

THE IMPACT OF CLASSROOM DEBATE ON STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING AND SPEAKING ABILITIES OF SECOND - YEAR ENGLISH MAJORED STUDENTS AT HANOI METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: *This study aims to investigate and evaluate the impact of classroom debate on students' critical thinking and speaking abilities of second - year English majored students at Hanoi Metropolitan University; with beneficial outcomes and difficulties in the debate process. In order to achieve this objective, a survey opened with closed ended questions for 24 students majoring in English language at Hanoi Metropolitan University, along with the teacher's provision. The findings indicate the positive effects and difficulties in the debate process that students often face. Based on this survey, to advance some approaches to help students be more confident when they debate in front of a crowd and have more flexible language when encountering unexpected situations.*

Keywords: *Debate, critical thinking, speaking abilities, second-year English majored students, positive effects, difficulties, confident, flexible language.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Under the trend of globalization, the world is developing increasingly, and every country is attempting to grow and integrate with the rest of the world. As a language that connects nations, English has emerged as the global tongue. Debate abilities are crucial in the modern world, not just for learning English but also for growing as a thinker.

As a matter of fact, the debate has not been commonly recognized or properly implemented in Vietnam, which has given rise to opposing opinions about its advantages. Many students use debate to supplement their academic and professional activities, but they often lack thoroughness, a multifaceted perspective, and problem-solving abilities when doing so.

Additionally, because they lack experience and a supportive environment for competition and practice, students tend to be timid in conversation and think lazily. It has an impact on young people's psychological health and ability to think.

2. DEVELOPMENT

In order to conduct this research, we consulted academic articles written by teachers and linguists from Vietnam and many other nations. We had only acknowledged a small number of works below due to time restrictions and scarce resources.

According to "Steps to Improve English Skills for Freshmen Majoring in English at Phenikaa University Through Debating Activities", Phan Thi Mai (2022) claimed that the use of debating activities in speaking practice for English language majors has plenty of positive effects on teaching and learning activities. Debate exercises give students a regular practice setting to improve their speaking abilities in a variety of areas, including pronunciation, grammar, ideas, and fluency. Besides that, debate activities help create motivation and interest in learning and increase students' confidence, creativity, and critical thinking. From there, promote a dynamic and positive learning atmosphere in the classroom. Therefore, in the conclusion of the research, she emphasized that with the advantages of debate activities, students promote their initiative and activeness in learning. Activities give students the chance to conduct their own investigations, advance their understanding of social issues and society, and develop their critical thinking and reasoning skills. Students also get the chance to share, speak, and connect with other students, which greatly enhances their collaboration and communication skills in addition to the aspects that contribute to the development of their foreign language abilities. We will borrow from author Phan Thi Mai's experiment in the paragraphs that follow.

Additionally, Pezhman Zare and Moomala Othman noted in their study on "Classroom debate as a systematic or learning approach" (2013) that using classroom debate as a teaching or learning approach has many benefits for learners, including the promotion of critical thinking skills, mastering the course material, and as a result, students benefit greatly

when teachers employ instructional tactics that encourage active participation. Due to this, all university students, not just those on forensics teams, must have the opportunity to participate in debate exercises.

Furthermore, Reli Handayani has demonstrated in her study "Students' Critical Thinking Skills in a Classroom Debate" (2016) that the findings from the study demonstrate that debate aids students in developing both their critical thinking and communication skills. During a debate, students can demonstrate their understanding of a subject by opposing, debating, and elaborating on their own disagreements. Many suggestions could be made in view of the study's findings. The students must first practice creating an argument that is coherent and logical. They must also learn to control their emotions when the conversation gets heated. Second, the instructors or lecturers must decide how the conversation will be structured based on the demands, number, and level of the students. The argument might be given abruptly as a test to see how quickly they can use critical thinking. Third, the potential researcher can make use of a variety of approved critical thinking evaluation techniques or even develop their own.

2.1. Definition of debate

According to Cambridge dictionary (1): “*Debate is 1. (a) serious discussion of a subject in which many people take part; 2. a competition in which teams of people, often students, discuss a subject and the team that is judged to make the best arguments wins*”

Debate can also be understood as a formally structured argument or contest of ideas in which participants present opposing viewpoints on a certain subject. The arguments for each side's position will be presented in an orderly and intelligent manner. They will support their arguments with examples and proof as they move closer to a conclusion.

