TEACHERS' USE OF QUESTIONS
IN ESL CLASSROOMS

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Science (Education Management),
Universisti Utara Malaysia

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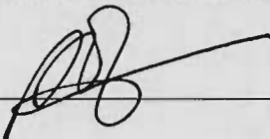**TEACHERS' USE OF QUESTIONS IN ESL CLASSROOMS.**

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Abstract

Teacher questions are a means by which teachers check students' factual knowledge and facilitate the learning of the target language in the ESL classrooms. This study investigates the types of oral questions used by teachers in the second language classroom. The focus of the study is on the use of referential and display questions and their effect on students' responses. The aim of the study is also to investigate the use of probing questions by teachers to follow-up and extend students' responses. Data was collected from two ESL classrooms in a teacher training college and involved two lecturers and their students enrolled in the pre-service diploma courses. Data was obtained by means of classroom observations and interviews with the teachers and pupils. The results indicate that although teachers used both referential and display questions in their classrooms, their choice seemed to depend on the types of lessons and their instructional goals. However this study could not establish the effect of the use of display and referential questions on student responses. The findings also reveal that probing questions were used by the teachers in a number of ways to extend students' responses. The results also indicate that the use of probing questions had prolonged the exchange between teacher and pupil and in some instances facilitated improved responses from the students.

Abstrak

Penyoalan guru merupakan satu kaedah dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua untuk menguji pengetahuan fakta dan mewujudkan peluang untuk mempertingkatkan penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris di bilik darjah. Kajian ini bertujuan menyiasat jenis soalan yang digunakan oleh guru dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa kedua. Fokus kajian ialah kepada penggunaan soalan 'referential' dan 'display' dan kesannya ke atas respon pelajar. Ia juga bertujuan menyiasat soalan jenis penerokaan (probing) untuk melanjutkan interaksi soal-jawab dan meningkatkan respon pelajar dari segi quality dan penstrukturan jawapan. Data dikumpul dari 2 buah kelas di sebuah maktab perguruan dan melibatkan dua orang pensyarah dan pelajar-pelajar mereka dalam kursus diploma perguruan. Data dikumpul melalui pemerhatian bilik darjah dan temuramah dengan guru dan pelajar. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa guru-guru menggunakan soalan-soalan jenis 'referential' dan 'display' dan penggunaan soalan ini bergantung kepada objektif pengajaran dan pembelajaran. Walaubagaimanapun, didapati penggunaan jenis-jenis soalan ini tidak menampakkan kesan perubahan ke atas respon pelajar. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan soalan bentuk penerokaan telah melanjutkan interaksi soal-jawab di antara guru dan pelajar dan telah mebawa kepada peningkatan respon pelajar dari segi kualiti dan penstrukturan jawapan.

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Acknowledgement

In completing this project, I am most grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Harshita Aini Haroon for her constant guiding, for the care with which she reviewed the drafts, and for her feedback and conversations that clarified my thinking and helped deepen my thoughts on the writing of this project.

I am also profoundly grateful to my colleagues in the English Studies Unit for their friendship and professional collaboration which in the first place had enabled me to conduct research on this topic. A number of them graciously consented to be participants in this study and readily allowed me entry into their classrooms.

As always there is my family who has been constantly supportive of my work and from whom I draw belief and strength.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
OF STUDY

Introduction

The spoken question is a norm in the teaching-learning process, and is generally regarded as an important method of teaching. Aschner (quoted in Gall, 1970) calls the teacher "a professional question maker" and views oral questions as "one of the basic ways by which the teacher stimulates student thinking and learning" (p. 707). The high frequency of questions asked by teachers has been reported in many research (Floyd; Moyer; Schreiber; Stevens; all cited in Gall, 1970). According to Borich (1992), "evidently little has changed since these early studies" (p. 252). Brown and Edmonson (cited in Borich, 1992) found that an average of 100 to 150 questions per class hour were asked in the typical elementary and secondary classrooms. Gall (1984) claimed that 80% of all school time is devoted to questions and answers. This enormous concentration on the strategy of using questions, according to Borich, is due both to its convenience and to its perceived effectiveness.

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