

Comparing Teachers' English and Indonesian Questions in Classroom Interaction

Meisyani Gustri Fadila¹, Hamzah Hamzah²

¹ Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; meisyanifadila@gmail.com

² Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; hamzah@fbs.unp

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ABSTRACT

Classroom interaction is defined as an interaction in order to transfer knowledge from teacher to students or sometimes exchange ideas between student to other students. In order to reach students' understanding about the material, interaction between teacher and students are crucial. As the result, this research aimed to analyze and compare the teachers' questioning in two languages, English and Indonesian. Then, it applied a qualitative descriptive method as a research design. There were six English teachers becoming the participant in this research. The research gathered the data through observation by using video recording as the instrument. After that, the video was transcribed and it analyzed based on Sidnell's theory (2013). The result of this research presented most English teachers asked questions through target and local language and content question was the highest percentage in both languages' questions. In questioning, teachers mostly presupposed on asking the lesson so that they applied topic agenda and the answer over non-answer response preference for all aspects of questioning.

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Corresponding Author:

Meisyani Gustri Fadila

Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; meisyanifadila@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

In the educational process, teachers play a critical role. Planning the materials, creating some assignments, putting a strong plan or strategy into practice, and assessing students' competency are all required. The learning process involves all of these elements. The teacher arrives in the classroom and provides instructions before the course begins. Next, under the teacher's supervision and direction, the students follow all of the directions. Classroom interaction actually refers to teachers offering instructions and students responding to them. Classroom interaction, defined by Brown (2001: 165, as cited in Sulistiani, 2022), is the mutually beneficial exchange of ideas, feelings, or thoughts between two or more people. It also refers to the transfer of ideas between teachers and students as well as between students and other students. According to Sulistiani (2022, p. 11), classroom interaction is crucial to the learning process because it forces students to engage in active thinking, speaking, and participation. As a result, the teacher's expected learning objective for that period of time will be successfully met.

Sidnell (2013) also explains that the aspects in questioning; there are presupposition, agenda and preference. The presupposition of speakers is exposed through questions. For example, the inquiry "When did she leave town?" presupposes that she left town before the question was asked (Sidnell & Stivers,

2013). It is also assumed by the polar inquiry "Are you using any book sources?" that the recipient enjoys reading books (Clayman et al., 2006). Another way that questions confine the people who answer them is by setting agendas. Two agendas are also established by a question: an action agenda, which focuses on the speaker's response to the question, and a topical agenda, which discusses what is being discussed (Boyd & Heritage, 2006). Preferences are another set of boundaries that questions impose on their responses. When someone asks a question, there are several binary possibilities for what might happen: the person asking the question might respond or not; the response might or might not meet the expectations of the questioner; the response might or might not take the form that the question specified; and if there are more than two people involved in the interaction, the addressed recipient might or might not respond (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). There are four preferences which are: (1) answer over non answer preference, (2) affirmation over disaffirmation preference, (3) type-conformity over non type-conformity preference, and (4) selected speaker over non-selected speaker preference.

However, developing positive teacher-student interactions to encourage active participation from students during the learning process is a challenging task. A few issues with interaction in the classroom come up. Based on observations and interviews conducted in senior high school students at Pesisir Selatan regency, the researcher discovered that teacher talk was the main actor impeding students' ability to connect with one another during the learning process, particularly in the English subject. A few students expressed their inability to grasp the teacher's English-language remarks, particularly when the teacher posed questions in the target language. In fact, to deliver a good material to students, students must grasp teachers' talk and to evaluate students' understanding the students also must understand teachers' questions in the target language. However, the result of the data in the preliminary research, the data showed that most students did not understand teachers' talk especially teachers' questions in English. This problem also found in some previous research (Dung & Trang, 2022; Nasir, Yusuf, & Wardana, 2019; Winanta, Rochsantiningsih, & Supriyadi, 2020). Winanta (2020) clearly noted that the most problem in classroom interaction between teacher – students because students did not recognise teachers' talk. He emphasized even the teachers only asked simple questions, most students still cannot answer it.

Actually, one of the most important tactics for fostering interaction in the classroom and gaining students' participation is questioning. Numerous research on the use of questioning strategies in classroom interactions, including one by Putri (2021, p. 15), provided evidence for this claim. She said that using questioning techniques improved student participation in the learning process and teachers should pose questions at three different points in the lesson: at the start of the class, throughout the explanation, and at the conclusion. Additionally, teachers need to come up with thoughtful questions for their students because this is one of the most effective ways to get them more involved in class discussion. Teachers need to pose thought-provoking questions in order to promote student participation (Yunio P., 2020). These questions will motivate them to study, particularly English. To make sure the questions grab the students' interest, they should be open-ended and include multiple valid answers. Questions like this would encourage reflective thought, arguments, or discussion, which would aid students in learning new information and understanding the course material (Yunio P., 2020, p. 4). Teachers can use questioning as a way to modify their questions based on students' responses, which can help students acquire greater critical thinking skills (Chin, 2007, as referenced in Sulistiani, 2022, p. 3). In summary, all these studies have shown that asking questions can improve student engagement and foster critical thinking in order to meet learning objectives.

