

An Examination of Source Credibility of Evidence in Japanese Debate: From the Aspect of Critical Thinking Disposition

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This study investigated, using questionnaires and interviews, the attitudes of debaters who have experienced junior and senior high school debate tournaments to find whether they approached information sources with critical thinking disposition in selecting evidence and examining evidence-based arguments. The results showed that they knew basic principles of evidence (critical assessments of source credibility and the importance of quoting from credible sources) but did not always act accordingly. Also, some students did not exercise critical thinking disposition to refute or indict the weakness of source credibility during the competition, given the difficulty of such refutation and the weight of other factors in the strategic choice of arguments. There are reasons behind such practices. One is that some students want to find “quotable” texts to directly support their claims regardless of source credibility. Another is that some debaters find it easier for the judges to accept arguments supported by evidence from low-credibility sources than those without any evidence at all.

1. INTRODUCTION

The debate is often used as a practical way to develop students’ critical thinking (CT). In “policy debate,” one type of academic debate, debaters quote “evidence” from published sources in the style of direct quotations to support their arguments. This evidence significantly affects the outcome of debate because it is theoretically the foundation of all arguments (e.g., Nakazawa, 1996). When selecting evidence from a variety of information and using it, debate requires CT to appropriately evaluate the credibility of information sources, contents, and to quote them accurately (Freeley & Steinberg, 2014).

Source credibility is closely related to the overall credibility of the evidence as many debate textbooks suggest (e.g., Ando & Tadokoro, 2002; Tenpaku, 2007; Nakazawa, 1996; Kruger, 1960). Ziegelmüller and Kay (1997) stated, “the credibility of factual and expert opinion evidence is, in large part, dependent on the ability and willingness of a source to perceive and interpret the situation accurately and fairly” (p. 88). However, source credibility of evidence does not seem to be emphasized in competitive interscholastic debate in practice. Trapp (1993) criticized the fact that debaters read the evidence

quickly, without considering the rationale on which the opinion was based and the credibility of the sources. Fine (2001)’s ethnographic study of the high school debate clarified that “few pieces of evidence are indicted in the round over the qualification of the source, except for a few controversial individuals or organizations” (p. 74). Debate educators such as Cram (2012), and Ulrich (1986), warned that the source credibility has been undervalued in debate. Most of previous writings refer to debate practices in the United States, while research in Japan has not studied the credibility of information sources in detail, except for my own works (Zhang, 2017; 2019).

Due to the diversification of searching methods and the development of technology, a large amount of information with mixed quality can be discovered; hence, making a critical judgment on the source credibility of information is necessary when selecting evidence. This paper’s purpose is to conduct qualitative research on the use of evidence in Japanese debate for better future argumentation and CT education. This study used questionnaires and interviews with debaters who have experienced junior and senior high school debate tournaments (so-called Debate Koshien)*¹ in Japan to determine whether they approached information sources with a CT disposition in selecting evidence and examining

evidence-based arguments. First, the research perspective will be outlined, followed by the clarification of specific research questions and research methods. Second, detailed analysis will be discussed based on the questionnaires and interviews.

2. RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE AND METHOD

2.1 Research Perspective: Critical Thinking Disposition

Recently, CT has increasingly attracted considerable attention due to its educational merits against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving information society. In Japan, various efforts have been undertaken to develop CT, such as debate activities and other classroom lessons. Cognitive abilities/skills and affective dispositions are the two primary CT dimensions. CT abilities/skills are concerned with clarification of issues, examinations of sources and contents of information, validity of inferences, etc. Affective dispositions include items related to the willingness or attitude to think critically by executing CT abilities/skills (e.g., Facione, 1990; Siegel, 1988; Ennis, 1987). It also includes some critical spirit, personal traits, or habits of the mind to doubt information credibility (Facione, 1990; D'Angelo, 1971), to seek diverse knowledge and information (Ennis, 1987; D'Angelo, 1971), to fairly appraise one's own and others' argument and evidence (Paul, 1995), to use reliable sources of information and make judgments upon valid evidence (Ennis, 1987; Kusumi, 2011), and to pursue alternatives for claims that seem weak in reason (Ennis, 1987; D'Angelo, 1971).

