

EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE TYPE OF TEACHER QUESTIONS: A QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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Abstract.

This study explores high school EFL students' perceptions of teacher questioning strategies, focusing on question types, their use, and effectiveness in enhancing engagement and comprehension. Questioning techniques are vital in EFL classrooms, promoting interaction, critical thinking, and understanding. This qualitative descriptive study involved ten first-year high school students from SMAN 58 Jakarta, using observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation of student grades. The findings reveal that teachers frequently use open-ended questions at the beginning of lessons to review previous material and stimulate critical thinking, with students preferring these types of questions for fostering broader thinking and active participation. Teachers predominantly use Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) questions initially, shifting to Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) questions during exams. Students perceive that teacher questioning techniques significantly enhance their understanding and engagement, aligning with previous research indicating that effective questioning leads to better outcomes in EFL classrooms. The study underscores the importance of employing diverse questioning strategies to support language development and academic achievement, providing valuable insights into effective pedagogical practices for EFL teachers. This research highlights the need for strategic questioning to enhance student learning experiences, motivation, and comprehension.



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A. INTRODUCTION

In teaching and learning English, there is a technique known as questioning, which involves asking or giving questions. This technique can be employed by either the teacher or the students. It is essential to incorporate questioning strategies when posing questions to students. Questioning techniques are employed to elicit information from students and achieve instructional objectives. Teachers must assess students' abilities and understanding of subject matter during the teaching and learning process.

Teachers also need to assess student performance by questioning before and after lessons are given. Interaction between teacher and student is essential, followed by feedback from the latter (Sujariati et al., 2016)

According to (Lesiana et al., 2023) interaction plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning process, as it allows students to improve their communication, academic, and social skills within the classroom setting. Students can better understand course material and enhance their academic performance by

engaging with their peers and instructors. Additionally, interaction fosters a sense of community within the classroom and promotes the development of important social skills essential for success beyond the classroom. In the classroom, a mutual learning process improves interaction between teachers and students. Classroom interaction involves the teacher asking direct questions to the students (Al-Zahrani & Al-Bargi, 2017).

The key actor in creating interaction is not limited to the teacher but also includes students. The teacher should motivate the students to facilitate interaction within the classroom. One effective way to promote good interaction is through questioning. Asking questions is vital for classroom interaction as it promotes better student engagement, motivation, and performance. The teacher's queries play a paramount role in teaching and learning by providing direction for productive thinking. Thus, questioning enables educators to guide their students effectively (Darong et al., 2021) In addition, mastering speaking skills in English is very important for students, as it serves as a means to build effective communication between teachers and students (Rahman & Kaniadewi, 2023)

As confirmed by (Alexander, 2023), questioning serves as a fundamental teaching tool and lies at the heart of developing critical thinking abilities in students. Giving questions is believed to be an essential way of teaching and learning, as it stimulates recall, improves comprehension and imagination, and fosters problem-solving. Additionally, questioning

satisfies curiosity and builds creativity as it serves as the basis for teaching activities (Zolfaghari et al., 2011). Therefore, teacher questioning is crucial in teaching and learning as it helps students understand the lesson content, encourages them to explore new concepts, fosters class engagement, and other related benefits. In relation to this, (Suryati, 2015) states that the teacher's question contributes to the student's language development. Classroom activities lead to successful learning when they are meaningful. Question-based activities are believed to enhance student learning outcomes. Success includes language and content mastery in English classrooms. Questions in English classrooms should encourage active student engagement. The learning process is necessary for meaningful and successful learning (Nuryani et al., 2018).

This current study has some relevant results on Teachers' Questioning Strategies in EFL Classrooms (Hamid, 2021). The study found that students have positive perceptions of teacher questioning techniques in EFL classrooms. It is a great source for classroom interaction since it keeps learners active and motivated in the EFL classroom. This research suggested that teacher questioning technique positively impacts students' performance in English language learning. In addition, some studies found that most students favored questions – they helped them learn. It sharpened their thinking ability. It also reflected that teachers were quite skillful in questioning, as questionnaire items targeted information on

purposes and tactics of questioning (Nuryani et al., 2018) . These studies focused on questioning techniques in the context of the university. Thus, this current study was conducted in a senior high school. Theoretically, the current study will provide greater insight into the types of questions teachers ask in the classroom, their reasoning behind doing so, and how students understand such questions for both the writer and the reader. The current study will provide some beneficial pedagogical information about the kinds of questions that EFL teachers may employ to support student's growth in language production during the teaching and learning process.