Although a number of researchers have already looked at the topic of questioning in classroom interactions, there are still a lot of debating about it. First, Nashruddin (2020) looked into the questioning practices of EFL teachers during class discussions. He discovered that the teacher employed a variety of asking techniques, including knowledge, closed-ended, and open-ended questions. The teacher in the EFL class then primarily employed knowledge-based questions. Nevertheless some experts (Astrid, Dwi Amrina, Desvitasari, Fitriani, & Shahab, 2019; Putri & Reflinda, 2021; Shaunessy, 2005) argue that teachers should pose questions that foster higher order thinking skills, which are critical to their students' cognitive development. There are various questions pertaining to the thinking process that can be used to elicit

critical thinking, including evaluation, convergent, divergent, and cognitive questions. In fact, a wide variety of question kinds remain, such as synthesis and thought-provoking inquiries that foster critical thinking in students (Shaunessy, 2005).

Furthermore, some research on the topic of questioning in classroom interactions (Dung & Trang, 2022; Nashruddin et al., 2020) used discourse design analysis and conversation analysis to analyze the questioning strategy. On the other hand, Sidnell (2013, p. 395) creates a design known as question analysis for analysing questions in an interaction. It examines how people ask questions during daily conversation including in classroom conversation. In everyday conversation, and particularly in the classroom throughout the learning process, there are two types of questions that arise: polar and content questions (Sidnell, 2013, p. 396). According to Dryer & Haspelmath (2013), linguistically, a number of languages distinguish between polar (yes-or-no) queries and statements. One may ask a tag question, like "He came, didn't he?" or use an inverted interrogative or negative interrogative to challenge a single statement in English words. Subsequently, content questions comprise the second category. Wh-questions, also known as content questions, are used to elicit information during discussions.

As the explanation above, the researcher chooses to examine the questions that teachers ask to students during English class interactions. After that, Sidnell's approach—also known as question design analysis—is applied as the foundational theory to examine the questions posed by the teachers. Furthermore, the researcher also discovered through observation and interviews for the preliminary study that the majority of teachers in English classes occasionally posed questions in both the local and target language. Because of this tendency, the researcher compares the teacher-assigned questions between English and Indonesian language in conjunction with analysing them using Sidnell's theory. As a result, the researcher is able to see how these two languages are evolving differently in provoking students' participation during classroom interaction. Obviously, after knowing the differences of teachers' questions in both languages in local language (Indonesia) and target language (English), the researcher can see which language teachers most use in provoking classroom interaction and the researcher will see: is the learning objective reached if teacher asked question in local language and target language simultaneously?

2. METHODS

This research applied descriptive qualitative method. According to Gay (2012), who claimed that qualitative research aimed to delve deeply into the study environment in order to understand how the things are, why they occurred, and how the participants in the context saw them, the researcher employed descriptive qualitative research in this research. This research examined how English teachers interacted with their students in the classroom by asking questions in a descriptive and qualitative method. The data that might be used for research came from the study's participants (Arikunto, 2010). Then, senior high school English teachers and students served as the research's primary data source. Three schools—SMA Negeri 1 Lengayang, SMA Negeri 2 Lengayang, and SMA Negeri 3 Lengayang—were involved in the research, which was conducted in senior high school in the Lengayang area of the Pesisir Selatan regency. Consequently, there were six English teachers in overall which were PNS teacher and had more 10 years of teaching experience. These teachers were selected by the researcher through accidental sampling. Because some English teachers in the Lengayang district had already completed the required lesson and were concentrating completely on the project lesson, the researcher employed this sampling technique. It happened as a result of the schools implementing the Merdeka curriculum, which assigned students to two focused lessons per semester: the project lesson and the regular class. Then, the details of the teachers could be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Participants of The Research

| No | School | Gender | | Total |
|----|------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1. | SMA Negeri 1 Lengayang | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| 2. | SMA Negeri 2 Lengayang | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 3. | SMA Negeri 3 Lengayang | 1 | 1 | 2 |

