



Teachers' Questioning in Reading Lessons: A Case Study in Indonesia

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Abstract

Teachers' quality questions contribute to enhancing students' existing thinking and reasoning skills. The practice of teacher questioning in the EFL reading classroom is critical in supporting student learning, especially in such contexts where there is limited research on these issues as in Indonesia. This study investigated the practice of teacher questioning and teaching reading in secondary schools in Indonesia. Teachers from three grade 11 classes from three different secondary schools participated in this multiple-site case study which was employed to generate rich explanatory data across sites. Data were gathered from the teachers in the form of observations, interviews, and textbook analysis. The findings from this study show that the teachers relied on the textbooks for pedagogies for teaching reading and for the kinds of questions they asked to assist in reading comprehension. The teachers were exposed mainly to low-level questions. Thus, they faced some challenges in generating high-level questions in these conditions, and required assistance in order to do this. The study provides important information about the practice of questioning strategies in a foreign language context in Indonesia and put forward implications for changes in reading lessons.

1 Introduction

In Indonesia, since 2003, each school district has had the authority to develop courses and curricula based on the needs of the community. For example, in some districts there are elective subjects such as traditional dance, crafts, local languages and Arabic. In many districts, English has been introduced in response to local community needs (Muatan Lokal, 2003). Thus, English has been taught in the first year of primary school since 1996 in some areas (Nur, 2004). At the primary level, English words are introduced to children thereby emphasising vocabulary and pronunciation.

Based on the national curriculum (Kurikulum, 2004, 2003) at junior secondary school, English is taught as a compulsory subject for three years in Grades 7-9. They study the same subjects in the first year of senior secondary school (Grade 10). From their second year (Grade 11) onward, the students are then grouped into three departments, namely Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Languages based on their interests and achievements in Grade 10.

Among the four English skills, reading is more emphasised to be taught in Indonesia as the item tests of the national examination focus on the reading comprehension. However, the promi-

nence of teaching reading in English in Indonesia is to develop comprehension skills. Activities in reading in secondary classrooms typically focus on searching for main ideas, learning new vocabulary, and emphasising grammatical structure (Lie, 2007; Madya, 2007).

Reading in a foreign language is the main goal of learning and "the most important skill in a foreign language" (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, p. 89). This skill is particularly important in an instructional circumstance where students have to be competent in English but rarely speak the language. For example, students in Indonesia who have been studying English for six years, regrettably, can hardly understand and speak English effectively (Nur, 2004).

Reading comprehension in a second language is more complicated than in a first language. In English as a first language, reading involves at least four components of knowledge including knowledge of words, knowledge of language, background knowledge of the reader and the context knowledge of the reading (Morrow, 2005). Reading in a second language also engages with those components and builds that knowledge in a second language incorporating many different contexts including ethnic and cultural discrepancies (Dubin & Bycina, 1991; Ediger, 2001; Grabe, 2002; Hudson, 2007; Kern & Schultz, 2005). Further, reading in a foreign language like English is even more challenging as the community does not speak English, lacks English exposure (i.e. English newspapers and English TV programs), and has the classroom as the only place to learn English. Thus, students who learn English in a foreign language context may lack English language proficiency when they read EFL texts, which means that they will have greater difficulties in reading comprehension. Thus, reading instruction is critical to provide opportunities for students to engage actively with texts to foster comprehension of English reading passages.

Reading instruction literature suggests that questioning strategies can be taught to students to enhance reading comprehension (Hudson, 2007). Questioning is a critical element in facilitating students' learning and their long term reading motivation (Macalister, 2011). In teaching reading, the most frequent techniques used for improving comprehension include questions of what the students have read (Alvermann & Phelps, 2002; Anthony & Raphael, 2004). Teachers ask questions in reading to reconcile prior knowledge, develop concepts, and clarifying reasons, and this strategy can often lead students to high level thinking (Good & Brophy, 2000; Gunning, 1992). For this to occur, teachers need more effective self-questioning strategy to use with their students. Therefore, this case study explored how EFL teachers used questions in teaching reading lessons in the classrooms in Indonesia. The study is hoped to contribute to further understanding of teacher questioning practice and teaching reading practice in some specific places in Indonesia.

2 Theoretical background for teacher question

Social development theory (Vygotsky, 1978) provides a useful framework for understanding the functions of teacher questioning practice. Vygotsky (1978) argues that the majority of learning is not achieved in isolation, but rather through the interaction that takes place through communication and collaboration with other people in social settings. According to the Vygotskyian approach, the construction of meaning first occurs as exchanges between two participants and is subsequently internalised. Vygotskyian theory states that in order for learning to become internalised, mediation must occur during the actual problem-solving through a joint activity or shared task with others (Vygotsky, 1981). Vygotsky maintains that social interaction is a prerequisite to learning and cognitive development. This means that when knowledge is co-constructed and learning occurs, it always involves more than one person. Interaction with more knowledgeable or capable others (parents, teachers, peers, etc.) helps children construct an understanding of the construct. As such, learning emerges as the result of interaction in social settings. Such interaction needs to occur within the zone of proximal development (ZPD), defined as the area between the development level of an individual for problem solving without assistance and the development level of an individual's problem solving when assisted by another (Vygotsky, 1978).

