CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In classroom, teacher plays very important roles. The teacher can be as controller, director, facilitator, and resource (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 1991, 2001, 2007). In conducting the role of controller, the teacher will determine what the students do, when they should speak, and what language form they should use. As a director of classroom, teacher is responsible to maintain students' engagement and motivation in order to flow smoothly and efficiently. As a facilitator, the teacher will assist the students to make the learning process easier and more comfortable. When teacher employs the role of resource, he/she will always be available to meet when students need advice or consultation. In conclusion, if teacher wishes to see successful teaching-learning processes in classroom, he/she should be able to conduct those roles appropriately because the teachers' different roles were related to the students' levels of participation and their positioning of themselves as powerful or powerless students (Yoon, 2008).

In relation to the English language learning and teaching in classroom, those teacher's roles will affect the quality and quantity of input, output, and interaction in the classroom. Input can be provided in good quality and sufficient in amount if the teacher contributes maximally in the role of resource from teacher talks (Ellis, 1986; Chaudron, 1988; Nunan, 1991) in explaining, commenting, or even questioning during the classroom activities. Language production as the

intended output can also be triggered by teacher when he/she carrying out the role of controller by giving commands or questions to the students in the classroom. Interaction as the core of teaching-learning process and through it acquisition can be facilitated (Long, 1983; Ellis, 1986; Johnson, 2001; and Brown, 2001) can be maximized through the conversation between teacher and students in which questioning-answering dialogue pattern is commonly adopted. To summarize, in fulfilling good quality and enough input, output, and interaction, teacher questions are the central point to take into consideration.

Regarding the importance of teacher questions in language learning, teacher should know what kinds of questions which are potential to support students in learning a target language. The emergency of knowing types of questions are based on the reasons that certain sort of questions will likely trigger the students to respond in more complex answers, provide more comprehensible inputs, and create more genuine interaction. Take for example, when a teacher uses more referential questions in classroom interaction, the answers from student will be more in number of words used, more complex sentences uttered, and more natural of communication developed (Brock, 1986). In other words, by using referential question teacher gives more opportunities for students to receive comprehensible input, more chance to produce output, and more opportunities to create natural interaction.

However, being familiar with the types of questions only is not sufficient to conduct effective teaching. Students as the addressee of teacher questions sometimes or even very often do not understand what the answers of the questions

are. Hence they cannot give any responses. To overcome this problem teacher usually will modify their questions through negotiation of meaning in form of simplifying, redirecting, paraphrasing (Chaudron, 1988), or even translating the question into students' first language (L1) in such way the students are expected to give responses more easily.

Seeing the central role of questioning in language classroom to facilitate students to have comprehensible input, to trigger students to produce language production (output), and to create interaction in classroom, it is necessary to conduct investigation to reveal the secret around the issue of teacher questions. It is hopefully from the investigation, researcher will find what types of questions which help students to learn language, how teachers modify their questions to be more understandable, and what kinds of student responses are generated from those given questions.

1.2 Research Questions

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

1. What types of question do the teachers usually use in EFL classroom?

2. What modification techniques do the teachers employ when the questions are not understood?

3. What sorts of responses do the questions generate from the students?

4. How can teacher questions facilitate language learning?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

There are four main purposes of conducting this study. The first purpose is to identify the types of question used by English teacher during English teaching-learning process. Those types of question will be classified into two main types; display question and referential question and three sub types; comprehension check, clarification request, and confirmation check. The second objective of this study is to identify the modification techniques employed by the teachers when their questions are not understood by the students. The main reason for identifying the modification is the importance of them in providing variety of inputs and opportunities for the students to practice the target language. The third purpose is to investigate the sorts and the complexity of student responses due to the use of those questions by the teachers during the classroom teaching-learning process. The forth purpose is to investigate how questions can facilitate language learning classroom activities.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Questioning has been identified as an important aspect of classroom interaction in teaching-learning situation (Wilen, 1987a, 1987b; Willson, 1999). Investigating the types of questions and modification of question used by the teacher in EFL classroom is expected to provide new insight into the use of those types and modifications of questions to facilitate better learning of English language, to encourage the students in order to participate in teaching-learning process, and to promote second language acquisition. As Walsh (2006) asserts

that one of the purposes of searching the teacher questions is to promote the awareness of teacher in using their questions during classroom interaction. By awareness as he states is meant more conscious use of language; noticing the effects of interactional features on learning opportunity; understanding that teachers and learners jointly create learning opportunity; and realizing the importance of using appropriate questions. Teachers of English language will particularly benefit from this study as the findings will be an eye-opener to them on how to use question and their modifications appropriately to improve EFL classroom interaction. Finally, the findings of this study are expected to be another alternative effort of improving students' competence in learning English communicatively in the basis of classroom activities.

