



# Teachers Explore: Questioning Skills in English Language Teaching

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## ABSTRACT

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Effective questioning skills are essential for successful English teaching. Questioning skills are one of the important competencies that English teachers must have to support effective learning. This research took the title "Exploring the Questioning Ability of English Teachers in Grade 9 Uranus EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School ". This school is one of the schools located in the interior of oil palm plantations, in Central Borneo. This research has a general problem to be examined, namely how can teachers apply their questioning skills to English subjects in grade 9 Uranus at EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School? This study used qualitative research methods. In collecting data, using observation techniques and interviews. The data analysis uses decision-making and verification. With the results obtained, this study shows (1) The ability of teachers to apply basic skills is that the application of basic questioning skills to English teachers in grade 9 Uranus at EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School has mostly been carried out well. (2) The ability to ask questions for advanced teachers is still not possible.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In Indonesia, the role of education is significant to improve human resources, which is quoted from Constitution 45, namely to realize the ideals of the Indonesian nation and educate the nation's life. One of the factors needed for the continuity of development in Indonesia is education itself because education is a form of investment from individuals, communities, and also the state (Zuraida et al., 2019). Plus, education is needed for humans because education itself will help students or students in forming mature characters and direct them towards intellectual and physical experience.

In the 21st century, education is emphasized more as a bridge for students to form a character spirit to face various obstacles in this 21st century. This education can produce learners who are not blind to science and technology. Because we know that in this 21st century, technological development is very rapid and therefore, the emphasis and also the focus of education in the 21st century is on the potential of students to face these obstacles. As a result, students will be more guided to always think broadly, creatively, and also skillfully (Kunayah & Fauziah, 2023).

To achieve these objectives, developing additional abilities like imaginative thinking, evaluative thinking, teamwork, and making effective choices is important. These skills are essential to equip students to navigate the diverse challenges of 21st-century hurdles. (Zubaidah, 2016). Teachers also play a part in preparing students' skills by informing them that knowledge can come from within themselves, rather than solely from external sources. (Lubis, 2019). When developing this with students, the primary focus is building a communication rapport, encompassing verbal and written forms. This approach aims to foster a sense of curiosity among students, encouraging them to ask questions and engage with knowledge. The capacity to ask questions is essential as it facilitates ease in comprehending learning materials and information. (Lubis, 2019).

Asking questions is a method to acquire knowledge or information about something. Formulating multiple questions can foster effective communication between people and groups. Consequently, questioning is a vital element in building communication. (Prilanita & Sukirno, 2017). As an educator, it is strongly advised to engage students in question-and-answer sessions during the learning process. This approach enhances learning effectiveness as it is particularly apt for minimizing distractions in the classroom. Consequently, it significantly impacts students' learning experience, fostering enhanced thinking abilities and ultimately influencing their academic performance. (Juliangkary, 2020)

By asking questions, teachers can understand the extent of students' understanding, analyze difficulties experienced by students, and identify the direction

of students' thoughts by directing them from misunderstanding a concept that they understand precisely (Juliangkary, 2020). Moreover, through posing such inquiries, educators can effectively manage students' comprehension of the subject matter, stimulate students' creativity, cultivate their inquisitiveness, motivate them to acquire new knowledge, and offer them chances to develop their enthusiasm. (Ermasari et al., 2014).

The incorporation of questioning into teaching and learning activities offers advantages for both educators and students. Teachers benefit from being well-prepared by thoroughly understanding the material before conducting lessons. Students benefit from the opportunity to overcome shyness, fear of speaking up, and expressing challenges in understanding, fostering an increased motivation to engage in class activities actively. These teaching and learning activities also promote a conducive environment for active classroom participation and reciprocal interactions between students and facilitators. (Azhari et al., 2021).