This theory provides a useful conceptual understanding of how students can benefit from teachers' questioning. Effective questions can be used to provide such assistance for student learn-

ing as questioning is an essential factor which contributes to challenge students' existing thinking and promote their reasoning skills. Questioning in the classroom usually refers to questions asked by teachers (Graesser & Person, 1994). Questioning strategies can be used not only for learning content, but also to guide students to think critically and analytically, leading to deep levels of understanding (Jacobsen, Eggen, & Kauchak, 1999; Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, 2007). The argument for this practice is that teachers act as a model in terms of questioning skills. Students are expected to imitate teachers' questions to help them to build up their own questioning skills (Vandermeij, 1994).

It is evident from research that teaching questioning supports student learning. Teachers asking students questions of what they have read is one of the common techniques used for teaching or improving reading comprehension (Alvermann & Phelps, 2002; Anthony & Raphael, 2004; Fordham, 2006; Good & Brophy, 2000; Gunning, 1992). Questions can be used (a) to make readers aware of the important points of a reading passage (Day & Bamford, 1998; Vandermeij, 1994), (b) to check comprehension (Gerot, 2000; Nuttall, 1982), (c) to extend the topic, (d) to link the passage to previous knowledge and experience to improve comprehension (Handsfield & Jiménez, 2008; Walker, 2000), and (e) to serve as "assessment" about whether students understand what they have been taught (Kintsch, 2005).

Moreover, Smith (2004), Raphael (1986), and Raphael and Au (2005) claim that the essence of comprehending a passage is being able to ask relevant questions and to search for answers to the questions that have been formulated. This technique is used to reconcile prior knowledge, develop concepts, clarify reasoning and may lead students to higher levels of thinking (Gunning, 1992). Different levels of thinking such as questions that require interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation can be described using taxonomies. Bloom's (1956) taxonomy categorises different levels of thinking focusing on the cognitive domain (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Eanes, 1997; Marzano, 2001). This taxonomy is well-structured and readily converted into instructional goals, becoming a valuable tool for identifying the intended outcomes of a program. In addition, this taxonomy has had a significant influence on theory and practice for over 40 years (Marzano, 2001). The taxonomy consists of six levels in which knowledge is the lowest level, followed by comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, with evaluation at the highest level. It can also be used as a guide that enables teachers to vary their questions in their classroom interactions (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Eanes, 1997).

Although display or literal questions are perceived as a low level question, Boyd and Rubin (2006) argue that display questions are still important. Ho (2005) investigated teachers' questions in reading lessons in three different secondary classrooms with three non-native ESL teachers in Brunei. The data were mainly gathered from six classroom observations and field notes. The findings showed that defining question categories was not easy when interactions in the classroom setting were observed. The study suggests a necessity to rethink the categories of teachers' questions which are commonly classified as open and closed. Lee (2008) analysed the use of yes/no questions in 36 hours of class sessions from three different ESL courses in two different US universities. The sessions were 20 hours of writing courses, six hours for speaking, and 10 hours from 10 reading sessions. The students were mostly from East Asian and Middle Eastern countries, and the teachers were native English speakers. The results revealed that yes/no questions were used to promote interactions between the teachers and the students as well as among the students themselves in order to make learning meaningful. The author also highlighted the fact that the questioning process was a useful tool for teaching and learning. So, research about questioning strategies suggests that literal questions as well as yes/no questions should still be used to encourage students to be involved in talking and that teachers should use this opportunity to lead students into higher levels of thinking by asking more inferential questions. The concern then arises as to whether teachers are able to do this in an EFL context.

In a second language context, a study by Shomoossi (2004) investigated teachers' questions in 40 EFL reading comprehension classes in Tehran universities. The results revealed that teachers used display questions (i.e. comprehension, confirmation or clarification checks) 4.4 times (82%) more than referential questions (18%). Teachers asked more referential questions in pre-reading

sessions with the intention to assist students to warm up for the task and to become familiar with the topic. However, the teachers' questions were dominantly display questions when working on the exercises in during- and post-reading phases. The author found that not all referential questions created classroom interactions, as other factors such as topics that were relevant to students' interest, teacher's attention, and sense of humour, influenced the extent of interaction to some degree. Further, the author indicated the importance of display questions to encourage language learners, particularly beginners. More recently, Tan (2007) conducted a study investigating teachers' questions in English classes at nine universities in China. The results showed that those teachers' questions were mostly targeted at comprehension checking and very few questions encouraged student understanding and thinking. Moreover, the questions asked by the teachers were commonly display ones, making up about 87% of the total questions. Also, the questions were used to keep students' attention focused on the passage and as part of class management. The author suggested that teachers needed to change their role into that of a facilitator to provide more opportunities for students to think independently and critically so that they became active learners. The research suggests that teachers need to ask more varied questions that focus on higher level thinking. Although the role of teachers' questioning is undoubtedly essential in developing students' learning, the practice of teachers' questioning in the classroom seems to be limited.

