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THE TEACHER'S QUESTIONING STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS' RESPONSES IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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Abstract

This study aimed to find out the questioning strategies applied by the teacher as well as the functions of those strategies and the dominant questioning strategies used by the teacher to encourage students' responses in English classroom interaction. This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 6 Pontianak with a descriptive qualitative method. The study was carried out by observing, interviewing, and taking video recordings of the English teacher that consisted of three meetings in the same class. The result showed that the teacher mostly used cueing strategies to encourage students' responses in English classroom interaction. In addition, other strategies also used by the teacher were clueing, probing, and wait time. The teacher used those questioning strategies to check students' understanding of the previous material, attract students' attention and interest, ask for an explanation from students about the thing, and give time to students to think before answering the questions.

Keyword: *english classroom interaction, questioning strategies, students' responses*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi bertanya yang diterapkan oleh guru serta fungsi dari strategi tersebut dan dominan strategi bertanya yang digunakan oleh guru untuk mendorong tanggapan siswa dalam interaksi di kelas bahasa Inggris. Studi ini dilakukan di SMP Negeri 6 Pontianak dengan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Studi ini dilakukan dengan mengamati, mewawancarai, dan mengambil rekaman video guru bahasa Inggris yang terdiri dari tiga pertemuan di kelas yang sama. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa guru sebagian besar menggunakan strategi isyarat untuk mendorong tanggapan siswa dalam interaksi di kelas bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, strategi lain yang juga digunakan oleh guru adalah petunjuk, penyelidikan, dan waktu tunggu. Guru menggunakan strategi strategi bertanya itu untuk memeriksa pemahaman siswa tentang materi sebelumnya, menarik perhatian dan minat siswa, meminta penjelasan dari siswa tentang suatu hal, dan memberikan waktu kepada siswa untuk berpikir sebelum menjawab pertanyaan.

Kata kunci: interaksi di kelas bahasa inggris, strategi bertanya, tanggapan siswa

Introduction

Learning at school is a social activity that requires teacher and student interaction. It is known that learning takes place effectively when the teacher and students actively engage in learning activities. To create a fun learning environment, both the teacher and students play crucial responsibilities. Howe et al. (2019) states that classroom communication matters regarding students' knowledge in class. In learning a language, classroom interaction plays a crucial role in facilitating students learning. Within the context of learning English, the teacher's questioning strategies were essential, particularly in encouraging students to respond actively during the learning process.

Zhang (2018) states that questioning is a way for the teacher and students to communicate and interact in class to develop English teaching. It has function as a means to facilitate the teaching and learning process, to monitor the learning process, and stimulate critical thinking as well as to encourage students' responses. Yang (2017) states that besides managing the teaching process, questioning in class is also used to inspire and increase students' understanding. In the teaching and learning process, questioning is commonly used to ask students to explain their thinking and reasoning, and to identify

misunderstandings about the thing. These information can be used by teachers to provide clarification and provide support to students in learning. Weihua (2018) states, the class situation would affect successful teaching and learning in the classroom. In learning a language, it is crucial to ensure that students enjoy the process. If students enjoy the learning process, it can produce an interactive class.

In classroom interaction, there were some strategies used for facilitating students to react to the teacher's questions and increase their thoughtful skills. For instance, Wu (1993) proposed there were five questioning strategies that teachers used when there was no reply from students. They were: rephrasing, simplification, repetition, decomposition (breaking down an initial question into several parts, and probing). Meanwhile, Chen (2016) suggested some strategies that could be applied to get students' responses related to higher-order questions. Those strategies were: wait time, repetition, paraphrasing, simplifying and the last strategy is probing. Besides, Walsh & Sattes (2005) mentioned there were some strategies that can be used by teachers to encourage the answering process. They were: Wait time, cueing, clueing, and probing.

Wait time is applied by the teacher to give students time to think before answering the questions. The use of wait time is when the question is complex. For example, when the teacher asks a question and the students are silent, then the teacher raises his/her hand and says *"If anyone can do it, please raise your hand!"*.