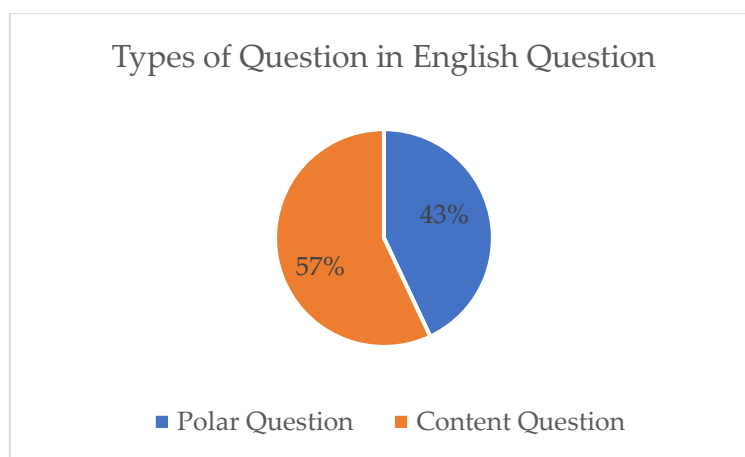
In order to gather data for this research, the researcher employed a video recorder. The video was recorded while the learning process was happening and it captured every interaction. The researcher recorded the video, transcribed it, and examined the teacher's questions based on Sidnell's theory (2013). The video recording lasted for two hours, or roughly ninety minutes, of learning time. The purpose of the research was to determine how teachers inquire during interactions in English classrooms. Hence the interaction was only captured during one meeting. Also, after gathering the data, the data firstly would be confirmed based Miles & Huberman's theory (1984, as cited in Sugiyono, 2013). They argue that there three steps after gathering the data for qualitative research; they are data reduction, data display, and data conclusion or verification. It would help the researcher for concluding the data and getting the true assumption in order to answer the research questions.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Teachers' questioning in English

This research investigated the questioning techniques of six English teachers during their instructional processes, focusing specifically on how teachers posed questions and how students responded. Utilizing Sidnell's (2013) question and response design analysis, the study revealed that most teachers asked questions in both English and Indonesian. The researcher categorized the types of questions posed in English, finding that content questions were more prevalent than polar questions. This distribution of question types is illustrated in the pie chart below.

**Chart 1.** Types of Questions in English Questions

It showed that of six English teachers, 57% of them asked English question with content question. Then, only 43% of them asked English questions with polar question. This data presented most teachers asked English question with content question due to an achieving learning objective.

In order to explore how teachers asked questions, the researcher also adapted the analysis from Sidnell (2013) about question design analysis. He argues three major aspects in questioning consisting presupposition, agenda and preference. First, preference was an aspect for investigating teacher's aim in questioning. The researcher discovered four types of presupposition existing during teachers' questioning especially in English. Then, the data would be displayed through pie chart below to see which type was the dominant presupposition type.

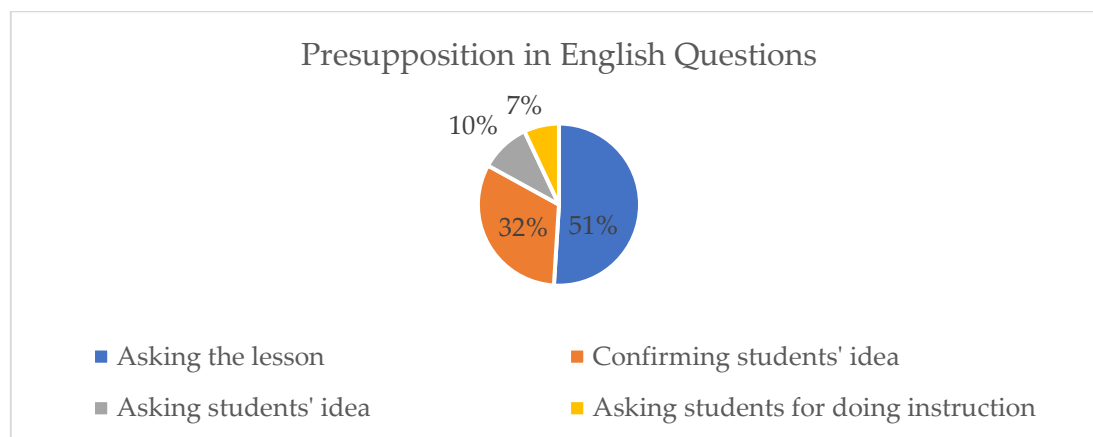


Chart 2. Presupposition in English Questions

The findings revealed that 51% of teachers asked questions to review lesson content, such as revisiting previous topics to reinforce students' understanding. Only 7% of the questions aimed to instruct students, for instance, asking a student to repeat their opinion during a class discussion by saying, "Can you repeat that?". Ultimately, the purpose of teachers' questions depended on their teaching strategy and the activities conducted with students. For example, when teachers assumed an observer role, they primarily asked questions related to task instructions, such as during student presentations and discussions. Conversely, when teachers focused on explaining material, their questions predominantly aimed to assess lesson comprehension.

