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USING EFL TEACHERS' QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES WITH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING

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ABSTRACT

In the classroom, it is normal for teachers to deliver questions to specific students or the entire class. To encourage classroom interaction, various question types are employed to help students develop their critical thinking skills and communicate effectively in real-world situations. This study analyzed teaching question strategies applied by EFL teachers and how they employed the strategies in their classrooms. The descriptive qualitative research design was selected, involving three female English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in one high school in Indonesia. Observations in different classes and interviews were conducted to gain the data. The results revealed nine types of questioning techniques according to Bloom taxonomy that the teachers actively implemented: 1) knowledge questioning technique, 2) comprehension questioning technique, 3) application questioning technique, 4) analysis questioning technique, 5) synthesis questioning technique, 6) evaluation questioning technique, 7) convergent questioning technique, 8) divergent questioning technique, and 9) procedural questioning technique. The teachers' application of questioning techniques was also discussed, according to the function of each strategy. EFL teachers can employ various questioning techniques to effectively manage classrooms and establish and sustain efficient teaching and learning processes. Questioning techniques positively impact students' learning outcomes by encouraging students to engage actively, so they understand and retain the material well.

Keywords: EFL teachers; high school students; questioning techniques; teaching and learning process

ABSTRAK

Di kelas, guru biasanya memberikan pertanyaan kepada peserta didik tertentu atau secara klasikal. Untuk mendorong interaksi dalam proses pembelajaran, berbagai jenis pertanyaan digunakan untuk membantu peserta didik mengembangkan keterampilan berpikir kritis dan berkomunikasi dalam situasi dunia nyata. Penelitian ini menganalisis beragam teknik bertanya yang diterapkan oleh guru bahasa Inggris dan bagaimana mereka menggunakan strategi tersebut di kelas mereka. Metode kualitatif deskriptif dipilih dengan melibatkan tiga guru Perempuan yang mengampu mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing di suatu sekolah menengah di Indonesia. Observasi di kelas yang berbeda dan wawancara dilakukan untuk mendapatkan data. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan sembilan jenis teknik bertanya berdasarkan taksonomi Bloom yang diterapkan guru secara aktif: 1) teknik bertanya pengetahuan, 2) teknik bertanya pemahaman, 3) teknik bertanya penerapan, 4) teknik bertanya analisis, 5) teknik bertanya sintesis, 6) teknik bertanya evaluasi, 7) teknik bertanya konvergen, 8) teknik bertanya divergen, dan 9) teknik bertanya prosedural. Cara guru menerapkan teknik bertanya juga dibahas menurut fungsi masing-masing strategi. Guru mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris dapat menggunakan berbagai teknik bertanya dalam mengelola aktivitas kelas secara efektif untuk membangun dan mempertahankan proses belajar mengajar yang efisien. Teknik bertanya memberikan dampak positif terhadap hasil belajar peserta didik dengan mendorong mereka bertindak nyata sehingga mereka memahami dan mengingat materi dengan baik.

Kata Kunci: *guru bahasa Inggris; peserta didik sekolah menengah; proses belajar mengajar; teknik bertanya*

INTRODUCTION

The development of the education system in Indonesia has undergone numerous changes, with a focus on material development and classroom activities. The changes affect the way teachers convey inputs and materials to students in the learning process, which is full of challenges (Merizka & Jufrizal, 2021; Nappi, 2017). The teachers need to consider students' diverse backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles. If they make inappropriate instructional choices, their strategies may decrease students' motivation. This awareness encourages teachers to manage their classrooms more deliberately and ensure the process of learning purposeful and engaging. As Gultom et al. (2020) highlighted, teachers must possess strong pedagogical skills to achieve learning objectives and helps students understand the delivered materials.

In the classroom, students are exposed to learning content through various methods including teacher led questioning which remains a central feature of classroom interaction (Fatmawati et al., 2020). As scholars addressed, questioning strategies may stimulate thinking (Saswati, 2022), learning (Theresia, 2021), class participation, and language production (Jacques et al., 2019). Although learning materials and instructional tasks influence students' achievement, classroom interaction is often dominated by how teachers pose questions. One essential area for improvement in classroom instruction is the way teachers formulate and deliver questions. Classroom questioning forms the foundation for meaningful communication between teachers and students. (Rahayu & Suharti, 2023; Zulfikar et al., 2022). Teachers can adopt specific questioning techniques to optimize the learning experience. On that note, carefully constructed questions not only support learning outcomes but also develop students' cognitive abilities, increase students engagement (Darong, 2020; Hasanuddin & Ciptaningrum, 2021; Huynh, 2022).

