

## QUESTIONING STRATEGIES IN EFL CLASSROOM: THE TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS

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### ABSTRAK

Kemampuan penting yang diharapkan dari siswa dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing adalah kemampuan berpikir kritis dan kreatif. Metode bertanya dianggap sebagai teknik terpenting untuk mendorong siswa agar memiliki kemampuan tersebut. Karena ketakutan membuat kesalahan, siswa hanya diam saja saat guru memberi pertanyaan. Maka strategi bertanya dalam memberi pertanyaan merupakan salah satu cara untuk melibatkan siswa dalam aktivitas interaktif di kelas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti strategi bertanya guru dan alasan mengapa menggunakan strategi tersebut dalam kelas Bahasa Inggris. Desain penelitian diskriptif kualitatif digunakan dengan melakukan wawancara secara daring dan memberi kuisioner pada seorang guru Bahasa Inggris pada sebuah sekolah menengah pertama swasta di Jember. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa guru Bahasa Inggris ini selalu (100%) menggunakan pertanyaan divergen pada pertengahan dan akhir proses pembelajaran di kelas. Tujuannya adalah untuk mengetahui pendapat siswa, mengembangkan kemampuan berpikir kritis dan kreatif siswa serta meningkatkan pengetahuan siswa. Guru biasanya (80%) juga menggunakan pertanyaan prosedural pada awal pelajaran untuk menjaga manajemen waktu, mengecek kondisi siswa dan rutinitas kelas. Terakhir, guru kadang (60%) menggunakan pertanyaan konvergen untuk memperoleh jawaban singkat dari siswa dan membantu mereka mengingat kembali materi yang sudah disampaikan.

**Kata kunci : Tipe strategi bertanya; pertanyaan guru; interaksi guru-siswa**

### ABSTRACT

A crucial ability expected of EFL students is a critical and creative thinking ability. Questioning method is regarded as the most important technique for encouraging students to build this ability. Because the students are anxious about making mistakes, they remain silent when teachers ask them. Thus, using questioning strategies in giving questions can be a way to engage them in interactive activities. This research, therefore, was aimed to investigate teacher's questioning strategies in teaching English and the reasons for using them. This study employed qualitative descriptive design by conducting an online interview and giving questionnaire to an English teacher of a private junior high school in Jember. The results of this study showed that the English teacher always (100%) used divergent questions in class in the middle and at the end of learning process. The goals were to know students' opinion, develop their critical and creative thinking skills and improve their knowledge. Further, the teacher usually (80%) used procedural questions in the beginning of the lesson to maintain time management, check students' conditions and class routine. Finally, the teacher sometimes (60%) used convergent questions to get short answers from the students and help them recalled the material.

**Keywords : Questioning strategies types; teacher questions; teacher-students interaction**

## INTRODUCTION

According to research in the subject of teaching a second/foreign language, asking questions is an important part of the classroom activities (Etemadzadeh et al, 2013; Salmon & Barrera, 2021). As a result, the kinds of questions teachers create and utilize in the classroom have an impact on students' learning, thinking, involvement, and degree of engagement (Etemadzadeh et al, 2013; Salmon & Barrera, 2021; Stevens, 2016). Nonetheless, it is essential to define what a question is. Cotton (2001) defines a question as any statement with interrogative structure or purpose. Further, he states that teacher's questions are instructional indications or stimulants that transmit to students the material items to be learnt as well as guidelines for what they should do and how they should accomplish it in a classroom setting (Cotton, 2001). Students and teachers can use questions as educational instruments to encourage and take control of learning (Salmon & Barrera, 2021). It has also been shown that there is a link between teachers' classroom questioning and student results, such as accomplishment, persistence, thinking skills, and involvement (Etemadzadeh et al, 2013; Ritchhart, 2015; Rothstein & Santana, 2017; Salmon & Barrera, 2021; Salmon, Campo, & Barrera, 2019). Consequently, students' views and ideas are transformed as a result of effective questions (Elder & Paul, 2002; Etemadzadeh et al, 2013; Rothstein & Santana, 2017; Salmon & Barrera, 2021; Salmon, Campo, & Barrera, 2019) and students are motivated by questions because they focus their attention, induce deeper processing of knowledge, provide feedback on how well they are acquiring content, and allow them to practice and rehearse (Rothstein & Santana, 2017; Salmon & Barrera, 2021; Salmon, Campo, & Barrera, 2019). Teacher's instructional questions are aimed to motivate students to engage themselves actively in the classroom activities, build their critical thinking, and seek knowledge (Costa and Kallick, 2015; Cotton, 2001; Ritchhart, 2015). Indeed, teachers need to consider their questioning strategies which allow students to involve themselves in the classroom activities, develop their creative and critical thinking, and enhance their knowledge indicating

