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## Do Teacher Questions Function as Assessment for Learning?

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**Abstract:** This study wants to challenge the robust idea of previous findings revealing that employing a particular question type would necessarily functions as Assessment for Learning (AfL). Besides, this study extends previous research focusing on typology and examines the syntactical forms of questioning in its practice. To gather data, six Indonesian English teachers were observed and audio-recorded, thus, transcribed and analysed following the principle of Conversation Analysis (CA). Except referential type functioning as a teaching technique and a discourse marker choice to discursively extend the classroom talk, the result of analysis corroborates previous studies in that they provide diagnostic information from which a better further action was taken place as highlighted in the AfL. Yet, this might occur as questioning types are syntactically constructed following classroom discourse moves. Thus, the examination of questionings functioning as Assessment for Learning (AfL), aside from types, the syntactical form and classroom discourse moves are important to cope with.

**Key words:** assessment for Learning; question type; syntactical form

**Abstrak:** Studi ini ingin menantang gagasan kuat dari temuan sebelumnya yang mengungkapkan bahwa menggunakan jenis pertanyaan tertentu tentu akan berfungsi sebagai Assessment for Learning (AfL). Selain itu, penelitian ini memperluas penelitian sebelumnya yang berfokus pada tipologi dan mengkaji bentuk sintaksis pertanyaan dalam praktiknya. Untuk mengumpulkan data, enam guru Bahasa Inggris Indonesia diamati dan direkam, kemudian ditranskripsi dan dianalisis mengikuti prinsip Analisis Percakapan (CA). Kecuali tipe referensial yang berfungsi sebagai teknik pengajaran dan pilihan penanda wacana untuk memperluas pembicaraan kelas secara diskursif,

*hasil analisis menguatkan penelitian sebelumnya dalam hal mereka memberikan informasi diagnostik dari mana tindakan lebih lanjut yang lebih baik dilakukan seperti yang disorot dalam AfL. Namun, ini mungkin terjadi karena jenis pertanyaan dibangun secara sintaksis mengikuti gerakan wacana kelas. Oleh karena itu, pemeriksaan soal yang berfungsi sebagai Assessment for Learning (AfL), selain jenisnya, bentuk sintaksis dan gerakan wacana kelas juga penting untuk diatasi.*

***Kata kunci;** penilaian untuk Pembelajaran; tipe pertanyaan; bentuk sintaksis*

## INTRODUCTION

Questioning and Assessment for Learning (AfL) are inseparably related. Following the pattern of IRF/E as claimed by (Ganapathy, Ai, Tan, & Phan, 2020; Laeli & Setiawan, 2019; Lee, Mak, & Burns, 2015; Nassaji, 2016), teacher questioning is widely acknowledged as crucial technique in classroom discourse and is used evaluate the specific learning goals (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Gattullo, 2000; Jiang, 2014; Milawati, 2017; Widiastuti & Saukah, 2017). Focusing on feedback activity, teachers utilize questions to make their students more active resulting from meaning negotiation process both through explicit and implicit. Besides, it might be functioned to stimulate learners thinking and serves to be a guide and a scaffold following the information exchange of IRF/E in the interactions (Chappell, 2014; Eckerth, 2009; Palma, 2014; Saito & Hanzawa, 2016; Tofade, Elsner, & Haines, 2013). Taken together, regardless to discursively influence the extent of students' learning and the shape of classroom talk, questioning types are of crucial to provide diagnostic information and elicit students' learning. As such, the employment of questions is meaningful to know the current level of students' knowledge.

In practice, AFL is implemented in some stages that potentially used in teaching learning process namely eliciting, interpreting, and using the information about the students' learning (Black, 2015; Black & Wiliam, 2009). This is corroborated by (Brookhart, Moss, & Long, 2010; Clark, 2010; Ekembe, 2014; Gotwals & Birmingham, 2015; Ketabi, 2014; F. Van Der Kleij, Vermeulen, Inholland, Schildkamp, & Eggen, 2015) saying that there are three main process of the assessment for learning namely; establishing where the learners are in their learning through meaning negotiation process (Initiation), establishing where they are going in which the teacher collect information about students' learning (from students response) and

establishing what to be done to get the students' achievement (evaluation/feedback). To conduct each stages, teacher should utilize questions to check students' thinking and inquire their understanding and guide future better instruction.

Following IRF/E pattern, there has been a considerable amount of research devoted to questioning in the field of classroom interaction (Barnett & Francis, 2012; Boyd, 2015; Durrleman & Franck, 2016; Gilson, Little, Ruegg, & Bruce-davis, 2014a; Harvey & Light, 2015; Hill, 2016; Hu & Duan, 2018a; Kao, Carlin, & Hsu, 2011; Kawalkar & Vijapurkar, 2013; Sarandi, 2016; Smart & Marshall, 2013; Sujariati, Rahman, & Mahmud, 2016; Taboada, Bianco, & Bowerman, 2012; Virgin, 2015; Waring, Reddington, Yu, & Clemente, 2018; Wright, 2016). The studies found that the employment of question was mainly concerned with the relation of questioning types to subject content, thinking level, and language classroom discourse moves.

