# CRITICAL ANALYSIS: LOGICAL FALLACIES IN STUDENTS' DEBATE REGARDING GENDER ISSUES

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## Abstract

Communication without logical fallacies is highly needed in the 21st century's student's skills. Many experts agreed that debate is an effective method to build students' communication skills. The debate has now expanded from an ELT teaching method into a competitive platform to proliferate students' critical thinking and communication. However, NUDC is one of the national scales of debate tournament that could represent the Indonesian students' critical and communication skills. Considering that background in mind, this study was expected to identify the logical fallacies uttered by university students' debate regarding gender issues. This study deployed a descriptive qualitative design. With a natural setting, the data were collected using the structured observation

sheet in three phases, the debate observation without setting manipulation, the recorded debate was scripted and condensate, and analyzing the logical fallacies through the transcription. While the data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data condensation, and data conclusions. The data shows that there are seven logical fallacies uttered by the speakers in the debate about the gender issue. They are misleading euphemism, prejudicial language, an appeal to fear, an appeal to pity, straw man, hasty generalization, and a slippery slope. Besides, the speakers who uttered the logical fallacies were also presented.

**Keywords:** Critical Analysis, Logical Fallacies, Gender Issue

## A. Introduction

Recently World Economic Forum has released the top 10 emerging skills for 2033. The list is motivated by the massive job transformation where 75 million of the job roles that could be lost from the existence(Bakhshi et al., 2017). one of the top lists of the competence required in the 21st century is a communication skill. Communication skills must be possessed by the workforce in 2030 in response to future global challenges(Bakhshi et al., 2017) such as increasing inequality, political uncertainty, technological change, globalization, demographic change, environmental sustainability, and urbanization. The data means that the importance of argumentation in response to the demand of the 21st century's challenges is undeniable.

Moreover, one of the effective communication skills is persuasive speaking. As a thoughtful process, persuasive speaking(Derin et al., 2020; Jones, 2016). It has been used in human daily interactions started from a trivial communication such as a convincing statement from a friend about which restaurant to pick for lunch and where to go for a vocation to the complex persuasive in political and business conversation such as entrepreneurs that persuade an investor to significantly invest the startup, job interviewee that persuade the interviewer to hire him, a politician that persuade society to vote for him, etc.

Communication skill especially in persuasive speaking has also grabbed the highest attention in English Language Teaching in Indonesia. It can be seen that the Indonesian Government has redefined the focus of education by applying Curriculum 2013 that is aimed to respond to the dynamic of the 21st century's education demand by inserting the skill of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving as the top focus of the education (Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 18A, 2012 about Curriculum Implementation).

There are three major aspects in persuasive speaking, they are persuasion are logos, pathos, and ethos(Ting, 2018). Logos is a rationality of argumentation using proper evidence and reasoning. Feeling no gaps between logic in the statement-making it more

convincing to the interlocutor, pathos is an emotional appeal that brings audiences to the interest of the speakers, while ethos is the speaker's credibility, the eloquent speakers show the audiences that he knows exactly what he is trying to communicate.

*Logos* (rationality), *Pathos* (emotional appeal) and *Ethos* (speaker credibility) as the three models of persuasive speaking are the human quality that has not yet been able to be performed by machines and algorithms. Therefore, many experts have agreed upon the position of persuasive speaking in the future. That it has not been automated by any machines and algorithms.

Logos is a rational appeal that deals with clarity and integrity of the argument(Krishnan et al., 2020; Shao, 2013) and it should be done using the proof, or apparent proof, that provided by the words of the speech itself(Demirdugen, 2010), therefore, to elevate the level of its persuasiveness, a speaker must be able to avoid logical fallacies(Mshvenieradze, 2013).

The logical fallacy is the flawed construction of the assertions, supporting and defending the claims using well-developed reasoning and evidence (Duplass & Ziedler, 2020). Some fallacies can be more-frequently encountered either in the lack of evidence, irrelevant points, or illegitimate arguments to support the case. from more than 125 logical fallacies that have been identified, here are the most common logical fallacies found in persuasive speaking(Baldwin, 1999; Hundleby, 2010; Indah & Kusuma, 2015; Mayfield, 2007).

