

Exploring Learner Engagement with English Debates: A Case Study of Chinese University Students

Ruiyu Yang *

College of Language and Culture, Northwest Agricultural & Forestry University, Yangling, China

* Corresponding Author Email: 1156599368@qq.com

Abstract. While many studies have examined students' participation in English debates with a focus on their development of English argumentation skills, second language (L2) learners' engagement with English debates has yet to be explored. Informed by a tripartite model on learner engagement, this study employed a case study involving four Chinese L2 learners to explore how they cognitively, behaviourally, and affectively engaged with English debates. Data was collected from multiple sources, including semi-structured interviews with students, notes taken in the debate classes, and class observations. Iterative analysis of the data revealed different patterns of learner engagement at all three dimensions among the four participants. It was also found that multiple factors, including their understanding of argumentation skills, self-evaluation of their language proficiency, their learning attitudes, and the instructor's teaching methods, played a role in their engagement with English debates. The findings suggest that teachers need to consider individual students' attitudes, beliefs, and L2 proficiency and provide explicit instruction on argumentation skills to enhance their engagement with English debate.

Keywords: English Debate; Learner Engagement; Individual Differences; Language Learning; Argumentation Skills.

1. Introduction

In the field of second language (L2) learning, many studies have researched English debate learning among L2 learners, showing the importance of learning English debate and argumentation skills for students, whether in their academic performance or their future careers (e.g. Butt, 2010; Abid et al., 2021). The capacity to generate and assess arguments has been widely regarded as a crucial indicator of effective critical thinking (Mercier, 2011). However, previous research has focused more on the teaching methods of English debate (e.g. Tan et al., 2019) or the argumentation abilities in the first Language (L1) as well as the L2 (e.g. Hsu et al., 2015; Iordanou & Rapanta, 2021; Qin & Karabacak, 2010). Considerably less research, if not none, has investigated L2 learners' engagement with English debate learning. However, a focus on three dimensions of student engagement with learning, including cognitive, behavioral, and affective engagement, could have unveiled the complexity involved in L2 students' learning of oral English, debate, and argumentation skills. Drawing on the tripartite engagement model (Fredricks et al., 2004), this paper reports on a case study involving four English-majored Chinese students who took an English debate course taught by the same teacher. Data was collected from multiple sources, including students' debate recordings, photographs of in-debate note scripts, semi-structured interviews with the participants, and the researcher's class observations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. A Multi-Dimensional Perspective to Learner Engagement in English Debates

Learner engagement plays an important role in both students' learning processes and academic achievements. There are various interpretations and definitions of student engagement (e.g. Fredricks et al., 2004; Roorda et al., 2017). As one of the earliest works that examined student engagement, Fredrick et al.'s (2004) proposed three dimensions of student engagement: the cognitive, the



behavioral, and affective perspectives. Following their conceptualization of student engagement, researchers of second language learning used the engagement model to examine students' uptake of corrective feedback in English learning (e.g., Ellis, 2010). The complexity and dynamics of language learning revealed in these studies have demonstrated the usefulness of such a framework in investigating student learning in the L2 learning context.

In English debates, students develop logical arguments and provide immediate responses to opponents' counterarguments. As such, participation in English debates is demanding for L2 learners, requiring both language ability and argumentation skills. Therefore, investigating their English debate learning through the engagement model (Han & Hyland, 2015) may inform English debate researchers and practitioners of the complexity involved in L2 students' learning process. The multi-dimensional framework of learner engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Han & Hyland, 2015) has been adopted and modified in the current study to accommodate the context of L2 English debate learning.

2.2. Students' Learning in English Debates

English debates can be useful for learners to understand both disciplinary practices and the target language (Lee, 2017). It is an effective way for learners to enhance argumentative skills and speaking proficiency. Through their participation in English debates, students can not only learn to argue, but also argue to learn. Studies focusing on learning to argue examine learners' ability to reason, raise claims, and support ideas, while studies focusing on arguing to learn place emphasis on knowledge acquisition in their participation in English debates.

