

# Teacher Questioning Used by English Lecturer in English Class: A Case Study at STIA NUSA Sungai Penuh

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**Abstract:** *Questioning has been utilized as a critical assessment tool for centuries. It has been thought that there is a relationship between asking good questions and effective teaching. In order to analyze teachers' questioning strategies from various aspects, this research was conducted in English subject for the students in STIA NUSANTARA Sungai Penuh City, Jambi Province to see the teacher questioning type and function in the classroom interaction. The sample of this was three English lecturer. There were two instrumentation were used: audio recorder and field note. From the three meetings conducted at the sample class, it was found that the most dominant type of questions used by the teacher is the low level questions (questions of what, when, who, where, which, modal auxiliary: are, is, can, will, could, might, shall, should, and many other) (with percentage of each meeting: 85.71%, 86.76%, and 87.50%), while the high level questions (why and how) were less appeared on the teaching and learning process in the classroom for the three meetings (12.50%, 13.24%, and 14.29%). The findings also showed that the English classroom in STIA NUSANTARA Sungai Penuh City was dominated by the questioning of the teacher that function to stimulate students to pursue knowledge on their own (25%), followed with the purpose to assess achievement of instructional goals and objectives (21%), and to nurture insights by exposing new relationships (18%). This reflected that both teacher and the students still needed the improvement on their interactions in the classroom, so the atmosphere of teaching and learning process could be more interactive, motivated, and could help the students to comprehend the materials much more better.*

**Keywords:** teacher questioning, classroom interaction, English subject

## 1. Introduction

Research on the importance of questioning as a teaching and learning strategy is well documented (Chin & Osborne, 2008; Albergaria, 2012; Arslan, 2006; Shomoossi, 2014; David, 2007; Brualdi, 2014; Dos et al; 2016; Kira et al, 2013.). Questioning has been utilized as a critical assessment tool for centuries (Dos et al, 2016:2065). Arslan (2006:81) also says that questioning is also the strongest tool at a teacher's disposal as it teaches students how to think. It has been thought that there is a relationship between asking good questions and effective teaching. Teacher in the classroom is demanded to be person who is able to engage the students to the teaching materials, so the students could comprehend it well. The questions might be useful for the teacher to be used to fulfill the need, so the teaching could be effective.

Giving questions to the students is a common action done by teacher in giving the material of the teaching. Teacher asks questions to the students in all situation of the classroom, for all subjects, and of course, for all level of students and proficiency. Brualdi (2014) states that many research have shown questioning is second only to lecturing in popularity as a teaching method and that classroom teachers spend anywhere from thirty-five to fifty percent of their instructional time conducting questioning sessions. This means teacher dominates his teaching and learning process by conducting questions, with numerous purposes upon the questions given to the students during the lesson. Therefore, the types of questions that are used by the teacher should be meaningful in order to achieve the purpose of questioning.

The questions teachers ask can be classified according to the Revised Bloom Taxonomy in Cognitive Field as

remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating (synthesizing). Remembering, understanding and applying steps are considered lower level, while analyzing, evaluating and creating steps are considered higher-level. Teachers are expected to ask higher-level questions for higher-level learning (Marzano & Kendall, 2007:16).

Furthermore, it can be considered that there are at least three main aims to questioning in the classroom: (1) increasing attainment, (2) enhancing retention, and (3) encouraging participation (Brualdi, 2014). First, increasing attainment means demanding the students to achieve the goals of the lesson. The criteria of achievement has been set by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson, in order to guide them what to teach, how to measure students achievement, and what the target is. These criteria will be used as the guidance for the teacher to determine whether the students achieve the goals of the lesson. In order to achieve such things, questions are asked by teacher to the students in the classroom. Second, enhancing retention means efforts giving by teacher to increase students' memory on lesson materials. Giving questions are seen as effective way to strengthen students' remembrance on topics of teaching and learning. The last, giving questions in the classroom are meant to increase students' participation on the lesson given by the teacher. This method is seen effective since asking questions can motivate students to speak up about ideas and knowledge they have to the entire classroom members.

