



## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ACADEMIC DEBATE SUBJECT

**Zaiton Fareeq Hassan**

Asst. Lect. / English Department/ College of  
Languages/ University of Duhok

**Hamza Zeebaree**

Asst. Lect./ English Department/College of  
languages/University of Duhok

**Aveen Ahmed Mohammed**

Asst. Lect/ English Department / College of  
Languages/ University of Duhok

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#### Correspondence:

[hamza.yousif@uod.ac](mailto:hamza.yousif@uod.ac)

### Abstract

This research paper investigates the students' attitudes towards the Academic Debate subject in an educational setting, which was surveyed at the English Department of the College of Languages of Duhok University. Thirty students from the mentioned department participated voluntarily in this study. The paper used qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. For that purpose, a questionnaire was employed as a research tool to gather students' attitudes towards the Academic Debate Class. The questionnaire consisted of 15 close-ended and two open-ended questions. The quantitative data are analysed using simple statistics, percentages and frequencies, while the qualitative data are analysed using the Thematic Analysis as the data analysis tool. Generally speaking, the findings are encouraging, indicating that most students hold positive attitudes towards the Academic Debate subject. Specifically, over 90% of the students reported feeling comfortable, like the debate class, and finding it relevant to developing their language proficiency.

Additionally, many students (86.6% to 96.6%) agree that the debate subject helped them to improve their critical thinking skills, motivation, teamwork, and active participation. However, only a small number of students (3.3% to 20%) expressed disagreement with the statements related to the positive impact of the debate subject. Some students face challenges like poor language to express ideas and argue with others, feeling shy, lacking self-confidence, and not having enough time inside the subject to debate comfortably. To sum it up, despite the challenges students face in debate class, the results highlight the potential of the academic debate subject in promoting students' language proficiency, critical thinking, motivation, and teamwork skills. The findings suggest incorporating debate classes into the curriculum may benefit students' learning experiences and overall development.

## سلوك الطلاب تجاه مادة النقاش الأكاديمية

زيتون فريق حسن\* حمزه زيباري\*\* افين احمد محمد\*\*\*

المستخلص :

يعد هذا البحث بمثابة استقصاء لآراء الطلاب بخصوص مادة النقاش الأكاديمي كأداة تعليمية لتعليم اللغة الانكليزية لغير الناطقين بها. أجريت الدراسة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية اللغات، جامعة دهوك حيث شارك 30 طالبا من القسم المذكور اعلاه طوعا في هذه الدراسة. طبق البحث الطرائق النوعية والكمية لجمع البيانات وتحليلها، حيث استخدم الاستبيان كأداة الاستطلاع آراء الطلاب. يتكون الاستبيان من 15 سؤالاً محدد الاجابة وسؤالين آخرين غير محددي الاجابة . تم تحليل البيانات الكمية باستخدام الإحصائيات الأولية والنسب المئوية والتكرارات، بينما تم تحليل البيانات النوعية باستخدام التحليل الموضوعي كأداة لتحليل البيانات. إجمالاً، بدأت النتائج مشجعة للغاية، حيث تشير إلى أن غالبية الطلاب لديهم آراء إيجابية تجاه المشاركة في صف المناظرة الأكاديمية. على وجه التحديد، أفاد أكثر من 90% من الطلاب أنهم يشعرون بالارتياح تجاه ارتياد فصل مادة النقاش الأكاديمي ، ويجدون أن لها اثراً فاعلاً في تطوير كفاءتهم اللغوية. علاوة على ذلك ، أعرب عدد كبير من الطلاب بنسبة (86.6% إلى 96.6%) عن أن هذا المنهج التعليمي ، مادة النقاش الأكاديمي ، ساعدهم على تحسين مهارات التفكير النقدي والتحفيز والعمل الجماعي والمشاركة الفعالة بينما أعرب عدد قليل فقط من الطلاب بنسبة (3.3% إلى 20%) عن عدم موافقتهم على وجود تأثير إيجابي لمادة النقاش حيث يواجه بعض الطلاب بعض التحديات مثل: ضعف اللغة في التعبير عن الأفكار والنقاش مع الآخرين، الشعور بالخجل وعدم الثقة بالنفس وعدم وجود الوقت الكافي داخل الصف للمناقشة بشكل مريح. باختصار، على الرغم من التحديات التي يواجهها الطلاب عند المشاركة في النقاش الأكاديمي، تسلط النتائج الضوء على دور مادة النقاش الأكاديمي الإيجابي في تعزيز إتقان اللغة لدى الطلاب، والتفكير النقدي، والتحفيز، ومهارات العمل الجماعي. تشير النتائج أيضاً إلى أن دمج مادة النقاش في المنهج الدراسي قد يكون مفيداً لتعزيز خبرات التعلم لدى الطلاب وتنمية مهاراتهم المذكورة آنفاً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النقاش الأكاديمي، الموقف، الطالب، واللغة .

