

The Relationship between Direct Questions and Students' Psychological Traits of Learning Process in EFL Classroom

Isnaini Eddy Saputro

*English Education Study Program
State University of Makassar, Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

The personality always is encountered in learning process. It would reveal about someone's attitude and behavior. This research focused on the students' custom in learning process. How the students were action habitually when they were interacting with the lecturers in the classroom. The researcher applied a descriptive qualitative method to answer the issue in this research. The participants of this research were two lecturers and 75 students of English Education program consisting of 25 graduate students and 50 undergraduate students. The data was taken by conducting classroom observation and interview. There were fifteen recordings that consisted of 7 recordings from classroom observation and 6 recordings of students' interview. The transcriptions were analyzed and discussed based on the theory of direct questions of Miller (2016), theory of psychological traits of Gordon Allport (1936). The findings of the research showed that the kinds of direct questions mostly used by the lecturers were divergent question to help the students to think and to get the students' attention. Besides that, direct questions gave the impact on the students' psychological aspect in which the students felt free to give their opinion related to the instruction and students' anxiety decreased in the classroom so that they have high motivation to interact with the lecturer, the students get a challenge to answer and help the students to think. Hence, the language learning becomes effective as the aim in teaching language.

Keywords: Direct Questions, Students' behavior, Psychological traits, English Language Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Lecturer and students have the role in language learning in the classroom. How the lecturer's way to involve the students to be active in their role in language learning. The problem in language learning is the students less to talk in the classroom. The reasons are less interaction between the lecturer and the students, there is no chance for students to express their ideas, or the students are afraid to inquire about the materials. The students prefer to listen what the lecturer said in confirming what the lecturer questioned. To solve those reasons, the lecturers must build up interaction with them by giving questions to students to ask their reason, opinion and provide the perspectives of a new idea about something related to the topic. Mahmud (2015) said that since lecturers and students are essential actors in the class, the use of questions is believed to be crucial as a bridge in finding the gap of mind in the learning and teaching process.

The purpose of questions is supposed to be a creative medium in encouraging students' activities in the class.

Teaching by using questions will find and determine the students' identity when they are learning. The lecturers alter the role with the students to interact in the classroom. Vebriyanto (2015) which explained that interaction is the exchange of thoughts, feelings, and ideas which is conducted by two or more people, and the mutual effect will be produced in both communicators. Thus they will share idea with their classmates and they will agree with the lecturers' idea. The way to help the students showed their attitude to involve in learning process is lecturer totally explaining the material while gives the question as the role of lecturer in influencing the learners' motivation in language learning. It can be mentioned as direct questions. Miller (2016) stated that by asking the open-ended questions, the person is allowed to answer in exactly his or her own words. It gives us the clearest insight into the reasons behind their actions.

Thus, direct questions help the lecturers to excite the students' motivation in interaction. This research focuses to see the impact of direct questions on students' psychological traits in learning process. Whether it will relate to students' attitude when the lecturers often used the questions to the students such as to decrease students' anxiety or the students feel discouraged in learning process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kim (2015) stated that open-ended questions have been advocated as stepping stones for enriching vocabulary and creating an atmosphere where students feel comfortable sharing their ideas with their peers and lecturers in class compared to close-ended questions. Teachers always use closed-ended question to engage with the students.

Papamitsiou, et al (2014) found that the conscientious students will spend more time to view the questions again and again before saving an answer, try to assure that they will submit the correct answer. Due to their strong sense of purpose, conscientious students demonstrate a deeper engagement with the assessment activity.

Shomooshi (2004) stated that students who are less likely to participate are usually encouraged, or forced, to speak when asked to speak. Questions are also a means at teacher's disposal to distribute turns fairly among all the learners. Some students are less confident or shy but they can also participate when the teacher allots them a turn.

Hakimi, et al (2011) found that as conscientious learners are believed to responsibly do their academic tasks and improve their performance. Extroverted people are more likely to be impetuous, impulsive at solving problems, talkative, distracted and externally-motivated, and thus they are more prone to lower academic achievement.

a. Types of direct question

Erlinda and Dewi (2014) said that basically questions are grouped into three categories in terms of the purpose of questions in classrooms. They include

procedural, convergent, and divergent questions as suggested by Richards & Lockhart (1996).

