

MALE AND FEMALE'S SPEAKING ABILITIES DIFFERENCES IN DEBATING CONTEXT

Yayu Anggraini H. Katili¹

¹Universitas Negeri Manado, Jln.Kampus Tondano, Tondano, Sulawesi Utara, Indonesia
Email: yayukatili@unima.ac.id

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Abstract. This study analyzed the differences in male and female speaking skills such as organization, opinion, rebuttal, sentence structure, and fluency in debate activities. This study used descriptive-qualitative methods and collected the data by using observations, audiovisual recordings, and interviews. As a result, male students were better than female students in constructing speeches, presenting their arguments, responding to opponents, organizing sentences, lexical hedges, and intensifiers in their sentences, and speaking their own words fluently. They could understand the main points, rephrase sentences, use reinforcing words, and sometimes produce pauses. On the contrary, female students were unsuccessful in delivering the main points, using unfinished sentences, repeating the sentences, using lexical hedges and intensifiers, and producing frequent pauses in debate activities. Thus, teachers should use different methods in teaching, assessing, and measuring the speaking ability of male and female students in debate activities, particularly in Speaking classes.

Keywords: Male, Female, Speaking Ability, Debating Context

Abstrak. Penelitian ini difokuskan untuk menganalisis perbedaan kemampuan berbicara laki-laki dan perempuan seperti pengorganisasian, pendapat, sanggahan, struktur kalimat dan kelancaran dalam kegiatan debat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif-kualitatif dan mengumpulkan data dengan menggunakan observasi, rekaman audiovisual, dan wawancara. Hasilnya, siswa laki-laki ditemukan lebih baik daripada siswa perempuan dalam menyusun pidato, mempresentasikan argumen mereka, menanggapi lawan, mengorganisir kalimat, lexical hedges dan intensifier dalam kalimat mereka dan berbicara dengan kata-kata mereka sendiri dengan lancar. Mereka mampu memahami poin-poin utama, menyusun ulang kalimat, menggunakan kata-kata penguat, dan terkadang membuat jeda. Sebaliknya, siswa perempuan tidak berhasil menyampaikan poin-poin utama, menggunakan kalimat yang belum selesai, mengulang kalimat, menggunakan lexical hedges dan intensifier, dan sering melakukan jeda dalam kegiatan debat. Oleh karena itu, guru harus menggunakan metode yang berbeda dalam mengajar, menilai, dan mengukur kemampuan berbicara siswa laki-laki dan perempuan dalam kegiatan debat, khususnya di kelas Berbicara.

Kata Kunci: Pria, Wanita, Kemampuan Berbicara, Konteks Debat

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INTRODUCTION

Male and female students exhibit distinct verbal communication abilities, particularly discernible when engaged in debates. Moreover, these differences become apparent and analyzable within the context of debating. Furthermore, debating, as outlined by Salim (2015), serves as a platform for students to showcase their skills in formal settings. Consequently, when

students participate in debates, they are required to effectively organize their topics, articulate arguments, counter their opponents' points, structure their sentences coherently, and speak fluently. Hence, evaluating the speaking proficiency of both male and female students can be achieved by assessing their performances in the debate process.

In the present day, debating has become a prominent activity for students in the fifth semester of the English Department, particularly in the Speaking IV class. This activity is integrated into their curriculum, where they learn and practice debating throughout the entire semester. However, various phenomena are observed when these students engage in debates. Firstly, female students encounter challenges in organizing their sentences. Secondly, they tend to present numerous arguments or speak extensively, often deviating from the main point. Lastly, they commonly employ incorrect words and leave sentences unfinished. In contrast, male students demonstrate a more organized approach, presenting clear main arguments, staying focused on the point, utilizing correct language, and incorporating reformulation in their communication.

Pease (2013) suggested that females excel in verbal skills, adept at organizing words and multitasking. Similarly, Goldberg and Roswell (2013) asserted the superiority of females in verbal abilities, highlighting their proficiency in fluency, oral comprehension, grammar, spelling, and reading comprehension. Rathus also argued in his book that females may struggle more with emotional control due to heightened sensitivity to social contexts compared to males. Consequently, the theory posits that while female students generally demonstrate superior oral skills compared to males, they may be more influenced by their social conditions or environments.