To become a good critical thinker, CT abilities/skills are not enough; one must develop those thinking dispositions. Full employment of CT must include its dispositions to make use of the given abilities/skills (Ennis, 1987; Facione, 1990; Siegel, 1988; Wade, 1997). In addition, the cultivation of these dispositions is particularly essential to transfer CT across domains (Kusumi, 2011; Halpern, 1998; Edman, 2008). Depending on the situational factors such as purpose and time, which influence judgments related to CT, even if people possess CT abilities/skills, they may not exercise them, or, even if they apply CT abilities/skills and dispositions, they may not turn their judgments into actions, e.g., in writing and

speaking (Tanaka & Kusumi, 2007; Tanaka, 2009; Kusumi, 2010).

Previous studies have extensively discussed the effects of CT ability development and debate education (e.g., Colbert, 1987; Hill, 1993). However, few studies have investigated CT disposition and its effects on the debate. None of them analyzed CT disposition towards the selection and evaluation of evidence for competitive debate.

Accordingly, this research will clarify whether debaters approached the source credibility of information/evidence with a CT disposition by analyzing the following three questions: (1) What criteria do debaters use to find evidence from the information?; (2) Do debaters evaluate the source credibility of information/evidence?; and (3) Do debaters pay attention to the credibility of the source cited by the opposite side during the competition?. The analysis and discussion will also consider possible reasons when debaters' CT disposition is apparently inhibited.

2.2 Research Methods

The questionnaire survey in this study was carried out at the Debate Koshien National Tournament held in Tokyo from August 4 to 6, 2018. The question items consisted of 19 questions about the qualitative evaluation of the evidence and 12 questions about the citation method. A total of 430 questionnaires were distributed, and the number of responses was 260. Of these, 241 were valid responses, resulting in 56% of the total (101 junior high school students, 53 males and 48 females, 65 debaters with more than one year of debating experience; 140 high school students, 82 males and 58 females, 101 with more than one year of debating experience).

Individual and group interviews were conducted with debaters from eight schools, who were taking breaks during the competition after explaining the purpose to them. Additional interviews were conducted with seven Japanese university students who had participated in other occasions. When interviewing university students, they were asked to recall their experiences of participating in the Debate Koshien and describe their preparation for it.

All interviews were conducted in Japanese, recorded with permission, and transcribed by the author for analysis. The excerpts in this paper were translated into English by the author.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Finding Evidence

For efficient CT, it is first crucial to accurately understand the underlying information and perform an appropriate analysis, including assumptions, argument structures, and definitions (Ennis, 1987; Facione, 1990; Kusumi, 2011). Hence, it is necessary to critically read the material to grasp the context, obtain sufficient information, and understand the content. This is also vital for evaluating source credibility (Inch & Warnick, 2011; Herrick, 1995). Ziegelmüller and Kay (1997) highlighted that “we must look carefully at the premises, facts, and opinions expressed by a source to determine whether or not they are consistent with each other. Inconsistencies between or among premises, facts, and opinions expressed by a single source raise serious questions concerning the credibility of the source of data” (p. 81). Knowing how the debater searches for and extracts evidence from various sources of information helps predict the degree of emphasis placed on source credibility. This was revealed by the interviews.

Generally, the resolution of Debate Koshien is announced about half a year before the national debate tournament. After the announcement, the debaters start with a general survey mainly using search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, as well as reading books and newspaper articles, while referring to the commentary on the resolution released by the tournament organizer. They search the information around the topic by arranging the keywords in search engines, addressing what the issues are, and where the issues are contested. After narrowing down the important issues and subordinate claims to some extent, they begin to understand more specific information for supporting their claims and arguments. They search for such content by typing specific sentences or phrases that represent their claims. If the identified content is considered useful by debaters through this process, chunks of texts will be extracted and accumulated as a collection of evidence.

The interviews also reveal ways of how and how much information to read. These aspects depend on certain criteria, such as the amount of time, the length of retrieved texts, and the researcher (one’s own research or someone else’s). Some debaters try to confirm the whole text by reading the information from beginning to end, while others attempt reading the full text only when it is short. Furthermore, some debaters

try to interpret the author’s intention correctly by reading the texts before and after what they want to quote. Others only read the texts they intend to quote. And some debaters only thoroughly scrutinize the information they find but do not do so about the information found by other team members.

Debaters seemed to focus more on whether the discovered source included the sentences and phrases they wanted to use to support their claims. One of the interviewees clearly stated that the evidence’s value depends on whether the useful phrases are written in:

It is a characteristic of debate; time is limited, well, short, and easy-to-understand statements are essential evidence for winning the round. Of course, what the author wants to convey is very important when reading. However, when it comes to evidence for debate, a good text is judged on whether [what a debater wants is explicitly] written as a criterion for the value of evidence. When searching for debate evidence, as a reading method, I first give a cursory reading and then pick up the place where I think certain words are good. (A female senior high school student with 4 years of debate experience).

