

Teachers' Questioning Strategies to Promote Students' Engagement in EFL Classroom: The Case of Islamic Boarding Schools in Aceh

Ika Apriani Fata^{1*}, Arifin Syamaun¹, Rini Maulini¹, Fadhilah Muktabar², Saiful Marhaban,¹
Asnawi Muslem¹, Silvi Listia Dewi³

¹Department of English Education, Universitas Syiah Kuala, Indonesia.

²Department of Public Health, Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh, Indonesia

³Department of English Education, Universitas Almuslim, Indonesia

*Corresponding email: ika.apriani@unsyiah.ac.id

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Abstract: Teachers' Questioning Strategies to Promote Students' Engagement in EFL Classroom: The case of Islamic Boarding Schools in Aceh. Objective: The present study aims to investigate the use of questioning strategies during classroom interaction. **Methods:** There were N=106 students, Aged 14-16 years as students at Islamic boarding schools in Aceh, and English teachers (N=5) participated in this study selected through purposive sampling, documentation, observation, and interview are triangulation of instruments. The data were analyzed by using the descriptive qualitative form by Marzano's Observational Protocol Sheet (2013). **Findings:** The findings revealed that teacher mostly employs questioning strategies to check the students' knowledge and comprehension in the learning process by using many kinds of questions. Furthermore, when it happened to come to promoting children's critical thinking, this strategy were ineffective because the questions were yes/no questions. **Conclusion:** it explicitly means that this strategy is effective and beneficial way to the students and teacher in the classroom interaction at school.

Keywords: questioning strategies, Islamic boarding school, classroom interaction.

Abstrak: Strategi Guru Bertanya Untuk Meningkatkan Keterlibatan Siswa Dalam Kelas Bahasa Inggris di Pesantren Aceh. Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki penggunaan strategi bertanya selama interaksi kelas. **Metode:** Terdapat N=106 santri berusia 14-16 tahun yang merupakan siswa Pesantren di Aceh dan guru Bahasa Inggris (N=5) berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini dipilih melalui "purposive sampling". Data diperoleh dengan menggunakan dokumentasi, observasi dan wawancara. Data dianalisis menggunakan deskriptif kualitatif dengan mengadopsi teori Lembar Protokol Observasi Marzano (2013). **Temuan:** Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa sebagian besar guru menggunakan strategi bertanya untuk menguji pengetahuan dan pemahaman siswa dalam pembelajaran. Selanjutnya, dalam upaya meningkatkan kemampuan berkritis anak, strategi ini tidak efektif karena berupa pertanyaan ya/tidak. **Kesimpulan:** Secara eksplisit, strategi ini dapat menjadi teknik yang bermanfaat bagi siswa dan guru dalam interaksi kelas.

Kata kunci: strategi bertanya, pesantren, interaksi kelas.

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■ INTRODUCTION

In recent years, numerous researches have figured out the teachers' method to promote students' engagement during EFL classroom with several contextual factors. For instance, developing teachers' strategy in the EFL context (Burns & Myhill, 2014); Black, 2015) have revealed the slowness of changing strategy. In addition, the shortcomings in implementing teachers' strategies (Can Daskin, 2017; Gotwals and Birmingham, 2016; Sungho, 2015) have revealed that teachers in classrooms have an insufficient understanding of strategy. Stakeholders such as the school headmaster, curriculum authorities, and English teachers might potentially expand their knowledge of proper language teaching strategies in classrooms by contributing to language teaching strategies.

Cân Daskin & Hatipoglu (2019) proposed the definition of language teaching as an interactive activity between students and teachers or among students themselves. As a result, it is expected that the teacher can provide adequate exposure to the target language during the class by encouraging students to participate and become more interested.

Unfortunately, due to the students' lack of enthusiasm to participate, the necessary active interaction rarely occurs during the teaching and learning process, especially in Indonesia. As a result, the instructor may have an unfair advantage in the classroom. They also refused to ask a question on the lesson that they wanted to know about. According to Doug Lemov (2016), teachers must be aware of the amount and type of talking they perform, as well as analyze its effectiveness in light of their pedagogical goals. When the teacher's discussion dominates the class, students may be more passive in their interactions with the teacher during the learning process. Furthermore, according to Sungho (2015), the teacher's talk duration, question

structure, and student responses all have a relationship with the teacher's classroom strategies.

