

Bringing Debate into Classroom: The Perspective of EFL Teachers in Aceh

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - This study aims to explore the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers regarding the use of parliamentary debate as a classroom instruction in Aceh, a Sharia-governed province in Indonesia. It investigates whether the assumption of Islamic-based education restricts the use of debate as a tool to enhance critical thinking. This investigation aimed to fill the research gaps where exploration had not been conducted yet.

Methodology - A quantitative descriptive survey design was employed to collect data from 252 EFL teachers across general and Islamic secondary schools in Aceh. A structured, closed-ended questionnaire (using a Likert scale) was administered, selected through stratified random sampling based on specific criteria. The instrument was developed to assess three matrices they are (1) the understanding, (2) acceptance, and (3) evaluation. The data was then analyzed for Mean and Standard Deviation.

Findings - The findings indicated a positive attitude toward integrating debate into classroom teaching tools for either critical thinking or language proficiency development. However, aligning the debate topics with Aceh's socio-religious norms is necessary to avoid overly liberal or sensitive issues that may be perceived as offensive. Although there is a strong acceptance of debate in the classroom and an understanding of the debate's nature, the teachers' procedural understanding of the debate remains lacking.

contribution - These findings suggest that the adoption of parliamentary debate in Aceh's EFL classrooms necessitates adjustments, indicating that Western teaching models, such as debate, must be localized within Islamic educational frameworks.

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INTRODUCTION

Debate has received greater attention as a pedagogical strategy in language education, proving advantageous for both language development and strengthening of the 4Cs, they are critical thinking (Chen,

Wang, et al., 2022; Rivas et al., 2022), communication (el Majidi et al., 2024; Howe & Cionea, 2021; Lubis et al., 2020), collaboration (Kim et al., 2022; Qobilova & Turaeva, 2020; S, 2023; Sudrajat et al., 2020; Urhan & Zengin, 2024), and creativity (Chen, Zhai, et al., 2022a, 2022b; Desmet & Sternberg, 2024; Dias-Oliveira et al., 2024). The growing benefits of this teaching model have led to its growing popularity in the EFL context worldwide. Indonesia not only advocates for the integration of debate techniques into classroom instruction but also provides a competitive platform for schools and university students through the National School Debating Championships (NSDC) and the National University Debating Championships (NUDC), both of which have been conducted annually since 2010, thereby enhancing their prominence in the regional circuit organised by various local institutions.

The debate technique emphasizes the importance of open and critical thinking, allowing students to express their ideas freely, provided that these ideas are logical and defensible against the opponent's rebuttals. In the context of debate, there is no restriction on debaters presenting arguments or ideas (Rodriguez-Dono & Hernández-Fernández, 2021). Furthermore, the debate topic commonly referred to as the debate motion may encompass a broad spectrum of issues (Abercrombie, 2021), enabling debaters to engage with subjects ranging from human rights, health, education, politics, and international relations to liberal thought, the LGBT community, and even religion (Chen, Zhai, et al., 2022c).

Parliamentary debate is a structured form of argumentation modeled on the Asian or British Parliamentary system, where two teams (Proposition and Opposition) argue for or against a motion within a limited time frame (Saputri et al., 2022; Syahputra, 2020). It is widely used in academic competitions, with various formats and tactics employed by participants (Ericson et al., 2023). The theoretical underpinnings of parliamentary debate involve strategic interactions within political parties and institutions, influencing which Members of Parliament speak and how their speeches can be analyzed to measure concepts like polarization and intra-party dissent (Slapin & Proksch, 2021).

The purpose and value of parliamentary debate extend beyond mere deliberation, encompassing elements of oratory, opposition, and spectacle. This multifaceted nature reflects a complex historical and ongoing discourse about the role of debate in democratic processes, challenging simplistic evaluations based solely on deliberative criteria (Hasanah et al., 2023; Jodoi, 2023; Munirom, 2023; Waluyo & Abrar, 2024). Thus, the motion in parliamentary debate encompasses a wide range of contexts and topics. Debate motions are intentionally designed to encompass a diverse range of subject areas, including, but not limited to, education, politics, social issues, health, law, international relations, and cultural matters. This broad scope allows participants to engage with a variety of perspectives and develop their critical thinking skills across multiple domains. By addressing a wide range of topics, parliamentary debate encourages students to research, analyze, and articulate arguments on issues they may not encounter in their regular coursework, thereby enriching their overall educational experience.

Recently, parliamentary debate has emerged as an effective pedagogical tool in English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts. It enhances students' speaking proficiency, critical thinking skills, and overall communication abilities (Wahyuni, Qamariah, Gani, et al., 2020; Waluyo & Abrar, 2024). Within the Communicative Language Teaching framework, parliamentary debate fosters interactive learning, promoting the development of language skills and self-confidence (Suhendra, 2020).