Variations in question types and response-handling techniques play a crucial role in the dynamics of learning. Marangell (2021) asserted that questions attract students to the discussion, measure their understanding, and encourage participation or sharing of ideas. Its practical application inspires and maintains students' attention, engaging them in real and meaningful ways. The questioning technique can effectively motivate students to learn to think during the learning process in the classroom (Astrid et al., 2019; Bibi et al., 2020). Questions in educational settings can be classified as either display or referential based on their intended use. Students' activeness in asking questions shows a good classroom situation can take advantage of the question-and-answer session as one of the most effective ways to attract active or passive students to participate in the learning process.

Applying question techniques draws experts' concern to identify this topic in depth. Astrid et al. (2019) confirmed four reasons teachers employed specific questioning strategies. Students' understanding was recalled using the questions. Besides, teachers applied the questions to attract students' attention. The questions were also designed to assist students to implement and strengthen their critical thinking skills. In any case, teachers apply the questions to engage students in the content of the lesson. In contrast, Mustika et al. (2020) declared that the low-level questions often chosen by teachers in the learning process hinder students' critical thinking skills enhancement. It occurs when questions that only require rote or yes/no answers dominate the interaction, thus limiting students' ability to analyze, evaluate, or synthesize information. As an illustration, a question such as "What does this word mean?" without being followed by "Why do you think that?" fails to trigger deeper thinking processes in students. In this recent study, critical thinking means students' ability to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize new information to revise, add, or delete existing knowledge so that they are able to make logical and objective decision (Dhakal et al., 2023; Kerruish, 2025; Lau, 2024). The ability enables the students to select relevant information that contributes to their consideration in making decisions so that their understanding in a certain topic is valid.

There are two justifications for teachers to employ questioning techniques. First, questioning provides space for students to contribute (Bibi et al., 2020). Second, questioning handles students'

learning achievement (Darong, 2020). To concentrate students' attention on the subject matter, engage them in the teaching and learning process, and discover how they respond, teachers are required to employ techniques for questioning while posing questions to their students. Students frequently sit still and silent as they may not understand what their teacher is asking, so the students are difficult to answer the teachers (Fatmawati et al., 2020; Gultom et al., 2020; Hasanuddin & Ciptaningrum, 2021). This situation causes students' embarrassed feelings to respond to the questions from their teacher. Implementing questioning techniques can help the teacher solve the problem so students can organize a speech. Meanwhile, if the teachers give low questioning techniques, the students will have a lack of cognitive challenges and learn the materials on the surface. Those conditions will make the classroom less dynamic which results in students' disengagement and demotivation.

The practice of asking questions, however, is a challenge so that a solid framework is needed. It not only provokes students' articulation and encourages them to deepen their ideas and ways of thinking but also deals with how the teacher carries the illocutionary act to students. In other words, examining types and students' responses is insufficient. It is necessary to set out research on the pragmatic aspects which definitely affect the force of questioning. In response to the issue, Tienken et al. (2009) by adopting Bloom's taxonomy gave a framework of questioning techniques that falls into lower and higher-level questions. The lower-level questions present the three first levels of skills in the hierarchy while the higher ones encourage students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate which belong to the rest of the skills in the diagram. Another prominent scholars came up with other types of questioning techniques which are convergent, divergent, and procedural questions in the higher order of thinking (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). While Bloom's taxonomy provides a robust cognitive hierarchy, the additional categories, such as convergent, divergent, and procedural, offer a pragmatic lens for understanding how questions are asked and processed in tangible classroom contexts. Convergent questions, which often require specific answers, align with Bloom's knowledge and understanding levels (Astrid et al., 2019; Bibi et al., 2020). In addition, divergent questions inherently encourage higher cognitive levels, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, by stimulating creative thinking and the exploration of multiple solutions (Darong, 2020; Dös et al., 2016; Milawati, 2017). Procedural questions focusing on steps or processes support application and problem-solving, which are integral to critical thinking (Ho & To, 2022). This integration gives a more holistic analysis, not only of the cognitive level of questions but also of their instructional functions and purposes. In short, the additional categories supply a richer picture of teachers' questioning techniques in promoting students' critical thinking.

Given this context, teachers must cultivate questioning strategies in the teaching and learning activities. Cues questioning strategies and advanced organizers can positively impact student achievement by helping students identify the essential materials and make connections to prior knowledge (Widiyati, 2020; Zulfikar et al., 2022). The effects of teachers' carelessness or ignorance about how they give the inquiry to students is fatal. The students lack critical thinking development, demotivate students which make the class lack interaction and communication, and burden students' autonomy learning. To get returning students to concentrate on attending class, high school teaching is a challenging stage for teachers. High school learning objectives are to increase students' knowledge to continue in higher education and to self-development in the development of science and technology (Astrid et al., 2019; Ekawati et al., 2021; Merizka & Jufrizal, 2021).