In contrast, Plug et al (2021) observed that females' language in social contexts tends to feature limited vocabulary, simpler sentence structures, and incomplete sentences compared to males. Likewise, females often produce incomplete ideas or unfinished sentences, leaving thoughts incomplete by introducing new words or phrases, such as "I know I could do it/the way/well." Conversely, males tend to employ more reformulation when constructing sentences, as exemplified by statements like "He is my best friend, you know/I mean I cannot leave him like that" (Zvereva, 2019). Similarly, in her study on non-native speakers, Zvereva (2019) discovered significant distinctions between male and female students in generating unfinished sentences and engaging in reformulation. A female student, for instance, produced an unfinished sentence, exemplified by "you can do that but then you are never yeah you have to have a mino/I do not know a min/ you have a minority government you can have that." On the other hand, a male student demonstrated reformulation with an example like "it looked like an

old hotel of/but very grand with old mirrors and chandeliers."

Moreover, in the context of a debate, students engage in countering a motion and presenting their arguments and statements through a five to seven-minute speech. This involves thoughtful consideration and preparation regarding the motion, where they articulate their arguments. Consequently, they prioritize thinking before speaking, resulting in words and sentences that are naturally generated from their minds. Their cognitive processes come into play as they use their brains to contemplate the motion and express it through their spoken words. Consequently, male, and female students naturally exhibit different speaking abilities in their speeches.

The presence of a specific brain zone for speech enables females to learn foreign languages more rapidly and effortlessly than males (Pease, 2013). They highlight that when females speak, brain scans indicate simultaneous activity in the front left and right brain centers responsible for speech control. Conversely, Wood et al (2021) posits that males and females utilize their brains differently, with females demonstrating a more balanced brain usage and males tending to be more one-sided. This distinction contributes to gender differences in verbal communication. On the other hand, Pease (2013) propose that the dissimilarity between males and females extends beyond brain usage to encompass variations in living environments, values, and rules. Consequently, the differences in verbal communication abilities between males and females arise not only from distinct brain functions but also from the influence of psychological conditions and environments.

Building upon these arguments and cases, this research aims to investigate disparities in speaking abilities between male and female students within a debating context. Furthermore, Brown (2004) have put forth a method for assessing debates, considering aspects such as organization, arguments, rebuttal, sentence structure, and fluency. Thus, the differences in male and female speaking abilities can be systematically analyzed using this rubric for debate assessment.

METHOD

The research employed the descriptive qualitative approach, which focuses on gathering data related to personal experiences, introspection, life stories, interviews, observations, historical context, interactions, and visual texts that hold significance and meaning in individuals' lives. For this study, three speaking classes were selected as the research participants, comprising a total of 6 male and 6 female students from the fifth semester of the English Department.

The selection of participants was based on the researcher's initial observation, where individuals exhibiting similar characteristics were identified, and they willingly agreed to take part in the research. Data collection for this study involved employing observation, audio-visual recording, and interviews. The primary aim of the observation was to identify the initial problem under investigation, specifically to discern variations in the speaking abilities of male and female students within a debating context. The researcher observed English students from three classes as they engaged in debate practice within the classroom. The entire process of their debates, from initiation to conclusion, was visually recorded and documented using an audio-visual recorder. The researcher focused on capturing their speech production by creating video recordings. Additionally, the researcher not only documented and filmed the participants' speech production but also observed and noted differences, evaluating them based on a debate assessment rubric that included criteria such as organization, arguments, rebuttal, grammar, and fluency.

