DEBATES IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM AS GENERATORS OF CRITICAL THINKING

IN ELEVEN GRADERS IN A HIGH SCHOOL IN PASTO

Zara Nathalia Montero Suárez

Submitted to the Faculty of Human Sciences in partial fulfillment

of the requirement for the B.A degree in English and French

Linguistic and Languages Department

University of Nariño

March 2019

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By

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San Juan de Pasto, Febrero de 2019

Resumen

Dentro del campo educativo en Colombia, el pensamiento crítico ha sido menospreciado por mucho tiempo, sobretodo dentro de la enseñanza del inglés como segunda lengua. La falta de estrategias adecuadas para su aplicación ha sido uno de los problemas principales. Sin embargo, teniendo en cuenta el gran significado que tiene para los estudiantes, especialmente de grado 11, el aprender a pensar críticamente, promover técnicas o actividades donde se lleven a cabo todos los procesos cognitivos envueltos en ello resulta necesario. Es por esto, que en este trabajo de investigación, se propone la implementación de los debates dentro de las clases de inglés como herramienta para impulsar el desarrollo de habilidades cognitivas tales como analizar, interpretar y evaluar la información dada sobre temas específicos. Resaltando que dichas capacidades también serán de gran importancia para los estudiantes como individuos dentro de una sociedad.

Palabras clave: pensamiento crítico, debate, educación, enseñanza, aprendizaje.

Abstract

Within the educational field in Colombia, critical thinking has been neglected for a long time, especially in the teaching of English as a second language. The lack of adequate strategies for its application has been one of the main problems. However, taking into account the great significance it has for students, especially from 11th grade, learning to think critically, promote techniques or activities where all the cognitive processes involved in it are carried out, is necessary. That is why the implementation of debates within English classes is proposed in this research paper as a tool to promote the development of cognitive skills such as analyzing, interpreting and evaluating the information given on specific topics. Emphasizing that such capabilities will also be of great importance to students as individuals within a society.

Keywords: critical thinking, debate, education, teaching, learning.

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Introduction

The changes in the educational system require the creation of new strategies in order to achieve better teaching and learning of English as a second language and at the same time, education needs more critical teachers and students.

According to some studies, critical thinking has been considered an essential element in the learning of any subject in the attempt of making students think by themselves and generate new ideas. A method that can promote this is debates. Roy and Macchiette (2005) highlight the effectiveness of debate to encourage precision and logical connectedness as critical thinking skills stated by Paul (1990). Since debates lead students to be objective, open and impartial towards determined information, of which they must be able to tell falsehoods between the different points of an argument and raise their criteria from it. This paper discusses the role of debates in the generation of critical thinking processes and how those elements are interrelated.

The Research Problem

In the field of education, critical thinking has seemed to be overlooked, especially in the process of teaching and learning of English in Colombia, and this is due to different reasons, one of them is technology, a factor that has influenced students negatively. According to Oliver and Utermohlen (1995):

> Nowadays, students are exposed to a large amount of information thanks to the technology that we possess, this is why it is necessary for them to appropriate an active position towards it through the development of skills necessary to be critical in the process of extraction of information from current technological means and those that are coming (p.159).

However, Shapiro and Kilbey (1990) state that based on some studies, teachers represent the main obstacle in the development of critical thinking in higher education. "Even if they want to enhance critical thinking in their students, issues such as how to define or teach critical thinking, and whether critical thinking should be taught or learned through social interaction represent the main difficulties for them". (Choy & Cheah, 2009, pp. 198-206). The aforementioned, leads students to be affected both within a personal and social perspective, seeing that critical thinking carries a significant value for the cognitive development of students in training, considering that it involves other associated processes such as analysis, inference, interpretation, explanation, self-regulation, and evaluation. (Facione, 2007).

Traditionally, education has been focused on the preservation of culture through the transference of knowledge accumulated in the development of its history. However, current education trends need to implement other objectives, such as forming students with the knowledge, promoting the development of skills and competencies that are required to live in a society. Moseley et al. and Hale (2005) among others agree that critical thinking and education are two interrelated elements that must offer students the opportunity to develop skills, abilities,

capabilities, and values applicable to life within real contexts outside the classroom. Hence, for eleven graders, the debate is the most effective option to foster the generation of this intellectual and cognitive process, since they are not only able to interact with their classmates over a specific topic, but they also develop other processes. As Garrett, Schoener, and Hood (1996) noted, "the skills required in critical thinking such as reading, writing, analyzing, and synthesizing implies that students perform other major processes on reasoning and logic" (pp. 37-40).

In this order of ideas, the teacher must provide the appropriate settings to create an environment that favors critical thinking, so that students are able to explore their own beliefs, express their feelings, communicate their opinions, and see their questions reinforced when they consider different points of view. (Aymes, 2012).

