
DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SPEAKING PERFORMANCE THROUGH MASTERING QUESTION WORDS IN ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY SETTING

Oleh

Ana Kuliahana¹, Abdul Gafur Marzuki^{2*}, Andi Nurfaizah³

^{1,2,3}Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, UIN Datokarama Palu

Email: ¹anakuliahana@uindatokarama.ac.id, ²gafurmarzuki@uindatokarama.ac.id,
³andinurfaizah@uindatokarama.ac.id

Article History:

Received: 12-11-2024

Revised: 26-11-2024

Accepted: 15-12-2024

Keywords:

EFL Students,
Question Words
Method, Speaking
Skill

Abstract: *This study aims to assess and enhance the speaking performance of students in the English Department at the State Islamic University of Datokarama Palu by using the question-word method. The study, a collaborative classroom action research project, involved two cycles, each involving 22 students. Data were collected through class observations, field notes, a questionnaire, and a speaking test. The study aimed to identify students' speaking abilities based on predetermined success criteria. The findings revealed that incorporating question words into the teaching process significantly increased students' motivation, responsiveness, enthusiasm, and confidence in speaking English. Additionally, this method helped students comprehend the content of questions before responding, allowing them to articulate their ideas more effectively. In the first cycle, only five students (23%) met the success criteria, indicating the need for further intervention. However, by the second cycle, 17 students (77%) achieved the success criteria, demonstrating that the question-word technique effectively enhanced their speaking performance. These results suggest that mastering question words is a valuable strategy for improving students' speaking abilities in English, particularly in an Islamic university context*

PENDAHULUAN

There are two key elements that contribute to enhancing students' overall speaking performance. Firstly, it emphasizes the importance of communicating in everyday relational and conditional discussions, and secondly, it emphasizes the significance of a short monologue text in a day-to-day setting. In an English classroom, one can emphasize the use of objective language as a medium for communication. This makes sense because the evaluation of the outcome of language learning is based on whether the students can incorporate it into their daily lives or if there are other activities taking place in the classroom during the learning process (Khan, 2018; Ali, 2018; Ali et al., 2019; Roza et al., 2019; Khairunnisa et al., 2022).

All lecturers are influencers who must participate and take responsibility for the change. The most fundamental action lecturers can take is to shift their worldview to align with their presentation style, which aligns closely with traditional viewpoints that require

lecturers to present their ideas in a comprehensive or compelling manner to their students. When lecturers fail to use various methods and media to enhance their students' learning in the classroom, the homeroom environment deteriorates significantly. Each of these factors contributes to students' fatigue when following English examples (Jay-ar & Lasaten, 2018; Zhu et al., 2019; Al-Jarf, 2021; Kadnawi, 2021).

In view of the researchers' past perceptions, the issues found in the researchers' classroom were that the majority of them saw it as challenging to communicate their sentiments, thoughts, and assessments, and they weren't aware of how to respond to the inquiry words. This is due to their inability to understand the purpose of the question and their lack of confidence in using the knowledge they had acquired to communicate or answer. Given the previously expressed realities, the researchers are eager to utilize the inquiry method to demonstrate their educational experience.

Furthermore, this research focused on speaking performance. 85% of these students were unable to answer basic questions such as what, why, and how, as demonstrated by the researchers' involvement in their educational experience. Clearly, this hinders their comprehension, as they remain perplexed when the speaker poses questions. They lacked even the slightest understanding of how to respond to questions, such as the 'wh' question in English. For models: How do you understand the past tense? What makes this strain significant? How would you utilize this strain? When do you use this strain? Because they misunderstood the lecturer's question, they simply replied "yes/no" or "stay quiet" without responding to the question or offering their perspective. Furthermore, the authority of their vocabulary was crucial. This is because the researchers frequently lacked a clear understanding of the purpose of the questions they asked their students (Bangun, 2018; Bouzar, 2019; Hammad, 2020; Hasan et al., 2021).

To elicit satisfying responses, researchers should understand how to formulate legitimate inquiry questions for their students. By understanding the purpose of the question, the speaker can more easily craft a question that inspires students to enthusiastically respond (Irfani, 2018; Wang et al., 2018; Marzuki & Kuliahana, 2021).

