CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews related literature and research in five sections. The first section examines roles of questions in the language classroom. The second section reviews question classifications. The third section presents roles of questioning strategies in the language classroom. The fourth section describes roles of students' responses in the language classroom. The fifth section reviews research on teachers' questions and students' responses in the language classroom.

2.1 Roles of Questions in the Language Classroom

In language classrooms, teachers ask questions to achieve different purposes. Teachers' questions are useful for language teaching and learning. They can foster development of students' language ability in various ways.

Firstly, questions can be used to draw students' attention to the lesson. Teachers may ask questions to arouse students' curiosity and maintain their interest in the lesson. When students are interested in the lesson, they will pay more attention to it and as a result they would have chances to obtain and further process the input.

Secondly, questions can be used to get students involved in learning. Many of the questions teachers ask in the language classroom are designed to encourage students to practise using the target language through interaction. Allwright (1988), Doff (1988), Allwright and Bailey (1991) and Johnson (1995) maintain that students can develop their linguistic ability when they participate in classroom interaction. It is believed that verbal participation offers language learners opportunities to follow

up new words and structures to which they are exposed during lessons and to practise using them in context. Practicing the language in context provides students with opportunities to modify and adjust their language production in ways that expand their current language capacity (Cornbleth, 1975; Long, 1983; White and Lightbown, 1984; Swain, 1985; Pica and Long, 1986; Cullen, 1988; Van Lier, 1988b; Johnson, 1992; Nunan, 1994; Dornyei, 1995; Nunan and Lamb, 1996 and Pica, et al, 1996).

Thirdly, questions enable teachers to check students' understanding of the lesson. The act of checking students' understanding of the lesson is important in the teaching and learning process. This is because when the teacher finds that students do not understand the lesson or the presented input is too difficult for them, s/he may provide the students with feedback, for example, by correcting their responses, simplifying or providing additional input that can make the previously presented input more comprehensible and thus can increase the students' understanding. Without the use of questions, it is quite difficult for teachers to promote students' comprehension of the lesson.

Fourthly, questions themselves can be considered an important input in that they provide students with models of language and its use. These models can have a positive effect on students' acquisition of the target language. That is, when students are exposed to teachers' questions, they may later acquire, at best, different question forms, vocabulary and language use.

The above review shows that questions have different roles in developing students' language ability: drawing students' attention to the lesson, getting students' involved in learning, checking students' understanding of the lesson and being an essential input which provides students with models of language and its use. It should be noted that the role of questions in getting students involved in learning is particularly crucial for developing their language ability and preparing them to communicate in the target language outside the classroom. Questions with this role encourage students to respond to teachers' questions in the language classroom and

lead to the elicitation of verbal interaction in the classroom which is crucial in communicative language teaching of which the goal is to enable students to communicate with others outside the classroom. Without teachers asking questions to elicit interaction in the classroom, students might not have opportunities to practise using the target language and develop their language ability and thus would be unable to use the target language spontaneously outside the classroom. Since teachers' use of questions has an important role in language learning and teaching, it is necessary to examine types of questions, the frequency of their occurrence in the classroom, and the extent that each type of question achieves its purpose of eliciting verbal interaction in the classroom.

2.2 Question Classifications

Much of the research on questions has centered on developing classifications for a description of question types. Researchers have categorized questions on four main bases: cognitive level, the nature of expected responses, forms and functions of questions. The four major types of question classifications are reviewed below:

2.2.1 Question Classification Based on Cognitive Level

Bloom (1974) classified questions based on cognitive level for educational purpose into six types as shown in the following table:

Table 2.1 Classification of Questions Based on Cognitive Level

Cognitive Level	Question Type	Purpose	Example
Low	Knowledge	To require students to recall and recognize facts	What's the opposite of "down" in English?
High	Comprehension	To require students to demonstrate an understanding of subject matter	What is the main idea of the first text?
	Application	To have students solve problems	Can you change this reported question into actual question?
	Analysis	To look at something as a whole and then break down into its component parts	Why should we make use of solar energy?
	Synthesis	To develop or create something original based on what students know or have experienced	What would you do if you were the president of America?
	Evaluation	To have students make reasonable value judgements and then defend those judgements with rational argument	Which of these suggestions are practical for you and why?

Based on Bloom (1974: 118)

According to Bloom (1974), questions are classified into two main types: low level and high level questions. Low level questions or fact questions are those concerning knowledge of subject matter or the recall of facts. High level questions or thought questions are those requiring students' interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis or evaluation of subject matter. These questions require students' greater effort and time to construct answers.

2.2.2 Question Classification Based on Nature of Expected Responses to Questions

Cross (1991) and Freiberg and Driscoll (1992) categorized questions based on the nature of expected responses into two main types. The first type is convergent and divergent questions. The second type is short-answer elicit and long-answer elicit questions.