We often encounter, many questions asked by teachers that cannot be answered by students. Because what the question wants is still not understood by students. With this, teachers must understand the important factors in the component of questioning skills. According to (Helmiati, 2013, hal 58) Questioning skills are categorized into two types: basic skills and advanced skills. Basic skills encompass a variety of fundamental abilities that should be taken into account when posing different types of questions. Advanced skills, on the other hand, are skills that teachers acquire after mastering basic questioning skills, focusing on enhancing students' thinking abilities, fostering students' enthusiasm, and encouraging students to think critically. (Helmiati, 2013).

There are 7 basic asking components according to (Helmiati, 2013), that is: Clear and concise disclosure of questions, Provision of reference, Formulation of the requested answer, Transfer of answering queues, Question deployment, giving time to think, Filing of claims.

With the ability to ask basic questions, the learning knowledge conveyed to students, whether it will be known or unknown by students, will be realized properly. The interaction relationship from informants or teachers and students will be more structured in order to achieve learning objectives. Because the responsibility that must be carried by the teacher is how the teacher gets special attention from the presence or absence of interaction in class.

Advanced questioning skills involve asking questions that target students' thinking abilities, boost their interest in learning, and encourage critical thinking. These advanced skills are built upon a solid understanding of basic questioning skills, ensuring a seamless transition and connection between the two. (Helmiati, 2013).

According to (Helmiati, 2013) There are 3 components of further asking, namely:

1. Cognitive level changes in answering the map

Teachers' questions can encompass various mental processes of students. The aim is for the questions to enhance students' cognitive levels by prompting them to answer

questions that start at a low cognitive level and progress to a higher one.

## 2. Setting the order of questions correctly

Questioning is intended to enhance cognitive levels from lower to higher levels. In other words, when posing questions, teachers should ensure that they are logical and well-organized.

## 3. Use tracker questions

If a student's response is considered correct by the teacher but has room for improvement, the teacher may introduce a new question randomly or a follow-up question. In essence, this allows the teacher to assess the extent to which students can provide answers that are connected to the original response.

According to (Fitriyah et al., 2020) The questions asked have levels, namely; Knowledge, Understanding, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation.

## METHOD

A research method is a strategy employed to address problems (Taufik, 2013). This study utilizes qualitative research methodologies. Qualitative research methodology is employed to investigate natural phenomena, with the researcher serving as the primary data collection tool. (Abdussamad, 2021). The purpose of the researcher using this method is to explain the extent of the teacher's ability to apply questioning skills to English subjects in grade 9 Uranus EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School.

Data collection in this study will use several techniques, namely:

### 1. Observation

(Abdussamad, 2021) Observation is a data collection technique whose implementation is carried out systematically and deliberately by observing and documenting what is being investigated. In this study, researchers used participatory observation. Where the researcher involved himself in the activities of the object being observed, namely the English teacher in grade 9 Uranus at EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School

### 2. Interview

(Abdussamad, 2021) An interview is a conversation that has the aim of obtaining information or can also be interpreted as a question and answer between the researcher and the object studied. In this study, researchers conducted an interviewing 2 students from grade 9 Uranus at EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School. The data obtained strengthened from the results of previous data.

## FINDINGS

### 1. Basic Questioning Skill

The student response to the interview, especially with the interview of 2 students resulted in the fact that there are several components that have been implemented and some are also unavailable. The most prominent thing is that when the teacher asks questions, the teacher's voice sounds very quiet, so the students have difficulty hearing his voice.

Student A

*Sometimes the teacher's voice is very quiet, to the point that it is very difficult for me to hear his voice.*

### Student B

*Sometimes it's difficult, even though I sit in the middle, but the voice is sometimes too quiet, I don't know if he's tired or whatever, but sometimes the voice is very quiet.*

Based on observation result, in terms of question concentration, teacher tend to focus his questions. They typically start with broad questions, such as reviewing previous material, and then proceed to narrower questions. The teacher's ability to ask questions in a transferable or classical manner, as well as individually, is evident from interview results. It is noted that English teachers present questions from classic sources and then address students individually, although the questions appear to be presented randomly. The teacher's practice of providing thinking time for students is commendable, as they consistently allow students time to think and formulate well-structured answers. When students seem confused in responding to questions, the teachers are observed guiding them to find the answer. Additionally, teachers do not hesitate to simplify and repeat questions when necessary.