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Academic debate refers to discussing ideas and opinions in an organised and formal setting to present logical arguments and counterarguments on a particular topic. According to Bellon (2000), what helps students improve their critical thinking skills, boost a deeper understanding of complex ideas, and improve their ability to communicate effectively is debate. He explains how debate can be integrated into English, history, and science. This also allows students to engage in structured and rigorous arguments, which can positively impact students' academic and professional success once integrated into the curriculum. Because of the above educational benefits of debate in learning, it is worth investigating students' attitudes as well as their being learners, and their attitudes help enhance both the teaching and the learning processes. To this end, this study is carried out.

### 1.1 Aims of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the students' attitudes towards the academic debate subject as a pedagogical tool. Specifically, it investigates whether this subject helps improve their language, presentational, and other skills, particularly critical thinking .

### 1.2 Research Questions

\* مدرس مساعد / قسم اللغة الانكليزية/ كلية اللغات / جامعة دهوك  
\*\* مدرس مساعد / قسم اللغة الانكليزية/ كلية اللغات / جامعة دهوك  
\*\*\* مدرس مساعد / قسم اللغة الانكليزية/ كلية اللغات / جامعة دهوك

The study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of the students, specifically 2nd year, at the Department of English, College of Languages, University of Duhok, towards the academic debate subject?
2. Does the academic debate subject help students to improve their language skills?
3. Does the academic debate subject help the students to improve their critical thinking and be open-minded individuals?
4. What challenges do students encounter while participating in the academic debate course?

### **1.3 The Problem of the Study**

As the debate subject is just one of the many subjects taught at the Department of English within the College of Languages, University of Dohuk, in the past four years and up to the present time, as far as the researchers are aware, no investigations have been carried out on this regard within the department mentioned above. For that reason, it is essential to investigate students' attitudes towards this subject as the students are the ones who are learning, and knowing their attitudes is essential for improving the teaching and learning processes .

### **1.4 Limitations of the Study**

The scope of the study is limited to only examining the attitudes of second-year students' (class of 2022-2023) within the English Department, College of Languages, UOD .

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review and Previous Studies**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature. It covers the following headings: What is debate? What is academic debate? Academic debate as a teaching tool, what is the attitude? The importance of investigating the students' attitudes and the previous studies .

##### **2.1.1 What is Debate?**

Debate is a conversation in which individuals discuss different viewpoints on by discussion. A debate can be a formal gathering, an unofficial conversation between two or more people, or a broad discussion involving many people. Also, a debate is a formal speaking format where speakers present their cases to win over listeners. According to D'cruz (2003), "persuasion" is a critical component of debate. There are no set rules for debate. The guidelines offer a framework participants can use to reduce bias and make objective judgments. As per Hornby (1987), a debate is a formal conversation, such as in public speaking, in which two or more speakers compete to showcase their ability to argue (p.221).