2.2. Types of debate

We have six types of debate: Policy Debate, Parliamentary Debate, Congressional Debate, Cross-Examination Debate, Impromptu Debate, Classroom Debate. However, with the topic being researched, we will go deeper into Classroom Debate.

2.2.1. Classroom Debate

In a classroom debate, two or more opposing groups must deliver arguments on a concept, question, or topic, each from a different point of view. Participants don't portray an imagined self or mimic others; instead, they act as themselves. The remaining students will be the non-debating audience.

2.2.2. Procedure of classroom debate

Here are what the instructor will do in order to prepare for the debate:

1. Introduce the topic: Make any claim or pose any yes-or-no queries, then watch how the two sides argue.
2. Form the teams and positions for the teams that are positive and negative. Each debate has two sides.
3. Provide time for research. Students will require some time to conduct their investigation. The group as a whole prepares ideas and plans for critique.
4. Maintain a Time Record

The affirmative team presents their arguments first, followed by a member of the opposing team. In the second speaker, same procedure is repeated for each team. Finally, each side has the opportunity to oppose the opponent's arguments.

2.3. Speaking ability

Communication and speaking ability go hand in hand. Speaking is the ability to utilize a language effectively to communicate one's thoughts, feelings, and facts to or with other speakers in order to exchange or collect knowledge and information.

2.4. Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of deliberately and skilfully

conceiving, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating knowledge gleaned from, or created by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication. In its best expression, it is founded on universal intellectual principles that cut across disciplinary boundaries, including relevance, soundness, correctness, consistency, precision, depth, and fairness.

2.5. Research Methodology

We used Google Forms to survey 90 second-year students of English linguistics at Hanoi Metropolitan University. The survey received 50 respondents. Then, we selected 24 valid surveys (they answered all the questions and were second-year English majors at Hanoi Metropolitan University). In addition, we also collected the Speaking 2 and Speaking 3 scores of these 24 people. In parallel, we conducted research on these students' final project grades and teacher evaluations. The survey was conducted from June 30, 2022, to January 28, 2023.