All things considered, it seems reasonable to attach great importance to critical thinking within the educative context, so teachers are aware of the meaningful significance that debates can have for students of eleventh grade, in order to propitiate the generation of their own ideas and to make them actively participate in their learning process, opposed to passively absorbing information. (Bonwell, C., & Eison, J., 1991).

Problem Description

The research problem emerges as one of the most relevant problems found in the observations made by the author of this study, noticing the lack of proper strategies offered by the teacher and his/her little awareness of effective activities (debates) to facilitate students express their own ideas, interpretations, conclusions and questions within the English field.

Problem delimitation

Conceptual delimitation

Critical Thinking: According to Scriven & Paul (1987), critical thinking is the decoding of the information obtained, either from experience, observation or communication through various mental processes of analysis, conceptualization, synthesizing and evaluation.

Debate: As stated by Fluharty & Ross (1996), the debate can be considered as a teaching-learning technique in which a person takes a position either for or against any statement, fact or conclusion about a specific topic or issue. Likewise, Nisbett (2003) declares: "The debate is a fundamental instrument in the educational field for the development of skills that allow reflective thinking of the authenticity of information" (p.5).

The research Question

General Question

How debates in the English classroom contribute to the generation of critical thinking in 11th graders in a high school in Pasto?

General Objective

To comprehend how debates in the English classroom contribute to the generation of critical thinking in eleven graders of a public school.

Significance of the Study

To be aware of the great importance of Critical Thinking for eleven graders is the key point in the process to form students as thinking individuals not only for their educational context but also to live within a society. Moreover, lead students to develop other skills, to acquire new knowledge and to establish strong opinions while inquiring about different academic topics and aspects about life will allow students to be protagonists of their learning processes and in their lives as well. "A high intellectual standard of critical thinking is essential to participate in the social, economic and political aspects of a society" (A statement by Scriven & Paul at the 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform, Summer, 1987). Lipman (1991), considers critical thinking as a way of conceptualizing situations, making decisions and self-evaluating based on specific criteria according to our context.

In addition to encouraging the development of critical thinking, the debate is the most convenient strategy to generate such a cognitive process. As stated by Nisbett (2003), "the debate plays an important role within the educational field since it is because of it that other cognitive processes occur, such is the case of analytical thinking and reflection on the validity of information" (p. 179). Therefore, it provides to students the opportunity to develop other interdependent processes such as meaningful listening, speaking, reading and writing practice, as well as highly effective argumentation skills for persuasive speech and writing. Likewise, Davidson (1996) stated that "Through the frequent practice of debates, students acquire and / or improve their skills to express ideas and recognize weaknesses in the information provided by their opponents" (p. 134).

In general terms, this study results useful on the field of education, especially on the teaching and learning of a second language because it will leave solid foundations on the critical

thinking term applied to the debates. It will also motivate students to be more selective in the

information they receive and from there be able to generate new and valid ideas while

performing other complementary skills.

Limitations

The limitations of this study lie in the first place the short amount of time to carry out this study since the topic itself requires a more extensive analysis due to the great significance for human beings to learn how to think critically and the requirements to successfully achieve it. Moreover, the lack of local bibliography about critical thinking counteracts the appropriate understanding of this topic within current contexts in Colombian education.

On the other hand, other limitations may arise with regard to the implementation of the debates. Considering that, students do not prepare in advance the given topics to develop in class causing lack of cooperation and their participation during the debate. Also, the low students' level of English so that the debate unfolds correctly. Finally, untrained English teachers may represent a big obstacle for the right development of the study since it is mandatory that teachers have the appropriate qualities to perform the right role during the whole process.

Theoretical Framework

Theories related to Critical Thinking

Regarding the complex cognitive of critical thinking, there are several theories that explain the different perspectives and statements in which thinking is developed considering the multiple factors that affect its process. Here, the most outstanding theories in relation to critical thinking are presented.

