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ANALYSIS OF TEACHER'S QUESTIONING STRATEGIES IN EFL CLASSROOM INTERACTION AT THE EIGHTH GRADE OF MTsN 6 KOTA PADANG

Abstract

English as foreign language is studied in educational levels as compulsory subject. In learning English, the students are not only obligated to understand the four skills of English but they also need to use it communicatively. One of activity in interactive classroom to make students able to use English communicatively is by applying questioning strategies. This study focused on the types of questioning strategies in EFL classroom, the teacher's reasons of asking questions and the influence of questioning strategies on classroom interaction. The design of this research was descriptive qualitative. The participants of the research were one of English teacher and two classes of eighth grade at MTsN 6 Kota Padang. The techniques for collecting the data were observation and interview. From the result of observation and interview, the teacher used procedural questions, convergent questions, and divergent questions, as suggested by Richards and Lockhart. In addition, combination question is another type of questions that teacher used. This type is the combination between Richards and Lockhart theory and Cao Wangru theory. The teacher had four reasons in applying the questioning strategy; to reassure students' readiness, to ensure students' understanding, to maintain the classroom control and to encourage students' knowledge and opinion. The findings indicated that convergent questions were the most used by teacher than other types of questions. Therefore, questioning strategies really influenced most of classroom

Keywords

EFL, Questioning Strategies, Classroom Interaction

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesians learn English at school from elementary to university level. Learning English as a compulsory subject means they have to master all the components of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ability to master these skills is not only seen in terms of correct grammar but also in terms of how to communicate by applying the four skills. As cited in Fitriati et al. (2017:217), the primary goal of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is to use the language effectively for communication as well as to develop a good understanding of its grammar. Language learners are deemed as successful learners when they are able to use it communicatively. Thus, being able to use English to communicate indeed become an obligatory to all students in an English classroom.

In order to engage the students to be more involved during a teaching and learning process in a classroom, it is important for the teacher to build a good interaction with the students. According to Harmer in Huriyah & Agustiani (2018:60), the process of language learning will be successful after going through three phases which known as ESA phases; Engage (E), Study (S), and Activate (A). Engage becomes the first important key before encouraging the students to study and practice. To get the students become interested in the subject, it is necessary to engage them. Therefore, a good interaction between teacher and students will assist the teachers to create a good rapport.

Asking and giving questions from the teacher to the students or the students to the teacher is an important aspect so that an interaction will be actively occurred. According to Hayano in Sundh (2017:5), due to the high amount of questions in class, questioning play a significant role in classroom interaction and seem to constitute a resource that teachers use to maintain their power. Putri & Putri (2021:85) stated that if there are zero questions asked either from the teacher or students, then the teacher will be dominated as the only main source of information (teacher centered). Hence, asking questions is the best way to embolden students' participation in a class discourse. Wong (2010:37) also asserted that asking good questions can show students how to ask their own questions well, and greatly improve their thought processes. Therefore, in order to enhance students' engagement during the teaching and learning process, the teacher should consider the suitable questions to be posed.

In teaching and learning process, every teacher has their own strategies to convey the subject material. Also, an appropriate strategy or method should be applied by the teacher in order to engage students' interest and improve their comprehension toward the lesson. One of the strategies that can be used is questioning strategy. Brown in Erianti et al. (2018:1) suggested that one of the best ways to develop teacher's role as being the initiator and sustainer of interaction is by employing questioning strategies during the teaching and learning process. Muslim (2017:3) also stated that questioning strategies give students the chance to reflect and organize their thoughts into a series of systematical structures and enabling them to respond a question with a logical answer.

From the description above, the researcher would like to investigate what types of questioning strategy used by the teacher at MTsN 6 Kota Padang as well as the teacher' reasons behind it. Moreover, the researcher also would like to examine how the questioning strategy give influence in fostering the classroom interaction.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied descriptive qualitative as the research design. The researcher observed two classes in the eighth grade at MTsN 6 Kota Padang namely class VIII-12 and class VIII-14. Each classroom consists of one teacher and thirty students. The researcher observed the class in four meetings; one meeting in VIII-12 and three meetings in class VIII- 14 which one meeting lasted for 80 minutes.