Cueing are words or symbols that help a student respond to the question. Cueing can be associated with a visual reminder like a map, picture, transparency, video, graphic, or organizer. When cueing, the teacher may remind students of the past or related learning that trigger the memory or spark the cognitive processes required for the response, or the teacher ask students to draw from their experience and what they already know to move toward a correct response. For examples, *"Remember on Monday we were discussing?"* or *"Yesterday we talked about the first step in addition and we did it on the board. Can you remember what we did first?"*

Clueing closely related to cues. Which is more clearer reminders. The teacher may provide the students with a "starter" that is a keyword, a beginning sound, a first name, sounds like, or some other verbal or nonverbal clue. For example, *the teacher point to the correct country on the map and ask the student to read the name.*

Probing can be used following incorrect or incomplete responses as well as correct responses and requires an explanation or rationale about the things. To make corrections and help students think more critically, teachers must reassure students that they thoroughly understand their responses. For examples, *“Can you give me an example of it?”* or *“Why do you think this issue is important to you?”*

Referring to the interview with an English teacher at SMP Negeri 6 Pontianak, the teacher said that since seventh-grade students were beginner in learning English and they were transitions from elementary to junior high school so they must be encouraged to respond. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting research to identify the dominant questioning strategies used by the teacher to encourage students' responses in English classroom interaction.

There were two previous research conducted by other researchers related to teachers' questioning strategies. The first is Rido (2017) conducted research in three vocational schools. There were three teachers and 33 students involved in this study. His findings revealed that the teachers used close-display, open-referential, and follow-up questions. In addition, the repeating strategy was the right strategy used when there was no response from the students. He states that this strategy used by the teachers is to control the lessons and stimulate students to answer the question. So, students have more opportunities to talk in the classroom. Astrid et al. (2019) also investigated the English teachers' questioning strategies at one Madrasah in Palembang, South Sumatra. Three types of teacher's questioning strategies used by the teacher included convergent, divergent, and procedural questions. Mostly the teachers used convergent questions, namely a question with short answers such as yes/no. Last, they found why teachers used those types of questioning in the classroom. They were recalling students' understanding, attracting students' attention, developing their thinking ability at a higher-order level, and engaging students in lessons. Meanwhile, in this research, the researcher focused on analysing the questioning strategies applied by the teacher as well as the function of these questioning strategies and the dominant questioning strategies used by the teacher to encourage students' responses in English classroom interaction.

Research Methods

This research used descriptive qualitative research. According to Creswell (2018) qualitative research was used by the researcher to analyze individuals or groups and ascribe social and human problems. Meanwhile, McCombes (2019) states that descriptive research was carried out systematically to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. This qualitative design was a suitable method used to investigate the teacher and student’s behavior in the classroom, particularly in the teacher questioning strategies to encourage students’ responses in English classroom interaction. The participant in this research is an English teacher of SMP Negeri 6 Pontianak. The observation and interview were used as the technique of data collection. In this study the researcher conducted three meetings of observation, this was carried out to gather data about the dominant questioning strategies applied by the teacher in classroom interaction. The research instruments were observation sheets and interview guide. The observation sheets consist of the strategies used by the teacher in asking questions. Meanwhile, the interview guide consists of questions the researcher made related to questioning strategies used by the teacher. The data obtained, then analyzed based on the questioning strategies suggested by Walsh & Sattes (2005). After that, the interview was conducted to asking for explanation and clarification to the teacher related to the questioning strategies used.

Results and Discussion

Result

Based on the data findings from observations it is known that the teacher uses different strategies in every meeting. It was the functions of each strategies was different in order to encourage students’ responses. The following are details:

The First meeting

At the first meeting, there were three questioning strategies used by the teacher namely cueing, clueing and wait time.

Cueing

Cueing strategy refers to words or symbols that stimulate thought. This strategy distributed by the teacher at the beginning of the lesson by providing an overview to students through words in order to determine the students interest related to the material being discussed. There were several examples of this strategy found. Such as *“Nah before that, biasanya on the street have you seen*

the direction sign turn left dan ada garis miring berwarna merahnya, do you know what does that sign mean?" and students answered *"Dilarang belok kiri ma'am (Do not turn left, ma'am)."* Then the teacher asked again *"Okay, what about the sign that turn left but tidak ada garis miringnya"* and students answered, *"Boleh belok ke kiri ma'am (Turn left ma'am)."* It indicated that the teacher provides an overview to students by mentioning the characteristics of the thing being discussed, so it can help students to imagine what the teacher asked and it was proven by students who answered correctly. Another example was *"Okay, I'll draw on the board, please guess ya. When someone wants to visit a new place, they usually use it. In today's trend people called it, it is difficult for women to read it but easy for men, what is it? (While drawing on the board)."* Then students answered *"I know mam, google maps"*. It can be seen that the teacher asked questions to students but they were silent. Therefore, the teacher uses cueing strategy in the form of words while drawing on the board. This is done to direct students to the material taught by the teacher. The correct answer from students indicates that they understand what is being asked by the teacher.

