

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

A language is the written and spoken methods of combining words to create meaning used by a particular group of people. For the linguist Edward Sapir (1999), language is not only a vehicle for the expression of thoughts, perceptions, sentiments, and values characteristic of a community; it also represents a fundamental expression of social identity.

Since English has been introduced in elementary school, Indonesian government expect all formal education in Indonesia to provide the younger generations the tools and knowledge for them to excel not only at school environment, but also beyond our national borders through English. This has allowed them to reach for the dreams and success in areas they may not have otherwise. For example, students who have studied, or are studying abroad will find more easily after learning English.

Otherwise, language is knowledge, and today knowledge is one of the key factors to gain the success of life. Brains and knowledge are what create the prosperity and growth we tend to take for granted (Manivannan 2002). There is no doubt that the knowledge of the English language is one of the most important tools available for students. It is one of the international languages, means communication between countries, cultural groups, various companies and organizations, communities and friends.

Classroom interaction has gained many attentions from many researchers for they believe it prominent to the success of the learning process (Fairclough 2006). This research is strengthened by theories and related research report that relate to the culture and classroom interaction between teacher and students. Many problems occur in teacher-students interaction in classroom. For instance, teachers from Batakese and Javanese tend to have heated conversation (conversation characterized by arguments and loudness) when they speak with students. Meanwhile most of the students are Sundanese. They (teachers from Java island) tend to have hesitant conversation (conversation characterized by politeness, indirectness and lack of interruptions) (Deena and Mara 1989). This situation may create problems for the students in classroom interaction because there is a different characteristic of culture in the classroom. Suherdi (2006) says that students and teacher should support each other in order to make a quality classroom.

A number of earlier studies carried out by some researchers relate to some aspects of classroom interactions to be analyzed by using discourse analysis. Stubbs (1996) investigates classroom talk and analyzes it based on its communicative functions that characterize teacher-talk. By using this analysis, he shows some strategies clearly employed by a teacher to keep in touch with his students. Meanwhile, Kakava (1995) provides a good discussion of directness and indirectness in classroom interaction, viewed from the intersection of contextual and cultural constrain. She shows that the power-based knowledge and the power-based institution do not correlate with the degree of directness expressed in

disagreement. She suggests that the professor's speech actions are susceptible to a norm of distancing politeness or independence.

There are many problems relating to the success of teacher-students interaction in English classroom. It would come from the teacher or the students, or could be both.

The first category, success is understood as something that is influenced by students' background knowledge and prior experience. Difficulties in mastering computer science concepts are attributed to factors such as an inadequate mathematics background or lack of experience with fundamental skills such as logic or abstract reasoning. These types of deficiency appeared to be a source of frustration for teachers. The second category of the problem in teacher-student's interaction is student's experience to the outcome of success in their own attitude or behavior. Several different attributes emerged from the data: effort and hard work, study habits, being proactive, presumptions, emotions and motivation. Students' motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, one was seen as having an impact on success; for example, students' awareness of an upcoming assessment was recognized as being important. The third category describes a perspective where teachers share responsibility for learning with the students. They expect students to identify the things they do not understand and act on those problems, for example, by asking questions, looking up other resources, etc. With this view, the responsibility for overcoming learning problems lies on both the student and the teacher, but the student is expected to make a breakthrough and to put forward in his/her problems.

All those categories clearly represent a more active approach to student learning problems and teaching in general. There is a sense of responsibility for identifying where students struggle, or at least for helping students identify what they do not understand, and for adapting teaching to better suit the students.

Based on the above problems, the writer was inspired by cultural congruence study conducted by Love and Suherdi (1996). They have analyzed the study of cultural congruence in two different poles of language education setting (EFL vs ESL). That analysis reflected the difference of some main characteristics of classroom discourse in English teaching-learning processes in the two settings. They gained data from two observations of two relatively similar lessons conducted in two different settings: in an adult ESL classroom in an Adult Migrant English Centre (AMEC) in a suburb of Melbourne (Australia) and an adult EFL classroom in an English Course in Bandung (Indonesia). The result of the research showed that the different cultural settings lead to different patterns of teacher-students and students-students interaction. It has also been shown that the more the teacher and the students share the cultural background, the higher the level of cultural congruence they can establish. The finding demonstrates that cultural congruence is one of the factors that are critical for successful EFL and ESL teaching and learning. However, the writer focuses on an EFL class which means that students use English language only use in classroom not as second language or language use in daily activity.