##### **2.1.2 What is an Academic Debate?**

Academic debate is typically held under the supervision of a learning institution to give students educational opportunities. In an academic debate, the focus is held on the discussion and analysis of ideas in which the proponents have an academic interest, and it is often delivered in front of a teacher, judge, or audience without deciding on the issue at hand. An academic discussion does cause audience members to change personally, and that change in perspective may ultimately inspire real action. In contrast, the judge's choice in an academic debate only determines the debate winner; therefore, audience decisions have a more direct impact on individuals. It may be suggested that the judge in an academic debate ignores the merits of the arguments and bases the decision only on the merits of the support presented throughout the discussion (Freeley & Steinberg, 2008). Furthermore, as noted by Frampton (2017), academic debates require participants to be open to disagree on a specific topic. It is important to remember that debate is not a personal attack but a competition where teams may be assigned opposing viewpoints. At the end of the debate, participants should shake hands to signify that it was merely a midpoint evaluation of progress, not a defence of individual beliefs (p.56).

### **2.1.3 Debate as a Teaching Tool**

According to Davis et al. (2016), debate is an inherent aspect of human nature and lies at the core of human action. It represents a broad and adaptable approach to interacting with topics, serving as an adaptable pedagogical tool. This is particularly true in the teaching language sector, where academic debate can also be used to develop speaking skills in second language education. All four skills of the English language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are practised when debating and are included in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) lessons. Moreover, debaters must master word pronunciation, stress, script, writing, vocabulary, refutation, and argumentation. So, practising debate in English requires various skills, which is inevitable that they will learn English (Alasmari & Ahmad, 2013, p.148).

Debate engages students in various cognitive and linguistic ways, making it an excellent practice for language learning. Debate is a very effective tool for improving your argumentation abilities for persuasive speech and writing and offering valuable practice for listening, speaking, and writing. Debate fosters the development of academic language abilities, fluency, and public speaking that help ESL/EFL students prepare for successful academic study. It encourages critical thinking while fostering teamwork, cooperation, and language competency improvement (Krieger, 2005). However, Salim (2015,p.99) claims that all do not share the idea of “debate as an active and effective educational method. Some have opposed and criticised the use of debate as a tool for learning and teaching”, such as Tumposky (2004) who questions whether the debate is a practical pedagogy to develop a variety of students' academic skills .

Mastering correct pronunciation in a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) is a challenging task due to the numerous intricate factors involved, such as differences in phonetics and phonology, grammar and vocabulary, as noted by Richard & Renandya (2002), Shumin (2002), and Correa (2015). Speaking requires encoding and expressing thoughts in speech streams that make sense and are contextually suitable for the environment, which can be, cognitively and socially, a challenging ability (Goh, 2017). The requirement for a large amount of cognitive space within the working memory for conceptualising, formulating, and articulating thoughts prevents learners from paying enough attention to all parts of speech (Skehan, 1998). Conversely, Zare and Othman (2013,p.1570) assure that debate helps students engage in the interactive learning course content actively; it is an encouragement for students to

learn course content better, this is on a broader, more profound and personal level. This can help them be trained to evaluate the data daily. Moreover, the debate is a valuable chance to enhance learners' speaking skills.

## **2.2 What is Attitude ?**

Attitude is the manner, character, feelings, and position about a person or a thing, as well as tendency and orientation, especially in the mind. Also, attitude is a psychological construct that describes a person's mental and emotional composition, approach to something, or point of view on it. Their thoughts, outlook, and feelings are all a part of attitude (Coon et al., 2018) .

According to Ham (2017, p. 17) and Crystal (1997), language attitudes are an individual's perceptions and feelings toward his or her language and other languages. A positive attitude towards language is essential for language learners as it positively influences their success rate. Attitudes toward language can be classified as positive or negative. Furthermore, Tanni (2015) unveils the connection between a learner's achievement in acquiring the target language and the use of that language, as well as the learner's attitude toward the language and its speakers. This is to say that learning a foreign language like English is vital to students' motivation and determination to succeed (p.139).