In the context of EFL, the questioning approach is important. Keeping students engaged and motivated is important while teaching them a foreign language. Improvements in language proficiency are directly correlated with learners' levels of motivation. As mentioned by previous research, they involve the university context. Thus, this current study involves senior high school students. In this regard, this study explores EFL students' perceptions on the type of teacher questions based on the necessity of the technique and some relevant supporting ideas. The research question addressed is: What are EFL students' perceptions on the type of teacher questions?

Students' perceptions about a teaching strategy or method are crucial in an EFL classroom. How students view a method determines whether or not it is effective (Zaim

et al., 2020). Therefore, the (Carrasquillo, 2023) defines Perception as your mental process and how your senses interpret something. Furthermore, the etymological source of the English word "perception" is the Latin word "perception," which means "receiving, collecting, the action of taking possession, and apprehension with senses or mind." The three primary stages of Perception are selection, organization, and interpretation. After deciding which information needs to be retained, the students organize and structure it logically. Ultimately, they make sense of the data and form opinions regarding the real world. As cited by (Kaniadewi, 2022), Perception is the process of interpreting information based on external stimuli that the sensory system detects. In a nutshell, Perception is the sequential process by which people gather, arrange, and interpret the information they learn from the diverse events in the environment. Humans perceive the world through their senses—visual, audio, tactile, smell, and taste. The human brain attempts to compile and organize the information to make sense after it has reached the five senses. Perception refers to the individual's own thoughts (Ilyas & Kaniadewi, 2023). Perception of the students is important in the teaching and learning process in EFL classes. The students' motivation was based on how they perceived different aspects of their immediate environment.

Asking questions is a crucial part of learning. One can use questions to examine new ideas, facts, information, experiences, and

knowledge. They have a big role in communication (Rachmawaty & Ariani, 2019). A question is an expression, phrase, or motion that asks for clarification through a response. It indicates that the question is asked when teachers say something that the listener or interlocutor has to repeat, such as words, phrases, or sentences. Some professionals give definitions for words. (Vebriyanto, 2015) defines a question as a meaningful language unit (sentence) or utterance with an interrogative sense, i.e., one that aims to elicit information or a response from the reader or listener. In other words, a question is raised when someone speaks to another person and uses an interrogative tone to obtain information or a response. The usage of questioning and the existence of teacher questioning strategies are closely related. A strategy must be in place to get children to respond to inquiries (Kholisoh & Linggar Bharati, 2021). The techniques rely on complex statements that elicit critical reactions from the students. The usage of questioning and the existence of teacher questioning strategies are closely related. A strategy must be in place to get children to respond to inquiries. According to (Xia, 2020) various strategies could be employed to get students answers to more complex questions. These strategies include waiting, repeating, paraphrasing, simplifying, and probing as the final strategy. Using the probing method, a teacher can help scaffold students' thought processes and make it easier for them to respond when asked questions.

Teacher's questions in a classroom context are defined as instructional signals or stimuli that communicate to students the material to be learned and instructions on what to do and how to do it. It focuses on the connections between instructors' questioning practices in the classroom and a range of student outcomes, such as involvement level, retention, and accomplishment (Sujariati et al., 2016). Teacher's questions are divided into multiple categories. Some experts divided between display and referential questions and open-ended and closed-ended categories. According to (Vebriyanto, 2015), one of these questions is a display question because the teacher already knows the answer. Students are asked this type of question to check whether they know the answer. According to several studies, these questions usually occur during classroom interactions. Additional question categories include display and referential questions and closed- and open-ended inquiries. Display questions are ones when the teacher already knows the answers. Its goal is to evaluate students' understanding of the content they have studied. On the other hand, referential questions are those in which the teacher cannot determine the answer. The teacher is interested in learning specific information from the students. Students usually thoroughly answer these questions (Zohrabi et al., 2014). Other types of questions are open-ended and closed-ended. A teacher cannot predict how a student will react to an open-ended question. Different responses will be provided based on the students. Some

researchers believe that open questions are frequently open, and vice versa. Conversely, there is only one right answer to closed-ended questions, which implies the teacher is already aware of the solution (Ta, 2021). According to (Kasimi et al., 2021), based on Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, teacher questions are divided into subjects for knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and assessment. Higher-level questions will anticipate higher-level thinking because the question levels are developed with the students' thinking abilities in sight.

