

## USING APPROPRIATE QUESTIONING FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSE

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**Abstrak:** Tujuan dari makalah ini adalah untuk membahas kalimat tanya yang digunakan guru di kelas. Dari literatur terkait dan temuan beberapa penelitian yang dilakukan oleh beberapa ahli, dapat disimpulkan bahwa guru sebaiknya mengajukan pertanyaan yang bervariasi di kelasnya. Pertanyaan-pertanyaan tersebut harus merupakan kombinasi dari pertanyaan-pertanyaan tingkat tinggi dan pertanyaan-pertanyaan tingkat rendah untuk menyesuaikan dengan perbedaan tingkat kemahiran yang ingin dicapai dari siswa. Mengajukan pertanyaan dengan baik akan membuat mereka lebih aktif dan percaya diri serta secara tidak langsung membangun kompetensi komunikatifnya. Guru juga harus mengingatkan siswanya untuk menghargai pendapat siswa lain

**Kata Kunci:** pertanyaan guru, pembentukan karakter

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to discuss the use of teacher questioning in the class. From the related literature and from the finding of several studies done by some experts, it can be concluded that teachers should ask variety of questions in their class. The questions should be the combination of high-level questions and low-level questions in order to address the different level of students' proficiency. Asking questions properly will make them more active and confident and indirectly build their communicative competence. Teachers should also remind their students to appreciate other's opinions

**Keywords:** teacher questioning, character building

### A. Introduction

If we talk about applied language studies, we must refer to one of the experts about it, Rod Ellis. He is a professor in the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics at the University of Auckland, New Zealand and has published a number of books on second language acquisition and teacher education teaching. According to Ellis (2008), studies about teaching English as a second or foreign language are basically classified into three major categories. The first category is studies examining relationship between interactions happened in the classroom and the language learning, the second is studies comparing the effect of different language teaching methods on language learning and the last is studies investigating the effects of grammar teaching to language learning.

Among these three categories, there were still few researchers examining the relationship of classroom interaction with language learning. He adds that there are actually some studies which can be done related to classroom interaction. Kinds of language used in the classroom, types of turn taking occurred in classroom conversations, ways of teachers' talk in the classroom, ways of teachers correct learners' error, types of questions asked by the teachers and the task given in the class can be raised as a research concern.

The writer is interested to discuss questions asked by the teacher because they seem not important but in contrary question is one of the essential tools to carry out instructional materials. Many teachers instinctively ask a lot questions in their class without giving much time to analyze why and how they ask those questions and the effect of them on students. Therefore, this paper will discuss the nature of questions and what kind of questions should be asked more to the students.

Before discussing about what kind of questions that should be asked to the people, this paper is going to discuss types of question from several experts. There are numerous systems for classifying questions. Brualdi (2019) divides questions into two levels from the cognitive aspect as being shown in table 1.

Table 1. Levels of question based on Brualdy

No	Question Levels
1.	low-level-cognitive questions
2.	high-level-cognitive questions

The first level is low-level-cognitive questions concentrating only on factual information. He argues that these questions can limit people to acquire deep and elaborate understanding of the subject matter because they are not involved in analyzing but only memorizing. On the contrary, high-level-cognitive questions are those questions which encourage people to use their knowledge to solve the problem, to analyze and to evaluate. This type of question will help people truly grasp a concept because they are involved to deeply understand the concept.

If Brualdi only distinguishes questions into two types, the following experts group them based on taxonomies of the cognitive domain proposed by Bloom and then revised by Anderson and Krathwohl. Wilson (2016) explains the five taxonomies of cognition based on Bloom stated from the lowest to the highest: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. He compares bloom's taxonomies with the revised one proposed by Anderson and Krathwohl, those are remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating.

From Bloom's taxonomies, Sanders in Blosser (2000) divide seven categories of question for use with social study material as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Categories of question based on Sanders

No	Question Categories
1.	Memory
2.	Translation
3.	Interpretation
4.	Application
5.	Analysis
6.	Synthesis
7.	Evaluation

The first category, memory, is the type of questions to recall information that has been given to the students. The second category, translation, is the questions which aim to ask students to change information into different symbolic form or language. Next category, interpretation, is the type of questions which require students to see relationship. And then application is questions that seek students to solve a lifelike problem by drawing on generalization and skills. The fifth category, analysis, is the questions which demand students to solve a problem from conscious knowledge of the parts and forms of thinking. The sixth category, synthesis, is the questions which require students to solve a problem requiring original creative thinking. And the last category, evaluation, is the questions that guide students to make judgements according to standards.

After discussing the seven categories of question given by Sanders, Blosser (2000) then simplified the questions categories into four major types of questions as shown in table 3.