The British Parliamentary Debate system, in particular, has shown significant improvements in students' linguistic skills, vocabulary, and self-awareness across various educational levels (Waluyo & Abrar, 2024). The debate process, comprising pre-debate, actual debate, and post-debate stages, engages students in research, argumentation, and reflection, contributing to second language acquisition (Aclan & Aziz, 2015). Quantitative studies have demonstrated statistically significant improvements in critical thinking and speaking skills after implementing parliamentary debate techniques (Rasyid & Namrullah, 2021; Syahputra & Salwa Chaira, 2020; Wahyuni, Qamariah, Syahputra, et al., 2020). Overall, parliamentary debate offers a comprehensive approach to developing essential 21st-century communication skills in EFL/ESL classrooms.

Debate is also gaining popularity in Aceh, a special autonomous conservative region in Indonesia, governed under sharia law and upholding strong Islamic traditions. The increasing performance level of the

Aceh debate society in national-scale competitive debate has shown consistent growth each year in both the quantity of participation and the quality of the debaters. The number of local debating competitions organized by various institutions and debating communities under different educational establishments has also risen annually. This trend demonstrates that debate is highly popular in Aceh at both the school and university levels.

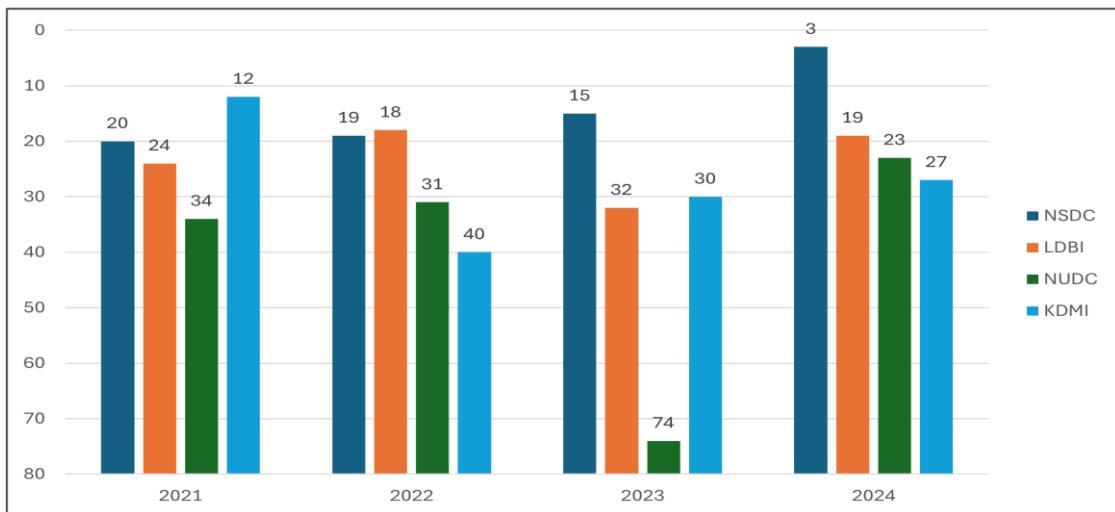


Figure 1. The best Aceh Delegation Rank in National Debating Championship (Puspresnas 2021-2024)

These diagrams show the growing quality and enthusiasm for parliamentary debate in Aceh. This conclusion is based on the diagram that shows the Aceh debate delegates in the National Scale Debating Championship, organized by the Ministry of Education, have consistently improved each year at both the school and varsity levels. The highest achievement was observed in the National School Debating Championship (NSDC) in 2024 (rank three from 36 teams). While in the Lomba Debat Bahasa Indonesia (LDBI), a debate competition for senior high school students in Bahasa Indonesia, a gradual yet consistent improvement has also been observed over the years, reaching its highest point in 2022 (rank 18 out of 36 teams). The consistent improvement is also observed in the National University Debating Championship (NUDC), an English varsity-level debating championship with the highest position in 2024 (rank 23 from 114 teams). Meanwhile, in the *Kompetisi Debat Mahasiswa Indonesia* (KDMI), a university-level debate competition in Bahasa Indonesia, a slight decline in trend is observed, with the highest score achieved in 2024 (rank 27 out of 209 teams); however, the ranking remains above the national average.

