

An Analysis of Classroom English Teachers' Questioning Types

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Abstract

This research aims to identify the types of questions used by English teachers in the classroom, focusing on convergent and divergent questions. Therefore, the researcher employed a descriptive qualitative research method for this study. The participants in this research were two English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Lubuk Sikaping, Pasaman. Each teacher was responsible for teaching eighth-grade classes. The research data were collected using a video recorder to record the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The researcher conducted observations by using a video recorder as a tool during the observation process. The results of the data analysis from the observations revealed that English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Lubuk Sikaping, Pasaman, utilized both convergent and divergent questions during the learning process. However, in practice, teachers more frequently used convergent questions compared to divergent questions to guide and stimulate students' critical thinking.

Keywords: Teachers' Questions, Convergent Questions, Divergent Questions

INTRODUCTION

Interaction between teachers and students is a fundamental aspect of successful English language teaching and learning. The quality of interaction in the classroom significantly influences students' engagement, motivation, and overall learning outcomes. Teachers, as facilitators, play a crucial role in fostering active participation and encouraging students to develop their thinking skills. One of the key strategies to enhance classroom interaction is through questioning. Effective questioning not only facilitates comprehension but also stimulates students' critical and creative thinking abilities (Uspayanti, 2020). The ability to ask meaningful questions is an essential skill that every teacher should master to promote a dynamic learning environment. Research suggests that the type and quality of questions posed by teachers can greatly impact students' learning experiences. Convergent questions, which require a single correct response, help ensure that students grasp essential concepts. For example, a question such as "What is the definition of a narrative text?" prompts students to recall factual information (Moore, 2001). In contrast, divergent questions encourage multiple perspectives and deeper analytical thinking. Questions such as "What would you do if you were in the main character's situation?" allow students to explore various possibilities and

enhance their problem-solving skills (Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

The integration of both convergent and divergent questions in classroom discourse is essential for developing students' cognitive abilities. Studies indicate that these questioning strategies can improve students' engagement and higher-order thinking skills, fostering a more interactive and student-centered learning environment (Astrid et al., 2019). Moreover, the combination of these question types can help educators assess students' comprehension while also encouraging them to think beyond the given information (Darong, 2022).

Based on a preliminary observation conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Lubuk Sikaping, Pasaman, it was found that English teachers employed both convergent and divergent questions in the teaching-learning process. However, students demonstrated limited interaction and engagement, making it challenging for teachers to assess their understanding effectively. To address this issue, teachers strategically used questioning techniques to stimulate student participation and critical thinking. This study aims to investigate how English teachers utilize convergent and divergent questions in classroom interactions to enhance student engagement and comprehension.

This research is expected to contribute to the understanding of effective questioning strategies in English language teaching, providing insights for educators on how to create a more interactive and stimulating learning environment. By examining the impact of convergent and divergent questions, this study seeks to offer practical recommendations for improving questioning techniques to support student learning and cognitive development.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive research design to analyze the use of convergent and divergent questions by English teachers in the teaching-learning process. Descriptive research focuses on systematically describing an object, situation, or population (Ansari et al., 2022). The researcher selected this approach to examine whether teachers combined convergent and divergent questions in their instruction at SMP Negeri 1 Lubuk Sikaping.

The participants in this study were two English teachers from SMP Negeri 1 Lubuk Sikaping, Pasaman. Participant observation, commonly used in educational research (Brancati, 2020), was conducted to collect data. The researcher selected these two teachers as they were responsible for teaching English to eighth-grade students. Data were gathered through classroom observations conducted at least three times.

The study utilized observation tools such as video recordings, field notes, and audio recordings to collect data. Research instruments help observe and describe psychological and educational phenomena in a measurable way (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Video recordings were particularly useful for analyzing multiple aspects of teacher-student interactions (Ukkonen & Ferreira, 2022).