The researcher adopted classroom observation and semi-structured interview to collect the data while the interview questions were based on the result of observation and the theory. The data were analyzed by applying three steps from Miles and Huberman (1994) such as data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. In data reduction, the researcher transcribed the data of classroom observation from video recording. Then, the researcher classified them into the observation sheet. The observation data were classified by using Richards and Lockhart theory. Same goes with the interview data, the researcher only focused on the teacher's reasons in applied certain questioning strategies.

After the process of data reduction, the researcher continued to interpret and display the data gained from observation and interview. The data from observation such teacher's questioning were marked and translated to English if it was still in Bahasa Indonesia. Then in last step, the conclusion was analyzed continuously and verified the validity to get the authenticity of the research. The researcher withdrew the conclusion by comparing the finding results in the field with valid and consistent findings from other researchers and theories from several experts.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Types of Questioning Strategies

According to Richards and Lockhart (1994), there are three types of questions such as procedural, convergent and divergent. All of these types are found in the classroom interactions of EFL classes in MTsN 6 Kota Padang. The researcher found that in the category of procedural questions, the teacher asked forty-nine (49) questions. Then, in convergent question category, the teacher asked one hundred three (103) questions and in divergent question category, eighteen (18) questions asked. It was also found that the teacher used repeating questions from Cao Wangru (2016) theory.

Total Number of Questions Uttered by the Teacher

No.	Types of Questions	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Total
1.	Procedural Question	6	19	17	7	49
2.	Convergent Question	1	30	40	32	103
3.	Divergent Question	12	3	3	-	18
Total Number		18	52	60	38	170

In the category of procedural questions, the teacher asked questions related with classroom procedures, classroom routines, and classroom management. In this study, the researcher found that the teacher asked procedural questions to check students' readiness before learning the material by saying, "Are you ready?" then the students responded, "Yes!". The teacher also asked procedural questions in order to make sure all of the students were understood about the instruction given.

Next, in the category of convergent questions, the teacher asked questions which required a short answer and yes or no answer. This type of question often being asked to recall the previous material and does not require students' high level of thinking. In this study, the teacher linked the recent material with the previous one by asking, "Sorry to bother you... What was that yesterday?". The teacher asked the students about the expression "Sorry to bother you" which have been learned in the past meeting.

Then, in the category of divergent questions, the students were required to answer the questions based on their own knowledge and opinion. The teacher asked divergent questions for example, "What do you think of group one's performance?" but the students responded mostly in one word, "Good".

The researcher also found another type of questioning strategy asked by the teacher. It was repeating strategy based on the theory from Cao Wangru. This strategy is called a combination because this strategy cannot only be categorized as a part of Cao Wangru's theory, but it also belongs to the convergent type of Richards and Lockhart's theory. For example, the teacher asked, "What else do you think?"; "What else is there to check understanding?"; "What else for checking? We just focus on checking for understanding first". The teacher repeated the questions three times to engage students' response. The teacher gave the students approximately 3-5 seconds to think about the answer but they still did not give any response. The shown example also belongs to convergent question from Richards and Lockhart theory because the teacher wanted to elicit students' answer in short statement related to their recent material.

2. Teacher's Reasons of Giving Questions

To find out the teacher's reasons in applying questioning strategies during the teaching and learning process, the researcher had done an interview with an English teacher as respondent. The teacher stated four reasons why she asked questions during the teaching and learning process. The first reason was to reassure students' readiness before the lesson started. In this context, the type of questioning strategy used by the teacher was procedural type.

The second reason was to ensure whether the students understand about the material or if they need additional explanation. The type of questioning strategy used by the teacher in this section was convergent type. Then, the third reason was to maintain the classroom control. In order to control the conduciveness of the classroom, the teacher applied convergent questioning strategy in form of Wh- questions to keep the students focused on the material. Last, the fourth reason of the teacher in giving

questions was to encourage students' knowledge and opinion by asking divergent type of questions.