3 Practice of teachers' questions

Given the fact that teachers' questions play a critical role in enhancing students' learning, the practice of teachers' use of questions is still questionable and varies across different contexts. Research has suggested that in reading lessons, teachers use the questions provided in the textbooks rather than generate questions themselves (Alvermann & Phelps, 2002; Dillon, 1988; Kerry, 1987; Shomoossi, 2004; Vandermeij, 1994). In addition, such questions are normally simple factual questions that rarely require higher level thinking (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2001). As a consequence, students might imitate and generate similar low level questions.

In their study that spanned two decades (1980–1999), Galton, Hargraves, Comber, Wall, and Pell (1999) noted that the quality of teachers' questions in primary classrooms in a first language context tended to improve. The authors reported that the number of fact questions decreased slightly from 29.2 % in 1980 to 24.7 % in 1999. Meanwhile, both closed solution questions that required problem solving (18.3 %) and open solution questions that associated with the lesson content (5.0 %) in 1980 had almost doubled in 1999 with 34.6% and 9.9% respectively. The review implied that teachers are still able to improve the quality of their questions, although the improvements are limited. Harrop and Swinson (2003) investigated 10 teachers' questions in infant, junior and secondary schools in the U.K. The data were gathered from observations and the categories of questions were open solution, task supervision, routine questions, and closed questions. The overall results were similar to the earlier study (Galton, et al., 1999) where the teachers' questions were commonly closed questions, followed by task supervision, routine, and some open questions. This implied that over a decade the teachers' questions remained dominantly closed questions. Another study by Parker and Hurry (2007) revealed that teachers also asked more closed questions in reading comprehension, leading to the fact that students generated a limited number of questions. The study stresses the need for teachers to ask more open questions and encourage students to generate questions which would provide more opportunities for them to practise and apply questioning strategies in the classroom.

In conclusion, the literature emphasizes the need for research into teachers' questioning. Studies investigating the use of teachers' questioning in the reading classroom have been of great interest to educational researchers. However, there is a dearth of studies in teacher questioning in EFL reading classrooms, in a context with limited resources, like Indonesia. Thus the current study investigates the practice of teacher questioning in EFL reading classrooms at secondary level in Indonesia. The general aim of this study is to explore teachers' use of questioning at the senior secondary level in English as a foreign language (EFL) context. More specifically, this study exam-

ines the types of questions provided in the textbooks and what types of questions did those teachers generate to assist students in comprehending the English passages, and their perception towards generating questions.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research design

This study focuses on an exploratory investigation of the practice of questioning strategies with teachers in a particular EFL context in Indonesia. As context is crucial, a case study approach was used to examine a particular location and program of teaching. More specifically, a multiple-site case study design was applied in order to provide rich data from the teachers. Using this design allowed the researcher to investigate phenomena within their real life contexts, while the use of several sites in this study provided a richer and more varied set of circumstances (Yin, 2003). In this study, the data were collected from multiple sources: teacher observations, teachers' interviews, and textbooks.

4.2 Research site and participants

This study was conducted in Samarinda, the capital of East Kalimantan (well-known as Borneo), Indonesia, where English is a foreign language to Indonesian speakers. The specific research sites comprised three senior secondary state schools located in Samarinda. These schools were School-2, School-3, and School-5. The schools had reputations for excellence and most of the students in these schools had previously studied at state schools. In addition, teaching and learning facilities, and teachers' qualifications across the three schools were comparable. They were also located outside of the Samarinda town centre and were easily accessible for the research.

Three English teachers (Ati, Issy, and Anna) and their Grade 11 classes from three different senior secondary schools participated in the multiple-site case study which was employed to generate rich explanatory data across sites. Ati holds a bachelor degree in English Education. She had twenty 45-minute lessons per week in School-3 and taught two 90-minute lessons in this class. She was also a language laboratory coordinator. Issy's class was in School-2. Issy holds a bachelor degree in English Education and had been teaching since 1991. Anna holds a bachelor degree and had also graduated in English Education. Her career in teaching began in 1995. Her class was in School-5.