Data collection involved selecting participants, obtaining permission, and gathering information through observations and recordings (Creswell, 2012). The researcher recorded classroom sessions while teachers conducted their lessons, ensuring that data collection was carried out at least two to three times for accuracy. This process aimed to document how English teachers used convergent and divergent

questions during lessons. By following these methodological steps, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Lubuk Sikaping utilize questioning strategies to engage students and enhance learning outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Lubuk Sikaping predominantly use convergent questions in classroom interactions. These questions mainly encourage students to recall facts and provide short answers, limiting opportunities for higher-order thinking. In contrast, divergent questions, which stimulate deeper analysis and critical thinking, were used less frequently. A key observation was that teachers tailored their questioning strategies to match specific lesson objectives. In grammar lessons, questions were primarily focused on definitions and structural understanding, while text-based lessons incorporated a broader range of inquiries, including questions related to the purpose and meaning of the text. This adaptation suggests that teachers recognize the need for different types of questions in different learning contexts but still lean towards using convergent questions more frequently. Another significant finding was that while some higher-order thinking questions were present, they remained limited in number. Questions that encouraged analysis, interpretation, and personal reflection were used sparingly, indicating a preference for structured responses over open-ended discussions.

The dominance of convergent questions in classroom discourse may be attributed to several factors. First, teachers may prioritize these questions due to time constraints, as they allow for quick assessments of students' comprehension. Second, students' proficiency levels might influence the types of questions teachers choose to use. If students struggle with basic comprehension, teachers may feel the need to reinforce foundational knowledge before introducing more complex, open-ended inquiries. Lastly, teachers' familiarity with traditional teaching methods, which often emphasize rote learning, could contribute to the

limited use of divergent questioning. Another contributing factor is the classroom environment. Large class sizes and limited instructional time may discourage teachers from engaging students in extended discussions that require deeper reasoning. Additionally, the expectation for students to provide immediate and correct answers may lead teachers to avoid questions that demand subjective or critical responses.

The findings of this study align with those of previous research on teacher questioning strategies. For instance, a study by Suherdi (2017) found that Indonesian English teachers tend to rely on convergent questions to ensure students grasp fundamental concepts before progressing to more complex discussions. Similarly, a study conducted by Rukmini and Saputri (2020) revealed that teachers in secondary schools frequently use factual and comprehension-based questions rather than questions that promote critical thinking and creativity. However, other research suggests that a more balanced approach to questioning yields better learning outcomes. A study by Astuti and Lestari (2021) emphasized that students who are regularly exposed to divergent questions demonstrate improved problem-solving skills and engagement in classroom discussions. This finding contrasts with the present study, which indicates that divergent questions remain underutilized despite their proven benefits in fostering analytical skills. Additionally, research by Setiawan (2019) highlighted that teachers who integrate a mix of question types tend to create more interactive and student-centered learning environments. Compared to the findings in this study, which suggest a strong reliance on convergent questioning, Setiawan's study provides evidence that a more diversified questioning strategy leads to better student participation and engagement.

The results of this study underscore the need for teachers to balance their use of convergent and divergent questions to enhance students' engagement and cognitive development. While convergent questions play a crucial role in assessing comprehension, incorporating more divergent questions can promote higher-order thinking and deeper discussions. These findings support existing research that advocates for a

more dynamic questioning approach in English language teaching. Future training and professional development programs for teachers should emphasize the benefits of using diverse questioning strategies to create a more stimulating and interactive learning environment.

CONCLUSIONS

Convergent questions are designed to obtain clear and focused answers, typically related to specific information that can be verified. On the other hand, divergent questions open space for exploration and critical thinking, encouraging students to think more broadly, offer multiple possible answers, and consider different perspectives. Both types of questions could improve both foundational knowledge and critical thinking skills.

In this research the researchers analyzed the questioning types used by English teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Lubuk Sikaping. The data that the researcher got from observation that the researcher had done at SMP Negeri Lubuk Sikaping, Pasaman. After analyzing the data from observation. The English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Lubuk Sikaping, Pasaman, used both convergent and divergent questions in the learning process. These types of questions help students enhance their understanding, stimulate critical thinking, and encourage active participation in the learning process.

SUGGESTIONS

Dealing with the researchers' findings, it could be viewed for students, teachers, and also the researcher. Therefore, the researcher has some suggestions. First, for the English teacher, incorporate more divergent questions into lessons to stimulate critical thinking and creativity, design questions that align with higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, such as Creating, to provide opportunities for students to generate new ideas and solutions, and balance the use of convergent and divergent questions to address both foundational knowledge and higher-order cognitive skills. And for the student, it can be helpful to solve the problem by providing training and workshops for teachers on effective questioning techniques and strategies to enhance

classroom interactions, encourage teachers to use a variety of questioning types to meet diverse learning objective and promote student engagement.

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