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# An Analysis of Questions and Answers in an EFL Classroom of St. Joseph Junior High School in Academic Year 2015/2016

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## ABSTRACTS

This project entitled “An analysis of questions and answers in an EFL classroom at St. Joseph Junior High School”. This study aims at knowing: 1) the types of questions and answers used in EFL classroom dialogue at St. Joseph Junior High School in academic year 2015/2016; 2) the grammatical errors of questions and answers used by teacher and students in EFL classroom dialogue at St. Joseph Junior High School in academic year 2015/2016. And, 3) How teacher and students ask questions and answer them in EFL classroom dialogue at St. Joseph Junior High School in academic year 2015/2016. The research used qualitative research method. The research subjects were 1 teacher of English and 32 students of grade VIII chosen purposively. The result shows that types of questions and answers are used by teacher and students in EFL classroom dialogue are limited on by purpose and by grammatical form questions. Then, by purpose including descriptive questions, relational question, and causal questions, and by grammatical form including polar questions and non-polar questions. Then, grammatical errors found in the teacher and students’ questions and answers are omission, misformation and misordering. Meanwhile, the aims of asking questions and giving answers are teacher gives questions to begin the class, teacher gives questions to lead the students to the topic of the material which is being taught, teacher mostly gives questions started by modal auxiliary can, and students answered their teacher with short answers, and students mostly answer the questions together.

**Keywords:** *questions and answers, EFL classroom, classroom interaction*

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## 1. Introduction

Education is the sum total of one’s learning experiences during a lifetime not just organized formal learning experiences in schools, but all learning experiences. It is a process by which a person gains understanding of self, as well as the environment. Laska (1976:3) again states that education becomes more important activity in which human being engage. It is means of the educative process and its role in transmitting the cultural heritage from one generation to the next that human societies are able to maintain their existence. In short, it can be said that through education, people can try to change or improve their societies.

Teaching and learning process is a complex and multi-face dissiue. There are many variables and two important components in it that is teachers’ teaching and learners’ learning that build up a meaningful and effective educational context. However, it is not easy to observe and determine if learning really takes place in a class. Therefore, we have to use any means of checking learning. Teacher’s question is one of the prominent tools. There are many types of teacher questions in an EFL class each of which evaluates learning from a different perspective. The outcomes of this process could reveal the amount of students’ learning. This study intends to examine how teachers’ questions affect students’ learning. An EFL classroom is in a

country where English is not the dominant language. Students share the same language and culture. Teacher may be the only native English speaker they have exposure to outside of the classroom students have very few opportunities to use English. For some, learning English may not have any obvious practical benefit. Students have limited exposure to English-speaking culture, most often through a distorted lens like TV or music. The common problem of EFL classroom is that an EFL teacher usually is faced with a non-interactive classroom where students are frequently unresponsive and avoid interacting with their teacher. Most of the students keep quiet and do not respond to the teacher’s questions. This problem is very important because interaction within the classroom can bring about many advantages for language learning such as comprehension checks, language practice and so on (Ellis, 1993).

## 2. Research Method

The investigator next plans how to conduct research to answer the research question; this plan includes the methods to be used, what data is to be gathered, where, how, and from whom (Ary et al., 2010, p. 320; Ary et al. (2010) write that for qualitative design the design is flexible and may change during the investigation if appropriate (p. 32). An account of how the methods designed for this study will be presented in the

following sections, in which these issues will be addressed. In this research, the research subjects were students of SMPK St. Joseph Naikoten, Kupang and the teacher (1 teacher) teaching course in English. The researcher took one class of grade VIII to be observed which consists of 32 students. The subject was selected purposively.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1. Result

This study found that there are some types of questions and answers done during the dialogue by a teacher and students in EFL classroom, the types of questions and answers, grammatical errors of questions and answers, and how teacher and students give questions and answers in EFL classroom.

#### 3.2. Types Questions and Answers in EFL Classroom

The type of questions and answers are observed, namely, by purpose and by grammatical. The types of questions and answers are as follows.