that the role of teachers in the teaching learning process is pivotal.

In the teaching and learning activities, a teacher can act as a director, controller, or facilitator (Brown 2001; Harmer, 2007). The teacher, as the controller, will decide when and how to speak. As a classroom director, it is the teacher's responsibility to boost student motivation so that they can pay attention in class and participate effectively. In addition, as a facilitator, the teacher will aid students in making the learning process easier and more enjoyable for them. These roles give possibilities for the teacher to build and maintain interaction with his/her students.

During the teaching and learning process, a teacher and students communicate each other. This type of interaction between a teacher and students is crucial to the teaching and learning process's success. In the classroom, interaction is an activity that allows the teacher and students to converse with one another. The teacher must be able to manage his or her own and the students' conversations, as well as the types of conversations that can be employed to create a balanced engagement and increase classroom activity. Thus, successful interaction allows both the teacher and the students to produce a collaborative exchange of thinking, feeling, or ideas that has reciprocal effects meaning that asking and answering questions cannot be denied in the interaction between the teacher and the students. Consequently, the teacher needs questioning strategies to maintain the interaction with his/her students.

Sujariati, et. al., (2016) denote questioning strategies are the ways used to ask something to the students in gaining a purpose in teaching. Teachers employ questioning strategies to find out about their students' abilities and how well they understand the content they have been taught. Critical thinking, creative thinking, and higher-order thinking skills all benefit from questioning strategies (Costa & Kallick, 2015; Etemadzadeh et al, 2013; Ritchhart, 2015; Rothstein & Santana, 2017; Salmon & Barrera, 2021; Salmon, Campo, & Barrera, 2019; Shaunessy, 2005). Costa and Kallick (2015) stated that teachers' questioning strategies can enable students improve their learning, develop their critical thinking, and become more conscious of their own cognitive processing. Hence, the

purpose of the teacher's questioning strategies is to determine how well the students comprehend the subject that has been taught. Questioning strategies are seen to be more effective since they assist teachers in arranging questions and answers sessions depending on the needs of the students. Previous study signifies that most students like to actively answer questions and prefer to volunteer to answer a teacher's questions (Setiawati, 2012). However, the teacher should pay attention to what kinds of questioning strategies that require students' creative and high order critical thinking skills.

There are some types of questioning strategies developed by some experts. Ritchhart (2015), mentioned several types of questions: review, procedural, generative and constructive questions used by teachers in their classrooms. On the other hand, Richards and Lockharts (2007) propose three types of questioning strategies, i.e., procedural, convergent, and divergent questioning strategies. Questions on class routines and classroom management are referred to as procedural queries. They are distinct from questions about learning content. The question is used to inquire about a topic that is not related to education. For example, while analyzing homework in the classroom, teachers may ask questions, and probably, then, inform students that they are ready to begin working on new assignments. Another example is the teacher's query when he or she recognizes that the students are unwilling to do the work. Convergent questions are those that elicit similar responses from students, or ones that are focused on a single theme. A short answer, such as yes or no, or a brief comment, is provided. The teacher may not need students to think deeply in order to receive responses, but the teacher frequently focuses on recalling previously supplied knowledge. In contrast, divergent questions require students to engage in higher-order thinking by encouraging them to respond in a variety of ways rather than giving short answers. Instead of recalling previously offered knowledge, they urge students to provide their own answers.

