

Teacher's Questioning in Classroom Interaction towards Students' Learning Process in an EFL Classroom

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Abstract

In the classroom, teacher's questions contribute an essential role in the students' learning process. In this study, the researcher aimed to investigate the types of teacher's questions conducted by the English teacher in the teaching and learning process and their roles towards students' learning process. This research is a qualitative study. The data of this research were collected through classroom observations, interviews, and audio-visual material. The participants of this research were grade X students of three classes at one of the Senior High Schools in Surakarta. The research findings showed that: firstly, there were three types of teacher's questions conducted by the English teacher in the classroom. The questions were procedural, convergent, and divergent questions. Secondly, every question has a role in the students' learning process. Procedural questions were essential to stimulate and maintain students' interest and motivation, check students' preparation, task, seatwork arrangement, and check students' understanding. The convergent questions, on the other hand, were beneficial to encourage students' participation in a lesson, encourage students to think and focus on the content of the lesson and help the students to review and summarize the previous lesson. Lastly, divergent questions have a role in developing students' participation in a lesson.

Keywords: Teacher's Questions, Students' Learning Process

INTRODUCTION

Classroom interaction is considered one of the principal elements that learning is successfully conducted in a learning activity (Hall and Walsh, 2002). Classroom interaction also plays a massive role for the students to have an interest and be able to communicate well in the classroom. According to Goronga (2013), classroom interaction is beneficial to enact the students to participate in the learning activity. Tsui (1995), stated that there are some aspects in classroom interaction; they are teacher talk and students

talk. One of the elements included in teacher talk is questions or questioning. Giving some questions is a natural action of communication, but it also can be an excellent instrument to be conducted in the classroom. Vebriyanto (2015) stated that the teacher's question or teacher's questioning is considered one of the most common methods that are conducted by a teacher in the classroom interaction. Question and answer (Q & A) activity is generally conducted in more than half of the class time (Gall, 1984). Teacher's questions consist of some types. In this research, the researcher uses the types of teacher's questions based on Richards and Lockhart (1996). These types of questions are procedural, convergent, and divergent questions. Procedural questions deal with classroom procedures and routines, classroom management, etc. On the other hand, convergent questions encourage similar students' responses, such as "yes" or "no" or short statements, while divergent questions encourage students to provide their information.

Questions contribute a beneficial role in classroom interaction and the learning process. One question contributes some impacts to specific classroom interactions, for instance: provides the students to be more active, interested, confident, and motivated during the teaching and learning process. As a two-way interaction, teacher's questions contribute in stimulating students' interaction, thinking, and learning (Erlinda & Dewi, 2014), to identify students' difficulties, to promote an active method to the learning process, to encourage the students to question themselves and to express an interest to the topic of the lesson (Hamiloglu & Temiz, 2012 cited in Erlinda & Dewi, 2014). Ma (2008) also stated that teacher's questions have some roles in the learning process such as: to stimulate and maintain students' interest, to encourage students to think and focus on the content of learning, encourage students' participation, and to check students' understanding.

When a teacher asks some questions to the students, the interaction between them will be more profound. The significant interaction between the teacher and the students might affect the learning process of the students. According to the research done by Hurst, Wallace, and Nixon (2013), social interaction gives an excellent contribution to students' learning process. Through a good interaction with the teacher, students will be more active and confident during their studies. Besides that, the teacher's questions are tools to encourage the students to become interested in the learning process and give them an exciting and motivating goal in the classroom as well.

Previous studies had conducted about three types of teacher's questions that are conducted by the teacher in the teaching activity; those questions were: procedural, convergent, and divergent questions (Andana, 2018). In this study, the researcher only concentrated on the types of teacher's questions in the English Language Teaching classroom and how the English teacher reacts towards students' responses. However, a more explanation about how the types of teacher's questions affect students' learning process in the EFL classroom is still rarely found. Whereas, it is essential to know what types of teacher's questions that have a significant impact on the teaching and learning process in the EFL classroom so that it can improve the students' learning process. So in this study, the researcher examined the types of teacher's questions conducted by the English teacher in classroom interaction and the role of each question towards students' learning process in the EFL classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Teacher's Questions

One of the most general techniques used in classroom interaction is teacher's questions (Vebriyanto, 2015). Besides playing a crucial role in classroom activities, questions also become more and more important since they become one of the primary techniques that are used to nurture the communication and interaction between the teacher and the students (Yang, 2017). The teacher's question is essential to the ways a teacher carries out the classroom, attracts the students to the content of the lesson, and encourages the students' involvement and comprehension (Darn, 2008).

