EXPLORING QUESTIONING STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN NARRATIVE TEXT

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Abstract:

This study explores the questioning strategies of class 8A students' reading comprehension of narrative texts at SMPN 10 Gresik. Qualitative descriptive approaches were employed with data gathering procedures through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, a group discussion with students, and examination of students' reflective journals. The research results suggest that the questioning method is beneficial in boosting students' reading comprehension of narrative texts, fostering critical thinking and active involvement. Challenges faced include variances in pupils' levels of knowledge and challenges in crafting appropriate questions. In addition, suitable questioning strategies help bridge the gap between students' knowledge and the new concepts being given, thereby enhancing students' understanding and curiosity. In conclusion, the use of proper questioning strategies is highly crucial in building an engaging and inclusive learning environment, which in turn can increase the quality of learning and student understanding.

Keywords: *Narrative Text, Questioning Strategies, Reading Comprehension, Teacher Questions*

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective learning in the English classroom is mostly dependent on interaction. According to Katty (2008), interaction is the best technique for beginners to learn English because pedagogical interaction, or interaction between teaching and learning (Sarosdy et al., 2006), provides students with numerous opportunities to practice and improve their language skills. When students hear teachers utilize language in class scenarios, they learn not only about the language but also how to apply it in a real-world setting (Zulfah, 2015). Group discussions, working in pairs, and asking questions can all help to increase interest (Brown, 2002). As a result, the teaching and learning process needs not only academics but also communication skills.

The teaching and learning of English as a Second Language (ESL) are now growing among young learners. One of the reasons is that young learners at this stage have the potential to become proficient in language learning. Their mental and cognitive development creates a unique paradigm for language learning at an early stage. Based on Vygotsky's Critical Period Hypothesis (Cameron, 2001:13).

Questions are the most typical kind of classroom interaction. Asking questions dominates classroom engagement, and it is one of the tactics for getting teachers closer to their students (Xuerong, 2012). A question is defined as a vocal statement that requires an answer from someone who understands the answer. (Sadiman, cited in Hamzah, 2006). Teachers typically ask questions throughout the class session, from the beginning to the end, making inquiries an essential component of the English learning process (Phuong and Nguyen, 2017; Jansem, 2008).

By asking the correct questions, teachers can get important feedback that will help them improve their teaching quality. According to Kim (2015), open-ended questions have been supported as stepping stones for expanding vocabulary and creating an

environment in which students feel comfortable sharing their views with their classmates and lecturers in class, as opposed to closed-ended questions. However, asking questions of pupils is not always helpful. Teachers always use closed-ended questions to engage their students. Papamitsiou et al. (2014) discovered that conscientious students will spend more time reviewing the questions before saving an answer, ensuring that they will submit the proper solution. Conscientious pupils are more engaged in the assessment activity because they have a strong sense of purpose. In other cases, students may not grasp the question or believe it is too long; thus, do not push them to speak more (Masykuri et al., 2023). As a result, teachers must consider the type and approach of questions used to promote interactive interaction in the classroom (Brown, 2002).

Learning in class depends on the right questioning strategy. This method asks questions and helps teachers start and lead classroom discussions. Stokhof et al. (2019) suggest that teachers use the proper questioning techniques to get students involved in their learning.

Teachers can increase students' understanding and curiosity and bridge the gap between what they know and what they learn by asking good questions (Meguro 2019; Surtantini 2019). This method also recognizes that students bring different experiences and knowledge to the class, which can improve learning, as per Sujariati (2016) and Sze (2022).

Teacher questioning is one of the most common instructional strategies, and it is the primary means by which teachers regulate classroom interactions. Various studies have found that teachers have a tendency to ask a lot of questions. Question-and-answer sessions take up almost half of class time in certain classrooms (Richards & Lockhart, as reported in Kurniawan, in Prasetyawati 2015: 10).