Additionally, the researcher also considered the agenda aspect in questioning as a tool to know how teachers develop the question in order to reach the aim or the presupposition. Sidnell (2013) states there were two kinds of agenda which were topic and action agenda. Topic agenda talked the questions focused on what is being discussed while action agenda talked the questions on what the speaker or student is doing with the question. Then, the researcher obtained most teachers asked question in English in order to ask the lesson topic and they applied topic agenda in questioning. The data could be seen in the pie chart below.

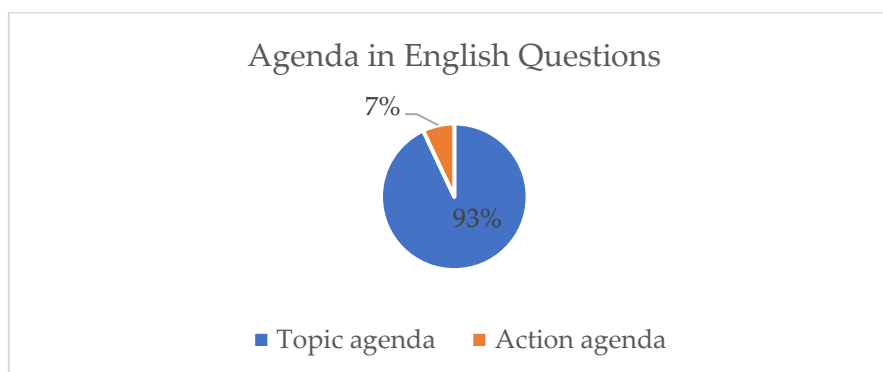


Chart 3. Agenda in English Questions

The chart displayed most teachers used topic agenda in order to reach their presupposition with 93%. It meant that teachers tried to reach their aim in questions by asking questions focused on what is

being talked rather than what the student was doing with the question. In illustration, teacher 1 in school A presupposed on asking the lesson by saying “did you still remember about what caption, what is caption?” and this question was in the form of topic agenda where it focused on what is being talked about obviously caption.

Besides investigating teachers’ presupposition and agenda, to explore teachers’ questioning completely, the researcher analysed the preference in questioning as it was the last aspect in questioning based on Sidnell’s theory. Preference explained on the teachers’ expectation with the question in order to get a good response by the students. There were four preference that would be explored and they were answer over non-answer preference, affirmation over disaffirmation preference, type-conformity over non-type-conformity preference, and selected speaker over non-selected speaker preference. Then, the data showed the comparison between them in order to discover the dominant preference of teachers’ questioning in English, which was displayed on the pie chart below.

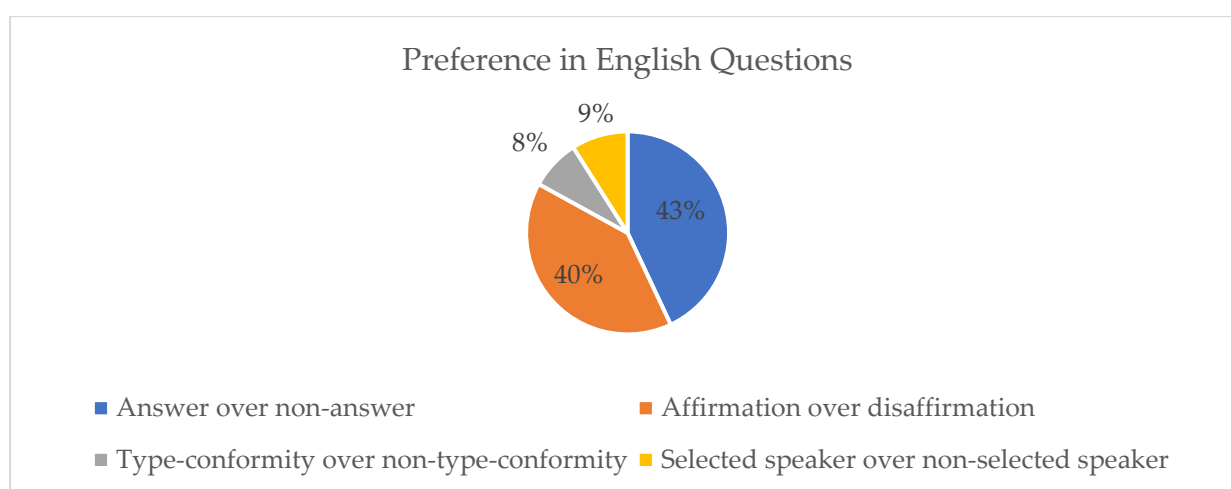


Chart 4. Preference in English Questions

The chart presented that answer over non-answer preference was the dominant preference in teachers’ English questions. Even though, some teachers also mostly asked questions expecting on affirmation over disaffirmation preference but answer over non-answer preference was higher 3% than affirmation over disaffirmation preference. This data proved that teachers really expected their students answered all questions correctly and actively.

