

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT TEACHER QUESTIONING TECHNIQUE IN
EFL CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN DIR
LOWER**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to find out the students' perceptions about teacher questioning technique in EFL classroom. Teacher questioning is integral part of classroom interaction and teaching learning process. Teachers' questioning technique is a source of motivation for learners, effective tool for elicitation of information and maximizes classroom interaction. The current study was conducted in district Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Undergraduate level students of different colleges of the University of Malakand were selected for the present study. The respondents of the study were selected through random purposive sampling technique. Fifty students from each college participated and as a whole 200 students were taken for this study as respondents. The data were collected from the respondents through questionnaires. After the data collection, the data were analyzed statistically through frequencies and percentages. The study found out that students have positive perceptions about teacher questioning technique in EFL classroom. It is a great source for classroom interaction, since it always keeps the learners activated and motivated in the EFL classroom. This research suggested that teacher questioning technique has positive impact on students' performance in English language learning.

Keywords: Teacher Questioning, ELF Classroom, Technique, Perceptions

INTRODUCTION

English language learning is a part and parcel of our education system. Inevitably, different techniques and learning methods have been used by practitioners for better outcomes in terms of classroom interaction and language learning. In such techniques, teacher questioning is one of the indispensable ways and techniques to keep the classroom interaction activated, and elicit information from the students. Teacher questioning technique has instructional significance and value for students; to get information, check their understanding and engage the learners in teaching learning (Cotton, 1988). In another study, Hamiloğlu and Temiz (2012) say that questioning is a highly prestigious skill that needs to be planned and well incorporated in the lesson. Besides, every teacher must incorporate a variety of questions into their lessons to achieve teaching learning goals.

Zhou (2002) says that teachers' questions have the following purposes; to create students' interest and curiosity about topic, to create active approach towards learning, to grab students' attention, to motivate students to ask questions themselves, to diagnose difficulties students are facing and to give an opportunity to students to reflect upon the information. As a matter of fact, teachers questions play a significant role in the classroom interaction in teaching learning because it has multipronged purposes in EFL context. In order to stimulate students' interest, certain questions shall be posed by teachers to maintain classroom interaction more productive and engaging.

Questioning technique has a paramount importance in EFL context. In foreign language learning it is mandatory to keep the students lively and motivated. The higher the motivation level of the learners, the better outcomes will be produced in terms of language performance. In this regards, this study tries to explore the perceptions of undergraduate students in district Dir Lower about teachers' questions in EFL classroom. There are different colleges, affiliated with the University of Malakand. Any method of teaching is directly connected and linked with students to whom it is taught. It is evident that students make their perception about that method after certain period of time. The currently study aims to bring about the students perceptions about questioning technique at undergraduate level in the district Dir Lower of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English language has pivotal role in the educational spectrum of Pakistani society. It has been widely adopted as medium of instruction and language of examination in almost all part of the country. It is taught as compulsory subject in all the classes (Idrees, 2012). For better acquisition of second language, classroom interaction plays a crucial role in it (Ellis, 1990). Most of the times, it occurs between teacher and learners or even among the learners. In majority of the culture teachers are authoritarian in nature; who take all the responsibility of the classroom interaction. In such circumstances, it is the teacher who uses various means and methods to initiate and sustain classroom interaction. One of those ways is questioning technique. Walsh (2011) says that questioning takes much of the language teacher's time in EFL classroom. In the same way, Tsui (2001) opines that language teachers use questions most of the time in their classroom. Therefore, questioning technique is an integral and dominant element of foreign language teaching.

Questioning technique triggers critical thinking among the students. Critical thinking is very much essential and integral part of any learning process. Critical thinking means to think about your own thinking and improve it. As Paul (1993) defines critical thinking is thinking about your thinking while you are thinking to make it better. Actually, it is a cognitive process of making reflective, logical and reasonable judgment about something. In this regard, questions make way for critical thinking and compel the learners to use their brains and activate their memory. The two kinds of questions; low order question and high order questions, are used for various purposes. Low-level cognitive question are used for facts and information, while High-level questions are used for thinking and reasoning of the students. In teaching, most of the times teachers use low-level questions (Wilén, 1991). In addition, questioning is also used for the initiation of teacher's talk in classroom. Teacher starts the classroom lesson with questions about the topic or general for tapping the previous knowledge of the learners (Richards, Platt & Platt, 2004).

Questioning is used in language pedagogy as scaffolding tool as well, since it supports students' participation in the lesson (Alton-Lee, 2003). In addition, it is second to lecturing method in popularity in teaching, as forty to fifty percent of the instructional time spent on

questioning (Cotton, 1988). It has been considered one of the essential pedagogical skills for EFL teachers. They need to sequence their questions in EFL context for better outcomes. Question sequence as a series of prompt about a specific topic to engage the learners in a productive way (Marzano & Simms, 2012).