Student participation in learning a new language could be fostered through the use of the teacher's questioning strategies. The teacher's method of questioning during the interactions is a crucial element that educators must consider to foster an effective teaching and learning environment; thus, it was essential to do research on questioning the interactions in the classroom. To maintain student engagement in class, it must be utilized effectively as an instructional instrument. It necessitates understanding question types, strategies, and the art of inquiring. When children are learning to read, they must first understand a written language and voice, the symbols that represent sounds in language.

Children use reading as a method to construct meaning by fusing information from a text with what they already know. Children already know how to read, so they may use it to create meaning. It is necessary for readers to draw on both the text itself and their own prior knowledge in order to get meaning from a piece of writing. Reading skills are essential for students in order for them to be able to create this meaning. Reading skills can be characterized as an internal competence that students can use in an activity as an application of their linguistic knowledge and cognitive capacities (Marince et al., 2019). In order to solve difficulties, the reader must be able to comprehend what is being read, both explicitly and implicitly, and then use that

comprehension to solve challenges. The most effective method to enhance reading comprehension is to engage in quiet reading. When engaging with written text, Snow (2002: 11) defines reading comprehension as the process of acquiring and constructing meaning. The reader can comprehend the concepts within the text if they are cognizant of its message. Educators must select engaging reading materials to facilitate children's enjoyment and pleasure in the process of learning to read. Anderson (1997: 8) defines a narrative as a written work that relates a story while simultaneously entertaining or informing the reader or listener. Narratives can amuse, inform, advise, and instruct students. It is noteworthy, consequential, and evokes fervor and creativity. The objective of a narrative text is to engage or entertain readers through authentic or fictitious events in diverse manners. Narratives consistently address challenges that culminate in climaxes and thereafter progress to resolutions of the issues.

One sort of spoken word is known as a narrative, and it is used to describe the sequence of events that led up to the occurrence of a scenario. The objective is to provide the reader with a distinct representation of the many stages, processes, or steps involved (Kundharu, 2014). Seventh-grade students should examine narrative texts as they contain chronological elements, essential for understanding the correct sequence of events in essay writing (Rahmadani et al., 2017). A narrative is a written work that portrays an incident or series of events that are fictional and conceived by the author. Every narrative presented in literature seeks to captivate and involve the reader or listener. Besides conveying knowledge and provoking contemplation, narratives seek to ignite creativity in their audience. While the majority of narratives are fictional, some are non-fictional representations of real occurrences. Narrative writing conveys a story to engage the reader's interest. Moreover, the objective of narrative storytelling is to impart moral values to its audience. We aspire for this to motivate a transformation in the reader as a prospective transgressor (Pujianti, 2016).

Educators should pose deliberate inquiries to promote engagement and an inclusive educational atmosphere. Students can engage in active learning and share ideas. Through thoughtfully crafted inquiries, educators may foster critical thinking, comprehension, and a passion for learning (Yang, 2018; Surtantini, 2019). This approach enhances pupils' confidence, fluency, and curiosity regarding the intricate world while facilitating greater learning.

In this research, several prior studies are referenced to provide context for examining questioning strategies in improving students' reading comprehension of narrative texts. However, these earlier studies have certain limitations that this current study aims to address. Firstly, a study entitled "Teacher Questioning Strategies Employed in Speaking Classes in EFL Setting: A Study of Classroom Interaction" (Saswati, 2022) examined how teachers in EFL Speaking classrooms employ strategies for questioning. The research indicated that educators employed display questions at the outset to initiate the class while utilizing referential and follow-up questions throughout and subsequent to discussions to promote student engagement. The findings underscore the significance of the teacher wait time in facilitating opportunities for students to reflect before responding, hence enhancing their engagement in classroom