Against this background, this study aims to reveal high school EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students' perceptions of the types of questions asked by teachers in the teaching and learning process. Specifically, this study will explore the different questioning strategies used by teachers, the reasons behind their use, and how students understand and respond to these questions. The main objectives of this study are to identify the types of questions asked by teachers in EFL classes at the high school level, explain the reasons behind teachers' use of different types of questions in the context of English language teaching, and evaluate students' perceptions of the effectiveness of different types of questions asked by teachers in improving their understanding and engagement in the teaching and learning process. In addition, this study also aims to provide useful pedagogical insights into the questioning strategies that EFL teachers can use to support the development of students' language skills

during the teaching and learning process. Through this research, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of the contribution of teachers' questioning techniques to the improvement of students' motivation, engagement and learning outcomes can be gained in the context of teaching English as a foreign language at the high school level.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research design employed a qualitative descriptive study. According to (Priya, 2021), in a descriptive case study, the purpose is to 'describe' a phenomenon in detail in its real-world context. The data collected has to be relevant to the issue under study. The process of analyzing data comes next. When assessing the data, the researcher must pay close attention to detail to appropriately present the results. The final phase is to make conclusions. The following conclusion is reached after thoroughly analyzing all the available data. This qualitative study aims to provide clarification for descriptive or non-statistical data. It has to do with a method of study that produces spoken or written descriptive data (Farisca Adhani et al., 2023; Lubis, 2024). Ten students from SMAN 58 Jakarta all took part in the study as respondents; they go by their initials S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, and S10. The researcher chose them because the participants were in their first year of high school. Three instruments were used to gather the data. The first instrument was an observation system used to observe students learning English. This observation aimed to

characterize the events surrounding the students' attempts at learning. The researchers carried out the observations three times. The interview served as the second instrument. The first research question concerned EFL students' opinions of the teacher's questioning techniques, and interviews were conducted to answer them. The third instrument is the documentation of the student's grades obtained by the English teacher to see their learning outcomes. Interviews were done to find out about interesting or pertinent unexpected answers to the questions that had been asked beforehand. Ten students were interviewed by the researchers to get relevant information. Each selected student had an interview that lasted ten to fifteen minutes. After the data were collected, the phases of analysis involved in the data collection process were data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion-making (Mezmir, 2020).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides the findings of semi-structured interviews with ten SMAN 58 Jakarta students regarding the research questions: What are EFL students' perceptions on the type of teacher questions? Particular narratives and statements have been provided to support these conclusions in the section that follows. The research question gained significance from the primary themes that emerged from the information acquired from the semi-structured interviews. The research findings are supported by a number of the claims made by students during the interviews.

Each student has a different perception on the types of questions teachers use at SMAN 58 Jakarta. According to S1, teachers frequently pose at the beginning of learning or before entering the learning material. S2, S5, and S4 are likewise in favor of this statement.

S1: Yes, When the teacher enters before starting the lesson, the teacher often asks questions, for example, asking or reviewing the previous material, after which we reflect back, and then we enter the material that will be carried out later. (rayya)

S2: Yes, teachers usually always start with triggering questions, like, for example, what do you know about this text? Then we will definitely answer it.

S5: Yes, the teacher definitely asks questions first before we start learning. The teacher gives a flashback of the previous material, then maybe simple questions related to the previous material.

S4: Yes, the teacher often asks questions such as whether you have learned this material before or whether you still remember this material from before.

From the result above, we can see that teachers often ask questions at the beginning of learning or before explaining learning materials, which is supported by (ASTRID et al., 2019; Ritonga et al., 2022). Posing questions as starting points for a discussion at the start of class can help students respond more efficiently and avoid pressuring them to share

too much personal information. Prior to instruction, the questions may be asked orally or in a written quiz format.

Open-ended questions are one of the most common types of questions asked by English teachers before teaching, indicated by S3, S6, S7, and S10 likewise support the idea.

S3: The type of question is open-ended because, with questions like that, our opinions become different and make us think more broadly.

S6: Usually, teachers prefer to give questions about the open-ended method or what is often known as open questions. Because of the open-ended questions, each student has their own opinion, and the advantage is that the students can be broader in scope because it covers more.

S7: The type of question is open-ended. This question is usually asked when the teacher is explaining new material. For example, he asks for students' opinions, so the students have a variety of answers, which can sometimes be included to add value too.

S10: So, for the types of questions that are asked, the teacher usually uses open-ended questions because these open-ended questions encourage the children to think more broadly and also so that they don't stick to one thing but rather to a broader meaning.

Thus, open-ended questions are among English teachers' frequently requested question types. As stated by (Çakır & Cengiz, 2016) the teachers asked more open-ended questions, which resulted in more student participation. Thus, there was more dialogue in the classrooms.

The following question relates to Bloom's taxonomy theory and is divided into Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). These categories categorize teacher inquiries into subjects for knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and assessment. The researcher's observations of English teachers showed that they frequently use LOTS (lower-order thinking Skills) in their questioning before introducing new material. This observation is further supported by interviews supporting the researcher's findings. The following statements from S2, S3, and S7 are explained.

S2: At the lesson's beginning, the teacher more often asks LOTS or Lower Order Thinking Skills questions. Because it has yet to go into concrete things, but for HOTS itself, it's usually only asked in the exam.

