

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

The study about questioning and students' response to the teachers' questions in English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is challenging because question plays role to the developing of teaching strategy. Teacher question has been the focus of research for many years (Gerot, 1989, cited in Nunan, 1991: 192) because questioning plays crucial role in classroom instruction and in the educational process that has been identified as an important aspect of classroom interaction in teaching learning situation that teacher can display, draw reference from, comprehend, confirm and clarify the students' knowledge (Willen, 1987; Sadker and Sadker, 1990).

In the teaching and learning processes, teacher questioning is the primary instigating aspect that occurs during the lesson. Research shows that teachers need to ask a lot of questions to initiate this process. Lourdusamy (2005: 34) supported that one interactive routine that often happens in the classroom is the question-and-answer method that is used by the teacher during the lesson to monitor the understanding of the students and to seek their views and opinions. The interactive question-and-answer routine creates a communicative situation which depends on how teacher initiates the interaction and applies the right type of question to create an interactive language classroom environment (Brown, 2001).

Questioning helps teacher to build an interactive activity to improve students' ability in communication. In language learning, the interactive and dynamic teaching and learning processes become the main aspects in creating conducive language learning that will promote students achievement (Rosenshine cited in Brualdi, 1998).

In traditional teaching and learning process where teacher dominates the classroom activity, it is useless to create an interactive activity because the teacher always gives lengthy explanations and lectures, drills repetitively, and makes too many judgments about the students' answers (Gebhard, 1996: 49). This statement is also supported by Johnson (2001) who says that some teachers in a traditional teaching start by giving the student declarative knowledge on the chosen topic and telling them about what they have to do. Long and Sato (1983) cited in Nunan (1986: 194) also found that teachers asked more display questions and fewer referential questions. It can be seen that teachers tend to use more low-level-cognitive question than higher-level-cognitive questions (Brualdi, 1998).

Foreign language learning must include the development of children's basic communication abilities in English by encouraging enjoyment and motivation in learning to build an interactive teaching and learning (Pinter, 2009: 99). Teacher should be aware to use the higher-level-cognitive questions to rise activities that involves attention, noticing and understanding to the subject by creating question-and-answer method (Thornbury, 2005:41) This kind of question requires students to use higher order thinking or reasoning skills. This statement is supported by Brown (1994) that a good conversation in the learning process needs

teacher question to give students the impetus and opportunity to produce comfortable language, initiate key language, initiate a chain reaction of students' interaction and provide the students with opportunities to find out what others think by hearing what they say.

Questions can also be used to test out students' awareness of the affect of their behavior in teaching and learning process as Wong (2005: 138) stated that a misbehaving student may not be aware of the effect his behavior and can help him learn to behave more appropriately. Suherdi (2009: 157) emphasized that the composition and proportion of question types, tasking and teacher explanation are the keys to building language competence, positive attitude, independent and responsible thinking and personal leadership skills.

The use of various types of teacher 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 the teachers' questions. If the teacher wants the students, as language target, to master language skills, the teacher should build the creative and interactive classroom environment to achieve active participation by the students. Students' response quality can be evaluated in relation to the teaching learning goals by measuring right word choice, understanding of the grammar and the feedback quality as well as and also mastery of the language data (Suherdi, 2009).

The teacher has role to educate students to reach a level of accepted educational competence (Wettasinghe, 2005: 194) by initiating the interaction to build a communicative situation. The communicative situation in English

language teaching learning occurs in conversation as an objective of understanding and interpreting that can increase achievement among students (Pinter, 2009; Slavin, 1988; Wong, 2005). The communicative situation in learning process needs questioning that can initiate a chain reaction of feedback. Leng (2005: 97) supported that communicative situation creates the dynamic process that facilitates interaction between students and students, and students and teachers.

It also provides opportunity to observe student process of thinking. When students respond to the teachers' questions, teacher takes the response as the feedback to gain achievement in language teaching and learning. Questioning pushes the reaction as the feedback. The feedback can be stated as students' responses to the teacher's questions to build interactive teaching and learning process. Interactive teaching and learning depends on how a teacher uses the right strategy to create an interactive condition when using questioning methods.

This study was conducted to find out the answers to the following research questions:

1. What questions do the teachers usually use in EFL classroom to elicit students' responses?
2. How do students respond to the teachers' questions during teaching learning process?
3. What strategies do the teachers apply when the questions are not understood by the students to create an interactive teaching and learning process?

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

Questioning strategy is not a new research topic; however it is still an interesting and pertinent issue in regard to the development of language teaching and learning research. This statement was supported by Walsh (2006) who claims that the purpose of searching the teachers' questions is to promote the awareness of teacher in using their questions during classroom interaction. Teachers' use of the right type of question and how they apply questioning in order to create interactive learning processes in the classroom is the true art of the effective language teacher. Leng (2005:62) described the effective teachers as being teachers who promote student learning that enhance their cognitive, social effectiveness and personal development'.