Taxonomy of [some] Critical Thinking Theories

Models	Developmental	Learning Styles/Bio-Neurological Modes of Thought	Categories of Cognitive Skills	Processes of Self (in Culture & Society)
	William Perry ○ Dualism ○ Multiplism ○ Relativism ○ Commitment in Relativism	David Kolb ○ Concrete Experience ○ Observation and Reflection ○ Abstract Concepts ○ Testing	Benjamin Bloom ○ Knowledge ○ Comprehension ○ Application ○ Analysis ○ Synthesis ○ Evaluation	Richard Paul and Linda Elder ○ Information and belief-generating and processing skills ○ Habits of intellectual commitment guiding behavior
	Belenky et. al. ○ Silence ○ Received Knowledge ○ Subjective Knowledge ○ Procedural Knowledge ○ Constructed Knowledge	James Zull ○ Sensory cortex ○ Back integrative cortex ○ Front integrative cortex ○ Motor cortex	Diane Halpern ○ Retrieval of Knowledge ○ Drawing Conclusions ○ Argument Analysis ○ Understanding Probabilities ○ Decision Making ○ Problem Solving ○ Hypothesis Testing ○ Creative Thinking	Donald Schön ○ Reflective practice ▪ Knowing-in-action ▪ Reflection-in-action ▪ Reflection-on-reflection-in-action ○ Predicament of learning ▪ Self education ▪ Doing before understanding ▪ Risk
	Susan Wolcott ○ Confused Fact Finder ○ Biased Jumper ○ Perpetual Analyzer ○ Pragmatic Performer ○ Strategic Revisioner	Jerome Bruner ○ Paradigmatic (scientific, logical) construction of reality ○ Narrative construction of reality ▪ Enactive ▪ Iconic ▪ Symbolic	Dee Fink ○ Significant Learning ▪ Learning how to Learn ▪ Foundational Knowledge ▪ Application ▪ Integration ▪ Human Dimension ▪ Caring	Stephen Brookfield ○ Productive, positive, lived ○ Process ○ Context-specific ○ Emotive and rational Critical reflection ○ Challenging assumptions ▪ Contextual awareness ○ Imagining/exploring alternatives ▪ Reflective skepticism
Giants	Piaget/Vygotsky/Dewey			Maslow/Dewey/Late Bruner

Table 1. Compiled by Tine Reimers

Source. University at Albany, 2010.

Some other important theories in the critical thinking subject are:

Socio-Cultural Approach - Vygotsky (1896- 1934)

Theory of Subjectivity - Kant (s. XVIII)

Constructivism - Piaget (s. XX)

Reflective Thinking - John Dewey (1910-1938)

Philosophy in the Classroom - Lipman Theories (1985)

Academic Background

Karbalaei (2012), highlights the importance of critical thinking by being favorable for students not only within their academic training and personal benefit but also for national needs. Nonetheless, she stresses the lack of opportunities given by teachers to make students be able to reflect on information and situations.

On the other hand, Uribe, Enciso and Vargas (2017) stand out the role of the implementation of CLIL approach (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in the development of critical thinking skills through language teaching and learning. Moreover, the limitations and conditions for this approach to be effectively implemented in schools and universities. In the Colombian context, regarding ELT education programs, indicate that it is necessary to improve pedagogical practices since they are in charge of preparing future teachers of English.

Besides, Tawil (2016), in his study could demonstrated favorable effects in students after practicing two debates. The results revealed an improvement in students especially when discussing opposing points of view, allowing them to develop the ability of critical thinkers through receptivity, neutrality, reasonability and, systematicity.

The results obtained from the research made by Lai (2011), showed that third-year students in Ireland scored much higher in critical thinking than first-year students. Therefore, the authors conclude that attending university has an independent effect on the development of critical thinking.

On the article written by Tamayo, Zona and Loaiza (2015) a theoretical reflection and analysis of the different perspectives and the main constituents of critical thinking are presented. Likewise, it describes the purposes of teaching in terms of teaching, learning and, in particular, the relationship with the central object of science education: the formation of critical thinking in specific domains of knowledge. To explain the above, the article is divided into three categories: Didactics and critical thinking, the argumentation in the formation of critical thinking and metacognition in the formation of critical thinking.

Likewise, Lopez (2012), reflects on the importance of developing critical thinking for academic and students' personal lives considering four interesting elements: critical thinking in the classroom, the basic skills of critical thinking, the characteristics of the critical thinker and the importance of inquiry. In the first one, it is explained that the mission of the school is to ensure that the student achieves an intellectual autonomy. In the second element, some general skills that are suggested by different authors: knowledge, inference, evaluation and metacognition are highlighted. In the third point, the most remarkable characteristics of the critical thinking are: be alert to use critical thinking, be confident in one's own abilities to reason, and be open-minded to consider points of view divergent to one's own.

In the case study done by Scott (2016), students' perceptions of the debate process used in a technology classroom to increase critical thinking are analyzed. As the debate was a new activity for them, they were asked two questions at the beginning of the process so their perceptions related to the debate process could be known. 1. What was their perception of the debate process in a technology classroom? 2. Did they believe the debates increased their critical-thinking ability? The answers were varied, but most students commented that the debate

experience was interesting and challenging and that it definitely contributed to the development of critical thinking skills as well as to be a good tool for working in teams.

The paper written by Vargo (2012) aims to expose five different methods of debating for keeping the class interested over the long haul. The methods are four corners, role-play, fishbowl, think-pair-share, and meeting house. All these methods require students to move around the classroom, to form groups, and to share their arguments within the class, leading students to work cooperatively and participate actively.

