AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHER’S QUESTIONING STRATEGIES USED IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN GRADE VII AT SMPN 14 MATARAM ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/2018

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Bachelor Degree in English Department Faculty of Teacher Training and Education University of Mataram

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Introduction

Teachers talk in a classroom has different reasons: explaining, controlling, modeling problem solving, asking question and giving feedback. Asking question in classroom is not an easy task. According to Smith and Higgins (2006) questioning is one of the most common techniques used by teachers and serves as the principal way in which teachers control the classroom interaction. Ellis (2008) proposes two reasons why teachers ask questions in their classroom. First, questions require responses; therefore, they serve as meanto obligate learners to contribute to the interaction. Learner’s responses also provide the teacher with feedback which can be used to adjust content and expression in subsequent teacher-talk. Second, questions serve as a device for controlling the progress of the interaction through which a lesson is enacted. According to Young (1992) by questioningstudents can also be used to motivate, to revise, control, test or asses, explore, explain, encourage students to focus on a particular topic, elicit informationand check understanding and to control behavior (Richards and Lockhart 1994). Teacher uses questions to engage the students and sustain an ‘active’ style to the learning. The teacher also uses questions as part of the assessment of learning in order to determine how they best structure, organize and present new learning.

It is believed that teachers play an important role in the students learning process. Therefore, teachers need to consider some strategies when they teach their students. One of the teaching strategies is how teachers ask questions. Asking questions and leading classroom discussions can have a positive impact on student learning. Shaunessy (2005) argues that questioning strategies are essential to the growth of critical thinking skills, creative thinking skills and higher level thinking skills and can positively affect achievement; most classrooms are devoid of these types of questions as a regular part of learning. In reality, there are many classrooms in which teachers rarely pose questions above read it and repeat it level. Shaunessy (2005) said that
most classrooms divergent thinking is a non-traditional concept and occurs infrequently in most classrooms.
In fact, it has been documented that teachers typically ask 96 percent of the questions in a classroom environment (Graesser & Person, 1994). According to Thompson (1989) both teachers and students should be caught up in a “mode of inquiry”. In other words, teachers should play a role as guide to learning rather than as an authority that dispenses questions and answers. Therefore, teachers are expected to be facilitators, which mean they have to be able to support the students in learning progress, instead of being the only ones who are in charge in classroom. The effect of the teacher as a learning guide will develop students’ confidence and bring comfort in a learning process. This study will attempt to find out the questioning techniques that the English teacher uses in SMP 14 Mataram. Hopefully, this knowledge about questioning strategies, as well as the classroom observation activity, will help teachers become skillful in using questions effectively and productively.

2. Research Question
What type of questioning strategies are used by teachers of SMPN 14 Mataram in teaching learning process?

3. The purpose of study
The purpose of this study is to analyze the type of questioning strategies that the English teachers use to teach students of SMPN 14 Mataram.

4. Type of Question
In too many classrooms, the kinds of questions used are limited to a very few types. A question can arouse curiosity, stimulate mental activity, or it can assure boredom or drudgery. Effective teachers select questions that are appropriate for the students and the situation or topic being explored. If a teacher uses the same questions for all students and all circumstances, productive interaction is unlikely. The selection of questions cannot be left to chance. Teacher questions are the means used to communicate the elements of the subject matter. They provide guidance to what is to be done with information and how it is to be done (Hunskin 1976).

The theoretical framework of the study determines its stance on the following areas (Donald & Eggen, 1989):

a. Diagnostic instrument: questions allow teachers to glimpse into the minds of students to find out not only what they know or don't know but also how they think about a topic. Through a well planned questioning, teachers can find out and recall not only what students know about a topic but also can identify their needs and present gaps.

b. Instructional instrument: questions help students learn new material and integrate it with the old one, and provide the practice and feedback essential for the development. Questions help students internalize what they learn and combine it with the new one.

c. Motivational instrument: allows teachers to engage with students actively in the lesson at hand, challenging their thinking and posing problems for them to consider. “Frequent and periodic questions can encourage active participation and provide opportunities in the lesson for continued student involvement” (Yan, 2006).
Teachers questions may process a variety of purposes, but Richards & Lockhart (2000,p.186) classify questions asked in the class into three categories in terms of their purposes as procedural, convergent and divergent. Procedural questions have to do with classroom procedures and routines, and classroom management. Convergent questions encourage similar students responses which focus on a central theme. They do not usually require students to engage in higher-level thinking in order to come up with a response but often focus on the recall of previously presented information. Divergent questions are the opposite of convergent questions. They encourage students to provide their own information rather than to recall previously presented information.