##### 3.2.1. By purpose

This type of questions is designed purposively which means it is designed to get the purpose of the teaching and learning process in EFL classroom. The types of purpose questions are divided again into three types, namely, descriptive, relational, and causal questions. These three types of purpose questions are displayed as follows.

##### 1) Descriptive Questions

This type of questions and answers are used primarily with the aim of describing the existence of something or process. The types of questions and answers found in the observation of EFL classroom are displayed as follows.

Teacher : *why you cannot see something?*  
Students : *because eyes are closed*

##### 2) Relational Questions

The relational questions are designed to look at the relationship between two or more variable. Variables in this case, are some aspects which related to classroom interaction in English teaching and learning process. Some questions and answers which are found in the EFL classroom at St. Joseph Junior High School Kupang are as follows.

Teacher : *Have you read the text?*  
Students : *Yes (together)*

##### 3) Causal Questions

Causal questions are designed to determine whether certain variables affect one or more custom variables. Variables are things that measured or about discussed. The question of this type is displayed below.

Teacher : *If I ask to close your eyes. Can you feel something in your book? Can you feel what you take?*  
Students : *Book (Together)*

##### 3.2.2. By Grammatical Form

The questions and answers based on the grammatical form are presented below.

##### 1). Polar Question (Yes/No Question)

Polar questions or closed questions ask whether or not

some statement is true which called as yes-no questions. These questions are answered by yes or no (or similar words or expressions in other languages). The findings of this type are as follows.

- a. Teacher : Have you read the text?
- b. Teacher : Mario, can you read the text?
- c. Teacher : Mario, can you retell the text after you read?
- d. Teacher : Can you close your eyes?
- e. Teacher : Can you see something?
- f. Teacher : Can you feel something in your bag?
- g. Teacher : Can you feel what you take?
- h. Teacher : Can you see that book?

##### 2). Non-Polar Question (Wh question)

Non-polar question (Wh-questions) uses interrogative words (5Wh) include what, who, where, when, which, and how. The questions of this type are presented below.

- a. Teacher : Who is absent today?
- b. Teacher : Why you cannot see something?
- c. Teacher : *Why?*
- d. Teacher : *How do you know that is a book?*
- e. Teacher : *What is the title of the text?*
- f. Teacher : *Who can read paragraph 1?*
- g. Teacher : *What is the suitable question for the sentence?*  
Students : *(no answer)*
- h. Teacher : *What does the famous mean?*  
Students : *Terkenal*
- i. Teacher : *What is write?*  
Students : *Menulis*
- j. Teacher : *what is the writer?*  
Students : *Penulis*

#### 3.3. Discussion

In this part, the researcher discusses the research findings that displayed in findings above. The discussion includes the analysis of teacher and students' types of questions answers in EFL Classroom, grammatical errors of questions and answers, and how these questions and answers are used by teacher and students. The discussions of this study are as follows.

##### 3.1.1. Types of Questions and Answers in EFL Classroom

The types of questions and answers in EFL classroom dialogue are discussed according to by purpose and by grammatical form. The researcher has found that the types of questions and answers in EFL classroom which are clearly presented below.

##### 3.1.1.1. By Purpose

By purpose questions are questions which have the purpose that means they are expressed according to know what, how, and why something or a phenomenon happens.

##### 1). Descriptive Question

This type of questions and answers are used primarily with the aim of describing the existence of something or process. The types of questions and answers found in the observation of EFL classroom are discussed thorough in the

following pars.

- a). Teacher : *why you cannot see something?*  
 Students : *because an eye is closed*

The question a) *why you cannot see something?* needs a descriptive from students in the form of expressing reason why students cannot see anything. The question given by teacher is designed to see the students understanding whether how they describe the phenomenon occurs around them. In addition, based on the observation done by the researcher this question given to students to lead them into the topic that is going to be discussed (Helen Keller). In line with this question, question b) also has a similar purpose to get informative/descriptive answers from students.