Despite the fact that questioning strategies have gained more attention in recent years, few research studies have looked into how teachers perceive their own practices when utilizing them. It is crucial to identify teachers' perceptions and reasons on using questioning strategies to portray the perceptions and reasons underlying teachers'

questions in keeping the interaction with their students. Thus, the aims of this study are 1) to know which questioning strategy is the most dominant used by the teacher and 2) to know how the teacher perceives her questioning strategies to maintain the interaction with her students. Hence, the research questions are formulated as:

RQ1: What kind of question is the most dominant question she uses in her classroom teaching and learning activities?

RQ2: How does the teacher perceive her questioning strategies to maintain her interaction with her students?

## METHOD

This study used qualitative descriptive research method. Shank defines qualitative research as "a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning" (2002 p.5). He means systematic when he says it is planned, ordered, and public, and done according to rules that members of the qualitative research community have agreed upon. By empirical, he means that this type of inquiry is grounded in the world of experience. Inquiry into meaning says researchers try to understand how others make sense of their experience (Shank, 2002). Qualitative research method was applied because the researcher wanted to look at the ways of English teacher's questioning strategies in the processes of teaching and learning and some reasons that made the English teacher used types of questioning strategies. Also, qualitative was an appropriate way to explore every day behavior of the teacher and students, particularly teacher's questioning strategies in EFL classroom.

## Respondent

The study used convenience sampling—a type of non-probability sampling method where the respondent taken because he/she is easy to contact or to reach. There were two English teachers in the school. However, only one English teacher who had willingness to participate in the research. The respondent of the research is a 7th grade English teacher of an Islamic private junior high school in Jember.

## Instruments

Instrument in research is any tools, resources, or equipment used to collect the data of the

research. Designing research instrument is the first practical step in conducting research. A researcher must first establish how he or she will collect data for the research project and then create the instrument for collecting the data (Kumar, 2011). Interview and questionnaire were used to get the data of the study.

An interview is any face-to-face or non-face-to-face conversation between two or more people with a particular goal in mind (Kumar, 2011). An online interview by using Google Meet platform was conducted to get the data of the kinds of questioning strategies that were used, the reasons of using questioning strategies in EFL classroom and the impact of using questioning strategies on student responses including the bad and interesting experiences.

A questionnaire is a printed list of questions to which respondents must respond and record their responses. Respondents read each question, comprehend what is anticipated, and afterwards jot down their replies (Kumar, 2011). In questionnaire, the respondent needed to answer the questions that already made by the researcher about questioning strategies that usually used in EFL classroom.

### Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique was taken from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) consisting of four stages, i.e., data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion/ verification. Data, in qualitative research, were collected by observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, or a mix of the three (triangulation). Reducing data entailed summarizing and selecting the most important elements, focusing on the most important elements, and searching for themes. As a result, the decreased data made it easier for researchers to obtain additional data. Data were presented in a variety of ways, including concise descriptions and tables. The findings of the study were presented in descriptions following the investigation, and they might be interactive, hypothetical, or theoretical.

### Validity

Validating findings entails following a specific procedure to ensure that the research findings and interpretations are accurate (Creswell, 2012, p. 259-260). According to Sugiyono, (2018, p. 185) 'extensive observations, enhanced persistence in inquiry, triangulation,

discussion with collaborators, negative case analysis, and member check are all used to test internal validity or trust in qualitative research data'. Internal validity testing was employed in this study since it can reveal the amount of correctness or application of research findings in the population where the sample was gathered. Triangulation was employed from the interview, questionnaire, and document analysis (lesson plan) to check whether the data or the findings accurate or not.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the research related to the two research questions proposed were presented in two forms, i.e., description and tables.

### The Most Dominant Questions Used by the Teacher

The findings revealed that the respondent always asked questions in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the lesson. Table 1 shows the result of the questionnaire that asking about teachers questioning activities during the teaching and learning process. The participant explained,

"In the teaching learning process, surely, I ask my students questions in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the lesson. I can avoid asking questions to my students because asking and answering questions are the activities that I use to maintain the interactions with my students in the teaching and learning process."