Moreover, Vdovina (2013), highlights the importance of the implementation of critical thinking in English Language Teaching, in addition to explain how to achieve it successfully and gives an example of lesson plan that can be applied at the English class in order to promote critical thinking. A very remarkable factor presented in this article is how critical thinking is associated with the language as a communicative vehicle considering that the English language is used globally by non-native speakers for intercultural communication, critical thinking skills become essential when practicing empathy and tolerance thus getting ready for communication in multicultural contexts. The lesson plan was about an amusing story which plot was based on teaching-learning elements of logical misconceptions. Allowing students to practice communicative skills (reading, listening, and speaking) by applying some critical thinking strategies around two areas of speculation.

Zare and Othman (2014), analyze students' awareness of the implementation of classroom debate to enhance critical thinking and oral communication ability. Sixteen undergraduate students were randomly selected and assigned to a group for taking part in debates for nine sessions during one semester. Likewise, students were also assigned with some open-ended questions to write down their perceptions about the classroom debate. In addition, semi-

structured interviews were applied to a group of volunteered participants. In general, students believed that the classroom debate was a constructive learning activity considering it an innovative, interesting, constructive, and helpful approach to teaching and learning. One of the most outstanding conclusions of the study was that the participants affirmed that the debates helped them to lose the fear of talking in front of their classmates and boost their confidence to talk. Furthermore, the students stressed that group work was their favorite feature of the classroom debate.

Conceptual framework

Critical thinking

Critical thinking encompasses many definitions and meanings involving different qualities and skills, generating controversy or confusion on any field of knowledge. Academics such as Paul, Elder and Bartell (1997) determine as inappropriate the assimilation of a single concept as a definition of critical thinking, due to all the elements it encompasses, its complexity and the great field of application it has. However, Lewis and Smith (1993) affirm that:

> Two main disciplines within the literature of critical thinking can be considered: Philosophy and psychology. In the first, the characteristics of a successful critical thinker are reflected, while in the second, the focus is on his attitudes, abilities and behaviors. (pp. 131-137).

Whereas Sternberg (1986), denotes other approaches to critical thinking around the educational field, where several other interests are exposed.

Abilities of Critical Thinking

Regarding the abilities developed within critical thinking, there is an opposition in the instruction of general skills and specific skills. (McPeck, 1990, Paul, 1990 & Tsui, 1999). Among the different proposals about the skills developed in the process of thinking critically, stands out the taxonomy of Bloom (1956), who has ranked some sub-skills that are presented as

six different steps that go upwards, in such a way that the abilities that an ideal critical thinker requires, be clearer. Hughes (2014). They are presented in the following figure *(Figure 1).*
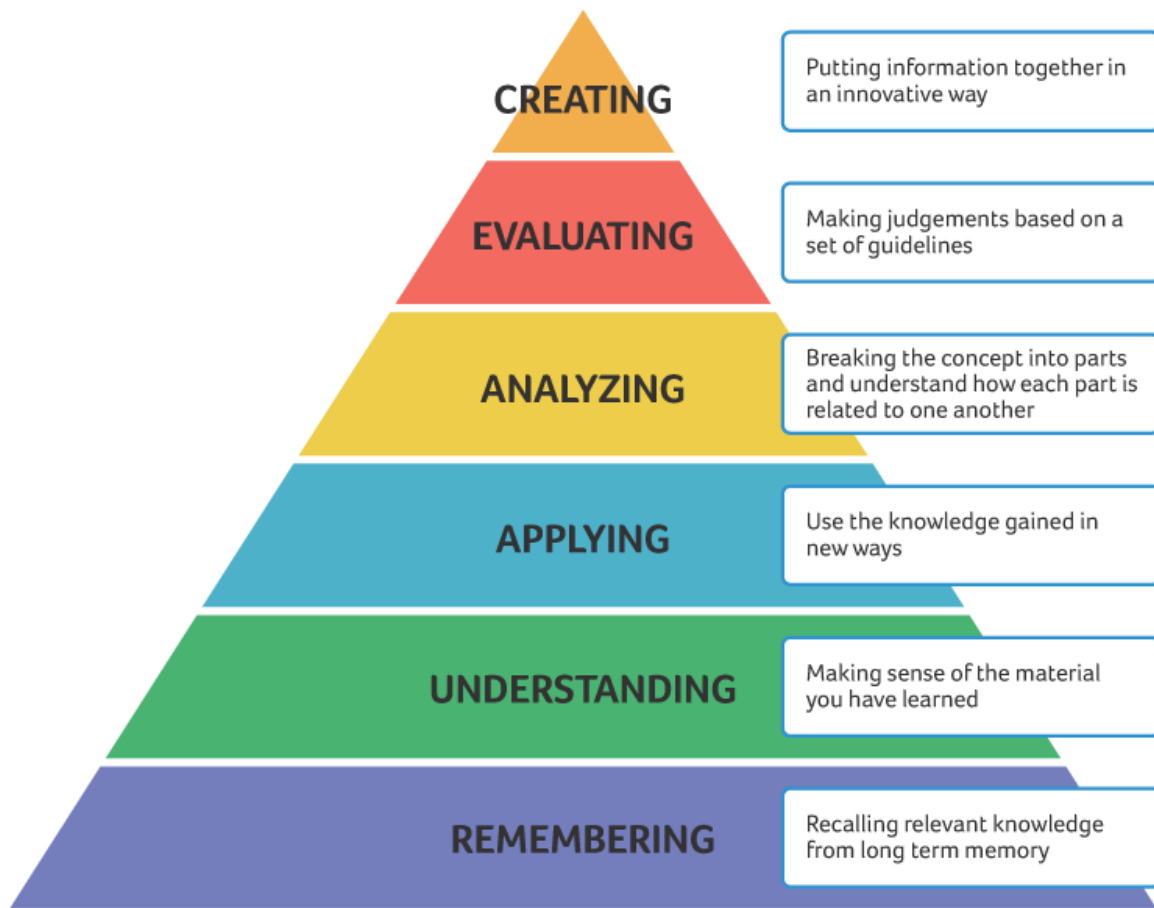
Figure 1. Taxonomy of the educational objectives by Bloom (1956)