- b). Teacher : *Killer or Keller?*  
 Students : *Killer (pembunuh), Keller (someone's name) (together)*

This questions b) *Killer or Keller?* Is designed by English teacher to ask the students about the description or definition about *Killer and Keller*. The English ask his students *Killer or Keller* does not mean that he does not how differ them. This question tend to check the students' understanding about how can they describe the difference between *Killer and Keller*. Then, students answer their teacher by giving descriptive, "*Killer (pembunuh), Keller (someone's name) (together)*". This answer clearly shows that students describe what is *Killer and Keller*. They describe that *Killer is Pembunuh* (Indonesian) meanwhile *Keller* is someone's name. Relating to question a) and b), the researcher also proposes another question which has the purpose to get a description of something or an event. Another question proposed is as follows.

- c). Teacher : *How do you know that is a book?*  
 Students : *Can feel it (together)*

This question has the purpose to ask the students about the description why or how they know it is the book without looking at the book because they closed their eyes. Furthermore, students answered their teacher by saying that they can feel it. This question needs a description of how students can interact with surroundings without looking them physically.

## 2). Relational Question

The relational questions are designed to look at the relationship between two or more variable. Variables in this case, are some aspects which related to classroom interaction in English teaching and learning process at St. Joseph Junior high school Kupang particularly.

- a). Teacher : *Have you read the text?*  
 Students : *Yes (together)*

Question a) *Have you read the text?* means the teacher asks his students to give him the answer relating to the text that they are going to discuss (Helen Keller). The teacher has a purpose not to check his students whether they have read the text or not but rather than to lead his students to the text about how familiar are they with this text. Therefore, the question given has the purpose on relating to something done with something

that will be done.

Likewise, question a), the researcher also presents the following question as a type of relational question.

- b). Teache : *What is the title of text?*  
 Students : *The Story of Hellen Keller (together)*

This question is given by the teacher in order to students answer the question to relate with the text that they read. In another word, the teacher has a purpose to relate the question with the topic that they are discussing. So, this question does not mean that to check the sentence whether can know the title or not but it is precisely to make students in order to they can relate what they read and the circumstance of the dialogue.

Regardless of the above relational questions, the researcher presents the following data.

- c). Teacher : *What is the suitable question for the sentence? (Hellen Keller was a famous American)*

Students : *No answer*

The question given teacher asks the students what is the suitable question for *the sentence of Helen Keller was a famous American*. This question has the purpose to lead the students to be able to relate it with the text which is being read. In this case, the teacher does not mean to ask his students about their understanding exactly but it needs more comprehension and understanding to link the topic in the sentence with the use of the question. In line with the question above, the researcher also discusses the following question and answer.

- d). Teacher : *What does the famous mean?*  
 Students : *Terkenal*

The question of *what does famous mean?* Refers to the meaning of word *famous* in Indonesian (students' native language). Teacher asks his students with this question means to make them link English word (target language) with Indonesian

meaning. The relation of this question is linking. English word (*famous*) and its meaning in Indonesian (*Terkenal*).

The fifth relational question found which is similar to question d) found in teacher and students EFL classroom dialogue is discussed clearly below.

- e). Teacher : *What is writing?*  
 Students : *Menulis*

This relational question has purpose on asking the Indonesian meaning of word *write*. Teacher requires students to link the target language word (*write*) with Indonesian meaning (*menulis*). Therefore, this question clearly shows that the relation between English word and Indonesian.

Relating to the question and answer above, the researcher has the same case of question and answer used by teacher and students as following.

- f) Teacher : *What is the writer?,*  
 Students : *Penulis.*

This question and answer has a relationship between English word '*writer*' and Indonesian word '*Penulis*'.

## 3). Causal Question

Causal questions are designed to determine whether

certain variables affect one or more costume variables. Variables are things that measured or about discussed. The researcher would like to analyze the data which have been presented in findings previously.

a. Teacher : *If I ask to close your eyes. Can you feel something in your bag? Can you feel what you take?*

Students : *Book (Together)*

This question has the purpose on asking the cause of feeling something (*can you feel something in your bag? Can you feel what you take?*) This question indicates that when students feel something in their bag, they can identify that is book. The question is called as causal because it needs an answer which caused by something that has result as effect. The cause of this question is feeling something, and the effect knows the object *book*. The data that found as the causal question is discussed in the following part.

b. Teacher : *Can you see something?*

Students : *No*

Teacher : *Why?*

Students A : *Dark*

This dialogue shows that there is the causal question, which this dialogue is formulated as one questions, it will be why cannot you see anything? This question needs a reason which indicates something/circumstance happens that caused by another to get an effect. The causal in this dialogue is according to the observation is teacher asked the students to close their eye, so that closing eye is the cause. Meanwhile, the effect is students cannot see anything by answering *no, dark*.