Clark (2010) also discovered that identifying specific factors linked to teacher-student interactions could provide useful information to an educational learning community. As we know, English has four skills that the students must learn. However, the teacher is unable to provide more opportunities for students to speak and use the language in class. Most of the teachers, nowadays, have their own opinions about how to interact or to help the students understand the lesson. These are some of the reasons why the teachers merely use the one-direction technique or teacher's center method at the beginning of the lesson. Whereas, Carless (2011) told that one of the important roles to play by the teacher in the classroom is as the initiator and sustainer of interaction. In addition, the most common way or strategy to initiate classroom interaction is by asking questions to the students since questioning is one of the best ways to develop the teacher's role as an initiator and sustainer of interaction (Chaudron (2018).

The learning strategy through questioning caused the students to be more creative and independent about their thought (Soysal, 2020). This is an opportunity to enhance the student's ability to comprehend lesson instructions and apply them according to the lesson's structures to achieve a successful outcome (Zulkarnain et al., 2021). Students may have expectations of what the teacher will ask them as the lesson begins. Students could also choose to actively react to their teacher's questions at the beginning of a course. It's a fairly typical occurrence in class. Regarding questioning, Furtak et.al, (2016) point out that appropriate questioning in an interactive classroom can fulfill several different functions, such as giving the students opportunity to produce language comfortably,

initiating a chain reaction of student interaction among themselves, and providing students with opportunities to find out what they think by hearing what they say.

This strategy not only imparts knowledge but also provides students with a great opportunity to speak up in the classroom if they are reluctant to do so at first. It is also known that the technique entails interaction between the teacher and the students during the learning process. As a result, this technique allows both students and teachers to fulfill their learning objectives.

Sungho (2015) informed that the result of the research showed that there were clear differences in teacher talk time, the structure of questions, and student responses between the treatment and control groups throughout the project and at each time point. Therefore, to create the relationship between learners and teachers in the classroom, the teacher needs to apply a good strategy in the learning process during classroom interaction (Sedova, et al., 2019; Sencibaugh & Sencibaugh, 2015; Soysal, 2020).

It is encouraged that the students must be actively involved in the learning process to express their ideas about the lesson. According to Brown (2014), questioning strategies may also provide necessary stepping stones for the students to communicate. Teachers must consider the more effective way to ask the question to the students before starting the lesson.

This consideration may have a positive impact on teachers' ability to create interactions with students. The teacher can use this sort of asking to get more satisfying involvement in the learning process. In this study, certain types of questions will be limited. The researcher use types of questioning by Bloom's Taxonomy that includes six categories; Knowledge (recall data or information), Comprehension (understand the meaning), Application (use a concept in a new

situation), Analysis (separate concepts into parts; distinguish between facts and inferences), Synthesis (combine parts to form new meaning), Evaluation (make judgments about the value of ideas or products).

To summarize, the purpose of this study was to look into teachers' strategies for developing strategies in EFL classroom interactions at the intermediate level. It also intends to describe the characteristics of how the five EFL teachers implemented questioning strategies through the Marzano sequences. Due to the shortcomings in the previous studies, a further investigation of questioning strategy is paramount. Few kinds of research on this problem are undertaken in the EFL context in the context of Islamic boarding schools. Thus, this study focused on investigating the questioning strategies types applied by the teachers during classroom interaction at Islamic boarding schools in Aceh.

■ METHODS

Research Design

The research method in this study is the qualitative method embracing the characteristics of case study research. The qualitative method is applied to investigate more on the real process or emphasize the natural setting. By applying qualitative study, the data were collected and classified into some categories. The data were collected and sorted into certain categories using a qualitative study. The information was gathered using two separate methods: classroom observation and interview. The Marzano Observational Protocol (Marzano, 2013) methodology was used to collect and analyze the data. The purpose of using these frameworks is to collect and discuss certain findings before concluding the study. There were N=106 students, Age 14-16 years, Islamic boarding schools namely *Ruhul Islam Anak Bangsa* and *Inshafuddin* in Aceh. Both schools are among

the top five Islamic schools in Banda Aceh, according to www.kemendepag.org.id and then English teachers (N=5) were chosen by purposive sampling to participate in this study. Documentation, observation, and interviews are triangulations of the research instruments. Marzano's Observational Protocol Sheet was used to examine the data in descriptive qualitative form (2013).