From the major aims of asking questions that is done by teacher in order to deliver the lesson, it can be drawn a number of purposes of teacher questioning in the classroom: (1) To develop interest and motivate students to become actively involved in lessons, (2) To evaluate students'

preparation and check on homework or seatwork completion, (3) To develop critical thinking skills and inquiring attitudes, (4) To review and summarize previous lessons, (5) To nurture insights by exposing new relationships (6) To assess achievement of instructional goals and objectives, and (7) To stimulate students to pursue knowledge on their own (Brualdi, 2014).

## 2. Research Method

The design of this research was descriptive. The sample was three English lecturer. Therefore, there are three transcriptions of teaching learning process at the same time with the three lecturers. The data collections are done through coming to the classroom and record the three meetings at the class by using audio recorder program with smart phone. Thus, the technique of data analysis was done through several steps: creating the transcript of the teaching and learning process into table, classifying the type of the questions (low level questions and high level questions), and then analyzing the data by calculating them based on the type of the questions. Next, the data were shown in table and chart For the function of the question, the same transcripts of the three meetings were also being used. Then, the data were classified into the six functions of the questions. After that, tabulation of the data based on its classification, and analyze them by using table and chart.

## 3. Finding and Discussion

Teacher's questions control which it gives the teacher over the discourse. Thus, a question is likely to occupy the first part of the ubiquitous three-phase of IRF exchange (Ellis, 1994). Questions typically serve as devices for initiating discourse centered on medium oriented goals, although they can also serve variety of other functions, such as: (1) The act of asking questions helps teachers keep students actively involved in lessons, (2) while answering questions, students have the opportunity to openly express their ideas and thoughts, (3) questioning students enables other students to hear different explanations of the material by their peers, (4) asking questions helps teachers to pace their lessons and moderate student behavior; and (5) Questioning students helps teachers to evaluate student learning and revise their lessons as necessary.

Generally, questions used by teachers in the classroom, especially for language teaching, there are two major types of questions, they are: high level questions and low level questions. The typical question words used in low level questions commonly are: *what, when, who, where, which, modal auxiliary (are, is, can, will, could, might, shall, should, and many other)*. Whereas, for the high level questions, the typical questions are using the words such as: *why and how* (Graessel & Olde, 2003; Graessel & Person, 1994). In other words, the high level questions are demanding to be explained and needs deep opinion, exploration, and knowledge.

Based on the classification of the level of the question, from the discourse, the data can be drawn as following chart:

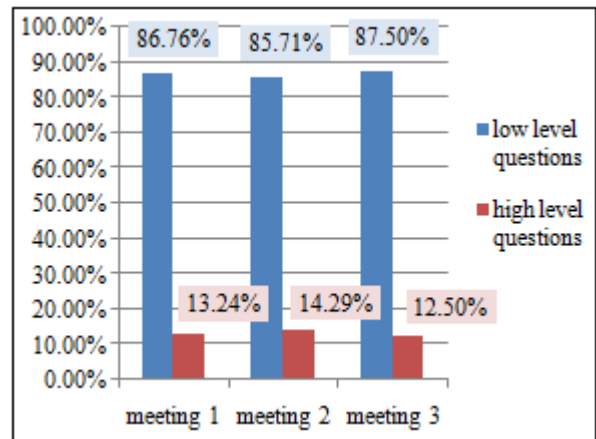


Chart 1: Level of Questions (in three meetings)

Based on the data above, unfortunately, the teacher of the object research was rare using the high level of questions. From the transcript of the classroom discourse, it is found that the teacher mostly used the low level questions for the three meetings of teaching and learning process (85.71%, 86.76%, and 87.50%). As an impact, the students' ability in analyzing, criticizing, and interpreting what might involve in the learning material giving by the teacher is not tested and not trained as it supposed to be. In fact, since the topic was about asking and giving opinion, the teacher should have proposed such questions that might develop students' critical awareness because this must be related with real life situation. The teacher might have asked the students why they need to ask and give opinion from one to another in reality. So the questions would have led the students to the main purpose of why they learn this topic. To get a clear explanation, a theory can be used as a guidance to classify teacher questioning in a discourse analysis, that is by using function of questions proposed by Brualdi (2014) mentioned previously. Therefore, the questions used by teacher in the classroom in this case can be concluded as following chart:

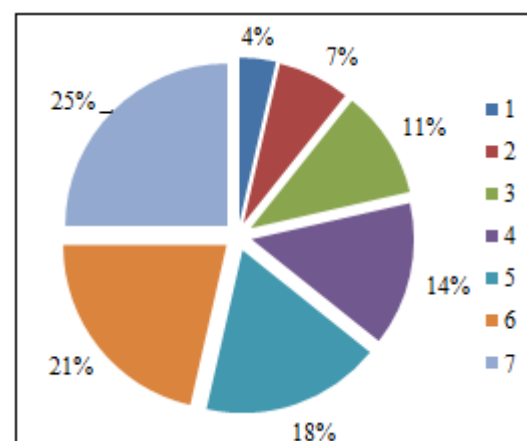


Chart 2: Function of questions (in three meetings)

Note

- 1) To develop interest and motivate students to become actively involved in lessons,
- 2) To evaluate students' preparation and check on homework or seatwork completion,
- 3) To develop critical thinking skills and inquiring attitudes,
- 4) To review and summarize previous lessons,
- 5) To nurture insights by exposing new relationships

- 6) To assess achievement of instructional goals and objectives, and
- 7) To stimulate students to pursue knowledge on their own

From the data above, it is clearly figured that the teacher mostly used the questions in the teaching and learning process in the three meetings in order to stimulate students to pursue knowledge on their own. The dominant questions asked by the lecturer are to stimulate students to pursue knowledge on their own (25%) from the three meetings of English subject. The typical questions proposed by the teacher typically in form of asking of learners' existing knowledge on topic and translation of certain words in English to students' native language (Indonesian language). The examples for each function of questions can be seen as follow:

- 1) To develop interest and motivate students to become actively involved in lessons

Teacher: "okay, good! Next, who wants to give definition?" (Transcript 1, line 54)

Extract 1. Example of asking question to develop interest and motivate students to become actively involved in lessons

- 2) To evaluate students' preparation and check on homework or seat work completion

Teacher: "I am going to take your attendance..... Ahmad Yadi?" (Transcript 1, line 15)

Extract 2. Example of asking question to evaluate students' preparation and check on homework or seat-work completion

- 3) To develop critical thinking skills and inquiring attitudes

Teacher: "nah... menurut Mr.Shane gimana cara dia memperkenalkan dirinya dimulai darimana?" (Transcript 2, line 48)

Extract 3. Example of asking question to develop critical thinking skills and inquiring attitudes

- 4) To review and summarize previous lessons

Teacher: "Dalam video gimana dia sebutkan?" (Transcript 2, line 60)

Extract 4. Example of asking question to review and summarize previous lessons

- 5) To nurture insights by exposing new relationships

Teacher: "can we check the video again?kita lihat videonya lagi." (Transcript 2, line 64)

Extract 5. Example of asking question to nurture insights by exposing new relationships

- 6) To assess achievement of instructional goals and objectives

Teacher: "after I explain, how is the sequence? Urutannya gimana?" (Transcript 3, line 111)

Extract 6. Example of asking question to assess achievement of instructional goals and objectives

- 7) To stimulate students to pursue knowledge on their own

Teacher: "helmet?Gimana cara bacanya?" (transcript 3, line 45)

Extract 6. Example of asking question to stimulate students to pursue knowledge on their own

#### 4. Conclusion

Classroom teachers frequently pose questions that require lower order thinking or basic recall. Since it is found that the teacher questioning in the teaching and learning process in

the research tended to use low level questions and found difficulties to engage the students to be interested on the topic. Obviously, the teachers' questioning behavior effects the classroom interaction. As a result, the teacher dominated the classroom activities by asking so many questions. David (2007) believes that questions that frequently used by teacher should be those which encourage students' critical thinking and challenge them to be involved toward the topic. Therefore, it is recommended for English teacher to use appropriate questions to improve classroom participation and involvement of the students. Whereas they also should pay a serious attention to adjust the learning style to students strategies and provide interesting and meaningful media of teaching. Also, Teachers should plan their lessons well in advance, with well-prepared questions for introducing, developing and concluding their lessons. They should use their questioning approaches to engage the least active students in order to improve their learning behavior (Kira, 2013:74-75).

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