To address these issues, the researchers conduct a logical examination and utilize inquiry words to enhance students' speaking performance. In this scenario, the use of question words can stimulate students' thought processes and encourage them to express their opinions. This method allows the researchers to effectively communicate question words that the students understand while also encouraging the students to express their reactions and emotions in response to the lecturer's questions. The researchers selected question words for this examination because they can enhance students' ability to use language effectively, especially when responding to questions and expressing their opinions orally using yes-or-no question words such as "what," "why," "which," "who," "where," "when," and "how."

METHOD

In this exploration, the researchers applied classroom action research. Some studies (McTaggart et al., 2017; Wulandari et al., 2019; Meesuk et al., 2020; Nurhasanah et al., 2020) suggest that friendly individuals, including those practicing teaching, utilize Classroom Action Research (CAR) as a tool to assess the fairness and reasonableness of their own social

or teaching practices, their understanding of their training, and the situation at hand.

In this action research, the researchers designed the plan based on the challenges encountered in the learning process. They planned the action, implemented it, and observed how the implementation affected students' learning progress. At the end, the researchers conducted a reflection to identify the effects of implementation, determine whether it met the success criteria, and then decide whether to stop or continue the action. If the researchers decided to continue the action to the next cycle, they first revised the plan based on findings from the previous cycle.

We conducted this research with English Department students who take speaking courses at the Islamic State University of Datokarama Palu. The research focused on the TBIG-1 class, comprising 22 students, as the majority of these students faced difficulties with speaking. The researchers conducted field research using various instruments, including an observation checklist, field notes, a questionnaire, and a test, to obtain accurate and reliable data. Through reflection, both collaborators and researchers analyzed the data gathered from the observation sheet, field note, questionnaire, and test.

RESULTS

Observing in Cycle I

The researchers and the collaborator engaged in extensive observation in order to establish accurate data from teaching and learning. Throughout this period, the researchers closely monitored the ongoing teaching and learning activities. We observed both the researcher's teaching style and the students' involvement in the teaching and learning process. In order to gather trustworthy data from the field, the researchers and the collaborator closely watched the two components.

The findings were derived from the observation sheet and field notes in cycle I.

1). First meeting

Observation sheets reveal that the majority of students have not yet actively responded to the researchers' questions, especially when it comes to question-word answers. But if the researcher used a closed question with a yes or no response, the students responded enthusiastically, according to data gathered in the field.

During the activity, the researchers provided a brief introduction to the subject before assigning a job. Once they had gathered their thoughts and comprehended the discourse, the researchers instructed them to express their opinions verbally. The field notes reveal that most of them still required a significant amount of time to articulate each unique oral description prior to verbal delivery.

2). Second meeting

The observation sheet revealed that the students actively participated in answering the questions and expressing their opinions based on the case study. Before starting the first task, researchers provided an example of how to communicate an opinion while using an expression during the activity. According to the data, eight students participated in this exercise and provided oral responses to the questions. When they responded to questions 1 and 2, they erred in both grammar and pronunciation. The researchers provided input after responding to all queries, and the meeting came to an end.

3). Third meeting

It was Cycle I's final meeting. The researchers made their assessment based on the information they gleaned from the observation sheet. The researchers provided eight questions for this activity. Despite the researchers' clear instructions, not all students followed them due to confusion and slower speech. In order to ensure that the students understand the instruction, they should translate it into Bahasa Indonesia if necessary. Their fear of speaking in front of the class prevented them from responding fully to all of the questions. As a result of the evaluation, twelve students individually presented their questions and answers in front of the class.

Table 1: Question words related to Daily Activities

No.	Questions
1.	What time do you usually wake up in the morning?
2.	Why do you prefer to exercise in the evening instead of the morning?
3.	Which tasks do you prioritize first when starting your workday?
4.	Who do you usually have lunch with during the week?
5.	Where do you like to relax after a long day?
6.	When do you typically go to bed on weekdays?
7.	How do you manage your time effectively between work and leisure?
8.	What activities help you unwind after a stressful day?