Along this line of findings, other studies emphasized the responses resulting from questioning practice (Babai, Parsazadeh, & Moradi, 2018; Farrell & Mom, 2015; Maphosa & Wadesango, 2017; Reinke & Herman, 2016; Robitaille & Lauderdale, 2015; Rolin-ianziti & Ord, 2016; Salerno & Kibler, 2015; Tavakoli & Davoudi, 2016; Tofade et al., 2013; Vaish, 2013; Wang, 2020; White, 2010). The studies have revealed that wait-time strategies and questioning types were very influential to elicit student responses. In this respect, the Initiation, Response, and Feedback (IRF) are the three-part sequence in which types of question and wait-time strategy are of benefit to invite student responses.

By and large, stressing on questioning typology, considerable amount of studies have been carried out regarding the questioning practice in the context of classroom discourse highlighting questioning as a teaching technique, a discourse marker of IRF/E classroom interaction and strategy used for AfL. Despite the long-standing interest and prolific writing, more research studies on the employment of teacher questioning are still needed. Questioning type is insufficient to be examined. One issue this set of papers appears is whether the construction of teacher questions syntactically functions as AfL.

Against this backdrop, this study is an attempt to challenge the robust idea of previous findings revealing that employing a particular question type would necessarily functions as AfL as it provides diagnostic information and promote students' learning. Besides, this study extends previous research that

focused on questioning type and examines its syntactical forms in the context of Assessment for Learning (AfL) in classroom interactions. The findings of this study provide comprehensive and in-depth information about questioning which functions to assess teaching-learning process and assist teachers to realign their instructions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Nowadays, the term ‘assessment for learning’ which is synonymously termed as formative assessment (Bennett, 2011; Clark, 2010; Schildkamp, Kleij, Heitink, Kippers, & Veldkamp, 2020) has become increasingly familiar to the researchers and been of powerful intervention to promote student learning achievement (Birenbaum et al., 2015; Box, Skoog, & Dabbs, Jennifer, 2015; Brookhart et al., 2010; Heritage, 2020; Herman, Osmundson, Dai, Ringstaff, & Timms, 2015b; Mccallum, Milner, Mccallum, & Milner, 2020; Swaffield, 2011; D. J. Walker, Topping, & Rodrigues, 2008). Different from assessment of learning (AoL) focusing on measurement, judgment, and report of students’ progress summatively and assessment as learning (AaL) emphasizing students’ to critically evaluate their own learning, make adjustments and identify the next steps, Assessment for learning (AFL) concerns with diagnostics information, by which a teacher can determine his/her next step in advancing student learning (Black, 2015; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Black & Wiliam, 2018; Earl, 2013). Furthermore, it is a requisite element in teaching learning process and a part of educational practices involving students, teachers and peers through discussion, tasks, and activities. As such, it should be employed in such a way that it might enhance students learning achievement (Birenbaum et al., 2015; Gebril, 2017; Herman et al., 2015b). Briefly, it has been acknowledged as a type of assessment employed by the teacher involving students and peers in order to procure an understanding of knowledge and skills and to guide a further better instruction.

To be an effective activity, AFL is implemented in some stages that potentially used in teaching learning process. They are; establishing where the learners are in their learning, establishing where they are going in which the teacher collect information about students’ learning and establishing what to be done to get the students’ achievement (Clark, 2010; Ekembe, 2014;

Gotwals & Birmingham, 2015; Ketabi, 2014; Swaffield, 2011). As such, the stages definitely involve teacher, and students, and peers in meaning negotiation process of their interactions. To add on, strategies purposed by Black and Wiliam (2009) comprising clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success, employing classroom discussion and assignment for the sake providing feedback and activating students both as instructional resources and the real agent of their own learning should be taken into account (Brookhart et al., 2010; Van Der Kleij, Vermeulen, Schildkamp, & Eggen, 2015).

However, in its implementation, prior studies have revealed something difficult and challenging. These are due to the fact that to assess the effectiveness, such assessment type, in fact, covers both an AFL itself and a summative element (Black, 2015; Dawson et al., 2018). While highlighting the challenges, the main principles of AFL are placing students and teacher's integration, learning goals, evidences, feedback as an entity and subsequently are utilizing them for the next instructional goals. In the meantime, aside from pedagogical aspect, learning instruction, students learning engagement, and the subject discipline (Bennett, 2011; Ekberg, Danby, Davidson, & Thorpe, 2016; Zhou, Dawson, Tai, & Bearman, 2020) and AFL protocol consisting of its dimensions and self-reflection/peer-observation tools were firmly and crucially elements to consider its effectiveness (Black & Wiliam, 2018; Wylie & Lyon, 2020). This is a prickly issue to cover and needs to reorient in that the effectiveness of it can be properly examined.