**Table 1.** Common Logical Fallacies in Communication based on Mayfield
(Mayfield, 2007)

| Type of Fallacy | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Manipulation through Language<br>1. Word Ambiguity<br>2. Misleading euphemism<br>3. Prejudicial language | 1. Uses vague or undefined words.<br>2. Hides meaning by creating words which make less acceptable idea seems positive.<br>3. Uses loaded words that convey bias. |
| Manipulation through Emotion<br>1. Appeal to fear<br>2. Appeal to pity<br>3. Appeal to false authority<br>4. Appeal to bandwagon<br>5. Appeal to prejudice<br>　a. Personal attack<br>　b. Poisoning the well | 1. Seeks to persuade by arousing fear<br>2. Seeks to persuade by arousing pity<br>3. Seeks to persuade by citing a fake or inappropriate authority<br>4. Seeks to persuade by appealing to the wisdom of popular momentum<br>　a. Attacks a person's character on matters irrelevant to the issue<br>　b. Seeks to prejudice others against a person, group or idea so that their arguments will not be heard on their own merits |
| Manipulation through distraction | 1. Diverts attention to other issues |

Mulyadi Syahputra; Sri Wahyuni; Rosdiana; Mulyani; Riska Marlisa Aini; Hijjatul Qamariah

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Red herring <br> 2. Pointing to another wrong <br> 3. Straw man <br> 4. Circular reasoning | 2. Claims that similar actions went unnoticed and unpunished <br> 3. Attacks a minor point in an argument, then claims this maneuver invalidates the whole argument <br> 4. Repeats the same conclusion in different words |
| Inductive Fallacy <br> 1. Hasty generalization <br> 2. Either-or fallacy <br> 3. Questionable statistics <br> 4. Inconsistencies and contradictions <br> 5. Loaded questions <br> 6. False analogy <br> 7. False cause <br> 8. Slippery slope | 1. Concludes insufficient sampling <br> 2. Asserts there are only two (extreme) choices while actually there are many <br> 3. Presents unknown or unsound statistics <br> 4. Uses claims that contradict one another <br> 5. Uses a biased question <br> 6. Ignores significant differences when comparing two things <br> 7. Presents unreasonable claim of causal connection <br> 8. Presents unwarranted claim that one event would lead to a chain reaction |

One of the teaching models that could boost students' persuasiveness is a debate(Asrida, 2012; Iman, 2017; Tianame et al., 2019). However, enhancing students' communication and persuasion skills is the most wanted output of the debate in ELT(Syahputra, 2020) since, during the debate, the speakers of each side attempted to deliver a matter that either support or negate the topic. The delivered matter targets the audiences and adjudicators to believe what the speakers were saying. The more convincing a speaker, the higher the score he got in the judgment of the adjudicators.

Moreover, the debate is an effective method in assessing the logical fallacies in an argumentation(Bennett, 2012; Hamzah et al., n.d.; Warman, 2019). It is because the delivered arguments in a debate should be followed by appropriate and convincing reasoning to fulfill the logic. Once the logical fallacies arise in a speaker's substantive speech there is always the opposite side that functions as the logical evaluator to rebut the logical fallacies of their opponent. Therefore, many experts believed that the debate technique is effective to teach the students to identify the logical fallacies in an argumentation.

The transformation of the debate as an EFL teaching method into a competitive entity urges the rising of many competitive debates(Agustina & Bahrani, 2016; Syahputra, 2020; Syahputra & Chaira, 2020). Nowadays, there is countless debate competition conducted by various organization and host in a local, national, and international scale of the competition. National University Debating Championship

(NUDC) is a national-level competition that deploys the British Parliamentary Debate System.