Ethical consideration

This study was self-funded and all participants provided informed consent, and their responses in the observation and interviews were kept confidential. They were not required or permitted to explain personal information or things that were uncomfortably close to them. This study lasts for nearly one semester time allocation, based on our preliminary study the maximum time would create an enjoyment atmosphere so that the natural setting of community appeared.

Technique of data analysis

In collecting data, the researcher applied interview as the instruments. Open-ended questions were asked to participants and required a written response through e-mail. The interview was conducted in Indonesian to avoid misunderstanding. Open-ended questions were asked to participants and required a response accordingly. The researcher used interview sections to discover the depth information from teachers to support the data based on the item in the questionnaire. According to Nassaji (2015), an interview is described as an instrument for the researcher seeks to find authentic information from participants being asked, and the answer is in form of an opinion or argument. There are three types of interview, they are unstructured, semi-structured, and structured (Creswell, 2014). This study was considering semi-structured interview type as one of the interview guide designs. The

aim of using semi-structured is because the type of this interview made the respondents conveyed the information more flexible and has the probability to be asked any additional questions from the answer. Furthermore, in this study researcher used open-ended interview as a type of question in interview. Popping (2015), as the framework of interview guidelines, it affirmed an open-ended question is a question in which the answer allowing the participants answers in his or her own words naturally. In other words, the participants free to express their perceptions in verbal.

Participants

Homogeneous purposive sampling techniques were used in selecting the participants. This approach aims to provide a homogenous sample with comparable characteristics such as age, occupation, background, etc., who can offer the best information as needed (Qiong, 2017). In addition, this technique was chosen since the research objective addressed the specific characteristics of a particular group (Aspers & Corte 2019).

■ RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher discovered some information about the teacher's questioning strategies in the classroom using the observation guidelines and video recording. The first was the teacher applied some types of questions to the students at the beginning of class. The second is the teacher also applied the strategies in the middle and the end of the class session. The third was the teachers gave the students time to answer their questions. The fourth was the teacher accidentally used similar questions to one and another student to all students. The fifth was the teacher sometimes used two languages, English and Bahasa, to make the students completely understand the questions and how they

comprehend the lesson. The last was the teacher repeated the questions to the students that did not understand the questions until she answered the question.

The questioning has a different types of questions according to the purpose of the teaching lesson. This is one of the earliest taxonomies Bloom by Brown (2014, p. 172). The first one is knowledge, it is for eliciting factual answers, testing recall, and recognition of information of material. Common question: identity, describe and tell. Who? What? Where? When? Answer "yes or no".

The second is comprehension. It is about the ability to understand the meaning (e.g. Explain how you got that answer?). The third is application. It is about the ability to use learned material such as rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws, and theories in new and concrete situations. (e.g. Give me an example of a situation that you may have this experience).

There is an inference as the fourth element. To know the ability to form conclusions that are not directly stated in instructional materials. (e.g. How do you feel about it?). Then, there is an analysis type to test the ability to break down the material into its elements so that its organizational structure may be understood. (e.g. Why did that work in this case?)

The sixth is synthesis type to tests the ability to collect different parts and put them together to create a new whole. Synthesis encourages learners to form something new and rely on innovative and creative thinking. (e.g. What would happen if you called him?). Then, there is evaluation as the last type. It is about the ability to assess the value of materials, the explanation to problems, or the details about particular cultures (What do you think?)

Every teacher in the learning process should be able to use these types of questions differently. To meet the needs of the lesson, some teachers

must use two or more types of questions. Knowledge, comprehension, and evaluation are examples of the kind of questions used by the English teacher in this study. Teachers employ at least one of these sorts of questions as a technique in teaching lessons in the classroom, depending on the demands.

