

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Conversation occurs when two or more people interact. It happens as an organized interaction where participants take turns speaking and adjust their responses to keep it flowing smoothly (Chao, 2023). In the classroom, however, it shifts from a general social flow into a structured medium organized to ensure that learning proceeds smoothly and achieves its objectives. Hudiyono, Rokhmansyah, and Elyana (2021) stated that each stage of the conversation has certain steps so that the conversation runs smoothly, meaningfully and reaches the learning objectives. The study of conversation as a systematically organized phenomenon is essentially investigated as a basic competency, thus covered by the concept of Conversation Analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974).

Conversation Analysis (CA) is about people organize their interaction through patterns such as turn taking, sequence organization, repair, and adjacency pairs in naturally occurring conversations. CA allows the researcher to examine how participants organize their turns, respond to each other, and manage speaker shifts during interaction. (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Therefore, the use of CA in this study is based on its relevance to the nature of the data and the focus of the research, rather than on the age of the theory. According to Seedhouse (2004), CA provides the analytical framework for examining such organized interaction, and it can be used as a powerful lens for understanding what actually happens during teacher student interaction in the classroom context. In the

language classroom specifically, analyzing classroom interaction using CA can help improve teaching by showing how teachers and students manage their communication (Han, 2024). This means in the classroom as a unique setting where teaching and learning mainly happen through talk, within one important aspect examined in CA is teacher talk (Seedhouse, 2004), because the way teachers use language strongly influences how interaction develops in the classroom.

Teacher talk is how teachers during the teaching and learning process to explain material, give instructions, ask questions, manage classroom activities, and interact with students (Walsh 2002). It functions not only as a medium for delivering knowledge but also as a tool for organizing interaction and controlling participation in the classroom. The way teachers use language in interaction is closely related to the effectiveness of classroom communication. Teacher talk can either support or limit students' opportunities to learn, and teachers want to encourage students to speak, but instead limit participation by talking for too long, responding too quickly, or not giving enough wait time. A teacher's ability to control their use of language in interaction is as important as their ability to select appropriate teaching methodologies. Classroom interaction is not only a way to deliver material, but also a skill in managing learners' participation through the exchange turns to facilitate effective learning.

Classroom interaction is the process that occurs between teachers and students during teaching and learning activities (Walsh, 2011). It involves the exchange of ideas, responses, questions, and feedback that support the learning

process in the classroom. Through classroom interaction, teachers and students collaboratively construct communication that enables learning to occur effectively. One important aspect of classroom interaction is speaking skill, it is the direct system of communication and verbal communication becomes an essential part of social interaction (Akidah and Halim, 2024). Speaking skill plays an essential role in language learning because students develop their language competence through active participation in interaction. Within the framework of classroom interaction, turn taking becomes one of the most important mechanisms that organizes how teacher and students exchange turns in speaking.

Turn taking is the systematic process through which participants in a conversation take turns so that communication can run smoothly. It was first explained by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) and classified into three main strategies by Stenström (1994) namely taking the turn, holding the turn, and yielding the turn. In the classroom interaction, turn taking tends to be realized in a more structured and teacher controlled manner, with the teacher playing a central role in allocating turns and frequently taking the majority of turns in the interaction (Willemssen et al., 2020).

In the English language teaching and learning context, turn taking is especially important because it directly determines the degree to which students have the opportunity to participate in interaction and express their ideas. However, in classroom interaction, teachers usually take more speaking turns than students. Research consistently shows that the teacher dominates classroom talk, while students participate primarily as listeners (Sari, Karimah, & Latifah, 2023). Fenyi

and Nyarkoh (2022) found that in 82% of classroom interactions, it is the teacher who initiates and controls the dialogue, with students often waiting for explicit permission before taking their turns. This asymmetry signals not just an imbalance in participation, but a potential obstruction of the very learning opportunities that classroom interaction is meant to create a concern directly aligned with Walsh's (2002) notion of interactional mismatch.

Several studies have examined how turn taking strategies function in EFL classrooms to shed light on these dynamics. Sari, Karimah, and Latifah (2023) found that adjacency pairs and incompleteness markers are the most dominant strategies used, with the teacher employing all available strategy types while students used only a limited range. Similarly, Zhou (2024) observed teacher hegemony in senior high school classroom interactions and argued that a deeper understanding of turn taking strategies can inspire teachers to adopt more effective communicative approaches.

