

THE HYPOTHETICAL ACTIVITIES OF TEACHER QUESTIONING IN PROMOTING EFL STUDENTS' LEARNING

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Abstract.

This conceptual paper shares the idea of the hypothetical activities of teacher questioning roles in facilitating EFL students' learning. Evidence is mounting that teacher questions can assist EFL students in various purposes in teaching learning process. The teacher tends to deliver a simple to complex level of question, in order the discussion can run smoothly. Despite this, a various of good questions will not guarantee that the interactive classroom will be created, the appropriate teacher roles in deploying question is a need. Teachers play different roles when they ask different questions, and these roles affect students' learning. It can be developed by considering; the contents to be taught, the types of questions to be deployed, the role of teacher to be possessed and the tasks chosen. The blueprint of the teacher questioning activities can be used in conducting effective classroom questioning.

Keywords: teacher questioning, roles, activities, classroom interaction.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers know from their training and experience that questioning plays an important role in today's instruction. Modern lessons are fast-paced and interactive, with teachers asking a lot of questions. Bond (2007: 19) found that question account for 80 percent of classroom talk and that some teachers ask more than 100 of them per hour. In the context of EFL classroom, it can not be denied that teacher is the only source learners to communicate with, and 40 to 50 percent of classroom instruction time spends on questioning as the effective strategies (Engho, 2005; Wong, 2010). Theoretically, it is believed that they can assist students to convey students' review, to check on comprehension, to stimulate critical thinking, to encourage creativity, to emphasize a point, to control classroom activities, to help determines grade, and to encourage discussion (Eng ho ,2005; Zhi Tan, 2007; Wong, 2010; Boyd, 2015).

Apart from its widely asserted advantages, however, asking questions in EFL classroom is not an easy task. Teacher has known to use questions appropriately. As Blosser

(2000) states that in asking questions require knowledge of the types of questions, strategies and the art of questioning. Teachers sometimes get so involved in asking questions that they do not give much time to analyze why and how they do it. To minimize such encounter problem, teacher's self awareness of their own role when asking questions is a need. Chin (2007) contended that teacher roles of questioning are a key factor of classroom interaction and different roles serve different functions for promoting students' conceptual understanding. When the teacher asks different questions, and posits his roles, it affects students' learning. For instance, when teachers ask more open-ended questions to encourage students to express their ideas and take responsibility for their own learning, the teachers may play the role of motivators to stimulate the generation of new ideas (Crawford, 2000).

This paper attempts to illustrate teacher questioning activities in promoting EFL students' learning. Particularly, the revised version of Bloom Taxonomy Level in Khratsworl (2002) namely; remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating, and the four roles of teacher when asking questions by Chen et al (2016) namely; dispenser, moderator, coach, and participant, are signified to get a better descriptions of teacher questioning activities in EFL classroom. It, then, would be beneficial for EFL teacher in conducting an English classroom questioning to promote students' learning.

WHY DO TEACHER ASK QUESTION?

Teachers dominantly keep on talking in ESL / EFL classroom interaction. It happens either in classroom which are lecturer – centered or student- centered. It is in line with Ellis (1997, p.74) states that the dominant of teacher's language is most evident in classroom which are teacher-centered, however, even in students centered, might be anticipated, the lecturer has been shown to take up the main share of the talking time. It also supported by results of research showed that teachers typically spend 40 to 50 per cent of their instructional time asking questions (Eng Ho, 2005; Zhi Tan, 2007; Lewin, 2010, Walsh & Hodge, 2016).

Past studies has revealed the reason underlying teacher need to ask questions. Basically, it is used to test students' ability functions in ELL classroom environment, fulfill the objectives of the classroom curriculum and provide practice in language production, (Zhi Tan, 2007). Similarly, in EFL context, Freiberg and Driscoll (1992, p. 224) state the advantages of teacher's questions such as question gives an indication of the effectiveness of instruction to the whole class, the level of dialogue and thinking is raised when higher- level questions are used in the classroom. It can also improve students' oral and communication

skills, students hear peer responses to the same question and compare answers with their own. Moreover, question provides students opportunities for review of recently taught information and cues the students about what the teacher feels is important.