From the above mentioned, one of the debater’s criteria to decide whether the information can be extracted as evidence is based upon its content, such as “good sentences and words.” Previous studies have also indicated this point. For example, Cram (2012) pointed out that “The digital manipulation of evidence enables researchers to more directly render text into the specific language or claims needed for debates over ‘what the evidence literally says’ in ways that speak to the needs of debate strategy as opposed to the facts of the issue. This incentivizes research that can pinpoint specific wording or verbiage over researching the strength of competing claims or the merit of the source, which is exacerbated by the current agnosticism in source quality” (p. 146). Debaters should be advised to read and understand the entire material critically, confirming that the quote corresponds with the author’s intention, in order not only to obtain accurate and sufficient content from various information but also to quote from reliable sources.

Nevertheless, it is not easy in practice to request debaters to conform to this principle

strictly because it requires considerable time and energy to read the whole text for every piece of information. Freeley and Steinberg (2014) proposed that, since advocates cannot read all information, sources including scholarly and professional journals, qualified authorities, competent and objective persons, and those who have a reputation for accuracy should be given priority for careful, detailed study. Others also argued that debaters need to focus on or select specific or highly reliable sources to quote (e.g., Edwards, 2008; Nakazawa, 1996). In other words, it is considered more efficient to extract the evidence from a highly reliable source. Do debaters judge sources' credibility when looking for evidence, or are they citing sources from highly reliable sources?

3.2 Source Credibility

As mentioned beforehand, it is essential to exercise critical judgment on the credibility of information sources when selecting evidence. Ennis (1987), Facione (1990), and Kusumi (2011) also recommend the use of reliable sources from the perspective of CT dispositions. Regarding source credibility, some items need to be examined based on debate textbooks: source identification, source accessibility (geographical/chronological), experience, ability, expertness, self-interest, past reputation, moral character, and internal/external consistencies in statements (e.g., Freeley & Steinberg, 2014; Ziegelmüller, Harris, & Bloomingdale, 1995). Upon this, the questionnaires and interviews yielded some findings to verify whether the debaters judged source credibility and its determination method, followed by particular attention to "authority"² in evidence.

In the questionnaire, 150 out of 241 respondents selected the answer *always judge* when asked "When quoting evidence, do you judge whether the sources are credible?" When examining the evidence, the interviews showed that some debaters first looked at the source and then confirmed the content, while others focused on the content from the beginning. Concerning the source credibility, they first tried to verify who published the information and whether their identity was apparent. Therefore, debaters are aware that it is not appropriate to quote from blogs or Wikipedia where the author's identity is not specified³. Some debaters also considered the presence of reasons for the author's opinion, the author's career, experience, job title, objectivity, authority, year of publication, etc.

When quoting the evidence, it is necessary to read three elements (author's name, title, and publication year) of the source to the judges in the debate speech, as stipulated in the rules of Debate Koshien⁴. The debaters, in turn, seemed to confirm these, as one debater's response testified in an interview: "Rather than quoting nothing, if we know the job title, author's name, and year of publication, our argument will become more credible than such argument that with no evidence quoted." If debaters can identify these three elements, they will believe that the source has a certain degree of credibility.

When asked, "Do you trust the literature if it is published?" 68 respondents out of 240 chose *always trust* and 124 chose *often trust*, indicating that most debaters seemed to trust the published literature. This and the above interview excerpts point to their agreement that the evidence has a certain degree of credibility if the source is published and the author is identified. Thus, some debaters judge these sources worth quoting as evidence. This finding raises the question of whether the information is deemed quotable in students' minds even if its source is not highly reliable. This was reflected in their answers to the question: "Do you use information even if the source has low credibility but contains the content you want?" There was a degree of similarity between the number of debaters who used low-credibility sources (*always use* (15), *often use* (17), *sometimes use* (82); 114 debaters in total) and those who rarely used these sources (*do not use much* (88), *never use* (39); 127 debaters in total).

The questionnaire also included another question: "In support of your claim, even if the quality of the evidence cited is not good, do you think it is better than no evidence quotation at all?" The results showed that more debaters (158 out of 240) thought that quoting evidence was better than no quotations—even if the weak quality (the result of considering both the source and the content) of that evidence. That is, even if the source of information was not highly reliable, debaters may extract evidence from it and use it in the competition.