The British parliamentary Debate System is where four teams are involved at each chamber(Othman et al., 2015; Smith, 2011; Wahyuni, Syahputra, et al., 2019). In a debate, there are two contrasting sides, the government, and the opposition side. each side is made up of two different teams. Accordingly, the first four teams are called Opening Government, Opening Opposition, Closing Government, and Closing Opposition.

Table 2. British Parliamentary Debate Format(Wahyuni, Qamariah, et al., 2019)

| Government | Opposition |
|---|---|
| Opening Government | Opening Opposition |
| 1. Prime Minister | 1. Leader for Opposition |
| 2. Deputy Prime Minister | 2. Deputy Leader for Opposition |
| Closing Government | Closing Opposition |
| 1. Member for Government | 1. Member for Opposition |
| 2. Government Whip | 2. Opposition Whip |

The motion discusses in the British Parliamentary Debate is a world's issues such as urbanization, terrorism, gender inequality, demographic change, etc (Othman et al., 2015; Syahputra, 2018, 2020; Syahputra & Chaira, 2020; Wahyuni, Syahputra, et al., 2019). Gender Issue deals with woman inequality before the society's perspective and discrimination toward their social role. Inclusivity is the key to this topic. This topic is getting popular in NUDC since many problems regarding gender exclusivity and the right of the woman is hardly solved in real social life(Uberoi, 2017). In NUDC 2020, the motion about gender issues is set in round 6 under the motion "As donors, THW make a heavy focus on applying Islamic feminism a requirement for developmental aid for Muslim-majority developing countries".

However, the debate on this topic is far from perfection. Many logical fallacies appear during the students' debate. Considering those gaps in mind, this research is aimed to answer the logical fallacies in students' debate regarding gender issue in NUDC that has been conducted virtually. 134 groups of students have been selected from all universities in Indonesia. The debate competition was conducted in 9 preliminary rounds, and one of the rounds is specified to debate under gender issue's theme.

However, there are still some logical fallacies made in students' debate regarding gender issues on the national debate circuit. Considering those gaps in mind, the objective of the current study has been set to identify and discuss the logical fallacies in students' debate regarding gender issues.

## B.  Method

The research was conducted in the qualitative approach with the descriptive qualitative method as the design of the study. Accordingly, the researcher described the phenomenon related to the logical fallacies found in the substantive speech of the National University Debate Competition 2020 (NUDC 2020) speakers.

There are nine preliminary rounds with 29 parallel chambers during the competition, the researcher conducted a purposive sampling in deciding which preliminary round would be the subject of the debate. Since among nine preliminary rounds, only one of those rounds was assigned to debate the gender issue's theme. While in deciding which chambers to observe, the researcher deployed random sampling, picking one of those 29 chambers using a randomizing website called www.randomizer.org.

The data of this study were utterances that contained arguments or logical fallacies during the substantive speech of the sixth preliminary round that debates the gender issues from two debate chamber under the motion "*As donors, THW make a heavy focus on applying Islamic feminism a requirement for developmental aid for Muslim-majority developing countries*". It means, the POI (Point of Information) and verbal adjudication were excluded from the observation. To collect the data, the researcher deployed observation as the key instrument. Using the structured observation sheet that is by the objective of the study(Martin, 1977). While to ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researchers themselves did collect the data through recording the debate process using *EaseUS RecExperts* Application.

The researcher conducted the data collection through the natural setting where the debates were not manipulated and specifically set up for the interest of the research(Norum, 2008). And the data collection were conducted in three phases, (1) the speaker from each of the sides interchangeably following the order of the British Parliamentary Debate System(Wahyuni, Qamariah, et al., 2019) while the researcher evaluates each utterance of the speakers during the substantive speech using logical fallacies approach by referring to the logical fallacy classification that is proposed by Mayfield(Mayfield, 2007). In addition, in this phase the researcher focus on the type of the logical fallacies made by the speakers instead of its frequencies, (2) the speakers' utterances that were recorded then transcribed and analyzed as well as condensate(Miles et al., 2014), lastly, (3) focusing to the aim of the study that to find the logical fallacies in speakers' substantive speech.