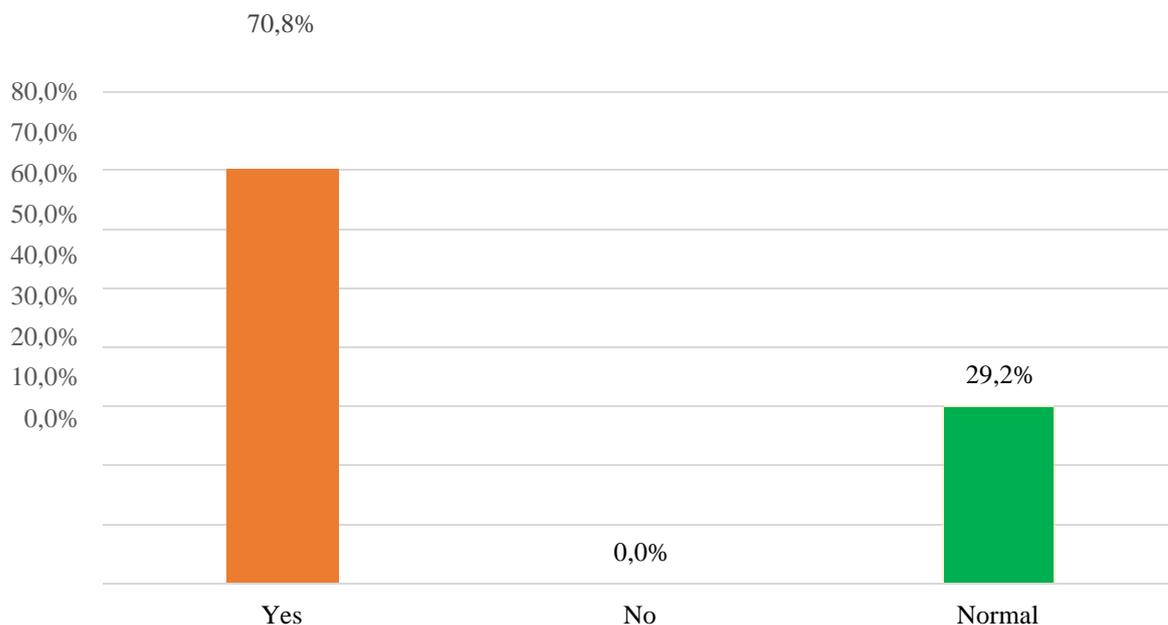
2.6. Observation

Research results of the classroom debate program were based on the final project guidelines of sophomores at Hanoi Metropolitan University. Sophomores' speaking test results were what we used. By comparing student and instructor evaluations from Speaking 2 to Speaking 3, we might determine how effective debate was. We displayed the topics that were debated because the Hanoi Metropolitan University's guidelines had two sections: debate and discussion.

2.7. Findings

Currently, there are many methods of learning English, and it is undeniable that debate is currently employed frequently in the classroom. Based on the students who participated in the research, we will go further to examine how debate impacts second-year students' critical thinking and speaking abilities.

Chart 1. Do you find debate difficult?



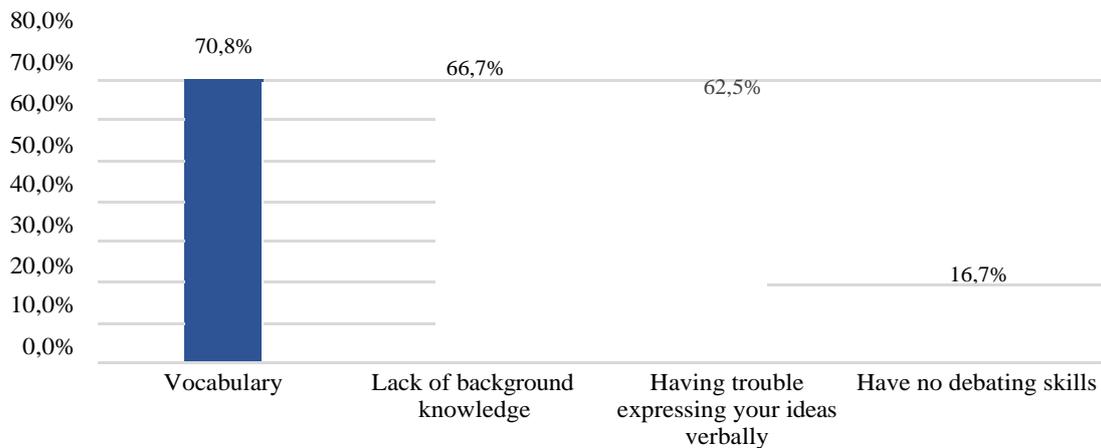
Debate is tough for most individuals. The following graph outlined difficult arguments and

essential issues for sophomores. Vocabulary was the component of debate that 70.8% of students perceived to be the most challenging. Following vocabulary, students struggled with a lack of background information (66.7%) and trouble expressing ideas verbally (62.5%).

The first bar chart illustrated the results of the debate's level of difficulty or ease. Out of a total of 24 students, 70.8% agreed that debate was difficult, and 29.2% thought it was normal.

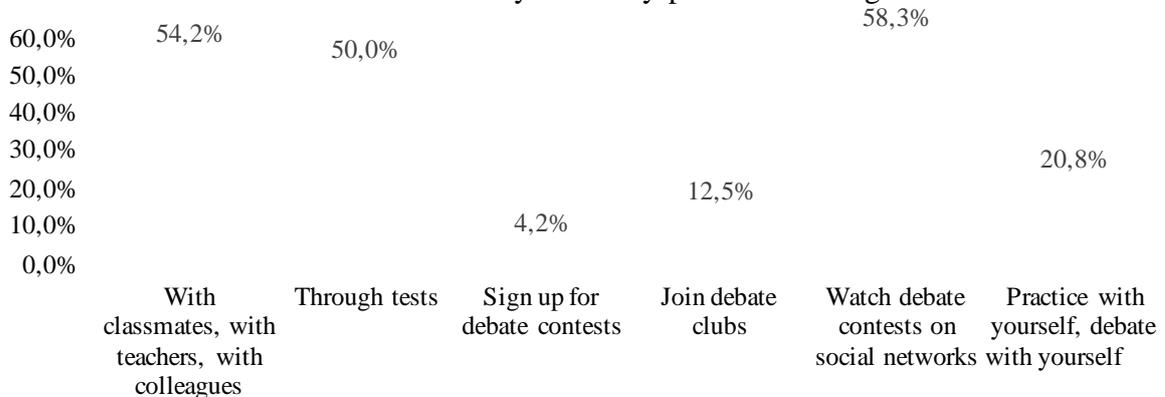
Nobody believed that debating was simple for them.

