

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an introduction of the study which elaborates six areas of discussion. The first sub-section explains the background underlying the study. The next section presents statements of the problems. The third sub-section presents objectives of the study. Further, the following sub-sections present the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and clarification of terms. Finally, the last section is the organization of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the Study

Indonesia is one of the EFL countries where English is a compulsory subject in secondary schools. Since four years ago, high schools which were selected as piloting schools have begun to implement 2013 Curriculum. The prominent characteristic of 2013 Curriculum design in primary education is the use of science-based and holistic features (Hamied, 2014). Indeed, Hamied (2014) explains that all subject matters, not to mention English, are taught using that approach through the activities of observing, questioning, associating, experimenting, and networking. This approach is also popularly called Scientific Approach (SA), derived from a science education framework (Agustien, 2014).

Among the activities involved in SA, student questioning is part of student talk in the classroom interaction which is very crucial. The class will be more interactive if the numbers of students' questions are many. In other words, students' participation in discussion, argument and critical thinking are increased when the students ask productive questions in class (Education and Culture Ministry, 2014; Musingafi, 2014). Therefore, the issue of promoting student questioning is important since questioning is one of stages that should be implemented in the scientific approach of 2013 Curriculum in Indonesia.

However, such an ideal condition is not always achieved. In their study on teacher-student interaction, Maulana, Opdenakker, Stroet, and Boskeret (2012) revealed that Indonesian teachers spent most of their time lecturing in front of the classroom with the lack of interaction with students. Similarly, Yulia (2013) revealed that the English language that should be targeted as the teachers'

classroom instruction needed by students were difficult to realize. Additionally, in her study investigating classroom interaction, Suryati (2015) found that students had limited opportunities to participate in the teacher-student interaction and to use the target language in class. Suryati (2015) added that little opportunities to exercise their oral English in an elaborate way. Though classroom interaction is important since the more engaged the students are, the more successful the material delivery will be (Hidayati, 2012). Suryati (2015) highlighted that the teachers seemed to dominate the class with their language mixture and students tended to keep silent. All those problems are generated by the fact that questioning cannot be implemented properly.

Regarding the issue of inactive EFL teaching, some researchers indicated several problems. In terms of student questioning, students do not have the questions in the classroom (McLuhan, cited in Bowker 2010). In relation to learning behavior in EFL classroom, it is said that students never express a question during the class and reserve it for the after-class time (Tan, 2007). Furthermore, Matinho, Almeida, and Dias (2012) revealed that only a small number of oral questions were formulated either by male or female students during lectures in EFL class. In the 2013 Curriculum context, teachers have problems in questioning stage especially in raising students' skills in asking questions and giving answers logically and systematically using proper and correct grammar; and encouraging the participation of students in discussion, arguing, developing the ability to make questions (Zaim, 2017).

On top of that, learning activities in the 2013 Curriculum are expected to be interactive, inspiring, fun, and challenging which can motivate students to participate actively in the classroom (Education and Culture Ministry Regulation, No.32 Year 2013). Such interactive learning environment is established when the communication among students in the target language to generate meaning can be produced (Mackey, 2009). In this case, Mackey (2009) suggests that classroom interaction needs to be arranged by the teachers to create students' active participation in producing the target language. Indeed, in a language class, language is used as materials, targets and interaction tools in the classroom so that student producing language becomes the core of the lesson (Maolida, 2013).

Accordingly, student active participation of using the target language in class affects the nature of the interaction and the students' achievement.

Besides, the implementation of SA in the 2013 Curriculum is also expected to create students as inquiry learners who use their critical thinking in discovering certain concepts (Education and Culture Ministry, 2014). Indeed, nowadays, the development of critical, reflexive, and creative thinking is one of the main aims of elementary and secondary education, in order to provide students with the necessary tools become active and autonomous citizens, as well as lifelong learners (Almeida & Coutinho, 2013). The competence can be developed through the stimulation of students' active learning, namely questioning (Almeida & Coutinho, 2013), especially student questioning is not only able to increase critical learning (Chin, 2004) but also it is able to create active learning and increase classroom interaction (Education and Culture Ministry, 2014). According to Education and Culture Ministry (2014), the 2013 Curriculum expects that questioning activity should be posed by the students by asking questions about the information that have not been understood or additional information from their observation.