Ozturk (2016) said that procedural questions are related to the procedures in the classroom setting, and they have nothing to do with the content of the lesson. “Can you see what I have written on the board?”, “How much time do you need to finish this task?” are the examples included in this group. Procedural questions do not involve engaging the students, making the students’ comprehension easier or promoting interaction in the classroom. Convergent questions encourage similar student response or responses which focus on a central theme. They do not usually require students to engage in higher-level thinking to come up with an answer but often focus on the recall of previously presented information. Examples of convergent questions contain “How many of you read books?”, “Do you read books every day?”.

Anderson (2012) said that divergent questions encourage students to respond with a longer and more complex answer. For example, if the teacher asks a student to analyze why a character from a book behaves in a certain way Ozturk (2016) they encourage students to provide their own information rather than to recall previously presented information. Mahmud (2015) noted that convergent question requires correct answer which is beneficial in establishing facts or ascertaining answers to problems that are accurate, whereas divergent questions give possibilities for more different answers, not only one correct answer.

b. Psychological Traits

Novikiva (2017) trait theory is one of the major approaches to the study of human personality. Personality traits are defined as habitual patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion that are manifest in a wide range of situations. Gordon Allport (1936) was a pioneer in the study of personality traits, which he referred to as dispositions. Cattell (1973) developed the Sixteen Personality Factor Model that includes the following traits: 1) Warmth (A); 2) Reasoning (B); 3) Emotional Stability (C); 4) Dominance (E); 5) Liveliness (F); 6) Rule-Consciousness (G); 7) Social Boldness (H); 8) Sensitivity (I); 9) Vigilance (L); 10) Abstractedness (M); 11) Privatness (N); 12) Apprehension (O); 13) Openness to Change (Q1); 14) Self-Reliance (Q2); 15) Perfectionism (Q3); and 16) Tension (Q4).

Cattell (1973) believed that each person can be characterized by a unique combination of expression of these traits. The factor analyzed these primary traits and discovered five second-order or Global Factors: 1) Openness / Tough-mindedness; 2) Self- Control; 3) Extraversion; 4) Independence / Accommodation; and 5) Anxiety. He suggested that personality traits can describe not only individuals, but also social groups.

A contemporary trait theory, The Five-Factor Theory postulated by Robert R. McCrae and Paul T. Costa, Jr. (2003) is based on the Five Factor Model (FFM), fairly closely to Cattell’s five Global Factors in the following way: big five factor global factor are openness / tough-mindedness, conscientiousness / self-control, Extraversion, agreeableness Independence/ Accommodation, and neuroticism/ Anxiety. Hakimi et al (2011) define the big five of personal characteristics such as:

1. Neuroticism: emotional stability. Neuroticism reflects individual differences in one's disposition towards constructing, perceiving and feeling realities in threatening, disturbing or problematic ways.
2. Extroversion: describes the intensity and quality of an individual's relationship to the environment; and warm, energetic, and sociable (Klinkozs et al.2006).
3. Openness to experience: reflects an individual's broad-mindedness, depth of attitude, and penetrable awareness; it is a need for generalizing and testing out experiences.
4. Conscientiousness: represents an individual's accountability, academic persistence and ability to organize information (Bratko et al. 2006).
5. Agreeableness: this dimension, too, refers to interpersonal relationships and is described by traits such as sympathy, altruism, honesty, sense of cooperation and hospitality (Mc Crae & John, 1992).

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was a descriptive qualitative design to investigate, to receive, and to interpret the data to see the use of direct questions by the lecturers with students' behavior in EFL classroom. Heigham & Croker (2009) said qualitative research entails collecting primarily textual data and examining it using interpretive analysis. In this research, the researcher applied discourse analysis as an approach to analyze the language used by the lecturers and the students in the classroom to get the description about students' disposition or characteristics in learning process. The researcher applied the purposive sampling technique in getting data because the subjects of data sources need special consideration. The subjects of this research were two English lecturers and six students to be interviewed to answer in completing the issue. The instruments of this research were observation and interview. The researcher used observation checklist, voice recording and video recording to collect the data for classroom observation and interview. The researcher used qualitative to analyze the data from Miles et al (2014) such as *to collect, display, select and conclude the data* to reveal the students' behavior in EFL classroom.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Impacts of Direct questions on Students' Psychological Traits in Learning Process

This study aimed to find out the impacts of direct question on students' psychological traits (disposition) in the EFL classroom. The data were shown in the following extracts.

a. Openness

Extract 1: Student's explanation of language philosophy at graduate level

The researcher was intentional to ask the students to explain the topic of the material that he had learned in language philosophy class as graduate student.