interactions. Second, in the study "Teacher Questioning Strategies in Teaching Procedure Texts for Class X SMAS Primbana Medan," Putri Syahrani Achsyur Nasution and Nora Ronita D. look into the questioning strategies employed by teachers while teaching process texts. When interviewing students individually, this study discovered that the questioning method, specifically the Questioning-Controlling strategy, is more prevalent. Although the findings shed light on the implementation of these tactics, there remains a void in the literature detailing their specific influence on student understanding and classroom interaction. Third, in the study "The Questioning Strategies of English Teachers in EFL Classes at SMAN 1 Bontomarannu," Sujariati, Qashas Rahman, and Murni Mahmud looked into the questioning strategies employed by teachers in the EFL environment. Using a qualitative method, the findings revealed that teachers employed open/closed and display questions more frequently than memory and referential questions. This study found that questioning tactics improve classroom interaction and student engagement. However, there is a vacuum in the literature about the necessity of asking more reference questions to improve student comprehension.

This study examines how questioning strategies affect narrative text comprehension in 8A grade students at SMPN 10 Gresik to close this gap. Based on the study problem's setting, the following can be said:

1. How do teachers at SMPN 10 Gresik measure the understanding of 8ᵗʰ A-grade students when they read narrative texts?
2. What are the benefits and challenges of questioning strategies to improve students' comprehension of narrative text?

2. METHOD

The methods used to compile the study's findings are detailed in this section. Everything from the study's framework to its participants, research environment, data, data sources, data gathering techniques, research instruments, and analysis protocols are part of it.

Students in 8th grade English classes at SMPN 10 Gresik were the subjects of this descriptive qualitative study, which aimed to determine whether or not certain questioning strategies improved their ability to understand narrative texts. Integrating primary and secondary sources, this qualitative study examines how well the questioning method improved eighth graders' ability to understand narrative texts that were submerged in water.

Numerous semi-structured interviews with 8th A-graders will provide primary data. These interviews will examine students' questioning tactics, including their challenges, rewards, and effects on narrative text knowledge. To understand how strategic questions affect comprehension, students' responses will be collected and analyzed. Secondary data will include textbooks, instructional materials, and SMPN 10 Gresik English curriculum documents. These documents will provide context and background for this study and aid primary data analysis.

Data are needed to undertake the findings of this study. Those data can be collected by employing the following instruments;

2.1 Classroom observation

Detailed observations of interactions in the classroom will be performed to document how the question strategy is applied and how students respond to it. - Observation checklists will be used to ensure that the key aspects of the questioning strategy and student reactions are systematically recorded.

2.2 Interview guideline:

To learn more about English language teachers' perspectives, experiences, and difficulties implementing the questioning technique, semi-structured interviews will be held with them. Guided group discussions with students will be held to gather their feedback on the effectiveness and challenges of the questions strategy. These discussions will provide a deeper understanding of students' perspectives and experiences.

In this study, data analysis was performed qualitatively to understand in depth how the strategy of asking students affects the understanding of reading in class 8A on the narrative text in SMPN 10 Gresik. The first step in data analysis is data collection through class observations, interviews with teachers, group discussions with students, and student reflective journals. All data from interviews and group discussions are recorded and then transcribed verbally to ensure no information is missed. Once the data is collected, the next step is organizing and coding the data. In this stage, open coding is carried out where data is openly encoded to identify the themes, concepts, and categories that emerge from the data; then, axial coding to link categories and sub-categories; and selective coding for selecting the most important core categories, and integrating all the other categories into a coherent narrative.

Thematic analysis is then used to determine the primary themes and subthemes in the coded data. These themes reflect the patterns and trends shown by student interactions and reactions to questioning tactics. Narrative development is used to describe how these themes relate to the research aims, specifically the efficacy and limitations of questioning tactics for improving reading comprehension. Data triangulation is used to evaluate findings while also ensuring data accuracy and consistency. The findings are contrasted using a variety of data sources, including observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and reflective journals, to ensure that the research results are consistent and accurate. This helps to ensure that the outcomes do not meet expectations bias and have a high level of validity.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the questioning strategies enhance students' comprehension of narrative texts in class 8A at SMPN 10 Gresik.

