

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses background of the research, statement of the problem, objective of the research, significance of the research, scope of the research, and operational definition.

1.1 Background of the Research

In Universitas Muria Kudus, there is an Academic Speaking Class where debate chosen as one of methods for the learning process. This is interesting because through debate, students are invited to think or examine about the current issues in a wider environment. Whereas, a function of higher education -in this context is university level- is to teach the students to think critically.

Critical thinking becomes an important skill that college students need to develop, because critical thinking skill defined as the higher-level thinking skills. Since it requires the use of collecting, analyse, evaluating, and making a decision based on the real data. A good *critical thinker* knows how to separate facts from personal assuming or opinion, how to examine an issue from all perspectives, and how to make rational inferences. Whereas to get used to think critically, we must train ourselves to argue or just express the opinions from various aspects. In this case, Debate becomes one of the best ways for it.

Debate is considered as a helpful method to develop or develop or even enhance students' critical thinking. Since, debate has been defined as the highest level of speaking. Debaters need to use their verbal communication and critical-thinking skills. Maryadi (2008: 16) states that debate can motivate students thinking, moreover if they must defend their stand or opinion which is in contradiction with conviction themselves'.

Otherwise, some students in higher education still have the difficulties to investigate information or an issue with different perspective through critical analysis in both sides of viewpoints. It happened because they are not used to apply their critical thinking in some case surrounds them. Sometimes, they are still less in preparing the data. They think debate is a serious matter, needs a lot of ideas or assumptions and specific evidence to develop a good

argument. But they cannot reveal it. Besides, critical thinking is one of the most important aspects in debate. That is why, it is important to analyze the students' perspective as they are the ones who experience the process. From the rationale above, the researcher is going to explore the students' perceptions toward debate to develop critical thinking. The writer only focuses on fourth semester of English Education Department in Universitas Muria Kudus.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the research, the writer determines the statement of the problem as follows:

How are the English Education Department students' perceptions toward debate in academic speaking class to develop critical thinking?

1.3 Objective of the Research

Based on the statement of the problem, the writer determines the objectives of the research are:

To find out the English Education Department students' perceptions toward debate in academic speaking class to develop critical thinking.

1.4 Significance of the Research

Besides this research will be significant for the writer, she hopes that the result of this research will be useful for:

1. The lecturers and the students. It can give information about the perceptions of debate practice in the classroom related to the students' critical thinking.
2. The readers. It can be the next reference for those who want to conduct the same research about students' perceptions in debate.

1.5 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research is the writer focuses on the students' perceptions of debate in Academic Speaking Class. Students' perceptions means students' opinions based on the own perspectives toward debate in Academic Speaking Class to develop critical thinking. Debate in

Academic Speaking Class is a class of a formal discussion which make the students explain the arguments based on the fact or reasoning data. To get the fact and reasoning data, the students must have a critical thinking. Critical thinking is making reasonable and logical judgments to accept the arguments and conclusions but have an attitude that involves questioning such arguments and conclusions.

While to prevent broader, this research only focuses on the aspects of critical thinking, there are clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, breadth, and logic. The writer will conduct the research in Universitas Muria Kudus. The subject of this research is the English Education Department students who have joined Academic Speaking Class.

1.6 Operational Definition

Based on the title of this research, I clarify the operational definition of each terminology as follows:

1. Students' perceptions means students' opinions based on the own perspectives toward debate in Academic Speaking Class to develop critical thinking.
2. Debate in Academic Speaking Class is a class of a formal discussion which make the students explain the arguments based on the fact or reasoning data.
3. Critical thinking is making reasonable and logical judgments to accept the arguments and conclusions but have an attitude that involves questioning such arguments and conclusions.
4. Academic Speaking Class is one of materials in 4th semester of English Education Department.