3.1.2 Teachers’ question in Indonesia

In investigating teachers’ questioning, the researcher discovered that teachers asked questions during English class with English and Indonesia language. Similar with the analysis in English question, primarily, the researcher investigated the type of questions which was existing from all Indonesia questions. The data discovered, in Indonesia questions, content questions were also the dominant question type than polar questions. This comparison could be seen in the pie chart below.

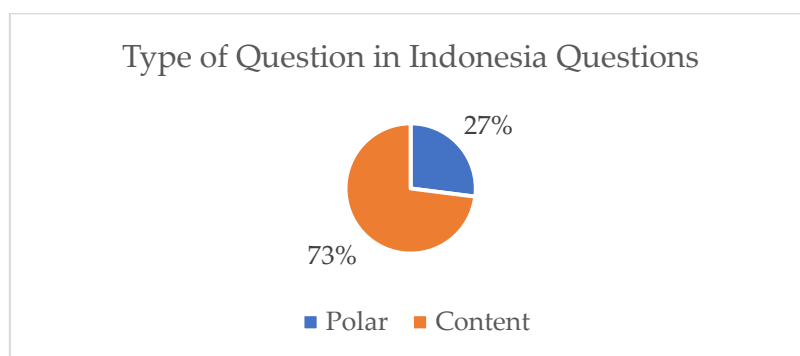


Chart 5. Type of Questions in Indonesia Questions

The analysis revealed that 73% of teachers used content questions, while only 27% used polar questions. This indicates that teachers predominantly employed content questions when asking in Indonesian. Furthermore, the researcher examined the aspects of questioning to understand how teachers formulated their questions in Indonesian. By analyzing the presuppositions in these questions, the researcher identified the teachers' purposes. Four types of presuppositions were considered, and it was found that most teachers asked questions in Indonesian with the aim of reviewing lesson content, mirroring the pattern observed with English questions. The comparison of the four types of presuppositions is illustrated in the pie chart below.

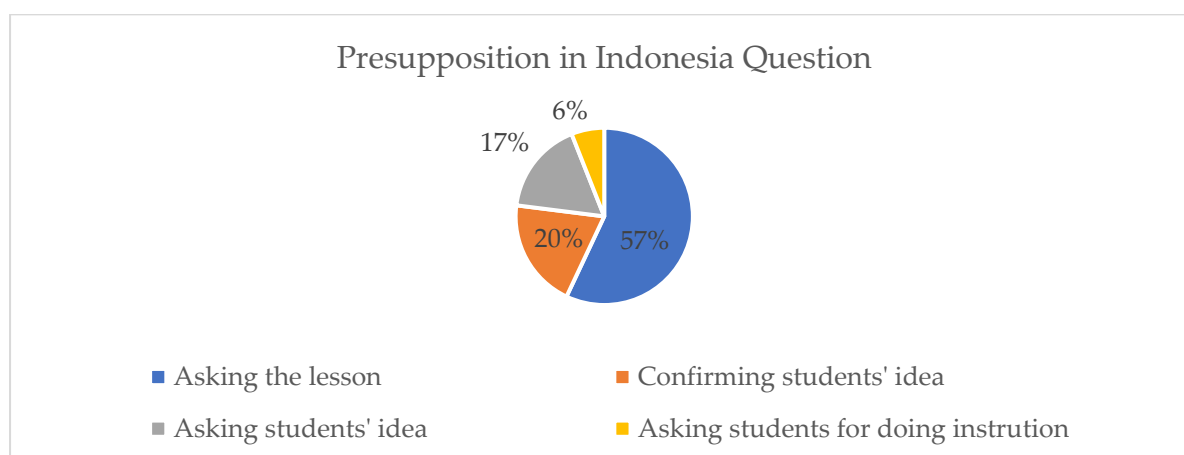


Chart 6. Presupposition in Indonesia Questions

It presented that most teachers presupposed on asking the lesson when they asked questions in Indonesia. It occurred because the focus of teachers in English class was delivering the material clearly so most questions was existing in order to ask the lesson especially to repeat and emphasize the English question. Also, to reach the presupposition, the teachers must use kinds of agenda in questioning (Sidnell, 2013). As there were two kinds of agenda consisting topic and action, the researcher compared the data between them. Then, the result of it could be seen in the pie chart below.