Clueing

Clueing refers to the question that started from the teacher like keyword, beginning sound, a first name, sounds like and verbal or non-verbal clue. This strategy used by the teacher in the middle of the class in order to know about the students understanding of the topic, particularly in this case, the teacher wants to know about students' knowledge related to the material about directions. There were a lot of examples from this strategy found. Such as *"So, the position of the hospital is turn? (Point out the picture on the board)"*. The teacher asks students to answer the questions together. Then students answered *"Right"*. Next, the teacher's asked again *"Yes, and the position about the school is turn? (Point out the picture on the board)"* and students answered *"Turn left"*. *"From our class to the office is turn? (The teacher shows hand gesture that lead to the left)."* All the students answered *"Turn left"*. Next *"and then go? (The teacher shows a hand gesture that lead to straight)"* students answered *"Straight"*. Furthermore, the teacher asked again *"After that, turn? (The teacher shows a hand gesture that lead to the left)"* and all students answered *"Left"* and finally the teacher asked *"then arrive to the?"* then all the students answered *"Office"*. The teacher's question above was a form of clueing strategy in which the teacher points to the pictures on the board and students answered based on

what they see. This strategy is used by the teacher with the aim that students can answer correctly and it can be seen from the responses of students who answered correctly to each of the teacher’s questions.

Wait Time

Wait time is used when the teacher did not get a response right away, they would ask leading questions. At the first meeting, this strategy used by the teacher in the middle of the class with the aim to check students understanding. After gives the explanation about the topic then the teacher asked the students about the directions from school to their home to ensure that students understand the material well. The example of this strategy is found. Such as *“Anyone? raise your hand!”*. Here the wait time process occurs where the teacher gives a few seconds until finally appointing one of the students to answer. Finally, the teacher asked one of the students to answered the question. The, that students answered *“From school to my house is turn left to Jalan Karya Baru and then go straight to Jalan Karya Baru 5 and then go straight again to Jalan Purnama 2 and then turn right to Jalan Purnama Hijau and go straight and then turn right to Gang Usaha Maju. Finally, arrive to my house”*. This strategy is used to give students time to think before they answer questions. It can be three to five seconds. Based on the teacher’s questions that asked students to explain the direction from school to their home, it may be quite complex for students so they just stay silent and need more time to think before answering. At the end, the teacher asked one of the students, and he answered well according to the teacher’s instructions.

The Second meeting

At the second meeting, the teacher only uses a cueing strategy by providing illustrated words. The teacher used this strategy at the beginning of the class to make students remember the material that had been taught. Then, the teacher continues the activities namely taking the students’ scores related to the material being taught.

Cueing

As explained before the cueing strategy aims to elicit particular responses toward a certain topic or aspect. There were some examples of this strategy. Such as *“Yesterday, we learned about turn right and left. Right?”*. Then, the teacher asked again *“So, what topic is the topic about?”* and the students

answered *"Maps mam"* It shows that the teacher asked to students by mentioning things related to the topic. Thus, the students can respond correctly because they have experienced it. The teacher asked again by using a cueing strategy. Such as *"Okay yesterday I told you when someone wants to visit a place, they will use maps, right? So, what is the purpose of learning maps?"*. Then students answered *"To know about the direction mam"* It indicates that the teacher gives an overview through words to students. In this way, students can get an idea of what is being asked. This is done by the teacher to guide the students to the material the teacher told them about.

The Third meeting

At the third meeting, the teacher the teacher uses three strategies, they were cueing, probing, and clueing strategies.

Cueing

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher used a cueing strategy by providing words to ensure student's interest in learning as well as to activate students. There were several examples of the cueing strategy found. Such as *"Okay now I will give some examples. Please guess ya. It is a pet, has legs, tail, and it has fur, barking a loud and it lives at home. What is it?"*. Then students answered *"Dog mam"* From those questions it can be known that the teacher told the specific characteristics of the animal to make students imagine what she said and guess what animal is it. It was also the same as the next question *"Yes, it is a dog."* Alright now please guess, *"in one of the famous movies, he is bad at remembering the way, it lives in the water and it swims. What is it?"*. *"Dori! Ikan mam"* answered the students. Then, the teacher asked again *"Yes, that's correct! Okay one more, It has a big sound and people said it is the king of all kings. What is it?"* and students answered *"Tiger mam"*. From the students' responses it seems that their responses were incorrect. Therefore, the teacher changes the strategy using the probing strategy.