Along this line of consideration, an approach to examining the technical quality of observation protocols focused on classroom AFL practices and used to provide feedback for teachers to the improvement of interventions and practice was examined. In this respect, the process of constructing a validity argument for an observation protocol is challenging due to the recurrent and lengthy process (Lyon, Oláh, & Brenneman, 2020). Despite the lengthy, there is need to employ such protocol in question for the sake of its effectiveness examination.

Thus, in an attempt to implement Assessment for Learning (AfL), previous studies have set up the prescriptive inquires which, probably, have served as a guide to precise and refine AfL real practice. These inquires, taken together, constitute the so-called effectiveness of Assessment for Learning (AfL). Yet, with regard to the challenges mentioned above, there is a need to examine the AfL strategies employed by teacher, from which the challenges in

question, might be enlightened. One of strategies which can be deeply examined is questioning practice in classroom interaction.

### **AfL and Questioning**

Questioning is the most frequent type of teacher talks employed in classroom interactions (Farrell & Mom, 2015) and is mostly affect learner outcomes (Maphosa & Wadesango, 2017). Stressing on questioning types, a wide range of studies have found that questioning is the most fundamental technique used by teachers to stimulate student thinking, involvement, and language production (Barnett & Francis, 2012; Chappell, 2014; Engin, 2013; Gilson, Little, Ruegg, & Bruce-davis, 2014b; Hill, 2016; Kao et al., 2011; Mcneil, 2012; Ngoc, Pham, & Hamid, 2013; Rido, 2017; Robitaille & Lauderdale, 2015; Salerno & Kibler, 2015; Sunggingwati & Nguyen, 2013; Taboada et al., 2012; Tofade et al., 2013; Walsh & Hodge, 2018). Through the use of effective questioning strategy involving types choice, students are helped to expand their knowledge and evolve thinking skills.

Aside from an interactive teaching technique, teacher question is the most frequent choice to discursively ease students' participation and learning in the classroom (Barbieri, 2015; Cancino, 2015; Ekembe, 2014; Hosoda, 2015; Hu & Duan, 2018; Kapellidi, 2013; Lam, 2018; J. Lee & Kim, 2016; Manzel, 2016; Palma, 2014; Sarandi, 2016; Solem, 2016; Stivers, 2018). In this context, as the most powerful discourse move choice, teacher questions should not only deal with the types but also with the functions following the context where they might appear (Boyd, 2015; Darong et al., 2020). Owing to questioning employs the so-called context-based functions, it is not only regarded as a teaching technique but also as a linguistic performance displayed in classroom discourse.

Of greater importance is the contribution of the questioning in Assessment for learning (AfL) in the stage of eliciting, interpreting, and using the information about students' learning. In each stages, questioning along with the types- display, referential, clarification, and request as purposed by Boyd (2015) are necessarily employed to check students thinking and trigger them toward better instructional. In this regard, through questioning teachers get information about the current stage of student knowledge and decides to take better action of his/her further instruction regarding student needs (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Gattullo, 2000; Jiang, 2014; May, 2011; Milawati, 2017; Pianta, 2016; Widiastuti & Saukah, 2017). To add on, in AfL practice, through questioning, teacher can adjust, modify the instruction to meet

student learning goals. The adjustment and modification can be intentionally done in a meaning negotiation process or a feedback activity (Eckerth, 2009; Palma, 2014), from which teacher can gather information to potentially attain the learning goals (Box et al., 2015; Carless, 2011; Clark, 2010; Deeley, Fischbacher-smith, Karadzhev, & Koristashevskaya, 2019; Gan, 2010; Hargreaves, 2005; Lee et al., 2015; Matthews, 2019; Mcclean & Hourigan, 2015; Morley, Bettles, & Derham, 2019; Walker, Salines, Abdillahi, Mason, & Molesworth, 2019)

In this respect, teacher questions serve a guidance to both teacher and students to reflect their current stages in teaching-learning and subsequently are able to have a better further action as expected in AfL. Through questions, the AFL might be carried out in such a way that teacher, students, and peers have diagnostic information to decide a better further instruction (Huang & Hu, 2016; Lam, 2016; Lee, 2011; Obeiah & Bataineh, 2016). Along this line of statement, strategy, context of learners, instruction methodology, interaction types such as teacher-student and student-student are vital elements in AFL. Those aspects, through questioning, are of benefit to have diagnostic information, change, and adapt teachers' instruction regarding students' needs (Choi & Li, 2012; Ganapathy et al., 2020; Nassaji, 2016; Park, 2018; Sarandi, 2016; Sritrakarn, 2018).

