QUESTIONS USED IN
PRIMARY EFL CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is the study of types and functions of questions based on features of classroom discourse. In this study, the writer observed the types of questions that the English teacher used in General English classroom, and the functions of the questions based on features of classroom discourse. The data were collected through classroom observation and audio-recording of one class of the sixth grade. The theories applied are the teachers' questions by Ellis (2008) and types of questions and features of classroom discourse by Walsh (2011). The qualitative approach was used in this study. The finding revealed that the teacher used two types of questions which were display questions and referential questions in the two meetings. Each meeting took 40 until 50 minutes. In addition, the teacher used three functions of questions based on features of classroom discourse, which are control of procedure, checking understanding, and eliciting a response. The finding also revealed that display questions have the function of checking understanding while referential questions have the functions of control of procedure, checking understanding and eliciting a response. In conclusion, questions can be considered as a tool for the teacher to check the students' understanding and to elicit the students' responses during teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Classroom Discourse, Questions

In classroom discourse, interactions have an important point. Brown (2007, p. 212) explained that "in the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is in fact, the heart of communication". Van Lier (1996, p. 5) as cited in Walsh (2011, p. 51) also argued "interaction is the most important element in the curriculum", a position that coincides with that of Ellis (2000, p. 209) as cited in Walsh (2011, p. 21) "learning arises not through interaction, but in interaction". If the teachers want to understand learning, they should begin by looking at the interaction that take place in their classes.

In a classroom, besides interacting with students, teachers also ask questions. According to Kerry (2002, p. 65) "questions play an important role in the process of teaching and learning because students' achievement and level of engagement depend on the types of questions which are formulated and used by the teacher in a classroom". Teacher usually used questions to check the students' understanding. Nunan and Lamb (1996, p. 80) argued teacher uses question in classroom "to elicit information, to check understanding and also to control behavior". Hyman (1979) also argued the reason of asking question in teaching English is because questions are direct approach to achieve the goals. Hence, many teachers want to get students to participate in the class and to find out whether the students understand the discussed topic, to get a discussion about the topic, to attract students' attention, to test their learning of the material, to initiate a lesson, to review what the teacher is talking about, to stimulate students' creative thinking, and many others.

Generally in classrooms, question remains the common strategy for eliciting responses from students during the whole class teaching. Chaudron (1988, p. 126) mentioned "teacher's question constitute a primary means of engaging learners' attention, promoting verbal responses and evaluating learners' progress".

In this study, the writer wanted to identify the types of questions that the English teacher used in her class meeting. In addition, she also wanted to identify the function based on the features of classroom.

The writer only focused on one grade of elementary school which was grade sixth to focus in the whole class activities to find out the use of questions related to interaction strategies

that the teacher used in the English classroom. She chose elementary school, because young learners are active learners. Cameron (2005, p. 1) said "children are often more enthusiastic and lively as learners. Children often seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language, and their lack inhibition seems to help them get a more native-like accent".

METHODS

This is a qualitative study, because the instrument of this study is the writer herself as the researcher, using a small sample as the data, and the data analysis was done with words (Dornyei, 2007). The writer recorded the teaching and learning process in the classroom with an audio-recorder and took notes of the classroom context.

In order to collect the data, the writer applied several steps. After obtaining the official permission from the school head master and the classroom teacher the writer started to observe the class through audio-recording and note taking on September 4th, 2014 and September 11st, 2014 for two times. According to Walsh (2011, p. 68) "audio- recordings are, in many ways the easier means of capturing the spoken interaction in classroom". In the class, she stood in the back so she would not disturb the teaching and learning process. She did not participate in the class activities. The recording focused on the conversation in the class between teacher and the students. She recorded during the General English class which is around 40 - 50 minutes, started at 06.45 am until 07.55 am on Tuesday.

When the writer finished the observation, she started to transcribe. For the transcription the writer used detailed transcription, focusing on the content and the narrative conveyed (Elliot, 2005 as cited in Zacharias, 2012). During the transcription, she put each of the teacher's questions in 'bold'. Subsequently, she gave the numbering system for each bolded part in the transcription and she used three digits in numbering system. The first digit referred to teacher. The second digit referred to the week the writer observed. The third digit referred to the types of questions and the functions of questions based on features of classroom discourse.