## **2.3 The Factors that Affect the Attitude**

Many factors affect the attitude in different ways. Below are the most influential ones:

1. Social context: Social factors are one of the main factors that impact students' attitudes. Spolsky (1989, p.131) argues that since languages are learnt in social circumstances, they are inherently social processes. He says that although language learning occurs individually, society plays a role. While social factors may not directly affect language learning, they have a significant and recognisable impact on the attitude and motivation of language learners. Similarly, Lier (1996, pp.35-36) claims that language use and acquisition are the worlds in which learners live. As a result, every activity carried out within the classroom needs to be understood in context since it may affect the students' beliefs, attitudes, and shaped behaviour. The social context encompasses the family or home setting, the learners' peer groups, the community or target language speakers, and their respective cultures (Spolsky, 1989, pp.25-26).

2. Parents of the Students: Many parent aspects, such as their educational background, religious beliefs, financial status, place of birth, and culture, not to mention their proficiency in the target language, are among the social circumstances to be taken into account (Spolosky, 1989, p. 26) These variables direct the parents' motivations, objections and preferences. According to Larsen and Long (1991, p.178), it was discovered that learners' attitudes mirrored their parents' attitudes regarding the target language in various studies looking at the role of parents and the formation process of attitudes toward speakers of the target language. They contend that children take after their parents' perspective on their target language, impacting how well they acquire it.

3. Learners' peer groups: The peer groups of learners significantly impact that person's attitude toward learning a second or foreign language. What Morgan (1996, p. 601) says about their influence is that an individual's peer might hold beliefs besides behaviour more than his or her parents might do".

4. The foreign language teacher: Positive perspectives regarding learning a second language can be cultivated through positive instructions from the teacher, peers, and course contents (Day & Ford, 1998, p. 25). Compared to students who connect with their teachers less, those with more involvement are likelier to cultivate a positive attitude about the target language. "There will be little hope of efficient education without communication between teachers and students" (Spolsky, 1972, p.3)

5. Anxiety (Fear): A consistent connection seems to exist between personality, anxiety, learning status, and language skills. Ehrman (1996, pp. 137-8) points out that learning is accompanied by various emotions, ranging from positive to unpleasant emotions and attitudes. Negative emotions and attitudes encompassing frustration, anger, fear and lack of confidence. These emotional factors can influence learning events and how much language a learner can acquire and achieve within a specific timeframe .

6. Educational context: In addition to informal settings, the learner may be allowed to acquire and speak the target language in the community; the school provides formal instructions to the learners using the target language. According to Conteh (2002, p. 193), "general learning environment, classroom dynamic, chances for students-student and student-teacher interaction, and student's perception of the teacher's dedications to their learning "influence learners' attitude and the learning environment. The learning environment in which language acquisition occurs, the English language teacher's awareness of physical, social, and cultural variations influencing the learning-teaching process, and the teaching-learning materials are all examples of educational settings .

7. Culture: The role of culture is also significant, and it cannot be ignored in students' attitudes as B.F. Skinner emphasised the importance of one's environment, particularly culture, in forming their personality (Azwar, 2005). There is no other personality other than a consistent sequence of actions that show the history of reinforcement (reinforcement, reward)—the form of reassurance from the people to their attitudes and behaviours rather than those of others.

#### **2.4The Importance of Investigating Attitude**

Investigating students' attitudes is crucial because it provides a direct insight into students' ideas, beliefs, and emotions in various situations. West (2017) asserts that numerous beliefs function subconsciously, making them almost invisible. While attitudes may not be visible, they must be inferred from overt behaviours, including verbal and nonverbal communication. Attitude has relatively long-lasting tendencies to respond consistently to particular objects or situations.

