



# Teacher's Questioning Strategies in Junior High School: A Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

Since questioning plays an important role in the teaching-learning process, the teachers' questions affect the students' learning motivation, particularly in asking or answering a question. This study was a case study which aimed to find out the types of questioning strategies and types of question used by the English teachers. This study's subject was two English teachers who taught seventh-grade students. The data were collected through a questionnaire (Google Form), and it was verified using the interview guide with teachers. This study showed that teachers used five strategies in applying the question: prompting, probing, redirecting, cold call, and wait. Then, the teachers asked three types of questions: procedural, convergent, and divergent questions. Meanwhile, the teachers mostly asked a procedural question and convergent rather than a divergent question. Furthermore, the teacher was expected to promote divergent questions to involve the students' critical thinking.

## 1. Introduction

In the classroom context, questioning mostly happened during the teaching-learning process. The question can be conveyed by the teacher to the student or from the student to the teacher. Erlinda & Dewi (2014) defined a question as an utterance expressed by the speaker to get any response. In addition, Lynch (1991) states that question is a command or interrogative expressions used to get information. Therefore, the question is defined as an interrogative sentence that is used as an inquiry expression to get information related to the topic.

In addition, Shen (2012) stated that in the classroom context, teachers' questions takes an important role to stimulate classroom talk. Shen (2012) also stated that there was evidence that a question can motivate students to be involved in the learning process, focus students' intention, increase students' critical thinking, and the teachers can assess the students' understanding of the material given. Besides, Ma (2008) states questioning is one teaching behavior that involves teacher's and students' interaction. Ma (2008) also stated that through the question and answer process, the environment of the class will be active because there is an interaction between the students and the teacher. It means that questioning is a tool to guide the teacher to make interact with the students.

Questioning in the teaching-learning process is a good thing to improve students' critical thinking (Wood & Anseron, 2001). When the students are given the chance to answer or ask questions, they will be given more chances to increase their knowledge (Shomoossi, 2004). Besides, Rismayanti (2018) also states questioning that is applied in the classroom can increase students' curiosity and students' interest, stimulate their proficiency, and motivate them to learn English better. It can be said that through questioning, the students will be given more chances to think critically and will become the sensitive learners.

Furthermore, questioning is one of the most frequently used strategies in the classroom Inan & Fidan (2012). The ministerial regulation of education and culture no.22 the year 2016 about the standard of necessary and medium education process also states that in the pre-activity of the teaching-learning process, the teacher should convey some questions about the previous knowledge related to the material to be studied. Therefore, the teachers should know the questioning strategies to be able to convey effective questions and build interaction with the students.

There were some previous studies that conducted researched teachers' questions. The first study was conducted by Astrid, Amrina, Desvitasari, Fitriani, & Shahab (2019) entitled "The Teacher's Questioning Strategies in The English Foreign Language Classrooms". The result showed that three types

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of teacher questioning strategies used by teachers, namely, convergent, divergent, and procedural questions. In this case, teachers mostly used convergent questions where the question mostly required yes/no and short answers questions. It was also found that there were five reasons why teachers preferred used convergent questions, those were: to recalling students' understanding, to attracting students' attention, to increasing students' in higher-order thinking, and to improve students participation.

In addition, the study was conducted by Ozturk (2016) entitled "Types of Question Used in EFL Classroom: A Reflective Study on a Turkish EFL Teachers' Practices". The question types which were used in this research was the framework of Richard and Lockhart (1996) such as, procedural, convergent, and divergent question. This study showed that most of the questions that the teacher used during these four hours were convergent, such as seeking yes/no short answers. This study also found that the teacher were sometimes used procedural questions, it was used to attract students' attention and prepare students for the next material, then it was used just for the sake of asking and served as conversational routines during the interaction with the students.

