

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Communication among persons is known as conversation. Conversation is necessary for social interaction among people of everyday life. It is necessary because the language used by conversational participant is a kind of embodiment people's thoughts and it is used by persons to participate and to have some interaction one another. The interaction among persons in conversation indicates them actively talking in a particular topic. During the conversation, actually the speakers use their own style. The style means the way they talk in the conversation; in other words it is called as conversational style.

Conversational style refers to the basic tools with which people communicate; anything that is said must be said in some way, and that way is style (Tannen, 2005). Further, Tannen explains that the style refers to a special way of speaking as if one could choose between speaking plainly or speaking with style. Thus, the role of style in conversation is really important in order to make the interaction communicative.

Tannen (1990) maintains that men and women have very different communicative conventions and conversational styles and that these styles are rooted in their early socialization in same-sex play groups. Girls grow up in groups in which the emphasis is on equality, cooperation, and friendships, and so they develop conversational styles that are cooperative and highly interactional, with each girl encouraging the speech of others and building on others'

communications. On the other hand, boys grow up in groups based on competition and hierarchy, and so they develop styles that are competitive rather than cooperative, often dominating conversations through long turns, interruptions, and abrupt introduction of new topics.

Further, Swann (2003) stated that there is a substantial body of evidence that women and men, and girls and boys interact, to some extent, in different ways. Such differences as occur have often been thought to disadvantage female speakers in mixed-sex interaction. This area of language and gender is one that has a number of practical as well as theoretical implications: within education.

Thus, this research concerns on conversational style of male and female teachers in senior high school since there is some situation where the conversation of male and female teachers takes place within this context. In senior high school, there are some setting where the conversation can occur naturally; such as in the classroom, teachers' office, canteen and library. In this research, it focuses on break time where the conversation among male and female teachers occurs in *SMA Swasta Sisingamangaraja Tanjungbalai*.

One of previous study which had been conduct the study about conversational style is Sylvia and Dewi (2012). It compares the conversational styles and preference structure of the host with different guest. This previous study and this research are discussed the same topic about conversational style. However, the previous study relates the conversational style with the preference structure in talk show; while this research relates the conversational style to gender differences in senior high school. The aim of the previous research is to

find out the features of conversational style used by the host toward different guests which is in a group and a single guest, in other words it compares the two different guests with the same host in order to see whether the conversational style of the host are different or not. On the other hand, this research intends to find out the style in conversation among male and female teachers in senior high school. The difference also can be seen in the theory which is used to analyze the conversational style. The previous study uses Tannen's theory, while in this research the researcher uses Swann's theory.

According to Swann (2000) there are five features of conversational style. Such as amount of talk, interruption, conversational support, tentativeness, and compliment. Further, Swann states that in amount of talk male speakers have been found to talk more than females, particularly in formal or public contexts. The second feature is interruption; it is stated that male speakers interrupt female speakers more than vice versa. The third feature is conversational support, female speakers more frequently use features that provide support and encouragement for other speakers, for example 'minimal responses' such as *mmh* and *yeah*. The fourth feature is tentativeness, it is stated that there are claims that female speakers use features that make their speech appear tentative and uncertain, such as 'hedges' that weaken the force of an utterance ('I think maybe . . .', 'sort of', 'you know') and certain types of 'tag questions' (questions tagged on to statements, such as ('It's so hot, isn't it?')). The last feature which proposed by Swann is compliment, it is stated that a wider range of compliments may be addressed to women than to men, and women also tend to pay more compliments.

In line with the explanation about the features of conversational style above, in reality during the break time (08.50 AM - 09.05 AM) in teacher's office among male and female teachers there was different phenomenon such as in the following.

- FT : *Pak Toha, nanti saya masuk sebentar di jam bapak ya*  
(Mr. Toha, I will enter to your class for a while)
- MT : *Kelas mana bu?*  
(Which class ma'am?)
- FT : ***Memangnya hari ini bapak ada berapa kelas? Kan Cuma satu?***  
(How many classes do you have today? Just one, right?)
- MT : *Oh, ini selasa ya*  
(Oh, today is Tuesday)
- FT : *Jangan banyak kali yang dipikirkan pak... nanti saya masuk ya pak ya*  
(Don't think a lot sir... I will come in later sir)
- MT : *Oke bu.*  
(Okay ma'am)

Based on example above, female teacher interrupted more than male teacher. The bold sentence "***Memangnya hari ini bapak ada berapa kelas? Kan Cuma satu?***" was the interruption that used by female teacher to the male teacher. In addition, female teacher tends to directive during the conversation.

Thus, based on the phenomena which have been mentioned above, this research tries to find out the features of conversational style used by male and female teachers, how it is realizes, and the reasons of conversational style used by male and female teachers in *SMA Swasta Sisingamangaraja Tanjungbalai*.

## **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

With reference to the background of the study, the problems of the study are formulated as follows.

1. What features of conversational style are used by male and female teachers in senior high school?
2. How are features of conversational style realized by male and female teachers in senior high school?
3. Why are the features of conversational styles used by male and female teachers as the ways they are?

## **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

In relation to the research problems, the objectives of the study are as follows.

1. To investigate features of conversational style used by male and female teachers in senior high school.
2. To elaborate the conversational style used by male and female teachers in senior high school.
3. To analyze the reasons why conversational style used by male and female teachers in senior high school.

## **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

This study is limited to the conversational style of male and female teachers among senior high school of *SMA Swasta Sisingamangaraja Tanjungbalai*. In this research the researcher uses the theory from Swann (2000)



for analyzing the features of conversational style and how it is used male and female teachers. In addition, this research uses the theory proposed by Tannen (1992) for describing the reasons of male and female teachers' style in conversation.

### **1.5 The Significances of the Study**

Finding of this research are expected to have both theoretical and practical significance.

1. Theoretically, the findings of this research are expected to enrich the theories presented in the study of linguistics, especially in the field of conversational style and gender differences.
2. Practically, the findings of this research are expected to be useful as following.
  - 1) The findings of the research are expected to be useful for the students, in order to enlarge their knowledge about gender and language since the results could be used as references.
  - 2) The findings of the research are expected to be useful for the teachers and lecturers, so they can use it to support the teaching and learning materials related to the gender and language since the results could be used as references.
  - 3) The findings of the research are expected to be useful for other researchers who wish to carry out further research about gender and language especially in conversational style since the results could be used as references.