### 3.1.1.2. By Grammatical Form

By grammatical form questions and answer are questions and answers which designed based on the grammatical form whether it is structured or not. The questions and answers which based on the grammatical form are presented below.

#### 1). Polar Question (Yes/No Question)

Polar questions or closed questions ask whether or not some statements are true which called as yes-no questions. These questions are answered by yes or no (or similar words or expressions in other languages). Through the classroom observation, the researcher found that there are questions and answers of teacher and students in EFL classroom dialogue used as polar questions. The researcher just discusses two out of eight as representation because the other questions are just repeated to use. The discussion is as follow.

a. Teacher : *Have you read the text?*

Students : *Yes*

b. Teacher : *Can you feel something in your bag?*

Students : *Book (together)*

These two questions are started by present perfect 'have' and modal auxiliary 'can'. These questions automatically have answers 'yes' or 'no'. Question a) *have you read the text?* has answered 'yes we have. The answer 'yes' when the question is match with the situation (the students have read the text). In contrast, when the question is not match with context, the

answer will be *No, we haven't*. Then, question b) *can you feel something in your bag?* Also needs an answer 'yes' or 'no'. In line with question a), this question requires an answer that must be appropriate with the questions used. If the question is started by *can*, the answer also will be followed by 'can' after 'yes' or 'no'. Regardless of this context the answer above actually *yes, we can not book*.

#### 2). Non-Polar Question (Wh question)

Non-polar question (Wh-questions) or open question uses interrogative words (5Wh) include what, who, where, when, which, and how. There ten questions and answers of non-polar questions used by teacher and students in EFL classroom dialogue at St. Joseph Junior High School Kupang (*see appendix*). There are four out ten questions and answers which are presented below.

a. Teacher : *Who is absent today?*

Students : *Ihsan, Tessa*

b. Teacher : *Why you cannot see something?*

Students : *because our eyes are closed*

c. Teacher : *Why?*

Students : *dark.*

d. Teacher : *How do you know that is a book?*

Students : *feel it*

These ten questions and answers are type of open questions or non-polar questions in which they are all use question of 5WH includes what, who, where, when, why and how. Question a) *who is absent today* uses the interrogative word 'what' which needs an answer to mentioning people's name (*ihsan, tessa*).

Then, question b) *Why you cannot see something?* indicates a reason of students (you) when they cannot see anything. This question does not limit the students to answer it by certain words as polar questions have, the answer is flexible depends on the students' own reason.

Question c) *why?* is incorrect literally because it just expressed by a single word 'why' without any other complements that should make this question to be clear. In contrary, this question is actually taken from oral dialogue so the question means why they (students) cannot see the book (*observation result*). That is why the students answer *dark*. These questions let the students answer freely according to what they experience.

Question and answer d) *How do you know that is a book?* is started by the interrogative word 'how' which needs a description of something how it occurs or happens in the circumstances of the topic. This question does not require fixed answer like the polar question or closed question that just requires an answer as yes or no.

### 3.4. Grammatical Errors of Questions and Answers in EFL Classroom

The grammatical of questions and answers in EFL classroom are focused on surface taxonomy which includes omission, addition, misformation and misordering (Dulay *et al.*, 1982: 146).