The nature of responses to convergent and divergent questions relates to whether there is one or many possible answers. Convergent questions require one correct answer. They can be factual, e.g., *Who travelled to the land we now call America in 1492?* Divergent questions, on the other hand, do not require one correct answer, but various acceptable answers. They are asked for students' opinion or conjecture and they tend to be more demanding of students' thought processes, for example, *Why do you like cats?*

Short-answer elicit and long-answer elicit questions require responses of different length. Short-answer elicit questions require short answers. They include yes/no questions, e.g., *Do you go to church on Sundays?*, true-false statements, or choice questions, e.g., *Does she travel by train or by plane?*, wh-short-answer questions, e.g., *Who discovered America?*. Long-answer elicit questions require long answers. They include speech-prompts, e.g., *Tell me about your family.*, wh-longer-answer questions, e.g., *What do you think about the economic crisis in Thailand?*.

2.2.3 Question Classification Based on Forms

Kearsley (1976) classified questions on the basis of their forms as follows:

Figure 2.1 Classification of Question Forms
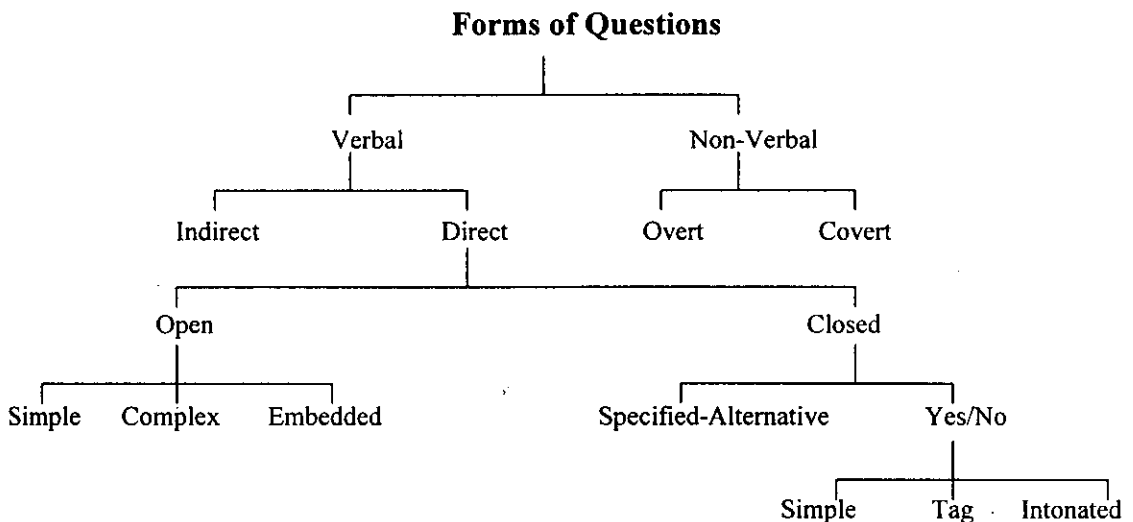
Kearsley (1976: 357)

According to Kearsley (1976), questions are categorized as verbal or non-verbal. Non-verbal questions can be overt or covert. Overt questions refer to gestures which function to elicit verbal responses, for example, questioning glances, raised eyebrows, shoulder or hand shrugs, deliberate silence and puzzled facial expressions. Covert questions are those we ask and answer ourselves. Verbal questions can be direct or indirect. Indirect questions are declaratives which contain an embedded partial interrogative phrase, for example, *I wonder where the house is*. Although this sentence is not a true question in syntactic form, it serves an important purpose of a question, that is to elicit a verbal response from the addressee. Direct questions are questions indicated by a question mark in written discourse and by certain intonation patterns in spoken discourse. They are subdivided into two main types: open and closed questions.

Open questions are questions always formed by wh-words. They allow a wide range of acceptable responses. Open questions are subdivided into three types: simple, complex and embedded questions. Simple questions are the questions with a single wh-word, e.g., *What time is it?*. Complex questions are complex wh-questions, e.g., *Who said what to whom?*. Embedded questions are wh-questions which contain an embedded closed-form question, e.g., *Why did you do that?*.

Closed questions are always asked with rising intonation. They allow only a narrow range of responses. They can be divided into specified-alternative questions, e.g., *Do you want orange juice, tea or coffee?* and yes/no questions, e.g., *Do you like pizza?*.