The rising trend among debate enthusiasts is observed in Aceh, a Sharia-governed province in Indonesia, which has strict regulations regarding Islamic teachings and cultural values. The case is. Even though Islam promoted critical thinking and open discussion as part of the knowledge that is obligated to be sought by the Islamic follower, as an Islamic Sharia-based region, several studies showed contrary results. Critical and liberal thinking in Aceh's conservative society is limited to a certain level of Islamic teachings. The barriers to critical thinking in Aceh, including egocentrism and conformity (Asmanidar, 2024), are proposed to be overcome by integrating Islamic epistemology and Acehnese cultural values. Moreover, Dayah ulama (Traditional Islamic scholar) in Aceh generally reject pluralism and discourage studying Islamic thought outside traditional frameworks, limiting intellectual diversity and open discussion (Anzaikhan, 2021). Asmanidar (2024) stated that a tension exists between the conservative and liberal educational paradigms in Aceh. Where conservative arguments are to maintain existing social orders, and liberalism emphasizes rationalization and critique of the established practices.

The Problem is in the Aceh context, where education is strongly guided by Islamic values and local cultural norms, classroom practices that encourage open argumentation and free expression, such as parliamentary debate, are often viewed with caution. Although debate is widely recognized in ELT as an effective strategy to strengthen students' language skills and critical thinking, its application in Aceh remains

limited due to concerns that specific topics may conflict with Sharia-based principles and social sensitivities. This tension places teachers in a challenging position as they must foster students' reasoning skills while protecting communal values.

Islam does not limit critical thinking; meanwhile, the believer must think critically. However, the practice of developing critical thinking through debate is often viewed as a Liberalist thinking framework in Acehnese society. Thus, its development was constrained by deeply rooted cultural and religious norms. Several studies had discovered that the cultural norm limit critical thinking and debate toward specific topic which was caused by egocentrism, conformity, and stereotypes, exacerbated by cultural norms prioritizing group harmony (Asmanidar, 2024), it was supported by Anzaikhan (2021) who stated that Ulama Dayah (Traditional Islamic scholar in Aceh) generally rejected debate which as viewed as pluralism and discourage studying Islamic thought outside traditional frameworks. This rejection may stem from the eagerness to conserve the social order within the religious and cultural context, which is why Aceh conservatively limits critical thinking to a certain level of topics and scope, such as religion, faith, and culturally taboo subjects.

The region's socio-legal framework, the implementation of Sharia law under Aceh's special autonomy granted by the Indonesian Government since 2015, and the traditional Islamic scholars in Aceh are some of the reasons why this cultural tendency is reinforced in Aceh. In maintaining the social order, questioning a religion or cultural view may be perceived as a challenge to morality and faith. Asriningpuri (2020) stated that the conservative community often perceives critical inquiry as being negotiated within boundaries in the name of moral and cultural loyalty, and debate is a critical thinking framework that the motion discusses unlimited topics and issues, making it vulnerable to being misunderstood.

However, the initiatives for cultivating critical thinking in Aceh are not halted, and the education platform continues to foster critical thinking in ways that are culturally resonant through education. Several studies have portrayed numerous efforts to increase students' critical thinking (Nushur & Dewie Astutie, 2021). Even critical thinking through debate might be challenged, but Aceh is not closed to the development of critical thinking. Such interventions demonstrate how education can offer a less confrontational platform for critical thinking in Aceh's cultural context.

The balancing act between protecting communal integrity and valuing intellectual approach is the overall Acehnese society's view toward critical thinking development. Critical thinking is not inherently rejected. It is essential to operate within the boundaries of ethical, religious, and cultural frameworks, ensuring that questioning and analysis are viewed as constructive rather than disruptive to social harmony (Asmanidar, 2024; Nushur & Dewie Astutie, 2021). However, the educators' perception of the use of the parliamentary debate model in promoting critical thinking remains questioned, even when they employ these approaches.

In the Aceh context, it is expected that education will reflect and respect the prevailing social assumptions that Sharia-based education inherently must not promote unlimited space for critical thinking and liberalism, particularly in activities such as debate that might invite dissent or touch on taboo topics like religion, politics, or liberal ideologies.

The research gaps are evident, as previous studies have explored debate-based pedagogy and the development of critical thinking in general Indonesian contexts or in Muslim-majority countries. However, very few have specifically examined the intersection between debate practices and Sharia-governed education systems. Aceh possesses distinct characteristics compared to other regions due to the direct enforcement of Islamic law, the strong traditional authority of Islamic scholars, and high sensitivity toward topics perceived as liberal. However, an evidence-based understanding of how EFL teachers navigate these cultural boundaries when adopting Western-derived instructional strategies remains absent. This study fills that gap by focusing on teachers' perceptions as key educational decision-makers and by framing parliamentary debate within the concept of culturally responsive and contextualized ELT. The novelty of this research lies in its contribution to understanding how global pedagogical models can be localized without compromising religious and cultural values, offering a new lens for ELT practices in conservative educational settings.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore how EFL teachers in Aceh perceive the use of parliamentary debate in EFL classrooms. It seeks to investigate three questions: (1) how is the teacher's understanding of the nature

of debate? (2) what is the teacher's acceptance of using debate as an instructional strategy in Aceh, and (3) what is the teacher's evaluation of the debate appropriateness within the socio-religious context of Aceh?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive quantitative design (Gleixner, 2022; Mbanaso et al., 2023), which was conducted through a structured survey distributed to EFL teachers in Aceh. The survey was appropriately selected to investigate the perspectives of a wide range of teachers.