There are several types of questions teachers can use to stimulate creative, critical, and higher level thinking. The most commonly recommended is the divergent thing question that probes beyond the convergent, one correct answer question, thus allowing students to delve more deeply into an idea. Letzer (1982) says that teacher question should be broad or open so that students will be free to respond with their own thoughts. Pollack (1988) argues, although the use of open ended questions may be somewhat threatening to the teacher because of the lack of guidelines in evaluating children’s responses, teachers should still strive to find meaningful and purposeful opportunities regularly for this line inquiry. The goal is to encourage a learning environment that values of learning to arrive at answer, rather than just themselves.

Chin (2004) classifies questioning strategies into the following:

- **Descriptive Questions**
  These questions encourage students to establish their own narrative and prioritize information. Usually these kinds of questions begin with such words or expressions such as: “tell”, “discuss”, “describe”, illustrate, and “show”.

- **Analysis Questions**
  These questions provide basic facts and call for sustained answers involving critical thinking. These questions begin with such words as: “why”, “how would you explain the fact that”, “prove”, “what is the importance of”, “how do you account for”, and “what is the meaning of”.

- **Evaluation Questions**
  These question are structured like analysis questions but are based on quotations or statements. These questions begin with such words expression as “evaluate the statement that,” “what is meant by”, “explain how”.

- **Compare / Contrast Questions**
  These questions call attention to common elements or major differences between ideas or arguments. These questions begin with such words or expressions as “compare”, “contrast”, “What is the difference,”, “What is the similarity”.

- **Causal Relationship Questions**
  This question may be used to show causal relationship or to determine whether such relationships exist. These questions begin with such words or expression as; “what are the causes of,” “what connection is there,” “what are the result of.”

5. **Method**
   The study is descriptive qualitative and the sample of population are 1 teacher in 4 classes consist of 27-28 students. In gathering data, i recorded the teacher talk with a
recording tool and took notes for anything important related to the classroom conditions and teacher’s talk. The ones that need to be paid attention to are the questioning techniques or methods that the teacher gave to the students. The data gathered were analyzed descriptively. The data analysis was based on Chin’s questioning strategies that are covered in the discussion. First, I recorded the talk and transcribed them. The second step was identifying the types of question and classification them into the table. The last step was analyzing the data and interpreting the data based on Chin’s questioning strategies (2004).

6. Result (Findings)

Based on the observation class activity, the teacher’s question could be classified into five question categories based on Chin’s questioning strategies (2004) as can be seen in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Types of Questions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Descriptive question</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Analysis question</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Compare/contrast question</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Evaluation question</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Causal relationship question</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the observation activities, most of the questions were the descriptive questions. As the table 1 shows, there were 91.4% of descriptive questions used in the class during the observation. The rest of the questions were analysis questions (6.6%), compare/contrast question (1%), and evaluation question (1%) of the total questions. However, as seen in the table, the causal relationship did not appear in the class activities during observation.

Descriptive Questioning Strategies

In this questioning strategy, students were only asked to recall information. This strategy was the same as fact question categories from Gall (1984) which also required students to recall previously presented information, as in utterance 1 when the teacher asked “What time is it? Apa maksudnya?” in utterance 1 the teacher wanted to measure the students knowledge about the nuclear family. As it was suggested by Gall (1984), who categories the lowest question level of taxonomy as a cognitive memory question, which meant it required simple process such as recognition, rote memory and selective recall. Chin (2004) also had some idea with Gall, but Chin used different terms for this kind of question, descriptive questions. As it has been mentioned earlier, the knowledge level of questions only needs to recall students answers.

