

LECTURERS' QUESTIONING STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH SPEAKING CLASS

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ABSTRACT


The purpose of this study was to investigate the questioning strategies employed by lecturers in English speaking class. The study used a descriptive method. The participants in this study were two English lecturers who taught English Speaking skills and ten students from English Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh, Aceh Province. Data were collected by means of interview and questionnaire. The obtained data were examined by analyzing the transcription of the interview and the questionnaire responses. This study found that lecturers utilized a variety of questioning strategies, including procedural, divergent, probing, specific, and open-ended questions. Lecturers employed questioning strategies in the English classroom by asking questions at the start of the teaching and learning process and after providing the learning materials.

KEYWORDS: *English Speaking Class, Questioning Strategies, Types of Questions.*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the essential skills that needs to be developed and enhanced for effective communication in English (Nisa et al., 2022; Sarair et al., 2023). However, speaking is still considered as one of the most difficult parts of English learning (Fitriyasni, 2020). Many English learners struggle to express themselves verbally in spoken languages (Netta et al., 2020; Sarair et al., 2023). As English is a foreign language in Indonesian education; learners have trouble effectively expressing themselves (Iksan et al., 2021). They may stop talking because they are experiencing psychological difficulties or are unable to find appropriate words and phrases (Djago, 1990; Fitriyasni, 2020; Netta et al., 2020).

Speaking skills are defined as abilities that allow students to communicate effectively, and they are necessary in today's world of media and mass communication (Nisa et al., 2022). Besides, speaking skills enable students to communicate verbally and in a



manner that is comprehensible to listeners. The ability to speak well in English is a characteristic of competent English users (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

The speaking strategies taught in class is necessary so that students to continue in their English language development in an enjoyable and helpful manner. Students aim to build and improve their speaking skills in order to obtain competent speaking (Rao, 2019). In the context of higher education, it is interesting to see the lecturer's techniques of teaching English speaking skills that are appropriate for students' abilities. Speaking English fluently is essential for success both inside and outside of the classroom. A preliminary observation among students at English Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh showed that some students were too shy to speak up or respond to questions when the lecturer asked them in class even though they knew the answers. In this case, the lecturer needs to apply one of learning strategies for English speaking class, one of which is the questioning strategy.

The role of the questioning strategy in the English learning process is something that lecturers should not overlook and should pay attention to. It is because the answer and question strategy has a big impact on how students learn. The lecturers' question and response strategy is one of the most important factor that should be taken into consideration in order to streamline the teaching and learning process. It is necessary to see and use the lecturer question and answer strategy in order to achieve teaching objectives. According to Adibah (2012), teacher's questions play a role in teaching English in classrooms. Educators should be aware of the types of questions that have the potential to help students of English acquire the target language.

The lecturer as an educator is the primary resource in a good teaching and learning process, but students should also be engaged. Lecturers and students will interact well, student involvement is essential to every stage of the teaching and learning process. In order to create interactive classrooms, lecturers must interact with and involve students in order to support students with questions, practice speaking skills, and ensure that students comprehend the lesson. Through lecturers' questioning, students' speaking performances clearly demonstrates the support provided in the classroom as well as achieve the outcomes. Adler & Rodman (2008) explain that teachers use questions to encourage students to think critically about concepts and force them to attend higher levels of thought in accordance with the subject matter and learning objectives.

However, many students in English class are still struggle to comprehend the lecturers' explanations. Students think that it is difficult to understand what the lecturers say in English; thus, they do not pay attention to the instruction. Lecturers should enhance

their teaching methods or strategy in order to facilitate students' comprehension of the material and encourage them to listen to lecturers' explanations during speaking class. The procedure of lecturers teaching and students learning English must be planned. To ensure that students are happy and actively participate in the teaching and learning process in an English-speaking class, lecturers must use the appropriate strategies. According to Tofade et al. (2013), teachers use questions in the learning process to foster insights and enhance critical thinking skills.

Based on the above discussions, this study intended to analyze the lecturers' questioning strategies in English speaking class, which helped identify why some students felt embarrassed to ask and respond to the questions proposed by the lecturers in class. The study hopes to contribute to the insightful information regarding the lecturer's teaching strategy in the field of English language teaching in Indonesia.