It turned out that the most occurrence of teachers' strategy was "knowledge" it implicitly meant that the teachers employed the question to check the students understanding, for instances "do you understand my explanation?, do you have any question about the text? Were the most frequents questions posed by the teachers. On the other hand, the least appearance question was "application" and it was explicitly revealed that the teacher rarely check the students creative thinking on how to apply the certain concept to the different problems and test, for instance "could you apply this formula to another questions? "do you employ this concept to question in the next page"?.

Based on the observation results, the teacher's questioning strategy in teaching English could have a significant impact on the students' interest in the classroom. Students became more eager to begin class and absorb the material. The interaction was one of the most crucial aspects that teachers needed to incorporate into the classroom. During the learning process, the teacher interacted with the pupils by asking those questions that they had to answer. The second-grade instructors at *Ruhul Islam Anak Bangsa and Inshafuddin Junior High School* employed the questioning method to foster interaction during the learning process, according to this study.

The results revealed that the students enjoyed the class because of the questions that the teacher asked them in class. Students received more opportunities to speak in class during the learning process as a result of the questions. There are two reasons why teachers ask questions in

Table 1. The result of questioning type by participants

Participant	QUESTIONING TYPES						Frequency	Percentage
	Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Inference	Analysis	Evaluation		
N1	5	3	1	0	2	2	13	22.03%
N2	4	4	1	1	1	1	12	20.33%
N3	4	4	0	0	1	1	10	16.94%
N4	4	3	0	0	2	2	11	18.64%
N5	5	3	1	1	1	2	13	22.03%
TOTAL	22	17	3	2	7	8	= 59	100%

their courses, according to Furtak et al. (2016) and Egeberg, H. et.al, (2016) that the first is that questions must be answered, and the second is that questions can be used to manage engagement during the learning process. They could also learn to speak English freely and not be frightened to give incorrect answers in English. Since the beginning of class, the students had been interested in the lesson.

According to Brown (2014), a teacher's question can also be used to initiate interaction between the teacher and the students. The teacher had asked the children a variety of questions, including yes/no, open/close, and display questions. These kinds of questions were used to determine the students' knowledge and understanding of the lesson. The teacher gained a better understanding of the students' circumstances regarding the lesson by asking them more questions. Their response, as well as their participation in the classroom during the learning process, demonstrated this.

Furthermore, Chaudron (2018) defined teachers' questions as a fundamental instrument for teachers to accomplish educational goals and focus on students' attention. The teacher had established the learning objectives by employing the questioning method, which resulted in the

teacher asking several questions from the beginning to the end of the lesson (Fata & Aprilya, 2021; Bonnet & Dalton-Puffer, 2013). The benefits of asking questions to grab the students' attention made the teacher happy to witness the students' enthusiasm during the class activity.

The advantages for the teacher were that the teacher might develop a positive engagement with the students as well as a positive relationship with them (Chen & Liang, 2017). This effective learning approach could also be used by the teacher to visually assess the students' competence and learning level. The researcher could see the teacher's efforts by asking them more and more questions to indicate the students' comprehension of the lesson utilizing this method.

Then, to keep a good relationship with the students, the teacher had been provided more chances for the students to speak in the classroom and the students could get the knowledge by obtaining the question and the right answer from another student. Whether the students had paid attention to class or not, the teacher could see it directly in the class by giving the questions to them. By posing some questions questioning that perceived as a strong tool to elicit student reasoning when learning a new lesson (Lynch)

Other advantages were that the teacher could give students greater room to express their ideas and opinions, which were crucial for them to develop critical thinking skills. It would be beneficial for pupils to improve their abilities to solve problems and respond quickly to any situation that arises. Using the questioning method to achieve the goal of teaching was also beneficial to the teacher.

The advantages for the students were they became more active in the class and they got more opportunities to speak to the teacher, especially with the language target (Brown, et al., 2016). Students were more motivated in participating in the learning process to gain knowledge after employing the method. This strategy could be very useful for a teacher who wished to see the students' strengths and weaknesses to help them understand the lesson. According to Carless (2011), the interaction between a teacher and a group of students includes both assisting other students who do not yet understand the discussed subjects and regulating the interaction to avoid an uncontrollable classroom.

Other advantages for the students were they became brave and confident with the lesson. It was seen when they responded directly and quickly to the teachers' questions. This action also aided the teacher because the students' answers could be used to determine whether or not they understood the lesson.

