

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In the field of education, language serves as the main foundation for teaching, learning, and building interaction between teachers and students. It functions not only as a means of communication but also as a tool to transfer knowledge, shape understanding, and foster engagement. Halliday (1994) describes language as a social semiotic system that reflects social values and relationships, showing its importance in classroom communication. The success of learning depends on effective language use, as it allows teachers to explain, guide, and motivate, while students use it to ask, express, and collaborate. Therefore, language functions as both an intellectual and social tool that supports meaningful and interactive learning.

Classroom interaction is central to the learning process, enabling the exchange of meaning, ideas, and understanding between teachers and students. Nunan (1991) emphasizes that it is not a one-way transfer of knowledge but a two-way process where meaning is negotiated and knowledge co-constructed. Through meaningful interaction, students receive input and produce output, which enhances their confidence, fluency, and overall participation. Brown (2001) highlights that interaction is the heart of language learning, as meaningful communication is essential for effective learning. Teachers who facilitate discussion, ask open-ended questions, provide feedback, allow wait to speak confidently create more open and communicative learning environments.

In the Indonesian EFL context, classroom interaction still faces challenges that limit students' communicative competence. Despite the curriculum's emphasis on two-way communication and the adoption of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), many classrooms remain teacher-centered, with teachers dominating talk while students play passive roles. Suherdi (2015) notes that interaction often follows the Initiation–Response–Feedback (IRF) pattern, where teachers control discourse through closed-ended questions, leaving little room for students' authentic communication or critical thinking. This contrasts with CLT principles, which promote student-centered learning and meaningful language use (Littlewood, 2014). The gap between curriculum goals and actual practice highlighted the need to understand how teachers and students use language to create more balanced and interactive learning environments.

In linguistic studies, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) by Halliday provides a framework for understanding how language functions in social contexts, emphasizing its role in expressing ideas, building relationships, and achieving communication goals. Central to this theory is the concept of speech functions; statement, question, offer, and command which reveal how meaning is exchanged in interaction. In classroom communication, SFL explains how teachers and students use these functions and how they influence student participation.

Several previous studies have investigated speech functions in classroom interaction using the SFL framework. Hasibuan (2025) examined teacher–student interaction and found that all four speech functions appeared in classroom

discourse, though teachers predominantly used statements, reflecting a teacher-centered pattern. Students also relied mostly on statements and rarely used questions or offers. The study focused on identifying types and frequencies of speech functions and their grammatical forms, without discussing their pedagogical role in classroom interaction. Similarly, Aprianti (2020) found that questions and statements dominated teacher talk in junior high classrooms, while students participated minimally. Although the study classified speech functions clearly, it did not examine how teacher dominance affected students' active language use. Putri and Wiyanto (2024) reported that students mostly used statements, with commands and questions less frequent and offers absent. These studies consistently show dominant speech functions, but most focus on types, frequencies, and forms rather than on how speech functions pedagogically manage interaction and influence student participation.

Despite the number of studies on speech functions in classroom interaction, limited attention has been given to the pedagogical function and interpersonal meaning of teachers' dominant speech functions. Existing research tends to emphasize classification, frequency, and grammatical realization, while the way speech functions function pedagogically to shape interaction, control participation, and influence students' language use remains underexplored. This indicates a gap in the focus of analysis, specifically in terms of empirical evidence, rather than in theory or research methodology. Therefore, a deeper analysis is needed to explain how teachers' dominant speech functions shape

classroom interaction and affect students' opportunities to actively participate in English learning.

Based on observations at SMA Swasta Budi Utomo, classroom interaction was shaped not only by the amount of teacher talk but also by how speech functions were used. Teachers often dominated discourse, causing students to be less active and give minimal responses. When teachers controlled most interaction, students rarely initiated speech or used functions such as questioning, responding, or offering ideas. Moments of greater student engagement occurred when teachers used speech functions that encouraged participation, like open-ended questions or positive feedback, but these were limited. The form of an utterance did not always reflect its function; for instance, "*Can you see the difference?*" functioned as a statement, while "*You can answer this one, right?*" acted as a command. These observations suggest that dominant teacher speech functions shape classroom interaction and influence student participation, highlighting the need to examine how Halliday's four speech functions realized in the learning process rather than only documenting their types or frequency.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze how teacher and students realize speech functions used in English classroom interaction. It focuses on how these speech functions shape classroom interaction patterns and influence students' participation during the learning process. By examining teacher and student utterances, this study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of the role of speech functions in classroom discourse.

1.2 The Problems of The Study

Based on the background described above, the research problems were formulated as follows:

1. What types of speech functions were used by the English teacher and students in the classroom interaction?
2. How were the speech functions realized in the classroom interaction?

1.3 The Objectives of The Study

Based on the problems above, the objectives of the research were as follows:

1. To identified the types of speech functions used by the English teacher and students during classroom interaction.
2. To analyzed the realization of speech functions in the classroom interaction by looking from the speakers' utterances.

1.4 The Scope of The Study

The scope of this research was limited to the analysis of verbal speech in one tenth-grade English class at SMA Swasta Budi Utomo. This study focused specifically on identifying the types of speech functions used by the teacher and students and describing the realization of speech functions in the classroom interaction. The analysis was based on Halliday's (1994) SFL framework without examining teaching methods or students' language proficiency.

1.5 The Significances of The Study

Based on the findings expected from this research, the significances of the study are presented as follows.

This study is expected to contribute theoretically to Systemic Functional Linguistics by examining the types and realizations of speech functions in classroom interaction. The findings are expected to show that certain speech functions, particularly those used by the teacher tend to dominate the interaction, shaping the overall discourse pattern in the classroom. Therefore, this study is expected to strengthen the understanding of how speech functions operate in real classroom settings and highlight their role in constructing interactional dynamics in EFL contexts.

Practically, the findings are expected to demonstrate a clear connection between the use of speech functions and the quality of classroom interaction. For teachers, the dominance of specific speech functions (such as giving information or directing actions) is expected to indicate the need to incorporate more varied functions, particularly those that invite student responses, to achieve more balanced interaction. For students, the study is expected to show that more varied teacher speech functions can encourage greater participation. For future researchers, this study is expected to provide empirical data and reveal that analyzing speech functions can uncover concrete issues in classroom communication, serving as a foundation for further research.