Respondents

The research participants are EFL teachers working in senior high schools and Islamic educational institutions (madrasah aliyah) in various districts of Aceh, comprising a total of 252 teachers randomly selected from over 519 EFL teachers in Aceh. To limit the criteria for the randomized teachers, the following list of research participant criteria was filtered through the instruments.

Table 1. Research Participants Criteria.

No	Criteria	Description
1	Teaching Field	EFL teachers from junior/senior high schools under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education or Islamic institutions (madrasah tsanawiyah and madrasah aliyah)
2	Teaching Experience	Minimum of 2 years of teaching experience in the current institution.
3	Educational Qualification	Holding at least a Bachelor's degree (S1) in English Education or related fields.
4	Accessibility	Willing and available to complete the research instruments (questionnaire).
5	Consent	Provided informed consent to participate voluntarily in the research

Instruments and Data Collection

For the quantitative phase, a self-administered questionnaire was developed to investigate teachers' perceptions of parliamentary debate in relation to understanding the nature of the debate, acceptance of debate as an instructional strategy, and evaluation of debate's appropriateness in the socio-religious context. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended items, measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Table 2. Questionnaire Indicators

No	Focus	Indicator
1	Nature of the debate, acceptance of debate as an instructional strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The understanding of debate as a communicative & critical-thinking activity. b. The perception of debate as a tool for language learning. c. The prior experience in conducting debate activities.
2	Acceptance of debate as an instructional strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The willingness to implement debate in their classrooms. b. Perceived benefits of debate for students' speaking and critical-thinking skills. c. Perceived challenges and constraints in using debate.
3	Evaluation of debate's appropriateness in the socio-religious context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The beliefs about the compatibility of debate with local values and religious norms. b. The perception of students' acceptance toward debate activities. c. The influence of the community expectations on debate implementation.

Adapted from (Brown, 2000; Kleinsasser et al., 1995; Tragant, 1996)

The instrument was piloted with five teachers from outside the study sample to ensure clarity, reliability, and cultural appropriateness of the items. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.82, indicating that the instrument was reliable and consistent in measuring the same constructs. The questionnaires were delivered online and written in both Bahasa Indonesia (the national language) and English (the International Language).

Data Analysis

The criteria filtered the responses from the participants; only those that matched the criteria were included. The data were then analyzed using three statistical analyses: Mean and Standard Deviation. The data were analysed using Microsoft Excel with the mean formula [Mean=AVERAGE(range)], and the Standard Deviation formula [Std==STDEV.P(range)]. Below the mean score and standard deviation table interpretation.

Tabel 4. Interpretation of Mean Scores

Value	Interpretation
1.00-1.80	Very Low
1.81-2.60	Low
2.61-3.40	Moderate
3.41-4.20	High
4.21-5.00	Very High

Source: (Best & Kahn, 2016)

Lower standard deviation values indicate more consistent responses, while higher values indicate greater diversity in perceptions. Lastly, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation is used to understand the correlation between three constructs: the understanding of the nature of the debate, the acceptance of debate as an instructional strategy, and the evaluation of debate's appropriateness in the socio-religious context.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

All procedures followed ethical research standards set by the institution to protect participants' privacy and ensure the integrity of the data. Participation was voluntary, and all teachers were informed about the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any time. Consent was obtained before data collection, and respondents' identities were kept confidential.

FINDINGS

The survey results revealed the data that hold favorable attitude toward the use of parliamentary debate in EFL teaching instruction that is divided into three major information, they are (1) the teachers' understanding toward the nature of the parliamentary debate, (2) the teachers' acceptance of debate as an Instructional Strategy, (3) The evaluation of Debate's Appropriateness in the Social-Religious Context.

Table 1. Aceh EFL Teachers' Perception on Parliamentary Debate

Construct	Understanding of the Nature of the Debate	Acceptance of Debate as an Instructional Strategy	Evaluation of Debate's Appropriateness in the Socio-Religious Context
N	252	252	252
Mean	3.77	4.51	4.18
Std. Deviation	.65	.76	.62

In the survey, the teachers' understanding of the nature of parliamentary debate, their acceptance of parliamentary debate as an instructional strategy, and their evaluation of the debate's appropriateness within Aceh's socio-religious context were evaluated, and their descriptive statistics are captured in Table 1. Using a Likert-scale questionnaire, 252 EFL teachers from Aceh, Indonesia, provided the relevant data. The findings reveal that the highest mean score was recorded for teachers' acceptance of parliamentary debate as an

instructional strategy ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.76$). This data indicates that EFL teachers from Aceh demonstrate a reasonable level of acceptance of the use of parliamentary debate in teaching foreign languages. At the same time, the second-highest mean result is in parliamentary debate's appropriateness in socio or religious context ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.62$), highlighting the importance of the parliamentary debate that is aligned with Aceh's cultural and religious norms. Lastly, the lowest construct mean score is still moderate in understanding the nature of parliamentary debate ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.65$). This indicates that while teachers may value and accept parliamentary debate as a teaching strategy, their procedural knowledge about it may not yet be fully developed. Here is the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation result based on the three constructs.