AfL highlights the involvement of teacher, students and peers which is mirrored in questioning of feedback activity. Consequently, teacher questions should be critical in that they can develop students' understanding, invite student responses representing their thinking. In addition, teacher follow-up actions should be purposeful mediation of students' learning goals (Black & Wiliam, 2018; Hill, 2016; Jiang, 2014). Yet, to have an effective questioning, there is a need for students to interpret received message and proceed or respond it (Cooke, 2013; Cowie & Moreland, 2015; Halbach, 2015; Jr & Stout, 2014; Ozuem & Lancaster, 2015; Richards, Conway, Roskvist, & Harvey, 2013; Winstone & Boud, 2020). In this regard, student roles might be of benefit toward the successfulness of questioning in feedback activity. As such, there is a need for students to reflect their own talks reflecting on the given response. Utilizing the roles of the agents in question is of benefit to seek, interpret, and responds to information from discussion and or meaning negotiation that enhances ongoing learning. Briefly, (Earl, 2013) recommended that questioning should be employed in such a way that the teachers should provide diagnostic information to boost students' learning and should adapt their teaching to encounter students' needs as highlighted in



AfL. Taken together, questioning serves a principal role to meet both learning aims and classroom expectations in AfL.

By and large, the function of teacher questioning highlighted from the previous studies draws into three issues namely as a diagnostic, instructional and discourse tool of classroom discourse. As such, teacher questions serve serves more functions (multi-functions) which cannot be revealed in the context of immediate response but also in the whole discourse moves occurring in interactions including assessment process. Regardless of the second and third, this article emphasized the former that is how teacher questions are utilized as AfL in classroom interactions. In this point, questioning analysis should not only be carried out in terms the types but also the syntactic form as it is of benefit and helpful to meet the learning goals. In a brief, to reveal questioning as an assessment tool, there is a need to uncover the entire process of questioning, particularly, the syntactic form in question.

## METHOD

Six EFL teachers teaching at Universitas Negeri Malang- Indonesia were chosen purposefully as the subjects. The selection was justified for the work in hand strives to enquire how the course of interaction is processed in oral expression. They were assumed to have ample knowledge and performance about the English language since they have been exposing to it for more than five years.

In order to have a broader insight into teachers' questions in classroom interactions, the researcher mainly relied on the observation data. Aside from an audio- recorder, a guide of classroom observation and field note of types, syntactical forms, and students' verbal responses and teacher instructions were used. The observation was not to compare; it is rather to have comprehensive data about teacher questions functioning as AfL during the interactions.

In effect, it is clear that the presence of the researcher is likely to distort the nature scene of the classroom atmosphere. As such, the researcher tried to work to the feeling of uneasiness that could rise among classroom participants. To observe and record, the permission was asked to attend the session without bringing the camera to avoid student from being shock, panic and uncomfortable.

Data analysis relied on the principles of Conversation Analysis (CA). The observed classes were transcribed following the convention of Jefferson 1984 (Hosoda, 2015) following the IRE/F interactions pattern. The transcripts were labelled by some symbols (Appendix)

The transcriptions were carefully coded and analysed. Regarding the types, all questions were coded and categorized into the display, referential, clarification, and request (Boyd, 2015). The researcher looked closely at types of questions to discern which type is frequently used in the lessons along with the responses. Since the existing coding schemes looked unsuitable for student responses in this current study, the writer developed his own comprising response and no response. In the meantime, the syntactic forms (yes/no, w-h, declarative/final raise, how/what) about as well as the functional role of the teacher questions were noted. They were necessarily analysed to know, whether or not, the form corresponds to the function as AfL. With respect to validity and attainable preconception and viewpoint built-in in this study, triangulation was carried out by comparing the observation data with reflective analysis of field notes and recording. They were carefully compared and cross-checked in verification process to be drawn into the final analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

In this section, the results of analysis comprising questioning types and the syntactical forms are presented. Data display and a concise interpretation are also presented. Both would be of benefit for the discussion section.

### Questioning types

In order to address the first objective of this article that is to challenge the robust idea of previous findings revealing that employing a particular question type would necessarily provide diagnostic information and promote students' learning., the data were sorted and categorized into display, referential, clarification, and request questions. The following table (Table 1) is the distribution of teacher question types which was varied for each teachers during their interactions with the students.

**Table 1** (attached)

Although all the teachers' questions made up more than half of their utterances, there were marked differences in frequencies of types for each teachers. Furthermore, looking at the data in Table 1, display or closed question type dominated in interactions. In the meantime, referential question came at the second position and respectively followed by clarification and request. When students struggled to comprehend the topic being discussed, display question dominated and contributed more than referential question. It was frequently used to check students understanding of the topic being discussed. Meanwhile, referential-open question which has a lower percentage than display question was used by the teacher to provoke students' high thinking level. When students required to elaborate their idea beyond the text, it occurred timely and was being a trigger to enlarge the talk. Besides, the clarification type appeared differently among the six participants under the contribution made by the students and the teachers' questions functioning as requests were varied in terms of perlocutionary acts they want to have. Along the line of the appearance of questioning types in Table 1, the responses given by students, in terms of number, were different following the nature questioning types and discourse moves of classroom interactions. More importantly, observation and field notes have shown that the employment of questioning types and the given response assisted teachers to realign their future instruction during the lesson.

