

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In these days, English is very important since it holds the role as the global language that is employed for the international communication. Due to the importance of English, this language is taught from elementary to the higher level of schools in Indonesia. Students are required to master English, both written and spoken to build up their competences in communicating with foreign people. Besides, it also enhances the students' abilities to compete in international world.

To uphold this need, there are several activities done by the teachers to improve students' four skills in English. One of the popular strategies to make students perform better in English is debate activity because of its effectiveness to improve students' English four skills; speaking, listening, reading and also writing.

Based on some studies debate was proven as an effective teaching and learning activity to achieve good speaking ability. As stated by Alasmari and Ahmed (2012), debate activity both formal and informal created better students' fluency in speaking, practiced their pronunciation and enriched their vocabulary. It means that debate activity aids students to boost students' capability in speaking. In line with this statement, Rubiati (2010) found in her research that the students' capability in speaking was a lot improved after implementing debate activities in class as it gave them bunch chances to speak. Supporting those two statements, Bellon (2000) also stated that debaters had more opportunities to

practice their communication skill compared to those students who practice their speaking skill inside the class only. Hall (2011) in his study also found that students' communication skill was improved because of debate activity since students have to communicate their ideas in debating. In line with those statements, Parcher (1998) also said that the ones who were active debating would get the advantage of better oral communication skill. Based on those studies, we can conclude that debate is an effective way to make the pupil's speaking ability improved.

For the students listening skill, debate activity is also able to facilitate the students to practice their listening proficiency. By debating, they listen to other's speaking to grasp the ideas from the opponents. As stated by Parcher (1998) listening skill of the debaters could be increased as debaters must listen carefully to the opponent's cases. According to Alasmari and Ahmed (2012), the students' listening skill was better since debating was employed in class. It is also proven by the research conducted by Hall (2011) which assumed that students felt benefited of getting improved listening skill when debate activity implemented in class since they are required to listen to both sides (positive and negative) arguments. Hence, debating is proven as an effective way in increasing the pupil's listening skill.

Furthermore, by implementing debate activity is also believed can create a significant progress on students reading ability since it entails students to read more. This is based on Alasmari and Ahmed (2012) research which stated that debate gave benefit of enhanced reading skill of the students in view of the fact that the students needed to gain much information about a particular debate topic

to construct their debate arguments. Thus, students will try to seek information by reading articles or text from various sources. Rashtchi and Sadraeimanesh (2011) study also found same result which stated that the students' reading comprehension got better as the implementation of debate within the class.

Additionally, in term of writing, debate facilitates students to practice their writing ability as well because they are obligated to make an organized debate speech in order to communicate their ideas effectively and efficiently. Supporting that statement, Alasmari and Ahmed (2012) confirmed that students' writing ability could be encouraged by the use of debate as it pushed them to make a good note to be delivered in their speech when they have a debate. In line with the previous study, Sanonguthai (2011) also found that debate activity enhanced students' writing proficiency for IELTS purpose due to the fact that it leads them to find ideas or information from two perspectives to be written for IELTS writing test.

Beside the advantages of supporting students' four skills, debate activity is also able to lift the pupils' critical thinking. As stated by Goodwin (2003), debate activity pushed students to think about the material of debate. Same statement also found in the study of Rashtchi and Sadraeimanesh (2011) which revealed a good impact of debate toward the students' critical thinking. It means that debate aids students to progress their critical thinking about the issues talked in the debate. The study of Hall (2011) revealed the same result in his study that debate was a good way to enhance pupils' critical thinking.

In term of the students' self-confidence, implementing debate practice in class assists teacher to raise students' self-confidence since the students are

required to speak in front of audiences and judges. This advantage is proven by the study of Hall (2011) which explained that the students' self-confidences were increased because of the implementation of debate activity within teaching process in class. Akerman and Neale (2011) also said the same that the pupils' self confidence was boosted because of the employment of debate activity in class.

Due to the advantages of the debate, University of Muhammadiyah Gresik especially English language education department which creates a students' community of debating to accommodate English language education department pupils' need to enhance their English skills, self-confidence and critical thinking besides accommodating students' willing to compete in debate competition. Debate community is formed to support the competence of English language education department students who are expected to be teachers who have to possess the abilities of teaching students from lower level to the higher level school. Moreover, as the candidates of English teachers, students of English language education department should achieve at least five hundreds of TOEFL test score. Seeing the impact of debate activity toward those abilities, practicing debate through English debate is one of the good ways to help the English language education department students to get better listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities.