S3: It's rare to ask HOTS questions at the beginning of learning, usually LOTS questions. HOTS questions usually come when the teacher is explaining the material or when discussing exam questions that have been completed, like reviewing them in the form of HOTS questions.

S7: At the beginning of learning, teachers are rarely based on HOTS; teachers often ask LOTS questions, and if they are HOTS, they are in exams or daily tests.

(Fachrunnisa et al., 2020) stated that after analyzing all test items provided by the two teachers, it was found that there are various levels in it. By considering Anderson's statement about the classification of thinking levels and LOTS and HOTS, it can be concluded that LOTS level on the questions mostly dominates over HOTS.

Seeing the results of observations in class, the students are very enthusiastic about interacting, discussing, and answering questions from the English teacher; it also turns out to be linear with the results of the interviews they gave. as stated by S1, S8, S9, and 10

S1: I prefer open questions because open questions encourage us to think more critically; in the end, we can have more fun learning that way.

S8: I prefer open questions; as I said earlier, they are open-ended. From these questions, students can think more critically and answer the questions given by the teacher.

S9: I like discussion-based questions. Because, as people, we are social creatures, we also need to discuss things. For example, group discussions are usually held with children who cannot speak English. Later, we will chat and discuss how to find the answer to the question. Well,

that can also help our friends. Then, my burden also becomes lighter because so many tasks do not burden me.

S10: I like questions that are open and discussion-based. Because if we ask open questions, we can get broader answers than closed questions. If it's just a closed question, we already know the answer, and the answer is the same as the others. Meanwhile, if the questions are open, we can hear questions and answers from friends whose thoughts are different from ours, and we can change the information we get so that it suits our friends depending on the information we want to get. Then, for example, if it is discussion-based, I prefer discussions because we exchange ideas by exchanging ideas, and I can understand the learning better.

Based on the result above, they prefer open-ended or discussion-based questions the teacher poses. As stated by (Saeed, 2018), Their results from Focus Group Discussions indicate that although students have different opinions about what constitutes discussion, they all agree that it is an effective teaching strategy. Classroom management is the primary purpose of teachers' open-ended questioning practices. Additionally, the material includes writing exercises and lessons on grammar and spelling. The teachers often pose open-ended questions that are more subject-specific (Svanes & Andersson-Bakken, 2023).

Several opinions emerged to answer which effective questions excited the students to learn. Many of them answered discussion questions and open-ended questions, but some opinions indicated that it needed to be more open-ended and discussion was more effective. as stated by S5 and S6.

S5: Open questions and HOTS-based questions are questions that are suitable and also effective when learning. Because of that, it makes children or students think broadly, makes us enthusiastic about learning, and encourages our friends to learn, too.

S6: referential, because, for example, if the question is just a display, we all already know what the answer is, but if it is referential, we can get other answers

The questions asked by English teachers at the beginning of the lesson or before getting into the learning material they believe can help students understand the lesson better because the questions asked by teachers at the beginning of the lesson or before getting into the material make them listen and have a more profound curiosity; their interview results reinforce this. As stated by S3, S9, and S5

S3: Yes, of course, because from these questions, our thinking patterns can be explored more deeply, so when working on questions whose type or basis requires analysis, they will definitely be more accessible.

S9: Yes, because after the teacher asked the question, there was further explanation regarding the answer. Also, the goal is clear; we know it, especially since sometimes frequently asked questions appear repeated, so that helps.

S5: Yes, of course, because when the teacher explains the questions, and we try to explain according to our opinion, usually the teacher at the end will try to explain according to the material. So we also feel helped, and I feel helped, too.

(Lubis & Ritonga, 2023; Nashruddin & Rahmawati Ningtyas, 2020) stated that their research findings showed the positive effect of teachers' questioning techniques in EFL classrooms. This was proven by the student's participation in learning. Moreover, the observation sheets showed that the teacher and all students had an excellent interaction in the teaching-learning process.

There were no suggestions for changes or improvements from the interviewees regarding better question types at the beginning of the lesson, which was in line with the observation checklist the researchers developed. The statements made by students supported the idea that many of them believed their English teachers had asked the most effective questions to help them understand the lesson better. As stated by S3

S3: For the English teacher, I don't have any suggestions or improvements because I am pretty comfortable with

how the English teacher explains or opens the conversation.

The three components of a practical questioning session are the teacher/student's response to the initial response, the student's response, and the excellent question (Alexander et al., 2022).

D. CONCLUSION

The findings and the discussion above conclude that students have various perceptions on the types of questions that teachers used at the beginning of learning or before entering the learning material. The type of teacher questions used encourages students to participate more actively and improves their understanding of the material. The students believe asking and answering questions will help them understand the lesson better.

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