Considering the strong benefits of questioning techniques for students' achievement, discussion on that area is significant. Mostly, the aforementioned scholars addressed the questioning techniques for classroom engagement without giving a strong position for critical thinking. In fact, cognitive ability is closely related to critical thinking. Thus, the intersection of teachers' questioning techniques and critical thinking needs to be explored. In addition, Bloom Taxonomy is widely used by many teaching practitioners to base graded tasks in their praxis. On that note,

the utility of the framework for teachers' questioning sheds the light of understanding on the broad function of the framework in classroom practices. According to the concerns, this study which investigated teachers' questioning techniques for high school students' critical is formulated into following questions:

1. What types of questioning techniques do EFL teachers choose for high school students in the learning process to support critical thinking?
2. How do EFL teachers apply questioning techniques to high school students in the learning process?

METHODS

Research design

A descriptive qualitative approach was selected to conduct this study. This design naturally obtains data based on processes or activities with an in-depth analysis of a matter (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The descriptive qualitative design also focuses on in-depth observation or interviews, which was suitable for analyzing teachers' questioning techniques in this study.

Participants and Instruments

This study was conducted in a well-rewarded high school in one of the big cities in Indonesia and involved three female EFL teachers: Barbie implemented the knowledge question technique nine times, Donna, and Rosie (pseudonym). Since this research employed a qualitative approach that highlighted depth rather than breadth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), detailed information from the participants according to their experience is more important than the number of the participants. In addition, from four English teachers in the school, only three teachers signed the research consent from the researchers. The three teachers had more than ten years of experience in conducting teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Furthermore, they were observed by the researchers with an observation guideline. The observations were conducted in four weeks while every teacher was carrying out the EFL teaching and learning process in the physical classroom. This study also conducted in-depth interviews using an interview guideline with eleven items to get richer data and confirm what the researchers found in the observation sessions.

Data collection process

The three teachers were observed while they were conducting the EFL teaching and learning process. The researchers had an agreement with every teacher about their class schedules and the interview time, place, and mode. During the observation sessions, taking notes and documentation were conducted to identify the questioning techniques implemented by every teacher. After the observation process, the teachers were given eleven questions in the offline interview process at the school. A phone with a voice recording app, a notebook, and a pen were used so it was recorded and could highlight the same findings found in the observation sessions.

Data analysis

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive analysis technique model. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argued that the activities in qualitative data analysis were carried out interactively and continued until they were completed so that the data became saturated. The actions referred to in data analysis were data reduction, data presentation, and concluding or verification. In reducing data, the researchers summarized the results obtained from the field, both from observations and interviews with research objects and subjects, so that the discussion remained consistent with the initial purpose of the research conducted. After the data had been reduced, this study presented description paragraphs in the next section. In this study, the data displayed was in the form of

reports derived from the observations and interviews. The descriptions were described in detail according to the effect of the data reduction process. The last step was concluding or verification to draw conclusions and verify the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

This section presented nine types of questioning strategies identified from the observation and interview results as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Teacher Questioning Strategies' Themes and Codes

Themes	Codes
Knowledge questioning technique	The teachers explored students' diverse perspectives, arguments, and counterarguments to recognize or recall information according to the material conveyed.
Comprehension questioning technique	The teachers check students' understanding and how they reformulated and illustrated the topic discussed.
Application questioning technique	The teachers encouraged students to select, transfer, and use information to solve problems or assignments with minimum instructions.
Analysis questioning technique	The teachers asked students to deconstruct information relevant to the material through pictures, videos, or audio.
Synthesis questioning technique	The teachers provided questions as directions for students to find a solution to a problem using original and creative thinking.
Evaluation questioning technique	The teachers asked students to critique and determine the appropriateness of the topic with the daily application.
Convergent questioning technique	The teachers posed questions that required quick responses or yes/no answers at the beginning of the lesson and after explaining the material.
Divergent questioning technique	The teachers conveyed questions that demanded open answers from students.
Procedural questioning technique	The teachers asked questions at the start of the lesson and while presenting content relevant to students' classroom activities.

Knowledge questioning technique. The first finding of types of questioning techniques applied by EFL teachers for high school students in the teaching and learning process is knowledge questions. It is about the nature of knowledge and what it means to "know" from the topics presented by the teacher. This strategy was conducted by all three participants during the class activities and mentioned in the interview sessions. The knowledge questioning technique encourages students to focus on ideas rather than discuss them normally in subject class.