Yes/no questions are subdivided into three types: simple yes/no questions, tag questions and intonated questions. Simple yes/no questions are the questions formed by an auxiliary verb, e.g., *Are you a teacher?*. Tag questions are short questions which are appended to statements to seek confirmation of the statement, e.g., *Paul will go to Europe, won't he?*. The third type, intonated questions, are asked with rising intonation, e.g., *That is a beautiful flower?*.
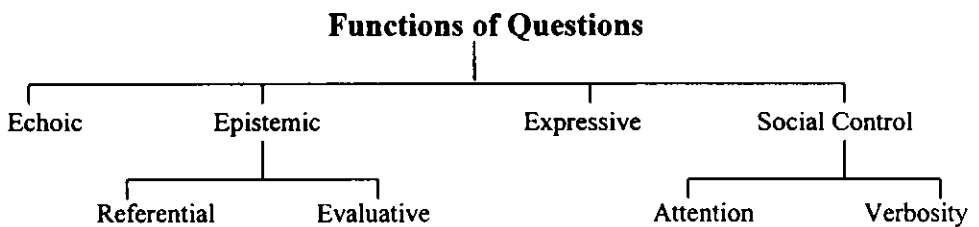
2.2.4 Question Classification Based on Functions

Kearsley (1976) and Long and Sato (1983) both classified questions based on their functions. Kearsley's classification is presented first.

2.2.4.1 Kearsley's Question Classification

Kearsley categorized questions based on their functions as follows:

Figure 2.2 Kearsley' Classification of Question Functions

Kearsley (1976: 360)

According to Kearsley (1976), questions are divided based on their communicative functions into four main types: echoic, epistemic, expressive and social control questions.

1. **Echoic questions** are questions which are asked for repetition of an utterance or confirmation that an addressee' s utterances have been interpreted by the addresser as intended, for example, *Pardon?, What?* and *Huh?.*

2. **Epistemic questions** are questions asked to acquire information. They are further categorized into two types: referential and evaluative questions. Referential questions are asked for the purpose of providing contextual information about events, situations, purposes, actions, relationship, or properties, *e.g., Where are you from?.* Evaluative questions are those which serve the purpose of testing the addressee's knowledge of the answers, *e.g., How do you spell "polite"?.*
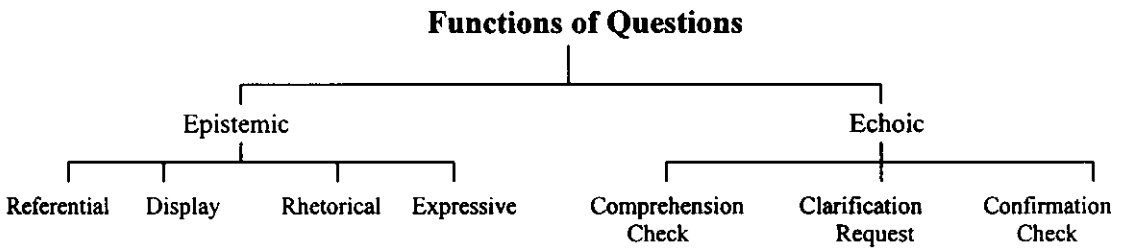
3. **Expressive questions** are questions asked to convey the addresser's attitudinal information to the addressee, *e.g., Are you really going to the movies with him?.*

4. **Social control questions** are questions used to exert authority by maintaining control of discourse. They are further divided into two types: attention and verbosity. Attention questions are those functioning to allow questioners to take over the direction of discourse, for example, *Listen to me.* or *Think about this.* Verbosity questions are questions asked for the sake of politeness or to maintain interaction. This type of question is often used during a party or social occasion.

2.2.4.2 Long and Sato's Question Classification

Long and Sato (1983) directly investigated verbal interaction in the language classroom. They believe that verbal interaction in the classroom makes the input comprehensible and thus leads to language acquisition. They also argue that conversational modifications in interaction such as comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks help modify the input to suit the capability of learners. Such conversational modifications make the input comprehensible and this, in turn, promotes language acquisition. Drawing on this belief, Long and Sato proposed a new question classification by adapting Kearsley's (1976) classification and categorized questions based on their functions to cover interaction which occurs in the classroom. They also incorporated comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks in their classification to accommodate questions not accounted for by Kearsley. Long and Sato maintain that the inclusion of these types of questions is necessary for describing verbal interaction in the classroom. In addition, they eliminated other types of questions not found in the classroom discourse such as verbosity questions. Their classification is presented below:

Figure 2.3 Long and Sato' s Classification of Question Functions

Functions of Questions

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                        Functions of Questions
                                 |
        ┌────────────────────────┴────────────────────────┐
     Epistemic                                          Echoic
        |                                                  |
 ┌──────┬──────┬──────┐                    ┌──────────────┬──────────────┐
Referential Display Rhetorical Expressive  Comprehension  Clarification  Confirmation
                                              Check          Request         Check
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Baesd on Long and Sato (1983: 274-275)

According to Long and Sato (1983), questions are divided into two main categories based on their functions in the classroom discourse: epistemic and echoic questions.

