

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

As we know, nowadays English has become an important language in the world. It is an international language. It is used as a means of communication among people who come from different countries. In Indonesia, English is taught almost at all schools. In fact, there are some schools in Indonesia that have already used English as their second language at school. Although English is taught at schools, still, the ability of the students in using English is not satisfying.

According to the new curriculum, the Competency Based Curriculum, teaching English now is different from that a couple years ago. In this Competency Based Curriculum, students are required to be more independent. The students must think critically, learn independently, and they must learn the four language skills in English: listening, reading, speaking and writing. It is what the students are not yet ready for.

Teachers, nowadays, are not the same as teachers a couple years ago. Teachers, couple years ago, was taking full control of the teaching learning process and they used to act as the main source in the classroom. That is why many teachers are confused with the curriculum because based on the curriculum teachers have to act as the facilitator who helps the students when they face problems and not as the main source like they have done in the old curriculum.

Teachers are trying to implement the new curriculum as best as they can. However, the students' ability in English is still below the average. In fact, many teachers do not apply the curriculum fully in their teaching learning activity. They mix the old style of teaching where they used to act as the main source in the classroom, with some parts of the new curriculum. It happens when the teachers in the classroom give full explanation about grammatical points and he or she tells the students to make their own sentences.

It can be seen that teaching English, nowadays, is not as easy as it looks. Teachers need to do a lot of improvisations in it because English consists of many aspects such as, grammar, skills, pronunciation and vocabulary mastery. The way teachers teach, ask questions, initiate conversations or talks or response to students' questions might also affect in raising the students' interests, motivation and improving the students' ability in mastering English.

A serious problem in EFL classrooms is that many students are afraid of speaking in English because they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes. They are afraid of speaking because they think that if they make mistakes, even a single grammatical mistake; people will not understand what they say. This kind of point of view is not right because the point of a conversation lies on the information or the meaning being delivered from the speaker to the hearer instead of the grammar.

In an English classroom, English is used not only as the object of the study, but also as a means of communication between the teachers and the students (Ngadiman, 1994). That is why the students must be able to speak English. The

role of teachers in the classroom is necessary to stimulate the students to speak. What the teachers say in the classroom is very important to the students' comprehension toward the lesson. Sometimes the students do not get what the teachers want because the teachers use new vocabulary items. In EFL classroom, what the teachers say will give effect to the students, both bad effects, such as make the students lose their self confidence in learning English, and good effects such as make the students motivated and confident with themselves. That is why teachers' utterances are very important in the classroom during the lesson.

Teachers usually find difficulties in stimulating students to speak English during the lesson time. Sometimes students do not want to answer the teachers' questions in English because they do not understand the questions in English. Furthermore, the students do not give responses because they do not understand clearly what the teachers have explained so that they cannot ask or give any responses or comments.

However, recent research found out that teacher talk give an important contribution to students' motivations in learning a language (Tsui Bik-May, 1986 : 8). Teacher talk will give a great effect on their ability to master English. Supporting the above statement, Krashen (1980, in Tsui Bik-May, 1986) states that what happens in the classroom during the teaching learning processes is very important to increase the students' ability in learning the target language. It is in the classroom, the interaction between students and the teachers take place through the teacher talk.

Considering the importance of classroom discourse, in this case is teacher talk, in teaching learning processes, the writer attempts to explore and explain some categories of teacher talk, teacher-initiate and teacher-response.

1.2 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study investigates teacher talk in the classroom as a part of classroom discourse at a school which applies Competency Based Curriculum. In a school which applies Competency Based Curriculum, teachers must apply students' center learning. It means that students should be more active than the teachers during the lesson. It covers the investigation of teacher-initiate and teacher-response during the lesson. The categories of teacher initiate and teacher-response based on Flanders' theory as quoted by Tsui Bik-May (1985 : 12-14) and Indrawan (2005 : 5).

This study limits and focuses the investigation on two English teachers at one school. As the consequence, the results of this study can not be generalized for all English teachers. However, the results might be used as a model and as a reflection tool for professional development in the field of English education in Indonesia.

1.3 Statements of the Problem

The problem of this research is: "How do teachers initiate and give responses to students' answers?" To be specific, the problems of the research can be specified as follows:

1. What types of initiations do the teachers use in the classroom?
2. What types of responses do the teachers give to the students' questions and answers?

1.4 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to describe how teachers initiate classroom talks and give response to the students' answers. To be specific, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To describe the types of initiation used by the teachers in order to encourage the students' motivation.
2. To describe the types of response that teachers give to students' answers in order to raise the students' interest toward the lesson.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theory of classroom discourse and teacher talk (teacher-initiate and teacher-response).

According to his personal experience in learning English, the writer realizes that teacher-initiate and teacher-response can stimulate students' motivation and participation during the lesson because they will give an effect on the improvement of the students' ability. It also gives the teacher a reflection about what he or she has done. Sinclair (1982 : 4) states that teachers should learn about teacher talk more in order to evaluate and check their own teaching ability.

The categories of teacher talk used in this study are based on Flanders (1970) and Indrawan (2005 : 5). There are eight categories of teacher-initiate based on Flanders. They are: 1.) Elicit, 2.) Direct, 3.) Nominate, 4.) Inform, 5.) Recapitulate, 6.) Frame, 7.) Starter, and 8.) Check. There are four categories of teacher-response according to Flanders' theory. They are: 1.) Evaluate, 2.) Accept, 3.) Comment, and 4.) Clue.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give information on teacher talk in the English classroom. This knowledge might be useful for future teachers to make some improvisation on their classroom discourse so that teaching learning processes can take place more effectively in the classroom. Furthermore, this knowledge on teacher talks might be used by English teachers as a tool for professional reflection for teachers to make evaluations of their performance in the classroom.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The followings are some key terms that have to be explained more to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation. They are: classroom discourse, teacher talk, teacher-initiate and teacher-response.

1. Classroom Discourse

Classroom discourse is language used in the classroom which becomes the means of communication between teacher and students in a classroom during the lesson (Cook, 1982)

2. Teacher Talk

Teacher talk is the particular language the teacher uses to interact with the students as the second language learners during the lesson time (Indrawan, 2005 : 6).

3. Teacher-initiate

Teacher initiate is the act of the teacher in stimulating the students to answer (Sinclair, 1982 : 36).

4. Teacher-response

Teacher response is the act of the teacher in responding or answering students' talk/ utterance/ questions/ answers which include commenting, evaluating, accepting and clueing (Sinclair, 1982 : 40).

1.8 The organization of the Thesis

The writer divided the discussion of this study into five chapters. Introduction of the study, including the background of the study, the statements of the problem, the objective of the study, the theoretical framework, the definition of key terms, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation, and the organization of the thesis are in the chapter one. Chapter two, deals with the review of related literature. The writer presents the research method in chapter three including the research design, source of data, research instrument, data collection procedure and the procedure of analyzing the data. The analysis will be discussed in chapter four. In the last chapter, chapter five, the writer draws conclusion about what he has already analyzed.