The analysis of data using Brown (2004) rubric for assessing debate involves a thorough examination of participants' performances across multiple dimensions. First and foremost, the organization of the speeches is assessed, considering the presence of a well-defined introduction, logically developed arguments, and a concise conclusion. The strength and persuasiveness of the arguments, supported by relevant evidence, form the basis for evaluating the 'Arguments' category. Additionally, participants' ability to effectively respond to opposing viewpoints, known as 'Rebuttal,' is scrutinized, with attention to the clarity and persuasiveness of their counterarguments. The 'Sentence Structure' category delves into the participants' use of language, assessing the construction of sentences and grammatical correctness. Patterns of sentence complexity or simplicity are identified and evaluated. The final dimension, 'Fluency,' focuses on the participants' spoken language skills, encompassing the natural flow of speech, including pauses, rhythm, stress, and intonation.

Integration of scores from each category provides an overall assessment of participants' debating performances. A comparative analysis is then conducted to identify any gender-specific trends or differences in organization, arguments, rebuttal, sentence structure, and fluency. The findings from this analysis not only offer insights into the strengths and weaknesses of both male and female participants but also guide recommendations for improvement in specific areas. The systematic application of Chan's rubric ensures a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of participants' debating abilities about gender differences.

RESULTS

The provided table presents scores for male and female students in a debate, assessed based on criteria such as organization, argumentation, rebuttal, sentence structure, and fluency, according to the rubric developed by Brown (2004).

Table 1. Male and female students' scores in debate

Participant	Organization	Argument	Rebuttal	Sentence Structure	Fluency	Total
Male Students	16	16	17	16	16	81
Female Students	15	12	15	14	15	71

The analysis of the debate scores presented in Table 1, as per the assessment rubric developed by Brown (2004) reveals notable differences between male and female students in their speaking abilities within a debating context. In terms of organization, male students achieved a slightly higher score (16) compared to their female counterparts (15), indicating a marginally superior ability to structure their debate content.

Similarly, male students outperformed female students in constructing compelling arguments, as evidenced by scores of 16 and 12, respectively. The trend continues in the rebuttal category, where male students demonstrated stronger skills with a score of 17, while female students scored 15. The assessment of sentence structure also favored male students, who scored 16 compared to the female students' score of 14. In the fluency category, both male and female students performed well, with male students holding a slight advantage (16 to 15). The cumulative effect of these individual category scores is reflected in the total scores, where male students obtained a higher total of 81, outperforming female students who scored 71.

This comprehensive analysis indicates that male students generally exhibited stronger speaking abilities across various facets of debate, showcasing their proficiency in organization, argumentation, rebuttal, sentence structure, and fluency. Further exploration may be necessary to understand the nuanced factors contributing to these differences and to inform strategies for improving speaking abilities in a debating context for both male and female students.

DISCUSSION

Initially, an analysis was conducted on how participants structured their sentences, presented arguments, countered opponents, organized their expressions, and demonstrated fluency during the debate process. Surprisingly, these findings contradicted the assertions made

by (Pease, 2013), who posited that females exhibited superior verbal skills, adept organizational abilities, and proficiency in multitasking. Similarly, the results diverged from Goldberg and Roswell (2013) theory, wherein he contended that females outperformed males in various verbal aspects, including fluency, oral comprehension, grammar, spelling, and reading comprehension. Furthermore, they suggested that female had less control over their emotions compared to males, attributing this to their heightened sensitivity to social contexts. Consequently, his theory proposed that while females excelled in oral skills, they were more susceptible to the influence of their social conditions and environments.

The data reveals distinctions in scores between male and female students during the debating process. The research outcomes indicate that a majority of male students outperformed their female counterparts in the organization of their speeches. This aligns with Nonlohy (2020) that "speech organization encompasses the pattern of the speech, including introduction, problem, and conclusion." Consequently, each student participating in the debating context crafted an introduction and delivered a memorable conclusion to the audience. The findings highlight that nearly all male students received a score of 3 or higher for organizing their speeches. In contrast, some female students achieved a score of 3 or higher in organizing their speech during debates, while others attained a score of 2 in this aspect of the debate.