Questions are any sentences that have an interrogative form or purpose. (Cotton, 2001). Questions also can be named as an inquiry expression that encourages or asks the students to get their responses or answers (Aizikovitsh, 2011). According to Nordquist (2013), a question commonly differentiated into several forms depends on the purpose – makes statements, delivers a command, or expresses an exclamation. From these theories, questions are general techniques that have an interrogative form that is used by a teacher to promote an excellent relationship between the teacher and the students during the lesson. Those are: create a communication and interaction between teacher and students, attract the students to be interrelated in the teaching and learning process, and encourage students' participation and understanding.

In a classroom context, teacher's questions are described as instructional signals that deliver to the students about the content of the lesson or the material that will be learned in the classroom and directions about the things that they will do and how they do that thing (Cotton, 2001). The questioning method is asking some questions that are not understood by the students about what they perceive or attach some information about it. Students' competencies that are promoted by delivering teacher's questions are curiosity, creativity, and competence in creating a problem to construct students' critical thinking.

Types of Questions

Procedural Questions

Richard and Lockhart (1996) stated that they opposed the learning content. This type of question focused on classroom management and classroom procedures and routines. Many questions asked by the teacher were formulated to engage students in the learning content, to promote students' comprehension, or to develop the interaction between the teacher and the students. However, this type of question has a diverse role with teacher's questions rolled to assist students in mastering the learning content. Procedural questions are beneficial in making the teaching and learning process easily flow. Procedural questions commonly asked while the teacher wanted to check that the instruction for the assignment was clear, to check the students' assignment had completed or not, check whether students were ready for the next instruction or assignments, etc. Procedural questions also usually used to begin the class and as a teaching routine. For example:

1. How is your life this morning?
2. Any absent today
3. Any questions?
4. Did you guys bring your homework?
5. Do you guys understand my request?

Convergent Questions

Richard and Lockhart (1996) stated that convergent questions are questions that are formulated to engage students in the learning content, to promote students' comprehension, or to develop the interaction between the teacher and the students. Convergent questions only require one correct answer and generally require the same or similar answer from the students. The answer is generally in the form of short statements or Yes/No answers. So, this type of question does not need the students to use their higher-level thinking skills. Convergent questions traditionally asked by the teacher to promote students' participation before the teacher moves to the other teaching method. Convergent questions are beneficial in recalling students' memory of previous information or material as well. For instance:

1. Who is the main cast of this story?
2. Where is the setting of the story?
3. How many casts of this story?
4. Does the story tell about good things?
5. Is the story interesting?

Divergent Questions

As stated by Richard and Lockhart (1996), divergent questions, on the other hand, are contrary to convergent questions. Unlike convergent questions, divergent questions require different students' responses, which are not short statements or Yes/No answers. In other words, this type of question requires the students to build and use their higher-level or critical thinking skills. Divergent questions are beneficial for the students in providing their insight, knowledge, and experiences. This kind of question allows students to answer the questions based on their thought, knowledge, and experiences and not depend on the information already served in their material. Divergent questions require students to give complex and longer answers by analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating knowledge. For example:

1. What event in the story do you think is very important? Why?
2. Can you feel what is felt by the character? What does he/she feel?
3. Would you do the same thing if you were the character? Explain it.
4. Can you imagine what happened? Explain it.
5. Is the story valuable? What values do you get from reading the story?

The Role of Teacher's Questions towards Students' Learning Process

As stated by Richards and Lockhart (1996), questions asked by the teacher possess several roles in the learning process:

1. Stimulate and maintain students' interest and motivation
2. Encourage students to think and focus on the content of the lesson
3. Enable a teacher to clarify what students have said
4. Enable a teacher to elicit a particular structure or vocabulary items
5. Enable teachers to check students' understanding
6. Encourage students' participation in a lesson

Cotton (2001) also stated why teacher's questions are so commonly used in the learning process:

1. Develop students' interest and motivate students to become actively involved in lessons
2. Check students' preparation, homework, task, or seatwork arrangement, etc.
3. Develop students' critical thinking skills and ask students' attitudes
4. Review and summarize the previous lessons

5. Maintain students' insights by exposing new relationships
6. Assess students' achievement of instructional goals and objectives
7. Stimulate students to pursue knowledge on their own.