Furthermore, if the source was not highly reliable, some debaters tried to search for more reliable evidence. If they could not find such a required evidence type, they reconsidered their argument as weak and did not use it. CT dispositions also encourage to withhold conclusions and consider other alternatives if insufficient information or reasons are found

(Ennis, 1987; D'Angelo, 1971). However, since some debaters pursued "good phrases and sentences," they used them even if the source had little credibility. As one debater said, when there is a lot of information that expresses what he wants to quote, he will choose the more reliable one; when the information is little, however, he uses it as long as it is not from an anonymous site.

Moreover, many debaters seemed to believe that, regardless of the degree of source credibility, it is easier to get their arguments accepted by the judges by quoting evidence from a published third party rather than saying it in their own words without evidence quotations. In a comparable U.S. context, Winebrenner (1995) also expressed concern about such practice: "Contemporary debate practice, with few exceptions, treats all testimony as equal. An evidence claim, no matter how poorly reasoned, is assumed superior to an unevidenced claim, no matter how well intuitively sound that claim might be" (p. 27). However, debate textbooks published in Japan and the U.S. had different teaching. Ando and Tadokoro (2002) stated that the existence of evidence alone does not determine a win—it is the job of the debater to advocate the superiority of their own evidence and indict the deficiencies of their opponents (p. 85). Besides, Tenpaku (2007) mentioned that "it is difficult to trust something as evidence if the source is not reliable, no matter how good the content is" (2.2 probative value, §2 credibility, paragraph 1). Hence, it is necessary to focus on the quality of sources and content more than symbolically or ritualistically quoting the evidence, from a certain pedagogic viewpoint.

"Authority" is one of the criteria that reflect the source credibility both in debating and CT in general (e.g., Tenpaku, 2007; Freeley & Steinberg, 2014; Inch & Warnick, 2011). Regarding the "authority" of an information source, the reference points of evaluation include expertise, skill, knowledge, credentials, reputation among the peers, qualifications, published work, etc. (e.g., Eisenberg & Liardo, 1980; Rybacki & Rybacki, 2012). In the current questionnaire, 113 debaters out of 240 answered that they *always investigate* the author's expertise or authoritativeness when asked the following question: "If the evidence cited is the author's opinion, do you investigate whether the author is an expert or has authority?" How do debaters then make a specific judgment?

Interviews revealed that some debaters judged the source's "authority" by investigating knowledge, experience, and relationships to the topic's field. Even for experts, they tried to confirm whether their research fields matched, exhibiting a CT disposition. There seems to be a general recognition among the debaters about what kinds of sources are desirable to quote. According to them, the statements of university professors are considered quite trustworthy and often quoted. When quoting the professor's statement, it is necessary to verify his/her specialization, related research directions, etc. However, some debaters said, "I look at the profile and field of the professor," while others clearly stated, "I do not look at it at all" and "I trust it unconsciously." Based on the interview, it seemed that debaters give much credit to papers written by professors, as they did not take further steps to examine the professors' research. Moreover, if the professor's specialty was not particularly inconsistent with the debate topic's area, their statement was quoted as evidence.

It is important to be suspicious of any information without believing it immediately (e.g., Michida, 2000; D'Angelo, 1971). The debaters might not exercise CT dispositions in evaluating professors' remarks. Also, previous studies disclosed that the source of information is easily trusted if the author is a professor or an expert (Tanaka, 2009; Beins, 2008). Similarly, they noted that the CT attitude/disposition is easily inhibited in these conditions. However, Miyamoto (1997) stated that the foundation of CT is "a doubtful mind." Nakazawa (1996) also remarked that CT is the disposition and ability to reconsider what is considered conventional. Furthermore, Palmer (2012) explained that "arguing from authority is an appropriate strategy when a person is an expert in the field you are discussing; however, part of your job as a critical thinker is to determine whether a person truly is an authority" (p. 75). Therefore, even for experts, such as professors, one should practice applying CT attitudes to consider specific information—for example, why they are authoritative and whether they have enough knowledge and experience to discuss the topic, as well as their potential biases due to their own interests and stakes in their research.

3.3 Arguing against Source Credibility

CT dispositions are required not only for one's own argument but also for the opponents' claim and evidence. As discussed earlier, not all

debaters always quote evidence from reliable sources. The debaters seem to be conscious of this; therefore, it can be predicted that, during the competition, the debaters will pay attention to the reliability of the source cited by their opponents with a CT disposition and point it out in the cross-examination or rebuttal speech if they find that the sources have little or no credibility. Debate textbooks also explain the rebuttal against the source credibility of opponents as one of the refutation methods (e.g., Patterson & Zarefsky, 1983; Ando & Tadokoro, 2002). Do the debaters focus on the credibility of the source cited by the opposite side during the competition?