4.3 Framework for data analysis

The Raphael's (1986) Categories of Question Types were used to classify the questions generated by the teachers and written in the English textbook. Raphael (1986), Raphael and Au (2005), and Smith (2004) claim that the essence of comprehending of a passage is being able to ask relevant questions and to search for answers to the questions that have been formulated. This technique is used to reconcile prior knowledge, develop concepts, and clarify reasoning and may lead students to higher levels of thinking (Gunning, 1992).

Four ordered categories of question types are defined by this scale based on the work of Raphael (1986). These question types were developed on the basis of the importance of question and answer relationships which are central to this study. These ordered scale categories going from complex to simple are: "On My Own," "Author and Me," "Think and Search," and "Right There" questions. A summary of the categories of questions can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The summary of the categories of questions described in Raphael's taxonomy (1986)

No	Category of Questions	Explanation
1	On My Own	Ask for personal responses including experience, background knowledge and judgement
2	Author and Me	Ask for answers from blended information in a passage including readers' background knowledge and experience
3	Think and Search	Ask for answers found from different parts of a passage and making inferences
4	Right There	Ask for explicit answers stated in a passage

The "On My Own" questions ask for the readers' personal responses that require readers' own experience, background knowledge and value judgements. The answers cannot be found in the passage. The "Author and Me" questions ask for answers which are related to the passage. They require answers which are gathered from a blend of information in the passage and readers' background knowledge and experiences. The "Think and Search" questions ask for answers where readers need to find material from different parts of the passage and then put together, make inferences and sometimes draw conclusions. The "Right There" questions generally require answers which are easily found as they are explicitly stated in the passage. This framework was used to investigate the use of questions by the participants in this study.

4.4 Methods of data collection

Data were collected from the following sources.

4.4.1 Classroom observation

Non-participant observations that did not interrupt classroom activities were undertaken. Observations were conducted to provide data about current practices in the reading classrooms, in terms of the kinds of questions the teachers asked and how reading lessons were conducted. The observations were conducted eight times; three observations each for School-3 and School-5 and two observations for School-2. The observations of the three classes focused on teachers' questions and strategies for teaching English in reading lessons. Each lesson lasted approximately 90 minutes for each class. The data comprised transcriptions from an audio tape recording of the teachers' questions as well as field-notes about how they conducted the reading lessons. The data in terms of questions asked were coded and analysed on the basis of data analysis stages suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). The analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing.

4.4.2 Semi-structured interview

The interviews were undertaken with teachers in the follow-up interviews after the observation. These interviews were used to gather further data which could not be obtained from observations (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006), and to gather the teachers' responses about *questioning* strategy (Patton, 2002). An individual interview was conducted with each teacher. This interview aimed to provide information about teachers' questioning skills. Each teacher was interviewed for 20-25 minutes.

4.4.3 Document analysis

Raphael's (1986) framework was used to investigate the questions in the textbook for teaching reading from Grade 11 students in Indonesia.

4.5 Method of data analysis

There are two major stages of data analysis in a multiple-site study: within-site analysis and across-site analysis. A within site study analysis involves organising the data in depth around the specific site and usually contains a detailed description of each site. Miles and Huberman's (1994) procedure were used in the within-site analysis to analyse the classroom observation and interviews of each case. Once the analysis of each site had been completed, the search for across-site similarities and differences began. From the results of within-site analysis and a range of initial impressions about the data, tentative themes, knowledge and concepts as well as relationships between variables from across-site analysis began to emerge. These tentative conclusions were verified and confirmed by triangulating this information with evidence from other sources of data used in the study (Eisenhardt, 1989). The analysis across different sites was undertaken using the techniques proposed by Yin (2003). The techniques were pattern matching and logic models. The pattern-matching technique searched for similarities and differences across the sites. The use of this technique in this study provided a broader understanding about the practice of teachers' questioning in reading lessons in a specific context in Indonesia

5 Results

5.1 Types of questions provided in the textbooks

The textbooks used by the three teachers provide questions and tasks to go with each reading passage. These tasks are intended to help students to comprehend the passage. The tasks take the form of True/False, Answering Questions, Matching the Synonym, Multiple Choice, Pronoun Reference, and Word Completion exercises. Since this study was investigating questioning strategies, the questions from the textbooks needed to be examined. The questions examined in the textbooks are those related to the passages used by the teachers in the initial observations.

The types of questions found in the textbooks were categorised based on Raphael's taxonomy (1986) which has been developed to identify the importance of question and answer relationships. These ordered categories provide a scale of conceptual difficulty from "On My Own" questions to "Author and Me," "Think and Search," and "Right There" questions. The question types provided in the textbooks are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the questions provided in the textbooks were mainly "Right There" questions (71 out of 75 or 94.7%) where answers to these questions can be found directly in the passages. The numbers of "Think and Search" questions which required readers to put together the information from different parts of the passage and make inferences, and "Author and Me" questions that required answers derived from the passage and readers' background knowledge and experiences amounted to only 2 out of 75 questions (2.7%) for each category.