Not only do they have essential roles in the lesson, according to Darn (2008), teacher's questions also play an essential role in classroom management. These questions such as: "Can you all see the whiteboard?", "Have you opened your smartphone?" "Are you ready?" "Have you finished?" etc. Teacher's questions designed to check instructions are essential to clarify the task. These kinds of questions should be as simple as possible such as: "Are you working alone or in pairs?" "Who's in group A?" etc. These kinds of questions are essential to help the teacher manage the classroom so the learning process will be more successful too.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a qualitative research design to examine the types of teacher's questions asked by the English teacher in classroom interaction towards students' learning process. The researcher had analyzed the data based on the data obtained from the real situation and condition in the EFL classroom. To collect the data, observation, interview, and audio-visual material were conducted in this research. The observation was conducted to observe both the English teacher and students to investigate what types of questions that are used and asked by the English teacher during the teaching and learning process, while the interviews were done to collect additional data from the English teacher and the grade X students. The last is the audio-visual materials that had been conducted by recording the whole classroom activities, both with audio and video recorder.

The data had been acquired by recording the teaching and learning activity both by audio and video recorder to help the researcher investigate the kind of questions frequently asked by the English teacher in the EFL classroom. After doing the audio and video recording, the researcher transcribed the result of the recording to assist the researcher in analyzing and categorizing the types of questions used by the English teacher. The researcher also conducted interviews with the English teacher and the students to collect additional data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Types of Questions used by the English Teacher in EFL Classroom

The finding showed that there were three types of teacher questions used by the English teacher during the teaching and learning process in the EFL classroom at grade X. Those questions were procedural questions, convergent questions, and divergent questions. The detail of the teacher's questions type and the amount that was asked by the English teacher in the EFL classroom for three classes is presented in table 1.

Table 1. The Use of Teacher's Questions in the Class

Question Type	XA 3	XA 4	XA 5	Total	%
Procedural	28	17	20	65	41.14%
Convergent	27	15	49	91	57.60%
Divergent	2	0	0	2	1.26%
Total	57	32	69	158	100%

Based on the table, convergent questions were the questions asked by the English teacher the most. From 158 questions, there were 91 or 57.60% convergent questions asked by the English teacher. Convergent questions were produced with an aim to help the students comprehend the content of the lesson, facilitate students' understanding, and promote classroom interaction between the teacher and the students. Convergent questions asked are mostly related to the topic of the lesson and do not require the students to engage in higher-level thinking. These types of questions required the students to answer with "yes" or "no" or a short statement and only required once correct answers related to the material being discussed. Convergent questions are found during the teaching and learning process, such as: "There are two kinds of interrogatives. Number 1 is?", "This is called a Yes/No question. Is it right?", "Then why, where, what. After what?"

Convergent questions are usually found in the middle of the lesson (whilst-activity). In this session, the English teacher usually asked some questions related to the material being discussed, such as "yes" or "no" questions or questions that require students' short answers.

Besides that, the English teacher also gave some questions which were light and fun to the students, such as asking the students to mention some English songs that have a title that correlated with the material they have discussed. For example: "In a song? Song? *Di dalam lagu yang pertama kali ada WH nya apa?*", "Where. In a song? *Yang pakai where apa ya? From the song yang pakai where?*", and "When we were young? What is the lyric?"

The second type of teacher's question conducted by the English teacher the most was the procedural questions. Procedural questions related to classroom procedures, classroom routines, and classroom management, as opposed to the content of learning. Procedural questions have a contrasting role from questions that help students to comprehend the content of the course. They usually occurred when the English teacher was checking the students' attendance, checking that the assignments had been completed, check students' understanding, checking whether the students' already done the teacher's request or instruction, etc. From 158 questions found by the researcher during the teaching and learning process, there were 41.14% or 65 procedural questions found by the researcher. These questions usually occurred at the pre-activity (at the beginning of the lesson), whilst-activity (in the middle of the lesson), and post-activity (at the end of the lesson). The example of those questions found during the teaching and learning process such as, "Have you already shared the PPT online?", "Have you studied in SMP?", "Does your PPT clear?"

At the beginning of the lesson (pre-activity), the English teacher started to give students questions right after they were all settled in their seatwork and ready to begin the lesson. During the EFL class in X MIPA 3, the English teacher used 16 procedural questions at the beginning of the lesson. The questions usually occurred when the English teacher wanted to know the students' conditions by asking questions such as: "How are you? Long-time no see, ya?" asked the students about the exam preparation, "Okay guys, because we are close to PAT. When? You join PAT?", or questions proposed to remind the students about some material such as, "Have you ever studied it in SMP?", or "Last Thursday, what was the previous discussion? About reported speeches? So, remember until?", etc.