Then, Wangru (2016) carried out the study entitled "The Research on College English Teacher Classroom Questioning." This study was conducted to explore several aspects of the characteristics of teachers' question, such as questions' types, how to answer the questions, the types of questioning strategies, how to distribution the questions, wait time, and give feedback in the college EFL class. It was also stated that it might contribute to the teachers' questioning and the second language acquisition in EFL classrooms; meanwhile, it may train students' language competence and improve teaching quality efficiency.

Erianti, Akib, & Baso (2018) also carried out the study about "An Analysis of Teachers' Questioning Strategies in ELT (English Language Teaching) the Classroom Interaction at Eleventh Grade SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Unismuh Makassar. This study showed that the teacher used 13% procedural question, 74 % display question, and 13% referential question. However, the teacher used the types of questions according to the function of the question type.

Furthermore, Rido (2017) also conducted a study about "Questioning Strategies of Master Teachers in Indonesian Vocational English Classrooms. The result showed that the teacher used three types of teacher's questioning strategies, namely, close-display, open-referential, and follow-up questions. It also nominated specific students to answer questions, asked the entire class, and repeated questions when there were no responses. Therefore, teachers' questions containing information about students' understanding can also be considered a tool for increasing students' interaction.

Then, Sujariati, Rahman & Mahmud (2016) carried out a study about "English Teacher's Questioning Strategies in EFL Classroom at SMAN 1 Bontomarannu". This study showed that the teacher used questioning strategies by applying some questions and performing the kind of questions in each teaching session. Besides, this study also found that the teacher used different strategies in applying the question, such as repeating the questions, emphasizing the question, translated the question into Bahasa, simplifying the questions, getting closer to students, and giving rewards to the student. Besides, this research also showed the positive effects of questioning strategies applied by the EFL Classroom teachers. Many responses from the students proved it. Moreover, the observation also showed that both teacher and students did an excellent interaction through questioning strategies.

The difference of this study from those empirical studies was the setting of the study, since all of the previous studies was conducted the study in Senior High School and University, this study was conducted at Junior High School. Moreover, most of the previous studies used types of question theories as to questioning strategies. Meanwhile, this study used different types of question and questioning strategies theories from Wangru (2016) and Moss (2016) who classify types of questioning strategies theories, and Richards & Lockhart (1996) who classifies types of question theories.

Regarding the questioning strategies, Moss (2016) classify types of questioning strategies into four, namely agree-build challenge, cold call, wait, and no calling out. The agree-build challenge is the strategy that deepens students' knowledge. The students are asked to either agree and justify their choice or disagree with other students' responses and give a reason why. The cold call is the strategy in which the teacher call a specific student to answer the question. It means the teacher appoints or mention the students' name to answer the question. Then, the wait is the strategy where the teacher gives thinking time to the students in answering the question. No calling out is the strategy in which the teacher does not call the student after the question has already been conveyed. In this case, the teacher can wait for the students until there is a volunteer to answer the question.

Furthermore, Wangru (2016) also classifies types of questioning strategies into four namely, prompting, probing, repeating, and redirecting. Prompting is the strategy in which the teacher has to provide prompts or giving clues to the student when they cannot respond to the question. Probing is the

strategy that the teacher used to control the questioning. In this time, the teacher involves a series of questions addressed to the students to elicit a complete answer. Furthermore, repeating is the strategy where the teacher repeats the question two or three times until there is a student to answer the question. Redirecting is the strategy in which the teacher direct the same question to several students to know the students' ideas. Based on the explanation, all of these strategies can be used to convey an effective question in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, questioning strategies can be defined as a guide for the teacher in order to get students' responses and build interaction with the students.

Regarding the questioning strategies, Richards & Lockhart (1996) classifies questions into three types: procedural, convergent, and divergent. The procedural question refers to the classroom procedures, classroom setting, or classroom management. The question is usually applied at the beginning of the lesson in which the teacher can ask about students' condition, students' homework, or students' readiness. Furthermore, the convergent question is the type of question which generate students to answer the teachers' question shortly and briefly where the question mostly required a short answer or yes/no. The question does not usually require students to engage in higher-level thinking, but often to recall the previous material. Then, a divergent question is a question that require students to higher-level thinking in which the students are encouraged to answer the question using their information rather than to recall previous information. Those are the types of questions that can be used by the teacher.