### **Questioning Syntactic form**

With respect to the second objective that is the syntactical forms of questioning in the context of Assessment for Learning (AfL) practice, the identification of questioning forms namely yes/no question, W-h question, Declarative with final raise, How/what about, and tag question was carried out (Table 2).

Table 2 Syntactic Forms of Questions

No	T	F	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	TN1-6								
1	D	Y/N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	166		
			68	24	3	4	25	20	8	32	37	33	25	30			
			W-H	155	54	25	37	58	47	10	40	50	45	41		49	339
			D/FP	52	18	40	59	33	26	7	28	23	21	16		19	171
			H/W about	11	4	-	-	9	7	-	-	1	1	2		2	23
TN	286	100	68	100	125	100	25	100	111	100	84	100	699				
2	R	Y/N	19	76	19	39	18	34	-	-	3	19	6	40	65		
			W-H	6	24	20	41	28	54	2	100	4	25	4	27	64	
			D/FP	-	-	9	18	6	12	-	-	9	56	3	20	27	
			H/W about	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	13	3	
			TN	25	100	49	100	52	100	2	100	16	100	15	100	159	
3	C	Y/N	-	-	2	20	6	14	1	17	12	52	5	26	49		
			W-H	-	-	1	10	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
			D/FP	9	100	7	70	36	84	5	83	11	48	3	37	71	
			H/W about	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
			TN	9	100	10	100	43	100	6	100	23	100	8	100	122	
4	Req	Y/N	2	40	3	60	13	81	3	60	4	67	7	86	32		
			W-H	1	20	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
			D/FP	2	40	1	20	2	13	2	40	2	33	1	14	10	
			H/W about	-	-	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
			TN	5	100	5	100	16	100	5	100	6	100	8	100	44	

1.024

Note:

T: Type; D: Display; R: Referential; C: Clarification; R: Request F: Form; Y/N: Yes/No question, W-H: W-H Question; D/FP: Declarative with final raise phrase; H/W about: How/what about question; TQ: Tag question; T1: Teacher 1, T2: teacher 2; T3: Teacher 3; T4: Teacher 4; T5: Teacher 5; T6: Teacher 6; N: Total number per form; TN: Total number of form per question type; TN1-6: Total number for all the teachers.

With regard to the data in Table 2, the syntactical form of teacher questions differently appeared. The W-h syntactical forms were used for purposes of checking students' knowledge and of enlarging or extending the classroom discourse exchanges. Meanwhile, the use of yes/no questions and declarative with final raise were justified by the fact that the students could not give response towards W-h and how/what about syntactical forms. In this regard, aside from checking students' knowledge, both served a function to

realign teachers instruction for the sake of student responses following the proposition of W-h questions raised in advance.

## DISCUSSION

Table 1 confirmed that the most question type employed by the teachers was display question. Although they knew the answers, this questioning type was raised to require the students to demonstrate their knowledge on a subject matter. Yet, following Grice's principle of co-operation in conversation, posing display question in real interactions might violate the maxim of quality. The addresser of a question in a real social life context seeks for new and unknown information from the addressee who is expected to provide a true and sincere answer. Therefore, asking a display question could be regarded insincere and might not receive the desired response from the addressee (Grice, 1989).

In terms of their appearance, pro and contra have come up in existing studies. Previous research studies have confirmed that display question was used to check students' understanding and their knowledge on the subject matter. This question type could facilitate or stimulate limited students' responses and not necessarily represent students' understanding and deeper thinking. Unlikely, referential-open question was posed to seek certain information and students' opinion about something. This question type might invite longer students' responses and provoke deeper thinking level than the previous one (Engin, 2013; Farrell & Ives, 2015; Hill, 2016; Kao et al., 2011; Ngoc et al., 2013; Tavakoli & Davoudi, 2016; Wright, 2016).

In contrast, display question is a central resource whereby language teachers and students set up their lessons and produce language pedagogy based on the learning goals (Hu & Duan, 2018a; Mcneil, 2012; Walsh & Hodge, 2018). Besides, the employment of such type requires students to provide longer response and to think deeply and critically following classroom discourse moves. In this respect, they would invite such students' response and deeper thinking as they have certain criteria of the difficulty of discourse and syntactical complexity level. In this context, the complexity of questioning might determine students' verbal response both cognitively and discursively (Durrleman & Franck, 2016; Ozuem & Lancaster, 2015; Stivers, 2018).