The existing studies have found that argumentation skills and good thinking skills students developed in English debate have a positive influence on both their way to process information and generate well-grounded viewpoints (Osana & Seymour, 2004) which are good for their academic performance. For example, the pedagogical intervention of L2 debates with a focus on structural and quality aspects of argumentation has not only improved the argument structure and quality but also prompted students to diversify their arguments with sophisticated structural components and bolster the positions with strong and well-grounded evidence (Majidi et al., 2021). Additionally, the science writing heuristic approach was found to facilitate students to focus on the coherence of the argument and the quality of evidence. Following this line of research, the present study explores four L2 learners' practice of argumentation skills in English debates. It may provide insights into the influence of their engagement with English debates on their argumentation skills.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Context and Participants

Table 1. Background information of student participants.

	Peter	Jack	Judy	Edward
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Male
Major	English	English	English	English
Year of college	Second year	Second year	Second year	Second year
Grade rank for their total grades	11/89	39/89	2/89	29/89

The study was carried out at a university in Northwestern China. In the second semester of sophomore year, English major students took English debating as a compulsory course. The tutor of this course had more than three years of experience teaching English debating. Among the students who volunteered to participate in this study, four students were selected based on purposive sampling and maximum variation sampling (Yin, 2018). Their L2 proficiency and in-class performance varied greatly (see Table 1 for the profiles of the participants). For ethical considerations of qualitative

research, I introduced the purposes and procedures of the study to the participants and obtained informed consent from them before I started to collect data.

3.2. Data Collection

The data collection started in the middle of a semester and lasted for three weeks. All the class sessions taught over the three weeks were observed and audio-recorded, totaling 4.5 hours. Observation notes were taken to gain a better understanding of the context and participants. Semi-structured interviews were held with student participants at the beginning and the end of the research period. The interviews centered around their perceptions, affections, and behavior regarding their participation in and learning of English debates. They recalled their thoughts and feelings when participating in English debates. All interview sessions took place in a quiet tutorial room and were conducted in each participant's first language based on their preference. Table 2 presents the data collection procedures.

Table 2. Time frame of data collection

Weeks	Data collected
1	Class observation, class documents, the first interview with students
2	Class observation, class documents, the draft of their debating
3	Class observation, class documents, the final interview with students

3.3. Data Analysis

To prepare for data analysis, I first transcribed the interview and debate recordings and organized the field notes. Then the data analysis took an inductive approach. I read the interview and debate transcripts iteratively and highlighted episodes relevant to the research questions. Preliminary codes emerged during the process, and these codes were constantly revised during the recursive coding of each data file. I then compared codes across data files to revise codes and clustered codes that shared similarities or were closely related into categories and subcategories. I also reiteratively revised and refined categories and subcategories both inductively and deductively based on the research questions and previous literature. The finalized categories and subcategories of learner engagement with English debates are shown in Appendix A. These categories and subcategories helped me to generate, refine and organize case study narratives for each participant.

It is worth mentioning that I used Han and Hyland's (2015) coding scheme for learner engagement as a primary coding system that I referenced, as we had similarly-structured research questions (i.e., the cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement). Despite that, I made necessary revisions to the names of subcategories in my coding scheme based on the specific codes generated from the dataset of the present study. For example, regarding behavioral engagement, I identified three subcategories specifically relevant to student's behavior in debates, including debate preparation, live debate performance, and before-or after-debate learning. Meanwhile, compared to Han and Hyland's (2015) framework, I removed two subcategories (i.e., noting and understanding) under the category of cognitive engagement. Additionally, to ensure the reliability of the analysis, a second coder experienced in qualitative coding was invited to analyze the dataset to check the subcategories and categories. Initially, the inter-coder agreement rate for coding cognitive engagement was 79.5%. Most disagreements were resolved after discussions on refining and revising codes and categories. The final inter-coder agreement rates for cognitive engagement, behavioral engagement, and affective engagement were 93.4%, 97.1%, and 89.5%, respectively.

4. Findings

The iterative analysis of the interview data revealed three categories of learner engagement with English debates.

4.1. Cognitive Engagement

4.1.1. Metacognitive Operations

Among the four participants, Peter's metacognitive operations differed from others, as he demonstrated a keen ability to monitor his logical thinking. He regularly engaged in reflection, particularly on his own debating experience. In the interview, he remarked, "A rich vocabulary, good oral expression, good logical thinking can be like a fish out of water in debating, and vocabulary is the foundation." These observations gained in the analysis of the interview data were supported by my class observations. Peter's deep-level metacognitive engagement contrasted with his unskillful use of argumentative strategies in debates. Unlike Peter, Edward highlighted a lack of relevant knowledge and cognitive abilities in this domain in his metacognitive evaluation of argument logic.