R : ... *here I want to know whether you understand or not about the topic.*

F : *oh yeah about the topic the first meeting we discussed about philosophy what is philosophy itself and the second we discussed about language and,, language and culture. It related tell about language and culture. The next meeting is language and mind so this explains about how the people construct their sentences in the brain so this is connection with mind and language and next is speech act. This is, we discussed about a(-- speech,, and acts. There are three point of material. The main point is about a(-- locution, illocution and perlocution. That is, we have discussed in the third meeting and the last is about language and truth.*

(on Wednesday, October 03, 2018; First Semester, Graduate Student)

This extract above indicates that lecturers' direct question can make the student recalls what he has learned about the topics in each meeting. The extract above described that student could mention some of the topics related to what the lecturer had explained before. It can be seen that direct question can influence the students' understanding in term of explanation. It is not intentional that the student aware about what the lecturer has informed in the previous meetings so he can reveal some salient topics with openness attitude.

b. Conscientiousness

Extract 2: Student reveals some examples of the material

R : **so can you give an example about intermediate grammar** that you have learnt?

A : yah ok **intermediate grammar about content of how we use the,, conjunction, modifier and how we know which is the types of modifier, there is a lot of types of modifier such as verb modifier and adjective modifier** and how we can know about both things. .. We studied in, on, how are differences between in, on, at, ...

R : can you give the **example of in, on, at?**

A : oh yah the preposition **example the preposition “on” means that there is something on something like “there is camera on the table” but there is something on the table meant that it touched by something under camera.** and then above, above means almost of preposition but above is same with “on” but above is something like you know there is a pool, swimming pool and then there is a butterfly on the,, there is butterfly on the water but the using of on it is not on but because it is untouched. and then “in” there is something in the things, example like there is a file in the mobile phones, there is a cake in the bowl and “at” at it is much to refers to the place.

(on Tuesday, October 02, 2018; Third Semester)

The extract above indicates that what the lecturer teaches by using direct question in the classroom is effective in influencing the student to apply what he has known and understood about the material. He gave explanations and examples appropriately with the situation around. He correlated the concept of the material and the example in around him. It means that he can apply what he has learned in

the classroom. He understands the idea of the material because what the lecturer had discussed with them he can make some example it means that his enthusiasm in making examples related to the material to control his understanding.

c. Empathy

Extract 3: Student's strategy to share the material

R : ... are you sure when you are presenting your material with your friends, whether your friends understand or not?

M : a(--) for me,, I make the explanation that my friend understands, the easier language that I used to explain for my friend so even sometimes it is complicated word I try to use the simple one. Because sometimes fewer my friends they didn't understand because they never heard the words and they never asked what is the meant? For example a(-) when I am explaining about part of brain or neuron. They don't know what is neuron so a(-) I just show the picture of neuron.

(on Thursday, October 04, 2018; Fifth Semester)

The student tries to make his explanation to be easier understood for the listener when he presented his material. He understood about the material so that he wanted to use simple language to explain it. It means that the student has demonstrated his ability to help the other students to understand about the material. Moreover he is in getting inside another feeling's inside by sharing his broad-mindedness in group discussion to complete the lecturer explanation. The student has attitude in learning language in line sympathy to the other friends, he is also one of the extrovert student in the classroom because he tries to see the classroom situation which the other students feel difficult to understand the material. He is brave to use the language to be simple in presenting the material and he also correlates his explanation by using his experiences.

d. Intuition

The type of understanding reveals about the student's awareness of the learning-process.

Extract 4: Asking the students' perception in graduate level

R: Ok and then a(-) why you have to or why you must learn philosophy?

F: learn philosophy? ehm, based on each meetings that we have discussed about the theory of language philosophy, I concluded that why we must learn philosophy because it is related to our activity. It is related to our habit. We use English we learn English every day for what? we, we how to express our language and how we act the language.

(on Wednesday, October 03, 2018; First Semester, Graduate Student)

The extract above explains that the student has a perspective that learning philosophy is crucial because it refers or gives impact on his ability in using the English language as his habit. He said that learning philosophy influenced how he

expressed the word and acted in the language. It means that in learning process, he has attitude in line with high motivation to try broad-mindedness and conscientiousness in using the language after learning the material. He is interested in learning this material because it relates to his activity in using the language.