Although it has been widely documented in various studies that display question normally elicited short, simple, and low-level answers and violated the maxim of quality (Engin, 2013; Farrell & Ives, 2015; Grice, 1989; Hill,

2016; Kao et al., 2011; Tavakoli & Davoudi, 2016; Wright, 2016), this current study confirmed something different. The employment of display question with its syntactical forms of W-h, yes-no, declarative with final raise and how/what about syntactical forms (Table 2) discursively shaped the classroom talk, and successfully promoted learning. Its employment could elicit more response and deeper thinking. In spite of the fact that there was a need for teachers to change into yes-no question and declarative with final raise (except T2 and T 4), as the students found difficulty to respond W-h question, student responses were elicited as shown in the following extract (taken from T1's interaction).

Extract 1

- T : *Why do you use have?*  
S1 : (*)*  
T : *Do you know why?*  
S1 : *Following the formula. There must be to be "have" following the subject.*  
T : *OK. Do you think you answer my question?*  
S : *Yes I am.*  
T : *What is the formula? Can you tell me the formula?*  
S1 : (*)*  
S2 : *S+ has/have + V+O/Adverb.*  
T : *What is the verb form?*  
S2 : (*)*  
T : *Should we put past participle there?*  
S2 : *Yes, we should use past participle. The formula is S+has/have+ V-3+ O/Adverb*  
T : *Yes, it is a must. Right↑ I was thinking you should add past participle there↓ I am wondering if you have put that one. Let's open the book page thirteen.*

Looking at the extract, the teacher emphasized the formula of a present perfect tense. The teacher raised display questions with the construction of W-h syntactical form such as "why do you use have?" "what is the formula?" "what is the verb form?" Using such W-h question form was not surprising in that the classroom is the most important setting for using W-h questions and teachers utilize them to expand learners' knowledge, and actively engage students in classroom sessions (Celce & Larsen, 1999). However, as seen in the extract, student response was silent (*)*. To cope with such condition, the teacher changed into yes/no question "do you know why", "can you tell me?" and "Should we put past participle there?" in feedback or meaning

negotiation process. In this respect, this findings echoed the previous studies confirming that students' response and deeper thinking represented by stating the formula of present perfect tense could be facilitated as teacher questions meet certain criteria of the difficulty of discourse and syntactical complexity of questioning (Durrleman & Franck, 2016; Hill, 2016; Harvey & Light, 2015; Ozuem & Lancaster, 2015; Stivers, 2018).

Regarding the Assessment for Learning (AfL), display question constituted a significant role. The employment of such question type was of benefit to provide evidence to modify and choose better strategy of learning instruction. The employment of display question along with its syntactical forms could assist teachers to realign their instructional strategy resulting from students' responses in meaning negotiation process as seen in the extract I. The teacher got an evidence that the student still did not know the subject matter (tense) that was being discussed from which, an option of learning instruction strategy chosen by the teacher (required the students to have a look at page thirteen). In this context, the extract indicates that the employment of display question, following the IRF pattern, was of benefit toward the provision of diagnostic information for a further instruction to meet students' needs. The teachers employed the types to elicit, interpret and use the information about students' learning as purposed by Black & Wiliam, (2009). Thus, the teachers employed display questions to confirm and check students' understanding and guide their better future instruction.

Saying it differently, regardless of the conflicting findings, the use of display questions with its syntactical forms was a means of AFL. Such questioning type was posed following the talk sequences namely initiation, response, and feedback/evaluation to evaluate students' knowledge or to review, to summarize and to assess the achievement of instructional goals or objectives (eliciting) of which more responses (interpreting) provided for better further instruction (using evidence). Then, this study corroborated previous studies revealing that question can be used as AFL in terms of finding the gap between the current state of students' knowledge and their target learning (Andersson & Palm, 2018; Carless, 2011; Gotwals & Birmingham, 2015; Herman, Osmundson, Dai, Ringstaff, & Timms, 2015; Hu & Duan, 2018b; F. M. Van Der Kleij et al., 2015; William, 2015), determining and modifying learning activities and subsequently choose a better strategy to improve students' learning achievement (Gattullo, 2000; Jiang, 2014b; Milawati, 2017; Widiastuti & Saukah, 2017).

Different from display question, referential question appearing as the second most frequent type was mostly constructed by yes-no question forms, then followed by W-h forms, declarative with final raise and How/what about forms (Table 2). The appearance of referential question during the interactions was teacher's effort to elaborate on the topic and lengthen the talk by weaving external information into learning instruction. The following extract, taken from teacher's 4 interactions delineates the effort in question.