Probing

Probing refers to questions that follow incorrect or incomplete responses as well as correct responses and require an explanation or rationale about the things. This strategy is applied by the teacher in the middle of the class to know the students understanding related to the material being discussed. From the table below examples of this strategy are found. Such as *"Are you sure? Why the lion is king?"*. It indicates that the teacher provides questions by asking reasons

for their answers to assure them that they truly understand their response. Through students answered *“karena di film kancil katanya singa adalah raja rimba ma’am”*. It is known that they understand what is being asked.

Clueing

As explained before, the clueing strategy refers to the question started by the teacher like keyword, beginning sound, a first name, sounds like and verbal or non-verbal clue, and aims to encourage students to respond. The teacher used this strategy in the middle of the class to keep students focused on the lesson by asking them some questions. There were several examples of this strategy found. Such as *“Yes of course they have heads, and what is this?”* (The teacher uses hand gesture and touch every part of the body and students mention it). From that question, it can be seen that the teacher uses hand gestures while asking questions. Which is a form of non-verbal clue strategy. It is done by the teacher to give direct examples to students so they can respond easily to the teacher’s questions. This can be proven by the students’ responses where they answered correctly according to the parts of the body appointed by the teacher.

Discussion

In this section, the researcher informed the readers that since learning is an active process which means students are involved in interactions in the classroom. Richards & Lockhart (2007) argues that questions were essential in the teaching process to stimulate and maintain students’ interest, to check students’ understanding, and to encourage their participation during a lesson. Therefore, the use of questioning strategies is an important part of teaching that must be considered by the teacher. This will impact the interaction between the teacher and students in the class itself, especially in terms of conveyed and received information related to the material being discussed.

Based on the research findings on identify the questioning strategies applied by the teacher as well as the functions of these questioning strategies and the dominant questioning strategies used by the teacher to encourage students’ responses in English classroom interaction at SMP Negeri 6 Pontianak. After analyzing the data from the first meeting to the third meeting, there were several strategies applied by the teacher such as: cueing, clueing, probing, and wait time. The use of cueing strategies appeared more than the other strategies. The cueing strategy is used by the teacher to provide an overview to students

related to certain topics so that it would be easier for them to understand what the teacher was asking. Furthermore, the clueing strategy is used when the teacher wants to highlight certain points in a material or when the teacher wants students to answer together in class. Moreover, Wait time was applied by the teacher with the aim of giving students time to think before answering the teacher's questions while the probing strategy is used by the teacher to ask for an explanation from students about something.

Rido (2017) states that questioning strategy used by teachers to control the lessons and stimulate students to answer the questions. This is in line with Astrid et al. (2019) that states teachers used questioning strategies to recall students' understanding and attract their attention. It was known from this study that each questioning strategy has a different function in the teaching and learning process in order to encourage students' responses. In addition, the distribution of strategies is also different in each teaching session, such as the cueing strategy more often applied at the beginning of class, while the clueing, probing and wait time strategies used in the middle of class.

Thus, it can be concluded that the teacher used questioning strategies in teaching English, especially in classroom interactions. Furthermore, in terms of applying questioning strategies, students' responses were greatly influenced by the teacher's questions. Therefore, teachers must consider the strategies they use in asking questions. So that students can understand and respond well. With that, the teaching and learning process can run smoothly.

Conclusion

Based on the results, there were several questioning strategies applied by the teacher such as, cueing, clueing, probing, and wait time. The questioning strategies used by the English teacher has several functions. They were: to check students' understanding related to the previous material, attract students' attention and interest, ask for explanations from students about something, and give time to students to think before answering the questions. In addition, it was concluded that the dominant questioning strategy used by the teacher was the cueing strategy which may elicit more responses from the students and stimulate their critical thinking. The cueing strategy is mostly used by teachers to provide an overview when asking questions to students so they can imagine what is being discussed and can answer well. Furthermore, the clueing strategy was used when the teacher wants to highlight certain points in a material or when the teacher wants students to answer together in class. Wait time was applied by the teacher with the aim of giving students time to think before answering the

teacher’s questions while the probing strategy was used by the teacher to ask for an explanation from students about the thing.

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