The participants also reflected on the role of language in English debates. For example, Judy believed language proficiency is the foundation of English debating. Interestingly, although Judy was the most fluent speaker during debates among the four participants, she still evaluated her debate performance as unsatisfactory. She attributed her "unsatisfying" performance to the combination of pronunciation and speed of speech problems with the deficiencies in language proficiency. Jack reported a similar negative evaluation of his language proficiency. To improve his language proficiency, he planned to 'make a clear compilation of [his] thoughts in the preparation stage, and try to reduce [his] use of some obscure and difficult vocabulary in the language and try to use more common and simple English to express' (interview).

Additionally, participants' attention to the debate topics also emerged as a frequent code in my analysis of their metacognitive operations. Peter highlighted the impact of debate topics on learners' effectiveness in learning English debate. He further observed that he and his peers were more likely to be interested in social hot topics or debate topics that were of general concern but lacked certainty or authoritative elaboration. In contrast to Peter, who was primarily concerned with the extent to which the debate topic aligned with current affairs, Judy prioritized the intrinsic quality of the debate topic itself, particularly regarding its degree of controversy. In the interview, she stated that a suitable debate topic should permit both sides to contribute to the discussion and should not be unduly biased in favor of one side's perspective.

4.1.2. Cognitive Operations

Regarding cognitive operations, memorization was a frequently used strategy among the participants. Peter referred to the fixed argumentative language he remembered from the debate, such as "honorable judges," "distinguished guests," and "to set the framework for our opinion, we believe it is necessary to state..." The participants were also observed reusing strategies that had proven effective in previous debates. Peter reported that once a debating technique had been proven effective, he would continue to adopt it in his next debating practice. In the interview, Judy stated that when she compiled the debate materials, she deliberately organized them into points, such as "this category is economy, then the next category is culture, and the next category is society" (interview).

Standing in the opponents' shoes was found to be essential in participants' cognitive operations. In the interview, Peter mentioned that putting himself in others' shoes could enable him to predict the opposing debater's point of view. In addition, concerning the logic of argumentation, Edward was more interested in the situation in which his point of view conflicted with that of the defense and was forced to adopt a position contrary to his own. In the interview, he stated that such a situation was an excellent opportunity to develop one's thinking ability objectively and rationally.

The analysis of the cognitive engagement of the four interviewees mentioned above revealed a fascinating array of perspectives. They all acknowledged the relationship between English debating

and English language proficiency, but their perceptions of what is more important in English debating varied. Furthermore, the participants showcased awareness of utilizing transpositions to organize their logical arguments. However, a significant deficit in their knowledge about debating skills and the declarative nature of argumentation was also evident. The majority of the interviewees discussed the incorporation of current events into their perceptions of the topic of debate, but the depth of their understandings varied based on their individual levels of thoughtfulness.

4.2. Behavioral Engagement

4.2.1. Debate Preparation

Analysis of preparation scripts shows that Judy prepared for the debate by listing her viewpoints and using mindmaps to visualize the logical connections between the points (as shown in the use of lines and arrows in Figure 1). Meanwhile, Judy focused on collecting empirical data as evidence to support her conceptualization of the argument. For example, in arguing that social media was unpopular, Judy cited data from iiMedia Research demonstrating that 27.5% of older adults still do not use the platform. Similar to Judy, Edward listed three arguments clearly and concisely in scripts, each identified by the letters A, B, and C. For instance, when advocating for the benefits of economic development, he wrote in his script, "(1) More job opportunities and higher income levels improve the quality of life; (2) redirect government tax revenue and social welfare."