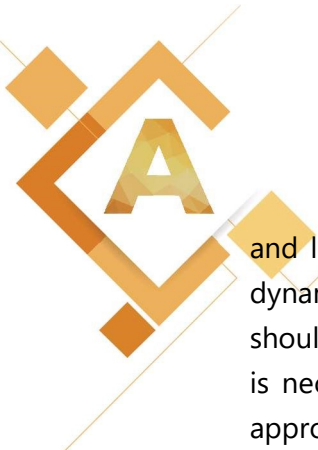
LITERATURE REVIEW

QUESTIONING STRATEGIES

Questioning strategies are ways of asking students questions in order to attain a certain purpose throughout the teaching and learning process. In fact, the questioning strategy can be useful educational tool in any field of study (Larson & Lovelace, 2013). It can facilitate students' learning, and it may help teachers build their own ways to improve students' work and thinking (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007). A question is an inquiry or interrogatory expression employed to obtain information and answer, or to evaluate knowledge (Lynch, 1991).

In order to encourage students to use higher order thinking, teachers adapt the questions based on their responses, which characterizes the questioning strategy as being flexible (Chin, 2007). Teachers should consider how to include strategic questioning into their lesson plans before beginning the teaching and learning process. The purpose of asking questions throughout the class process is to allow the use of diverse teaching approaches and strategies. There are different questioning tactics that might help students take greater responsibility for their own learning and become more active in the learning process. For lecturers, having the skill to ask questions to students is the ability to accomplish the proper objective with the goal of encouraging students to voice their thoughts, merely perception, or to receive feedback from the explanation given. This ability is one of the keys for improving students' ability to answer questions from lecturers.

A number of question and response strategies may be employed to assist students to become more accountable for their own learning and to involve them in the teaching



and learning process. The lecturer's questioning strategy is meant to foster a more dynamic, active, and collaborative learning environment. Questioning strategies should be used by lecturers to test students' learning. Asking the appropriate question is necessary for having good communication and information exchange. Using the appropriate question in the right context helps improve all types of communication abilities. For instance, it might increase information gathering and learning, foster stronger relationships, improve people, and help others learn.

Richards and Lockhart (1995) divide questions into three that teachers frequently apply in class interactions, as follows:

a. Procedural Questions

To find out what is going on in the classroom, the teacher might ask procedural questions. Procedural questions concern classroom processes and routines. Procedural questions are not concerned with content. To check student assignments, the teacher uses procedural questions. Students may use short answers such as yes or no to answer procedural questions.

b. Convergent Questions

Convergent questions could encourage students to reply to questions by focusing on a certain topic or piece of information. In convergent questions, students may respond to the question by using the information offered by the teacher. Short answers, such as yes, no, or a short comment, have been used to react to convergent inquiries.

c. Divergent Questions

Students could be encouraged to think about issues and answer questions in a number of ways. Students are more likely to respond the questions based on their knowledge, expertise, and information when the questions are varied. This proves that students are able to answer to questions with longer responses and more complex sentences. Students are required to grade several things based on their ability in order to answer a various kinds of questions.

Furthermore, Wilson (2022) mention many questioning strategies that teachers might use in class, including factual, convergent, divergent, evaluative, and combination questions. This list of question types is one that teachers may use to assess their questioning strategies and create various kinds of questions to think about, as explained in the following.

a. Probing Questions

The probing questions are developed based on the replies of the students. Probing is a questioning approach in which students are more engaged in delivering answers and providing lots of information in order to obtain a more comprehensive answer. Lecturers recognized distraction and pushing techniques when applying this method. The first entails expanding the number of students, while the latter includes dealing

with incorrect replies. Other instances happen when students answer truthful but insufficiently in detail. For example, when a teacher examines an activity more closely. "You think trees are important to the soil?" The teacher asks (pause), "Sandra?" "Yes." "Sandra, do you know why?"

The goal of this method is to persuade students to defend or explain further responses, thereby deepening the conversation. It also aids in moving students away from superficial answers. Lecturers should move students beyond the basic yes or no answer. Lecturers must provide students with more possibilities to digest knowledge, to deal with reasons, methods, and the best depending on what. In other words, pupils receive not only experience in dealing with higher level assignments, but also more experience and a sense of achievement.

b. Factual Questions

Factual questions require responses based on facts. There is just one right answer, which may be confirmed by consulting the text or other educational materials. For example, student may be asked to read a text and then answer a series of factual questions based on what they have just read. Wilson (2022) states that the function of factual questions is to deliver simple factual questions including who, what, where, when, why, and how.

c. Divergent Questions

Divergent questions allow students to explore different perspectives and produce a variety of views and alternate responses or other scenarios. Truth can be formed on logical projections, may be contextual, or derived by fundamental knowledge, hypothesis, inference, projection, invention, intuition, or imagination. These kinds of questions generally ask students to examine, synthesize, or assess a knowledge base and then project or anticipate possible outcomes. An instance of a divergent question is to list every possible use for each of the following items: (1) a brick; (2) a blanket.