Table 2. The kinds of questions presented in the textbooks

School and Type of Passage	Categories of Question Types				Total Questions f(%)
	<i>Right There</i> f(%)	<i>Think and Search</i> f(%)	<i>Author and Me</i> f(%)	<i>On My Own</i> f(%)	
School-2					
Gua Tabuhan is a Lively Cave	10(13.3)				10(13.3)
Snoring, and An Atheist and Newton	15(20)	1(1.3)			16(21.3)
School-3					
Thanksgiving	10(13.3)				10(13.3)
Hummingbird	8(10.7)				8(10.7)
Ministers Endorse Plans on Trade, Bird Flu	5(6.7)		1(1.3)		6(8)
School-5					
Farming	8(10.7)				8(10.7)
Horticulture	9(12)	1(1.3)			10(13.3)
Welfare	6(8)		1(1.3)		7(9.3)
Total Questions	71(94.7)	2(2.7)	2(2.7)		75(100)

The passage and questions for “Ministers Endorse Plans on Trade, Bird Flu” which were included in this analysis because they came from the third observation at School-3, and where a handout sheet was provided by the teacher, and they were used in the same way as the passages in the textbooks. The pattern of question types used in the teacher’s generated questions comprised five “Right There” questions (6.7%) and one “Author and Me” question (1.3%) that was similar to those provided in the textbooks.

In addition, the sequence of questions in the textbooks required answers from the passage where information was in the same sequence. For example, the passage “Farming” used in the first lesson observation at School-5 was as follows:

Early people could stay alive by hunting animals, catching fishes, and gathering fruits from trees. They moved from one place to another in search of food to keep them alive.
People used to collect seeds for their supplies of food. They often found several new seedlings of the seeds they had collected before. From this finding, they started to grow seeds and grains for their first crops. (Setiyadi, n.d., p. 33)

Then the first three questions asked in the textbook were as follows:

1. How did early people survive?
2. Did they use to roam from one place to another in search of food?
3. When did people start to grow crops and breed animals?

From this example, the parallel ordering of questions and answers is evident. The first and second questions could be answered from the first and second sentences of the first paragraph respectively, while the third question required an answer from the second sentence of the second paragraph. It was also noted that the wording of the questions was similar to the information in the passage. The first question asked “How did early people survive?” while the passage indicated how “early people could stay alive.” This also occurred in the second question in relation to the second sentence of the first paragraph, and the third question in conjunction with the second sentence of the second paragraph.

Thus, there was an emergent pattern that guided students to find the answers to the questions in sequence using similar key words rather than finding an answer by understanding the passage. The similar wording or phrasing of the question and the passage also made the questions easy to answer. A better test of reading comprehension would have occurred if the answers to the questions

were found in different parts of a passage and the words or phrases making up the questions were different from those in the passage.

5.2 *Teaching English reading*

The findings from the initial observations revealed that the teachers from the three schools taught their reading lessons in a relatively similar fashion. The way they taught English reading was similar to the traditional approach used by the majority of teachers in Indonesian classrooms. Teaching reading activities in the classroom began with some questions from the teachers. Then, the teachers asked students to skim a passage. Next, the students read the passage silently and the teacher offered some assistance if they needed some clarification. On completion of this task, two or three students were asked to read aloud. Translating the passage was sometimes conducted during this phase. Next, the students were required to answer the questions provided in the textbook and to complete the tasks presented there. This was carried out in the classroom if time was available or taken home for homework. These findings indicate that all three teachers were heavily dependent on the textbooks as a syllabus and for their teaching methodology. As a consequence, they often just followed or imitated the material presented in the textbooks.

The findings also revealed that comprehension of the passages was not the primary target of reading. For example, Issy (School-2) taught her students about pronunciation and synonyms prior to reading lessons. The students in Ati's class at School-3 completed the reading tasks from the textbooks mostly as group work; while the School-5 teacher, Anna, asked her students to translate the passage before they were asked to complete the task. This indicates that each teacher had their own style of teaching reading with a different emphasis on the basic classroom strategies to achieve the aims of the reading syllabus. The teacher who highlighted pronunciation in reading probably also used this language focus as an important feature in teaching other skills such as speaking and listening. The teacher who emphasised translation from English to Bahasa Indonesia possibly hypothesised that by including translation, better mastery of English could be achieved. The use of group work may have required more students' involvement and participation in class activities, but the aim was not understanding of the reading passages.

The findings showed that the teachers predominantly asked questions that were taken from their textbooks for both their *pre-* and *post-reading* sessions. Although the questions asked prior to reading were mainly questions that tried to develop students' curiosity, to raise ideas, and to get students to talk, or think about general issues in the passage so that they were ready for reading comprehension, this final stage of high-level understanding did not eventuate.