To achieve the expectation of the 2013 Curriculum in creating interactive classroom and enquiry learners, it is suggested that questioning can enhance students' participation and create scientific enquiry in meaningful learning (Chin, 2014; Education and Culture Ministry, 2014). The component skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration rarely develop individually, but frequently through speaking with and listening to others (Goh, 2013). In addition, Goh (2013) suggests that the process of talk in the interaction of peers is able to help students to express, synthesize, evaluate and apply ideas that are jointly constructed. The students negotiate meaning by asking questions (Setiawati, 2012). Consequently, everything the teacher does should provide learners with opportunities of encountering the language (Cook, 2000).

To this point, the researcher believes that problems in classroom interactions and student questioning must be noticed since interactive classrooms and critical learners should be achieved as expected by the 2013 Curriculum. Therefore, Indonesian teachers need to create EFL classes which reflect the expectation of

the current curriculum. One of the attempts to achieve the purposes is through promoting student questioning in EFL classes.

Referring to this issue, various research have been conducted (Rosenthal, Zimmerman & Durning, 1970; Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1972; Zimmerman & Pike, 1972; Cornbleth, 1975; King, Biggs & Lipsky, 1984; Biddulph, Symington, & Osborne, 1986; Chin, 2002; Taboada & Guthrie, 2006; Tan, 2007; Almeida, 2010; Bowker, 2010; Loghtenberg, Boxtel & Wolters, 2011; Hung, Hwang, Lee, Wu, Vogel, Milrad & Johansson, 2014; and Navtalie, 2014). The topics of investigation in aforementioned studies are varied. Most of the studies investigating student questioning were conducted in scientific class (e.g. Rosenthal et al., 1970; Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1972; Zimmerman & Pike, 1972; Cornbleth, 1975; Biddulph, Symington, & Osborne, 1986; Chin, 2002; Almeida, 2010; Bowker, 2010; Hung et al., 2014; and Navtalie, 2014), while few studies emphasized on language domain (e.g. King, Biggs & Lipsky, 1984; Taboada & Guthrie, 2006; Tan, 2007; and Loghtenberg, Boxtel & Wolters, 2011). Reviewing the previous research, student questioning in language domain still become the area which is in need of research. Besides, none of the aforementioned researchers discussed teachers' strategies in promoting student questioning in EFL. In addition, it is true that around the last five years, there have been several journals in the Indonesian EFL contexts discussing teaching strategies in 2013 Curriculum, (e.g. Senowarsito, 2013; Rohani, 2013; Suryati, 2016; Astuti, 2016), yet there is still limited discussion on this issue. Thus, this study is an attempt to fill the gap of the previous studies.

To sum up, the 2013 Curriculum emphasizes that teachers need to create a class which is interactive, inspiring, fun, and challenging that motivate students to participate actively in the classroom. Besides, it also highlights the enhancement students' critical thinking. Considering this issue, some theories point out that students questioning can be used as the potential strategy to achieve the goals. Accordingly, this study was conducted to investigate the teachers' strategies in promoting student questioning in Indonesian EFL class.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the issue and the aforementioned studies, this study would specifically find the answers to the following questions.

- a. How do the teachers promote student questioning in Indonesian EFL classrooms?
- b. What is the students' opinion about the frequency of teachers' strategies in promoting student questioning in their class?
- c. What are the effective strategies that can promote students to ask more questions in EFL classrooms from teachers' perspectives?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In the belief that student questioning is effective to develop interactive classroom and critical learners, the teachers need to promote student questioning. Therefore, this study investigated two English teachers in a senior high school in Purbalingga, Central Java which had the following objectives:

- a. to explore the teachers' strategies in promoting student questioning in EFL classrooms;
- b. to find out the students' opinion about the frequency of teachers' strategies in promoting student questioning in their class;
- c. to indicate the effective strategies that can promote students to ask more questions in EFL classrooms from the teachers' perspective.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study concerned student questioning in EFL class. This issue might be expanded in an increasing classroom interaction and critical learner. However, the focus of the investigation was on teachers' strategies in promoting student questioning in EFL classroom. More specifically, this study aimed to investigate how two English teachers in a senior high school in Purbalingga, Central Java encourage their students to ask more questions in class. Thus, the teachers' activities and expressions, and oral students' questions became the object of investigation of this study.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to give some benefits in two areas of English language pedagogy, those are theory and practice. Mostly research studies related this issue (e.g. Rosenthal et al., 1970; Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1972; Zimmerman & Pike, 1972; Cornbleth, 1975; Biddulph, Symington, & Osborne; 1986; Chin, 2002; Almeida, 2010; Bowker, 2010; Hung et al., 2014; and Navtalie, 2014) was focused in science classroom, while the current studies of this issue in EFL class were still limited. Reviewing EFL journal in the latest five years, the issue of teaching strategies (Senowarsito, 2013; Rohani, 2013; Suryati, 2016; Astuti, 2016) were also limited discussed on this topic. For that reason, this study is expected to enrich the literature on the TEFL, specifically related to the interactive classroom and student questioning in the 2013 Curriculum context. In addition, this study is also proposed to support the previous theories of the promotion of student questioning.

Secondly, since the students' activeness and participation in EFL class were still as the problem of teachers in creating an interactive classroom, this study is expected to give a portrayal of strategies in creating an interactive classroom through promoting student questioning in 2013 Curriculum context. In other words, this study attempts to help teachers in encountering the problems related to the student questioning and students' talk, and later will enhance the teaching practices in EFL class better. On top of that, creating critical learner is also as one of the purposes in the current curriculum. Thus, the result of the study is also expected to give value to English teachers in achieving the purpose through encouraging student questioning which is believed to create students to be active and critical.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

In reporting the study, several terms need to be clearly defined in order to avoid misunderstanding, misinterpretation, or ambiguity. The definitions of the terms in this study are as follows:

a. Teacher's strategy

Strategy is defined as ways consisting of some actions or plans which are designed to achieve a specific objective (Steiner, 1979; Mintzberg, 1994; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Denscombe 2010). Teacher's strategy refers to the ways which are designed and planned by the teacher to accomplish particular purpose. In this study, teachers' strategy refers to the ways that were designed and planned by the teachers in order to promote student questioning in class.

b. Promote

Promote refers to helping or encouraging something happen, develop, or increase (*"Cambridge Learner's Dictionary"*, 2007; *"Merriam-Webster's online dictionary"*, n.d). In other words, Cambridge Online Dictionary defines promote is encouraging people to like, buy, use, do or support something. In this study, promote refers to encouraging students to ask more questions.

c. Student questioning

The act of questioning is a central of thinking, to accumulate and communicate knowledge, even to several important types of social interaction (Bowker, 2010). In particular, questioning needs a person being asked the question to act in response in which it is to get deeper understanding or appreciation of what is being said (Browne & Keely, 2007). Thus, students' questioning is the act of accumulating and communicating knowledge addressed by the students. In this study, student questioning focuses on oral questions that were addressed by the students to accumulate and communicate knowledge.

d. EFL classroom

EFL classroom is defined as a class where learners were studying English with the purpose of using language with any other English speakers in the world (Harmer, 2007b). In this study, the EFL classroom refers to EFL classes in a senior high school.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

This paper is organized into five chapters. Describing its central focus, Chapter 1 gives an overview of this study. It provides the background of the study, the research questions, the objectives of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the research.

Covering the theories of teachers' strategy, student questioning, and teaching English as a Foreign Language class in Indonesia, Chapter 2 reviews the literature from which this study draws. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of the study including research design, data collection techniques, data analysis, and validity of the study. Chapter 4 explains the findings and the discussions of the study which are elaborated according to the research questions of the study. Chapter 5 illustrates conclusion of the study and recommendation for future research.