The result of the interview showed that the teacher used the questioning strategy to test the students' knowledge and comprehend the lesson. The teacher had been seriously taken the chance of using this strategy to look for the students' problem toward the lesson and also to give them more experience in answering the questions although the answer was not fully correct, at least they had tried to have an interaction with the teacher during the learning process. Based on Hedge (2011, p. 26), she identifies important

roles the teacher as a controller, within a classroom interaction and especially learner-teacher interaction, the teacher is the responsible for the teaching and learning process.

The researcher found that the teacher was delighted and proud of the students because they were so active in the classroom during the learning process. Since the beginning of class, the students have demonstrated their interest in learning by answering the questions. One of the teacher's favorite things to do with the kids was to have them describe the answer using their own words. The teacher also asked for an example in the middle of the learning process to ensure that they understood the lesson correctly.

To live up to the class, the teacher provided some jokes to the students to make them feel more relaxed during the learning process and allow them to freely respond to the questions. According to the interview, the teacher's feedback was also significant in making the pupils more confident and fearless in their ability to get the solution without feeling nervous or fearful of getting a wrong answer.

The use of the questioning strategy made the relation between student-teacher happen in the class because the questions made two directions of learning run smoothly from the beginning of the class to the end of the class. The students got the knowledge and comprehend the lesson, meanwhile, the teacher could obtain the successful purpose of teaching. The questioning strategy to build the interaction during the learning process.

The results revealed that the students enjoyed the class because of the questions that the teacher asked them in class. Students received more opportunities to speak in class during the learning process as a result of the questions. There are two reasons why teachers ask questions in their courses, according to Furtak et al. (2016). The first is that questions must be

answered, and the second is that questions can be used to manage engagement during the learning process. They could also learn to speak English freely and not be frightened to give incorrect answers in English. Since the beginning of class, the students had been interested in the lesson.

According to Brown (2014), the question that is asked by the teacher can also be a way to initiate interaction between teacher and students. The teacher had given the students many kinds of questions such as yes/no questions, open/close questions, and display questions. These kinds of questions were applied to know the students knowledge and comprehend the lesson (Joseph, et al 2016). By giving the students more questions, the teacher got to know the students situation about the lesson. It showed by their answer and also their participation in the classroom during the learning process.

Furthermore, Chaudron (2018) and Liu (2021) also defined teachers' questions as the basic tool for the teacher to achieve instructional goals as well as to focus on learners' attention. The teacher had been set up the goals of the learning by using the questioning strategy so that the teacher provided many questions from the beginning to the end of the class. To get the students' attention, the advantages of using the questions made the teacher feel great to see the students' enthusiasm during the class activity.

The advantages for the teacher were the teacher could build a good interaction with the students and also good relation to them (Chien, 2020). The teacher also could use this effective learning strategy to check the students' ability and their level of learning visibly. By using this strategy, the researcher could see the teacher's efforts by giving them more and more questions to reveal the students' comprehension of the lesson (Box, et.al 2015).

The teacher was therefore given additional opportunities for students to speak in the

classroom, and students might gain information by acquiring a question and the correct response from another student, to maintain excellent relations with the kids. The teacher could see whether or not the students were paying attention in class by asking them questions (Murillo-Zamorano, et al., 2019). When teaching a new lesson, offering certain questions is seen as a powerful strategy for eliciting student reasoning (Clark, 2010).

Another advantage was that the teacher could give students greater space to express their ideas and opinions, which was crucial for them to develop critical thinking skills (Pun et al., 2019). It would be beneficial for students to enhance their skills to solve problems and respond quickly to any situation that arises. Using the questioning method to achieve the goal of teaching was also beneficial to the teacher.

The advantages for the students were they became more active in the class and they got more opportunities to speak to the teacher, especially with the language target. Students were more motivated in participating in the learning process to gain knowledge after employing the method. This strategy could be very useful for a teacher who wished to see the students' strengths and weaknesses to help them understand the lesson. According to Carless (2011), the interaction between a teacher and a group of students includes both assisting other students who do not yet understand the discussed subjects and controlling the interaction to avoid an uncontrollable classroom scenario.