For a better understanding of what these skills are about, there is a summary of these concepts.

1. Remembering: This level serves as the foundation of the other levels because it is about recovering, recognizing and recall the most relevant information from long-term memory.

2. Understanding: When we read or listen to any text in our native language, the process that we make is simply knowing what we are reading, seeing or listening to. However, to do this in a foreign language implicates a longer process, so the teacher might need to ask some

questions to facilitate understanding such as 'What kind of text is it? Is it from a newspaper? Where would you read it?' (Hughes, 2014).

3. Applying: After reading and analyzing a text it is essential to apply it to something. In the case of the language classroom, this is reflected through answering some comprehension questions or filling in a table with facts or information from a text. (Hughes, 2014).

4. Analyzing: In this stage, the test is taken again to question the information presented by the author and identifying the bases from what it was constructed, in addition to looking for evidence to support the main points. This is where students become more critical about a text by not accepting all the information with its simple reading. (Adams, 2015).

5. Evaluating: This stage is one of the most important factors within the development of critical thinking skills. In this stage, students begin to establish and evaluate the validity of the information given by the author of the text. After this, students decide the information they are going to use considering its validity and relevance. (Adams, 2015).

6. Creating: During this last stage, students are able to create something through the knowledge they acquired from the studied text, so they can expose their opinions and conclusions based on facts and evidence. They can do this through many activities such as essays, oral presentations, and so on. (Hughes, 2014).

From another perspective, critical thinking could be described through more general skills as suggested by various authors (Halpern, 1998, Kurfiss, 1988, Quellmalz, 1987, Swartz & Perkins, 1990, cited in Bruning et al., 1999). They are described below:

1. Knowledge: According to Perkins (1987) and McPeck (1990), this is an essential element for the organization of the information that we obtain, as well as allowing us to select among the ideas with the greatest potential within the solution of problems.

2. Inference: It is done for a better understanding of a situation when establishing the necessary connections between different elements that allow us a deeper and more eloquent vision of the subject. This can be done both inductively and deductively. (Bruning et al., 1999).

3. Evaluation: It is where all those sub-skills are related, interpretation, inference and making valid conclusions. (Swartz and Perkins, 1990). Moreover, McPeck (1990) adds that this step can be inferred from person to person depending on their experiences, values, context and cognitive perspective.

4. Metacognition: It refers to all those cognitive processes that are carried out for the performance of intellectual tasks and the implementation of prediction and event verification skills. These processes are ordering, classifying and planning. (Brown, 1978, Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1985).

Debate

As stated by Garett & Hood (1996); Darby (2007); and Dundes (2001), "the debate is a teaching-learning technique that helps with the recognition of beliefs, values, and attitudes for the subsequent development of critical thinking and reasoning skills" (pp. 37-40). Moreover, Krieger (2005) affirms that:

> The practice of debates turns out to be very significant within the process of training of a language student due to the great variety of skills that are involved in it. The written part through the creation of persuasive texts, in oral expression through argumentation, and finally in listening skills. (p. 84).

Cattani (2003), cited in Ramlan, F., et al. (2016), defines debates as "a competition between two parties who seek the approval of a third party, which may be the debate judge or a larger audience" (p. 67). Keeping this in mind, within a class, requires that students actively participate so that the process is carried out successfully. (Snider & Schnurer, 2002).

