

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of research. This part consists of the background of the research, research question, objective of the research, hypothesis, scope and limitation of the research, significance of the research, and definition of key terms.

A. Research Background

Fluency in speaking is a critical competency in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Effective communication is essential in both academic and professional contexts, especially given the increasing emphasis on English proficiency in global settings. However, many students still face difficulty achieving fluency and persuasive speaking abilities. According to Crisianita and Mandasari (2022), speaking is an consequential skill for students in language learning activities in schools and should be incorporated into the broader perspective of future tasks. Additionally, Sayow and Marsevani (2024) stated that the teaching of speaking can help student build fluency and self-assurance in expressing their views and thoughts. It can also enhance their ability to listen attentively and respond appropriately to others.

Therefore, to achieve effective speaking skill learning, strategies for teaching speaking skills effectively are definitely needed. Mulyanti and Nadrin (2021) mentioned that through strategies, teachers can teach effectively, and the students can also learn more easily. Moreover, without any teaching planning, the students will find it difficult to understand the lesson. Tarigan et al. (2019) added that it is challenging to teach speaking because teachers still employ conventional

methods in teaching students bored, and thus the students would become passive learners. Therefore, the teachers should apply the appropriate technique to teach English speaking, even to enhance students' speaking skills. The method of learning to speak must also be engaging so the students can learn enjoyably. One of the well-known teaching speaking strategies is the focus of group discussion (FGD). This strategy is a way to make speaking lessons more enjoyable (S. Safitri et al., 2023). Nurmasitah et al. (2018) stated that by applying the FGD approach, the students were expected to enjoy the class activities, be more interactive in class, and enhance their speaking capacity.

FGD can be described as a discussion conducted in a systematic and focused way towards a specific problem or issue. The FGD in personality development learning aims to collect information about students' understanding of the material provided and its application in daily life. Yulianti and Sulistyawati (2021) added that the application of the FGD strategy is expected to enable students to develop critical, creative, and innovative thinking skills in preparing presentations and group discussions. The investigation showed that speaking skills improvement occurred due to the learners taking part in FGD.

However, there is an imbalance between the collaboration aspects inherent in FGD and the competition aspect, which can promote rational thought processes and oratory. As stated by Yulianti and Sulistyawati (2021), although FGD are fundamentally collaborative, students strive to articulate their opinions clearly and persuasively in response to different points of view. Another study showed that, in a group discussion, students will make their arguments more logical if they feel that the opponent's arguments make their previous arguments less logical, and this will

change the atmosphere of collaborative debate into an arena of subtle rhetorical competition (Mauliyda et al., 2021). Related studies also stated by Beckera and Horvátc (2021) showed that light competitive dynamics are beneficial in collaborative group settings because disagreement and argument can improve both individual and group critical thinking. Hence, there is a demand for an educational framework combining collaboration with competition to improve the performance of students. Many studies have shown that debate activities encourage a strong incentive to increase speaking skills by Hernawan and Yusuf (2021). Linh (2024) argues that debate is closely related to speaking skill, which are the skills that equip us with the competence to generate effective oral communication.

To facilitate students in practicing and learning English language skills in real-life situations or in speaking skills, the debate method can be implemented in EFL classes as a tool (Sahril et al., 2020). Fatmawati and Laisouw (2019) explained that debate is one way to enhance students' knowledge as well as their speaking skills. According to Safitri and Suntari (2024), to teach critical thinking and improve communication skills, debate is presented as a valuable learning activity. In support of this view, several studies further confirm the pedagogical value of debate in language education. Jodoi (2024) mentioned that they are right in asserting that debates in class make significant contributions towards enhancing learners' skills in argumentation in second language learning, stressing its potential beyond competitive models. Istihari (2025) also proved that debate activities could be greatly adapted even among EFL young learners to activate language production and organizational ability. Parallel to this, Dewangga et al. (2024) show how classroom debate, when paired with the case method, has the ability to enhance

higher-order thinking such as reasoning, critical analysis, and refutation. Oktaviani et al. (2021) also reported measurable improvement in Indonesian senior high school learners' speaking competences following a structured classroom debate intervention. However, despite its proven benefits, most applications of debate in previous studies still operate in competitive or isolated formats, rather than being embedded into collaborative and inclusive learning environments. If this gap remains unaddressed, it may be difficult to develop higher-order speaking skills such as argumentation and persuasion, which are increasingly crucial in modern academic and professional contexts.

To bridge this gap, this study introduces an innovative approach called "Focus Group Discussion with a Debate Plot Twist." This model combines the collaborative nature of FGD with the competitive aspects of debates. It aims to create an interactive and balanced learning environment that encourages active participation while enhancing students' logical and persuasive speaking skills. Therefore, the learning process constructed in this research aims to construct a balanced learning interactive environment where not only are students engaged, but it also specifically attempts to construct logical and persuasive speech skills. This approach is needed in view of the demands of 21st-century learning, which emphasizes constructing skills in critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Not only should students be able to present ideas in English as such, but also to defend opinions, present logical arguments, and persuade individuals in various contexts, academic and professional. Additionally, building a well-balanced learning atmosphere between co-operation and intellectual competition (argumentative) is also a strategy that can suit various student learning styles.