Chart 7. Agenda in Indonesia Questions

It showed that most teachers asked questions in Indonesia in order to reach their aim by using topic agenda which was focused on questions in the form what is being discuss with the questions. In fact, this result was similar with the agenda in English question where there were 93% of teachers applying topic agenda while questioning in order to achieve their presupposition in questioning.

To complete the analysis on how teachers' questioning, it must explore the teachers' expectation on the question which was called preference in Sidnell's theory (2013). The researcher analysed four types of preference in order to know what kind of responses that teachers expected from students and the data was found in the pie chart below.



Chart 8. Preference in Indonesia Questions

The chart showed that most teachers preferred students to provide answers rather than non-answers, with 64% of teachers expressing this expectation. This preference arose because teachers frequently asked questions related to lesson content, aiming to ensure students understood the material. In summary, teachers asked content-focused questions to achieve learning objectives and foster good interaction with students, favoring answers over non-answers.

3.1.3 Comparing teachers' questions between English and Indonesia

As the data analysis was done in both languages, most teachers asked questions using content questions rather than polar questions. This happened because the teachers tried to explore students' understanding about the material by asking more content questions such as "what is news item?" and

“what happened in Palestine?”. The detail of data comparison between English and Indonesia especially on type of questions, could be seen in the chart below.

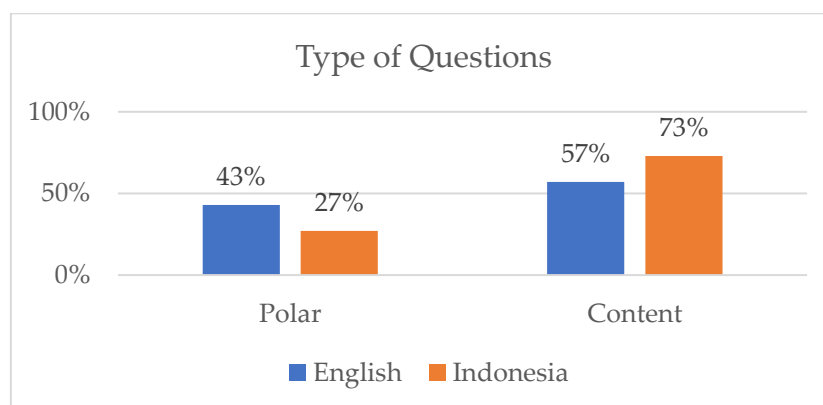


Chart 9. Type of Question in both languages

The chart showed that English and Indonesia used content questions more than polar questions, with 57% and 73%. It proved in both languages that teachers mostly applied content questions when they tried to encourage students’ understanding in classroom interaction and improve students’ participation with many possible responses.

In addition, the researcher investigated the aspects in questions to answer how teachers should ask questions during English classrooms. Sidnell (2013) already stated there were three aspects in questioning that must be considered by the speaker. Then, they were presupposition, agenda, and preference. First, presupposition aimed to reveal speaker’s purposes in questioning. Then, the data showed that most teachers presupposed on materials such as asking the last topic and the new topic; this data could be seen in the chart below.

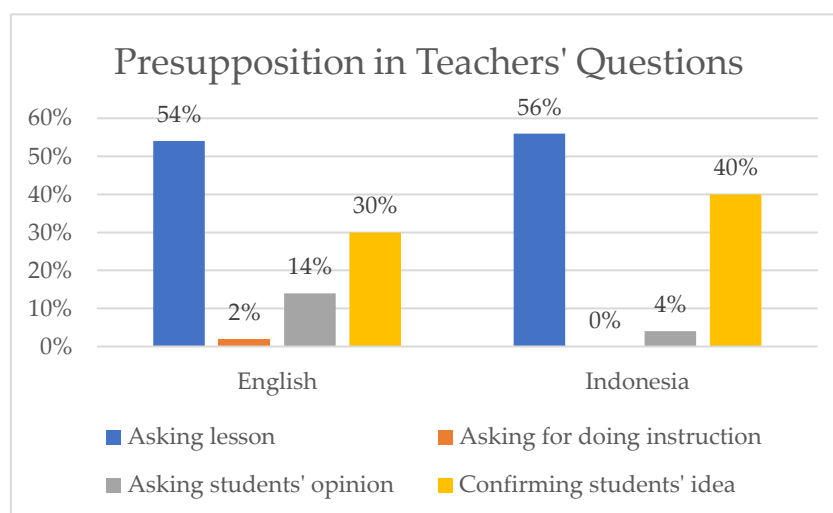


Chart 10. Presupposition in both languages

The chart displayed on what the teachers’ aim in questioning during learning processes and the data showed that most of them presupposed on asking the lesson. This presupposition occurred in both languages, English and Indonesia. This data actually could be seen clearly on the transcription below about teacher 3 in school A teaching her students about news item.