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

In this section the researcher will elaborate the key terms that will be frequently used in this study. The elaboration is aimed at giving definition, avoiding misunderstanding and limiting the use of the terms, and understanding the context in which the terms being used (Cresswell, 1994).

1. Question is defined as a functional or speech act label, and refers to an utterance that seeks information or any statement intended to evoke a response.

2. Display Question is the term used to refer to a question to which the teacher already knows the answer (Nunan, 1989b: 29). In asking display question, the teacher does not seek an answer to resolve some

doubts. Rather he/she wants the students to display or show some previous knowledge that has been learned before. Such question like, "What is the capital of Indonesia?" belongs to this category.

3. Referential Question refers to a question to which the teacher does not already know the answer (Brock, 1986; Chaudron, 1988; Nunan, 1991; Gebhard, 1999). For instance: Have you done your homework?

4. Modification of Question refers to the change employed by teacher to make the question understandable. Three additional types associated with the concept of *negotiation* or *modification of meaning* through modification of question between interlocutors (Chaudron, 1993:130-131) or *modified interaction,* are *comprehension check*, *clarification request*, and *confirmation check*.

5. Confirmation checks are moves by which one speaker seeks confirmation of the other's preceding utterance through repetition, with rising intonation, of what was perceived to be all or part of the preceding utterance.

6. Clarification requests are moves by which one speaker seeks assistance in understanding the other speaker's preceding utterance through questions, statements such as "I don't understand," or imperatives such as "Please repeat."

7. Comprehension checks are moves by which one speaker attempts to determine whether the other speaker has understood a preceding message (Pica, 1987).

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8. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the process through which someone acquires one or more second or foreign language in addition to their native language (Nunan, 1991). In this study the term of SLA will be interchangeably used with Second Language Learning (SLL).

9. Comprehensible Input is the part of the total input that the learners understand and which is hypothesized to be necessary for acquisition to take place (Ellis, 1997).

10. Input Hypothesis is the hypothesis advanced by Krashen to Explain how learners subconsciously acquire language from input they comprehend (Ellis, 1997).

11. Interaction Hypothesis is the name given to claim that the interactional modification resulting from the negotiation of meaning facilitate acquisition (Ellis, 1997).

12. The term classroom interaction in this study is defined as the interaction between teacher and learners, and amongst the learners in the class room (Tsui, 2001).

13. Output Hypothesis is the hypothesis which claims that the act of producing language (speaking or writing) constitutes, under certain circumstances, part of the process of second language (Swain, 2007)

14. Student Language Production refers to the answers or comments given by the students orally, in classroom during English teaching and learning process which is generated from the teacher questions.

1.6 The Structure of This Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Besides the introduction part, there are four other chapters. They will be introduced separately as follows:

Chapter I is the introduction of the whole study. It includes the background of conducting study on teacher questions, and then presents the research questions and the purposes of the present study. At the end of this chapter researcher presents the key terms those frequently used in this study and the description of this thesis structure.

Chapter II discusses the theoretical views by which the present study underpinned. The theoretical views include the nature of questioning in classroom teaching which covers the functions and purposes of questions in classroom teaching; the position of questioning in classroom language learning which covers comprehensible input hypothesis, interactional hypothesis, and output hypothesis; the position on questioning in classroom interaction; and types of question. Finally, this chapter ends by presenting some related studies conducted by many researchers concerning about the question in classroom language learning.

Chapter III constitutes the methodological aspects of this thesis. In this section, the researcher elaborates 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 elaborates the findings and discussion. The analysis is carried out based on the three research questions. The analysis is presented in sequence starting from types of teacher questions and student responses, followed by modification techniques used by the teachers, and the last is to what extent teacher questions facilitate language learning. At the end of each elaboration, the researcher presents the findings related to each research questions. Finally, at the end part of this section the researcher discusses how the findings are seen from the perspective of comprehensible input hypothesis, interaction hypothesis, and output hypothesis.

Chapter V is the conclusion part. This part summarizes the findings obtained from the present study. At the end of this section, the researcher will elaborate some possible recommendations for conducting further similar related studies. Then it discusses the limitations of the present study and puts forward some suggestions for the further study on teacher questions.