Table 3. Categories of question based on Blosser

No	Question Categories
1.	Managerial questions
2.	Rhetorical questions
3.	Closed questions
4.	Open questions

The first category is managerial questions. This type of questions is used by the teacher to keep the classroom operating or in other words questions used to move the activities and people toward desired goals of the lesson. Such questions are "Will you turn to page 15, please?", "Does everyone bring the book?" or "Do you need more time?". The second category is rhetorical questions. These questions are given to reinforce a point for emphasis. Teacher asks these questions not to get the answer from the students but to emphasize a point. Here are the examples of these questions: "Description text is text to describe a specific thing, right?" or

“Yesterday we have learnt that past forms are used to say something that happened at the past, okay?”. Though these questions do not get answer from the students, students’ response such as okay or all right indicates that they pay attention or agree with teacher’s statement.

The third category is closed questions. This type of questions provides a limited number of acceptable responses or right answers. “Who is the main character of the story?”, “What will happen if the trees are fell down according to the text?“ or “When should we push enter button on this procedure?“ are examples of closed questions. As its name, open question is the contrary of closed question. The last type is open questions. These questions anticipate a wide range of possible answers than one or two right answers. Blosser in Milawati and Suryati (2019) states that these questions do not only activate prior knowledge but also require people to give and justify their opinions, to infer or identify implications, to formulate hypotheses and to make judgment based on their own values or standards. Examples of these questions are: “What is your opinion about the increase of fuel price?”, “What kind of actions should be done by government to solve this problem?“ or “If you are lost in a jungle, what kind of tools that you need most?“.

While Sanders in Blosser categories questions into seven categories and Blosser simplifies them into four, Tarlington (2003) introduces 6 questioning stems for revised Bloom’s taxonomy as shown in table 4.

Table 4. Question Stems based on Tarlington

No	Question Categories
1.	Questioning for remembering
2.	Questioning for understanding
3.	Questioning for applying
4.	Questioning for analyzing
5.	Questioning for evaluating
6.	Questioning for creating

The first stem is questioning for remembering such as: “What happened after ...?”, “Which one is true or false ...?” and “Find the definition of ...?”. The second stem is questioning for understanding such as: “Can you explain why ...?”, “What do you think could have happened next...?” and “What was the main idea ...?”. The third stem is questioning for applying such as: “Which factors would you change if ...?”, “Can you group by characteristics ...?” and “From the information given, can you develop ...?”. Next stem is questioning for analyzing such as: “How is ... is similar to ...?”, “Why did those changes occur? ” and “Can you distinguish from ...?”. The fifth stem is questioning for evaluating such as: “How effective are ...?”, “What are the alternatives? ” and “How would you have handled ...?”. The last stem is questioning for creating such as: “Can you design a ... to ...?”, “What would happen if ...?” and “Can you see a possible solution for ...?”.

Kao and Weng (2012) narrow classification of questions based on their occurrence in real social context. They distinguish questions between pseudo questions and real questions as shown in table 5. Pseudo questions are those questions whose answers have been known by the teacher and some people. They are also called display questions because the people are asked to display their knowledge. Kao and Weng argue that pseudo questions do not address the question usually asked in social talk because in social talk people ask questions because they seek new unknown information from the addressee and they expect to get sincere and true answers. Thus, pseudo questions only function to verify people’ comprehension or memory about the taught materials. An example of pseudo question given by Kao and Weng is “What can you see in the picture?” This type of questions is the same with low-level-cognitive question proposed by Brualdi.

Table 5. Classification of Question based on Kao and Weng

No	Question Levels
1.	Pseudo questions
2.	Real questions

The second type of question based on Kao and Weng is the real questions. In contrast to pseudo questions, the real questions are called genuine or referential questions which are

common in real communication because the aim of giving the question is to elicit unknown information from the addressees. People ask these questions to draw answers referring to people' opinions, experience and judgements in order to fill information gaps. The answers of referential questions are usually longer than pseudo questions and involve conversation between teachers and people. This type of questions is the same with high-level-question proposed by Brualdi. Kao and Weng also confirm that the higher the people' ages the less their desire to response pseudo questions. Therefore, the questions quality determines the productivity of the teaching and learning.

In conclusion, the types of questions discussed above in general can be divided into two types of questions; they are low-level-cognitive question or pseudo question and high-level-cognitive question or real question. Rhetorical and closed questions from Blosser are included to low-level-cognitive questions while open questions belong to high-level-cognitive questions. Referring to categories of questions from Bloom's taxonomy, they are classified into remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating questions. Translation and interpretation belong to understanding questions.

Types of questions above have indirectly given the functions of questions in the classroom such as to check people' comprehension and to stimulate people to think. Cotton (2012) explains seven purposes of asking questions. First is to develop interest and motivate people to become actively involved. Second is to evaluate people' participation. Next function is to develop critical thinking skills and inquiring attitudes. Fourth is to review and summarize previous talk and then to nurture insights by exposing new relationship. Sixth is to assess achievement of communication goals and objectives and the last but not the least is to stimulate people to persuade knowledge on their own.

Blosser (2000) summarizes functions of questions as the following: to help people review, to check on comprehension, to stimulate critical thinking, to encourage creativity, to emphasize a point, to control conversation and cut down on disruptive behavior, to encourage discussion and to discourage inattentiveness. Functions of questions given by the three experts are approximately the same and can be summarized as to check on comprehension, to emphasize a point, to encourage creativity, to activate people, to help people review, to control conversation activity, to stimulate critical thinking, to moderate people' behaviors, to encourage discussion, and to encourage people to pursue knowledge on their own.