In the language teaching and learning-process, an effective teacher tries to create an interesting classroom by applying questioning. In teaching and learning activities teachers sometimes find difficulty in using the appropriate type of questioning. This situation makes the situation in the class stagnant and boring. Teachers need to apply questioning strategies that make students feel interested and active in the classroom activities. Hence the need to investigate how teachers choose and apply question types and what strategies they use when their questions are not understood by the students as well as how students respond to the teachers' questions.

This study was designed to investigate the teacher questions that are used by English teachers during English teaching learning process and to identify

the methods that are applied by the teachers when their questions are not understood by the students as well as to investigate the quality of students' responses to the teachers' questions during the classroom teaching learning process.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

Teachers' questions create to determine the quality of students' learning. From the theory perspective, teachers' questions can be categorized as knowledge questions, comprehension questions, application questions, inference questions, analysis question, synthesis question, and evaluation questions. Teacher will apply questioning strategies when students do not know how to respond and answer the questions incorrectly. Some questioning strategies that can be used by the teacher to elicit the response from student are rephrasing, simplification, repetition and decomposition.

When teacher applies questioning, teacher needs responses from the students. The responses from the students can be categorized as verbal or nonverbal including the use of gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and conversational distance.

It is hoped that the answers to this research will help to formulate a new view and way of thinking about teaching and learning methods and evaluation techniques. This research will also develop the teaching strategy to create innovative and interactive language learning classroom.



## **1.4 Definitions of Key Terms**

### **1.4.1. Teachers' Questions**

Teachers' questions have a central function in teaching and learning. A teacher as "a professional question-asker" needs question formulating skill because types of questions they create determine the quality of students' learning (Suherdi, 2009: 156). This study includes a description of teacher question from Kinsela and Bloom (1959) and cited in Brown (1994: 166) which has seven question and instruction categories consisting of knowledge questions, comprehension questions, application questions, inference questions, analysis question, synthesis question, and evaluation questions.

### **1.4.2 Students' Responses**

During teaching and learning process, teacher questions need responses from the students. The responses from the students can be categorized as verbal or nonverbal. Verbal communication can be defined as spoken communication, including the use of words and intonation to convey meaning, while the nonverbal communication is defined as "silent" communication, including the use of gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and conversational distance (Levine, 1993; Suherdi, 2009). Brown (1994: 163) also categorized students' responses such as specific response means responding to the teacher within specific and limited range of available or previously practiced answers, open ended or student initiated means responding to the teacher with students' own reactions, silence means pauses in the interaction, silence-AV means silence in the interaction

during which a piece of audio-visual equipment, confusion, and laughter means student is giggling in the class.

From some previous studies, it was noted that the students used verbal response because they understood the questions from the teacher enabling the teacher to elicit the response from the students more easily. The students used non-verbal response because of some burden: e.g. they had difficulty understanding the questions, they did not know the answer and or they had psychological problems such as being shy, afraid or nervous. These varied responses from the students can be categorized as communication feedback.

#### **1.4.3 EFL Classroom Activities**

Classroom activities in English Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning are the focus of the research. According to Chavez (2006) - For foreign language learners, the classroom is the primary forum for them to use and experience the target language. Similar to Chavez, Pinter also stated (2006) that teaching English as foreign language is challenging because students learn English as a school subject and had limited opportunity to practice the language outside school so that they had no immediate need or clear motivation to use and learn English.

It is for this reason that teachers have to have the skill to prepare, organize and manage questioning in order to develop the suitable interactive classroom activities that can be defined as ideal for creating interaction between teacher and students, and students with students in the classroom.



## 1.5 The Structure of This Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters introduced separately as follow:

Chapter I introduces to the whole of the study which includes the background for conducting study on teacher questions and then presents the research questions and the purposes of the present study. At the end of this chapter the researcher presents the key terms most frequently used in this study and the description of the thesis structure.

Chapter II discusses the theoretical views on which the present study is based. The theoretical views include the nature of questioning in classroom teaching learning interaction as well as the types of questions, the students' responses, and also the questioning strategies employed when the questions are not understood by the students. Finally, this chapter ends by presenting some related studies conducted by a number of researchers concerning the use of questions in classroom language learning.

Chapter III constitutes the methodological aspect of this thesis. In this section, the researcher elaborates on the methodological issues of the present study. The elaboration includes the research design, research method, research validity, participants, research setting, techniques of gathering data, and techniques of analyzing data respectively.

Chapter IV presents the findings and discussion. This analysis is presented in sequence starting from types of teacher questions and student responses and is followed by questioning techniques used by the teachers when

their questions were not understood by the students. At the end of each presentation of the findings the researcher draws conclusions in relation to specific research questions.

Chapter V is the conclusion or summary. This part summarizes the findings obtained from the present study. At the end of this section, the researcher provides recommendations for conducting further related studies based on topical limitations of the present study and puts forward some suggestions for the further study on teachers' questions.