Table 2. Knowledge Questioning Techniques by the Teachers

Teacher's questions	Students' responses
Do you remember the topic of our last meeting?	*Lumayan ingat*, miss
Do you know the meaning of asking and giving an opinion?	Asking *itu bertanya*, giving *itu memberikan pendapat ke orang lain*
Where do you get news items?	Internet, newspapers, TV, TikTok, IG, Twitter (X), YouTube
How do you know about passive sentences?	*Di* passive sentence, *bendanya bisa beraktivitas. Jadi, yang awalnya di belakang (obyek) menjadi di depan (subyek)*
What is the meaning of "obey"?	*Artinya mematuhi,* miss
Ada berapa items *pada* newspaper?	Three
Apakah kalian tahu pengertian dari pendapat?	Tahu, miss
Apa bahasa Inggrisnya hari Kamis?	Thursday
Apakah kita boleh menggunakan "In my opinion" *dalam memberikan tanggapan atau hanya boleh dengan* "I think"?	*Boleh dua-duanya*, miss

According to the interview and observation results revealed in Table 2, Barbie implemented the knowledge question technique nine times, Donna seven times, and Rosie three times consistently during the four weeks of teaching and learning sessions. As an illustration, Donna echoed to the students, "What do you know the meaning of asking and giving an opinion?". This question was to start the class by presenting new topics or ideas for students about the topics that would be discussed. The knowledge questioning technique assisted the three EFL teachers in exploring students' knowledge.

The consistent frequency of the knowledge questioning technique application by all three EFL teachers across the four observations indicated that this technique is an early foundation used to gauge students' basic understanding of the material. Consistent here means that the knowledge questioning technique is regularly observed in their teaching sessions, albeit with varying intensity. This difference in frequency confirmed variations in teaching styles or the level of need for exploration of students' prior knowledge in their respective classes. For instance, a question such as Donna's, "What do you know about the meaning of asking and giving an opinion?" served to trigger students' initial schemas before moving on to more advanced discussion. However, it is important to note that while this technique is essential for mapping students' knowledge, the dominance or very high frequency of knowledge questions, especially when not followed by higher-level questions, has the potential to limit the development of deeper critical thinking skills, such as analysis or evaluation. Further analysis suggests that teachers who implement this questioning technique may balance it with other questioning techniques to promote students beyond simply memorizing facts.

In classroom practice, the knowledge question technique often arises as teachers attempt to activate students' prior knowledge schemas or ensure their basic understanding of new material. For example, after explaining a new grammar concept or vocabulary, Barbie and Rosie asked direct questions such as "What does the word "obey" mean?" or "Where do we get news items?" During this process, they did not only wait for verbal answers. The interview and observation results revealed that all three participants used non-verbal cues, such as pointing to different students, nodding to encourage, or maintaining eye contact to encourage participation. When students gave the correct answer, the participants validated with a smile or a short remark such as "Very good!" or "Exactly!". However, if students hesitated or conveyed incorrect answers, the participants applied follow-up strategies. The three EFL teachers repeated the question with a different intonation, providing additional clues or even writing key words on the board to clarify the topic before moving on to more complex questions.

Comprehension questioning technique. The comprehension questioning technique becomes the second strategy implemented. It focuses on understanding and remembering the meaning of materials by explaining in students' own words or citing from the book. When observing the teaching and learning process, one out of three participants used this strategy.

Table 3. Comprehension Questioning Techniques by the Teachers

Teacher's questions	Students' responses
Could you explain about the recent news today?	Yes, miss. *Di tempat saya, mau ada lomba tujuh belasan. Saya lihat di TikTok juga banyak daerah yang mengadakan lomba*

The observation and interview sessions showed only Barbie applied the comprehension questioning technique in repeating the same sentence (see Table 3). She once expressed in the classroom, "Could you explain about the recent news today?". The strategy Barbie implemented in a topic session aimed to check students' understanding of what they had read from books or videos they had watched. All in all, the comprehension questioning technique she used was to check to understand, interpret, infer, exemplify, and classify students' material.

The participant strategically used the comprehension questioning technique in various classroom situations to ensure that students not only remembered information but also understood

its meaning in depth. As an illustration, in a news text reading session, Barbie may ask questions such as "Can you explain the main points of today's news in your own words?" after students finished reading to check for understanding and interpretation. In another situation, the teacher can declare, "What can you conclude from the reactions of people in this video to bullying at school?" while discussing a documentary video (to encourage inference). The comprehension questioning technique is applied as a versatile tool to repeat sentences. In other words, this questioning technique encourages students to actively process, interpret, and classify learning materials.

Application questioning technique. The third finding is the application questioning technique. It is used to learn about real situations when students must follow a procedure to solve a problem. Out of three participants, two EFL teachers applied this strategy during the teaching and learning process.