The questionnaire also indicated that the respondent asking questions in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the lesson. Table 1 showed that asking questions always took place in the teaching learning process procedure. It indicates that asking questions is crucial part of classroom activities (Etemadzadeh et al, 2013; Salmon & Barrera, 2021).

Table 1 Questioning Activities of the Teaching Learning Process

No.	Statement	Percentage
1.	I give questions in the beginning of class activities.	100%
2.	I ask questions in the middle of teaching and learning process.	100%
3.	I give questions at the end of the teaching and learning	100%



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Further, the respondent explained kinds of questioning strategies she used in teaching learning activities. She usually (80%) used procedural questions in the beginning of the learning process in order to elicit quick responses rather than forcing students to think more thoroughly. The respondent's initial actions included perceiving, repeating, or remembering the material already presented in the prior meeting, and explaining the topics to be discussed in class. The findings supported previous theory that a procedural question is asked regarding a non-educational issue. Teachers may, for example, ask questions while reviewing homework in the classroom and then notify students that they are ready to begin working on new assignments (Richards and Lockharts, 2007).

Table 2 Kinds of Questioning Strategies Used by the Respondent

No.	Statement	Percentage
1.	I use procedural questions to ask students. For example: Are you ready for the next assignments?	80%
2.	I use convergent questions to ask students. For example: Do you read English book every day?	60%
3.	I use divergent questions to ask students. For example: Do you think games had any negative effects on students?	100%

Convergent questions require extensive answers and improve students' understanding, and the respondent utilized them to determine whether or not the students comprehended the lesson. She often (60%) used convergent questions in the middle of the teaching learning activities. When delivering material that did not need students to think deeply, the respondent employed this question so that the questions simply required quick responses. The percentage (60%) indicates that the teacher might have put lower attention to the type of the questions because of the example of the questions given by the researcher. However, the finding confirmed that convergent questions generate similar replies from students or are focused on a single theme. A simple yes or no response or a quick comment is supplied. Although the teacher may not require pupils to think deeply in order to acquire

responses, the teacher frequently concentrates on retaining previously provided information (Richards and Lockharts, 2007).

Moreover, divergent questions were always employed by the respondent in the beginning, the middle, and at the end of the lesson. The respondent stated that she prefers to ask diverse questions to her students because these types of questions allow them to develop their critical and creative thinking skills. The finding buoyed divergent questions encourage students to use higher-order thinking skills by allowing them to react in a variety of ways rather than just giving one or two replies. They encourage pupils to provide their own answers rather than relying on previously provided information (Richards and Lockharts, 2007).

Finally, Table 1 denotes that the most dominant questioning strategy the respondent used in her teaching learning activities was divergent questions (100%). In the interview, she averred,

"I always use divergent questions in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the lesson. These types of questions can improve students' critical and creative thinking. They can also be used to induce students' opinion, willingness to practice their English, and be active in the classroom activities. Moreover, they can stimulate students to improve their knowledge."

The findings reinforced the ideas that students' views and ideas are transformed as a result of effective inquiry or questions (Elder and Paul, 2003). Questioning is vital because it motivates students, focuses their attention, elicits higher information processing, indicates students how they have been grasping subject, and allows them to practice and rehearse (Rothstein & Santana, 2017; Salmon & Barrera, 2021; Salmon, Campo, & Barrera, 2019). It is used to improve students' active participation, build their critical thinking, and enrich their knowledge (Cotton, 2001). Some motivations for asking questions include demonstrating an interest in knowing what students feel and think; encouraging a problem-solving technique to development and reasoning; and deepening students' cognitive capacities (Etemadzadeh et al, 2013; Nasreen, 2003; Rothstein & Santana, 2017; Salmon & Barrera, 2021; Salmon, Campo, & Barrera, 2019).

