CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language serves as means of communication. People communicate by using the language(s) they know in order to represent and exchange their experience. When people attempt to achieve a communication purpose they have to choose which of the language forms to use. According to Harmer (2001), there are a number of variables which govern our choice of choosing the language forms: setting, participants, gender, channel, and topics. The setting refers to the situation or place where conversations take place. Normally people use different language style or variety according to the situation or place. Participant refers the people involved in an exchange whether in speech or writing. Gender also influences the language being chosen. Some researches clearly show that men and women typically use language differently when addressing either members of the same or the opposite sex. The channel that affects the language chosen refers to the tools used in exchanging information such as telephone, microphone, paper etc. The topic addressed also affects the lexical and grammatical choices.

The primary purpose of classroom communication is a pedagogic one. The teacher is in command of a body of knowledge and of skills that he/she is required to transmit to the learners. In most foreign language classrooms the teacher knows the language better than the students. The learners, in as much as they are speakers of their native language and of any other languages, however, know

something about language and the way it works in general. There is thus sufficient common ground for teacher-learner interaction to take place with the purpose of learning the new language (Malamah-Thomas, 1987).

Foreign language classroom is a specific setting which has specific participants (teacher and students) and specific topic to communicate. Most of the English teachers of the national schools in Indonesia are Indonesian who graduated from universities. Most of them are fluent in speaking, listening, reading and writing English. Therefore they are considered as bilingual (though not true bilingual) which means they are able to use more than one language namely Bahasa Indonesia and English.

Students get models of language from textbooks, reading materials of all sorts, audio and video tapes as well as from their teachers. In some English classrooms in Indonesia the English teacher normally uses English as well as Bahasa Indonesia in teaching English as a foreign language. The use of the two languages alternately in teaching can be categorized as code-switching. The term code-switching is defined as the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation (Milroy & Musyken, 1995). Code-switching involves two processes namely, syntactic process which explains how switching occurs at the surface level and cognitive process which explains how bilinguals switch between languages or produce mixed sentences.

Code-switching, one of the most unavoidable consequences of communication between different language varieties, has long existed as a result of language contact widely observed especially in multilingual and multicultural

communities. Code-switching as specific phenomenon and strategy of foreign language teachers received attention in the 1980s. From then on, there has been the heated debate between different views on whether it is helpful or impeding to switch back and forth between the target language and the native language in the foreign language learning classroom (Jingxia, 2010).

Traditionally, tutorial situation is different from an ordinary conversational speech situation, and we might expect classroom code-switching to differ in several important respects from code-switching in natural discourse. It is important to bear in mind that the foreign language teacher should not be regarded as a true bilingual who can choose freely between different codes. Instead, they are normally dealing with monolingual individual who has skills in a foreign language and whose task is to teach this language to other monolinguals (Flyman-Mattson & Burenhult, 1999).

Teachers need to bear in mind that in foreign language classroom, the target language input by them is considered as an important factor in language learning. It is argued that one of the teacher's roles is to provide the target language input and present the best model of language while fulfilling the teaching requirement (Higgs, 1982). It is quite contrary, however, with what is found in the preliminary study done by the researcher in one of the EFL classrooms in Tebing Tinggi. The teacher most frequently uses the native language (Bahasa Indonesia) in teaching English and sometimes switches into English for some specific purposes. It means English as the content of learning is

placed not in its major purpose anymore, yet it turns to be the subject to be explained in Bahasa Indonesia.

According to Krashen (1981) comprehensible input is all that is required for language acquisition. He saw the successful acquisition by students of a second language as being bound up with the nature of language input they receive. The language input can be whatever the students hear such as teacher's instruction, and read in the teaching and learning process. Therefore the language used by the teacher in talking, instructing, asking questions and explaining is an important input for the learners.

In recent years, code-switching in language classroom has come into focus as an area of specific interest and investigation. Foreign language classroom has become one of the specific code-switching contexts (Jacobson, 2001). Some researchers have done some studies and empirical investigation on code-switching which occurred in the teaching of foreign language. They also come up with different functions and factors that cause teachers to switch their language in the teaching of foreign language.

