

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching learning process is a complex and multi-faced issue. Teachers' teaching and learners' learning are two important components to build up a meaningful and effective educational context. In this context, teachers and students learn from one another as they build up an environment of learning in a class (Wood & Anderson, 2001).

At this point, learning process gains a role as a mean for negotiation and the success of this negotiation mainly depends on the quality and quantity of learners' participation to information sharing in the class as getting students to speak to use the language they are learning is a vital part of a teachers job and responsibility to adopt the target language to promote their communication with learners within which teachers' questions maintain the talk via extending and leading students into continuance. (Yan, 2006).

It means that the significance that departed from the duties and responsibilities of teachers are severe enough to educate their students in class. As the English teacher in classes, requires plenty of practice, needs cooperation between the teacher and students in class to join fulfill the verbal communication and the teaching-learning procedure. Teachers' questioning has traditionally been viewed as an important component of teacher talk and the core of effective teaching in classroom context.

Questioning is one of the most regularly employed teaching strategies. It is used by many teachers during their teaching process. They consider that it is an effective tool to build students' understanding and to stimulate them to participate in learning. Thus, almost all teachers ask questions in the class every day to individual students, to small groups, and to the whole class.

Studies relating to EFL (English as Foreign Language) teaching have pointed out the need for teachers' questioning. It can be inferred that in EFL classes, especially in Indonesia, where the target language is seldom used outside the classroom, questioning can be considered as the most powerful device to stimulate students to communicate. A common problem that EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers are facing is to deal with a passive class, where students are unresponsive and avoid interaction with the teacher. This is especially true when a teacher seeks interaction in a teacher-class dialog, such as asking questions to the class as a whole, expecting at least one student to respond.

It means that the teachers are facing a challenge of how to create a conducive learning environment which is effective for the learners to attain good achievements in the subject. Without considering a proper plan to use questions as a learning tool, teachers are likely to miss a powerful opportunity to create the type of dynamic and interactive dialogue that promotes an environment in which students actively analyze and process information to answer good questions.

As Tsui (1995) states that in EFL classroom, teachers spend two thirds of the classroom time for lecturing. They do most of the talking whilst students remain silent. However, the most important factor within any effective language teaching-learning is that students are enabled to do most of the talking. It means that students'

talking time (STT) should be more dominant than teachers' talking time (TTT). It can be reached when the students participate actively during the lesson.

Therefore, when the students never speak English, teachers' question can be used to lead, to extend, and to control communication in order to enhance students' exposure to the target language. Furthermore, employing questions in language classrooms also help teachers, to check what students know and can do, to gain students' attention to the task, to review and revise on what have been learned, and to help in managing classroom. For instance:

Teacher : *Morning everybody. Have you finished your homework?*

Students : *Morning, Mom. Yes, I have finished, Mom.*

*Not yet Mom.*

Teacher : *Why haven't you finished yet, dear? Come on collect your exercise books now.*

From the conversation above it could be seen that there were two types of teacher's question used to the students in the classroom namely yes/No question and referential question. Yes/No question based on the conversation above was marked by teacher's question "*Have you finished your homework?*". and then the students respond by answering "*Yes, I have finished and Not yet*". While the second types of teacher's question used in classroom was referential question which the teacher's questions contain an elaboration as such reason. It was marked by teacher's questions "*Why haven't you finish yet, dear?*". Both of those teacher's questions asked to the students were commonly used in the classroom. And the questions are effective which aim to make the class is to be conducive in order to the learning process run effectively. And it is one of the procedural to manage the class and it is useful to ensure the smooth flow of the teaching process in classroom.

Therefore, teachers use questions to engage the students and sustain an active style to the learning. The teacher also uses questions as part of the assessment of learning in order to determine how they best structure, organize and present new learning. However, developing questioning approaches requires much greater emphasis on the time provided for students to think individually, collaboratively and deeply to enable them to develop answers and to share better answers. This will improve their thinking and engagement.

Historically, teachers have asked questions to check what has been learnt and understood, to help them gauge whether to further review previous learning, increase or decrease the challenge, and assess whether students are ready to move forward and learn new information (factual checks – ie „Closed“ questions). This can be structured as a simple „teacher versus the class“ approach, where the teacher asks a question and accepts an answer from a volunteer, or selects/conscripts a specific student to answer. These approaches are implicit in any pedagogy, but teachers need a range of „Open“ questioning strategies to address different learning needs and situations. Teachers must also pitch questions effectively to raise the thinking challenge, target specific students or groups within the class.

Moreover, students fear to produce words in an activity that demands them to speak up. However, students should be encouraged to use the target language because students“ communicative competence is improved through practicing the language for communication. Actually, the students possibly practice to use the target language, but they are afraid to speak up, so they tend to be quiet. The reason why they do not response their teachers“ question is not only because they

do not understand the lesson nor know the answer, but also it might be caused by the teachers who still do not master or even not know the skill in questioning.

This guidance informs teachers how to pre-plan their questions and select approaches for promoting classroom talk; prepare their „open“ and „high-challenge“ questions; pre-determine the level and type of challenge they wish to set, who they will target and how they will target specific groups in the classroom.

Teacher : *What are the characters of the story in this text?*

Annisa : *Cinderella, and fairy.*

Farhan : *Prince.*

Amelia : *Step mother*

From the conversation above there is a question which the teacher questions by using the characters of the story in this text. Namely “*What are the characters of the story in this text?*”. This question refers to display question which the students can answer what teacher asked. It is proved by students’ answer who can describe by word by word namely “Cinderella and Fairy, Prince and Step mother”. This question is very effective because the teacher’s question includes clarity, learning value, interest, availability and extension. It is caused teacher’s question Convergent. It is an useful question to encourage the students response.