Functions of Debating

Ice Breaking: Debates have a great role in EFL classes for ice-breaking in terms of making students feel more comfortable and encouraged to take part in any discussion. Teachers play an important role to achieve this by generating an environment of confidence.

Listening: Through debates, students are able to improve their listening skills by using different listening resources such as videos, conversations, reports, talk shows, etc. The role of the teacher in this case, is to give feedback focusing on pronunciation, accents and the use of words.

Speaking: Debates are the best opportunity for students to speak in English. This activity will drive out students' fear about the English language. Through practice, they will be able to improve their fluency and use of vocabulary, enriching their spoken English. Teachers in this case, will provide feedback on speeches focusing on pronunciation, stress, choice of vocabulary, information cohesion, and so on.

Reading: This ability is reinforced to students at the moment they look for information needed for the debates. Moreover, while they read from articles, newspapers, magazines, they are also acquiring great knowledge about other social, political, cultural and economic aspects. Teacher's role is to facilitate students the necessary resources for information.

Writing: Through the process of organizing the topics and facts for a debate, students practice writing in English in a very significant way. Considering that the process includes brainstorming, writing down points, connecting ideas and adding supporting details to construct their debate script, what they are also writing is an argumentative essay. Furthermore, students learn to choose the most relevant and controversial topics and facts to present them in the debate.

Debate and Critical Thinking

According to Garrett M (1996), the implementation of the debate in education emerged in the 80's as a teaching technique that also promoted the development of other skills in relation to critical thinking. Furthermore, Turnposky (2004) points out three important connections between debate and critical thinking within the learning process: peer interactions, analysis (Bloom's Taxonomy), and improvement of metacognitive skills. Through interactions between peers high-level tasks are developed. Moreover, meaningful learning will be acquired by students when utilize Blooms Taxonomy during debates. In addition, according to Kennedy (2007), "critical thinking skills used in a debate include defining the problem, assessing the credibility of sources, identifying and checking assumptions, recognizing inconsistencies and prioritizing the relevance of different points within the overall argument" (p. 57). Finally, some other characteristics of debate are also pointed out:

> "The debate as a tool that leads students to think critically, must be implemented in the educational field because it represents a very significant element for their future lives. Therefore, it is very important to work on the structure of the debates for their subsequent application and evaluation in the classroom". (Yuksel & Alci, 2012, pp. 81-90).

Contextual Framework

"Institucion Educativa Libertad" aims to provide an education that promotes the development of their potential in children, adolescents, and adults; and enables them to make creative use of the knowledge acquired in school and beyond, this institution is committed to the conservation of ecosystems and the sustainable development of humanity.

This is a public institution located on the Pan-American Highway #Cra. 13 No. 8-30, in Pasto, Nariño. It is a mixed institution where students belong to 1 and 2 strata. The school is well equipped in terms of teachers, students, and academic staff. The school has large classrooms;

however, the distribution of the rooms according to the degrees is not very adequate. Most desks

are not in good condition. There are offices for the administrative staff, a teachers' room, an

auditorium where school events are held, as well as sports fields and green areas.

Methodology

This research stands on the interpretative methodology and a post positivist paradigm considering that this research focuses on meanings and interpretations that the individuals share about the social reality. According to Mason (2002), "qualitative research is of great significance within a study because it allows us to approach the processes and relationships that are carried out in a deeper way, including all the elements involved" (p. 1).

The method for the present study is qualitative with a phenomenological approach since it focuses on the subjective experiences of the participants in their everyday contexts. Moreover, Husserl (1970), cited in Lester, S (1999) states that "phenomenological research focuses on the description of information that does not contain pre-established assumptions or concepts" (p.1).

Instruments for Data Collection

For the development of this study the research procedure will be conducted by some visits and by the development of two interviews aimed at students.

Also, it is important for the students to plan the debate in advance at home, so they are prepared to express their ideas in a more orderly and clearly way in the English classroom, this is in order to understand how this phenomenon could generate more critical thinking in their learning processes. In this case, the researcher or teacher in charge will give a specific topic for all the students. This topic will be presented in different ways. For example, through the presentation of a video about an interview, a documental or a short film, through an audio about a conversation or simply through a phrase or a short text, all the resources mentioned based on a particular situation or topic. From this point, students have to decide if they are in favor or against the given topic. The idea is that the students prepare their point of view in English. To accomplish this, they must take some notes about important facts from the audio, video or text

presented, so they can have a guide to construct and organize their ideas for their later debate

sketch. To complement this part, the chosen students will participate at class by telling the ideas

or facts that they remembered or wrote down from the topic presented to the researcher or

teacher in charge, who will write them on the board and he/she will start a short conversation

with the students around the topic and its related factors with the aim of guiding students about

the topic and giving them an overview of the different ideas. After this, the researcher or teacher

in charge will provide students with two sheets, one containing a chart with a series of questions

and the other one with the expressions that they may use during the debate. In the first sheet,

"*The Ultimate Cheat Sheet For Digital Thinking by Global Digital Citizen Foundation"*,

TeachThought Staff (2018), *(Figure 2)* will lead students to answer previous and later questions

that will guide them to choose their position about the situation or the given topic. From this

chart, students are asked to choose the questions they consider the most relevant and consistent

to base their debate sketch for their later presentation in the English class.