### Extract 2

S1 : *So recently I read ↑..a book. a novel, it is a novel from Oscar Wilde.*

T : *Oscar Wilde?*

S1 : *Yes.*

T : *What is it?*

S1 : *Picture of Glorian way.*

T : *Glorian way?*

S1 : *Yes*

T : *OK. What is it?*

S1 : *The novel is very interesting to me. The story is about love and faith*

T : *Wow..what a great story. Have you ever experienced like that? I mean experience like the characters presented in the novel? Can you?*

S1 : *No, I don't have. Yet, my best friend used to have it*

T : *Pity him. How about you? What is your experience?*

S2 : ( )

The extract highlights the use of referential question with the construction of yes/no, how about and W-h syntactical forms such as “have you ever experienced like that?” and “how about you?,” “what is it?” and “what is your experience?” In this respect, instead of checking students' knowledge and providing diagnostic information, the employment of referential question along with its form indicates teacher's effort to lengthen the conversation. This finding mirrors the previous studies noting that referential questions were posed to extend the talk and develop students' interest in classroom discourse moves rather than to check learning and provide diagnostic information for further instruction (Gilson et al.,; Kawalkar & Vijapurkar, 2013; Lam, 2018; Maphosa & Wadesango, 2017; Rolin-ianziti & Ord, 2016; Smart & Marshall, 2013; Çakır & Cengiz, 2016; Jiang, 2014; Pendidikan & Dianti, 2015; Wright, 2016). Besides, in spite of inviting longer responses and higher-order thinking in that the students were facilitated to have an effort of knowledge actualization toward the questioning proposition, they were used as a teaching technique and not as assessment tool. Moreover,



there was no follow-up actions provided to facilitate learning goals that meet student needs. Thus, referential question type along with its syntactical forms did not meet the principle of AFL.

To add on, the employment of referential questioning type in this study was in contrast with the last stage of AFL practice purposed by Black & Wiliam (2009) and Gotwals & Birmingham (2015) that is using the information about students' learning. In this regard, teacher questions could function as AFL in that they are used to find the gap between the current stage of students' knowledge and target learning. Besides, teacher question might be able to assist, both teacher and students, to be more actively engaged with their assessment and learning. It, in fact, was posed only for classroom discourse moves, rather than to check learning and provide diagnostic information for a better instruction. In brief, the employment of referential question with its syntactical forms in this study was divergently encountered with the learning target and run into teaching technique and a discourse choice marker of classroom talk, instead of as AFL.

With regard to clarification type, Table 2 confirmed that it was syntactically constructed in declarative with final raise and successively followed by yes-no question and W-h question forms. Bringing them to the context of AFL, the employment of such syntactical forms mirrors the strategies proposed by Black & Wiliam (2009) of AFL practice; 1) clarifying and sharing learning intentions 2) activating students as the owner of learning. The former, in which the teachers clarified students' responses, was seeking to bring about an explanation or redefinition of the preceding contribution. As shown in Extract 1 ("Do you think you answer my question?" and "Should we put past participle there?") and Extract 2 ("Oscard Wilde?" and "Glorian Way?"). The appearance was as a logical consequence of preceding utterances and its forms was to relate direction or students' behaviour (Boyd, 2015). Although clarification type invited short responses, the employment was of benefit to check students understanding from which new instruction was taken place.

To add on, clarification type was mostly contingent to previous response and displayed students' knowledge. The syntactical forms, declarative with final raise and yes-no question, were used likely to ensure whether students' responses have already represented their thinking or not. In spite of the fact that W-h question form was only posed by two teachers (T2 employing 1 or for about 10% of 10 questions and T3 who posed 1 (2%) of 43 questions), the function was beneficial for providing diagnostic information for a further

instruction stage. Meanwhile, the absence of this form in some teachers' classes and other syntactical forms (how/what about and tag form) was due to the discourse move during the discussions.

Along this line of argument, the second strategy is that activating students as the owner of learning. In this context, teacher provided feedback that moved learners forward as found in the Extract I (Why do you use have? Do you know why?). As such, the employment of the clarification could make students actively involved in learning process by means of meaning negotiation in feedback activities. Following the sequences of communicative acts performed by both teachers and students, this study corroborates previous findings showing that teachers utilized clarification check questions to put their students actively resulting in the meaning negotiation process (Ellis, 2009; Palma, 2014; Wright, 2016). In this regard, the feedback activity, then, can be regarded as a process of providing diagnostic information (Choi & Li, 2012; Cooke, 2013; Cowie & Moreland, 2015; Joughin, Boud, Dawson, & Tai, 2020; Lee, 2011; Park, 2018; Sarandi, 2016) to attain learning goals as what AfL wants to cover.