## **B.Research Method**

To see what questions usually asked by some teachers in the classroom, this paper will see the result of studies done by some researchers in ESL classroom. Thus, the method used in this research was qualitative method with library research type. According to George (2008), by doing library research the writer basically gathers and analyses data from related books, theories, notes, and documents in order to answer the research questions.

## **C.Finding and Discussion**

To see what questions usually asked by some teachers in the classroom, this paper will see the result of studies done by some researchers in ESL classroom. Cotton (2012) summarized thirty-seven research documents done through several research methods such as experimental, correlational, reviews and meta-analyses in some. Several findings were concluded by her. First the studies revealed that there were around 60 percent of lower cognitive questions asked by the teacher during classroom recitation, 20 percent was higher cognitive questions and the rest was procedural questions. She also found that lower cognitive questions were more effective for young children especially primarily level. And these lower-level cognitive questions were more effective to impart factual knowledge and assist people to commit this information to their memory. And if they were asked appropriately, the people' achievement were also better.

The studies also shows that teachers who perceived that their people were slow or poor learners tended to ask fewer higher cognitive questions than their people who perceived as capable learners. Then, for most classes above primary grades, the combination of higher and

lower cognitive questions was better than using only high- or low-level cognitive questions. And the increasing of using higher cognitive questions around 20 percent for people above the primary level resulted superior learning gains. Greater learning gain can also elicit though questions asking people to draw inferences. And especially for older people, the increasing of asking higher cognitive questions around 50 percent or more would also increase their behaviors towards the task, their length of responses, the number of their volunteered contributions to answer the questions and also increase teachers' expectations about their people' ability.

If Cotton drove conclusion from several studies done by some researchers, Kao and Weng (2012) conducted their own research towards two classes in a cram school in Taiwan. The people were native speakers of Chinese. The first class consisted of low-level people and the second class consisted of high-level people. Both classes were taught by four female teachers. Two teachers were native speaker of English (NS) who had bachelor's degrees outside the field of English or education and spoke very little Chinese and the other two were non-native speakers (NNS) who majored in applied English, one in the US and another was in a university in Taiwan.

From the study, Kao and Weng concluded that both NS and NNS teachers said that people' low proficiency made free conversation difficult and any real questions would confuse them and resulted in silence in the class. Even though they understood the questions, the limitation of their English made them could not respond the questions. In contrary, the high-level class members were very excited with open questions. They all tried to respond in both Chinese and English and often led to chaos. But when the teacher reminded them to say in English only, the class immediately became quiet.

Over all, they concluded that the four teachers adjusted the proportion and types of classroom questions according to people' proficiency levels. The teachers used more communicative types of questions or real questions especially informative questions with the high-level people. They also asked much more questions to the teacher than the low-level people. In the contrary, the pseudo questions and questions understanding check questions were usually asked to the low-level people.

If these two findings are compared, it can be summed up that people' proficiency level really influences types of questions and quantity of questions asked by the teachers in the class. Now, there come to the question about what kind of questions should be asked in Indonesian school. From the studies of several researches concluded by Cotton and study done by Kao and Weng, perhaps the latter study is closer to the situation of Indonesian classroom because as in Indonesia English is learnt as a foreign language in Taiwan, while the former studies did not mention position of English in their class.

And the level of people' English proficiency in secondary school in Indonesia is relatively in range medium to low. Thus, teachers should really consider types of questions that they will ask. Moreover, the aim of education in Indonesia is not only to build people' cognitive competence but also people' affective and psychomotor competences. Cognitive and psychomotor competences can be taught from the content of the lesson given to the people. While the affective competence is not only from the content but also influenced by the way the teachers convey the lesson.

When the teacher asks the right questions to their people, they will be more active and confident and indirectly raise their communicative ability. Asking only high-level questions such as question for analyzing or question for creating critical thinking are not appropriate because they only address people who have high level proficiency. The low-level people will feel desperate and unwilling to participate in classroom discussion. On the contrary, questions to check people understanding or pseudo questions can be asked to increase people' confidence and self-gaining especially for low level people. If their confidence has increased, they will not reluctant to join in classroom discussion. But this type of question will make the high-level people get bored.

Thus, if the high- and low-level questions asked properly, people' confidence and self-gaining will be increased as well as people' curiosity. Teacher should also remind the people

to appreciate others' opinion even though their friend's answer is not correct. Appreciating each other's opinion will build people tolerance.

#### **D.Conclusion**

It can be concluded that teachers should ask variety of questions which address several functions. And these questions are also adjusted to people' competence in order to build their characters. High level questions will invite people' critical thinking and low-level questions will increase people' participation and indirectly increase the feeling of accomplishment. But asking only high-level questions will build people anxiety and asking only low-level questions will create people boredom. Thus, the teacher should combine high level questions and low-level questions in their classroom talk in order to promote learning.

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