On the other hand, culture, as one of identities is some ways of life in certain places that has been generalized. It can be said that culture is an identity of

signs people put out to reach other indicating where people coming from and what people are about, so other people can size us up and decide what to do next. It is a way of marking out what makes us different with the others. There are so many possibilities that misunderstanding happen around us. Some cultures affirm their existence by thumping anyone who breaks its rules applied to all members of one culture. The cultural generalizations in this text are descriptions of commonly observed patterns; they may not hold true for every member of a given culture (Deena and Mara 1989). From those explanations, it can be seen that culture can give effects to the classroom during study whether it is ESL or EFL classroom that still cultural background takes part in that situation.

Based on classroom interaction phenomenon, therefore, it will be interesting to investigate deeper about such phenomenon. For example, the interaction between teacher and students in the classroom that clash among them may happen. It appears because unsmooth communication between teacher and students in classroom. Cultural differences probably one of the problems that make the classroom uncomfortable. Hence, one of the objectives of this research is to discover how the teacher's cultural background affects in teacher-students interaction.

## **1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic**

The first characteristic of classroom discourse relates to the teacher-students interaction (Suherdi, 2006 p.83). Meanwhile, the second characteristic which needs to be reviewed is concerned with status and power relations in

classroom interaction, particularly with the shift of serving the roles of the primary knower (the source of information) in a language classroom (Suherdi, 2006 p.97). Indeed, in the other countries a student can be a primary knower or the source of information in the classroom while in Indonesia there is still a classroom discourse monopolized by the teacher.

There are some reasons why this research takes this topic as the main issue to be investigated.

First, there are many cultural backgrounds in one particular class that make the teacher hard to maintain the classroom. For example, teachers from *Bataknese* and *Javanese ethnic* do not as the same as *Javanese* or *Sundanese ethnic* because their cultures are different each other. *Bataknese and Javanese ethnic* tend to have heated conversation - conversation characterized by argument, loudness, a rapid exchange of words, and interruptions. Meanwhile, *Sundanese ethnic* tend to have hesitant conversation - conversation characterized by politeness, indirectness, pauses, and a lack of interruption (Deena and Mara, 1989 p.64). Further, there must be some reason (s) or background knowledge why culture influence student's learning process in the classroom during the study. Moreover, the writer wants to see what happen with those different situations that affected by various cultures in the classroom. Besides, the writer tries to solve the problem and to find the way out.

Second, this topic - still relates to the cultural system which is interesting to be revealed deeper about the teacher's cultural background in various exchanges of patterns in teacher-students interaction. Through this research, the



writer would give out the information data about the various exchange patterns in teacher-students interaction in English classroom, took place in the first grade of SMAN 13 Bandung. This research also provides an analysis in the perspective of cultural understanding that the writer tries to specify the study.

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

The study of this research in this paper merely covers the variation of exchange patterns in teacher-students interaction, which was conducted in a 1<sup>st</sup> grade class in SMAN 13 Bandung, the teacher's cultural background on those variations.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The writer is interesting in searching out the result of the influence of student's cultural background on the variation of exchange patterns in teacher-student's interaction. Therefore, the research of this classroom interaction study formulated the questions to seek the answer. The issue to be discussed in this paper will be summarized in the following research questions.

1. What are the variations of exchange patterns in teacher-students interaction in English classroom?
2. How does the teacher's cultural background affect the variation of exchange patterns in the teacher-student's interaction in English classroom?

### **1.5 Aims of the Study**

Given the research questions, this research paper is aimed at the following matter:

1. To investigate the variation of exchange patterns in teacher-students interaction in English classroom.
2. To investigate the effect of the teacher's cultural background on variation of exchange patterns in the teacher-students interaction in English classroom.

