

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing *and* receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable. Language functions (or patterns) that tend to recur in certain discourse situations (e.g., declining an invitation or requesting time off from work), can be identified and charted (Burns & Joyce, 1997). For example, when a salesperson asks "May I help you?" the expected discourse sequence includes a statement of need, response to the need, offer of appreciation, acknowledgement of the appreciation, and a leave-taking exchange.

Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (*linguistic competence*), but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language (*sociolinguistic competence*). Finally, speech has its own skills, structures, and conventions different from written language (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996). A good speaker synthesizes this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in a given speech act.

Young peoples, in this case English Department students are expected to master speaking skill especially public speaking. Grice and Skinner (1995) mentioned that the most important skills for college graduate to earn a job is oral communication and listening skills.

Unfortunately, in researcher's assumption, English Department students cannot fulfill the expectation given by the English Department. They are still thinking that speaking skill is really difficult to be mastered. The students are afraid to speak because they are afraid to make a mistake in speaking. On the other hand, as English Department graduates, they must be able to have a good public speaking skill.

Debate comes and might be the solution for this case. Speaking problem might be solved through debate. It is because debate consists of some essential components of speaking, like logical and critical thinking, delivering good opinion with strong explanation, and the competences to defend or present the argument.

Debate itself has been implemented on Speaking C's course outline. The learning objectives of Speaking C course are that the students are expected to able to present ideas/meanings with clear communicative purposes; use relevant generic structures to achieve the communicative purposes and shows how much the speakers' level of confident to speak in front of public. The researcher's assumption is that not every student in the English Department is interested in this activity. In connection with this fact, the writer is interested to observe about the students' perception in debate activity in their Speaking C class.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In line with the title of the thesis and the background of the study, a research question is formulated as follows:

What is the English Department students' perception towards debate activity in Speaking C?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In connection with the research question above, this study aims at finding out English Department students' perception towards debate activity in Speaking C.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

In this research, the writer analyzed students' perception towards debate activity in speaking C. To support this study, theory of teaching in a particular teaching speaking is called for and then reviewed. Besides, since this study is concerned with students' perception, the theory of perception needs to be reviewed as well. The other perspective that also needs to be reviewed is debate as a form of this study.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this study are expected to be meaningful feedbacks for many aspects connected to speaking C, such as the lecturers of Speaking C course, the students taking speaking C, and the English Department. The findings of this study are also useful for those who are interested to conduct a further study on this topic

1.6 Assumptions

In line with the purpose of the study which find out students' perception of debate activity in Speaking C, the researcher assume that the students who have taken and passed speaking C have an individual perceptions on debate activity given in Speaking C.

1.7. Limitation and Scope

This research is limited to the English Department students who have taken Speaking C as their subject. The objective of the study is to analyze students' perception towards debate practice in the classroom, the lecturer guidance, and what the students have learned from debate.

The respondents under this study are the students of the 2017 batch of the English Department who have taken and passed Speaking C in which debate is included as one of Speaking C activities.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

This section will give a definition about the key terms used in this study to avoid misunderstanding. These are the defined terms:

A. Perception

Perception is defined as an opinion to declare how people feels and how people say about one certain subject.

B. Debate

Debate is an English speaking activity that discusses one theme with two groups (negatives and positives) with an adjudicator; time keeper and each group have 3 speakers. Debate can be used for a competition or a speaking activity in the classroom.

C. Speaking C

Speaking C is a three-credit course that is offered to the fourth semester students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University of Surabaya who have passed Speaking A and Speaking B courses