

# THE QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES USED BY FOREIGN-EDUCATED BACKGROUND TEACHER TO PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING

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## Abstrak

Critical thinking is a cognitive skill that must be achieved by a student in higher education. By having critical thinking, especially in a language class, a student must understand the language and the message it brings to be communicated fluently and it will be a good asset for their future, especially to face the world of work. To foster students' critical thinking, a teacher is required to give them fairly complex questions with suitable questioning techniques. Asking the right technique is a good way to trigger critical thinking. This research uses a qualitative approach and focuses on indigenous teachers who have studied abroad as a subject. The teacher was chosen because, based on theory, overseas have felt a better critical thinking environment, have adapted and absorbed ways to be active in the classroom. This study aims to determine the types of questions and questioning techniques used by teachers to trigger critical thinking students. The results showed that the teacher used high-level cognitive questions namely the types of analysis (25, 3%), synthesis (21%) and evaluation (20, 3%). Then the questioning technique that most teachers use is the decomposition type (25%). It can be concluded that the teacher can foster students' critical thinking by providing high-level questioning techniques and questions with high cognitive levels

Keywords, Critical Thinking, Technique

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Being able to be a critical thinker is a significant skill to be accomplished by the students since they live in a period where information are rapidly spread. By having critical thinking, students must be able to comprehend, analyze and evaluate some information they got and avoid the bias. They are able to uncover the bias before making conclusion (Nguyen Thi Cam Le, 2005). In language learning context, critical thinking is a vital skill to be grasped by the students since it

is a foremost goal of higher education (Wang, Chai, & Hairon, 2017). Critical thinking has many recompenses. Pennycook (1997) mentioned that students will comprehend of a passage or discourse by having critical thinking. Critical thinking benefices the user of language for having proper communication within society (Brown, 2007). Students are able to become proficient in language learning because they are not only practice the language but also understanding the meaning of the language and the process of it needs the critical thinking ability (Bachman & Palmer, 2000). It is in relevant with what Brown (2004) proposed that to be capable in a language mastery, learners need to have critical thinking of the target language as well (Brown, 2007). Having students ready with critical thinking can assist them the workforce (Feng, 2014). Increasing critical thinking skills in college students is a crucial effort (Yang, Newby, & Bill, 2005), it can help them compose appropriate decisions, communicate effectively, and use proof to support conclusions (Harris, 2014). In fact, as King (1998) pointed out that critical thinking and depth analysis of the students can be built and triggered by some problematic questions (King, Goodson, & Rohani, 1988).

Teacher questions aim to disclose understanding. A proper question seeks to expose and discover the knowledge, thinking process, or misconceptions of the student. By delivering questions, teacher can stimulate the word production of a students as well as guide them to think deeply about the information they get in the classroom.

Meanwhile, the notion of critical thinking atmosphere in classroom is also correlated with the situation they can engage daily within their teachers set of teaching and teacher as the role model for the students (Báez, 2004). Asian countries are identified to have lack of critical thinking circumstances than western countries. In Asia, the students usually be the passive knowledge recipient from the teacher (Ha, 2008b). But nowadays, there are some teachers, domestic teacher, who experience in an English speaking country to study where it means that they have the mobility to other nationality and they might grasp the new way of thinking and behavior as a teacher in teaching the students (Ha, 2008a).

However, critical questions about study abroad value remain to upsurge (Gomez-lanier, 2017). Foreign-educated teacher experiences a substantial number of short-term immigrants in the city (Sharifian, 2010). In addition, study abroad will give a potential of shifting viewpoints. Participants of such programs tend to have global views. Within their foreign study to an English speaking country, the teacher might get the atmosphere of critical thinking situation that they can