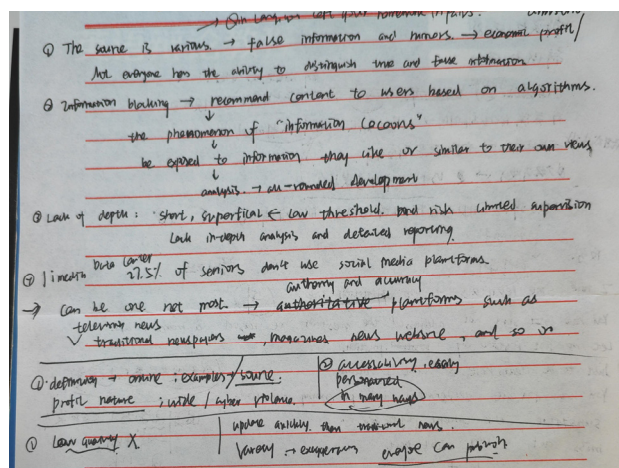


Figure 1. A photograph of notes taken by Judy in the debate

Compared to the other three participants, Jack's script appeared to be a messy and disjointed collection of words with no apparent relation to the subject matter of the debate. In a debate on economic development and environmental protection, his argument was written in Chinese and divided into three points, with one selected for analysis here. For instance, his initial point in his script was as follows: "The economy is the foundation for enhancing efficiency, and the prerequisite for the development of a green economy is that there are consumers." The argument presented comprised only three sentences, which were insufficient to form a complete chain of logic. There were instances of logical inconsistency and a lack of coherence.

4.2.2. Live Debate Strategies

The analysis of the debate recordings reveals that Peter's oral expression in English was characterized by a high frequency of repetitions of English words accompanied by Chinese intonation words such as 'en' and 'er' and many grammatical errors. For instance, he erroneously employed the clause "exam English in college entrance examination" as an independent sentence, using "exam" as a verb. The interview data indicates that he attributed this phenomenon to his difficulty in converting the organization of ideas in Chinese into oral expression in English. Moreover, his arguments in the field

often lacked clarity and logic. For instance, in a debate about the abolition of English in the college entrance examination, when the opponent raised a question about how to ensure that the abolition of the English examination would not affect the students' learning of English by citing music as an example, he firstly retorted, "It's just a problem of the educational system," and then said, "It's just a problem of the educational system," and then said, "It's just a problem of the educational system" (debate recordings).

In contrast to other participants, Judy's English presentation was also relatively fluent, with a low incidence of grammatical errors and fillers. The fluency of her oral English enhanced the effectiveness of her debate. Edward demonstrated a high level of logical organization and reasoning abilities, which enabled him to effectively utilize argumentation methods to improve the persuasive power of his debates. Furthermore, his spoken English performance was outstanding, and he did not encounter any apparent difficulties in language expression. This enhanced the effectiveness of his debates to a certain extent. For instance, he was adept at providing illustrative examples and citing authoritative sources. In his argument for the importance of economic development, he cited the statement by former Premier Li Keqiang that "development is the key element in solving all problems."

4.2.3. Before- or After- Debate Learning

The four participants reported time devoted to debate learning outside the classroom. In learning to debate, Peter demonstrated a high degree of completion of the tasks assigned by the teacher. In addition to previewing the knowledge of the textbook, it can also be seen that he had completed the homework task assigned by the teacher about watching the debate video after class. In contrast, Jack and Edward reported spending extended periods engaged in debate learning outside of the classroom. Although Jack indicated that he utilized online resources to observe and emulate the debating styles of others to enhance his performance, the video viewing history he provided revealed that he had spent more time engaged in this activity than Peter and Judy. However, Jack's debate video viewing history indicates that he viewed a relatively limited number of videos.

Furthermore, the four participants employed disparate learning strategies. Peter demonstrated relatively conventional single preparation and learning strategies. Jack's learning strategies were relatively single, and they did not engage in debate learning. Judy showed a wide variety of learning strategies in English debate learning. For example, she mentioned in the interview that she would categorize the material according to the perspectives of countries, societies, and individuals when sorting out the material. Consequently, she was more familiar with specific argumentation techniques and methods and could think logically, which enabled her to perform relatively flexibly and comfortably in live debates.

4.3. Emotional Engagement

4.3.1. Emotional Response

Learners developed distinct emotions and attitudes following their initial exposure to English debate. For example, Jack's feelings towards English debates transformed from initial nervousness and timidity to a more positive outlook, characterized by a growing enjoyment of refuting his opponents. This shift in attitude was likely to have a positive impact on his learning of English debates, as he stated in the interview: "I would be a bit nervous, and I was not very interested in it at the beginning, but in the gradual process of understanding and learning, I found it quite interesting, and especially after the first debate, I still found it very meaningful and challenging." a keen interest in English debate outside the classroom during the interview.

Unlike Jack, although Edward initially exhibited stuttering and a lack of fluency during the debate, he could adapt rapidly and demonstrate high engagement. For instance, he showed apparent emotional fluctuations at the debate's conclusion. Besides, Edward did not have many emotional ups and downs regarding the English debate, given his previous experience with speeches. However, he was nervous at the beginning of the debate, but he could adjust quickly and pay full attention to the process. He

was less concerned with the outcome of the debate regarding whether or not he refuted his opponent and more focused on his own experience and growth in the debate process.