Table 4. Application Questioning Techniques by the Teachers

Teacher's questions	Students' responses
Class, how do you make a positive opinion?	*Pakai* "It's a good opinion"
How do you make a negative opinion?	*Pakai* "I'm sorry, I disagree with you"
Hello, my students! *Bisakah* you *memberikan* another example of the passive sentence?	The FF (Free Fire) game is played by me
Bagaimana cara kita membuat asking opinion?	What do you think about…?, *diisi apa yang mau kita tanya*, miss
Guys, *bagaimana cara kita membuat* giving opinion?	I think, In my opinion

From the observation and interview results as shown in Table 4, Donna implemented the application questioning technique seven times, and Rosie was continuously twice by mixing English-Bahasa (Indonesian) in the question sentences. They used this strategy to give students opportunities or space to select, transfer, and use the information to solve problems or assignments with minimum instructions. For example, Rosie mentioned, "Hello, my students! *Bisakah* you *memberikan* another example of the passive sentence?". The application questioning technique helped Donna and Rosie create questions that asked students to use appropriate responses in specific situations.

Donna and Rosie utilized the application questioning technique to encourage students to use their newly acquired knowledge in different contexts or to solve problems. The interview and observation results demonstrated that Donna, with a higher frequency (seven times), often used this technique after the presentation of new material. For example, she may deliver "How would you respond to this situation (giving an opinion) in English?" which encouraged students to select and transfer information. Meanwhile, Rosie (twice) implemented this technique, sometimes by mixing languages, such as "*Bisakah* you *memberikan* another example of the passive sentence?" Rosie's question pushed students to actively create new phrases using grammatical rules despite it being a straightforward context. Both teachers used the application questioning technique not only as an assessment but also as a learning tool that provides space for students to practice implementing concepts with minimal instruction. In essence, the application questioning technique trains students' ability to complete practice-based tasks.

Analysis questioning technique. This strategy becomes the fourth questioning technique implemented by the participants. It used the information to produce results by all three participants during the teaching and learning process. The analysis questioning technique requires students to solve a problem through the systematic examination of facts or information.

During the observation process (see Table 5), Barbie and Rosie applied the analysis questioning technique twice and Donna was once to emphasize the questions when students seemed confused. Donna implemented a one-time question to find the underlying structure of the topic explained. She pointed out in the interview, "What kind of expression was found in this conversation?". The question appeared as an understanding procedure that took further contextualization by students and their special attention.

Table 5. Analysis Questioning Techniques by the Teachers

Teacher's questions	Students' responses
What kind of expression is found in this conversation?	Asking and giving opinion
What is the structure of a news item?	Main events, elaboration, source
What is your opinion about this sample sentence?	Good, miss
In this news, *apa saja* structure *yang ada di dalamnya*?	*Ada* main events, elaboration, *dan* source

Barbie and Rosie applied the analysis questioning technique twice each, especially when students showed confusion, to help them decipher complex information. For instance, in a discussion of a news text, Barbie can ask, "What are the main facts and arguments presented, and how do they relate to each other?" to encourage students to identify the structure and relationships between ideas. Donna, though only once, implemented this technique to dig into the underlying structure of the topic discussed. It can be assumed when she asked, "What kind of expression is found in this conversation?" after students read the sample dialogue. The analysis questioning technique is not simply for surface understanding; it requires students to identify patterns, categories, or core components of the material. The use of this technique demonstrates the three teachers' efforts to facilitate students in breaking down the material into smaller shares. Finally, the analysis questioning technique facilitates students in identifying motifs or finding supporting evidence, which are crucial steps in developing critical thinking.

Synthesis questioning technique. The fifth is synthesis questioning technique aiming to integrate existing ideas from the information received to produce new things. One out of three participants used this strategy. The synthesis questioning technique requires students to find a solution to a problem using original and creative thinking.

Table 6. Synthesis Questioning Techniques by the Teachers

Teacher's questions	Students' responses
How do you make this sentence correct?	*Itu masih* verb 1, miss. *Setelah* to be *harusnya* verb 3 *biar jadi* passive

Based on the observation and interview sessions as illustrated in Table 6, Rosie was the only teacher using this strategy to get closer to students since they could not answer her questions three times. In the classroom, she said once, "How do you make this sentence correctly?" The question was used in situations where the teacher provided direction through questions that suggested problems that students could solve when creating ideas.

The synthesis questioning technique aims to encourage students to combine various information and new ideas, especially when they are having difficulty forming an answer. This technique is not only used as a response when students cannot answer but also as an effort to guide them in creating something new or finding a solution. As an illustration, in a writing session, after discussing the elements of the passive voice, the teacher may ask, "How do you combine the subject, to be, and verb 3 in the passive sentences you create?" to encourage students to organize separate ideas into a coherent whole. When discussing a group project, the teacher can echo, "With all the information we have, how would you design the most effective presentation to explain the topic of passive voice to your friends?" which requires students to organize, formulate, and produce a new product. The findings presented to actively guide students through the creative process, the participant applied the synthesis question technique. This technique helps students answer questions and develop original ideas and solutions.

