcher distributed the post-test after several meetings in experimental and control classes using the Wetson-Glaser Test. The result of the pre-test can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Post-Test Descriptive Data Result

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-experimental	36	32	84	62.31	19.997
Post-control	36	32	81	52.08	16.907
Valid N (listwise)	36				

Table 2 illustrates the mean scores of the pre-test for both groups. Specifically, the experimental group recorded a mean pre-test score of 62.31, while the control group showed a mean pre-test score of 52.08. This indicates distinct levels of critical thinking between the two groups, with the control group categorized at the 'Very Good' level and the experimental group categorized at the 'Excellent' level.

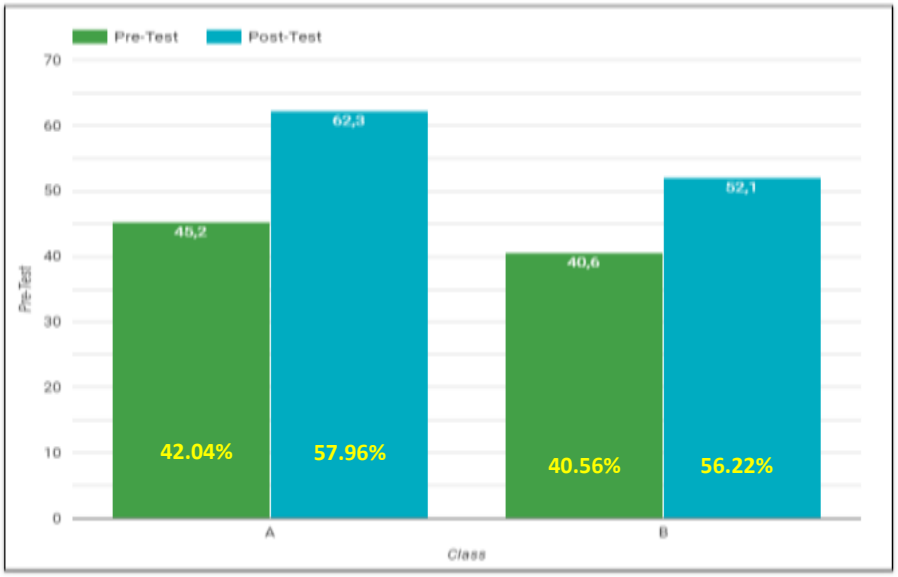

Figure 1. *The Mean Score of the Pre-Test and Post-Test*

Moreover, the data in the table indicates that in the post-test, the range of scores within the experimental group ranged from a minimum of 32 to a maximum of 84 across 36 students. Meanwhile, in the control group, post-test scores ranged from a minimum of 32 to a maximum of 81 among 36 students. The analysis of this data was performed using IBM SPSS software version 25, and the outcomes of this analysis are depicted in Figure 1 which graphically represents the increase in scores within both groups. The experimental group exhibited an increase in critical thinking scores from 45.2 to 62.3, denoting a notable improvement of 17.1% from the pre-test to the post-test, reaching an 'Excellent' level. Similarly, the control group demonstrated an increase in scores from 40.56 to 52.1, indicating a 12.44% enhancement in critical thinking from the pre-test to the post-test, reaching a 'Good' level. Notably, although both groups exhibited improvement, the average score of the experimental group (62.3 or 57.96%) surpassed that of the control group (52.1 or 56.22%). This underscores an overall enhancement in students' critical thinking scores, yet the experimental group exhibited a higher level of critical thinking compared to the control group, positioned at 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' levels, respectively.

The outcomes indicate noteworthy progress in both groups' critical thinking abilities. The experimental group experienced a substantial increase in scores, rising from 45.2 to 62.3, denoting a 17.1% enhancement from the pre-test to the post-test, achieving an 'Excellent' level. Similarly, the control group exhibited improvement, with scores escalating from 40.56 to 52.1, indicating a 12.44% enhancement from the pre-test to the post-test, reaching a 'Good' level. Despite improvements in both groups, there was a discernible disparity in the average scores between the experimental and control groups. Specifically, the mean score for the experimental group stood at 62.3 (57.96%), surpassing the control group's mean score of 52.1 (56.22%). This highlights the overall advancement in students' scores, with the experimental group displaying higher critical thinking scores compared to the control group, positioned at 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' levels, respectively.

Consequently, these results suggest that the APD method significantly impacted students' critical thinking. Following the intervention, the experimental group's critical thinking advanced from the 'Good' level to the 'Excellent' level, whereas the control group progressed from 'Good' to 'Very Good' level, affirming the substantial influence of the APD technique on enhancing students' critical thinking skills.

2. Data Analysis

a. Normality Test

The study employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method to assess the normality of the data. The combined number of students in groups X-A and X-B totaled 72. Utilizing SPSS 25, the researcher computed the normality for each test, and the outcomes of these data normality tests are presented in Table 3.