#### 1). Omission

According to Dulay *et al.* (1982: 154), omission is a

type of errors which characterized by the absence of a part which must not include in a well-formed utterance. This type of grammatical error is mostly done by all second language learners including Indonesian students. This grammatical error also encountered by teacher and students in EFL Classroom dialogue at St. Joseph Junior High School Kupang. The omission errors in questions and answers given by teacher and students are as follows.

a). Teacher : *Who is absent today?*

Students : ***Ihsan, Tessa (together)***

The error of this question and answer is *Ihsan, Tessa*. The answer of the students just gives sort response by omitting some parts of a sentence so that the sentence is not well-formed sentence. The answer should be *they are Ihsan, Tessa,.....* The omission of this sentence is it has no subject (they) and to be (are). Then, another question and answer that has the similar error of omission is presented as follow.

b). Teacher : *Have you read the text?*

Students : ***Yes***

Similar to question and answer a) above, the question and answer b) also has some missing parts. The omission of the above question and answer is on answer *Yes* without any additional part as complement of a yes-no question and answer. The answer should be in well-formed sentence to *Yes we have* because the question is started by perfect (present) *Have*. So, the answer also must be started by *have*.

Besides the above errors, the researcher presents similar error in the following question and answer.

c). Teacher : *Can You see something?*

Students : ***No***

The error of question and answer part c) is on the students' answer; *No*. This answer is incorrect because there is not complement which must be included in order to sentence or the utterance is well-formed used. The answer is given by students actually must be *No, we cannot*.

Another question and answer which has omission error are displayed in the answer of students below.

d). Teacher : *What is the title of the text?*

Students : ***The Story of Helen Keller (together)***

This error (*the story of Helen Keller*) has omission on subject (it) as substitution of *the title of the text* and to be (*is*) in the question given by the teacher. Therefore, the correct sentence of the answer must be *It is the story of Helen Keller*.

## 2). Misformation

Misformation is a type of error characterized by the use of inappropriate forms of the morpheme or structure (Dulay et al., 1982: 160). There are two misformations errors found in the teacher and students' question and answer. The misformation errors are presented below.

a). Teacher : *what is write?*

Students : ***Menulis***

The first error of this question and answer is *what is write?* This question was given by English teacher that is not complete or cannot be understood by readers or listeners because it is not well-formed structure. Actually, this question

must be *what is the Indonesian of write?* Looking at the question above, the students cannot be blamed in answering unless they answer correctly.

Similarly to the first error, the second error below has same error about misformation of the question.

b). Teacher : *what is writer?*

Students : ***Penulis***

The error of this dialogue is on teacher's question *what is writer?* If we see the question syntactically, the question has meaning what is the definition of writer. Conversely, according to observation done, the teacher asks the students about the meaning of writer in Indonesian. Therefore, the correct form of the question is *what is the Indonesian meaning of writer?*

The last question and answer which have misformation error are displayed in the following dialogue.

c). Teacher : *Why you cannot see something?*

Students : ***Because our eyes are closed***

The error in this dialogue is different with others because it has an error in question and so does in the answer. The error of question is the use of word '*something*'. The appropriate word should be *anything* because the question is in the negative form. Then, the correct sentence of the question given by teacher is *why cannot you see anything?*. Meanwhile, the error of the answer given by students is the use of inappropriate to be (is). The error of the answer caused by the use of to be *is* after subject *our eyes* (plural form). Therefore, the error of the answer is about the disagreement of the subject and to be.

## 3). Misordering

Misordering is an error which ordered unstructurally in an utterance or in a sentence. This type of error is clearly defined by Dulay, et, al (1982: 162) in which it is a type of error that is characterized by incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morpheme in an utterance. Misordering error occurs once during the dialogue of teacher and students in EFL classroom. The error of misordering can be seen in the following question and answer.

a). Teacher : *Why you cannot see something?*

Students : ***Because our eyes are closed***

The error of this dialogue is question given by teacher and students. The question *why you cannot see something?* is an error because the placement of modal auxiliary *cannot* is incorrect. As an interrogative sentence, this question structure should be Question word + modal auxiliary + S + V1 + O. Thus, the correct sentence of the question is *why you can't see anything*.

## 3.5. Ways of Asking Questions and Giving Answers

The researcher observes the way how teacher and students give questions and answers in EFL classroom dialogue. The questions and answers given are observed at the beginning, middle, and at the end of the lesson. In the observation, the researcher did not find questions given students. On the other hand, the teacher just gives questions from the beginning to the middle of the class, because at the end of the class, the teacher has no questions anymore but just gives students homework.