adapt later in their own country. (Nguyen Thi Cam Le, 2005) They experience the situation of having question and answer, class discussion and the open-minded argument delivering. This condition will reduce the dichotomy of native and non-native speaker of English in teaching the students (Rizki, 2018). Where now, there is a globalized teachers who study abroad and grasp the climate of western country education and add the good point to their teaching and their way of questioning and giving chance to the students to be more active in class (Punyanunt-carter, Wrench, Carter, & Linden, 2014). Additionally, teachers in Indonesia who teach English are mostly non-native speakers. As an domestic teacher who teach English, they experienced an English language acquisition, teacher has the more advantages than the native English teacher (Rizki, 2018). They experiences the process of acquiring the language and have their strategy to master it. Communication researchers, sociological researchers, as well as many others have dedicated much of their time to determining potential factors and attempting to find a solution to the problem that domestic teachers, who usually called non-native teacher, of college classes are perceived as more effective teachers than are international teachers or native speaker, especially in understanding the culture and how they can engage well with the students within in the same country (McCroskey, 2002). Phillipson (1996) regards non-native speaker teachers of English as 'ideal' language teachers since they acquire English as an additional language; they have first-hand experience in learning and using language as a second language, thus this experience sensitizes them to the linguistic and cultural needs of their students. Widdowson (1992) also supports the same idea and claims that non-native speakers have more advantages when the role of the instructor is important because they have experience as second language learners of English and this experience makes them aware of the target language. Moreover, there are some teachers who experience studying in an English speaking country to study where it means that they have the mobility to other nationality and they might grasp the new way of thinking and behaviour as a teacher in teaching the students (Ha, 2008). Means that, nowadays, the non-native speaker teacher has also developed their knowledge by having such experience in the English speaking country.

Within their international study to an English speaking country, the teacher might get the real atmosphere of critical thinking situation that they can adapt later in their own country (Nguyen Thi Cam Le, 2005). They experience the situation of having question and answer, class discussion and the open-minded argument delivering (Zerman, 2014). Furthermore, by experiencing abroad

study, teacher can gain experience in different educational systems and be involved in other learning processes.

Relating with the critical thinking, the study abroad program could be an expanding worldviews and creating globally minded teacher where they experienced as a student (Wright and Clarke, 2015). The foreign country study, especially for students studying a foreign language is clearly seen as the best path towards a higher level of intellectual and cognitive development (Mozeleski, 2013). It is a unique and novel experience that heightens teacher' perceptions of the world they live in, as well as a unique chance to utilize each teachers' own critical thinking skills and improve them when an individual experiences another culture, they are changing the input that helps them form cognitive and intellectual schemas about the world and how it works. This is seen as an intellectual development because the schemas become broader, more globalized in spread rather than restricted to one specific culture. It takes an amount of cognitive intelligence to even recognize that there is a different perspective being held by others, even more to be able to communicate in that different perspective. The benefit gained here is not only flexibility of cognition but an actual gain in knowledge as well, about the different perspective and how one is seen and sees things from it. Where in this study, the idea of being developed-teacher by having internationally education would be investigated through their way of questioning in class.

However, in some developing countries, the English classes are commonly to have a class with different grade, age, and level of competence of the students in the same classroom too. Such condition are challenging for the teachers and it adds the reluctance of the students in practicing the language in class (Quail & Smyth, 2014) as well as expressing their thought in English (Hamouda, 2012). Therefore, the teachers should give contribution and help improving the students' communicative performance and participation in class, hence, one of the techniques in gaining the students communication is by delivering teacher's questions (Wright, 2016). In addition, as King (1998) pointed out that questions can build the critical thinking and depth analysis of the students (King, 1998).

Teachers' questions is called to be the most used in the class to formulate the active situation. It is in correlation with (Nunn, 1999) and Ho (2005) that to promote communicative language teaching and to focus on students' need of being able to communicate, they pointed out that the study of the language classroom, especially about teachers' discourse, has mostly intense

on teachers' questions (Ho, 2005). Furthermore, another experts noted that teacher's questions are vital in the process of language teaching and learning, moreover the questions they composed can be known as the quality indicator of the teaching (Roth, 1996). Wright (2016) mentioned that teacher questions can force the students to have a deeper look at the information, to elicit the understanding by using the new language and to practice the target language (Wright, 2016).

Considering the background above, the problem constructed in this research are: First, what are the questions used by foreign-educated teacher to promote critical thinking of the students? Second, how do the questioning techniques used by foreign-educated to foster critical thinking of the students?