Nevertheless, the results diverged from Pease's theory (2013), which asserted that females excelled in verbal skills, had proficiency in organizing words, and demonstrated multitasking abilities. This discrepancy emerged because the data indicated that male students were adept at organizing their speeches without introducing unrelated points. This suggests that they presented concise and focused arguments during debates, effectively organizing materials, evidence, and presentations. In contrast, female students appeared to face challenges in organizing their debates. Consequently, the observed phenomena suggest that, within a debating context, male students exhibit superior skills in organizing their speeches compared to their female counterparts.

Argument

The findings indicate that male students outperformed their female counterparts in delivering persuasive arguments during the debate process. Plug (2021) emphasizes that effective argumentation involves presenting compelling arguments to the audience, supported by well-sourced reasons and relevant evidence. Thus, students achieving high scores delivered persuasive arguments substantiated by factual support. Upon examining the rubric used for assessing debates, it is evident that male students demonstrated robust arguments, even if they

did not always persuade both the audiences and judges. The previous findings illustrated a notable score difference, with male students earning scores of 16, while female students received scores of 12. This 4-point disparity suggests a substantial divergence in the quality of arguments presented.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that some male and female students obtained average grades in delivering arguments. However, certain male students excelled in presenting compelling arguments related to the motion. Conversely, some female students appeared uncertain, possibly forgetting the next point or sentence, and relied on memorization. As a result, while female students generally stayed on track with their arguments, the persuasiveness of their delivery was often perceived as lacking. As a result, these findings deviate from Goldberg and Roswell's (2013) but align with Merchant (2012) arguments, supporting the notion that males excel in debating and reasoning. This theory reinforces the observation that male students exhibited proficiency in delivering persuasive arguments during debates, characterized by their ability to provide compelling statements.

On the contrary, the subsequent data revealed a tendency among female students to engage in repetitive speech patterns. This implies that they reiterated the same arguments throughout their debates, expressing their points across numerous sentences. However, these sentences often converged into a singular idea. To illustrate:

So eh technology ee....if we use technology is to,if we buy technology ee...expensive an we.....and FIFA didnt want to show the game just watching vedeo game play from the technology, So, what is eeee..so FIFA what is,FIFA ee...in FIFA ee...will....we disagree wwith this because too expensive too expensive for using and then if we stop,it will wating time if we using the technology and then technology we eill wasting time,,ee,...soccer game and the soccer the play of football

The given example illustrates a pattern where a female student consistently repeats the word 'technology' throughout her speech. Her discourse revolves around the assertion that technology is a time-wasting endeavor. Despite articulating the argument, she tends to construct sentences in a relatively simple manner. For instance, she expresses disagreement with the motion by stating, "We disagree with this motion because technology is very expensive and wastes the judges' time for making decisions in FIFA."

This tendency to repeat arguments is observed across many female students during their speeches. While they may articulate multiple sentences, the central point remains singular. This repetition contributes to the perception that, in the context of delivering speeches during debates, there exists a notable difference between male and female students in their approaches and communication styles.

Rebuttal

The results revealed that male students surpassed their female counterparts in the skill of rebutting opponents. This observation aligns with Nanlohy (2020) defining rebuttal as an opportunity to summarize critical arguments, present new examples, and refute the opposing team's arguments. Rebuttal aims to offer a compelling explanation for why a team should emerge victorious in the debate.

In this study, it was evident that male students achieved higher scores than female students in rebuttal, although the score difference was relatively modest. Specifically, male students garnered scores of 17, while female students secured scores of 15, representing a 2-point discrepancy. Notably, one male student exhibited exceptional proficiency in rebutting opponents, excelling in both defense and offense against the opposing side. His ability to identify and exploit the weaknesses of the opposing arguments contributed to his standout performance in this aspect of the debating process.

Conversely, none of the female students achieved outstanding scores comparable to their male counterparts. This discrepancy in performance highlights the distinctions in speaking abilities between male and female students within the debating context, albeit the differences being relatively minor. Interestingly, these results are at odds with Goldberg and Roswell (2013) theory, which posited that females were superior to males in verbal abilities, including speaking comprehension. They specifically argued that females excelled in speaking, particularly in the skill of rebutting opposing teams. However, the empirical findings present a different scenario, indicating that male students exhibited greater proficiency in rebutting opponents compared to their female counterparts. Consequently, these observations underscore the nuanced differences in the speaking abilities of male and female students in a debating context.