On the other hand, on the second sheet, students will find a chart, "*Critical Thinking in

the Language Classroom.* (Hughes, 2014)*, (Figure 3)* of useful phrases and questions that they

will need at the moment of expressing their ideas on the debate or ask for explanation to their

counterparts, so a coherent and concise order through the development of the debate itself and

also in the creation and interconnection of ideas for their debate sketches is established.

Who	... benefits from this? ... is this harmful to? ... makes decisions about this? ... is most directly affected?	... have you also heard discuss this? ... would be the best person to consult? ... will be the key people in this? ... deserves recognition for this?
What	... are the strengths/weaknesses? ... is another perspective? ... is another alternative? ... would be a counter-argument?	... is the best/worst case scenario? ... is most/least important? ... can we do to make a positive change? ... is getting in the way of our action?
Where	... would we see this in the real world? ... are there similar concepts/situations? ... is there the most need for this? ... in the world would this be a problem?	... can we get more information? ... do we go for help with this? ... will this idea take us? ... are the areas for improvement?
When	... is this acceptable/unacceptable? ... would this benefit our society? ... would this cause a problem? ... is the best time to take action?	... will we know we've succeeded? ... has this played a part in our history? ... can we expect this to change? ... should we ask for help with this?
Why	... is this a problem/challenge? ... is it relevant to me/others? ... is this the best/worst scenario? ... are people influenced by this?	... should people know about this? ... has it been this way for so long? ... have we allowed this to happen? ... is there a need for this today?
How	... is this similar to _____? ... does this disrupt things? ... do we know the truth about this? ... will we approach this safely?	... does this benefit us/others? ... does this harm us/others? ... do we see this in the future? ... can we change this for our good?

Figure 2. "The Ultimate Cheat Sheet for Digital Thinking by Global Digital Citizen Foundation" (TeachThought Staff, 2018).

The main point is....	On the one hand...
One argument for it is that...	I agree because...
One argument against it is that...	I disagree because...
It's because...	In my opinion...
As a result of this...	Evidence shows that...
...is similar because...	What do you mean by that?
...is different because...	Why do you think that?
There are a number of reasons. Firstly...	How did you come to that conclusion?
Another reason is...	In conclusion...
Also...	What evidence do you have for that?
Because...	I know because...

Figure 3. Critical Thinking in the Language Classroom. (Hughes, 2014).

Both charts will be exposed and explained by the researcher or teacher in charge, so all students will understand their parts and will be able to use them before and during the debate. Considering the above, students will prepare their debate sketches as essays at home, so that they can have a guide for their interventions on the debate in the English class.

For the debate itself, the selected students will be separated into two homogeneous groups. There will be a moderator who can be the researcher or the teacher in charge, this person will tell the group of students the following rules:

1. As a moderator, he/she will be the one who gives the word to the participants.

2. The "pro" group will start the debate to give the opportunity to the "con" group to counter.

3. Each participant has the possibility of four interventions during the debate.

4. One student speaks at a time (avoiding discussions).

5. Each intervention of each participant has a duration of minute maximum.

6. Each student must participate two times minimum.

7. Each participant must credit all the resources of the research information at the moment they mention it.

8. The duration of the whole debate must be 90 minutes maximum.

At the end of the debate, the moderator will say some of the conclusions from the debate, summarizing the most outstanding points from both parts, and focusing on the strongest opinions given by the participants.

The development of this activity will enable to understand the role of debates on the generation of critical thinking, and at the same time, it makes possible to notice how the four skills of the English language can be practiced and improved. Considering the four skills as

"listening, speaking, reading and writing", during the debate, students will be able to work on each ability through the different moments of the activity. To begin, they will practice either listening or reading at the moment in which the topic is presented, either by video, audio or text. To continue, when they are taking notes from the resource they will be practicing writing. At the moment of expressing the important ideas or facts they wrote to the researcher or teacher in charge, they will practice speaking. Then, when they create their debate scripts, they will be practicing writing as well as reading by taking some extra information from their research. Finally, in the development of the debate, they will practice reading (debate scripts), listening (their classmates and counterparts), and speaking (expressing their opinions and explaining facts).

In conclusion, this debate will contribute to the accomplishment of the main objective, which is the guide for the present study.