The researcher conducted three steps in data analysis. (1) data analysis was data reduction(Miles et al., 2014), which means that the focus of the researcher was selecting and categorizing the raw data into utterances that contain logical fallacies, (2) the data

then condensate(Miles et al., 2014), filtered and categorized into the need of the study, (3) the data then concluded(Miles et al., 2014) to achieve a conclusive statement about the logical fallacies in the students' debate about the gender issue.

## C.   Finding and Discussion

The research has successfully identified several fallacies in National University Debating Championship 2020 speakers. The study focussed on the logical fallacies found in the substantive speech of each speaker. After analyzing the data, it was found that there were five types of logical fallacies in the substantive speech on the gender issue. Based on the logical fallacies' classification, the followings are some logical fallacies produced by the speakers regarding gender issues under the motion "*As donors, THW make a heavy focus on applying Islamic feminism a requirement for developmental aid for Muslim-majority developing countries*".

To ease in naming the participants, the researcher gave abbreviations for each speaker. Prime minister (PM), Leader of Opposition (LO), Deputy Prime Minister (DPM), Deputy Leader of Opposition (DLO), Member for Government (MG), Member for Opposition (MO), Government Whip (GW), and Opposition Whip (OW).

a.   Fallacy by manipulation through language.

Each speaker in the chamber constantly uttered fallacy by manipulation through language in each of their substantive speech in form of misleading euphemism and prejudicial language, the findings can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3.** Fallacy by Manipulation through Language

| Speakers | Logical Fallacy by Manipulation through Language |
|---|---|
| PM | …It is **disgraceful** for the developing country to take the donation without obeying the offered belief.<br>The women are **oppressed** and need helps from… |
| MG | …As a country that owned an integrity, they will redirect their focus to establish a strong government that promote Muslim feminism idea… |
| MO | …the culture of the society is not inherently **evil** to be adopted.<br>Women themselves is not fully aware of … |

Both sentences (PM & MO) were considered manipulative due to the word choice to strengthen the message being delivered to the adjudicator. "Disgraceful. oppressed and evil" are strong words that could manipulate the listeners to believe in the speakers without focusing on the logical reasonings presented after the claims. This type of logical fallacies called 'Misleading euphemism'

The MG statements show a prejudicial language where a country that has integrity must focus on accepting the redirection focus of the government to pay attention to

Mulyadi Syahputra; Sri Wahyuni; Rosdiana; Mulyani; Riska Marlisa Aini; Hijjatul Qamariah

feminism idea. However, the other speakers in the house, do not conduct the logical fallacies in the type of manipulation through language.

b. Fallacy by manipulation through emotion

the speakers in the chamber uttered fallacy by manipulation through emotion in form of appeal to fear and appeal to pity. This is mostly used by the opposition side of the house to convince the adjudicator that the developing country that could not impose the feminism movement needs help. The list of the fallacies can be seen in the table 4.

Table 4. Fallacy by Manipulation through emotion

| Speakers | Logical Fallacy by Manipulation through Emotion |
|---|---|
| LO | … the internal social reform would be broken in the interference of the international body becomes the motivation of the feminism movement ideology creation… |
| MO | They (the developing country) are in need of the helps; the development of the country would not be possible without the donation. And it is morally unjustified to use the weaknesses of a country to impose our agenda, this will cause the rejection from the rest of the society. |

LO used manipulation through emotion using an appeal to fear by highlighting the risk that could arise in implementing the motion was still underdone. It is considered fallacies since the stated risk was not followed by proper reasoning on how this impact could arise.

While MO used an appeal to pity by highlighting the need of the developing country to the help of the developed country. It is considered a fallacy since the speaker used the developing country's weaknesses and need to justify that the donation is still needed to be given with or without the implementation of Islamic feminism in those Muslim countries.

c. Fallacy by Distraction

It was also found that the fallacy by Distraction has been uttered by some speakers in the debating chamber. Most of this type of fallacies was conducted by the closing opposition. The list of the fallacy by distraction uttered by the speakers can be seen in the table 5.