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Critical thinking is the set of cognitive and intellectual skills, abilities and dispositions characterized. It develops skills for reasoning and evidence. It inspires students to ascertain and process information, and to do so with discipline. It teaches students to think their way to infer and make conclusions, defend positions on complex issues, consider a wide variety of viewpoints, analyze concepts, theories, and explanations, clarify issues and conclusions, solve problems, transfer ideas to new contexts, examine assumptions, assess alleged facts, explore implications and consequences, and increasingly come to terms with the contradictions and inconsistencies in their own thought and experience (Paul & Elder, 2013) In relevance with that, Chin (2006) describes that by giving systematically lower to higher order questions, teacher can raise up the cognitive level and ladder the critical thinking. Starting the lesson with a new content, teachers may employ lowerlevel question focused on recall and application (Chin & Chin, 2006) Gall (1991) mentioned that for language classes, question is the major aspect mainly in teaching and learning process (Gall, 1991). Moreover, In EFL circumstances, the classroom is frequently the only situation in which students exposed to the target language regularly (Brock, 1986). Therefore, questions displays a worthy portion in the acquisition of the language, because, as Ellis (1994) argues, mostly, the language learner has most opportunity to speak up when they were asked by some questions. To one side from its contribution for the learning of second language, questions that teachers use to ask in classroom also contribute some benefits pedagogically, like motivating, stimulating and retaining students' interest, making the students think and focus on the contents, empowering teachers to check, elicit and clarify the understanding of the students toward the

lesson (Kleinsasser, Richards, & Lockhart, 1995). Brown & Wragg (1993) propose other cognitive and similar motives for asking questions such as encouraging recall memory, developing understanding, increasing imagination and stimulating problem-solving (Wragg & Brown, 1993). Furthermore, to analyze and observe the questions which include cognitive level and trigger students' critical thinking skills in a classroom of language, this research was based on Bloom's (1956) cognitive level theory and his questions taxonomy. Furthermore, Wu's (1993) taxonomy of questioning techniques was also be the based theory of the teacher questioning techniques.

The taxonomy of Bloom (1956) contains a level of learning starting from the basic to the complex one. The cognitive process of it contains some stages such as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Brown, 2007). For the detail information, let us pay attention on this:

- a. Knowledge. This level is the prerequisite for the higher level. Knowledge claimed as the lowest level of cognitive process. The ability like remembering, recalling knowledge and materials in the previous study are the purpose of asking questions by the teacher.
- b. Comprehension. In this level, students are expectedly understand what they have learned and go beyond the knowledge because by comprehending, students are not only have the knowledge but also understand what they have already known. In addition, this level requires students to deduce the facts and comprehend the meaning of information as well as understand how it uses in a certain condition. The questions form to elicit comprehension are rephrase, describe, and explain.
- c. Application. In this level, students are inspires to put on knowledge they have well-read and expanded in class to numerous situations. Students tends to have this ability if they can apply the idea, knowledge and principle in a new situations. The questions starts by some verbs such as determine, solve, employ, choose, demonstrate, relate and interpret would help the students master this cognitive level.
- d. Analysis. The ability of students in which they can break down or separate their knowledge they have comprehended into quantities and function it in diverse conditions and problems are the illustration of having analysis process. In analysis, the questions verbs to be used are such as why, analyze, categorize, and classify.
- e. Synthesis. This ability is driving together of components and parts so as to form a complete, working with components, parts and conjoining them in a way as to establish a pattern or structure not clearly there before (Bloom, 1956). By delivering synthesis questions, teacher can stimulate

students to put all the parts together into a whole. They must use their own ideas, background and experiences in synthesizing process.

f. Evaluation. This level requires students to make judgment about the experience, value, and purpose of ideas, methods, resolutions, and materials. Evaluation means the student used all the previous level of cognitive process from knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis and synthesis. Moreover, evaluation inspires students to compose their decisions about somewhat they know, and have been analyzed, synthesized, based on the criteria which can be seen explicitly to show their perspective. The question that encourages evaluation are evaluate, judge, evaluate, choose, criticize, predict, argue and estimate.