Further, Lynch (1991) also mentions the benefits of teacher's questions into three categories; linguistics, interactional and psycholinguistics. In term of linguistics, teacher's questions serve mainly to test students' ability function in the classroom environment, fulfill the objective of the curriculum and provide practice in language production. Meanwhile, interactionally, it concerns on the ways in which questions (and the questioner) exert social control. It may be relatively unimportant whether teacher asks display or real questions, what is important is the way in which control over discourse is maintained by the teacher or made available to the learners. Then, in the view of psycholinguistics, teacher's questions deals with what has to do with the mental processes involved in second language comprehension. It is inevitable that at less than native proficiency levels, will be found some difficulties in understanding written or spoken second language.

In the context of ESL teacher, Engho (2005) presents three level descriptions why teacher is asking display and referential questions. Level 1 describes teacher asks questions in order to prompt short and simple response, to correct student answer, to allow students and to display their previous learnt knowledge within classroom context. While, Level 2 tend to focus on how questions can gauge students' proficiency and to stimulate more thoughtful responses, though not necessarily linguistically lengthy or complex. The last level indicates that teacher genuinely wants to know students' judgment whether it is right or wrong answer, promote an interactive classroom and stimulate complex and lengthy linguistic output from the students.

In general, it is widely believed that teacher question play a vital role in ESL as well as in EFL classroom context. It is used as a device by which teacher could evaluate the specific purposes of learning. It is hoped that this article may contribute to the knowledge base by providing insights into how questioning can be used effectively in classroom. It also offers concrete suggestions regarding how to improve questioning skills.

TYPES OF TEACHER QUESTIONING

Questions, like students, have an important role to play in learning process. The types of questions and the ways in which they are posed are critical to developing students' abilities

to process information at various levels of thought. Further, Brualdi (1998) cited that good questions are questions that can expand students' knowledge and encourage them to think creatively. It implies that teacher must be sure that they have a clear purpose for their questions rather than just determining what knowledge is known.

Related to the types of questions Cooper (1999:140-141) proposes compliance questions, rhetorical question, prompting and probing questions. The brief explanations is as follow:

1. Compliance Question

Question in which students are expected to comply with command worded as a question. For instance, "*Be quiet, please...!*" Or "*May I take your attention, please!*"

2. Rhetorical Question

Question in which students are not expected to reply. The teacher answers his own question. For instance, *why observation is needed before doing the real teaching practice? It is because observation.....*

3. Prompting Question

Question which is aimed to prompt students' thought process. It is delivered to the students, when the teacher expects the students to be more focus on a particular part of materials. On the other hand, when the students give wrong answer, the teacher will prompt their process of thinking that finally they can find the right answer.

Malcolm : *What's a psychophar...molist?*

Teacher : ***Psy-cho-pharm-a-col-o-gist. What do you think, Malcolm? What word parts do you see in there?***

Malcolm : *Well, the guy who woks at a drug store-pharmacist or something.*

Teacher : ***Great start, Malcolm. The first part-psycho-you've heard that before.***

Malcolm : *People who work with crazy people?*

Teacher : ***Who can help Malcolm. Isaac?***

Isaac : *It's, hmm- like a psychologist?*

Teacher : ***And what's that? Someone knows, yes Hillary?***

Hillary : *Someone who studies people?*

Teacher : ***No. james?***

James : *Someone who studies people's mind.*

Teacher : ***Close, enough. So, put all together. What's a psychopharmacologist? Write down in your notebook, everybody, what you think it is. Great, check with your neighbor. If you agree and really think you got it right, put a hand up. All right, Jamal?***

Jamal : *(who paired with Lissa) Someone who checks out people and how they feel, mentally tuff, but work at a drug store.*

Teacher : s
 Arturo : *Someone who gives out drugs but just people who are feeling bad mentally.*
 Teacher : *Absolutely! It's two jobs in one. Someone who specializes in pharmaceuticals and drugs. And someone who knows the minds works. So, this single career puts the two jobs together into a new specialization. We get someone who has high expertise in understanding chemistry, drugs, the human brain, and feelings.*

4. Probing Question

Cooper (1999:13) defines probing question as a question which requires the students to think more deeply to acquire the right answer. In other words, it can be called a continual question which requires the students to think more deeply to the answer of the previous questions. The following is the example taken from Cooper (1999:13).