Furthermore, it is also expected that English language education department students can be a public relation and reporter that has an ability of effective and efficient skill in English speaking. Hence, creating debate community to practice debate activity can to help them to lift their skill to speak in

front of the public because debate trains people to speak in front of judges and audiences.

Usually this debate community conducts debate practice at least one a week and can be increased due to the schedule of debate competitions. Moreover, this debate community regularly joins some debate competitions a year. Yet, this debate community has no guidelines for the students and coach to practice debate for competition or can be called as competitive debate. There is no module or textbook for the students to learn competitive debate. This may cause them being confused about the concept of competitive debate itself since the debate practice is not conducted in organized way. Unlike unorganized debate, competitive debate requires debaters to deliver their arguments in good organization. It would be easier for the debaters to understand the whole rules if it is taught in sequence from the simple one to the more complicated one. Thus, the presence of an organized debate module gives an easy way for coach and debaters to learn competitive debate in systematic and organized way.

Moreover, without the presence of debate module, it would be more difficult for the students to learn competitive debate by themselves. It will be easier for the students to learn competitive debate with or without debate coach or friends using a debate book or module. Hence, the members of debate community have more chances to learn about debate since they can learn it individually by the help of English debate module.

From some sources, the researcher has found some debate handbooks which have been developed by some experts, such as handbooks from The Cambridge Union Society (2011) and D'cruz (2003). The books mostly provide

various information within the competitive debate activity, such as the understanding about the ways on how to conduct competitive debates as host, the roles of each speaker, how to make arguments, rebuttals and others. But those two handbooks do not give any exercises for the reader to practice their understanding and skills in debating. Moreover, the handbooks only cover one of various competitive systems.

Meanwhile, there is a book created by Prince (2006) that consists of four kinds of debates; British parliamentary debate, Canadian parliamentary, North American styles and French Debates. Like the two books that have been explained previously, it only explains the basic rules of those kinds of debates without giving chance for the learners to practice their understanding by doing exercises as well. Moreover, the debate module may not fit for English language education department students need since those books only cover several competitive debate systems which may not be needed by them.

Regarding these problems, the researcher attempts to develop a competitive English debate module which is appropriate for English language education department students at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. This module is hoped can assist the students to practice debate better. Moreover, in term of elevating the critical thinking of the students, the researcher tries to develop modules which provide more opportunities to practice students' debate skill by providing some exercises.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to the background above, the statement of the research problem is to develop a competitive English debate module for English language education department students at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik.

1.3 Objective of the Study

Objective of this study is to develop competitive English debate module for English language education department students at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is hoped to give contribution toward two significances, they are theoretical and practical ones.

1.4.1 Theoretical significance

In theoretical significance, the researcher expects that this study provides implication upon:

1. The theory regarding competitive debate for English language education department students which is hoped that it will be advantageous for the further development of debate activity.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

For the practical aspect, it is also expected that this study gives some impacts:

1. As an effective guideline to practice competitive debate intended for English language education department students at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik who involve in debate community. Thus, the students are able to learn competitive debate more effectively and efficiently.
2. For the debate coach at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik, it helps the coach to conduct well-organized competitive debate practice for English language education department students at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik.
3. The researcher of this study also hopes other researchers to do further study to know the usefulness of this competitive English debate module upon the English language education department students' performance in competitive debating.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

In order to specify the discussion of this study, the researcher limits the topic to be as specific as possible. The scope of this study is only developing an English debate module for English language education department students at University of Muhammadiyah Gresik.

The limitation of this study will be focused on competitive debates which are aimed for competition that have some particular rules that are different one and another.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding regarding the problems which are going to be discussed in this research, the researcher intended to define the key terms as follow:

1. Debate is an activity in which there are two contrasting sides defend their positions by delivering effective arguments to persuade audiences or judges.
2. Competitive debate in this study relies on systematic debate which has some rules.
3. Module is a written book for education that contains some topics to be learned by students that contains several parts; user instruction, preface or introduction, objective, explanations of the materials, exercises, answer key, evaluation and references.