1. Epistemic questions are questions which serve the purpose of acquiring information. They are further divided into four sub-categories: referential, display, rhetorical and expressive questions.

1.1 Referential questions are questions that seek unknown information, for example, *Why should we make use of solar energy?* and *What do you think about animal rights?*. For this type of question, there is no single right or wrong answer, so, a wide range of responses is acceptable.

1.2 Display questions refer to questions to which the teacher already knows the answer. An example of display questions is *What's the opposite of "up" in English?*. This kind of question is asked to encourage students to display their knowledge.

1.3 Rhetorical questions are defined as forceful statements which have the form of questions but which do not expect answers, for example, *What difference does it make?*. This question may function like the statement: *It makes no difference.*

1.4 Expressive questions are questions asked to convey attitudinal information to the addressee. Examples are *Are you coming or aren't you?* and *It's interesting the different pronunciations we use, isn't it?*. This type of question functions to supply information about the teacher's feelings, preferences, prejudices and past experiences. It mainly serves to establish and maintain social relations between teachers and students.

2. Echoic questions are questions asked to direct information flow and negotiate interaction. They can be further divided into three types: comprehension checks, clarification requests and confirmation checks.

2.1 Comprehension checks are expressions the teacher uses to check students'comprehension about what s/he has said or about the information that has been presented, for example, *Do you understand?* and *Do you follow me?*. They are also formed by repetition of all or part of students' preceding utterances and are spoken with rising intonation, for example, the teacher asks *Does everyone understand "polite"?*. This question asked by the teacher functions to confirm whether the students understand the word "polite" in their response.

2.2 Clarification requests are expressions the teacher uses to elicit clarifications of students' preceding utterances. They are mostly in the form of questions, and may consist of yes/no or wh-questions, for example, *What do you mean?* as well as uninverted (rising intonation) and tag questions, for example, *You are going to tell me about your project?* and *Tell me briefly about Hat Yai, will you?*. Clarification requests are also encoded in statements, such as *I don't understand.* and through imperatives like *Try again.* These questions require students to either furnish new information or to recode information previously given.

2.3 Confirmation checks are questions the teacher uses to confirm that s/he had heard and/or understood students' previous utterances correctly or to dispel that belief. They involve complete or partial repetition of the students' previous utterances. They are encoded as either yes/no or uninverted (rising intonation) questions. There is a presupposition of a "yes" answer. Examples are *Did you say "she"?* and *Is that what you mean?*.

Based on the four major types of question classifications reviewed above, it can be concluded that all the researchers had a common goal of classifying questions. However, their question classifications have a different focus. While Bloom (1974) classified questions on the basis of the level of cognitive process, Cross (1991) and Frieberg and

Driscroll (1992) classified questions based on the nature of expected responses. As for Kearsley (1976), he focused on functions and syntactic forms of questions in social discourse. He offered two classifications: one is for classifying questions based on their functions and the other for classifying questions based on their forms. Long and Sato (1983) focused on classroom interaction and second language acquisition. They proposed a classification of questions found in the classroom. Considering the focuses of the above-mentioned question classifications, it can be seen that the question classifications proposed by Bloom, Cross, Frieberg and Driscroll and Kearsley do not directly serve the purpose of the present study which is to investigate verbal interaction in the classroom. Thus, these question classifications are not appropriate and applicable to the classification of questions in the classroom. Apart from the issue of the focus, the question classifications proposed by Bloom, Cross, Frieberg and Driscroll and Kearsley are also found to have some practical problems and limited applicability in terms of their use as a tool for the classification of questions in the classroom.

Firstly, the question classifications proposed by Bloom (1974), Cross (1991), Frieberg and Driscroll (1992) and Kearsley (1976) cannot account for all question types found in the language classroom since different types of questions occur in classroom discourse. For example, Bloom's classification accounts for questions exploring students' cognitive process or thinking skills, but it cannot capture other types of questions which can be found in the classroom, for instance, *Have you finished your homework?*. Besides, some types of questions, for example, verbosity questions in Kearsley's classification are not relevant to this study since this type of question is rarely found in the classroom.

Secondly, there is an overlap among different types of questions within one classification, that is, the same question fits into several categories. For example, in Cross (1991) and Frieberg and Driscroll (1992), the question *What does the word "terror" mean?* can be classified as both a convergent and short-answer elicit question and the question *Why do you like pink?* can be classified as a divergent and long-answer elicit question. The above examples show that categories in Cross' and Frieberg and

Driscroll's classification are not clear-cut because one question can be classified into two types. So, using this framework to classify questions will be problematic and confusing.