3.1 Types of Questioning Strategies

In this study, the researcher discovered numerous questioning tactics utilized during the instructor's observation of the reading comprehension lesson in class 8A at SMPN 10 Gresik. The strategies utilized include structuring, leading,

distributing, pressuring, questioning, listening to student responses, and question delivery speed. This method is consistent with the concept proposed by Wragg and Brown (1993). However, not everyone questions the strategies utilized in the observation class, with the teacher focusing on specific approaches to increase student involvement and comprehension.

Table 1. Result of classroom observations

No	Types of Questioning Strategies	Teacher 1
1.	Structuring	✓
2.	Pitching and Putting Clearly	x
3.	Directing and Distributing	✓
4.	Prompting and Probing	✓
5.	Listening to replies and Responding	✓
6.	Pausing and Pacing	✓
7.	Sequencing	x

Table 2. Questioning strategies used related to each types

	ST	PP	DD	PPr	LR	Ppa	SQ
Teacher 1	2	0	4	1	3	4	0

Based on the observation results shown in tables 4.1 and 4.2, it was found that the teacher used five of the seven questioning strategies identified, namely structuring, responsibilities including directing and distributing, encouraging and investigating, listening to feedback, responding, and pausing/pacing. These tactics are frequently used during narrative text comprehension classes in class 8A at SMPN 10 Gresik.

3.1.1 Structuring

The teacher employs this method to provide advice and first instructions on the order of narrative text learning. The teacher reminds the pupils of previously learned content, for example, by asking, "Do you still remember the storyline we discussed yesterday?" This allows students to make connections between prior lessons and new ones, particularly when it comes to understanding the plot, characters, and place in narrative literature.

3.1.2 Directing and Distributing

The questions are spread fairly among the students so that everyone has a chance to participate in discussions regarding character and planning. To keep all pupils involved, the teacher may offer questions such as "Who can explain the actions of the main character in this story?".

3.1.3 Prompting and Probing

The teacher provides hints or words of encouragement to students who are struggling to answer questions about narrative aspects. For example, "What happens after the main character meets the antagonist?" This approach

allows students to analyze the narrative text critically and understand its intricacies.

3.1.4 Listening and Responding

The teacher attentively listens to the students' responses and offers pertinent feedback. If students provide inaccurate responses regarding characters or situations in the literature, the teacher provides clarification to facilitate their comprehension.

3.1.5 Pausing and Pacing

The teacher pauses after asking questions, especially on questions that ask for in-depth analysis of characters or themes in the narrative text. This allows students to have sufficient thinking time before giving more in-depth responses.

However, two strategies, namely Pitching and Putting Clearly and Sequencing, were not used during the observation.

3.1.6 Pitching and Putting Clearly

This strategy was not used, which may have affected some students' understanding of more complex questions about narrative structure or more abstract story elements.

3.1.7 Sequencing

The sequencing of questions from simpler to more complex was also not implemented. This strategy is important in helping students build gradual understanding, especially in analyzing the plot and themes of the story.

3.2 Challenges of Questioning Strategies

Based on the interviews conducted with the teacher and four students (Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, and Student 4) during the research, several challenges and benefits were identified regarding the implementation of questioning strategies in narrative text reading comprehension in 8A grade at SMPN 10 Gresik.

3.2.1 Differences in Student Understanding

Teachers face challenges in delivering questions because not all students have the same level of understanding. Student 1 felt that sometimes the questions were too difficult because they had not fully understood the material. Student 2 also mentioned that some questions were difficult to answer because they had to understand the material first. Student 3 stated that difficult vocabulary often made them unable to answer questions appropriately, and Student 4 added that the difficulty of the material was the main challenge in understanding the questions.

3.2.2 Panic and Fear of Being Wrong

Many students feel panic or fear when answering teacher questions. Student 1 often feels panic when called upon, especially if he is unsure of his answer. Student 2 also admitted that although they wanted to answer, the fear of being wrong made them hesitate. Student 3 felt nervous every time he had

to answer a question for fear of being wrong, while Student 4, although nervous, felt challenged to participate.