It can thus suggested that the teacher used knowledge level questions not frequently, because they taught students in junior high school specially in VII grade. Junior high school students were expected to think in higher cognitive level, unlike the students in elementary school. In other words, they should be given questions that stimulate students to think creatively and modify their answers. However, the knowledge level of questions was also necessary for the students, since it expected the awareness of students to pay
The students only need to answer the question based on the knowledge that they have already known.

Analysis Questioning Strategies

The second questioning strategy found in this research study was analysis questioning strategies. In this questioning strategy, students were asked to put information in another form. It required using independently generated data or a new direction or perspective on a given topic. Chin (2004) called this kind of question as action questions, because the questions always ask the students to predict the outcome, as in utterance 79, when teacher asked “Do you think that is a good time to sleep? Is it good time to sleep at 11 o’clock?” By asking this question, the teacher expected the students to predict outcome by knowing the effect of sleep late. Moreover, at this level of questions, students were asked to apply known facts to solve problem and it also had potential to stimulate higher level thinking. By using kind of question, students would be stimulated to think in higher level thinking. Moreover, it required student’s perspective on given topic.

Compare/Contrast Question

In this Questioning strategy, the teachers asked the questions that call attention to common elements or major differences between ideas or arguments. The Cause and Effect strategy systematically analyzed and evaluated the relationship of two or more subjects. The comparison was a process that shown how subjects were alike (similarities), while the contrast was the process of showing how subjects were unlike (differences). In this situation, students were expected to think critically and to find out the differences, as in utterance 64 “What different between eleven or elephant?” By analyzing the two similar things and finding the differences, the students could be stimulated to think the right answer.

In addition, based on the observation, Chin’s Evaluation and Causal Relationship questioning strategy did not appear in the classroom. The teacher did not ask this kind of
question during the teacher learning activities because teacher showed that most of students cannot think critical.

**Evaluation Question**

In this questioning strategy, the students were expected to reason their answers. It can be seen from utterance 20 from the evaluation questioning, “Ya kalau pake itu artinya ke atau menuju, contoh jam 8 kurang 10, dalam bahasa inggris kita bilangnya ten to eight, sepuluh menit menuju jam 8, understand? Based on the previous question, it seems that teacher wanted to check students understanding.

**Media**

To optimize questioning strategies the teacher created her own media such as doll, clock, and hand puppet. The media used to stimulate students thinking, because most of students more understand the question of material if teacher used media.

**Game**

Teacher also used game to make students interest with the material. For example is, English Quiz Contest. Teachers divided students into 4 groups and choose one speaker to represent their answer.

7. **Conclusion**

From the observation of class activities that were done it could be concluded that the teacher used descriptive questioning strategy most frequently in teaching. As we can see from the table, the use of descriptive questions was 92.4% followed by analysis question (6.6%), compare/contrast question (1%) and the last evaluation question (1%). However, from the observation class activities, researcher found that the students only produced short answers when the teacher asked all type of question because students have lack of vocabulary. This fact was rather disappointing, since the students were expected to think creatively.

8. **Suggestion**

Based on the findings and conclusion above, the writer would like to give some suggestions as follows

- Teachers should give students more chances to explain their answer because the first answers usually are superficial. Teacher did not give students a chance to explain why he/she answer like that. Based on the observation of the class activity, the teacher did most of the talking and reasoning instead of the students.
- Hopefully, this study could help teachers to develop their teaching strategies, so the students could gain the best learning process. As a matter of fact, questioning strategies is one of teaching strategies that is commonly used by teachers. Therefore, it is very important to teachers to pay attention to their questioning strategies, because if they do not apply the best questioning strategies, the students will not gain the best from learning process.
9. Recommendation

Based on the findings of the research and the conclusion, I recommend compare/contrast question should be applied more often in teaching students in grade VII because it has the potential to stimulate higher level thinking.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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