Passive learners in the conventional discussion can become active in a formal debate environment where they have assigned roles, while actively involved students can be instructed to listen, consider different views, and articulate ideas in a clear direction. Thus, the FGD learning model using the Debate Plot Twist approach is not only revolutionary but timely and relevant in bridging the gap between basic communication skills and higher-order speaking skills, which are not being catered to by conventional FGD approaches to any great extent. Apriliani et al. (2021) explained that debate is presented as a successful learning activity for the teaching of critical thinking and enhancing communication skills; debate technique could have a significant impact on the oral skills of the students. According to Zuhri and Wahyuli (2025), overcoming the obstacles that arise in speaking, learning, and debating is one of the relevant and effective learning approaches.

The students of SMAN 1 Pare, like students in most schools, experience similar problems in improving their speaking ability. The ability to integrate different aspects of speaking skills is relevant to the debate method, as a learning solution is based on its (Zuhri & Wahyuli, 2025). From initial observation, the majority of the students have good potential but require a more interactive and encouraging learning environment. The debate method is believed to be the right solution to enhance students' speaking skills, as it engages them in learning activities that are attractive, competitive, and relevant to the needs of the times.

This study focuses on assessing the impact of this innovative method on 11th-grade students at SMAN 1 Pare. This limits its scope to the development of speaking skills and does not address other language skills such as reading, writing, or listening. This research will also compare the effectiveness of innovative FGD

with the Debate Plot Twist method with the conventional FGD in teaching students' speaking skills. With this innovation, this research contributes to the development of more effective interaction-based learning methods to enhance speaking skills, as well as addressing the gaps in existing research on interactive language learning approaches. Additionally, this study will fill the gaps in the existing literature on focus group discussions by designing new techniques to enhance speaking skills among students, which is an innovative FGD with the Debate Plot Twist method.

B. Research Question

Based on the background mentioned above, the following question is the aim of this research: Is there any significant difference in the students' speaking skills between those who were taught by innovative Focus Group Discussion with Debate Plot Twist in teaching speaking skills and those who were taught by conventional FGD at SMAN 1 Pare?

C. Research Objective

Based on the problem formulation above, the research objectives can be formulated as follows: To investigate whether there is a significant difference between students' speaking skills between those taught using Innovative Focus Group Discussion with Debate Plot Twist and those taught using conventional FGD.

D. Hypothesis

This research hypothesis exists as an uncertain answer that can still be changed to the previously stated research problem. In this study, the null hypothesis (H_0) and alternative hypothesis (H_a) are as follows :

1. Ho: There is no significant difference in the students' speaking skills between those who were taught by innovative Focus Group Discussion with Debate Plot Twist in teaching speaking skills and those who were taught by conventional FGD at SMAN 1 Pare.
2. Ha: There is a significant difference in the students' speaking skills between those who were taught by innovative Focus Group Discussion with Debate Plot Twist in teaching speaking skills and those who were taught by conventional FGD at SMAN 1 Pare.

E. Research Significance

This study will fill the gap in the existing literature on FGD by devising novel techniques for teaching speaking skills among students. Eventually, this study is supposed to contribute to the theoretical body of language education by disclosing a novel understanding of how interactive, creative FGD can serve as a tool for language acquisition. FGD with Debate Plot Twist is an innovative FGD that helps students develop their critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills contained within the elements of this debate plot twist. This innovation of FGD with Debate Plot Twist can be adopted by teachers for effective speaking skills learning to foster critical thinking, confidence, and the ability to explore new things in speaking skills education. This would mean, in practice, giving real measures for teachers to make sessions of their lessons effective and productive, particularly for speaking skills in terms of students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence. Besides empowering the student to communicate well, the broader implications will have an effect for future academic success and future professional opportunities.

F. Scope and Limitation

Based on the background of the study and the identification problem of the research, the scope and limitation of this research are directed towards the examination of the effectiveness of FGD with Debate Plot Twist in teaching eleventh-grade students' speaking ability at SMAN 1 Pare. This study specifically investigates how this new discussion method enhances students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence in speaking English.

The research is limited to speaking skills only and excludes other language components such as reading, writing, or listening. Additionally, the current research contrasts the efficacy of FGD with Debate Plot Twist with conventional FGD to identify which technique yields better improvement in students' speaking skills. The results of the current research will be generalizable to the same learning environment but not to students of different proficiency levels or educations.

G. Definition of Key Terms

- 1.** Speaking skill is the individual's ability to convey ideas, thoughts, and information verbally in a clear, structured, and effective manner. In this study, speaking skill refers to the students' speaking abilities developed through FGD method with an interactive approach, which involves argumentation and problem-solving in the context of English language learning. Additionally, this study incorporates the learning of analytical exposition as a foundation for developing well-structured arguments, enabling students to express and defend their stands more effectively in debates and discussions.
- 2.** Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a discussion method that involves a group of participants with the aim of systematically and purposefully delving into a

topic. In this study, FGD is applied as a learning strategy to improve students' speaking skills, where they were given the opportunity to express their opinions, exchange ideas, and build understanding collectively in a conducive and controlled environment.

3. FGD with Debate Plot Twist is an enhancement of the FGD method that unexpectedly integrates debate elements into the discussion. In this study, this model is applied to challenge students' mindsets by forcing them to spontaneously change or maintain their opinions based on the arguments that develop during the discussion. This approach is designed to enhance students' speaking fluency, critical thinking, and argumentation skills in English.