As a rule of the normality test, it can be concluded that:

- If "Sig" > 0.05, the data is normal
- If "Sig" < 0.05, the data is not normal

The data variable in the table was 0.200, which is more than 0.05. Thus, the conclusion of the data was normally distributed based on table normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Table 3. *The Result of the Normality Test*

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
			Unstandardized Residual
N			36
Normal Parameters [a,b]	Mean		.0000000
	Std. Deviation		15.52534075
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		.119
	Positive		.119
	Negative		-.088
Test Statistic			.119
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			.200[c,d]
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig.		.646[e]
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.633
		Upper Bound	.658

b. Homogeneity Test

A further step was to establish the homogeneity of the data's pre-test and post-test. To establish whether or not the data was homogeneous, the researcher used SPSS v.25. The findings of the data homogeneity test are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. *The Result of Homogeneity Data*

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df 1	df2	Sig.
Critical Thinking	Based on Mean	6.706	1	70	.012
	Based on Median	3.470	1	70	.067
	Based on the Median and with adjusted df	3.470	1	69.387	.067
	Based on trimmed mean	6.738	1	70	.011

The homogeneity variance analysis between the experimental and control groups resulted in a Sig. Based on the Mean score of 0.012. As this score (Sig. 0.012) is less than 0.05, it signifies that the variance in the data was not homogeneous. Despite the

normal distribution of the data, the presence of heterogeneous variance prompted the analysis to be performed using either the t-test or the Independent Samples Test.

3. Hypothesis Test

This investigation was carried out to answer the following research question: "Does the use of the APD technique in the classroom significantly improve students' critical thinking skills?" to answer the question, the following hypothesis is tested:

H_0: APD does not have any significant effect on students' critical thinking abilities

H_a: APD has a significant effect on students' critical thinking abilities.

In hypothesis testing using a t-test, the criteria to accept or reject the Ho based on the ratio between t_{-count} with t_{-table} as follows:

- If $t_{-count} > t_{-table}$ Ho is rejected or H1 is accepted
- If $t_{-count} > t_{-table}$ Ho is accepted or H1 is rejected

The results show that the value of t_{-count} is 2.342 while t_{-table} is 1.994 (with dk=n1+n2-2 = 36+36-2=70). The hypothesis test results demonstrate that $t_{he\ t\text{-}count}$ (2.342) is higher than $t_{he\ t\text{-}table}$ (1.994) with a significant level of 0.05. Thus, H_a was accepted and H_0 was rejected. To conclude, APD has a significant effect on students' critical thinking abilities.

Table 5. The Result of the Hypothesis Test

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Critical Thinking	Equal variances assumed	6.706	.012	2.342	70	.022	10.222	4.364	1.518	18.927
	Equal variances not assumed			2.342	68.117	.022	10.222	4.364	1.513	18.931

Discussion

This main purpose of this study is to investigate the potential impact of the APD technique on students' critical thinking skills development. The quantitative data analysis led to the conclusion that APD stands as an effective method for enhancing critical thinking abilities among students. Specifically, the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group were 45.2 and 62.3, respectively, while in the control

group, the mean pre-test and post-test scores were 40.56 and 52.1, respectively. Notably, the experimental group exhibited an improvement in critical thinking from a 'Good' level to an 'Excellent' level, whereas the control group progressed from a 'Good' to a 'Very Good' level. Furthermore, the hypothesis test findings indicated that the t-count (2.342) surpassed the critical t-table value (1.994) at a significant level of 0.05, signifying a significant impact of APD on students' critical thinking. This confirms the collective evidence from studies conducted by Handayani (2016), Li (2020), Nurakhir (2020), and Tawil (2016), all reinforcing the positive influence of APD on students' critical thinking skills. These studies underscored that student participation in APD leads to the development and refinement of critical thinking abilities. Engaging in debates encourages students to analyze complex issues, consider multiple perspectives, and communicate effectively. Debate instruction integration in English teaching can effectively increase students' comprehensive thinking skills, and advance their clarity, precision, accuracy, significance, relevance, completeness, logicalness, fairness, breadth and depth (Li, LI, & Shen 2020). Through APD, students learn to critically evaluate information, discern its reliability, and make reasoned judgments based on logical reasoning. This corroborates Fuad's (2016) findings that classroom debates enhance students' critical thinking skills and verbal reasoning.

Overall, the discussion of these findings underscores that active participation in APD correlates with substantial improvements in students' critical thinking abilities, as evidenced by the statistically significant enhancements in critical thinking test scores among the participants. Engagement in debate refines students' abilities to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and formulate reasoned judgments. When a student engage in a debate, he is required to research and understand the assigned topics thoroughly. Such in-depth exploration encourages cognitive processes, stimulating students to question assumptions, seek evidence, and develop a subtle understanding of complex issues. What is more, interactivity of debates nurtures active listening skills, a critical factor of critical thinking. In a debate, students should thoughtfully consider opposing arguments, respond attentively, and adjust their strategies based on the evolving discourse.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, this study employed a mixed-methods approach to examine the impact of APD on the critical thinking abilities of students at SMA Negeri 71 Jakarta. The findings demonstrated notable enhancements in critical thinking skills within the experimental group compared to the control group. The integration of APD into classroom practices positively affected students' critical thinking skills, evident in the higher average scores and the significant disparities observed in the pre-test outcomes. Additionally, insights gleaned from qualitative interviews offered valuable narratives and perspectives on students' encounters with APD. While some students encountered challenges in articulation and group collaboration, many reported heightened confidence, improved language proficiency, and a more receptive mindset. Identified concerns included communication barriers within groups and difficulties in comprehending opposing arguments during debates, indicating areas for improvement in the debate process.

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