Thirdly, some classifications, such as Kearsley (1976), separate forms of questions from their functions. For example, the question *What did you do yesterday?* is classified based on form as a wh-question, while it is a referential question when it is classified based on function. In communication, there is a relationship between form and function of the language. A question cannot perform its function without a syntactic form and a question with only a syntactic form cannot convey meaning if there is no intended function. It can then be argued that Kearsley's question classification does not adequately describe the language as it is used for communication because it separates forms of questions from their functions. However, it was also found that Kearsley is not consistent in his treatment of forms and functions. In some instances, Kearsley does not separate forms of questions from their functions, for example, he maintains that the sentence *I wonder where the house is*, functions as a question although it is not in a syntactic form of question. A question classification which incorporates forms and functions and consistently does so would be desirable.

Based on the above discussion, it can be seen that the question classifications proposed by Bloom (1974), Cross (1991) and Frieberg and Driscroll (1992) and Kearsley (1976) are not appropriate for coding questions in the classroom discourse. This is because the focuses of their classifications are not on verbal interaction in the classroom. So, these question classifications cannot cover all question types which occur in the classroom. There is an overlap between different types of questions within one classification and forms of questions are separated from their functions. For these reasons, it can be argued that the question classification proposed by Long and Sato (1983) is more appropriate for classifying questions in the classroom discourse and therefore will be used as an analytical framework in this study. This is because the focus of this study is in line with the focus of their classification. In addition, Long and Sato's classification covers all

types of questions which occur in the classroom. There is no overlap between types of questions in their classification and forms and functions of questions are not separated.

2.3 Roles of Questioning Strategies in the Language Classroom

In the language classroom, teachers ask various questions in an attempt to elicit responses from students and to sustain verbal interaction. However, not all questions achieve the purposes they serve. Some questions fail to elicit students' responses. When the initial questions fail to elicit responses from students, teachers have to encourage students to respond to their initial questions by using questioning strategies such as providing them with chances to hear the questions again or making difficult and complex questions more understandable (Cole and Chan, 1987; Supatcharee Ekasingh, 1991 and Wu, 1993).

In the language classroom, absence of students' responses to teachers' questions is a phenomenon which frequently occurs. This phenomenon has been recognized by language teachers and researchers. This is made evident by the fact that a considerable number of questioning strategies are suggested in language teaching handbooks and research has been conducted to investigate questioning strategies used by teachers in the classroom.

Cole and Chan (1987) suggest six questioning strategies for teachers in their language teaching handbook. They are as follows:

1. Pausing. Pausing is the simplest strategy for teachers. It gives students more time to think about the answer to a question.

2. Prompting. When students do not respond to teachers' questions, teachers may stimulate the students to formulate responses by giving a short prompt, e.g., *Tell me about your best friend.* or *Describe your bedroom.*

3. Repeating. Students are sometimes unable to answer questions because they do not listen to the questions or they cannot follow them. Repetition gives the students a chance to hear the questions again.

4. Rephrasing. Sometimes students may not answer questions because they do not understand the questions. Rephrasing an initial question to make it more understandable may help the students understand the questions better.

5. Changing the level of cognitive demand or question switching. When teachers consider that questions are too difficult or require students' higher level of thinking, the teachers may change the level of cognitive skill required by the questions.

6. Providing additional information. When students fail to provide answers to teachers' questions because they do not have enough knowledge, the teachers can give them more information or key words relating to the topic of the questions.

Thomas (1987), Stevick (1988), Richards (1990) and Ellis (1994) suggest five questioning strategies, namely repetition, rephrasing, simplification, probing and decomposition in their language teaching handbooks for teachers to encourage students to answer teachers' questions in the language classroom. Two of which, namely repetition and rephrasing perform the same functions as in Cole and Chan (1987). As for simplification, probing and decomposition, they are defined as follows:

1. **Simplification** is making questions clearer, easier or less complicated for students.

2. **Probing** is asking further questions following students' responses to stimulate them to develop the quality of their responses.

3. **Decomposition** is breaking questions into smaller parts. This makes the answers of questions more specific.

As for research on questioning strategies, Supatcharee Ekasingh (1991) investigated the language of non-native teachers in Thai EFL classrooms and found that the teachers in her study used rephrasing, repetition, simplification and question switching when their students could not respond to the their questions. In her study, the teachers

rephrased their questions by asking more specific questions such as factual questions instead of process questions, the questions which require students to explain the procedures or steps they have employed to find solutions or reach conclusions and usually call for extended explanations rather than short answers. Besides, she found that the teachers also switched from asking wh-questions to or-choice questions or yes/no questions in order to obtain responses from the students.

In her study on repetition in verbal interaction between teachers and students in the classroom, Supatcharee Morrow (1997) found that repetition was used frequently by the teachers. She maintained that repetition is an important communicative strategy in the classroom which gives students a second chance to hear the same questions. This makes students process the questions better. By repeating their own questions, teachers are more likely to get responses from students and can encourage students to participate more in classroom interaction.