4.3.2. Attitudinal Response

The participants' attitudes toward English debate also varied. Jack's attitude towards English debate was generally positive. Following the inaugural debate, he maintained that the experience was meaningful and challenging. Peter's relatively low commitment to English debate was partly due to his negative attitude. In terms of study time, apart from class time, he estimated that he watched English debates for approximately 30 minutes after class. Judy's attitude toward English debates was generally positive. Nevertheless, she maintained that refuting back was tantamount to arguing, and sometimes the question from the opponents could be "brutal and unreasonable," leading to the tendency to "go to extremes" (Judy, interview).

Edward's attitude towards English debates was relatively neutral. In the interview, he mentioned: "He doesn't feel that these topics have any practical significance." Although he admitted that debates had a specific positive influence on the shaping of logical thinking, he also mentioned: "I have always had a question, that is, do we solve any practical problems through the debate, do we solve any problems by understanding this topic, I don't think it actually does" (interview). This attitude also led to his having "very little time" to study English debates outside the classroom. In addition, he also mentioned the reason that other studies and practical tasks would squeeze the time for English debate study: "Maybe it's because of my usual work or my things, I just squeeze the time very much. So it's really hard to find the time, sometimes I even stay up late to prepare for the debates" (Edward, interview).

5. Discussion

The multiple-case study has shown that all these four students were aware of the role of English language proficiency in English debates, with varying degrees of understanding. All four students acknowledged the positive impact of listening and speaking skills and particularly specialized vocabulary on English debates. This may add support to the argument that English debates play a dual role in one's disciplinary practices and linguistic performance (Lee, 2017). It is interesting that reader awareness was found to be a common characteristic among the four students. This is different from what Tan et al. (2019) found in their study, which found that as students progressed in their learning of debate, they began to consider the audience's response more carefully. The four participants started to take into consideration their opponents' viewpoints at the early stage of their argument construction. The reason may lie in their observation of the debates between classrooms in previous sessions of this course.

Individual differences in the ways and extent to which learners engage with English debate contribute to the complexity of learners' engagement. These students' learning goals, perceptions of English debate learning (e.g., the relationship between English language proficiency and debate competence, awareness of debate topics), and perceptions of their own English language proficiency significantly influenced their use of metacognitive operations. Another significant influence on learner engagement was contextual factors. Although English debate is a relatively serious topic, the degree of familiarity and interaction among classmates may affect learners' commitment to a certain extent, given that it is a simulation and training of English debate in the same class. A classroom observation revealed that Jack laughed during the English debate. In the future, cross-class training and simulation may be a viable approach to enhance the efficacy of English debate instruction.

Our findings have pedagogical implications for teaching English debates to L2 learners. In the debate class under consideration, the teachers favored practical methods of developing students' debating skills. However, the absence of teaching on debating methods and argumentation skills meant that students' debating skills could have improved more rapidly. Thus, the teacher's practice might only sometimes be consistent with her rationale. This may provide additional support for the complex

relationship between teachers' beliefs and their feedback practices, as shown in Junqueira and Payant's (2015) and Lee's (2008a) studies.

6. Conclusion

The present qualitative multiple-case study, based on data from multiple sources, investigated Chinese English major university students' cognitive, behavioral, and affective engagement in English debate learning. The case studies of these four students illustrate the complexity of student engagement in English debate as a construct mediated by individual and contextual factors. This study can contribute to our current knowledge of student engagement in English debate from three main aspects. First, compared with previous studies, which have focused more on English debate teaching methods or improving written argumentation skills through learning English debate, this paper has pursued and built on the multidimensional perspective on learner engagement and adapted Fredericks et al.'s (2004) framework under the context of English debate learning. Second, a comprehensive and contextualized description of four individual learners' engagement has been provided, suggesting a dynamic relationship between the three dimensions of engagement. It corroborates the rationality of Han and Hyland's (2015) tripartite framework of learner engagement. Third, the interrelationship among contextual factors, student factors, and student engagement in English debate shows the need for researchers to take a perspective that integrates the cognitive and social aspects of English debate learning.