Teacher : *How can we convince auto manufacturers to build smaller cars, cars that burn gasoline?*
 Students : *Pass a law.*
 Teacher : *Can you be more specific? (Probe)*
 Student : *Well, smaller cars burn less gas. If you just ask them to make smaller cars, they wouldn't do it. So pass a law requiring it.*
 Teacher : *Wouldn't car manufacturers rebel at being forced to make smaller cars? (Probe)*
 Student : *I guess. But they would do it.*
 Teacher : *What effect might such a law have on businesspeople in other industries? How would they perceive such a law? (Probe)*

Whereas, Long and Sato in Chaudron (1995: 127), and Talebinezahd (2005) differentiate questions which concern with communication in language classroom into display and referential questions. Display question deals with the teacher determining in asking for information which students already know. It tends to be closed questions. For example:

A: *These are nice pants!*
 B: *Can I try them on?*
 A: *This is a nice sweater!*
 B: *Can I try it on?*

(Taken from Talebinezahd, 2005)

While in referential questions, the students does not know the information. It may be either open or closed question which promote greater learner productivity, and the latter would likely promote more meaningful communication between teacher and learner. For instance:

1. *Suppose you win \$50,000. What are you going to do with it?*
 2. *How do you usually spend your weekend?*
- (Taken from Talebinezhad, 2005)

Particularly, Zhi Tan (2007) proposes closed questions and open questions. Closed questions are those for which there are limited number of acceptable responses or “right answers”. For instance. “*what is the chemical formula for water?*” or “*what are plants cell walls made of?*”. In other words, this question is expected that students have already been exposed to the information requested by closed question. While, open questions anticipate a wide range of acceptable responses rather than one or two “right answers”. They draw on students’ past experiences but they also cause students to give and justify their opinions, to infer, or to identify implications, to formulate hypotheses and to make judgement based on their values and standards. Example of open questions might include: “*if you were to design a science display for the school bulletin board, what would you include in the display and why?*” or “*what do you suppose life on earth might be like with weaker gravity?*”. Differently Jones *et al* (2006, p.91) mentions the types of questions as Table 1.

Table 1. Types of questions

Open questions – are designed to elicit as much information as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Which part of your teaching do you enjoy most?</i> • <i>How would you describe your experience of . . . ?</i> • <i>What would you want to gain from this course?</i> • <i>What do you think would be the best way to take this forward?</i> • <i>What are the advantages of using this one?</i> • <i>How did you overcome those?</i>
Probing questions are designed to go deeper into the issue, in order to gain quality information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In what way?</i> • <i>How did you feel when you had completed that work?</i> • <i>What makes that part of the job interesting/more satisfying/difficult?</i> • <i>Will you expand on that a little?</i> • <i>Why is that important?</i> • <i>What makes it helpful/difficult to work in that way?</i>
Reflective questions are questions which check out understanding and reflect information back to the job holder in order to help him/her develop the issue further:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>So are you saying that . . . ?</i> • <i>Are you telling me that . . . ?</i> • <i>If I were to summarise what you've said, would I be right in saying. . . ?</i>
closed questions – can be used to gather information, or to check facts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have you used this computer program often?</i> • <i>What resources do you use for . . . ?</i> • <i>Where did you find this information?</i> <p><i>Closed questions lead to specific information or the reply 'yes' or 'no'. They may need to be followed up with more open questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have you used this reading text before?</i> • <i>Are there any disadvantages?</i>
Multiple questions- when two or more questions are asked at the same time. They are best avoided, as they are often confusing. Usually only one question will be answered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Will you tell me what you've done best and what you'd like to improve on?</i> • <i>Are you happy with the agenda, would you like to add something or do you think we should approach it differently?</i>

Leading questions – can be frustrating if used too often or inappropriately, but they can sometimes be useful for exerting influence. You are likely to get a positive response whether the teacher agrees with you or not. It is important to follow up with an open question.

- *I'm sure you can see the advantages of this, can't you?*
- *What do think these advantages may be?(follow-up)*
- *Don't you think that would be a good idea?*
- *So, how do we put it into practice? (follow-up)*

Adopted from Jones *et al* (2006:91)

From the description of the various questions above, it can be implied that the more question oriented in the classroom, the more teachers can find appropriate way to elicit students' constrains in learning process.