T: news item, yess. Who knows about the news item? Siapa yang coba tahu apa itu news item? What do you know about the news item?
 (quiet)
 T: apa judulnya kemarin? What the title of news itesm last week?
 S: problem in palestina
 T: okey, itu kemarin kan?
 All: iyaa
 T: okay, what do you know? What's else yang kamu ketahui tentang news item kemarin? How about the story? In the past or happens now?

(Transcription 1 Teacher 3 in School A)

It was seen that the blue text showed the English questions and the yellow text showed the Indonesian language questions. This transcription proved that the teacher mostly often presupposed asking the lesson and, in this transcription, talked about news item. For instance, teacher 3 asked the lesson about the news item by saying "who knows about the news item?" in order to remind students on it. Then, she continued the questions by asking "what do you know about the news items?". This question aimed to know students' understanding about the news item. Therefore, usually teachers asked questions to presuppose on the understanding or the conceptual of the topic materials.

Additionally, a question sets up two agendas: an action agenda, which is the speaker's plan of action in response to the question, and a subject agenda, which is what is being discussed (Boyd & Heritage, 2006). The data found the similar situation happened in agenda data for both languages' questions. The researcher found that both languages, English and Indonesia, reached a similar percentage in both types of agenda, topic and action. This situation can be seen in the chart below.

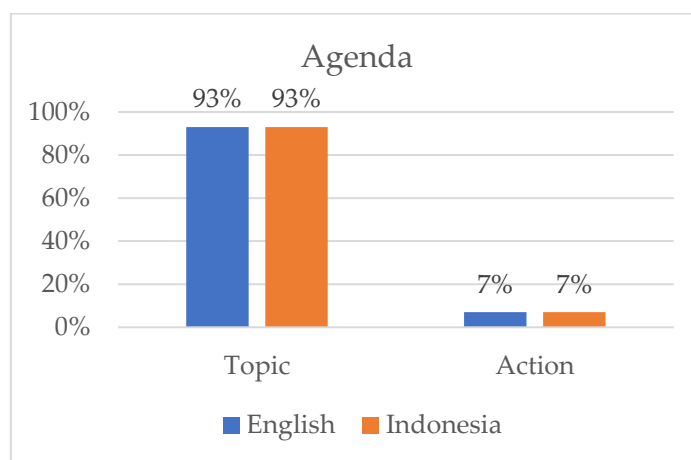


Chart 11. Agenda in both languages

The data revealed an unusual result: both languages showed the same percentages for topic and action agendas in questioning. Topic agendas accounted for 93%, while action agendas accounted for 7%. This indicates that most teachers primarily asked questions focusing on the topic being discussed. The final aspect of questioning examined was preference, which refers to the various outcomes or situations that can follow a question (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013). Sidnell (2013) identified four types of preferences: (1) answer over non-answer preference, (2) affirmation over disaffirmation preference, (3) type-conformity over non-type-conformity preference, and (4) selected speaker over non-selected speaker preference. Analysis showed that the highest percentage of questions in both English and Indonesian demonstrated an answer over non-answer preference. The data for these findings is presented in the chart below.

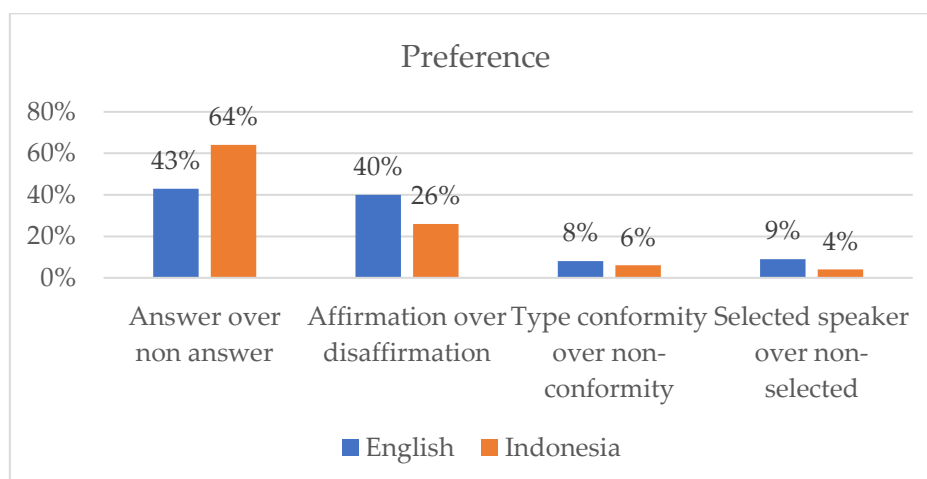


Chart 12. Presupposition in both languages

This chart presented the trends of teachers in using answer over non-answer preference while questioning. It happened because the purpose of teachers' questioning is to engage and comprehend students about the lesson topic. This preference had a connection with the other aspects in questioning. For instance, the answer over non-answer preference occurred due to teachers' presupposition and topic agenda. Because most teachers presupposed on asking the lesson and applied agenda for emphasizing the questions on what being discussed so that the type preference appearing in the data was the answer over non answer preference. In conclusion, the way teachers' questioning in English classroom interaction even though using target or local language, all the questions consisted these three aspects which were presupposition, agenda and preference.