Chart 2. At what point do you find debate difficult?



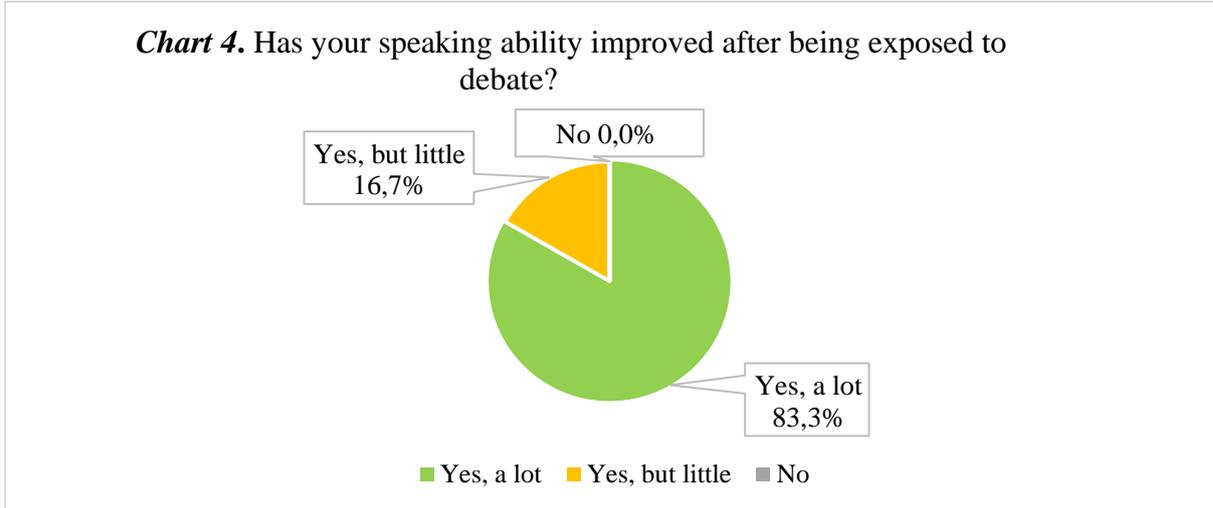
The following column chart clearly indicated how pupils usually practiced debating. There were many methods used to practice debating skills. A lot of people (58.3%) often watched debate contests on social networks to practice debating. Besides that, practice with classmates, teachers, and colleagues and through tests were good ways to improve skills, accounting for 54.2% and 50%. Practice with oneself (20.8%) and joining debate clubs (12.5%) were also used by everyone. 4.2% of students participating in the survey signed up for debate contests.

Chart 3. How do you usually practice debating?