To the researcher's knowledge, Wu (1993) seems to be the one who directly addressed roles of questioning strategies in his investigation of classroom interaction, teachers' questions and questioning strategies used by teachers in the language classroom. In his study, it was found that five strategies were employed by the teachers in order to help their students respond to their questions: repetition, rephrasing, simplification, decomposition and probing. These five types of questioning strategies are all further illustrated in more detail below:

1. **Rephrasing**. This is reforming an original question in another way, as in:

   T: Can anybody tell me the advantages of being a tour guide?

   Ss: [Silence]

   T: What are the benefits from being a tour guide?

In the above example, when there is no response from students, the teacher asks the question again in different words and uses a different structure in order to make the form of the question easier for students. This may enable the students to provide answers.

2. Simplification. This is making the content focus of an initial question narrower. An example of simplification is provided below:

T: How was your holiday?

S: [Silence]

T: Did anything exciting happen to you during the holiday?

The above example shows that the teacher simplified the question by making the scope of the question more specific which helps students respond to the teacher's question.

3. Repetition. This is asking an initial question again. The teacher repeats the initial question in the hope of enabling students to respond to the question, as shown in the example below:

T: Have you been to the airport before?

Ss: [Silence]

T: Have you been to the airport before?

4. Decomposition. This refers to the strategy the teacher uses to break an initial question into smaller parts to encourage students to respond to the question. Below is an example of decomposition:

1 T: Can you tell me something about your family?

2 S: [Silence]

3 T: How many sisters and brothers do you have?

4 S: I have one sister.

5 T: What about brothers?

6 S: None.

As the example shows, the teacher decomposed the first question of this exchange into two questions as described in turns 3 and 5.

5. Probing. The teacher uses this to solicit more information from students. Its intent is to stimulate students to improve the quality of their answers. It requires students to expand on and develop a minimally adequate response by making it

clearer, more accurate, or more original with a supporting rationale or factual information. Consider the following exchange:

T: Do you think it's a good number?

S: Yes.

T: Yes? Why do you think it's good to have two brothers and one sister?

Based on the review of literature on questioning strategies, it can be seen that there is a relatively small number of studies on questioning strategies in language classrooms. It was also noted that of all questioning strategies reviewed above, repetition, rephrasing, decomposition, probing and simplification were frequently found in research and suggested in language teaching handbooks for teachers to use in the classroom. Besides, these questioning strategies are covered and clearly defined in Wu's (1993) classification of questioning strategies. Therefore, Wu's classification can be considered an appropriate analytical framework to start off with and it will be used for classifying questioning strategies in the classroom in this study.

2.4 Roles of Students' Responses in the Language Classroom

Students' responses are their language production which indicates whether they understand what has been taught or whether they are able to use the language correctly and appropriately. Responding to teachers' questions requires students to have grammatical knowledge and appropriate use of the language. Richards and Lockhart (1994) and Swain et al. (1994) maintain that responding to teachers' questions provides students with opportunities to practise and apply skills they have learnt and to control and adjust their communication. The more adjustments students make in their attempts to communicate, the greater opportunities for second language acquisition (Richards, 1985; Nunan, 1990; Johnson, 1995; Swain, 1995; Lynch, 1996 and Shehadeh, 1999). Along the same line, Swain (1985) states that students' responses in the classroom are an output which is significant in the learning process. Producing output provides students with

opportunities to test out their hypothesis about the target language and to enable them to put the language into contextualized and meaningful use. This, in turn, extends students' language repertoire as they attempt to create precisely and appropriately the intended meaning. He further states that output, particularly when it occurs in conversations where students have to generate their own responses, pushes their linguistic and communicative competence. Nunan (1989), Tarone and Yule (1991) and Van den Braden (1995) add that students' responses are necessary in developing their language ability. When students do not respond to teachers' questions, they deprive themselves of opportunities to develop their language ability and interactive skills.

In the classroom setting, teachers usually want students to produce as often and as many responses as possible. Students' responses are a great stimulus for language acquisition because producing responses enhances three necessary skills: thinking, recognizing and organizing (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992 and Ulichny, 1996). When students are asked questions, first of all, they have to think about an answer to the question or what is to be said. To do this, they need to recognize or recall their linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world. Finally, they have to organize or formulate their responses. So, the more opportunities that are given to students to produce often and many responses, the more they can improve their language ability. Furthermore, students' ability to produce often and many responses in the classroom contributes to their ability to use the language outside the classroom. It is very likely that students who are only capable of producing short or few responses are going to experience a lot of frustration when they try to use a foreign language outside the classroom (Seliger, 1977; Dillon, 1981a and 1981b; Long, 1983; Seliger and Long, 1983; Long and Richards, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Ellis, 1994 and 1995 and Lynch, 1996).