Investigation on classroom code-switching have been carried out in a broader variety of language environment, from bilingual (and even multilingual) classrooms, to second language learning classrooms, and recently, to foreign language classrooms. Some researchers, for instance Guthrie (1984) has investigated both classroom talk and the role of code-switching. They have carried out extensive observations of classroom interaction and conducted close analysis

of classroom language. In his study, Guthrie (1984) finds that the bilingual teacher is very consistent in his/her use of the mother tongue and the target language.

Using ethnographic observations, Merritt (1992) also explores the determinants of teachers code-switching between English, Swahili and mother tongue in three Kenyan primary schools. Reasons they put forward code switching include the socializing role of teacher, the importance of variation and repetition, and the teacher's linguistic competence and insecurity. Similar with Merritt (1992) a study by Flyman-Mattsson & Burenhult (1999) reveals an extensive use of code-switching in the teacher's interaction with the students and explains the reasons for code-switching which include linguistic insecurity, topic switch, affective functions, socializing functions and repetitive functions.

Aside from identifying the reasons of teachers' code-switching in foreign language classrooms, some researchers also identify the functions of code-switching in foreign language teaching. In Macaro's study (1997), most students reported that they expected their teachers to speak the L1 sometimes to facilitate their understanding. Many indicated that they could not learn if they could not understand their teacher. It was also revealed that teachers switched to the L1 most often to give and clarify instructions for classroom activities, to give feedback to students, for translating and checking comprehension.

Grim (2010) and Jinxia (2010) identify three main functions of code-switching in foreign language teaching namely, facilitating language learning, managing the class, and expressing empathy or solidarity to the students. The real fact of functions of code-switching can be seen in EFL classrooms in Indonesia

which is done by the teachers when teaching English to their students. The teachers assume that their students could not fully understand them if they only use English. It can be understood since the second year students of senior high school are in the process of learning the language which is not widely used in the community.

It can be concluded that foreign language classroom is a specific setting or context (pedagogic context) which has specific participants (teacher and students), and specific topic (grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, reading and writing) which can trigger the choice of language use. Code-switching in foreign language occurs due to some factors and for specific functions. However, it is still argued whether code-switching in foreign language classroom is helpful for students' comprehension or impeding the language input by switching back and forth between the target language and the native language. Therefore code-switching which occurs in the EFL classrooms in Tebing Tinggi and uttered by the teachers, is worth investigated.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Code-switching is not only an interesting phenomenon in bilingual environment, but also very common in foreign language teaching and learning. In Indonesia, English is taught mainly as a subject at school/courses and seldom practiced in the broad social environment. Most English language teachers as well as the students are native speakers of Bahasa Indonesia. Therefore they sometimes

switch the language. The purpose of this study is to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What types of code-switching uttered by the teachers in teaching English to eleven grade students of senior high school?

2. What are the functions of code-switching in teaching English to grade eleven students of senior high school?

3. How does code-switching occur in teaching English to grade eleven students of senior high school?

4. Why do the teachers of grade eleven senior high school switch their language in the teaching of English?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research problems formulated above, this study has some objectives as follow:

1. To describe the type/s of code-witching uttered by the teachers in teaching English to grade eleven students of senior high school.

2. To describe the functions of code-switching in teaching English to grade eleven students of senior high school.

3. To describe the process of code-switching that occurs in teaching English to grade eleven students of senior high school.

4. To explain the factors that cause the EFL teachers of grade eleven senior high school to switch their language in teaching English.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research is limited to the language used in teaching English by three EFL teachers of grade eleven senior high schools in Tebing Tinggi. The language observed and recorded is the language used in classroom communication. This research also describes the types and process of code-switching which occurs in pedagogic discourse which is different from code-switching in natural discourse. The types of code-switching used to classify the code-switching uttered by the teachers are based on Poplack (1980) typology of code-switching; intra-sentential switching, inter-sentential switching and tag switching.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to have both theoretical and practical significance for the readers, English teachers as well as English department students.

Theoretically the findings of this research are expected to provide new contribution to the theory of code-switching in foreign language teaching. They are also expected to have contribution as guiding information for linguistic students who are interested in the study of code-switching. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be useful for the English teachers as reference. The teachers are expected to be careful in selecting the language as input in language teaching and for other researchers to use the findings as the sending context in their research.