Table 1. Correlation among Constructs of Teachers' Perception on Parliamentary Debate

Constructs	1	2	3
1. Understanding of the Nature of the Debate	-	.612**	.485**
2. Acceptance of Debate as an Instructional Strategy	.612**	-	.531**
3. Evaluation of Debate's Appropriateness in the Socio-Religious Context	.485**	.531**	-

Note: N = 252 and Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

There is a strong positive correlation ($r = .612$, $p < .01$) between Understanding of the Nature of the Debate and Acceptance of Debate as an Instructional Strategy, indicating that teachers who better understand the nature and process of debate are more likely to accept it as a practical teaching method. The correlation between Acceptance and Evaluation of Debate's Appropriateness ($r = .531$, $p < .01$) suggests that teachers who value debate pedagogically also view it as appropriate within the socio-religious context. The moderate positive correlation between Understanding and Evaluation ($r = .485$, $p < .01$) shows that conceptual understanding of debate contributes to teachers' perception of its appropriateness. The correlation results demonstrate that teachers' cognitive understanding of debate is closely associated with both their pedagogical acceptance and contextual evaluation of the method. In other words, the more teachers comprehend the educational value and structure of debate, the more positively they perceive its relevance and applicability in their classrooms.

Understanding the Nature of Parliamentary Debate

The details regarding teachers' understanding of the nature of parliamentary debate are as follows.

Table 2. Aceh EFL Teachers' Understanding on Parliamentary Debate

Questions	Mean	Std. Deviation	n
I understand the basic structure and format of a formal debate.	4,35	0,77	252
I am familiar with some types of debate (parliamentary, policy, Lincoln-Douglas).	2,62	0,74	252
I can explain the key elements of argumentation (claim, evidence, rebuttal, etc.).	3,00	0,66	252
I understand the role of critical thinking in debate activities.	4,86	0,36	252
I am aware of the differences between debate and general classroom discussions.	4,74	0,66	252
I can guide students to prepare constructive arguments for a debate.	3,00	0,85	252
I know how to evaluate students' performance in a debate.	2,80	0,66	252
I understand the potential educational benefits of debate for language learning.	4,82	0,47	252

Table 2 presents the statistical description of the teachers' understanding of parliamentary debate. The highest mean score is collected for the statement "I understand the role of critical thinking in debate activities" ($M=4.86$, $SD=0.36$) and "I understand the potential educational benefits of debate for language learning" ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 0.47$) showing a very homogenous responses that indicate the EFL teachers in Aceh fully aware of

the purpose of the debate in educational context such as the development of critical thinking and language development.

High awareness of the value of parliamentary debate is also shown in the statement "I understand the basic structure and format of a formal debate" ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.77$) and "I am aware of the differences between debate and general classroom discussions" ($M = 4.74$, $SD = 0.66$). This homogeneous response suggests that most EFL teachers in Aceh have grasped the fundamental structure of debate, which involves presenting arguments from both positive and negative perspectives, as well as its distinct characteristics from general classroom discussions.

While the lower mean score is in the statement "I am familiar with different types of debate" ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 0.74$), this indicates that the respondents are not familiar with types of debate such as parliamentary, policy, and Lincoln-Douglas debate. While the second lowest result in this section is "I know" ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 0.47$), it reflects the teachers' limited understanding of the concept of debate in depth, including its types and formats, as well as performance evaluation in debate. Based on the initial data, the following conclusions can be drawn, as shown in the table below.

Table 3. Aceh EFL Teachers' Understanding on Parliamentary Debate

Construct	Conceptual	Procedural	Purpose-Oriented
N	252	252	252
Mean	3.90	3.42	4.82
Std. Deviation	.72	.63	.47

Overall, the results for the teachers' understanding toward parliamentary debate is that Aceh's EFL teachers possess an awareness of parliamentary debate's purpose ($M=4.82$, $SD=0.47$) and conceptual understanding ($M=3.42$, $SD =0.63$) in educational setting, however, this perception also found in procedural ($M=3.42$, $SD=0.63$) indicating neutral respons that means the Aceh EFL teachers required more training and development in strengthening their deepeunderstanding of parliamentary debate.