Extract 5: To motivate and to challenge the students' vocabulary

L : *kata lain dari associated, ini supaya semester 5 juga tambah vocabnya. Associated means?*

(what is another word of associated? because you are fifth semester to increase your vocabulary)

Ss : silent – thinking

S : *related*

L : *kata lain lagi? (What is another word?)*

S : connected

L : **kata lain lagi? (any else?)**

S : together with.

(on Thursday, September 09 2018; Fifth Semester)

The extract above indicates that the lecturer gives some questions to attract students' attention and the lecturer is intentional to measure students' vocabulary. It shows that the students are doubt to answer directly. They need time to think because the question refers to measure their vocabulary. Then, they tried to answer the question while the lecturer pursued their answer by giving the display question to get some answer from the students. It has aim to attract students' attention before the lecturer will explain more about the material.

Extract 6: To warm up the students' comprehension of the material in undergraduate level

L : *... last week we talk about one criteria in translation is? Was the first one?*

L : *Anybody remember?*

L : *was the first criteria? was the first, first one?*

Ss : *accuracy, mastery of two language, mastery the accuracy*

L : ***how do we called? apa namanya? istilahnya? (What is the term?)***

L : *accu?*

Ss : *accuracy*

L : *yes. The second one?*

Ss : *clarity,*

L : *the third one?*

S1 : *nature,*

S2 : *naturally*

(on Monday, September 17, 201; Third Semester)

The extract above explains that there are repeated question that is used by the lecturers to know the students answer. Here, the lecturer used leading question to elicit the students' responding. Firstly, the lecturer used open ended to brainstorming the previous lesson and after that the lecturer blended the display question to let the students' answer. All the students feel agreement to answer the

question. So there is equal answering from them. Here the lecturer applied direct question by using a clue to help the students to think and the students have motivated to answer the question.

The Impacts of Direct questions on Students' Psychological Traits in the learning Process

Based on the observation in this study, the impacts of direct questions in the classroom could make the students to pay more attention to the lessons in the classroom, more active and could help the students to think. Besides that, encouraging participation and showing enthusiasm could be potentially influential to the learning. Al-Darwish in Chaudron (2012) suggests that different strategies lecturers ask questions because it helps to hold students' attention, contribute to students' verbal output, and evaluate informally learners' progress.

In the present study, the researcher found the five personalities which the student demonstrated in learning. Students' psychological traits elicited when the lecturers used question that was followed by some commands and leading questions to encourage the students' answer. Psychological traits was found in this research, firstly about *neuroticism* influenced the students' attitude in learning process. This trait explained that the students need time to answer the lecturers' question although they feel doubt or anxious in facing the question. They had motivation to answer but it was not directly. The lecturer did repetition to take their attention. It has been explained by Shomoossi (2004) students who are less likely to participate are usually encouraged, or forced to speak when asked to speak. Questions are also a means at teacher's disposal to distribute turns fairly among all the learners. Some students are less confident or shy but they can also participate when the teacher allots them a turn.

The second trait showed in this research is *openness or broad-mindedness*. Some of students answer the lecturers' question by using their opinion and what they have understood. They have motivation and interest in responding the lecturers' question by their experiences although they felt unsure about their answering. The *openness students* have similar with the students who are conscientiousness and agreeableness in learning process. They had ability to organize or to response the question in the classroom by using their opinion, So that they attempted to answer by using their common sense. In this research, the students tried to be *sympathy* in learning. They gave helping to the other students to simplify the lecturers' explanation. Hakimi et al (2011) *agreeableness* and *conscientiousness* and *openness* were positively related to academic achievement. *Conscientious* students are defined as highly responsible, achievement - oriented and industrious learners.

The researcher found new findings of traits about the combination between *extrovert* and *openness traits* and *conscientiousness* and *openness* in student's behavior. *Extrovert* and *openness behavior* of students named as *empathy*. *Empathy* is the way to understand and to get inside with another's feeling person. Where a students has energetic in learning process to get insight to another student in sharing his idea. It has supported by his *broad-mindedness or openness*. Papamitsiou et al (2014) stated that since *extraversion* is related to energetic and optimistic attitudes and behaviors, they assumed that it is expected to have a

positive effect on goal expectancy. Believe that they are prepared enough to achieve their goals. In this research an extrovert student who has ability to connect with the situation in the classroom like he wanted to help their friend by using his way in explaining or making simple of his language to paraphrase what the lecturer has said. He used his *broad-minded* and his enthusiasm in touching with his friend in learning process. Thus, two attitudes occurred in a time can create the student to be active in learning process.