Hussain (2011) asserts that attitudes significantly influence people's professional performance. Individuals' views regarding their various occupations significantly impact their professional achievement, as noted by Cakir (2005) and quoted in Khan, Shan, and Khan (2018, p. 217). In this regard, Mill (1960, p.212) remarked, "Both teachers and students must examine their attitudes before learning can improve". In his thorough investigation of what, how, and why investigating attitudes influence learning, Mill (1960,p.212) argued that attitudes are so closely tied to motivation in the teacher whose students are positively orientated toward him and his subject matter. He will find them working with greater vigour and learning more swiftly. Additionally, students' attitudes have a substantial influence on their success. Scholars have studied students' attitudes toward learning a second or foreign language over the years, and the results confirm that students' success is closely related to their perspectives on the language (Gardner, 1985; Fakeye, 2010; Gajalakshmi, 2013), as mentioned by Dewali and Barany (2019).

## **2.5 Previous Studies**

Several studies have explored academic debate as a pedagogical tool. The following are some of them :

A study entitled “Improving the Students’ Speaking Skill through Debate Technique” by Arung and Jumardin (2016). This study used debate techniques to improve students’ speaking skills in English. It was carried out in two cycles of classroom action research and found that the debate technique improved test scores, suggesting its effectiveness in enhancing speaking skills. The study provides valuable insight for English teachers.

Moreover, another research entitled “Utilizing Debate as a Strategy of Pedagogy to Enhance Oral Proficiency in Second Language Education”, conducted by el Majidi et al. (2021), explored the effect of debate intervention on the English-speaking skills of Dutch secondary school students. Using a pretest-post-test control group design, the study revealed that the intervention group showed improvements in speech quantity, fluency, complexity, accuracy, and cohesion compared to the control group. The findings highlight the potential of debate as a pedagogical tool for L2 speaking development .

Finally, another study called “The Effects of Academic Debate on English Language Learners’ Speaking Proficiency” by Johnson and Smith (2014) examined the effects of academic debate on the speaking proficiency of English Learners (ELLS) in a US high school. The results showed that participation in academic debates significantly improved students’ speaking skills, including organising and expressing ideas, using appropriate language, and engaging in critical thinking .

It is noteworthy to mention that the current research paper is an investigation of the student’s attitudes towards the academic debate subject in a Kurdish context of the study, Department of English, College of Languages, University of Duhok (UoD), to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, no study has been carried out on the debate subject so far. The study attempts to fill that gap.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the design of the research study, which embraces qualitative and quantitative research tools, including a questionnaire with close-ended and open-ended questions. This chapter also explains the research tools, data collection, analysis, and the study's participants.

#### **3.1 The Research Tool**

The study used a questionnaire as a research tool. The questionnaire was used because we could get many students' opinions quickly. The questionnaire variables are adopted from Majidi et al. (2015) and structured based on our purpose of study and context. The questionnaire consists of two open-ended and 15 close-ended questions, yes and no .

The aim is to determine the students’ attitudes towards the academic debate subject as a teaching tool and the challenges students encounter. The table below presents the study variables .

Table 1 Research Variables (close-ended questions)

Questions	Close-ended questions
1-	Students' attitude towards debate subject
2-	Language proficiency
3-	Motivation and Fun
4-	Critical thinking and personal growth
5-	Teamwork and active participation

Table 2 Research Variables (Open-ended questions)

Questions	Open-end questions
1-	What did you learn from the debate class ?
2-	What are the challenges you faced during the debate class ?

### 3.2The Participants

The study participants are students from the English Department, College of Languages, UoD. Forty undergraduate students (males and females) from the second stage participated in this study voluntarily. However, ten were excluded because they did not answer all the questions, and we took only 30 students who answered them. This stage was chosen because they studied academic debate in the first stage of their study, were familiar with it, and practised debate; that is why we decided to take this stage as a suitable group for our study .

### 3.3Data Collection Procedures

The study followed the following procedures. First of all, the input was taken from the teacher and students; all the students participated voluntarily. Before distributing the questionnaire, an explanation of the study's purpose was provided to the students, and their answers were going to be used for this study only. There are three groups of second-year students; we distributed the questionnaire as follows among the groups: Group A (10) students, Group B (15) and Group C (15). All the data were collected in one day, February 28, 2023.