The Result of Speaking Assessment

Before the activity began in this phase, the researchers delivered the evaluation sheet and gave clear instructions; therefore, it was easier for participants to respond to the questions. In this instance, they demanded that they complete the assignment and understand the questions' content before expressing themselves orally in front of the class. Their use of question phrases not only expressed themselves but also significantly impacted the researchers' and collaborators' ability to determine the students' academic success.

In this instance, the researchers assessed each student's oral presentation of the case upon its introduction to the class. As a first step in capturing value, the researchers called each participant individually to make a presentation in front of the class in accordance with their requests. The researchers tabulated and presented the results of the speaking test from cycle one.

According to the gain data, the mean score for the speaking assessment in Cycle I was 67. Only 5 students (or 23%) met the success criteria and achieved scores of 70 or higher, indicating their classification as successful. In this instance, 17 students, or 77 percent, failed to meet the success criteria, indicating that they did not learn the intended content. As a result, the next cycle needs to have a plan.

Reflection in cycle I

Action researchers and the collaborator could reflect on past classroom activities and analyze the findings. To determine whether the treatment has yielded a significant improvement and whether to continue it once the students' performance meets the success criteria, action researchers and the collaborator should reflect on past classroom activities.

By assessing and validating the information gleaned from the observation sheet and field notes, the researchers and their collaborator engaged in reflective work.

After discussing the data gathered in the first cycle, it seems more appropriate for the researchers and the collaborator to draw a reflection. This allows us to explain why the students did not meet the established criteria for success. The collected data and information prompted the researchers and the collaborator to reflect. The findings revealed that only five students achieved a score of 4 or above in the speaking assessment. Only 23% of the students satisfied the success condition, thereby failing to meet the success criterion. Finally, observation and field notes revealed the need to improve the students' speaking abilities in the next cycle.

Observing in cycle II

The researchers conducted the observation during a teaching and learning session. The observation encompassed the researchers' performance in conducting classroom action research, the students' participation in the teaching and learning process, and their performance in speaking and listening activities.

The observation sheet and field notes revealed the findings.

Beginning in meeting 1 and continuing through meeting 3, the majority of students began responding to the researchers' queries, despite their imperfect speech and lack of active participation. During the pre-activity, the students would collectively respond directly to the researchers' questions, such as "Are you prepared for study now?" How much of the subject did you learn yesterday? It indicates that they have already grasped the question's meaning.

Field notes indicate that when she asked the students to group their sentences into paragraphs using sequence terms, they were able to complete the assignments. The students appeared more enthusiastic during all of Cycle II's events than they had during Cycle I. It suggests that even if they were still pronouncing incorrectly when the researchers asked them, they had already responded. This is based on observations and field notes made during instruction.

According to the information in the field notes, it became simpler for the majority of students to express their opinions orally in response to the researchers' queries. They all used the necessary gestures, which made their oral presentation effective.

Findings from the questionnaire

The questionnaire's purpose was to determine whether or not the students enjoyed and were interested in the teaching model that the researchers had presented. The researchers asked participants to respond to ten questions. According to the questionnaire results, 17 students, or 77% of the class, admitted that they find it simpler to learn speaking by employing question words. The lowest number was 23%, at which point only 5 students expressed interest in speaking English to a stranger.

The result of the speaking assessment

The researchers administered the test to the students after implementing the action in cycle II and making any necessary adjustments. Its goal was to gauge how much the students' speaking abilities had improved. The second cycle of testing focused, like the first, on the students' spoken ability to ask and respond to questions. Below is the test's outcome for this cycle.

According to the data, 17 out of 22 students, or 77%, met the success criteria. The 17 students who received points achieved scores ranging from 70 to 74. Only 5 students received the lowest grade. Comparatively speaking, only 23% of the students failed cycle II. Reflection in Cycle II

After discussing the data collected during the second cycle, the researchers and the collaborator reflected on their findings. The results showed that 17 students received scores of 70 or better. The fact that 77% of students fulfilled the requirement signifies the fulfillment of the success conditions. In other words, the majority of students succeed because they actively participate in the teaching and learning process and demonstrate courage when they ask and answer questions.