CLASSIFICATION OF QUESTION

Questions have also distinct characteristic, serve various functions, and create different level of thinking. Based on the revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy, there are six levels namely of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. Each level requires the person to respond by using different kind of thought process. The detail description of the revised version of Bloom's taxonomy level can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Structure of the Cognitive Process Dimension of the Revised Taxonomy

<p>1.0 Remember - Retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory.</p> <p>1.1 Recognizing</p> <p>1.2 Recalling</p>
<p>2.0 Understand - Determining the meaning of instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication.</p> <p>2.1 Interpreting</p> <p>2.2 Exemplifying</p> <p>2.3 Classifying</p> <p>2.4 Summarizing</p> <p>2.5 Inferring</p> <p>2.6 Comparing</p> <p>2.7 Explaining</p>
<p>3.0 Apply - Carrying out or using a procedure in a given situation.</p> <p>3.1 Executing</p> <p>3.2 Implementing</p>
<p>4.0 Analyze - Breaking material into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose.</p> <p>4.1 Differentiating</p> <p>4.2 Organizing</p> <p>4.3 Attributing</p>

<p>5.0 Evaluate - Making judgments based on criteria and standards.</p> <p>5.1 Checking</p> <p>5.2 Critiquing</p>
<p>6.0 Create - Putting elements together to form a novel, coherent whole or make an original product.</p> <p>6.1 Generating</p> <p>6.2 Planning</p> <p>6.3 Producing</p>

Adopted from Krathwohl, D R, (2002).

Table 2. describes the revised version of Bloom taxonomy in cognitive process dimension. The verb aspect of the original *Knowledge* category was kept as the first of the six major categories, but was renamed **Remember**. *Comprehension* was renamed because one criterion for selecting category labels was the use of terms that teachers use in talking about their work. Because *understand* is a commonly used term in objectives, its lack of inclusion was a frequent criticism of the original Taxonomy. Indeed, the original group considered using it, but dropped the idea after further consideration showed that when teachers say they want the student to "really" understand, they mean anything from *Comprehension* to *Synthesis*. But, to the revising authors there seemed to be popular usage in which *understand* was a widespread synonym for comprehending. So, *Comprehension*, the second of the original categories, was renamed **Understand**. *Application*, *Analysis*, and *Evaluation* were retained, but in their verb forms as **Apply**, **Analyze**, and **Evaluate**. *Synthesis* changed places with *Evaluation* and was renamed **Create**. All the original subcategories were replaced with gerunds, and called "cognitive processes."

TEACHER ROLES OF QUESTIONING

Research has suggested that teacher questioning is a major contributing factor shaping the role of teachers for promoting dialogic interaction and students' ownership of learning (Boyd & Rubin, 2006; Zhi tan, 2007; Wong, 2010, Boyd, 2016). In that way, it is suggested that teacher questioning should encourage students to be authors and producers of knowledge, with ownership over it, rather than mere consumers of it, (Zhi Tan, 2007).

In the context of EFL classroom interaction which happened in argumentative discourse, Chen et al (2016) conceptualized the roles of teacher questioning, which signified the two conceptions of ownership: ownership of the *ideas* in discussion and ownership of *activities*. The former ownership refers to those who controlled the ideas, while the later

refers to the one who control the activities during the argumentative discourse is conducted. There are four roles namely; dispenser, moderator, coach, and participant. The detail description of each roles can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Teacher’s Role in EFL Classroom Discussion

<p>Dispenser <i>Feature:</i> the teacher controls the ownership of discussion <i>Function:</i> the teacher focuses on transforming information, explaining vocabulary, recalling content and evaluating students’ understanding. <i>Student response:</i> no response, one-word answer, or one sentence filling in the blank.</p>
<p>Moderator <i>Feature:</i> students control the ideas of discussion under the teacher’s activity <i>Function:</i> the teacher intervenes in recognizing, comparing, and integrating students’ diverse ideas to reach consensus <i>Student response:</i> one or more sentences to explicitly explain ideas or display position</p>
<p>Coaching Role <i>Feature:</i> the teacher controls the ownership of discussion in an activity conducted by students <i>Function:</i> the teacher allows students to do the activities but challenges the students’ ideas and helps to resolve students’ difficulties by asking questions. <i>Student response:</i> one or more sentences to explicitly explain ideas or position</p>
<p>Participant Role <i>Feature:</i> students control the ownership of discussion and activities <i>Function:</i> teacher and students exchanging ideas and developing activities collaboratively through student- led negotiation. <i>Student response:</i> one or more sentences to construct or evaluate the teacher’s ideas</p>

Adapted from Chen et al., (2016)

The above table presents a teacher in a *dispenser role* could control both the ideas being discussed and the activity; a teacher in a *moderator role* allows students to control the ideas being discussed during a teacher-directed activity; a teacher in a *coaching role* controls the ownership of discussion in an activity conducted by students; and a teacher in a *participant role* allows students to control both the ideas and the activities.