According to Tanaka (2011), questions may process a variety of purposes. Therefore, questioning is not only about gathering information from respondents, but includes some other functions. The functions of teachers questions are not only interrogative, but can also be instructional cues or stimuli that convey content elements and directions (what to do and how) to students in the classroom. It means that questions are provided to learners in order to fill the gaps in

information between teachers and students during the process of teaching and learning.

In other words, if all teachers have a full understanding of the function and the reason of their questions and it can be the positive effects that they can help the students learn the subject matter in depth, so that they can self-evaluate the questioning techniques applied in their lessons particularly in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context in which Junior High School teachers teach English to their students.

As what Brown (2001:169) states that one of the best ways to develop teachers' role as an initiator and sustainer of interaction is to develop a repertoire of questioning strategies. Therefore, what kind of and how questions are used in the class is important to provide an effective interaction. It will happen if the teachers can make the effective questioning to ask the students in teaching-learning process.

Effective questioning by the teacher directs students into understanding lesson content, arouse their curiosity, stimulate their imagination, and motivate them to seek out new knowledge. If executed skillfully, questioning would elevate pupils' level of thinking (Muth & Alverman, 1992; Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Kauchak, & Gibson, 1994; Ornstein, 1995; Hussin, H., 2006). Correspondingly, this elevates students' inquiry in the form of challenging assumptions and exposing contradictions that lead to acquisition of new knowledge. As it can be seen at the conversation below:

Teacher : *How does Cinderella feel about her step mother?*

Rafli : *Sad*

Putra : *Kejam.*

Agnes : *Cruel.*

Teacher : *Yes, Putra that's right. Good Agnes. Rafli, Do you understand with this question? Maksudnya How does her step mother treat her? Do you know the meaning of treat?*

Rafli : *Silent*

Based on the conversation above there are two types of questions which the teacher asked to students in the classroom namely Display and Yes/No Question. Display question who teacher used to ask in the class such as "*How does Cinderella feel about her step mother?*". This question refers to display question which the students can answer what teacher asked. It is proved by students' answer who can describe word by word namely "sad, kejam and cruel". But from the students' answers are considered correctless (sad) based on the text about. Here the students have any wrong interpretation about what teacher questioned. Then the teacher changes the question to be "*How does her step mother treat her?*". From this question, the teacher expects that the student can answer correctly. But the result is nothing. Finally the teacher reformulates the question specifically by "*Do you know the meaning of treat?*". It is kinds of yes/no question which the first question is display to be yes/no. In fact that the student (Rafli) has any limitation in mastering vocabulary. It is marked by word *treat*. From the questions above it can be said that display question that teacher used is effective. It is proved which the question contain clarity, learning value, interest and availability. While yes/no question used by the teacher is less

effective. It is characterized with clarity, interest and learning value. The reason of the teacher used these questions to encourage students to answer what the teacher questioned. It is called as divergent dan convergent.

Those phenomena above have shown that teachers have known the purpose and the way to ask the questioning in teaching learning process, but they do not know the types of teachers questioning and the skills of questioning. It is in line with Brualdi (1998) states that the teachers should create the various questions based on the purposes of the questions and teachers must be able to ask question efectively in order to teach well. Effective questions depend on the using of teachers" skills. It means that when the teachers ask questions there must be having knowledge and skills in questioning for teachers in teaching learning process.

In line with all explanations above, this study would like to describe the teachers questioning in (EFL) classroom in SMP Negeri 15 Medan.

## **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

Based on the background of the study above, the problems are formulated as the following:

1. What types of teacher"s questions are used by the teacher in EFL classroom?
2. How far the effectiveness of teacher"s questions in EFL classroom?
3. Why does the teacher ask those questions in EFL classroom?



### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

In relation to the problem of the study, it attempts to reach the following objectives:

1. To find out the types of teacher's questions in EFL classroom.
2. To describe of the effectiveness of those questions in EFL classroom.
3. To find out the reasons of those questions asked by the teacher in EFL classroom.

### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

With reference to previous explanation, questions not only take place in daily conversation but also in the teaching learning process. This study attempts to investigate the teacher's questions which shown the conversation between teacher and students in EFL Junior High classes. The aspects will be observed in this study are the types of teacher's questions in EFL classroom proposes by Tsui (1995), the effective of those questions according to Ur (1996) and the reasons of those questions asked by the teacher according to Richards & Lockhart (2000).

### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study are expected to be relevant and significant theoretically and practically. The findings could give contribution to all readers for those who are concerned with this field. In the following significances of the study are stated theoretically and practically.

#### **a. Theoretically**

Theoretically, the usefulness of the findings is described as the following:

- i. The enrichment of questions knowledge in the field of teaching especially in the teacher's questions.
  - ii. To widen horizon in the theory of teaching especially in the teacher's questions.
- b. Practically

Practically, the usefulness of the findings is described as the following:

- i. This research can be a source for especially other researchers who want to conduct a research on questioning, and generally for every teacher in conducting teaching process.
- ii. By knowing the types of teacher's questions in English classroom, it is expected for the teacher will improve the teachers' skills of questioning in teaching-learning process.
- iii. The teachers should be selective and having preparation in giving questions to the students in English classroom which are useful as the teachers skills in developing teaching-learning process