

# Teacher's Questions and Students' Responses in EFL Classroom Interaction

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## ABSTRACT

Teachers' questions play a very important role to initiate teaching and learning since they affect students' responses. Almost all classroom interactions during teaching learning process are built by teacher's question. So far, the problem faced by the teacher is to deal with students' participation, where the students are unresponsive and even avoid interaction with the teachers. This article is derived from the research conducted on finding teacher's questions and students' responses at EFL classroom activities at Senior High School Pariaman. This research is conducted to identify the types of questions which are used in EFL classroom. To meet the purpose, this research employed a descriptive qualitative research design. The participants were two teachers with 70 students. The study was carried out by observing and taking video recordings of two eleventh grade English teachers of Senior High School 1 Pariaman. Interviews were also employed in this study. The collected data were analyzed by Richard and Lockharts (1994) classification of procedural, convergent, and divergent questions. The findings indicate that convergent questions were highly uttered by the teachers rather than procedural and divergent questions.

**Keywords:** *Teacher's Questions, Types of Teacher's Questions, Classroom Interaction*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Interaction is one essential process in social life. In the process of learning English as a foreign language in the school, interaction also occurs in the classroom. Interaction in the classroom is a type of interaction that occurs between teacher and students and also among the students. Essentially a good teaching and learning needs the interaction involving the entire component in the classroom such as students and teacher. In the classroom, both teachers and students should have a willingness to get involved in the interaction. The teacher must realize that creating a good and effective interaction with the students is very influential to reach the purpose of the teaching- learning process itself [1]

One of the success factors of a classroom interaction is teacher's questions which play a very important role to initiate teaching and learning. Teacher's question is defined as instructional stimuli that convey student to content element to be learnt and direction for answer [2]. Moreover, teacher's question can monitor comprehension; it makes connection to prior learning and can stimulate cognitive growth [3]. Thus, teacher's question can give more space of learning which will challenge the students to be more critical in their responses and use their background knowledge to get possible answer. Therefore, teacher

should design questions which can expand student's knowledge and promote creative thinking.

Regarding the importance of teacher's question in classroom interaction, teacher should know what types of question which potentially support students in learning target language. The use of various types of teacher's questions in classroom is beneficial to foreign language learning, if it can elicit students' responses. An interactive classroom environment depends on how students response to teacher's questions. If the teacher wants the students, as language target, to master language skill, the teacher should build the creative and interactive classroom environment to achieve student participation.

The teacher employs different types of question to initiate an effective teaching. Before giving a question, teacher may consider the types of questions. There are three types of questions; procedural question, convergent question, and divergent question. Procedural question has to do with classroom procedure and routines and classroom management as opposed to the content of learning. Second, convergent question is designed to engage students in the content of learning which also promote students' thinking and promote classroom interaction. The last type, divergent question encourages students' responses which are not short

responses and require student to engage in higher level thinking [4]

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This research was classified into descriptive research. The basic aim of descriptive research is to describe all aspect of social behavior in the social setting such as school, factories, hospital and so on, which are treated as cultures of activity [5]. In this research, the researcher describes types of teacher's question and questioning modification used by the teacher as the aspect of interaction that occurs in the school, particularly in the classroom. This research has been conducted at eleventh grades of Senior High School 1 Pariaman. The researcher chooses all grades based on the classes taught by two English teachers at that school. Two instruments which are used to collect the data in this research are video recorder and observation sheet. The data were gathered by recording classroom interaction. The researcher came to the class then recorded the classroom interaction by using the video recorder to get an authentic situation of what really happened in the classroom interaction. After that, the researcher transcribed them. Then, the researcher identifies the transcription data and analyzing the transcription based on the context of interaction.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data that have been collected through video recording and transcript dealt with teacher question. The data showed that the types of question used by the teachers in classroom interaction at Senior High School 1 Pariaman. Based on all data that have been collected, it was found that the number of questions given by teachers to students either individually or in groups were 181 questions. The detail of the data is presented in table 1.

Table 1. The number of question identified

Observation	Number of Questions Occur	Types of Questions		
		Procedural	Convergent	Divergent
1 <sup>st</sup>	72	9	40	23
2 <sup>nd</sup>	46	11	33	3
3 <sup>rd</sup>	62	12	43	7
Total Percentage	181	32	116	33
		17,68%	64,08%	18,22%

From the table above it can be seen that the types of question which has a highest portion in its use is a type of convergent question as much as 64,85%. Both teachers have a great portion of the use of convergent question to other types of question which shows that teacher A and B have the same habit of using a convergent question to get students' responses when interacting in the classroom. This shows that all teachers have the same tendency which is more often using questions to engage students in the content of learning which also facilitate student's thinking and promote classroom interaction. Then, from total 181 questions, it is followed by 18,85% divergent questions and 17,68% procedural questions.

Dealing with the table above, the explanation of each type of questions which are used by teacher A and teacher B when having interaction with the students in Classroom interaction can be seen in following explanation:

### a. Type of Teacher's Question

Dealing with the types of question, the teachers used some types of question which were procedural question, convergent question, and divergent question.

#### 1) Convergent question

Teachers use this question to check students' knowledge. This type of questions requires the students to recall the previous information. Teachers use this question to attract students' activeness. For examples: **"What is rendah hati in English?"** and **"What do you have in your bag?"**

#### 2) Divergent question

Teachers tend to give an easy question to the students to start the interaction. The following ones are example of divergent questions from the observation data: **"What do you understand about narrative text?"** **"Do you think smart phones have positive effects to the students?"**

#### 3) Procedural question

Teachers usually use this question to check students' understanding, progress and assignment. This question is also used to attract students' activeness. From the data it is found that the teachers ask this question during the lesson. The following ones are the example of procedural question: **"Do you understand what you have to do?"** and **"Anybody has finished?"**

Based on analysis of transcription of classroom interaction recording, it was found that the first type of question was convergent question. Dealing with finding of this research, convergent question was the most frequently used by the teachers. The amount of the use of convergent question is

64,85%. As identified by Paramatha et al., [6] that the teachers more often raise convergent questions to the students. She also supports that convergent questions can interact students' interest and keep the students focus with the content of teaching and learning.

The second most used question was divergent questions. The amount of the used of divergent question is 18,22%. This was in line with the study that was conducted by Qashoa [7] who found that teacher and students' interaction dominantly involves divergent questions. By asking this question, teachers tried to develop students' critical thinking by raising an analytic question. As Omari [8] said that the use of divergent type questions which is similar with open-ended questions were frequently used by the teacher in developing the students' critical thinking. The use of divergent questions can also build an active classroom compared to yes/no question [9]

The third type of question which is the most least question used by English teachers was procedural question. The amount of the used of divergent question is 17,68%. According to the teacher, those questions are used to clarify and check students' understanding. This type of question is categorized to a low level question. Farahian and Rezaee [10] state that a low level of questions were not effective in raising students' awareness, curiosity, motivation, and critical thinking.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

To sum up the result, regarding to the teacher's questions, the first type used was a convergent question, this question used by the teacher to make the students focus with the content of teaching and learning. The second type used by the teacher was divergent question. The teacher used this question to develop students' critical thinking by raising an analytic question. This question is used to start the interaction. The last type of question used by teacher in classroom interaction was procedural question. The amount of the used of this question was not too far from the amount used of divergent question. Procedural question when teacher check students' understanding and assignment during teaching and learning process.

Teacher's question plays an important role in provoking interactions between teachers and student. Therefore, teacher should be aware of the using various types of questions than giving questions that require students' short responses which could lead the students' disinterest to participate in the classroom interaction.

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