The writer used the table below as a media to analyze the types and the functions of the questions based on the features of classroom discourse. In the first column, the writer put numbering system there. After finishing with the first column, she filled the second column with the teacher's questions. The third column deals with types of question; "DQ" for display questions, "RQ" for referential questions. And fourth column deals with functions of classroom discourse; "CQ" for control of the interaction, "SM" for speech modification, "ET" for elicitation techniques, "R" for repair. In third and fourth columns the writer gave the check mark (✓) in appropriate sub column based on teacher's questions in second column. Then, she started the analysis of the first research question and she continued the analysis of the second research questions. The analysis is based on the theory of teacher's questions by Ellis (2008) and four features of classroom discourse by Walsh (2011).

Table 1. The analysis of the questions related to interaction features that used in general English classroom

Code Number	Utterances	Types of Questions		Features of Classroom Discourse				Note
		DQ	RQ	CI	SM	ET	R	

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The whole findings referring to the types and the functions of the questions used by the teacher in the two meetings can be summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Types and functions of questions used by the English teacher

Function of classroom discourse / Types of questions	Control of Interaction		Speech Modification		Elicitation Techniques				Repair		Total	
	Control of procedure				Eliciting a respond		Checking understanding					
	n =	%	n =	%	n =	%	n =	%	n =	%	n =	%
Display Questions	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	53	72.60%	0	0%	53	72.60%
Referential Questions	7	9.59%	0	0%	9	12.3%	4	5.47%	0	0%	20	27.40%
TOTAL	7	9.59%	0	0%	9	12.3%	57	78.08%	0	0%	73	100%

From the table above it could be seen that teacher used two types of questions based on Walsh (2011) in elicitation techniques. From these two types of questions, display questions was the types of questions that were mostly used during the classroom teaching because the teacher always asked the students some questions about what they were learning at that time and what they had learned in the previous grades. And for referential questions, the teacher usually used this type of questions when she did not have the knowledge of the answer of the questions she asked.

a)   Display questions
        Extract 1.1.3 and 1.1.4
        Teacher   : Number 1 **Tanjung Perak in Surabaya is the name of…?[1.1.3]**
                           Tanjung Perak in Surabaya is the name of…?[1.1.4]
        Students   : (Students wrote the answer in their exercise books)
        The extract 1.1.4 and extract 1.1.5 above show that the teacher gave quiz to the students to check her students about the material that they had already learnt when they are in the fourth grade. The material that they learn for today is the same material when they were in the fourth grade. The purpose of giving the quiz for the teacher is to know if the students really remembered the material. Before starting the quiz the teacher greeted the students and she asked the students to prepare their exercise books.

b)   Referential questions
        Extract 1.1.32 and extract 1.1.33
        Teacher   : Yes, waterfall, 19 river. And the last one is cave. Ok you already check your mistake. S*ekarang bu Y tanya dari 20 pertanyaan **siapa yang jawabannya betul semua?** [1.1.32]*. (Now Mam Y will ask, from 20 questions, who have all correct answers?) Please raise your hands
        (No one raised their hands)
        Teacher   : *Tidak ada satu pun yang jawabannya betul semua.* (No one get all correct answers) *Ok sekarang bu Y tanya lagi dari 20 pertanyaan **siapa yang membuat kesalahan lebih dari 5 ya 5,6,7,8 dan seterusnya?** [1.1.33]*
                           (Ok now Mam Y ask again, from 20 questions who make mistakes more than 5, 5, 6, 7, 8, and etcetera?)

(Some of the students raised their hands)

The extract 1.1.32 and extract 1.1.33 above show that after checking the students' answer, the teacher wanted to know how many mistake that her students made, because the teacher did not know how many mistake that the student made. (The students gave their responded by raising their hand.)

From table 2, it could be seen that the teacher mostly used functions of eliciting techniques, which were checking understanding and eliciting a response during the classroom teaching, because the teacher usually elicited the students' response and checked the students' understanding or knowledge. Here are the result from the data.

a)   Control of the procedure
        Extract 1.1.2

Teacher   : Ok. **Are you ready?[1.1.2]** I will read it twice *bu Y akan membacakan 2x* listen carefully.
Students   : Yes Mam

Extract 1.1.2 shows that the teacher controls the procedure in her classroom. Before starting the quiz, the teacher asked the students if they are ready to get a quiz. (The students answered that they were ready)

b)   Checking understanding
        Extract 1.1.6 and 1.1.7

Teacher   : Last year *tahun kemarin kalian dapet pelajaran ini waktu kelas 5, masa sudah lupa (*smile) (last year you got this material when you were in fifth grade, did you forget it? Ok number 2 **Juanda in Sidoarjo is the name of…?[1.1.6] Juanda in Sidoarjo is the name of… ?[1.1.7]**
(Students wrote their answer in their book)