### The Teacher's Perceptions on Her Teaching Learning Practices Related to Questioning Strategies

The findings uncovered the practices the respondent did related to her perceptions on questioning strategies she used in her classroom activities, and her preparation of using the questioning strategies. They are presented in the form of tables and elaborations to depict comprehensive understanding. Table 3 presents the respondent perceptions on her questioning strategies. It shows that short and long answers question had different proportion meaning that the respondent often (80%) took short answer questions. On the other hand, she always (100%) took long answer questions in her classroom activities. She, further, perceived that the questions she delivered to the students aiming to develop the students' understanding on certain topics in the questions (100%), create discussion forum among the students (80%), challenge the students to express their opinion in spoken or written forms (80%), explain or support students' understanding (80%), and build mutual interaction by discussing the questions with the students (80%).

Table 3 The Respondent's Perceptions on Questioning Strategies

No.	Statement	Percentage
1.	I provide questions with short answers in asking the students. For example: Do you understand?	80%
2.	I provide questions with long answers in asking the students. For example: What is your opinion about that movie?	100%
3.	I encourage students to develop their understandings with the questions	100%
4.	I encourage students to discuss the questions	80%
5.	I encourage students to challenge their opinion expressed in speaking or writing	80%
6.	I explain or support students' understanding of what they have got	100%
7.	I discuss students' understanding on the questions with them	80%

The findings, undoubtedly, asserted previous findings stating there is a link between instructional questions by teachers and student results, such as accomplishment, engagement, thinking abilities, and involvement. Additionally, some researchers feel that thinking is primarily driven by questions rather than answers (Etemadzadeh et al., 2013;). Teaching and learning goals—teaching and learning that allows students' active participation and promotes student-centered learning, facilitates students to construct their knowledge, increases students' problem-solving skills, and expands long-term memory can be met through focused and systematic questioning in the classroom (Etemadzadeh et al., 2013; Nasreen, 2003; Rothstein & Santana, 2017; Salmon & Barrera, 2021; Salmon, Campo, & Barrera, 2019). Questions stimulate students to express their misunderstandings, discuss and evaluate their understandings, and develop their reflections (Profetto-McGrath et al., 2004). Students can benefit from questions that stimulate their thinking, allow them to reflect on their learning, and assist them in the creation of knowledge (Larue, 2008; Profetto-McGrath et al., 2004).

The findings also exposed the teacher's practices in sharing and collaborating with other teachers. Table 4 unwraps her practices indicating that she sometimes (60%) shared her teaching experiences with other teachers, often (80%) collaborated with other teachers to improve her teaching skills, and sometimes (60%) worked with other teachers from different grades to maintain the continuity of learning. The practices, therefore, indicated that sharing, collaborating, and working together with other teachers is important to broaden her teaching ability. However, the findings indicate that the respondent sometimes shared and worked with teacher of other grades (60% for each) there was no team teaching or there was no regular discussion sessions with colleagues as the school culture. The findings suggested that collaboration is the key of improvement since a degree of collaborative professionalism oriented on student learning is a component of professional orientation (Nguyen et al., 2021; Schoen & Teddlie, 2008). Collaboration among teachers in a healthy environment may promote professional improvement for better instructional strategies (Goddard et al., 2007).

Table 4 The Teacher's Perceptions on Her Practices

No.	Statement	Percentage
1.	I share what I have learned about my teaching experiences.	60%
2.	I work together to improve how to teach a particular topic.	80%
3.	I work with teachers from other grades to ensure continuity in learning	60%

## CONCLUSION

Research findings unveiled that the most dominant questions the respondent used in her classroom activities were divergent questions (100%). She used these questions in the beginning, the middle and at the end of the lesson. She argued that these kinds of questions could build students' critical and creative thinking skills, improve their active participation in the classroom activities, facilitate them to construct their own knowledge as well as maintain long-term memory. The findings also suggested that sharing and collaborating with other teachers could improve her teaching skills and working together with other teachers from different grades could retain the continuity of learning. Thus, it is important for teachers to work and collaborate with other teachers to affirm their professional practices. However, this research had only employed one respondent. Therefore, further researches are suggested to employ more respondents to get comprehensive findings that cover a wider range of the importance of questioning strategies in teaching practices.

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