Teachers' Acceptance of Parliamentary Debate as a Classroom Model

The details of the perception regarding the teachers' acceptance of the parliamentary debate in a pedagogical context are shown in the following table.

Table 4. Aceh EFL Teachers' Acceptance on Parliamentary Debate

Questions	Mean	Std. Deviation	n
I believe debate can improve students' English-speaking skills.	4,68	0,68	252
I believe debate can enhance students' critical thinking abilities.	4,66	0,71	252
I am willing to integrate debate into my teaching practice.	4,16	0,94	252
I feel confident in facilitating a debate activity in my classroom.	4,40	0,73	252
I believe debate is an effective method for engaging students in learning English.	4,75	0,54	252
I am willing to receive training on how to use debate in EFL classes.	4,46	0,70	252
I believe that using debate will motivate students to participate more actively.	4,26	0,96	252
I believe that the benefits of using debate outweigh potential challenges.	4,69	0,78	252

The table above outlines teachers' acceptance, suitability, and compatibility toward the use of parliamentary debate in EFL classrooms. Almost all the statements in this poem showed homogeneous and positive responses. Such as "I believe debate is an effective method for engaging students in learning English" ($M = 4.75$, $SD=0.94$), "I am willing to receive training on how to use debate in EFL classes" ($M=4.46$, $SD=0.70$), "I feel confident in facilitating a debate activity in my classroom" ($M = 4.40$, $SD=0.73$), "I believe debate can improve students' English-speaking skills" ($M=4.68$, $SD=0.68$), "I believe debate can enhance students' critical thinking abilities". ($M=4.66$, $SD=0.71$), "I believe that using debate will motivate students to participate more

actively" ($M=4.26$, $SD=0.96$), and "I believe that the benefits of using debate outweigh potential challenges" ($M=4.69$, $SD=0.78$). The teachers indicate a high acceptance of this debate as an instructional strategy in their classroom setting because the debate is perceived as a potential strategy for improving students' English-speaking skills, critical thinking, and potentially motivating them.

The lowest mean score was categorized as high in the statement "I am willing to integrate debate into my teaching practice." ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.94$). Even though this statement is the lowest among the other statements in the acceptance categories, it does not mean that the teacher's willingness is low, because the category of the response is still categorized as highly homogeneous, indicating a high willingness to integrate debate into teaching practice. The overall result for the Aceh teachers' acceptance of parliamentary debate in EFL teaching instruction is presented in the following tables.

Table 5. Aceh EFL Teachers' Acceptance on Parliamentary Debate into Classroom Instruction.

Construct	Effectiveness	Willingness	Feasibility
N	252	252	252
Mean	4.57	4.46	4.40
Std. Deviation	.78	.73	.73

Overall, the above table shows a very high positive response toward the acceptance of the debate into a classroom context in terms of effectiveness ($M=4.57$, $SD=0.72$), willingness ($M=4.46$, $SD=0.73$), and feasibility ($M=4.40$, $SD=0.73$). These findings suggest that Aceh's EFL teachers hold positive views toward parliamentary debate as a means of helping EFL teachers in the classroom.

Evaluation of Debate's Appropriateness within the Socio-Religious Context of Aceh

Evaluating the appropriateness of the debate in a socio-religious context in Aceh is based on two criteria: compatibility and challenges. Here are the results of each statement.

Table 6. Aceh EFL Teachers' Evaluation Parliamentary Debate

Questions	Mean	Std. Deviation	n
Debate is compatible with the values and norms of Aceh's society.	3,15	0,53	252
Debate can be conducted in ways that respect Islamic values.	4,36	0,76	252
Debate topics should be carefully selected to align with socio-religious sensitivities.	4,87	0,40	252
Debate can encourage respectful disagreement without causing conflict.	4,49	0,65	252
Debate activities should avoid topics that are sensitive in the Acehnese context.	4,56	0,65	252
I believe debate can be adapted to fit the local cultural and religious environment.	4,50	0,51	252
I feel comfortable organizing debates under Aceh's socio-religious context.	3,33	0,71	252
I believe parents and the community would support debate activities in schools.	4,15	0,71	252

Table 6 presents teachers' evaluation of parliamentary debate in relation to Aceh's socio-cultural and religious context. The highest agreement with a very homogeneous response is found in the statement "Debate topics should be carefully selected to align with socio-religious sensitivities" ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 0.40$), indicating that the topics in debate are very sensitive. It has to be aligned with the socio-religious context. In contrast, high positivity and homogenous response to the statement "Debate can be conducted in ways that respect Islamic values" ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.76$), "Debate can encourage respectful disagreement without causing conflict" ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 0.65$), and " I believe debate can be adapted to fit the local cultural" ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.51$). Those responses showed that there is a high expectation and agreement that the debate can be aligned with the local cultural and religious values in Aceh.