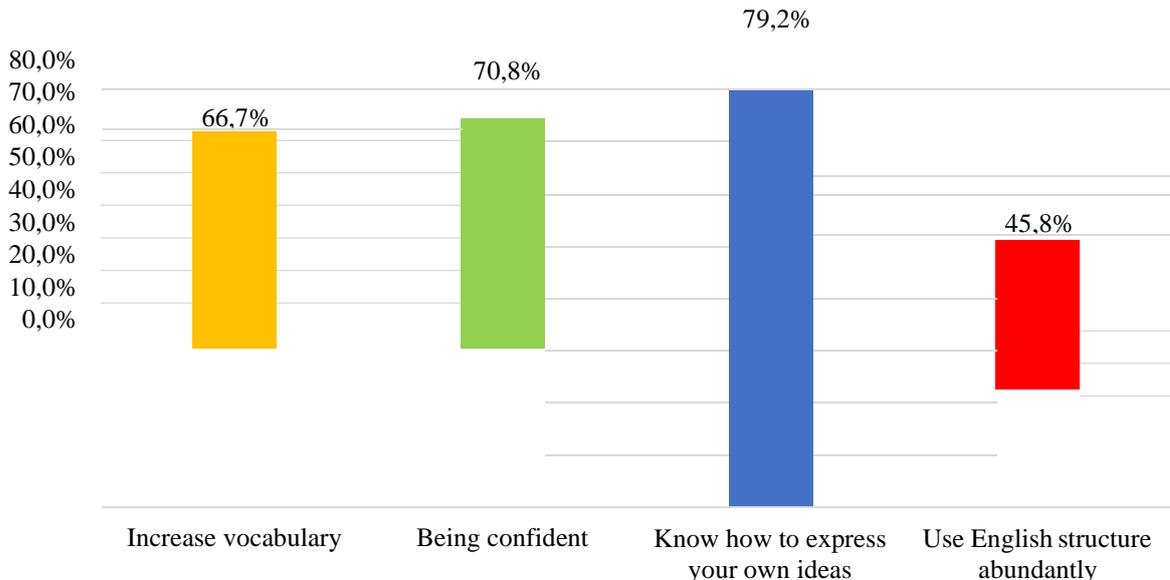
The first pie chart showed improvement in speaking ability after being exposed to debate.

Everyone agreed that debate improved one's skill at speaking. Many individuals agreed that improving a person's ability to communicate a lot accounted for 83.3% of the improvement, and 16.7% and 16.7% of them thought it affected a little. Nobody could deny the importance of discussion in improving one's speaking abilities.



The graph below made it evident that debate aided in the improvement of English proficiency. Among the 24 students, 79.2% claimed that debate helped them fully express all of their thoughts on a subject. Debate increased their confidence in 70.8% of these cases, and their vocabulary greatly improved in 66.7% of them. The use of English grammar and learning several other structures were easier for about 45.8% of people.

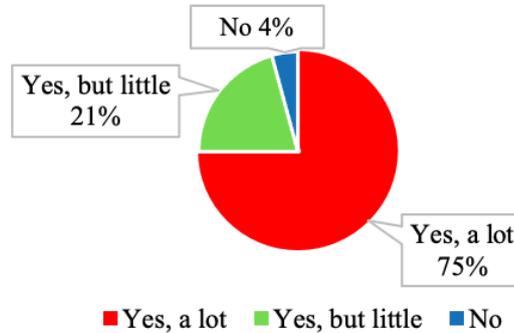
Chart 5. If yes, how have your English-speaking skills improved?



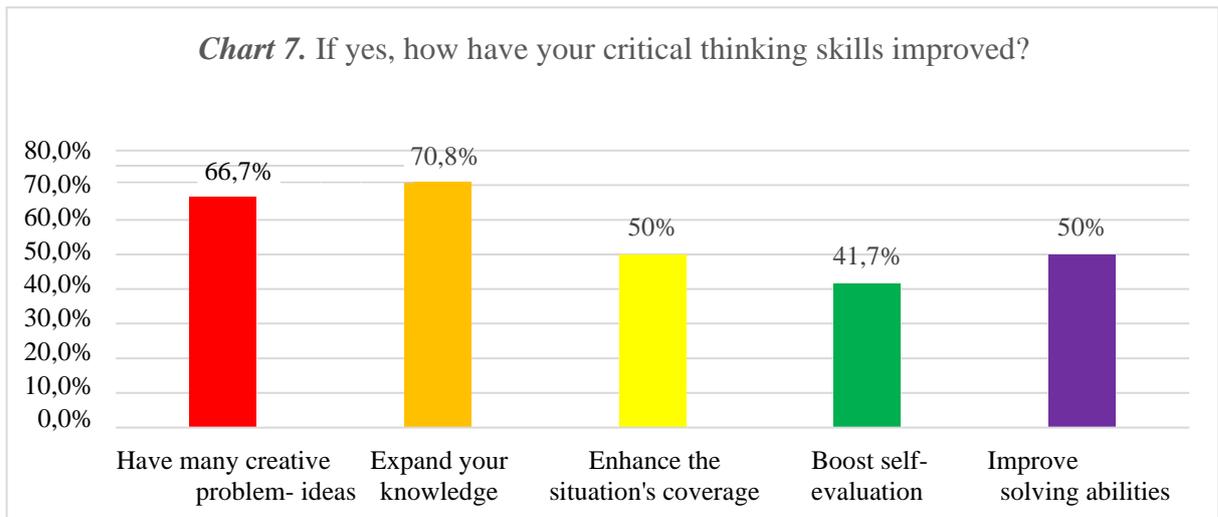
In the next pie chart, the majority of people agreed that engaging in debate enhanced their critical thinking skills in addition to their vocabulary, grammar, and ability to communicate ideas. Of those, 75% believed that their critical thinking had obviously matured, while 21% thought it had just marginally enhanced. Just 4% of people believed that debating did not help