Table 5. Fallacy by Distraction

| Speakers | Logical Fallacy by Distraction |
|---|---|
| MO | … Muslim majority countries are not mostly attracted to the developmental aids offered by the donors. Because the requirement is complicated and it will take long time to manage… |

This type of fallacy is in form of the straw man, where it is only a trivial point to justify that the Muslim majority countries would reject the developmental aids just

because of the complicated procedure and administration. This is considered fallacies since the reason is a minor point the opposes the motions.

   d.   The fallacy in inductive conclusion

   Many inductive conclusions were uttered by the various speakers in the debate about this gender issue. The list of the fallacies can be seen in the table 6.

**Table 6**. Fallacy in Inductive Conclusion

| Speakers | Logical Fallacy in Inductive Conclusion |
|---|---|
| PM | …the Muslim majority countries are in need of the developmental aids that the donor offered. It is highly an effective way to impose the Muslim feminism to those countries… <br><br> …most of the citizen would not interfere with their government regulation, since the Muslim majorities country are still having a sense of dictatorship… |
| DPM | …if this (proposal) has been accepted by the government, then the Muslim feminism would soon become popular and it opens the door for the women to be accepted in the society… |
| MG | …All the Muslim majority countries are struggling with the gender issues, like honour killing, underage marriage and etc. this is because the Muslim feminism is not being accepted in the country. which mean that the countries would hardly develop without the participation of the woman… |

   PM stated two fallacies in form of Hasty Generalization, (1) PM uttered that all the Muslim majority countries are poor and in need of developmental aids and easily accept the narration of Muslim feminism in their countries. (2) PM stated that most of the Muslim majority's country are still having a sense of dictatorship which is a generalization of a small number compared to Muslim countries who has accepted democracy as their system.

   While DPM stated that the logic of government acceptance could directly open the Muslim feminism ideology to society. It is considered a Slippery Slope since many side impacts could arise even after the government accepts the developmental aids rather that it will smoothly be implemented in the social paradigm.

   Lastly, MG uttered two logical fallacies in one statement, (1) the statement was considered as Hasty Generalization by categorizing all Muslim countries are struggling with extreme gender issues. This generalization is not acceptable since there is no such data presented to support the statement. And (2) the statement is also considered as a Slippery Slope since concluding the premise where without Muslim feminism the

Countries' development would be hampered without any further explanation on how this prediction could be the most likely to happen.

## D. Conclusion

After conducting the research, the four types of logical fallacies by the classification of Mayfield(Mayfield, 2007) are uttered. In the first classification, Manipulation through Language the speakers uttered two types of logical fallacies, they are Misleading Euphemism and Prejudicial Language. The Misleading Euphemism was uttered by the Prime Minister and Member of Opposition while the Prejudicial Language was uttered by the member of the government. The second type of logical fallacies is Manipulation through emotion. The type of fallacies uttered by the speakers in this section are an Appeal to Fear and an Appeal to Pity. These fallacies were uttered by the Leader of Opposition that uttered an Appeal to Fear and Member of Opposition that uttered an Appeal to Pity. This type of second logical fallacies is mostly uttered by the Opposition side of the house. The third type of logical fallacies is Fallacy by Distraction. This fallacy was uttered in form of Straw Man. It was uttered by Member of Opposition by appointing a minor case to indicate that the major agreement will not be approved. Lastly, the third type of logical fallacies is Hasty Generalization and Slippery Slope. The Hasty Generalization was uttered two times by the Prime Minister and Member of Government, while the Slippery Slope was uttered by Deputy Prime Minister and member of the government. To sum up, the logical fallacies in students' debate about gender issues are misleading euphemism, prejudicial language, an appeal to fear, an appeal to pity, straw man, hasty generalization, and a slippery slope.

### Acknowledgement

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