Students' perception about any teaching method or technique has invaluable significance in the EFL classroom. Perception of the learners decides whether the method is effective or not. Thus, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2019) defines that perception is the way you think about something and how your sense interpret it. Besides, etymologically the word 'perception' derives from the Latin words 'percipio', 'perception' which means 'receiving, collecting, action of taking possession, and apprehension with senses or mind'. There are three major stages in the process of perception; selecting, organizing and interpreting. First, the learners select the information which should be absorbed, then structure and organize them in a coherent way. Finally, they interpret that information and develop their perception about the physical environment. In EFL classroom, perception of the students matter in teaching learning process. Since, the motivation of the learners depended about their perception about various things in the immediate surroundings.

Majority of the studies focused on teachers questioning technique in the classroom. They explored about the impacts of questions on students critical thinking skills. However, very few studies have elaborated students' performance and perceptions about teacher questioning technique in the EFL context. This study mainly focuses on students' perceptions about the questioning technique of teachers and various questions they ask in EFL classroom. The study explored the students' perceptions regarding questioning technique in the EFL context of Dir Lower at undergraduate level.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretically, this study can be traced and linked with the classroom interaction and questioning patterns for classroom interaction in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). It is one of those fundamental requirements of classroom interaction on which teacher mostly depended on. It is also linked with cognitive theory of Low order thinking question and higher order thinking questions, on which teachers rely to use in

teaching for better classroom participation. Moreover, questioning can be used as diagnostic instrument, instructional instrument and motivational instrument in EFL context (Yan, 2006).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In English Language teaching, students' participation has crucial role in learning a language. Participation of the learners depends upon the interaction in the language class. There are different ways for classroom interaction. One of those ways is teachers questioning technique. Teachers questioning is a part of teacher talk in the EFL classroom. So, teachers questioning technique holds a central position in the EFL classroom, therefore, students are the main stakeholders of EFL classroom environment. Here, the students' perceptions about the teachers questioning technique has central place. This study tried to explore students' perceptions about teachers questioning technique in the EFL context at undergraduate level in District Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. This paper aims to find out students perceptions regarding teachers usage of questioning technique in their classroom.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The universe of this study is district Dir Lower, of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study was mainly concerned with the undergraduate level students of the various affiliated colleges of University of Malakand. This study was confined to four colleges; Post-graduate College Timargara, Degree College Lalqila Maidan, Post-graduate College Samar Bagh and Gulabab Degree college. The study was quantitative in nature and primary data was collected through structured questionnaire from undergraduate students of these colleges.

The students of four colleges were considered for the current study through random sampling technique. All the respondents were studying English as Foreign Language in their respective courses. Moreover, questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. Ten questions were included in the questionnaire to check the perceptions of those undergraduate students about the teachers questioning technique. From every college, 50 students were included in the present study which became as whole two hundred participants. The researchers themselves visited the given colleges and distributed the questionnaires and received it back from the respondents. After the data collection, the data were analyzed statistically. Frequencies and percentages of the respondents' results were drawn. The obtained data were analyzed

meticulously. The results were presented in a data table and analyzed in detail in the discussion section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the collected data from the respondents have been summarized in the following Table.

Table: 1.1. Frequencies and Percentages of the Respondents views

S. No	Statements	S.A	A	N	D.A	S.D	Total
1	English Subject teachers use questioning technique in their Classroom.	80 (40%)	80 (40%)	5 (2.5%)	5 (2.5%)	30 (15%)	200 (100%)
2	Questioning technique is a better way to initiate classroom interaction.	70 (35%)	85 (42.5%)	6 (3%)	25 (12.5%)	15 (7.5%)	200 (100%)
3	Questioning as effective way to elicit information from the students.	76 (38%)	90 (45%)	4 (2%)	20 (10%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)
4	I prefer teacher's questions in the classroom over non-questioning classrooms	66 (33%)	92 (46%)	8 (4%)	18 (9%)	16 (8%)	200 (100%)
5	Teachers' questions always give me an opportunity for interaction in the class.	68 (34%)	100 (50%)	2 (1%)	20 (10%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)
6	Teachers questioning technique is always a source of motivation in the class.	88 (44%)	80 (40%)	6 (3%)	16 (8%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)
7	Students take more interest in the class and participate confidently when teacher asks questions	70 (35%)	90 (45%)	10 (5%)	22 (11%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
8	Students praise the teachers who initiate maximum interaction in class through questions	66 (33%)	100 (50%)	12 (6%)	14 (7%)	8 (4%)	200 (100%)
9	Students learn more from the various questions of teachers in EFL class.	60 (30%)	96 (48%)	8 (4%)	20 (10%)	6 (3%)	200 (100%)
10	Questioning is an effective tool for classroom interaction in class.	70 (35%)	110 (55%)	4 (2%)	10 (5%)	6 (3%)	200 (100%)

Notes: S.A= strongly Agree, A=Agree, N= Neutral, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

The above table is about the perceptions of students about teachers questioning technique in EFL classroom. The results show the percentages of respondents' answers.