Furthermore, the students' exam scores increased and the results from cycle II were similar to those from cycle I, indicating that they had also attained the classical achievement. This suggests that they have fully met the standard of academic performance. They then decided to break the cycle. One could conclude that they deemed the method successful.

DISCUSSION

The use of new ideas and research on language acquisition to assess how students' speaking performance develops in an Islamic university setting as they become proficient with question words. A key component of speaking competency is the ability to facilitate interactive discussion, which requires mastery of question words. Asking and responding to questions improves learners' interactional competency, which is necessary for having meaningful interactions (Goh and Burns, 2018). This is consistent with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (SCT), which views language development as a socially mediated process. According to recent research, students can engage in dialogues that foster deeper cognitive engagement more effectively provided they possess the appropriate language tools, such as inquiry words (Lantolf & Poehner, 2018).

Additionally, research on task-based language teaching (TBLT) shows that tasks that require the use of question words can greatly enhance speaking performance by providing students with the opportunity to practice language in context. For example, a study by Ellis (2019) discovered that learners' spoken language fluency and complexity significantly improved when they completed tasks that required them to frequently employ question words. This enhancement is in line with the Interaction Hypothesis, which holds that communication, especially when it comes to meaning negotiation, promotes language acquisition (Long, 2015; Ellis, 2019).

Learning question phrases can be particularly helpful in an Islamic institution, where conversations are frequently philosophical and theological in nature. It allows students to interact more thoroughly with the content and their peers, resulting in a more active learning environment. According to a study by Razak and Razak (2020), students who were more proficient with question words were able to express their ideas more clearly and actively participate in class discussions, which enhanced their speaking skills. This study demonstrated the value of interaction in Islamic educational environments.

Furthermore, recent research by Alqahtani and Al-Munawer (2021) reinforces the notion that focused instruction on question words might result in appreciable improvements in speaking proficiency. Their research revealed that students explicitly

taught to use question phrases demonstrated greater competence and self-assurance in speaking, particularly in formal contexts. Especially in an Islamic institution, students' development as speakers depends greatly on their command of question phrases. Teachers can improve students' capacity for meaningful communication by incorporating targeted teaching on question words into the curriculum, thereby contributing to their language growth and academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion is based on findings that suggest the use of question words to stimulate students' speech. The steps involved in asking questions when teaching speaking are: first, choosing the right questions based on the topic; second, framing the questions; third, giving students time to consider their answers; fourth, choosing students; and last, providing feedback on the students' responses. The use of questions in the teaching and learning process helps to increase students' motivation, responsiveness, and enthusiasm, as well as, of course, their courage to speak English. You can also use this method to encourage students to comprehend the question's content before responding and to provide them with the opportunity to express their ideas verbally. The first cycle's assessment of students' speaking performance detected only five students who received at least a score. It meant that only 23% of the students met the success criteria. In the second cycle, seventeen students, or 77% of the total, discovered their achievements. This suggests that either the students have met the success requirements, and the question-word technique can enhance their speaking performance.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ali, A. (2018). Understanding the complex process of oral communication. *International Journal*, 6(1), 123-128.
- [2] Ali, J. K. M., Shamsan, M. A., Guduru, R., & Yemmela, N. (2019). Attitudes of Saudi EFL Learners towards Speaking Skills. *Arab World English Journal*, 10(2), 353-364.
- [3] Al-Jarf, R. (2021). Designing English for Islamic studies courses: Some basic considerations. *Journal Educational Verkenning*, 2(2), 10-19.
- [4] Alqahtani, M., & Al-Munawer, M. (2021). The impact of explicit instruction on students' use of question words in academic speaking tasks. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 12(3), 455-463.
- [5] Bangun, B. K. (2018). Improving students' speaking skill by using show and tell method: A classroom action research. *International Journal of Language Teaching and Education*, 2(1), 41-48.
- [6] Bouzar, S. (2019). Issues in teaching speaking to EFL Learners. *Education and Linguistics Research*, 5(1), 70-79.
- [7] Ellis, R. (2019). *Task-Based Language Teaching: Theory and Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- [8] Goh, C. C. M., & Burns, A. (2018). *Teaching Speaking: A Holistic Approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- [9] Hammad, E. A. (2020). The impact of oral presentations on Al-Aqsa University EFL students' speaking performance, speaking anxiety and achievement in ELT

