

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Literature circles or small peer-led discussion groups are suggested in reading in English as a foreign language program. Literature circle activities which are used to improve the students' ability to grasp, analyze, and summarize texts and develop their critical and reflective thinking are known to be more effective than traditional text reading activities such as reading the text aloud or silently, guessing unknown words from context and looking them up in the dictionary, analyzing the text using wh-question, and analyzing the stylistic properties of texts (as cited in Karatay, 2017, p. 65). A literature circle as instructional scaffolding also provides a social space for students to engage in an active reading activity by talking about the text being read, responding to it, sharing what they have learned from the text, and discussing their own questions and interpretations of the text within a certain reading circle (Widodo, 2016, p. 348). Students learn to decode words and read proficiently, but if they do not comprehend what they have read, they are unable to create meaning, connect with the text, or enjoy reading. Therefore, reading can be interpreted as a complex language skill that requires many skills to be used simultaneously. Thus, the engagement of students' interaction is considerably important to conclude, predict and interpret the texts in reading activities. Importantly,

literature circles allow students to cooperatively learn and comprehend texts through casual conversation among their peers (Coccia, 2015).

A plethora of research has analyzed the effect of literature circles around the world, for example, in the United States, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. (e.g., Mark, 2007; Nolasco, 2009; Shelton-Strong, 2012; Widodo, 2016). Those focused on how the literature circle provides students with a dialogic space not merely for understanding texts, and for making sense or meaning of the texts dialogically. Though literature circles have been well understood in the ESL and EFL contexts, the implementation of this instructional method in the secondary EFL classroom remains under-explored. To fill this gap, the present study emphasizes investigating how natural an interaction among students occurred during learning through literature circle activity.

B. Formulation of the Problem

Formulation of the problem in this thesis is as follows, “What interaction patterns occurred during learning through literature circle activity?”

C. Operational Definition

To avoid misunderstanding the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to this study, as follows:

1. Literature circle : An instructional approach in which students meet in small groups to respond to

activity the reading of a book by taking on revolving roles.

2. Students' interaction : A kind of action that occurs among students during the learning process in the classroom.

D. Aims of the Research

The present study aims to investigate the patterns of students' interaction in literature circle activity.

E. Uses of the Research

The present study will expand the pedagogical implications for the implementation of literature circle activity in a classroom context. In terms of theory, this research can enrich the literature and knowledge about students' interaction in literature circle activity. In this case, the present research could be useful for the English teacher to conduct effective teaching and learning strategies, especially in developing effective reading strategies.