Furthermore, the *conscientiousness* and *openness* were also found in this research. It was named as *intuition*. *Intuition* is the way to solve the problem in learning process to get the solution together. A student has combined two attitudes when learning language. He aware when he learnt the language he used his common sense and also he must be self-control in using the language related to his act the language. He sometimes answered the lecturers' question by using his common sense while he explained what he has got from theory that he learnt. The students were brave in expressing their idea because they understand about lecturers' instruction. Papamitsiou (2014) the conscientious students will spend more time to view the questions again and again before saving an answer, try to assure that they will submit the correct answer.

CONCLUSION

Psychological aspects or traits are an attitude related to the students' utterance and the students' ability in learning the language or producing the language. It can be seen when they can recall and explain by using their broad-mindedness. They prefer more to choose learning by question because they need to know whether their opinion or ideas can be accepted by the lecturers or not. Extrovert student can influence in learning process for the other students. When Agreeableness, openness and extroversion are there in the classroom, it will influence the learning process and the students can achieve the learning goal.

It has different with graduate students. In graduate students, the students' attitudes in learning prefer to openness and conscientiousness (self-control). It is appropriate with the lecturers' statement that the students' thought will describe about their attitude and behavior in learning process. Thus, they prefer more to give opinion by their common sense while they are aware about their ability in learning the material. Thus, this research seems that direct question can decrease students' anxiety to speak up freely. At first, all the students feel doubt to answer but the lecturer always makes paraphrase and gives the clue so that they have a chance to get the lecturers' intention. Moreover, in this research finds combination attitude in learning from the students such as empathy and intuition. Empathy is a student's attitude that combines from agreeableness and extroversion while intuition is a student's attitude that combines from openness and conscientiousness. These elicit depending on types of direct question that are used by the lecturers.

REFERENCES

- Kim, S. (2015). An analysis of teacher question types in inquiry-based classroom and traditional classroom settings. The University of Iowa.
- Mahmud, M. (2015). Questioning Powers of the Students in the Class. Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 111-116
- Miller, B. (2016) The case for direct questions in your UX research. <https://www.usertesting.com/blog/2016/03/03/direct-questions/>Modern Language Review, 40 (2), 228 – 244 .
- Vebriyanto, A, D. (2015). Teacher's questions in EFL Classroom interaction. Journal Vision, Volume 4 Number 2.
- Shomoossi, N. (2004). The effect of teachers' questioning behavior on efl classroom interaction: a classroom research study. Vol. 4, No. 2
- Papamitsiou, Z., & Economides, A. A. (2014, July). The effect of personality traits on students' performance during computer-based testing: A study of the big five inventory with temporal learning analytics. In 2014 IEEE 14th International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies (pp. 378-382). IEEE.
- Hakimi, S., Hejazi, E., & Lavasani, M. G. (2011). The relationships between personality traits and students' academic achievement. Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 29, 836-845.
- Erlinda, R., & Dewi, S. R. (2016). Teacher's Questions in EFL Classroom. Ta'dib, 17(2), 177-188.
- Öztürk2. O. A. (2016). Types of Questions Used in EFL Classrooms: A Reflective Study on A Turkish Efl Teacher's Practices1. Turkey. Çukurova University: International Journal of Language Academy.
- Richards, J. C. & Lockhart, C. (1996). Reflective teaching in second language classrooms. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Novikova. A. I. (2017) Trait, Traits Theory. Peoples' Friendship University of Russia.
- Andersson, S. (2012). Teacher and student questions in the EFL classroom: A study of gender and interaction in three Swedish classes.
- Cattell, R. B. (1973). Personality and mood by questionnaire. Jossey-Bass.
- Klinkozs, W., Sekowski, A., & Brambring, M. (2006). Academic achievement and personality in university students who are visually impaired. *Journal of Visual Impairment Blindness*, 100(11), 666-675.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (2003). Personality in adulthood: A five-factor theory perspective. Guilford Press.
- Bratko, D., Chamoro, T., & Saks, Z. (2006). Personality and school performance: Incremental validity of self and peer-ratings over intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 41, 131-142.
- McCrae, R. & John, O. P. (1992). An introduction on five factor model and its implications. *Journal of Personality*, 60, 169-175.
- Heigham, J., & Croker, R. A. (2009). Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistics; A Practical Introduction. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.