Similarly, request type was mostly constructed by yes-no question form and followed by declarative with a final raise and W-h questioning forms. The employment of such syntactic forms was to elicit students' responses as shown in extract I ("Can you tell me?") and Extract 2 ("Can you?"). In this regard, the response of yes-no question form established where the learners are in their learning. Furthermore, an analytical analysis on the transcripts confirmed that the forms in question were contingent to previous student responses. Both teacher and students negotiate their learning target, objectives, and standard for success. They were posed in feedback activity and were regarded as follow-up questions to facilitate learning. In other words, request questions were intended to have the students to perform an act. This corroborates previous studies saying that request referred to a preparatory condition such as willingness, ability or possibility to perform the act ( Darong, 2020; Tajeddin & Pezeshki, 2014; Yazdanfar & Bonyadi, 2016). In this regard, the students were requested to perform acts resulting from the illocutionary act of the teacher's questions. Yet, the performed action was used as the evidence to establish what need to be done to get the students achievement as highlighted in AfL. Its employment clarified and shared learning intentions and provided feedback to activate students as the owner of learning (Clark, 2010; Gotwals & Birmingham, 2015; Hargreaves, 2005; Ketabi, 2014; Wiliam, 2017). In brief, request type along with its syntactical forms was a teacher strategy and met the AFL practice.

To a great extent, the question type found in this study were beneficial to promote students' learning. This corroborates previous findings saying that question types (except referential type) are necessarily posed to check students thinking and trigger them toward better learning achievement. Teachers got information about the current stage of student knowledge and decided to take better action of their further instruction to meet student needs (P. Black & Wiliam, 2018; Gattullo, 2000; Heritage, 2020; May, 2011; Milawati, 2017; Pianta, 2016; Widiastuti & Saukah, 2017). Meanwhile, referential question was posed to develop students' interest rather than to check learning. Besides, the employment of such questioning type was to enlarge the talk. As such, referential question functioned as teaching technique and a discourse choice moves and not as AfL.

However, the findings in this study are expected to give better understanding on questioning employment functioning as Assessment for Learning (AfL). In this context, types are insufficient. The syntactical form of questioning is another aspect to deal with. More importantly, both did not occur independently. They were absolutely connected in sequence and were associated with context (context-based) and commodity exchange of classroom discourse. Consequently, teachers' interactional awareness along with their pedagogical and assessment knowledge in questioning is of benefit for the practice of Assessment for Learning (AfL)

(Boyd, 2015; Ghafarpour, 2016; Hu & Duan, 2018; Lee, 2016). Thus, the an effective examination of questionings functioning as Assessment for Learning (AfL), aside from types, the syntactical form and classroom discourse moves are important to cope with.

## CONCLUSION

Teacher questions were beneficial to organize the structure, manage the turn-taking and the topic of discourse. Aside from those, through questioning, teachers can do Assessment for Learning (AFL) to modify learning activities and to choose a better strategy for the sake of students' learning achievement. Therefore, teacher questions should develop students' understanding, elicit responses representing their thinking so as the follow-up actions should be meaningful interventions which move learners towards their learning goals.

More importantly, to develop questioning as an Assessment for Learning (AfL) tool in classroom interactions, there is a need to go beyond the

standard IRF. Aside from the types, the syntactical forms following discourse moves are of great importance to invite students' responses, to involve them actively and to extend the talks, from which teachers gain evidence to set up further stage instruction. Briefly, regardless of the types, there should be a better look on questioning syntactical forms and discourse moves occurring in classroom interactions.

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## Appendix

### Transcription Convention

Code	Meaning
T	Teacher
S	student (response)
.	Period, end of a sentence
?	Question
..	short time pause
()	Nonlinguistic sounds, e.g. Laughing
↑	Rising intonation
↓	Falling intonation
()	Comments by transcriber
(( )) about	Problematic hearing that transcriber is not certain

Adapted from Jefferson (Hosoda, 2015)

**Table 1: Distribution of Types of Questions**

No	T	T1				T2				T3				T4				T5				T6				Total R & NR			
		N	%	R	NR	N	%	R	NR	N	%	R	NP	N	%	R	NR	N	%	R	NR	N	%	R	NR	TN	%	R	NR
1	D	286	88	280	6	68	51	64	4	125	53	122	3	25	66	25	0	111	71	103	8	84	73	79	5	699	70	673	26
2	R	25	8	18	7	49	37	32	3	52	22	47	5	2	5	2	0	16	10	9	7	15	13	8	7	159	16	116	43
3	C	9	3	7	2	10	8	4	6	43	18	39	4	6	16	6	0	23	15	21	2	8	7	7	1	99	10	84	15
4	Req	5	1	4	1	5	4	4	1	16	7	14	2	5	13	5	0	6	4	6	0	8	7	6	2	45	4	39	16
TQ/%		325	100			132	100			236	100			38	100			156	100			115	100			1.002	100	912	100

Note: TQ: Total question per teacher; T: Type; D: Display; R: Referential; C: Clarification; Req: Request; T1: Teacher 1, T2: teacher 2; T3: Teacher 3; T4: Teacher 4; T5: Teacher 5; T6: Teacher 6; R: Response; NR: No response; N: Total number per type; N: Total number per type for each teacher; TN: Total number per question type for all the teacher

