

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Classroom oral interaction plays an important role in language classroom. Besides, it gives more dynamics to the teaching-learning process, especially when students actively participate. This verbal interaction is realized in oral activities, like conversations. It is “one of the primary means by which learning is accomplished in classroom” (Hall, 2003). It shows that the classroom oral interaction is a reflection of the learning process.

Moreover, language classroom interaction provides the facility for the students to use the target language “they possess in real life exchange” (Rivers cited in Tuan and Nhu, 2010). Hence, through the oral interaction the teacher can provide opportunities to the students to use the target language orally in meaningful and purposeful way, while it can only be realized when the teacher elicits students’ participation by using the target language, too (Knop, 1985).

The quality and the motives of students’ participation can be revealed from the interpersonal functions they do in the exchanges of interaction. Halliday (2004: 108) proposed that the interpersonal functions cover the commodity being exchanged, the initiating role the students play, and the moves (i.e. how they initiate or response).

Starting from Halliday’s theory of the interpersonal functions, Hall (2003) proposes a pattern of moves in the classroom oral interaction called the basic unit

of classroom interaction covering initiation, response, and follow-up (IRF). IRF is the modification of Coulthard and Sinclair IRE: initiation, response, and evaluation. The term evaluation, then, is replaced by the 'follow-up' since it can be done by the teacher only. Then the follow-up referring to any kinds of feedback given to the responses and can be done by, both, the teacher and the students. However, the 'follow-up' column of IRF will lack of students' participation while the teacher doesn't give any chance for the students to give comments, sum-up, argue, and so forth, on others' response.

The previous study conducted by Wells and Arauz (2006) revealed that students' participations, still, took place on the second part, which is response. In the same way, Bellack et al (1966: 48) revealed that students' primary job in classroom interaction is to respond. In the similar way, Hall describes the situation of classroom oral interaction where "the teacher elicits information from students, then students respond, after that teacher evaluates their responses" (Hall, 2003). Therefore, the moves the students do in the oral interaction are limited only as the responder of teacher's initiation.

Another finding from a research conducted by Juniarti (2010) shows that the teacher is dominant in the classroom interaction, even after giving some elicitations to make the students participate. The study revealed that the classroom oral interaction lacked of students participation in giving initiation and follow-up. It can be seen from the following chart.

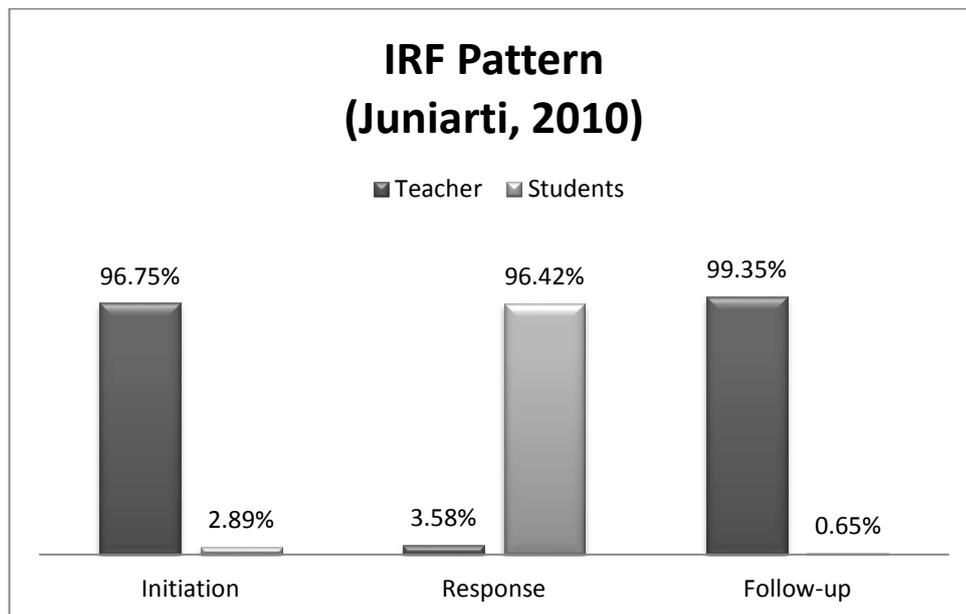


Chart 1.1. IRF Pattern (Juniarti, 2010)

To conclude, the previous study described above reveals that the participations of the students are dominated by their role as the responder. Meanwhile, they missed their chance to participate in giving initiation and follow-up. Also, the fact that teachers are still dominant in interactions indicates that learning process seems to be teacher-centered.

Likewise, during the PPL program (2011), the same situation was found in some English classes in SMP 47 where students participated only to respond to the teacher's initiations. The question is "are the students' interpersonal functions helpful as means to improve their language?" If no, the oral interaction in the classroom will be useless since it doesn't support the participants, the teacher and students, to reach the goal of the learning process. This is another reason why the students' participation in classroom oral interaction is important to study.

In the classroom oral interaction, the interpersonal expressions the students used represent their experiential functions. The experiential functions of the interpersonal expressions are distinguished by the process type construed. Each process type can be recognized from the choice of the verbal group in the clause. Meanwhile, the experiential functions of the interpersonal expressions have not been discussed yet in the previous studies concerning the students' participation in classroom oral interaction. Therefore, this study tries to fill the gap by providing new information about the experiential meaning in regard to the process types represented in students' interpersonal expression.

The language the students used in their participation shows their language preference in doing their interpersonal functions in classroom oral interaction, especially in the English class where the use of the target language is being demanded. By contrasting the use of students' L1 and the target language in their interpersonal functions and the experiential functions of students' interpersonal expressions in their target language reveals how the students participate in English classroom oral interaction.

Therefore, the fact the theoretical and empirical background as well as the previous study have revealed shows a good basic reason why the students' interpersonal and experiential functions are worthwhile to study.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

The main question of this study is: “How do students participate in English classroom oral interaction?”. The following are sub-questions that helped the writer to answer the main question:

1. What interpersonal functions do the students do in the exchanges of the interaction?
  - a. Which interpersonal functions do they do in Indonesian?
  - b. Which interpersonal functions do they do in English?
2. What experiential functions do the students do with their interpersonal expressions?

## **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

The study was aimed to analyze how students participate in English classroom oral interaction. This study also concentrated on analyzing what interpersonal functions the students do in the exchanges of the classroom interaction, in regard to the interpersonal functions they do in Indonesian and English. Furthermore, this study was aimed to analyze the students’ experiential functions of their interpersonal expressions.

## **1.4. Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is:

- the students’ interpersonal moves in Indonesian and English in regard to the interpersonal functions; and

- the experiential functions of the students' interpersonal expressions, specifically the process types.

The study was conducted by involving only one English teacher and students of one class (K7). Therefore, the result of this study is not to be generalized or to compare to other EFL classroom oral interaction

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

- The result of the study will hopefully contribute to the improvement of the pedagogical practices in EFL classroom in junior high school.
- The result of the study will hopefully contribute to the development of our understanding on students' participation in EFL classroom which is to be considered for further research.