Moreover, the overall, results show that students have very positive and favorable perceptions about the questioning technique of EFL teachers. Students appreciate the teachers' questions for the initiation of classroom interaction and for the elicitation of information about any topic. 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that their teachers use questioning technique in their classroom, similarly 40% agreed that they do the same. On the other hand, 15% disagreed and about teachers' use of questioning technique. It illustrates that majority of the teachers use questioning technique in their EFL classroom in the current study. In similar way, 42% of the students agreed and 35% strongly agreed that questioning technique is an effective way of for the initiation of classroom interaction. Contrary to this, 12% of the respondents disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed with the given statement. It is another positive sign that students have confidence about teachers' questioning technique. It is inferred that teachers questioning technique is better way to create and enhance interaction in the classroom.

Henceforth, 45% of the respondents agreed and 38% of the respondents strongly agreed that teachers' questioning as a useful way for the elicitation of information. They considered it as a better way to elicit information from the learners about a particular topic. Meanwhile, 10% of the respondents disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed with this statement. However, majority of the respondents have a positive view. It is an indication that teachers questioning technique as effective way for the elicitation of information from the learners. Furthermore, 46% of the respondents agreed and 33% strongly agreed that they prefer teachers questioning classroom over non-questioning classroom. While, 8% of the respondents disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed with the statement. It shows that students like those classrooms where teachers ask more questions and initiate classroom interaction through questioning technique.

Similarly, 50% of the respondents agreed and 34% strongly agreed that teachers' questions give them an opportunity for interaction in the class. On the other hand, 10% of the respondents disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed about this statement. So, it is a clear illustration about students view regarding teachers questions with students opportunity, it maximizes their chances of participations in the classroom interaction. The more teachers ask questions, the more students get the opportunity for participation in the classroom activities and interaction. Consequently, teachers' questions are also source of motivation for the

learners. In the above table, 44% of the students strongly agreed and 40% agreed that teachers questioning technique is a source of motivation for them to interact in the class. Contrarily, 8% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed that teachers' questions motivate them in the classroom. This gap between the two views is indication of students' attitude about motivation of the learners; it shows that majority of the respondents find motivating the teachers' questions.

Elaborating the above table, it is found that 45% of the respondents agreed and 35% strongly agreed that teachers questioning technique makes the classroom more interesting for the learners. While, 11% of the respondents disagreed and 5% answered that they did not know. This shows us that majority of the respondents say that teachers questioning technique creates students interest in the lesson and students participate confidently in the lesson. Moreover, students also appreciated and praised those teachers who initiate classroom interaction through questioning technique. In this case, 50% of the respondents agreed and 33% of them strongly agreed that they praise teachers questioning technique in the classroom. On the other hand, that 7% of the respondents disagreed and 6% of the respondents did not know about it. It indicates that students praise teachers' questions in the classroom which creates classroom interaction.

In the same way, teachers questioning technique is also helpful in students learning. Teachers' questions give a chance to students to learn more in EFL context. In the above table, 48% of the respondents agreed and 30% strongly agreed that they learn more when teachers ask various questions in their classroom. Contrary to this, 10% of the respondents disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed with above statement. It means that teachers' questions can help students in learning in the EFL classroom. The more teachers ask questions, the more students learn. Likewise, 55% of the respondents agreed and 35% of the respondents strongly agreed that questioning technique is an effective tool for classroom interaction. 5% of the respondents disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed about the given statement. This illustrates that majority of the respondents consider questioning technique as effective tool for classroom interaction. It is inferred from the given results that questioning technique is facilitating and helpful for learners in EFL context. Students believe that questioning is a good way to promote classroom interaction in EFL context. It is always more productive and helpful in teaching learning of a foreign language.

On the basis of results of the respondents, it is summarized that teachers questioning technique is very effective tool and strategy for classroom interaction in EFL context. It is directly linked with better language teaching. For efficient language teaching, teachers' questions have a significant role. It has been suggested that teachers should incorporate questioning technique in their classroom for better outcomes of the learners. Since learners have a very positive outlook about teachers questioning technique. So, teachers have to increase the use of questioning technique in language teaching. It will provide maximum opportunity for the learners to interact with one another. As it is clear from this study that students have positive perceive teachers questions in a positive way and they like it, so teachers should use it in their EFL classroom. In addition, students are motivated and encouraged with the maximum use of questioning technique by the teacher in the EFL classroom. They always find is a source of motivation and encouragement when the teachers ask questions about topics in the EFL classroom.

CONCLUSION

It is found that majority of the students at undergraduate level in Dir Lower have positive perceptions about teachers questioning technique in EFL context. They appreciated teachers questioning technique in EFL classroom. Similarly, they also praised teachers' questions technique because it gives opportunity for classroom interaction. Moreover, it is also a source of motivation for them and creates their interest in the class. So, it is summarized that teachers' questions have a positive impact on students at undergraduate level in the EFL context of Dir. It is suggested that teachers should use questioning in their classroom for better outcomes in English language learning.

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