Besides, Padmadewi, Artini, & Agustini (2017) stated that questioning has eight functions during the teaching and learning process are: (1) to develop students' interest and curiosity towards the topic of the lesson, (2) to get students' attention toward the subject of the study, (3) to diagnose students' difficulty, (4) to attract students' activeness, (5) to give students time to understand the material, (6) to stimulate students in stating information, (7) to check students' knowledge, and (8) to measure students achievement in the learning process. Additionally, Cotton (1988) also states questioning has seven basic functions, namely: (1) to develop students' interest and motivate them to become active during the lessons, (2) to checking students' preparation and check on their homework or seatwork completion, (3) to develop students' critical thinking skills and inquiring their attitudes, (4) to recall and summarize previous material, (5) to build an interaction by exposing new relationships, (6) to assess students' achievement of instructional goals and objectives, and (7) to stimulate students to pursue their own knowledge. Therefore, teachers' questions have several positive effects on the students' participation during the learning process.

In line with the explanation above, it can be said that question is an important part of the teaching and learning process. It was used to promote students' critical thinking skills, check students' understanding of the material, and enhance the students' participation in the learning process. Moreover, Lai (2011) explained that critical thinking includes analyzing, judging or evaluating, and solving problems or making decisions. Therefore, teachers' questioning plays an important role in helping the students increase their thinking critically and enhance their participation.

Unfortunately, there are still some obstacles that occurred in asking or answer a question during the teaching-learning process. There may appear particular cases in which students cannot respond to the teachers' questions appropriately. Pratama (2019) stated that teachers are difficult to choose a word and sentence to make a question that makes students interested in questioning. It is also stated that the students have a lack adequate vocabulary knowledge, it makes the students difficult to understand the question and did not respond to teachers' question. Thus, the students do not act and become passive in asking or answering questions.

Concerning the studies, based on the preliminary observation at SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja, it was found that the English teacher used strategies in asking or answering a question. The strategy used by the teachers were an agree-build challenge, cold call, wait, and no calling out, prompting, probing, repeating, and redirecting strategies. The teachers also used types of questions in asking questions: procedural, convergent, and divergent questions. In line with that, it was interesting to find out teachers' questioning strategies and types of questions used by English teachers in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, questioning strategies need to be known by the teacher to be able to convey the effective question as well as to build an interaction with the students.

## **2. Method**

The design of this study was qualitative research. Qualitative research is an approach which is used to explore and understand the meaning of individual or groups relating to social or human problems which collects the data in form of words, images, or video and analyze the information for description (Creswell, 2012). In this study, qualitative research was used to find out teacher's questioning strategies

and types of questions used by the English teachers in the teaching-learning process. Thus, the type of qualitative research in this study was a case study. A case study is defined as a series of scientific activities done in detail, in-depth, and intensively about a program, event, process, and activity, whether individual, group or organization in-depth information knowledge regarding that event (Creswell, 2012)

The setting of this study was SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja, which is located in Buleleng Regency, Bali, Indonesia. This place was chosen because this school used the 2013 curriculum in which the students are expected to be active during the learning process. Two English teachers in seventh-grade students were the subject of this study. The teachers were chosen as a subject due to her willingness and their experience in teaching English in junior high school for 30 years and has certification as a professional English teacher.

Four instruments were used in collecting the data, namely, researcher, questionnaire, interview guide, and audio recorder. The researcher collects the information about teachers' questioning strategies and the types of questions used by the teachers in the teaching-learning process. The questionnaire was also used to collect data from the teachers' responses toward their questioning strategies and the types of questions used in the teaching-learning process. To support the data that were gained from the questionnaire, an interview was conducted. The questions list was related to the types of questions used by English teachers. Then, an audio recorder was utilized as an instrument to record the interview process.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

This study aimed to find out the types of questioning strategies and types of question which were used by the English teachers in the seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 5 Singaraja. The result and discussion are divided into two sections. Firstly, it is about was the types of questioning strategies used by English teachers during the teaching-learning process. Secondly, it is about the types of questions used by the English teacher.