2.5 Research on Teachers' Questions and Students' Responses in the Language Classroom

There have been a number of studies which focus on teachers' questions in both EFL and ESL classrooms. Most of the studies on teachers' questions in the language classroom have focused on the frequency of different types of questions used in the classroom, wait-time and the nature of learners' responses to teachers' questions. Studies conducted in the foreign context are first reviewed and then studies in the Thai context.

In the foreign context, Long and Sato (1983) investigated both forms and functions of teachers' questions in the ESL classroom. They compared conversations of six ESL teachers and their elementary level students in the classroom with thirty-six informal native speakers (NS) — non-native speakers (NNS) conversations outside classrooms in which NNSs were at the same level of ESL proficiency (elementary level). Tsui (1985) analyzed modified input and verbal interaction pattern in an ESL reading comprehension classroom of a non-native teacher and grade 8 students in a Chinese-medium school and of a native teacher and grade 8 students in an English-medium school in Hong Kong. Pica and Long (1986) recorded ten-minute samples from speech of ten ESL teachers. Then, they compared the speech of the ten ESL teachers with informal NS-NNS recorded conversations outside the classroom. The findings of these studies showed that display questions were more common than referential questions inside the classroom than outside it.

A number of studies investigated both teachers' use of questions and students' responses. Wu (1993) observed four teachers in EFL classrooms in Hong Kong and analyzed their questions. This study has shed much light on the relationship between students' responses and types of questions used by teachers, students' attitude toward the use of English and patterns of interaction. The findings revealed that the teachers asked more referential questions than display questions and more open questions than closed

questions. In addition, referential questions and open questions did not elicit longer responses from the students than display and closed questions. The responses generated by referential and open questions were restricted rather than elaborate. In his study, the students thought that they should hesitate and show difficulty in arriving at an answer, they should not answer the teacher voluntarily or enthusiastically in English and they should not demonstrate verbal success in English in front of their peers and speak in fluent English. Wu found that these views of the students about answering questions and using English in the classroom made them prefer to be silent rather than to show off by providing longer responses to referential questions. The findings of Wu's study is confirmed by Lai (1994) who investigated the causes of communication failure in the language classroom in Hong Kong and discovered that Hong Kong students rarely interacted with teachers in the classroom. This is because if the students ask or answer the teachers' questions, they will be seen by peers as showing off. So, they did not participate in verbal interaction in the classroom. She also revealed that students with low language proficiency were anxious about their oral performance in English and this led to low self-confidence in responding to the teachers' questions.

Suzuki (2000) examined the relationship between input, interaction and learners' language production with a focus on the form, function and topic of teachers' questions. He analyzed thirty-six hours of recorded interaction from fourteen subjects in Texas and in Japan. The findings showed that referential questions, personal topics and longer wait-time resulted in longer learner language production; whereas display questions, impersonal topics and shorter wait-time resulted in shorter learner language production.

Brock (1986) investigated the effects of training teachers to ask referential questions on the quantity of the teachers' use of referential questions in the classrooms and quality of students' responses. She carried out an experimental study consisting of four experienced ESL teachers and twenty-four non-native learners; two of the teachers were trained to incorporate referential questions into their teaching while the other two

were not. Each of the four teachers taught the same reading and vocabulary lesson. Long and Crookes (1984) closely looked at the effect of training in the use of referential questions of four ESL teachers with students in public high schools in Hawaii. Studies by Long and Crookes as well as Brock showed that the training affected the teachers' use of questions by significantly increasing the number of referential questions they asked in the classrooms. The experimental group teachers in both studies asked more referential questions than did the control-group teachers. Brock 's study further revealed that the learners in the experimental group produced significantly longer, more grammatically and syntactically complex responses and also took a greater number of speaking turns. However, Long and Crookes found that there was no difference in the average syntactic complexity of the referential and display questions. They also found that although the average length in words of students' responses was greater following referential questions, display questions elicited more students' responses than referential questions.

Besides types of questions used by teachers, other factors such as wait-time, have also been found to contribute to the quantity and quality of students' responses in the language classroom. The following research intensively investigated the relationship between wait-time provided by teachers and students' responses. Rowe (1974) analyzed the teachers' wait-time in 900 tapes of lessons. Long and Crookes (1984), Brock (1986), Good and Brophy (1991) and Loya (1998) trained the teachers to extend their wait-time. They all found that waiting three to five seconds for students' responses during questioning led to an increase in the length of students' responses, student-initiated and appropriate (related to the topic or subject) responses, students' confidence in responding, students' supported responses, participation in lessons and the variety of students' responses to teachers' questions.