3. The Influence of Questioning Strategies and Classroom Interaction

Questions have correlation with the ongoing process of classroom interaction. The questions asked by the teacher served specific purposes based on the type of the questions. When a teaching session is newly opened, the teacher asked question with type procedural. This question arose when the teacher wanted to make sure the classroom conditions were truly ready before starting the main learning session. Continue to the main teaching process, the convergent questions were the most asked questions. The teacher asked convergent questions in form of Wh- questions and yes or no questions to stimulate students' participation in the teaching and learning process. Lastly, the teacher did not ask a lot of questions when closing the learning session. Based on the observation, when the lesson hour approached the end, the students were still focused on the exercises given.

From the four meetings observation, the most frequent type of questioning posed by the teacher was the convergent type. The total of convergent questions asked by the teacher was one hundred three (103) times. The teacher asked this type of question with the required answers in the form of yes or no answers and short answers. The researcher found that the type of convergent question proposed by the teacher in order to recall students' comprehension of previous material. This is similar with Olbata et.al (2022:5) result that the teacher asked convergent questions because the students did not have to think about the answer since the answer only provided in form of Yes or No. Moreover, the students still responded to the questions by giving short statements and repeating it without applying higher thinking.

In this study, the researcher also found that the teacher used procedural type of questioning strategy during the pre-teaching in order to make sure the students were ready to participate and join the class activity. Similarly, Reflinda and Putri (2022:511) also found in their research finding that during the beginning of the learning, the teacher will do several activities such as greetings, asking students' feelings and condition, and also asking students' comprehension about previous material then link it to the next material.

Another result in this study that the teacher used divergent questioning type to elicit students to produce their own sentences while responding to the question given. This result was consistent with the findings from Paramartha et al. (2018:13) whom found that the teacher had two purposes in asking referential questions which has similar definition with divergent questions; to elicit students' own knowledge. The first purpose was to attract students' interest and their inquisitive and the second purpose, the teacher wanted the students to have the main concept of the lesson by their own before being explained by the teacher.

Lastly, it was inferred from the observation and interview data that the questioning strategies applied by the English teacher influenced on how the students interact during the teaching and learning process. The students were more likely

responded to the questions that purposely asked as comprehension check and questions related to the games. Otherwise, the questions which asked in purpose to receive such an open and complex answers did not ignite the interaction. The students gave their responses contained of a single or two words only. They also tend to be silent when they had no idea regarding the answers of questions asked.

This result was similar to the research finding from Shomoossi (2004:102-103). He found that the factors which lead the reduction of interaction were repeated questions, low language proficiency, and limiting the class to the textbook. Interesting topics, teacher's attention, misunderstanding, information gap and humor were several factors enhanced the amount of interaction. He also concluded that the use of display questions can encourage language learners, especially beginners, to get interested. Then, referential questions usually requiring long and syntactically complex answers contain, in fact, important points, e.g., interpretation, elaboration, giving opinions, etc.

D. CONCLUSION

This study analyses types and reasons of questioning strategies that teacher at MTsN 6 Kota Padang uses in teaching English for grade eighth. It was found that during the teaching and learning process at MTsN 6 Kota Padang, the English teacher used three types of questioning strategy based on Richards and Lockhart theory such as procedural questioning strategy, convergent questioning strategy, and divergent questioning strategy. In addition, the teacher also used combination questioning strategy which was a question included in combination of Richards and Lockhart theory and Cao Wangru theory.

The researcher also found several reasons comprised by the teacher in asking questions. The first reason was to reassure students' readiness before starting the lesson by using Procedural type. The second reason was ensuring the students' understanding. Then, the third reason was maintaining the classroom control. The last reason of the teacher asked questions was to encourage students' knowledge and opinion.

It was also found that teacher questions bridge the interaction in the class. The teacher engaged convergent questioning strategy the most (103 times). This type of strategy related to the content of the learning material that had been taught. The divergent type of question was the type of question that barely asked in the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, this type of question could bridge the reciprocal interaction between the teacher and the students so there would not be a teacher-centered learning. For future researchers, it is a good chance to find out why the teacher barely asked questions that engaging students' high level of thinking.

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