### 3.4Data Analysis Procedure

For the analyses of the data, the 15 close-ended questions were analysed using frequencies and simple statistics (percentage), and the open-ended questions were analysed using the Thematic Analysis. The Thematic Analysis encodes qualitative information (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4 as cited in Baha, 2008). In other



words, the process involves codes generated based on the developments of the themes, which means that students' answers are sorted out based on themes that develop from this sorting out .

## **Chapter Four**

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the study results are presented and then discussed, along with the results obtained from the questionnaire .

#### **4.1 Students' Attitude Towards the Academic Debate Subject**

This section consists of three questions; the table below shows that most of the responses to these questions are positive, students are comfortable, and they like debate class. Concerning the first question of this section, the number of students who were feeling positive about the debate subjects (was 96.6%); however, the number of students who were feeling negative about the debate subject was only (3.3%). In question two, the responses indicate that the rate of comfort in subjects (was 93.3%), but those who did not feel comfortable were at a rate of (6.6%) only. In question three, those who liked the debate were (93.3%). On the other hand, the number of students who did not like the debate subject was (6.6%).

Table 3 Students' Attitudes Towards Debate Class

Questions	Yes (Agree )	No (Disagree)
1- I feel positive in the debate subject	29Students(%96.6)	1Student(%3.3)
2- I am comfortable in this subject	28Students (%93.3)	2Students(%6.6)
3- I like the debate subject	28Students(%93.3)	2Students (%6.6)

#### **4.2 Language Proficiency**

The second variable of the questionnaire provides students' attitudes on the relevance of the debate subject to their language proficiency. This section also consists of three questions, and the results show that the debate subject helps improve students' language proficiency. The percentages were as follows: in questions four and five, (90%) of the students like to learn English through debate, and (90%) mentioned that it helps them improve all their language skills. However, (10%) of them disagree with the two questions .

Regarding the sixth question, (86.6%) of students agreed that the debate subject helps improve their skills in speaking and presenting seminars, and only (13.3%) disagreed .

Table 4 Language Proficiency

Questions	Yes (Agree)	No (Disagree)
Do you like learning English through the debate class ?	27Students(%90)	3Students(%10)
Does the debate subject help you to improve your language skills ?	27Students(%90)	3Students(%10)
Does the debate subject help you to improve your speaking and presentational skills?	26Students(%86.65)	4Students(%13.3)

#### 4.3 Motivation and Fun

Generally speaking, from the results obtained from this section, it could be observed that the debate subject is a factor of motivation and fun for students. This section consists of two questions. In question 7, (80%) of the students agreed that this subject motivates them. However, (20%) of the students disagreed. Also, the responses to question 8 show that the number of the students who agreed that the debate subject is fun is (80%), and those who disagreed were (20%), see Table (5) below:

Table 5 Motivation and Fun

Questions	Yes (Agree)	No (Disagree)
7- Do you feel motivated when you work through the debate subject ?	24Students(%80)	6Students(%20)
8- Is the debate subject fun ?	24Students(%80)	6Students(%20)

#### 4.4 Critical Thinking

This section provides the students' perceptions of the debate subject and how it helps them think critically. Most of the students agreed on these four questions, and the responses were as follows: questions 9 and 12, the number of students who agreed were (86.6%). However, (13.3%) of the students disagreed. Concerning the 10th question, (83.3%) of the students agreed, and (16.6%) of them did not. Also, in question 11, (96.6%) of the students agreed, and (3.3%) of them did not.

Table 6 Critical Thinking

Questions	Yes (Agree)	No ( Disagree)
9- Do you feel your reasoning skills have improved during learning how to debate ?	26Students (%86.6)	4Students (%13.3)
10- The debate subject stimulates thinking on the subject matter .	25Students (%83.3)	5Students (%16.6)
11- Does the debate subject make you more open-minded, confident person and learner ?	29Students	1Student

	(%96.6)	(%3.3)
12- Do you believe the oral debate increases your critical thinking ?	26Students (%86.6)	4Students (%13.3)

#### 4.5 Teamwork and Active Participation

Finally, we found that the majority of the student's attitudes towards the debate subject were positive concerning students' teamwork and active participation. This section consists of three questions. In question thirteen, the responses demonstrated that (80%) of the students agreed; however, (20%) of the students disagreed. In addition, in question fourteen, (90%) of the students agreed, but (10%) of them disagreed. The responses to the last question, question fifteen, were as follows (66.6%) agreed, while (33.3%) disagreed .