In the Thai context, research on teachers' use of questions has focused on the occurrence of different types of questions in different phases of learning, the forms and types of questions asked by teachers and students' responses. For example, Suvalee Chinkumtornwong (1985) observed a one-hour long class of first year university

students taught by a native speaker teacher and found that the teacher asked more display questions than other types of questions and that the students were rarely given sufficient time to formulate their answers before the teacher repeated or rephrased the questions or asked another student to answer. However, she concluded that the teacher was successful in eliciting appropriate answers to his questions from the students and questioning encouraged the students to participate in the lesson. This research, nevertheless, did not explain in detail why and how the teacher's display questions could elicit the students' responses.

Supatcharee Ekasingh (1991) studied the teachers' use of questions in two freshman English classes at a university in Thailand in order to determine the patterns of occurrence of the teachers' questions in the classroom. The study examined whether certain forms and functions of questions were more prevalent than others and also whether there was a relationship between the phase in the lesson and the type of questions asked. Supatcharee Ekasingh classified questions as yes/no questions, wh-questions, statements with question intonation, tag questions, display questions, referential questions, rhetorical questions, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, clarification requests, directive questions and others such as suggestive and recall questions. She found that wh-questions were employed most frequently by the teachers to ask display questions and yes/no questions were the most frequent forms of questions used to ask referential questions. Display questions were employed significantly more often than referential questions.

Chutima Thamaraksa (1997) investigated teachers' questioning behaviors in Thai EFL classrooms by observing three Thai teachers at university level seven times each and interviewing them six times. This study revealed four major findings. Firstly, display questions were predominant in the classrooms. Secondly, wh-questions were used the most frequently, while tag-questions were hardly used by the teachers. Thirdly, the content of questions were mostly about the study of special areas or content communicated in textbooks. Fourthly, the teachers' questions contained a small

proportion of narrowing characteristics or clues that decreased the number of expected responses from the students.

Sakorn Suasongsilp (1990) recorded her teaching of two lessons and investigated if the use of more non-display questions could increase the length of first year university students' utterances. She also explored factors influencing the students' responses to the teacher's questions. The results of the study showed that non-display questions elicited longer answers than display questions. According to the students' responses to a questionnaire, the major factor that made them unable to answer the teacher' s questions was that they did not understand the key vocabulary in the questions. Other factors were the teacher's lack of eye-contact and inappropriate wait-time.

Based on the above review of studies on teachers' questions and students' responses in both ESL and EFL classrooms, major results can be summarized as follows:

First, display and referential questions were frequently used by teachers in the classroom. In some studies, display questions were predominant while referential questions were predominant in others. However, most of the studies found that display questions were used far more frequently than referential questions.

Second, display and referential questions elicited different quantity and quality of students' responses. Most studies revealed that referential questions elicited longer, more syntactically complex responses from students than display questions. Also, they elicited more students' responses. However, this was not always true. For example, Long and Crookes (1984) found that there was no difference in the average syntactic complexity of students' responses to referential and display questions. They also found that display questions elicited more students' speaking turns than referential questions.

Third, insufficient wait-time provided by teachers, students' limited language proficiency and students' views about answering questions and using English in the classroom are obviously important factors affecting the quantity and quality of students' responses in the language classroom. Insufficient wait-time provided by teachers made students unable to formulate responses in time. Another factor that caused students'

silence is their limited language proficiency. Students with low language proficiency were not able to formulate responses to teachers' questions. Students' views about answering questions and using English in the classroom is also an essential factor contributing to absence of their responses to teachers' questions in the classroom. For instance, in Hong Kong, the students view that they should not answer teachers' questions voluntarily or enthusiastically in English and they should not demonstrate verbal success in English in front of peers. These views about answering questions and using English in the classroom made the students prefer to be silent after teachers' questions rather than to actively respond to the questions.

The findings of the studies reviewed in this chapter imply that even though the studies were conducted in similar teaching context, they revealed different findings. For instance, while it is true that display questions were the most frequently used by the teachers in certain studies, and referential questions were successful in eliciting longer and more syntactically complex responses from the students in a certain ESL classroom, these phenomena did not occur in other studies in similar context.

Besides, the focus of previous studies on questions in the language classroom was usually on the frequency of types of questions used by teachers and the length of students' responses rather than on the extent that each type of question elicits students' responses, the causes of absence of students' responses to teachers' questions and questioning strategies. More importantly, there is a relatively small amount of research on questions, questioning strategies and students' responses in the language classroom in the Thai context and unfortunately the previous studies in Thailand did not explain how different types of questions may have affected Thai students' responses to teachers' questions. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap in our knowledge of this area by investigating the types of questions used by teachers, the extent that they elicit students' responses and factors affecting absence of students' responses as well as questioning strategies teachers use to help their students respond to their questions in the EFL context in Thailand. It is hoped that this study will shed more light on these issues.