3.2.3 Inequality in Student Participation

Student 1 and Student 2 noted that teachers more often ask questions to students who are more active or stand out, which sometimes makes other students participate less. Student 2 added that often, the more intelligent students get more opportunities to answer while other students listen. Student 3 also agreed that participation is uneven, especially among students who feel less confident.

3.2.4 Difficult Material to Understand

All students agreed that difficulties in understanding the narrative text material made the teacher's questions more difficult to answer. Student 1 felt that questions related to text structure were often confusing if they had not fully understood the text.

Student 2 also stated that if a topic is new or complicated, they have difficulties offering a suitable response. Student 3 agreed, noting that the more technical aspects, such as characters and story components, provide a big barrier. Student 4 revealed that questions about text features can be challenging if the topic is not fully comprehended.

3.3 Benefits of Questioning Strategies

3.3.1 Helps Focus Attention on the Material

Student 1 thinks that the questioning method helps them focus better on the subject. Questions such as "What is a narrative text?" help pupils grasp the material's substance. Student 2 stated that the teacher's questions motivate students to focus on details in the narrative text. Student 3 also agreed to utilize this method; they became more concentrated, however Student 4 stated that the teacher's queries persisted. They remained concentrated and did not get sidetracked from the lesson.

3.3.2 Improving Students' Understanding of Narrative Text

The questioning method helps students better understand narrative texts. Student 1 believes that queries on the text structure help them understand the story better. Student 2 remarked that inquiries about the features and forms of narrative texts are quite useful for explaining the material. Student 3 acknowledged this, stating that when the questions were posed, they were able to better understand aspects of the novel, such as characters and plot. Student 4 stated that the questions posed by the teacher helped them remember essential points from the story.

3.3.3 Increasing Student Engagement in Discussion

The teacher's questions motivate students to participate more actively in solving challenges related to class discussions. Student 1 mentioned that the teacher's questions increased their enthusiasm to participate. Student 2 remarked that the questioning method gives them more confidence while

speaking in front of the class. While Student 4 feels challenged to respond and more immersed in learning, Student 3 feels the same way—despite their continued nervousness, this method increases their participation in class discussions.

3.3.4 Encouraging Students to Think Critically

Student 1 believes that the teacher's questions asking them to explain characters or components of the literature encourage them to think critically. Student 2 agrees that the deeper the questions, the more thoroughly they must evaluate the text. Student 3 adds that the teacher's follow-up questions urge them to think more deeply. Furthermore, Student 4 reported that questions pertaining to textual aspects caused them to consider the story they read in a broader context.

3.3.5 Increasing Students' Courage in Answering Questions

Student 1 believes that the questioning method provided by the teacher helps them gain confidence in responding to questions. Student 2 feels the same way; they gain confidence over time. Despite their fear of being incorrect, Student 3 said they are growing more confident when responding in class. The fourth student also mentioned that they are more driven to attempt to answer every question, even if they are unsure.

This discussion examines the impact of the questioning method on student engagement and comprehension, highlighting its accomplishments and obstacles in implementation. This study finds that teachers in class 8A at SMPN 10 Gresik employ five of the seven questioning techniques when instructing students in reading comprehension of narrative texts. Among the tactics used, organizing is critical because it allows students to connect new content with past knowledge. This is consistent with Nasution and Ronita's (2021) research, which found that organized questioning tactics can improve student involvement. Using this method, teachers can remind students about key features in narrative texts, such as plot and characters, so that they are more prepared to understand the content that will be covered.

In order to ensure that every student has the chance to contribute to the conversation, another tactic is Directing and Distributing. This is vital because it fosters an inclusive learning environment in which all students feel appreciated. In this case, the teacher frequently asks, "Who can explain the actions of the main character in this story?" These questions inspire students to actively participate. Sujariati et al. (2023) also said that variance in questioning tactics leads to learning effectiveness, underlining the need for teachers to employ a variety of approaches to improve students' learning outcomes.

