

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces basic information regarding the study. It starts with an elaboration of the background of the study followed by statement of problems, aims of study, scope of study, and significance of the study are the next items described. This chapter is ended by presenting the clarification of key terms, naturalness in turn-taking, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

Developing proficiency in speaking is a challenging task for a language learner. To be a fluent speaker, a learner must not only have grammatical competence but also has to be very well informed in cultural information in which the *Target Language* (TL) is used by its speech community (see Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2000).

In the case of learning English in Indonesia, the task is even more challenging given the fact its status as a foreign language. For this reason, attempts should be made to investigate in a greater detail the phenomenon of Indonesian learners of English speaking skills to reveal important information regarding their mastery.

Conversation is one example in which a learner has to demonstrate his/her mastery of speaking in the target language. In a conversation we can actually see how a language is being used. Saville-Troike (2006) states that conversation is not only about talking to someone but there is also a rule to follow as a reflection of the speaker's and listener's *communicative competence*, which means, the speaker's and listener's knowledge on what should be known within the TL's community so to be able to communicate properly. She further states that *communicative competence* is

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not only about mastering vocabulary, phonology, grammar, or other linguistic structures but also knowing when to speak including when to stop, and appropriately choose what to say to whom according to the situation (Saville-Troike, 2006). In this issue, Hughes (2002) seems to be in agreement with Saville-Troike when she assures that successful conversation is supported by linguistic and sociolinguistic competence.

A successful conversation could also be seen from its 'flow'. Even, according to Mey (2000), this 'flow' of a conversation is the key point. There are two elements that describe the flow of a conversation; *form* and *content*. Mey (2000) mentions that 'form' or 'structure' in a conversation deals with *turns* and *turn-taking* which then a *turn-taking mechanism* comes in. He further elaborates that 'content' of a conversation deals with *cohesion* and *coherence* (Mey, 2000). In a conversation, *cohesion* refers to the well arranged words in sentences, while, *coherence* refers to message that makes sense.

Conversation has attracted many researchers' interest. For example, Bardovi-Harlig et al (1991) investigate learners' pragmatic awareness emphasizing on their pragmatic awareness to the closing of a conversation in a natural way. The findings show that learners need pragmatic information related to how to close a conversation properly suggesting that in addition to mastering grammatical aspects of the target language they also need pragmatic information. That is because the purpose of learning language is for communication not only learning words. Another research by Auer (1988) studies the phenomena of code switching and transfer in a conversation among migrants in Germany indicating the influence of an L1 over learning an L2.

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The present research also attempts to reveal important aspects of a conversation. In particular, this study focuses on the phenomenon of the *turn-taking* in a conversation among Indonesian English learners by considering the context of situation.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

By considering the context of situation of the interlocutors, this study tries to find out answers to the following research questions:

1. How natural is the turn-taking in the learners' conversation?
2. How high does the learners rate their conversation?

1.3 Aims of the Study

The study is aimed at the following matters:

1. To find out the naturalness of turn-taking in the learners' conversation.
2. To find out how high the learners rate their conversation.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The focus of this research is to analyze the naturalness of the turn-taking of a conversation by considering the context of situation. The study also investigates learners' rating towards their conversation. This section will be further discussed in chapter three.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to reveal information on how learners go through the process of holding a conversation. The way they handle it may be beneficial for teachers, as it may give teachers some ideas how to help learners to proceed the process of improving their target language mastery, in particular holding a

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conversation naturally. In other words, the information revealed maybe of some uses both for learners and teachers. For learners, the information may help them draw their attention and consequently awareness on the structures of a conversation which in the long run will help them improve their proficiency in the target language. For teachers, the information may inspire them to develop a better plan and implementation of their teaching, in particular the teaching of conversation

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

Communicative competence: speaker's and listener's knowledge on what should be known within the TL's community so to be able to communicate appropriately (Saville-Troike, 2006).

Conversation: "... kind of talk in which two or more participant freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, law courts, classrooms and the like." (Levinson, 1983: 284).

Turn: "turn... a shift in the direction of the speaking 'flow' which is characteristic of normal conversation." (Mey, 2000: 139).

Turn-taking: "one participant, A, talks, stops; another, B, starts, talks, stops; and so we obtain an A-B-A-B-A-B distribution of talk across two participants." (Levinson, 1983: 296).

1.7 Naturalness in Turn-Taking

For this research, the naturalness in turn-taking will be seen through the *Adjacency Pair*. It is chosen because adjacency pair should be an automatic pattern in a conversation (Yule, 1996). This is why the learners' ability to sustain or not being

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able to sustain a conversation through applying adjacency pair will be the focus of this research to determine their naturalness in turn-taking.

1.8 Organization of Paper

This paper consists of five chapters. The first is chapter one as an introduction of the study which presents the general overview of the study. It informs the general condition about conversation in English as a *Target Language* moving to the more detail condition and problem. Furthermore, it raises the research questions and the aims of the study with the methodology in general. The second is chapter two; this chapter provides the theoretical foundation of the study. It deals with some theories and previous research in this field contextualized the present study. The third is chapter three that describe the methodology employed in this research. In this chapter the methods employed and the data collected are provided and explained. The fourth is chapter four; here it presents findings and discussions based on the data which had been collected. The last is chapter five that presents the conclusions of the research and suggestions for the further research and the parties in the field.

1.9 Concluding Remark

This chapter has introduced basic information regarding the study. It covers the background, statement of problems, aims of study, scope of study, significance of the study, clarification of key terms, naturalness in turn-taking, and organization of paper. The next chapter elaborates the literatures relevant to this study.