Extract 1.1.6 and 1.1.7 show that the teacher checked the students' understanding by giving them a quiz. Because the material was about public places and the students had learned this material when they were in the fifth grade, so the teacher gave them a quiz to check if the students still remembered of what they had learned in the past. (The students wrote their answer in their exercise books).

c)   Eliciting a response
        Extract 1.1.32 and 1.1.33

Teacher   : Yes, waterfall, 19 river. And the last one is cave. Ok you already check your mistake. S*ekarang bu Y tanya dari 20 pertanyaan **siapa yang jawabannya betul semua?* [1.1.32]*. (now Mam Y will ask, who have all correct answers? Please raise your hands
(Few of students raised their hands)
Teacher   : *Tidak ada satu pun yang jawabannya betul semua.* (no one have all correct answers) *Ok sekarang bu Y tanya lagi dari 20 pertanyaan **siapa yang membuat kesalahan lebih dari 5 ya 5,6,7,8 dan seterusnya?* [1.1.33]** (now Mam Y ask again, who makes mistakes more than 5. 5,6,7,8, and etcetera)
 (Some of the students raised their hands)

Extract 1.1.32 and 1.1.33 show that the teacher elicited the students' response by asking them how many mistakes that the students made during the quiz. (The students responded by raising their hands)

Besides the two types of questions and the three functions of questions found in this data, the writer also found that display questions have a function such as control of procedure. Below is the example of display questions as a function of checking understanding.

Extract 1.1.3 and 1.1.4

Teacher : Number 1 **Tanjung Perak in Surabaya is the name of…?[1.1.3] Tanjung Perak in Surabaya is the name of…?[1.1.4]**

Students : (Students write the answer in their exercise books)

This extracts show that the teacher asked the questions that refer to display questions. The questions itself have a function of checking understanding, because the teacher checked the students' knowledge about the material that they had learned in the previous grade.

Different from display questions, referential questions have functions such as control of procedure, checking understanding, and eliciting a responses. Below is the example of referential questions as a function of control of procedure.

Extract 1.1.2

Teacher : Ok. **Are you ready?[1.1.2]** I will read it twice *bu Y akan membacakan 2x* listen carefully.

Students : Yes Mam

This extract shows that the teacher asked the questions that refer to referential questions. The questions itself have a function of control of procedure, because the teacher controlled the process of her classroom. Before starting the quiz, the teacher asked if the students were ready for the quiz. (The students responded that they were ready).

Another function of referential questions was checking understanding. For example in extract 1.2.1

Teacher : *Siapkan 4 romawi tiap romawi 5 nomer tiap nomer di lompati 1 baris, jelas?[1.2.1]* (prepare part four roman letters, every roman letter consists of five numbers, write in every other line, understand?)

Students : Jelas (understand)

This extract shows that the teacher used referential question as function of checking the students' understanding. The teacher made sure if that the students really understood what they had to do in the exam.

In this data, the writer also found the function of eliciting a respond in referential questions. For example in extract 1.1.32 and 1.1.33

Teacher : Yes, waterfall, 19 river. And the last one is cave. Ok you already check your mistake. S*ekarang bu Y tanya dari 20 pertanyaan **siapa yang jawabannya betul semua?** [1.1.32]*. (now Mam Y will ask, who has all correct answers? Please raise your hands

(Few of students raised their hands)

Teacher : *Tidak ada satu pun yang jawabannya betul semua.* (no one have all correct answers) *Ok sekarang bu Y tanya lagi dari 20 pertanyaan **siapa yang membuat kesalahan lebih dari 5 ya 5,6,7,8 dan seterusnya?** [1.1.33]* (now Mam Y asked again, who makes mistakes more than 5. 5,6,7,8, and etc)

(Some of the students raised their hands)

This extract show that the teacher use referential questions as function of eliciting a response. After checking the students' mistake, the teacher wanted to know how many mistakes that the students made during the quiz.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The result of this study showed that the teacher used two types of questions based on Walsh's explanation in elicitation techniques, which were display questions and referential questions. The writer also found the teacher used more display questions than referential questions, because firstly, the teacher always asked the students some questions about what they had learned in the previous grades. Secondly, the materials that the teacher used were reviews. The students had learned the materials when they were in the fourth and fifth grades. The findings also revealed that the functions were control of procedures, checking understanding and eliciting a response. Besides, relating the two types of questions and the functions, the writer found that display questions have a function of checking understanding and referential questions have the functions of control of procedure, checking understanding, and eliciting a response.

This study is a small scale one, which involved one classroom and one teacher. Further research could be conducted on a larger scale in which higher level, such as junior high school or senior high school, could be involved. Hopefully, this study contributes to similar research on the use of types of questions in classroom discourse.

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