3.2 Discussion

The teachers utilized English and Indonesian as the two languages for the questions. The majority of type questions that teachers' using were content question in both languages with 53% in English and 73% in Indonesia. According to Sidnell and Stivers (2013), content questions are also known as Wh-questions or "topic" inquiries. Teachers used content questions to get students thinking and help them build their grasp of the lesson (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2018). Several researchers have also looked into the use of content questions (Wh-questions) to help students develop their comprehension (Fadlaini, 2018; Sahin, 2015; Yanita & Yusuf, 2016). They discussed how teachers questioned students with questions like "what is the letter talking about" and "where do you usually find this letter" to help them understand the subject matter better. Furthermore, Yanita (2016) noted that topic questions could prompt students to relate the lesson to their own experiences.

Since most questions presupposed on the lesson's subject, it follows that the teacher attempted to foster students' critical thinking skills through questioning as well. According to a few research (Dung & Trang, 2022; Nasir et al., 2019; Sa'adah, 2023), it was consistent. Dung (2022) declared a question is a teacher's tool for promoting critical thinking in their students. It is clear that, in the context of English classroom interactions, the questioning method may encourage students' critical thinking. It is also an important tactic for the development of higher-level, creative, and critical thinking skills (Sa'adah, 2023). Students were able to use their newly learned knowledge to solve problems and locate relevant sources of information to express themselves. The teacher asks questions to help students develop their critical thinking abilities by providing them time to think about and understand the answers (Putri & Reflinda, 2021). In summary, the teacher employed questions as an instructional strategy to encourage critical thinking among the students and improve their comprehension of the material.

However, according to some researchers, such as Winanta (2020) and Mockler (2018), giving students content questions causes them to become silent students. The majority of students lacked

confidence while responding to questions on content. Lestari (2021) also noted that the majority of students remained silent when their teacher asked them Wh-questions, and the statistics indicated that this was because the students needed extra time to consider their answers and think through the problem. Similar findings were also made by Mockler (2018), who observed that when the teacher was posing content-related questions, students generally remained silent. Most students were hesitant to respond to questions on content because they believed their responses were incorrect (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2018). Therefore, in order to encourage student participation, these studies suggested using polar questions first, followed by content-based inquiries.

The majority of teachers posed questions in Indonesian in order to stress and repeat the questions in English. In some investigations, it also happened (Paramartha, ..., & 2018, 2018; Rido, Education, & 2018, 2018). According to Rido (2018), the teacher occasionally did not use the target language, English, when delivering the material because the learning objective was centered on lesson understanding. Additionally, he emphasized the outcome of the students' comprehension following the use of bilingual language to convey the lesson. Similar data analysis was conducted by Paramartha (2018) in her study, which found that teachers tended to ask questions in the students' mother tongue rather than the target language. It occurred because the teacher assumed that rather than starting with language practice, the students would grasp the lesson's main idea.

In contrast, Haryanto (2016) rejected in his research the use of the Indonesian language by teachers in English classrooms, even when they are clarifying and posing questions. He thought that if teachers were not using the target language, the students' proficiency in English would start to decrease. Furthermore, Nasir (2019) had a similar opinion regarding how the teacher's usage of language during the teaching process causes the students' skills to decrease. Consequently, the teacher has to take into account both the language proficiency and the reasoning behind the language lessons.

4. CONCLUSION

Following data collection and analysis, the study concludes that most English teachers in the Pesisir Selatan regency's Lengayang region posed questions to enhance classroom communication in both Indonesian and English. Content questions were more frequently used than polar questions, with 57% in English and 73% in Indonesian. These questions often related to lesson topics, covering both prior and current material, with 51% in English and 57% in Indonesian. Teachers primarily used topic agendas (93% in both languages) and preferred answers over non-answers (43% in English and 64% in Indonesian) to ensure student comprehension. However, the research has limitations, particularly in addressing the complexities of classroom interactions, especially regarding teacher questioning and student responses. Future research should delve deeper into these issues, utilizing and expanding Sidnell's analysis theory (2013) to explore factors and challenges in student responses to teacher questions. Additionally, it is recommended that teachers incorporate more English questions during English classes to further enhance learning.

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