#### **Questioning Strategies**

In describing the types of questioning strategies used by the teachers, Moss (2016) and Wangru (2016) are considered as the main reference. Thus, there are eight types of questioning strategies that are used to classify teachers' questioning strategies. Based on the result of the questionnaire, it could be seen that the teachers used all of those questioning strategies during the teaching-learning process. However, the teachers always used five strategies among the eight strategies in conveying the question namely, prompting, probing, redirecting, cold call, and wait.

Prompting was a questioning strategy in which the teacher provided the students a clue about the answer. It was used in order to make the students more understand the question and can answer the questions. The teachers stated that they used prompting strategies when they seemed confused and did not answer the question. Then, the teacher gave clues by translating the question into the Indonesian language, which helped the students understand the question. This study was similar to previous studies by Wangru (2016) and Sujariati, et all (2016). Sujariati, et all (2016) found that the teacher translated the question or mixed the question into Bahasa and emphasized the question when the students seemed confused. Then, Wangru (2016) also found that prompting strategies were occurred and mostly followed by giving prompt and translating the question. Therefore the teachers always used the prompting strategy.

Probing was the questioning strategy in which the teacher conveyed a series of questions to get a complete answer. In this study, the English teachers taught the seventh-grade students to share their ideas when other students' answers were not correct. Ma (2018) stated that probing strategies are useful in getting students more involved in critical analysis of their own and other students' ideas. In addition, Erlinda, et all (2014) stated that probing strategies were used when the students' first answer was incomplete. She added that probing strategies were commonly used in the classroom to clarify students' responses and dig much more in-depth into their responses to complete the answer. In this study, the teachers stated that they wanted to train students to think critically about the answer. It was also used to train the students to find the correct or complete answer and make them active to share their ideas.

Redirecting was the questioning strategy where the teacher conveys the same question to several students. In this study, the teachers direct the same question to several students to make them more active in sharing their ideas. Besides, the teachers wanted to check students' comprehension of the question, improve students' speaking ability, and train them to share their opinions. According to Wangru (2016), redirecting questions to other students is also used when they want other students to illustrate more or provide more examples. Thus, the interaction between students will be enhanced, then it can encourage students to speak up and be active in sharing their opinions.

Then cold call was the next questioning strategy that was always used by the teachers. The teachers stated these strategies were used to focus students' attention or increase students' participation. In this study, the teachers direct a question to the student individually or mention the students' name was used to encourage students to participate in the class. Thus, the students will be active to share their ideas. It was similar to a previous study by Matra (2014). He found that the teacher randomly pointed at the students to encourage them to answer the question and accepted any answer from the students. Thus, cold call was an effective strategy to make the students involved in the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, the wait was the strategy in which the teacher conveyed a question and provided the students thinking time. This study showed that when the teachers conveyed the question to the students, the teachers gave a wait time to make the students think about the question. Dos, Bay, Aslansoy, Tiryaki, Çetin, and Duman (2016), and Ozturk (2016) stated that waiting time was one of the most important factors affecting students' correct response. It also found that most of the teachers provide students' thinking time in answering the question, in which they waited for 9 to 12 seconds or 13 to 15 seconds after asking the question. Looking at the result of this study, the teachers provide 2 to 3 minutes of thinking time. Therefore, students can answer the question completely.

Based on the teacher's interview, the teachers used a prompting strategy like giving some clue about the Indonesian Language question to help the students understand the question. A probing strategy was used to train students to think critically about the answer and know students' ideas. Besides, redirecting strategies were used to increase students' participation to improve students' speaking ability and trained them to be active to share their opinions. Furthermore, cold call strategies were used if a student ignored the teacher, so it controlled students' attitude and increased students' participation. Then, wait strategies were used to give students time to think about the question.