d. Evaluative Questions

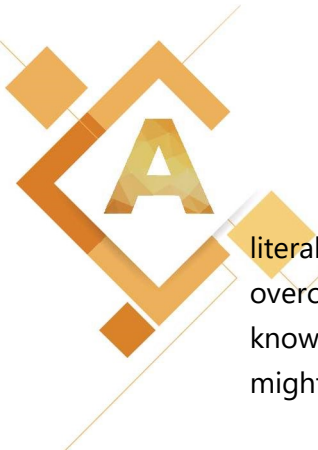
These questions typically call for highly developed levels of cognitive and/or emotional judgment. Students may use numerous comparing frameworks or logical and/or emotive thought processes in their attempts to respond to evaluation questions. Before coming at new synthesized information or conclusions, an answer is frequently examined at several levels and from a variety of angles.

e. Combination Questions

They are questions that combine any of the aforementioned strategies.

f. Higher Order Questions

Higher-order questions are ones that students cannot answer simply by recalling material or reading it "verbatim" from the book. Students' cognitive abilities are challenged with higher-order problems. It encourages students to look beyond the



literal. Teachers who employ various kinds of higher-order questions successfully might overcome the brain's natural desire to build mental routines and patterns to restrict knowledge, a phenomenon known as neural pruning. As a result, students' thoughts might become more open-minded, which boosts the brain (Hunkin, 1976).

Based on the above types of questioning strategies, the most successful questioning strategy is when the lecturer encourages students to be completely involved in the learning process. When planning learning, it is critical for the lecturer to consider about the sorts of questions that will be asked of students. The questioning strategy will assist the lecturer in efficiently planning question and answer sessions. The lecturer offers questions effectively depending on student needs and the sorts of questions will fully engaged students in conversation.

The objective of asking questions is significant because it can inspire students to share their thoughts and take responsibility for their decisions in problem solving. The lecturer must make every attempt to urge pupils to share their own viewpoints. According to Sanjaya (2006), excellent questions have a favorable influence on students. This questioning strategy can increase students' full participation in the learning process, improve students' thinking skills (thinking is asking questions), arouse students' curiosity, guide students to determine answers, and focus on the students' problems discussed. The primary functions of questioning are to pique students' interest and encourage them to participate actively in class, to improve critical thinking abilities, to go over what students have learned, and to encourage students to learn more about themselves and ask their own inquiries. A language-rich classroom atmosphere is more favorable to learning and development for students (Stehle Wallace, et al., 2022).

The functions of asking questions are more successful in promoting achievement than instruction that is delivered without questioning students. When a lecturer poses a question in class, it starts a cognitive process. Furthermore, asking questions may increase student engagement, stimulate and motivate students' learning, and offer feedback on progress to both lecturers and students. According to Hasibuan and Moedjiono (2012), asking questions in the classroom learning process is vital because well-structured questions with suitable submission strategies may help students communicate with their peers.

In light of the fact that questioning is the most crucial and inseparable aspect of the learning process, it can be said that asking questions is an ability in the teaching and learning process. The ability of a lecturer to ask the proper questions affects how effective a lecturer is in class. In essence, students will study to gain knowledge

regarding the question asked by the lecturers. During the learning process, questioning activity entails dynamic interaction between lecturer and students as well as amongst students. Asking activities will be more successful if the questions asked are relevant to the concerns.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive method to figure out the questioning strategies employed by lecturers in English speaking classes, as well as how lecturers asked questions to students. The data for this study were gathered through interview and questionnaire. The data of the study were all the facts and statistics used as material to compile an information that the researchers obtained for the research outcomes. The interview was intended to elicit information from the lecturers. According to Stewart and Cash (2014), an interview is a paired communication process with a serious, deliberate goal that involves regularly asked questions. In this study, the researchers investigated the opinions of two lecturers on the strategies of asking questions during interactions in English speaking classes. After the interview, the researchers distributed ten questions to students via Google Form. The students responded to the questions based on their views on the question strategies used by their lecturers in the speaking class.

After collecting data, the researchers analyzed data into descriptive explanation. First, the interview data were transcribed into written transformation. Second, the researchers classified the data based on the need of analysis of the research question. The interview transcript was used to answer the type of questioning strategy used by the lecturers in the speaking class, whereas the questionnaire was used to observe how the students viewed the lecturers' questioning strategies in the classroom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The interview was used to investigate the questioning strategies employed by the lecturers in English speaking classes. The interview results are as follows.