their ability to think critically.

Chart 6. Do you feel your critical thinking skills improved when exposed to debate?



The graph below illustrated how debate improved critical thinking. The majority claimed to have significantly increased their knowledge (70.8%) and had more original thoughts (66.7%), which were the two advantages that were most apparent to them. They also benefited from an improvement in their capacity to generalize circumstances and solve issues more quickly (50%). Eventually, roughly 41.7% of them discovered that debate also helped them improve their own evaluations.



The 24 members who had just taken the survey are listed next along with their Speaking 2 and Speaking 3 scores.

Table 1. Speaking 2 and Speaking 3 scores of 24 people

No.	Name	Vocabulary	Grammar	Pronunciation	Fluency and Coherence	Interaction	Total
1	Kieu My	2	2	2	1.5	1	8.5

	Anh	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	8.8
2	Tran Thi Ngoc Anh	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.4	7.5
		2	2	2	2	1	9
3	Nguyen Tien Anh	2	2	2	1.5	1	8.5
		2	2	2	2	1	9
4	Nguyen Le Van Anh	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.8	8.2
		1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	8.4
5	Duong Hong Diep	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.8	8.2
		1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2	9.2
6	Pham Hong Duyen	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	8.5
		1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	9
7	Hoang Thi Thanh Ha	2	2	2	2	1	9
		2	2	2	2	1	9
8	Nguyen Thi Thu Ha	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.8	8.5
		1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6	8.6
9	Hoang Thi Hau	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	9
		2	2	2	1.9	1	8.9
10	Nguyen Thanh Hien	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	8.7
		1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2	9.2
11	Vu Thi Hien	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.7	8.2
		1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6	8.5
12	Nguyen Thi Kieu Hieu	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.7	8.2
		1.8	1.8	1.7	1.8	2	9.1
13	Tran Khai Hoan	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6	8.5
		1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	9

14	Tran Hoang	2	2	2	1.9	1	8.9
		1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	8.7
15	Nguyen Thi Thuy Huong	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.7	8
		1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	8.8
16	Nguyen Phuong Linh	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.8	8.2
		1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	8.8
17	Bui Van Phu	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.4	7.5
		1.7	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.5	7.9
18	To Nguyen Chau Phuong	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.8	8.6
		1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	8.2
19	Le Ha Phuong	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	8.6
		1.8	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.9	9
20	Truong Phuong Thao	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.7	8.3
		1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	9
21	Nguyen Huyen Thuong	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.5	8
		1.8	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.7	8.6
22	Pham Huyen Trang	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	8.5
		1.8	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.8	8.7
23	Pham Thi Ngan Vang	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.7	8.4
		1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2	9.2
24	Nguyen Ngoc Van	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	8.2
		2	2	2	1.5	1	8.5

This represents the members' speaking performance on the debate part of our survey. As

we can see, most people made progress from Speaking 2 to Speaking 3 by applying debate in class. We also list the component scores for each of the five assessment criteria in the table: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency-coherence, and interaction. Most people's scores went up from 0.1 to 2.5 points. Only a few did not increase or decrease from 0.1 to 0.4 points (we do not consider it as student inattentiveness or ineffectiveness in applying debate to the classroom because all scores range from good to excellent.)

3. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The value of using the debate approach in the classroom has been observed. As we've shown above with primary and secondary data, it has improved students' critical thinking and speaking abilities. Regarding secondary data, numerous studies conducted domestically and internationally have demonstrated the value of debate for pupils. Also, based on primary data, it is easy to assess how students are progressing while using the debate technique. From Speaking 2 to Speaking 3, scores greatly (up to 2.5 points) increased. Also, we obtained a survey of members to learn more about their opinions as well as debates that hone public speaking and critical thinking skills. The majority of the participants who have made considerable progress exhibit a favorable attitude toward the debate. We are incredibly grateful to our professors and friends for their support of this study. They greatly aided us in gathering information to produce the most accurate results.

We understand that there would be numerous limitations to our study, such as the fact that the survey was only administered to 24 second-year English majors at Hanoi Metropolitan University. Other personal challenges include having little spare time and being able to do our research with only a restricted number of resources. We tried our best to gather information to provide the most accurate results about how useful debate is for college students, despite certain issues.

We present a number of strategies for improving students' two skills—critical thinking and speaking—through the use of debate in the classroom. The first step is to research and evaluate information about a specific subject. Students will benefit from having a broader understanding of the subject matter of the debate while also developing their awareness of social knowledge. The second approach is to establish and support individual viewpoints with justifications and proof. As a result, their ideas will be more connected and coherent, which will make it simpler to persuade their opponent. Learning the fundamentals of presentation structure is the third option. They will be able to critique more carefully as a result, and their presentation abilities will also get better. Understanding the structure will improve students' persuasion and make others perceive them as invested in their talk. Provide a general introduction to the subject, then present their arguments and supporting data, and then sum up their points. The next solution is to comprehend debate concepts and become fluent in its jargon. Students will appear more professional if they do this. They should also work on their public speaking abilities, get over their anxiety of speaking in front of groups, and improve their body language expression. Students will become more assured in both their capacity to communicate and the ideas they develop as a result. The ability to speak English will be greatly improved, especially in terms

of presenting abilities. Pupils practiced observation, creative thinking, critical thinking, and teamwork as our last study activity. As a result, students' debate will be more original and less stereotypical. Good observation skills will make it easier to counter the opposition side. Also, it is crucial to have good teamwork abilities. More people will generate more ideas; simply understanding how to strike a balance between individuals and groups will result in excellent presentations.

In conclusion, this study has shown how debate in the classroom affects speaking and critical thinking skills. We hope that more classes will incorporate debate into their curriculum to increase students' learning effectiveness.

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TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA VIỆC TRANH LUẬN TRONG LỚP HỌC ĐẾN KHẢ NĂNG TƯ DUY PHẢN BIỆN VÀ KHẢ NĂNG NÓI CỦA SINH VIÊN NĂM HAI NGÀNH NGÔN NGỮ ANH TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC THỦ ĐÔ HÀ NỘI

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này thực hiện nhằm khảo sát và đánh giá những tác động của việc tranh luận trong lớp học đến khả năng tư duy phản biện và khả năng nói của sinh viên năm hai ngành Ngôn Ngữ Anh tại trường Đại học Thủ đô Hà Nội; với những tác động tích cực và khó khăn trong quá trình tranh luận. Để đạt được mục đích này, một cuộc khảo sát được mở ra bằng những câu hỏi đóng với 24 sinh viên ngành Ngôn Ngữ Anh trường Đại học Thủ đô Hà Nội, kết hợp với bảng điểm của giáo viên cung cấp. Kết quả cho thấy những ảnh hưởng tích cực và những khó khăn trong quá trình tranh luận mà sinh viên thường gặp phải. Dựa vào cuộc khảo sát này, đề ra một số phương pháp giúp sinh viên tự tin hơn khi tranh luận trước đám đông và ngôn ngữ linh hoạt hơn khi gặp những tình huống bất ngờ.

Từ khóa: Tranh luận, tư duy phản biện, sinh viên năm hai ngôn ngữ Anh, tác động tích cực, khó khăn, tự tin, ngôn ngữ linh hoạt.