



The Correlation Between Questioning Strategies And Student's Focus
(A Study of Teachers in East Lombok)

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ABSTRACT

In the learning process, students' ability to stay focused is a crucial factor in achieving optimal learning outcomes. The teacher's teaching strategies, including questioning strategies, play an important role in building students' focus in the classroom. This study aims to identify and analyze the correlation between the questioning strategies implemented by the teacher and students' learning focus in the classroom. Methodology: This quantitative correlational study employed descriptive and inferential analyses with random sampling. The sample consisted of 113 teachers, including 72 males and 41 females, who taught eleventh-grade students in private schools in East Lombok, NTB. Data were collected using an online form, and the reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The data analysis procedure was conducted through Spearman correlation analysis. Findings: The research results found a correlation value of $r = 0.531$ with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Conclusion: The research results indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between the questioning strategies used by the teacher and the students' level of focus in learning. This suggests that the more effective the questioning strategies implemented by the teacher, the higher the students' level of focus in the classroom.

Keywords: *questioning strategies, student's focus.*

INTRODUCTION

Student's concentration during learning sessions is a critical determinant of instructional effectiveness, yet it remains underexplored in the Indonesian EFL context. In the learning process, another challenge is that students often lose concentration during lessons, which affects their learning outcomes. (Chen & Huang, 2025) Students' focus or concentration determines how effectively they can receive, process, and understand the information delivered by the teacher. (Siga & Madhakomala, 2023) On the other hand, the teacher's teaching strategies, including questioning strategies, play a vital role in building interaction and student engagement in the classroom. (Tran, 2024)

Questioning strategy is a technique used by teachers to stimulate students' critical thinking, increase participation, and help them direct their attention to the learning material (Sanjaya, 2010). With appropriate questions, teachers not only assess students' understanding but can also help refocus students whose attention may have declined during the learning process. Open-ended, challenging, and relevant questions can spark curiosity and compel students to concentrate more closely on the lesson (Walsh & Sattes, 2011), (Lee, 2024).

Students' learning focus can be influenced by various factors, both internal and external. One significant external factor is the teacher's teaching style and methods. When teachers use questioning strategies effectively, students are encouraged to think actively, feel engaged, and ultimately improve their focus on the material (Hamzah, 2008). Conversely, passive teaching methods can lead to boredom and a loss of student attention.

Several previous studies have also shown a connection between teachers' questioning techniques and students' cognitive engagement, which directly correlates with their learning focus. For instance, a study conducted by Chin (2006) revealed that exploratory questions posed by teachers encouraged students to think more deeply and become more actively involved in classroom discussions. (Graff, 2025)

Learning focus is one of the key indicators of success in the learning process. Students who are able to maintain sustained attention to the lesson material tend to have better understanding and higher academic achievement. (Harunasari et al., 2023) However, in various regions, including East Lombok Regency, issues related to low levels of student focus remain a serious challenge that affects the effectiveness of classroom learning.

Several elementary and secondary schools in East Lombok face various challenges that affect students' ability to concentrate during the learning process. One of the main factors is the unequal condition of educational infrastructure. (Huang & Tsai, 2024) According to local media reports and field investigations, several schools in East Lombok face infrastructural challenges, such as inadequate classroom facilities, which may hinder students' concentration and learning engagement. (Begum et al., 2022) This situation has forced some students to study in temporary classrooms, and in some cases, even in teachers' homes, as seen at SDN 4 Jurit Baru (LombokPost, 2024). Such uncomfortable learning environments directly contribute to a decline in students' concentration and learning focus. (Ou, 2024)

In addition to environmental factors, teachers' ability to manage the classroom and apply effective teaching strategies also plays a significant role in determining students' level of focus. In

several schools in East Lombok, the lack of professional training for teachers in implementing active learning strategies including questioning techniques that stimulate students' cognitive engagement has resulted in monotonous and less interactive instruction. As a consequence, students become easily distracted and lose interest in the lessons being delivered.

On the other hand, government initiatives through the *Sekolah Penggerak* (Driving School) program and the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which have begun to be implemented in several schools in East Lombok, offer opportunities to improve this situation. (Deveci, 2023) Project-based learning (P5), differentiated instruction, and questioning strategies that emphasize active student engagement can serve as effective solutions to enhance students' learning focus. (Dah et al., 2023) However, the implementation of these programs remains uneven and requires thorough evaluation regarding their effectiveness in improving learning focus, particularly in areas with limited resources. (Brynsbaert, 2024)