However, not all of the suggested steps were applied. The absence of Pitching and Clear and Ordered Placement Strategies implies a lapse in instructional practices. The absence of Pitching and Putting obviously limits students' capacity to answer more difficult issues, whereas the absence of Sequencing can impede student understanding progress. This emphasizes the need for teacher training to broaden the use of

questioning tactics so that students can gain a deeper and more structured comprehension of narrative materials.

Interviews with students revealed many problems in implementing questioning tactics. Students frequently perceive that the questions posed are tough and do not correspond to their level of understanding. For example, Student 1 stated that the number of questions caused them to panic because they did not fully understand the topic. This supports research by Sujariati et al. (2023) that indicates students' participation may be impeded by their fear of the questions posed by teachers. As a result, when developing questions, teachers must consider their students' degrees of comprehension.

Furthermore, there is a huge gap in student engagement. A few students believe that teachers favor more active or intelligent students. For example, Student 2 emphasizes that smarter students are frequently given more opportunities to answer questions, whilst other students are simply listeners. This imbalance is not impossible. Less confident students are left feeling disregarded and unmotivated to participate. This indicates that educators must concentrate more on each student and foster a more inclusive learning environment.

The difficulty of comprehending the information that is being delivered is another obstacle. All students believe that hard-to-understand content makes it harder to answer questions. Student 3 stated that technical components in narrative texts, such as characters and narrative elements, frequently confuse them. This means teachers have to offer additional help and explanations prior to asking inquiries to guarantee that pupils are adequately prepared and certain in their answers.

There are obvious and substantial benefits to using the questioning method while studying narrative texts. A number of students have commented on how the teacher's questions helped in their retention of course content. "What is a narrative text?" and similar inquiries, according to Student 1, assist students in grasping the central idea. According to Sujariati et al. (2023), students' attention may be better directed, and key concepts in the text can be more easily identified when questions are well-structured. Student 2 showed that the questioning method increased their grasp of the tale by asking questions regarding the text structure, which is another established strategy for improving students' story comprehension.

The importance of asking kids questions that are both relevant and suitable in order to help them understand story aspects like characters and narrative is highlighted in this research. Consequently, a good method of asking promotes critical thinking about what pupils read and aids in their comprehension of the subject. Additionally, the technique of asking encourages more active engagement from students in class discussions. One more youngster spoke out on how the teacher's questions got them involved. Speaking in front of the class has made them more courageous, although they still get nervous. Educators may improve learning results for students by fostering an open and engaging learning environment via the use of questioning methods. Educators can foster a more conducive learning atmosphere and help students reach their learning goals by enhancing their questioning abilities.

4. CONCLUSION

The significance of inquiring strategies in enhancing the comprehension of narrative text among eighth-grade students at SMPN 10 Gresik is underscored in this study. The results demonstrate that tactics like advising and investigating, as well as structuring, directing, and distributing, not only encourage student involvement and participation in discussions but also assist students in gaining a deeper understanding of narrative features. Concurrently, the implementation of effective inquiry strategies can mitigate obstacles such as fluctuating student comprehension and persistent anxiety when responding to inquiries, thereby cultivating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Previous research has ignored narrative texts in favor of procedural texts or speaking activities; this study fills that gap in the literature by giving them the attention they deserve. A lack of knowledge on the effects of questioning strategies on reading comprehension is addressed.

Teachers are encouraged to develop and adapt effective questioning strategies in narrative text learning to improve students' knowledge. Material preparation should include approaches such as offering instructions, conducting investigations, and directing discussions. Furthermore, teachers are supposed to allow appropriate wait time for queries to assist students who may be exploring answers. To create a more comprehensive reference, more studies should be conducted on this questioning method across different sorts of materials or classes.

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