Furthermore, the taxonomy of questioning techniques of Wu (1993) contains five questioning techniques like repetition, rephrasing, decomposition, simplification and probing. In repetition, means that the teacher repeats the question, the same questions in order to support the students to respond to that question. Then, in rephrasing the teacher reforms an original question in another way when there is no response from students. Here, the teacher asks the question in different words and structures once more to give easier form of questions. Simplification. In this technique, the teacher rephrase the content of the questions by which it is simplified. Then, it includes making the scope of the answers specifically that will help the students recognize the question better and thus can answer the question are the purpose of simplification. Decomposition. This techniques let the teacher breaks down an original question into smaller parts in order to help the students to respond to the question is what the teacher do in decomposition. Then, in Probing, the teacher solicits more information from students. Here, assisting the students to have a quality in their response is the purpose. It encourages the students of having more accurate, clearer or more original added with supportive reasoning, justification or accurate responses of information.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

The research was conducted by using a qualitative design and presented descriptively. In qualitative research, the design is flexible and may change during the investigation if appropriate (Creswell, 2014). The design of qualitative research is thus often described as “emergent.” (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2017). In relation with a qualitative research, the data sources implemented the nature' of the setting of the classroom, teaching and learning process at English classroom. Furthermore, the qualitative approach was used for interpreting the data and presenting descriptively. Some reasons that make this study considered as qualitative are: (1) source of the

data adopted the “nature” of classroom setting, teaching and learning process at English classroom, (2) the researcher directly observed the event happened in the setting as a “key instrument”, and (3) The study describe the teachers’ questions employed and the students’ response related with their comprehension and their critical thinking development. The data of this study would be in the form of utterances contain with questions from the teacher and the utterances from the students in the form of their response to the question as an indicator that the question lead them to comprehend and to have critical thinking. The setting of this study was an English classroom in a private University, primarily in the general English class where the objectives was preparing the students to have critical thinking in order to be ready to face the workforce. Then, the main subject of this research was a local teacher who experienced a study abroad in Australia. She pursued TESOL for her program of master education. The response of the students were also be seen as the indicator of the successful teacher questioning. The utterance and response of teacher-student in class were then be transcribed and coded based on the questioning and techniques code book. Before conducting the observation, the preliminary research was done to get depth understanding of the critical thinking skills level of the students. The preliminary research was in the form preobservation. The rubric was based on the holistic critical thinking test of critical thinking based on Facione and critical thinking center (Facione, 2011). The result of the preliminary research depicted that the critical thinking of the students was in the insufficient level where the students were still misinterpret evidence, confused groupings and categorizations, failed to identify strong applicable counterarguments, disorganized claims with the reasons offered in their support, misused major modifications or resemblances and so on.

#### **4. DISCUSSIONS OF MAIN THEMES/ RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

In the preliminary research, the students were still in the insufficient level of critical thinking where they fit the criteria of that level. The students were at first could not understand what was the message of the material they got in the classroom They just saw what was in the surface of the material, for example when they were given an audio visual passage about theme in the market, they did not comprehend why the buyer bargain statement could not be accepted by the seller, then the students could not analyze the reason why that could be happened. They could not get the information that the seller and the buyer were not in the same culture for instance. In other passage, the students could not comprehend why such misunderstanding happened within



the condition in an interview. Then the teacher needed to guide the students' way of comprehending and criticizing the passage as well as infer, analyze, evaluate, till have a self-regulation through the questioning techniques in class. The findings of the observation showed that the teachers asked 256 questions during their teaching and learning process.