Table 7 Teamwork and Active Participation

Questions	Yes) Agree)	No) Disagree)
1- Debate subject helps me how to work in teams cooperatively .	24Students (%80)	6Students (%20)
2- Debate subject helps me to actively participate in the learning process .	27Students(%90)	3Students(%10)
3- I learn best in the subject when working in teams .	20Students (%66.6)	10Students(%33.3)

#### 4.6 Open-ended Questions Students' Responses

Their responses to the first question (What did you learn from the debate subject?) were as follows:

The participants' responses were positive; they claimed they learned different things in the debate class, which can be divided into educational and personal development skills. Educational skills such as new vocabulary and language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), while personal development skills are new experiences, gained self-confidence, learning how to argue with others, how to work in teams and groups, how to listen to the other side of the debate, respect otherness and different ideas. In addition, the participants added that they learned how to be polite in debating and open-minded and active individuals inside and outside the class .

The responses to the second question by the participants (What are the challenges you faced Throughout the debate course?) were as follows:

Their responses to these questions vary from one student to another; some of them faced no challenges or difficulties in debate class. However, some others faced different kinds of difficulties, such as fear of being wrong while debating, shyness, not having enough vocabulary, terms and an excellent language to communicate, convincing the other side was hard for some, and lastly, not having enough time for each student to think and participate. It is worth saying that the challenges are investigated as

they may affect their attitudes and their views on the debate class. In other words, knowing the challenges will help us figure out why some students hold negative attitudes towards the class .

#### **4.7 Discussion of the Findings**

Derived from the findings of this study, the students' attitudes towards the academic debate subject are highly positive concerning all the study variables. The results indicate that most students feel comfortable and cheerful and express their love for the debate class. Furthermore, students perceive this subject as relevant to improving their language proficiency, preferring to learn English through the debate subject and acknowledging its positive impact on their language skills. Furthermore, they said they are equipped with and have learned many skills through this course, such as self-confidence, argumentation, accepting otherness, and many other personal development skills. However, they face challenges like shyness, poor language, insufficient time for preparation, and debating inside the class. It is believed that this happens due to the large number of students inside one class, as it is hard for all students to have enough time to debate comfortably. Also, students' poor language performance prevents them from expressing and arguing their ideas. The latter challenge can be solved to a certain extent if this subject can be taught at the second or third stage instead of the first, as the students' language improves stage by stage. Similar to previous studies mentioned in Chapter Two, the results of this research indicate that debate can enhance language proficiency, critical thinking skills, motivation, and active subject participation, as well as develop students as active individuals inside and outside the class. These consistent findings provide valuable insights for English teachers and support using debate as a pedagogical tool for enhancing all four language skills, overall language development, and cognitive and social skills in second language education .

### **Chapter five**

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

##### **5.1 Conclusions**

In conclusion, a valuable insight into students' attitudes towards the debate subject and its impact on various aspects of their language learning journey and developing their skills is provided. The findings highlight students' positive perceptions towards the academic debate class, with the majority expressing comfort, enjoyment, and recognition of its benefits. From this study, it could be highlighted that the debate subject is a factor of enhancement for students' language proficiency, motivation, critical thinking, and teamwork skills. These results could carry significant implications for various stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers, suggesting that the debate subject can be a practical pedagogical approach in language education .

##### **5.2 Recommendations**

It is recommended that future research further explores the long-term effects of debate subjects on students' language proficiency and other cognitive and social outcomes. Additionally, studies examining the effectiveness of debate subjects across different cultural and linguistic contexts would contribute to a deeper understanding of its applicability and impact.