### **1.6 Methodology**

In this research the writer would conduct a qualitative research. Qualitative research is research that uses the case study approach centers on one or a few individuals. These studies are usually longitudinal, that is, they follow the individual or individuals over a relatively long period while tracing some aspects of language development (Brown, 1988 p.2). In short, this research is should build theory or hypothesis. So do this research. This research should provide data that support research questions above. The research is taken from the first grade class of SMAN 13 Bandung. It is because many students come from different cultural background. Besides, the first grade student is an appropriate sample to be selected because they start to adapt in one particular environment and condition. It takes a sample about 30 to 40 students or approximately conducted in one class. Those are the characteristics that this research required.



### **1.6.1 Sample**

This kind of sample is determined by choosing participants based on the characteristic of the participants whom the researcher assumes and eager to be investigated by the researcher (see Alwasilah, 2003). Since the analysis on this paper is a qualitative research, the determination of sample is through purposive sampling. Those kinds of information will support the evidence of cultural involvement in that classroom. The population that will be taken from this investigation is the first grade of student of SMAN 13 Bandung, which consists of approximately around 30 to 40 students. Thus, those students will support the sample that the writer need in this research.

### **1.6.2 Data collection**

The writer will conduct the research by analyzing the sample data that have been taken from the videotaping, interview, and questionnaire.

This research involved a speech event, which was a 2 x 45 minute-English session. Since the research was a natural spoken classroom discourse, the researcher used some techniques in collecting data: video recording, observation (field-note taking), interview, questionnaire and documents (curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plan).

The data was collected through observing and recording (tape recorder and video tape) an EFL classroom interaction. Recording and observing were conducted with consent from the institutional officials.

The respondent (the students) was observed and investigated. Those activities focused on rechecking the result of transcription and the difference of student's cultural background in variation of exchange patterns in the teacher-students interaction.

Besides, the researcher took documents (curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plan) and other related data to give input to teacher's cultural background that are assumed to have a close relation to the variation of exchange patterns in teacher-students interaction.

### **1.7 Data Analysis**

The transcription of recording result was coded and analyzed. The result of observation and note taking were taken to support the data, includes, collecting documents (curriculum, syllabus, and lesson plan) and videotaping. The data were divided by the concentrate on student's cultural background in the lesson plan; then they were coded based on Suherdi's framework (2006). The researcher focused on the variations of exchange patterns in the teacher-students interaction and the teacher's cultural background on those variations.

## 1.8 Clarification of the Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding of the terms used in this research, the following are some key terms:

### 1. Exchange Pattern

Exchange pattern refers to the various models of conversations or dialogues that teacher and students employ in the classroom. It is usually illustrated as a formula to identify teacher-students interaction's pattern in English classroom.

### 2. Classroom Discourse

Classroom discourse refers to the language that teachers and students use to communicate with each other in the classroom. Talking, or conversation, is the medium through which most teaching takes place, so the study of classroom discourse is the study of the process of face-to-face classroom teaching (Ventola, 1982).

### 3. Teacher-students interaction

Teacher-students interaction refers to the interaction that happens between teacher and students in the classroom. It usually appears when they have class interaction, discussion, and conversation in the classroom.

## 1.9 Organization of the Paper

This research is presented in five chapters. Chapter one discusses introduction. It contains the importance of language for students, the importance of teachers and student's interaction in English classroom, the problems relating

to the success of teachers and student's interaction, and related previous researches to gain information for classroom discourse research. Besides, the writer also conducts research question, research statement, and methodology in brief.

Chapter two describes the theoretical foundation in exchange categories and components of student's cultural background. It starts from theories related to the topic of classroom discourse and teacher-student interaction in English classroom. It shows the definition of discourse, various exchange patterns that use in classroom discourse, classroom interaction's theories, and communicative competence.

Chapter three restrains the methodology used in this research. There are two main parts on methodology that the writer uses in teacher and students interaction research, as follows: sample and data collection. The sample is taken from first grade of students on SMAN 13 Bandung. It involves 30-40 students. Since the writer uses qualitative research as methodology in this research, so the writer employ three data collection to gain information. There are videotaping, interview, and questionnaire.

Chapter four explains findings and discussion which elucidates information from the research that conducted in chapter 3. It also answers the questions that shows in chapter one. Chapter five conducts conclusion from the whole chapter on teacher and student's interaction research and suggestions for further research.