CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section covers the introductory part of this thesis. It covers the background, research questions, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and the organization of this thesis. Those introductory parts will be presented below respectively.

1.1 Background of the Study

The role of questioning in teaching and learning process is very important for teachers and students. It is widely accepted that questioning is a basic skill that teachers are obliged to have in the classroom (Gall, 1970; Suherdi, 2007; Fitriani, 2009; Sabeni, 2008; Winasaputra, 2008; Sofa, 2008). Regarding the importance of questioning for teachers, Suherdi (2007) states that teachers are often considered as "professional question-askers". The skill for formulating questions, he adds, is an important strategy in conducting classroom teaching and learning process.

In classrooms, the questions used by teachers have many purposes. Through the questions, teachers can make students involved in learning activities and to stimulate the student to think critically and learning more efficiently (Gall, 1970; Kim & Kellough, 1978). Gall regards the belief that question plays a significant role in teaching as "a truism". Teachers can also use questions in ongoing assessment to assess students' understandings on the materials being learnt (Stiggins, 2006). Therefore teachers should have skills in questioning to maximize the advantages they contribute in the classroom. They need to plan the questions carefully by thinking through possible questions which would guide the

students toward further investigation and a deeper understanding of the concepts being stressed.

Effective questioning posed by the teachers is believed to be able to focus students' attention to understand lesson content, arouse their curiosity, stimulate their imagination, and motivate them to seek out new knowledge (Ornstein, 1990). Besides, questioning is one of the best ways to develop teacher's role as an initiator and sustainer of classroom interaction (Nunan, 2001). In short, questioning done skillfully would facilitate students' language acquisition.

In reality, however, it seems that effective questioning does not always happen, even among teachers with considerable experience in teaching. Nunan and Lamb's (1996) research on questioning in language education reveals that over the years, teachers still pose questions in much the same way as always, with most of the questions low-level, despite improvement in materials, curricula, and methods of teaching. Teachers tend to pose a series of specific, factual, and low-level questions that hardly challenge students to think of the answers as they can be readily lifted from text (Moore, 1995). This condition also happens in the teaching and learning process when the researcher conducted an informal observation in a Senior High School in Kendari. It seems that the teachers' knowledge on how to pose questions effectively is still limited. On the other hand, the society at large assumes that teachers know how to pose questions effectively because they spend a large part of their time in class posing questions to their students.

Based on that informal observation related to the way of the teacher poses the question in the teaching and learning process, teacher did not seem to apply many types of questions as well as appropriate questioning strategies in their teachings. They did not give any opportunity to the students to involve in the teaching and learning process. This has brought about a consequence that the teaching learning process in the classroom does not occur as what is expected. Therefore it is important to portray the teacher's activities in the classroom to see whether the way s/he conducts the teaching and learning activity is worth applying in the teaching context.

As commonly known that in the classroom, the interaction between teacher and students are often initiated, controlled, and dominated by the teacher. Thomas (1987) and Van Lier (1988) describe that kind of classroom interaction as IRF pattern in which teacher Initiates the interaction by giving questions, gives Response, and provides Feedback to the students' responses. From this, it is inferred that questioning plays a central role in classroom interaction.

Teachers' questioning strategies have been the main concern in most investigation of classroom practice. Woods (1991) in her study reported that teacher frequently pose specific questions that demand a narrow range of possible right answer. As a result it no wonders that responses obtained from students are rather predictable. As well, Jan et. al. (1993) found the similar results in their study on teachers' behaviors in using question.

As the students' answers are much effected by the teachers' questions, in the application of questioning strategy, teachers should consider the strategy in

posing questions in term of the level types of question and the questioning behaviors (Nunan, 1996). This is important to take into account because skillful questioning can arouse student's curiosity and interest, stimulate their imagination, and motivate them to search out knowledge (Ornstein, 1987). In summary, good questions given by the teacher can challenge the students to think critically and help clarify concepts and problems related to the lesson (Paul and Elder, 2007).

Based on the description above, it is very important to investigate the teachers' understandings about questioning, the types of questions, and the questioning strategies that the teachers use in eliciting student's responses, and the kinds of responses are elicited by the students to respond to the teachers' questions.Therefore, the need of investigating the teacher's questioning related to these phenomena has triggered the researcher to conduct this research.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the issues of questioning stated in the background, the researcher intends to carry out a research relating to teachers' questions in English language classroom activities. This research attempts to find out the answers of the following research questions.

1. What are teachers' understandings about questioning?

2. What types of questions are employed by the teachers in the classroom?

3. What questioning strategies do the teachers use in eliciting student's responses when the questions are not understood?

4. What kinds of responses are elicited by the students to respond to the teachers' questions?

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

There are four main purposes of conducting this research. The first purpose is to find out the data about the teachers' understandings on questioning in English teaching and learning process. The second objective is to find out the data about the types of questions employed by the teachers in the classroom. Those types of question will be classified into two main types; display and referential questions. The third purpose is to find out what questioning strategy used by the teachers in eliciting students' responses when the questions are not understood. The main reason for identifying those strategies is the importance of them in overcoming the students' absence in responding teachers' questions. The forth objective is to identify the kinds of students' responses elicited by different types of questions posed by the teachers.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is significant in that 1) it attempts to investigate the teachers' questioning in English language classroom. This research hopefully will enrich the teachers' knowledge about many kinds of questionings as well as strategies on questioning so they can select and use appropriate questions in the classroom instruction, 2) it supports an existing theoy on questioning in teaching and learning process.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One presents the introduction. It covers the background of the study, the research questions, and the purposes of the study as well as the significance of the study.

Chapter Two presents review of related literature relating to teacher questions. It will discuss the importance of questioning, the types of questions and the questioning strategy in teaching and learning. Chapter Three elaborates the mothodology of the research. It covers research design, research site, research participant, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the data presentation and discussion of the research and Chapter Five draws the conclusion, some implications and limitations. It also offers some recommendations for further research.