Sentence Structure

The findings reveal that male students achieved scores of 16, while female students obtained scores of 14, indicating that male students demonstrated a slightly superior proficiency in sentence structure, although the score difference is not substantial. Fetzer (2004, p. 18) asserts that a "grammatical sentence is processed and interpreted completely," suggesting that students should produce grammatically correct sentences by the language rules. Furthermore, the research findings expound on both similarities and differences in the sentence structure of male and female students within the debating context. The similarity lies in the observation that both male and female students made similar errors in using parts of speech and employed the same

language features proposed by Svendsen (2019b). However, notable differences emerged, such as female students tending to produce unfinished sentences, while male students displayed a tendency to use reformulation in their sentence construction. Thus, these findings on sentence structures elucidate the nuanced similarities and distinctions in the speaking abilities of male and female students in the context of debating.

Based on the findings, the first similarity was male and female students made the same errors in using words, phrase, or verbs. To illustrate:

Nowadays the students ec...lazy for study ee. So, they can use their logical to find the method how to winxin the games in the games itself.

According to the findings, the first similarity observed was that both male and female students made similar errors in the usage of words, phrases, or verbs. To illustrate, male students demonstrated mistakes in their use of verbs, as seen in the phrase "for study," which should have been "for studying." This error arises from the rule that words starting with "for" should be followed by "-ing." Another mistake involved the phrase "to found," where the infinitive should be followed by the present tense, making it "to find." Similarly, the phrase "to wins" should have been "to win." Therefore, male students exhibited inaccuracies in their use of phrases and verbs during the debating process. Likewise, female students also displayed similar errors in their use of phrases and verbs. For example:

Then and if we are using human, we will e didnt wasting time, we will what is make decision in that time. You know that and then ee...so also in this motion we we agree we dont agree with this motion because so that people talk to using technology in champion from minimalize mistake ee.

According to the findings, a noteworthy similarity emerged, as both male and female students committed similar errors in the usage of words, phrases, or verbs. In the examples provided, both male and female students demonstrated mistakes in verb usage. Specifically, male students erred by not adding the appropriate form of "to be" before the verb that required "-ing," while female students exhibited a comparable mistake by neglecting to include "to be" before the verb in the -ing form. Additionally, there was a shared error in failing to use the correct verb form or present tense after the infinitive.

This observation leads to the conclusion that both male and female students exhibited inaccuracies and errors in their use of parts of speech in their sentences during the debating process. Notably, these results contradict Rathus's theory (2015), which claimed that females were superior to males in verbal abilities, including grammar proficiency. The empirical evidence presented here suggests a deviation from Rathus's theory, as both males and females

demonstrated similar errors in grammar usage.

In further examination of the results, the second notable similarity was identified: both male and female students employed the same language features as proposed by Svendsen (2019b). She elucidated that female language exhibits distinct characteristics, including the use of lexical hedges, intensifiers, tag questions, and hypercorrect grammar. However, the data from the present research revealed that male students also utilized similar language features to their female counterparts, specifically employing lexical hedges and intensifiers. Among male students, the employed lexical hedges included phrases like "I think" and "you know," while intensifiers encompassed words such as "maybe," "so," and "just." Similarly, female students used "I think" and "you know" as lexical hedges, and their intensifiers included "so," "well," and "maybe." Notably, no other distinctive features were identified in their speech.

These findings challenge Svendsen (2019a) which asserted that the language characteristics attributed to females were exclusive to that gender. The data from this study suggests that male students also incorporate language features traditionally associated with female speech patterns. In other cases, the results of the findings showed the third similarity of males and females in sentence structure. In this case, male and female students used longer and shorter sentences. The examples showed that males and females used longer even shorter sentences depending on their needs. Unlike, these results contradicted the theory of Svendsen (2019b), she described that female sentences were longer than male because of the impression of more speech. It was because the data presented that female students could produce longer and shorter sentences in debating. Similarly, male students made the same phenomenons. Therefore, male, and female students could produce shorter even longer sentences depending on their needs in debating context. On the contrary, the results highlighted distinctions between male and female students in sentence structures. Specifically, female students tended to generate unfinished sentences, while male students employed reformulation in their sentence construction.