In the *post-reading* phase, the teachers asked questions and discussed them with their students as the main activity of the lesson. However, these questions which were predominantly taken from the textbooks only required immediate answers easily located in the passages. At this level of language study, there is an expectation by the students that their teachers should ask high level questions that allow students to demonstrate high level thinking. However, this did not occur in the reading lessons observed. They simply used and followed the questions provided in the textbooks and gained textbook responses and outcomes.

5.3 *Question types asked by teachers in reading lessons*

Teachers asked many questions in the course of their teaching. These questions were asked in the *pre-* and *post-reading* sessions. The purposes of the questions in the *pre-reading* sessions asked by the teachers in this study were to introduce students to the topic or help them to recall some aspects of their background knowledge, while the questions asked in the *post-reading* sessions were used to search for information from a passage rather than as a means of testing comprehension. The questions asked by the teachers during the observed reading lessons in the *pre-reading* sessions are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. The Question Types the Teachers Asked in the Prior-Reading Sessions

School and Type of Passage	Categories of Questions			Total Questions f(%)
	From Text- book f(%)	Open- Ended f(%)	Yes/No Questions f(%)	
School-2				
Gua Tabuhan is a Lively Cave	6 (15.4)	2 (5.1)	2 (5.1)	10 (25.6)
Snoring and An Atheist and Newton	8 (20.5)			8 (20.5)
School-3				
Thanksgiving				
Hummingbird		40 (10.3)	2 (5.1)	6 (15.4)
Ministers Endorse Plans on Trade, Bird Flu		8 (20.5)		8 (20.5)
School-5				
Farming				
Horticulture	3 (7.7)	2 (5.1)		5 (12.8)
Welfare	1 (2.6)			1 (2.6)
		1 (2.6)		1 (2.6)
Total Questions	18 (46.2)	17 (43.6)	4 (10.3)	39 (100)

Table 3 shows that the questions the teachers asked in the *pre-reading* sessions were predominantly those presented in the textbooks. These made up 18 out of 39 or 46.2% of their questions. In the questions they generated themselves, the most frequently asked questions were “Open-ended” questions that were used to lead students to be interested in the reading topic, and made up with 17 questions or 43.6%. These were followed by ‘Yes/No’ questions (10.3%). Table 4 presents the question types the teachers asked in the *post-reading* sessions.

Table 4. The Question Types the Teachers Asked in the Post-Reading Sessions

School and Type of Passage	Categories of Questions				Total Questions f(%)
	From Text- book f(%)	Yes/No Ques- tions f(%)	Right There f(%)	Author and Me f(%)	
School-2					
Gua Tabuhan is a Lively Cave	10 (14.3)				10 (14.3)
Snoring and An Atheist and Newton	8 (11.4)	3 (4.3)			11 (15.7)
School-3					
Thanksgiving	10 (14.3)				10 (14.3)
Hummingbird	8 (11.4)				8 (11.4)
Ministers endorse plans on Trade, Bird Flu			5 (7.1)	1 (1.4)	6 (8.6)
School-5					
Farming	8 (11.4)				8 (11.4)
Horticulture	10 (14.3)				10 (14.3)
Welfare	7 (10)				7 (10)
Total Questions	61 (87.1)	3 (4.3)	5 (7.1)	1 (1.4)	70 (100)

Table 4 reveals that in the *post-reading* sessions, the questions the teachers asked were mainly the same as those asked in the textbook with 61 out of 70 or 87.1% being from that source. Teachers themselves formulated only a small number of questions including “Yes/No” (4.3%) and “Right There” questions (7.1%). One “Author and Me” question (1.4%) was asked only in the third observation at School-3 where the teacher had selected that passage.

The analysis presented in Tables 3 and 4 indicated that the teachers in both the *pre-* and *post-reading* sessions relied heavily on the questions from the textbooks rather than generating questions of their own. Moreover, when they generated questions, their questions did not require higher

order thinking responses. This pattern suggests that teachers need to improve the quality of their questions if they want to improve students' comprehension. These questions need to be different from the questions that are provided in the textbook as they are predominantly "Right There" questions (see Table 2).

5.4 Teacher interviews

In general, when the teachers were asked whether they had practiced generating questions to understand English passages, they responded that they often asked questions to their students in the *pre-* and *during-reading* in English reading lessons. However, they had not practised generating questions yet. When asked to reflect on what they had done in the pre-reading task, they said that readers who were able to make questions understood what they had read. For example, Issy stated: "That's good. It means that the person can understand the content of the passage." Furthermore, the teachers also indicated that they lacked English vocabulary.

When asked how confident they felt generally during the pre-reading task, the teachers' responses indicated that they were comfortable during the task but had slightly different responses to completing the task. Issy, for example, said she had no difficulty completing the task. Ati admitted that she had difficulty completing the task which required readers to make a summary from previous paragraphs of a reading task. She also encountered more difficulty generating questions than answering them.

