

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter presents the background of the study along with the slight theoretical propositions. This chapter also highlights the research questions, aims and significance. It also discusses clarification of terms used in this study as well as the paper organization.

1.1 Background of the Study

It is assumed that the quality and the quantity of teacher talk have many values in young learner's classroom interaction (Moon, 2001; Richards, 2003). Firstly, it provides language input as language model for children to experiment the language (Pinter, 2006). In other words, children can learn language better through direct experiences and meaningful conversations (Pinter, 2006). Hence, teacher's attempt to provide language input is reflected on his/her meaningful talk to children's lives.

Secondly, teacher talk supports student talk in practicing the language. This view is supported by Tsui (1995) who states that teacher talk is a determiner of student's output due to some categories of teacher talk such as questioning strategies affect the tendency of learner's strategies in producing language. Therefore, teacher's job is how their talks can enforce student's language production. Tsui, (1995:124) writes that:

“Studies on language and learning have shown that children not only learn to talk but they also talk to learn. This comes up from the fact that children are persistent

questioners; it is by asking questions that they experiment and learn about the world around them”.

Thirdly, the appropriateness of teacher talk can result in a warm classroom atmosphere and informal teacher-student relationship. This is in line with Moon (2001) who states that young learners need warmer classroom climate and informal relationship with the teacher in order to get better achievement. Besides, Lewis (2000) asserts that children need their teacher’s approval and positive feedback in order to achieve their self-esteem. If students do not get positive feedback toward their performances, they would possibly feel shy as they make mistakes in front their peers. Hence, students need to be motivated by giving them encouragement and positive feedback.

Nevertheless, the practice of English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia tends to show many cases indicating that primary school English teachers lack of pedagogical understanding and skills in teaching English to young learners (Musthafa, 2010). It leads the teachers to a misconception in applying classroom talk which is not child-friendly. This view is supported by a study showing that English teachers are not well-trained in teaching children and they still prefer to teach English focusing on lecture (Damayanti, et al. 2008). In addition, Damayanti, et al (2008) reports that those limitations lead them to avoid using English in classroom rather than to build active interaction between teachers and students.

Those problems above potentially influence students to be passive in classroom as teacher mostly dominates interaction (Nunan, 1998). Teachers do not provide adequate chances for students to interact and practice the language as

teachers spend for about 70% of class time for lecturing only (Nunan,1998). It is supported by Tsui (1995) who says that many studies found that student talk accounts for less than 30 percent in teacher-fronted classroom. On the other hand, children are active learners who learn better through interaction such as talking, telling stories and actively participating in interactive activities (Brumfit, 1991, Cameron, 2001; Harmer, 2001; Moon, 2000). Moreover, Harmer (2000) also points out that children have a short attention span which means that they can not do the same activity which is longer than 10-15 minutes unless it is interesting, fun and lively. Therefore, it is clear that lecturing which has been applied by some incompetent teachers is not appropriate to children characteristics and how children learn language as active learners.

Children can be encouraged to be active learners when they are provided by adequate chances to interact in English classroom. It is stated that the more teacher-students interaction employed, the better success of a class will be achieved (Tsui, 1995). Furthermore, sociocultural perspective study emphasizes that students should be treated as a part of social context and social interaction which they can not be separated from learning (Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002; 17). Thus, foreign language teachers need to be aware that student's communication skill should be practiced and improved earlier in rich language environment which is closer to everyday conversations (Hargreaves, Merry & Paterson, 2003; Kumpulainen & Wray, 2003). Related to the view, teachers should realize that to encourage student's to be active learners is by knowing who children are and giving them opportunity to actively interact in classroom.

Concerning on the last statement, classroom is considered as the vital source of foreign language learning where the students can be provided by language input and modelling so that they can practice in interaction (Xiaou, 2006: 5). Through verbal interaction (Reynolds & Farrel, 1996, as cited in Hargreaves, Merry and Paterson, 2003), target language exposure can be transmitted to students (Brown, 2001: 165). He goes on to say that the finest way to learn a language is through interaction itself where people can send, accept and interpret messages in meaningful context to achieve mutual understanding and aims (Brown,2001). As suggested also by Nunan (1998), second language learning especially spoken one requires active communication of student's engagement. Thus, it is important for teachers to teach English to young learners as daily communication. This is coincide with Allwright (1984) and Ellis (1990) who argue that teaching and learning process in classroom should be conducted as interaction to get language model and facility since its quality can influence level of acquisition. Dealing with that problem, learning English as foreign language context like in Indonesia should be emphasized more into interaction of students.

According to the importance of the issue above, analysis towards classroom talk used by teacher and students is considered crucial in order to measure the pattern of young learner's classroom interaction in English as foreign language context. It is in line with Ellis (1985) who points out that many studies are intended to draw attention to the classroom interaction processes by gaining language data from the classroom. Many studies that focus on the nature and characteristics of classroom interaction has been begun to emerge since 1960 as

the urgency of student's role as an active participant in the process of teaching and learning as well as the the principal domain influencing language learning (Kumpulainen & Wray, 2003).

