

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Reserch Background

English is a compulsory subject in schools and universities in Indonesia. This is very important not only for students' academic success, but also for their future careers and social interactions. Speaking is one of four crucial skills in English language learning. The students communicate and share their thoughts by language in their everyday life. They use language to make an order, to communicate with others, to express their emotions, thoughts and ideas (S. A. I. Lestari et al., 2021).

English skills to increase like, particularly speaking, English teachers and lecturers employ a variety of educational strategies. Because English is an international language in Indonesia, speaking is considered the most challenging skill. Lecturers must select proper teaching approaches in order to capture the attention and motivation of their students. English Debate subject is one of the approaches (*Rokhayani & Nur Cahyo, 2015*). English debate appears to have a favorable impact on pupils by encouraging critical thinking, social skills, teamwork, and student enjoyment with the debate English (*Putri, 2019*). As a result, English debate can be used as classroom exercises to help students develop their speaking skills in expressing opinions. Debate can also help in the development of critical thinking skills.

Perception is the brain's ability to translate incoming stimuli into human senses. Human perception is different in positive and negative viewpoints that will affect human actions that appear or real. Perception is the experience of objects, events, or relationships gained by inferring and interpreting information (*Lee et al., 2016*). Student perceptions of teachers and their behaviors have become an important way to capture what happens in class (*Rollett et al., 2021*). In this study, student perceptions are needed to develop English debate in college.

There are several previous studies discussing about English debate. First, a study from *Rokhayani & Nur Cahyo (2015)* entitled “Peningkatan Keterampilan Berbicara (Speaking) Mahasiswa Melalui Teknik English Debate”. The purpose of this research is to see if English Debate may help students enhance their speaking skills. This is a classroom action research project that was carried out for the ESA (English Students Association) of Muria Kudus University's English Education Department fourth semester students in the academic year 2014/2015. In the class, the students are taught by using English Debate technique. Second, a research conducted by *Putri (2019)* ”The Speech Acts Used In English Debate By The Eleventh Grade Students Of Sman 2 Bojonegoro In The Academic Year Of 2018/2019” Students are supposed to use polite or formal language when debating, in addition to using the appropriate strategies. The researcher focused on the speech acts and politeness styles utilized by SMAN 2 Bojonegoro eleventh grade students in conducting English discussion. Then, the other research *Lestari et al., (2021)* with the titled “EFL Students’ Perception of Speaking Course through Debating Process during the Pandemic”. The research found that participants' perceptions of a video-conferenced speaking course stimulate critical thinking, teamwork, social skills, and enthusiasm in the subject. The debate technique appears to have a favorable impact on pupils by encouraging critical thinking, social skills, teamwork, and student enjoyment with the subject.

Considering the benefits brought by English Debate in teaching and learning activity above, the English Education study program has included English debate into its current curriculum. The subject itself is offered only to regular students enrolling in this study program. That being said, English Debate subject is still a freshly-developed course and many previous studies (see *Arung & Jumardin, 2016; F. L. Lestari, 2018; Pradana, 2017; Suhendra, 2020*) only focus on English Debate as a teaching strategy or extracurricular program applied in educational institutions. As a result, there is very little known on how enrolling students perceive English debate as a subject in

college and how it impacts their learning development as a college student. A study done by Curran & Rosen (2006) also suggested that it is crucial to understand all of the influencing factors on the conduct of college courses since this would determine the consumers' attitudes (i.e., the students who enroll in English Debate subject) and is meaningful for the service provider (i.e., the institution).

Based on the previous research above, all of them were equally discussed about English debate. This research is different from previous research, this research focuses on the description of Students' Perceptions of English Debate subject as well as the impacts of the subject towards language aspects, communication skill and language learning. In this study, the participants were third-year students who followed English debate subject in college IKIP PGRI Pontianak. From the statement above, the researcher would like to describe the perception of college students in the English debate subject administered at English education study program of IKIP PGRI Pontianak in the previous academic year. This research is expected to be useful as an evaluation material and teaching at institutional level.

B. Research Question

Based on the background above, this research would like to answer the question being studied by the researcher and it is "What are the students' perceptions of English debate subject at English Education study program of IKIP PGRI Pontianak?"

C. Research Purpose

Based on the research question above, this study aims to describe the students' perceptions of English debate as a subject provided by English Education study program at IKIP PGRI Pontianak.

D. Significance of Research

1. Theoretical Significance

Research advances knowledge in the topic being examined, and this set of scientific activities looks at a community or a large sample to better comprehend opinions, viewpoints, and behaviors. The research is expected for use as collected data and a reference in the context of educational progress, specifically in students' perceptions of English debate as a subject in university.

2. Practical Significance

a. For IKIP PGRI Pontianak

This research can be used as a reference to assess and implement the English debate subject for students' needs, especially for English Education Department as an educational institution that certifies English teachers to be. It is also important for curriculum developers in the institution to understand the trend of attitudes towards this issue in order to deliver the course with good expectation and need-fulfilling to students enrolling in the course.

b. For students

This research can be used as a reference for students who have enrolled in the English debate subject at English education department. It is important for students, especially those who would pursue a teaching career or non-teaching career to experience and understand English debate as a college subject for its various benefits to personal and professional development, such as promoting critical thinking and the capacity towards creativity.

c. For other researchers

The results of this research later on can be used as a reference on the condition in implementing of English debate subject. Other than that, other researchers that find this issue fascinating can also use this research as a reference to conduct similar or further and deeper

exploration into how English debate as a course subject in university is perceived by the students who enrolled in it.

E. Scope of Research

1. Research Variable

A variable is a construct or a characteristic that can take on different values or scores. Researchers study variables and the relationships that exist among variables (Ary et al., 2014). In this study, the researcher focuses on the perception of students on English debate subject taught in English Education study program at IKIP PGRI Pontianak.

2. Research Terminology

In this research, the researcher provides affirmations on many concepts in order to completely describe and avoid misinterpretation. The following are the terms contained in the title of the research, namely:

a. Perception of students

A mixture of ideas and knowledge that have been acquired as a result of personal experiences with a topic can be characterized as perception. There are both good and negative perspectives on a topic. In this study, the perception is the ideas and knowledge acquired by the students as a result of their first-hand experience with the English debate subject that they are enrolling in the current semester.

b. English Debate Subject

A debate is a formal conversation in which participants express their differing viewpoints on a certain topic before voting on it, such as in a parliament or other institution. The English debate subject in this study refers to the university course that English Education study program provides for their students to enroll in the current semester. The subject also consists of the lesson being taught by the lecturers, the students' learning activity when enrolling in the subject, and other relevant indicators that will be discussed further in Literature Review.

c. IKIP PGRI Pontianak

IKIP PGRI is a private university located in Pontianak, West Kalimantan. This institution also provides courses for English Education in one of its faculty (Language and Art Education Faculty) and one of the courses in the current semester is English Debate subject. This institution has Institution B accreditation and Study Program Accreditation is accredited B. IKIP PGRI Pontianak was inaugurated in 27 June 2014.