- Methodology1. Journal of Second and Multiple Language Acquisition, 8(1), 1-27.
- [10] Hasan, H., Kahar, A., Hermansyah, S., & Usman, U. (2021). The Improving Speaking Skills through Active Learning Strategy. MAJESTY JOURNAL, 3(1), 15-21.
- [11] Irfani, B. (2018). Speaking Performance of Islamic Boarding School and Public School-Based Graduates: A Comparative Study. JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies), 5(1), 97-113.
- [12] Jay-ar, A., & Lasaten, R. C. S. (2018). Oral communication apprehensions and academic performance of grade 7 students. Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 6(3).
- [13] Kadnawi, M. P. (2021). Improving Students' Speaking Skill Through Questioning Paper at Kampung Inggris Pare. ETJaR: English Teaching Journal and Research, 1(1), 64-85.
- [14] Khairunnisa, N. A., Rahman, M. A., & Handrianto, C. (2022). English digital literacy practices inside and outside class to develop students' speaking skills. Pedagogy: Journal of English Language Teaching, 10(1), 13-24.
- [15] Khan, R. M. I., Radzuan, N. R. M., Shahbaz, M., Ibrahim, A. H., & Mustafa, G. (2018). The role of vocabulary knowledge in speaking development of Saudi EFL learners. Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume, 9.
- [16] Lantolf, J. P., & Poehner, M. E. (2018). Sociocultural Theory and the Pedagogical Imperative in L2 Education. Routledge.
- [17] Long, M. H. (2015). Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching. Wiley-Blackwell.
- [18] Marzuki, A. G., & Kuliahana, A. (2021). Using Language Games to Enhance EFL Students' Speaking Skill in Indonesia. Al-Ta lim Journal, 28(3), 213-222.
- [19] McTaggart, R., Nixon, R., & Kemmis, S. (2017). Critical participatory action research. In The Palgrave international handbook of action research (pp. 21-35). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- [20] Meesuk, P., Sramoon, B., & Wongrugsu, A. (2020). Classroom action research-based instruction: The sustainable teacher professional development strategy. Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability, 22(1), 98-110.
- [21] Nurhasanah, F., Sukandi, U., Kuncoro, A. B., Rusilowati, A., Hastuti, W. S., & Prabowo, A. (2020, August). Collaborative classroom action research for mathematics and science teachers in Indonesia. In Journal of Physics: Conference Series (Vol. 1613, No. 1, p. 012024). IOP Publishing.
- [22] Razak, N. A., & Razak, R. A. (2020). Interaction in Islamic higher education: Enhancing speaking skills through question words. International Journal of Islamic Studies, 32(2), 210-225.
- [23] Roza, A. S., Rafli, Z., & Rahmat, A. (2019). The Implementation of contextual teaching learning (CTL) to improve the students' speaking ability in Islamic studies course. International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 8(4), 45-50.
- [24] Wang, Z., Lan, A. S., Nie, W., Waters, A. E., Grimaldi, P. J., & Baraniuk, R. G. (2018, June). QG-net: a data-driven question generation model for educational content. In Proceedings of the fifth annual ACM conference on learning at scale (pp. 1-10).
- [25] Wulandari, D., Narmaditya, B. S., Utomo, S. H., & Prayi, P. H. (2019). Teachers' perception on classroom action research. KnE Social Sciences, 313-320.

- [26] Zhu, X., Liao, X., & Cheong, C. M. (2019). Strategy use in oral communication with competent synthesis and complex interaction. *Journal of psycholinguistic research*, 48(5), 1163-1183.

HALAMAN INI SENGAJA DIKOSONGKAN