### **Types of Questions**

In describing the types of questions used by the teachers, Richards & Lockhart (1996) are considered the main reference. Therefore, three types of teacher's questions are used to classify the teacher's questions. In this study, the English teachers used three types of questions during the teaching-learning process. Moreover, this study showed that the teachers mostly used procedural questions and convergent questions rather than a divergent question.

The procedural question was a question that referred to the classroom procedure, classroom routine, or classroom management. Hamiloglu & Temis (2012) stated that procedural questions helped teachers have an order in the class in terms of classroom management and the flow of teaching and learning processes. They added the teacher typically uses these questions to make the classroom run well. Besides, Ozturk (2016) found that procedural questions were used to draw the attention of students to the focus of the lesson, to encourage the students who had not been involved in the interaction, and to ask the question just for the sake of asking. In this study, the teachers stated that procedural questions were daily routines or refreshed the students' focus before teaching and learning. Thus, a procedural question was effective to check students' condition and make them relaxed while studying.

The convergent question was the type of question that generated the students to review the previous information. It usually involves students participating during the lesson. Based on the interview result, it was used to increase their participation and check their understanding of the material. According to Dos, et al (2016), convergent question types were mostly used by teachers to reinforce and summarize topics and motivate the students to participate during the lesson. Hence, it was used when the teachers wanted to involve students' participation or check on students' knowledge. For the convergent question, it has purposed to stimulate students to be active or involved in the teaching and learning process, and some convergent question also used to review the previous material, check students' understanding, and focus control students' attitude.

Furthermore, the teachers rarely use the divergent questions it has purposed to stimulate students' to pursue knowledge on their own; however, the teachers very rarely and almost none in using divergent questions. The students were unresponsive to the divergent question that generated them to higher-order thinking. Based on the interview result, the teachers stated that encouraging students to think higher-order thinking can confuse them and become passive.

Based on the interview result, the teachers said that procedural question was as a daily routine or to refresh the students' focus before the teaching preparation and learning was started. The convergent question, it has purposed to stimulate students to be active or involved in the teaching and learning process, and some convergent questions were also used to review the previous material. Furthermore, the teachers very infrequently and almost none in using divergent questions. The students were unresponsive to the divergent question that generated them to higher-order thinking. The teachers stated encouraging students to think higher-order thinking can confuse them and become passive.

#### 4. Conclusion

From the result of the study, it can be concluded that the English teachers who taught seventh-grade students at SMP N 5 Singaraja used five strategies in applying the questions, namely, prompting, probing, redirecting, cold call, and wait. Prompting strategies were used as stimuli or guidance for students' answers or giving clues. Probing strategies were used to train students to think critically about the answer, then know other students' ideas. Redirecting strategies were used to increase students' participation to improve students' speaking ability and trained them to be active to share their opinions. Cold calls were used to focus the students' attention or increase students' participation. Then wait was used to give the students time to think.

Furthermore, the English teachers asked three types of questions during the teaching: procedural, convergent, and divergent. Meanwhile, the teachers mostly used a procedural question and convergent question rather than a divergent question. Procedural questions were used to refresh the students' focus before teaching and learning were started and organize the classroom activity. Convergent questions were used to review the previous material, check students' understanding, and focus control students' attitudes. Then, the teachers rarely use the divergent questions it has purposed to stimulate students' to pursue knowledge on their own.

Related to the research conclusion above, some suggestions were provided. Firstly, the English teachers should keep increasing their questioning strategies or types of questions to succeed in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, the English teachers were asked to promote divergent questions to involve the students' critical thinking. Next, the headmaster should conduct a teacher's training or workshop to increase their questioning strategies and types of questions. Last, it is suggested for the other researchers who wanted to conduct related to this study to find out the students' perception toward the questioning used by the teacher to know the effectiveness of the teachers' questioning strategies in teaching and learning process.

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