However, we do need to acknowledge the limitations of the study. Since participants' preparation scripts were analyzed for only one debate, the study could not investigate the development or change in their noting-taking strategies over time. In future studies, researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to observe changes in learners over time. Also, as the participants were students from the same class taught by one teacher, the current findings could not be generalized to students of other performance levels or in other pedagogical contexts. Future research can make comparisons between different classes taught by different teachers to find out the effects of different teaching methods on the learning of English debates. In this way, the research findings may offer new insights into the effective ways of teaching and learning English debates.

References

- [1] Ellis, R. (2010). EPILOGUE: A framework for investigating oral and written corrective feedback. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 32(2), 335-349. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263109990544>.
- [2] Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74, 59-109. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059>.
- [3] Han, Y., & Hyland, F. (2015). Exploring learner engagement with written corrective feedback in a Chinese tertiary EFL classroom. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 30(4), 31-44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2015.08.002>.
- [4] Hsu, P. S., Van Dyke, M., Chen, Y., & Smith, T. J. (2015). The effect of a graph-oriented computer-assisted project-based learning environment on argumentation skills. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 31(1), 32-58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12080>.
- [5] Iordanou, K., & Rapanta, C. (2021). "argue with me": A method for developing argument skills. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 631203-631203. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.631203>.
- [6] Jin, T., Shi, Z., & Lu, X. (2019). From novice storytellers to persuasive arguers: Learner use of evidence in oral argumentation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 53(4), 1151-1161. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.541>.
- [7] Junqueira, L., & Payant, C. (2015). "I just want to do it right, but it's so hard": A novice teacher's written feedback beliefs and practices. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 27, 19-36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2014.11.001>.
- [8] Lee, O. (2017). Common core state standards for ELA/literacy and Next Generation Science Standards: Convergences and discrepancies using argument as an example. *Educational Researcher*, 46(2), 90-102. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X17699172>.
- [9] Majidi, A. e., Janssen, D., & de Graaff, R. (2021). The effects of in-class debates on argumentation skills in second language education. *System*, 101, 102576. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2021.102576>.
- [10] Mercier, H. (2011). Reasoning serves argumentation in children. *Cognitive Development*, 26(3), 177-191. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2010.12.001>.

- [11] Osana, H. P., & Seymour, J. R. (2004). Critical thinking in preservice teachers: A rubric for evaluating argumentation and statistical reasoning. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 10(4-6), 473-498. [https://doi.org/ 10. 1080/13803610512331383529](https://doi.org/10.1080/13803610512331383529).
- [12] Qin, J., & Karabacak, E. (2010). The analysis of toulmin elements in chinese EFL university argumentative writing. *System*, 38(3), 444-456. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2010.06.012>.
- [13] Roorda, D. L., Jak, S., Zee, M., Oort, F. J., & Koomen, H. M. Y. (2017). Affective teacher-student relationships and students' engagement and achievement: A meta-analytic update and test of the mediating role of engagement. *School Psychology Review*, 46(3), 239-261. <https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017-0035.V46-3>.
- [14] Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Appendix A. Coding scheme of learner engagement in the present study

Categories and subcategories	Descriptions	Examples
Cognitive engagement		
Meta-cognitive operations	Strategies and skills the learner used to regulate his or her mental process, practices, and emotional reactions.	E.g. planning for emotional reactions: “When it is my turn to debate, I often feel nervous. However, I always try to make myself calm down.”
Cognitive operations	Cognitive strategies and skills that the learner adopts to understand the subject-matter, the logic of argumentation, and language use in English debates.	E.g. transfer learning: “Once I used the sentence pattern like 'At first sight, their argument seems to be true, but...', I found it was a good way to convince the opposite, thus I am thinking to reuse it next time.”
Behavioral engagement		
Debate preparation	Observable operations the learner took to prepare for the debate after the topic has been announced.	E.g. brainstorming about the debate point and find out useful debate point; searching on the Internet for help; using dictionary to look up words
Live debate performance	The learner's observable performance during the English debate.	E.g. listening carefully about what the opposite said; trying to find out the bug to have a debate; being ready to put up a point
Before- or after-debate learning	The learner's observable strategies to learn the skills of English debate.	E.g. watching some debating videos; learning from the text books; reflecting on his or her performance after each debating; the feedback from the teacher
Affective engagement		
Emotional response	The learner's emotional reactions toward English debate; the change of their emotional reactions during and after English debate.	E.g. upset; nervous; anxious; pleasant; proud
Attitudinal response	The learner's overall attitudes toward English debate that is revealed throughout the whole process of English debate.	E.g. positive, negative, mixed