The questions were based on some categories as classify in the codebook to analyze the data. From the findings, it was known that the teacher asked some questions. It can be known that the foreign-graduated teacher asked totally 256 questions consist of 16 knowledge question (6,25%), 39 (15,2%) comprehension questions, 30 (11,7%) application questions, 65 (25,3%) analysis questions, 54 (21%) synthesis questions and 52 (20,3%) evaluation questions. The teacher was noted that the choice of the vocabulary she used was that mostly more complex but the questions she made were reconstructed into easier word choice to assist the students to compasses the trustworthiness of statements or other representations related with the answer of the questions. Meanwhile, it can be understood that in teaching and learning process, the questions completed by the teacher, could be broke down into some classifications that used to be critical thinking promotion. They were exposed to the questions to let them made the conclusion, practiced to think about the way to explain their own reason. Most of the questions were accessible in the stimulating discussion section questions. But the questions had their own utility related to critical thinking as example they can be used as the question lead the students to think intensely toward the subject matter. Analysis aspect were mostly triggered in stimulating discussion by both of the teachers. The questions made forced the students to think and used their cognitive skills to give response to the teacher.

The findings also indicated that the teacher used more high cognitive level questions than low cognitive level question, this was indicated because the teacher tried to elicit more responses and trigger the critical thinking of the students by guide them to analyze more about the material given rather than just recalling the information they got. By guiding the students to have analysis, synthesis and evaluation through some questions, the student critical thinking level was increased in some level after seen by the observation of critical thinking components and it increased in the acceptable level so they could do such accurate interpretation, evidence given, statements, graphics, questions, categorizes/groups objects correctly and identified main thoughts properly (Cottrell, 2005). Moreover, the students showed they could identify pertinent arguments (reasons

and claims) pro and con, correctly distinguish reasons from claims, is able to note major and minor differences and similarities as in the criteria of the rubric (Facione, 2011).

Furthermore, the categories of the techniques the teacher met the classifications of repetition, decomposition, simplification and probing. It was in line with the questioning techniques proposed by Natthanan (2009). Repetition was a questioning technique when teachers hope that students were able to respond to the question when the question. The next questioning technique used was simplification. Simplification was similar to rephrasing in that simplification was a technique of reforming the original question. However, when this technique was used, the content of the original question was simplified so that the question can be easier and was more likely to be answered because the questions were composed to be challenging for the students to be critically thinking about the response their own. Then, it was found that decomposition was also implemented in giving the question. This was the technique used by teachers in an attempt to divide an original question into different parts so that students could answer. The most frequently used technique was probing. This was used for eliciting further information from learners (Wu, 1993, as cited in Natthanan, 2009). Although teachers used questioning techniques such as repetitions when learners did not respond, probing seemed to have been used most frequently by the two teachers observed. Probing was used in order to help learners to complete answers when their answers were only partly correct. Another reason for using probing was to provide opportunities for more students to answer in class so that they could participate in interactions. Probing was also used mostly by the internationally educated teacher because she seemed to lead the students to give more response to the questions she made without any intervention to directly give judgment to the response of the students. A teacher who dominates communication and overuses factual questions does little to motivate and, in general, does not emphasize meaning (Ramsey, Gabbard, Clawson, Lee, & Henson, 1990).

Furthermore, the questioning techniques used by the foreign-graduated teacher in the classroom is presented as follows:

**Table 1 Questioning Techniques Which Elicited Students' Responses**

<b>Questioning Techniques</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Repetition	21	10 %
Simplification	47	22%
Rephrasing	39	18%
Decomposition	54	25%
Probing	51	24%

From the findings, the questioning techniques used by the foreign educated teacher was 212. It consists 10% repetition, 22% simplification, 18% rephrasing, 25% decomposition, and 24% probing. By employing those questioning techniques, the teacher mentioned that the students gave more response to the teacher questions. The techniques used helped the students to understand the question more then made the students knew what they have to react. Repetition was the lowest used in the class because the class situation was already in a good and proper situation so the teacher did not need to repeat the question more and more. The class was conducted in the language laboratory. The foreign educated teacher employed repetition with the same pattern of question as well. This might be because the student was not able to put ideas into words yet. Then the teacher repeated the question, broke it into two question in order to let the students understand the question and think about the answer. The second question seemed effective for the student. By not adding any Indonesian sentence, the repetition of the question could elicit response from the student. The other technique used was simplification. This was a technique of remodeling the original question. However, when this technique is used, the content of the original question is simplified so that the question can be easier and is more likely to be answered because the questions were composed to be challenging for the students to be critically thinking about the response their own. Simplification was the third highest employing technique. The next were probing and decomposition. . Probing was an important thing to do because it can assist the students to come to the expected answer after being assisted by the extended questions in the form of simpler sentences. Probing was the way in soliciting more information from students. She required students to expand and develop their responses by making it clearer, more accurate, or more original with supporting rationale or factual information. Probing questions were good tools to gather detailed information made by her.