It [generating questions] was good, meaning that the readers who were able to generate questions showed that they understood the passage. It was more difficult to formulate questions rather than answering them. We simply need the point of view of the passage in answering questions. However, I needed to reread the passage several times in order to formulate questions. I tried to avoid generating questions that the answers of those were not available in the passage. Thus, the readers who could generate questions indicated that they know what they are asking.

This statement indicated that Ati was more challenged by generating rather than answering the questions that were usually provided in the textbooks. She simply took the point of view of a passage when answering the questions but she had to re-read the passage to formulate questions. Similar to Ati, when Anna was asked whether she experienced difficulties in generating questions, she said that she had difficulties in asking questions related to the passage but not in answering them. In addition, she was less confident while doing the task because she was hesitant about whether the questions she made were right or wrong. She was unsure as to whether the answers to those questions were appropriate to the passage as she said: "I felt nervous ... Is my question right? Is the answer right too? Is it related to the passage or not?"

Moreover, the teachers were concerned that different factors might influence the implementation of the *self-questioning* strategy in the classroom. That is, Issy hypothesised that generating questions might be influenced by the topic and structure of reading passages. Ati reported that cheating in her classroom would be a big challenge for her, while Anna was worried about English grammar when generating questions:

The students sometimes should be first guided such as what grammar would be mostly used. We can't let it go whether the passage contains particular structure. So what should be done for the students in order to know about the grammar before reading.

This comment shows that grammar would be a problem for her students if it was not discussed before reading sessions.

In the end, when the teachers were asked what kind of workshop they wanted to have, they responded that they wanted to have a workshop that would enhance their ability to ask questions and that they also expected the workshop to demonstrate the phases necessary to implement self-questioning with students in the classroom.

A synthesis of the analysis of the results from the interviews with the three teachers revealed some key issues. First, they often asked questions of their students in the reading lesson, but they did not generate questions themselves in order to comprehend an English passage. Second, after completing the pre-reading task, the teachers were able to link the concept of generating questions with reading comprehension. These teachers reported that they had more difficulty in generating questions than responding to them. The fourth key finding was that the teachers wanted a workshop that would improve their questioning skills. Further, they expected that the workshop would also show them how to apply each step of this skill in order to teach their students to generate questions. Finally, these teachers considered that the topic, passage structure, cheating, and grammar were all potential challenges to the implementation of the self-questioning strategy with their students in the classrooms.

6 Discussion

6.1 Teaching reading

There was no evidence to support the notion that teachers generated questions to understand the English passages in their teaching practices prior to this study. The results from the pre-interview data indicated that the teachers did not generate their own questions. However, classroom observations revealed that they often asked questions in their reading lessons, but these questions were at a low level that required low order thinking skills to answer. This situation has not only been typical of Indonesia's language classrooms but reported in a number of studies which have suggested that in reading lessons, teachers use the questions provided in the textbooks rather than generate questions themselves (Alvermann & Phelps, 2002; Dillon, 1988; Kerry, 1987; Shomoossi, 2004; Vandermeij, 1994) and such questions are normally simple factual questions that rarely require higher levels of thinking (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2001).

When teachers did ask their students questions, they imitated and/or asked repetitive questions from the textbooks. This behaviour supports the literature which indicates that typically teachers' questions are not self-generated but rather depend on the use of the questions in the textbooks (Alvermann & Phelps, 2002; Dillon, 1988; Kerry, 1987; Shomoossi, 2004; Vandermeij, 1994). In addition, the teachers in this study repeatedly asked students such low-level questions as a kind of drill and confirmation technique. This echoes the need for more useful assistance or guidance from teachers in enhancing students' capacity of performing at higher cognitive levels by providing students with high-level thinking questions.

The aim of teaching English reading in these classrooms focused on language skills rather than on intent to construct meaning from the reading passage as the expected outcome (Alexander & Fox, 2004; McLaughlin, 2008). For example, Issy (School-2) taught pronunciation and synonyms, while Anna asked students to translate the reading passage into Bahasa Indonesia. The fact that this study showed that comprehension was not emphasised in teaching reading indicated that these teachers needed to be provided with additional pedagogical knowledge and skills about reading comprehension through a learning process that enables them to experience being active readers themselves (Garcia, 2003; Gibbons, 2007; Handsfield & Jiménez, 2008; Lantolf, 2007; Pressley, 2002).