IMPLEMENTING EFL TEACHER QUESTIONING ACTIVITIES

Classroom interaction in which require students to argue on certain topic to be discussed and keep active involving in the discussion, are inseparable one to another. The implementation of teacher questioning activities could be donethrough work group discussion, in which, then begin with introducing students to the big idea which identified by the EFL teacher based upon on National Standard Curriculum. Several considerations such as, the task and the topic were chosen based on the students’ interest and familiar to them. For example the big idea is “A company should provide children day care for their women employee”. Once the big idea have been introduced, teacher could ask students to share what they already knew about that big idea. Table 4. describes the teaching

strategies like concept maps and KWL (what we Know, what we Want and what we Learned) charts could usually be adopted by the teacher. The purpose of having students discuss their prior knowledge with each other is to help them become more involved in classroom discussion. While the students deliver their argument, the teacher could write them on whiteboard.

To check whether their argument is addressed to the big idea, the teacher, then, guide them to generate questions on their arguments. The teacher could ask penetrating questions during this process that scaffolded students' ability to construct their argument, such as: *“what did you observe”*, *“how would your observation relate to the big idea?”*, *“what is your claim...?”*, *“what evidence can support your claim?”*. As students develop their claim and evidence as a group, each group is asked to present its argument to the whole class. In that way, all students will identify the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. The role of teacher then, is to foster students in the argumentative process by modelling the practice of how to question claims and the justification for those claims. Teacher also took on the role of critiquer to challenge students' ideas and guide their investigations. Throughout the process, teacher is encouraged to use questioning to engage their students in thinking about conceptual concepts that enable them to construct their knowledge.

After all groups have presented to the whole class, the teacher could ask them to compare their argument to what experts say in books or on the internet. At the end, each student is required to engage in writing activities to reflect on what they have learned and how their ideas had changed compared to the earlier one. In summary, it is illustrated in the following blueprint of teacher questioning activities.

The Blueprint of Hypothetical Teacher Questioning Activities

- Skill : Speaking
- Level : University Level
- Competence : Examining controversial issues and using effective means of debating through the use of correct terminology.
- Goal : Students are able to develop skills in argumentation and sharpen their communication skills.
- Approach/ Strategies : KWL

Teacher Questioning Stages	Teaching Learning Activities	
	Teacher	Students
Stage 1. Introducing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing the big idea to the whole class. example: “A company should provide children day care for their women employee” 	Generating any information related to big idea on KWL Chart

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring students' prior knowledge by using KWL strategy (Ogle, 1986) 	
Stage 2. Crosschecking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking students to work in group Guiding students to check their information whether it is successfully addressed to the big idea <p>Sample Teacher question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"what did you observe",</i> <i>"how would your observation relate to the big idea?"</i> <i>"what is your claim...?"</i> <i>"what evidence can support your claim?"</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working in group to generate questions related to their prior knowledge Organizing the evidence to support their arguments
Stage 3. Discussing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering students in argumentative process Modelling of how to question the claim and make a justification <p>Sample questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Why should company provide children daycare?</i> <i>Is it free or they have to pay?</i> <i>Do you think the woman employee will focus to their job?</i> <i>How company could guarantee the parent that the children are safe?</i> 	Presenting and debating their group claims and evidence to generate a class claim in a whole class setting (Weaknesses and strengths of their claims)
Stage 4. Comparing	<p>Asking students to compare with other argument in different sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Are there any bad or good impacts of that program?</i> 	Students compare their arguments to textbooks, internet, etc.
Stage 5. Reflecting	<p>Fostering students to reflect their arguments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Is it really the best solution for woman employee who has children?</i> 	Students write down their argument individually which leads to identifying pattern and big ideas.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that teacher should have known how to use question effectively by considering what type of question, what level of questions and what roles which should be played by the teacher in asking question. In that way, perhaps the students can give a response which can meet teacher's expectation. In particular, the four roles of teacher questioning, perhaps could also benefit students an opportunity to learn and practice a range of thinking and provide a simple structure for many different kinds of questions and thinking. Thus, this idea which reflects in the blueprint may contribute to the practical of EFL teacher when asking students' to argue and actively involve in classroom discussion.

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