While in the middle of the lesson (whilst-activity), the English teacher usually used procedural questions in order to check students' understanding. These questions are usually asked by the students when the English teacher has finished explaining the

material. The way the English teacher asked to check students' understanding, such as: "You got the point?"; "Catching,"; "Everybody clear?"; "Questions?"; and many more. On the other hand, at the end of the lesson (post-activity), the English teacher rarely asked procedural questions to the students. Once the English teacher asked questions, the questions were about giving the students assignments such as "Okay, you can do it at home, yeah?".

The last type of teacher's question was divergent questions. Divergent questions were the opposite of convergent questions. These types of questions encouraged diverse students' responses, which were not a short answer, "yes" or "no" or only one correct answer. These types of questions required the students' to engage in higher-level thinking or response by their ideas or opinion, insight, knowledge, or information. So, divergent questions encouraged the students' to think critically and not related to the information already presented in the subject material.

In this research, the researcher found 2 or 1.26% of divergent questions that were asked by the English teacher in the teaching and learning process. Based on the observation, the researcher discovered these types of questions at the beginning of the lesson or the pre-activity. The divergent questions found during the teaching and learning process, such as: "What are you going to do to Indonesia?" and "Why not you are going to give a contribution to the country?"

The Role of Teacher's Questions in Classroom Interaction towards Students' Learning Process

Every type of question has its own role in the students' learning process. The type of teacher's question and its role in students' learning process are described in table 2.

Table 2: Types of Question and Its Role towards Students' Learning Process

Question Type	Experts	Question Roles	Total	%
Procedural	Richards & Lockhart (1996)	Stimulate & maintain students' interest and motivation	14	8.86
		Check students' preparation, task, seatwork arrangement, etc	9	5.69
	Cotton (2001)	Check Students' understanding	38	24.05
		Review and summarize the previous lesson	4	2.53
		Encourage students'	12	7.59

Convergent	Richards & Lockhart	participation in a lesson		
		Encourage students to think & focus on the content of the lesson	65	41.14
Divergent	Cotton (2001)	Review and summarize the previous lesson	14	8.87
		Develop students' critical thinking skills	2	1.27
Total			158	100

Based on the table, it can be seen that procedural questions have some roles towards students' learning process such as: stimulate and maintain students' interest and learning process; check students' preparation, task, seatwork arrangement, etc; check students' understanding, and review and summarize the previous lesson.

Procedural questions have some role in stimulating and maintaining students' interest; check students' preparation, task, seatwork arrangement, etc; check students' understanding, and review and summarize the previous lesson. Procedural questions rolled to stimulate and maintain students' interest and motivation were 14 or 8.86%. Questions such as: "How are you? Long-time no see, ya?", "... so what did you do at home?"; and "I will say „out“; you will say...?". Besides, there were 9 procedural questions that played a role in checking students' preparation, task, seatwork arrangement, etc. Questions such as: "Have you already shared the PPT online?", "*Sudah dibuka smartphone nya?*", "Have you read all?". While procedural questions rolled to check students' understanding found during the teaching and learning process were 38 questions or 24.05%. Those questions found in the class were, "Do you understand what am I speaking?"; "No questions for this one? Very clear?"; "Everybody clear?"; etc. Lastly, there were 3 or 1.89% procedural questions that have a role in reviewing and summarizing the previous lesson. The questions that have this role found in the class, such as, "Last Thursday, what is the previous discussion? About reported speeches? So remember, until?".

Convergent questions, on the other hand, have some roles in encouraging students' participation in a lesson, encouraging students to think and focus on the content of the lesson and review and summarize the previous lesson. There were 12 or 7.59% questions rolled to encourage students' participation in a lesson, such as, "*In a song? Song? Di dalam lagu yang pertama kali ada WH nya apa?*", "Where. In a song? *Yang pakai where apa ya? From the song yang pakai where?*", and "When we were young? What's the lyrics?". While there were 65 or 41.14% questions that have a role in encouraging students to think and focus on the content of the lesson. Those questions such as, "*Udak said, „I will find“ Find what?*", "Do you, you refer to?", and "So this one becomes he. Am present, so am I?". These kinds of questions were convergent questions asked by the English teacher the most. On the other hand, convergent questions that have a role in reviewing and summarizing the previous lesson found in the classroom were 14 questions or 8.87%. Convergent questions rolled to review and summarize the

previous lesson such as, "How many kinds of interrogatives in English?", "This is interrogative. The interrogative sentence, there are 2, yeah? Number 1 is yes/no, starting by, starting by an auxiliary, yeah?", and "If you want to say „Go away!“, „Come on time!“ this is not a statement, but this is...?"