Population and Sample

Setting and Population

Institución Educativa Municipal Libertad is a public institution located on the Pan-American Highway in Pasto, Nariño. It is a mixed institution where students belong to 1 and 2 strata. The school is well equipped in terms of teachers, students, and academic staff. It consists of a total of 1550 students.

Purposive Sampling

Considering that the main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a specific population to propitiate the answers for the research questions, this study will require a homogenous sampling with the participation of a group of the students from

the 11th grade of the Institución Educativa Municipal Libertad with an A2 and/or B1 level of English. The chosen group can vary on number and gender, depending on the case.

Data Collection

Taking into account that this is qualitative research, the main research technique is the interview. As stated by McNamara (1999), "because the researcher looks for complete and in-depth information, the interviews can be very useful tools in qualitative research since with them it can be possible to obtain data that go beyond simple experiences" (p. 1). Two interviews will be applied orally to pairs, one girl and one boy. In this interview, the different behaviors of students, their attitudes toward the problem and how they deal with it will be evident. The interviews are important because they will allow us to notice how much knowledge they have about the critical thinking subject. Moreover, they will serve as a tool to approach the students in terms of generating empathy to have a better understanding of their experience with the topic.

Data Analysis

For the analysis of the results from the interviews, a series of steps to come up with some general conclusions are going to be developed.

Step 1: To read the answers and take a look at the transcripts as a whole. Then, write some of the first impressions and later, read again line by line more carefully.

Step 2: To label relevant words, sentences, phrases or sections about concepts, opinions, actions or other important aspects. The above considering that something is 'relevant' when it is repeated several times; it is explicitly stated by the interviewee that it is important; it is related to some theory or concept or because it is considered interesting for the researcher.

Step 3: To decide which information or codes are important and to create categories joining the related items; combining two codes to create new ones and dropping the codes that are not so relevant.

Step 4: To label categories and to decide which are the most relevant and how they are connected to each other. Then, to describe the connections between them, considering the main points of view from the interviewed participants about the subject of research.

Step 5: To draw a figure about the summarized results and establish a hierarchy among the categories, deciding which categories are more important than others.

Step 6: To write on the results section, the description of the connections between the different codes. To write on the discussion section the researcher's own interpretations and discuss the results. Then, to establish connections between the outcomes and the chosen theories and concepts presented on the theoretical framework of this study.

Ethics of Research

This research follows some ethical issues in order to make sure all the authors and ideas will be respected and cited in an appropriate way. Also, this research is committed to respecting all the rules of the institution where the study will be done. At the end of the study, the researcher has to thank all the participants of the process, the institution, the principal, the teachers, the students, and other academic staff.

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DEBATES FOR THE GENERATION OF CRITICAL THINKING

Appendix

Appendix 1: Timetable

AREA OF WORK	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	NOV	JAN	FEB	MAR
Selection of the topic and information query	28- 31								
Development of the proposal		4-9							
Problem description, problem statement, significance of the study and objectives		11-22							
Theoretical, conceptual framework and background			2-16						
Delivery of the first draft				21					
Corrections					17-21				
Delivery of the second draft						27			
Last corrections							14 -	26	
Thesis defense									13-15

DEBATES FOR THE GENERATION OF CRITICAL THINKING

Appendix 2: Budget

ELEMENT	COST
Transportation	$120.000
Photocopies	$5.000

Appendix 3: Interview

Two interviews will be applied to students during the procedure of the study. The first one will be done before the debate (Pre- debate questions), this one will be in order to know what the students' perceptions are about both debate and critical thinking based on their previous experiences. The second one will be done after having experienced the debate (Post – debate questions), with their responses there could be evident the possible changes that may appear in their perceptions about debate and critical thinking before and after putting them into practice.

Pre- Debate Questions

1. What is critical thinking for you?

2. Do you think it is important to promote critical thinking in the English class? Why?

3. Have you ever participate on a debate? How was the experience?

4. Have you ever participate on an English debate? How was the experience?

5. What do you think are the purposes of a debate?

6. How do you think listening is practiced on a debate?

7. How do you think speaking is practiced on a debate?

8. How do you think reading is practiced on a debate?

9. How do you think writing is practiced on a debate?

10. How do you think debates generate critical thinking?

Post- Debate Questions

1. In which moments of the process do you consider you thought critically?

2. Which difficulties did you experiment at the moment of thinking critically in the English class?

3. What do you think about the development of the debate?

4. Why do you consider thinking critically is important for a debate?

5. In which moments of the process did you practice the listening skill?

6. In which moments of the process did you practice the speaking skill?

7. In which moments of the process did you practice the reading skill?

8. In which moments of the process did you practice the writing skill?

9. Do you consider debates in the English class should be continue implemented? Why?

10. How do you think debates and critical thinking are connected?