The lower responses are in the statement "Debate is compatible with the values and norms of Aceh's society" ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.53$) and "I feel comfortable organizing debates in my class under Aceh's socio-religious context" ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.71$). The neutral response indicates that the teachers perceive the debate as not fully adaptable to the Aceh cultural and religious context. Thus, the teachers required a modification to make the debate compatible with the current condition of Aceh without conflicting with its cultural and religious values. Here is the conclusion of the statement on evaluation.

Table 7. Aceh EFL Teachers' Evaluation on Parliamentary Debate into Classroom Instruction

Construct	Compatibility	Challenges
N	252	252
Mean	3.97	4.53
Std. Deviation	.63	.59

Overall, the findings on the teachers' evaluation showed that the compatibility ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.63$) mean score is lower compared to the challenges ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.59$) indicating that the EFL teachers in Aceh perceive that the current debate is not fully compatible with local cultural and religious context and the EFL teachers encourage the limitation and adjustment in some debate topic (motion) to the context that is cultural and religious sensitive to Aceh.

DISCUSSION

The research indicates that incorporating parliamentary debate into Aceh classrooms necessitates teachers to carefully adapt the method to suit the local cultural and religious context. Teachers in Aceh are not only responsible for improving students' English skills, but they also ensure that teaching methods support Islamic values and community expectations. Because of this, any new teaching approach must be adapted, not simply adopted. Parliamentary debate, although proven helpful in building critical thinking and communication skills, needs to be localized so that the content and topics are appropriate for the Aceh context. This situation illustrates that English language teaching in Aceh must always be culturally responsive, meaning that teachers choose methods that support learning while still respecting students' identities and local norms.

Aceh EFL teachers valued parliamentary debate as a potential method for enhancing critical thinking and language skills, although a significant concern was revealed in the teachers' responses, where they acknowledged being deeply aware of the cultural and religious challenges associated with adapting it into their classrooms. It demonstrates that the teacher's identity extends beyond being a language instructor to encompass that of a cultural mediator through education. In addition to their generally positive perspectives on parliamentary debate, they recognize the need for cultural and religious adjustments. Aceh EFL teachers are likely to face difficulties in fully understanding the debate as a system. These challenges include mastering the format, rules, and techniques of argumentation, as well as assessment methods that emphasize the critical thinking embedded in arguments. As these are essential teaching skills, teachers must acquire and master them in order to effectively integrate parliamentary debate into the classroom context.

Aceh EFL teachers identify the need for a proper adaptation of parliamentary debate in motions concerning the socio-religious context in Aceh, as the only province in Indonesia that regulates Islamic Sharia Law as its daily regulation and culture. The complexity of adapting the debate into a new pedagogical model that is culturally and religiously sensitive is one of the challenges for EFL teachers in implementing it in a classroom context (Wahyuni, Qamariah, Gani, et al., 2020; Wahyuni, Syahputra, & Irmayanti, 2020). However, the data also revealed that the EFL teachers' understanding of the nature of debate is the lowest among all the questions. It reflected that the EFL teachers' ability to prepare, teach, and evaluate lessons using parliamentary debate in their ELF teaching required more attention than the other aspects.

Parliamentary debate has been widely recognized as an effective teaching strategy in elevating the four language skills (speaking, reading, listening, and writing) as integral components of language learning. Moreover, the findings also found that the teachers' perception is strong that the debate has a significant

contribution not only to the improvement of students' critical thinking abilities, but also supports the development of the 4Cs (critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration) (Pardede, 2020), making it a comprehensive pedagogical approach for 21st-century skills. The strong agreement among Aceh teachers suggests that they recognize the theoretical value of debate as more than just a speaking activity, but as a structured process to encourage reasoning and reflection.

The debate procedure is generally understood as a process categorized into planning, implementation, and evaluation, which is further divided into giving feedback and scoring. It is an important point in implementing parliamentary debate into a classroom setting. This suggests that while the EFL teachers in Aceh conceptually understand the educational benefits of debate, they may be lacking in preparation, implementation, and evaluation within the debate. In line with this concept, Watson (2021) once described this phenomenon as "declarative knowledge," where people understand the concepts, and "procedural knowledge," where people know how to apply the declarative knowledge in proper practice.

To be an effective classroom facilitator, declarative knowledge alone is insufficient to assist in a debate classroom. Thus, without sufficient training in debate formats, rules, and assessment, teachers may struggle to incorporate parliamentary debate into their EFL classrooms. Aceh represents a unique cultural and religious context in which Islamic values and local traditions have a strong influence on educational practices. The study's results demonstrate that teachers' responses indicate a need to align the debate itself to avoid socio-religiously sensitive topics. Thus, the socio-religious dimension of the study is particularly significant in Aceh Education. The teachers' awareness of potential cultural conflicts and their role as mediators must strike a balance between pedagogical innovation and community values. EFL practices are not culturally neutral; instead, they must be localized to reflect the social and cultural realities of the target context (Hasibuan et al., 2025).