Another advantage for the pupils was that they grew more courageous and confident as a result of the session. It was evident when they responded directly and quickly to the teachers' inquiries. This move also benefited the teacher because the students' answers could be a reference to the teacher whether they comprehend the lesson or not (Burns & Myhill, 2014; Fata et al., 2020).

The result of the interview showed that the teacher used the questioning strategy to test the students knowledge and comprehend the lesson. The teacher had been seriously taken the chance of using this strategy to look for the students problem toward the lesson and also to give them more experience in answering the questions although the answer was not fully correct, at least they had tried to have an interaction with the teacher during the learning process. Carless (2011) and Ernst-Slavit & Pratt (2017) identified important roles of the teacher as a controller, within a classroom interaction and especially learner-teacher interaction, the teacher is responsible for the teaching and learning process.

The researcher found that the teacher was very happy and proud of the students because they were so active in the classroom during the learning process. Since the beginning of class, the students have shown their interest in learning by answering the questions. One of the teacher's favorite things to do with the students was to have

them describe the answer using their own words (Rahayu, et al., 2019). The teacher also asked for an example in the middle of the learning process to ensure that they understood the lesson correctly (Ong, et al,2016).

To live up to the class, the teacher also provided some jokes to the students to make them feel relaxed in the learning process and they can answer the questions freely (Alsowat, 2016). According to the interview, the feedback that was given by the teacher also became an important thing to make the students more confident and brave to get the answer without feeling uneasy or afraid to get a wrong answer.

The use of the questioning strategy made the relation between student-teacher happen in the class because the questions made two directions of learning run smoothly from the beginning of the class to the end of the class. The students learned and understood the material, and the teacher was able to achieve his or her goal of teaching.

Table 2. Marzano observational protocol rating scale

Innovating (4)	Applying (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)	Not Using (0)
Adapts and creates new strategies for unique student needs and situations.	Engages students in the strategy and monitors the extent to which it produces the desired outcomes.	Engages students in the strategy with no significant errors or omissions.	Uses strategy incorrectly or with parts missing.	The strategy was called for but not exhibited.

Based on observation results the teacher applied some questions to check the students' comprehension and knowledge of the lesson. It showed in the table that the teacher can build a

connection with the students by applying questioning strategies. The researcher found out that the teacher began the lesson by giving questions such as open/close questions before

starting the class and to live up the atmosphere than to make the students more focused that the class had begun.

Based on the observation, the researcher also found that the students could answer the questions directly after the teacher gave them the questions. It showed that the teacher successfully used the questioning strategy to build interaction with the students and the feedback was good. The question was an open/close and display question about the lesson.

The students also showed their interest in the learning process as they not only could answer what the teacher asked them but also could give an opinion about their answers. The fact was so great that when a student had their own opinion toward their answer and also knew the answer correctly. It indicated that the students paid attention carefully during the learning process and they also comprehend the lesson by responding with the correct answer.

■ CONCLUSIONS

One of the most crucial things that students must do during the learning process was used a questioning strategy. The teacher must try to connect with the students to develop an interaction with them, and using this method could be a good way to expose the students' real capacity for the lesson. According to the observation, the teacher used a questioning strategy from the beginning of the class to the end of the class.

Based on the results of triangulation data, the questioning type utmost performs of knowledge and comprehension, it is assumed that the teacher tends to ask about students' understanding and opinion. However, the least questioning type is inference and application. It is assumed that students are rarely taught how to apply English comprehension as well as students' indicated comprehension of texts. Also, the findings of the interviews mainly suggested that

teachers asked the same question (Knowledge and comprehension) at the beginning, middle, and end of each class to grasp students' attention, understanding, and opinions.

The learning process became more engaging, and the students' excitement for the session grew as well. The teacher employed a variety of questions, including yes/no, display, and open/close questions, as seen by the observation results. These kinds of questions become a strategy for gauging a student's ability to comprehend and obtain the information provided by the teacher. The teacher also noted that by providing the correct answer, the students had thoroughly comprehended the subject. The researcher discovered that the teacher employed this questioning method to interact with the students and that this strategy was then used to assess the students' understanding and knowledge.

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