Evaluation questioning technique. The evaluation questioning technique becomes the sixth finding. All three participants applied this strategy during four weeks of teaching and learning activities. The evaluation questioning technique involves checking for inconsistencies in processes or representations or making judgments based on material values that have been done.

Table 7. Evaluation Questioning Techniques by the Teachers

Teacher's questions	Students' responses
What is the most important in news items?	*Bagian* main event, miss
What do you think about my scarf (hijab)?	It's beautiful
If these sentences are false, what is the solution to make a good sentence?	*Mengubah* to be, *karena tidak sesuai dengan subyeknya*
Please, you. Could you tell me about our lesson today?	Today, *kita belajar* asking and giving opinions *ke orang lain. Kalau mau* asking, *pakai* "What do you think about…?" *Jawabnya boleh pakai* "In my opinion"
Do you agree with Ayu, class?	Agree, miss

The observation and interview results (see Table 7) presented that Barbie and Rosie implemented the evaluation questioning technique twice and Donna was once. For example, Barbie stated, "Please, you. Could you tell me about our lesson today?". This strategy was used by the three teachers to close the class and check students' achievement material. Additionally, it was assumed that students should be able to make and maintain their reason, rationale, or justifications. The participants chose the evaluation question technique to judge what the best way was to solve specific problems about the topic.

Barbie and Rosie (twice each) and Donna (once) used the evaluation questioning technique to close the class session and encourage students to evaluate and defend their arguments. For example, when Barbie asked, "Could you tell me about our lesson today?" she was not simply checking for understanding but encouraging students to evaluate the most prominent points and why they were relevant. In another situation, the teachers may express, "Of all the solutions we discussed, which one do you think is the most effective and why?" after a group discussion of solutions to a problem. Questions like those require students to make judgments, compare options, and provide logical justification for their choices. Applying the evaluation questioning technique implied all three teachers' efforts to facilitate students' development of the ability to assess idea validity. To summarize, students can distinguish between fact and opinion and make reasoned decisions, which are the pinnacle of critical thinking skills with the evaluation questioning technique.

Convergent questioning technique. The seventh finding is the convergent questioning technique. It is a basic question asked by the teachers to involve students when the activity is starting. This strategy only requires students to give one answer. All three participants started the teaching and learning process by dropping the convergent questioning technique.

Table 8. Convergent Questioning Techniques by the Teachers

Teacher's questions	Students' responses
Who is absent today?	No one, miss
What kind of expression was found in this conversation?	*Ada* positive *dan* negative opinion
Do you understand this lesson?	Understand, miss
Apakah kalimat ini sudah benar?	Sudah benar

During the observation sessions as presented in Table 8, all the teachers, Barbie, Donna, and Rosie, used the convergent questioning technique twice at the beginning and after representing the teaching-learning process. Donna declared at first, "Who is absent today?". Afterwards, she asked the second question in the middle of the classroom process. She said, "What kind of expression was found in this conversation?". It can be indicated that Donna wanted a short solution from their students to the question provided.

The convergent questioning serves to focus students' attention and direct them toward specific expected answers. This technique, observed twice with each participant at the beginning or end of

a learning session, became a tool to quickly check understanding or consolidate key information. For instance, Donna's question, "Who is absent today?" is a basic form of convergent questioning aimed at eliciting factual information. However, its strategic use extends to academic contexts. After explaining a concept, the teachers may ask, "What is the main idea of this conversation?" or "What is the main difference between active and passive sentences?" to ensure that students understand the key points. These questions require a single correct or limited answer. To sum up, the convergent questioning technique helped all three participants efficiently assess basic understanding and identify areas that need further clarification before moving on to more complex discussions or higher-level questions.

Divergent questioning technique. The divergent questioning technique becomes the next finding. It is the opposite of the convergent questioning technique since this strategy requires multiple correct answers. As the same as its opposite, the divergent questioning technique was also applied by all three participants.

Table 9. Divergent Questioning Techniques by the Teachers

Teacher's questions	Students' responses
What is your opinion about this sample sentence?	I think it's easy, miss
What is your idea about this book?	I think it's thick, miss
Another idea, guys?	(silent)
Who wants to tell me about the news item?	(silent)

According to the observation and interview results (see Table 9), Donna and Rosie implemented this strategy once and Barbie was twice in repeat with different sentences. The questions were asked during the teaching and learning process in the whilst-phase. Rosie echoed, "What is your opinion about this sample sentence?". She asked a question that required responses in the form of open answers. She also expressed, "Another idea, guys?" while delivering the material for the lesson.