The way of teacher and students give questions and answers in EFL classroom observed throughly since the beginning till the end of English teaching and learning process, are teacher gives question to begin the class, teacher gives questions to lead the students to the topic of the material which is being taught, teacher mostly gives questions started by modal auxiliary can, teacher gives questions to check the understanding of the students. Meanwhile, students answered their teacher with short answers, and students mostly answer the questions together.

Teacher gives question to students by saying that “*who is absent today?*” This question does not only mean that checking the students’ attendance but also the teacher wants to begin the class. By regarding to check the students’ attendance, the students will think that they are cared by their teacher so that they will be interested in the teaching and learning process.

Teacher gives questions to lead the students to the topic of the material which is being taught. The teacher asked the students with questions; *Can you close your eyes, Can you see something? Why you cannot see something, Can you feel something in your bag? Can you feel what you take? Can you see that book? and How do you know that is a book?*. These all questions are given to students to lead the students to the topic (Helen Keller) that they are going to discuss. Closing eyes, can see anything, feeling something, knowing an object without seeing it, and how a book is recognized without seeing it. These questions have relation to the topic (Helen Keller) in which Hellen Keller was blind women, who cannot see anything, she just feels something when she interacted with surroundings. These questions are very good in which the teacher tried to lead his students to the condition that will be discussed.

Teacher mostly gives questions started by modal auxiliary *can* because nine of ten polar questions or closed questions are started by using *can*. The teacher seemed to have limited questions which mean he does not vary his questions. Conversely, the teacher also has another reason that is he wants invite his students by using capability question in order to students encourage themselves that they can.

Teacher gives questions to check the understanding of the students. This way is done by the teacher after students read the text. This questions mean that the teacher tries to check his students can understand that they have read or not. The questions are *What is the title of the text? What is the suitable question for the sentence? What does the famous mean?, What is write? what is writer? and can you retell the text after you read?*. These all questions clearly show thatthe teacher invites his students to be involved in the discussion of the topic ‘Helen Keller’. The teacher gives questions which relate to the content of the topic which is being discussed.

Students mostly answered their teacher with short answers, YES and No without any complements (*as have been discussed in grammatical errors, see pg 79*). The answers of

the students could be also caused by their teacher who also gives those polar questions or closed questions.

According to observation done by the researcher, students mostly answer the questions together. This phenomenon mostly happens in Indonesian students, then there are just two students who can answer the questions alone given by teacher. This is also caused by the question given to personal student (*see appendix for more information*).

### 3. Conclusion

This research aims to know the types of questions and answers used by teacher and students in EFL classroom dialogue, to find out the grammatical errors of questions and answers used by teacher and students in EFL classroom dialogue, and to know the way of teacher and students give questions and answers in EFL classroom dialogue at St. Junior High School in academic year 2015/2016. This research focuses on three issues; types of questions used by teacher and students, grammatical errors of questions and answers given by teacher and students, and how teacher and students give questions and answers in EFL classroom dialogue.

The type of questions and answers used by teacher and students in EFL classroom dialogue are limited on by purpose and by grammatical form questions. Then, by purpose questions are divided into three types, descriptive question, eg. *Why you cannot see something?* relational question, eg. *What does the famous mean?* and causal question, e.g. *can you see something?*. By grammatical form still divided into two group; polar question e.g. *can you close your eyes?* and non-polar question, e.g. *what is the suitable question for the sentence?*

The grammatical errors of questions and answers used by teacher and students in EFL classroom dialogue. The errors of questions and answers given teacher and students are omission, (*answer: yes, no, the story of Helen Keller*), misformation, e.g. *because our eyes are closed*, and misordering, e.g. *why you cannot see something?*

The teacher and students’ way in giving questions and answers in EFL classroom dialogue, are as teacher gives question to begin the class, teacher gives questions to lead the students to the topic of the material which is being taught, teacher mostly gives questions started by modal auxiliary can, teacher gives questions to check the understanding of the students, students answered their teacher with short answers, and sstudents mostly answer the questions together.

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