The issue of students' learning focus in East Lombok deserves serious attention, as it is directly related to the quality of learning outcomes and the equity of education. Therefore, research on the factors influencing students' learning focus in this region both internal (such as motivation, attention, and engagement) and external (such as teaching strategies and the learning environment) is essential as a basis for developing well-targeted educational policies. (Maniaque-Benton, 2025)

Based on the above explanation, it is important to further examine whether there is a significant correlation between the questioning strategies used by teachers and students' focus during learning activities. (Bintz, 2025) This study is expected to contribute to the improvement of classroom learning quality by providing a deeper understanding of teacher interaction techniques and their impact on students. However, empirical evidence examining the link between questioning strategies and student focus, particularly in under-resourced Indonesian contexts, remains limited. (Scullion, 2024)

Based on this, the present study aims to identify and analyze the correlation between the questioning strategies implemented by teachers and students' learning focus in the classroom. This research is intended to provide valuable input for developing more effective questioning strategies to help maintain students' focus during learning. It also aims to raise students' awareness of the importance of concentration in learning and how teachers' instructional strategies can influence it, as well as to serve as a reference for future studies related to teaching strategies and educational psychology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategies for Asking in Learning

Questioning strategies are an approach used by teachers to develop student involvement in the learning process through structured questions. Asking questions is not only to test students' understanding, but also to stimulate critical thinking, encourage exploration, and build active classroom interaction (Sanjaya, 2010). The strategy of asking questions in learning is a systematic approach used by teachers to ask questions in a conscious, planned, and purposeful manner in order to build two-way interactions, stimulate students' thinking, and increase participation and understanding of the material. "Teacher questioning strategy refers to the intentional use of questions by teachers to stimulate student thinking, sustain engagement, and promote deeper understanding" (Chin, 2023; Ma *et al.*, 2024). According to Walsh & Sattes (2011), the quality of the questions asked by teachers greatly affects the depth of students' thinking process. Open-ended and challenging questions will encourage students to think more actively and pay attention to the learning process.

Supriatna (2019) stated that there are several indicators of the questioning strategy: 1) Clarity and brevity: Questions are asked clearly and easily understood, without using excessive or ambiguous language. 2) Relevance: The questions asked are directly related to the topic or problem being discussed, and have a clear purpose. 3) Variety: Use different types of questions, such as open-ended questions (questions that require more than just yes or no) and closed-ended questions (questions that require yes or no answers) to dig deeper into information. 4) Critical Thinking: Questions are designed to stimulate critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation. 5) Deep Understanding: Questions help to understand concepts, ideas, or information more deeply, as well as encourage students to relate new knowledge to existing knowledge. 6) Probing and Divergent: The ability to ask further questions (probing) to dig deeper into information and ask different (divergent) questions to see different points of view. 7) Contextual: Questions are adjusted to the context of the situation or learning material being discussed. 8) Feedback: Being able to receive and utilize feedback from the questions asked, both for oneself and others. 9) Giving Thinking Time: Giving students enough time to think about the question and formulate the answer. And 10) Spread: Provides the opportunity to ask questions to all students, not just to a few specific students.

Student Focus on Learning

In relation to this, students' focus during learning represents a crucial outcome of effective questioning. Learning focus or concentration is defined as the ability of students to focus on academic activities in a certain time without being distracted by other stimuli (Slavin, 2009). Focus is key to optimizing material absorption, information processing, and long-term memory strengthening. Factors that affect student focus include: Learning environment, teacher's teaching style, students' mental readiness and classroom management techniques (Hamzah, 2008). Student focus is also closely related to engagement in learning. The more actively involved students are, the higher the level of focus they have (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). According to Mattson & . Pinkelman (2020), put forward three indicators of student focus in learning such as; 1) Emotional: The involvement of positive feelings during learning (interest, enthusiasm) as well as emotional disengagement (boredom, frustration). 2) Behavior: The execution of activities that are appropriate to learning such as on-task behavior (following instructions, taking notes, dialogue).3) Cognitive: Depth of students' thinking involves information processing, reflection strategies, and metacognition.

The Relationship Between Questioning Strategies and Student Focus

Similarly, Sadker and Zittleman (2009) noted that effective questioning creates an "active mental state" that sustains attention and engagement. This finding demonstrates a positive correlation between teachers' questioning techniques and students' level of focus in learning.

Conversely, when teachers rely solely on closed-ended or repetitive questions, students' focus tends to decline due to limited cognitive stimulation. Regular questioning can, therefore, function as a cognitive control tool to help redirect students' attention during lessons (Kauchak & Eggen, 2012).

In summary, the reviewed studies consistently indicate that questioning strategies and student focus are interrelated components of classroom engagement.