Additionally, the study conducted by Jiang (2023) aligns with the current research, indicating that male speakers are more prone to leaving their sentences unfinished or being interrupted by other speakers. This aligns with the observed pattern in the present study, where female students demonstrated a higher incidence of unfinished sentences compared to their male counterparts. For instance:

So they e....they ee.and FIFA will what is mm...will.ee..ss.show the.

The examples illustrate that female students frequently constructed unfinished sentences during their speeches. In both instances, they initiated a sentence and then transitioned abruptly

to another idea or sentence. On the other hand, male students demonstrated the use of reformulation in articulating their speeches during the debating process. For example:

Okuy and then okay.for ee.and ee..the four is about people ee.whu ce..do the hlack market because of the plan packaging.

The example of male reformulation illustrates his substitution of the word 'for' with 'four'. Consequently, the results highlight that female students tended to use unfinished sentences, while male students exhibited a tendency to employ reformulation in their sentences. This implies that males and females shared similarities and differences in sentence structure aspects during debates. Furthermore, the analyzed data suggests that male students performed better in the fluency aspect compared to female students. The outcomes revealed that male students received a score of 16, whereas female students obtained a score of 15. According to Vuorsola (2019), fluency encompasses speech that closely resembles a native speaker's pausing, rhythm, stress, and intonation. Hence, every male and female student participating in debates should strive for fluency by minimizing pauses in their speech. Moreover, the data elucidates those male students exhibited occasional pauses, whereas female students demonstrated frequent pauses. For example:

I think its...its about home, its about person who didnt manage the ti..their.

The illustration above described that the pauses produced by the male student were its...its and titheir. In contrast, female students got occasional pauses and frequent pauses. For instance:

You know always ee..ece.many problem ece..likein England versus Germany, many people ee...make mistakes because..so...ce...and then.

The example provided above demonstrates the presence of frequent pauses in the speech of a female student. She consistently inserted pauses throughout a single sentence. Consequently, both male and female students exhibited occasional pauses, but it is noteworthy that female students tended to have more frequent pauses than their male counterparts. In conclusion, the observed phenomena underscored the differences between the speaking abilities of male and female students in a debating context. Notably, male students consistently achieved higher scores than their female counterparts across various aspects of debate analyzed through the rubric of assessing debate, despite the marginal score differences. The disparities were evident in their abilities to organize speeches, deliver arguments, rebut opponents, structure sentences, and speak fluently during the debate process. Thus, it can be asserted that male and female students exhibit distinct capacities in these facets of debating.

CONCLUSION

The distinct abilities of male and female students in organizing speeches, delivering arguments, rebutting opponents, arranging sentences, and speaking fluently during debates can be further categorized into several points. Firstly, male students consistently achieved higher scores than their female counterparts across all aspects of language generation in debates, including composition, argumentation, counter argumentation, sentence structure, and proficiency. Secondly, male students tended to convey their ideas more directly, while female students tended to repeat the same sentences without reaching a clear point. Thirdly, males demonstrated a proficiency in reconstructing sentences, whereas females exhibited a tendency to create unfinished sentences within the debate context. Fourthly, both males and females utilized similar language features, including vocabulary protectors and reinforcers. Fifthly, no noticeable difference emerged between male and female students in their use of parts of speech, as both groups made similar mistakes in employing subjects, verbs, and other phrases within sentences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation stemming from this study suggests that educators should consider assessing male and female students differently. Recognizing and acknowledging the distinct speaking abilities and patterns exhibited by each gender in the context of debates can lead to a fairer and more accurate evaluation. Tailoring assessment approaches to account for the observed differences can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of individual strengths and areas for improvement, fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

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