After confirming this point in the interview, the following responses were given by some debaters:

I place importance on the contents first, so I look at them, rather than credibility....Even if you say in your own words that the evidence is not credible, the judge will wonder why it is not credible. For the judge, the reasoning is unclear. Thus, there is a possibility that judges will not take our arguments over source credibility. If I have time, I will [spend it to] defend the contents [of our own arguments] (A male junior high school student with 3 years of experience)

Rather than saying that there is no point in refuting source credibility, I think the time is limited...Hence, even if the opponent's materials lack credibility, if I can only compete there, I will say it. But since there probably are other criteria, I think it's best to win by paying attention to these other criteria, so I usually overlook them. (A female junior high school student with 1.2 years of experience)

According to the first debater above, if he had the same or competing evidence, he could argue that the evidence lacked credibility by specifically pointing to the problem. However, without such evidence, it is difficult to refute credibility. This is similar to another debater's opinion: "If we know the person isn't an expert, that's great, but if we don't know, we can't point out anything." Debaters read the author's name, title, and year of publication before reading the evidence's contents during the competition, but they do not always disclose the author's background in detail. Accordingly, when the same evidence is not at

hand, it is difficult to immediately judge whether the source is reliable after hearing the source's title presented by the opponent. In addition, some debaters responded in the interview that they would not attack the source unless it was the only way to compete on the issue the evidence was concerned with, as in the second testimony above.

Since there is limited speech time during a debate round (one rebuttal speech is three minutes in the junior high school format and four minutes in the senior high school format), debaters cannot refute all arguments and pieces of evidence. Therefore, they need to make a proper refutation choice to guarantee winning (Ziegelmueller & Kay, 1997; Matsumoto, 2006). Debaters also said they could not convince the judges to discard the evidence entirely, even if indicting the source credibility. Consequently, they considered it an object of refutation only when they did not have other ways to refute the argument at hand. On the contrary, one debater said that he often suspects the unreliability of the contents if the source credibility is low. Another debater announced that she cast doubt in her mind on the credibility of the source cited by opponents. However, both debaters considered source credibility as a secondary priority resulting from weighing it against the overall win and loss in the particular round. Fine (2001) declared that "given the amount of information in a round, and given the reality that debaters do not have 'indicts' on any but a few critical sources, this contributes to a culture in which one source tends to be as good as another" (p. 74). Similarly, Ulrich (1986) also criticized that the evidence is assumed to be true as long as it appears on the evidence card. There seems to be a similar tendency in the Japanese debate.

In a debate, the direct goal is to persuade the judge. To have the judge accept their arguments and win their ballots, the debaters, of course, engage in argumentation according to the judge's judging criteria^{*5}. From the above responses, there is some awareness among the debaters that arguing over source credibility does not lead to winning. According to the provided experiences, different judges place different degrees of emphasis on credibility. Another interview about this topic revealed the following:

The results will differ even depending on the judges in different regions. Some judges decide who wins based on the source credibility of the constructive speech, or some others decide by watching

the flow of the competition on the assumption that the information is entirely correct for the time being. As far as I hear these judgments, where the emphasis occurred is wholly different....” (A female senior high school student with 2 years of debate experience)

CT is goal-directed in its nature; therefore, its utilization depends on the goal setting (e.g., Paul, 1995; Tanaka & Kusumi, 2007). Surely, debaters consider winning the round/tournament a direct/immediate goal. Therefore, even if they have dispositions to think critically, it can be predicted that they may suppress those dispositions after considering such a goal. This point also surfaced in the interviews. Debaters think that a practice of critically examining and evaluating the credibility of a source before the round, and pointing it out and refuting it during the round, does not usually lead to winning. Thus, they suppress their CT dispositions, or they may find weaknesses in source credibility but do not express it in speech.