TABLE 1. Questioning strategies of lecturers

| No. | Lecturer | Questioning Strategies Applied |
|-----|----------|--|
| 1. | A | Specific questions Open-ended questions |
| 2. | B | Probing questions Procedural questions Divergent questions |

Table 1 reveals that English lecturers at the English Department of Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh used a particular type of questioning strategy during the learning process. Lecturer A employed different types of questioning strategies in teaching, such as specific questions and open-ended questions. In contrast, lecturer B employed the questioning strategies during the learning process such as probing questions, procedural questions, and divergent questions. As a result of these questioning strategies, students might answer questions from lecturers more simply, and students would not answer with short responses or with a simple "Yes/No". Students could respond to the offered questions in greater depth due to the questioning strategies utilized by lecturers in the classroom.

The questionnaire was used to see how the lecturer used questioning strategies in English speaking class. The data were obtained from students during the speaking class. The results of the questionnaire are as follow.

TABLE 2. Questionnaire results of students' opinions on questioning strategies

| No. | Question Item | Yes | No |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | Do the lecturers use the questioning strategy in speaking class? | 9 | 1 |
| 2. | Do the lecturers ask question immediately when the class starts? | 7 | 3 |
| 3. | Does the questioning strategy used by the lecturer match the material being taught? | 9 | 1 |
| 4. | Do the lecturers ask questions after explaining some learning material? | 9 | 1 |
| 5. | Do you always answer yes or no when the lecturer asks questions in class? | 9 | 1 |
| 6. | Does the questioning strategy applied by lecturers have good effects in the speaking class? | 9 | 1 |
| 7. | Do you often answer the questions asked by the lecturer in class? | 8 | 2 |
| 8. | Does the questioning strategy in speaking class is important ? | 7 | 3 |
| 9. | Does the questioning strategy used by lecturers make you easily understand material ? | 8 | 2 |
| 10. | Do lecturers who have good questioning skills influence the learning process in speaking class? | 9 | 1 |


Table 2 displays that the lecturers used mostly questioning strategies in speaking class. It can be seen that the majority of students proposed good responses regarding the use of questioning strategies in speaking class starting with nine students reporting

"yes" and only one student saying "no". Then, as many as 8 out of 10 students felt that questioning strategies applied by lecturers could ease them in understanding the lesson. Further, the results indicated that seven students responded that questioning strategies were necessary during class in which they also stated that the lecturers immediately questioned students when the class started. It is a sign that the questioning strategies applied by the lecturers in the class have given positive contribution in the teaching and learning process, especially in English speaking class, making the students more active in talking and interacting with friends and lecturers.

Based on the findings, both lecturers used questioning strategies in speaking class. There are five types of questioning strategies applied by lecturers in their classes. Lecturer A employed Specific and Open-ended questions while lecturer B used Probing, Procedural, and Divergent questions. Furthermore, both lecturers always used questioning strategies in their class, in which the lecturers asked questions at the beginning of class and after explaining the learning materials to create a better teaching and learning process in the speaking class.

A positive response from students when using this strategy encouraged the lecturers to use these strategies constantly when asking questions in class. The lecturers' questioning strategies have had a positive influence on students because students might answer questions based on the topics being taught, and it helped the lecturers manage the students' responses in class. As a result, the lecturers' questioning strategies during speaking class might energize the teaching and learning process. According to Dewi (2018), the questioning strategies may actively engage students in the classroom, resulting in critical thinking and higher order learning.

When lecturers employed questioning strategies in class, students have improved significantly. When the learning process began in class, generally speaking, the majority of the students' ability to answer the lecturer's questions was good; some could respond properly or at least the students comprehended the questions given by the lecturers. The lecturers, who always employed a questioning strategy appropriate to the content being presented, helped students understand what was being taught. The lecturer's questioning strategies also helped students grasp the learning content provided in class, allowing the learning process to proceed smoothly. According to Chin (2007), questioning strategy is characterized by flexibility as the teacher adjusts questioning based on the students' responses that will engage students in higher order thinking.



Furthermore, the lecturers did not encounter any problems while applying the questioning methods throughout the learning process in class. The students would always respond to the lecturers' questions. When the learning process took place in class, the students could comprehend what was expected of the lecturers' questioning strategy. When the lecturers employed a questioning strategy, students responded enthusiastically and confidently to the questions posed by the lecturers. The lecturers' questioning strategies, therefore, assisted students in understanding the materials delivered in the classroom. Sulaiman (2021), who state that questioning strategy might determine how well students understand the topics, also backs this assertion.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that types of questioning strategies used by the lecturers in English speaking class consisted of procedural questions, divergent questions, probing questions, specific questions, and open-ended questions. Then, the lecturers employed questioning strategies in the classroom by asking questions before and after explaining the learning materials in class. In short, any questioning strategy in speaking class is necessary since it helps lead students to respond to the questions asked by the lecturers. The questioning strategies applied by the lecturers have had a positive impact on the teaching and learning process in English speaking classroom.

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