Lastly, divergent questions have a role in developing students' critical thinking. The result showed that there were 2 divergent questions or 1.26% found during the teaching and learning process. Those questions were used to promote the students' initiative to give an answer based on their knowledge and experience, such as: "What are you going to do to Indonesia?", or "Why not you are going to give a contribution to the country?"

IMPLICATION

Teacher's questions were beneficial for the students' learning process in the EFL classroom. As the implication, the English teacher should be capable to use the teacher's questions maximally and effectively, it will assist the teacher in controlling the students' learning process, since teacher's questions play a valuable role such as: stimulating students' interest and motivation; checking students' understanding, task, assignment, preparation; reviewing the previous lesson; encouraging the students to be more focus to the lesson; even helping the students to develop and improve their critical thinking skills.

Unfortunately, the utilization of teacher's questions in the EFL classroom was not maximally conducted, especially for divergent questions. Whereas, asking divergent questions regularly can assist the students in fostering their critical thinking skills since divergent questions require the students to engage their higher-level thinking skills. Besides that, divergent questions allow the students to answer questions based on their knowledge and experience. In summary, the use of teacher's questions plays some essential roles in students' learning process even though it is not significant. Therefore, the application of teacher's questions needs to be improved by asking high-order thinking questions more since the school already conducted *Kurikulum-13* (K-13), which requires the students' to think critically. It is because the teacher's questions help the teacher in the improvement of students' learning processes in the EFL classroom.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

According to the first research question, the result indicated that there were three types of teacher's questions used by the English teacher during the teaching and learning process for the grade X students in one of the senior high schools in Surakarta. Those questions were procedural questions, convergent questions, and divergent questions. The English teacher usually asked questions in the classroom in three sessions - at the beginning of the lesson, in the middle of the lesson, and at the end of the lesson. At the beginning of the lesson, the English teacher often used procedural questions rather than convergent or divergent questions. It is because procedural questions were asked related to classroom routines, classroom procedures, and classroom management. In the middle of the lesson, the English teacher usually asks several questions related to the material being discussed, so the teacher usually uses convergent questions in this session. Furthermore, at the end of the lesson, the English teacher rarely gives questions to the students since the teacher often runs out of time.

From all three types of questions, the researcher found that convergent questions are the questions asked by the English teacher the most. From all questions (158 questions in total), there are 91 or around 57.60% convergent questions found from three classes. The next teacher's questions asked by the English teacher the most were

procedural questions. There are 65 or 41.14% procedural questions. While the least frequently used questions asked by the English teacher are divergent questions. There are only 2 or 1.26% divergent questions found by the researcher from this research.

Each question has some role in the students' learning process. Procedural questions are questions that are related to classroom routines, classroom procedures, or classroom management. The researcher found that procedural questions had a role in the teaching and learning process especially for the students, such as: stimulate and maintain students' interest and motivation, check students' preparation, task, seatwork arrangement, etc check students' understanding, and review and summarize the previous lesson. The second type of questions, or convergent questions that are designed to engage students in the content of the lesson, facilitate students' comprehension and promote classroom interaction. Based on the findings, it indicated that convergent questions play a role in encouraging students' participation in a lesson, encouraging students to think and focus on the content of the lesson, and review and summarize the previous lesson. Lastly, divergent questions have to do with the improvement and development of the students' critical thinking skills. The researcher discovered that the English teacher rarely used divergent questions, so the researcher did not find the role or the contribution of divergent questions in the teaching and learning activity.

Through this research, the researcher suggests that the teacher has to maximize the use of questions in the teaching and learning activity since the questions play a significant role in the students' learning process. It will be better if the teacher also increases the frequency of using divergent questions because divergent questions can affect students' critical thinking. Moreover, students' critical thinking is necessary for K-13 (*Kurikulum 13*). Besides that, teacher's questions have a fundamental role in the teaching and learning process, especially towards the students' learning process. Lastly, it is expected that future researchers will investigate the other categories of teacher's questions according to other theories and compare them with the types of questions observed in this research. It is also expected that the future researcher also conducts the research from more than one teacher and in a more extended session.

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