However, the preliminary data obtained through classroom observations and interviews at SMA Negeri 8 Medan reveal that the practical reality of classroom interaction often deviates from the structured flow suggested in these studies. A significant difference is found in the occurrence of unsmooth speaker shifts (Stenström, 1994), where the strategies utilized do not always result in successful participation. In the following extract, the teacher utilizes an utterance incompleter, a strategy noted by Putra, Yusiana, and Alfiyanto (2024), but the use of this strategy results in an interactional breakdown.

1. Extract 1

T : "We say, (0.2) my friend said (0.2) tha::t"

Ss : (0.7) [Silence]

T : "(.) you, ((points to S6))
continue."

S6 : "My friend said that (0.2) he was hungry."

From the extract above, it could be seen that the teacher tried to continue using prolongation (tha::t), which was technically a stalling mechanism intended to hold the turn while planning the discourse and expecting students to respond. However, the students did not respond immediately, which resulted in silence. The teacher then directly pointed to one student to continue the sentence. This showed that students tended to wait and did not take the turn by themselves.

2. Extract 2

T: This (0.2) is indirect speech.

[teacher underlines 'that' on board]

(0.7)

T: So, (0.2) what is the difference?

(1.4)

Ss: [Silence]

In this interaction, the teacher asked a question to the whole class. However, no student answered the question, and the silence became longer. This indicated

that students might felt unsure or were not ready to respond. As a result, the interaction did not continue as expected.

3. Extract 3

T: Because (0.2) WH-questions (0.2) use (0.2) // ‘if’—

S2: [Miss, bukannya ga pakai ‘if’

(0.5)

T: Oh, yes.

(0.2)

T: you are right.

(0.2)

T: Thank you.

In this extract, a student interrupted the teacher by using the word “Miss” before speaking. This showed that students used certain ways to enter the conversation. The teacher accepted the interruption and continued the interaction.

Based on these observations, it can be seen that students do not always take the turn actively. In many cases, they wait, remain silent, or need to be selected by the teacher. In the context of English language learning, this condition becomes important because speaking skill is one of the main indicators of students’ communicative competence. Through speaking, students are expected to express ideas, respond to others, and actively participate in interaction. On the other hand, the teacher often controls the interaction by asking questions and selecting students. These conditions show that the use of turn-taking strategies in the classroom does not always run smoothly. There are still delays, silence, and

interruptions during the interaction. This may affect how communication develops during the teaching and learning process.

Therefore, it is important to study how turn taking strategies are used by the teacher and the students in classroom interaction. By understanding this, the researcher expects to describe how interaction occurs and how students participate in the classroom. In response to this gap, this study aims to investigate the use of turn taking strategies by the teacher and the students in EFL classroom interaction at SMA Negeri 8 Medan.

1.2 The Problems of Study

1. What types of turn taking strategies are used by the teacher and the students in the EFL classroom interaction?
2. How are turn taking strategies realized by the teacher and the students in the EFL classroom interaction?

1.3 The Objectives of Study

1. To identify the types of turn taking strategies used by the teacher and the students in the EFL classroom interaction.
2. To analyze the realization of turn taking strategies used by the teacher and the students in the EFL classroom interaction.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study is limited to verbal interactions between the teacher and students in the EFL classroom at SMA Negeri 8 Medan. The analysis focuses on turn taking strategies, specifically how turns are initiated, maintained, and shifted during classroom interaction. Given the need to obtain relevant data this study is restricted to the main activity stage of the lesson, as this stage involves the highest level of spontaneous interaction such as explanations and question and answer sessions. These situations provide clear examples of how turn taking strategies are used in real classroom communication. Furthermore, this study focuses only on verbal interaction. Nonverbal aspects such as gestures, body language, and facial expressions are not included in the analysis.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

The significance of a study generally refers to the value, benefits, and contributions that the research is expected to provide for different stakeholders such as teachers, students, and future researchers. In this research, the significance lies in how the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of turn-taking strategies in real classroom interaction, especially in the Indonesian EFL context, and how this understanding can be used to support more effective teaching and learning activities.

For English teachers, this study is expected to help teachers understand how turn taking strategies are used in real classroom interaction. By understanding how turns are managed between teachers and students, teachers can adjust their

interactional practices to create more effective and balanced classroom communication.

For students, this study can help students become more aware of how they take turns in classroom interaction and how their responses contribute to the flow of communication. By understanding this, students may become more active and responsive participants in classroom interaction.

For future researchers, this study can serve as an empirical reference for those interested in studying classroom discourse, particularly in the Indonesian EFL context. Since this study focuses on the use of turn taking strategies in classroom interaction, it can provide a foundation for future researchers to explore similar topics in different contexts or expand the analysis to other aspects of interaction.