Based on this, the hypothesis in this study is

Ha: There is a relationship between the questioning strategy and the student's focus.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a correlational quantitative approach. The goal is to find out the relationship between the questioning strategies used by teachers and the level of students' focus during the learning process. This type of study was chosen because it is in accordance with the purpose of testing the relationship between variables, not just describing or testing the influence causally. The location of the research was conducted in East Lombok. Time: February – April 2025 (Even Semester of the 2024/2025 Academic Year). The population in this study is all teachers in East Lombok, which amounts to around 200 teachers. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of 20 Likert-scale items adapted from Chin (2006) and Supriatna (2019). The instrument's reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.87$). The number of samples obtained was 113 teachers who were selected using the proportional random sampling technique so that the representation of each class was fair. The data is analyzed using SPSS or other statistical programs with the following steps:

1. Correlation test: using the Pearson Product Moment test (if the data is normal) or Spearman Rank (if the data is normal).
2. Interpretation of the correlation value (r):
0.00–0.19: very weak
0.20–0.39: weak
0.40–0.59: medium
0.60–0.79: Strong
0.80–1.00: very strong

The study ensures the confidentiality of the participants' identities, uses informed consent, and obtains permission from the principal and homeroom teacher before data collection is carried out. Ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee, and participants provided informed consent prior to data collection.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the analysis on the relationship between teachers' questioning strategies and students' focus that were formulated at the outset of the study. The findings are derived from the data analysis conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25, which provided accurate statistical outputs to support the interpretation of the results.

Table 1. Correlation Test Results

		Correlations	
		Teachers Questioning Strategies	Student's Focus
Teachers Questioning Strategies	Pearson Correlation	1	.741**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	113	113
Student's Focus	Pearson Correlation	.741**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	113	113

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on these results, it is known that there is a positive relationship between the questioning strategy used by teachers and the level of students' focus in learning with a sign value of $0.000 < 0.005$. Meanwhile, the Pearson Correlation value is 0.741 which is in the interval of 0.60–0.79 which means that there is a strong relationship between the questioning strategies used by teachers and the level of students' focus in learning.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the questioning strategies used by teachers and the level of students' focus in learning. Statistical analysis using the Pearson correlation test yielded a value of $r = 0.741$ with a significance of $0.000 (p < 0.05)$. This shows that the more effective the questioning strategy applied by the teacher, the higher the level of students' focus in the classroom. This positive correlation suggests that teachers' questioning behaviors may act as an external regulator of students' cognitive engagement, aligning with Vygotsky's concept of guided interaction. These results support previous findings by Ma et al. (2024) in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology* which stated that questioning strategies that include open-ended questions, probing, and waiting time can significantly increase student engagement, including aspects of their focus and attention.

Similarly, the study of Chin (2023) underscores the importance of question quality in activating students' thinking. Reflective and analytical questions encourage students to concentrate more on understanding the context of the question and formulating meaningful answers. In the context of learning in Indonesia, Azhari & Wildan (2023) found that teachers who use probing techniques and equitably distribute questions tend to result in more active classes and more focused students.

Furthermore, the success of the questioning strategy in improving student focus is also influenced by the type of questions used. Questions that are exploratory and challenging make students feel encouraged to think deeper, process information critically, and stay focused on learning activities. Conversely, questions that are closed or too simple are less likely to trigger strong intellectual engagement, making it easier for students to lose focus.

The correlation found was high, indicating that the questioning strategy contributed significantly to maintaining students' focus. Other factors such as the teacher's teaching style, subject matter, and classroom environment also affect students' focus, but the strategy of asking questions remains one of the key aspects that teachers can control and improve.

In learning practice, teachers who consistently use structured questioning strategies including *wait time*, probing, and redirecting tend to have more interactive and focused classes. This strategy not only builds meaningful dialogue, but also develops students' thinking skills and keeps them mentally engaged in the learning process. Teachers can enhance students' focus by incorporating structured questioning routines such as probing and reflective prompts.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pivotal role of questioning strategies in maintaining students' learning focus, highlighting the need for teacher professional development in interactive pedagogy. Statistical analysis using the Pearson correlation test yielded a value of $r = 0.741$ with a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This shows that the more effective the questioning strategy applied by the teacher, the higher the level of students' focus in the classroom.

This study acknowledges the use of a correlational design; therefore, it cannot establish a causal relationship between teachers' questioning strategies and students' learning focus. Future research is recommended to employ experimental or longitudinal designs to examine the direct and long-term effects of questioning strategies on students' focus. In addition, this study focuses on students in learning not only influenced by questioning strategies, but also by teachers' teaching

styles, learning environment, intrinsic motivation, and students' psychological conditions. Further research should consider these variables as moderator or mediation variables to obtain more comprehensive results.

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