Donna, Rosie, and Barbie implemented the divergent questioning technique to encourage students to explore distinct ideas and perspectives, especially during the core phase of learning. This technique, which requires open-ended and varied responses, is very effective in sparking creative thinking and in-depth discussion. As an illustration, when Rosie said, "What is your opinion about this sample sentence?" she was not seeking a single answer but rather opening up space for students to provide personal interpretations or analysis. Similarly, when Rosie stated, "Another idea, guys?" she explicitly invited diverse thinking. The use of divergent questioning depicted the three participants' efforts to facilitate students' generation of new ideas. On balance, this technique explores multiple possibilities and develops students' arguments based on their understanding, which is a strong indicator of high-level critical thinking.

Procedural questioning technique. The last finding is the procedural questioning technique. It is a type of questioning technique that concerns how to do something commonly known as how-questioning. Out of three EFL teachers, only one used this strategy. The procedural questioning technique is used when the teacher asks questions related to the topic that has been delivered or to see how far students understand the materials that have been provided, such as when certain materials are used for students in presenting readings or practice trials.

The observation and interview sessions (see Table 10) revealed that Barbie applied the procedural questioning technique once by mixing English-Bahasa (Indonesia) in the question sentence. She mentioned, "Please, *bisakah* you read the newspaper in your *buku*?". She said the question before explaining the materials that would be discussed. This strategy given by the teacher to their students was in the form of classroom activities. The procedural questioning technique was implemented by Barbie when she asked questions related to the topic elaborated.

Table 10. Procedural Questioning Techniques by the Teachers

Teacher's questions	Students' responses
Please, *bisakah* you read the newspaper in your *buku*?	Sure, miss

The procedural questioning technique aims to guide students through specific steps or instructions, ensuring that they understand the flow of an activity or learning process. Although the observation sessions only recorded one explicit application, such as "Please, *bisakah* you read the newspaper in your *buku*?" this technique often implicitly accompanies various classroom instructions. For example, before starting a group assignment, the teacher might ask, "What is the first step we should take to analyze this text?" or "We have found the main idea. What should we do next to summarize?" These questions are designed to ensure that students understand the sequence of actions or procedures required to complete the task so they may work independently and effectively. Barbie's use of the procedural question demonstrates her attempt to establish a clear framework for students. In the long run, the procedural questioning technique helps students navigate the learning activity and implement the correct steps in the problem-solving process.

Discussion

Among all types of questions, knowledge questioning techniques was the most frequently applied by all teachers to activate prior knowledge and check for basic recall of the materials learned. In parallel with that, Putri and Reflinda (2021) showed teachers deliver questions to students about the material that had passed to connect to the next material, applying certain questioning techniques at the first meeting. For instance, in today's meeting to discuss the number, teachers ask students about the part of the number, the type of number, and others. Afterwards, they connect the questions with the next material. However, if this practice dominates teachers' instruction without being supported by higher order questions, students will experience surface-level engagement. As what Jacques et al. (2019) said, questions that develop students' critical thinking are simple recall questions that continues to ones that involves reasonings, problem-solving, and synthesis.

The other expected findings go to the consistent application of convergent questioning techniques which is usually shown up at the beginning or end of the classes. Questions under this technique becomes teachers' favorite because the questions require brief and specific answers and are considered effective for quick checks and classroom management. Similar to knowledge questioning techniques, if the questions are not complemented by open ended questions, they will limit students' opportunity to think critically and reflectively (Jacques et al., 2019).

Interestingly, the divergent questioning techniques which are widely known as a trigger to stimulate student creativity and high order of thinking (Darong, 2020; Dös et al., 2016; Richards & Lockhart, 1994) belongs to ones that all participants applied. The questions, however, often yielded minimal responses from students. The students' reluctance may be caused by their language anxiety or lack of confidence. Obviously, expressing a complex idea in a foreign language is not easy for students with limited foreign language mastery.

The teachers' use of comprehension questioning shows a striking inconsistency. As presented in the observation result, that was solely done by Barbie. This low frequency recommends either a potential gap in her pedagogical practices or a situational challenge like students' English proficiency that remains low and limited. The absence of comprehension checks among the participants is a concerning issue since as emphasized by Ekawati et al. (2021) this technique is significant to ensure that students grasp the materials. Ekawati et al. even suggested teachers to repeat the question if there was no response from students. When students' understanding is not successfully assessed, teachers risk advancing to higher level tasks without conforming foundational comprehension which may be a hindrance to students' deep and meaningful learning.

As a solution, teachers can replicate the question with different words but with the same meaning to gain students' understanding of the lesson (Mustika et al., 2020; Nappi, 2017).

