

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of the Study

Language plays an important and indispensable role in someone's life. Someone cannot fully understand others without knowing the language that is being used. It means that someone can only interact with others or expresses someone's feeling by using a language or by manipulating the words of the language others people know. Edwards (1985:6) adds that language as system implies regularity and rules of order and is used for communicative purposes by a group of people who constitutes the speech or language communication. It is a common factor that when people communicate with one another, they use a language and/or body language to express their feelings, ideas, opinions or suggestions. Thus, a language can be said to play very important function in human's life.

Typically, in doing communication, speakers ask between 300-400 questions per day, however the quality and value of questions varies. Tracy (2005:34) states that 300 until 400 questions per day are said by people to know some information. Every question demands an answer as the response. That is why question inevitably generate communication.

The Hornby dictionary defines a question as a sentence which by word orders use of interrogative words or intonation, request information and answer etc. Moreover, Guihun (2006) states a question is something about which there is

discussion, something that needs to be decided and all our knowledge results from questions. In the classroom, the use of question is aimed at creating interaction, activities, and drills in language teaching and learning. Richard (1985) remarks that questions are used to provide models for transformation, repetition and manipulation exercise, to test comprehension, and to maintain an acceptable ratio of student-teacher participation in the learning process. In addition, Alexander (1988) describes questions in the classroom are also helpful in seeking information such as a) asking opinions b) enlisting reinforcement or support, c) trying to get a response showing acceptance, forgiveness, love, attention, d) analyzing critically etc. However, as observed, most students find difficult to raise questions. The effect is they are passive in the class.

Presently, a growing number of educators emphasize the importance of students' questions in both teaching and learning processes, and the number of research studies looking for ways to encourage students to generate questions is growing. Studies at different educational levels and context generally indicate that learners avoid asking questions. The number and kind of questions that learners ask may be influenced by previous knowledge, experiences and skills, their age, the attitude of the teacher, teaching style, classroom evaluative climate, social interaction patterns and nature of topic.

Almost all educators can agree that questions are a 'good thing' that is questions play an important role in learning and thinking. It can stimulate student thinking. Kendrick (1990) states that students may see it as the teacher's responsibility to be clear. International students and members of some co-cultures

may view question asking as rude or inappropriate. Socialization, communication competence, and different perceptions by different groups of learners may all affect question asking. This review suggests an irony in classroom. While questions are integral components of the teaching-learning process, students fail to ask them.

Graesser (2003) states that students' questions usually result from a gap or discrepancy in the students' knowledge or a desire to expand their knowledge. Students' questions may be triggered by unknown words or inconsistencies between their knowledge and new information, which then provoke 'cognitive disequilibrium'

As social being, interaction with one another by means of a language is inevitable. Using question to make the interaction fruitful is very interesting because it can express what the speaker wants to know. People always fail to make good interaction if she or he cannot do communication well. It means that interaction can be successfully done if there is a good communication between the speaker and the listener.

Although teachers had put a lot of efforts in teaching to increase students' achievement, if the students themselves did not have high capabilities and motivation to learn, the process of English language, teaching will not be effective. Brown (2000) emphasizes that the success of students in second language is affected by students' personal investment of time, effort, and attention to the second language and if all learners are intrinsically motivated to perform all classroom tasks, we might not even need teachers. He also stresses that what is

important is to motivate the students, by creating awareness amongst them regarding the importance of English and then gradually helping the students to attain his/her goal.

Therefore, it is necessary to view the English language teaching from the students' perspectives. What students perceive about what is going on the class will influence their achievement in the class. Hiew (2012) states that learners' perception towards the teaching and learning of English should be taken and reviewed seriously as it is a two-way process involving teachers and learners.

For concerning explanation above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study about the types of questions used by students in SMA N 3 Medan in order to find out the questions used frequently and in classroom interaction and the factors affecting students' questioning power.

B. The Identification of Problem

Based on the observation, the teacher was too dominant in classroom activities instead of giving the student an opportunity to ask. This also examined 42 students in the class and observed an average of two teacher questions per minute and two student questions per half hour. It meant that students asked only an average 4 questions per hour. The lack of questions within the classroom has been of concern to educational practitioners.

Furthermore, while some students asked questions in the classroom, others did not. In the classroom interaction, the students did not ask questions because they feared negative reactions from the teachers. Similarly, students may avoid

questions asking if they did not feel there was an advantage to ask e.g. if they felt that the teacher was unwilling to respond. Although passive and apprehensive students refrained from question asking, other students who were particularly unlikely to ask questions were those who were not called upon frequently, those who were often criticized for the wrong answer, and those who seem to provide the wrong response rather than the right response. Over time, low-achieving students ask fewer and fewer questions. Furthermore, higher achieving students ask more substantive questions than lower achieving students. Finally, students may not feel that their role is to ask questions to teachers.

C. The Scope of the Study

This study attempts to investigate the student's questions used by students in English classroom interaction. Long and Sato (1983) theory will be used as the theory of categorization of student's question in classroom interaction. In this theory, there are 2 types of questions display question, and referential question. This study will be applied in X MIA 7 of SMA N 3 Medan.

D. The Problems of the Study

In accordance with the previous background of the study, the problems of the study are formulated as following:

1. What types of student's questions are used during the English learning (group discussion/ presentation) process in SMAN 3 Medan?
2. What are the factors affecting students' questioning power?

E. The Objectives of the Study

In supporting of the research problem of the study, the objectives of the study are formulated as following:

1. To find out the types of student's question used during the English learning (group discussion/ presentation) process in SMAN 3 Medan.
2. To describe the factors affecting students' questioning power.

F. The Significances of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to provide information which may have theoretical as well as practical value for teachers.

1. Theoretically, the research findings of this study later are expected to be useful for the enrichment for the addition of some new theories and information in the area of how the students deliver their questions during the classroom interaction.
2. Practically, the findings are useful for the teachers in learning process, which types of question can affect and improve their questions to be higher level.