The teaching of English in these classrooms was driven by the textbooks. For example, in the initial observations, Issy (School-2) and Anna (School-5) followed the textbooks to teach reading using the sequence of activities suggested by the textbooks. So, when the textbooks provided *pre-reading* questions followed by reading a passage, vocabulary study using a synonym task, and *post-reading* questions as the last task, their teaching of reading followed the patterns set out in the textbooks. The fact that teachers relied on the textbooks as their teaching syllabus has two implications. First, the role of textbooks is clearly very important in teaching and learning activities in these EFL classrooms. Therefore, well-planned and thought out activities that focus on students' engagement in learning should be emphasised when creating textbooks. Second, teachers need to

learn a range of teaching methodologies that allow them to adopt and adapt these methodologies based on their teaching styles and specific educational contexts to help them go beyond the textbooks.

Overall, these teachers were exposed to low-level questions provided in the textbooks and they had limited knowledge themselves about questioning strategies. This implied that they needed to improve their ability to develop more complex questions beyond the ones that were provided in the textbooks and to learn strategies that would allow them to develop their own techniques for asking questions. This is important, as previous research has highlighted how questions can improve comprehension (Alvermann & Phelps, 2002; Anthony & Raphael, 2004; Fordham, 2006; Good & Brophy, 2000; Gunning, 1992), extend the topic to link the passage to previous knowledge and experience (Handsfield & Jiménez, 2008; Walker, 2000), and can be used to assess whether students understand what they have been taught (Kintsch, 2005).

6.2 Questions in the textbooks

The second theme explored in this study related to textbooks focusing on the questions provided for use in reading comprehension activities. The questions asked in the textbooks that were used by the teachers were low level. The analysis of questions in the textbooks showed that the questions predominantly required explicit answers, such as “Right There” questions, which are at the lowest level of questions based on the Raphael’s (1986) taxonomy, or could be classified as knowledge and comprehension questions based on the two lowest levels of six different levels of questions from Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy. These findings corresponded with previous research that English reading questions in the textbooks at junior secondary level used in Indonesia were low level and these types of questions also existed at senior secondary particularly at Grade 11 (Sunggingwati, 2001). This study confirms our knowledge that not only did teachers ask low level questions, but that the textbooks also provided questions that inhibited high order thinking. Pedagogy could be improved by the inclusion of questions that necessitate higher order thinking, for example, by asking questions that ask for answers beyond the passage, or questions that require students to link the information in the passage to real world beyond the classroom.

In addition, the use of an ordered set of questions discouraged students from constructing deep meaning from their English reading passages. An analysis of the textbooks revealed that the order of the questions was the same as the sequence of information in a reading passage. Similarity of wording and phrasing of the questions and the wording in a reading passage created predictable clues that made the questions easy to answer. Consequently, students could simply follow and focus on the clues, and even rely on them to help them to answer the questions rather than to understand or think about the meaning of the passage. While the inclusion of a few of “Right There” questions helped to build student confidence, it would be more effective to provide reading passages with questions that use dissimilar words and phrases where answers need to be found through synthesising a combination of information from different parts of the passage, or from implicit answers. Therefore, thoughtful consideration is needed in designing reading questions in the textbooks so that more high-level questions are included, and neither the sequence of information in a passage, nor the array of questions should be in a predictable order. In addition, similar wording and phrasing between the questions and the reading passage should be avoided.

7 Conclusion

The findings of the analysis of the passages and observations indicated that these teachers mainly asked questions in the “Right There” category that were typically found in the textbooks. They needed support to ask higher levels of questions that would encourage students to use skills such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This support could be offered in the form of targeted professional development focusing on developing higher order questioning strategies that differ from those in the textbooks. Only by developing these strategies could the aim of reading, that is, comprehension, be achieved. Creating a supportive classroom atmosphere for students

is necessary to provide learning strategies such as questioning. This situation could be created by fostering mutual-understanding relationships between the teachers and students that assist students to feel comfortable, and by creating activities that invite students to fully engage in their learning. Schools need to provide support for teachers to attend professional development programs to improve their subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills thereby developing their own teaching techniques. Furthermore, schools need to provide supportive resources for teachers to implement the strategies they have learnt from professional development programs, which in turn, would improve learning outcomes for teachers and students (Sunggingwati & Nguyen, 2013).

In addition, findings reinforce the importance of planning well and being well-prepared for the materials that will be taught to students to provide them with a better understanding of what they are learning. Questions in textbooks should challenge students' thinking by asking high order as well as low order questions to lead deeper levels of learning. This study has demonstrated to the need of the introduction of Bloom's (1956) taxonomy as guidance in constructing English reading questions. In addition, the sequence of information in a passage and the series of questions associated with the passage should not be in the same order nor should the wording and phrasing be the same because these circumstances generate a routine, surface approach to the passage which discourages students from understanding the reading passage or a deep learning. These considerations, if taken into account in designing English reading questions in textbooks, would enhance the use of higher-level questions in EFL classrooms.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Prof. Richard B. Baldauf Jr and Assoc. Prof. Karen Moni at the University of Queensland, Australia, for their insightful feedback and guidance on this research.

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