Probing question was a series of question which require students to go beyond the first response. Subsequent teachers' questions were formed on the basic of the students' respond. Probing was a question technique where students more active give the answer and supply much information to get more inclusive answer. In applying this, the teacher have identified the redirection and the prompting technique. The former involved increase number of students and the latter deals with incorrect response. An additional situation arises when the students' reply was correct but insufficient because it lacked depth analysis.

Then decomposition took 25% of the total techniques which means that the teacher broke down part of the questions into smaller version in order to stimulate students respond which is then can have critical thinking promotion. The teacher let the students practice English as the response of the questions freely, means that the students in class might have discussion and debate of other responses. The students then practice more vocabularies, more complex grammatical features to show their critical thinking accomplishment. She implemented decomposition on the questioning part. She broke down her question into smaller part in order to help the students understanding and answering the question. But, here the question was added with some illustration to direct the question.

However, not all questions can effectively elicit learners' responses right away. If original questions failed to elicit responses from learners, using different questioning techniques will be necessary in order to help learners answer the original questions. Such questioning techniques include asking the same question in a more understandable and less complex manner and repeating the same question, as stated by Natthanan, 2009, was also conducted by both of the teacher. According to a study which examined more than a thousand questions, 53% of questions that were asked in the study stood alone. The rest of the questions were part of a sequence of questions that were asked to help learners to respond to original questions by teachers (Wragg and Brown, 2001, as cited in Vogler, 2005). Therefore, follow-up questions are often used in order to promote learners' responses to teachers' questions. When follow-up questions are examined, the teacher in the current study seemed to have used some questioning techniques for stimulating learners' ideas related to critical thinking (Wu, 1993, as cited in Natthanan, 2009).

The other significant technique used by the teacher in delivering higher order question found in the observation was wait-time. If the student did not respond in one second, the teacher

repeated or rephrased the questions, asked another question or called other student. After receiving a response, the foreign educated teacher waited an average of only 3 seconds before reacting or asking another question. Wait time allowed students time to think. It took time to process information, and students should not be rushed Hunkins (1969).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In this research, the foreign-graduated teacher applied six types of questions based on the taxonomy of Bloom in the classrooms. The questions were knowledge, comprehension, application, and analysis, synthesis, and evaluation questions. Hence, analysis questions were found to be the most dominant questions. The dominance of analysis questions was caused by the factor such as the teacher wanted to help the students to have deeper understanding of the material by analysis the factor and message behind the material delivered by the teacher. The three high cognitive level of questions were mostly used because the teacher goal of teaching was also included a critical thinking factor in the class. The teacher gave the students chance to discuss and debate the response of other students' too. Furthermore for questioning techniques the teacher used repetition, simplification, rephrasing, decomposition and probing in the class. Decomposition was the most frequently employed in the classroom. This is because the teacher needed to break down the original question in order to be more understood by the students. The students seemed to be brave to express their idea and tried not to be shy to tell what they have in mind about the material given. By employing teacher questions based on Bloom taxonomy and Wu's teacher questioning techniques, students' critical thinking was about to be promoted. The preliminary research which was done to observe the critical thinking level which was in the insufficient level were then increased into the acceptance level of critical thinking criteria proposed by Facione (2011). In the acceptance level students accurately interpreted evidence, statements, graphics, questions, correctly categorized/grouped objects, identified main ideas correctly, identified relevant arguments (reasons and claims) pro and con. Furthermore, the students correctly distinguished reasons from claims, was able to note major and minor differences and similarities. From the teacher techniques and guided questions of critical thinking students were also able to offered analyses and evaluations of obvious alternative points of view, correctly distinguished between well-reasoned vs poorly reasoned arguments, correctly evaluated the credibility of sources.

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