Another fact shows from the findings that all participants demonstrated their use of analysis and evaluation questioning techniques which indicated their attempts to facilitates students' critical thinking. Teachers who gave this type of question to students means they encourage students to break down information (Shanmugavelu et al., 2020) and justify the relevance and accuracy of the information (Darong, 2020; Dös et al., 2016). However, this technique is still limitedly and inconsistently implemented by the participants leading to a notion that technique is an uncommon teaching practice. That occurrence is well explained by scholars (Milawati & Suryati, 2019; Upayogi et al., 2024) who stated, regardless higher-order questions are promising for students' critical thinking, their effectiveness depends on factors that teachers are unable to control such as students' readiness or students' limitation on English mastery.

The only one appearance is also possessed by synthesis questioning technique. For some scholars, this technique is believed as a tool to nurture creativity and help students generate ideas (Bibi et al., 2020; Hrin et al., 2016). The rare implementation of this technique may showcase teachers' hesitance in handling open ended questions in which students may give broad answers. The teachers may be afraid of inadequate wait time or insufficient follow-up to guide students mentioning precise points. It can also take place due to teachers' anxiety in translating students' idea from Indonesian into English which would be much time taking. As Sujariati et al. (2016) presented, their study identified teachers' distress on language translation in the implementation of questioning techniques. Similarly, that may what teachers experience with infrequent procedural questions despite their importance in structuring student action during the lessons. Hence, the infrequency of those types of questioning techniques does not reflect a missed opportunity to empower students to formulate new ideas that lead to critical thinking.

From all aspects that appear in the implementation of questioning techniques, the most interesting part is the linguistic dynamic in the classroom. Even though the teachers have been questioning in full English at the beginning, they should switch the language into Indonesian since the students kept answering the questions in Indonesian. Thus, during the discussion, classroom members often mixed English and Indonesian. This bilingual strategy that was observed particularly in Rosie's and Barbie's practices was supported by Ekawati et al. (2021) and Sujariati et al. (2016) who argued that translanguaging or mixing two languages (L1 and L2) can bridge comprehension gaps and foster a more inclusive environment for language learners. One point that needs a highlight in using translingual strategy is over reliance on code switching and code mixing causing the lack of exposure on target language which is not quite good for language learners.

On top of that, the finding also shows teachers' repetition in giving questions, either verbatim or rephrased. That practice quite commonly happened when students were unable to give their response immediately which help teachers in classroom management and assist students comprehend the materials (Ekawati et al., 2021; Mustika et al., 2020). Highlighting the students' comprehension as the goal, the other concerning point that teachers need to consider is the crafted questions. Simple questions are strongly suggested so that the students can understand easily. The teachers do not need to repeat the questions all the time and make other students neglected which cause the failure of meaningful engagement in classrooms.

Overall, teachers' questioning techniques are one element of developing an effective teaching and learning process. The previous studies by Saswati (2022) and Theresia (2021) shared that questioning helps students direct their learning as they merge their prior knowledge and new information to make sense of these ideas. They also added that questioning in the classroom is the foundation for building impactful communication between teachers and students when involving themselves in conversation. Although the questioning techniques sounds ideal to enhance students' critical thinking, this research raises critical facts that the implementation of questioning techniques have linier relationship to students' readiness, teachers' preparedness, and teachers'

pedagogical intent. Teachers must be equipped not only with the knowledge of questioning types but also with the skills to implement them effectively in classrooms. In addition, students need to be assisted and empowered with strong English mastery to enhance their critical thinking in EFL classroom discussion.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study investigated questioning techniques as teaching high school is a complex stage for teachers in returning students to focus on attending class. High school learning objectives are to increase students' knowledge to continue in higher education and to self-develop in the development of science and technology. In this study, the implementation of teachers' questioning techniques to high school students during the teaching and learning process is highlighted adopting the descriptive qualitative method. Involving three EFL female teachers from a high school in Indonesia, it is known that all teachers used the nine types of questioning techniques. Those questioning strategies were applied at the beginning, whilst, and closing the lesson with different level of frequency.

In general, the results of this study enable EFL teachers to know types of the questioning techniques, the function of the techniques, and how to implement them for students' critical thinking. Additionally, this research shows student-teacher's linguistic dynamic in EFL classrooms that needs to be a concern for teachers who are interested in implementing the techniques. Students can be active and focus on receiving the materials when they could elaborate answers for the teacher's questions.

Regarding the result, pedagogically, this study recommends EFL teachers to comprehend all types of questioning techniques and the functions. They also should anticipate students' readiness in terms of critical thought and their mastery of English by finding supporting strategies to complement questioning techniques. This study also suggested curriculum and policy makers to put materials of questioning techniques as part of teaching strategies for teacher professional development. Theoretically, this study suggested potential gaps in this area that future researchers may fill. Considering that this qualitative investigation does not focus on the frequency of the questioning techniques that the teachers apply, the other researchers could quantify the implementation by finding the trend of the techniques implemented by teachers. Moreover, same research can be done in other education levels to enrich literature in this area.

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