Based on the issues above, it is needed to explore teacher talk and student talk in English for young learner's classroom interaction. To find out the the practice of verbal classroom interaction is by observing and interviewing EYL teacher. Thus, the study entitled *Classroom Interaction: An Analysis of Teacher Talk and Student Talk in English for Young Learners* aims to investigate and the practice of EYL verbal classroom interaction of a teacher and students in a primary school in Bandung. It mainly aims to describe what characteristic of verbal classroom interaction is, teacher talk and student talk categories. It is also aimed at investigating teacher's role and its implication on student's motivation that appear during the teaching learning process.

1.2 Statement of Problems

As the problems stated above, the main purpose of this study is to investigate how verbal classroom interaction between teacher and student is conducted in EYL classroom. The main research question is "How is verbal interaction realized in English for young learner's classroom?". The question is then broken down into the following questions:

1. What types of teacher talk are there in young learner's classroom interaction?

2. What types of student talk are there in young learner's classroom interaction?
3. What type of role that the teacher mostly adopts in conducting young learner's classroom interaction?
4. What is the implication of teacher talk to student's motivation?

1.3 Aims of the Study

According to the research questions, this study has one main aim that is to investigate the realization of verbal interaction which is conducted in young learners' classroom. Relevant to the research sub-questions, the more specific aims for this study are as follow:

1. To describe types of teacher talk in young learners' classroom.
2. To describe types of student talk in young learners' classroom.
3. To investigate a role that is mostly adopted by the teacher in conducting young learner's classroom interaction.
4. To investigate the implication of teacher talk on student's motivation.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on examining the nature of EYL verbal classroom interaction. The goal is achieved by describing types of teacher talk and student talk which are performed by teacher and students in EYL classroom.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study may give valuable contributions to some fields theoretically, practically and professionally. To begin with, the results of the study are expected

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to provide a comprehensive descriptions and basis for future studies related to the practice of verbal classroom interaction theoretically.

From practical view, it also hopefully gives valuable contributions to English teachers in case of they can be better to analyze their own teaching performance, to observe their classroom behavior and then to plan as well as to conduct interactive and child-friendly verbal classroom interaction.

In relation to the study program of English education, this study professionally aims to contribute a positive impact for English teaching practices and pedagogical development according to the aforementioned background.

1.6 Research Methodology

This section discusses the design, data collection and data analysis that were employed in the study.

1.6.1 Design

Parallel to the aims of the study, a qualitative method embracing characteristic of a case study was used. As stated by Maxwell (1996), qualitative study emphasizes on words rather than numbers, and a process rather than a result as in this study is how classroom interaction in teaching English to young learners is conducted by an EYL teacher. In addition, qualitative study was chosen since this study aimed at exploring and interpreting process and in-depth understanding of specific situation or people. Specifically, the case study approach was chosen since it focuses on quality of specific phenomenon and case of individual, a group of people or real life contexts (Alwasilah, 2008; Creswell, 2003).

1.6.2 Data Collection

Two instruments were used to collect the data of the study which they were classroom observation and interview. The classroom observation was also designed to investigate the practice of classroom interaction. Meanwhile, the interview instrument was designed to investigate teacher's inner thoughts and belief in verbal classroom interaction, her roles as EYL teacher and how she adopted it as well as to confirm and sharpen data gained from observation.

1.6.3 Site and Respondents

The research was conducted in a well-known private primary school in northern Bandung. The school was chosen for two reasons, firstly because the school uses English fully as a tool of communication and secondly because the principal allowed the researcher to conduct a research in September 2012. The participants of this study consisted of an English teacher and 15 fourth grade students. Then, the participants were chosen randomly since this study was intended to describe a contemporary phenomenon.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2008), the data obtained from interview and classroom observation will be analyzed, to be next interpreted, through the following seven steps:

“(1) Preparing and organizing the data; (2) Transcribing videos of classroom observation; (3) Exploring and coding the database; (4) Describing findings and forming themes; (5) Representing and reporting findings; (6)

Interpreting the meaning of the findings; (8) Validating the accuracy of the findings”.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misconception, some terms are clarified as follow.

1. **Verbal Classroom Interaction** can be referred to verbal exchanges produced by both teacher-students and student-student interaction in classroom (Lynch, 1999).
2. **Young Learners** are children aged between 5-12 years old (Pinter, 2006), in this study, young learners are 4th graders of elementary school from 9-10 years old.
3. **EYL classrooms** refer to English classes of elementary/primary level whose students are young learners between 5-12 years old.
4. **Teacher Talk** is described as a specific kind of talk that is performed by teacher for particular reasons and aims (Lynch, 1999).
5. **Student Talk** refers to language which is used by students in classroom (Lynch, 1999).

1.8 Paper Organization

The paper is presented into five chapters as follow.

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statement of problems, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms, and organization of paper.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter elaborates related theories of verbal classroom interaction, young learners' characteristics, teacher and student talk and the role of teacher in classroom interaction.

CHAPTER III : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter gives clear elaboration about the methodologies that are used in this study.

CHAPTER IV : FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter portrays the findings of the study and analyzes those findings in discussion. It discusses dominant characteristic of classroom interaction.

CHAPTER V : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents some essential conclusions regarding the findings of the study as well as its theoretical, practical and professional implications and related further studies.

1.9 Concluding Remark

This chapter describes the background and burning issues related to the topic, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, research methodology, clarification of prominent terms related to the study and organization of the paper.