From the results of the above interviews and questionnaire responses, we find that debaters do not quote all their evidence from credible sources. Nevertheless, during the competition, they try not to argue about credibility; additionally, some judges neglect the importance of source credibility. The following interview answers confirm the above:

Even if the source is not credible, I feel it is OK to quote. There is no indictment about the source. High-level schools also use it, so even if it is not credible, I would like to try using them, so it is not indicted very much. (A female junior high school student with 2.8 years of experience)

Rather than arguing about authority, the one who crushes the argument content tends to win. Consequently, nobody will point out the problem of or refute the credibility of the source. Hence, some low-authority materials and sloppy quotes appear. (A male college student with 3 years of experience)

The first debater emphasized a lack of indictments about sources; in addition, she talked about high-level schools that quoted the low-credibility sources in competition. The second debater thought that some low-authority sources

and sloppy quotations emerged because all ignored the source credibility. We can infer that neither the judge nor the debater emphasizes source credibility; thus, various sources with low credibility may have appeared in the competition.

In the limited speech time of the debate tournament, it is necessary to be careful about time allocation when examining the argument. It may be impossible to impose the demands of critically doubting and evaluating the credibility of all the sources of evidence in the competition. It is also impossible for junior and senior high school debaters to do all the background checks of authors they encounter during the debate season. It may be the case that many of the low-quality sources are in fact eliminated through the shared practices of research, practice rounds, and local/national rounds (or at least it is so hoped) (N. Inoue, personal communication, July 12th, 2020). However, saying that one cannot argue about credibility during a particular round does not lead to the conclusion that one can use less credible sources. The purpose of debate education is to build persuasive arguments and foster CT. Thus, it is valuable to make an argument about credibility when realizing that a source’s reliability is low. Besides, if individual debaters emphasize source credibility from the beginning of the process of selecting evidence, there may be no need to argue about it during the competition.

4. CONCLUSION

By conducting questionnaires and interviews, this paper has clarified the debaters’ attitudes towards the credibility of the source of information/evidence from the perspective of CT disposition. As a result, we find the following attitudes and behaviors. When selecting the evidence, debaters evaluate the source credibility within a specific range. They tend to confirm who sends the information and their minimum qualifications such as their affiliation (job title). Some debaters also study the presence of reasons for the author’s conclusion, objectivity, experience, and authority of the sources during the evaluation process. When discovering no credible sources, some debaters judge that the argument they constructed as weak, and hence do not use those low-quality sources. Therefore, these debaters are supposed to have the disposition to think critically.

Furthermore, some debaters consider the identification of the author's name, title, and year of publication as standard criteria for source credibility. Also, a "good phrase or sentence" (i.e., directly supporting the intended claim) is considered one of the judging criteria that determine whether the evidence should be recorded for use, rather than the source credibility. Thus, some debaters cite well-phrased evidence from low-credibility sources. In addition, some debaters who do not cite evidence from high-quality sources think that quotations from unreliable sources are better than no quotations for the judges to accept their arguments.

Even if debaters have CT dispositions, some do not exercise those dispositions to argue against the credibility of sources during the competition, given the difficulty of arguing and weight of other factors in judging. They think that attacking a source's credibility cannot lead to winning; thus, although they find that low-credibility sources are quoted by the opponent, they do not indict it. Moreover, some debaters seem to have suppressed CT disposition from the beginning. Since source credibility is not usually indicted and power-house schools well-known among debaters also use low-quality sources, some debaters consider it acceptable to quote it in the competition even if it is not highly credible. In addition, someone accept university professors' statements as credible without critically scrutinizing their specialty and research.

Due to the limited number, location, and time of interviews and questionnaires conducted for this analysis, we should avoid applying the above findings to all junior and senior high school debaters in Japan. Furthermore, since the quality of the evidence is also subject to the quality of its contents, I would like to consider the debaters' attitudes towards the reliability of the information content as a future topic. It will further clarify the relationship among different aspects of CT applicable to evidence in debate and other contexts of CT application, all of which have time and other constraints that preventing exhaustive efforts of critical evaluation of all the aspects of the available evidence.

NOTES

- *1. Debate Koshien is a tournament held in August every year, targeting junior high and high school students nationwide to decide the national champions in Japan. Local preliminaries are held in June and

July.

- *2. Debaters do use this loanword from English. It usually refers to a job title and a field of specialization, e.g., professor of economics.
- *3. This does not mean debaters do not quote evidence from blogs. Those better-quality blogs should be distinguished from low-quality, anonymous blogs.
- *4. Available at: <http://nade.jp/koshien/rule/index> Accessed July 20th, 2020.
- *5. In Debate Koshien, unlike in the U.S. Policy Debate and intercollegiate English debating in Japan, specific judging philosophy statements are not available, but debaters may know which judge is more open to evidence attack from the shared experiences and other means.

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