For Aceh teachers, parliamentary debate may still be perceived as a "foreign" model requiring significant adaptation before being accepted by the broader community. The analysis of the parliamentary debate compatibility and its challenges further reinforces this perspective. While teachers rated debate's compatibility at a moderate level, the challenges dimension received a higher mean score, indicating that teachers are more aware of the difficulties of the implementation than of its current applicability. This cautious yet pragmatic perception among Aceh EFL teachers suggests that they are open to using debate but emphasize the need for modification and adaptation in topic selection and classroom implementation. Rasyin & Namrullah (2021) wrote an inline statement about this finding, stating that the success of debate in EFL classrooms often depends on contextual adjustments that ensure cultural appropriateness while preserving the pedagogical benefits. Taken together, these findings suggest that parliamentary debate holds strong potential as an instructional strategy in Aceh but requires careful contextualization.

Teachers are highly aware of its educational benefits, particularly in enhancing critical thinking and language proficiency. However, gaps in procedural knowledge and concerns about cultural compatibility present significant challenges. To address these, professional development programs focused on debate training, as well as curriculum design that incorporates culturally sensitive debate topics, may be essential. This approach would not only strengthen teachers' capacity to implement debate but also ensure that the practice aligns with Aceh's socio-religious environment. Although the collected evidence indicates that integrating parliamentary debate into the classroom in Aceh could be a powerful teaching model, its success hinges on prudent adaptation to the local socio-religious context. Aceh EFL teachers regularly recognized the potential of parliamentary debates for sharpening critical thinking and language skills.

This study contributes to English language teaching by demonstrating how an international teaching model can be effectively adapted in an Islamic educational context. The discussion provides valuable insights for curriculum planners, policymakers, and teacher educators on how to support the use of debate in schools. It highlights the importance of preparing teachers not only to understand the concept of debate but also to manage the process in class—from planning to guiding student arguments to evaluating their performance. These insights can help teachers grow professionally and encourage more interactive and student-centered learning activities in Aceh.

However, the discussion also recognizes several limitations. The interpretation is based on what teachers report, which may not always reflect what happens in the classroom. The focus on Aceh also means that these ideas may not be directly applicable to other regions with different cultural contexts. Additionally, since this study does not include classroom observations, it does not demonstrate how debate is actually used in teaching. These limitations indicate that further research is necessary through classroom trials, larger samples, and additional methods.

In conclusion, this discussion highlights that Aceh teachers play a dual role: developing students' language skills while also preserving the cultural and religious values of their community. Parliamentary debate has strong potential to enhance students' critical thinking and communication skills, but it must be tailored to local needs. When carefully adjusted to fit the Aceh context, debate can become a meaningful teaching model that supports student learning while respecting the community's values. This is a notable example of how contextualized English teaching can be effective, as it connects global teaching ideas with local culture in a balanced and respectful manner.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the perceptions of Aceh EFL teachers regarding parliamentary debate as an instructional strategy within the unique socio-religious context of Aceh. The findings revealed that teachers demonstrated a dual awareness; on the one hand, they acknowledged the significant educational benefits of debate in fostering students' critical thinking and language skills, while on the other hand, they expressed strong sensitivity to the cultural and religious challenges of implementing it in their classrooms. Overall, the highest levels of agreement were observed in teachers' acceptance of parliamentary debate as an effective and engaging instructional strategy, supported by their belief in its capacity to improve English proficiency and enhance student motivation. However, the results also revealed limitations in teachers' procedural knowledge, including their understanding of debate formats, rules, and assessment methods. This indicates the need for targeted professional development and training to strengthen teachers' practical skills in facilitating debate activities.

The evaluation of the debate's appropriateness in Aceh's socio-religious context further revealed a cautious stance. While teachers agreed that debate can be conducted in ways that respect Islamic values and can be adapted to fit local traditions, they remained neutral regarding its full compatibility with Acehnese norms. This reflects both optimism and caution: teachers recognize the potential of parliamentary debate but emphasize the importance of cultural adaptation, particularly in the careful selection of debate topics. In conclusion, parliamentary debate has strong potential to be integrated into Aceh's EFL classrooms as a means of promoting critical thinking and communicative competence. However, its successful adoption depends on two key factors: (1) equipping teachers with the necessary procedural skills through training and professional development, and (2) contextualizing debate practices to align with Aceh's socio-religious environment. By addressing these factors, parliamentary debate can be transformed from a foreign pedagogical model into a culturally responsive tool that supports both language education and the preservation of local values.

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