### 2. Advance Questioning Skills

From the data obtained from the results of the researchers' observations of teachers about the extent to which further questioning skills are when observation does not change questions to a higher level. Researchers did not see any type of question where there should be a change from a low-level or easy question to a higher-level question. Researchers only saw a repetition of questions with low levels, with no change in question levels.

Researchers also did not see any tracker questions based on observational data. Based on the table from the observations, there is no clarification of the questions that the teacher uses in class. The teacher prefers to replace the object of the question rather than replace the question. From the interviews, teachers said that it was still difficult to invite students to a question that was deeper than the material that had been learned. According to researchers, this is because the school environment is still relatively inland.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of research on English teachers at SMP EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG in Seruyan District, Central Kalimantan using data collection methods with interview of 2 students and observations based on theory (Helmiati, 2013). From Basic Questioning Skills teachers have carried out several components such as providing references, formulating the requested answers, diverting answer queues, spreading questions, giving time to think, and submitting claims. However, if the delivery is not clear, or in other words, it cannot be heard clearly by the students, the ability to convey questions is still lacking. So, applying with theory from (Helmiati, 2013) English teachers at SMP EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG in Seruyan are not yet suitable because there are components that have not been carried out by the teacher.

This also happens in advance questioning. Where questions about advance have not been implemented by the teacher in accordance with the theory of (Helmiati, 2013). For

advanced questioning skills, a teacher must also be able to develop questions to a higher level. This is to measure the extent of the level of knowledge of students so far. If we only use equivalent questions, we do not know the extent of student development. It is very important for teachers to develop questioning skills. Not only in basic questions but also in advanced questions. Because, advanced questioning can help in focusing on improving students' thinking skills, fostering students' enthusiasm, and encouraging students to think critically the researchers have completed data collection from observations, interviews on the application of basic questioning skills by 9th-grade Uranus English teachers at EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School. However, there are certain aspects of basic questioning skills, such as encouraging critical thinking and fostering intimate relationships among teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, that are not being fully implemented. Of all the observations that have been made in applying questioning skills, it has not been carried out well. Because it is caused by an unfavorable environment so that the components contained in advanced skills cannot be fulfilled. And this is homework for English teachers to always guide students so that these components can be carried out.

Ultimately, Mistakes to avoid based on the results of research on English teachers at EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School in Seruyan District, Central Kalimantan using data collection methods with teacher interviews, interview of 2 students, and observations, the application of questioning skills is the result of observation, namely the lack of teacher creativity to encourage students to think critically, not only following the material that has been explained but also can grow critical students, for example in problem-solving.

Then there is still a lack of a climate of close or intimate relationships between teachers and students. This is something that must be corrected it is very important that in teaching and learning activities in the classroom, there is good communication. This is a homework that must be addressed immediately because creating a climate of intelligent relationships between teachers and students is very important in learning.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and the discussion that has been explained earlier, conclusions and suggestions can be drawn related to the teacher's ability to apply questioning skills in English lessons in grade 9 Uranus at EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School.

1. The teacher's ability to apply basic skills is that the application of basic questioning skills to English teachers in grade 9 Uranus at EKA TJIPTA KATAYANG Junior High School has mostly been carried out well. However, there is still a basic skill component that has not been implemented, namely encouraging students to think critically and creating a climate of intimate relationships between teachers and students.
2. The ability to ask advanced teachers is still not possible. Due to environmental factors in the interior. Which makes it difficult for students to develop.

As a suggestion for English teachers in carrying out teaching and learning activities, they should fully understand the components in questioning skills by deepening more about understanding the components of questioning skills or can follow training on teaching techniques in the hope of increasing insight into teaching skills.

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